



ECONOMIC
DEMOCRACY
INITIATIVE

Unemployment Relief Programme Trinidad and Tobago

A program that promotes the community interest through work provided by short-term employment projects

Summary

This program provides employment to unemployed persons at short term projects (with no limit to participation duration) to complete infrastructure, environmental, and care projects in communities while also providing on-the-job training. This program awards special projects to small-scale contractors who provide the necessary materials.

Rationale

To provide short-term employment for unemployed persons in the community and enhance entrepreneurial skills of participants.

Defining Principles

Direct employment of the unemployed, meeting unmet social and environmental needs in communities, expanding access to economic opportunities for women, and providing pathways to other economic opportunities.

Dates of Operation

2010 - present

Number of Program Participants

30,000 in 2014 (2.2% of citizens) (1).

Criteria for Participation

Unemployed residents of Trinidad and Tobago with government ID over 18 years old (2).

Pay and Benefits

Between TTD 149 and TTD 241 depending on job responsibilities. In 2022, pay was increased and vacation leave, sick days, and maternity leave benefits were made available to program participants (3).

Financing

TTD 290M (USD 38.2M), 0.16% of GDP, in 2021. Spending on this program peaked at 0.45% of GDP in 2015 (4).



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Implementation

Administered by the Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT).

Types of Work

Landscaping, small-scale construction, crafts, furnishings, cleaning, painting, community work, geriatric care, beautification, and providing labor support for churches and other community organizations (5).

Notable Features

The Women's Programme offers flexibility to accommodate women participant's other commitments (6). Program participants will receive on-the-job training commensurate with all other government employees.

Challenges

Ghost gangs (people working no hours or too few hours and sometimes being paid higher wages) and low productivity have been periodically identified. The URP was split and placed under the management of three separate ministries in 2011 with payment disbursed by the Prime Minister to reduce corruption (7).

Program Website

<https://www.mowt.gov.tt/Divisions/Unemployment-Relief-Programme/Media-Centre>



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Citations

- (1) United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Non-Contributory. Unemployment Relief Programme (2010-). Social Protection Programmes Database website. [South Africa Department of Government Communication and Information Systems. \(2019\). South Africa Yearbook 2018/2019. https://www.gcis.gov.za/south-africa-yearbook-201819](#)
- (2) United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Non-Contributory. Unemployment Relief Programme (2010-). Social Protection Programmes Database website. [E3.pdfhttp://www.epwp.gov.za/documents/Reports/Year19-22-23/Q3/2022-23_QTR3-Annexure_A-E3.pdf](#)
- (3) Tobago House of Assembly. (2022). Wage Increases for URP Workers. [https://www.tha.gov.tt/info-hub/wage-increases-for-urp-workers/](#)
- (4) United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Non-Contributory. Unemployment Relief Programme (2010-). Social Protection Programmes Database website.
- (5) Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Works and Transport Unemployment Relief Programme. What We Do. [Expanded Public Works Programmes Summit. Ministerial Determination and Code of Good Practice. \(2014\). Presentation. https://slideplayer.com/slide/5259524/](#)
- (6) Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Works and Transport Unemployment Relief Programme. Women's Programme – URP. [https://www.mowt.gov.tt/Divisions/Unemployment-Relief-Programme/Services/Women-s-Programme-URP](#)
- (7) Trinidad and Tobago Guardian. (July 20, 2011). URP split will weed out corruption–PM. [https://www.guardian.co.tt/article-6.2.446929.9dc8e250c4](#)



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