



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



## MEDIA RELEASE

Friday October 2, 2020

Priority: **HIGH**

### **Ministry launches ICT Lab for Adult Education Programme**

**Port of Spain---**For the very first time, there will be an Information Communication Technology (ICT) Lab attached to the Adult Education Programme (AEP) which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS). The Lab will be owned and operated by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, through the Ministry. The Lab, which was an initiative in collaboration with Digicel Foundation is located at the AEP's Lifelong Learning Centre at Omardeen Building, Ciper Street San Fernando. Through the generous donation by Digicel Foundation, ten (10) desktop computers will be made available to the fifty-five (55) persons registered for ICT Studies in the 2020 Edition of the Adult Education Programme. The initiative forms part of the Government's strategy to revitalize the national economy and increase resilience and sustainability among vulnerable populations

Minister of Social Development and Family Service, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, during the feature address said, "today's exercise is symbolic of the greater good that can come out of alliances between the State and the private sector, especially within this period of unprecedented global developments. Within recent months, the world has been experiencing dramatic shifts in our relationships with technology, which of course, come with many positives such as today's event." According to Minister Cox, "Education as you know, is a fundamental tool in the fight against poverty. As such, through this initiative, the Ministry has also gone one step further in reducing the digital divide and creating avenues for decent work, quality education and enhanced standards of living." She thanked Digicel Foundation for partnering with the Ministry to ensure that *no person is left behind*, while empowering our human capital and building a resilient framework for a brighter and more prosperous future.

During her welcome remarks, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry Sheila Seecharan told those present that the initiative is in direct support of the Ministry's preparations to migrate the AEP's courses to the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Open Campus' online platforms. This decision will allow for modular studies to be pursued in various subject offerings, resulting in certification by the UWIOC. She too, expressed appreciate to Digicel for the gesture.

Representing Digicel Foundation, Senior Government Relations and Affairs Executive Alicia Hospedales indicated that through the Foundation's EPIC initiative her organization was happy to partner with the Ministry, particularly during this period when having access to online learning was so important. During her remarks, she highlighted that the overall cost for the ten (10) computers is estimated at \$5,000 USD.

National AEP Coordinator, Rachel Guzman DeVlugt expressed that following the restrictions associated with COVID-19 and the new approach to online classes, the computers could not have been awarded at a better time. She stated further that the new computers will also assist the AEP to contribute to the fulfilment of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4: *"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all."*

The Adult Education Programme, which was first introduced in the 1940's has always played a vital role in the empowerment and transformation of the lives of our most vulnerable, allowing for certifiable improvements in their academic, as well as, technical and vocational knowledge, behaviours and competencies.

**-End-**

**For more information:**

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*Figure 1: Senator the Honourable Donna Cox addresses members of the media at the launch of the Ministry's ICT Lab for the Adult Education Programme.*



*Figure 2: (L-R) Alicia Hospedales of Digicel Foundation, Senator the Honorable Donna Cox and Permanent Secretary of the MSDFS Shiela Seecharan*



*Figure 3: Senator the Honourable Donna Cox is given a preview of the platform which will be utilised by students of the Adult Education Programme*



*Figure 4: Alica Hospedales ensures that Senator the Honourable Donna Cox health and safety remain paramount in the performance of her duties.*