

## TT EXPERIENCE

In spite of the challenges, there have been already some Best Practices and success stories across Trinidad and Tobago. On the occasion of last year's CSR Leadership Awards hosted by the South Trinidad Chamber of Industry and Commerce (STCIC), a number of companies were recognized for achieving remarkable success thanks to their corporate volunteering activities.

**BG Trinidad and Tobago Limited**, the multinational energy company, obtained the 'Commitment to Transparency Award' as well as 'the Commitment to Local Business Development Award' for its voluntary provision of services aiding Port of Spain's beautification and cleanliness.

**Guardian Holding Limited**, a financial company, organized an important initiative in 2008 to improve employee volunteerism. The 'Guardian Initiative for Transformation (GIFT)' includes a number of projects implemented by TEAM GHL, a team of Guardian employees aiming at improving life for those less fortunate. GHL's employee community initiatives provide opportunities for the employer and the employee and the company as a whole, improving the image of the company, promoting team building, fostering employee interests in community involvement and their skills, building loyalty in the company and reinforcing internal values. GIFT also includes two programs, the Employee-Driven Program with volunteers developing their own projects and the Employee-Partnering Programs, where volunteer work results from partnerships with Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

Finally, in the 'Recognizing the Value of People' category, the STCIC CSR award was won by **Methanex**, a company of the energy sector which scored highly in the opinion of its own employees. Methanex operates a system of employee engagement surveys as a way of tracking employees' commitment to the company. The surveys provide a vehicle for employee input about aspects of the workplace that were viewed positively and those that need further improvement. The findings showed that employees' voluntary engagement brings greater financial success, attraction and a happier and more productive workforce.

Among local companies, there are substantial differences in managing corporate volunteerism depending on the specific sector they are involved in. Companies operating in the energy sector like Atlantic LNG and **the National Gas Company of Trinidad & Tobago Ltd.** have adopted a more structured approach towards corporate volunteering **and are finding themselves predominantly involved in the protection of the environment**, in the improvement of infrastructures and in the development of programs on education through scholarships and sponsorships of sporting and cultural activities.

**The National Gas Company of Trinidad & Tobago Ltd (NGC) for example** is committed to youth through both an indirect and direct involvement of the company. This interest in schools takes on a number of different forms, among which there are employees' visits of primary and secondary schools to educate students about the natural gas industry and pipeline safety.

Another good example of employee involvement in the promotion of volunteerism with local communities is provided by Powergen, a local energy company. It has designated a small department devoted to the development of social programs. This has created a competitive spirit among employees

to select the best project proposals, which the company will support financially, with the added benefit of time-off for employees involved in the program.