

Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago will undertake its 1st Voluntary National Review in July 2020. With a focus this year on development accelerators and transformative action, it is a key moment to consider activities and tools which can unlock progress, for all, across the board.

Access to information – understood as the physical possibility and right for all to seek and find information, and the skills to use it – can make just such a contribution. This access can help at all levels. It supports individuals to take better decisions about how to farm, where to look for work or how to look after their own and their families' health. It gives governments the possibility to define better policies. It allows researchers to understand the world around us, establish new insights and innovate. Libraries are a key part of the infrastructure for ensuring that this is the case.

But where does Trinidad and Tobago stand today as concerns its libraries and access to information? This data sheet provides background based on data from the Development and Access to Information report produced by IFLA in partnership with the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington, as well as IFLA's own Library Map of the World.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- *Trinidad and Tobago has well-staffed, equipped and used public libraries, but these remain relatively rare compared to the size of the population. The country's academic library field is stronger, with the second highest number of academic library workers per head in the region.*
- *While Trinidad and Tobago scores well on household internet and computer access, literacy and rights, relatively few access the internet on the move, limiting potential uses. An average score on the skills pillar of the ICT development index and high numbers of young adults out of work or education indicate an area where libraries could help by putting people in touch with learning or work opportunities.*

LIBRARIES IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

There is a good amount of data on libraries in Trinidad and Tobago. The country has 27 public libraries, representing almost 2 per 100 000 people. This is lower than the averages for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (3.4 per 100 000) and the world (6.8 per 100 000). However, they are relatively well staffed, with 9.28 public library workers per 100 000 people, much closer to the global average (11.8) and the regional average (10.1). 22 of Trinidad and Tobago's public libraries offer internet access, with almost 1 in 6 a registered library user, borrowing on average 3 books a year each. This indicates a strong starting point, with well equipped and used libraries where these exist, but a potential area for further development, in order to bring the potential of libraries to deliver access to information further into communities.

Trinidad and Tobago's academic library sector is, in relative terms, stronger, with 1.2 academic libraries and 15.2 academic library workers per 100 000 people. These compare with figures of 1.4 and 1.3 libraries in LAC and the world respectively, and 9.1 and 10.6 library workers. Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago has the second highest number of academic library workers per 100 000 people in the region after Colombia. Given the role of academic libraries in supporting students and researchers, this is a relatively positive situation, but one where more could still be done.

DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

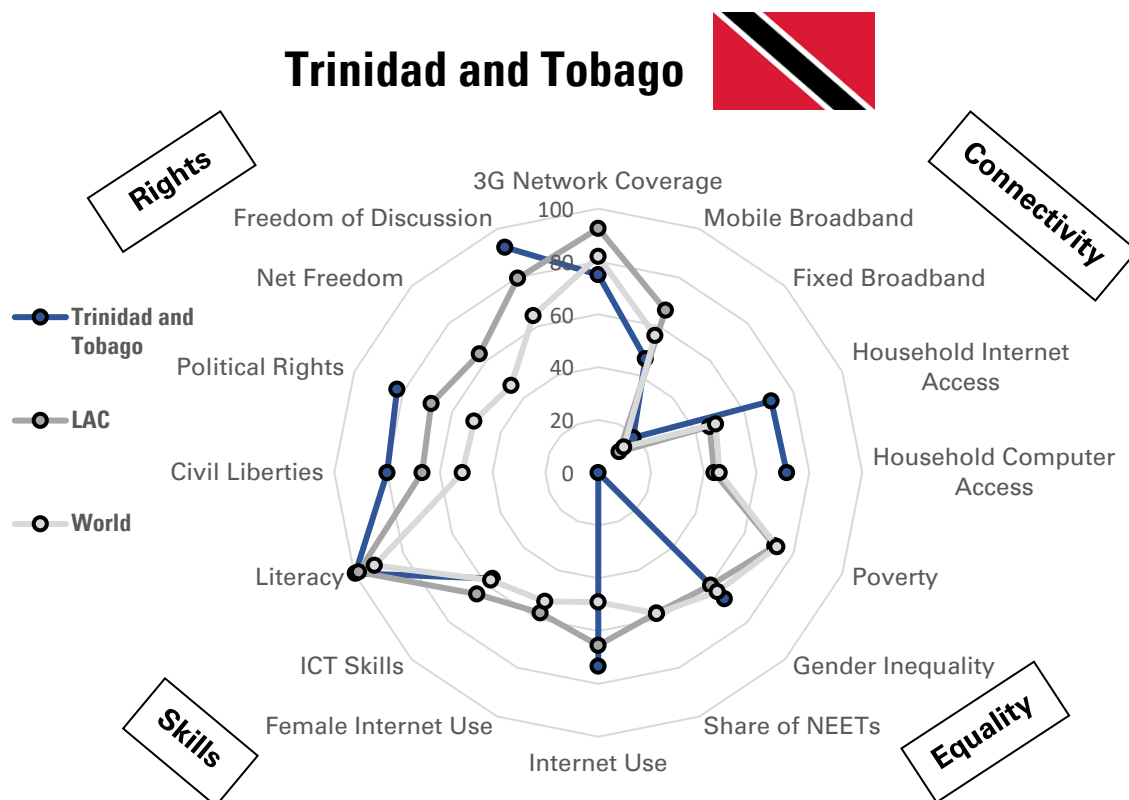
The Development and Access to Information report draws on a range of indicators highlighting where countries stand on four key pillars of access to information: connectivity, equality, skills and rights. For meaningful access to information to be a reality for all, performance needs to be strong across all of these categories.

Trinidad and Tobago has a mixed set of results on **connectivity**, with lower 3G network coverage and mobile broadband subscriptions than both the global and regional (Latin America and Caribbean) averages. However, household internet and household computer access as well as fixed broadband subscriptions are considerably higher, with internet use as a whole nearing 75%. This does raise the question of whether more can be done to enable people to use the internet on the move, when they are away from a fixed connection, for example by promoting public access WiFi points in libraries.

Concerning **equality**, Trinidad and Tobago does well on gender equality – above both regional and global averages, but over 50% of young adults are not in employment, education or training. This is a major concern, given that the first years of a young person’s career can be formative, and experience of exclusion from the labour market can have scarring effects. Libraries may be able to provide a route into learning, or for finding work or entrepreneurship opportunities.

On **skills**, Trinidad and Tobago scores well on literacy, but comes in below the regional average on the skills pillar of the ICT development index (which is strongly based on secondary school completion). The country does do well on the **rights** pillar of the development and access to information framework.

On the basis of the data, it appears that key challenges for Trinidad and Tobago are to address unemployment among young people. Providing more opportunities to get online – both to find education and work, or to develop skills – could prove helpful.



How to read the graph: this graph displays a range of indicators used within the DA2I framework, adjusted to fit on a scale of 0-100, where 100 is the most positive outcome in terms of access to information.

TABLE OF DATA

See below for explanations. * = or latest available year. Regional averages are based on available data.

PILLAR	INDICATOR	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	Year	LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	Year	WORLD	Year
CONNECTIVITY	3G Network Coverage	75.00%	2016	92.52%	2016	81.92%	2016
	Mobile Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People)	46.73	2016	66.64	2016	56.22	2016
	Fixed Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People)	18.72	2016	11.21	2016	13.71	2016
	Household Internet Access	70.94%	2016	45.67%	2016	48.16%	2016
	Household Computer Access	71.42%	2016	43.88%	2016	45.88%	2016
EQUALITY	Poverty (Share of pop'n below national poverty line)			27.58%	2015*	26.69%	2015*
	Gender Inequality (0 = More equal, 1 = Less equal)	0.32	2015	0.40	2015	0.36*	2015*
	Share of NEETs	52.52%	2013	21.23%	2015*	21.12%	2015*
	Internet Use	73.30%	2016	65.40%	2016*	49%	2016*
	Female Internet Use			57.48%	2016*	52.79%	2016*
SKILLS	ICT Skills	5.67	2016	6.50	2017	5.76	2017
	Literacy	99.61%	2015	98.28%	2015	91.75	2015
RIGHTS	Civil Liberties (0 = least free, 60 = most free)	48.00	2018	40.04	2018	30.9	2018
	Political Rights (0 = least free, 40 = most free)	33.00	2018	27.38	2018	20.37	2018
	Net Freedom (0 = most free, 100 = least free)			36.36	2016	53.29	2016
	Freedom of Discussion	0.92	2016	0.80	2016	0.64	2016

EXPLANATION OF INDICATORS

3G Network Coverage: this provides a measure of whether one part of the basic infrastructure for connectivity exists, although in itself is not enough to guarantee access (users need a device and a relevant subscription to be able to get online). Source: ITU

Mobile Broadband (Mobile Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people): this provides an idea of how many people can use mobile internet, opening up many – if not all – of the possibilities that internet access brings. One person may have more than one subscription. Source: ITU

Fixed Broadband (Fixed Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people): this provides an idea of how widespread home or business internet access is. Fixed access is often associated with the possibility to connect computers to make more advanced uses of the internet. Source: ITU

Household Internet Access (Share of Households with Internet Access): access to the internet at home allows for access to information at any time without having to go outside, but may be controlled by some members of the family. Source: ITU

Household Computer Access (Share of Households with a Computer): this focuses on access to computers. This is crucial for people to be able to carry out more advanced activities on the internet that might be impossible on a phone, such as writing resumes or analysing data. Source: ITU

Poverty: this indicator measures the number of people living below the national poverty line, which varies from country to country. It is a measure of economic inequality in a country. The indicator is inversed in the chart (i.e. the share of people not under the poverty line). Source: World Bank

Gender Inequality: this is calculated using the Gender Inequality Index. This index uses a basket of indicators in different areas of social development including: reproductive health, proportion of women in parliament, relative shares of men and women with at least some secondary education, and labour market participation in order to provide a broad idea of the extent of gender inequality in a country. The indicator runs from 0 (most equal) to 1 (least equal) and is inversed and adapted in the chart above. Source: UNDP

Share of NEETS (People aged 15-24 Not in Education, Employment or Training): this measures the share of young people cut off from education or the job market. Being 'NEET' can bring long-term scarring effects, and so reducing numbers is a key priority. The indicator is inversed and adapted in the chart (i.e. the share of young people who are not NEET). Source: ILO.

Internet Use (Share of People Using the Internet): looking beyond household access data (which will be affected by the structure of households in general), this gives a figure for the number of people using the internet. Source: ITU

Female Internet Use: this measure, in conjunction with the share of the overall population using the internet, allows us to understand to what extent there is a gender digital divide. Source: ITU

ICT Skills: there are relatively few global metrics of ICT skills, with those that exist only focusing on certain regions. The Skills Sub-Index of the ICT Development Index created by the ITU aims to work in this direction using levels of secondary and tertiary education enrolment, plus mean years of schooling, as proxies. Source: ITU

Literacy: this measures literacy among 15-24 year olds – i.e. people who have finished formal education. While there are online resources available for people with low literacy, being able to read, type, and understand information remains a fundamental skill. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Civil Liberties: this provides an indication of the degree to which citizens of a country enjoy fundamental civic rights, including freedom of expression and association, as well as the strength of the rule of law, based on expert judgements. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 60 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Political Rights: this provides a measure of the rights people have to participate in the political process, including fair and free elections, political pluralism, and the functioning of government in general. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 40 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Net Freedom: this metric assesses the level of restrictions on rights online by both public and private actors. It draws on assessments of obstacles to access (legal, economic and practical), limits on content, and violations of rights. Scores run from 100 (least free) to 0 (most free) and so are inverted in the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Freedom of Discussion: this indicator looks at whether people are able to hold private discussions without fear of repercussions either from the authorities or society in general due to cultural restrictions or norms. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 1 (most free), and so are adapted to fit into the graphic above. Source: V-Dem dataset codebook.