



## IICA-COLEAD CARIBBEAN AGRIFOOD BUSINESS SERIES

### Inspiring stories from Caribbean businesses and SMEs

## 16 inspiring Caribbean women farmers and entrepreneurs

In June 2021, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture ([IICA](#)) and the [COLEAD](#)<sup>1</sup> launched the Caribbean Agrifood Business Series aimed at showcasing innovations and successes of Caribbean farmer-led businesses and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The series looks at the contribution of entrepreneurs, farmers, agripreneurs and SMEs who are creating business models which are economically, environmentally and socially viable. They share their best practices, innovations and technologies to support and encourage others to embrace the unprecedented opportunities offered by local, regional and export markets. The series focuses on various topics, including COVID-19 resilience, rebuilding tourism with increased linkages to agriculture, bioeconomy and green businesses, food safety and quality, improved production, trade, competitiveness, skills for entrepreneurship and successes from women-led businesses.

The recordings of the sessions are available on [IICA](#)'s and the [COLEAD](#)'s YouTube channels.

During these sessions, **17 inspiring women farmers and entrepreneurs** presented their businesses to create awareness about their key contributions to food systems and the (rural) economy, but also to share their knowledge and experiences so as to inspire others to engage (more) with agriculture and entrepreneurship, and to call for targeted support from policy makers, finance institutions, research and support organisations.

**Find short presentations of these amazing women entrepreneurs below:**

<sup>1</sup> [COLEACP becomes COLEAD](#) in January 2023 (Committee Linking Entrepreneurship Agriculture Development).





Danielle Thomson, Founder & CEO, [THERAPY](#), Jamaica

THERAPY is a company created in 2015 which produces balanced, nutrient-rich, vegan, sugar-free and preservative-free products. The plant-based foods are made from local organic fruit and vegetables grown by a network of Jamaican organic farmers. The company focuses on product development and innovation to respond to consumers' needs, lifestyle changes focused on health and wellbeing. THERAPY supports organic farmers and MSMEs, and sustainable farming, as well as raises awareness on the importance of growing organically and maintaining seasonal supply of the products.

The company constantly adapts to its business environment and so continuously expands. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, THERAPY closed its physical locations and focused only on online sales, having the team working remotely and promoting use of technology amongst employees. It adopted shopify experiences, followed metrics of sales to track progress, and uses social medias to link and interact with customers.



Shadel Nyack Compton, Managing Director, [Belmont Estate Group of Companies](#), Grenada

Belmont Estate is a small agritourism business which produces cocoa, spices, particularly nutmeg, fruit, vegetables, herbs and goat cheese, among others. Most of the products can be tasted at Belmont Estate's Creole restaurant. Belmont Estate received in 2019 the award of 1 of the 50 best cocoa samples in the world by the Cocoa of Excellence. The agricultural estate does agritourism to integrate local culture, history, traditions and cuisine. It organises various interactive tours on its premises to showcase sustainable agriculture and tourism practices, the process from cocoa growing to chocolate making.

With the COVID-19 crisis, Belmont Estate developed solutions to keep connected with its customers and generate revenue. It worked on increasing its social media presence to continuously inform about its activities and developed virtual tours and experiences. It also developed two shopify experiences: Belmont Organics to shop its manufactured products and My Grenada Box to export Grenadian products to the US market for Christmas.



Rachel Renie, Co-Founder & Managing Director, [D'Market Movers](#), Trinidad & Tobago

D'Market Movers is an online distribution company established in 2009 specialised in the delivery of fresh produce throughout Trinidad & Tobago. D'Market Movers works closely with a network of about 250 farmers/artisans who supply various types of fresh produce and tries to create new opportunities for its local agripreneurs. Through its online sale platform, D'Market Movers can identify trends in consumption and demand to advise its suppliers about the fruit and vegetable which are highly demanded and the customers' expectations, enabling farmers to grow produce which meet the market demand and requirements.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the online shop has enabled customers to be supplied with fresh food while ensuring their security as they could stay at home. D'Market Movers recently launched a click and collect store to meet the customers' demand to go in store and be able to interact with staff, adapting the experience to the current health measures in place.



Tania Lieuw-A-Soe, CEO, [SURIVIT N.V.](#), Suriname

SURIVIT N.V. is a fruit and cassava processing company that produces high-quality products, such as flour, baby porridge, cassava pancakes mixes and cassava flakes, both for local and export markets. The company focuses on producing tasty and healthy food. It was created in 2020 by "Wi! Uma Fu Sranan" (meaning "We the women of Suriname"), the first women agricultural cooperative in Suriname which was established in 2013 to strengthen Suriname's agricultural sector and to reduce poverty. Nowadays, the cooperative has 38 members.

SURIVIT N.V. is a pioneering social enterprise which educates and empowers women to learn all aspects of producing, value adding, food safety, product marketing and distribution. The company aims to contribute to sustainable food and nutrition security, economic growth, value chain development, promotion and employment opportunities in Suriname with the specific focus on rural women.



**Rita Hilton, Founder & Managing Director, [Carita Jamaica Ltd.](#), Jamaica**

Carita Jamaica Limited, formerly Incorporated Marketing Developments Limited, is a family-owned and operated company created in 1984 which distributes fresh Jamaican products. It has expanded its activities by processing locally grown crops sourced in its own fields and from farmers across Jamaica into frozen products, soups, and natural teas under the “Carita Premium” brand.

Carita Jamaica Limited aims to support local rural communities by offering them a sustainable income. It also promotes sustainable and healthy lifestyle, and works on ensuring that its production and exports meet local and international food safety and security standards and requirements.

Carita Jamaica Limited was named Best Import/Export Company at the ActionCOACH Regional 2018 Business Excellence Forum Award. It mainly exports to the US, Canada, the UK and diaspora markets, and is looking to expand to the EU, as well as to Caribbean markets.



**Theophilia Stoute, Founder & Managing Director, [O's Inc.](#), Barbados**

O's Inc. is an agro-processing company which produces all-natural, organic and gluten-free products, such as flours, pancakes mixes, porridges, coatings and oils. All the products are prepared with locally grown fruit and vegetables, such as cassava, breadfruit, sweet potato, plantain or coconut, without additives nor preservatives. The company supports a healthy lifestyle and a gluten-free diet with high-quality products at an affordable cost and proves that eating healthy doesn't mean eating bland.

O's products are currently available in supermarkets and convenient shops across Barbados and will be exported to other Caribbean islands in a near future. The company is still developing new formulas and products, and strives to source an eco-friendly packaging to guarantee the freshness and aroma of its products.





**Daphne Miaoulis, Managing Director, [Abaco Neem](#), Bahamas**

Abaco Neem Limited is the only certified organic farm in the Bahamas and was founded in 1993 by Nick Miaoulis to contribute to the healthcare of The Bahamas. The company processes all parts of the neem tree (roots, bark, gum, leaves, flowers, fruit, seed kernels and seed oil) into over 23 different neem health and beauty products, as well as products for home, garden and agriculture. Over the past ten years, the production of Abaco Neem Limited has grown in popularity within the Bahamas and in the Caribbean, North America and Europe, partly resulting from the company’s intensive use of the internet and social media avenues to promote its products. Abaco Neem Limited’s products are of consistent high quality and manufactured in a clean facility which meets the international export standards.



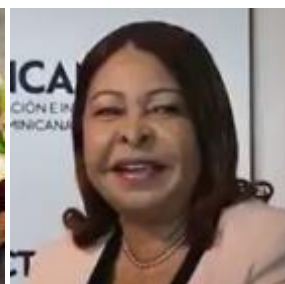
**Umeeda Switlo, Co-Founder and CEO, [Naledo Foods and Beverages Inc](#), Belize**

Naledo is a B-Corp certified social enterprise founded in 2015, with a vision to produce quality, healthy products while benefiting the environment and communities they partner with. Naledo’s brand, “Truly Turmeric” makes a variety of products, including the world’s first wildcrafted, whole root turmeric paste. Their method of direct trade with producers makes it possible that their growers earn over six times the Fair Trade price for their turmeric. Naledo’s products can be found in retail stores in Belize, Canada and the United States, as well as through several online channels for customers worldwide. Naledo and Truly Turmeric have been granted numerous awards for their innovation, taste and their contribution to rural development. Naledo has also been recognized by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for Best Practices in Strengthening Youth Rural Employment in the Caribbean.



**Elizabeth Montano, Director, [Montanos' Chocolate Company Limited](#), Trinidad and Tobago**

Montanos Chocolate Company is a three-generational family owned and operated company, founded in 2018. Their primary product is Machel Montano 60% Dark Chocolate. This chocolate bar is handmade, all natural and allergen free and is promoted as the healthy, vegan choice for chocolate. Montanos' mission is to contribute to the successful revitalization of Trinidad and Tobago's cocoa industry by leading their country and the Caribbean into a global cocoa revolution. Their vision is to be the leading environmentally sustainable chocolate and cocoa producer in the Caribbean, while developing a sustainable cocoa industry and securing employment for the local community's youth, women and cocoa farmers. The company's investment in rural development is exemplified through their work with the Alliance of Rural Communities, which involves a dedication to transforming cocoa producing communities and building connections between cocoa producers and consumers.



**Dr. Polina Araujo, CEO, [Cosmos 2000](#), Dominican Republic**

Cosmos 2000 International was founded in the year 2000 from the desire to expand the products of the Dominican Republic throughout the Caribbean and beyond. Today, the company specializes in the export of the highest quality fresh fruit and vegetables, and their mission is to satisfy the requirements of their direct and final consumers. With over 20 years of market experience, Cosmos has acquired a deep knowledge of the fruit and vegetable business. By working directly with farmers in the Dominican Republic and purchasing products directly from plantations, Cosmos 2000 is able to match any demand or requirement from customers. Cosmos 2000 supports the rural economy through their business model and operations, they provide advice to producers on planting projects, and they support the establishment of cooperatives.



**Theresa Marryshow, Founder and President, Grenada Network of Rural Women Producers (Grenrop), Grenada**

Formed in 2002, Grenrop currently is comprised of 80% women and 20% youth who are involved in farming, agro-processing, art & craft, catering and eco-tourism. The aim of Grenrop is to help its members become empowered and improve their farming methods, post harvesting techniques and ultimately, their livelihoods through training, projects, networking, and cultural and agricultural exchanges. The Network's members supply a wide variety of high quality produce and a range of agro-processed products to its buyers that include the top hotels and restaurants in Grenada, major supermarkets and the general public. Grenrop encourages its farmers to cultivate organic as much as possible, and also trains them in various agroprocessing skills to prepare new products for the hotels.



**Gillian Goddard, Co-Founder and Co-Director, [Alliance of Rural Communities of Trinidad and Tobago \(ACTT\)](#), Trinidad and Tobago**

The Alliance of Rural Communities (ARC), founded in 2014, is a Caribbean rural network of cocoa growing/chocolate producing communities. It is a self-funded, systems change network using cocoa and chocolate to support rural communities throughout the Caribbean to play an expanded role in their national affairs and to move towards solid financial inclusion in regional economics.

The ARC supports and develops financially independent, community owned chocolate businesses and affiliated projects using rural resources, labor and creativity. The products created are branded, marketed and distributed in collaboration with ARC, leading to much higher margins within the community than they would have realized by selling the raw materials. Ensuring the inclusion of all generations, ARC also trains community youth in conservation and nature guiding.



**Jeanette Marcelle, Founder and CEO, [Handmade by Jeanette Co.](#), Trinidad and Tobago**

Handmade by Jeanette Co. (HBJ) is a chef-owned and operated agri-processing food company making artisan products including granola, unique sauces and spice rubs. The company is supporting small farmers in the community by making their products using 75% locally sourced indigenous ingredients. Driven by innovation, HBJ creates shelf stable products that are rich in nutrients. Featured in some of the top gourmet shops in Trinidad, the company caters to health-conscious individuals, vegans and millennial customers. Jeanette strives to follow business practices that are beneficial to the environment, including those that reduce waste in the agriculture sector.



**Anastasha Elliot, Co-Founder and CEO, [Sugar Town Organics](#), St. Kitts and Nevis**

Sugar Town Organics, founded in 2010 by a mother-daughter duo, is an agri-based social enterprise that offers authentic and healthy Caribbean cosmetics and tasty vegan food products. The company is creating sustainable value through eco-conscious practices to craft their unique products. Sugar Town Organics offers four product lines, including Marapa (luxury skincare), Flauriel (processed food), Yaphene (hair and body products) and Baba's Lullaby (nutrient rich baby skin products). The company is innovating to transform indigenous ingredients and offer their customers products that infuse Caribbean traditions and culture. Sugar Town Organics has its own mini farm where herbs and spices are grown, and it works with local farmers who supply other raw materials. Sugar Town Organics' products are sold locally and exported throughout the Caribbean, United States, European Union, United Kingdom and Taiwan.





**Shondel Abby Alexander, Founder and Owner, [Abby's Exotic Blends](#), St. Lucia**

Abby's Exotic Blends Ltd is an award winning agro-processing company producing a variety of unique, tasty and nourishing products from locally grown ingredients. The company offers a wide range of vegetable chips made of plantain, banana, sweet potato, breadfruit and dasheen. Its product range also includes alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages made from coffee, banana, sea moss, peanut and rum punch. The company meets all industry quality standards and aims to incorporate environmentally friendly practices in its production cycle to limit wastage and preserve energy consumption, all while ensuring the best tasting products.

Abby's Exotic Blends products can be found on the local market in Saint Lucia, and are also exported to neighbouring islands.



**Noella Ruiz, Founder and CEO, [Empresas Noelia Ruiz Srl](#), Dominican Republic**

Noelia Ruiz SRL is a family business founded in 2014 that produces and markets high quality honey products under the brand Miel Noelia. Its main objective is to create value added, innovative and healthy honey-based products for the benefit and sustainability of beekeepers' livelihoods. The company is dedicated to the conservation of the environment and is driven by the aim of developing beekeeping as a prosperous and essential economic activity. It supports beekeeping producers in three provinces of the Dominican Republic, where it provides training and workshops for them and supports the social and economic inclusion of women beekeepers.