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A Publication of the Mona School of Business and Management

REBUILDING ON A FOUNDATION OF RESILIENCE IN POST-PANDEMIC JAMAICA



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Dr. David McBean

From The Executive Director

Digital Transformation: What Does It Mean For Us?



Digital Transformation should simplify people's lives. The sight of persons jammed in tightly in crowds waiting for remittances and government support in the early days of the pandemic were jarring. Not many masks was to be seen, and tempers flared as the long waits caused patience to wear thin. Potential super-spreader event. Yet almost everyone in line had their smartphones in hand. Imagine if we had a robust mobile money ecosystem that delivered simply and efficiently to the citizenry? Jamaica benefits from having one of the highest smartphone penetration rates in the world at over 100%. Take note, in the world.

Despite our bemoaning of our digital divides, we have one of the most connected societies in the world by access to online platforms and the internet. Yet we have refused to leverage this into radically improving the lives of our population. Apps are patchy and disconnected, and there is no clear policy

to propose and enact digital strategies, both in the private and public sector. A large part of the blame must lie at the feet of our policy makers, elected or otherwise.

Whatever happened to mobile payments?

Mobile payments are now commonplace globally, but somehow the BOJ has presided over a muddle for over a decade (that's moving at the speed of business). Any number of bewildering regulations and postulations have seen us roll out half-hearted "trials" and "authorisations" to the favoured few, who then find themselves hobbled by the guardrails put up. Our national fetish for stifling anti-money laundering (AML) and know-your-customer (KYC) strictures, means that banks are viewed by the masses as an unwelcoming behemoth, rather than as a facilitator for financial empowerment.

So less than 20% of the population have bank accounts (estimated 300K). The credit unions have many more (1m+) but are constrained to the products they can offer. We seem determined to stamp out the last one thousandth of a percentile of the chance of fraud, on our quest to develop foolproof systems (that elusive Holy Grail), while locking out the majority of our citizens from “digital inclusion”. I would rather we implement solutions that benefit the vast majority of the population, with severe penalties for fraud that is actually enforced (another weakness of ours), coupled with robust detection systems. Novel idea? Not really, that’s how the rest of the world rolls (to channel my hip hop brethren).

My dominant engineering brain (identify a problem, design a solution, test the solution, and refine or change said solution till problem is solved) tells me that the obvious solution would be to find a way to make credit unions offer their clients core banking services. Instead, we are trying to turn credit unions into mini-banks.

But I digress. Back to mobile payments. What if we were delivering government payments etc. directly to mobile payment platforms? Granny could stay at home and get her pension payments. Of course, the Accountant General points out that they now send payments directly to bank accounts, but I refer to my earlier discourse on the difficulty of getting said banks to accept your business.

Renewal of motor vehicle licence is another idiocy

Cast your mind to another idiocy. The police are out in force checking licence discs (well licence squares). To renew same, one has to go and line up cheek by jowl at the tax office in the time

of corona. Why? I have to bring my original registration document for the cashier to see, who then confiscates and issues new registration. Arrant nonsense. All details are online. The fitness certificate could be checked, you issue new licence authorization against that. And you could mail the disc to me. Too simple?

The police have access to an App which quickly checks your compliance with insurance, fitness, etc against your licence plate. They can tell whether you have a valid driver’s licence or not. So we have digitized the process for compliance. It should be a simple thing to turn it round for enabling the transactions. Tells you where the focus of our policy makers and implementers are.

There is light at the end of the tunnel, and I’m hoping its daylight. COVID-19 is a horrible thing, but its silver lining may be to force our lords and masters to go digital, both in thought and action for the benefit of us all. My final thought to illustrate out there is the overzealous officer who is going to ticket me for an expired licence disc (no square!). I hope I can persuade him/her that it was the reasonable fear of contracting COVID-19 that kept me from “bungling up” at the tax office, and I am deserving of that most Jamaican mercies, a “blich”.

Or maybe we can persuade the tax office to accept online payments from the privileged few with credit cards (since mobile money has been stillborn for a decade and may not be included in the list of Christmas miracles), and simply mail them their new licence discs before Christmas. What do you think?



David McBean, Executive Director



Claude Robinson

From The Editor



Welcome to the second issue of **MSBM Business e-Zine**, the online publication of the Mona School of Business and Management, of the University of the West Indies, Mona. As with our first issue in June 2020, this issue, continues our examination of some of the uncertainties surrounding the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic as businesses and individuals try to figure out the so-called 'new normal' and how to co-exist with it.

This issue appears towards the end of calendar 2020 and the news is not good on three of the main indicators of well-being in Jamaica these days, namely, crime control, economic outturn, and managing the spread of the coronavirus.

With a murder rate (2019) of 47 per 100,000 population, according to data from the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Jamaica was ranked among the highest homicide rates in the world and there have been no indications of improvement in 2020.

On economic out-turn, The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)

reported that the economy contracted by 11.3 per cent during the July to September quarter, compared to the corresponding period in 2019. PIOJ head, Dr Wayne Henry reported that the economy has contracted by an estimated 10.7 per cent for the first nine months of the calendar year, from January to September. And it is projected to contract within the range of nine to 11 per cent for the October to December quarter, resulting in a 10 to 12 per cent decline in both the 2020 calendar and 2020-21 fiscal year out-turns as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

On the coronavirus pandemic, the government reported confirmed cases tracking past 10,000 mid-November and deaths inching towards 250 government has to calibrate carefully how much and how fast they can ease restrictions movement and gatherings of people as the holidays approach.

Against that background, we have dubbed this issue, "Rebuilding on a foundation of resilience" to focus on the

need to rebuild and grow the economy while avoiding the vulnerabilities that have been so cruelly exposed by the pandemic.

In our lead article, **Densil A. Williams, professor of International Business at the UWI**, makes the case for added expenditure to stimulate economic activities as necessary at this time, but “it is clearly not sufficient to build back a stronger and more resilient economy”. Further, stimulus spending “must be geared towards strategic areas that will drive long-term growth. If not, the country will find itself in a situation where it has to borrow and increase its debt in order to stimulate the local economy post the pandemic.”

With the PIOJ report noting that the out-turn for hotels and restaurants reflected an 81.8 per cent downturn in stopover arrivals, particularly from Jamaica’s main source markets, the United States, Europe, and Canada, returning to pre-Covid growth levels will be a heavy lift.

Dr Michelle McLeod, The UWI COVID-19 Task Force Tourism Expert and Lecturer, MSBM, in a timely assessment warns that the “full recovery of Caribbean tourism to levels of performance in 2019 is years ahead; however, advancing towards that goal requires planning and preparation of the sector’s key resources” including people.

We have two contributions from the related entertainment sector. **Dr Deborah Hickling Gordon**, a **Lecturer in Cultural Economy in the Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS) at UWI Mona** outlines several “clear and present opportunities for a powerful and transformational financial sector to fast-track the development of a nascent Caribbean creative sector” and push-start the recovery and transformation of economies severely challenged by the pandemic.

Andrea Dempster Chung, Co-Founder & Executive Director of Kingston Creative, argues that the cultural and creative sector can emerge from the pandemic stronger and better enabled to contribute to economic growth and human development. However, both creatives and the financing sector must rethink their approaches to financing the sector.

Danny Roberts, senior lecturer and head of the Hugh Shearer Labour Studies Institute at the Consortium for Social Development and Research, The UWI Open Campus says the pandemic has forced the need for new work from home policies designed to (i) improving employee satisfaction and reducing stress among staff, and (ii) increasing employee outcome and improving organisational efficiency.”

Finally, **Dr Maurice McNaughton Director, Centre for IT-enabled Innovation, MSBM** offers some useful insights on the requirements for organisational resilience in these times. Organisations must demonstrate digital leadership. He explains, “Digital leadership means thinking differently about business strategy, business models, the IT function, enterprise platforms, mindsets and skill sets, and the nature of the workplace.”



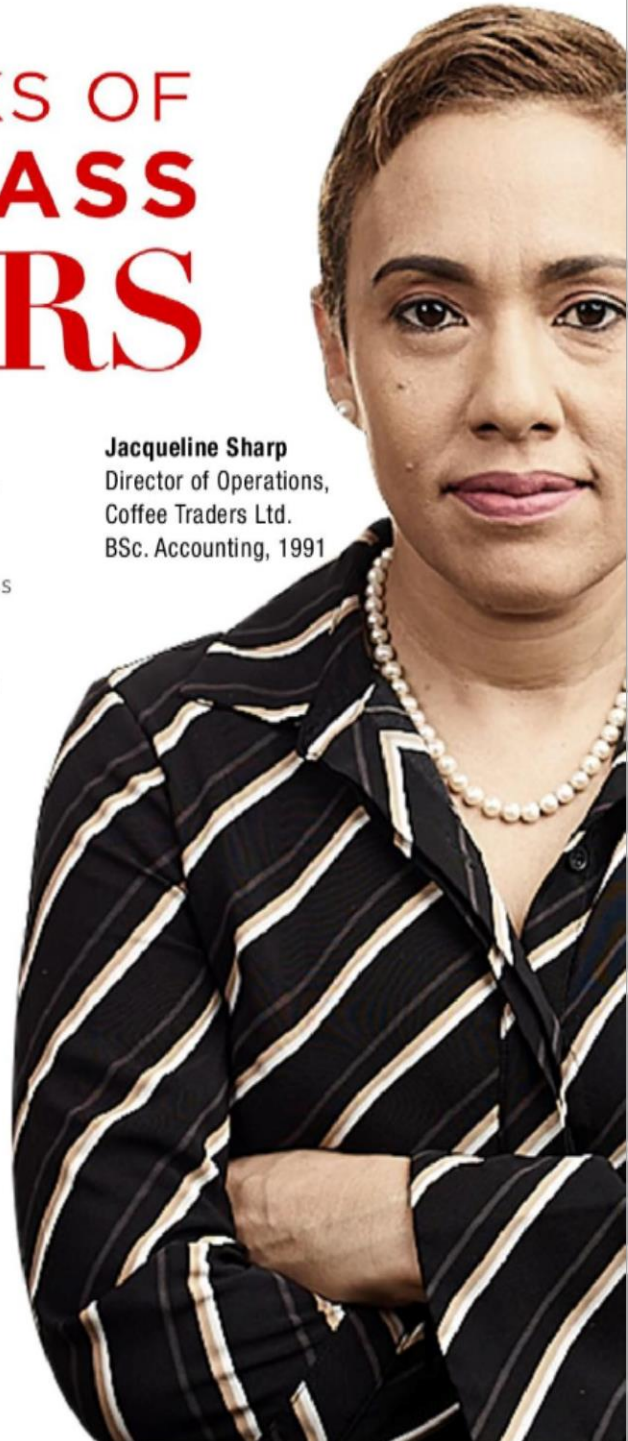
Claude Robinson, Editor-in-Chief

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Economic Recovery Amidst A Global Pandemic

How Should Jamaica Proceed?

By Prof. Densil Williams

Introduction

It is no secret that the global economy has been ravaged by the spread of the COVID-19 disease. Due to the contagious nature of the disease and the lack of effective treatment to date, Governments across the world have instituted containment measures to prevent the rapid spread which can overburden health facilities and eventually lead to a significant number of deaths.

Measures generally include -- but are not limited to—the closing of borders to prevent international travel, national curfews to limit movement of people, closing down of bars/restaurants to limit access to entertainment spots etc. While these produced positive results in containing the spread of the disease, they have brought tremendous hardship on businesses, economic sectors and fiscal revenues for Governments across the world. Indeed, the extent of the hardship varied based on the duration of the restrictions and also, the fiscal buffer that an economy had to protect the most vulnerable. Despite the hardships generally, some countries, notably, China still saw growth in its GDP and also some industries such as agriculture and manufacturing, also saw positive outturns.

Unfortunately, countries in the Caribbean are not so lucky to have positive outlook for GDP growth.

International financial agencies are predicting double digit decline in GDP across the Caribbean, in some cases up to the magnitude of 10% for some economies. In the case of Jamaica, the local central bank revised its estimate for contraction in 2020 from a 5-7% band to 7-10% band. This is not only frightening but if realized, would be the most historic decline in the economy since Independence. Already, the reports for the two quarters since the country recorded its first case of the virus in March 2020, have shown a combined decline in output of over 20%. The attendant problems of high unemployment and dislocation of Government revenues have also been manifested over the period. Unemployment has moved from 7.2% to over 12% during the period. Similarly, the price tag for the economic loss has been estimated to be over J\$81-billion. These numbers and the future outlook, raise serious concerns about how to stimulate the economy to prevent further erosion of gains in employment and stability while at the same time, limiting the negative impact on health.

The revised budget proposed an expenditure budget of circa J\$853-billion with the additional J\$15-billion to be spent in the areas of health, social welfare, education, and the general economy.

In the area of health, J\$1.5-billion will be spent on health personnel and acquiring personal protective equipment among other things; in education, J\$1-billion will be spent on acquisition of tablets and other related issues. The bulk of the spending will go towards social welfare where, J\$5-billion will be spent on support for employees and businesses with cash transfer, and, the COVID allocation of resources for employees (CARE) programme. Similarly, a substantial portion of the funding will be spent on infrastructure work on the South Coast High-way project.

It must be noted that increased expenditure is financed by a reduction in the primary surplus target which was set at a high level in order to help with the rapid reduction in the country's debt/GDP ratio. The reduction of the target from 3.5 to 3.1 percent of GDP led to freeing-up over J\$11 billion in revenues for recurrent expenditure. The remainder of the increase in expenditure is funded from the over-performance of tax revenue in the second quarter, by over 8%.

The use of fiscal policy tool by the GOJ to stimulate the economy at this point is a good policy decision. However, given the already tight fiscal space within which the GOJ was operating pre COVID-19, the question must be asked: Looking ahead, can the level of fiscal stimulus be sustained if the pandemic continues for a much longer period into 2021? A close reading of the economic situation would suggest that the road ahead will be tough, as the fiscal space will get much tighter.

What should the stimulus be spent on?

So, while the added expenditure to stimulate economic activities is necessary it is clearly not sufficient to build back a

stronger and more resilient economy. An analysis of the areas to which the expenditure will go shows that, they are not geared towards long-term growth. What the package lacks is a focus on positioning the economy for long-term success post the pandemic. In this regard therefore, there should be more investment in education to ensure more citizens stay in school and acquire the relevant skills that will be needed to operate within the new normal, post the pandemic. The stimulus for education therefore, should include investment in science and technology, curriculum reforms among other areas. Merely getting more tablets for schools will not help to build the kind of workforce that will be needed post the pandemic.

Similarly, some of the stimulus should be geared towards an investment fund to assist small and medium enterprise to retool and be ready for the post pandemic world and, to prevent them from closing their doors during this period. For, once businesses are closed, it is not easy to get them to re-open.

Further, there should be a stronger stimulus to the agricultural sector to create a modern and highly productive sector which can produce, and substitute imported products with locally made ones.



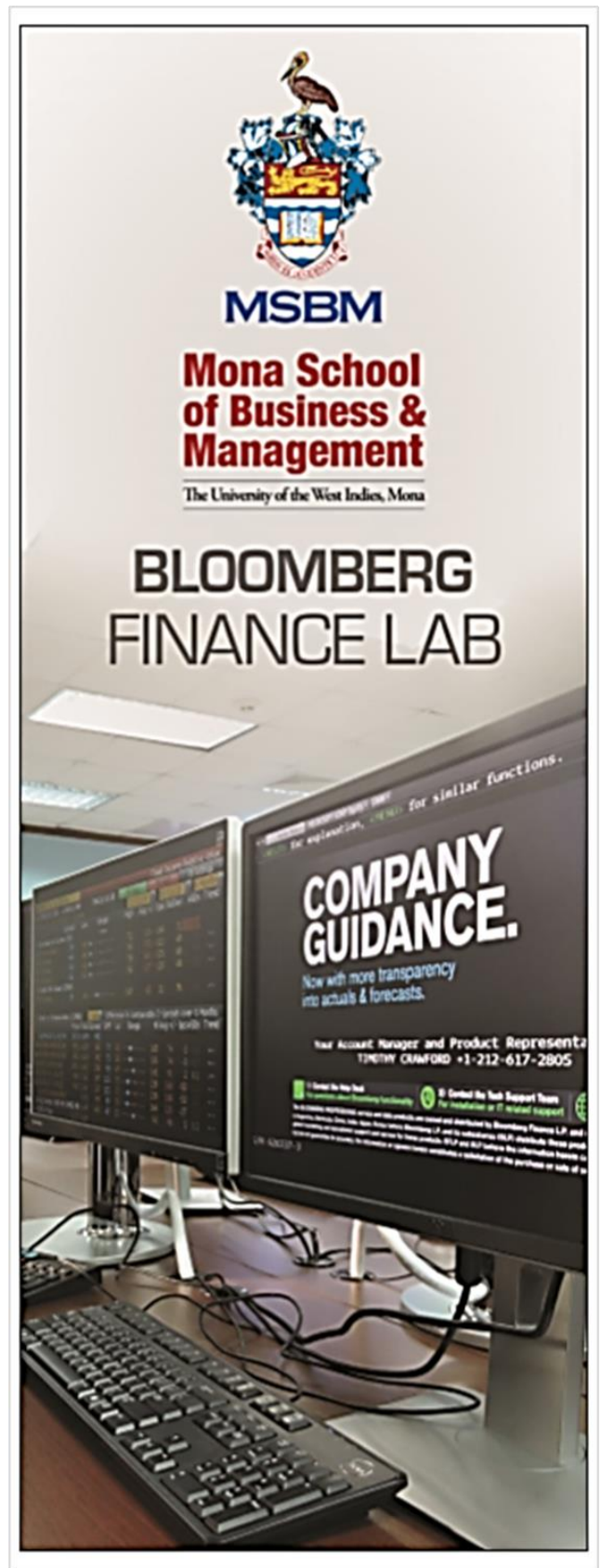
An Agricultural Financing Competitiveness Fund should be established, with clear criteria on how to select participants who will benefit. The outcome from use of these funds must be a highly competitive agricultural sector with businesses that can compete not just locally, but internationally.

Conclusion

For the Jamaican economy to recover stronger, post the pandemic, fiscal stimulus given today, must be geared towards strategic areas that will drive long-term growth. If not, the country will find itself in a situation where it has to borrow and increase its debt in order to stimulate the local economy post the pandemic. For, it will not have the fiscal space to provide fiscal stimulus if the pandemic continues for a long time. While increasing debt will be an option available to the country, it is not one that should be pursued without careful consideration to the impact on the overall stability in the macro-economy, which is a core foundation for future growth and development.



Densil A. Williams Ph.D. is a Professor of International Business at the UWI.





Responding To Tourism Capacity Challenges During A Pandemic In The Caribbean Region

By Dr. Michelle McLeod

Caribbean tourism has been affected by the disruptions of travel brought on by the global pandemic, COVID 19. A reversal in the strong performance and dominance of Caribbean tourism, particularly the cruise industry with a 35% share of the global market, has resulted in the crippling of several Caribbean economies. One response has been a call for diversifying the tourism sector to avoid its dependency. Another response has been to build capacity to enable the sector to 'build back better or stronger' as was the case with the devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean region. This article highlights practices that enable the tourism sector to maintain its quality during a down time. Unlike a hurricane that destroys the physical plant, a pandemic does not, however, there is need for new protocols that will ensure that the physical plant is maintained. In addition, the people element is also important as the tourism industry is labour intensive and will

require knowledge and skills banks of people having the capacity to adapt to new practices to maintain the health and safety protocols required.

Protection of frontline workers

Retraining staff in the tourism and hospitality industries to meet new requirements is a top priority. The health and safety standards that allow for contact-less tourism activity have to be achieved in a relatively short period of time. The number one priority is the protection of front-line staff in the travel, tourism and hospitality industries as these persons are key to maintain ongoing tourism activities in tourism destinations across the Caribbean region. In some instances, staff members are being requested to volunteer to work in the industry as those persons who are most vulnerable to the coronavirus are being kept safe.



Recognition that there is life after the pandemic means that the preservation of life now for the continuity of the tourism sector is vital. Training adjustments to hotel rooms, in house dining front desk operations, cleaning of public areas and so on are necessary practices to prevent an outbreak of the virus at a tourism or hospitality establishment and to avoid another shut down and disruption to operations.



A down time means that persons are under-employed or unemployed. With a resurgence of tourism activities, re-employment exercises will be conducted, and shifts may occur with movements between industries, establishments and career paths. Human resource practices that will align the best knowledge and skills to aid the smooth transformation of businesses and organizations, as these fit within the new operating environment of the pandemic crisis are essential. The extent to which businesses and organizations adapt depends not only on having the correct information about the changes that are necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees and visitors, but also on finding the right fit of staff members for the immediately available jobs within the tourism and hospitality operations. Early preparation for recruitment and selection practices is

needed to facilitate successful re-employment.

Maintaining high standards of health and safety

As with hospitality operations where a visitor may stay several days, and the airport where a visitor is transient, the same high standards of health and safety protocols are to be maintained. Consistency of these standards across the Caribbean region is being supported by the two main tourism regional organisations. The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association have been working with the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the UWI Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre to provide resources and facilitate the building of capacity in the tourism and hospitality industries. In addition, The UWI COVID-19 Task Force has dedicated a page on its website for tourism recovery (<https://uwi.edu/covid19/resources/resources-tourism>). The full recovery of Caribbean tourism to levels of performance in 2019 is years ahead; however, advancing towards that goal requires planning and preparation of the sector's key resources.



Michelle McLeod Ph.D. is The UWI COVID-19 Task Force Tourism Expert and Lecturer, MSBM



Bridging A Gap

Financial Inclusion & The Cultural Economy

By Dr. Deborah Hickling Gordon

Prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, financial inclusion trends became increasingly popular as part of a raft of global growth strategies. In keeping with World Economic Forum imperatives, financial institutions sought to provide individuals and businesses with increased access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs.

It is well known that tensions exist globally between the financial sector and the world of culture. These are “characterized by profound mistrust, fueled by sectors that ignore each other at best or despise each other at worst”, says Belgian culture agent, Phillippe Kern. The financial/cultural dichotomy persists in advanced industrial countries that formalized at least thirty-five Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) with new ones emerging daily. CCIs are the locomotive of the digital economy, contributing US\$200 billion to global digital sales in 2013. Digital cultural goods are said to be the biggest revenue source for the digital economy and CCI average 18% of the services sector in 38 countries. Yet, the potential remains largely unfulfilled mainly because of a lack of trust on both sides of the financial-creative divide.

Here in Jamaica, the dynamic creative ecosystem is undergoing a veritable renaissance. Small and medium

sized creative entities are becoming integrated into the corporate landscape. The LAB, one of Jamaica's leading advertising agencies, announced its intention to float an initial public offering (IPO) on the Jamaican Junior Stock Exchange. This follows on the creative training institute, iCreate Limited's successful IPO on the Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE) Junior Market for just over 74 million shares in February; and the listing of The Main Event Entertainment Group (MEEG) in 2017, which received a total of 1,033 applications for shares for their initial public offering (IPO), worth approximately \$673 million. These trends clearly indicate that cultural and creative industries have a place in the formal economy; however, access to capital remains one of the creative sector's main hindrances to growth.

Transformative Initiatives

In 2017, Jamaica sought to transform the informal economy which includes CCIs through initiatives including a National Financial Inclusion Council and National Strategy which sought to create the universal conditions in which Jamaicans, particularly those underserved by the domestic financial systems, can “invest, grow and generate greater levels of wealth.”



The following year the Jamaica Bankers Association (JBA) and the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ) launched a financial Inclusion programme for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs). They rolled out a 10-point plan with commitments that ranged from the review of the regulatory system to the re-assessment of SME transparency and delinquency.

This was positive news for the interface of creativity and economy. Below the surface, however, lies a much more complex reality, namely, financial institutions remain unsure when it comes to banking CCI businesses. A senior financial executive whom I interviewed on condition of anonymity, indicated that “there is not enough awareness or knowledge of how the cultural and creative industries are developing. This is blocking the flow of capital to the industry.” How do we remove this blockage?

For starters, financiers need to learn more about the people and the businesses in the creative space and their impact on GDP, and creatives have to better prepare themselves to function within the demands of financial

institutions. So, the question: Should there be a unified approach to optimizing the objectives of both sectors?

On one side, Jamaica is increasing and improving its creative output, more trained professionals are involved; and professional standards are increasing. These creatives need access to finance, pensions, insurance, investment, savings; and emerging industries are being shaped and directed to optimize output and outcomes. To embrace the new economy the traditional financial sector may have to reconsider its positions in relation to creativity, creatives, and creative work.

Optimizing mutual benefits

For financial and cultural sectors to optimize mutual benefits, the twain must meet and come to a common understanding. Here are some important discussion points:

- The Jamaican cultural and creative sector is made up, primarily of micro enterprises, (that is, firms with up to five employees and an annual sales turnover of up to \$15-million Jamaican); yet existing financial strategies favour small and medium sized enterprises.

- The creation of terms and special products and services for workers in the creative ecosystem at varying phases of formalization. Creatives largely work in transient projects on temporary contracts within the gig economy with infrequent, irregular, seasonal payment cycles.
- Many of the prerequisites for financial inclusion run counter to principles of creative production:
 - Technically, there is said to be little or no traditional ‘demand’ for creative products and services. Foundational economist specializing in creative industries Richard Florida tells us that for creative goods and services, “demand is uncertain”. Creatives have to generate their own demand.
 - Standardization is often prescribed for firms seeking financing which is often anathema to creativity. As such, the 35 creative sectors and their business models are not monolithic as they are commonly treated in the financial world.
 - In many cases in the nascent industry, emergent business models, products or services are “not yet a thing.” By their very nature, creative solutions are being found for new problems. New tools and technologies are emerging.

As new ways of doing business emerge, there is need for more, better, and more novel services. Where the outcomes of these unproven business models, products and services are not demonstrable, the risk to the financial institution increases.

- The main holders and traders of creative ‘value’ come from marginalized circumstances and are challenged to participate in FI processes.
- The principal ‘capital’ of the cultural and creative businesses is ‘talent’ and aptitude. The CCI Individual is the business, which affects the process of bringing that business to

scale. Financing the process of stimulating and meeting increased demand is always a challenge for the micro creative player.

- Financial institutions acquainting themselves with the means to use intellectual property as collateral, now legally provided for.

There are clear and present opportunities for a powerful and transformational financial sector to fast-track the development of a nascent Caribbean creative sector, push-start a challenged pandemic-afflicted economy and lead the transformation of a new economic direction for the region. Three clear paths towards a vibrant transformed, modern economy where finance and creativity thrive, complementarily suggest themselves: The creation of specialist financial products and services for creative workers as seen in financial institutions in global creative provinces; supporting the national/regional research agenda to close the data gaps that aid in financial decision making; and increasing the ‘creative literacy’ of financiers -from sales and customer service personnel in banking halls to executives making strategic decisions.



Dr Deborah Hickling Gordon is a Lecturer in Cultural Economy in the Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS) at UWI Mona. She coordinates both the Bachelor of Arts Programmes in Cultural and Creative Industries, and Entertainment and Cultural Enterprise Management in the ICS.

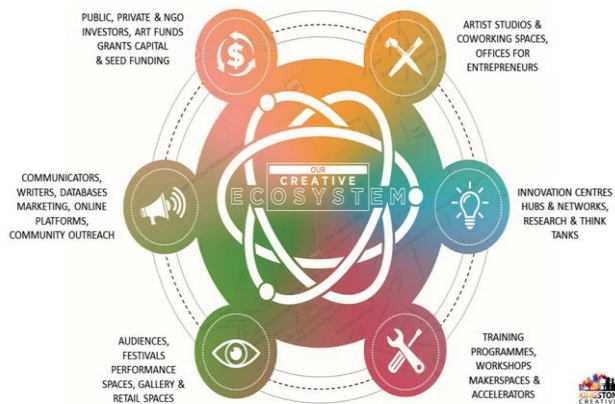


COVID-19

& Radical Creative Shifts

By Andrea Dempster Chung

Jamaica identifies itself as a small island with an outsize global brand and cultural impact. In the quest to leverage the potential of the cultural and creative industries for sustainable development in Jamaica, the focus must be on developing a healthy creative ecosystem, with the funding, research, space, communicators, training and venues that creatives need to succeed. (See Fig. 1)



(Figure 1: The Creative Ecosystem for Downtown Kingston)

The work of Kingston Creative, a non-profit entity centres on changing the narrative around creativity, by emphasizing the importance of creative people, the value of the creative economy and its ability to deliver inclusive growth to Jamaica. Balanced regeneration is being catalysed by the development of an Art District in Downtown and the Creative Hub is focused on developing a talent pipeline of creative entrepreneurs and artists with the legal know how and

business skills to attract investment. The Creative Hub provides affordable training, collective shared economy coworking space, as well as retail space, digital studios, dance studios, meeting rooms and offices. Kingston Creative promotes collaboration, inclusion, and innovation, while using art and culture to transform the old city – a viable placemaking model that can be replicated in towns and cities across the region

Creatives and the Pandemic

With the onset of COVID-19, most would see this as a setback for the creative industries, but sometimes a crisis has a silver lining. History has shown that pandemics, while devastating, offer the opportunity for what we could call radical creative shifts. In the mid-1300s the Plague, also known as the Black Death, marked an end of an era, and its impact was profound. It resulted in wide-ranging social, economic, cultural, and religious changes that led to the emergence of the Renaissance, one of the greatest periods for the arts in human history.

Again, in 1918, an eerily familiar pandemic struck the world. There were shutdowns, the ever familiar masks and a complete temporary break with normal life, but on the heels of the Spanish Flu came the Roaring Twenties; a cultural movement also known as the Jazz Age

which also spawned the Harlem Renaissance. The challenge with COVID-19 is to peer optimistically into the future, even as our world is being completely disrupted and we are personally gripped by fear and loss. The pandemic has hit the creative community hard. Kingston is a UNESCO Creative City of Music, but the streets Downtown are eerily quiet. They no longer reverberate with the bass from the sound system speaker boxes as parties and dancehall events have been curtailed by curfews and the critical income generation from tourism and festivals is on pause.

Audiences long for the return of carnival, of live music, theatre, dance and all the joy that cultural expression brings, while for creative people, their livelihoods are being challenged. How does one continue to practice, rehearse' and create art when one's very survival is at stake? For a region with fragile economies that thrive on music and entertainment and whose brand is synonymous with 'livity' (a general enjoyment of life) there is a real urgency around "visioneering" – crafting a vision of the future and engineering the best post-pandemic course of action for the sector.

The Inevitable Re-emergence

What history has also shown is that pandemics do not last forever. The immediate need is the provision of emergency aid to stabilise the livelihoods of creative people, so they can survive until things return to normal. To this end, support programmes have been rolled out by various Caribbean governments, by the Caribbean Development Bank, by international aid agencies and NGOs like Kingston Creative with the Catapult Programme.

But there is need for more including targeting support for independent,

grassroots cultural practitioners, who at a ground level, create most of the authentic experiences that people value. The pandemic offers an opportunity to accelerate some key elements that can help us to jump from the linear growth path and make a radical creative shift.



Radical Creative Shift

To position the creative sector for re-emergence, five areas need to be addressed: Formalisation, digital innovation, collaboration, policy and global market access.

1. Shift to Formalisation – Jamaican creatives should register their businesses, protect their intellectual property, set up formal banking and join industry associations. Apart from ensuring that they are counted in a crisis and can be reached with aid, as everything goes online, this offers creatives protection when operating in digital space. .

2. Shift to Digital Innovation – Technology was always important, but now, having an online presence and means of taking payments is an imperative. Digital innovation, driven by necessity will continue to accelerate as result of the pandemic and this means an increase in creatives utilising social media, e-commerce, digital marketing, but also the application of artificial intelligence, virtual, augmented and mixed reality to connect with audiences.

3. Shift to Intuitive Collaboration – Trust, networking and collaboration is a trend that is being accelerated by the pandemic. To create the critical mass needed for radical creative shift, the trust index within the local creative sector will have to rise, as only intentional collaboration can bring the capital, team, resources and expertise to a project quickly enough to increase its chances of success. The results of the collaborations that have been taking place will surface soon, with new partnerships announced and business models emerging in the upcoming months.

4. Shift to Aligned Policy – Lack of alignment and coordination is probably the biggest challenge for the sector as it has historically made it difficult to take decisions, to move in a new direction or to communicate cohesively on the topic. We have the opportunity post-pandemic to establish an aligned, multisector approach to the creative economy. The focus should be on making it easy for creatives to do business in a post-COVID environment. Registration, banking, paying taxes, protecting IP, exporting, and accessing technology all need to be streamlined if the sector is to move forward powerfully.

5. Global Market Access – As every creative now can have the ability to put their content online and reach a global audience with their cultural products, we can declare that the era of the gatekeeper is over. Instead, we see the rise of the tastemaker, the curator, the broker - that trusted entity who spots and showcases talent. Entrenched powers and authorities will be challenged in this period, and we can support the local creative sector by closing the digital divide and investing in shared monetisation, marketing, and distribution platforms. Just as we can go online to watch a performance of the Bolshoi ballet, so too we can pay to watch dancehall

performances livestreamed from Downtown Kingston. This is a radical shift that will only accelerate our market access as technological solutions that create market access become more prevalent.

So what will manifest in Jamaica's creative sector after the Coronavirus Pandemic – business as usual or a radical creative shift? That all depends on what vision we see and how we prepare for it. What is at stake is sustainable growth, development, employment opportunities and an increase in social cohesion in some of the most marginalised communities where the brilliant creators of culture can be found. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to leverage our raw talent and propel Jamaican creatives to the front of the global pack. A post-pandemic boom in exports of creative goods and services can be a real driver in the local economy for decades to come. It is worth noting that the United Nations has declared 2021 as the Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development. This announcement, made well before the onset of the coronavirus, seems now to be a rallying call for creatives in Jamaica to come together, and make the vision a reality.



Andrea Dempster-Chung, PE, is an engineer, business consultant, entrepreneur and is the Co-Founder & Executive Director of Kingston Creative, an NGO building an Art District and a Creative Hub and working towards a healthy creative ecosystem in Jamaica. For more on Kingston Creative, visit www.kingstoncreative.org.

Business Analysis Fundamentals

January 9, 16, 23, 30, 2021
9:00 a.m - 4:30 p.m



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Work-From-Home Policy

Employee Welfare & Organisational Efficiency

By Danny Roberts

Scholars around the world have been engaged in research about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on organisations and workers. Recently, the University of Arkansas compiled a research agenda that focused on five areas for further exploration. These include the impact of COVID-19 on jobs, more specifically job losses, job changes, job outcomes, coping and support. But the public health considerations and the social distancing to contain the virus meant that many employees had to resort to working from home, which had an impact on home life changes, work-life balance, social life and the supporting environment. In addition to, and arising from these changes, the socio-psychological impact of the pandemic on individuals undoubtedly would require special attention.

A study done by Tian, et. al. (2020) on the psychological impact of COVID 19 on Chinese workers, revealed that “more than 70% of them have moderate and higher level of psychological symptoms specifically elevated scores for obsessive compulsion, interpersonal sensitivity, phobic anxiety and psychoticism.” This points to the need for organisations to pay particular attention to the psychological welfare of their employees and the requirements to set up intervention and assistance programmes in the evolving of policies to address not only the immediate

challenges, but the changing nature of employment.



Technostress issues in the new workplace

There is, of course, the surge in the use of digital technologies in responding to the social distancing norms and the necessity of having to work from home. Already we were contemplating the digitalization of organisations in shaping the world of work long before Covid. With the impact of the virus there is going to be technostress issues which will have a far greater presence in workplaces, along with the regulation of the internet, online fraud and how to allocate certain aspects of work among employees.

Every workplace should therefore begin to adopt a Work-From-Home (WFH) policy in an effort to achieve two broad objectives: (i) improving employee satisfaction and reducing stress among staff, and (ii) increasing employee outcome

and improving organisational efficiency. In so doing, the WFH policies should set about to define the expectations in the ‘new’ normal arrangements at the workplace.

There should be no compromise on the quality of output from employees, the attitude and skills necessary to achieve top performance need to be clearly identified, even as attention must be paid to the conditions of work - be it home or office – to include the well-being of the employee and his family.

Long before Covid appeared on the radar, the January-February 2014 issue of Harvard Business Review recognised, after studying two groups over a 9-month period, that those workers working from home were happier than those working at the office. Those working from home were less likely to leave their jobs and were more productive than those working from the office. Similarly, a 2014 study found that Call Centre workers, working from home at a large Chinese travel agency increased performance by 13% when compared with those who stayed at the office.

Workers’ rights must be protected

These are important considerations in developing a WFH policy, which should be guided by international best practices highlighted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in its Recommendation No. 184 (1996). In that Recommendation emphasis was placed on the right of workers to organise and participate in union activities; the need for occupational health and safety protection to form a central plank of workplace policies; a wider focus on statutory social protection;

access to training; maternity protection and adequate remuneration. The ILO Convention No. 177 (1996) on ‘Home Work’, emphasised the importance of “equality of treatment between home workers and other wage earners...”, and the need to pay particular attention to women who undertake the largest share of care-related tasks in the family.

In shaping the WFH policy, the organisation will therefore have to give special attention to the means of communication. Effective communication is one of the biggest challenges in managing virtual employees, and so there will be the need to rely on multiple forms of communication. Ensuring data and device security will be a major concern of employers and their clients going forward. Adequate protection, through the use of firewalls, anti-virus software, encryptions and other such means must be adopted and formulated in a policy, in addition to educating the workers about the security policies. This would place responsibility on the employers to take charge of the software requirements even if the computer is owned by the employee.

The expectations as to the cost associated with working from home must feature in the policy. This is to be negotiated and not imposed, as the Ministry Paper on ‘Implementing Flexible Work Arrangements in Jamaica’, 2013, contemplates. And employers need to bear in mind that ‘remote work’ or ‘telework’, or ‘telecommuting’ was one of several options identified as available to organisations under the FWA policy.

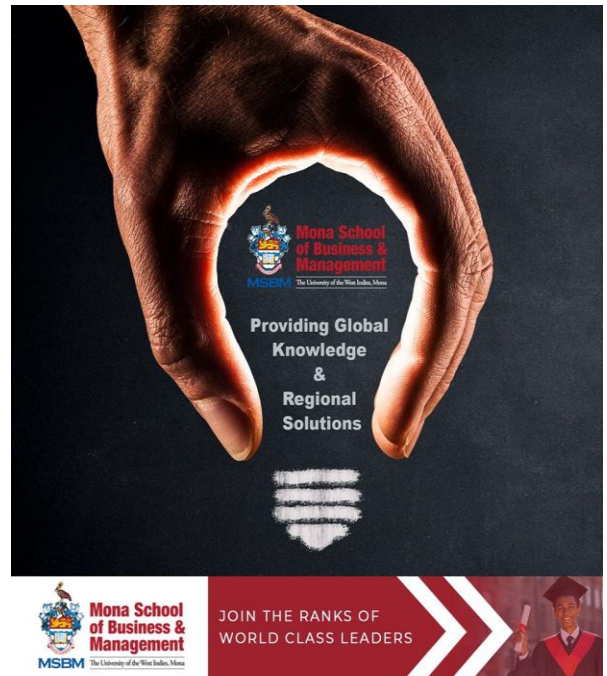
The potential for home-based work during, and after a crisis in Jamaica needs to be the subject of even further research

research as part of an industry-academic partnership. Studies done in the United States, Argentina, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom showed anywhere between 25% to 35% of jobs are able to be performed from home. The global estimate is around 18%, and middle-income countries like Jamaica accounts for only 17% of occupations effectively able to be performed remotely.

The implications for the future of work and Jamaica's place in it, will therefore be decided by how quickly the country can overcome the challenges to our economic and occupational structures, environmental factors like broadband internet, the housing situation and how widespread there is of ownership of personal computers.



Danny Roberts, CD, JP is a senior lecturer and head of the Hugh Shearer Labour Studies Institute at the Consortium for Social Development and Research, The UWI Open Campus





Organizational Resilience During A Pandemic

The Importance of Digital Agility

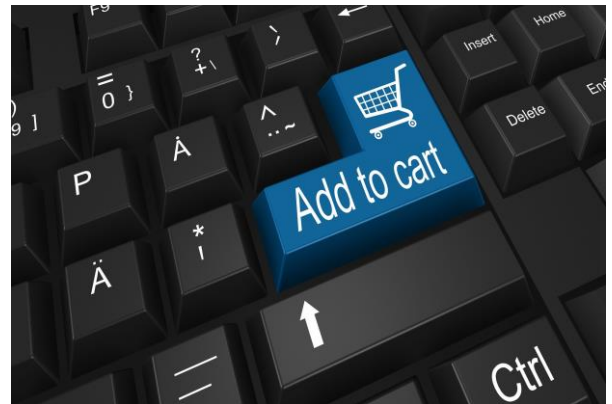
By Dr. Maurice McNaughton

Resilience /rɪˈzɪliəns/ n. the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties

Resilience can be considered as an individual or organizational *capacity* and *ability* to respond to **uncertainty** and to recover from **adversity**. In this current context, the COVID-19 pandemic is as big an adversity as most of us have experienced in our lifetimes; most certainly, in terms of the mortality outcomes and the extent of its global impact: disruption of supply chains, economies, travel and job markets. Even though Jamaica and the Caribbean have, *relatively speaking*, been moderately affected by the pandemic in health terms, the effects on our economies have been devastating. Tourism, the mainstay of many Caribbean economies collapsed to close to zero, and the hyper-openness of economies like Jamaica's, in terms of our connectivity to, and dependency on, the global economy, has resulted in significant domino effects.

As COVID-19 forced the curtailment of traditional social and business practices and behaviours, physical movement and interactions have become severely constrained by rules of social distancing and official directives to "*tan a yu yaad*". The traditional workplace where people physically congregate and work in adjacent cubicles, shake hands, breathe the same re-cycled, conditioned air, and use the same coffee

machine, all of a sudden, has become potentially contagious centres of infection. This has amplified the urgency of digital innovation and digital transformation as business imperatives.



Covid-19 amplifies urgency of digital innovation

To be clear, the onset of the Digital Economy was already imminent, Covid-19 has only served to accelerate the urgency of our responses to this emergent reality. While it is fashionable to refer to the "4th Industrial Revolution" to distinguish where we are now from previous industrial paradigm shifts, the 4IR concept has managed to convey a somewhat esoteric impression, and left business leaders with the illusion that this is something for the future and not necessarily relevant to our current developing context. However, there **should** be no illusion that we are already in the throes of the Digital Economy where *Digital* has rapidly become the



the dominant mode of interaction for commercial, social, and economic activity.

The transformational effects of going digital are being experienced across every sector, albeit to varying degrees. Many of our financial institutions have seized the opportunity to accelerate the migration of transactions from the traditional banking hall, attended by face-to-face human agents, to digital channels such as the ABM, mobile and internet banking. Retail has long flirted with digital conversion at the point-of-sale, attempting to replace stubborn, inefficient cash as the means of exchange, but eCommerce now seeks to consummate the end-to-end digital conversion from ordering through fulfillment and delivery. Education has been forced to migrate from the centuries-old nexus of knowledge exchange called the classroom, to the zoom-sphere which offers far greater flexibility, but an ultimately less-satisfying teaching and learning experience.

Organizations are compelled to navigate this digital transformation imperative that has been thrust upon us by acquiring Digital Capabilities. Some have done so more seamlessly than others through prior foresight and executive alertness which has equipped them with the *Digital Agility* to respond to the opportunities and threats created by the unforeseen Covid-19 pandemic. Today's business environment, even absent Covid-

19, is often referred to using the fashionable acronym "VUCA" – *volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity*. The "*fittest*" organizations (*as in the Darwinian survival of the fittest*) are not those organizations with the most Assets (*bigger*) and the best laid 5-year strategic plans. Rather it is those organizations that are most "Agile" – capable of seizing opportunities through rapid decision-making and reconfiguration of resources and activities in order to minimize the impact of adversity and seize dynamic opportunities. I refer often to the colorful metaphor credited to Karl Schwaab – "*In the new world, it is not the big fish which eats the small fish, it's the fast fish which eats the slow fish*" - to convey this notion. Just ask Blockbuster (*who were they again?*) – only a US\$6B business that was gobbled up by a faster, more agile digital startup called Netflix in less than six (6) years.

Attributes of digital capabilities

What then, are the essential attributes of these Digital Capabilities through which organizations can acquire Business Agility? I don't have sufficient wordcount to discuss them all here, but there are at least two important related components:

1. **Quality of the Data / Information** assets that the organization possesses. According to PwC: Organizations' most valuable asset, although not shown in the financial statements, is data.

2. Capabilities within the organization to maximize the use and leverage of its Data/Information Assets. We refer to these collectively as the **Information Maturity** of the organization – a combination of leadership, strategy, culture, talent, and technologies.

Most importantly, Digital Transformation, the journey towards acquiring these organizational capabilities, has become a Strategic Leadership Imperative, not an endeavor to be relegated to IT practitioners. Digital leadership is about doing the right things for the strategic success of digitalization for the enterprise and its business ecosystem. Digital leadership means thinking differently about business strategy, business models, the IT function, enterprise platforms, mindsets and skill sets, and the nature of the workplace. It requires a willingness to:

- a) Build the requisite internal capabilities through a combination of talent acquisition and staff upskilling
- b) Explore and experiment and a tolerance for learning through a fail-fast culture
- c) Collaborate and exploit shared value opportunities through partnerships with public and private sector and academia

One of the more fascinating cases of Digital Transformation that is recommended reading for aspiring digital leaders is the case of LEGO, whose CEO Jørgen Knudstorp is often quoted as saying: *“No more digital strategy—*

executing strategy digitally.” This simply means digital transformation is no longer just one option in a strategic portfolio of initiatives, instead the corporate business strategy itself must be executed through digitalization.

****This paper was freely adapted from remarks made at the Symposium: "Resilient Policies for National Development" hosted by The Ministry of National Security (MNS) and the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) in June 2020***



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