



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

SECTION 3

IMPACT STORIES DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION



SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Safeguarding Inclusion: CDB Working to Advance Disability Rights in the Caribbean

Inclusion matters, and the spirited mantra of Caribbean people living with disabilities of “nothing about us without us” has resonated with the CDB as the institution continues to mainstream disability issues. The Bank is ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its planning and programming and is also collaborating with partners for similar approaches in their projects.

According to Dr. Anthony George, Operations Officer at CDB who has spearheaded education, policy, and infrastructure initiatives for the community, “We see the ability and not the disability and have sought to integrate the views of this community in our initiatives.”

From its partnership with Authentic Caribbean and the Government of Grenada to host the 2024 Caribbean Disability Conference to the completion of National Disabilities Assessments for Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago, CDB is taking meaningful action.



Participant Mr. Michael Andrews, makes a point during one of the discussions at the inaugural Caribbean Disabilities Conference which was held in Grenada in October 2024. The CDB was instrumental in supporting the event which brought together nearly 300 stakeholders from across the Caribbean for dialogue on strategies to enhance accessibility and empowerment of the region’s disabled community.

"We continue to seek out these voices, including and engaging this community in our efforts," Dr. Anthony George explains.

Disability advocates like Janeil Odle, are pushing the Bank to accelerate its interventions. An Attorney-at-Law and member of CDB's Future Leaders Network, Ms. Odle leverages her influence and strong advocacy skills to drive youth-focused change. Through the Bank's youth forum, stakeholder engagement sessions, and other activities, she amplifies the call for inclusivity, ensuring that the voices of the disabled community resonate loudly.

"We are not invisible," she emphasises. "We live here and are adding value. The disabled community matters as much as anyone else. As a young black, disabled Caribbean woman, I am keen to share my unique world perspective. I have been working to highlight the numerous systemic disadvantages we face and while there are many, much more needs to be done."

CDB has worked with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to embed disability inclusion into its largest infrastructure investment programme, UKCIF, funded by the UK Government. The programme prioritises managing and monitoring social and gender issues across the project cycle, including a focus on persons with disabilities.

"This involves clear standards for disability accessibility embedded in tenders and contracts,

informing the design and implementation of infrastructure projects. It also includes user review and testing by persons with disabilities," says Ms. Sharon Griffith, CDB's Programme Manager, Infrastructure Partnerships.

Beyond mainstreaming disability and inclusion of the community in its programmes, CDB is at the cusp of releasing findings from a new study conducted with regional partners, which sheds light on the interests of this special group. This study highlights the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and underscores the significant policy gaps that persist across the Caribbean.

Reflecting on the four-country assessments the Bank completed, Dr. Martin Baptiste, CDB's Division Chief, Social Sector says, "Although experiences vary between countries, the challenges are consistent. Issues of inclusion, equity, access, care, social protection, dignity, invisibility, and communication persist. It is imperative that the region rallies together to create a paradigm shift ensuring our disabled community is not disadvantaged."

While progress is evident, disparities remain. By leading with action and amplifying the voices of the community, the Bank continues to champion the rights of persons with disabilities, advocating for their dignity, agency, and full inclusion in development efforts.

PRODUCTION RESILIENCE

Caribshopper and the Caribbean Development Bank: Connecting Caribbean Entrepreneurs to Global Markets

Caribshopper, a CDB-supported e-commerce platform, is connecting Caribbean products to a vast diaspora, offering over 6,000 items to more than 40,000 subscribers. According to Chief Executive Officer Kadion Preston, “This isn’t just business—it’s a chance for our far-flung diaspora to reconnect with their culture, heritage, and more importantly with the place they call home.”



Ms. Gale Charles, of Charlo Farms Ltd in Trinidad and Tobago shows off products from her line of all-natural seasonings.

With over 90 million Caribbean migrants longing for a taste of home, the potential for entrepreneurs is infinite. Dubbed the number one Caribbean marketplace, shoppers can find everything from world-famous Blue Mountain coffee to steelpanns from Panland and the latest music from Sean Paul or Beres Hammond.

Kadion’s vision has helped nearly 800 businesses from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago connect with millions of customers in the United States and Canada. Now, with the support of CDB, national businesses and support organisations, he plans to expand into the United Kingdom and other markets. By the end of 2024, his team aims to onboard businesses from Barbados, Guyana, and Saint Kitts and Nevis onto the Caribshopper platform.

The benefits of Caribshopper’s reach to both entrepreneurs and economies are clear. One of the platform’s top performers is Gale Charles, of Charlo Farms Ltd in Trinidad and Tobago. From modest origins and a passion for home gardening, the startup is today a thriving family-run enterprise producing high-quality, all-natural seasonings.

"Caribshopper came to us during COVID when we needed it most. Their involvement gave us the boost we wanted to expand into international markets," Ms. Charles explains.

Similarly, Sonya Dunstan, Creative Director of A Taste of the Caribbean Limited in Jamaica, has seen her business flourish through the platform. Her small team transforms authentic Jamaican produce into a range of products like jams, sauces, and seasonings for export.

"Our dry seasonings are performing exceptionally well. Thanks to our export-focused business model, we've been able to stabilise prices for consumers despite market shifts and climate challenges. Now, Caribbean flavours are available year-round to locals and the diaspora alike," she says.

Michel Thomas, Senior Operations Officer at CDB, emphasises the effects of supporting MSMEs and private sector growth and development as demonstrated by the impact on the two companies.

"These successes are exactly what the Bank envisions for the MSME sector. Growing these businesses means growing our economies, bringing us closer to economic prosperity for all," he says.

Caribbean businesses are at a critical juncture, with the need for growth higher than ever. MSMEs are the backbone of the region, making up 60-70% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Understanding their crucial role, the Bank has partnered with Caribshopper to provide substantial support to these businesses. This collaboration aims to help these enterprises expand to global markets, boost revenue, and generate more opportunities for economic development.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Building Back Better: Dominica's Journey Toward Climate Resilience

Dominica, a small island in the Eastern Caribbean, has taken on the challenge of building back better and protecting its communities, children, and livelihoods from the unpredictability of nature. After being devastated by Hurricane Maria in 2017, Dominica set a bold goal: to become the world's first climate-resilient nation. This decision isn't just about recovery; it's about survival.



The climate resilient Morne Jaune, Primary School in Dominica.

Dominica's approach, with the support of the CDB and grant funding from the Government of Canada through the Dominica Climate Resilience and Restoration Fund, focuses on building stronger, climate-resilient infrastructure to protect its people. Climate resilient infrastructure is about the development of the built environment with structures

capable of withstanding or recovering from natural hazards made worse by climate change. Schools like Morne Jaune, Delices, Grand Bay, Salisbury, and W.S. Stevens Primary have been at the forefront of this transformation. These schools, many of which also serve as emergency shelters, are essential to the community's safety and future.

Students at these institutions are just some of the beneficiaries of Dominica's intentional plan to strengthen its public infrastructure. The country was ravaged but survived Hurricane Maria, a record-breaking Category 5 storm, which wreaked havoc on the majority of the island's built environment. The Government has been working to ensure no recurrence since that time.

"We're not just rebuilding schools, we're building resilience. Schools are critical because they double as shelters during disasters. By ensuring they can withstand storms, we're protecting both the education of our children and the safety of our communities," says Robert Guiste, Permanent Secretary at Dominica's Ministry of Education

At Delices Primary School, the upgrades have brought peace of mind.

"Since the project was completed, we no longer fear the worst when storms approach. Our retrofitted schools are now capable of withstanding severe weather, giving us confidence that our students and community will be safe," shares Mrs. Althea St. Ville, Delice's Primary School, Dominica Principal.

Delices, which is located in eastern Dominica, houses 56 students from the La Plaine district and

has experienced minimal weather-related disruption since the project completion. The students and faculty have also been trained in disaster resilience while a pool of local contractors now have greater knowledge in construction best practices with CDB's support. Community members were also afforded skills development training.

L. O'Reilly Lewis, Director of Projects (Ag) at CDB, emphasises the broader significance of this effort. "Hurricane Maria destroyed 40% of the country's housing and severely impacted education. By investing in disaster-resilient schools, we're not just helping Dominica recover, we're securing a stronger future for its people. CDB has invested in the country using the principles of Build Back Better, with disaster resilience technology, to create a better learning environment and service delivery for all."

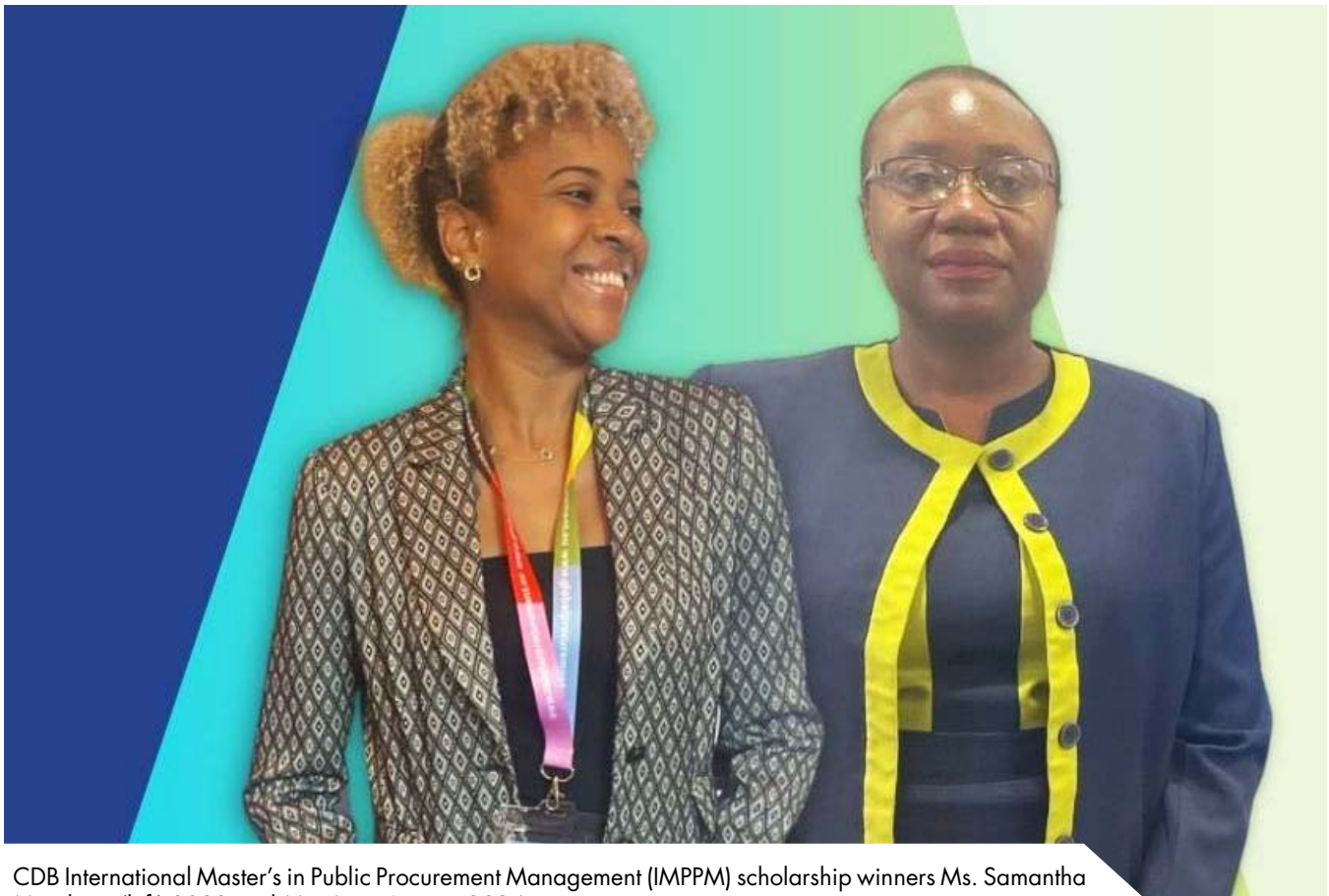
He also highlighted the importance of the project in the context of the Bank's focus on increasing climate resilient infrastructure across the region.

"This is more than just rebuilding, it's building back better, with the future in mind."

INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

CDB's Procurement Scholarship Programme Strengthens Governance and Careers

A scholarship can be more than just an academic opportunity—it can be a catalyst for systemic change. Through the CDB International Master's in Public Procurement Management (IMPPM) scholarship, selected professionals are not only advancing their careers but also strengthening public procurement reform and governance in their respective countries. Funded by CDB with support from the Italian Government, the IMPPM, offered by the University of Rome Tor Vergata, is recognised as a premier programme in public procurement management.



CDB International Master's in Public Procurement Management (IMPPM) scholarship winners Ms. Samantha Marchan, (left) 2022 and Ms. Amoi Romeo 2024.

Samantha Marchan was the first to benefit from this transformative initiative, receiving the inaugural IMPPM scholarship in 2022. Graduating as valedictorian, she returned to Trinidad and Tobago, where she now serves as a Senior Capacity Development Specialist at the Office of Procurement Regulation. Armed with advanced training, she is driving improvements in procurement processes, ensuring they are transparent, fair, and efficient across public bodies.

Describing the scholarship as a “game-changer,” Samantha reflects,

“The programme equipped me with the skills to enhance procurement practices and drive meaningful change in my country’s procurement landscape.”

Building on this success, Amoi Romeo became the next recipient of the IMPPM scholarship in 2024. As the Technical Advisor to the Secretary of Finance at the Division of Finance, Tobago House of Assembly, she plays a critical role in overseeing procurement operations. Following four and a half months of intensive in-person instruction in Rome, she returned to Tobago to apply her expertise through a traineeship and dissertation, while completing her final module remotely.

“Throughout my career in public procurement, I’ve focused on fostering a learning environment for my team and promoting competition and vendor

inclusion. The IMPPM programme has further developed my capabilities and allows me to share valuable knowledge with my organisation, advancing our procurement practices.” Amoi explains.

Doug Fraser, CDB’s Head of Procurement, underscores the programme’s broader impact: “By investing in the education of senior procurement professionals, we are enhancing institutional capacity and equipping individuals with the expertise to implement best practices. This leads to tangible improvements in transparency, efficiency, and accountability in public services.”

Through strategic investments in human capital, CDB is fostering stronger institutions and driving sustainable development across the Caribbean. By equipping professionals like Samantha and Amoi with the tools to lead procurement reform, the Bank is reinforcing governance systems that deliver more effective public services and support long-term economic resilience.

Recognising the programme’s success and its potential for greater regional impact, CDB joined forces with the IDB in 2024 to expand its reach. This collaboration resulted in three additional scholarships for 2025, with candidates from Belize, the Cayman Islands, and Trinidad and Tobago set to make up the cohort.