For Immediate Release
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Caribbean Climate Innovation Center (CCIC) puts 60,000 Mentors at GreenTech Entrepreneurs’ Fingertips

KINGSTON, Jamaica — With the fast-paced and competitive startup culture, entrepreneurship can be a lonely road. The Caribbean Climate Innovation Center (CCIC), in collaboration with MicroMentor, plans to make that journey a little less lonely with the unveiling of a new mentoring program for developing climate-resilient green businesses. The launch was held on January 18th, 2018 at the Knutsford Court Hotel.

“Startups in emerging markets such as ours are at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing mentors and mentorship programs,” said Carlinton Burrell, Project Manager at the CCIC. He also shared insights on the importance of mentoring in the region. Mr. Burrell stated that entrepreneurs are powerful agents of change, that they are the catalyst for job creation and drivers of economic growth. This is the main reason, the CCIC decided to partner with MicroMentor through the World Bank Climate Technology Program to pilot this mentoring program. The other program is being run consecutively in Ghana to address similar challenges.

With the physical separation of the islands and key industry players spread across the different island states, face-to-face mentoring has been a challenge, stated Mr. Burrell. That is why CCIC chose to partner with MicroMentor to tailor a mentoring program that connects Caribbean GreenTech entrepreneurs with mentors regionally and internationally who can help make their businesses scalable and to create the biggest impact by delivering crucial advice based on real-world experience.

Through the new CCIC GreenTech Mentorship program, entrepreneurs have a unique opportunity to make positive global changes while growing their businesses through mentorship.
Caribbean Climate Innovation Center Project Manager, Carlinton Burrell, and CCIC GreenTech Entrepreneurs Yekini Wallen-Bryan and Philip Logan, Founder and CTO of Preelabs at the CCIC Mentorship program launch

Sharing insights into the best practices needed for implementing such a program, special guest speaker Dr. K’adamawe K’nife, (Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship, Thinking & Practice at UWI) cautioned the audience to “be aware of the generation gap”. Programs such as this can be a communication bridge between millennials and baby boomers.

“Remember that passion and commitment are two of the key elements needed to become successful in what you are doing – and mentorship is really about inter-generational responsibility. It is like a grandparent kind of principle and that is to ensure that the current generation becomes brighter and more advanced than you the mentor.”
Over the course of the event, speed mentoring sessions saw mentors, who outnumbered entrepreneurs, on hand to facilitate the entrepreneurs’ questions and concerns in face-to-face interaction.

So far, new mentees and previous CCIC clients alike are excited about the potential impact it could have on their enterprises:

“Having a sounding board in a mentor is invaluable. “It helps you get your focus back; it helps you get your energy back and helps you move forward,” said program participant Kevin Harris, CEO of LumiTech International Ltd. “This program has been of tremendous benefit to me. It has allowed me to get more confidence in what I am doing. The more support you have behind you, the more confident you are and the more energy you have to move forward ... Suffice to say this program has been very fruitful for me and my company,” he concluded.

Program mentor Caroline Rose-Miller, Marketing & Communications Manager at the Scientific Research Council drew on her own journey through mentorship: “We have experiences that we can draw from, share, and give back with our time. Everybody in this room will tell you that there was someone that believed in them and gave that push. My mentor believed in me and saw what I did not see in myself. And I saw in Kevin Harris, my mentee, the potential of the business that he did not see.”

Program sponsors came out to join the buzz of the networking session, including CCIC Consortium representative Dr. Cliff Riley (Executive Director, Scientific Research Council) who added, “If we are to succeed as a region, we have to lean on and learn from each other.”

**How the program works**

Both mentors and mentees create their profiles on a mentorship virtual platform that is free and easy to use. The platform enables users to make mentoring connections anywhere and anytime from the comfort of home or office. Mentors and mentees who apply to the program will have the opportunity to self-select the mentor or mentee with whom they wish to be matched.
The program was developed based on the need for increased mentoring relationships in the Caribbean for business development from shared experience and knowledge transfer. It is a six-month pilot program with two mentee onboarding periods – one in January, the other in March. The second cluster will open up to non-GreenTech entrepreneurs through the CCIC Hubs, throughout the rest of the Caribbean.

The mentoring program goes hand-in-hand with CCIC’s interest in developing entrepreneurs and expanding their opportunities to access new markets. The pilot will last for six months with planned renewal based on feedback from platform users.

Open to CCIC, its hubs, and affiliated entrepreneurs, it is intended to help build a new collection of leaders in the areas of sustainable agribusiness, renewable, and energy efficiency, water/waste management, and resource use efficiency. Startups interested in being a part of the program are urged to contact the CCIC or its hubs in the respective Caribbean countries.

“Through this program, the CCIC plans to capture real-time data documenting challenges, opportunities and best practice on mentoring in the region. These findings will guide the design and implementation of future initiatives promoting the quality of mentoring and training in the Caribbean and other Climate Innovation centers across the globe,” concluded Mr. Burrell.

Photo: Mint Creative

Participants celebrate following the speed mentoring session

About the Caribbean Climate Innovation Center
The CCIC is a consortium of the Scientific Research Council (SRC) in Jamaica and the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (Cariri) in Trinidad & Tobago. CCIC's primary focus is on the development of the Caribbean clean technology ecosystem. By assisting neighboring islands to adapt and mitigate the impact of climate change through empowering each territory to develop innovative techniques and scalable businesses while strengthening several gaps across five priority areas: renewable energy, water/waste management, sustainable agribusiness, resource use and efficiency, and energy efficiency. The center has 12 established country spokes throughout the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with the hub located in Jamaica to execute a unified response across the region to address climate change.

**About MicroMentor**

MicroMentor is an initiative of Mercy Corps, a leading global humanitarian organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. MicroMentor is a free online mentoring program that connects entrepreneurs with experienced professionals who work together to solve business challenges. Mentors and entrepreneurs connect around the globe to grow businesses, create more jobs and contribute to their local communities.

*For more information on the CCIC, please visit our website at [www.caribbeancic.org](http://www.caribbeancic.org). If you have any questions or need further information, feel free contact us at (876-977-2154 or info@caribbeancic.org)*

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