

# CSR<sup>2020</sup>

## Corporate Sustainability Review



Covid-19 and the SDGs – A World of Solidarity



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3

## EDITORIAL

5

## CSR Stories

**AGILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY – ATLANTIC'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19** 5-8

**bp TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S MILLION-DOLLAR DRIVE**  
PROVIDING HELP AND HOPE AMIDST A PANDEMIC 9-13

**NGC INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO OUR BUSINESS**  
FOR NATIONAL BENEFIT 15-18

**THE EVOLUTION OF SERVICE**  
HOW SHELL TRANSFORMED ITS STAKEHOLDER  
RELATIONSHIPS AMIDST COVID-19 19-21

**NESTLÉ:**  
DEMONSTRATING SHARED VALUE IN THE PANDEMIC 22-26

**ANSA McAL:**  
TOGETHER WE ARE FAMILY – OUR COVID STORY 27-33

35

## PROFILES

**HEROES FOUNDATION:**  
EMPOWERING NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP 35-40

**A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**  
A LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
AND ACP STATES *Interview with Ambassador Patrick I. Gomes* 41-47

**ADAM'S BAGLERY & RESTAURANT**  
DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE FOOD BUSINESS 48-51

52

## FEATURES – COVID-19 FOCUS

**THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)**  
CONTRIBUTING TO SDG GOALS IN REGIONAL AGRICULTURE  
*A Conversation with an IICA Representative - Diana Francis* 52-60

**CARPHA'S REGIONAL TOURISM AND HEALTH PROGRAM**  
AND ITS HOLISTIC RESPONSE TO  
COVID-19 IN THE CARIBBEAN 61-65

52

## FEATURES – COVID-19 FOCUS (continued)

TTMA: STRATEGIZING FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH IN A DOWNTURN 66-70

71

## REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP – CSR HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION  
OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020 71-77

TechnipFMC – CONTRIBUTING TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN GUYANA 78-79

COVID-19 PRESENTS NEW THREATS TO ECONOMIC STABILITY  
UN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGIONAL RECOVERY 80-83

PHILANTHROPY IN TIMES OF COVID 84-86

87

## OPINIONS

INTEGRATING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS INTO CORPORATE  
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 87-89

SUSTAINABILITY IN A POST COVID-19 WORLD:  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE DECADE OF ACTION 90-91

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION  
A CHALLENGE TO SD8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 92-94

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# CSR

The **Corporate Sustainability Review** features the unique social programmes and experiences of companies from a wide range of sectors including Energy, Finance, Manufacturing, Telecommunication Services, Retail and others as they strengthen communities and transform lives across the Caribbean region.

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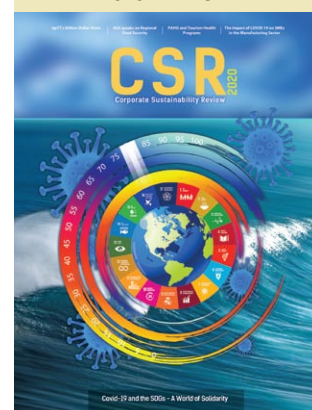
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2020 EDITION







**It has been a roller-coaster ride for much of the region, with people adapting to ever changing Covid-measures to protect themselves from the virus, and with many businesses struggling as customers and clients remain largely sequestered at home. Closed, open and then closed again. This has become the rhythm across the region as sporadic spikes in contagion accentuate the uncertainty of the prevailing business environment.**

Essential workers faced the risk at the onset of the pandemic – many of them from the health and protective services. But along with these, were workers in food and beverage manufacturing. Many of them braved public transport systems, armed themselves with PPE and adopted new HSE protocols to protect fellow employees as well as their loved ones waiting for them at home. One thing is certain – no will ever again take the simple things in life for granted. Covid-19 has proven it is no discriminator of persons – no one is immune.

Jamaica was the first to reopen for business, giving the island a jumpstart on market gains as others lagged behind in addressing economic recovery. The country began welcoming international travellers on June 15 with an extensive set of protocols for visitors, including health screening before entry and upon entry.

In Barbados, the island is seizing on the opportunity to market the destination as the perfect Covid-19 escape. The packaged offer of sun, sand and sea presents a rather attractive alternative offer to business tourists seeking new remote workspaces.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Covid-19 has compounded a period marked by sustained low oil prices. The country followed a reopening of the economy with a partial shutdown as infections suddenly spiked after a long period of stability. The measures have had negative effects on business – particularly SMEs. The extended deployment of social programmes is also costing the government and tax payers. Clearly there is no

single prescription for getting this right as every territory has unique challenges.

This edition of the Review was designed around the Sustainable Development Goals as we aim to benchmark how corporate social investment programmes are helping to progress SDG plans and targets. The unexpected arrival of Covid-19 has provided an interesting lens for measuring how effective the region is being in realising the SDGs.

In our features segment, we look at the impact of the pandemic on sustainable issues of health, tourism, agriculture, meaningful work and climate change, through a series of interviews with the Caribbean Public Health Agency, Franka Costello of the Trinidad & Tobago Manufacturers' Association, Diana Francis of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, and former Secretary-General of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, Dr Patrick Gomes who is interviewed as our 2020 Conscious Leader. In an interview with Lawrence Arjoon, the Heroes Foundation installs a new CEO who is bringing different ideas to youth engagement and transformation of the energy industry.

Companies have responded to the crisis by working with government, agencies and civil society groups to distribute PPE, food and relief programmes to address the massive social fallout that has resulted from prolonged closure of business and loss of jobs, as well as the lack of digital infrastructure and tools needed to return students to learning in virtual classrooms. The disparity in access to technology, water and healthcare are just some of the issues that the pandemic is showing up – and this is altering the way in which business is delivering and strategizing CSR programmes.

In our corporate segment, Atlantic is “Transforming lives by passionately energizing our world”; ANSA tells its Covid story from the perspective of family; BPTT undertakes a million-dollar relief drive; Nestle prioritises employee health and comfort; the National Gas Company integrates sustainability into its business; and Shell T&T invests in major equipment to bolster capacity at hospitals.

In Guyana, SME business GameXpress sparks a national clean-up campaign when it hires a man made homeless by Covid-19; and TechnipFMC is part of the global and regional services provided by TechnipFMC plc to the new local energy sector. Our Regional Roundup gathers stories from all across the Caribbean to give readers a glimpse of how business is contributing to building better societies.

Donna P. Ramsammy  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# Energy

## That Inspires Advancement

It is our passion that drives us forward.

In our rapidly evolving world, Atlantic is intent on continuing to yield sustainable value that energises us all.

We believe in the ingenuity of our people and the strength of our communities. We believe in the extraordinary potential of all our citizens, and are committed to investing in them as well as the technologies which will power progression.

Let us continue transforming lives, together.



*Moving a generation ahead*







## AGILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY – ATLANTIC'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

### SUSTAINABILITY AND ATLANTIC'S BUSINESS STRATEGY

**"Transforming lives by passionately energizing our world"** is the vision under which Atlantic continues in our aspiration to be a world class business and maintain our global position among the world's producers of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). We see our purpose as three-fold: to sustainably produce LNG safely, reliably and profitably; to develop the capability of our people; and to be a 'Force for Good' by enabling the economic and social betterment of Trinidad and Tobago.

In line with our vision and purpose, the need to future-proof our business has always been a key driver for us.

As a critical player in Trinidad and Tobago's natural gas value chain and an essential service, we know that our success is of national importance. So, faced with the unprecedented circumstances of 2020, combined with the ever-evolving business landscape, our ability to develop considerable agility was, and continues to be, important to our country. At the same time, we are keenly aware that we must remain true to our core values, the Atlantic spirit values – Safety, Performance, Integrity, Respect and Teamwork. These are our moral compass and we cannot venture forward into the future without them.

### DEMONSTRATING OUR AGILITY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Atlantic team has quickly adapted to new ways of working, especially operational staff who keep the trains running. Armed with an understanding that much of what faces our company is outside of our control, Atlantic's leadership encouraged the team to seize the unique opportunity to thrive in the changing world being faced every day. In the very early stages Atlantic adopted three main principles to guide our strategy and to underpin all the decisions and actions to be pursued:

1. Protecting the health and safety of our people
2. Ensuring safe and reliable operations
3. Demonstrating care for our stakeholders

Each team member was urged to do their part to add value every day and to keep operations going with a true spirit of community. For Atlantic, values govern our way of working and must continue to underpin the team's collective future. The following are four initiatives that demonstrate Atlantic's ability to respond at the business, local and national level.

### KEEPING OUR TRAINS RUNNING

(SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING,  
SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE)

To achieve our goals Atlantic established a dedicated COVID-19 Task Force before the first local case was declared in country. Their work was to steer the company ahead during turbulent times, playing an instrumental role in making decisions to guide adjustments to processes, procedures and work arrangements that would allow Atlantic to respond in an agile way while protecting people.



This Task Force presided over many deliverables inclusive of:

1. Establishing and communicating the framework and triggers to guide Atlantic's response. This involved a scenario, risk-based approach consistently reviewing the environment and adjusting procedures, escalating, and de-escalating as necessary based on external factors. Alert levels and appropriate responses were designed to adjust mitigation processes and protocols and to ensure business continuity and the health and wellbeing of all.
2. Designing and implementing strategies, varying models and permutations of spaces and work rotations to keep operations personnel in as bio-secure an environment as possible. In the same vein, extensive procedures guiding return to office protocols and arrangements for non-operational staff were created to complement these efforts.
3. Procuring thermal scanners, masks, and other relevant PPE for Atlantic's site, as well as guiding comprehensive internal communications campaigns for Atlantic staff, and service providers to acquaint all persons with the required safety protocols and to encourage compliance.
4. Ensuring a suite of support systems and programmes were in place to support the wellbeing of all personnel, inclusive of psychological support services, occupational health consultancy, ergonomic and other considerations such as a virtual gym, motivational talks and continued staff engagement.



*Covid Guidelines*

Given the company's national role as an essential service and the nature of our operations, Atlantic understood the need to embrace new ways of working while assiduously mitigating risk. Throughout, the company continued planned maintenance activities instead of deferring them. Some of these works were completed by third parties requiring the development of a "heat map" which allowed for the determination of how many people could be accommodated in any one area at a time, how they could safely work, and observe all safety protocols.

Armed with experience but always adopting a culture of continuous improvement, the Task Force and by extension all at Atlantic, will continue to challenge ourselves to find the right mix and model to keep our operations going while protecting our people.

## ENSURING BUSINESS CONTINUITY THROUGH DIGITALISATION (SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE)

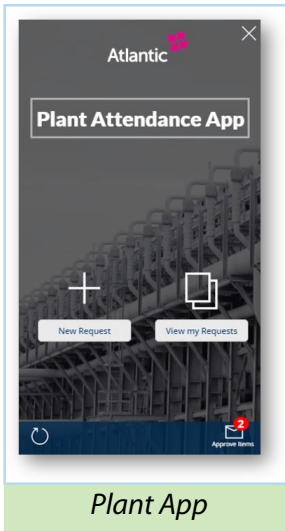
At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Atlantic successfully implemented a smooth transition to remote work for over 450 staff over the course of a weekend. The

ability to manage this sudden shift was a direct result of investments Atlantic made in digitalisation to ensure and enable business continuity.

Two critical developments also placed Atlantic in an excellent position to adapt to the disruption caused by Covid-19. The first was the implementation of systems and tools that allowed appropriate staff to gain access to site critical information from anywhere in the world. The second was the adoption of virtual collaboration tools and the associated training of staff, allowing teams to work together more effectively and efficiently regardless of location.

A variety of tools and Apps were also rolled out in response to Covid-19 to address everything from collaboration and enhanced cybersecurity to electronic signatures and the internal development of a Remote Working App among others. These were all designed to ensure that employees were able to stay connected to the business and informed of critical events occurring in the country. This even included keeping in good physical shape via the Virtual Gym which formed part of the App. A Return to Office App was also developed to seamlessly manage requests to work from our administrative facilities, and a similar App to





Plant App

control plant access, with yet another to roll out site safety inductions. Combined with the Covid-19 Health Screening App, the occupational health, site management and security teams were well equipped to ensure compliance with social distancing and other protocols using technology.

The result of these efforts is that the company is well advanced in onboarding innovative use of technology and building a fully tech savvy workforce, prepared for the challenges of 2020 and beyond.



Working Safely.

## SUPPORTING THOSE MOST IN NEED (SDG 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES)

The Covid-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges across all parts of society, but perhaps these were felt more acutely in adult and children's care homes. Indeed, these groups were specifically highlighted by the Government at a very early stage in the pandemic. In response, Atlantic leveraged its relationship with small farmers participating in our Loan for Enterprise and Network Development (LEND) Agency initiative, to access fresh produce for the Point Fortin Extended Care Centre and Ferndean's Children's Home. In doing so, Atlantic was also able to support farmers

who were facing challenges selling their crops due to reduced demand and difficulty accessing markets – a true example of sustainable corporate social responsibility.

Atlantic covered the cost of the items produced by the farmers and coordinated delivery to the Point Fortin Extended Care Centre and Ferndean's Children's Home. The company also supplemented the fresh produce with additional foodstuff, cleaning and personal hygiene supplies and personal protective equipment purchased from local retailers. More broadly speaking, Atlantic has been assessing the repayment obligations for LEND clients on a case by case basis and providing relief to those most in need.

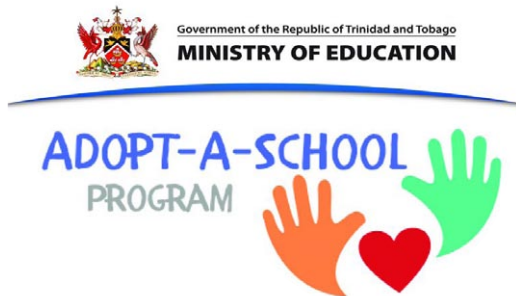
Additionally, during a time of significant challenges with global supply, Atlantic successfully procured 11 ventilators, which were donated to supplement Trinidad and Tobago's health care system for the country's battle with Covid-19.

Physical contributions aside, Atlantic's staff were also able to aid the wider national community through the volunteer initiative coordinated by United Way Trinidad & Tobago. This partnership enabled members of staff to volunteer their time to field calls associated with the delivery of social assistance grants by the Government.

The challenges posed by Covid-19 also made us re-examine the approach to delivering community projects, highlighting the need for more virtual events and facilities where complete control of conditions for health, safety, and hygiene is a factor.

## FACILITATING ONLINE LEARNING (SDG 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION)

Around the world, children have seen their normal daily routines thrown out the window. For now, gone are the uniforms, morning drives to school and eagerly anticipated playtime at break and lunch. Despite this, education has had to continue, with teachers, students and parents forced to adapt overnight. For many students especially those preparing for exams, it has been a particularly stressful time.



To facilitate this transition and ease the challenge, Atlantic worked with partners to close the gap between teachers and students through online learning interactions. The company is acquiring a significant number of devices for children in need in both primary and secondary schools in our home community of Point Fortin and environs. This is part of the Ministry of Education's "Adopt a School Programme." The educational needs of children is an area that Atlantic has been investing in significantly for many years, so this is seen as the right step to 'adopt our community' to provide much-needed resources to our children in 34 schools during this time.

These interventions, particularly our support for local communities and schools across the country, are in

response to an immediate need. Flexibility and speed of response is critical. However, now is the time to prepare for the period of global and national rebuilding that is to come. Over the years, Atlantic has learned that a better future can be built by making choices that embrace better ways of doing things and of collaborating with each other. The company embraces that strategic focus on Sustainability by companies such as ours can make all the difference.

We see ourselves not only as an LNG producer, but as an energy business of the future that can continue to transform people's lives for the better. We will therefore, continue to support our NGO partners and their work in developing entrepreneurship; educating children and youth; raising environmental awareness; and facilitating health, wellness and holistic development of sports – all enabled by increasing use of technology. We will continue to work collaboratively with our service providers to share best practices and help build capability among the sector's work force. Sustainability is what enables our country and communities to thrive. It is also what will ensure that Atlantic will not only become, but also remain world-class 20 years from now and beyond.

*The Atlantic Facility at Point Fortin.*







Trinidad and Tobago

## bp TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S MILLION-DOLLAR DRIVE PROVIDING HELP AND HOPE AMIDST A PANDEMIC

For over 50 years, bp Trinidad and Tobago (bpTT) has been entwined within the fabric of Trinidad and Tobago's society. The company is the single biggest contributor to the country's economy, producing over half of all its hydrocarbons. bpTT's reach into the communities in which it operates is legendary; its partnerships and support for the arts and culture is iconic. Trinidad and Tobago has given much to bp, and the company feels it is more than a responsibility - it's an honour to serve this country. bpTT's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes, then, are extensive. The company's core focus areas are education, enterprise development, environment and arts and culture. bpTT has a range of long-term projects that distinctively emphasise each of these elements. This year, however, as the Covid-19 pandemic spread around the globe, making landfall in Trinidad and Tobago on March 12, the company was presented with a unique challenge – and opportunity – to provide comfort and inspiration to the people of Trinidad and Tobago in an unprecedented time of crisis.

The CSR Review spoke with members of the bpTT CSR team- Joel Primus, Community Sustainability and Stakeholder Relations Adviser and Matthew Pierre, Community Liaison Officer for Mayaro; alongside Sterling Belgrove, Founder and Chairman of the Rose Foundation, about how they envisioned and helped to execute bpTT's Covid-19 Crisis Response.

One of the fundamental aspects of bpTT's Covid-19 response was being able to bring stability to many families, demonstrating the company's commitment to Trinidad and Tobago. As the Government sought to secure the safety of its citizenry and mitigate the spread of the virus through revolutionary shut down measures, the most vulnerable in society were severely impacted; unable to meet their basic needs. Business operations, including bpTT, were also affected with the company implementing various work-from-home programme measures while imposing new safety and sanitisation policies at its various sites. With all going on - bpTT stood ready to serve. *"Our immediate target was the most vulnerable in society – as well as the grassroots organisations dedicated to helping them,"* said Joel Primus, the Community Sustainability and Stakeholder Relations Adviser at bpTT.

The company quickly mobilized funding to the tune of 1M TTD for emergency relief and related projects. *"In an effort to ensure that the most vulnerable throughout the country benefitted, we reached out to one of our trusted civil society partners, the Rose Foundation, to coordinate the activities. We wanted to complement the government and national effort to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 because with more hands-on deck, we would be able to touch more lives throughout the country,"* Primus added.

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

bpTT and the Rose Foundation have an ongoing partnership that spans nearly 15 years. The Foundation has a sound organisational and governance structure with a proven track record in assisting the vulnerable, the poor and underserved communities.

Through the Foundation, bpTT established six foodbanks in Trinidad - Diego Martin, Arima, Chaguanas, San Fernando, Moruga and Mayaro and one in Tobago – servicing some 1,559 families or nearly 7795 individuals. There were also several smaller satellite operations that helped expand the reach of the foodbank initiative. In order to spur



## bp TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S MILLION-DOLLAR DRIVE PROVIDING HELP AND HOPE AMIDST A PANDEMIC (CONTINUED)



Students and representatives from various community organisations with their laptops donated by bpTT through the Rose Foundation.



Sterling Belgrove, Founder of the Rose Foundation distributing grants and foodstuff in Tobago.



Packaged sweet potato and yams, sourced from local farmers, at the Arima food bank and central storage facility.

entrepreneurship and economic activity in the various communities, the Rose Foundation worked with local farmers to source different types of produce for the food banks. Watermelon, eggplant, herbal seasoning, pumpkins, patchoi and sweet potatoes were included in the hampers for those in need. *"This is part of bpTT's commitment to supporting an eco-system which integrates each element of the local value chain, so every dollar spent is optimised,"* said Sterling Belgrove, Founder and Chairman of the Rose Foundation.

The Foundation made many cross-country runs to ensure that they were able to assist those most in need. *"There were people who had lost jobs, some in dire need of medical supplies, others on the verge of eviction, some with their houses on the verge of collapse, and some suffering from depression,"* Belgrove recalled. Between March and April, the Foundation was able to help over 5,000 people through mass and targeted distribution. *"We were able to provide food, medical care, basic home repairs and in some cases, alternative housing,"* he added. In keeping with social distancing protocols, bpTT set up a hotline so that people needing information could call without having to make in-person enquiries.

bpTT's staff also made personal financial contributions to these efforts. Primus noted that these funds, in particular, were earmarked and directed to families with small children (under five years old), whose needs were not covered in a standard hamper. *"It really demonstrated care, connectivity and empathy with our fellow man. CSR is important to bp on a global level. Locally, staff is largely from Trinidad and Tobago, so when bpTT responds in this way, you know it's from a sense of national pride,"* he said.

## GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION

Another key aspect of bpTT's response, was providing small grants to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) that were working on Covid-19 interventions, especially those in rural communities and that were committed to grassroots work. These grants helped bolster the groups' capacity to effectively deliver programmes in their communities.





## bp TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S MILLION-DOLLAR DRIVE PROVIDING HELP AND HOPE AMIDST A PANDEMIC (CONTINUED)



*Sterling Belgrove, Founder and Chairman of the Rose Foundation, wheels out bottles of watermelon juice, sourced from farmers in Mayaro, for distribution at the Penal/Debe, Food bank.*

Grants were awarded to several organisations including the Living Water Community in Port of Spain; Support Autism Trinidad and Tobago in Claxton Bay; the Carenage Improvement & Empowerment League; and the Dass Trace Youth Empowerment Committee in Enterprise, just to name a few of the beneficiaries based in Trinidad. In Tobago, the Golden Lane Fisherfolk Association; the Plymouth Fishermen's Association; the Roxborough Police Club; and the Empowerment Foundation of Tobago in Patience Hill received assistance. In total, as part of its Covid-19 outreach, bpTT supported 30 NGOs and CBOs with donations and grants amounting to nearly \$240,000.

As Primus explains, *"We have always focused on working through NGOs and CBOs because they have a first-hand understanding of their communities and are best able to identify and reach the most vulnerable. It also allows us to strengthen our bond with communities. bpTT's Covid-19 relief went beyond financial support and the company was able to*



*Sterling Belgrove, Founder of the Rose Foundation distributing grants to NGO and CBO representatives in Trinidad.*

*help CBOs create opportunities for economic activity in a time of scarce resources and high demand. Some of the CBOs we supported are social enterprises and where they had adequate land, we provided them with seedlings to grow short crops that could then be harvested and sold. So, beyond the initial grant support, the organisations are equipped to generate income that can be invested in their own entrepreneurial activity. As a company this is how we build sustainability into our programmes. It's all part of how bpTT supports the development of a circular economy in Trinidad and Tobago."*

## HELPING OUR HOME

While bpTT is a Trinidad and Tobago company, it has a special relationship with Mayaro, its home base and hub for much of its East Coast exploration and production activity. *"Mayaro is family. For much of the 50 years in which bpTT has been operating in Trinidad and Tobago, Mayaro has been home,"* said Matthew Pierre, bpTT's Community Liaison Officer for Mayaro. bpTT has 15 platforms offshore and two onshore terminals in the area. *"Trinidad and Tobago and the people of Mayaro have been good to us, and we see it as part of our duty to be a good corporate citizen,"* he reflected.

Over the years the company has played an integral part in the development of Mayaro via the **'Brighter Prospects'** scholarship programme, the Mayaro Initiative for Private Enterprise Development (MIPED) that provides micro-loans to local entrepreneurs and support for various environmental projects to enhance the sustainability of



bp TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S MILLION-DOLLAR DRIVE  
PROVIDING HELP AND HOPE AMIDST A PANDEMIC (CONTINUED)

the community. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a new angle to the dynamic, but bpTT was determined to help the community to manage the immediate fallout created by the pandemic. Together both community and company stepped up to the challenge.

In record time, bpTT began distributing care packages to the elderly and those with underlying medical issues who were less able to leave their homes to access supplies. These packages included sanitising wipes, bleach and disinfectant. The company also worked with the Mayaro Regional Corporation and the Member of Parliament's Office on their public information campaigns. *"bpTT became a first responder – even to the first responders in Mayaro. We delivered personal protective equipment (PPE) including, surgical and N95 masks and sanitisers to the Mayaro and Guayaguayare Health Centres, and to the Coast Guard station at Galeota,"* Pierre said.

bpTT distributed hot meals to food insecure families in Mayaro during the month of June. NGOs and CBOs helped to identify the families and to source community volunteers who delivered the meals to those in need across the entire Mayaro region from Biche to Galeota. In support of Mayaro businesses, a local catering company, owned by a MIPED loan beneficiary, was contracted to supply the meals.



Master chef Carla Mitchell and her staff prepare meals for distribution to families in Mayaro during the month of June.

## KEEPING THE COUNTRY CONNECTED

The Covid-19 pandemic emphasised the need for people to stay connected – from work from home to online classes, people without access to computers or other technological devices faced the challenge of falling behind. There was clear evidence of the digital divide. bpTT is always committed to encouraging academic excellence in Trinidad and Tobago. Given the mandatory shuttering of schools and the shifting of classes to online platforms, bpTT donated 110 devices to students and community groups across the country. bpTT's corporate security team donated 45 computers to the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) – the company's partners in keeping its onshore and offshore assets and personnel safe and secure. bpTT received a certificate of appreciation from the TTDF for its efforts. Eighty-five bpTT staff volunteers were also on hand to help people complete, print and submit application forms to the government's social service agencies.

## CSR BEYOND COVID-19

Like much in this post-pandemic world, CSR must also evolve. *"Covid-19 has certainly proved to be one of those disruptors to the normal scheme of things,"* said Primus. *"As a company, BP does CSR well,"* he said. *"Beyond Covid-19, the company is also transforming as the company is re-imagining energy and our purpose and vision is changing as we look towards a carbon neutral future by 2050. This brings with it a paradigm shift in terms of our agenda and strategy,"* he added.



Volunteers from MaGuaya Youth Foundation attend a briefing with Matthew Pierre (right), community liaison officer, bpTT, to coordinate the delivery of the meals organised by bpTT.





bp TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S MILLION-DOLLAR DRIVE  
PROVIDING HELP AND HOPE AMIDST A PANDEMIC (CONTINUED)

bpTT has already begun to look at developing new programmes and initiatives aligned with the company's new focus that take into consideration the new challenges of engaging people when there are restrictions on movement. Most recently, stakeholder engagement sessions between community contractors and community organisations with bpTT's regional president Claire Fitzpatrick, moved online. bpTT is also exploring partnerships with online learning platforms to provide training traditionally offered at locations like the Mayaro Resource Centre. The training offerings will also be expanded to include future skills like coding and artificial intelligence. There is also the opportunity to expand the company's relationship with tertiary education institutions to incorporate alternative and renewable energy. Said Primus, *"The opportunity now exists for us to help build new skill sets locally that can enable nationals to participate fully in the new normal."*

## bpTT's Covid-19 Crisis Response Highlights

**\$1 million** earmarked and disbursed via the Rose Foundation for Covid-19 relief, including grants to grassroots organisations

**\$383,198** donated to NGOs and CBOs for Covid-19 assistance

**7 foodbanks** established in Tobago, Diego Martin, Arima, Chaguanas, San Fernando, Moruga and Mayaro

**1559 families** (7795 individuals) supported via foodbanks and care packages

**110 computers** and tablets donated to schools and NGOs

**20,000 facemasks** donated to the Ministry of Health for distribution among frontline workers

**45 computers** donated to the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force

# BP and Trinidad & Tobago

There's **technology** in this partnership



**Shane Gunness**

BP Subsea Engineer

The energy industry is changing faster than at any time during our 50 years here. That's why we're finding more efficient, even safer ways to provide the gas our country needs to grow, such as using drones to inspect our facilities. Partnership means working together to build a brighter future for everyone.

For details, visit [www.bptt.com](http://www.bptt.com)



Trinidad and Tobago





## NGC INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO OUR BUSINESS FOR NATIONAL BENEFIT

### OUR APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

At NGC, we believe that a sustainable organisation requires a sustainable business model. As such, we have continued to evolve by positioning ourselves as a strategic player at the centre of Trinidad and Tobago's natural gas industry with a strong social responsibility ethos.

A key aspect of our business model is sustainability, which we define as the way social, environmental, and economic concerns are integrated into our vision, core values, culture, decision-making and strategy. This is guided by our strategic pillars and at a global level, our efforts are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals. Nationally, our efforts contribute to the development priorities defined in Vision 2030, Trinidad and Tobago's National Development Strategy.

#### Our Vision:

To be a recognised global leader in the development of sustainable energy-related businesses.

#### Our Mission:

To create exceptional value from natural gas and related energy businesses through our people and strategic partnerships.

#### Our Core Values:

- Safety and Environmental Preservation
- Integrity
- Employee Engagement
- Excellence
- Transparency
- Customer Focus
- Corporate Social Responsibility

### Our Strategic Pillars:

Four pillars that are centred around sustainability guide our actions:

DEVELOP OUR ORGANISATION	SECURE OUR CURRENT BUSINESS	GROW LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY	STRENGTHEN NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION
Governance, Ethics and Compliance and Human Capital	Health, Safety, Security and Environment, Asset Integrity	Diversification and Internationalisation	Energy Efficiency, Corporate Social Responsibility
<p><b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p> <p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<p><b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p>	<p><b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> <p><b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p><b>7</b> AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p>

In order to have a positive impact on some of the most significant challenges facing our country and our planet, we have chosen to focus our efforts on the issues that are most relevant to our business and stakeholders. In addition, some time ago we took the strategic decision to engage in partnerships that build capacity in NGOs and community groups by providing them with the skills and tools to sustain themselves. This decision signalled a shift away from a culture of grants and donations.

One way we do this is through volunteering. Our Employee Volunteerism Programme enables our people to contribute their time, knowledge and skills to the support of social and environmental issues. In this way, employees become involved in our mission to create value for our stakeholders across Trinidad and Tobago.

Over the long term, NGC has partnered with the Ministry of Community Development Culture and the Arts for the implementation of the National Policy on Sustainable Community Development in our fenceline communities, starting with La Brea. This policy, aligned with SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities, represents a significant step towards a robust approach to community economic development and achievement of Trinidad and Tobago's national development goals.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The year 2020 has presented extraordinary challenges for NGC. However, our continued focus on creating a sustainable business placed NGC in a position to adapt and respond to the needs of our stakeholders for the benefit of society. In addition to the critical role NGC has played in ensuring the supply of natural gas for electricity generation has been maintained, our efforts have focused on the health and social impacts of Covid-19 (SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing and SDG 4 – Quality Education) respectively.

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY

As early as January, we activated our existing Business Continuity Plan and began to share critical information on

Covid-19 across our operations. Our response protocols were immediately escalated upon confirmation of Trinidad and Tobago's first case of Covid-19 and the Incident Management Team was mobilised to manage the implementation of the Business Continuity Plan.

On March 18th, we initiated a work-from-home policy for non-essential staff. This significant step benefitted from the deployment Windows 10 Always On VPN beginning in 2019, allowing for a smooth transition for staff that were already using company laptops. An alternative technology solution was implemented for staff that were not traditionally mobile, allowing them to work securely on their personal computers at home. We continue to make the necessary adjustments to our workflows and processes as the situation evolves - all aimed at keeping employees, contractors and other stakeholders safe, while maintaining operational efficiency.

## MEETING THE NEEDS OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we have been acutely aware of the needs of national stakeholders and our fenceline communities, particularly those most vulnerable to the disease. At a national level, we provided financial and in-kind support to a number of homes for the elderly as well as donating masks and personal protective equipment in response to a national initiative by the Foundation for the Enhancement and Enrichment of Lives (FEEL). To boost national awareness, we ran a series of safety awareness campaigns on national TV and radio stations.

We have also provided support to immunocompromised patients, such as those with HIV and Cancer, as well as a halfway house for abused infants. In addition, we provided hampers of food and household items to vulnerable groups in the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation, La Brea, Guayaguayare and Tobago. Finally, at the time of writing, NGC was in advanced stages of procuring tablets to support distance-learning for students in its local community, an initiative which aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education.





THE NATIONAL GAS COMPANY  
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED

the potential

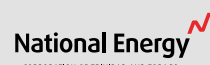
UNLEASHING



NGC

Corporate  
Social  
Responsibility

Whether it's developing social programmes, providing sponsorship, or ensuring we replant every single tree we've lost during pipeline construction, NGC continues to work toward creating a better Trinidad and Tobago by focusing on the broad areas of sport, education, training, arts and culture, environmental preservation and youth and community development.



MEMBERS OF THE NGC GROUP OF COMPANIES



## SUPPORTING MEDICAL INNOVATION

Faced with the threat of urgent local and regional shortages of critical medical equipment, NGC entered into a partnership with the University of the West Indies St Augustine (UWI) to provide funding for the development of a prototype ventilator and the essential testing of the equipment. This partnership supports local innovation and the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities in response to national needs.

NGC remains committed to being an innovator and leader in the field of sustainability, creating shared value for the company and all of our stakeholders. The challenges of 2020 have only strengthened our resolve and provided a stress-test of our ability to respond. We are confident that together, we can overcome whatever challenges our company and our country may face.



NGC Volunteers at the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Beach Clean-up at Station Beach, La Brea 2019.





## THE EVOLUTION OF SERVICE HOW SHELL TRANSFORMED ITS STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS AMIDST COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has been described as a disruptor – and at Shell Trinidad & Tobago, they have embraced this to drive change. For the company's Corporate Social Responsibility programmes – or as they term it – Social Performance – it's been a time of reflection, adaptation and transformation. CSR Review spoke with **Shell's External Relations Manager Candice Clarke-Salloum** about how the company has used this time to rethink and reposition Shell's role in society.

The advantage of being a multinational corporation is that there is a vast pool of experience to tap into, and Shell Trinidad and Tobago did not hesitate to use those connections to help the country it calls home. *"From early on, Shell used its connections internationally, all the way to China, to locate and procure ten ventilators, which we donated to the Trinidad and Tobago public health system,"* Clarke-Salloum said. It wasn't easy – especially as the impact of the virus was just starting to be understood and the whole world was in a period of uncertainty, with supply chain disruptions throughout the global economy. Ventilators are costly medical equipment and each cost about US\$35,000. But the company saw the importance of responding to this critical need. *"As you can imagine, at that time ventilators were in high demand everywhere, but through the Shell network, our Country Chair, Eugene Okpere got involved. He reached out to the Country Chair in China, who helped facilitate delivery. It was a complex task to navigate and involved several departments – Government Relations, Contracts and Procurement, External Affairs – it proved to be quite a challenge to navigate the procurement and transport systems, but we did it,"* she recalled.

Covid-19 has also meant that creative solutions need to be found to meet new and urgent concerns. However, Shell thrives on encouraging innovation, so it was primed to manage the new challenges posed by the pandemic. While Clarke-Salloum did note that the company has had to modify the way it engages with stakeholders, she commended the response of Shell staffers, explaining that everyone understands the struggle and believes in the

partnership. *"We all understand that we're all in this together."*

### ENCOURAGING FOOD SECURITY AND SELF SUFFICIENCY

As Government announced the first nationwide restrictions on movement in March, aimed at mitigating the spread of Covid-19, Shell immediately started planning and executing emergency assistance to its stakeholder communities – those along the East Coast, North Coast, Port of Spain and Moruga in Trinidad and in Tobago.

*"In the initial stages, we discovered some of our community members, especially the more rural communities, were having difficulty accessing some of the public assistance programmes, so we stepped in in these early days"* Clarke-Salloum said. Shell provided over 1,000 hampers of food and emergency supplies within its stakeholder communities and in collaboration with other NGOs like the Living Water Community. *"This experience made us stop and think. The first impulse was to help where we can – and creating and distributing these hampers offered a quick turnaround for immediate assistance. But it made us consider what we could do to create more sustainable options because Covid-19 was going to be here for the long haul."*

The first consideration was food. *"We were giving away food and thinking, people should not have to go hungry, especially in a time like this. And then the national conversation also started to pivot to food security, and it sparked something in*



THE EVOLUTION OF SERVICE  
HOW SHELL TRANSFORMED ITS STAKEHOLDER  
RELATIONSHIPS AMIDST COVID-19 (CONTINUED)

*us that we need to help our communities feed themselves."* Shell worked with a staff member who also lives along the East Coast and brainstormed ideas on how to develop small-scale agribusiness ventures.

For now, it's a pilot project, but one that's very close to Shell's heart. *"It ties in to what is now a national priority. I'm happy with the way it is being developed because it's meeting a need,"* Clarke-Salloum said. *"Shell is partnering with the University of the West Indies to implement the project and lend technical expertise. The University is spearheading some rather interesting and relevant programmes in agricultural innovation,"* she said, especially with agro-business models, which is why Shell was excited to work with the department. Agriculture isn't the most popular field of work, she said, and that's why it was important to show young people the world of opportunities the sector offers. It is not just intensive, back-breaking labour as per tradition, but technology has transformed its potential. *"The UWI as an implementing partner is really perfect in this regard because they have so many ideas and forward-looking ways on how agriculture can be done, initially on a small scale. So, let us see where this can take us!"*

Shell is also planning to work with other stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, but is also looking for inspiration within the Group as well. *"The Shell network is so vast so we can look beyond for guidance from other places as well,"* she said.

## GETTING THINGS ON STREAM

Diversification is an important element in Shell's drive to encourage sustainability, and it does so through investment in education – more specifically through Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics programmes in primary schools.

The programme is designed for after school participation and delivered face to face in classrooms; but Covid-19 has made it impossible to continue as usual. Luckily, even before the pandemic, the company had started implementing ways to deliver the programme online. *"All of our education programmes have had to be re-designed to*

*make them virtual. Of course, in some schools, it's difficult to be totally virtual so we do what we can to make the programmes relevant."*

While Covid-19 was a trigger, after eight years in schools, the company had already commenced the process of evaluating the STEM programme. Redesigning has been informed through extensive collaboration with key stakeholders: The Ministry of Education, principals, teachers, parents, and of course, the students. *"We've really taken some time now to rethink how we deliver this programme. One thing we've considered is expanding it to include the Arts and Research – STREAM."* Things are still evolving, though. *"You have some schools that are more advanced than others with regards to technology and then some don't even have the internet. A home with one computer might have three children needing to share log-in time for classes. So, the education system has been under massive strain."* Shell's stem programmes were able to go online immediately but there have been some problems that the company is trying to fix. *"We have made substantial progress and we are confident that we can put the technology to work to strengthen delivery and widen participation."*

The pivot to STREAM is also part of Shell's commitment to diversification, understanding that there needs to be a more holistic approach to education if students – the future of the workforce – are to be equipped with 21st century skills. *"We started STEM eight years ago to encourage critical thinking skills among students and teachers. What we are looking at now is changing the whole design. The Ministry of Education is our main stakeholder in this regard. Together with their expertise, we want to expand STREAM programmes into the secondary and tertiary systems. We want to create a capable talent pipeline ready to enter the world of work with essential, relevant and modern skills,"* she said.

## THE EVOLUTION OF CSR

Globally, Shell is at the forefront on evolving trends in energy production. The company, a giant in hydrocarbon extraction and refining is now looking at incorporating renewable energy into its portfolio in a way that is distinctive and characteristic of the company's bias for technology





**THE EVOLUTION OF SERVICE**  
HOW SHELL TRANSFORMED ITS STAKEHOLDER  
RELATIONSHIPS AMIDST COVID-19 (CONTINUED)

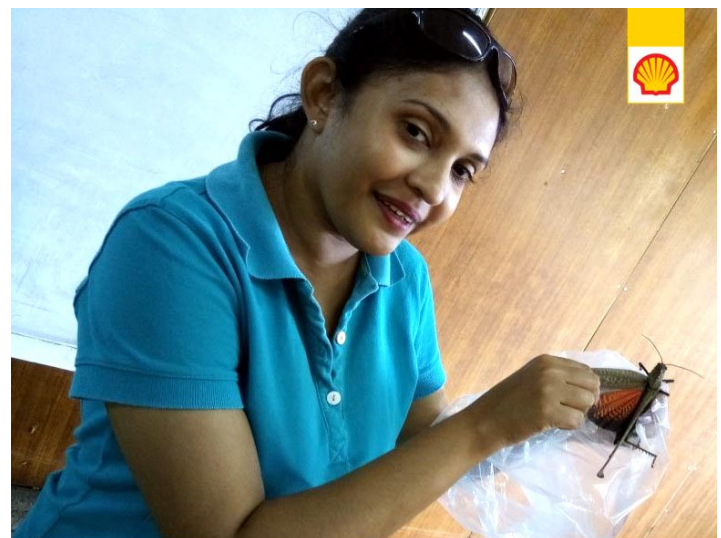
and innovation. In April, Shell CEO Ben van Beurden announced plans for the company to become a net-zero carbon company by 2050 or sooner, including producing more green energy. In Trinidad and Tobago, the company is part of a consortium, including BP, to create the first renewable energy project in the country. *"Shell is focusing a lot on the energy transition, recognizing that hydrocarbons are going to play a role even as we eventually move to renewables. The renewables project in Trinidad and Tobago is a perfect example of that – as that progresses, we are continuing our gas production, but we recognize that renewables is where the future of energy lies,"* Clarke-Salloum said. In the short to medium term, however, gas will continue to be a feature of the energy mix, so Shell's business remains a blend of both. But she added, *"We have made very public climate change goals and we are going to live up to that."*

So how does that affect Shell's social performance? *"It's going to determine our new goals, our new narratives, and our new consciousness. It's always been part of our philosophy no matter where in the world we are, that we engage the community so we can maintain our license to operate."* There is a deep recognition within the company that it must be accountable to its stakeholders – not just through payments to the State but also on the ground, among its fenceline communities. *"They have always been and always will be part of our process. It's all about how we share value with our stakeholders. With that principle of shared value, wherever we go, we make sure we reciprocate that feeling of community."*

Social performance, then, is part of Shell's purpose. *"We power progress together with all our partners. It's built into our DNA."* The views of stakeholder are always taken into consideration whenever the company develops its social performance programmes, especially when it comes to sustainable development. *"Philanthropy, immediate financial support – sure, that's important. But so too are our long-term development programmes where we ensure that value is placed on diversification, livelihoods, and sustainable development. Together, that's how we can develop Trinidad and Tobago."*



2019 National Consultation for STEM Education in Trinidad & Tobago.



Amazing spider lady, Dr. Sewlal who is considered the expert in arachnids in the Eastern Caribbean, wants to see career opportunities for zoologists beyond teaching.



Taking technology by the hand - Vice President and Country Chair, Shell Trinidad and Tobago, Eugene Okpere supports a robot at a 2019 STEM event.



Good Food, Good Life

## DEMONSTRATING SHARED VALUE IN THE PANDEMIC

Running along the Churchill Roosevelt Highway, just beyond the busy South Flyover, is the Nestlé plant. Emblazoned on the walls is the icon of a mother bird caring for the young ones in her nest. Tanks transformed to resemble giant food containers reflect products that are all too familiar and very much part of the average local household.

If that Nestlé bird could talk, she would tell a story of a family of workers behind the wall that galvanised into a support group preparing product for donation to thousands of families as the Covid 19 pandemic immobilised households and businesses across the country.



Song Thrush

## CARING FOR FAMILY

Nestlé's philosophy on employees is legendary. The company doesn't just pay lip service to the notion of employees as assets; it invests in helping employees grow and develop on the job, creating new and better opportunities through service. This value for employees meant that with the advent of Covid-19, the priority was employee health and comfort.

*"Our focus was ensuring that our employees were safe, felt safe and knew that they were secure and valued during a very difficult time. This was an imperative for us. Our staff and their families took precedence from day one,"* explains Denise d'Abadie, Head of Corporate Communications, Nestlé Trinidad and Tobago Limited.



Protective Sneeze Guards installed at Nestlé

Nestlé began with what it considered to be the basics: sneeze guards in common areas, hand washing stations, temperature screenings, social-distancing markers, and frequent sanitisation. The company also distributed masks to all frontline workers and increased security on the compound to enforce the new protocols. While operations were being recalibrated to keep essential workers protected on the job, non-essential workers were asked to stay at home and provisions were put in place to allow them to work remotely.





Good Food, Good Life

## DEMONSTRATING SHARED VALUE IN THE PANDEMIC (CONTINUED)



Canteen Sneeze Guards



Nestlé partners with the Ministry of Health in-Health-4-Masks

And the work had to go on — Nestlé Trinidad and Tobago Limited is one of the country's largest manufacturers of foods and beverages and was considered an essential business during the Government's lockdown order. For those frontline employees, the company provided hygiene kits with personal protective equipment, a shuttle service so workers could avoid public transportation, and meals or meal allowances – all aimed at reducing contact and potential exposure. For those working remotely, the company transitioned to virtual meetings, including crisis webinars and e-learning.

*"We spared no expense with the actions we took – everything we did, was centred around the mitigation of spread. If an employee had a concern, it was immediately addressed. Our workers knew that they had the full support of the company in staying safe"* says Patricio Torres, Head of Market.

Internal strengthening is consistent with how Nestlé does business. Building capability and capacity internally has allowed the company to respond to changes in the global marketplace with agility, and with the kind of success that attracts shareholder confidence. Providing first for its workforce amidst the sudden disruption, was therefore a key factor in creating the kind of stability needed to address the social issues that quickly emerged as Covid-19 took its toll.

Naturally, the first food baskets went out to employees, but Nestlé didn't stop there, and extended their goodwill by supporting the distribution of product to NGOs, community groups, hospitals and first responders.

*"Of course, we have emergency response procedures and we have crisis and issue management policies but something like this was unprecedented for most of us. Luckily, being part of a wider, multinational organisation allowed us to leverage our global resources, local know-how, and best practices, to deliver solutions at scale and at a pace that absolutely made a difference – and was instrumental in our moving so quickly to provide support to community organisations across the country"* says Mrs d'Abadie.

In July, Mark Schneider, Nestlé's global CEO, commented:

***"COVID-19 continues to impact people around the world. We stand with all those affected and are committed to helping where we can. I would like to thank every member of the Nestlé team for their dedication and hard work in the face of incredible challenges. Our priorities remain the same - keeping our people safe, assuring continued supply of essential food and beverages to consumers, and caring for our communities and business partners through financial and in-kind support."***



## COVID-19 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Nestlé has a strong corporate social responsibility programme, with long standing relationships with several charitable organisations, including the International Red Cross Federation locally and internationally, and the Living Water Community here in Trinidad and Tobago. These well-established NGOs helped the company to streamline the distribution of its products and safety items. This included a monetary donation of over TTD 500,000 dollars to the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society, to ensure food security to vulnerable communities, assisting with communication and ambulance transportation, and providing psychosocial support.

Tackling societal issues is ingrained in the Nestlé value code. Nestlé believes that its long-term success depends on creating sustainable value both for its shareholders and for society. The company already has strong and trusted relationships with communities nationwide, and is distinguished for its public education programmes on healthy eating and exercise, combating lifestyle diseases,

life skills training to help at-risk children, and interventions such as the Dairy Development Programme which helps farmers improve productivity, save money and create sustainable operations.

Globally, Nestlé delivers more than 1 billion servings of foods and beverages every day worldwide, and it is a privilege it takes very seriously. The company sees itself as uniquely positioned to drive optimal health and improved wellness and it is no surprise that Nestlé was the first company in the world to make a formal pledge to reduce sugar, salt and trans-fat in all of its products. Reduced sugar and recyclable packaging features in its beverages which target local school aged children, and a strategic partnership with the country's Ministry of Education has been instrumental in addressing the growing issue of childhood obesity.

Those relationships have proved valuable in providing immediate access during the extensive Covid-19 relief outreach. Nestlé collaborated with these community groups and organisations to manage the distribution to



The TT Redcross Society receives \$500,000 to provide relief.





## DEMONSTRATING SHARED VALUE IN THE PANDEMIC (CONTINUED)



**Thank you** to all frontliners and healthcare workers.



neediest cases and to institutions like the North/Central Regional Health Authority, with oversight for the two primary care facilities for Covid-19 patient care – the Couva and Caura Hospitals, providing over TTD 75,000 in product donations. Nestlé also donated over TTD 80,000 in product to the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, to be distributed to society's most vulnerable; provided 45,000 surgical masks to the Ministry of Health for frontline workers; and donated products to more than 50 charitable organisations and NGOs across the country.

Several of the company's iconic brands were also prominently involved in recognising the sacrifice being made by essential workers. The partnership between Nescafé and NP and Unipet service stations provided frontline workers and first responders with complimentary cups of coffee at the onset of the lockdown; and the Milo and Orchard brands, popular with children, stepped up to keep kids entertained during lockdown with 'Move with Milo' at home physical education classes, and 'Orchard's Story Time' sessions. Both of these were delivered virtually via the brands' social media platforms.

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Nestlé's care for the whole person is probably a primary reason for its high employee retention record and why LinkedIn has ranked it high each year in its most attractive employer ratings. A range of training and development programmes encourage young talent to spread their ideas, achieve career goals, and grow with each challenge. Equally important is the balance of mind and body that the Nestlé culture fosters. The company promotes healthy lifestyles across its operations and makes provisions for employees to get and stay healthy.

The focus on wellbeing has intensified during the pandemic. Prolonged periods of sequestration, social distancing and remote work are taking a toll on employees everywhere. The management at Nestlé Trinidad implemented a number of activities to help employees take care of their emotional health and that of their loved ones.

The staff gym was closed in accordance with Covid-19 protocols, but the company led online exercise classes, held virtual medical consultations and even conducted online counselling sessions. Support within the Nestlé family went even further. Nestlé offered financial assistance in the form of salary advances and compassionate loans to workers in some instances.

The company also rolled out morale-boosting campaigns, including its 'Grids of Gratitude' Instagram promotion, where Nestlé shared support and expressed thanks to frontline workers across the country, in addition to participating in the National Applause for frontline workers initiative.

When it was time to return to work, the company implemented a robust communication strategy to create high visibility and compliance with the new workplace protocols that were designed to keep everyone safe and healthy. This was supported by a welcome video from the Head of Market, Patricio Torres, who led on the ground every day. There were email blasts, notice boards and onsite digital screens throughout the compound that provided continuous information on how to stay safe.

"It's been an inspiring thing to witness how everyone at Nestlé came together, volunteering personal time to make this work despite the constraints imposed by the mandatory protocols. This was a kind of camaraderie and support that I don't think I've experienced in the workplace before and it was really gratifying," says Nikeeta Mongroo, Communications Officer at Nestlé.

"We say, 'one team, one Nestlé' and in this period, we are clearly living it", she adds, "Our whole purpose at Nestlé is to unlock the power of foods and quality of life for everyone, today and for generations to come and our collective response to the pandemic demonstrates how we stand by this credo."





## TOGETHER WE ARE FAMILY – OUR COVID STORY

by the ANSA McAL Group Corporate Communications Unit

The adage stands that no crisis should ever be wasted, and this certainly holds powerfully true for what we are facing. There will be significant financial impact, not only for ourselves, but our competitors. But here we have a catalytic possibility to reimagine a new way of doing business and our service and delivery to our customers.

### 2020 NO ORDINARY YEAR

The year 2020 will go down in history as no ordinary year, not just for the ANSA McAL Group and the countries where we operate, but for the world.

The impact of the coronavirus disrupted the daily routines of billions of people globally, in our neck of the woods, our home, our country, our region and our Caribbean people, and tested our collective will.

Assessing the pandemic from very early on and given the fluidity of the situation, cascading plans and actions were developed and implemented by our Leadership teams across our companies in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, Grenada, St Kitts, Jamaica and the USA. The Group established a Crisis Management Team which worked diligently behind the scenes to develop an Emergency Response, Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan which became templates utilized by our business associates to deal with COVID-19.

We issued messages on *Hygiene, Social Distancing Protocols, Information on School Closures, Employee Guidelines for Prevention and Protocols on COVID-19, Guidelines & Protocols for Working from Home*, along with flyers on *Keeping our ANSA McAL Family Safe*.

Deep in the trenches of the pandemic, the Group, together with I Support Our Services (ISOS) and ReThink, took the time to show support and pay tribute to Trinidad and Tobago's essential workers. We initiated an emotional

national outpouring of gratitude through the National Applause #TTApplause #TTHeroes initiative.

Additionally, as a demonstration of our collective responsibility, key executives of the ANSA McAL, led by Group CEO, Mr Anthony N. Sabga III, spearheaded a meeting with Union Leaders of the recognized majority unions (RMUs) of the Group subsidiaries. The purpose of the conversation was to establish common ground for sustaining Group business and employment - specifically the emotional and physical wellbeing of our workers and stakeholders, the continuity of Group business as a means of employment and the survival of work as a critical pattern in any nation's social fabric. All parties committed to transforming the unprecedented challenge into an opportunity to establish a new relationship and a new paradigm, which would be founded on a shared vision, the promotion of initiative and innovation, the development of business opportunities, the respect for workers' rights, and the establishment of ways of furthering the blended interests of people and profits.

Anthony Sabga III  
Chief Executive Officer  
ANSA McAL Group



# CSR Stories



TOGETHER WE ARE FAMILY – OUR COVID STORY (CONTINUED)



Showing support and paying tribute to Trinidad and Tobago's essential workers through the National Applause #TTApplause #TTHeroes initiative.

ANSA McAL Barbados Ltd also joined with the Barbados Workers Union (BWU) in celebration of a very unusual May Day 2020. ANSA McAL committed to navigating with the BWU in the critical balance between lives and livelihoods, noting more than ever, that we must work together to collectively face the challenges created by the pandemic.



Meeting with ANSA McAL's Executives and Union Leaders.



ANSA McAL supports the NUGFW with food relief packages.



Donation of mattresses from Standard Distributors Ltd to Regional Health Authority.



TATIL and TATIL Life support the Home of Football Wellness Center, Couva.





TOGETHER WE ARE FAMILY – OUR COVID STORY (CONTINUED)

## Thankfully, fear did not stop us from giving back.

From the onset, we established proper protocols with the Ministry of Health. Through that association, Standard Distributors Ltd (SDL) kicked things off by donating 300 mattresses to all Regional Health Authorities for use in the parallel healthcare system.

TATIL and TATIL Life working with the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, also collaborated with SDL to procure and deliver appliances worth close to TT\$100,000.00 towards one of the country's step-down COVID-19 facilities, the Home of Football Wellness Centre, Couva.

Carib Brewery Ltd (CBL), in its efforts to assist healthcare workers, took the time to create a world-class hand sanitizer. Close to 100,000 bottles were filled by employees of the Brewery and distributed to members of the essential services.

CBL also donated 11 fully stocked chillers with Malta and Smalta to all major hospitals throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Given our regional reach, Grenada Breweries Ltd launched their Hands in Unity hand sanitizer which was donated to frontline workers on the island.

Several partnerships were formed with stakeholders to provide relief to members of the communities impacted by the pandemic. These included direct involvement by our group companies such as AMCO and Grand Bazaar Ltd to distribute food hampers to families in Chaguana, National Union of Government and Federated Workers' (NUGFW) members, the Lopinot/Bon Air West Constituency and the Bamboo community. Additionally, the Guardian Neediest Cases Fund (GNCF) was able to donate hampers to NGOs from communities across Trinidad and Tobago, thanks to a virtual food drive made possible through cooking classes, powered by Propa Eats, titled **"Community Kitchen"**.



*Bottling of Carib Hand sanitizer.*



*Chillers from Malta and Smalta being delivered to Couva Hospital COVID-19 frontline staff.*



*John Mitchell Commissioner of Prisons, Grenada, received on behalf of Her Majesty's Prisons.*



*Grand Bazaar donates Hampers to the Bamboo Community.*



## CONTINUED CONTRIBUTIONS TO GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In working towards a more sustainable region as part of our journey towards corporate and collective responsibility, we fulfilled our promise to our employees affected by the devastating floods that occurred in Trinidad in 2018. Sixty-five employees received gift vouchers totalling over TT\$430,000.00 to assist in rebuilding their homes.

As part of Carib Glassworks Ltd (CGL) continued commitment to the environment, they became the first privately owned quarry to partner with the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) to commence a one-hectare rehabilitation project at its Matura sand plant where 2,743 trees were planted. Another 2000 trees/seedlings will be replanted during 2020. The project is part of a five-year multi-focal regional project that supports the reduction and reversion where possible of land degradation at quarry sites. CGL's motivation and awareness is also connected to four sustainable development goals that are in alignment with CGL's social and environmental areas of interest: SDG#12-Responsible Consumption, SDG#13-Climate Action, SDG#15-Life on Land and SDG#17-Partnership for the Goals.

Additionally, CGL in collaboration with the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD) has been a part of the International Coastal Clean-up initiative for several years and its volunteers are part of the solution in ending ocean plastic pollution.

Not to be outdone, ABEL Building Solutions (ABS) partnered with the University of the West Indies Open Lectures Committee, the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Architects as well as the Board of Architecture of Trinidad and Tobago to host a special lecture by Sir David Adjaye OBE, a leading architect of his generation, on the topic of "Building Publics". There, he shared the creative process behind his work, as well as his professional and personal commitment to the social purpose of architecture and the design of civic buildings that connect communities. Close to 400 students, architects, artists and interested parties attended the lecture.

Our love and respect for our country does not begin and end in Trinidad and Tobago. We consistently invest and assist in the sustainable development of communities where we operate and where we are needed.

Regionally, we witnessed the crushing impact of climate change in the Caribbean when hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated some islands in the Caribbean and brought trauma to our beloved region. The Group mobilised its workforce across subsidiaries throughout the Caribbean. Our ANSA McAL Team hit the ground running in coordinating care packages valued at over TT\$1 million for people affected by the disaster. Together, with an army of volunteers from Dominica and Tortola, as well as team members from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), five fully loaded containers were offloaded, and distribution took place throughout communities in islands ravaged by hurricanes.

On the occasion of ANSA McAL's 25th year of business in Guyana, then President David Granger officially commissioned the ANSA McAL Jubilee Arch. This was in recognition of Guyana's 50th Independence Anniversary. The arch will stand for decades as an acknowledgement of the innovativeness of our Caribbean people.

Health and Well Being was not only considered during the pandemic. One of the highlights of our ANSA McAL Family event calendar has always been our biannual Sports and Family Mini Olympic weekend. Close to 5,000 employees showcased true sportsmanship on and off the field at the UWI SPEC (Sports & Physical Education Centre) St Augustine.

With over 422 million people worldwide living with diabetes and the disease threatening the public health and economies of countries in the region, TATIL and TATIL Life adopted an educational stance about Diabetes, as one of their Corporate Social initiatives. They launched a nationwide Diabetes Corporate Social initiative and demonstrated how the private sector can drive awareness at a different level.





TOGETHER WE ARE FAMILY – OUR COVID STORY (CONTINUED)

## INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

ANSA McAL continues to invest in its people across the Caribbean. The Group was represented at the 8th Biennial Conference themed ***Jamaica and the Diaspora – Building Pathways for Sustainable Development*** at the Jamaica Conference Centre, Kingston.

The theme reflected the Government's commitment to pursue initiatives and mechanisms to encourage, support, create and empower Jamaicans to achieve and sustain their full potential. It also represented an example of public private partnership and was in fact the principal forum for dialogue and action in areas of national importance.

In Trinidad and Tobago, potential Champions from the University of the West Indies are afforded an opportunity to speak with top Executives of the Group and discuss why they would be an asset. The Champions' Programme, which commenced in 2015, is a 24-month rotational programme aimed at converting our country's most ambitious and

talented graduates into future executives. Candidates become immersed in a dynamic, entrepreneurial environment. It is carefully structured to optimise professional exposure, deepen technical expertise and cultivate leadership competence. To date 23 Champions have engaged in the programme.

Additionally, Cohort 3 of the ANSA McAL EMBA at the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business is well underway, with 9 employees having finished their first year. Employees identified for this are all high potentials and/or high performers within the Group and the completion of the EMBA forms part of their targeted development and succession plans.

The Group was pleased to be a gold sponsor at the Heroes 7 Convention at NAPA. The convention is a flagship event of the Heroes Foundation which provides opportunities for youths, stakeholders and other collaborative entities to showcase their involvement in positive youth development in society.



ANSA McAL Champions.





**GOAL 4 - EDU - ANSA CAFE BDS.**



**GOAL 4 - EDU - Laureates Jamaica.**



**GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK - ANSA Coatings dispatched 13 containers of paint to Cuba.**

## THE ANSA MCAL FOUNDATION

Relieving poverty and suffering among the people of the region is one of the main objectives of the ANSA McAL Foundation. It endeavours to achieve this by helping people to help themselves and has featured persons who are taking the journey towards achieving excellence through certain attributes and values such as having a vision and purpose, commitment, hard work, creativity, selflessness, perseverance, resourcefulness and integrity. To this end, the Foundation disbursed a total of TT\$2,057,844 to 38 different organisations for 2019.

The Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence continues to be the major project of the Foundation. Arts & Letters, Entrepreneurship, Public & Civic Contributions and Science & Technology are the four disciplines from which candidates may be nominated.

The founder of the awards, the late Dr Anthony N Sabga, O.R.T.T was recognised as one of the giants of Caribbean achievement and foresight. It was after his retirement in the early 2000s that he turned his attention to a problem that many people spoke of, but few knew how to address: regional unity. He believed many stories of achievement and excellence existed in the region but because of the nature of regional politics and society, they were not being told. His answer to this, after consulting with friends and associates, was the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence, launched in 2005, and its first laureates named in 2006.

The total amount disbursed via this Awards' programme since 2005 is TT\$19.5 million and laureates now number 43.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Underpinning our performance is our steadfast commitment to sustainable and ethical business practices and strong corporate governance. We believe that acting ethically and responsibly is sacrosanct and also the basis of sound business judgement. In this regard, we reviewed and launched our revised Code of Ethics and Conduct and Whistle-blower programme across the Group in 2019.





TOGETHER WE ARE FAMILY – OUR COVID STORY (CONTINUED)

We acknowledge the benefits of Corporate Governance to society by maintaining investor confidence, ensuring corporate success and economic growth.

## ONE FAMILY GROWING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

As the Group navigates these turbulent times, we are comforted by our proven history of resilience over the course of 140 years. We have seen and risen above many challenging moments and we are convinced that we will overcome this one as well.

With these efforts and more, we are committed to being a responsible and sustainable business that includes the health and safety of our employees, the well-being of the people in communities where we operate and a healthy environment. It is important for us that our people are united in a culture that stimulates everyone to perform at their best. Through active dialogue and engagement with stakeholders, and a genuine manifestation of goodwill, the ANSA McAL Group will continue to create value for our customers, shareholders, employees and the people of the Caribbean.



**GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK** - Execs attend AMs Talent Day.



**GOAL 15 - LIFE ON LAND.**



**GOAL 13 - CLIMATE ACTION.**



**GOAL 17 - NEW PARTNERSHIP** - GOLD SPONSOR OF HEROES CONVENTION.



- 







**HEROES**  
FOUNDATION

Not all heroes wear a cape.

## EMPOWERING NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP

Staff Writer

**In every field there are winners. Those who take the responsibility to step out of the crowd and make their story part of the human history. These are the light bearers showing the way to the next generation. Indeed, this is how mankind moves forward: by passing on knowledge to the younger generations.**

This corporate nuance of *“unleashing new generation leaders”* is the mantra of The Heroes Foundation- a non-profit organisation established in October 2002 to serve the needs of youths in Trinidad and Tobago. In March this year, Mr. Philip Julien, son of local legendary energy pioneer, Prof Kenneth Julien, and the organisation’s founder, passed the torch to new CEO, 30-year old Mr. Lawrence Arjoon, a former adviser with the Proman Group.

Mr. Julien, a self-professed comic book lover, recognized something was lacking in society. His concept was to fill that need by incorporating the unyielding virtues of heroes as mentors to whom youths could relate and aspire after.

Mr. Julien then pitched his idea – the Heroes Convention – to national heroes including his father, another energy great Trevor Boopsingh, WWII hero and diplomat Ulric Cross, former Fatima College principal Clive Pantin, renowned artist Pat Bishop, and Olympian Hasely Crawford.

Now six months later, new captain, Mr. Arjoon, has been toiling tirelessly to foster holistic youth development and breathe life into their aspirations.

The Foundation which has about 500 people in the various programmes, is heavily dependent on corporate sponsorship. Spanning a wide demographic, it currently reaches 16 secondary schools and one primary school in which groups of 11 to 17 young people interact weekly with various programme coordinators.

Traditionally, the Foundation has three main offerings; **HEROES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (HDP)** previously known as the **Youth Development Programme** which encompasses life skills and character development, youth and sustainable development, and volunteer and advocacy modules, **THE BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (BBBSTT)**, and **THE SEQUENTIAL ARTS PROGRAMME** which chronicles the lives of local heroes from a wide spectrum of society.

**BBBSTT** is built on mentorship and is the local chapter of the **Big Brothers Big Sisters International Initiative** in which a young person is paired with an adult who inspires and influences. Two new arms – **Heroes Media** and **Heroes Connect** are being rolled out in 2020”

**Heroes Connect**, Mr. Arjoon explained, showcases The Foundation’s digital transformation initiative designed to connect youths with people and entities who can contribute to their development in a safe environment via a multitude of online activities, courses, and mentorship opportunities. He believes that Trinidad and Tobago has many hidden heroes who want to contribute to youth development, and **Heroes Connect** provides an opportunity for them to do so digitally.

There is, a screening process to join **Heroes Connect** as this is vital to safeguard young people in the digital realm. This initiative, like all others, is free.

# PROFILES



EMPOWERING NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP (CONTINUED)

*Olympian Hasely Crawford with students at the Heroes of Energy Youth Forum 2020. Photo courtesy the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago.*



*A Little (mentee) and Big (mentor) in the Unit Trust Corporation's BBBSTT Corporate Workplace programme.*







Building on the dynamic art of sequential storytelling, is **Heroes Media**, encompassing the values of local heroes to motivate youths to discover that hero within themselves. Mr. Arjoon further explained **Heroes Media** will also use a digital platform so youths themselves could narrate stories to harness positive change in society. Indeed, stories about heroes can calm fears, buoy spirits, nourish hopes and foster important values of strength and resilience.

Students enrolling in the programmes follow a relatively simple process which requires teachers' input as well as those from parents or guardians. While academic ability is considered, it is not an absolute requirement for enrolment. *"We want students who are excited and engaging, but also welcome students who may be a bit shy. We try to create a little microcosm of society in each programme so they can find ways to help and inspire each other in their own ways, and in turn, influence society - a diverse mix of personalities,"* Mr. Arjoon explained.

The Foundation carefully monitors truancy levels among participants in programmes. Fewer school skippers means more engaged individuals. Vital to the survival of school programmes, however, are corporate sponsors, which Mr. Arjoon hopes will be increased to continue with fresh, dynamic offerings. .

A Hero's Youth is distinguishable, easily spotted amongst a crowd. *"A Hero's youth has that excitement for the unknown, an eagerness to embrace change, to grasp at opportunities and really position themselves to grow,"* Mr. Arjoon said, noting that a Hero's sense of volunteerism is also critical. This is evident in the countless activities students often participate in - be it beach clean-ups in far-flung locations or raising funds on their own or assisting the elderly.

## HEROES IN ENERGY

The 2020 Energy Conference, which took place in February this year also encompassed the **Heroes of Energy Youth Forum** where young people from schools across the country partnered with an energy professional to discuss the sector and policy.

What distinctly emerged from the conference, Mr. Arjoon stated, was a clarion call for young people to have a voice in the energy discourse. *"Youths asked for more accessible information on the energy sector, specifically, opportunities in renewables and conservation,"* he said. Climate change was also noted as another major issue which young people are concerned and passionate about. At Heroes, these recommendations are taken very seriously.

*"Heroes Connect came from the youths and when we launch, we will be connecting them to sector leaders every week to understand the realities of the energy sector,"* Mr. Arjoon added.

The forum also materialised in the **Heroes Idea Strike Team**, representing a culmination of proposals from all the students during discussions. Since then, the team has been digitally meeting every Sunday to transform their plans into reality. Ultimately, the goal is to implement campaigns incorporating such ideas into their respective communities and schools once the country becomes COVID safe.

## BUILDING A BETTER T&T

Life skills are equally important as business skills. The Foundation's operating philosophy is **Dream, Believe, Inspire, Mentor and Empower**. Its programmes, therefore, entail work streams which enable youths to explore different areas of interest. Among these are budgeting, financial management and entrepreneurship, which collectively foster sustainable living and a sense of responsibility. *"We then provide opportunities to young people so that as a team, they can then come up with their own plans,"* Mr. Arjoon said.

Other areas of focus include wildlife conservation, recycling and home gardening. As Arjoon explains, *"All these ideas came from the youths. This is what they want to learn about. With COVID-19 restrictions they even wanted to learn about cooking, so, in line with healthy lifestyles we provided classes in easy, balanced meals."*



## PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The backbone of The Foundation's operating budget comprises donations and sponsorship. As more and more companies encapsulate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in their core value systems, this not only affords employees a chance to contribute to society and the country but more importantly, this helps to establish corporate brands with youth leadership and development. Undoubtedly, The Foundation provides the ideal investment for corporate partners to nurture young minds and engender nation building.

*"There are opportunities for companies to adopt a school in which a Heroes Development Programme can be rolled out, there are opportunities for companies to have a Big Brother, Big Sister corporate mentorship in their organisations with a school of their choice from one of their communities for instance," Mr. Arjoon explained.*

This, approach will make it easier for **Heroes Connect** to thrive even more effectively as entities wanting to support youth development will be able to do so digitally. And while there are no fees to use **Heroes Connect** the technology and systems obviously carry an operational cost which can be exorbitant. *"We want as many people as possible to be part of Heroes Connect to share their insights and to do so we obviously need funding,"* says Arjoon.



*A Little (mentee) and Big (mentor) in the Unit Trust Corporation's BBBSTT Corporate Workplace programme.*



*Participants at the Heroes of Energy Youth Forum engaged in discussions with Heroes Founder, Philip Julien.*



*A participant at the Heroes of Energy Youth Forum 2020 engaging with virtual reality technology. Photo courtesy the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago.*





EMPOWERING NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP (CONTINUED)



Participant at the Heroes of Energy Youth Forum 2020. Photo courtesy the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The last six months have been eventful for The Foundation. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a more seamless digitised operation as limited physical interaction meant connecting with students online. Next on the agenda is ramping up the mobilising of resources to nurture the vast potential of that human spirit. The Heroes Foundation has been fortunate enough to operate as a strong social enterprise, with above board corporate governance and accountability.

But as the world and even the local economy continue to grapple with the negative financial effects of the pandemic, the need for Government and the private sector to invest in young people cannot be ignored,

especially with many countries having more than 60 percent of the total population aged 30 and below.

Heroes go beyond the direct benefits of heroic action. Heroes elevate us emotionally; they heal our psychological ills; they build connections between people; they encourage us to transform ourselves for the better; and they call us to become heroes and help others.

Now more than ever, we need heroes to lead the way.

### Contact Information

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## LAWRENCE ARJOON

Lawrence is Chief Executive Officer of the Heroes Foundation. With a history of creativity, and innovation and strategic branding in the energy sector, he represents the new generation of young leaders who are driven to reinterpret our future through the lens of a common good. His work with Civic Society Organisations over the years is marked with a keen sensitivity to diversity and inclusion and a deep commitment to a sustainable future for all peoples.

Having held several leading roles in his 10-year professional career, Lawrence has brought a unique perspective on managing people and work as a symbiotic process. He has a solid understanding of integrated communications, stakeholder relations and risk management, and is experienced in the area of resource optimisation for organisational efficiency.

Prior to joining Heroes, Lawrence held the position of Government and Stakeholder Affairs Advisor at the Proman family of companies. Prior to this he served as Corporate and External Affairs Manager at DeNovo Energy Limited. As part of DeNovo's founding team, Lawrence was pivotal in launching and establishing DeNovo's brand on an international level and maintaining key external relationships locally and globally.

A former 'Big' or mentor, Lawrence championed the development of the 'Big Brothers Big Sisters Corporate Workplace Model for Trinidad and Tobago' during his tenure at Trinity Exploration & Production Plc. He firmly believes that everyone has a hero inside, and that they can find that hero with the right encouragement, guidance, and support.





## A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

### A LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ACP STATES

*Ambassador Patrick I. Gomes, former Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Caribbean & Pacific States*

by Pat Ganase

One thing leads to another. In an interconnected world, touch one issue and the next thing you know, you are unravelling or affecting the entire fabric of human civilization all over the world. Going from one job to another, one place to the next, learning from everyone he met along the way, Patrick Ignatius Gomes allowed himself to be shaped by and shared with his times. He grew from a Caribbean son to a citizen of the world; from an individual to an institutional man. In the end, he believes, the human species develops in collectives and the highest goals are achieved when – he quotes Lao Tzu - *“we all do it together.”*

This is his gift to the communities he became part of: his ability to see and seize opportunities that serve their visions for the development of people, of whole and healthy societies.

As he demitted office as Secretary-General of the OACPS (Organisation of African Caribbean and Pacific States, formerly the ACP Group of States), the work on the revised Cotonou Agreement between OACPS and the European Union was being completed. Gomes says they are pursuing the approach for inclusive sustainable economic growth and development to deepen participation in Global Value Chains (GVCs), for instance, for agriculture. This is framed in the UN's Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.

People and the environment came equally in focus: *“Concern for the environment by the ACP Group led to the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) with support of the European*

*Development Fund (EDF). When the ACP is looking at small and medium enterprises, and their capacity to be successful as suppliers in the Value Chains to transnational corporations, the Corporate Social Responsibility of transnationals, governments, public-private partnerships, come into focus.”* It's a dizzying range of issues for any organisation. Gomes has tried to see the array, do his part, and is confident that the team, after he has left, will build on the cumulative impact of experiences of the individuals and programme management units, still there.

*“There is a clear need for orienting development to the achievement of multidimensional goals.”*

### A COMMON PURPOSE: AFRICA CARIBBEAN PACIFIC

On ACP Day in 2019 (June 6), Gomes reminded his audience, *"Sir Shridath Ramphal, one of the ACP Group's founding fathers, in a recent speech had recalled the trials and tribulations faced by the early ACP pioneers a half century ago to broker the first joint agreement. Recalling the sense of unity and common purpose that drove those first steps, he detailed the dovetailing of regional agreements which ensured that, to quote him, 'there was no turning back to separateness,' a time when the ACP never negotiated otherwise than as a Group and spoke always with one voice. It was often an African voice, sometimes a Caribbean or a Pacific voice; but always a voice that spoke for the ACP."*

*"This ACP voice speaks in a number of different languages. It speaks through a number of different channels and it speaks about a diverse range of issues that are of tremendous concern to our different regions. But what is important is that it is still one ACP voice that expresses the solidarity and shared vision of our members."*

### ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is the most existential threat we face. The recent five years are the hottest on record. We are witnessing extensive extreme weather patterns: hurricanes, floods, droughts, wildfires, and ocean levels rising faster than predicted. Big cities on coasts, island states are all at risk.

Our oceans are polluted from centuries of dumping; and in the recent decades, the accumulation of plastic waste is now evident in the food chain and in every ocean of the world, Arctic to Antarctic. Once considered an inexhaustible supply of food from fish, the ocean has been plundered. Over-fishing and pollution inhibit carbon sequestration, exacerbating the release of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Climate change - along with the devastation of Covid-19 - is the most significant challenge to achieving sustainable development. Its adverse impacts are more severe in the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Droughts,



Dr Patric Gomes -  
Advocate for change  
during his tenure at  
the ACP

*"The ACP has a vision for the development of its societies. We see opportunities, and how they serve the vision. We bring the resource of cumulative experiences to build strong institutions that are adaptable to change; and which develop resilient and innovative leaders."*

desertification, hurricanes, floods, agricultural losses, reduced water resources and sea level rise are major concerns for the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). Many of these countries are already facing serious impacts on lives and livelihoods now compounded by the pandemic.

In 2017, Dominica took a double hit from hurricanes Irma and Maria. Last year (2019) Dorian sat over and flattened Abaco Island in the Bahamas. These powerful Atlantic storms have also done considerable damage on the east coast of the USA.

The social impact to Caribbean small island states has been devastating to housing, food, health, sanitation. Crops are wiped out; there's loss of communication; and it takes the most determined and optimistic acts of faith to rebuild and be productive again.

In continental Caribbean states, we have coastal erosion and sea level rise in Guyana, Belize and Suriname. From



## CONSCIOUS LEADER (CONTINUED)

the end of 2004 into January 2005, half the population of Georgetown was affected by what has become known as the Great Flood in Guyana.

In these countries, the changes are not only on the coasts; for instance, damage to access roads by exceptionally



*Guyana's vulnerable coastline presents a constant threat of flooding  
(Source - Kaieteur News Online)*

heavy flooding threatened the indigenous communities in Iwokrama, one of the last four pristine tropical forests in the world. The Iwokrama Forest is nearly 3,710 square kilometres of central Guyana. Severe droughts are followed by severe flooding; and recently saltwater incursion in coastal Guyana has destroyed vast acreages of rice.



*The aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Dominica (Source - The Guardian)*

## CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

Gomes recognises that solutions must be both local and global. In December 2015, 190 states (including all CARICOM and the 28 in the European Union), signed the Paris Agreement, the first universal, legally binding commitment to acknowledge and counter global climate change. Each country pledged to work towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and each articulated and quantified their effort as a National Determined Contribution (NDC).

At the next UN Climate Conference in Glasgow, Scotland in November 1-12, 2021, countries are obliged to record their progress by revising or updating their NDCs towards more ambitious goals. This is an opportunity to increase ambition to keep the global temperature rise to below 1.5°C. Towards 2030, the commitment is now at least 40% cuts in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels) and at least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency.

To effect this ambitious global aim, governments have established environmental management units. While these are government departments, there is need to be broad-based and inclusive of other parties in the society with

SMEs, private sector, business and NGOs. All countries that agreed to prepare NDCs - also need to show measures being taken to mitigate impacts and adapt - building codes; not building on coasts; early warning systems; GHG reductions through use of alternative renewable energies and energy efficiency. There is also need to engage citizens in broad-based multi-stakeholders forums, and especially for and with youth.

Regionally, states should collaborate and create response mechanisms to the immediate threats. For instance, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has CDEMA in Barbados. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is a regional inter-governmental agency whose main function is to make an immediate and coordinated response to any disastrous event affecting any member-state of CARICOM. CDEMA provides a rapid response mechanism for assessing all kinds of damage and mobilising humanitarian interventions.

CARICOM also has the 5Cs in Belize -the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre. Its focus is policy analysis and data collection as well as resource mobilisation. It is authorised to be an agent of the Green Climate Fund

and can assist countries to prepare projects for funding to deal with mitigation and adaptation. The Green Climate Fund was established within the relevant framework of the United Nations (UNFCCC) to assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change, and in building capacity for resilience and food security. The GCF is based in Incheon, South Korea.

ACP+ EU is working closely with Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility in Barbados to offer insurances at subsidized rates, partially financed by the ACP-EU's European Development Fund (EDF).

As part of this global effort, the ACP Group has now reviewed all 79 NDCs of its Member States. The findings show that ACP countries will need at least USD 2,317 billion, as well as support on capacity building and technology transfer, to implement their NDCs. More important than the need to adopt mitigation and adaptation strategies is resilience and flexibility in planning for and accepting change.

*"Change is the only permanent reality, according to Aristotle,"*

Gomes reminds us.

## INTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In positions to have a view across the Caribbean, Gomes understands the need for unity, for integration, good governance and policies that would bring the islands and mainland states of the region together.

*"I am fortunate to have been in the Caribbean, and through a Caribbean lens to understand and grasp the vision and objectives of the sub-Saharan African, Caribbean and Pacific group which was established in 1975 by the Georgetown Agreement.*

*"In 2005, I went to Brussels as Ambassador for Guyana to the European Union (EU), and representative to the ACP Group of States. This entailed advocacy, negotiations and service on a host of committees, with concurrent accreditation to WTO, FAO and the Governments of Denmark, Italy and Norway. A high point was the negotiations of the controversial WTO-compatible Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU. When the term was up in 2010, the incoming government continued my tenure with additional representation to Cyprus and the Netherlands. It was also a period of contentious and intense negotiations with the EU for the 2010 -15 revision of the Cotonou Agreement on Trade, Development Finance and political dialogue on human rights and rule of law.*

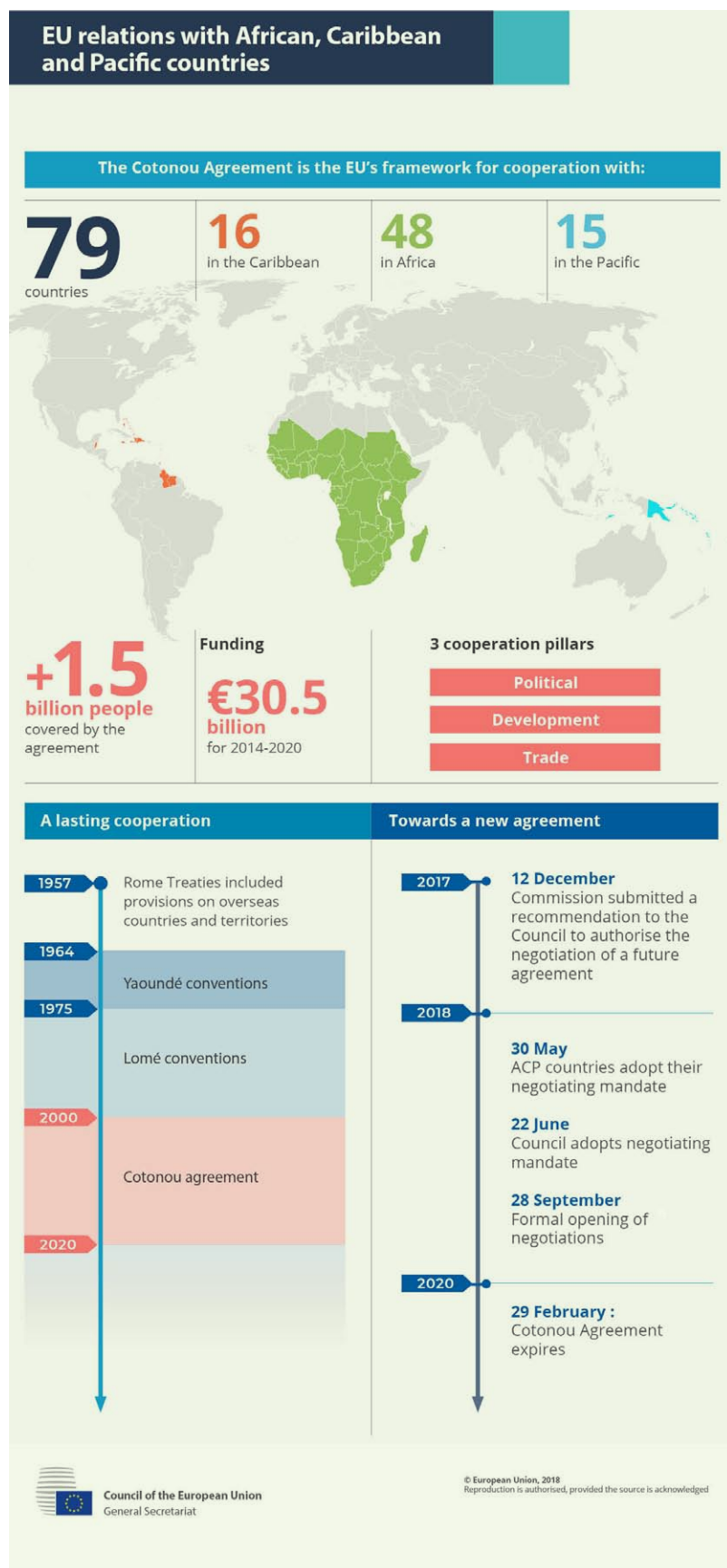
*"In 2015, when the appointment of the ACP's Secretary-General post rotated to the Caribbean, I was elected for the five-year period. This was the term of office in which great attention was centred on a successor Treaty to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between ACP and EU."*

The Cotonou Agreement is a treaty signed in 2000 in the Benin city of Cotonou by 78 African, Caribbean & Pacific states and initially 15, then 28, member states of the European Union. The Agreement's objectives are the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty while contributing to sustainable development and to the gradual integration of ACP countries into the world economy. With its terminal date of 29 February 2020, negotiations are on-going for a successor agreement of, at least, 20 years.



Negotiating revisions to the Cotonou Agreement





## ON MULTILATERALISM

(ACP Secretary-General Dr. Patrick I. Gomes provided his viewpoint on moving the ACP Group to centre stage of multilateralism, March 2019. (The full address is available at: [info@un-insider.news](mailto:info@un-insider.news))

The task in our view is to confront economic injustice and the systemic legal conditions for excessive wealth fuelled by greed and deal-making that need to be challenged by the embedding of values of justice, equal opportunity, solidarity of humanity and respect for the rule of law, in which no one is privileged either by money, racial origin or social standing. Herein lies the basis of a liberal order for all human transactions and at the global level are anchored in multilateralism.

Indeed, the interdependence of nations in this century is evident in the impact of globalization, as phenomenal advances in digital communications for news, entertainment, business, trade or travel.

This degree of connectivity and interdependence loosely defines main features of globalization, bringing in its wake mixed results. The evident extremes of wealth and poverty or abundance and scarcity are used to feed envy, hate and promotion of racism.

Critical issues facing our 21st century, still burdened by endemic poverty of millions in the Global South, and experiencing deepening inequality, in the face of callous use of violence in multiple forms, demands a comprehensive response across borders of nations and regions.

Such a response will benefit from and build on the kernel of commitment by all members of the United Nations in their adoption of the Agenda 2030 of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for People, Planet, Peace and Prosperity. Armed with this resolve, the centrality of purpose for a dynamic multilateralism is an imperative and not an option.

Inherent in a rejuvenated multilateralism lies the values and human agency for systemic and strategic engagements. These, must of necessity, be multi-level and addressing mutually reinforcing thematic areas of the SDGs drawing on coherent and coordinated synergies by countries, organisations, institutions and communities from continents and regions of North and South. Although universal, the SDGs are not mutually exclusive since “ending poverty in all its forms and everywhere” (SDG1) cannot be adequately addressed without a relation to “food, nutrition and hunger” (SDG2) or “education or health of women and girls” (SDG5).

Similarly, the ACP Group of States as Facilitator and Hub of South-South & Triangular Cooperation identifies practical actions of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), in its programmes within the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA +) addresses reducing global warming by efforts in the use of renewable energy. These can be linked across countries and regions so that global benefits are known

and shared, making multilateralism rooted in the everyday life of ordinary people.

The ACP Group of States, comprising 79 developing countries, is positioning itself to contribute as an effective player and partner with the like-minded to join forces for multilateral institutions and actions to become the drivers of action for humanity’s future that realizes justice, solidarity and respect for human rights.

States must take active roles in multilateral organisations dealing with climate change and sustainable development goals in holistic ways. The ACP has a SIDS Forum and works with AOSIS - Alliance of Small Island States. Our model of South-South Cooperation calls for regular exchange of information and best practices. We need to look at laws that provide enabling environment for private sector to mainstream climate consciousness in their work and investments.

## ON AID FOR DEVELOPMENT

(In mid-June 2020 when UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced his intention to scrap the UK’s Department for International Development (DfID) and have it merged with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Dr Gomes wondered about the effect on UK’s Official Development Assistance (ODA). This is extracted from the viewpoint published at: [info@un-insider.news](mailto:info@un-insider.news)

Firstly, my starting point is the need for an understanding of poverty and underdevelopment from a historical, holistic and global angle of the power relations affecting the developing country and developed country from which development finance is negotiated, since aid is not politically neutral.

Secondly, one needs a position on dominant ideas and theories of development and to what one subscribes as informing the development strategies adopted, since aid programmes are not value-free.

Thirdly, the agency and actors in executing aid-funded programmes and projects entail a struggle of classes, groups or strata in the developing society and developed sponsoring agency or country whose interests are at stake. From this follows the fact that aid aims to satisfy state, business or community interests.

These dimensions, complex and multidimensional as they are, imply that development assistance requires a long-term vision through which the reduction or eradication of poverty is inevitably tied to overcoming structures of inequality. Such a vision of development in which financial assistance, or as lumped together in a generic concept of ‘development finance cooperation’, has as its ultimate goal the material and spiritual upliftment of the great majority of the lives of people in the Global South.



## CONSCIOUS LEADER (CONTINUED)

### DOING IT TOGETHER

We are one world, and what affects communities in one part, one island, eventually affects the whole.

Pacific islands are extremely concerned with sea level rise, ocean pollution, illegal, unregulated, unreported (IUU) fishing; there is need to protect artisanal fishers.

In small-scale mining and extractive industries, women are the primary labour force and must be protected. This leads to issues of gender equality and concerns about domestic violence. One thing leads to another, when you start anywhere, you touch everything else. We are all interconnected in an interdependent world.

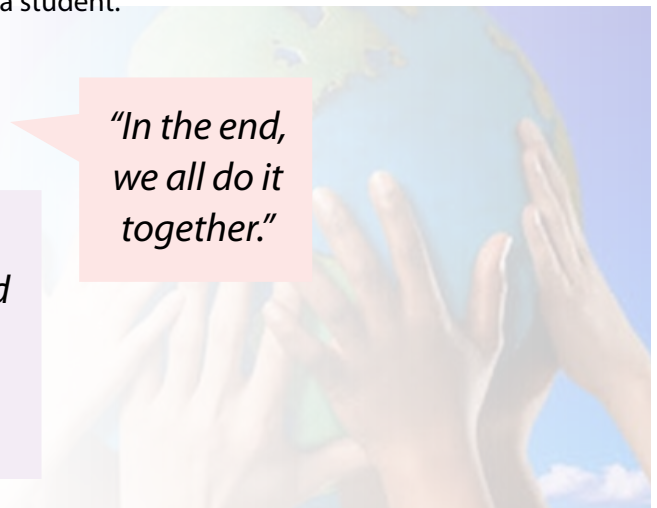
Gomes' role has been that of a catalyst, a hub, a team player, always a student.

And his last words are from Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu who said,

*"There's always something to learn from others," he says.*

*"As individuals, we are shaped by our times, and by each other," he says. "But success belongs to the team."*

*"In the end, we all do it together."*



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# Adam's

## ADAM'S BAGLERY & RESTAURANT DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE FOOD BUSINESS

by Tisha Marajh



Adam Aboud - Owner of Adam's Bagelry and Restaurant.

Adam's is a family owned and operated Bakery, Restaurant and Gourmet Shop located in the heart of Maraval, Trinidad and Tobago, a burgeoning hub of entertainment and dining. The restaurant has been in this location for over eighteen years.

Adam's first foray into the business world was as a garment trader from 1986-1990. Unfortunately, after the attempted Coup in Trinidad in 1990, his store was looted during the days of civil unrest which followed. With losses being too significant to recover, Adam decided to pursue his passion for food. This led him to New York, where he interned at eminent Wellwood Bagels in Lindenhurst, NY, learning to make traditional New York styled bagels in which the bagels are boiled.

After his training in New York he decided to return to Trinidad and try his new venture. His first kitchen was his mother's and his public debut was a stall at an annual charity bazaar at the Trinidad Hilton. Within half an hour of the bazaar, all the bagels were sold and that led to calls for private orders. These private catering orders kept him busy in his mother's kitchen for another eight months. He eventually needed a bigger space and made the decision to retail to the public. This prompted him into purchasing of a property at 15 A Saddle Road, where Adams still stands today.

However, as in every business there is a learning curve. On the first day of business in 1993, he sold only 150 bagels and had to give away the rest. This was primarily due to the lack of local bagel knowledge and the novelty of the then unknown restaurant. After some reflection and market research, Adam decided to expand his portfolio and included bread baking. He then added his mother's homemade pies and cinnamon rolls to the menu. Adam reflects fondly that throughout his learning trials, his parents Odie and Eddie were his constant support and guidance and inspired him to continue growing the business.

In 1994, Adam took on another role of husband and with expectations of expanding his family, business expansion was another priority for him. Adam's new life partner, Jackie, played a significant role in his success by redesigning his bakery and restaurant. She also introduced the gourmet shop in 1998 which has been expanded and redesigned.

Today, the bakery and restaurant is familiarly known as simply Adam's by a growing clientele, because the establishment has evolved from bagels, to breads, to pies, to breakfast, to lunch, to tea, to a dine in or take out





**ADAM'S BAGLERY & RESTAURANT**  
DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE FOOD BUSINESS (CONTINUED)



*Adam inspects his wide array of locally made condiments.*



*Traditional artisan breads and pastries also come in healthy options and hints of local flavours.*



*Here's where one can find the city's widest selection of finest olive oils, cooking wines and salad dressings.*



*Always on the job.*

restaurant to a gourmet shop and patisserie. It has also cemented its 'good food and great service' in the Maraval community and environs.

Adam and Jackie shared some of the challenges they faced as a business in a time of Covid-19 lock down and restrictions, but due to their investment in sustainable practices such as local sourcing, they were able to weather the storm and maintain their commitment to preserve jobs.

## DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

In terms of meeting the SDG requirements Adam's is making good progress in several dimensions that are applicable to businesses in the food sector. Adam believes that low staff turnover and employee satisfaction is tied to organisational success. Often seen working side by side with staff, his nurturing style has distinguished his management and inspired loyal, long-serving staff. About 90% of Adam's staff complement are locals - many from nearby communities. Some staff have been with Adam's from the first day the doors were opened twenty-eight years ago. Several have benefitted from mobility and training. The bakery has become a training ground for the food and beverage industry with many young persons pursuing internships there. Adam's also attracts specialized pastry chefs from CARICOM countries – each one often adding their own individual creativity to the bakery's offering. Local talent sourcing means that Adam's meets SDG Goal 8 which promotes 'Decent Work & Economic Growth'.

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

Adam's is now an icon in the Maraval community and Adam has made a concerted effort to engage the community as much as possible. For the past few years, the restaurant has been using local fruits and vegetables as primary ingredients in their food, pastry and dessert dishes, and the restaurant menu reflects produce from local residents and the nation's farmers, providing a steady demand that reduces demands on foreign exchange and strengthening the local supply chain.

100% of local ingredients go into the making of the Adam's self-branded gourmet sauces and this has contributed to the success of the separate manufacturing business line, Adam's Gourmet Sauces

which is committed to creating high quality local substitutes for previously imported items. The sauces which can be readily purchased at Adam's, are also available at many food retailers locally and regionally. This core practice of Adam's business is consistent with SDG Goals 11 and 12 – 'Sustainable Cities and Communities' and Responsible Consumption and Production'.

### CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – ON LAND AND WATER

Trinidad and Tobago has a serious problem in how it addresses waste disposal - with waste from commercial operations being a significant source of land based and water pollution. The impact of irresponsible waste disposal has negative impacts to many communities - often marked by flooding episodes, landfill fires, unsightly, polluted recreational areas and water vector-transmitted illnesses. Adams has actively been implementing waste management tools such as composting, separation of waste, recycling and sustainable food containers and cutlery to lessen the restaurant's ecological footprint and to support the effort of waste reduction in Trinidad and Tobago. Adam currently collects used coffee grounds for composting into soil, they collect and sell used cooking oil for bio-fuel recycling, they are phasing out plastic and have recently introduced vegetable-based containers for take-away customers. These are all well aligned to the SDG Goals of 'Life below Water' and 'Life on Land'.

### GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

While sound HSE practice is an important pre-requisite for customer confidence and the license to operate in the food industry, Covid-19 have accentuated this in unprecedented ways and has likely made this the biggest challenge to business viability in 2020.

As an essential business, Adam's bakery operations have remained opened throughout the mandatory lockdown and has been a mainstay to stabilising the business amidst the attendant economic challenges. This has also been instrumental in maintaining employment levels despite reduced work production, but it has not been without sacrifice by both staff and management. This commitment to job security and exceptional customer service has paid dividends when government protocols were relaxed, Adam's employees remain committed to their jobs and pay strictest attention to all Covid-19 regulations to safeguard their own and their



*Prepping tarts.*



*Covid protocols in display as shelves are being restocked.*



*Traditional Syro-Lebanese pastries and gourmet desserts can be found only at Adam's.*



*Tables are rearranged for dining socially-distanced in keeping with regulations.*





ADAM'S BAGLERY & RESTAURANT  
DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE FOOD BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

customers health. They are keenly aware that this commitment to the SDG Goal of 'Good Health and Well Being', is good for business and good for the economy.

## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Adam is focused on remaining viable and competitive in the "new normal" of Covid-19. He is prepared to adapt to new trends and innovations to maintain the reputation of his restaurant and other affiliated components. He strongly believes that his staff is his greatest asset and will continue to make them an integral part of the business, and to value their loyalty to the company.

When Adam was asked about the future, he said, "I think the world has changed, not just with Covid, but in general. People are more aware about serious global concerns and businesses must be sustainable to stay afloat. Technology has made the world easier, but also makes it move at a tremendous speed and the expected convenience and instant gratification can be overwhelming. I still think what is going to give businesses the edge, is exceptional customer service, convenience, a unique vibe and good old-fashioned niceness"

Adam seems to be on his way to adapting to this new world while continuing to foster that homey, community spirit and special dining and shopping experience. To quote a Maraval resident whose family has lived in the area for decades, when asked if he would ever leave Maraval. The resident responded, "If I leave here, how can I go by Adams when I want to?" This succinctly demonstrates the importance of Adam's to their home community as a quality, service oriented and dynamic one-stop dining and shopping experience.

Typically, in our regional context, when we think about the Sustainable Development Goals a bakery or restaurant may not be the first thing that comes to mind. However, Adam's is clearly on the right track to providing a model for the food industry and sustainable business practices.

Although Adams may have not intentionally set out in the beginning to achieve the goals applicable to them, the evolution of their business model demonstrates that they have been thinking sustainably and are effectively, and almost effortlessly, incorporating elements of the Goals into their operations.



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### COVID-19 FOCUS



## THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTING TO SDG GOALS IN REGIONAL AGRICULTURE

### A CONVERSATION WITH AN IICA REPRESENTATIVE – DIANA FRANCIS

by Tisha Marajh



The Review interviewed the Representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, Trinidad and Tobago Office, **Ms. Diana Francis** for perspectives on regional food security amidst annual floods and hurricanes within the region, compounded by Covid-19 impacts on the farming community.

Diana Francis is a graduate of the University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine – BSc. Economics and Cave Hill - MPhil Economics. Her recent publications include 'Family Farming and Agricultural Policies: Considerations for Public Policy in the Caribbean' (2018) and 'Hunger and nutrition from belly-full to body-fuel: Critical Issues, Options and Perspectives' (2015). In her 27-year journey, she has provided direct assistance to Ministries of Agriculture in formulating Agricultural Policy and Strategy, emphasizing the importance of rebuilding strong planning capacity. Her current focus includes increasing the efficiency of agricultural policy and programming under conditions of constrained institutional resources (human and financial) and integrating micro and small agroprocessors more firmly into domestic agriculture value chains.

The Caribbean is one of five geographic regions in IICA's institutional structure. It comprises 14 sovereign states, double most of other IICA regions, of which 13 are members of the CARICOM Community (CARICOM), and adding the Dominican Republic, members of CARIFORUM. IICA has roughly 50 years in the Caribbean, starting in the Dominican Republic (1968), with 42 years in Trinidad and Tobago. IICA's Technical Cooperation (TC) is delivered by a team of well-trained, passionate Caribbean professionals and seasoned administrators. The Caribbean is the only IICA Region comprising Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which face extreme sustainable human development threats. IICA's 2018-2022 Medium Term Plan aligns to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which define its TC agenda, role in, and relationship with member countries.





THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTING TO SDG GOALS IN REGIONAL AGRICULTURE  
A CONVERSATION WITH AN IICA REPRESENTATIVE – DIANA FRANCIS (CONTINUED)

### What is IICA's role in and relationship with the agricultural sector in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean?

IICA's official entry point into Caribbean member countries is through the various Ministries of Foreign/External Affairs. Its technical cooperation is supported through quota payments from member countries and externally funded projects. IICA works directly with Ministries of Agriculture, providing technical cooperation through four strategic objectives, i.e., to:

- (1) Increase agriculture's contributions to economic growth and sustainable development,
- (2) Contribute to the well-being of all rural dwellers,
- (3) Improve international and regional trade for countries in the region, and
- (4) Increase resilience of rural areas and agrifood systems to extreme events.

These Strategic Objectives capture IICA's holistic view of agriculture as more than a supplier of raw material and food, as reflected in IICA's five technical cooperation programmes: namely

- (1) Bioeconomy and Production Development,
- (2) Territorial Development and Family Farming,
- (3) International Trade and Regional Integration,
- (4) Climate Change, Natural Resources and Management of Production Risks, and
- (5) Agricultural Health, Safety and Food Quality.

Integrated into all five programmes are important cross-cutting issues of Gender and Youth, and Innovation and Technology.

In T&T, IICA works closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) and its entities, particularly the

National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), Cocoa Development Company of T&T Ltd. (CDCTTL). Other collaborators include Chemistry, Food and Drugs Division (CFDD), ExporTT, local NGOs including The Cropper Foundation (TCF), Alliance for Rural Communities in T&T (ARCTT) and WHYFarm, and regional entities, such as The University of the West Indies (UWI), The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), and The Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI), in areas that span virtually all of its technical programmes.

### What are some of the key local/regional projects and strategic partnerships?

IICA's technical cooperation engages at all levels and in collaboration with like-minded partners. In terms of local projects and partnerships, IICA Trinidad and Tobago:

- consistently provides technical support to MALF and key entities to strengthen the regulatory framework for agricultural health and food safety, including, the T&T Food Safety Act, Zoonotic Disease Policy Framework and Implementation Plan (2019), Animals (Diseases and Importation) Bill, 2019, and the more recent development of Good Agricultural Practice T&T (GAP-TT) for fresh fruit and vegetable production. Led by NAMDEVCO, GAP-TT is built on institutional collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards, CFDD and CARIRI. The USDA-APHIS continues to be a key international partner in this area across the Region.
- continues to advocate for micro and small agripreneurs (AgriMSEs), following from a 2015-2017 European Union funded regional Agriculture Policy Programme (APP). Engagement and technical support to AgriMSEs focus on target-specific training, technical

# FEATURES

## COVID-19 FOCUS



THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTING TO SDG GOALS IN REGIONAL AGRICULTURE  
A CONVERSATION WITH AN IICA REPRESENTATIVE – DIANA FRANCIS (CONTINUED)

information, and business to business networking for product development, including testing and certification, to enhance marketability, market promotion and business management. CARIRI, CFDD, MALF, NAMDEVCO, the ADB, ExportTT and e-Teck are key collaborators in this effort. In the last quarter of 2019, IICA-T&T proactively organised, promoted and undertook direct marketing of AgriMSE Christmas Gift boxes showcased under the theme 'Trini Christmas is the Best', featuring a mix of local teas, seasonings fruit-infused punches, cocktails and syrups and herb-infused goat cheese, packaged in local wooden custom-made crates from recycled shipping pallets.

- works alongside the Food and Agriculture Organisation, to support the MALF's thrust (from 2019) to strengthen agricultural disaster risk management linked to farm flooding. This led to the GIS mapping of flood-vulnerable farming areas and digitisation of records of damage and loss claims for the 2015 to 2018 floods. The T&T Red Cross Society is an important collaborator, providing expert training in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to potential agriculture sector first responders.

Strategic Partnerships in other Caribbean countries include:

- The Australian High Commission in Port of Spain Direct Aid Program (DAP) 2019-2020, project on 'Developing Sustainable Protein-Sources for Community Nutrition Resilience in Antigua' to enhance local production and supplies of sustainable protein-sources. Antigua & Barbuda, a naturally dry island with poor soils, which affect the productivity of crop and livestock farming, is an import-food dependent country.
- The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) which signed an MoU with IICA Barbados in

2019 to enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest and strengthen advocacy for sustainable tourism development and inter-sectoral linkages in the Americas. The Barbados office has served as an IICA hub for AgroTourism Linkages since 2002.

- Rural Community Groups in Saint Lucia, namely Micoud Chocolate Company and the Beausoleil Sustainable Agriculture Business Group. These community groups are active in building rural enterprises from cocoa and this collaboration with IICA Saint Lucia and ARCTT, for training support, led to the production of the first ever rural community chocolate bar in Saint Lucia, produced by the Micoud Chocolate Group in 2017.

### **Clearly strategic partnerships are critical to secure additional funding for regional interventions. Who are some of the agencies you currently partner with?**

IICA has and continues to partner with some long-standing donors in agriculture in the Region such as:

- The European Union (EU) - Through a Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures project to help CARIFORUM countries meet their international obligations as a vehicle for more effective participation in international agriculture and food trade (IICA Barbados).
- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Through the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative aimed at safeguarding US agriculture and natural resources against the entry, establishment and spread of pests, and facilitating safe agricultural trade (IICA Barbados).
- The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) – a relatively new relationship from 2019, through a project to strengthen coastal and marine climate resilience through upland and coastal Ecosystem-based





THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTING TO SDG GOALS IN REGIONAL AGRICULTURE  
A CONVERSATION WITH AN IICA REPRESENTATIVE - DIANA FRANCIS (CONTINUED)

Adaptation (EbA, or nature-based solutions), such as using vetiver grass to improve soil health, stabilize slopes and reduce soil erosion and run-off downstream into coastal and marine areas, with full community engagement (IICA T&T).

- Caribbean Exports - Through a project that pairs 8 AgriMSEs from 6 Caribbean countries to experienced coaches to provide specialised support tailored to their specific business stage and needs to build their capacity for competitive marketing and exports. The tailored coaching hopes to provide them with the tools to improve business success and for some, to successfully restart business after the temporary stoppage due to COVID-19 (IICA Saint Lucia).

## Is the model of engaging the private sector viable for the advancement of local and regional food sustainability?

Private sector involvement is important. But the inability over decades, to successfully engage and lock-in private sector commitment suggests that we haven't quite found the right mechanisms for doing so. Collaboration means being able to effectively remove the obstacles, real or imagined, that disincentivize the private sector. This relates to investment directly in farming and value adding and indirectly in research, capacity building and business facilitation to ease entry of local/regional agri-food products into the well-organised and networked private sector warehousing, marketing and distribution logistics.

Past efforts were largely driven by the public sector and inward looking, to create cohesion among firms already involved in agribusiness. The establishment of the Caribbean AgriBusiness Association (CABA), with IICA's support in the early 2000's, was positioned as a vehicle to enhance private sector engagement. Attempts to attract private sector investment in large farming operations in



ARCTT training rural women of the Saint Lucia Micoud Cluster in chocolate making.



Saint Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers - Micoud Cluster displaying first chocolate bar.



Apiculture Training - Field Visit to an Apiary with Argentine experts Liliana Gallez and Elian Tourn - July 2019.

# FEATURES

## COVID-19 FOCUS



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A CONVERSATION WITH AN IICA REPRESENTATIVE – DIANA FRANCIS (CONTINUED)

land-rich Caribbean countries, to increase local/regional content in processed foods and beverages and inter-regional trade had limited uptake.

The more recent establishment of the Caribbean Private Sector Organisation (CPSO) in late 2019, in response to Prime Minister Mia Mottley's call to reduce the extra-regional food import bill, perhaps represents an outward-looking approach to public-private partnership. Led by regional private sector conglomerates not traditionally associated with the agriculture sector, in February 2020, the CPSO presented CARICOM Heads of Government with a "25 x 25" plan - to achieve a 25% reduction in extra-regional food imports by 2025. The plan acknowledges that private sector investment in innovation for agricultural productivity and efficiency will be pivotal to raise supply-side capacity and reduce losses and waste in the agri-food chain. Timely, because COVID-19 was declared a pandemic in March, with significant implications for food and nutrition security in a food import dependent and climate-vulnerable Region.

### **How does IICA view and integrate the relationship between sustainable agriculture and Climate Change into its work?**

Climate change and sustainable agriculture are inextricably linked. Conventional farming systems, still practiced in the Caribbean, will not be viable without effectively addressing climate risk in a region which is among the most climate vulnerable in the World. This risk is both climate variability, a short-term phenomenon manifested in seasonal droughts, variations in the length of the seasons etc., and climate change, which is a more long-term phenomenon. This makes understanding of climate risk and climate readiness extremely important to agricultural practices.

Although the Caribbean Region shares great commonalities, there are variabilities. IICA takes a systematic approach by profiling and prioritising climate

risks to agriculture by country, and in some instances, by locales within a country. These country-specific risk assessments allow for a clearer determination of entry points for IICA's interventions across three levels – the farm, the sector institutions and the country's international commitments.

At the national institutional and governmental level, IICA supports mainstreaming of approaches to climate risk assessment, climate readiness building, in agriculture and across other key sectors critical to sustainable agriculture development. Interventions include supporting the authorities to formulate national adaptation plans, targets and climate resilience policy.

At the ground level - the farm, IICA's focus is on enhancing understanding of factors of production that face the climate risk, mainly water and soil. This is essential to build farmers' capacity to recognise these risks, to build management plans with a focus on 'resource smart' approaches and practices and disaster risk reduction, to make them less dependent on traditional support systems, and more self-reliant, applying the 'do-it-yourself' concept.

At the international level, IICA has been expanding collaboration and partnerships with international organisations, such as the IPCC, to have a stronger Caribbean presence at these international conventions.

### **How has COVID-19 affected agriculture and the role of IICA regionally and in Trinidad and Tobago?**

The economic, social and other impacts of COVID-19 on agriculture in the Region have been studied and continue to be observed by IICA, FAO, CARICOM and other organisations, including Governments, such as through the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's Post COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery process.





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A CONVERSATION WITH AN IICA REPRESENTATIVE – DIANA FRANCIS (CONTINUED)

COVID-19 has not changed IICA's role in the Caribbean. IICA consolidated its 2020 technical cooperation budget to contribute directly to member countries COVID-19 agriculture and food security initiatives. IICA strengthened its technical cooperation capacity through strategic agreements with leading global academic and private sector entities to facilitate innovation and science-based policies and regulations to strengthen agricultural production, marketing and trade. In the height of the pandemic, IICA embarked on an aggressive campaign across the Americas to promote the strategic importance of agriculture and food supply. This involved outreach and partnerships with artists including from T&T and the hosting of strategic dialogue at all levels, from Ministers to youth in agriculture, across the Americas.

COVID-19 has definitely caused a rethinking of how IICA carries out its technical cooperation. IICA has renewed calls to build a new institutional framework for agriculture; to introduce greater innovation and digitalization; to promote openness and the free flow of international trade while also fostering regional integration to secure domestic food supplies. This also requires IICA to manage its own internal institutional adjustment to ensure that its technical cooperation remains relevant and effective in assisting member countries to navigate the rebuilding of agriculture within weakened national and global economies.

The IICA Director General, Dr. Manuel Otero advocates strongly for solidarity and international cooperation, particularly the work of multilateral technical cooperation organisations like IICA, as having tremendous value in overcoming the pandemic.



*IICA-TT & MALF discuss areas of common interest while sampling breakfast items from local AgriMSEs.*



*Leading by example, IICA staff setting up a compost unit in the IICA TT's office backgarden.*



*Setting up micro-irrigation systems against drought in Suriname.*

# FEATURES

## COVID-19 FOCUS



THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTING TO SDG GOALS IN REGIONAL AGRICULTURE  
A CONVERSATION WITH AN IICA REPRESENTATIVE – DIANA FRANCIS (CONTINUED)

### What are some of the goals and targets IICA has set itself for the Caribbean?

The IICA DG recognises that “the current situation has, once again, prioritized agriculture as a strategic sector that is capable of providing rapid, necessary responses to support economic reactivation in our countries”. Over the last 3 years Dr. Otero has been transitioning IICA to a new cooperation model driven by efficiency, flexibility, decentralization, collaborative work and networking; one that focuses on processes and based on mobilization of human, institutional and financial resources. This has enabled IICA to sustain and strengthen its role as a strong institution that can assist in transforming agriculture, a sector in which countries of the Americas have tremendous advantage.

Across the Caribbean, IICA’s TC goals remain consistent with its technical focus, differentiated only by scale and strategy fit to country context. The scope of our TC has also widened to incorporate linked and emerging issues that enhance progress in SDGs. In a post-COVID-19 era, IICA’s goals and targets can best be contextualized in gains that need to be consolidated and strengthened and areas that need urgent and concerted attention. Some priorities are:

- **Assuring water security for agriculture** (SDG 6) using an integrated water resource management approach in collaboration with the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean, the Caribbean Water & Sewerage Association Inc., and University of California, Davis. The global public is now sensitized to basic hygiene practices – handwashing - mandatory for mitigating COVID-19. Water is indispensable to agriculture, at all levels of the food production-handling chain. For years, farmers, fresh produce handlers and food processors have been required to incorporate this basic hygiene for food safety. NAMDEVCO GAP-TT standard is also

premised on clean water for food safety assurance. The additional high demand for water for public health hygiene has worsened the competition for water, in a sector already challenged by climate change/variability.

- **Linking life on land to life under water** (SDGs 15 & 14) using the Ridge to Reef concept and in collaboration with a number of traditional and new partners, including the CBF, IICA will promote the need for continuous adoption of good agriculture practices and use of nature-based solutions to protect soils from degradation and erosion and fresh and marine waters from siltation and pollution.
- **Pursuing affordable and clean energy** (SDG 7), as a response to the need to reduce the sector’s reliance on costly fossil fuel and build capacity for affordable, sustainable and green energy sources. IICA’s special project, on ‘Creating Economic Opportunities for the Organic Waste Management Sector through the Adoption of Bioeconomic Models in the Caribbean’ seeks to tackle the growing problem of landfills and waste management, by converting waste into viable green businesses that can extend the value of agriculture. This includes transitioning composting from a traditional knowledge practice into an economically viable bio-business using more scientific methods, with additional benefits for public safety and environmental health.
- **Building Resilient communities** (SDG 11) particularly in rural areas which still host traditional agriculture, to strengthen their self-reliance for food production and ability to mitigate risk and recover quicker after disasters. IICA’s recent outreach and partnerships with civil society groups and NGOs is important to community and agriculture resilience strategies.





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A CONVERSATION WITH AN IICA REPRESENTATIVE – DIANA FRANCIS (CONTINUED)

- **Addressing dietary deficiencies and non-communicable diseases** (SDG 2) mitigated through introduction of Biofortified Crops, through the Caribbean Biofortified Network (CBN), with two experiments ongoing in Belize and Guyana on iron fortified beans and zinc fortified rice varieties, respectively.
- **Mainstreaming agriculture and food and nutrition in education**, recognising that education is not limited to classrooms and traditional teaching methods (SDG 4) but must embrace all environments for learning and available information and communication technologies and tools.
- **Digitising agriculture** (SDG 9) to enhance decision-making, expand training opportunities and do better business, including among farmers and as a pull factor for youth and innovation (key to several SDGs) This includes bringing agriculture production and agricultural extension into the digital age, through proposals articulated in collaboration with UWI, CARDI and the CARICOM Secretariat.

### Can Trinidad and Tobago see sustainable agriculture (technology, education, tourism, community farming, etc) as viable diversification opportunities?

Short answer – Absolutely! All the ingredients and capacities to achieve this exist. The question really is whether sustainable and economically integrated agriculture is a development priority for T&T. The COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery process suggests that it is. There was overwhelming interest from stakeholders in agriculture, with calls for more tangible and strategic support for its development. The additional \$500M budget for agriculture's development is a step in the right direction. But it cannot only be a step; it must be a commitment, systematically dealing with bottlenecks as they arise.

Sustainable agriculture is not a static state; it can be easily disrupted by extreme natural hazards that wreak havoc to the agri-food supply chain. Sustainable agriculture requires investment driven by innovation in all areas necessary for an industry's growth, and commitment at all levels to adopt

and sustain recommended good policies, programmes and practices. While T&T, and the Caribbean as a whole, may not rank among the world's top agri-innovators, the scope for, and access to global innovations and the drive of several locals, particularly among the young class of agriculturalists, already provide the firm platform for T&T to progress towards this goal.

Some of the fundamental messages that emerged from the Roadmap to Recovery effort for agriculture that will determine progress and the quality of same, are that: it cannot be 'business as usual'; that policy makers must rebuild confidence in the sector among producers through assurances of adequate, relevant and reliable development support and consumers through assurances of safe, wholesome, affordable, acceptable and readily accessible local agri-food products. IICA played a central role in the Agriculture Post-COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery process and remains committed to supporting T&T and the Caribbean to continuously build capacity for and sustain resilient agriculture that contributes adequately and meaningfully to sustainable human development.

## FEATURES

### COVID-19 FOCUS



## CARPHA'S REGIONAL TOURISM AND HEALTH PROGRAM AND ITS HOLISTIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN THE CARIBBEAN

by Saarah Khan

The Caribbean region, known as one of the world's top tourism destinations, is diverse in its offerings of tropical weather, vibrant cultures and history, picturesque beaches, and unique eco-tourism. For these reasons, and more, the region is an attractive location for visitors, making the tourism industry a major factor driving the economies of many Caribbean countries, with approximately 50 million visitors per year arriving by sea and air. However, unmanaged health events can seriously harm the inflow of tourists and tarnish the reputation, and thus, the economic sustainability of Caribbean tourism destinations. The region has been susceptible to communicable diseases like Chikungunya, Zika, Dengue and most recently, the novel coronavirus, COVID-19.

The health of Caribbean economies is closely related to the health of its tourism industry given that the Caribbean is the most tourism-dependent region in the world. The Caribbean Public Health Agency, as the Caribbean's sole regional public health agency responsible for preventing disease, promoting, and protecting health and responding to public health emergencies, acknowledges that Caribbean tourism required programmes that address these risks. It can also contribute to different health, safety and environmental (HSE) threats, including the introduction and spread of new and emerging diseases by visitors and locals. Therefore, CARPHA, in partnership with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) established the Regional Tourism and Health Programme (THP), with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) <sup>1</sup> in 2016.

The THP is an innovative program that addresses HSE threats impacting on tourism to improve the health, safety and security of visitors and locals and thereby contributing to the enhancement of the quality, competitiveness, reputation, resilience and sustainability of Caribbean tourism and the Regional economies. This novel programme adopts a multi-pronged and multi-sectoral approach to implementation. The programme has built capacity and equipped countries with regional tools that support preparedness and response to public health threats like COVID-19. This is the first integrated programme of its kind, setting an international precedent for improving sustainable tourism and regional health security.

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) disease to be a pandemic. The global spread of COVID-19 was propelled by travel, is threatening the health security of this region, whilst at the same time disrupting tourism and reducing revenues in Caribbean economies, as countries implemented border and business closures to prevent importation and spread of illnesses. In the absence of a vaccine, COVID-19 will continue to be a grave public health, security and economic threat. Countries have, as of June 2020, started to re-open borders and businesses. Re-opening and recovery require a careful balance between reducing restrictive measures and ensuring adequate measures are implemented to prevent/reduce importation and spread of new cases, and to ensure that capacity is ramped up to rapidly identify new cases, and test, isolate and trace contacts.

<sup>1</sup> Tourism & Health Program: <https://carpha.org/THP>





CARPHA'S REGIONAL TOURISM AND HEALTH PROGRAM AND ITS HOLISTIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN THE CARIBBEAN (CONTINUED)

## COVID-19 Proactive Health Measures For Reopening Tourism



Real time monitoring of illnesses via Tourism Health Information System (THIS)



COVID-19 Health Guidelines



Healthy, Clean and Green Operational checklists



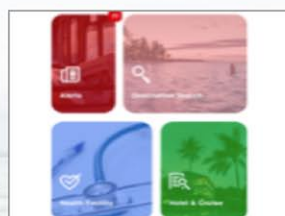
COVID-19 response in hotels and tourism accommodations



Hospitality health, safety and environment standards



Advance food safety and hygiene certification



Traveller's Health App



Caribbean Travel Health Assurance Stamp

## COVID-19 Tourism Task Force



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION



The THP is actively supporting CARPHA's regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic, through a comprehensive suite of Regional Proactive Health Measures, shown in Figure 1. Guiding the tourism sector's response to COVID-19 requires strong public-private intersectoral partnerships at national and regional levels between tourism, health and environment stakeholders. This holistic system is the only way to support a rapid and well-coordinated approach to deal with the pandemic.

Figure 1

# FEATURES

## COVID-19 FOCUS



### CARPHA'S REGIONAL TOURISM AND HEALTH PROGRAM AND ITS HOLISTIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN THE CARIBBEAN (CONTINUED)

From its inception, the THP was ideal for addressing the pandemic as its design intentionally involves the cooperation of multiple sectors. These THP tools have been crucial in aiding the regional response to COVID-19 for both health sector and the tourism industry:

- i. **Real time monitoring and response to illnesses through the Tourism and Health Information System (THiS)**<sup>1</sup>- This early warning and response travel/tourism information system identifies illnesses and other public health threats in tourist accommodations in real time, so as to trigger a rapid and coordinated response, and thereby reduce illness spread, and negative economic and reputational impact on Caribbean tourism destinations
- ii. **COVID-19 Health Guidelines for Hospitality Sector:** A comprehensive package of COVID-19 health guidelines for the various sectors in the hospitality industry<sup>2</sup>
- iii. **Advanced Food Safety Training and Certification**<sup>3</sup> - offering advanced food safety, environmental sanitation, prevention and response to illness, outbreaks, mosquito borne infections training with accompanying globally recognized certification, to add to the hospitality sector's reputation
- iv. **COVID-19 Technical Guidance Documents**<sup>4</sup> - These give technical guidance in handling COVID-19 risks for travellers, hoteliers and workers, food handlers, and ports of entry, as countries begin reopening borders.
- v. **COVID-19 Tourism Task Force Guidelines for the Reopening of Caribbean Tourism and Travel: Guidelines and Checklist**<sup>5</sup> - a comprehensive checklist of all measures for reopening of the tourism industry
- vi. **Travelers Health Prevention Guidelines**<sup>6</sup>
- vii. **Regional Hospitality Health, Food Safety and Environmental Operational Standards**<sup>7</sup> - indicate Seven (7) CARICOM Regional Standards for the Tourism Industry
- viii. **Regular travel briefs and countries' reopening measures**<sup>8</sup> - CARPHA regularly monitors and publishes the travel updates for countries, both globally and within the Caribbean region
- ix. Response to COVID-19 cases in tourism accommodation establishments using the THP's **Regional Guidelines for Response to Public Health Issues**<sup>9</sup>.
- x. **Caribbean Travelers Health Mobile App**<sup>10</sup>- This app will allow for the reporting of illnesses and identify accommodations using proactive healthier, safer measures to customers.
- xi. Caribbean Travel Health Assurance Stamp - Award for Healthier Safer Tourism for companies that are using the proactive health measures of the THiS system and have undergone the COVID-19 health training.

1 Tourism and Health Information System: <http://this.carpha.org/>

2 Tourism and Health Information System: <https://www.carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/Technical%20Guidance/Interim%20COVID19%20Guidelines%20for%20Hospitality%20Hotels%20and%20Guest%20Houses.pdf>

3 Tourism and Health Information System: <https://www.servsafe.com/>

4 Tourism and Health Information System: <https://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus/Technical-Guidance>

5 Tourism and Health Information System: <https://www.carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/Technical%20Guidance/Guidelines%20and%20Checklists%20for%20Reopening%20of%20Caribbean%20Tourism%20and%20Travel.pdf>

6 Tourism and Health Information System: [https://carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/COVID-19 Guidelines Preparedness for Traveller.pdf](https://carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/COVID-19%20Guidelines%20Preparedness%20for%20Traveller.pdf)

7 Tourism and Health Information System: <https://carpha.org/What-We-Do/THP/Hospitality-Health-Safety-and-Environmental-Sanitation-Standards>

8 Tourism and Health Information System: <https://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus/Prevention-Measures-Travel-Advisories-and-Reopening-Plan>

9 Tourism and Health Information System: <https://carpha.org/What-We-Do/THP/Regional-Guidelines-for-Response>

10 Tourism and Health Information System: <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/caribbean-travelers-health-app/id1518385740>





## CARPHA'S REGIONAL TOURISM AND HEALTH PROGRAM AND ITS HOLISTIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN THE CARIBBEAN (CONTINUED)

Given the proximity and interconnection between all the islands, an outbreak on one island can quickly spread to the others. The Regional Surveillance Guidelines aim to provide harmonized technical guidance to travel-related public health events. The Guidelines for Managing Issues of Public Health Significance on Passenger Ships provided a foundation for the development of a mandated regional coordination protocol for Heads of Government for managing COVID-19 on passenger ships.

Since the beginning of the crisis, regular webinars with CARPHA, CHTA, CTO members and regional Ministers of Tourism have been organized to provide real-time assistance to all member states in preparing for the possible spread of the virus throughout the region. CARPHA and the THP have maintained constant communication, providing real-time information and guidance to the countries within the region, circulating the CARPHA COVID-19 Situation Report to our stakeholders. Building upon a unique partnership established over five years ago by CARPHA and the region's public and private sector tourism stakeholders, as well as recognizing the severe negative impact that COVID-19 could have on the tourism-dependent economies of the region, CARPHA, CTO, CHTA started working on COVID-19 preventative and education initiatives early in February 2020. This led to the formation of the COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Task Force a month later between CARPHA, CTO and CHTA, and was later joined by the Jamaica-based Global Tourism Resiliency and Crisis Management Centre (GTRCMC) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission (OECSC).



### CARIBBEAN TOURISM HEALTH SAFETY TRAINING SERIES

#### Tourism Health Safety 101 & THiS Overview

**Wednesday, June 24, 2020  
3:00 - 5:00PM ET**







**Panelists**

**Dr. Lisa Indar**  
Assistant Director and  
Head, Tourism and Health  
Programme Surveillance,  
Disease Prevention &  
Control Division  
Caribbean Public Health  
Agency (CARPHA)



**Ornella Cyrus**  
Epidemiologist / Technical  
Operations Officer  
Tourism and Health  
Program  
Caribbean Public Health  
Agency (CARPHA)



# FEATURES

## COVID-19 FOCUS



### CARPHA'S REGIONAL TOURISM AND HEALTH PROGRAM AND ITS HOLISTIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN THE CARIBBEAN (CONTINUED)

On June 23, 2020, the COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Task Force, launched its Health, Safety and Sanitation Guidelines and Training Series, which will provide tools and guidance to be used for the protection of both residents and visitors, as countries reopen the tourism sectors. The THP will be facilitating the training sessions along with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), which will run from June 23 – July 22, 2020 and will emphasize the core health, food safety and environmental training previously provided by THP. While not intended to replace specific national and territorial guidelines, or those being put in place by specific hotels and the industry, the procedures serve to reinforce and complement existing policies which have been drawn up to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The initiative has also been put in place to provide support particularly for the independent hotels, tourism-related businesses, and smaller destinations that lack the expertise or resources to develop their own.

The THP is also in the process of developing multiple tools to foster better public health throughout the region, with the creation of a certification system, whereby facilities and tourist accommodations can be verified as a healthier, safer destination with the Caribbean Travel Health Assurance Stamp. Companies in the region which participate in the

training and also use CARPHA's online Tourism Health Information System (THiS) will be eligible to receive the Caribbean Travel Health Assurance (CTHA) Stamp, adding further assurance to travelers about their commitment to health safety.

The newly developed The Caribbean Travelers Health App, allows visitors throughout the world to view the THP registered facilities in participating countries that are using healthier, safer tourism measures. It also gives information on any health updates and alerts occurring in specific countries, vaccines required for travel, as well as the local health facilities.

The Caribbean is leading in the way that it is treating the health of travellers coming into the region. As was noted by Frank Comito, CEO and Director General of the CHTA, during the launch of the COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Task Force, "nowhere else in the world do you have a partnership between public health agencies and governments, focused on travellers health", and the Tourism and Health Program continues to provide real-time assistance to all member states in preparing and responding to the spread of the virus and promoting the Caribbean as a healthier option for travelers, steadfastly working with its tourism partners to ensure the vision for "Healthier, Safer Tourism".

For more information on CARPHA, the THP and the COVID-19 Response:

Visit our website at <https://carpha.org/What-We-Do/THP/Country-Programmes/Trinidad-and-Tobago>

or any of our social media platforms: @CARPHATHP @tourismandhealth\_carpha @CARPHA\_THP





### STRATEGIZING FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH IN A DOWNTURN

Staff Writer

Retaining employment for 52,300 workers when the Covid-19 pandemic initially sent Trinidad and Tobago into lockdown, was the first in a number of steps followed by the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA), in its quest to maintain lives and livelihood over the months that followed. Most manufacturers took a hit – and a hard hit from the onset. President Franka Costelloe says, businesses are still reeling from the effects and some are unlikely to recover.

#### PUTTING LIVES AND LIVELIHOOD FIRST

*"Putting human lives at the forefront cannot be understated,"* says President of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association Franka Costelloe. She is genuinely concerned about business survivability and viability in the near term for her 550-plus corporate members.

*"A business being shut down for three months and not being able to generate revenue while attempting to maintain employment through that period, is a massive humanitarian effort. But, in many instances, when you operate in an island economy like ours, companies – particularly SMEs, recognize employees as extended family. Many are familiar faces who have been with them for years. Paying salaries with no income coming in for a whole month would be unthinkable under normal circumstances,"* she explains. But as the youthful executive states, *"This is something everyone needed to, and wanted to do."*

In the months that followed many were forced to make labour cuts, and Costelloe says, *"it was very hard to do. I want to make sure that it is recognised that employers tried hard to find that balance to maintain employment even as revenue went down. It was a tall order and they delivered. They should be applauded for that."*

#### COVID-19 – INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The TTMA embarked on a systemwide humanitarian effort that addressed the immediate need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline workers at the height of the pandemic as it hit the region, was the massive thrust by manufacturers to design and manufacture personal protective equipment, including face masks, shields and hand sanitiser. Some companies even retooled their production lines to streamline output and delivery.

The TTMA partnered with The UWI St. Augustine to develop and produce essential medical equipment which had been depleted by the demands that Covid-19 was placing on critical resources. PPE supplies such as head caps, surgical masks, N95 respirators, face shields, gloves, shoe covers, gowns and protective suits are all high-demand items for hospitals and quarantine centres and global sourcing is proving to be increasingly difficult. The UWI Engineering Department designed prototypes for a comfort-fit facemask, PET protective face-shields and an N95 equivalent respirator which was co-developed with MIC for mass production. The University also designed a low-cost ventilator – the 'UWI-Vent' in preparation for critical care patients.

# FEATURES

## COVID-19 FOCUS



STRATEGIZING FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH IN A DOWNTURN (CONTINUED)

*"That was a tremendous show of innovation and strategic partnership," Costelloe said. As covid19 spread through the world, demand for cleaning and hygiene products skyrocketed. For a brief period at the start of the pandemic, around late February, early March, items like hand sanitisers were sold out throughout the country. Supply chain disruption meant that one of the key ingredients for the product, isopropyl alcohol, was difficult to import. Angostura and ANSA McAL stepped in and stepped up.*

Ethyl alcohol, used by distillers and brewers in their products, at a minimum strength of 70 per cent has been determined by health experts to be a viable option for hand sanitisers that could disinfect and kill covid19. Rum distillers Angostura was the first to announce that it would sell some of its ethyl alcohol to local manufacturers to make more hand sanitisers for the local market. Angostura also pledged to ensure that none of its product would be sold to any company that would engage in price gouging and embarked on its own formula for distribution to frontline workers. Carib Brewery, a subsidiary of ANSA McAL, followed suit soon after, also distributing hand sanitisers to frontline workers.

According to Ms. Costelloe, *"Carib donated about 50,000 bottles and we (TTMA) got 10,000 to put into our care packages for SME workers and the frontline. Angostura donated about 3,000 as well, so that was an incredible commitment."*

Clothing manufacturer Janoura's was also among the first to transform its production line to making face masks. Label House repurposed some of its polyethylene terephthalate (PET), a type of plastic used in packaging, to make face shields based on designs developed at the UWI and which was successfully tested for efficacy at the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI). These masks were then marked with stickers that attested to the rigorous testing the products went through and distributed to frontline and healthcare workers by the TTMA.

### TTMA IN THE COMMUNITY

*"This initiative is not a first for the manufacturing industry. In many occasions of crisis, the TTMA always comes through for our community and country," Ms. Costelloe said. The TTMA, for example, led the charge among businesses in Trinidad and Tobago to co-ordinate and distribute relief aid and donations to flood victims over the last few years, especially as part of its Proudly T&T programme.*

Manufacturers also led the way with implementing industry best practice for health, safety and environment (HSE) policies in the workplace thereby making the protection of workers health and wellbeing mandatory.

*"The response by manufacturers to COVID19 was exceptional. We referenced international best practice and WHO standards; we sourced data and information from several countries and institutions; and we conducted extensive research and listened to the experts - including the Health Ministry and the Chief Medical Officer. We not only implemented their specific protocols, we went beyond that," she said.*

### A COMMON-SENSE APPROACH TO SURVIVAL

As Ms. Costelloe explains, the sector took a common-sense approach and made adjustments based on the unique circumstances of individuals and companies, especially when it came to limiting human contact. *"It certainly prompted the digitisation leap - i.e. e-commerce, managed distribution that limited the number of customers coming into a place; work shift systems that allowed fewer workers on the ground at the same time but allowed the same amount of production and volume to be produced," Ms Costelloe said.*

There are 1,014 manufacturers, but during the lockdown period which lasted from mid-March to the end of May, only 273 companies, deemed essential, were allowed to operate. Among these were food and beverage





## STRATEGIZING FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH IN A DOWNTURN (CONTINUED)



Collection of PPE following HSE COVID Protocol Webinar #proudlytt

manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies and other PPE makers.

Cognizant that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) would have felt the brunt of the economic impact of Covid-19 mitigation policies, the big companies stepped in to help out – a sort of big brother helping a little brother scenario.

Giants like the West Indian Tobacco Company (WITCO), Vemco and Carib came together and supplied PPE purchases up to \$150,000 for distribution via the TTMA to SMEs. Around 120 SMEs received an average of \$3,500 worth of PPE. *“That was an awesome approach, helping out each other in a very tangible way. We recognise we are all in this together and we will support each other. Because if a small manufacturer contracts Covid-19 in a work environment it puts us all at risk,”* Ms Costelloe said.

The TTMA also hosted a webinar featuring specialists who could speak to SMEs and advise them on different approaches on how best to adapt to their individual needs, as well as speak to key team members from these large companies to find out how they adapted.

Covid-19 has changed the world, and it is clear that flexibility and adaptability are the keys to sustainability and business viability.

## CHANGING METHODS OF DOING BUSINESS

*“Everything has changed – how you market your product, how you distribute it, package it, sell it – it’s all changed. Even market share has drastically changed. The bottom line is to be efficient and being efficient means being cost effective,”* the TTMA President explains.



Face Shields donated to Chaguanas health centre courtesy TTMA/UWI/label house collaboration.

# FEATURES

## COVID-19 FOCUS



STRATEGIZING FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH IN A DOWNTURN (CONTINUED)

In tough times like these, businesses are particularly careful about spending. Businesses also need to be agile – especially when it comes to digital transformation. *“What was once considered nice to have in terms of technology is now considered an absolute necessity. The whole digital 4.0 thrust which we were talking about pre-Covid-19 was previously just background noise and seen as just for big companies. But now we see it as a means of surviving right now.”*

App development that pushes and markets a company's product and puts it out there and makes it easier for distribution and delivery is very important. E-commerce and online is incredibly important, she said.

*“Look at us at TTMA. We adapted by hosting our Annual General Meeting virtually – the first one in Trinidad and Tobago. We've since inspired others to follow suit. And next up we will have a virtual trade show – the first of its kind in the CARICOM – TIC 2020.*



Distribution of 1,000 bottles of sanitizer to police stations in rural south Trinidad (donated by Angostura) with a further 3,000 bottles to be donated by ANSA Mcal.

*“So, I'm explaining to our members, don't wait, don't be afraid of the change, do not think that this is just another month or two and things will go back to normal. It is not going back to normal. This is not going back to what it was before. So much of the world has advanced with technology right now and becoming more efficient that reverting makes no business sense. People have learnt how to do it better, faster and more cost effective. So, if you miss that boat you are going to get left behind. That's how business is,”* Ms. Costelloe cautioned.

## STRATEGIZING FOR THE FUTURE – 2025

The manufacturing sector is 52,300 times important to Trinidad and Tobago, says Ms Costelloe. *“Every single job is important, and we have the potential to double our capacity. I have much hope and belief that this country can be a manufacturing hub for the CARICOM. It's not only our geography, natural resources and cheap gas. That's a great foundation, but the thing that makes us different is the people. We have such a talented and creative human resource,”* she said, clearly excited at the possibilities.

We have devised a three-phased strategy for 2020. It is a strategy to stabilize, strengthen and secure the sector. Phase One is focussed on stabilising the domestic market, drawing from the initiatives that we had already outlined as critical to sustainability. We are working aggressively with our members, especially the SMEs to get trade back to December 2019 levels.

In Phase Two of the strategy implementation, we are looking at strengthening the base. Our plan is to recapture and recover our pre-Covid export market share through a virtual reconnect with buyers, leveraging technology to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones. Personal travel may be restricted but there is no restriction to the movement of goods and there is every opportunity for those who want to be first movers in the new digitised trading space.





### STRATEGIZING FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH IN A DOWNTURN (CONTINUED)

In Phase Three, we will refocus our attention on growing exports by targeting and securing new markets and connecting our members through B2B arrangements. Our objective is a targeted one, which is to sustainably grow exports, thereby removing any reliance on the public sector for foreign exchange, while at the same time contributing toward the diversification of the economy.

Our long-term strategy, over five years, is aimed at doubling our efforts in the export markets and this would mean further penetration into existing markets and finding new market opportunities for our manufacturers/exporters in the country.

Manufacturing could be a bigger asset to the country. It's one of the most stable sectors worldwide and has been proven historically to be the driving force to get countries out of recessions and economic depressions. In addressing the potential of the sector, Ms Costello affirms the value of manufacturing. *"Our 2020-2025 Manufacturing Strategy is aiming for sector growth and expansion and we believe that manufacturing is pivotal to reopening and rebuilding the economy. Investing in the manufacturing industry means everybody will get better jobs, better paying jobs, better skill sets and better training. I believe Trinidad and Tobago has that potential to really grow the manufacturing industry and that through manufacturing, we will have a more stable economy and a higher and better quality of life for everyone."*

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# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

## CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

CSR HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION  
OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020

### OCTOBER 2019



#### **Cable & Wireless Charitable Foundation donates US\$100,000 to United Way of Trinidad & Tobago.**

Following a spate of floods, the C&W Charitable Foundation (CWCF) committed over US\$1M to projects across the Caribbean region. Flood response and mitigation activities in Trinidad and Tobago will get a significant boost as the CWCF and Flow partner with the United Way of Trinidad and Tobago (UWTT) to donate US\$100,000 to support a broad range of response programmes across the island. The partnership will focus on rebuilding activities that specifically benefit vulnerable groups as well as a longer-term awareness programme to mitigate the impact of natural hazards. (Web source)

### NOVEMBER 2019



#### **Caribbean Airlines Supports Shelter for Battered Women and Children.**

The Shelter for Battered Women and Children was established in 1987 as a safe haven for women and children who are victims of all forms of domestic violence. On November 24, 2019 the Shelter for Battered Women and Children hosted its 4th Annual Charity Golf Tournament, with proceeds going towards renovation works at the shelter, which provides a safe space for women and children, who are victims of domestic violence, to rebuild their lives. Caribbean Airlines sponsored the event and was also proudly represented in the Tournament by Captains Raphael Rose and Captain Richi Kangoo. The Shelter provides direct services to survivors of physical and emotional abuse and their children, including counselling, crisis intervention, support, individual advocacy, and a wide range of material assistance. Direct services include providing a safe physical space for survivors of violence and their children through maintenance of a shelter facility. (Web source)

### DECEMBER 2019



20 Scholarship Winners from Carib Cement.

#### **Caribbean Cement Company Awards 20 Community Scholarships.**

Twenty deserving students from communities surrounding the company's plant and quarries, particularly from communities located in Bull Bay, St. Andrew are among beneficiaries of the 2019 Carib Cement Scholarship programme. Among them are 16 secondary and four tertiary school students. Included in the group are future medical practitioners, marine life researchers, engineers and software developers. With the support of their parents and community, they are determined to self-actualize, and are already on the path to doing so. The company's educational outreach initiatives have included a range of activities over the years such as: funding a homework programme within the Harbour View Community for schools in that area; covering the cost of a remedial Math and Reading programme for primary schools in East Kingston; assisting with infrastructural development and facilitating career talks and tours for schools within and outside of the immediate vicinity of the plant. (Source: Corporate Website)



CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP  
CSR HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION  
OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020 (CONTINUED)

## JANUARY 2020



### AMCHAM Gala Awards celebrates Business and Civic Leadership.

US Ambassador Donald Tapia says the US Embassy will be working closely with the American Chamber of Commerce of Jamaica (AMCHAM) on the upcoming Trade Americas 2020 Trade mission to Jamaica in June. He was speaking on Tuesday, January 28 at the 10th annual AMCHAM Business and Civic Leadership Awards for Excellence at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel. The event saw hotelier and entrepreneur Kevin Hendrickson receiving the AMCHAM President's Award, which is given to a distinguished business leader and philanthropist who has made a significant contribution to Jamaica's development. Bank of Jamaica Governor Richard Byles received the Lifetime Achievement Award. The AMCHAM Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have made considerable and lasting contributions to economic and social progress in Jamaica through ethical leadership and community building activities. (Source: Loop News – January 30, 2020)

## FEBRUARY 2020



### Digicel supports DASH in St. Lucia.

Embracing corporate social responsibility is the focal underpinning of many supporters and sponsors of DASH, who all believe in the sixth annual event's core values of youth empowerment, health and wellness, charity, diversity, and unity. Among those organisations that believe strongly in this is longstanding partner DIGICEL which, like DASH has not only continued to live up to its commitment to charity but has over the years steadily raised the bar and exceeded expectations. Recognising the clear distinction of the two, Marketing Manager Jamisha Wright said, "We at DIGICEL are super pleased to be a part of DASH Colour Run for another year. Other key sponsors include KFC, The Cell, West Tech Shipping, Republic Bank, LUCELEC, and Lumnat Distributors all of whom have joined the cause of underlining the importance of family, partnership and charity. (Source: St. Lucia News Online – February 13, 2020)

## MARCH 2020



### Scotiabank announces details on Customer Assistance Programme for customers affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

Scotiabank Guyana implemented financial measures to help customers cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Scotiabank implemented deferral of payments on various products for up to 6 months. Which meant customers were not required to make regular payments to loans (principal, interest, insurance cost charge, if applicable) during the period of the deferral. The bank has also stated that it continues to work on financial relief measures to help with any financial hardships that customers may be experiencing. (Raymond Smith – Country Manager, Scotiabank Guyana – March 31, 2020)

# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

## CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

CSR HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION  
OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020 (CONTINUED)

**MARCH 2020**



### **PLNL provides support to fence line communities.**

Point Lisas Nitrogen Ltd (PLNL) is extending its Covid-outreach to its community, increasing its social investment programme to provide critical food and household items to families in their fence-line community. “Charity begins at home”, said PLNL president, Fitzroy Harewood in a statement Tuesday. “Many families in our fence line communities are facing challenges due to loss of employment and so we collaborated with Habitat for Humanity to distribute food hampers to families and that drive continues. PLNL remains committed to doing all we can to provide support and assistance during these difficult times.” PLNL will also aid Habitat to package and distribute 1,500 hygiene kits to suburban and remote households to encourage sanitisation habits – especially where there are limited supplies of water. (Trinidad & Tobago Newsday, April 30, 2020)

**APRIL 2020**



### **Ramps Logistics provides laptops and internet to staff to support remote work .**

While the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their operations, local oil and gas support companies Ramps Logistics committed to retaining staff and have implemented measures to ensure everyone is paid as they abide by public health measures instituted to prevent the spread of the virus. Ramps committed to preserving jobs and implementing work from home options. Business Development Director Mariska Jordan said. “We have the majority of the staff working from home. We have given them laptops, given them internet, because some people didn’t have, and we had to make sure they did, equipped them with safety stuff, such as sanitizers and PPE, but we are not looking at lay-offs,” Jordan added. (Source: Stabroek News, April 29, 2020)

**APRIL 2020**



### **ExxonMobil, partners donate \$60M to Guyana’s COVID-19 fight.**

The Civil Defence Commission (CDC), Salvation Army and Rotary Guyana have received more than GY \$60 million to support COVID-19 relief programmes. ExxonMobil Guyana and the Stabroek Block co-venturers, Hess and CNOOC, are providing funds as part of the programme established collaboratively with the Department of Energy to support social projects. The Stabroek Block co-venturers were assisted by the Department of Energy in identifying programmes that were in greatest need of COVID-19 funding and could reach as many people as possible throughout the country. The CDC received \$40 million to support the Ministry of Public Health for additional quarantine facilities, food, sanitation items and equipment, including personal protective equipment for staff at the quarantine facilities. Director General, Lieutenant Colonel Kester Craig said the funds will also be utilized to supplement the humanitarian efforts designed to bring hampers of relief supplies to the people most vulnerable to COVID-19. (Source: News Room, April 30, 2020)



CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP  
CSR HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION  
OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020 (CONTINUED)

**APRIL 2020**



**Republic Bank Limited**

## **Republic Bank is donating \$31.5m to Guyana's fight against the rampaging COVID-19 pandemic.**

Republic Financial Holdings said that this was part of a US\$2m contribution to all parts of the globe where it operates. Describing the human tragedy that is unfolding as "epochal", President and CEO of the Group, Nigel Baptiste said that the donated money will be utilised for the purchase of critical needs such as ventilators, personal protection equipment, testing kits, food and supplies for health workers. "The full extent of the human tragedy that is unfolding before our eyes is epochal. While the Group is committed to helping our customers survive the economic impact, there is so much more that is needed to be done at the society level. No country is immune from this virus and, given our preference for open economies, we all must be interested in what happens elsewhere. (Source: Stabroek News, April 4, 2020)

**APRIL 2020**



*HELPING HANDS - Major appliances donated to the Health Ministry by Amalgamated Security Services Ltd (ASSL). PHOTO COURTESY ASSL - ASSL*

## **Amalgamated Security reaches out with donation.**

AMALGAMATED Security Services Ltd (ASSL), under its "Amalgamated Security Saving Lives" programme, has donated appliances to the Ministry of Health to support national covid19 response. The appliances are destined for two step-down quarantine facilities, namely the National Racquet Sports Centre in Tacarigua, and the Brooklyn facility in Sangre Grande. This latest donation complements a number of initiatives by ASSL, including its cloth mask drive that saw the company producing and distributing 30,000 plus free cloth face masks to its employees, their families and the wider community. Recently, ASSL also donated 51 sewing machines to NGOs and other social-impact organisations throughout the country to support the national effort in producing more masks, as well as various donations of hand sanitizers. ASSL's donations to the ministry included refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, televisions, microwaves and electric kettles. (Trinidad & Tobago Newsday – April 21, 2020)

**MAY 2020**



*2019 JEP Tertiary Scholar, Nickolye Graham, shares lens with JEP Group President and CEO, Wayne McKenzie at the JEP-WKPP Scholarship Awards Ceremony last year.*

## **Tertiary, PEP students to benefit from JEP's \$17m scholarship fund.**

The Jamaica Energy Partners Group invited university students residing in St Catherine, western and eastern Kingston, to apply for its scholarship programme valued at \$17 million. The Ministry of Education will select students sitting the Primary Exit Profile examinations based on their academic performance and location. The private power producing company, which includes Jamaica Energy Partners, West Kingston Power Partners and Jamaica Private Power Company said it recognises the need for academic advancement to foster economic, social, and sustainable development in Jamaica. JEP Group will, therefore, offer tertiary/PEP students scholarships valuing \$250,000 and \$35,000 respectively per school year, to cover tuition, books, and other educational materials. The scholarships are payable per semester and the company will re-award the full amount until the completion of study, once students maintain a B+ average/3.0 GPA. (Source: Loop News – May 4, 2020)

# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

## CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

CSR HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION  
OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020 (CONTINUED)

MAY 2020



### Proman Trinidad gives over TT\$1 million in its COVID support initiatives.

Proman Trinidad committed to the distribution of over 3,500 hampers over the course of three months—between April and June 2020—in the Couva region and more widely, in partnership with the Couva Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce, the Carli Bay Fisherman's Association and other relief organisations across the country. The company partnered with local farming associations to take high-quality produce that would otherwise have gone to waste, including leafy greens, a range of fresh vegetables and ground provisions, and created healthy fresh food hampers—thereby reducing food waste, and supporting the livelihoods of local farmers while providing food relief to those most in need. (Source: CNC3 – May 17, 2020)

MAY 2020



Alain Carreau (left), CEO of RUBiS and Daniel Caron, Country Manager for Nestle Jamaica

### RUBiS gives Essential workers get complimentary coffee.

RUBiS Energy Jamaica Limited and Nestlé Jamaica Limited through its coffee brand Nescafé, have partnered in an effort to show appreciation to the island's frontline workers in the battle against the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Doctors, nurses, members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and members of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF), with valid photo identification, who visit select RUBiS locations island-wide, will be provided with a complimentary Nescafé beverage of their choice. The offer by the two entities may be redeemed by doctors, nurses and members of the JDF and JCF at select RUBiS stores up to May 10, or while stocks last. A list of participating locations is available via RUBiS and Nestle's online platforms. RUBiS Energy Jamaica Limited said it believes the selfless dedication of these frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic is highly commendable. (Source: Loop News – May 1, 2020)

JUNE 2020



### Angostura donates 7,000 bottles of hand sanitiser to schools.

As schools prepare to accommodate students for the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA), Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) and the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC), Angostura has donated over 7,000 bottles of hand sanitiser in order to keep students and teachers safe while at school. A handover ceremony was conducted at the company's headquarters yesterday, where Peter Sandström, CEO of Angostura said, "We want to ensure that our nation's children are safe when they return to school so that when their parents go to work, they are comfortable knowing their children are protected." The company also sent bottles of sanitiser to Tobago through the Tobago House of Assembly. (Source: Loop News – June 26, 2020)



CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP  
CSR HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION  
OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020 (CONTINUED)

**JULY 2020**



## **NWC Jamaica Giving Employment Opportunities to At Risk Youth.**

As part of its continued efforts in exercising its corporate social responsibility, the nation's leading water provider the National Water Commission (NWC), has to date employed over 300 at risk youth to gather vital information through its Customer Census Mapping Project. By definition, at risk youth are persons who due to a range of factors are deemed less likely to transition successfully into adulthood, achieve economic independence or contribute meaningfully to society. It is a definition that Naaman Parker, one of the youngsters employed through the project, is all too familiar with. "I was told a lot of things in my life that I would never achieve but this project has offered me a second chance and has been a saving grace for me" he explains. As a result of employment through the project, Naaman has been able to complete the building of his own house and investing in his farm. Staff for the project are mainly recruited through the government's Housing Opportunity Production and Employment (HOPE) programme where they are trained in life skills, citizenship, work ethics, discipline, volunteerism and entrepreneurship skills. Once with the NWC, they are further trained in crucial areas such as customer service, Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, safety guidelines and meter handling. (Source: Jamaica Information Service – July 2020)

**AUGUST 2020**



## **CGX donates \$14M in cereal to CDC for pandemic response and boosts local agro processing.**

CGX Energy Inc. yesterday donated more than \$14 million in Morning Glory Cereal to the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) to assist Guyanese who have been affected by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. During a brief ceremony morning at the National Gymnasium on Mandela Avenue, Executive Director of CGX Energy Inc., Professor Suresh Narine, revealed that the company in collaboration with its partner, Frontier Energy, has donated 40,000 boxes of locally manufactured cereals, to the CDC. Each box, he said, contains five rice cereal meal replacements. He noted that they were motivated to make the donation by the president's call for the private sector to assist in the COVID-19 response. However, he said, they decided to include a local food product because it is very important to sustain local agro processing ventures, which are hard hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Narine also revealed that they will be donating \$10 million later this week that will aid CDC's task of addressing the needs of the citizenry during this time. (Source: Stabroek News – August 16, 2020)

# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

## CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

CSR HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION  
OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020 (CONTINUED)

AUGUST 2020



### Grace Kennedy donates food hampers to the Living Water Community.

Staff members of GraceKennedy Money Services (TT) Ltd, agents for Bill Express, FX Trader and Western Union have pooled their resources to join the national food distribution drive. Taking the lead from their employer which, in May, undertook a similar initiative to assist persons affected by covid19, employees of GraceKennedy (TT) Ltd recently made a donation of food hampers to the non-governmental organisation, Living Water Community, a media release said. The hampers contain a range of essential foodstuff including canned items from GK Foods. (Source: Trinidad & Tobago Newsday – August 15,2020)

*A GraceKennedy (TT) Limited employee sorts some of the food hampers arranged by staff members for the Living Water Community.*

AUGUST 2020



### Mount Gay helps with hand sanitiser, but it won't be a norm post-COVID.

As Mount Gay Distilleries Ltd makes yet another contribution to Barbados' fight against COVID-19, the company says that introducing the alcohol-based hand sanitiser was not a difficult decision or feat. "It was an easy transition as we used 1.75 ml bottles which is a standard format for us," said Managing Director Raphaël Grisoni. Most recently Mount Gay donated a second batch of hand sanitiser to aid the frontline workers. As of June 2020, the company has contributed over 8,000 bottles in the 1.75 ml size of the Mount Gay manufactured sanitiser worth over \$180,000 to its employees, Government agencies including the Royal Barbados Police Force, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Barbados Drug Service, Barbados Customs Department, Barbados Postal Service and select business partners. (Source: Loop News – August 31, 2020)

SEPTEMBER 2020



### Digicel maintains Paralympian sponsorship.

Digicel maintains its position as a major supporter of Jamaica's special-needs community with the re-signing of Paralympian gold medallist, Alphonso Cunningham, as a brand ambassador. The company also reaffirmed its support for Special Olympics Jamaica (SOJ) team, now 19 years running. As a Digicel brand ambassador for the past seven years, Cunningham, a five-time gold medallist, has been a pivotal part of the company's work to raise awareness and support for Jamaica's special-needs community. His achievements on the world stage and as a seven-time winner of the annual Digicel 5K for Special Needs, have been an inspiration to all. In welcoming the continued partnership, Cunningham noted, "Digicel has helped to make me who I am today, and for that, I will forever be thankful. They have helped me to fully embrace who I am. The Foundation is doing some amazing work within Jamaica's special-needs community, showing genuine compassion, and I just want to say thank you Digicel. Keep up the good work." (Source: Loop News September 1, 2020)





## TechnipFMC – CONTRIBUTING TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN GUYANA

by Donna Ramsammy

TechnipFMC in Guyana is part of the global & regional services provided by TechnipFMC plc to the local energy sector. TechnipFMC is a global oil and gas company that provides complete project life cycle services for the energy industry.

In Guyana, the company is working to build capacity and capability in country to service the sector and to improve standards generally across all sectors. TechnipFMC does the audits and qualification of suppliers and service companies and, partners with others in training and support services to Guyanese companies to help them close gaps and be better positioned to become a qualified supplier to TechnipFMC and other Tier 1 service companies operating in Guyana.

Francois Baptiste is Country Coordinator for TechnipFMC in Trinidad and Tobago. Given the proximity to Guyana, he is part of the Group's face and representative of the Global Supplier Development Team that has been working to develop and qualify suppliers in Guyana over the last 2+ years. His contribution to the team includes regional and cultural context that is valuable to how TechnipFMC delivers its services in country.

TechnipFMC has committed to maximising local content – people, personnel and services. To satisfy this commitment, the company issues quarterly reports which details funds spent in country, the number of Expressions of Interests (EOI) published, the number of supplier forums held, contracts awarded, supplier site visits and the total number of training hours provided its Guyanese hires to name a few areas.

Training is critical to supplier development and bringing Guyanese companies up to standard and fully compliant with the technical requirements of the new industry. Baptiste explains, *"Service in this industry is heavily technical, procedural and regulated. Health, Safety, Environment and Quality Assurance requirements in particular, are quite stringent. There is little or no experience with the sub-sea environment and companies are challenged by capacity – scale and scope, as well as by capability – skill and technical knowledge."*

TechnipFMC works with companies in several ways. It publishes EOIs and follows up with supplier forums to help guide the process towards compliance. Subsequent to the EOIs, TechnipFMC's Supplier Development Team undertakes site visits in addition to conducting pre-audits to assess capacity and capability and then provides feedback on gaps to the Centre.

Once companies complete training and do the necessary work, TechnipFMC aids with full audits. Not all companies are able to meet the demands. For some, it requires a comprehensive equipment upgrade. 1800 metres below sea level is very different to the mining and fishing industries. Equipping for such new tolerance levels can be costly and many are unable to make the transition. Others simply don't have the number of skilled personnel needed and additional training is required to build a cadre of talent for the sector. TechnipFMC supplier development services are free.

Since April 2017 when Technip first mobilised in Guyana, the company has overseen the certification of five Guyanese supplier companies and to date has employed 27 Guyanese

# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

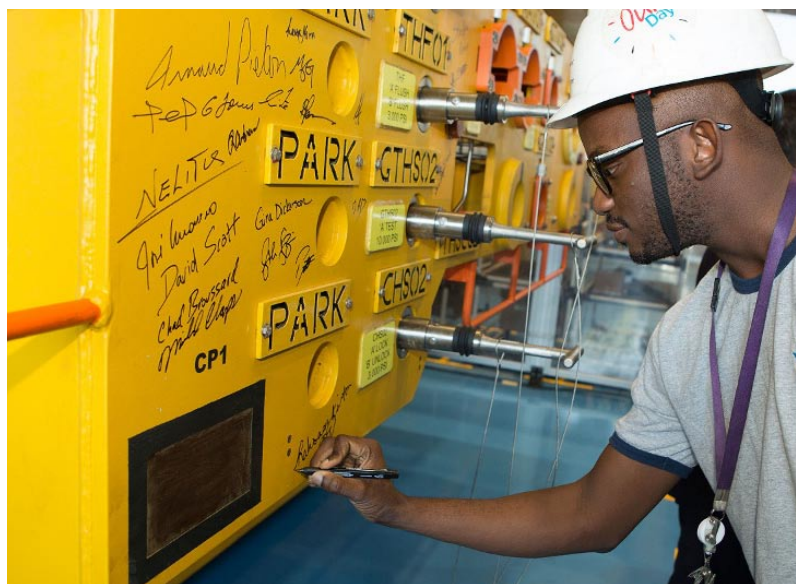


TECHNIPFMC – CONTRIBUTING TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN GUYANA (CONTINUED)

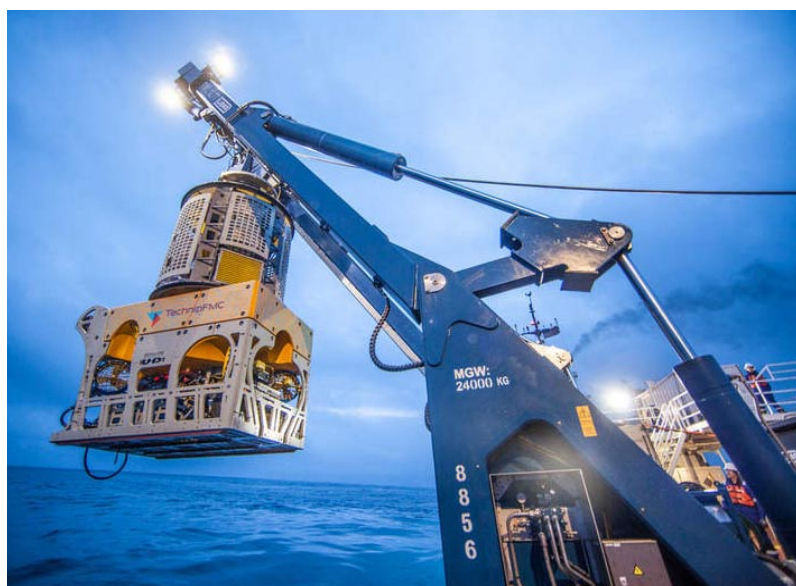
nationals who, having completed sensitisation and education programmes via in-house training with TechnipFMC at various locations including Brazil & Houston are then transitioned to the field where they work under experienced personnel. TechnipFMC qualified Guyana suppliers to date provide a range of items including industrial gases, hose and fittings, slings & shackles, and security services. They also provide servicing and refurbishing of items such as tools, baskets, trees and drill strings.

Baptiste says, “The work with local training partners to push the Tier 1 contractors to do as much as possible to maximise local content is creating equal opportunity and transparency to the procurement process, and contributing to the transformation that is apparent in Guyana today.”

Baptiste believes more can happen with better financing but that is just not happening as fast as it should as the banking and finance sector also tries to keep pace and develop areas to assist local Guyanese businesses. When asked about Joint Ventures as an option to financing, he is cautious. TechnipFMC is wary of shell companies who have no prior experience and may want to simply ship labour in and out. This is not a desirable outcome for TechnipFMC. The Company believes that Guyana has the will and capability to make the shift and that sooner rather than later the service industry in Guyana will be largely Guyanese owned and manned.



Guyana employees hired by TechnipFMC sign subsea tree prior to its installation in water depths greater than 1,900m (6,230ft).



TechnipFMC-subsea-rover.





## COVID-19 RESPONSE

### COVID-19 PRESENTS NEW THREATS TO ECONOMIC STABILITY UN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGIONAL RECOVERY

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***“Latin America and the Caribbean has become a hotspot of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, exacerbated by weak social protection, fragmented health systems and profound inequalities...In a region which experienced a significant number of political crises and protests in 2019, increasing inequalities, exclusion and discrimination in the context of COVID-19 affect adversely the enjoyment of human rights and democratic developments, potentially even leading to civil unrest, if left unaddressed”. (Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean)***

In July 2020, the UN Secretary General issued a Policy Brief on the impact of Covid-19 on Latin America and the Caribbean. With increasing numbers and limited access to quality health care, there is growing concern about the effect of the glaring inequalities on these most vulnerable populations. Among these, women who make up the majority of the labour force and older persons. The document also looked at how indigenous peoples and people of African descent, as well as migrants and refugees, are suffering disproportionately, as vulnerability multiplies.

The policy brief addresses “urgent and longer-term steps to recover better” and calls on regional governments “to do more to reduce poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition”. Below are excerpts from the Executive Summary and which highlights recommended interventions to avert a crisis.

#### ISSUES SUMMARY

**Latin America and the Caribbean has become a hotspot of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, exacerbated by weak social protection, fragmented health systems and profound inequalities.** COVID-19 will result in the worst recession in the region in a century, causing a 9.1% contraction in regional GDP in 2020. This could push the number of poor up by 45 million (to a total of 230 million) and the number of extremely poor by 28 million (to 96 million in total), putting them at risk of undernutrition. In a region which experienced a significant number of political crises and protests in 2019, increasing inequalities, exclusion

and discrimination in the context of COVID-19 affect adversely the enjoyment of human rights and democratic developments, potentially even leading to civil unrest, if left unaddressed.

**Prior to the pandemic, the region’s development model was facing severe structural limitations:** high inequality, balance-of-payments constraints, and exports concentrated in low-technology sectors resulting in recurrent exchange-rate and debt crises, low growth, high informality and poverty, vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, and loss of biodiversity. Negative social indicators were and continue to be aggravated by extremely high rates of homicide and gender-based violence, including femicide.

**Recovery from the pandemic should be an occasion to transform the development model of Latin America and the Caribbean while strengthening democracy, safeguarding human rights and sustaining peace, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** The costs of inequality in the region have become untenable. The response requires rebalancing the role of states, markets and civil society, emphasis on transparency, greater accountability and inclusiveness to support democracy, strengthening the rule of law and protecting and promoting human rights. The root causes of inequality, political instability and displacement need to be addressed. These steps, in turn, demand social compacts for legitimacy and support, a strong commitment to the fight against



corruption and organized crime, as well as an effective, accountable and responsive presence of the state throughout the territory.

The peacebuilding gains made in the past three decades need to be preserved and deepened.

**Equality holds the key for the successful control of the pandemic and for a sustainable economic recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean.** In the short run, equality helps to sustain income and aggregate demand. The focus on social inclusion counteracts the rise of xenophobia and stigmatization of marginalized groups. The active contribution of youth needs to be recognized, supported and leveraged, as close to 17% of the Latin American and Caribbean population is between the ages of 15 and 24. In the economic recovery, equality is crucial to boost growth and productivity both directly — through access to education, food, health and opportunities for all — and indirectly, by preventing the concentration of economic and political power that constrains, captures and distorts public policies. **In Latin America and the Caribbean, building back better implies building back with equality.**

**Gender equality and the empowerment of women needs to be at the core of the response:** Women have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic; largely employed in the informal and hardest-hit sectors, their ability to absorb economic shocks is less, while they have also taken on greater care demands at home as well as being more exposed to increased violence in a region with high rates of gender-based violence already. Every effort should be made to guarantee full-fledged rights of women, girls and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, including the right to a life free of violence, exploitation and discrimination, the right to health and

education, employment, wages and social protection, the promotion of economic autonomy and political participation.

The policy response to COVID-19 should get us closer to the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development across four key dimensions anchored in human rights:

1. **Social**, based on equality and universal social protection for all, regardless of sex or gender, age, race or ethnicity, language, religion, legal or migratory status, or any other status or personal circumstance.
2. **Economic**, based on the creation of decent jobs sustained by enhanced local technological capabilities.
3. **Environmental**, based on the protection of nature and the environment for present and future generations.
4. **Political**, based on democracy, rule of law, transparency, gender equality, conflict prevention, accountability, participation and access by civil society and local communities to information in all the phases of design, implementation and evaluation of public policy.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SHORT TERM

- **Explore mechanisms to provide people living in poverty with basic emergency incomes.**
  - This could include the possibility of providing the equivalent of one national poverty line. In order to address food insecurity and malnutrition, these measures could be complemented, when necessary, by anti-hunger grants for those living in extreme poverty.



COVID-19 PRESENTS NEW THREATS TO ECONOMIC STABILITY  
UN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGIONAL RECOVERY (CONTINUED)



- **Full access to economic and humanitarian assistance and basic services should be ensured for all in need.**
  - o Special consideration for informal workers, women, youth and those in the most vulnerable situations: children, older persons, Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons, internally displaced persons, migrants, refugees and minorities, as well as women who have experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence or other forms of gender-based violence.
- **Implement measures to preserve skills and managerial and productive capabilities to allow production to respond when demand recovers**
  - o To include emergency subsidies to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), especially to cover labour costs. Policies should facilitate equal access to information and communication technologies (ICT), tools and platforms. In the case of larger firms, financial support could be provided with conditionalities, such as protecting employment, investing in research and development (R&D), green investments and refraining from distribution of dividends among shareholders.
- **The immediate international multilateral response should be extended to the middle-income countries.**
  - o This group, which includes most Latin American and Caribbean countries, faces structural constraints, yet has been largely excluded from cooperation in the form of emergency liquidity response, concessional funding, trade exemptions, deferral of debt service payments

and humanitarian assistance. These instruments are especially urgent for tackling the rising external public debt of Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS). Debt sustainability should be pursued by fostering sustainable and inclusive growth, not by austerity that halts investment. International financing should be expanded, including a major allocation of special drawing rights (SDRs), accompanied by initiatives for debt relief or debt standstill and innovative financing mechanisms such as the Debt Relief/Swap for Climate Adaptation for the Caribbean.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING BACK WITH EQUALITY

- **Fostering comprehensive welfare systems**
  - o Revamped social protection schemes and universal access to health care and education for all, free of discrimination and irrespective of legal or migratory status. It should comprise targeted measures to protect the most vulnerable groups.
- **Fostering sustainable industrial and technological policies (SDG 9)**
  - o Measures to encourage a low-carbon growth path, reallocate informal workers into decent jobs, promote the transition to renewable energy, build capabilities in health and in digital and green technologies, and reduce vulnerability to new shocks. Investments in research and development (R&D) and cooperation with universities, the scientific community and the private sector are crucial for resilience and recovery.

# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

COVID-19 PRESENTS NEW THREATS TO ECONOMIC STABILITY  
UN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGIONAL RECOVERY (CONTINUED)



- **Strengthening progressive tax systems that allow for enhanced domestic resource mobilization (SDG 17)**
  - o Ensuring that the fiscal effort relies on redistributive taxes, while curbing tax evasion and avoidance.
- **Preserving strategic natural terrestrial and maritime ecosystems while reducing territorial inequalities**
  - o Conservation of biodiversity and more inclusive agricultural and forestry systems that are oriented towards local communities and products, as well as respectful of indigenous peoples' right to their traditional lands.
- **Regional economic integration**
  - o Support productive diversification, economic resilience, and regional cooperation in financing research, science and technology.
- **Strengthening democratic governance, the rule of law, accountability and transparency**
  - o Sustained by a social compact to ensure the legitimacy, inclusivity and effectiveness of public policy, as well the involvement of local communities and civil society, including women's organisations and youth.
- **Environmental sustainability, underpinned by the 2030 Agenda, should be the basis for relaunching multilateral cooperation, particularly in developing countries.**
  - o Economic recovery will require a strong multilateralism and international cooperation. Crucial global challenges — such as climate change, human mobility, pandemics or the fight against illicit capital flows — demand new forms of governance. A just transition to a zero-carbon economy, that in many cases will require investments to promote environmentally friendly technologies and economic sectors, should be a critical component of the recovery.

*Excerpted from Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Latin America and the Caribbean  
For more information or to access the full document go to [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)*





### PHILANTHROPY IN TIMES OF COVID

by Jennifer Cipriani

In August 2020, a homeless man in Guyana, Carl Melville, went viral on social media after a post of him cleaning up the popular seawall area was shared multiple times. Built by Dutch Settlers in the 1880's, this concrete and steel structure runs for 280 miles along much of Guyana's shoreline, protecting it against the might of the Atlantic Ocean which towers some 7 feet above the coast which sits mostly below sea level.

*Carl Melville inspires a clean up movement.*



*Carl Melville smiles at his turn of fortune.*



Over the years, the section of the wall which is in the capital city of Georgetown, has been a place of relaxation for family and friends. The strip has emerged as a popular weekend entertainment spot. Here, among the bling and excesses of alcohol, one can find a fusion of street foods – from traditional Guyanese to Latino fare influenced by a migrant community. One can choose from fried fish and fried chicken paired unexpectedly with green plantain fries, cook-up rice, pudding and souse, curried dishes, black pudding, and souse, as well as hotdogs, burgers, gyros, Brazilian grilled meats and local pastries.

These weekend events often leave piles of trash behind. Unsightly plastic and glass bottles, disposable food containers and other waste, line both the wall and the beach, spoiling this beautiful landmark – a sad indictment on the numerous pleasure seekers and a poor testimony to the visitors staying in the nearby upscale Marriott and Pegasus hotels.

It's no surprise that Carl's story spread like wildfire. This wasn't just an act of conscience, it was one of leadership. Carl had become homeless – a casualty of Covid-19 on the labour market in country. The loss of livelihood left him living on the seawalls. He decided one day to single-handedly begin to clean up the space he now called home and then simply continued the task. Facilitated by numerous shares on Facebook, Carl's story reached the owner of GameXpress, Audie Henriques, as he scrolled through local news while stuck overseas due to the pandemic.

# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES



## PHILANTHROPY IN TIMES OF COVID (CONTINUED)

Henriques and his staff were deeply impressed by Carl's passion and sense of community. *"His hardworking nature and his ability to do so much for the cleanliness of the seawall and not expect any reward for it was truly inspiring,"* said Henriques.

Henriques decided to reward Carl's diligence. Anyone who would display such commitment to unpaid work, was sure to be a responsible employee. Henriques hired Carl to maintain the GameXpress store and surroundings and gave him a place to stay nearby. In appreciation for his act of national pride, Henriques also granted Carl paid time off to continue his seawall cleanup.

Life as a small business owner has not always been great for Henriques and his wife Nazeema, who started off in business since 1994. They were dogged by several failures as they ventured into wholesale party supplies, children's books, shoes and clothing.

But they never gave up. GameXpress, before it was officially launched in 2005, started out as a small game arcade in the year 2000. As its popularity grew, customer interest expanded into games, consoles and accessories for personal use. This gave birth to GameXpress.

Over the years the challenges were numerous. *"We had to mortgage our house, and were robbed and broken into multiple times,"* Henriques recalled. But he remained undaunted and persevered. Helping others is characteristic of Henriques; but his own personal trials only served to reinforce his commitment to supporting those who are less fortunate.

*"Since GameXpress was launched, we embarked on our own social responsibility programme. Though not at the scale that large companies can, we have been making steady contributions each year to multiple orphanages,"* the Philanthropist explained. In 2014, he undertook the sponsorship of high school education of an at-risk youth whom, for the purpose of anonymity, we will call 'G'. He has been doing well in school and Henriques holds out great hopes for him.



Audie Henriques - Philanthropist and owner of GameXpress. .

*"Helping him is probably the thing that made me the proudest other than when my kids got their bachelors degrees. And that's because he started out with bad grades but then when he got 14 subjects with grades ones and twos, I was delighted for him."*

GameXpress continues to pay for the young man's education now that he is at University. And that's not all. *"Before the pandemic, we were paying for the transportation of a student from Linden, a town about 2 hours away, to attend one of the top schools in the City, Queens College. When school resumes, we will continue doing this,"* says Henriques.

In the midst of the pandemic, GameXpress continues its Corporate Social Responsibility efforts by distributing hampers to residents in depressed communities. The company usually provides groceries and financial aid to underserved persons in the community. The pandemic has increased those numbers. Apart from education and food relief, Henriques shares another cleanup campaign. *"We make other contributions to the community by paying to have the parapet from Camp to Alexander Street, Georgetown, cleaned".*

GameXpress has over the years grown into a successful small business. The party supplies that failed initially, became a huge success when Henriques focused on retail sales only. He is currently the distributor of Wilton cake products which are doing excellent in Guyana as many supermarkets carry the products.



What has made GameXpress stand out from its competitors? Henriques believes the differentiating factors are his excellent staff who provide top notch customer service; the variety and availability of products; and competitive prices. Undoubtedly the reputation his business has for consistently good deeds, has contributed to the patronage he receives. The many comments under the Facebook posts about his employment of Carl, attest to this. *"That is why GameXpress will always have my support,"* said one customer.

Since March 2020 Guyana's business climate has been severely affected by the prolonged elections process and simultaneous outbreak of Covid-19. GameXpress, during the initial lockdown, suffered like many others who had staff and bills to pay but were not generating any income. But they fared much better than many other small businesses.

*"We are known to focus primarily on home entertainment, so the pandemic did not affect us as much as it would other businesses,"* explained Henriques. Globally, trends reflect a

spike in home entertainment solutions as the world settled into lockdowns and remote work.

Since GameXpress and Carl Melville first made the news, Carl is now quite settled in his new role. Henriques reported that Carl is doing great at his job and is popular with patrons and suppliers. Carl was even invited to meet with Guyana's new First Lady Mrs. Arya Ali, who has undertaken to support the seawall project. On September 5th HE Arya Ali made good on her promise and embarked on a clean up exercise with the Seawalls and Beyond community group. She also reiterated her commitment to the National Beautification Project, a personal initiative which aims to regulate and monitor unlawful intrusion on landscape and public spaces. Her plans include planting of trees and the return of creative arts events at the bandstand.

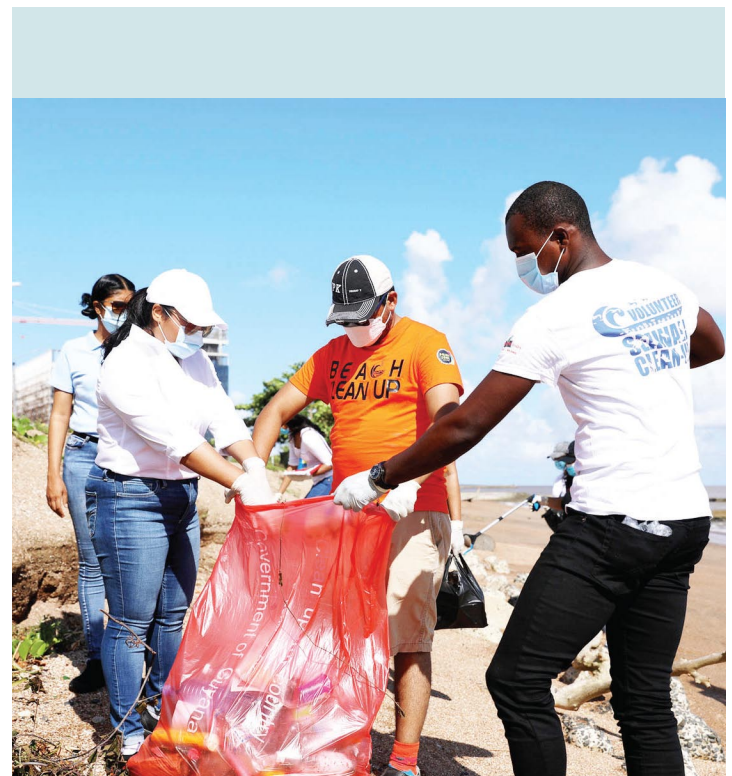
How does the future look for this small business role model? *"We hope to continue to grow as a company not only to expand in the sense of business, but also to be able to increase our potential for giving back to the community,"* said Henriques.



Carl Melville joins the GameXpress team.



Her Excellency, Arya Ali, the First Lady of Guyana, hosts Carl Melville at President's State House.



First-lady HE Arya Ali joins in the Seawall clean-up.



## INTEGRATING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS INTO CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

by Kyle Santos

**The Caribbean region faces massive economic, social and environmental challenges, most of which existed before the unprecedented events of 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these, bringing the long-term sustainability of the region into question.**

Luckily, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) and the associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The SDGs articulate an urgent and detailed call for action by all countries over the next decade. Encouragingly, governments worldwide have already signed on to the SDGs; they were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. Many countries are making impressive progress as outlined in their documented Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of progress on the SDGs. Trinidad and Tobago's first VNR was published in 2020.

Increasingly, the private sector is being seen as a critical contributor to the achievement in the SDGs. But this is not just about doing the right thing, according to the Better Business Better World report by the Business & Sustainable Development Commission (a two-year initiative supported by the UN, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, among others), achieving the SDGs could open up an estimated US\$12 trillion in market opportunities in four economic systems: food and agriculture, cities, energy and materials, and health and well-being. Many companies will do very well by aligning themselves to the SDGs.

## GETTING BUSINESS' MORE ENGAGED ON THE SDGS

For the most part, business can do much more to contribute to the SDGs. This is particularly true in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), creator of the most widely adopted global corporate sustainability reporting standards, has identified five key mechanisms governments can use to scale corporate interventions in the SDGs.

1. **Involve the private sector in every step of SDGs implementation:** ensure priorities are shared, and the contributions of different businesses and sectors are understood
2. **Facilitate and enforce effective SDGs disclosure by companies:** such as through best practice guidelines and regulations for mandatory reporting
3. **Align with existing corporate disclosure practices and frameworks:** focus on those already widely used and working well, such as the GRI Standards
4. **Develop measurement and monitoring tools to track private sector input to the SDGs:** start with the data available through companies' public reports
5. **Enable regular dialogue between stakeholders:** encourage collaboration and reinforce their respective contributions to the SDGs

To date, civil society has taken the lead on implementing the SDGs in Trinidad and Tobago, with initiatives such as the SDG Catalyst Network and the Caribbean Civil Society



SDGs Knowledge Platform being used for collaboration and sharing good practice. The private sector should take a page out of civil society's book in this regard.

### INTEGRATING THE SDGS INTO YOUR BUSINESS

The SDGs are often described as a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. Not surprisingly then, they are substantial and detailed. The 17 goals are just a helicopter view of a more comprehensive approach. Sitting beneath these are 169 targets and 231 unique indicators, with annual refinements made to the indicator framework as needed.

Many companies, and some civil society organisations, that claim to have adopted the SDGs have merely mapped their core activities and or CSR initiatives to the 17 goals, without paying attention to the underlying targets and indicators. While this is better than nothing, it is insufficient. For example, SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere is incredibly broad. Without analysing the targets and indicators a company may not realise that critical to achieving this goal are things like: the effectiveness of the social protection system, the ability of people to secure tenure rights to land, appropriate inheritance laws, boosting communities' resilience to natural disasters, increasing financial literacy and access to appropriate technologies.

The SDG targets and indicators provide a plethora of clearly defined social, economic and environmental needs that companies can contribute to and unless time is taken to assess the targets and indicators, there is no guarantee that your company's efforts are actually contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.

This is not to suggest that companies take action on every SDG; that would not be a practical or helpful approach. However, a superficial alignment at the Goal level or a narrow focus on philanthropy may not yield significant societal benefits. For companies aspiring to create positive change, it is time for a new strategy.

### IDENTIFY AREAS OF FOCUS

Arguably the most important step in integrating the SDGs into your sustainability strategy is determining which SDGs to focus on – or put another way, which social or environmental challenges do you want to help solve. In many cases this decision has hinged on 'what we've always done', or the interests of leadership and other influential voices within the company. This is no longer considered good practice. Instead, several factors should be taken into consideration:

1. **Local operating environment** – Which of the SDGs impact on the country and local communities in which the business operates? If you don't know the answer, engage local stakeholders to get their views.
2. **Business purpose, vision, mission and strategy** – Which of the SDGs are most clearly aligned to these fundamental building blocks of the business?
3. **Stakeholder views** – What SDGs are the business' stakeholders (including but not limited to employees, customers, local communities, and NGOs) concerned about?
4. **Core skills and resources** – What are the company and its people good at? What resources (products, services, cash, time, knowledge and experience, relationships and influence, etc.) does the company have and how can these be applied to the SDGs identified?

It is worth noting that while there is no limit to the number of SDGs a company can support, good practice would be to focus only on what is most important, to avoid spreading resources too thinly.

### DEFINE A VISION FOR CHANGE

Once you identify the SDGs you wish to focus on, the next step is to define the positive impact the business wants to create. Think of it the same way you would a corporate vision statement, which articulates the company's dreams and hopes for the future. Defining the desired impacts makes it easier to select the interventions (e.g. volunteering

programmes, education initiatives, financial contributions, operational changes) that are most appropriate, identify the beneficiaries, and set quantitative measures of success.

### IMPLEMENT THE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

This is where the rubber meets the road. Armed with SDG focus areas, a clear vision of desired impacts, preferred interventions, and performance metrics, it is time to implement the sustainability strategy. These activities do not need to be equal in profile or scale, nor do they all need to be started at the same time. Whichever approach you take, it is critical to allocate appropriate time and resources to implementing the strategy. A leadership level sponsor or board champion will also be critical. Their role is to advocate for the strategy inside and outside of the business and clear barriers to implementation.

### MEASURE AND COMMUNICATE PROGRESS

Few companies in Trinidad and Tobago actively measure progress against their sustainability ambitions. Even fewer communicate this progress to their external stakeholders. To ensure a positive societal impact, it is critical that companies have processes and controls in place to track the inputs and outputs of their sustainability activities. In some cases, this data will be available from existing systems

in the finance or human resources departments (e.g. financial donations), but these systems may be ill-suited to tracking other metrics, such as employee volunteering hours and the impact of sustainability initiatives. Where this is the case, it may be necessary to develop bespoke tools.

In terms of communication, social media provides companies with a quick and effective means of telling their story. Annual sustainability reports are also increasingly common locally and are ubiquitous in more mature markets. However, whichever communication methods are chosen, companies should avoid the temptation to create self-serving case studies, which media-savvy readers will see through as marketing and public relations. Instead, focus on demonstrating how the company's activities have created tangible benefits for beneficiaries and contributed to the SDGs, supporting these claims with testimonials and data.

The direction of travel is clear, companies around the world are being asked to play a greater role in solving society's challenges. The SDGs are the world's sustainability blueprint for the next decade, but they will not be achieved without significant efforts from the private sector. It is within your company's power to embrace the SDGs and contribute to a sustainable and prosperous future for us all.

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## SUSTAINABILITY IN A POST COVID-19 WORLD: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE DECADE OF ACTION

by Saarah Khan

Five years ago, the countries of the United Nations all agreed to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, outlining 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets in order to encourage action in ***“areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet”*** while balancing the core pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental.

This year marked the start of the Decade of Action to achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030. In his remarks to the General Assembly in January 2020, the UN Secretary-General stated that this decade is ***“central to achieving a fair globalization, boosting economic growth and preventing conflict.”*** The progress reports conducted by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) at the end of 2019, show that although there have been strides made in regards to several of the SDGs, for some of the goals, the progress has been too slow and in some cases reversed. The global response simply has not been ambitious enough. The next ten years are a call to action to mobilize all levels of society to attain sustainable solutions to the most critical global challenges.

However, 2020 also brought with it the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been a devastating human tragedy, directly impacting millions, with more than 9 million people having been infected worldwide, and untold indirect impacts. This pandemic has succeeded in effectively bringing the global economy to a halt. It has uncovered ***“fundamental weaknesses in our global system. It has shown how the prevalence of poverty (SDG 1), weak health systems (SDG 3), lack of education (SDG 4), and a lack of global cooperation exacerbate the crisis (SDG 17).”***<sup>1</sup>

Inequalities have been magnified and the major progress made on the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement is at risk of being reversed. Projections from the UN indicate that we could see the first increase in global extreme poverty in 20 years, with potentially 40 – 60 million people being pushed into extreme poverty<sup>2</sup>, due to loss of income to already vulnerable segments of society (SDG 1). The crisis significantly jeopardizes employment gains (SDG 8), food security (SDG 2) and equity in education (SDG 4), especially in developing countries.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted an interconnectedness of the SDGs that was not as palpable before. In many countries the effect of the pandemic has been intensified by the ***“crisis in delivering on clean water and sanitation targets (SDG 6), weak economic growth and the absence of decent work (SDG 8), pervasive inequalities (SDG 10), and above all, a crisis in poverty (SDG 1) and food security (SDG 2)”***<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> & <sup>3</sup> “Amid The Coronavirus Pandemic, The Sdgs Are Even More Relevant Today Than Ever Before”. United Nations Sustainable Development, 2020, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2020/04/coronavirus-sdgs-more-relevant-than-ever-before/>.

<sup>2</sup> “Sdgs: The Challenge To Improve Lives After The COVID-19 Crisis | Inter Press Service”. Ipsnews.Net, 2020, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/04/sdgs-challenge-improve-lives-covid-19-crisis/>.

There is a danger in getting back to 'business as usual'. With the halt in manufacturing, industry and human activity caused by the global lockdown, there has been a positive impact on the environment, with improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions. However, this does not mean that the environmental challenges have disappeared. Once economies reopen these short-term gains will disappear and will, in fact, be reversed, if businesses, governments and individuals do not implement sustainable solutions. In fact, the director of Europe's Copernicus Climate Change Service, states that due to the *"inertia in the climate system, even if we were to significantly reduce or stop our emissions today, you would still see the increase in temperatures expected for the next 20 years almost unaffected"*.

A major theme for businesses in the UN Global Compact 20th Anniversary Leaders Summit in June 2020, was the concept of **"Build Back Better"**. This disaster risk reduction framework aims to reduce the risk and impact caused by current and future disasters, through creating more resilient communities. Governments have already allocated over \$13 trillion to stabilise and restart global economies and support the most affected and vulnerable segments of society. The long-term stimulus packages must be centered around sustainability in order to rebuild a more resilient economy that guarantees job creation, improved health and well-being, reduced inequalities at all levels of society, and includes an effective and ambitious plan to address climate change. Otherwise, we are at risk of building on an unstable foundation that will inevitably inflict greater harm on the people, economy and planet that these packages are aimed at supporting.

Given the interconnectedness of the SDGs, there is significant opportunity to use these synergies to address multiple targets with single solutions, essentially killing two birds with one stone. For example, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that if there is a focus on climate change as it relates to the energy sector, this can potentially *"generate 24 million new jobs by 2030 if the right policies are in place."*

To truly foster resilience to future global challenges, it is imperative to pair the pandemic recovery action with climate action. Investigating the interdependencies between strong global public health systems (SDG 3) and the effect of the climate crisis (SDG 13) is crucial. Warmer climates create perfect breeding grounds for communicable disease vectors that spread quickly without consideration for borders or economic strength. Climate change (SDG 13) affects the rise of waterborne diseases (SDG 6) and respiratory illness (SDG 3) caused by airborne pollution, which causes 4.6 million deaths annually, as estimated by The World Health Organisation. Inequalities in access to quality education (SDG 4), job and food security (SDGs 8 & 3), and clean water sources (SDG 6), also exacerbate the ability to properly treat and contain health crises (SDG 3), as the systems are not well-equipped to handle the problem, especially within marginalised communities, where there is little to no affordable access to health care.

Unless we address the global challenges faced, before and after, this crisis with sustainable development practices and policies, COVID-19 will not be the last, or even worst, pandemic this generation will face.







## HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION A CHALLENGE TO SD8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

by Juanita Headley • GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Tackling modern slavery and human trafficking is a complex and daunting challenge, especially in countries where child labour is prevalent and where there are large numbers of migrant workers. Multinationals are required to report on such risks in their supply chain – particularly where their operations cross multiple borders. Corporations are asked to state what steps or measures are being taken to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in supply chains, or within their business.

Human trafficking is an equal opportunity employer, and just as has been evident in past months with the virus and subsequent lockdown, it does not discriminate, regardless of a person's creed, colour, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, economic or celebrity status.

No country is exempt from the scourge of this modern-day slavery. On the contrary it exists in even the most beautiful parts of the world, is often hidden in plain sight and is very much present in our very own backyard. One of society's greatest shame, is the turning of a blind eye to the needs and pain of others in its own community.

Too often in Trinidad and Tobago, the practice has been to ignore these social issues unless it lands on our doorstep. While there are seemingly valid reasons for such a mindset, primarily fear for one's own safety, such caution may sometimes be at the expense of another life.

Having visited Trinidad and Tobago consistently over the past 5 years I have observed a growing trend where the topic of human trafficking is being brought more to the forefront. Media reporting on this issue is on the increase

which means one of two things. Either trafficking is on the increase, or more worryingly, it is only now surfacing as a national issue.

Assuming the latter is true, mainstream media, movies, and fiction books can be attributed to the heightened sensitivity by residents to human trafficking. What needs to happen next is widespread education and knowledge sharing to build a better understanding of the aspects of trafficking which could aid detection and early intervention.

For instance, the concept of trafficking is not well understood. For example, popular movies like 'Taken', suggests that trafficking requires movement of persons. On the contrary, as evidenced by the Palermo Protocol: *"Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."*

The Protocol highlights that transportation is not a requisite element in the offence of trafficking but is instead a possibility. The reality of this is that a person could be born in Port of Spain, live in Port of Spain and be trafficked in Port of Spain. Where parents, guardians, caregivers or even

# OPINIONS

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION  
A CHALLENGE TO SD8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)



Engaging Youth at COGOP Summit in 2018



Sharing with counselling psychologists at Dolly & Associates

landlords (as in the case of migrants), engage in the commoditization of a human being, there is often no need for that person to ever leave the confines of their own bedroom to be 'trafficked'.

A Trinidad Newsday article dated February 16, 2018, makes reference to one such case in which a 13-year-old girl alleges that her mother was prostituting her. Although trafficking requires 3 elements: Act, Means and Purpose, the 2nd element is not required when an offence involves a minor. As shocking as this case may have seemed it is nothing new, in certain communities around the world it is expected of the girl child to "work" in prostitution to support her family.

Of course, the reality is that prostitution is not work despite being legalized in some countries. On the contrary, it involves a transaction, often with a man, considered to be a "customer," and a female who one would assume is the "product." In some island states where the sale of underage girls and boys for sex is prevalent, we witness exploitation. This is nothing other than paid rape.

A child or woman selling their body on a street corner may not be there by choice. Some of these actions are driven by real needs – e.g. the inability to care for one's family, overdue bills, insufficient money for school fees – these all demonstrate perceptions about choice.

However, it is important to point out that it is not just economic deprivation that places someone at risk of exploitation – very often, as in the case of minors, all that is required is vulnerability.

Human trafficking is not just about migrant women crossing borders for economic reasons. It also includes women and girls being sold through online exploitation, from what should be the comfort and safety of their own home.

Parents and caregivers need to be sensitized to identify red flags in attitudes and behaviours of minors in their care. 'Stranger danger' is far less of a risk when compared to the violations by a relative or close family friend. Unfortunately, with the advent of Covid-19, many young persons are cooped up in vulnerable situations and less likely to be able to share with a friend or teacher.



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION A CHALLENGE TO SD8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)



There must be increased transparency and open conversation if we are to put a stop to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. My book, “Can You Keep A Secret?” discusses the links between child sexual abuse and human trafficking, provides signs and identifiers of exploitation and gives valuable advice on how to handle disclosures.



Promoting the Movie Screening of SOLD on Tobago Channel 5

More needs to be done, and not just by the local government. Grassroots organisations need to be established to provide aftercare support, and first responders need to be trained to identify human trafficking and to respond appropriately.

*Juanita Headley is a pro bono licensed N.Y. attorney, an international speaker on human trafficking and child abuse, the author of “Can You Keep A Secret?” and the Founder and CEO of Changing Cases. You can connect with Juanita on Facebook at Changing Cases or on IG: changingcasescykas.*

*Launched in June 2020, “Can You Keep A Secret?” is a very honest account of Juanita’s life and experiences around the world and will provide valuable information to those seeking to assist in the restoration of those suffering in silence.*

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