



CIPRIANI COLLEGE
OF LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES

WORK MATTERS

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COLUMN

Regional development and critical partnerships

In this region we need to be constantly thriving towards perfection, not only in the national objectives, but also in relation to regional development which includes all the member states. At Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies (CCLCS), this is the preferred approach, and this informs the research which is being undertaken as part of the College's research agenda. In order to be effective and enact change, this effort requires collaboration and cooperation with a number of national and regional bodies that share similar ethos.

Fortunately, CCLCS has recently found a partner in this effort with the Caribbean Development Bank and has engaged in a regional research effort that seeks to interrogate a number of issues related to labour in the region with the programme entitled "The Gender Differential Labour Market Impact Study 2023-2024".

While this effort is seminal and explores labour issues in the region, it highlights a number of related issues such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), working conditions, the gender differential, the impact of COVID-19 on the Caribbean economies, vulnerability and gender-based violence, among related issues, it marks a new beginning, not only in content, but also in partnerships that focus on the salient issues related to individuals, workers, and communities.

Fortunately, the pillars of the Caribbean Development Bank and the research agenda of CCLCS are similar, and this lays the foundation for the investigation into the afore-mentioned issues. It will allow the voices of the peoples and the workers in the region to be heard. This is instructive as it lays the foundation for not only the development of national and regional policies but also for creating the environment for further discussion on these issues and others that may arise from the study.

While the College is dedicated to lifelong learning and research, it is also heavily involved in bringing to the national and regional agendas, the issue of social justice. This drive to increase the levels of social justice in the

region is evident in the work at CCLCS as well as the research that has been published. In line with this approach, the President of the Caribbean Development Bank (Dr. Hyginus "Gene" Leon) delivered the keynote address at the College for the launch of its newest publication entitled "The Caribbean Social Justice Agenda", where he highlighted the similarities in approach, agenda, and working programmes between the Bank and CCLCS.

To be sure, CCLCS's partnership with Caribbean Development Bank marks a critical milestone in advancing regional research, and paving the way for unprecedented strides in economic and social development. With a shared commitment to fostering sustainable growth and addressing critical societal challenges, CCLCS and Caribbean Development Bank are poised to unlock the full potential of the Caribbean region and usher in a brighter future for generations to come.

While, this is a great and timely initiative, it also marks the beginning of a partnership that will reap benefits for the Caribbean region in line with internationally accepted best practices and allow for a more all-encompassing approach to regional development. An additional benefit of this collaborative effort is the engagement of national and regional stakeholder in the conversations that surround the issues being explored, some being more comfortable than others to the general public as well as policy makers.

As espoused by Dr. Leon, "the theme of social justice is fully aligned with the CDB's advocacy of a holistic, systems approach to development", and he went on to state "that the core of the Bank's approach rests on two principles: first, the definition of system must be complete and comprehensive — this embodies the linkages that exist across productive, social, institutional, environmental, and financial elements of societies. So, we cannot do development without recognising and addressing the internal coherence of whole system." These statements are in tandem with the beliefs of CCLCS and serve to direct the programmes and re-

search endeavours that are intended to not only raise levels of awareness on a number of issues related to the citizenry of the region and its workers, but also to influence the way that we approach issues that are backed by robust research and led by professionals in the respective areas under review, and guided and supported by the CCLCS Director, Dr. Andre Henry.

Having said all that, it is exciting to be a part of this collaborative programme that will have far reaching implication on regional development, and I am confident that the benefits to be derived will be immeasurable.

Marlon Anatol (PhD)
Senior Fellow and Dean,
CCLCS