

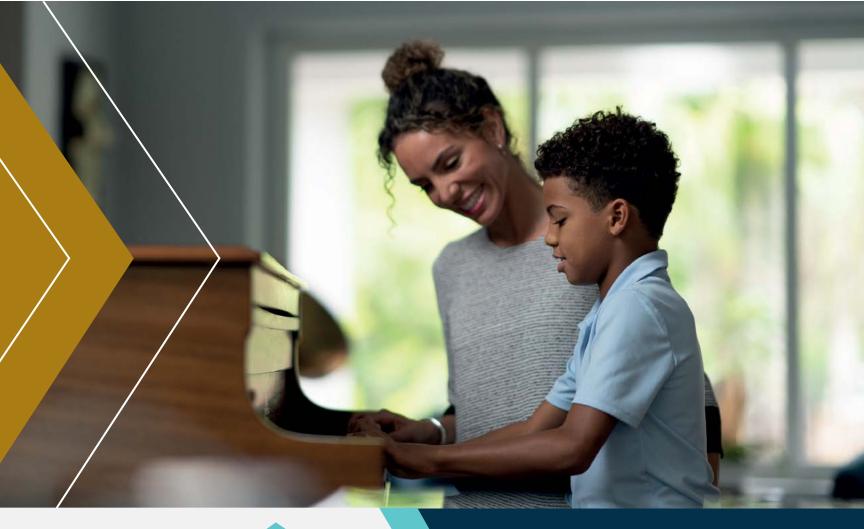
LINKAGE

ISSUE 1/2023 magazine



Women's Leadership: Embrace Equity

CEO's Perspective - Anita Gajadhar, Proman Financing the ESG Strategy for T&T - Indu Sharma Taking Responsibility For Our Success - Sharon Christopher Building Self-Worth - Dr Elaine Monica Davis





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The opinions expressed in the editorial contributions in Linkage may not necessarily be those of AMCHAM T&T. We welcome any comments you might have! Simply email a "Letter to the Editor" to the AMCHAM T&T Secretariat to kennedymaraj@amchamtt.com

AMCHAM T&T'S VISION

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AMCHAM T&T'S MISSION

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- **Enhancement of Competitiveness**
- Generation of New Business and Market Access for Services/Goods
- Influence on Policies and Legislation
- Transfer of Knowledge
- Contribution to Sustainable Development

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Members of the Secretariat can be reached at their respective mobile numbers and email addresses.

You can also reach us via 1-868-295-4869 or 1-868-705-0579





#62 Maraval Road Newtown Port Of Spain Sanaa #6 Scott Street St. Clair





Embracing Equity

hen I became President of this esteemed chamber two years ago, I became the third woman to hold this position. That's why I find it most fitting that my final LINKAGE message as President of AMCHAM T&T will be on a topic that I am very passionate

about—the opportunities to continue advancing gender equality in every aspect of our society.

EMBRACE EQUITY

This year the global call-to-action for International Women's Day has asked leaders and everyday citizens to "Embrace Equity" within their respective spheres of influence to help us reach equality quicker.

This is important for many reasons. In the workplace, embracing equity is about developing a culture of fairness. It's one of the reasons why most diversity and inclusion plans fail. When we ignore taking the steps to ensure that all persons, regardless of their ethnic background, country of origin, age, physical ability/ disability, gender, or sexual orientation, have a level playing field, we unintentionally create a culture where discrimination is allowed to exist and thrive.

It's no secret that every employee wants to be seen and heard to feel respected and treated fairly. However, when representation doesn't exist at the leadership level or at the decision-making table, many employees expressed feelings of alienation and powerlessness when confronted with challenges. That's why we must provide support and resources based on every individual's needs, so they have equal access to all opportunities.

Embracing equity will send a clear message that says we appreciate the unique differences of our employees and recognise that they experience different barriers to accessing the opportunities that equality provides. We are also letting them know that we are committed to taking steps to eliminate barriers against equity to reach an equal outcome.

SO, WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

We need to look at our recruitment and hiring processes and ask ourselves whether we are hiring people based on their skills or how much they look like us. If the latter is the priority, female candidates seeking employment in traditionally male industries will be sadly overlooked and ignored. But there are solutions that can increase the number of women and other minorities in the workplace. A starting point would be to remove gendercoded language from job descriptions and embrace blind hiring. We should also focus more on a candidate's real skills and experience. Of course, none of this will result in success if we aren't diversifying the hiring team to increase representation and allow for better-informed hiring decisions.

Embracing equity will also require organisations to offer the benefits employees actually want as opposed to what the organisation thinks is best for them. Hybrid work options, parental leave or childcare benefits might be seen as highly favourable

I am most grateful for the support received, the lessons learned, and most importantly, the unique connections forged with our members.

for female employees. However, none of this will matter if we don't ensure pay equity as a basic requirement. Therefore, we must overcome the gender pay gap by embracing pay transparency, encouraging negotiation, and conducting regular pay equity audits to identify gender pay discrepancies and improve retention rates among women.

Finally, organisations must commit to upskilling women into leadership roles. Programmes that are centred on learning, mentoring and coaching can create a clear path for entry-level employees to progress into management and leadership roles and provide fair promotion opportunities. There is also the potential to break the glass ceiling when more women have gained access to higher-paying leadership positions, which will undoubtedly positively impact the business and all female employees in the organisation.

Remember, with equity as a target, we are better able to increase innovation, enhance employee engagement and productivity, improve hiring and retention, and create better customer loyalty and brand reputation. So, let's continue to embrace equity as we build a fairer and more equal world for all.

I hope you enjoy the articles in this issue of LINKAGE, which offer insightful advice and perspectives to help you embrace equity in all aspects of our society. As I end my second term, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for allowing me the opportunity to serve you over the past two years and for the work we did together around enhancing business through promoting tech, incentivising trade opportunities, investing in ESG, forging productive collaborations with other local business chambers and of course in strengthening our long-standing relationship with the US Embassy. This journey has been fulfilling and I am most grateful for the support received, the lessons learned, and most importantly, the unique connections forged with our members. I wish you continued success in all I know you will do for your people and our country.

Embracing Equity

WELCOME

A

dvancing opportunities for women to lead and succeed in every aspect of society is a responsibility we must all share.

This requires us to become better partners and allies to create a more equitable world for every citizen. That's why this year's IWD theme "Embrace Equity" is very timely and relevant—it requires tapping into our own sphere of influence and enacting the changes needed to achieve equity and equality.

EMBRACING EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE

In the workplace, embracing equity translates to how we treat and deal with issues of harassment and discrimination. Creating a safe, empowering and inclusive work environment requires clear and established antiharassment and anti-discrimination policies that set appropriate standards and expectations for behaviour. Therefore, every organisation must have a clear statement that shows its commitment to enacting policies that maintain respect for human rights while fostering equality and inclusion.

Today, a lot more is expected of leaders who have a collective responsibility to create the cultural shift needed to ensure women and girls feel safe, seen, heard, and respected to advance equality.

EMBRACING EQUITY OUTSIDE OF THE WORKPLACE

A lot of this transcends beyond the boundaries of the workplace and into our homes, schools and communities, where men play an important role. Men must realise that we have the power—indeed the responsibility—to transform how society views and treats the opposite sex. Therefore, let's start by redefining our own definitions of masculinity, leading more with emotional intelligence when dealing with conflicts, and challenging gender bias, discrimination and stereotypes wherever we see them manifest. This could include encouraging men to show healthy emotions and seek support for past traumas.

Let's start by redefining our own definitions of masculinity, leading more with emotional intelligence when dealing with conflicts, and challenging gender bias, discrimination and stereotypes wherever we see them manifest.

What I have found useful to build this change comes from using the word "REMEMBERS" as an acronym. I'll use this to share some of my specific thoughts on the subject with you.

R.E.M.E.M.B.E.R.S.

Respect Everyone's Differences: This includes women, men and non-binary persons.

Ensure Equality: If I can't do it for one person because of gender, I do it for none.

(be) **Mindful of Individual Circumstances:** I try my best to make people comfortable to share so I can take individual circumstances into account.

Encourage Participation: If I see a woman hanging back, I try to ask a question or do something to bring her into the conversation.

Mentor and Coach: Mentor and coach.

Back Your Team: Have your team's back, call out misogyny and sexism.

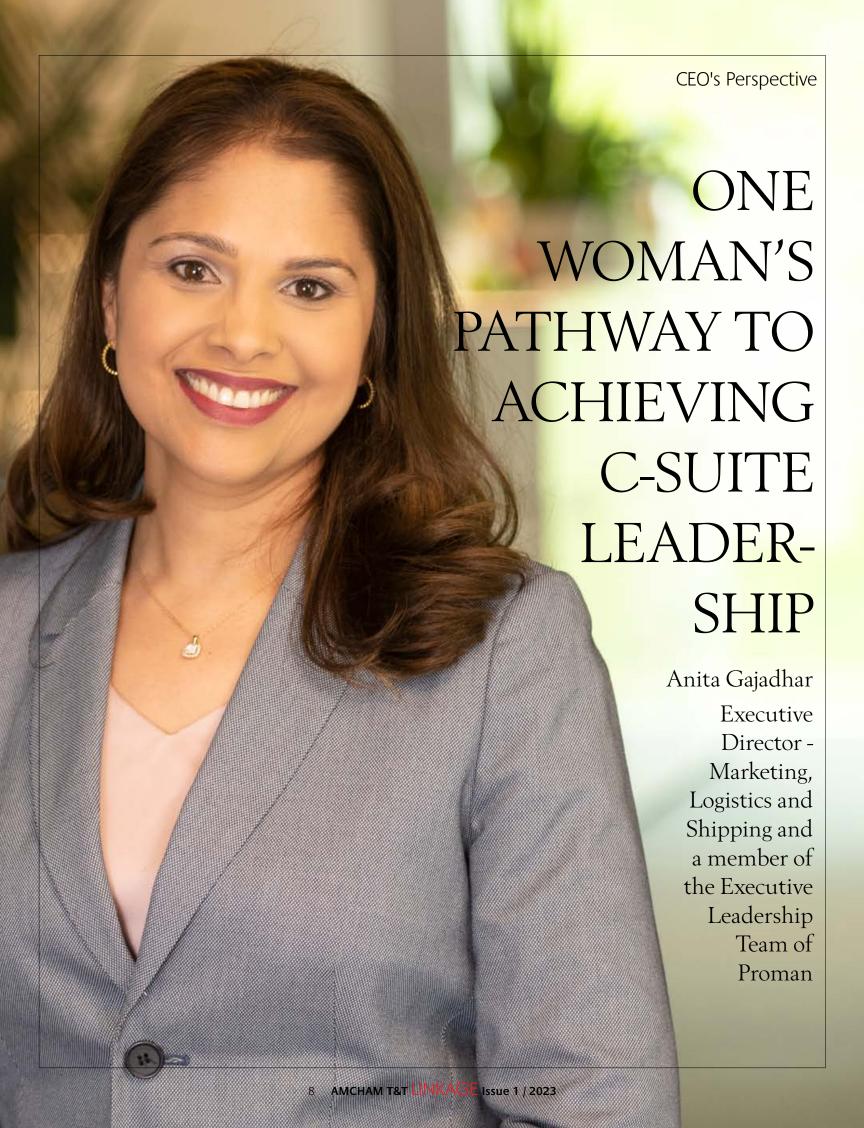
Engage Actively: Listen and be open to the fact that you may need to change your perspective.

Be Real: Don't be inauthentic or a predator.

Support in Groups, Meetings: Give credit and repeat comments, suggestions, and ideas from females. ■

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Nirad Tewarie CEO, AMCHAM T&T





oday's global business environment demands a consciousness of and consistent drive towards embracing equity within the workplace. Embracing equity requires a willingness to listen, learn and engage in creating a culture of learning, which leads to a progressive and more diverse workforce, where each employee is allocated the required resources and opportunities needed for an equal outcome.

Being part of the petrochemical and shipping industry since the early 2000s, I was usually the lone female or one of a very small group of females participating in company meetings and other industry engagements. I have since journeyed through the ranks of the organisation and now serve at the highest level on Proman's global executive management team. I take this opportunity to share how my progression into a c-suite leadership role in Proman has been due to an equitable and enabling work environment that identifies and rewards employees based on performance rather than the basis of gender.

My introduction to the world of work began as a Graduate Trainee at Petrotrin some twenty-one years ago. In 2005, I started at Methanol Holdings Trinidad Limited (MHTL)—a subsidiary of Proman Limited—as a Business Analyst. I remember clearly that the interview panel for that role comprised four men and no women. However, I would like to believe that my selection for the role meant that the company was already ahead of the curve and practicing equity, without perhaps even being purposefully aware of this.

Over the years, my career progressed within an industry that was largely male-centric and this sometimes created a certain degree of solitude, as I hardly encountered other females within the industry. Nevertheless, I quickly developed a resilient mindset and established clear professional as well as personal boundaries to always make the best and sometimes difficult decisions for the business.

While Trinidad and Tobago has always managed elements of the company's shipping business, in 2018 the decision was taken to establish a new shipping company, Proman Shipping, in Switzerland. Again, I benefitted from Proman's equitable system as our Chief Executive David Cassidy identified me as the most qualified person to start up and operate this new business.

Dare To Lead Panel at the AMCHAM T&T Women's Leadership Conference 2023

L-R: Angélique Parisot-Potter (Moderator & AMCHAM T&T Director); Vicki Assevero (International Lawyer, Social Entrepreneur & Founder/Executive Director - Green Market Santa Cruz); Anita Gajadhar (Executive Director Marketing Logistics & Shipping - Proman); Tracey Weekes (Manager - Financial and Strategic Investments - NGC); Sharon Christopher (Chief Executive Officer - Sharon Christopher and Associates); Nirad Tewarie (CEO - AMCHAM T&T)

I moved to Switzerland and almost immediately had to navigate many simultaneous business and personal challenges, navigating in a new country whose culture and language were a total mystery to me. In early 2020, I was given another promotion and asked to join the Executive Leadership team of the company, and within weeks of that offer, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. Here I was, without my husband, friends and family due to the closure of our borders, and I discovered that I was pregnant with my first child.



t that moment, Proman's Chief Executive again illustrated the organisation's strength of equity. Just as I started to doubt my capabilities, he steered me on a path of reassurance, providing the support required to help me adjust to both my new professional and personal life.

Today, I am Executive Director - Marketing, Logistics and Shipping and a member of

Proman's Executive Leadership Team. The latter role requires me to assist in steering the organisation's strategic direction, including being at the fore of the company's sustainability agenda to advance lower carbon and renewable methanol as a clean fuel source for the global shipping, transport and heavy industries.

Recently, Proman's joint venture partnership with Stena Bulk Limited achieved the first barge to ship bunkering at the Port of Houston, one of the United States' busiest ports. And, more recently, we launched Proman's first fully owned, methanol-powered vessel,

Stena Promise, at the Port of Rotterdam, which is the largest methanol hub in north-western Europe. I am therefore exceptionally proud of my role and that of my team in partnering with stakeholders to accelerate the shift to decarbonisation of the global maritime sector and in so doing, continue to illustrate the ease of methanol bunkering and the viability of the methanol sector.

I have grown my team from an office of one, just me in May 2018, to a group of highly skilled professionals. Today, I manage seventy persons from across 21 diverse nationalities and of this team, 60% are female. For over half of my team English is not their primary language. So, in my own way and unconsciously so, I have embraced equity from both a gender and a linguistic perspective.



enturing further within the industry, I am also the first female Chairperson of the Methanol Institute, the established trade association for the global methanol sector. I have received recognition as a subject matter expert and have been interviewed by the T&T and the international media, including the Wall Street Journal, on critical aspects of the methanol

business and the role of methanol as a pathway to decarbonisation. I also speak publicly on behalf of Proman at various industry-related conferences and of course, I was very honoured to do this at the 2023 Energy Conference of Trinidad and Tobago and the recently concluded AMCHAM Trinidad and Tobago Women In Leadership Conference.

When I look around today, the world of work has certainly changed from when I first joined the industry. The female proportion attaining tertiary level education is significantly higher than a decade ago, and greater numbers of women are seeking to enter the corporate world. At the Women in Leadership conference, I noted the large number of eager, young females who expressed aspirations of becoming c-suite leaders and who directly engaged with me to understand more about my journey.

I have never perceived my gender as a barrier to my success, but I also recognise that I gravitated towards and benefitted tremendously from vocal, competent women who mentored me (sometimes without them even being aware of such) throughout my life and played a tangible role in shaping the leader that I have become. One such female manager really shaped my ideation of who I should aspire to become. I greatly admired her professionalism, leadership attributes and her nononsense attitude. I know that I have patterned myself after her.

> I would therefore urge young females who aspire to become c-suite leaders to surround themselves with like-minded females. Young females should immerse themselves in also learning about other strong female leaders to understand the challenges these women faced and the tools that they used to help them navigate the corporate world, in which they were a minority. I was heavily inspired by Indra Nooyi's "My Life in Full", in which the author traced her humble origins and rise to success while also acknowledging the tremendous parental and spousal support she received, thus enabling her to

become a globally recognised corporate force. I highly recommend this story to any aspiring female leader.

I have never perceived my gender as a barrier to my success, but I also recognise that I gravitated towards and benefitted tremendously from vocal, competent women who mentored me (sometimes without them even being aware of such) throughout my life and played a tangible role in shaping the leader that I have become.

There are also many local and global organisations with well-developed female networks and mentorship programmes that provide much needed support. In Trinidad and Tobago, these include AMCHAM T&T and AFETT. Young females should seek to become active members of these groups and in so doing, directly learn from other females within the industry.

I encourage all young women to continue to strive for and build their expertise, be brave, believe in yourself and your skills. There will always be failure but as the author, Brené Brown wrote, "there is absolutely no innovation without failure."

In hindsight, I recognise that a lot of my drive to succeed comes from being educated at an all-girls' high school, within an environment in which we were taught to strive for excellence. Much credit must therefore be extended to my alma mater – St. Augustine Girls' Secondary School. The School's motto, "Per Ardua Astra," means "through adversity to the stars," and I realise that these words have shaped and influenced the way that I have always lived my life and have led me on the pathway to becoming a c-suite leader at Proman.



EMBRACING EQUITY

By Kennedy Everett Maraj, Communications and Events Officer, AMCHAM T&T



ender equality and equity are a major pillar of AMCHAM T&T's work. Having already secured gender parity on its board of directors since 2020, the organisation has a longstanding record of advocating for increased opportunities for women and girls throughout every aspect of society.

Through its flagship women's leadership conference, which is held annually in March in commemoration of International Women's Day, AMCHAM T&T celebrates the accomplishments of women in leadership roles while shining a spotlight on some of the issues that hinder their equal and full participation in the workplace and wider society.

The backdrop of this year's 9th Women's Leadership Conference held on March 10th was IWD's theme "Embrace Equity", which calls on every individual to actively support and embrace equity within their own sphere of influence. AMCHAM T&T President Toni Sirju-Ramnarine gave the welcoming remarks at the opening ceremony of the conference and said that tackling gender equity was now the business of everyone to help create a fair and equal world.

"If we are going to provide opportunities for all of our daughters to reach their fullest potential and ensure that they are safe and respected wherever they go, then we must accept that we each have a part to play to challenge gender stereotypes, call out discrimination, draw attention to bias, and seek out justice and inclusion in all spaces," Sirju-Ramnarine said.

She also reminded the largely female audience to also take the time to identify, highlight and celebrate their progress and achievements to inspire the next generation of young girls. "For a young nation, it's a testament to our progress and growth that we have already seen women ascend to the highest offices and positions in our country: Prime Minister, President, and the most recent examples - our first female Police Commissioner, and second President - show how far women have come and how much they have achieved."

Sirju-Ramnarine also called on the audience to not ignore the realities that women face even as they celebrate their progress. "We read headlines about 'Period Poverty' existing in Trinidad and Tobago according to a recent study that said that women are unable to access basic and essential items such as menstrual products."

Indeed, there are many issues facing women that are not spoken about because they are still viewed as taboo. "Where is the research into the physical and mental effects of perimenopause and menopause on women in the workplace?" Sirju-Ramnarine asked. "It is so not spoken about that I'm not even sure women understand them, far less men! We need to change this."

She also cited the violence perpetrated against girls and women as a major issue that needs to be addressed immediately. "307 women were killed in the past six years from violent confrontations attributed to domestic violence and gang-related activities. These are the cases that sadly ended in murder, it is not counting the number of violent acts committed against women and girls that are both reported and not reported."

Sirju-Ramnarine said what we needed now is more leaders stepping up to create opportunities for women to maintain their worth and live within the freedom of their own rights to make their own decisions. "The issues we address today will require the full commitment and participation of everyone showing up to address discrimination, combat stereotypes, and promote peace and equality. Therefore, we need more men who are wise enough to listen, strong enough to stand with us, and brave enough to champion change and progress."

This point was also made by U.S. Ambassador Her Excellency Candace A. Bond, who delivered the keynote address at the opening ceremony. "For the inclusion of women, men must be allies. And ultimately, integrating marginalised or excluded voices is not about restricting access. Including women is not at the expense of men," Bond said. "Rather, the goal of inclusion is ensuring balanced opportunity and access."

Bond says it is a proven fact that equity and inclusion are economic issues. "Societies that exclude entire demographics, restrict access to

opportunity and stifle inclusion pay an economic cost. For example, it is estimated that closing gender gaps in the workforce around the world would add between \$12 and \$28 trillion in global GDP."

That's why Bond says the economic security of women and girls in all of their diversity is essential to the realisation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms and strengthening communities, promoting peace and security, and building resilient, growing economies both for the United States and our allies and partners.

"Gender equity and equality are not only a matter of human rights and fairness, but when present together they promote inclusive economic growth; advance peace, security, and the prevention and resolution of conflicts; and protect against gender-based violence," Bond said.

Bond also said securing gender equity and equality would help address global challenges more effectively, such as the climate crisis, forced displacement, the COVID-19 pandemic, and resulting economic and social disruptions.

For these reasons, Bond said ensuring that all people, regardless of their gender identity, could achieve their full potential, was both a moral and a strategic imperative. "Gender equity and equality are at the very heart of human rights; therefore, it is paramount that we continue to forge ahead to find solutions and create opportunities for all affected."

This year's Women's Leadership Conference broke an attendance record with over 400 persons registered for the event. Participants were treated to four insightful and impactful panel discussions that explored topics on "Embracing the 'E' in DEI" [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion], "Financial Wellbeing", "Building Self-Worth" and lessons from pioneering female leaders who offered important advice to help women "Dare To Lead".



Embracing Equity

AMCHAM T&T's 9th WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Where T&T Women Leaders Come Together

Thank you to all our members, stakeholders, allies, supporters, and sponsors for the overwhelmingly high turnout and the tremendous support we received at our 9th Women's Leadership Conference. This event was filled with impactful conversations, keen insights, and excellent networking opportunities among colleagues, friends, and supporters who share a strong commitment to advancing gender equality in society.

Let's continue to #EmbraceEquity to create a fair and equal world. Remember, equality is the goal, and equity is the means to get there but only through equity, we can reach equality!

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WELCOMING REMARKS



Feature address by Her Excellency Ms. Candace Bond - U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.



Welcome speech: **AMCHAM T&T** President Toni Sirju-Ramnarine.

Read the full speeches by Toni Sirju-Ramnarine and Ambassador Bond:

https://www.amchamtt.com/blog/amchamt-t-news-1/wlc-2023-keynote-address-by-us-ambassador-candace-a-bond-103?anim



Sponsor's remarks: Gayle Pazos - Senior Vice President and Head, Caribbean South & East and Managing Director, Trinidad & Tobago, Scotiabank



Sponsor's remarks: Frances Bain-Cumberbatch - Chief Legal and External Affairs Officer, ANSA McAl.



Sponsor's remarks: Aleeya Ali - Managing **Director Proman** Operations, Proman.

CLICK HERE FOR MORE EVENT PICTURES ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE





Financial Wellbeing Panel: Andrea Davis (Moderator & AMCHAM T&T Director); Tricia De La Rosa (VP, AML/ATF & Compliance – Scotiabank); Eva Mitchell (CEO – The Trinidad and Tobago Stock Exchange); Aliyah Hamel-Smith (Managing Director – ExeQtrust); Paul Pantin (Director – E Couriers Limited/E Zone)



Embrace Equity Panel: Giselle Thompson (Moderator & AMCHAM T&T Director), Aché Abrahams (Miss World TT 2023), Carina Cockburn (Country Representative – IDB), Richard Westell (General Manager – Hyatt Regency Trinidad), Amy Lazzari (Chief Human Resource Officer – Ansa McAl), Olivia Constantine (HR Director – UNICOMER (Trinidad) Limited)



Building Self-Worth Panel: Anna Henderson (Moderator & AMCHAM T&T Director); Greer Quan (CEO – PALIG); Dr Elaine Monica Davis (Physician, Founder/CEO – Wisdom For Wellness); Melissa Pierre (Senior Trade and Policy Specialist – AMCHAM T&T); Stéphane Picarle (General Manager, Commercial – Shell)





























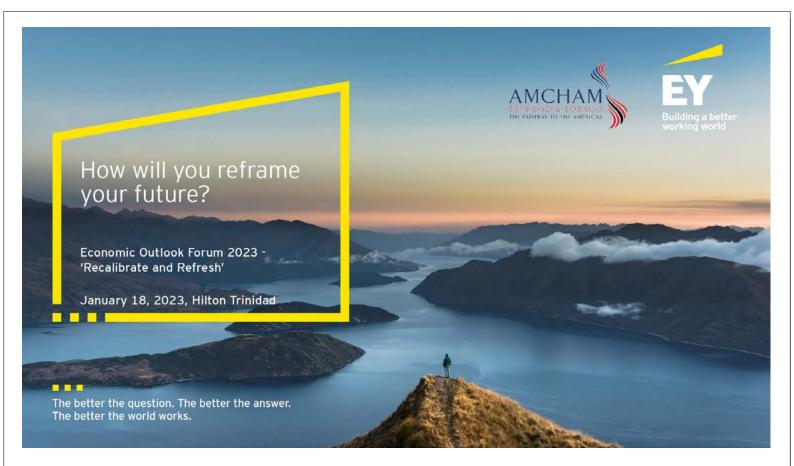












HOW WILL YOU REFRAME YOUR FUTURE?

Results of the AMCHAM T&T / EY Private Sector Economic Outlook Survey 2023

s we transition out of the pandemic, we are witnessing a period of great change and opportunity. Now is the time for organisations to recalibrate and refresh their strategies to ensure longterm success. In other words, how will you reframe your future?

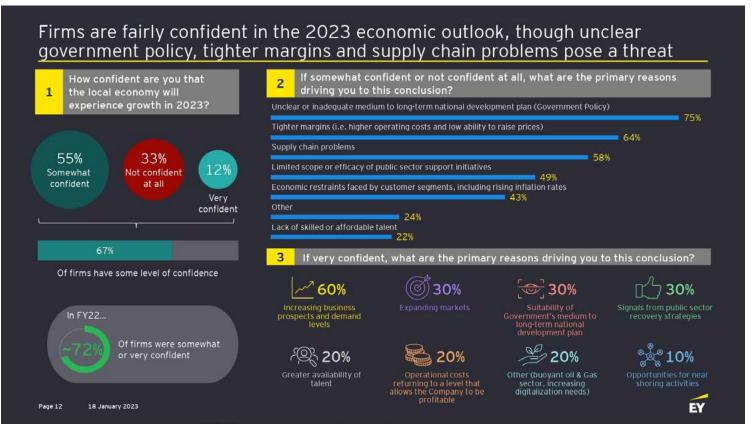
A pulse survey conducted by AMCHAM T&T and EY in November 2022 with c-suite and executive directors/management across eleven industries sought to gain insights into companies' sentiments regarding their:

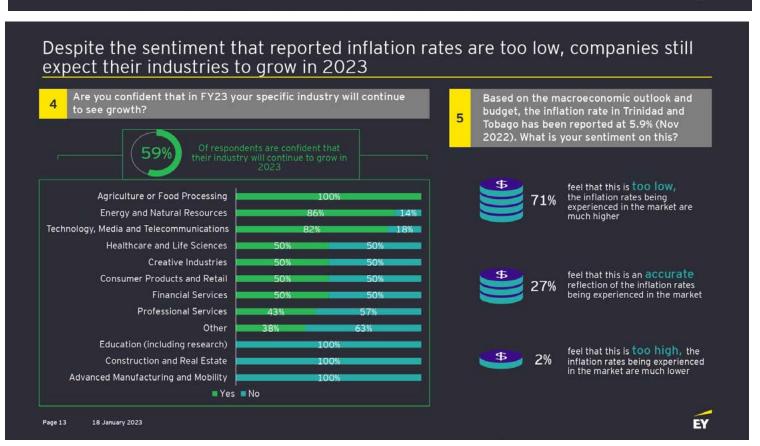
- 1) confidence in the economy to grow,
- 2) corporate strategy as companies focus on growth and transformation;
- 3) talent strategy as the risk of migration resurfaces as well as the need for new skills to adapt; and
- 4) how digitalisation is driving efficiencies and competitive advantage, and other pertinent considerations that continue to impact our local businesses' operations.

THEME 1 – CREATING CONFIDENCE, GENERATING GROWTH

How are organisations leveraging new opportunities and pivoting to drive confidence and generate growth in 2023?

According to the survey, 67% of survey participants expressed confidence in the economy's growth potential in 2023, which is a 5% drop in confidence compared to the previous year.





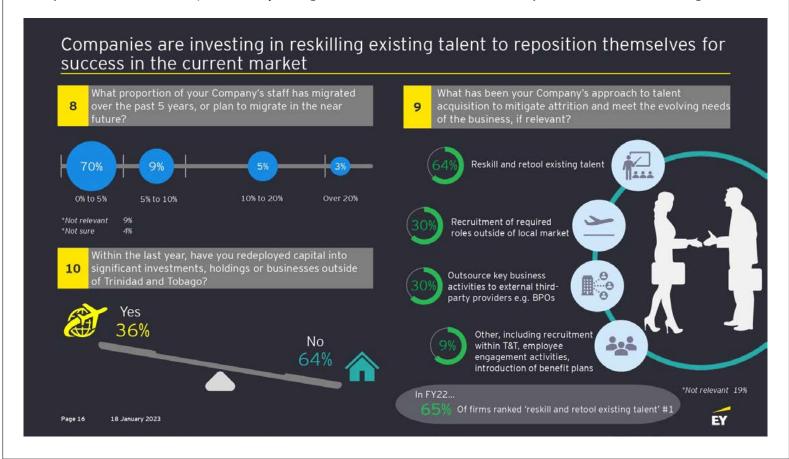
Respondents cited improving business opportunities (60%), expanding markets (30%), the effectiveness of the government's long-term development plan and signals from public sector recovery strategies as reasons for their positive outlook. Meanwhile, an unclear or insufficient long-term national development plan (75%), tighter profit margins (64%) and supply chain disruptions (58%) were some of the major reasons recognised by respondents for their lack of confidence in the economy's growth potential.

Confidence in the growth potential of the Agriculture and Food Processing industry (100%), Energy and Natural Resources (86%) and Technology, Media and Telecommunications (82%) provided high optimism by business leaders, while the growth prospects of the Education, Construction and Real Estate, and Advanced Manufacturing and Mobility industries showed pessimism.

The top three areas identified by survey participants for government to prioritise in driving economic growth were digital transformation, increasing manufacturing and export potential, and investing in private sector projects with job creation potential. However, when it comes to the private sector's role in driving economic growth, survey participants identified private equity or angel investing, participating in public-private partnerships, and investing in talent development for the future of work as the top contributors.

THEME 2 – TALENT STRATEGY

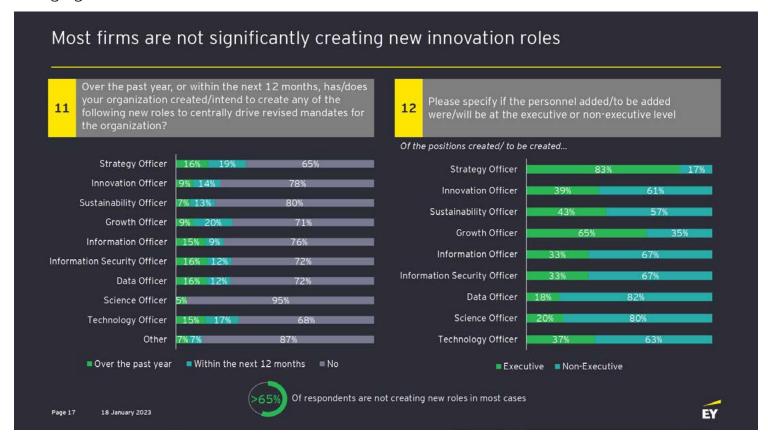
Over the past three years, the challenges of the evolving business environment have resulted in companies losing skilled employees and having to recruit at high costs and with reduced productivity. So, how are companies adjusting their workforce to effectively tackle these challenges?



The survey showed that the majority or 70% of companies experienced between 0% to 5% attrition through migration while 3% of survey participants reported over 20% migration.

The survey showed that the majority or 70% of companies experienced between up to 5% attrition through migration, while 3% of survey participants reported over 20% migration.

Companies that are not looking to increase their headcount said they have begun shifting from hiring new talent to upskilling their current workforce. 64% of survey respondents reported that their organisations are investing in retraining and upskilling their existing workforce to adapt to changing needs.



Also, companies have expressed slightly more willingness around creating roles to drive innovation and strategy in 2023 with the creation of a Strategy Officer, Technology Officer, and Sustainability Officer among the top 3 roles created.

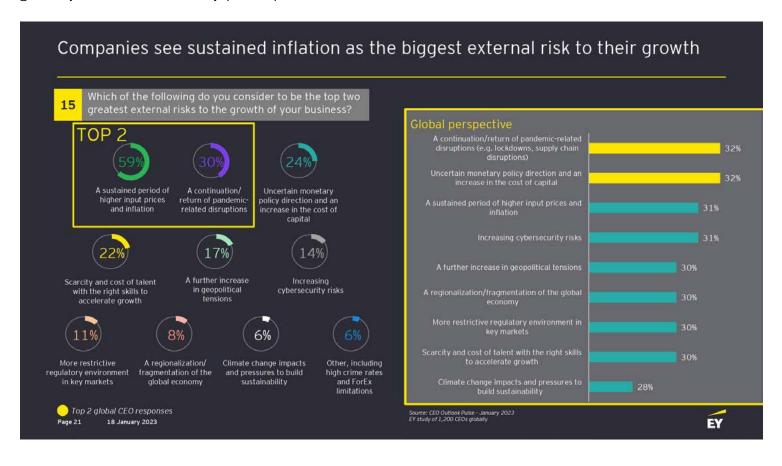
THEME 3 – CORPORATE STRATEGY

While investing in accelerating the digitalisation of customer journeys and business processes was the top strategic priority for companies in 2022, the focus in 2023 was shifting in favour of the following:

- 1. Boosting customer loyalty using technology to optimise product suite.
- 2. Maintaining/improving performance and margins in an economic downturn.
- 3. Adopting new pricing constructs or innovating pricing models to improve profitability.



Globally, boosting customer loyalty was the #3 priority, while the top focus was on building sustainability and ESG, which ranked #5 in T&T. Innovation through Investing in early-stage businesses to enhance existing portfolios, access new talent, or create new business platforms ranked #2 globally, which local survey participants ranked at #6.

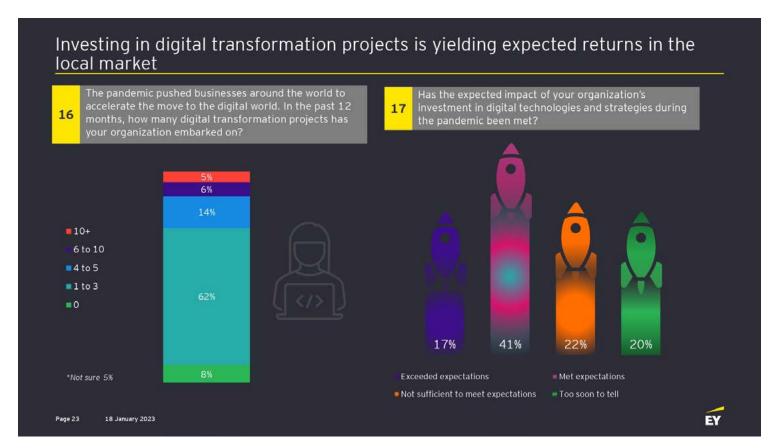


It came as no surprise that 59% of survey respondents ranked sustained periods of higher input prices or inflation as the greatest external risk to growth, given the rising inflation rates. Globally, this issue is also ranked as one of the top external risks, with companies seeing major or extreme input price increases across all measures, from labour to raw materials.

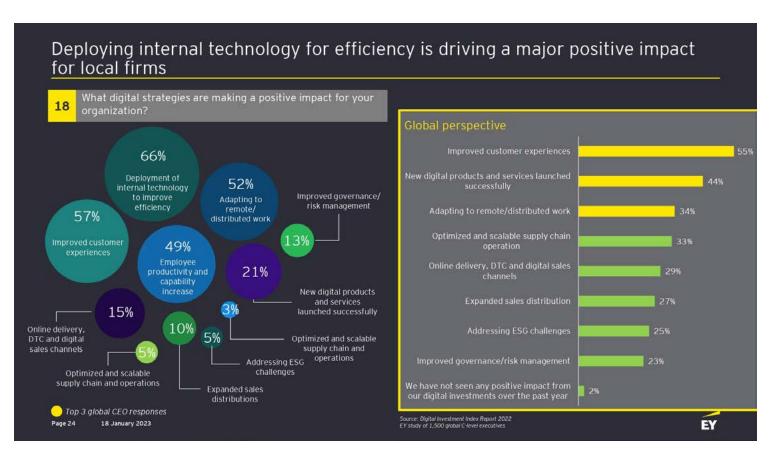
A continuation or return of pandemic-related disruptions was ranked second on the list of challenges (30%), which is consistent with global results, indicating that these vulnerabilities are not isolated to the local market.

THEME 4 – DIGITALISATION

The survey found that both global and local companies are making record-breaking investments in digital transformation, with 87% of survey respondents indicating that they embarked on digital transformation projects over the last year. The results also showed that most companies embarked on 1 to 3 projects, while 14% undertook 4 to 5 projects, and 5% of respondents undertook major transformation, with over 10 projects started in the last year.

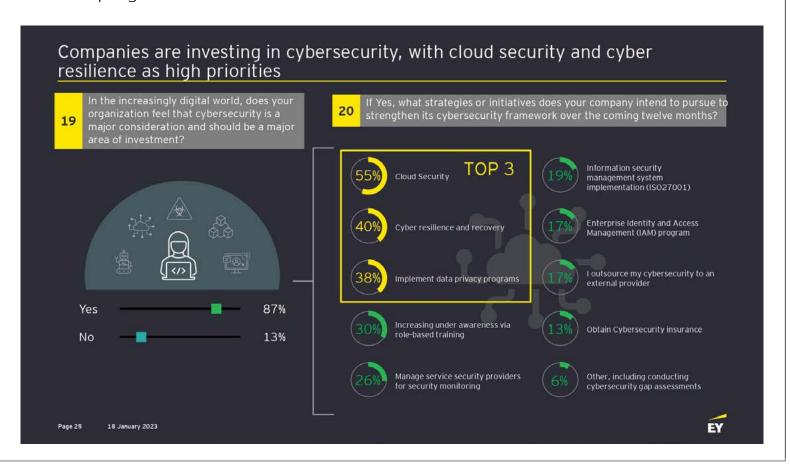


Of those who invested in digital transformation, 41% found that their returns met expectations and 17% found they exceeded them. This is in line with global results, as 41% of global companies measured positive returns on their digital investments.



The top 3 digital strategies making a positive impact locally were:

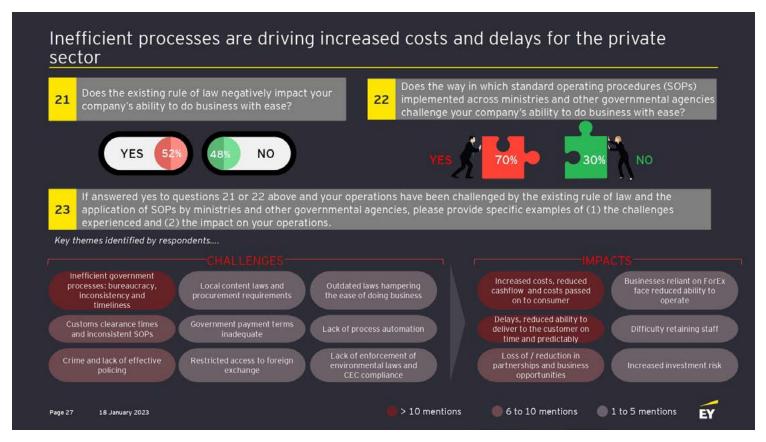
- 1. Deployment of internal technology to improve efficiency;
- 2. Improved customer experiences; and
- 3. Adapting to remote work.



Cybersecurity has emerged as an important part of doing business, since companies are relying more heavily on digital technologies to operate and connect with customers. The survey found that 87% of participants feel that cybersecurity is a major consideration and should be a major area of investment.

This has been brought on by the shift to remote work, increased use of digital platforms, and the sharing and storing of more data and sensitive information which have created new vulnerabilities for cyber-attacks and data breaches.

THEME 5 – OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, INCLUDING ESG. FOREIGN **EXCHANGE, AND SUPPLY CHAIN CONSIDERATIONS**



The biggest challenges affecting companies' ability to reframe their strategy was inefficient government processes, in particular a difficult and tedious bureaucracy, inconsistent application of SoPs, and lengthy wait times. Respondents also identified challenges associated with the operations of the Customs Division, crime, and the lack of effective policing as other major challenges.

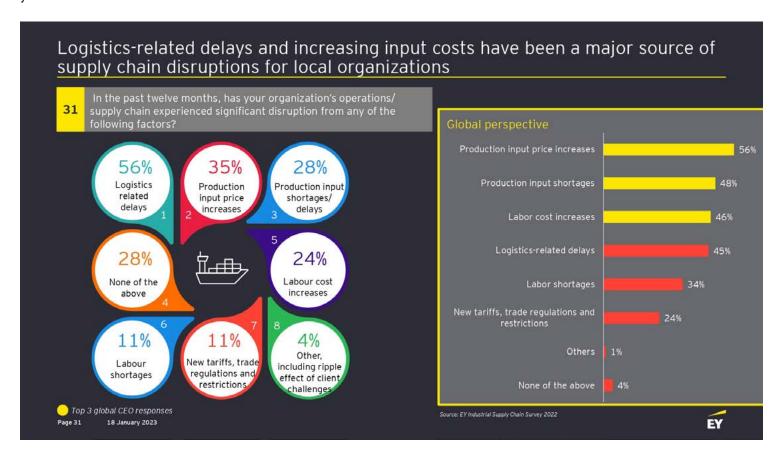
These challenges resulted in significantly increased costs and delays, which negatively impact business operations and cash flow. The impact of these challenges trickles down to the consumer, as companies are unable to absorb costs or deliver to the customer on time. Loss of or reduction in partnerships and business opportunities were also reported.



Access to foreign exchange is another key challenge for local firms, with 38% of companies finding that there has been no change in accessibility, while 32% found that it actually became more difficult.



While embedding ESG in corporate strategies has been a major focus for global firms and has been considered a driver of growth, locally ESG does not appear to be as high on the strategic agenda for surveyed organisations. The survey found that the majority of survey participants did not implement any ESG strategies in the last year, with 31% intending to do so in the coming year.



Also, challenges arising out of supply chain disruptions have caused local firms to reconfigure their supply chains as a mitigation strategy. Companies are also looking to source local alternatives for inputs, and some have also delayed planned investments. This mirrors what is happening on a global scale. Delaying planned investments and reconfiguration of supply chains are the top 2 mitigation actions, closely followed by the relocation of operational assets.

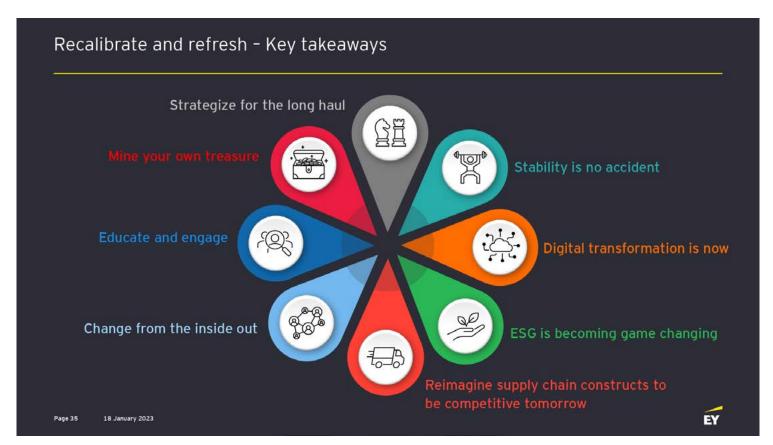
CONCLUSION

The pandemic has been a wake-up call for many companies, and the transformation is imperative. The survey findings provided the following key takeaways:

Strategise for the long haul: Focus on efficiency and stronger stakeholder engagement – emphasising long-term value over short-term wins.

Mine your own treasure: Use customer data to help predict changing behaviors and define future strategies.

Educate and engage: Refresh your narratives to engage investors and all internal and external stakeholders – articulate a positive vision and respond to concerns quickly.



Change from the inside out:

Reconfigure internal processes to strengthen operational resilience and the talent agenda, while engaging external ecosystems to position for future growth.

Stability is no accident: Strategically prioritise for the next unforeseen shock to help ensure optionality across the

enterprise, including supply chain security and channels to customers.

Digital transformation is now: Establish clear rules to drive capital allocation strategies, while simultaneously considering corporate strategy goals, the company's tech portfolio, return on investment, and potential impact on the business.

ESG is becoming game-changing: Place focus on integrating ESG principles into your businesses' operations. As consumers and investors become more conscious of the impact of business on society and the environment, companies are under pressure to integrate ESG principles into their operations.

Reimagine supply chain constructs to be competitive tomorrow: A large number of global companies are already rethinking their supply chain setup. Companies must act quickly and decisively if they want to have resilient supply chains and remain competitive. ■



Panel at AMCHAM T&T's Economic Outlook Forum 2023 (I-r): Gregory Hill - Managing Director - ANSA Merchant Bank Limited: Her Excellency Ms. Candace Bond -U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; Toni Sirju-Ramnarine - President, AMCHAM T&T; Robert Riley - Chairman-**Designate - Massy Holdings** Limited; Greer Quan - CEO -Caribbean - Pan-American Life Insurance Group; Nirad Tewarie -CEO - AMCHAM T&T; Zack Nadur -Partner | Strategy & Transactions - EY Caribbean

AMCHAM T&T

AMCHAM T&T'S AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION

AMCHAM T&T hosted our annual Ambassador's Reception on Jan. 11th at the official residence of the U.S. Ambassador to express our sincere appreciation to all our members, partners, friends, and stakeholders who have greatly supported our many events and initiatives over the years.

Ambassador Bond shared some of the U.S. Embassy's priorities for 2023 by highlighting the areas of collaboration between the two organizations.

Click the link below to read the full speech:

https://tt.usembassy.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-candace.../

AMCHAM T&T would like to offer our gratitude to Her Excellency Candace Bond (U.S. Ambassador to T&T), and the entire staff at the U.S. Embassy Trinidad and Tobago for their hard work and dedication shown towards making this event the success it is every year.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:

Europcar (Transport Sponsor), G4S Secure Solutions Trinidad Limited (Security Partner), Kallco Ltd., Esau Oilfield Supplies Co. Ltd., TRINCARGO/TRINEBOX



Her Excellency Ms. Candace Bond – U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago with AMCHAM T&T President Toni Sirju-Ramnarine and Board of AMCHAM T&T



(I-r) Nirad Tewarie - CEO, AMCHAM T&T, Ambassador Bond and Clint Williams -Principal CEO, Corbin Communications Ltd.



Karen Kelshall Lee – Group Head-Compliance, Guardian Holdings Ltd. chats with Clive Fletcher – Managing Director, Unicomer (Trinidad) Limited.



Andrea Davis – AMCHAM T&T Director Valerie A. Laboy – Economic and Commercial Officer, US Embassy, Megan Kelly, US Embassy



Ambassador Bond with Gervase Warner, President and Group CEO of the Massy Group of Companies.



AMCHAM T&T CEO, Nirad Tewarie presents a steelpan to Her Excellency.



Toni Sirju-Ramnarine presents a special gift to Shante Moore, outgoing Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy.



(I-r) Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry; Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs; Ambassador Bond and Toni Sirju-Ramnarine.



Her Excellency (centre) with AMCHAM T&T Board Members Nirad Tewarie, Giselle Thompson, Gregory Hill and Toni Sirju-Ramnarine.



Speaking at the event, AMCHAM T&T President Toni Sirju-Ramnarine welcomed the arrival of the new U.S. Ambassador to T&T, Her Excellency Ms. Candace Bond and her family to our beautiful country and to the members of AMCHAM T&T: "We are very happy to have a U.S. Ambassador here with us in Trinidad & Tobago," Sirju-Ramnarine said. "As AMCHAM T&T has progressed over the past three decades, the immense value we place on our relationship with the U.S. Embassy has not changed. The U.S. remains our country's major trading partner and we commit to continue working collaboratively to enhance the ease of doing business here in Trinidad and Tobago so that trade continues to thrive between our two countries."

Click the link below to read the full speech: https://amchamtt.com/Featured-News/13055363



(I-r) Stephane Picarle – General Manager – Commercial, SHELL Trinidad & Tobago; Beatrice Picarle; Mark Loquan – President, The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited; Roger Bolai, Country Manager - IGT; Toni Sirju-Ramnarine; Ambassador Bond; Ronald Adams - Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic LNG.



he discovery of substantial oil reserves off the coast of Guyana has opened up unprecedented opportunities for economic growth and development in the country. As Guyana emerges as a key player in the global oil industry, collaboration between countries and business organisations becomes vital for harnessing these opportunities effectively. In this context, Amcham Guyana and AMCHAM Trinidad & Tobago have forged a strong partnership to foster economic ties, promote investment and

AmCham Guyana recognises the significance of developing strong bilateral relations between Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. These neighbouring countries share historical, cultural, and economic ties, making them natural partners in the pursuit of mutual growth and prosperity. With Trinidad and Tobago possessing decades of experience in the oil and gas sector, AmCham Guyana can benefit from the expertise and knowledge that its counterpart brings to the table.

facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

By Devindra Kissoon President of AmCham Guyana

One of our primary goals in collaborating with AMCHAM Trinidad & Tobago is the exchange of knowledge and capacitybuilding. Through various workshops, seminars and networking events, both chambers facilitate the transfer of industry best practices, technological advancements and regulatory frameworks. Such initiatives help local businesses in Guyana gain valuable insights into the oil and gas sector, enabling them to participate more effectively in the supply chain and explore potential investment opportunities.



We also aspire to jointly promote investment opportunities in Guyana's burgeoning oil and gas sector. By leveraging their networks and connections, both chambers can actively engage with potential investors from the United States and beyond, encouraging them to explore the vast potential that Guyana offers. This collaboration will serve as a catalyst for attracting foreign direct investment, which is crucial for infrastructure development, job creation and the overall diversification of Guyana's economy.

To foster greater commercial ties, we look forward to collaborating with AMCHAM Trinidad & Tobago to organise trade missions and business matchmaking events. These initiatives bring together entrepreneurs, investors, and key stakeholders from both countries, facilitating meaningful connections and fostering business partnerships. By promoting dialogue and establishing a platform for collaboration, these events create a favourable environment for joint ventures and crossborder trade.

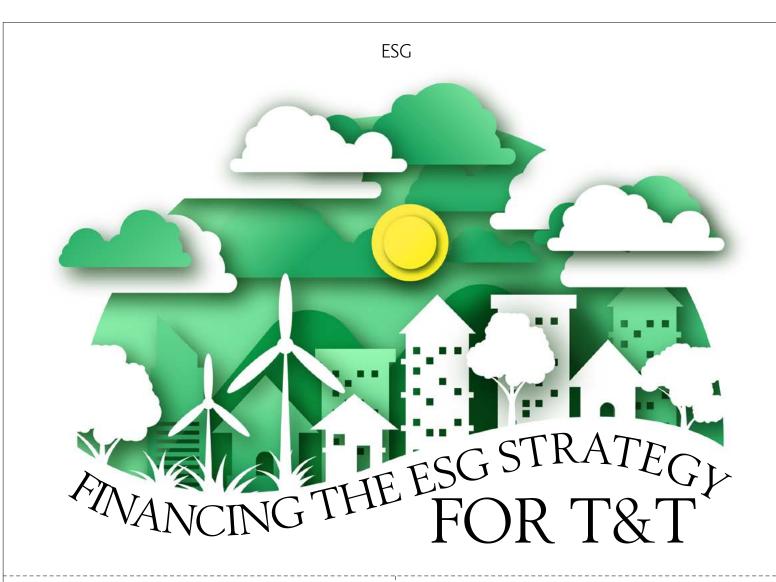
Naturally, the collaboration between AmCham Guyana and AMCHAM Trinidad & Tobago extends beyond business and investment opportunities. Both chambers actively engage with governments and policymakers, advocating for policies and regulations that promote a conducive business environment. By presenting a unified voice on key issues, we can ensure that the concerns and interests of the business community are effectively communicated and addressed.

Both chambers also no doubt recognise the importance of sustainable development in the wake of Guyana's oil discovery, promoting responsible business practices and fostering environmental stewardship. Through knowledge-sharing initiatives, together we can facilitate the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies and practices, ensuring that Guyana's oil sector operates in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

By presenting a unified voice on key issues, we can ensure that the concerns and interests of the business community are effectively communicated and addressed.

We very much look forward to collaborative efforts between AmCham Guyana and AMCHAM Trinidad & Tobago. By building bridges, facilitating knowledge exchange, promoting investment and fostering sustainable development, both chambers can contribute significantly to the growth and prosperity of Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago alike. As the partnership between these chambers continues to strengthen, we can expect enhanced economic cooperation, increased job opportunities and a brighter future for both countries.

https://amcham.gy info@amchamguyana.com



he Government of Singapore, specifically its Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, has taken the bold step to appoint a Government Chief Sustainability Officer responsible for driving its sustainability efforts.

In my view, this is icing on the cake. Singapore is demonstrating its commitment to driving its sustainability efforts. Moreover, it comes on the heels of

many years of serious concerted efforts to move towards a sustainable future. Most recently, the establishment of the Singapore Green Plan 2030 outlined the country's sustainable transition strategy. Under the plan, targets include:

- Quadrupling solar energy deployment by 2025
- Reducing waste to landfill by 30% by 2030 and
- Reducing water consumption, greening buildings, and requiring clean energy vehicles.

—in other words, a holistic, policy-based approach to meeting country commitments to Sustainable Development Goals and NDC goals.

No doubt under this model, there will be a significant collaboration between government and the private sector in Singapore in order to ensure that the resources are in place to execute this ambitious agenda.

At AMCHAM T&T, we are seeking to foster this type of collaboration to ensure that Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) frameworks present will be implemented, so that Trinidad and Tobago can achieve meaningful and sustainable growth in the short-term.



By Indu Sharma
Chairperson of AMCHAM T&T's ESG Committee
and Director and Principal Consultant Q.E.D.
Consulting Limited

ESG provides a framework within which we can all take a hard look at our businesses and identify both risks and opportunities, solve big problems, create value and grow and transform the economies of small island states such as ours.

We believe that government can play an instrumental role from a policy perspective for Trinidad and Tobago to reach its carbon-reduction treaty commitments. At AMCHAM T&T, we are keen to play a collaborative role in developing practical policies that can get us there.

THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

As the impacts of climate change are being felt, it is imperative to speak about the ability of small island states such as Trinidad and Tobago to adapt and build resilience in our communities, businesses and economies

Flooding, sea level rise and reduction in biodiversity will have tangible impacts on our economies. For example, the valuation of our real estate portfolio may already be experiencing this impact. The ability to mitigate these risks is becoming increasingly more expensive and has already impacted the business to continue to be competitive.

It will take capital to enable adaptation and build resilience; therefore, the providers of capital have a pivotal role to play. They will undoubtedly assess business risk on the basis of ESG frameworks, so it is important for us as businesses to understand and not miss the opportunity to access much-needed capital.

The size of the prize is considerable—mind-boggling even—over US\$50 trillion by 2025 (Bloomberg), representing more than one-third of projected total assets under management and accessible via defined ESG criteria.

A

nalysts expect accelerated growth as ESG extends across asset classes and themes, and while equities via capital markets will dominate new product development, credit represents 20% of new ESG funds

Sustainable funding will be thematic in the areas of so-called "broad" ESG, Environmental, and Impact investing (Morningstar).

From a regional capital markets perspective, why shouldn't Caribbean economies attract these sustainable funds? The real question is what it will take to make this happen.

- Regional governments and agencies (SECs) should not seek to reinvent the wheel in terms of regulation.
- There are already market-tested frameworks that sustainable funds understand well and feel comfortable with so alignment between our regional markets and established capital markets from a regulatory perspective will be key.
- However, a major driver to attract the private enterprise to avail
 themselves of these opportunities will be government support and
 incentives to promote ESG projects, adaptation and resilience initiatives, and further listing on regional exchanges and wider overseas capital markets.

ESG provides a framework within which we can all take a hard look at our businesses and identify both risks and opportunities, solve big problems, create value and grow and transform the economies of small island states such as ours.

- Governments need to ensure that any incentives should be technology neutral as many companies will run with several technology options before selecting the most economically and technically feasible solution.
- Keep regulations simple and consistent and reliable. Don't keep changing or introducing new regulations. To introduce more sustainable circular economy models industries such as energy and manufacturing need 5-7 years to deliver new outcomes.

Most of all, let us not discount our responsibility in the private sector. Businesses need to become familiar with and implement ESG frameworks to enable business agility and sustainability and to be ready to access the capital on the table.

The "how to" will be a challenge for many businesses. Nevertheless, AMCHAM T&T intends to support its membership and the wider business community to meet this challenge—we look forward to developing and sharing practical advice and tools that can help businesses of all sizes and models along the ESG journey. ■



Embracing Equity

LEADING WITH POSITIVE MOMENTUM AT PALIG

Women Leaders Reflect On Embracing Equity

Embracing equity is critically important to building stronger and more cohesive communities and workplaces. When everyone has access to the same opportunities and resources, people are more likely to be able to reach their full potential and contribute to society. Sharing our perspectives on equity increases awareness and understanding of the importance of equity.

Pan-American Life Insurance Group's leaders share personal reflections on embracing equity.



HAT DOES EMBRACING EQUITY MEAN TO YOU?

"Embracing equity as a leader means understanding firstly how equity applies to your role and function and ensuring your actions and decisions align. Equity-based leadership is not only for the workplace, but it should be how you operate in your daily life. In my role as an HR Executive operating within a regional scope, the need

for equitable decision making is imperative to ensure all our employees feel included given the myriad of cultures and backgrounds."

Rachael Sudan, Assistant Vice President, Regional Human Resources - Caribbean



HAT ARE THREE WAYS WE CAN EMBRACE **EOUITY IN OUR DAILY LIVES?**

Practicing empathy in our everyday interactions. This enables us to interact with others without judgement, which helps us to appreciate other point of views whether we agree or not.

Developing a commitment to continued learning. There is no finish line. Continuously and consistently educating ourselves about different experiences and perspectives through a combination of written media and engaging in meaningful conversations will continue to shape our own thoughts and actions, to ultimately be part of the change we want to see.

Rally our teams, colleagues, family and friends. Use the knowledge that we gain to educate others and to discuss impactful actions within our own communities.

Kristi-Marie Weston, Assistant Vice President, Regional Corporate **Business**





HAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS AT THE HEART OF **EMBRACING EQUITY?**

Having a genuine respect for people—all people, regardless of views, backgrounds, cultures, gender, race or ethnicity. The authentic engagement of individuals, being able to connect in thought or aligned objectives, creates opportunities, meaningful change and synergies. In the same way, authentic engagement where there are oppos-

ing perspectives, presents opportunities for learning, removing the barriers of bias leading to the opening of one's mind, fostering empathy and embracing equity. As a leader, every exchange provides an opportunity to not only impart knowledge, but to learn and therefore evolve.

Karyn Dasent, Vice President - Regional Chief Operations Officer, Caribbean



OW CAN WE BEST EMBRACE EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE?

Embracing equity in the workplace is a fundamental responsibility of everyone, not just the leaders of the organisation; however, the tone must be set at the top. We must encourage dialogue with our colleagues at various levels, giving persons the avenue for their voice to be heard. We also need to make changes where nec-

essary to ensure that opportunities are afforded to everyone based on their skills, talents, and even personal situations, not their gender, race or background.

Marsha McCarthy, Vice President & Regional Chief Financial Officer



HAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH ABOUT EMBRACING EQUITY?

Be kind. Equity demands kindness.

Defend inequity. Speak up. Your silence breeds inequity.

Broaden your networks. Seek out opportunities to meet and interact with others that are different from yourself. In so doing, you will create the space within yourself that

fosters acceptance.

Greer Quan, CEO Caribbean ■



Embracing Equity

ASCENDING INTO 2023

Methanex Trinidad and Tobago's Women's Development Programme



ne team of women, inspiring, aspiring and ascending together. That's the objective of Methanex's "Ascend" women's development programme, which is led by Gina Gosine, Trinidad and Tobago's Process Team Lead and to date, the group has been doing just that.

The Ascend programme, which celebrated its first successful year of operation in September 2022, aligns with Methanex's global diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategy and is based on an international development programme for women called "Springboard", which was introduced to the site in 2020.

To successfully leverage the benefits of a diverse workforce, Methanex continues to recognise that an inclusive culture is crucial to attract and retain the best talent, enhance engagement, foster innovation, and ultimately strengthen its overall company performance. That is why D&I was identified as one of the company's top focus areas and a critical enabler of its Vision 2030.

Methanex developed a D&I vision, guiding principles and strategic priorities along with a three-year roadmap to promote an inclusive culture

where diversity is valued and everyone can contribute, develop and advance.

"Ascend is a great example of a successful D&I initiative which has grown organically in Trinidad to respond to a networking and support need of our female colleagues at the site," says Priscilla Fuchslocher, Methanex's Vice President of Marketing and Logistics who is based in Brussels. Priscilla was joined virtually by a panel of female leaders from across Methanex to share some insights into their individual journeys and field the many curious questions from all the participants, which ranged from work direction and career aspirations to recommended mental health habits and work-life balance. The panel included some of Methanex's female leaders from around the globe including Canada, United States and Europe.

In addition to facilitating conversations with Methanex's inspiring women leaders, Ascend has offered quarterly interactive and engaging growth-focused sessions, addressing areas from self-awareness and speaking-up, to collaboration and productivity, helping women



develop professionally and personally. The sessions included an array of voices from local energy leaders and other influential women from various industries across Trinidad and Tobago.

Reflecting on the last year, Gina noted: "The initiative provides an avenue for women to check in with one another, to learn from and grow with them, and to provide a space to be wholly themselves. I'm humbled to be a part of this network of amazing women. We come from so many different backgrounds yet find so much common ground and natural connection. This has helped us advance the quality of the work that we do, and we're able to apply the tools learned to all other parts of our life—we are truly 'Ascending' together."

elisa Tracey, one of the Trinidad team members and Ascend participant, also recounted her journey thus far: "I've gained such valuable insight from being a part of this team, both from a professional and personal perspective. It's been a relatively short time that we have participated but it's been incredibly meaningful, especially to me and my career. I am currently transitioning from one role to another within Methanex and I have used guite a bit of my

learning at Ascend to help me navigate the change. It's truly helped me to keep focused on strengthening my capabilities and to curate my voice".

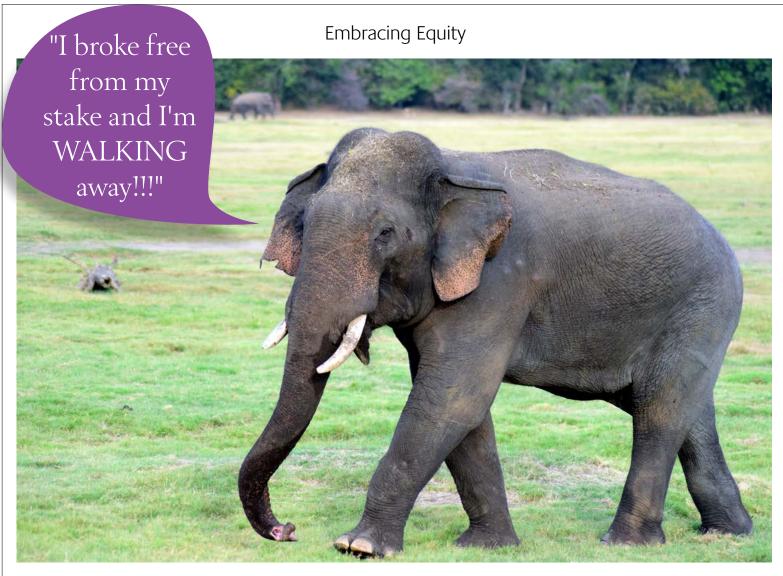
Looking ahead, Ascend will continue to build on the foundation laid over the past year and continue to keep leaning on strong leaders to guide the way, including Sarah Boon, Methanex's Vice President Corporate Sustainability. On her visit to Trinidad to participate in the 2023 T&T Energy Conference, Sarah made time to meet with the Ascend group and to have a lunch and learn session. She discussed the company's sustainability journey and the group talked about D&I.

Ascend's success is the result of the commitment of everyone on the Trinidad and Tobago site, not only the commitment to provide the resources for the programme's operation but the time and space required for participation.

"I'm so impressed by the engagement from the Ascend participants, and I was honoured to participate in the global panel. It's important for all of us to support activities that make our workplace more inclusive, and the conversations that are happening all over the company, including those at Ascend, are helping us to define what inclusion looks like at Methanex."

Ascend's success is the result of the commitment of everyone on the Trinidad and Tobago site, not only the commitment to provide the resources for the programme's operation but the time and space required for participation. This is a testament to the initiative's importance to the organisation as it recognises that D&I is an ongoing journey which is continuously evolving.

Methanex remains committed to being intentional in their actions today, building accountability within all levels of the organisation and measuring progress regularly. The company stands firm in its belief that celebrating and embracing diversity and ensuring all its team members are valued and feel a sense of belonging is essential to Methanex's long-term success. ■



TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR SUCCESS

M

uch of the discussion on the theme of this year's International Women's Day (Embrace Equity) centered around what others had to do to enable women to live their best lives. However, my own experience has shown that it is also important for each woman to take responsibility for achieving her success.

We are often told that to achieve success there are things that we need to acquire. For example, having the correct academic qualifications. And very often the expectation is that having acquired these things, our success is guaranteed once others do their part. I have learned that while the acquisition of some things is important, true success in large part depends on our ability to let go. I set out below some of the most important things that one must let go of to move forward.



By Sharon Christopher CEO - Sharon Christopher and Associates

NEGATIVE CONDITIONING

When it was still appropriate to have animals in a circus you would see elephants with a rope around their leg that was attached to a stake in the ground. The adult elephant did not move, even though with the least bit of effort the elephant could pull the stake out of the ground. The reason for this was, when the elephant was small, it was tied to the stake like this, and it could not move. By the time it was large enough to remove the stake, it was already conditioned to believe that it could not break free, so it did not try. This is how negative conditioning works. As a result of what we have experienced in our lives, we may be conditioned to believe that we cannot break free of the stakes. What is even more damaging is that often we do not realise that we are being held back by these stakes.

or example, a child who has not passed the Secondary Entrance Examination for a "prestige school" may receive the message that she is limited intellectually. As an adult, she may invest heavily in making sure that she is highly qualified academically. Eventually, she enters the work environment, and she may do quite well in the technical aspects of her job, yet she finds herself "struck dumb" in meetings, unable to ask questions outside of her area of expertise, even though

she has an opinion on the matter. Similarly, she is unable to defend her position before persons she considers to be "brighter" than her because they went to the "right" schools. This behaviour then adversely affects how the woman is viewed in terms of the value that she brings to the organisation.

It is important therefore for us all to be conscious about how we have been negatively conditioned. To do this, it helps to consider your life in five-year blocks. As you consider each five-year period, consider the messages you received that are negatively impacting you today. Then take action. This can range from developing your own strategies, to seeking professional help from persons such as a coach or a psycholo-

FEAR

Fear is one of the most paralysing of emotions. Yet if you have no fear, you are not likely to live very long, or to live a life without suffering serious physical injury. However, what a woman fears is that, in spite of her achievements, she is just not good enough. This fear may stop a woman from accepting jobs outside of her comfort zone, even though to accept such a job can be a career builder. It is important therefore to learn to move ahead despite the feeling of fear.

When I was a young government lawyer, I was requested to work on the international finance desk. This meant that I had to travel with the technocrats in the Ministry of Finance to the major international financial markets to negotiate multi-million dollar loans. I was terrified and did not want to take on the assignment. The Attorney General at that time had little sympathy, saying to me "You are a lawyer, aren't you?" So off I went, eventually becoming somewhat of an expert in this area. It would have been easy to just refuse to do it, but having to face that fear and do it nonetheless allowed me to acquire an expertise that served me well throughout my career.

ANGER AND RESENTMENT

A woman may have a very bad experience; for example, she may have been wrongfully denied a promotion or she may be sexually harassed at work, and she carries that anger and resentment within her and it spews out in her daily interactions. And despite the quality of her work output, no one wants to work with her. So, her behaviour becomes a barrier to her success.

"As a result of what we have experienced in our lives, we may be conditioned to believe that we cannot break free of the stakes. "

To overcome anger and resentment, one needs to learn to forgive. Forgiveness does not mean that you must forget what happened, or that you have to continue the relationship with anyone, or stay in a particular job. It means that you must stop using the excuse of what happened to you as a justification for your behaviour. It means freeing yourself so that you can live your best life. One of the ways to get to a place of forgiveness is to focus on what is good in your life. A great exercise to do is to write down three things every day that you are grateful for. You cannot repeat anything previously written. You will find that after the fourth day, you will have to actively look for things to be grateful for. Focusing on gratitude helps to dissolve the anger and resentment.

DOUBT

In certain circumstances, the challenges we face may seem insurmountable. In those times, we do not go after our dreams, or we do not move beyond current situations because we simply cannot see how it is possible for us to overcome that situation. One of the simplest strategies to use when doubt threatens to overwhelm you is the constant repetition of positive affirmations.

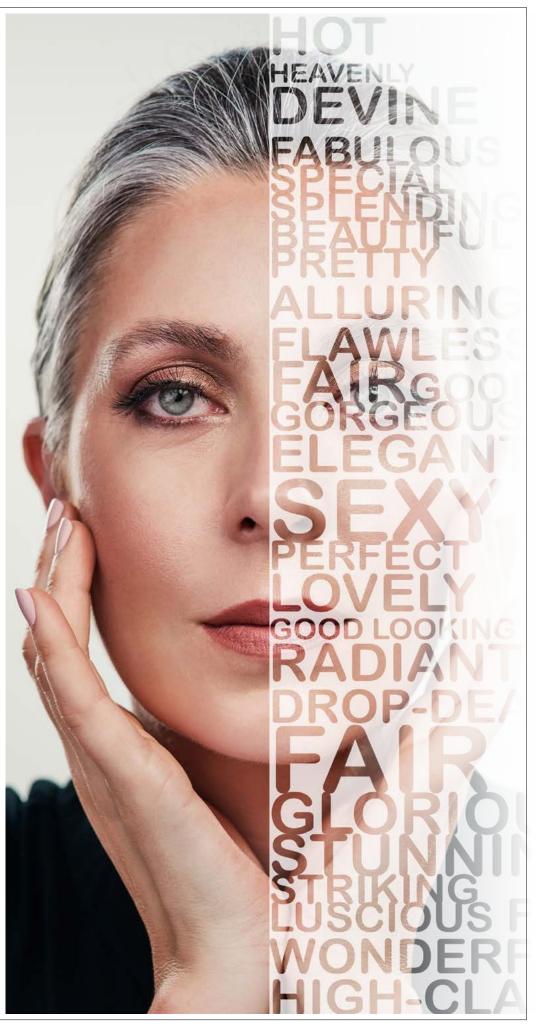
he year 2014 was the worst of my professional life. My organisation was embroiled in a debacle related to an issue of shares. It seemed that I would be made the scapegoat for this, although I was innocent of all the allegations being made. I believed that it was the intention of the Board to fire me. I felt that my reputation was being destroyed. They were several things that I had to do to get myself through the situation, but in many ways one of

the easiest, and dare I say, most effective was my constant repetition of positive affirmations. These included: "No weapons formed against me shall prosper; If God be for me who shall be against me; All is well, everything is working out for my highest good, out of this situation only good will come. I am safe." By the end of that year, the situation had been resolved and, though somewhat battered and bruised, I had survived. The thing about positive affirmations is that their constant repetition can bring you to a place in which you begin to believe that what you are repeating will become your truth. One of the affirmations that every woman should repeat until it is stuck in her subconscious is "I am worthy. I am enough".

The journey towards true success is not necessarily an easy one. Yet each of us has the power within us to let go of the chains that bind us, and as we do this, we will move into the life that we deserve. Use that power!

By Dr. Elaine
Monica Davis
MBBS, MPhil
(Physiology)
Physician/ Founder
& CEO of Wisdom
for Wellness/ Former
UWI Lecturer

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"AS A MAN THINKETH, SO IS HE; AS A MAN CHOOSETH, SO IS HE." RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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uilding self-worth can be viewed as building a valuable space inside of yourself that will guide and protect you throughout many challenging situations such as making difficult decisions, forging meaningful relationships and achieving happiness and success in life.

Many of the qualities that contribute to peace, joy, happiness and love are not only gained but also

honed through positive self-worth. The list of these attributes is extensive: caring, confidence, empathy, fairness, honesty, integrity, kindness, patience and respect among many others. For optimal physical, mental, social and spiritual health to be realised, it is imperative to be possessed of positive self-worth and belief in oneself!

Building self-worth is not unlike the construction of a physical structure, which relies on a good, solid foundation. Foundations can give way and crumble under many circumstances: if the design plan is wrong, if the engineering is faulty, if the incorrect tools and materials are used—to cite a few possible errors. In much the same way, an unstable mental health foundation can deteriorate irretrievably due to low levels of self-worth and a reduction in belief in oneself. Examples: an individual feels unworthy or unloved; s(he) feels that an impediment is the barrier to true worthiness; or s(he) perceives that being deemed 'less good' than her/his peers is a life sentence. These scenarios, and a myriad others, can cause unwanted consequences, unless timely mental health interventions are made to rebuild the individual's belief in him/herself, and thereby restore self-worth.

It is therefore essential for those who strive to lead a meaningful and mentally healthy life that the concept of self-worth and its importance be well understood.

WHAT IS SELF-WORTH?

Self-worth is an internal feeling that we are enough, that we are good enough, that we are worthy—worthy of love and belonging. It is an intrinsic phenomenon, and as such its value must never be measured against anyone else or any quantum or quality of material possessions. Research has shown that self-worth is linked to ability, effort and performance, and these features are often referred to as the components of self-worth. It can be inferred that high levels of ability, effort and performance will result in high self-worth. It can be equally inferred that low levels would lead to low self-worth and that any diminution of self-worth can also negatively affect ability, effort and performance. There are reasons for this apparent complexity, and the following paragraph seeks to illustrate the interactive link between ability, effort, performance and self-worth, and underscores that ability, effort and performance contribute significantly to one's feeling of self-worth.

Ability varies in individuals, and lack of ability in certain spheres can be devastating to some yet powerfully motivating to others. The degree of effort exerted in varying situations can be improved or limited by the level of ability that exists. Whether there is betterment or decrement in the person's ability depends upon the motivational state, the internal will, the effect of external pressure on the individual and her/his intrinsic feeling of self-worth, inter alia. Where a large quantum

of effort is invested in a particular situation by a motivated, high self-worth individual, it is not unreasonable to expect positive results, wherein ability in the task at hand increases substantially, thus further increasing self-worth. On the other hand, where the same quantum of effort is employed towards an identical situation by a subject with low motivation and diminished feelings of self-worth, the results are likely to be significantly different and could well drive the individual into a destructive frame of mind.

There are several other factors that can influence self-worth; far too many to be discussed here, but let us look at health and wellness for a minute. One of the main components of a healthy lifestyle is sleep, which plays an important role in our physical and mental wellness. It is generally recommended that we get between six to eight hours of sleep per night. One might argue that we still function well with less hours of heads on pillows, but research has proven, without a doubt, that sleep deprivation can be detrimental to our physical and mental wellbeing. Decreased sleep leads to decreased concentration skills, which in turn affects effort. Decreased effort causes diminished ability, which in turn leads to procrastination. Procrastination fuels anxiety and stress, which inevitably lower performance levels. Low performance levels decrease success, waning success causes low self-esteem. Low self-esteem favours internal feelings of poor self-worth—"I can't cope...I am useless...I don't deserve this job...I don't deserve anything good...I am a failure!"

Positive self-worth is critically important for optimal performance in whatever we do, as it increases motivation, boosts confidence and infuses a feeling of belief in oneself. Increased self-belief deepens gratitude and buffers disappointment.

WHAT ARE SOME TYPES OF SELF-WORTH?

There are many, three will be mentioned here.

- Inherent self-worth: A belief in life in general, a profound belief in self, an appreciation and understanding of morality, and the inner fortitude of being able to distinguish right from wrong...all the time
- 2) **Expressed self-worth:** This is fuelled very early in life by the positive actions of our parents and guardians, and manifests in attributes such as kindness, love, support, praise and reinforcement. This is a very valuable type of self-worth, though not necessarily the pre-eminent one.
- 3) Achieved self-worth: This type of self-worth relates to our own actions, our personal development and our journey to resultant successes. Achieved self-worth, in my mind, could also be considered a dynamic, yet delicate, interplay of our inherent and expressed self-worth.

"NEVER MEASURE YOUR SELF-WORTH BY WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE BECOME." (ANONYMOUS)

SELF-WORTH IS OFTEN MIS-DEFINED AS SELF-ESTEEM...BUT THEY ARE NOT THE SAME.

Self-worth, an internal phenomenon, makes us feel inherently worthy. It is a personal feeling of confidence in ourselves and in the universe. Internal feelings of worth motivate us and lead to (external) success.

Self-esteem is more of an external phenomenon, which relies on validation of ourselves by others, who measure our performance and label it as success or failure (both factors external to self). People with high self-esteem feel good about themselves and those with low self-esteem often get depressed, both based on what others think.

Reliance on external opinions to build self-worth is linked to depression and increased feelings of worthlessness (Kernis et al, 1998). Other researchers have revealed that people with positive self-worth develop high self-esteem. The higher one's self-worth, the greater the motivation and possibilities for external success. The greater the success, the better one feels about it and about oneself, resulting in high self-esteem. Enhancement of the external markers of success increases the internal feeling of worthiness.

WHAT MAKES A POSITIVE, HIGH SELF-WORTH INDIVIDUAL RECOGNISABLE?

A high self-worth individual loves and fully accepts her/himself (imperfections and all), is self-aware, self-confident and, because of an innate sense of belonging, is able to have meaningful social relationships. S(he) and no-one else defines her/himself and maintains constant value as a person. A deep sense of self causes the high self-worth individual not to be bothered by the opinions of others.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HALLMARKS OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH HIGH SELF-WORTH:

This individual:

- exudes emotional balance and resilience; possesses self-regulatory skills and maintains high level functioning despite external circumstances
- exhibits self-assurance and self-confidence; feels comfortable within her/himself and allows confidence to be the precursor of her/his successes.
- fosters and engages in positive and healthy relationships; does not tolerate toxic environments of any sort.
- avoids being devalued as a person by simply saying NO to people or life situations who/which seek to devalue.
- is self-aware, self-accepting and self-validating and is able to remain highly motivated despite the undulating landscape of life.

- does not compete with anyone but him/herself as there will always be people greater and lesser than him/her.
- is full of gratitude, always cognisant that every day there are innumerable facets of life for which to be thankful.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO INCREASE OUR SELF-WORTH NOW?

Engage in some simple, but important activities, viz:

- care for yourself by leading a healthy lifestyle inclusive of exercise, adequate nutrition, sufficient sleep etc.
- think positively about yourself, assert yourself more and remember the word NO is your safe word; use it when you need to.
- find time to do things that bring you happiness and joy...you know...the things you never seem to have time for as you climb the proverbial ladder of success. Note to self, true success relies on large doses of happiness and joy.
- spend your time with people whose company you enjoy. Avoid and forget those who treat you badly. Become allergic to negative people and negativity in general (yes, it can be done). Life is truly very short. Make a promise to yourself to make every moment count!

THOUGHTS FOR TIPS ON BUILDING SELF-WORTH:

- Building self-worth is not something that can be done overnight. It may require effort for some, but it can be done.
- Self-worth is not tied to people or things, and is not dependent on good days or bad days. Everyone is deserving of love, kindness, compassion and positivity every day.
- People's toxic opinions do not matter to you. Do not let others define your worth. Validate yourself daily.
- Learn more about yourself self-awareness, self-understanding, self-acceptance, self-care and self-responsibility are "must haves".
- Become the person you choose to be, on your terms, and enjoy
 the journey. Start now!! You deserve it...You are worthy!!

Dr. Elaine Monica Davis is a physician with over four decades of experience. During her career, she worked in public health, part time private practice, and recently retired from The UWI where she was a lecturer for 30 years. She is passionate about wellness, wellbeing, stress management and resilience.

"I AM THE MEASURE OF MY WORTH, AND I SAY I AM WORTHY!"



THE ROLE OF HR IN THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

"Change management" sounds self-explanatory:

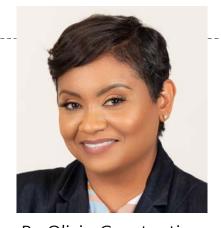
Managing change seems like an activity most do every day.

It's a different story in the business environment!

or the business environment, where stakeholders' needs and expectations can make or break a successful change, change management is less an everyday occurrence and more an in-depth consideration and analysis. Many underestimate the impact of the activities involving change management, and believe that anyone can do it.

DEFINING CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change management entails controlled identification and implementation of required changes, which typically look like a new project, or a shift in organisational thinking, or a desire to change its culture. It can be argued that the ability to lead and implement adequate change management is the bread and butter of business success. But change management is not always easy and requires skill and experience in navigating and influencing the journey.



By Olivia Constantine Director, Human Capital, Unicomer (Trinidad) Limited

THE ROLE OF HR IN MANAGING CHANGE

The responsibility of influencing and guiding this journey for many organisations lies primarily within its Human Resources support unit. Done properly, HR makes sure that the process of change uses appropriate philosophies and frameworks. From the moment the change is conceptualised, to the implementation and all through the evaluation of its success (or failure), HR should be consulted in all stages.

Applying a chosen structure or framework helps an organisation to visualise and apply valuable insights from stakeholders on how to mitigate risk, respond to resistance or detractors, and even to design appropriate and effective communication messages. HR also takes into account employees' well-being during the implementation of the change management process.

DESIGNING AND PLANNING THE CHANGE

The process itself involves a high level of consultation and analysis. The journey starts with defining the change and conceptualising what the successful outcome looks like. The HR practitioner starts asking key questions such as:

- Who will be involved in this change?
- Who are our stakeholders?
- When will the change be effected?

Delving deep into these questions helps the organisation determine whether or not the team or teams affected will support the change, and assess the risk associated with the change as it affects different stakeholders or groups.

The HR change practitioner will work with the organisation to determine the resources needed for this change, and whether or not those resources are available. This enables them to create a plan that outlines how each team and individual will be affected by the change, defines their roles, and explains how they will interact with each other. In this planning stage HR asks questions such as:

- How will we engage our stakeholders?
- What are the risks that need to be considered and addressed?

IDENTIFYING RISKS

HR will assist the organisation in identifying risks and creating riskmitigating plans to adequately address these risks so that change progresses as unhindered as possible. This is an area often overlooked and can be crippling in the conceptualisation and planning phases. A risk-averse culture may find itself over-thinking, over-analysing and even over-mitigating the identified risks. A risk-seeking culture may fail to see opportunities to create certainty or stability and may tend to want to address the risks as they come.

Equally important is the consultation of stakeholders in identifying these risks. When enough information about the change is shared and communicated, and the right questions are asked, stakeholders are generally forthcoming with concerns, recommendations and questions.

GETTING READY FOR THE CHANGE

Every change forces organisations to consider if the right skills and experience are already present to support the change. HR should report on any and all gaps in skill and expertise required to implement, reinforce and maintain the change, and plan how to bridge any gap(s) identified.

IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE

During the implementation stage, communication, execution of training, activating catalysts for change as well as effecting risk mitigation strategies are focal action points. HR advises the organisation on how to monitor and manage resistance.

There is a school of thought that proffers that change cannot be accepted until it has been implemented. Even so, if there is an opportunity to revert to 'old ways' and back into the zone of comfort, often humans will find difficulty in sustaining the change that has been implemented.



ho needs to know related information to the change? When and what is the best way to deliver these messages? Who is going to deliver these messages? These are some of the key communication elements that the HR change practitioner has to consider in order to design and execute a robust communication plan to support change outcomes.

HR has a crucial role in creating a positive and supportive environment. It's important to ensure that employees feel supported during the transition period. HR professionals need to be available to answer questions, provide support and offer quidance. It's important to make sure that employees feel confident and capable of using the new systems or processes.

EVALUATING THE CHANGE

Once the changes have been implemented, it's just as important for HR to assess their effectiveness as it was during the planning stages. HR needs to monitor how employees have adapted to the new systems or procedures, and evaluate their performance against the expectations that were set at the beginning of the process. If there are areas that need improvement, HR needs to work with managers to make sure that they're addressed.

Evaluation is an essential part of the change management process. It helps identify any areas where things didn't go as planned and provides an opportunity to make changes for the better. HR professionals need to identify areas for improvement and recommending solutions. They should also be open to feedback from employees and other stakeholders.

SUSTAINING THE CHANGE

There is a school of thought that proffers that change cannot be accepted until it has been implemented. Even so, if there is an opportunity to revert to 'old ways' and back into the zone of comfort, often humans will find difficulty in sustaining the change that has been implemented. The HR change practitioner must continue in her or his efforts to communicate, revisit, realign and support the organisation in all efforts to reinforce and sustain the change.

Mindfulness



MINDFULNESS

AKEDA, BEFORE MINDFULNESS:

Prior to practicing mindfulness, I had a big secret.

One that I tried very hard to mask.

Despite the big smile and even bigger personality, I was stressed out, overwhelmed and burned out beyond belief.

While some stress is to be expected, and is a normal response to the everyday demands of life, chronic stress—a consistent sense of feeling pressured and overwhelmed over a long period of time—slowly wears on our mind and body and can leave us feeling depressed, anxious, depleted and fundamentally unwell. Some examples of chronic stress include the pressures that come along with demanding careers, a long commute, difficult relationships, dissolving a marriage, dealing with chronic illness or injury, caring for an elderly or sick family member, or traumatic situations, just to name a few. This kind of day-in-day-out stress, spanning months and years, can negatively affect our health,



By Makeda N. McKenzie Founder and Managing Consultant Caribbean Mindfulness Institute



Modern-day mainstream mindfulness is a secular, non-religious practice that is supported by 30+ years of rigorous neuroscientific research.

productivity and relationships; and if left unchecked, do significant harm to our mental and physical health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), stress has been classified as the health epidemic of the 21st century.

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efore I learned that chronic stress, and all that came with it, was a legitimate health concern, I felt deeply embarrassed by the way stress had taken over my life. In retrospect, it's no surprise that I was struggling at the time, as I was grappling with some significant life, work and health challenges spanning many years. But because I had such a limited concept of what constitutes good mental health and no idea of the far-reaching and harmful effects of

too much stress, I believed that constantly feeling stressed out, burned out, sick, depleted and overwhelmed was the price to pay for being a high-achieving, functioning adult. Repeating the popular expression "pressure makes a diamond" whenever my mind and body pleaded for my care and attention, I ignored all the red flags that the stress in my life was becoming too much to bear and became stuck in a vicious cycle of overwhelm, burnout and recovery.

Over time, as my health continued to deteriorate, sick leave absences became longer and longer, and my attempts at healthy coping merged into unhealthy coping. I realised that the chronic stress in my life was taking over, and something had to give. I had hit a wall, and after continued prayer and some reading up about the psychology and physiology of stress, I kept coming across a particular word over and over again: mindfulness.

MAKEDA, AFTER MINDFULNESS:

Often referred to as "brain training", and with its roots in ancient traditions, mindfulness is the basic human ability we all have to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us. It involves maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surrounding environment, through a friendly, non-judgmental lens. As the mind develops stability and is less caught up in thinking and sometimes deeply ingrained reactivity, we strengthen our capacity to be calm, steady and focused, even in the midst of life's invariable ups and downs.

The fundamental attitudes of mindfulness—attitudes like non-judging, non-striving, patience, beginner's mind, trust, acceptance and letting go—are cultivated both through formal mindfulness practices like mindfulness meditation and informal mindfulness practices; everyday activities that we bring mindful awareness to. Modern-day mainstream

mindfulness is a secular, non-religious practice that is supported by 30+ years of rigorous neuroscientific research. Consistent mindfulness practice has been shown to be helpful in reducing the effects of chronic stress, depression, anxiety and pain on the mind and body, while improving focus, concentration, resilience, compassion, wellbeing and overall mental health. Mindfulness classes are offered in workplaces, hospitals and schools worldwide, and the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence now recommends mindfulness-based therapies as a way to treat less severe depression and support mental wellbeing at work. It is a simple skill that can potentially be life-changing.



esperate for relief and unable to find a mindfulness class locally, I enrolled in an in-depth eight-week programme online. After just about two weeks of diligently doing the practices and homework, I was amazed at the powerful difference mindfulness made in my life. It was as if I had been underwater for years and had finally come up for air. Like I was living life in fullcolour again, instead of dragging through my

days in black and white. And as the months went on and I continued to experience the benefits—how my mood improved, focus and concentration were enhanced, became less reactive, and enjoyed fewer anxious moments and more steadiness—the more I was encouraged to continue practicing.

We all struggle at times; it is part of being human. Proactively managing stress is far better than letting it build up and hoping that someday it all just magically sorts itself out. My mindfulness practice empowered me with practical tools I could draw on every day to reclaim my joy, health and well-being and address the negative effects of the chronic stress in my life once and for all. Of course, stress will always be a part of life, and no one can ever really say with certainty what tomorrow will bring, but mindfulness has taught me that I do not have to simply grit my teeth and bear it. That there is a healthier, gentler, more sustainable way of relating to life's inevitable challenges. One that is equal parts kind and grounded. As the famous mindfulness quote goes: "You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."

MAKEDA, PRESENT DAY:

I am now a qualified mindfulness teacher and trainer, teaching traditional standardised 8-week programmes to the general public, training other mindfulness teachers, and creating and delivering mindfulness workshops of my own design, primarily for the workplace. I love that I now reach people where they are likely to feel stressed and pressured the most—the workplace—and provide them with the tools to

maintain their focus, engagement and productivity both on and off the job. My dream is to make mindfulness even more accessible throughout the region, but for now, I am satisfied and deeply grateful to be able to share this transformational practice with those who need it.

Makeda McKenzie is the Founder and Managing Consultant of the Caribbean Mindfulness Institute (CMI) and a dedicated mindfulness advocate, practitioner, and coach. Founded in 2017 and based in Trinidad & Tobago, the Caribbean Mindfulness Institute is dedicated to promoting mindfulness and meditation as an effective, safe, science-backed means of reducing the impact of chronic stress in our region's workplaces, schools, and communities. To date, Makeda has trained over 1,700 West Indians in the science and practice of mindfulness; and more recently, has been supporting the work of The Oxford Mindfulness Foundation (UK) as a Teacher and Teacher-Trainer. You can learn more about Makeda and the work of the Caribbean Mindfulness Institute on the website www.caribbeanmbsr.com and popular social media pages.

n today's fast-paced workplace, it's easy to feel over-whelmed by deadlines, multitasking, and demands of our jobs. Fortunately, we can practice mindfulness at work and support ourselves in staying calm, grounded, and focused - no matter what the day brings. Mindfulness at work can help you work skillfully with everyday stresses and challenges, reduce stress and anxiety, improve focus and concentration, and increase overall well-being – which all ultimately leads to greater productivity, creativity, job satisfaction, and workplace mental health outcomes. Here are 5 easy ways you can start practicing mindfulness at work:

1. Take Mindful Breaks

We all can experience feelings of stress and overwhelm while at work from time to time. One way to calm the mind and body is to take short mindful breaks throughout the day. A mindful break can be as simple as taking a few mindful breaths, going for a short walk outside and really noticing your surroundings, or taking a few minutes to enjoy and savour a cup of tea or coffee. Taking some time to refresh and steady yourself in the present moment can help you reset and refocus; allowing you to resume your work with a clearer mind, greater sense of calm, and more energy.

2. Practice Mindful Communication

Effective communication is essential in the workplace, but it can be challenging, especially when habitual patterns of reactivity threaten to take over. Mindful communication involves being fully present in the moment and listening with an open mind and heart. This means being fully present when speaking and listening, avoiding distractions such as checking emails or scrolling through social media while in a conversation or during meetings, and watching out for the tendency to interrupt others or use judgmental language. To communicate more mindfully, try speaking a bit more slowly, so that you're intentional about the words you are using and message you're conveying Also, practice listening fully to the other person without interrupting, or before offering a response or suggestion. Practicing mindful communication in this way can lead to better relationships with colleagues and interactions that are more productive. It can also support greater collaboration and innovation in the workplace.

3. Set Mindful Goals

Setting goals is an important part of achieving success in the workplace. Mindful goal setting is a bit different from normal goal setting, as it involves being present in the moment and reflecting not only on desired outcomes, but also on values – in this case,



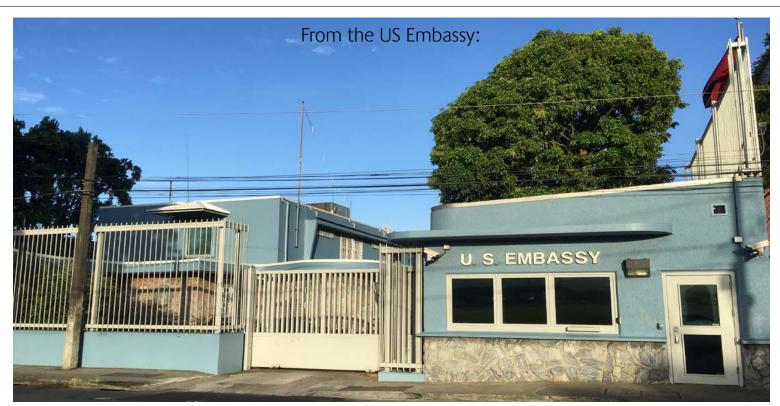
both your own and that of the organisation you work for. This can help you work wisely with discernment, prioritise tasks, and focus on personal or career goals that align with your inner-compass. Studies show that employees who set mindful goals are more likely to be more engaged with their work, and experience greater job satisfaction.

4. Practice Mindful Eating

It can be difficult to maintain healthy eating habits at work, as many of us tend to rush through our meal breaks or mindlessly snack on unhealthy foods throughout the day. Mindful eating can help you turn an ordinary everyday experience like eating into a meaningful mindfulness practice. This can help you squeeze in some mindfulness into a busy workday, make healthier food choices, and even avoid overeating. Mindful eating means being fully present with your snack or meal, paying full attention to the taste, texture, and smell of the food or drink, with a real engaged sense of curiosity. To practice mindful eating, try slowing down so that you can bring all five senses to each bite or forkful. Eating, and just eating.

5. Engage in Mindful Meditation

Mindfulness meditation can be a powerful tool for reducing stress and anxiety, improving focus, concentration, and overall wellbeing. And practicing mindful meditation at work has the added bonus of injecting some calm and self-care to a hectic workday. The good news is, you can practice right at your desk - taking a few minutes each day to sit quietly and focus on the breath or sensations in the body (as little as 3 minutes is all that you need), or by listening to a short guided mindfulness meditation. If you'd like to make mindfulness meditation a regular habit for the longterm, taking part in a mindfulness workshop can be a great place to start. A structured programme with a qualified teacher can help you strengthen your mindfulness muscle, and provide the space and time for you to observe how the fruits of your practice - like increased patience, attention, focus, and compassion - transform your experiences, both inside and outside of work, for the better.



HOW TO APPLY FOR A US VISA

B1/B2 TOURISM AND BUSINESS VISA

Business travellers are generally issued the combined B1/B2 visa. This visa allows for short, non-working trips for leisure, transit and to attend meetings, professional conferences, seminars and conventions.

The following are the required documents to apply for a nonimmigrant visa:

- Valid passport
- Passport photo (if unable to upload online)
- Electronic Visa Application Form Confirmation Page (DS-160) available at <u>ceac.state.gov</u>

You may be eligible to utilise the Interview Waiver to submit the application by courier:

- If your B1/B2 Tourism and Business Visa is expiring or has been expired for less than 48 months (4 years);
- If you are applying for a minor child under the age of 14 years old and at least one parent has a valid U.S. visa;
- If you are over the age of 79 years old (Note that no prior visa is required).

If you meet these criteria, once you pay your visa application processing fee, the online Information and Appointment Website system will prompt you to submit your visa application package to the U.S. Embassy via DHL.

If you are not eligible for interview waiver, you will be directed to the appointment system.

Note: There is no online fee payment option, all non-immigrant fees are paid at Scotiabank branches.

https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-tt/niv/information/fee

For applicants under the age of 14 years old the package should also include one photocopy of the applicant's birth certificate and one photocopy of one or both parent's valid U.S. visa(s).

Do not send original copies of any document except your passport and the passport with the most recent visa. Only passports will be returned to applicants.

Pay particular attention to the questions while creating the online profile. Your responses will determine eligibility for interview waiver.

Mail-in applications are processed in 3-4 weeks from receipt at the Embassy. If you have upcoming travel that does not require the use of a U.S. visa, do not mail in your passport until conclusion of your trip.

E2 - INVESTOR VISA

Foreign nationals travelling to the US to develop and direct operations of an enterprise in which the applicant has invested or is in the process of investing substantial capital.

E2 visa applicants should follow the nonimmigrant visa application process online at **trinidadandtobago.usvisa-info.com.** They are required to create an account, print the payment slip and pay the application fee at Scotiabank. The applicant will use the courier service to submit their application package to the Embassy.

Once the application is received through DHL delivery service (application may not be dropped off at the Embassy), it takes approximately four weeks to completely review the application.

The applicant is then contacted for an in-person interview.

Specific information about the E-2 visa qualification requirements is available on the Department of State's website at:

https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

With the exception of interview waiver for B1/B2 applications all visas services are done by appointment.

This includes petition based work visas, student visas and transit visas. If your visa is lost/stolen provide the details by email to

consularpos@state.gov

The visa will be cancelled to avoid it being used to fraudulently travel to the United States.

We remind frequent travellers to:

- Check the visa before making online bookings
- Apply at least three months before travel date

EXPEDITED APPOINTMENT REQUESTS

If you cannot utilise the interview waiver, you will be prompted to schedule an interview.

If you have selected an interview date that is after your proposed date of travel, you can submit an expedited appointment request.

All expedited appointment requests are processed online. If you would like to submit and expedited appointment request, return to the profile on the information and appointment website and select the "Request Expedite tab" to insert a brief explanation.

Expedited appointments are provided for:

- urgent medical attention
- bereavement immediate family members
- critical training for employees in essential sectors.

Priority is not place on leisure or vacation travel.

EXPEDITING INTERVIEW WAIVER APPLICATIONS

Persons required to travel urgently while awaiting courier-in authorisation can reach out by email to consularpos@state.gov with evidence of the emergency travel.

VISITING THE EMBASSY

Expect to spend at least one hour at the Embassy on your appointment day. There is no public parking available at the US Embassy.

All persons entering the Embassy's waiting area are subject to search. Electronic devices, including cell phones and cameras are not allowed in the waiting area. These items should not be brought to the Embassy. Weapons of any kind, large bags, backpacks, wallets, suitcases, glass containers and any liquids (except baby formula) are also not permit-

Place your application documents and payments in a clear plastic

If your visa is approved on the day of the interview, the passport will be returned in 7-10 working days. ■



CONTACT US

Non-Immigrant Visa Unit **U.S.Embassy** 15 Queen's Park West Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago

Email inquiries: consularpos@state.gov U.S. Embassy website: tt.usembassy.gov Information and appointment website: ais.usvisa-info.com



A Case Study

he kidnapping and murder of Andrea Bharat in 2021 was considered the proverbial 'straw that broke the camel's back', despite it being only one of the numerous similar offenses in our society. It triggered an outcry across our society that has continued to this day. A large portion of our population expressed pain and heartbreak, since they could easily relate to this ordinary young lady as their

daughter, granddaughter, sister, niece, cousin, wife, girlfriend, and best friend from school.

PPGPL took the decision that it was no longer sufficient to say, "Take care, be safe out there" and other superficial phrases of encouragement. Instead, I arranged a series of security awareness sessions facilitated by an experienced security professional in my capacity as Security Coordinator at PPGPL. The sessions targeted our entire female staff and included detailed online two-hour sessions that covered preventing and responding to home invasions and personal security in public spaces.

During the Easter school break, we also hosted sessions for our employees' children, which dealt with cybersecurity and issues such as cyberbullying. These sessions were geared to both primary and secondary school age children.

These online security awareness sessions were repeated during the first six months of 2022. During the next six months, we took it a step further by taking advantage of the relaxed pandemic measures and

By Colin N Harris, CPP AMCHAM T&T - Security Committee

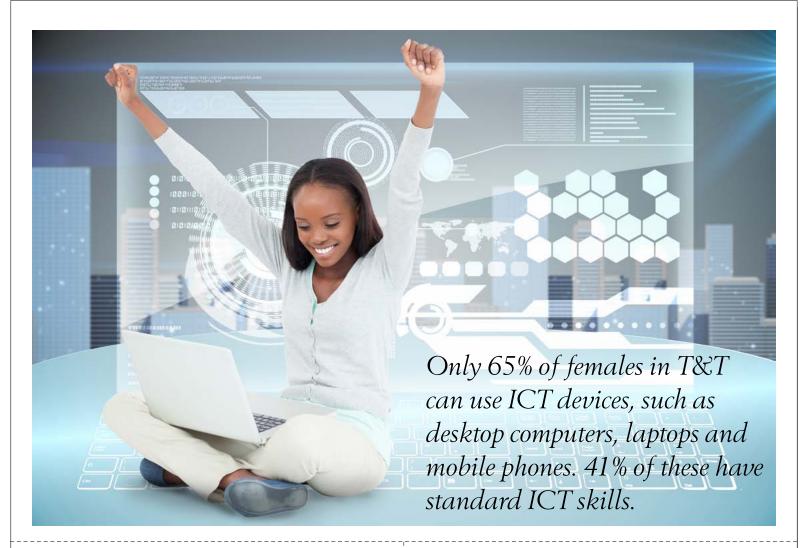
hosted 3-hour long, in-person self-defense sessions with small groups to ensure maximum individual attention. The female participants were taken through a series of scenarios such as:

- Understanding the Psychology of an attacker.
- Evasion of attackers.
- Escaping chokes and holds, inclusive of counter-rape techniques.
- Disarming an attacker with a firearm.

The ladies were drilled relentlessly during these sessions, with each attendee having to satisfy the instructor that she had attained sufficient competency in each technique that was taught. Participants expressed tremendous appreciation and gratitude since the majority never had an opportunity to receive such detailed in-person training in self-defense.

We encourage organisations and other groups of professionals to do more than encourage and offer condolences, but instead to initiate programmes to empower women in the workplace with additional knowledge and skill to protect themselves and their families.





receive a US\$100 Amazon gift card each. The winners of these special prizes were Alana Hasan from Guyana and Chantelle Shedded and Amelia Calame, both from Jamaica. Their dedication and efforts in the Tech4Girls boot camp were recognised, and this additional reward will incentivise them to continue their entrepreneurial journeys.

Participants had the opportunity to hear inspiring remarks from several esteemed female ICT leaders such as Mrs Cynthia Reddock-Downes, Chief Executive Officer, TATT; Ms Abby Knowles, Vice President, Information Technology, Verizon; Mrs Teresa Wankin, Secretary General, CANTO; and Ms Natasha Ottley, Business Transformation Specialist, Ministry of Digital Transformation.

Ms Charlie Ann St Cyr, the Founder and Director of Girls with Roots, captivated the audience with her search engine optimisation (SEO) presentation. Recognising the importance of visibility and discoverability in the digital landscape, Ms St Cyr shared valuable insights and strategies to enhance website rankings, increase organic traffic, and reach target audiences effectively. Her session inspired attendees to harness the power of SEO as a tool for business growth and online success.

This Tech4Girls event marks a significant milestone in the journey of these women as they embark on the exciting path of entrepreneurship, armed with the knowledge gained from the Tech4Girls boot camp and the support of industry-leading organisations. This event was a testament to the power of collaboration, technology, and personal and professional growth opportunities.



ender-specific data from the ITU reveals that girls have fallen further behind boys in learning basic ICT skills. According to the ITU's Facts & Figures 2022 flagship study, 63% of women used the Internet globally in 2022, compared to 69% of men. However, even while gender parity is becoming more prevalent, 259 million fewer women than men have access to the Internet.

In TATT's National Digital Inclusion Survey Report, 2021, 51.4% of the respondents were female. However, of those, only 65% of the female respondents could use ICT devices, such as desktop computers, laptops and mobile phones. Interestingly, only 41% of these individuals had standard ICT skills. These figures reflect the continued need to promote inclusivity, diversity, and female leadership within the local ICT sector.

This event exemplified TATT and our partners' commitment to fostering gender equality and empowering females in the field of ICT.

The impact of the Tech4Girls workshop extends beyond the event itself. TATT aims to create a ripple effect that will inspire a new generation of female leaders in ICT by equipping women with the tools and knowledge to build their online stores.

TATT maintains its commitment to gender equality and inclusive development, and events like Tech4Girls pave the way for a brighter, more equitable future for women in the ICT sector. ■



Empowering Females through ICTs

Tech4Girls: Build Your Online Store Workshop!

A Girls in ICT Day Event!

The Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) extends a huge thank you to all who participated in this year's Girls in ICT Day event titled "Tech4Girls: Build Your Online Store!".

The event gave female participants from the Caribbean the opportunity to learn about website development without coding and how to create an online store using Big Cartel.

Attendees also explored the world of search engine optimisation to learn about strategies and tips to increase traffic to their e-commerce store.

The primary objective of this event aligns with the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU) theme for Girls in ICT this year which is "Digital Skills for Life". Digital skills involve successfully understanding and navigating technology such as software, applications, and digital devices.

Tech4Girls is aimed at empowering young girls to gain practical digital skills and the confidence to pursue their entrepreneurial interests.



Snapshot of the female participants at the ICT Access Centre



Sr. Technology Project Manager, GSMA; Ms Diana Mathura-Hobson, Digicel Foundation; Mrs Lianne Dieffenthaller, Operations Specialist, CANTO; Mr Bradley Ramcharan, Director, C&W/Flow Business; Mrs. Cynthia Reddock-Downes, CEO, TATT; Mr Raj Ramdass, Director, RSC; Ms Tanya Muller, Senior Manager, IT Infrastructure, TSTT and Ms Diana Mathura-Hobson, Project Coordinator, Digicel Foundation



Attendees participating in the workshop at the ICT Access Centre



Technology Project Manager, GSMA at the Belmont Access TT Centre



Featured Speaker Ms Abby Knowles, Vice President, Information Technology,

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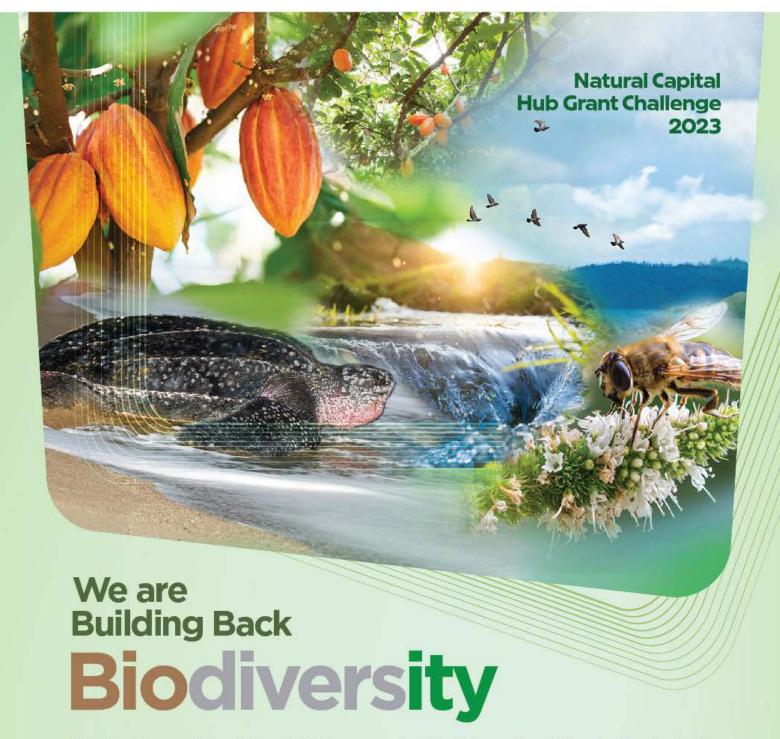


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The Caribbean Natural Capital Hub celebrates the International Day for Biological Diversity with the launch of the Natural Capital Grant Challenge 2023.

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