

With Canada's support, Haiti's Centre for Professional Training was able to professionalize its administration and teaching methods and better guide its students toward skilled trades. In 2015, the centre's training programs welcomed 503 first-year students. A survey found that 35 percent of graduates quickly found employment in their field of studies, despite Haiti's current economic challenges.

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, micro-entrepreneurs typically employ just one or two people. These tiny enterprises represent the hopes and ambitions of the regions' poorest. In February 2016, with support from Canada's IDRC, the Universidad de los Andes of Colombia launched the SCALA Knowledge Observatory, a research and information-sharing platform to promote new business models with distribution networks that include these micro businesses. These models commercialize products and services that have social value and extend business opportunities to women and other low-income groups. Through the SCALA Observatory, IDRC, Citi Foundation, and the Inter-American Development Bank are now collaborating to generate new business prospects for 10,000 vulnerable women, in partnership with corporations and social enterprises.

In the Philippines, Canada's programming helped increase access for 7,110 micro-entrepreneurs, low-skilled tourism workers and smallholder farmers (of whom 34 percent are women) to employment opportunities. It also helped micro-enterprises connect with markets through skills training, improved farm practices and access to technology. A total of 127 loans (US\$770,000) were disbursed to smallholder farmers, while 52 micro loans (US\$278,857) were disbursed to women. Of the 1,413 out-of-school youth trained (half of whom are women), 57 percent had found paid employment by the end of 2015. The Local Governance Support Program for Local Economic Development, active from 2008 to 2016, also contributed the creation of more than 22,000 employment positions in the tourism industry.

NUTRITIOUS POTATOES: A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR FARMERS IN ST. LUCIA

Since 2000, agriculture in St. Lucia has been in decline and now accounts for less than four percent of the country's GDP. However, local demand for fresh produce is rising, in part to supply the growing tourism industry. The agricultural sector and Government of St. Lucia had been actively looking for ways to diversify and promote domestic food production when Canada's Promotion of Regional Opportunities for Produce through Enterprises and Linkages (PROPEL) project, in association with Consolidated Foods Limited, offered a solution.

The project evaluated three varieties of potatoes to determine their marketability in St. Lucia. PROPEL provided the seeds and the varieties while Consolidated Foods Limited and a PROPEL agronomist located suitable areas and producers for the project trials. The farm of Raphael "Freedom" Gaston was selected as it is 1,900 feet above sea level and enjoys the cooler nights needed for optimum tuberization (growth) of potatoes. Throughout the crop cycle, PROPEL provided technical guidance on land preparation, planting, pest and disease control and fertilizer use. As Mr. Gaston noted, "This was the first time that I have grown potatoes. I was very happy with the experience and the help that PROPEL provided. I plan to plant more potatoes in the future and increase the acreage."