

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Young Leaders lead the way for a Sustainable Future

St. Stephen's College earns \$100,000 to execute project proposal

PORT OF SPAIN, May 29, 2025 — St. Stephen's College, Princes Town clinched top honours at this year's RBC Young Leaders Programme with their plan titled "SUSTAIN – St. Stephen's United for Skills, Training And Innovation."

The winning initiative centres on educational empowerment and skills development, offering free remedial English and Mathematics classes, vocational and financial literacy training to the diverse socio-economic community surrounding the school.

With the theme "Sustainable Future", students were encouraged to design projects to implement initiatives addressing environmental conservation, waste reduction or community resilience. Participants pitched their innovative ideas to a panel of judges for the chance to win \$100,000 to bring their projects to life.

Last year's champion, Manzanilla Secondary, returned to the winners' circle, this time securing second place and \$50,000 for its plan to create a new Eden at its school. The project aims to address educational inequality among students by introducing a Digital Learning Hub with laptops and expanded Wi-Fi capabilities, ensuring all students have access to essential digital resources, similar to those available in many other schools.

Bishop Anstey was awarded third place, with a prize of \$25,000 for its proposal to develop an AI-controlled ventilation system for its Food and Nutrition Lab and a school-based herb and vegetable garden. Their plan includes repurposing school food scraps into compost, creating a sustainable, student-driven ecosystem, and enhancing the efficiency of the lab.

In sharing comments from the judges, Stefan Simmons, a co-lead for the program praised the students for the calibre of projects stating they showcased innovation, teamwork and a deep sense of responsibility toward a greener future. The participants also shared how the programme fostered critical thinking, leadership, and a proactive approach to sustainability.

Minister of Education, Dr. Michael Dowlath, who was in attendance recognised the students for their outstanding efforts and congratulated the winning participants.

St. Stephen's College was also recognized for winning the Best Written Presentation, while Manzanilla Secondary received the Best Oral Presentation award. Speyside Secondary School, Tobago was awarded for the Most Innovative Proposal.

The only individual award went to Vinaayak Lall from Hillview College, who was recognised as the Best Presenter.

RBC's Managing Director and Vice President, Commercial Banking, Trinidad and Tobago, Marc Jardine explained that the program allowed the students to explore biodiversity loss, recycling, and reforestation, while addressing urgent challenges in their schools and communities. Additionally, participants were also taught financial literacy, project management, and presentation skills and explored the concepts related to ESG.

"Most importantly, you have started to see yourself as active participants in shaping our world. And that truly is the heart of this program. We designed it not just to impart knowledge, but to ignite a spark within each of you – a spark of curiosity, a flame of passion and the unwavering conviction that you have the power to be an agent of change."

He challenged the Young Leaders to speak up, be innovative, educate, collaborate and above all, act. "Take the first step, however, small it may seem towards a more sustainable way of life... this isn't the end of your journey, it is just the beginning of your journey as a leader. Carry the knowledge, the inspiration and the connections you have made during this program forward The world is awaiting your impact," he said.

Thirteen schools participated in this year's program, including the top three from last year's competition. RBC Young Leaders is the Bank's flagship youth program and demonstrates its commitment to investing in the next generation of leaders for a stronger Caribbean. This year, this initiative was also expanded to The Bahamas and Cayman Islands.

RBC's Treasurer, Caribbean Nichola Guy, who is also the Executive Sponsor for the program, said the Bank looks forward to continuing the momentum.

"Seeing the creativity, passion and leadership displayed by these young leaders has been truly inspiring," she said. "The programme is more than just an initiative - it's a launchpad for the next generation of leaders, equipping them with skills, confidence and vision to shape a better future. RBC is proud to support such meaningful efforts and looks forward to seeing the lasting impact these talented youth will make with the schools, communities and beyond."

PHOTO CAPTIONS



The winners of the 2025 RBC Young Leaders program from St. Stephen's College, accept their trophy and top prize of \$100,000.



The students of Manzanilla Secondary take a shot with Leo the Lion, as they show off their digital deposit of \$50,000 in recognition of earning second place in the 2025 RBC Young Leaders program.



Third place winners in this year's RBC Young Leaders program was Bishop Anstey High School, Port of Spain, who walked away with \$25,000.



Marc Jardine, RBC's Managing Director delivers remarks at the closing and awards ceremony of the 2025 RBC Young Leaders Programme at the Hyatt Regency on May 27.



Young Leaders from Speyside High School, Tobago



Young Leaders from St. Mary's College



A Young Leader poses with Leo the Lion.

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