



IICA-COLEACP CARIBBEAN AGRIFOOD BUSINESS SERIES

Session N°1 Post-COVID-19: Resilience building and new opportunities for Caribbean businesses

9th June 2021 – 10:00-12:00 (EST)

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

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.

Kerwin CRAIGWELL – Director, Bwana Business Incorporated, Trinidad & Tobago



Kerwin Craigwell, a Logistics and Supply Chain Professional, is one of the Directors of Bwana Business Incorporated. As a seasoned professional with more than 20 years' experience in the oil and gas sector, he is known for driving brand growth, maximizing operational excellence and delivering performance. With a passion for healthy living, he transformed that vision into pouches of all natural, healthy, local goodness with Bwana's provision based food products

Dunstan DEMILLE – Perishables Manager, MASSY Stores, St. Lucia Ltd, St. Lucia



Dunstan Demille is the Perishables Manager at MASSY Stores SLU Ltd. which operates MASSY Stores Supermarkets, MASSY Stores Gourmet, MASSY Stores Mega and MASSY Stores Home In St. Lucia and 3 MASSY Stores in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Dunstan brings to his role some 15 years in the hotel sector in various capacities, and he received the Ste Lisi Par Excellence award as “Manager of the Year’ for large hotels in St. Lucia”, while serving as purchasing and stores manager for Wyndham Morgan Bay resort. He is currently responsible for all agricultural programs and products for MASSY Stores, which cover the range of fresh produce, ripe bananas, eggs, poultry, cocoa products, honey, local fish and sea food, horticulture and all value added products produced from raw agricultural materials in St. Lucia. Dunstan is the Secretary of the Caribbean Agri Business Association (CABA) and a member of the Special Advisory Committee member for the PROPEL project.

Ena HARVEY – IICA Representative, Barbados



Ena Harvey is the Agribusiness Specialist in Agrotourism with IICA (InterAmerican Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture) and from May 2002, she is the IICA Representative in Barbados.

Prior to joining IICA, she held the post of Food Technologist with the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) in Trinidad from 1982-1987 assisting private sector with commercialisation of small-scale processing operations. From 1987 to 2002, she worked as a private consultant to several regional and international agencies, Trade Promotion agencies, Government Ministries, and NGOs on projects covering trade, export competitiveness, food security, education and training, sustainable agroindustrial development and agrotourism. During this time, she also served as the Caribbean agro-industry expert to the Centre for the Development of Enterprise/ Centre for the Development of Industry (CDE/ CDI) (Brussels) for 5 years, and regional agro-industry expert under a 4-year Canadian funded CIDA-CPEC (Canadian International Development Agency - Caribbean Program for Economic Competitiveness) Human Resources Development (HRD) programme on economic competitiveness, supporting private sector development in Jamaica, Suriname, Barbados, OECS and Belize.

Sheldon JACKMAN – Project Officer Delegation of the European Union to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM



Sheldon Jackman currently serves as a programme manager in the Regional Co-operation and Trade Team at the EU Delegation to Barbados. His current portfolio includes managing the support to the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) Member States in implementation of their commitments in undertaking the Economic Partnership Agreement. This support includes providing technical assistance and aid in addressing common issues faced by the private sector to trade including Non-Tariff Technical Barriers, Sanitary and Phytosanitary, Trade Facilitation and enterprise capacity constraints.

Prior to joining the delegation Mr. Jackman spent over 10 years working in the areas trade promotion, export development and private sector development, both at the national level in Trinidad and Tobago and within the region. These included roles as Senior Trade and Investment Advisor at the British High Commission (Port of Spain), Market Intelligence Advisor at the Caribbean Export Development Agency in Barbados, and Market Intelligence Officer at the National Export Facilitation Organization of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Jackman holds a B.Sc. in Management from the University of the West Indies St. Augustine, a Post Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Economic Development from the International School and Social Sciences, and a MBA from the Edinburgh Business School, Scotland.

Jeremy KNOPS – Délégué général, COLEACP



Jeremy 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.

Jéanelle MURRAY- Advisor, Access to finance, Caribbean Export Development Agency



Jéanelle Murray has over fifteen years' experience brokering and providing training and technical assistance aimed at improving the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and the service delivery of Business Support Organisations across the Caribbean. She has a passion for helping persons realise their full potential through professional and personal development. Jéanelle has assisted over 3,000 potential and existing entrepreneurs to start or expand their businesses, including exporting to new markets, or upgrade their business skills. She has accomplished this in her positions as Advisor – Access to Finance at the Caribbean Export Development Agency, Operations Officer at the Caribbean Development Bank, and Training Specialist and Business Development Officer at the Grenada Investment Development Corporation.

Jéanelle holds a Doctorate in Business Administration from Walden University, a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Mississippi, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Management Studies with Psychology from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus. She is also certified as a Competency based Economies through the Formation of Enterprises (CEFE) trainer, which is a revolutionary, action-oriented approach to training entrepreneurs of all ages in business management.

Manuel OTERO – Director General, IICA



Dr. Otero began his career at IICA in 1988 at its Headquarters. He has worked as an Advisor to the Director General, as Director of Programming and Evaluation, as Director of the Andean Regional Centre, and as IICA Representative to Uruguay and to Brazil, a position he held on two occasions.

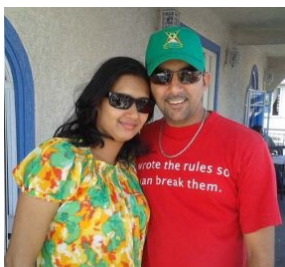
He has authored several technical documents on international trade, sectoral policies and agricultural modernisation.

Previously, he served in Washington D.C. as an Agricultural Attaché, attached to the Ministry of Agriculture of Argentina and was also Vice-President of Argentina's Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria – INTA (The National Institute of Agricultural Technology).

He was elected in 2017 as Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) for the 2018-2022 period.

Dr. Otero holds a M.Sc. in Agricultural Development from the University of London, Masters in Animal Production from the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), headquartered in Costa Rica, and is a qualified Veterinarian from the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA).

Diana PERSAUD – CEO, Arya's Fresh Cut, Guyana



Diana Persaud and her husband Aditya are moving head-on with their goal of building an organic farming business that provides consumers with fresh crops that are well packaged and can be relied upon for their high quality. Arya's line of produce includes pumpkins, tomatoes, cabbage (chopped), corilla that is cut and cleaned, bell peppers, sweet peppers, wiri-wiri peppers, ochro, boulanger or eggplant and passion fruit.

During the first two weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a noticeable drop in sales. The CEO shared, "As a businesswoman, I couldn't allow the pandemic to affect me. My team and I worked out a way to conquer it by using different strategies, including home delivery and online services... So as it is, our business is not being affected by the Coronavirus."

Ravi SANKAR – Managing Director, RHS Marketing Limited, Trinidad & Tobago



With a 25-year history, Ravi Sankar's company Karibbean Flavours has one of the longest and most successful track records in the Caribbean. From a simple beginning as a one-man operation with his own recipes for pepper sauces, browning essences, and green seasoning, the company now produces an extensive range of household-name products sold throughout the national grocery chains, independent shops, hotels, and restaurants. Today, the company has approximately 100 employees, and they are now in 27 markets, across the U.S., the Caribbean islands, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a recipe for changing people’s cooking habits and tastes. “People are all looking for specialty ingredients because they happened to find a recipe on Facebook, on Pinterest, on Instagram that they wanted to try,” Sankar says. “Based on our portfolio, we have spices from everywhere: India, Egypt, Turkey, China. A lot of different spices. We’ve found that there’s been an increase in the overall amount of ingredients being purchased by our customers”.

Danielle Thomson, CEO, Nature My Therapy LLC, Jamaica



Danielle Thompson founded Nature My Therapy LLC 6 years ago disrupting the local food industry in Jamaica by producing completely vegan, sugar-free and preservative-free delicious products made from organic produce grown by a network of organic farmers across the island. The brand ethos is Make Healthy Fun, Delicious & Convenient!

Rebranded THERAPY in 2019 to reflect the focus on the total spectrum of wellbeing, THERAPY has continued to stay at the center of wellness in Kingston Jamaica providing a growing range of products including detox packages, coldpressed juices, herbal teas, therapeutic treats and vegetable noodles for island-wide delivery.

The challenges of Covid19 have accelerated their transition into online real-estate and solidified their belief in the power of social media. Using technology to continue to connect, innovate and provide healthy options and ‘edutainment’ right into the palms, laps and tummies of customers with door deliveries and strategic collaborations.

José TORRES – Senior Investment Manager, Latin America/Caribbean, Bamboo Capital Partners



José Alejandro Torres is a Senior Investment Manager with Bamboo Capital Partners. He has 10 years of experience in Colombian capital markets, private equity fund management, and social impact consultancy. He is responsible for sourcing, executing, and managing investments in Latin America.

Prior to joining Bamboo Capital Partners, he was the Executive Director of Compartamos Con Colombia, a non-profit social impact consultancy founded by renowned firms such as McKinsey & Co, PwC, EY, Deloitte, JP Morgan, among others. Mr. Torres also served as a project manager in Compartamos and led more than 40 projects related to Colombia’s and Latin America’s socio-economic development with family foundations, non-profits, social businesses, governments and private companies in capacity building topics such as strategy, financial restructuring, organisational re-alignment, and corporate governance.

Previously he worked as the private equity fund management team leader in a local asset management firm (Fiducor), where he was in charge of operations, compliance, and reporting.

Mr. Torres holds a BS in Industrial Engineering from Los Andes University and a Masters in Development Management from the London School of Economics.