



IICA-COLEAD Caribbean Agrifood Business Series

Session n°15:

How trade infrastructure can boost Caribbean entrepreneurship: Challenges and opportunities

Wednesday 23 October 2024 – 14:00-16:00 UTC

Live interpretation in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

Shondel Abby Alexander – Abby's Exotic Blends, St Lucia

Shondel Abiola Alexander – Abby – is from the island of Saint Lucia with heritage influence from the island of Guyana. A single mother of three, Abby's determination to grow her passion for creating beverages and treats led to the establishment in 2018 of her business, Abby's Exotic Blends. The company offers a wide range of vegetable chips made of plantain, banana, sweet potato, breadfruit and dasheen. Its product range also includes a number of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages such as coffee, banana, sea moss, peanut and rum punch.



Since its creation, Abby's Exotic Blends has flourished into one of the best agro-processing companies that contributes to the local economy and to the marketing of Saint Lucia's product brands by exporting to neighbour islands. The company's engagement and contribution to the local commerce industry has been rewarded by several accolades, including in 2018 the Gold SMA (Saint Lucia Manufacturers Association) Quality Awards for Leadership, Product and Customer Service Quality and Implementations of Standards and Best Practices, and in 2019 the Saint Lucia Business Award.

Isolina Boto – Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEAD

Isolina Boto is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEAD, 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 COLEAD, 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.

Sandiford Edwards – Program Director, USAID CAPA Project

Sandiford Edwards has over 20 years' experience in the field of trade and business development having served in senior leadership positions in both the private and public sectors. He led the analytical work for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Private Sector Organization in determining opportunities for food import displacement as part of the *25% by 2025 Plan*. He also was the lead write for the *CARICOM COVID-19 Agri-Food Risk Management Plan*.

Sandiford is the program director of the USAID Caribbean Agricultural Productivity improvement Activity (CAPA) is a three-year program designed to improve food security and promote sustainable farming practices. It is an important part of the food security efforts being undertaken as part of the U.S. Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis 2030. The nonprofit organisation Improving Economies for Stronger Communities (IESC) is implementing the program in Guyana, Suriname, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Sandiford holds a Master's Degree in Development Finance from the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, Germany, a Master's Degree in business administration from Oxford Brookes University, England, and is a Certified Chartered Accountant.

Allister Reynold Glean – Technical Specialist, International Trade and Regional Integration Programme / Representative in Barbados, IICA

Allister Glean is the Representative (Acting) of the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Barbados. He spent the last 5 years as the International Specialist in Agribusiness and Value Chains, stationed with the St. Lucia Delegation. Allister has worked extensively in the agricultural sector for over 20 years with experience working in agricultural research and development, agribusiness development, food and beverage processing as well as development financing for agribusiness.



Allister has lectured on a part-time basis at the tertiary level for over 16 years in the areas of marketing, strategic planning and business ethics. While trained in management and marketing, he also possesses post graduate qualifications in international relations and agribusiness development. He is also a qualified

attorney at law. Allister tends to have a particular interest in governance, market development and trade facilitation.

Allister has a passion for working with micro, small and medium sized business with emphasis on women, youth and producer groups. In fact, he is himself also a small farmer producing food crops on a 2 1/2 acre plot.

Krista Lucenti – Lead Trade Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank

Krista Lucenti is the Caribbean Regional Coordinator of the Trade and Investment Portfolio at the Inter-American Development Bank. Primarily, she develops, designs, executes and monitors the Bank's operational portfolio of lending and grant projects focused on maritime transport and logistics, trade facilitation, trade single windows and investment attraction. Dr. Lucenti is the subject lead on the implementation of Port Community Systems and Smart Ports in the wider Latin American and Caribbean region. Prior to joining the Bank, Dr. Lucenti worked at the World Bank and at several investment banks in London, and holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Bern (Switzerland), as well as degrees from the World Trade Institute (Bern, Switzerland), the School of Oriental and African Studies (London, United Kingdom), and McGill University (Montreal, Canada).



Daniel Rodríguez Sáenz - International Trade and Regional Integration Programme Manager, IICA

Daniel Rodríguez is the International Trade and Regional Integration Programme Manager at IICA. He holds a Master's degree in Business Administration with emphasis in Marketing and a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering with emphasis in Agricultural Economics from the University of Costa Rica. He has more than 15 years of experience in the area of agribusiness, specifically in issues related to linking producers to markets, export promotion and business and associative management. He is the author of several publications on linking producers to export markets and strengthening business and associative capacities. IICA's International Trade and Regional Integration Program focuses on providing technical cooperation to member countries to improve their participation in international markets for agrifood products, and on deepening regional integration as a means to increase economic development and welfare.



Darwin Telemaque - Chief Executive Officer, Antigua Port Authority, Antigua & Barbuda

Mr. Darwin Telemaque, is a very accomplished transportation and logistics expert professional with extensive experience in port operations, logistics, project management, and safety management. Mr. Telemaque is a strategic leader who prioritizes performance optimization and employs international best practices in addressing intricate technological, logistical, and human resource issues. Mr. Telemaque currently serves as the CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority, a position he has held for ten years. He has played a significant role in the redevelopment of the port in St. John's, Antigua, which is regarded as the first of its kind in the Caribbean. With the ability to berth three cargo ships and five cruise ships concurrently, it serves as a vital hub for transportation and a significant driver of the local economy.



In addition to his duties, he holds the positions of Vice-Chairman of the International Committee of Ports of the Organization of the American States (OAS), Chairman of the Port Committee of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and Chairman of the Port Management Association of the Caribbean (PMAC). He fulfills these positions with passion and diligence, working to advance the development of these organizations for the benefit of the region they serve. Mr. Telemaque has sat on several key panel discussions relating to port developments, Regional Transport, Logistics around the region and the world. He is passionate about developing resilient and sustainable infrastructure and Port Services for the region.

Nadja Thomas - Draw Teas, Dominica

Nadja Thomas is a farmer, entrepreneur and multimedia journalist. She is the owner and creator of Draw, a line of instant ginger teas made locally in Dominica. Draw is made from ingredients grown on her farms and from other local Dominican farmers. The teas are available at all major supermarkets in Dominica as well as a few regional outlets.



Jody Williams - International Sales and Marketing Manager, Marie Sharp's Fine Foods Ltd, Belize

Jody Williams is the Chief Sales and Marketing Director of Belizean World Renown Habanero Pepper Sauce Company, Marie Sharp's Fine Foods Ltd. At Marie Sharp's, Jody has the honor to represent the company in all of its Sales and Marketing Operations in Belize and around the world since 2009. He leads all sales and marketing strategies, overseeing the growth of niche and premium markets, consumer and field marketing activities, brand advertising, public relations, and e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Walmart. Jody also manages the global sales portfolio which includes 39 countries.



Previous to his career Jody graduated from St. John's College, Belize, with an Associate's Degree in Business Administration and later a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing from Galen University Belize. Now with over 15 years of experience in Sales and Marketing Jody is also involved in other areas such as Shipping and Logistics, Contract Administration, Customer Service & Complaint Management. His future vision is to continue grow in his career, make the Maire Sharp's brand be available in all tables across the globe and be an integral part in the growth of Belize.

At the age of 38, Jody has established himself not only in his career with Marie Sharp's but also in trying to giving back to others. Since 2020 for three terms Jody is serving on the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry Executive Council first as Executive Councilor and now currently as Vice President of Commerce.



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