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JA-T1148 - Pricing, Targeting, and Effectiveness of Business-training Activities. Experimental Evidence from Jamaica (US\$72,000 disbursed with an addition US\$30,000 Counterpart Financing and US\$108,992 co-financing from IDBInvest) (2017-2020)

Counterpart: Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC)

Objective: To improve the pricing, targeting, and effectiveness of business training activities.

This research project aimed to assess if and when it is possible and desirable to charge a positive price for business-training programs for micro, small and medium enterprises. Based on this pricing analysis, the project aimed to understand whether the effectiveness of business-training activities can be increased by improving targeting, and whether providers can achieve financial sustainability by charging a positive price without screening out a large share of entrepreneurs who might have a limited willingness to pay.

Results: The project delivered 200 training workshops to a total of 429 entrepreneurs (of which 268 were women). Average attendance among those who attended at least one class was 7.5 classes. Three hundred and sixty participants (360) attended five or more sessions. A randomized controlled trial of 945 entrepreneurs in Jamaica (with the 429 trained entrepreneurs as the treated sample) in Jamaica showed positive short-term impacts of soft-skills training on business outcomes. The effects are concentrated among men and disappear 12 months after the training. The main channel is increased adoption of recommended business practices, exclusively observed in the short run. Persistent effects were observed on an incentivized behavioral measure of perseverance after setbacks, a focus of this training. An intensive course on soft-skills was compared to one that combines soft-skills with traditional business training. The effects of the combined training are never statistically significant.

To read more about the results of this research:

<https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/The-Impact-of-Soft-Skills-Training-for-Entrepreneurs-in-Jamaica.pdf>

JA-T1161 - Strengthening the Intellectual Property Ecosystem to Increase Innovation, Competitiveness and Growth in Jamaica (US\$249,490 disbursed, CDB co-financing US\$120,270 and counterpart financing (in-kind): US\$30,500) (2018-2023)

Counterpart: Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO)

Objective: To strengthen Jamaica's Intellectual Property ecosystem to support MSMEs in leveraging their IP assets to drive innovation, competitiveness and growth. The project resulted from a request from JIPO to strengthen the capacity of Jamaican MSMEs' to use intangible assets such as Intellectual Property (IP) as collateral, as well as the willingness of financial institutions to accept these intangibles as collateral.

Results: The project financed an Intellectual Property monetization toolkit and a country-level action plan to strengthen the use of IP as collateral. It provided Valuation Guidelines for Jamaica's IP Finance Ecosystem and capacity building on valuation of IP (Introduction to IP Valuation and

Advanced IP Valuation for Trainers in IP valuation) to over 400 persons, of which 65% were women – entrepreneurs as well as individuals working in the financial sector. The project also completed IP audits for 7 Jamaican businesses, along with IP Profiles and IP Valuations, and loan applications utilizing these profiles and valuations were submitted to the participating Commercial Banks. Finally, updates to the Legal and Regulatory Framework for Secured Transactions in Jamaica (NATLAW) were drafted.

The project also provided support to JIPO directly in digitizing 1806 files, of which 1347 were design files and 459 patent files. The project also helped pay for a project manager within JIPO for this project that would support supervision of consultancies and report to both the IDB and the CDB.

<https://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/bold-move/> and <https://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/jipo-upbeat-banks-will-accept-ip-as-loan-insurance/>

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JA-T1162 – Jamaica Global Services Sector – Moving Firms up the Value Chain (US\$397,761 disbursed with an additional US\$80,000 in counterpart financing) (2019-2023)

Counterpart: Global Services Sector Association of Jamaica (GSAJ)

Objective: To support the growth of the Jamaica's Global Services Sector (GSS) by facilitating the upgrading of the firms in the GSS cluster – and in particular, SMEs - into higher segments of the global value chain.

This project was requested by the GSAJ to help the Global Services Sector industry of Jamaica (until then mostly focused on basic functions through call centers) to adapt to the foreseeable disruption of the industry given the advent of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

Results: The project financed an industry forecasting study of the global GSS industry, and the identification of niche markets for Jamaica's GSS sector, an outline of strategic opportunities to scale- up to the global economy, and an identification of the skills that needed to be developed to take advantage of that opportunity. The project also selected 10 businesses from the Jamaican GSS sector (10 of them women-owned), conducted a readiness assessment of their capacity to provide higher value services in knowledge process outsourcing and information technology outsourcing, and produced a roadmap for each business. The selected businesses were offered grant financing to implement their roadmaps and six took advantage of this opportunity. All 10 businesses were assisted in participating in a specialized trade fair, O2Jamaica (Outsource to Jamaica), and promotional videos and brochures were developed for each one of them. One of the firms was able to attend the International Quality and Productivity Center 24th annual Shared Services and Outsourcing Conference, and two of the supported businesses were able to export services for the first time due to the project's support.

In terms of sector-wide support, the former Business Process Industry Association of Jamaica (BPIAJ – what it was known before becoming the GSAJ) received technical assistance to revise operations and processes, and a forward-looking advocacy strategy, along with a clear value proposition to attract and support members. A training workshop was delivered to all GSAJ members on how to develop contracts and negotiate partnership agreements. Moreover, the project developed a training program on the GSAJ and its members on how to deal with Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination in the Workplace, thus raising the levels of knowledge and awareness as well as improving professional behaviors to align with acceptable benchmarked standards.

This project was conducted in parallel to the IDB's GSS Skills Development Loan program (JA- L1179), and the project helped leverage resources from the loan to complement activities – for example by providing the assessment on the strategic skills profile to further develop and internationalize the GSS sector in Jamaica, and by developing terms of reference for a consultancy that would support the entire sector during COVID, which was subsequently financed through the IDB loan.

The director of the GSAJ at the time, Gloria Henry, reported that companies utilized the foresighting strategy on GSS and required skills to recruit new hires, to a tune of 1940 new hires post-COVID.

JA-T1164 - Support to Jamaica's Innovation Ecosystem for Promoting Innovative Firms (US\$463,054 disbursed) 2019-2022

Counterpart: Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ)

Objective: To strengthen local capacity for developing a pipeline of early/stage innovative ventures, mostly technology based, that contribute to catalyzing firm productivity gains. Specifically, the project aims to support capacity to design, implement and evaluate innovation programs within the framework of IGNITE II.

While this project was initially requested by the DBJ to help it review the IGNITE program and help it launch an improved version, the dialogue with the Government of Jamaica started by this project quickly became a request for a much larger program – which ended up being financed by an IDB US\$50 million loan in two tranches of US\$25 million – to strengthen the ecosystem to support entrepreneurs and innovators in Jamaica. The project then pivoted to supporting the DBJ to design the instruments that would be rolled out under the Boosting Innovation and Growth Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (BIGEE) under this project (see <https://thinkbiggee.com/> for the official website of the BIGEE project).

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Results: This project helped finance: 1) the design of the innovation fund and the cluster fund instruments; 2) a mapping of the current support from incubators and accelerators in Jamaica towards startups, and a report designing the strengthening intervention of the BIGEE program for these ecosystem players in Jamaica; 3) an assessment of how to deploy the corporate venturing instrument of the BIGEE; 4) designs for the Sidecar Angel Fund and the Venture Capital Fund financed by BIGEE, along with manuals on how to manage those funds and training material for fund managers; 5) a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Strategy (MEALS) for the BIGEE program, a digital platform that would enable monitoring of the BIGEE program, and with capacity building of the DBJ team to enable adequate monitoring and evaluation.

The first tranche of the BIGEE program has been successfully implemented and the Government of Jamaica requested the IDB to design the second US\$25 million tranche of the BIGEE program.

JA-T1167 – Improving Competitiveness of the Jamaica Castor Bean Cluster (US\$399,932 disbursed plus US\$101,090 counterpart financing) (2018-2024)

Counterpart: Jamaica Baptist Union (JAMPRO also benefitted from outputs of this project)

Objective: To create employment opportunities and reduce poverty in rural communities in Jamaica through enhanced productivity and competitiveness of the Jamaican castor oil industry.

Results: This project experienced significant delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, given that most of the training and other capacity-building activities had to be delivered in person. Even though the project had been approved pre-COVID, it really took off once restrictions were lifted.

This project financed capacity building in business development for 83 (40 men, 43 women) Jamaican castor bean farmers growing castor beans on land belonging to the Jamaican Baptist Union to develop their farm holdings into profitable businesses and yields. Subsequent to this, 8 farmers were then selected for handholding and further assistance by the Jamaica Business Development Corporation. Additional agronomy training for 13 farmers was held, which consisted of an intraregional exchange advisory service between farmers and Dr. Liv Severino from the Brazilian Research Institute for Agriculture (EMBRAPA).

The training resulted in the exchange of several new cultural practices related to the farming of castor bean and introduction to improved seed varieties.

Despite significant supply chain disruptions following COVID, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) facilitated the arrival of a new castor-bean variety (Kika) from Brazil, which is expected to have higher productivity. To achieve this, the IICA team partnered with the Plant Quarantine Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MOAF) to complete a Pest Risk Analysis to facilitate the importation of castor planting material from Brazil, China, and India. As a direct result, anyone can now import castor seeds from these countries into Jamaica once an import permit is secured. This has opened the doors for the industry to improve the varieties it stocks which could facilitate greater yields across the sector. It has also unlocked a new opportunity for enterprises in sourcing, importing, and propagating more productive castor varieties. The seeds are undergoing field tests with the MOAF to validate yields and conditions. Demonstration fields were planted in two locations for testing. The first was done alongside the domestic variety in multiple soil types. The other was done utilizing the modern techniques acquired in the cultural exchange training.

The final consultancy conducted by the University of the West Indies Mona Institute of Applied Sciences (UWI MIAS) produced the first known Cold Pressed Castor Oil (CPCO) standard which, when published, will be the first internationally referenced authoritative standard on the subject and positions Jamaica as technical authority on the subject matter. This standard has formed part of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) curriculum for Castor Production Modules. Controlled Publication of the Cold Pressed Castor Oil Protocols and Standard can ensure quality of products produced to this standard, will result in revenues from sale of the standard and will position Jamaica as the authority on Castor Oil processing. The NVQ curriculum ensures that there can be a trained and competent workforce with the correct skills for growing, harvesting and processing of Castor in Jamaica even at a basic level. Knowledge dissemination workshops conducted in 2023 resulted in approximately 213 farmers being made aware of the public goods that have come out of this project. Compete Caribbean leveraged funding from other partners in the castor industry to execute these workshops to spread word of the advancements and initiatives taking place so that farmers and processors may learn

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about best practices and opportunities respectively. A project closing event was held on 8th November, 2024 to disseminate the knowledge acquired during the UWI MIAS consultancy in a practical manner to over 80 persons from the general public as well as stakeholders from the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ), Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) and Jamaica Baptist Union. From the 83 farmers, 40 (35 men and 5 women) who were surveyed, have adapted new products, processes or organizational methods to increase yields at their farms.

JA-T1192 – Building a New Shared Brand for the Jamaica Sauces and Spices Cluster (US\$185,132 disbursed plus counterpart resources (projected) of US\$99,000) (2020-ongoing)

Counterpart: Sauces and Spices cluster, made up of 3 sauces and spices agro-processors

Objective: To increase revenues, employment and exports for three Jamaican agro-processors and their suppliers by supporting the positioning of their collectively branded pepper sauces & spices products competitively in the mainstream U.S. market. This project sought to support 3 Jamaican agro-processors coming together to sell under the same brand (Half-Way Tree) in the US market, thus helping to alleviate supply bottlenecks that typically affect the sauces and spices sector, which has a good comparative advantage overseas.

Results: The project helped the cluster formulate the products, complete shelf life and packaging trials, submit filings and receive approvals from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for its six formulations in both retail and food service. The project helped to support the launch of a suite of new products under the joint Half-Way Tree brand with the Jamaica Sauces and Spices Cluster as an eCommerce retailer in key markets. The project engaged consultants to execute a targeted digital marketing effort to support sales through an Amazon online store. Additional donor resources from a prior IFC project contributed to digital media content, Marketing Material, export market studies and business plans, thereby increasing the efficient use of Compete Caribbean financial resources. Additionally, a promotion and brand awareness strategy was designed under the project and is being implemented for the cluster by an American firm along with an awareness campaign.

Disruptions in the agriculture supply chain due to the effects of Hurricane Beryl on Jamaica and persistent year-on-year droughts have affected the ability to launch in the short term as raw materials are in short supply. However, brand materials and digital assets such as the website(halfwaytreetrading.com) and the Amazon store front are ready to be launched in Q1 2025 when supply chains are predicted to stabilize.

RG-T3322 - Technology Extension Services (TES) in the Caribbean (2019-2024)

Objective: Technology Extension Services is a form of innovation policy that sought to accelerate the pace at which Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) "catch up" with more advanced firms by transferring cutting-edge technology. This Caribbean-wide project worked with agri-business, manufacturing, and tourism firms.

Results: This project funded 75 technology audits and assessments for MSMEs, with 50 of the firms also benefiting from partial implementation.

Jamaica's Participation

The Jamaican firms that benefited from this intervention included: Blue House Boutique Bed and Breakfast, CNC Wellness, Country House Products, De La Enzie Essentials Ltd., Herboo Corporation, Irie Rock Yaad Spa, Shavout International Holdings Company Limited, Travellers Beach Resort, and True Shade Cosmetics.

RG-T3850 - Support to Caribbean startups and innovative firms in the Blue Economy (US\$ 107,500 disbursed for Jamaica) (2021-ongoing)

Objective: To support Caribbean startups and innovative firms within the blue economy in scaling up by developing new products and services, innovative business models, and improving their processes. This project had two types of activities: (i) supporting the institutional strengthening of the Institute of Marine Affairs to stimulate gender-responsive entrepreneurship and innovation; and (ii) providing technical support to startups and innovative firms selected competitively via open innovation challenges.

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Jamaica's Participation

Three Jamaican firms (JALGAE, GeoTech Vision and Startup Robot Limited) were awarded under a regional challenge launched in 2021. These businesses received incubation support for the scale-up and commercial cultivation of Jamaica Spirulina, for a Sargassum Early Warning System, and for a Ship 2 Shelf logistics management initiative respectively.

RG-T4003 - Technology Extension Services (TES) in the Caribbean Blue Economy and Essential Services Sectors (US\$47,262 disbursed for Jamaica) (2021-ongoing)

Objective: To support firms in the blue economy and essential services sectors in the acceleration of technological diffusion, adoption, and upgrading, thus providing support to the Caribbean in diversifying the blue economy and strengthening the delivery of goods and services in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results: This project delivered technology extension services to a group of businesses in every country. In addition, the project implemented a supplementary capacity building plan for a sub-group of women-owned businesses with growth potential.

Beneficiaries from Jamaica:

1. Jah Jireh Herbal Limited
2. Lifespan Company Limited
3. RSS Naturall Delites
4. University of the Commonwealth Caribbean
5. Caribbean Coastal Area Management Ltd.

In addition, the Caribbean Coastal Area Foundation, a woman-owned initiative, received capacity building from the women-owned business initiative.

RG-T4008 - Strengthening the Implementation Capacity of Caribbean Blue Economy Clusters and Value Chains - (US\$220,280 disbursed for the Jamaica Conch Cluster) (2022-ongoing)

Overall Objective: This regional project provides implementation support to 3 Caribbean Blue Economy clusters that were identified and recommended for financing under a 2020 Blue Economy Cluster Call (See RG-T3815). It is also providing support to 1 additional cluster that participated in the call. In Jamaica, the project worked with the Jamaica Industrial Conch fishing sector as well as government counterparts.

Counterparts in Jamaica: Jamaica Industrial Conch fishing companies (initially 5 companies, of which 2 were women-owned, but growing to 11 of the 12 companies in the sector by the end of the project).

Objective: The aim of this cluster project is to address the challenges and opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth of the Jamaica Queen Conch Cluster through Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification.

Results: MSC Fishery Standard certification was first attained in February 2024, and was then reconfirmed in January 2025, which certifies the Pedro Cay Fishery as the first sustainably certified wild hand-caught conch Fishery in the world. The cluster in January 2025 also achieved the MSC Chain of Custody Certification. This certifies all conch products from the Jamaica Conch cluster as sustainable with the ability to utilize the MSC sustainably caught logo which will enable the cluster to build value and brand recognition and attach a premium for both their current markets of France, Martinique and Guadeloupe and potentially in the North American, Canadian and other European markets.

The project financed the full assessment necessary to achieve the MSC certifications, as well as the development of new conch value added products, policy and legislative recommendations and capacity building for the cluster.

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A project steering committee and JCC website were established under the project as well as a newsletter that outlines key updates with the cluster. A Marketing Research Consultant carried out research on the potential market for value-added conch products while a Marketing Specialist Consultant has conducted a market research and feasibility study and developed a strategy to determine the viability of new conch-based product(s) and their favorable entry into different territories. Policy Development and Cluster Development Consultancies were also financed which resulted in 11 regulation and policy recommendations surrounding monitoring, control and surveillance of the fishery and to help consolidate the sector and enable greater economies of scale without creating a monopoly utilizing an Individual Transferable Quota system. <https://www.competecaribbean.org/jamaican-conch-cluster-achieves-msc-certification-paving-the-way-for-sustainable-seafood-excellence/>