
DEBORAH THOMAS-AUSTIN, President of the World YWCA

Deborah Thomas-Austin joined the YWCA in 1985 as a member of the Board of the Port of Spain Association in Trinidad and Tobago. She served as chairman of the Programme Committee, including responsibility for the Y-Teens. In 1986, Deborah was selected to participate in a YWCA Leadership Training programme in Phoenix Arizona. She also served as First Vice Chairman of the Port of Spain Association.

In 2003 Deborah was elected as the President of the YWCA of Trinidad and Tobago (YWCATT) and served for two terms until 2008. During that time she led the development of a strategic plan, employee handbook and policy and procedure manual, as well as many other key mechanisms to support continued good governance in the YWCATT.

Deborah also represented the Caribbean region as a Vice President of the World YWCA from 2007-2011 and is the Immediate Past President of the YWCA of Trinidad and Tobago. In recent years, Deborah has participated in the Veil of Silence project, a video documentary about domestic violence in six Caribbean countries and in developing the YWCATT ***In Her Shoes*** project as a tool for raising awareness of domestic violence in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Deborah Thomas-Austin is the Managing Director of the East Port of Spain Development Company, a special purpose State enterprise established by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, a position she has held since the Company became operational in 2006. Previously, she served as the Assistant Coordinator and Town Planner with the Town and Country Planning Division of the government of Trinidad and Tobago from 2003 to March 2006. She holds a BA (Hons) in Planning Studies and a MSc in Urban Planning from Oxford Polytechnic (now Oxford Brookes University), UK, and a PhD in Land Economy from the University of Cambridge (Wolfson College), UK.

Dr. Thomas-Austin serves as a part-time lecturer on the MSc Planning and Development programme in the Department of Surveying and Land Information at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad since 2002. She has also lectured on undergraduate programmes in the Department and is a former President of the Trinidad and Tobago Society of Planners.

Dr. Thomas has consulted for the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Centre for Human Settlements as a land use planner/project manager, working with the governments of Anguilla, Montserrat and Antigua and Barbuda between 1992 and 2001. She has also provided consultancy services to the Organisation of American States in the field of hazard mitigation in the Caribbean and participated in designing a hazard risk management course for the Caribbean Development Bank.

Deborah has recently completed training, leading to certification in mediation (Alternative Dispute Resolution) and in adult literacy. In September 2011 she will begin teaching as a volunteer adult literacy tutor with ALTA in Trinidad.

About the World YWCA

The World YWCA is a global network of women and young women leading social and economic change in 125 countries. It advocates for peace, justice, human rights and care of the environment, and has been at the forefront of raising the status of women for over a century. The World YWCA develops women's leadership to find local solutions to the global inequalities women face.

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