



CARIBBEAN JUST TRANSITION INITIATIVE

Foundation for Development Planning, Inc.



Objective

To improve the lives of Caribbean peoples by facilitating investment by community organizations and worker collectives¹ in wealth creation for workers and community development.

Context

The overarching trend in global development is increasing instability resulting from the cumulative effects of the inability of current democratic systems of governing at national and global levels to consistently deliver improvements in the quality of life of most of the planetary population. The trend was accelerated by factors such as:

- (1) Shifting responsibility for the welfare of workers in the private sector from corporations to governments while expanding the scope and mechanisms for provision of tax relief and other financial incentives to the private sector.
- (2) Government transfer of control of the internet to private interests.
- (3) Limited guidance and intervention by governments in the concentration of technological and scientific advances in an increasingly small group of corporations.
- (4) Globalization and its attendant concentration of manufacturing in places with sub-optimal democratic norms, increased freedoms in the movement of global capital, and decreased sovereignty of states constituting the smaller economies.
- (5) Increasing dependence of governments on private sector services in the technology and security spaces.
- (6) The growing spread of misinformation and disinformation.
- (7) The rise of a small group of global elites.

The trend in global instability is highlighted by factors and events such as:

- (1) The growing distrust of public authorities and an increase in the number of authoritarian regimes.

¹ A collective is any group of persons or organizations working together because of shared interest or towards a shared goal. Worker collectives in the Caribbean include traditional groups such as labour unions, co-operatives, and staff associations. Energy co-operatives are gaining attention. Examples of less formal, but still traditional, worker collectives include lending circles and work sharing on small farm holdings.

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- (2) An increase in wealth disparities and reduction of social justice protections, as underscored by the number of civil protests and demand for worker rights.
- (3) An increase in the number of armed conflicts in regions of the world, which contributes to an increase in the cost of goods in Caribbean countries.
- (4) The ongoing effort to concentrate information (including previously available public information) under private ownership and to charge rent for access to said information.
- (5) The action by Facebook to prevent sovereign states from enacting rules protecting copyright and compensation for national content providers.
- (6) The increasing power of non-state actors in the information, financial, and security spaces.
- (7) An increase in efforts in many countries to roll back social and environmental protections.

Global instability is being accelerated by the adverse impacts of climate change.

Most Caribbean countries are single-sector economies designed primarily for export and are therefore extremely vulnerable to both global instability and climate change. Strategies to diversify the economies have largely been undertaken within the current export economic model supported by foreign direct investment and have largely been unsuccessful in delivering the anticipated development outcomes.

Initiatives to stimulate and/or be the anchor for community development through provision of social infrastructure or establishment of economic incubators have generally not delivered the intended long-term impacts.

Frequent disruptions by natural and geopolitical forces increasingly constrain the ability of small islands and developing economies to pursue successful sustainable development strategies. The disruptions, particularly natural disasters, also exacerbate existing stresses and vulnerabilities in the environmental, social, and economic systems, thereby amplifying existing social and economic disparities. Transition to a more just society requires understanding of the current development models and governance arrangements, engagement and mobilization of all social partners, and deployment of investment and organizational support necessary to build social infrastructure for community development.

There is clearly a need for strategies to build community resilience through economic and social development, while searching for new models of development.

Just Transition as a Structural Pillar in Caribbean Development

Just Transition is a philosophy and framework to shift economic activities from a paradigm of extraction to one rooted in regeneration and justice². A Just Transition framework was adopted by the

² <https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/>

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International Labour Organization as guidelines for implementing its Decent Work Agenda³, which is integrated into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) as sustainable development goal number eight (SDG 8)⁴.

However, decent work is only one element of SDG 8 of Agenda 2030, which includes sustainable economic development, community cohesion, and regenerative human settlements⁵.

In the Caribbean, the model of development and the economic paradigm used by the social elites dictate that some of the objectives contained within SDG8 are mutually exclusive.

A different economic framework has to be adopted in order to achieve the targets in SDG 8.

In response to the inability of democratic governments to deliver agreed social development outcomes, earlier movements in economic justice focused on development of a framework called the social and solidarity economy.

The United Nations recognizes the potential contribution of the social and solidarity economy to facilitate democracy and social justice, resulting in the 2023 UN General Assembly Resolution⁶ (77/281 of 18 April 2023), “Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development”.

“The UNGA recognized that the SSE can play a key role in eliminating poverty and catalysing social transformation, thus helping to achieve the objective of leaving no one behind and to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, while ensuring social inclusion.” <https://unsse.org/sse-and-the-sdgs/>

The main pillars of the social and solidarity economy framework are mutualism, participatory governance, and inclusiveness, which are important in maintaining social cohesion in small communities. The framework is particularly applicable to the Caribbean because Caribbean communities historically function as sharing economies.

This Caribbean Just Transition Initiative uses the broad framework of the social and solidarity economy to facilitate the movement towards creating just and sustainable societies in the Caribbean.

Organizational Leadership for the Initiative

The Caribbean Just Transitions Initiative is coordinated by the Foundation for Development Planning, Inc. (FDPI). The FDPI is a non-governmental organization, designated as a public charity, that endeavors to be an Institution of Place, defined as “*an institution that serves as a steward of the communities and*

³ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>

⁴ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁵ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Goal-8.pdf>

⁶ https://unsse.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/A_RES_77_281-EN.pdf

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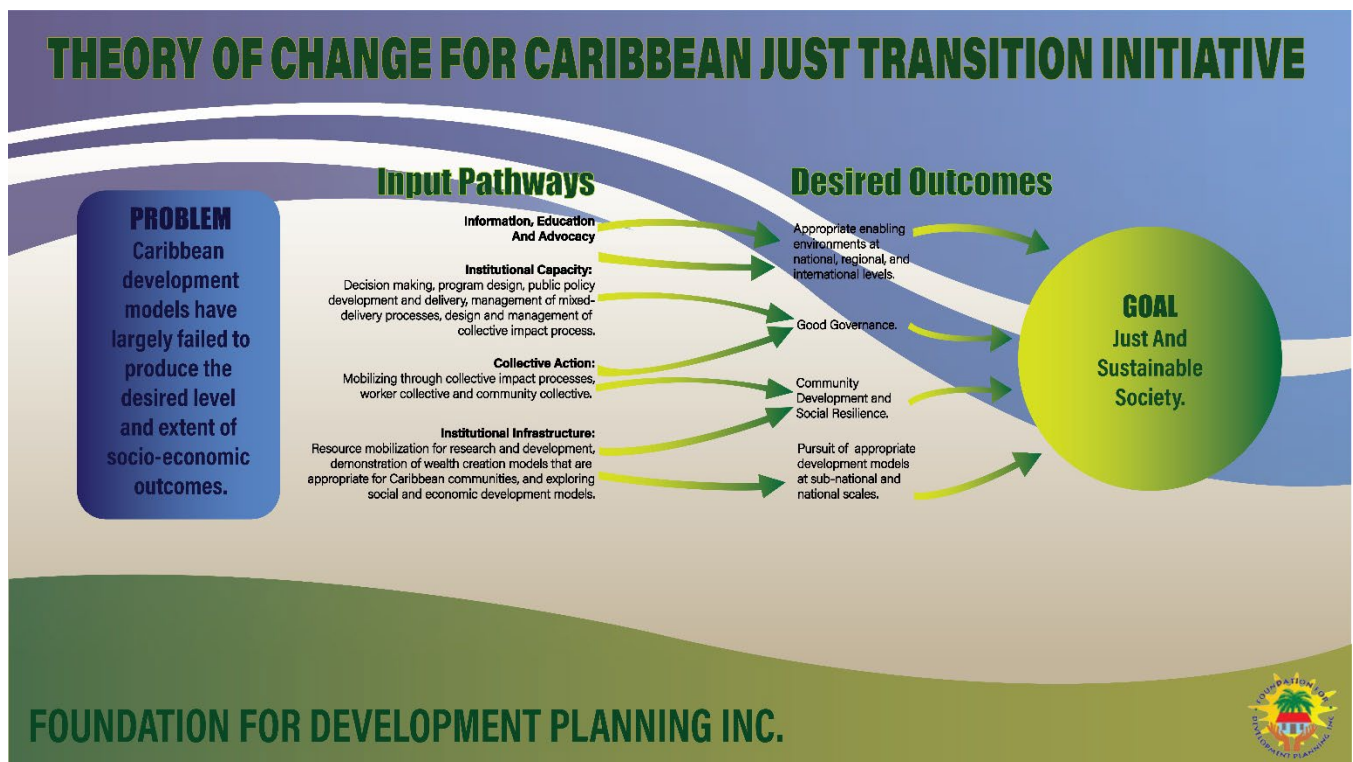
region in which it functions, a publicly engaged institution that plays an essential role in addressing issues of importance and facilitating the development of the communities and region it serves”.

The Cipriani College for Labour and Co-operative Studies is a strategic partner, in keeping with the agreement between the two organizations to work collaboratively at the nexus of climate justice, community economic development, and Just Transition.

Theory of Change

The theory of change for this Caribbean Just Transition Initiative is that the conditions to facilitate just transition must be created by making changes to the enabling environment, motivating attitudinal changes in the leadership of worker collectives, and mobilizing financial and institutional resources for action. The Initiative will act through the following pathways (see graphic):

- (1) Information, education, and advocacy.
- (2) Enhancing institutional capacity for action.
- (3) Supporting collective action.
- (4) Establishment of institutional infrastructure to facilitate wealth creation by worker and community collectives.



Proposed Approach

The initiative focuses on three intersecting spheres in the lives of workers and community:

I. Decent Work/Future of Work Agenda

- (a) Expanding the definition of worker.
- (b) Exploring notions of worker responsibility within the paradigms of justice and worker as shareholder.
- (c) Improving protections for all categories of workers.
- (d) Preparing for shifts in the organization of work.
- (e) Preparing for changing work conditions.

II. Wealth Creation through Worker Collectives

- (a) Facilitating the evolution of labour organizations to incorporate wealth creation for workers.
- (b) Supporting establishment of community development organizations.
- (c) Supporting asset building by public-benefit civil society organizations.
- (d) Creating opportunities for investment by worker collectives in enterprises and economic development initiatives.

III. Well-being Beyond Place of Work

- (a) Increasing worker access to social services.
- (b) Expanding support to worker families.
- (c) Improving infrastructure to support workers (transportation, housing, etc.).
- (d) Increasing community development and improving environmental quality.
- (e) Development of an Equitable Infrastructure Strategy for placemaking.
- (f) Exploring conceptual frameworks (e.g. Social and Solidarity Economy) that support building communities of cooperation.

Phase 1 Project

Phase 1 of the initiative will take place over five years and will focus on assessment, design, advocacy, and development of the institutional infrastructure for long-term action.

- I. **Research and Development:** (i) review of past initiatives to establish community development organizations in the Insular Caribbean; (ii) assessment of status of worker collectives and readiness for transformative growth; (iii) review of policy and legal frameworks governing worker-owned cooperatives; (iv) mapping of the social justice ecosystem in the Caribbean; (v) preparation of a research agenda and development of a research network; (vi) development of strategies and feasibility assessment of projects for wealth creation.
- II. **Advocacy, Education, and Policy Uptake:** (i) Decent Work Agenda; (ii) environmental justice initiative; (iii) engagement with worker collectives; (iv) establishment of a Social Justice Community of Practice; (v) social and solidarity economy framework.

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III. **Training:** (i) needs assessment; (ii) curriculum, supporting materials, and delivery system.

IV. **Organizational Infrastructure:** System to sustain action along multiple pathways.

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The Foundation for Development Planning, Inc. (FDPI) is a civil society organization whose purpose is to engage in programs that lead to the sustainable development of Caribbean communities. This purpose is achieved through the development of policies, processes, methodologies, tools, and programs that enable effective management of island systems.

The FDPI is registered in the United States Virgin Islands and is certified by the United States Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) public charity. As such, donations by U.S. institutions and citizens are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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