

Notoya John: Post Hurricane Dominica has Youth That Inspire!

In collaboration with the Dominica Youth Business Trust (DYBT), WUSC Caribbean with the support of the Government of Canada through PROPEL has mobilized resources to support 17 ambitious young entrepreneurs whose agri-businesses have been impacted by hurricane Maria. These are youth that the DYBT has been working with and supporting through training and mentoring and helping them to develop into young business people. **Notoya John is one of these enterprising youth agripreneurs.**



Youth Agripreneur Notoya John

N&N Punches

Natoya started N&N Products just 5 years ago. N&N Products are punches and according to her product tag line **“It’s not just a punch, it’s passion in a bottle”**. Her rum punch comes in a range of flavours which have proven very popular on the local market. Unfortunately, since Hurricane Maria, Natoya has been unable to produce punch as her stock of bottles and labels were destroyed during the storm, when they were hit by a falling tree and suffered water damage. She is hoping the replacement order will arrive soon so she can get back into production.

SaeJen’s Yogurt

In the past Natoya was lucky enough to spend some time in China. While she was there, she learned how to make yogurt products. Two years ago after returning home to Dominica, she realized that there was a gap in the local market and SaeJen’s yogurt was formed. She had production up to 1,500 cups of yogurt a week, wholesaling her yogurts through local supermarkets as well as some direct sales. She was doing very well and establishing a brand name for herself with support from her husband who helped out with the marketing. Once again, Hurricane Maria had an impact. They lost electricity for two months (luckier than many on the island) but the effect was significant. Immediately they lost a week’s worth of yogurt that had been produced and readied for the market. They also lost all of her perishable raw materials, much of which was imported from the USA and some of the nearby French islands. Finally, with no power, they could no longer produce new batches of yogurt.



DYBT PROPEL Business Training helps to grow her Business

As members of the Dominica Youth Business Trust (DYBT), Natoya and her husband have benefited from training in business plan development and marketing, which have helped Natoya to take a business approach for both the punch and the yogurt venture. She has also benefitted from training on food production and safety requirements which outlined for her the health and hygiene processes to be undertaken to satisfy the food and safety inspectors who regularly visit her production site.



Natoya received Support through PROPEL to Re-start Production

More recently, through the partnership with WUSC Caribbean through the Promotion of Regional Opportunities for Produce through Enterprises and Linkages (PROPEL) project, DYBT has been able to provide support to Natoya to help her get back on her feet and re-start her businesses once again. She has benefitted from further training on best practices in agro processing and has been provided with XCD \$6,000 of equipment and raw materials.

Upon receipt of the raw materials Natoya restarted her yogurt production. When WUSC Caribbean management visited Dominica in April she was expecting the equipment (a cup filler and chiller) any day. **While the raw materials helped her get back into production, the cup filler and chiller will enable Natoya to become more efficient and expand her production by two thirds, from 1,500 yogurt cups a week to 4,500 a week.** Given her margins, that will significantly increase the profitability of her business.

Natoya has ambitious plans as a result. She has started building a new production site away from her home, where she currently houses her production site. **She is also aiming to expand her yogurt production so that she can ultimately supply 100% of the yogurt consumed in Dominica to reduce the need for imported yogurt.** Additionally she is aiming to re-start the production of her N&N Products rum punch. We know that with her determination and drive these ambitions will soon become a reality.



WUSC Caribbean Team visit Natoya in Dominica to check on her progress

