

MEDIA RELEASE

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Dear Editor / Head of Department

Contact: NIHERST Marketing and Communications Department

Email: marketing@niherst.gov.tt



First Lego League National Tournament held its Master Piece

Couva, Trinidad and Tobago. Approximately **One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000)** in prizes was up for grabs at the FIRST LEGO League National Robotics Tournament on 27th April, 2024. The event organized by the National Institute of Higher Education Research Science and Technology (NIHERST) and Shell Trinidad & Tobago Limited (Shell) drew hundreds of onlookers as they cheered on more than **two hundred (200) participants**, from eighteen (18) teams representing various schools in Trinidad and Tobago including **Tranquility Government Secondary, Naparima College, Waterloo Secondary School and Holy Name Convent, Port of Spain.**

The FIRST LEGO League is a global programme with a presence in eighty (80) countries that utilizes theme-based challenges to engage students in research, problem-solving, and engineering. Emphasizing core values such as collaboration, continuous learning, and community engagement, the programme not only fosters competition but also cultivates the mindset of our youth with the tools necessary for creating a sustainable world.

Through its structured approach, the programme nurtures participants to thrive in diverse social environments, preparing them for the evolving future workforce and providing them with invaluable insights for success in global economic landscapes.

This year's theme, Masterpiece, prompts participants to rethink global communication methods, inspiring creative solutions to bridge gaps across cultures and borders.

In its awards ceremony, NIHERST as the operational partner of the programme in Trinidad and Tobago, invited Ms. Sharon Baboolal (NIHERST Board of Governor) to deliver remarks. Ms. Baboolal underscored, **'At NIHERST, we are committed to nurturing the next generation of innovators, scientists, and engineers. Events like the FIRST® LEGO® League**

provide a platform for young people to develop the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.'

She continued her address highlighting, **'This year's competition theme, [MasterPiece], has encouraged our young participants to explore the boundless possibilities of technology and innovation in addressing real-world challenges. It is heartening to see how these bright minds have embraced this theme and developed innovative solutions that have the potential to make a meaningful difference in our communities and beyond.'**

Delivering the featured address on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Education, was Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mr. Wilson Henderson Jr. Mr. Henderson expressed, **"As a faithful advocate for the importance of solidifying STEM principles in our educational system, it is my firm belief that a society driven by technological advancements, must be one where the solutions to tomorrow's challenges are placed in the hands of our youth today. As such, it is imperative that we equip our students with the tools they need to thrive in this digital age"**

The Deputy Permanent Secretary proceeded to impress, **'Your theme of this year's tournament, "Masterpiece," speaks to the ingenuity and creativity that lies at the heart of STEM education. You must remember, however, that the true masterpiece is not just the end result; it is the process of discovery, collaboration, and learning that occurs along the way. So embrace every challenge today as an opportunity to unleash your inner innovator.'**

During the awards declaration, the following teams were announced as the **top winners** in their respective categories: -

- Champion's Award – Welnnovate from El Dorado
- Robot Performance Awards (1st) – Welnnovate from El Dorado
- Robot Performance Awards (2nd) – Matthew Dream, Claxton Bay
- Core Values Award – Holy Name Convent, PoS
- Robot Design Award – Naparima College, San Fernando
- Innovation Project Award – Tranquility Secondary School, PoS
- Motivate Award – Presentation College, Chaguanas
- Rising All-Star Award – Waterloo Secondary School
- Breakthrough Award – Maple Leaf International School, PoS
- Engineering Excellence Award- Presentation College Chaguanas

In their concluding statements, NIHERST extended its gratitude to the event's Platinum Sponsor, Shell Trinidad and Tobago Ltd. as well as bronze sponsors, Massy Foundation, Republic Bank Ltd- Power to Make a Difference, The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago and acknowledge its in-kind sponsors, Caribbean Airlines and Sunshine Snacks.



From Left: Ms. Ryssa Braithwaite (Social Performance and Social Investment Advisor, Shell Trinidad and Tobago Limited), Ms. Sharon Baboolal (Board of Governor, NIHERST), Mr. Patrice Charles (Deputy Director, Physical Education and Sports Division, Ministry of Sports and Community Development), Mr. Wilson Henderson Jr. (Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education), Ms. Natasha Skinner-Rocke (Deputy Chairman, NIHERST), Mrs. Marleen Lord-Lewis (President, NIHERST), Makesi Francis (Foundation Assistant, Massy Foundation)



Back Row (from left): Akeem Philbert Jr. (Coach, Team x), Ms. Sharon Baboolal (Board of Governor, NIHERST), Mr. Patrice Charles (Deputy Director, Physical Education and Sports Division, Ministry of Sports and Community Development), Mr. Wilson Henderson Jr. (Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education), Ms. Natasha Skinner-Rocke (Deputy Chairman, NIHERST), Mrs. Marleen Lord-Lewis (President, NIHERST), Makesi Francis (Foundation Assistant, Massy Foundation)

Front Row (from left): Ms. Ryssa Braithwaite (Social Performance and Social Investment Advisor, Shell Trinidad and Tobago Limited), Adam Ali, Sojourner Philbert, Matthias Roberts, Benjamin Lee, Brandell Jack, Mikkell Martin, Oleta Liverpool-Philbert, (Team X of Welnnovate-Recipients of the Champions Award and Robot Game Award (1st))

About NIHERST

NIHERST is a statutory body established in 1984 to promote science, technology and higher education in Trinidad and Tobago consistent with national development goals. The Institute is an agency under the Ministry of Education. Its current work focuses on the development of a more diversified, knowledge-driven economy, based on the ingenuity of our people and their ability to create, adapt and use science and technology for wealth generation and national development. Many of its programmes aim to strengthen the innovative, creative and entrepreneurial capabilities of the general population. NIHERST is also engaged in research, such as in foresight and innovation, to support economic diversification; promoting innovation and the commercialisation of technology in priority sectors; and building global partnerships.

About Shell STREAM Programme

Shell Trinidad and Tobago Ltd. (STTL) has been implementing Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Arts and Math (S.T.R.E.A.M.) Programme since 2013. This national programme aims to strengthen the energy sector's talent pipeline and the country's progress at economic diversification by enhancing critical thinking, creativity and problem solving through strengthening awareness, competence and the delivery of Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics within the educational system. Since 2019, NIHERST has been one of Shell's facilitators in STREAM education.

The programme represents a key opportunity for informal education and hands on learning around innovative science and technology resources. It communicates not only the fundamentals of STREAM but also enables the foresight to demonstrate how STREAM connects to the everyday and real world. This makes the STREAM concept more relatable and solidifies the correlation between science and society.



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