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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

### ***SUCCESSFUL ODPM VOLUNTEER APPLICANTS UNDERGO MUCH ANTICIPATED ORIENTATION***

Following a robust and successful screening process, the first cohort of applicants for the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management's (ODPM) Volunteer Programme commenced their orientation training on **Saturday 06th February 2021**. Twenty-seven eager persons underwent the highly anticipated morning and afternoon sessions conducted at the National Security Training Academy (NSTA), Cumuto, Wallerfield.

The participants were treated to lively and enlightening presentations on the critical role of the ODPM in national disaster management; the realities of hazard impacts in various communities; overview of the volunteer programme and its operations; as well as a synopsis of Communications, External Affairs and Administration in volunteerism.

Through the presentations, facilitators shared their wealth of knowledge and experience with the trainees. The facilitators also highlighted the fact that volunteers can provide the country with much needed surge capacity. The trainees were also told that they could build their capacity through training and education such as learning about the topography of our twin island state or learning a new skill. Through volunteering, the trainees learned that they can increase their capacity to communicate and bring comfort to those most vulnerable in communities, through exposure to sign language and foreign languages.

In keeping with the COVID-19 regulations, the participants were separated into a morning and afternoon session. Facilitators included the ODPM's Regional Coordinator, Mr. Jaishima Gowandan, a Disaster Management specialist and lecturer; the Volunteer Director, Mr. Anthony Gonzales; Deputy Director Mr. Winston Thorne and Disaster Management campaigner and seasoned volunteer Mr. Earl Hernandez.

Following the orientation session, some of the trainees expressed enthusiasm and excitement to embark on the next stage that would qualify them to become full-fledged ODPM volunteers. Others shared their overall appreciation for the in-depth and engaging programme, noting that they gained far more than was anticipated.

At the end of the session, all the participants left with a greater understanding of the ODPM's role and how volunteers are able to strengthen disaster resilience.

The ODPM takes this opportunity to invite other passionate and committed individuals to enrol in the programme by registering on its website at [www.odpm.gov.tt/volunteer](http://www.odpm.gov.tt/volunteer). Through volunteerism, the ODPM continues to build capacity on individual, family and community levels in a bid to strengthen disaster resilience in Trinidad and Tobago.

## PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS



**Photo and Caption 1:** Volunteer Director, Mr. Anthony Gonzales (seated right) and Disaster Management campaigner and seasoned volunteer Mr. Earl Hernandez (seated left) along with some of the trainees listen attentively to presentations at the orientation training at National Security Training Academy (NSTA), Cumuto, Wallerfield.



**Photo and Caption 2:** A cross-section of the trainees participating in the orientation training at National Security Training Academy (NSTA), Cumuto, Wallerfield.

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**Issued by:**

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