National Advocacy Workshop Report

Let’s Advocate Together!: Building civil society capacity to advance the sustainable development agenda in Trinidad & Tobago (T&T)

March 22-23rd, 2018
Port of Spain, Trinidad

under the project: CSOs For Good Governance: Enhancing civil society’s contribution to governance and development processes in Trinidad and Tobago (CSOs4GoodGov)
Overview

Who?
40 participants representing 31 civil society organisations in Trinidad & Tobago (T&T)

Why?
Addressing needs for “advocacy capacity building and advancing partnerships and collective advocacy by civil society in T&T around the sustainable development goals (SDGs)”

How?
Bringing civil society in T&T together in a national 2-day advocacy workshop involving mapping, knowledge sharing, peer exchange and collective visioning focused on the SDGs and advocacy capacity building.

What?
Starting to: “distil a collective civil society position on the SDGs, including the optimal role of CSOs and the priorities for the national SDGs agenda; build CSO capacity in developing advocacy strategies; outline an advocacy strategy to guide civil society in its SDG-related advocacy actions.”

Results:
- CSO knowledge enhanced on the sustainable development agenda and updated mapping of CSO initiatives delivering results on SDGs in T&T
- Improved advocacy capacity of participating CSOs
- Identification of common themes and broad areas of interest for collective advocacy AND specific opportunities for CSOs to join or support advocacy actions
- Agreement for and commitment to finalising a collective CSO advocacy strategy by members of the SDGs Catalysts Network and wider civil society

See here for more:
- Information on the project CSOsForGoodGov
- Workshop concept and agenda
- Participant information
From the SDGs Catalysts Network members and wider civil society participants, three messages stood out from the event:

**Civil society collaborating together will have a stronger voice**
Civil society in T&T recognises the value of building and strengthening relationships to ensure healthy collaboration and that civil society voices and messages are heard in national development processes. A key part of the vision for civil society is working more effectively together for collective advocacy and action. Identifying common interests and opportunities and building strong relationships and coalitions among civil society actors will be key for this.

**A rights-based approach to development is critical**
Civil society in T&T recognises that human rights is central to sustainable development. Civil society needs to work toward a cohesive position on the human rights agenda and collaborate and coordinate on advocacy for the different rights. SDGs already provide an integrated framework for advancing the human rights agenda and opportunity for mainstreaming human rights in development to ensure a more inclusive approach so that we ‘leave no-one behind’

**Local development is critical to sustainable development**
Localising the SDGs means asking ‘do the means of implementation include civil society?’ Civil society as a key local actor needs to be empowered to channel global goals into local actions and can contribute to ensuring others in government and private sector are aware and begin mainstreaming SDGs in local development priorities and in communities. This will make for a more holistic approach to development, as is envisioned under the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
Six key questions were shared by the representative of the Europe Union (EU) Delegation to T&T, as thinking points to guide the workshop deliberations:

1. How are the SDGs being implemented?
2. How is the implementation of the SDGs being measured?
3. How is T&T financing implementation of the SDGs?
4. How do government’s political priorities contribute to achieving the SDGs?
5. How are T&T’s national development policies contributing to achieving the SDGs?
6. How are WE promoting the SDGs?

CANARI shared overview presentations on the workshop objectives and civil society and the SDGs. These can be accessed here.
The workshop kicked off with participants mapping their initiatives and identifying how they were delivering results on the 17 SDGs. The aim was to help visualise and start telling the stories of how collectively CSOs in T&T are contributing to the SDGs.

The exercise built on work done at the launch and inception workshop of the SDGs Catalysts Network. With new CSOs adding their contributions, participants were able to identify current gaps, synergies and areas for potential collaboration.

Key take-aways were that:

- CSOs may have focus areas but are actually contributing to multiple SDGs.
- SDGs are linked and therefore an integrated approach is needed to achieving the goals.
- The process does not have to be government centric; CSOs are also leading in doing great work and making an impact towards achieving the SDGs.
- A variety of CSOs are working on similar SDGs and there is potential to collaborate to achieve bigger impact.

See the results in the next few pages.
For work originally done at the inception workshop of the SDGs Catalysts Network, see [here](#) for more.
Some examples:

SDG 1 No Poverty
- The 2 Cents Movement – teaching business skills to artists and creating new sources of employment in creative industries through Artist Development Program
- CANARI - working to strengthen rural community SMEs to reduce poverty
- PAVI – partnering with YTEPP to provide certified vocational training

SDG 2 Zero Hunger
- TTUF – promoting sustainable utilisation of fisheries and marine resources which contributes to reducing hunger and poverty
- The Santa Cruz Green Market – promoting sustainable agriculture and contributing to reducing poverty and hunger and providing decent work

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
- Autism Spirit – advocates for autistics and their families and promotes empowerment of parents and autistics through awareness programmes and information sharing
- PAVI - working toward adjustment to blindness by providing rehab services and reducing vision loss through education, vision screening and referrals

SDG 4 Quality Education
- ALTA – working on increasing literacy rates to reduce inequality and contribute to poverty reduction
- AMCHAM T&T – working toward improving secondary level education and promoting women in technology
- ALGSB - providing cutting edge business education and training at various levels to prepare professionals for the world of work and develop exceptional leaders
- CKFTO – runs teacher and professional development workshops which educates on disabilities and provides strategies for working with persons with disabilities
- ParentingTT – provides parenting education and helping teachers to deal with ‘at risk’ students in schools
- The Cropper Foundation – runs creative writing workshops for teens and adults and promotes environmental education
- The 2 Cents Movement – promoting youth literacy including reading, writing and communication skills and runs Future Authors program
What is civil society doing?

SDG 5 Gender Equality
• CAISO – promoting gender justice, mitigating gender based violence and enabling autonomy of gender identity
• Families in Action – engaged in youth programmes to educate, advocate and fight against gender based violence in schools and communities, domestic violence responder training and prevention

SDG 6 Clean Water & Sanitation
• AMCHAM T&T – promoting environmental charter which addresses dumping of trash and recycling

SDG 7 Affordable & Clean Energy
• ALGSB – has academic programmes to develop and support sustainable energy professionals to lead clean energy industry in T&T

SDG 8 Decent Work & Economic Growth
• Families in Action - supports companies and employees regionally to create healthy and productive work environment
• ALGSB – engages in capacity development initiatives with the public, private and CSO sectors with a view to enhancing economic growth and development

• CAISO – advocating to help increase employment discrimination protections for e.g. with respect to age, health conditions, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI)
• Autism Spirit – promoting access to work for autistics through networking
• RED Initiatives – promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace and work-life balance

SDG 9 Industry Innovation & Infrastructure
• ALGSB – has academic programmes on SME’s innovation, Business Incubator, organisational development; works with institutions and organisations to enhance internal capacities, networks, productivity and competitiveness
SDG 10 Reducing Inequality

• NCPD – working toward and supports inclusion of persons with disabilities through sensitisation workshops, awareness raising and partnering with the corporate sector for employment opportunities
• PAVI – conducting and hosting educational radio shows, training, workshops and seminars
• CKFTO – educates children about disabilities through puppet program in order to dispel fears about disabled persons and in turn increase inclusion
• RED Initiatives – advocates for access to health and social services and human rights for all
• The 2 Cents Movement - works on developing socially inclusive creative spaces e.g. national Poetry Slam and supports artists engaged in advocacy on LGBTQI issues

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities

• Habitat for Humanity – engaged in advocacy for housing and land access for vulnerable groups including people with disabilities, HIV-Aids, LGBTQI
• The Cropper Foundation – capacity building of CSOs and empowering communities to monitor impacts and environmental commitments made by extractive industries

SDG 12 Responsible Consumption & Production

• The 2 Cents Movement – partnering with the Trinidad & Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Institute for school tour and student competition focused on engaging students on responsible consumption practices
• The Cropper Foundation – has been engaged in process advocating for local chemical free agricultural products and facilitating accessibility for benefit of producers and consumers

SDG 13 Climate Action

• Trinidad Youth Council - advocating for the reduction of the use of plastic bags by store owners and consumers
• The 2 Cents Movement - working on a schools awareness campaign in 2019 and with IAMovement and SustainTT for artists to develop and perform a body of work that addresses and raises awareness on climate issues
• IAMovement – involved in environmental awareness and advocacy through film, ‘climate talks’, climate marches, Climathon
• CANARI – provides capacity building for CSOs and rural communities on climate change adaptation
What is civil society doing?

SDG 14 Life Below Water
• TTUF - working to promote sustainable management of fisheries by encouraging improvements in gear types used and fishing seasons
• The Cropper Foundation - supporting protection of marine life and reefs by facilitating a source of income for reef-focused foundations

SDG 15 Life on Land
• Trinidad Youth Council - engaging organisations to help clean beaches in their communities
• The Cropper Foundation – training agricultural officers and farmers in environmentally sustainable practices
• CANARI – promotes sustainable forest livelihoods and support rural community SMEs to sustainably use forest resources and so protect forest ecosystems.

SDG 16 Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions
• CAISO – working to broaden representation in governance, increase participatory planning, strengthen national machinery for human rights accountability (via national human rights institution) and enable access to supranational human rights mechanisms (HRMs)
• HARTT – promoting human rights and social justice through a Youth Peace and Security Think Tank aimed at peace and security especially for those from minority backgrounds.
• Veni Apwann – working to strengthen organisational backbones of CSOs and facilitating partnerships
• The 2 Cents Movement – undertakes workshops with under-served youth in prison and stigmatized ‘hotspot’ communities, including through partnership with the US Embassy on the ‘Normal, Not Normal’ campaign which involves outreach via school tours, clubs and PSA ads targeting ‘at-risk youth’
• Parenting TT – empowering, informing and encouraging innovative parenting to promote peaceful and inclusive societies
• SHIFT! Caribbean – building capacity of CSOs through leadership development and training, addressing systems issues and root causes of problems

SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals
• CAISO – working to increase international support for civil society
• ALJGSB – a relationship broker for business, CSOs, academia, and public sector
• RED Initiatives – advocates for indigenous CSOs and promotes inclusion to prevent ‘elite grouping’
• TTUF – builds partnerships with other stakeholders that use the same environment
• Autism Spirit – promoting partnerships and collaboration for autism support in T&T
• ACSOTT – umbrella organisation actively promoting partnership of CSOs in T&T

What is civil society doing?
Priorities for a civil society (charter): for people, for planet, for prosperity

In order to distil possible areas of focus for advocacy, CSOs worked on developing snapshots of the world they want by 2030, from 4 perspectives or themes – Urban, Rural, Tobago, Civil society.

From these snapshots, common themes and key priorities emerging include:

1. Human Rights / Social justice
   Addressing:
   - Inequality & discrimination (various types – sex, gender, disabilities)
   - Accessibility

2. Environmental Sustainability
   Promoting:
   - Green buildings/spaces and protected areas
   - Energy efficiency-alternative/renewable energy
   - Sustainable agriculture & food security

3. Efficient public services delivery & self sufficiency
   Involving:
   - Technological innovation
   - Connectivity & mobility - reliable transport system & public utilities
   - Autonomy & self sufficiency (Tobago)
   - Decent work

See visuals and brainstorming results on the various themes on the next few pages.
Priorities for a civil society (charter): for people, for planet, for prosperity

- **Rural Theme**
  - The vision:
    - Access for all
    - Self sufficiency – rainwater harvesting, composting, sustainable fishing and farming, recycling.
    - Market-places.
    - Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, renewable energy-electric bus.
    - Efficient delivery of and easy access to public services-reliability and connectivity.
    - Access/reliable utilities - power and water, and health services.
    - Focus on education and literacy - promote reading of books and braille for visually impaired.
    - Future of rural living supported by technology.
Priorities for a civil society (charter): for people, for planet, for prosperity

Urban Theme

The vision:
- Access for all/disabled friendly
- Energy efficiency, renewable/alternative energy – solar power, wind turbines, green spaces.
- Mobility and alternate forms of transport.
- Easily accessible government services – centralised/one-stop shop, technology based.
- Self-sufficiency - food farms. No unemployment, alternative learning centres.
- Participatory budgeting.
- Recreation spaces and promotion of a strong family life.
Priorities for a civil society (charter): for people, for planet, for prosperity

- **Tobago Theme**

  The vision:
  - Autonomy and self-sufficiency.
    - More voice in decision making.
  - Self sustaining communities generating own food, rainwater harvesting.
  - Job creation/opportunities – e.g. exporting food.
  - Local university, virtual classes.
  - Technology based.
  - Reliable transport system.
  - Focus on protected areas – coral reef restored, forests protected.
  - Renewable energy.
  - Safe, clean and serene communities.

Section 2: The World We Want
Priorities for a civil society (charter): for people, for planet, for prosperity

- **Civil Society Theme**
  - The vision:
    - Property/dedicated space/hub for CSOs.
    - Easy access to services including disabled access and modern technology supporting service delivery
    - Green buildings and spaces
    - Opportunities for income generation.
    - Mechanism/medium for showcasing CSO achievements.
    - Collaboration with private sector.
On day 2, participants started work on building advocacy capacity by reflecting on ‘what is advocacy?’

- Advocates are those who work to influence or persuade a case for change, including by providing evidence for why the outcome is important.
- Advocacy is about promoting behavioural change, which may or may not involve ‘changing mindsets’ to influence policy and practice at any level.
- Advocacy is making a case for positive change which can involve both talking and doing; it is usually enhanced by collaboration and most often focused in the public sphere.
- Advocacy can have a discrete timeline or be a way of life.

Key takeaways:
- Advocacy is not one size fits all.
- You can enact a change in behaviour without changing a ‘mindset’.
CSOs were guided through the process of advocacy and key elements of building an advocacy strategy using 4 key advocacy themes or goals:

1. Enhanced recognition of the civil society sector as an equal partner in achieving the SDGs
2. CSOs collaborating more effectively for integrated development
3. Moving towards more integrated, localised development
4. Leave no-one behind: a more inclusive approach to development
Developing an Advocacy Strategy

With CSOs organised into groups on the advocacy theme/goal of interest to them, facilitators shared information and guided groups through interactive exercises and practical steps on developing effective advocacy strategies. Using a template, CSOs learnt about and started to deliberate on the following key elements of developing an effective advocacy strategy:

- Target audiences
- Key messages
- Advocacy products & pathways - what examples and tools are available?
- Evaluating the success of your strategy (indicators)

The advocacy capacity building presentations and resources used, including the advocacy strategy template, can be accessed here.

See the following pages for summarised results from the practical advocacy capacity building exercises.
### Developing an Advocacy Strategy

#### Section 3: Building collective advocacy capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Enhanced recognition of civil society as an equal partner in achieving the SDGs and 2. CSOs collaborating more effectively for integrated development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key target audience:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong></td>
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</table>
| **Key Messages:** | • Involve others..Civil society is #StrongerTogether!  
• Share your knowledge - #Knowledge is power! |
| **Products:** | Briefs, Merchandise, Reports, Audiovisual material - slides, videos, Emails, hashtag - #SDGsCatalysts |
| **Pathways:** | WhatsApp, Listservs, virtual meetings, shared calendars personal meetings – face-to-face, one on one, focus groups, social events, social media – Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat |
| **Indicators:** | • No. CSOs engaged (Catalysts and others)  
• No. meetings held by Catalysts with partners CSOs  
• Single social media platform for all Catalysts  
• No. posts submitted (no. hits, likes, shares)  
• CSOs engaged in evaluations |

*Summarised results from practical exercises on developing effective advocacy strategies*
### 3. Moving towards more integrated, localised development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key target audience:</th>
<th>Local councillor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong></td>
<td>To ensure local councillor is more aware and knowledgeable on the SDGs and integrating SDG priorities in his/her area</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Key Messages:**   | • Civil society is here to collaborate and build communication channels on SDGs work.  
• Local development is critical to sustainable development  
• SDGs are a framework for wholistic integrated development for people, planet and prosperity |
| **Products:**       | Presentations, policy brief, merchandise, contact listings, press release |
| **Pathways:**       | Face to face, organised community meeting, social event, videos |
| **Indicators:**     | • No. SDGs themed or related events held by councillor  
• Increase in invites to SDGs events and SDGs mentions  
• Councillor acts as an SDGs Catalyst (long term) |

*Summarised results from practical exercises on developing effective advocacy strategies*
### 4. Leave no-one behind: a more inclusive approach to development

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key target audience:</th>
<th>Bilateral and Multilateral Funding Agencies (donor organisations)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong></td>
<td>Inclusion of conditionalities or incentives to support strengthening of human rights into development agreements over the next 5-10 years</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Key Messages:**                 | • Incentives should be provided to encourage and support the establishment of the NHRI  
• These incentives should be predicated on CSOs holding a major leadership role |
| **Products:**                     | Policy brief, presentations, press release |
| **Pathways:**                     | Launch event to support National Human Rights Institute (NHRI), traditional and social media, face-to-face meet and greet/icebreaker |
| **Indicators:**                   | No. donors attending launch  
No. donors engaging / committing after |

*Summarised results from practical exercises on developing effective advocacy strategies*
Lessons & Reflections

Some overarching lessons and reflections over the course of the two days are captured here.

Collaboration & collective working
• How do we drive our “own” development and communicating and negotiating a shared vision? A key step includes identifying who can do what and then how to facilitate the collaboration.
• CSOs must be able to recognize their “niche” and what they can contribute to the whole picture.
• The shared view of what the future will look like isn’t necessarily a reflection of how we work together currently.
• If we want to move the sector forward then each CSO needs to work together and “put aside” their ego and start advocating on the shared vision.
• We can imagine many things for the future but in real life there are resource limitations to deal with.

Collective Advocacy
• A collective advocacy strategy is needed but we need to narrow the focus and identify a few key areas of common interest that make sense for collective working and form networks around key issues for advocacy; CSOs can’t agree to do everything.
• Messages need to be memorable, credible and tap into something that matters to the target audience.
• Measurable indicators for collective advocacy are important to give CSOs credibility – CSOs need to think about how to realistically capture data for measuring their work.
• One of the biggest needs for collaboration and collective advocacy is TRUST.
The collective approach: What’s in it for me?

CSOs reflecting on usefulness of a collective approach to advocacy for their own organisations:

**HIGHS**
- Good vibes
- Inspiration from millennials
- Being a conduit to bring additional resources
- “step by step” approach
- Can help deliver mission
- Ideas and best practices
- Capacity building and mentorship
- Address gaps & reduce redundancy
- Practical learning

**LOWS**
- Turf and ego
- Worried about survival
- Possible “Crabs in a barrel” syndrome
- Will my voice get lost in the collective voice?
In moving forward and to capitalise on enhanced capacities for collective advocacy out of the workshop and opportunities identified for partnerships, the following key steps were agreed and noted:

**Finalise collective CSO advocacy strategy (Target: May 2018)**
Core group to be convened for write-shop: ACSOTT, Families in Action, ET, Habitat for Humanity, Autism Spirit, The 2 Cents Movement, Red Initiatives, Trinidad Youth Council, Veni Apwann, The Cropper Foundation, the Humanitarian Association of T&T, UWTT

**Build coalitions for advocacy actions together**
Potential areas of focus and coalitions (to capitalise on ‘hot’ opportunities):
- Human rights (network group): CAISO, Autism Spirit, Family Planning Association, PAVI, NCPD, 2 Cents Movement, Trinidad Youth Council
- Environmental justice group: possibly ET, IAMovement and others
- Green enterprises: CANARI lead and others join/support

**Leverage the Advocacy Action Fund**
Opportunity to leverage small grants for collective advocacy work under the CSOsForGoodGov project
Global village say SDGs is the way
Civil society must have an important role to play

EU saw that CSOs need to grow
And provided some funds to start the show

So long we acting like crabs in a barrel
Years from now we can’t be doing that still

We agree “No one left behind”
Has to be the way to grow the ties that bind

“So let’s change the change to help each other stand.
Volunteer your time to lend a helping hand

By changing the change, we are better people for tomorrow.
To be part of the process to help the country grow

Changing the change is our plea
Or as The Voice say ‘fire go bun we’

[Music: Step by Step]

Inspired by: Mining Union Song
Step by Step

Credits: Colleen Davis-Veni
Apwann, David Shim-ACSOTT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adult Literacy Tutors Association (ALTA)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago (AMCHAM T&amp;T)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Association of Civil Society Organisations of Trinidad and Tobago (ACSOTT)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Autism Spirit</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Caribbean Kids and Families Therapy Organisation (CKFTO)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Caribbean Youth Environment Network- Trinidad and Tobago Chapter (CYEN-TT)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Consortium of Disability Organisations (CODO)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Environment Tobago (ET)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Families in Action (FIA)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Family Planning Association (FPA)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Habitat for Humanity Trinidad and Tobago (HABITAT TT)</td>
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<td>Humanitarian Association of the Republic of Trinidad &amp; Tobago (HARTT)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>IAMovement</td>
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<td>National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Parenting TT</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Persons Associated with Visual Impairment (PAVI)</td>
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<td>Shift! Caribbean</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>The 2 Cents Movement</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>The Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business (ALJGSB)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>The Bridge Foundation</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>The Coalition Advocating for Inclusion of Sexual Orientation (CAISO)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>The Cropper Foundation</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago Transparency Institute (TTTI)</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago United Fisherfolk (TTUF)</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Veni Apwann (VA)</td>
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<td>868 Change (Trade School Port of Spain)</td>
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For more information on the CSOsForGoodGovernance project:

- http://www.canari.org/csos4goodgov
- https://csosforgoodgov.org/the-project/

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