



IICA-COLEACP CARIBBEAN AGRIFOOD BUSINESS SERIES

Session n°7:

Entrepreneurial skills needed for businesses to succeed and expand

Wednesday 23rd November 2022 – 10:00-12:00 EST

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

Ricardo BERRIS – Purposely



Ricardo Berris, born and raised in the Caribbean, is a serial entrepreneur, speaker, investor, mentor and coach. Ricardo has 20 years of experience in entrepreneurship, business development, marketing, technology and business. He is the Founder and CEO of MI Group of Companies that provides a range of mobile and internet solutions for small and medium companies in the Caribbean and the USA. In 2019, he founded Purpusly LLC, a commerce platform for purpose-driven brands. Ricardo is also the Chairman of the Global Opportunities Committee, Atlanta Black Chambers.

Ricardo is a Digital Marketing Coach and the host of the The Digital Marketing Technology Tools 'Get MORE' Podcast. He is a Scholar in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses (IOKSB) and a Branson Center Caribbean Alumni. Ricardo is serious about helping entrepreneurs to grow their business online and in the United States, as well as other markets. His goal is to help 1 million entrepreneurs earn 6-7 figure incomes by 2035.

Isolina BOTO – Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEACP



Isolina Boto is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEACP, a non-profit association of private sector operators in the agrifood sector active in the European Union (EU), Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. Isolina has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural development. She started her career with the European Commission and has also worked with various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Before joining COLEACP, she was the Manager of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) Brussels Office (2004-2020) implementing policy initiatives related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of the agrifood sector. She has led agribusiness projects in support of capacity development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs and farmers organisations across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and developed agrotourism aimed at linking agriculture and tourism sectors.





Dino Clayde Hensley DEMIDOF – Agricultural Technical and Extension Specialist, Representative in Surinam, IICA

Dino Clayde Hensley Demidof is the Representative of the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Surinam. He is an Agronomist graduated in 2011 at the Universidad de Ciego de Avila, Cuba. He worked in the fields of Plant Physiology and Biotechnology in Horticulture production. He coordinated the field activities of the feasibility study of the Ethanol Production out of sugar cane. He worked with rural communities in enhancing livelihood providing them with rain water harvesting systems. He coordinated the soil and water management pilot project on degraded mined-out soils in the hinterland of Suriname. With the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries he implemented a project to establish a emergency preparedness plan for aquatic animal disease outbreak.



Don FLETCHER – BareFruit Juices, Trinidad and Tobago

Don Fletcher is the founder and Managing Director of Meico Ltd (Manufacturing Export Import Company Ltd) in Trinidad and Tobago. The company is considered a small enterprise with a staff of 50 people and annual sales of \$US2-3 million. Meico Ltd was founded in 2005 as an agribusiness processor with a vision to manufacture, export and import value added agri-products sourced locally and regionally. Its primary focus since inception has been on the manufacture of fruit drinks for the domestic market under the brand name “Barefruit Juices”. There are plans to diversify both the product range and markets in the future.

Mr Fletcher comes from a family background of agroprocessing with vertical linkages in the agri value chain. He has a BSc in Agricultural Engineering and MSc in Agribusiness and Marketing. He has had a few years' professional experience working on Regional and Domestic projects designed to strengthen aspects of the agri value chains.

Keith Flett – One Skip, LLC

Keith Flett comes from a family of fishermen and wharf owners in Grenada. At the age of 23, he developed his first business specialised in predicting market price movement for clients involved in seafood procurement and buying and selling fish in an extremely short supply chain. This business evolved into a research and development project and the first electronically traded forward contracts for the procurement of multiple different seafood products. These internet-based contracts allowed processors access to new markets and fishermen the ability to hedge their quota costs and sell their fish before they went fishing. Keith also created Open Ocean Trading, another contract exchange that eases the effects of market price fluctuations and gives all sides of the industry more insight into the supply and demand of seafood products.



Keith began his career in fisheries sustainability as Strategy Director of the non for profit organisation (NGO) Future of Fish. Later, he found One Skip, LLC, the first company solely focused on fisheries development from a for profit point of view specialised in the digital transformation, investment and market linkages. As Managing Director, Keith leads the development projects that includes defining the business models and forming the legality of for-profit fisheries development companies in multiple countries in the Caribbean. He also oversees the staffing and operations for all new plants and supply chains at their project infancy stage.



Gillian GODDARD – Alliance of Rural Communities of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)



Gillian Goddard is a systems thinker and community organizer who engages mainly with food and agriculture to instigate change. She is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Alliance of Rural Communities, a Caribbean rural network of cocoa growing/chocolate producing communities. She has an undergraduate degree from Emory University, United States, and a graduate degree from Stanford University, United States. She has been gardening and farming indigenous style for over 3 decades and has also played different roles in delivering her harvest, and that of others, to nearby communities. Gillian has seen all sides of the food industry. She has started a zero waste organic locavore vegan cafe in Port of Spain, led raw food retreats in Miami Beach, United States, foraged regularly in high desert west Texas, and convened a global pan-African chocolate collective. For the past several years she has been mainly stationary in her native Trinidad and Tobago with her hands deep in cocoa, chocolate and all the plant friends that surround them. Since the pandemic started her reach has become increasingly global and now the Cross Atlantic Chocolate Collective - for which she was the convenor - spans 9 African countries, 6 Caribbean countries and diaspora chocolate makers in the east and west coasts of the United States.

Jeremy KNOPS – General Delegate, COLEACP



Jeremy Knops holds a Master's degree in Business Engineering from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM). Prior to joining COLEACP in 2009, he was involved in Guatemala with the daily operations of a farmers' cooperative exporting loquats to the EU and the US. He started to work for COLEACP as an expert in charge of matters related to private standards and certification for ACP producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables. Jeremy is an accredited coach for leadership and professional development. He has been appointed as General Delegate of COLEACP in June 2019.

Norman Mc DONALD – Linstead Market, Jamaica

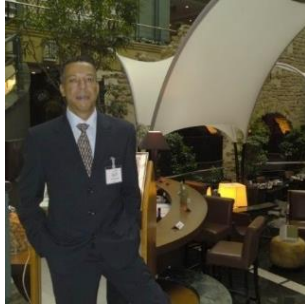
Norman McDonald is the founder and executive chairman of Canco Ltd., Linstead's parent company. He has over 37 years' experience in senior management positions, both in the private and public sectors. In his private capacity, he has owned and operated manufacturing companies in the furniture manufacturing, roof manufacturing and installation, and food processing industries. He has also owned and operated companies in real estate development, project management, business consultancy and business facilitation. In his public capacity, he has worked as manager of Market and Industry Research at Jamaica Development Bank (JDB). He has also chaired Housing Development Companies for the government for 17 years (NHC, NHDC) and served as board member of JAMPRO and Factories Corporation of Jamaica.

Norman holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industry Chemistry from Howard University, Washington D.C., United States, and an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States.



Kenneth Van GOM – Gom Food Industries Ltd, Suriname

Kenneth van Gom is a motivated entrepreneur and the Founder and General Manager of Gom Food Industries N.V, a family-owned company operating in the specialty food sector. The idea for the company originated in 1996, when Kenneth was inspired by the recipes of his mother, Yvonne van Gom. Together, they started a tiny family-owned business in a small shed that was set up as a production facility. Since being officially established in 1998, the company has managed to become the market leader in Suriname, whilst expanding to different parts of the world. In 2022, Gom Food Industries participated in the world's biggest food fair, SIAL Paris. In the same year, the company won the Manufacturing Award for Quality, presented by the Suriname Standards Bureau.



With previous experience in the export of local products to the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles, Kenneth knew that export development was the solution to poverty reduction in Suriname. Today, he oversees the day-to-day operations and manages the workforce of Gom Food Industries