



# OUR CIRCLE EQUALITY FELLOWSHIP

**August 2022 - January 2023**

## **Curriculum**

Strengthening the governance participation of young and emerging  
Human Rights advocates through a continuing learning program

## **Description of the Project**

There is increasing and persistent misinformation about and continuous decline of the valuation of human rights in Belize. With this national context and the limited successes in having responsive policies and legislation, there is a need to expand and sustain the advocacy community both at the local and the national levels of governance.

This project aims to address these concerns by developing and empowering a larger pool of advocates from young and emerging leaders. Many young leaders develop their activism and advocacy skills while they are in university and while they belong to student organizations, some of which have received mentorship and support from Our Circle and its partners. However, the disruption of the physical learning modalities made it harder for student leaders to organize. Additionally, as we learned from the participants of the [Strengthening Human Rights Defender in Belize Project](#) many of them lose their platform in advocacy when they leave their universities or one off projects end. There are very limited opportunities for them to take part in the movement, without affiliation with a more established organization. On the other hand, many of these older organizations are not able to tap new advocates who will sustain their work in the movement.

The fellowship aims to not only build the capacity of young and emerging Human Rights advocates, but also contribute to the sustainability of these organizations which are instrumental to the active participation of more diverse voices in leadership and good governance.

## **Training Design**

Under the program, the fellows will undergo eight Discourse & Discussion (D&D) sessions, four Hangout sessions, five Field Visits, focus group discussions (FGD), implementation of their batch project, and virtual graduation.

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Our Circle is a national organization that works to advance legal and lived equality for LGBTQ families, and for those who wish to form them, through building community, changing hearts and minds, and driving policy change.

Contact us at [ourcirclebze@gmail.com](mailto:ourcirclebze@gmail.com)

## **Discourse & Discussion Sessions**

Over a period of six months, eight sessions will be conducted on different topics pertinent to Human Rights advocacy. These sessions will be in a "Discourse and Discussion" (D&D) format. A pre-recorded lecture video on an advocacy discourse will be uploaded on a Monday which will be followed by an online forum with guide questions from the organizers. Then, at the end of the week, on a Saturday, a live synchronous interactive discussion session will be conducted with the resource person.

## **Hangouts**

Hangouts will be held where participants and mentors can talk about special topics in a more conversational format. Some participants will also be given the opportunity to lead peer mentoring sessions.

## **Field Visits**

The participants will virtually visit the offices of several Human Rights organizations working in advocacy. This will be their opportunity to be acquainted with the work that the organizations are doing. As such, we have chosen five organizations working on different areas to immerse the participants into the different facets of our advocacy and connect them with the larger LGBTQI network.

The organizations the participants will visit are:

1. Our Circle - Legal Protections
2. UN Headquarters - Understanding the role of the UN in Belize
3. Human Rights Commission of Belize - Community Organizing
4. National AIDS Commission - Policy and Legislative Advocacy
5. National Women's Commission - Lobbying

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## **Batch Project**

The participants will be grouped according to the industry they are currently working in. One group will be for the public sector and the other group will be for the private sector. The goal of these batch projects is for the participants to influence policy change/s in the sector they belong to. Throughout the implementation, students may seek consultation and mentoring from the organizers, training consultants, and resource speakers. After the implementation, the batch will conduct an assessment of the project.

## **Virtual Graduation**

A one-day online graduation and culmination activity will be held to recognize the hard work and passion of the participants throughout their Equality Fellowship journey. This will also serve as their celebration for finishing the whole curriculum and for implementing inclusive and progressive policies in the sector they belong to. All the resource persons will be invited to impart final mentoring on the advocacy work.

## **Graduation Requirements**

Please note that fellows need to attend at least:

- 6 out of 8 D&D sessions
- 2 out of 4 Hangouts
- 3 out of 5 Field Visits

Additionally, batch projects will only be considered accomplished once the implementing fellows receive a signed Certificate of Completion endorsed by the Project Officer and approved by the Our Circle's Managing Director.

To be eligible for graduation, fellows need to attend the minimum number of required sessions and acquire the signed batch project Certificate of Completion.

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