

Youth Voices Take Centre Stage as ACS Essay Competition Concludes



Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago - August 2026 — The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is pleased to announce Saffira Samaroo as the winner of the ACS Youth Voices Essay Competition, an initiative created to bring young people closer to the work of the Association and encourage them to reflect on the challenges, opportunities and shared identity of the Greater Caribbean.

For Saffira, one idea stands at the heart of her winning essay: unity.

"I mostly want young people to take away the message of unity, because in a world where people are feeling more and more alone, I hope they remember the power of connection, and the collective effect we, as people, can enact."

That message of connection lies at the heart of the ACS itself: bringing together the countries, territories and peoples of the Greater Caribbean around what they share, while celebrating the diversity that makes the region unique.

The competition invited Form Five and Form Six students from government-recognised secondary schools across Trinidad and Tobago to examine the theme "A Sunshine of Cultures", exploring how the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the ACS membership can contribute to economic and technological development, regional cooperation and responses to inequality.

Saffira's winning essay highlights how the Greater Caribbean's diversity and shared heritage can strengthen cooperation and collective action.

[Read Saffira Samaroo's winning essay](#)

The ACS Youth Voices Essay Competition was designed as a platform for young people to engage with regional issues, strengthen their awareness of the Greater Caribbean and reflect on their own role in shaping its future. Essays were evaluated by a panel of experts from the School of Education of The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.

As part of the competition's recognition programme, the top three participants will have the opportunity to undertake a six-week hybrid internship at the ACS Secretariat, subject to parental

consent.

[Read the ACS interview with Saffira Samaroo](#)

The future of regional cooperation also depends on new generations seeing themselves as active participants in the Greater Caribbean. By connecting classroom learning with regional issues, the ACS Youth Voices Essay Competition encourages young people to move from studying the Caribbean to considering how they can contribute to it.

Through initiatives such as Youth Voices, the ACS continues to create opportunities for young people to contribute ideas and perspectives toward a more connected, sustainable and inclusive Greater Caribbean.