



Caribbean Corporate Investment for Resilience

Final Report: July 2023

DISCLAIMER: The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Introduction

Through the Caribbean Corporate Investment for Resilience (CCIR) initiative designed and facilitated by The Global Knowledge Initiative (GKI), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) tested a new approach to fostering long-term, sustainable collaborations between the private sector and humanitarian actors. The initiative was driven by local stakeholders and applied [systems thinking and human-centered design \(HCD\)](#) methodologies.¹

Initial initiative discovery and design phases took place from November 2020 to February 2021 and March - August 2021 respectively. These two initial phases centered around systems sensing and co-design and are described in detail in the [Caribbean Corporate Investment for Resilience: Discovery Report](#). These efforts uncovered three central areas for strengthening resilience to natural disasters.

Enhanced cross-sector coordination and communications during crisis response



- Cash Donations
- Supplies
- Logistics and Transport (of resources and people)
- Multi-way Communications
- Customs and Regulations
- International Support

Broader use of business continuity planning for disaster preparedness, response and recovery



- Human Resources (care for employees and their families)
- Finances
- Investment in and capacity building of planning standards

Strengthen supply chains of products and services



- Trade and Tariffs
- Logistics and Transport (sea & air, inbound & outbound)
- Cold-chain Integrity
- Last Mile Delivery
- Infrastructure
- Food Suppliers (e.g., supermarkets, fishermen)

Collaborative brainstorming with CCIR stakeholders led to identifying a range of innovative solutions to address these challenge areas. A second report, the [Corporate Impact Model Pilot Concept Note](#), provides a detailed overview of the proposed initiative. Namely, GKI and local leads would facilitate the co-design of a coalition² for strengthening regional disaster resilience. The coalition would support member-led collaborations, the first of which was a pilot “resource tracker” that would enable the timely, efficient, and needs-based coordination of disaster preparedness and response resources among regional and national organizations in the Caribbean.

¹ Linked throughout this document are various resources and working documents produced during the initiative; they are not all formal deliverables so may not be branded or final versions.

² GKI explicitly worked with network building methodologies, however, the term “network” and “coalition” tended to be used interchangeably by the team.

As earlier discovery and design efforts are covered in the reports referenced above, this Final Report focuses on GKI's contract extension, from November 2021 through July 2023, for the implementation of the work designed in previous phases. Implementation followed three primary streams of work, reflected in the document sections below:

- Developing the Coalition's governance design and "backbone" functions providing day-to-day support, coordination, and management functions
- Activating and engaging Coalition membership
- Piloting the resource tracker solution

The report serves to succinctly describe the work carried out and steps taken under these streams of work to hand over assets, capacities, and tools to our partners and other local stakeholders in support of their own continued efforts in the region.

In addition, given CCIR was a test approach for USAID, the initiative included a focus on learning, an overview of which appears in the final section of the report. Relatedly, accompanying this deliverable is a "Learning Story" (kept separate on USAID's request), that identifies key lessons associated with CCIR's learning questions as well as illustrative case stories.

CCIR by the Numbers

- 244 individual stakeholders
- 140 organizations
- 29 stakeholders participated in Learning & Action Labs
- 22 stakeholders contributed to the resource tracker development
- 22 Chambers of Commerce represented by CARICHAM
- 8 Design Team members
- 7 Caribbean nations represented
- 2 "mini projects" formed by Learning & Action Lab participants
- 1 solution tested (resource tracker)

Coalition Design and Backbone

The [Caribbean Corporate Investment for Resilience \(CCIR\) Coalition](#) aimed to provide a platform for the private and public sectors in the region to act collectively towards disaster and climate resilience. By participating in the CCIR Coalition and ultimately making the changes needed to reach the goal of a more resilient Caribbean region, coalition participants would have the opportunity to:

- share and access knowledge, information and skills
- build and strengthen relationships
- learn how to shift business and organizational practices

- explore opportunities for public-private coordination and collaboration

The original intention for developing a coalition was for GKI and local leads to co-design a coalition for mobilizing collective action, across sectors and nations in the Caribbean, by providing a platform to convene, coordinate, and collaborate around the shared goal of strengthening regional disaster resilience. The coalition was envisaged as a platform for supporting member-led collaborations (the first of which was a pilot [resource tracker](#)). The work focused on Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Grenadines, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Trinidad & Tobago.

Pursuing CDEMA as Backbone

Networks function most effectively with a designated backbone organization that has the legal structure and capacity to staff, support, and grow a coalition. As CCIR initially envisioned developing a new regional coalition, this backbone would have the responsibility for defining what coalition governance would look like as well. The Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) regional intergovernmental Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) was originally identified as a backbone for the CCIR coalition during the discovery and design phases. This was based on their role in the region and their expressed interest and availability to take the coalition forward.

GKI attempted to secure CDEMA participation as the Coalition's backbone through one-on-one meetings and collaborating on a February 2022 CCIR stakeholder roundtable during which CDEMA provided introductory remarks. GKI also drafted and iterated with CDEMA a [backbone scope of work](#). Unfortunately, by April 2022, it became apparent that CDEMA did not have the staffing capacity to take on the work required to coordinate a coalition of mainly private sector actors, despite CCIR's ability to fund a supporting role with their organization.

Design Team

While continuing to identify an existing backbone organization, in April 2022, GKI first convened a small group of private and public sector stakeholders to form a Design Team (DT). The DT was intended to serve as an interim backbone. While active participation waxed and waned, at its peak the DT had six members from diverse Caribbean nations and organizations³ in addition to USAID and UN representatives.

DT member contributions consisted of participation in approximately monthly meetings through July 2023 and one-on-one discussions in between while asynchronously working on various guiding

³ The organizations represented on the DT were ANSA McAL, Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce, Massy Group, PBS Technologies, and the Trinidad & Tobago American Chamber of Commerce.

documents. Members of the DT advised the GKI team, brokered connections with key stakeholders and organizations, participated and co-presented in workshop and panel presentations, disseminated information and announcements from CCIR, and advised on innovation challenge model planning (see below under member engagement). Specifically, in May and November 2022 GKI representatives attended conferences in Trinidad & Tobago on the invitation of DT members, creating opportunities to vet plans for the Coalition overall as well as the resource tracker solution.

From April to December 2022, DT efforts focused on developing governance infrastructure for the Coalition, with some time spent on orienting them on the potential innovation challenge model as well. Key outputs from this process were a draft [Coalition Theory of Change](#) (TOC) and a [draft Coalition Charter](#),⁴ which provided guidance on key infrastructure elements to be discussed and determined. Then in the lead up to the November 2022 conference in Trinidad & Tobago, the DT and a local consultant advised GKI on alternative options for backbone organizations as well as assisted in arranging face to face meetings with some of the candidates. The underlying advice they shared was to build up an existing network with goals aligned to those of CCIR, and one from the private sector rather than public sector given the constituency CCIR aimed to serve.

This led GKI to reconsider various other institutions that had been captured in previous landscape mapping efforts, before CDEMA emerged as the most promising potential backbone, and eventually to partner with the Caribbean Chambers of Commerce (CARICHAM). Once the partnership with CARICHAM began to form, the function of the DT evolved from one of coalition design to into a consultative body. Meetings were still scheduled on a regular cadence through July 2023. The GKI team used the opportunities to gain valuable perspectives and feedback on efforts under all work streams.

Supporting CARICHAM

By early 2023, CARICHAM had emerged as the most likely backbone candidate. In addition to endorsement from the DT, USAID was also enthusiastic to proceed. CARICHAM is a network of 22 Caribbean Chambers of Commerce launched in 2019. CARICHAM itself is still a nascent, semi-formal network held together by a MOU; regardless, it has existing governance and membership structures. Moreover it is in the final stages of establishing nonprofit status to formalize its role as a regional coordinating body for the private sector. The DT and GKI identified that it had great potential for impact in the area of disaster resilience. It prepares the private sector for resilience and enables the private sector to better support communities in need. CARICHAM objectives also aligned closely with those developed with the DT for CCIR, as illustrated in Table I.

⁴ Note that templated versions of these will be highlighted in the [Systems Innovation Toolkit](#) that GKI is producing as part of another USAID Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs initiative, Accelerating Innovation for Resilience (AI4Resilience), thanks to cross-program collaborations and learning.

Table 1. Shared Pillars & Stakeholder Priorities

CCIR	Members share and access knowledge, information, and skills	New relationships are developed or strengthened across sectors, organizations, initiatives, and projects	More opportunities for private-public/humanitarian and innovation sector coordination and collaboration	Resilience is a priority within organizational planning
CARICHAM	Sharing Best Practices: Share knowledge and best practices among the Network	Advocacy & Member Value: Advocate and create enhanced value for members of the respective chambers	Trade Facilitation: Enhance transportation, trade facilitation, and promotion	Disaster Risk Reduction: Enhance the resilience of its Members and their countries

GKI offered to accompany and mentor CARICHAM to understand and carry out its leadership role as coalition backbone; identify staffing and capacities needed to manage a coalition; and pick up, finalize, and activate prototypes of the CCIR Coalition architecture/governance infrastructure. In addition, GKI was prepared to do the following, though these did not end up aligning with CARICHAM’s capacity as a primarily volunteer-led organization and nascent network:

- Transfer ownership of a repository of resources, tools, and systems related to charter, TOC, stakeholders, communications, engagement activities, and monitoring and evaluation – including a large database of relevant organizations, individuals, and initiatives as well as the past research identifying regional priorities for the CCIR Coalition
- Develop a sustainable business model including identification of ongoing budget costs, and potential financing models and funders
- Transfer ownership of the CCIR resource tracker
- Handover ongoing Coalition member engagement and action-oriented activities

Starting in February 2023, GKI developed a Memorandum of Understanding and subcontract with CARICHAM. Under this umbrella, GKI conducted a network assessment and provided technical support to CARICHAM. In addition to the assessment and network development prioritization, key achievements during this period are listed below. The GKI team was positioned to provide further support including facilitation of a member retreat to be used as a touchpoint to generate or vet content related to CARICHAM’s overall governance and operations (i.e., guiding statements, values and

principles; member value, jurisdiction and decision making; and details pertaining to communications and engagement). While timelines and competing priorities limited what was possible in the period of performance, key outputs of the CARICHAM engagement included the following materials, handed over to them for their application and use:

- Assessment Findings and Capacity Priorities (presentation to CARICHAM)
- Draft guiding statements (vision, mission, purpose)
- A [template charter](#) that contains current CARICHAM operations with recommended next steps for discussion and completion
- Member survey to gather ideas and feedback on governance, value, and guiding statements to be used by CARICHAM when appropriate
- [Network Management Task List](#) that provides a general understanding of the type of work, roles involved, and level of effort needed to manage and engage a network
- Communications and Engagement Strategy (audiences and suggested refinements to improve delivery)
- Brand guide and standardized templates (letterhead, newsletter, slide deck)
- Engagement Activities “toolkit”, which contains ideas for engagement across key, identified audience types

CARICHAM has expressed commitment to continue strengthening their backbone and network capacity, and to use GKI-provided resources⁵ to enable this continuing work (listed above). In addition, due to the milestone-based contract in place governing GKI’s and CARICHAM’s work together, CARICHAM has funding in place to keep the dedicated Network Coordinator in place until early 2024.

Member Engagement Activities

Upon the recognition in March 2022 that CDEMA would not step in as backbone, GKI determined to move forward with mobilizing potential coalition membership in parallel to resolving the backbone organization issue.

Initial Planning and BFM Coordination

To establish a cohesive stakeholder engagement experience, GKI held regular meetings with the CollaborateUp and Pan-American Development Foundation (PADF) implementation team of CCIR’s sister initiative, the CCIR Blended Finance Mechanism (BFM). During the meetings, the two programs

⁵ After the final meeting with the CARICHAM Executive Team, GKI received a formal note (written on the new branded letterhead) from the Chair expressing appreciation for the partnership in enhancing their capabilities to foster a collaborative environment among their stakeholders and to address the challenges of network structure and onboarding more effectively and with greater confidence.

shared respective updates and coordinated where applicable including stakeholder outreach and messaging (e.g., recording an [overview video](#) of the Coalition and the BFM challenge), opportunities for influence and engagement by the DT, and presenting at and amplifying each other's events (e.g., February 2022 Roundtable, Business Resilience Challenge workshops in February and September 2022).

Meanwhile, GKI mapped several potential member engagement activities against the emerging Coalition TOC coming out of work with the DT. The team also explored applying an innovation challenge model to activate the network and foster ownership of solutions to the regional challenges that had been identified during CCIR's discovery phase. Ultimately, because of parallel efforts by BFM, GKI did not go forward with the innovation challenge concept. Further collaboration with BFM also proved difficult to maintain due to the time and effort required to coordinate, without clearly defined expectations from USAID.

Learning and Action Labs

By October 2022 it was becoming clear that working with an existing coalition was the most appropriate strategy to support CCIR's objectives. Regardless without clarity on a backbone, GKI continued to pursue member engagement and activation approaches. In line with scenarios identified at the time, GKI used the engagement activities to test and prototype an approach with the intention of handing over relevant assets to the backbone for work with its members.

The team identified a potential menu of activity options including action labs, peer learning groups, 1:1 coaching and matchmaking, and coalition meet-ups. The team narrowed the list based on resource and time constraints. In January 2023, GKI [surveyed](#) stakeholders to ask for commitments to participate in either loosely structured Peer Learning Circles or more intensive Action Labs, focused around solutions identified during CCIR discovery and design in 2020-2021. Based on the 23 survey responses and subsequent informational sessions with interested stakeholders and recommendations from the Network Engagement Designer, GKI proceeded with a combined Learning and Action Lab series.

With the intention of cultivating local leadership, the survey also asked for respondents to indicate their interest in serving as co-facilitators. Two stakeholders from Trinidad & Tobago joined the GKI facilitation team. (As of July 2023, the local facilitators have shared that they have benefited greatly from the capacity-building opportunity and have begun to see ripple effects throughout their work as a result of new participatory facilitation practices.)

With facilitators in place, the series proceeded with 7 sessions held roughly every three weeks from March to July 2023. The series was designed as a creative and participatory space to bring the 29

participants together⁶ to tap into their collective knowledge while finding new collaborations for shared impact. Key technical outputs included a [participant guide](#) outlining expectations, [facilitation guide](#) with agendas for the lab sessions, slide decks, and a Mural board for hands-on activities and live capture of participant responses.

The commitment from participants included “mini projects” to apply collaboration skills to the development and deployment of a hands-on activity. As of July 2023, four stakeholders remained engaged in the labs and focused on the mini projects. They are divided into two teams: one focused on “Knowledge Exchange Activities” and the other on “Community Activation Events.” Each team received \$2500 of seed funding for their “mini projects.” (One team also expected to receive \$300 in matched funding from another source for their activity.) Each team has committed to present the progress on their “mini-project” in a final call with GKI and the local facilitators in late August/early September 2023.

The first team is initiating a community of practice for micro, small, and medium size enterprises (MSMEs) in Trinidad & Tobago, Grenada, and Saint Lucia around the topic of business continuity planning (BCP). They will host three events: small online gatherings to familiarize interested participants with their activity (September 2023), then a hybrid session held at the Chaguanas Borough Corporation (October 2023), and finally present at the annual AMCHAM T&T Health, Safety, Security & Environment (HSSE) conference (November 2023). Anticipated outputs are attendance sheets that they will convert into an accessible member directory, recordings of the 2nd and 3rd events and a suite of BCP templates to circulate to participants and more widely.

The second team is engaging residents of Chaguanas, Trinidad & Tobago, a high risk disaster zone, to collect and validate data for an online visual directory that will aid in the coordination of disaster preparedness and response by the community and the country’s Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM). The directory will be supplemented with existing data sets from local NGOs working in the area such as the Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity. The Chaguanas community will be consulted and invited to test the tool for usability.

Additional Engagement Assets

Other stakeholder/potential member engagement continued in parallel. Beginning in June 2022, GKI published [monthly newsletters](#) to up to 230 CCIR stakeholders via MailChimp that includes news, happenings, and learnings from CCIR and across the region. Alongside work on the Learning and Action Labs, GKI developed guidance on [member engagement tracker or “CRM”](#) tailored to network functions.

⁶ Additional participants joined once the labs were launched.

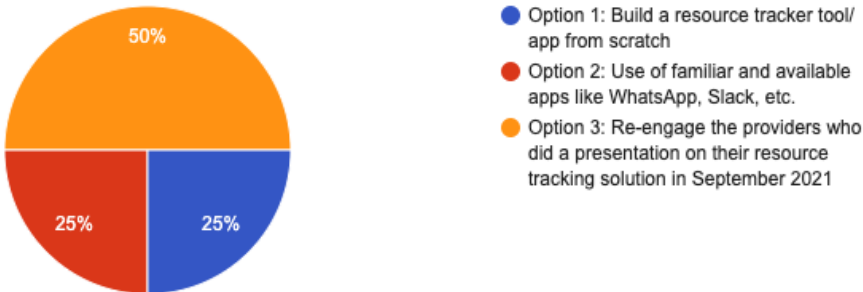
Finally, GKI developed an interactive [“menu” of member engagement activities](#) that any network could use. (GKI handed an engagement “starter pack” that included this tool to CARICHAM.)

Resource Tracker

In late 2021, based on stakeholder prioritization during discovery and design phases, GKI prioritized the development of a resource tracker (RT) capable of supporting public-private coordination around “needs and offers” before, during, and after natural disasters. Approximately 12 stakeholders were invited to join a working group to guide the resource tracker’s development, a majority of whom came from the private sector. The working group launched at a roundtable meeting and subsequently convened four times between November 2021 and March 2022 with facilitation support from GKI. By March 2022, GKI had developed a [concept note](#) for the resource tracker based on this stakeholder engagement. Without a clear way forward for a [coalition backbone organization](#), no other immediate local ownership of the RT work apparent, and with team staffing changes, GKI mostly paused further resource tracker efforts until late 2022. (During the May 2022 conference in Trinidad & Tobago, GKI convened several of the RT working group in person for further discussion and check in.)

Upon the decision to actively identify an alternative to CDEMA as backbone, GKI determined to move forward prototyping a RT in parallel to resolving the backbone organization issue. Working with a local advisor, the team developed an approach resting on feedback from RT stakeholders (members of the original reference group plus DT members). In December 2023, GKI circulated a [survey](#) inquiring inputs on how best to proceed with a RT trial. The survey provided the choices of building an app from scratch, using familiar and available messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Slack), or re-engaging the online platform NeedsList which had presented to stakeholders on its resource tracking solution in September 2021. Based on 11 responses, the option with the most votes was to proceed with NeedsList.

Chart 1. Summary Breakdown of RT Votes



On this basis, GKI and NeedsList executed a subcontract agreement in March 2023 that covered an annual license for the white label software from March 2023 to February 2024 as well as work to

establish the software, onboard users, and market the platform. NeedsList moved quickly to set up a beta version of the platform, Caribbean Mutual Aid (CMA). In April 2023, they presented the platform to all private sector stakeholders from the working group and the Design Team during a “simulation.” These stakeholders explored crucial questions, including how might the platform integrate with regional and national disaster management agency systems, and surfaced critical insights, such as the fact that the tracker could provide multiple solutions, depending on the goal of the user. Stakeholders also raised concerns with the cost of financing the platform and the lack of an option for a “coordinating body” user type, given the prevalence within a regional Caribbean context.

Despite the stakeholders’ positive response to the platform, progress slowed following the initial simulation due to sudden leadership changes and a strategic reorganization within NeedsList. Pending internal NeedsList decisions, GKI had to delay efforts to further promote the white label version of the tool and to find a local “host organization” for it. In parallel, NeedsList launched a global version of its platform, and GKI was made aware that the long term costs of the white label version were significantly higher than initially expected. The cost would be prohibitive to most potential local host organizations.

Separately, CDEMA began inviting private sector organizations – including one that had proactively expressed interest in being the CMA host – to onboard onto CDEMA’s new resource coordination platform of their own. The expectation from CDEMA’s member countries and respective national emergency management organizations (NEMO) was that the CDEMA platform should be their priority, given CDEMA’s role within the region. As a result, the prospective CMA host withdrew from consideration.

NeedsList was later able to determine that CDEMA is not developing a tracker but in fact [a logistics system](#). No further information was available as of July 2023, as contacts have not actually seen the platform and meetings with regard to the launch have been canceled. As this pathway develops, it will be useful to observe; the CDEMA approach may ultimately be exclusive to governments, leaving the private sector, NGOs, and community based organizations (CBOs) without a place to coordinate needs and offers, which is a gap that NeedsList is designed to fill.

Given the confluence of these factors, in June 2023, GKI and NeedsList agreed to refocus NeedsList’s efforts on onboarding Caribbean stakeholders onto NeedsList Global for the 2023 hurricane season. The licensing fee GKI had covered for the white label CMA converted into the sponsorship fee for the global platform “issue area.” NeedsList is actively pursuing discussions with a potential local sponsor (rather than host) for future years. The 9 stakeholder organizations that had initially onboarded onto the white label CMA were asked to shift their logins to [the global platform](#); as of July 2023, 7 of the 9 opted

into transferring their accounts. They will retain access through December 2023, as sponsorships run on a calendar year cycle.

To date, no organizations have posted needs or offers on NeedsList Global, due to the delayed transition. However, the Caribbean will be a primary focus region for NeedsList over the 2023 hurricane season. They are committed to actively marketing the CMA issue area and believe that this will lead to active usage of the platform.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

The original intention for MEL activities under the contract extension was to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks supportive of long term coalition activities and development, and robust learning on GKI's and USAID's part in line with CCIR's test program status.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

GKI originally set out in Fall 2022 to develop a Coalition M&E framework aligned with the Coalition theory of change co-developed with the DT that would monitor network health and progress beyond the CCIR period of performance. Pending identifying an alternative to CDEMA as backbone, this work paused and GKI focused on a [M&E framework and indicators](#) to capture results from its November 2022-July 2023 workplan. However, once CARICHAM came onboard, most of the framework and indicators were moot as they also primarily focused on development of a *new* network. While GKI was prepared to provide MEL capacity support to CARICHAM, this did not emerge as a priority during the CARICHAM network assessment process.

Instead the impact and success of each CCIR workstream were gauged against their progress against agreed workplans as laid out above. The exception was the Learning and Action Labs; GKI circulated a [final survey](#) to participants and local facilitators to gauge participants' feedback on the knowledge, skills, and relationships they may have developed.

Learning

Learning from the process was a priority for GKI. By April 2022, GKI developed a set of learning questions to guide reflections. Once the shift in the backbone approach took place, four of these remained relevant and were iterated upon:

- I. How can GKI, as an external facilitator/project implementer, support the strengthening of local networks?

2. What approaches, methods, and tools have enabled and/or inhibited the ability to foster meaningful stakeholder engagement?
3. What does the private sector need to identify and implement collective solutions?
4. What incentives and support do the private sector and humanitarian actors need to collaborate?

To those ends, GKI held Pause and Reflects (P&R) internally (June 2022, May 2023, July 2023) and with USAID (June 2022, July 2023). From September 2022 to July 2023 GKI also met approximately monthly with USAID to reflect on progress and lessons. Following the May and November 2022 trips to Trinidad & Tobago and other major stakeholder events, including DT meetings, the team debriefed or conducted After Action Reviews (AAR). These events helped GKI identify lessons learned as well as make adaptations to the project processes and approaches. In addition, a dedicated storytelling consultant came on board to support gathering lessons from document review, key stakeholders, and GKI. GKI produced the Learning Story structured around the four learning questions above. *Please refer to the [Learning Story](#) for the lessons and future recommendations that emerged.*

Conclusion

Following an in-depth design and discovery process from 2020-2022, the implementation of the Caribbean Corporate Investment for Resilience coalition from November 2022 through July 2023 was a test pilot for USAID and a learning experience for GKI and stakeholders who participated in the initiative. Despite a need for significant redirection early on –when it was clear the potential backbone organization identified previously for the Coalition was not available– GKI turned its attention to 1) activating a “Design Team” of engaged, committed local private sector representatives; 2) piloting a partnership with NeedsList to better track resource needs and offers during disasters; and 3) providing significant support to the Caribbean Chambers of Commerce at a crucial point in the regional network’s development. The initiative garnered GKI and USAID significant lessons learned, captured in a Learning Story, that can be taken into future work for how to engage the private sector in developing multisector initiatives in the Caribbean, to form and strengthen regional learning and action networks globally, and to develop collective solutions for disaster preparedness and response within the private sector.