

United Way.....planting the seeds for Social Innovation

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Collaboration is the key to social change especially when social ills such as crime, teenage pregnancy and school violence continue to plague our communities. The United Way of Trinidad and Tobago (UWTT) understands this, realizing that social change is not going to happen as a result of one organisation or one Government sector or commercial entity working on complex issues.

When UWTT was established 15 years ago, it held as its vision the desire to be the moving force in developing and sustaining a civil society in Trinidad and Tobago. It modelled its operations after United Way of Canada and focused on mobilizing human, financial and physical resources for the benefit of community service organizations.

Like United Ways all over the world, UWTT is a non-profit organisation which raises charitable donations from companies and individuals. These funds are then channelled to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to be used to deliver critical social services to citizens in need.

UWTT has disbursed TT\$37 million to over 60 NGOs throughout Trinidad and Tobago. But UWTT has recognised that a different approach, perhaps an innovation, is required to impact the social landscape of our twin Republic. Hence a collaborative effort is needed. It has been recorded that significant progress is more likely when nonprofits, governments, businesses and the public are brought together around a common agenda to create collective impact.

That's why two years ago, UWTT approached the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust II and was successful in receiving grant funding to pilot the implementation of the Collective Impact Model in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Collective Impact Model is the commitment from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem. It uses shared measurements and a common strategic objective to address social problems that require deep collaboration across sectors and organizations.

Other countries and organisations around the world have seen considerable benefits from the collective impact approach. UWTT's sister organisation, United Way Greater Milwaukee, for example, has used the Collective Impact Model to successfully reduce the teenage pregnancy rate from 52 births per 1,000 females between the ages of 15 and 17 in 2006 to 25.7 births per 1,000 in 2012.

In Trinidad and Tobago, a pilot project is currently being initiated to mitigate social issues most impacting our youths. UWTT's partners have made some investment in support of this initiative. When asked about their involvement to execute the Collective Impact Model, officials at Republic Bank Limited, Scotiabank Trinidad and Tobago and BG Trinidad and Tobago welcomed the opportunity to partner for the benefit of Trinidad and Tobago's youths and offered the following remarks:

“Republic Bank’s involvement is a direct result of its commitment to building successful societies.”

“Scotiabank Trinidad and Tobago and the Scotiabank Trinidad and Tobago Foundation view this as a meaningful initiative that will help create a sustainable and brighter future for our nation’s youth.”

“BG T&T recognizes the tremendous value UWTT brings to creating a better balance in society - working with NGOS and CBOs to reach some of the neediest in the country”

The journey towards the implementation of a Collective Impact Model continues in the full understanding that solutions are possible and available but require significant collaboration.

United Way Worldwide has taken the lead in bringing together nonprofits, governments, businesses and the public around a common agenda to create collective impact.

UWTT, still in the early stages of this approach, is learning from the experiences of its International affiliates. The approach is measured, studied and has the potential to deliver the real social change Trinidad and Tobago has been chasing.

If you would like to get involved or find out more about Collective Impact, you may contact United Way Trinidad and Tobago via email, facebook or twitter at unitedway@tstt.net.tt, [facebook.com/UnitedWayTT](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedWayTT) or [@UnitedWay868](https://twitter.com/UnitedWay868) respectively.



From left to right

Mrs. Pamela Francis - CEO United Way Trinidad & Tobago

Mrs. Candice Clarke-Salloum - BG Trinidad & Tobago - Head Public Affairs

Ms Inca Mohammed - JB Fernandez Memorial Trust

Mr. Ian Benjamin - Chairman- United Way Trinidad & Tobago

Mr. Shazard Mohammed - Manager, Market Intelligence and Segment - Republic Bank Limited

Mrs. Gisele Marfleet - Chairman - Trinidad & Tobago Scotiabank Foundation

Mrs. Michelle Adams-Padia - Programme Coordinator - United Way Trinidad & Tobago