



OAS School of Governance and OGP successfully completed the program “Advancing Open Government in the Caribbean: Strategies and Tools to Increase Transparency and Citizen Participation in Public Policy”

Fifty-two participants from 13 Caribbean countries participated in the first edition of this online joint initiative of the OAS School of Governance and the Open Government Partnership, carried out from July 6th to July 29th with the sponsorship of the U.S. Mission to the OAS.

The program aimed to increase transparency and citizen participation in the design, development, and implementation of public policies by promoting open government principles and practices in public administration. The main objective of the Program was to empower citizens to become agents of change for the promotion of open government principles to contribute to more transparent, accountable, and effective public institutions. It combined capacity development with leadership training and networking elements through 12 sessions that included lectures, workshops, presentations, and group discussions.

52 citizens of the following 13 Caribbean member States participated in this 4 -weeks online Program: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Participants came from public sector as well as civil society, private sector and academia.

Program sessions were addressed by OAS and OGP specialists and guest speakers from different countries and partnering organizations such as the Open Data Charter, the University of the West Indies, DataSketch, UFaciliate, Kubaldi and the Open Contracting Partnership. The program also included recognized public officials in the subject, such as Mélanie Robert, Executive Director of Open Government at the Treasury Board of Canada; Sabine Romero, Complete Communities, City of Austin, Texas; and Sue Bateman, Deputy Director of the Data and Innovation -Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO)- of the United Kingdom, as well as civil society representatives such as Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza East Africa and OGP Steering Committee; and María Barón, Executive Director of Directorio Legislativo and OGP Steering Committee Lead Co-chair.

Open Government, Open Data, and Public Procurement were some of the main topics of the program. Students drafted Open Government Commitments designed as solutions for



specific challenges in the Caribbean region. As a result, there were 8 commitments drafted in the areas of Political Integrity, Open Contracting and Procurement, Right to Information, Justice, Education, Water and sanitation, Climate change and Covid-19 responses.

Some of the comments mentioned by the students about this Program are:

“The program expanded my knowledge of what the open government initiative is and clearly outlined the important components of such a program. It also allows to learn of successful open government projects that can be tailored for my country which have similar issues”.

“Participation has rounded out my knowledge not only on the open movement but how to advocate for "openness in governance". Openness in education and technology can only be truly successful where there is openness in governance and transparency, accountability and collaboration are demonstrated at the highest level, that of government. The course should be pitched to senior public officers”.

“I am much more knowledgeable of Open Government principles and the broader framework required for it to be effective/successful. It has equipped me with the tools and strategies needed to build upon the current work being done toward Open Gov't in my nation and exposed me to more of the issues and perspectives of civil society in that regard. As a developer of e-legislations understanding the Open Gov't principles and the required checks and balances, gave me a better advantage point to develop more citizen-centered legislation and policies in favor of Openness”.

After having successfully completed the first edition of the Advancing Open Government Program in the Caribbean, OAS School of Governance and OGP hope to continue contributing to the strengthening of Open Government principles through future course editions tailored to the needs of the region.

OAS School of Governance

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