

Digicel Foundation, Shell T&T invest \$1m in communities

PORT OF SPAIN

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THE Digicel Foundation has awarded ten organisations \$100,000 each to advance community projects, marking the start of its 2025/2026 cycle under its flagship EPIC (Extraordinary Projects Impacting Communities) initiative.

Now in its ninth year, the programme also unveiled a new partnership with Shell Trinidad and Tobago during an event held at the Hyatt Regency hotel on Wednesday.

The collaboration means \$1 million will be channelled into sustainable development projects over the next three months.

Desha Clifford, the foundation's board chair and deputy general counsel for regulatory affairs, said the alliance with Shell expands the programme's national reach.

She noted that Shell has entered into a three-year partnership representing a joint investment of \$3.8 million, aimed at strengthening the impact and longevity of EPIC.

She said that Shell's involvement secures EPIC's status as a national platform for longterm community transformation.

The initiative remains central to the foundation's mission of fostering resilient, sustainable and well-connected communities through grassroots leadership.

This year's cycle focused on three areas: environmental sustainability, sport for development, and technology digitalisation.

Clifford said the foundation's purpose is rooted in supporting people, adding that the response from applicants was overwhelming.

'We got a huge number of applications from organisations across the country...each idea was unique and brought forward ideas rooted in hope, ingenuity and deep desire to uplift their community,' she said.

Clifford praised the commitment of each group, noting that the foundation has so far supported 160 EPIC projects, benefiting 88,000 people. She described EPIC as more than a grants facility, saying it is a partnership designed to deliver extraordinary change. Acting deputy permanent secretary at the Ministry of Culture and Community Development, Martel Waldron, also addressed the audience, saying the ministry recognises the alignment between EPIC and the national agenda to build stronger communities, empower NGOs, and advance sustainable development.

Community development, he said, 'is not something the Government does for the people; it is something we build with the people.'

He added that the partnership between Digicel Foundation and Shell reinforces the capacity of community organisations.