

**TWO  
DECADES  
OF GIVING  
BACK**

**Digicel** Foundation



**2022 WILL MARK THE END  
OF THE SECOND DECADE  
OF DIGICEL OPERATIONS.**

EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, PHILANTHROPIC  
DECISIONS HAVE KEPT PACE WITH  
COMMERCIAL ONES, GUIDED BY THE MANTRA  
THAT WHERE DIGICEL AS A BUSINESS GROWS,  
SO TOO MUST THE COMMUNITIES  
IN WHICH IT OPERATES.

IN THE TIME SINCE DIGICEL MADE ITS FIRST  
STEPS IN JAMAICA, THEIR FOUNDATIONS  
HAVE INVESTED OVER US\$173M IN THE  
COUNTRIES OF OPERATION, FOCUSING ON  
EDUCATION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
SPECIAL NEEDS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
AND, ABOVE ALL, ENSURING NO-ONE  
IS LEFT BEHIND.

THIS BOOK ATTEMPTS TO DO JUSTICE  
TO THAT ACHIEVEMENT.

“DENIS’S  
FIRST  
INSTINCT  
IS ALWAYS  
TO WANT TO  
HELP AND  
HIS ENERGY  
ALWAYS  
DRIVES  
IMPACT”



## LEADING THE WAY

### DIGICEL'S UNIQUE COMMITMENT TO ITS COMMUNITY

A FOREWORD BY **OLIVER COUGHLAN**,  
GROUP CEO, DIGICEL

Digicel has a proud history of leading the way. In every market we've entered, we've innovated, transforming our customers' digital lives in delivering services, experiences and connectivity.

That commitment to making a difference and always ensuring that what we do has a lasting positive impact on our customers and our communities goes to the heart of who our Chairman and founder, Denis O'Brien, is as a person. Denis's first instinct is always to want to help and his energy always drives impact. It is his passionate belief that we must play our part to help create a world where no one gets left behind and that ethos reverberates throughout the organisation and is proudly brought to life by our people across the globe day in, day out.

Likewise, the Foundation is part of that commitment to innovation and delivery. In Haiti, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea and Trinidad and Tobago we've had a remarkable history of delivering transformative change to the communities we serve.

The Foundations have managed to focus public and political attention on issues around education, Special Needs and gender based violence. At times of crisis, they are at the forefront of humanitarian response, aware of and prioritising customers' needs.

Our business is a competitive one and the Foundation helps to differentiate us from others. Who else, for instance, would have designed a disaster preparedness programme for people with Special Needs, or built 187 schools in Haiti? The Foundation personifies both our values and purpose and reinforces our brand strength with every investment made.

I am in awe of the exceptional work carried out by Maria Mulcahy and her team of CEOs, Charmaine Daniels, Sophia Stransky, Serena Sasingian and Penny Gomez and very grateful for all that they have done for our business and our customers.

**Oliver Coughlan**  
Group CEO, Digicel





# EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

AN INTRODUCTION BY  
**MARIA MULCAHY,**  
GLOBAL CHAIR, DIGICEL FOUNDATION

THE COMMITMENT OF THE DIGICEL GROUP TO THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH IT OPERATES IS, PERHAPS, UNPRECEDENTED: I'D CERTAINLY STRUGGLE TO IDENTIFY ANOTHER FOR-PROFIT WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH, SO CONSISTENTLY.

Since it commenced operations, the Foundation has reached hundreds of thousands of people, ensured no-one is left behind, and invested over US\$173m in underserved communities in Digicel markets. It's been an incredible journey, driven by the philosophy that everything is possible.

We hope this book begins to do some justice to all that has been achieved.

At the heart of this story are people: corporate staff and leadership who are unwavering in their commitment to the Foundation; to the Foundation staff themselves who invest each cent as if it is their own; and, critically, the people whose lives are improved by the Foundation programmes.





The energy making all of this possible is provided by Denis O'Brien. He is relentless in his pursuit of excellence: excellence defined by maximising the impact on the lives of those who need our support the most. He is an inspiration: to everyone who has met him, worked with him, or benefited from his philanthropy.

Looking back on 20+ years of operations, there are, of course, some fantastic stand-out moments. I admit I was proud when The Guardian wrote, in 2014:

[Digicel] ... has embarked on an ambitious school-building programme to create a brighter future for Haiti's children.

The company has also trained teachers, provided mobile libraries for remote communities and helped bring financial support to families in need.

Following the disaster, Digicel moved swiftly to accelerate and scale up its existing school-building project in Haiti, committing to a further 150 schools by 2014.

When I read those words, I particularly remember Rose, the first Principal of the first Digicel Foundation supported school in Jamaica. Her life, and the lives of all of the students who attended Lakes Pen School over the past two decades, have been fundamentally improved as a result of the Foundation's engagement. I visited the school on three occasions: the first to vet the school, the second to launch the relationship and the third, a year later, to witness what had been achieved.



That third visit was remarkable. The school was transformed – happy children learning in an appropriate setting and Rose, sitting in her office, using a computer. Two things came to mind: everything is possible, and education is key. That experience hugely influenced the Foundation’s programme since – for instance, we subsequently delivered 187 schools in Haiti, bringing, to tens of thousands of young people the most powerful weapon we have to change the world: education itself.

In all of the countries in which we operate, it is important that Digicel has proven itself willing to make tough and brave decisions. A perfect example is the Men of Honour campaign in Papua New Guinea. Human Rights Watch reported earlier in 2021 that a woman is beaten every 30 seconds in PNG, and more than 1.5m people experience gender-based violence annually.

So it was brave for Digicel to establish a programme which looked to honour the good men of PNG, using positive behaviour to promote positive role models for the next generation to follow.

ECOLE ROSALIE  
JAVOUHEY  
HAITI

A group of young men in red and blue sports uniforms standing in a circle on a grassy field, with a bright sun in the background.

MEN  
OF  
HONOUR

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

THE MENTOR

HE'S STRONG. HE'S MOTIVATED. HE'S THE CREATOR OF NOT ONLY CHAMPION ATHLETES BUT CHAMPION PEOPLE. IF YOU KNOW A MAN LIKE THIS, NOMINATE HIM TODAY FOR THE MENTOR AWARD AT THE FIRST-EVER 2014 MAN OF HONOUR AWARDS.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR NOMINATE GO TO ANY DIGICEL OUTLET OR [FACEBOOK.COM/MOH](https://www.facebook.com/moh)

THIS IS A CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIOLENCE

**Digicel**  
FOUNDATION

MEN OF HONOUR  
CAMPAIGN  
PAPUA NEW  
GUINEA





THE ENRICHMENT  
PROGRAMME  
JAMAICA

PREPARING YOU  
TRINIDAD AND  
TOBAGO



The Foundation is very pragmatic in its operations: it is led by local knowledge and always does what makes most sense. In Trinidad and Tobago, as an example, Preparing You, the disaster management programme for persons with Special Needs, is hugely impactful. Funded jointly by Digicel, the UNDP, and the Inter-American Development Bank, the project has ensured that over 1,000 people with Special Needs (and the 18 schools they attend) are well prepared to handle a natural disaster.

In Jamaica, the enrichment programme, co-funded by USAID and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, had the most incredible reach: over 43,000 students, 200 teachers and principals and 6,000 parents. It also fundamentally shifted the dial on literacy, with USAID independently reporting that students involved showed an average improvement of two grade levels, within the first year of engagement!

These five snapshot stories, and everything else that has been achieved, wouldn't have happened without the leadership from within the Foundation: I want to acknowledge the incredible role played by the CEOs: Charmaine Daniels, Sophia Stransky, Serena Sasingian and Penny Gomez and their energetic and professional teams. None of what we do would be done if it wasn't for them. They are wonderful colleagues.

*Maria*

**Maria Mulcahy**  
Global Chair, Digicel Foundation

# Digicel Foundation

## GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

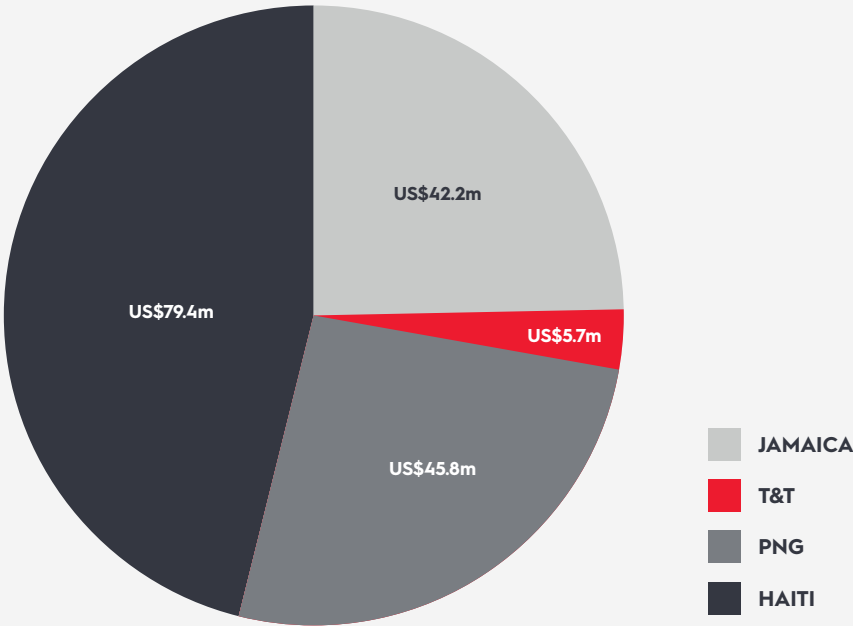
2004-2021

WE FOCUS ON FOUR PILLARS OF STRENGTH: EDUCATION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, SPECIAL NEEDS, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

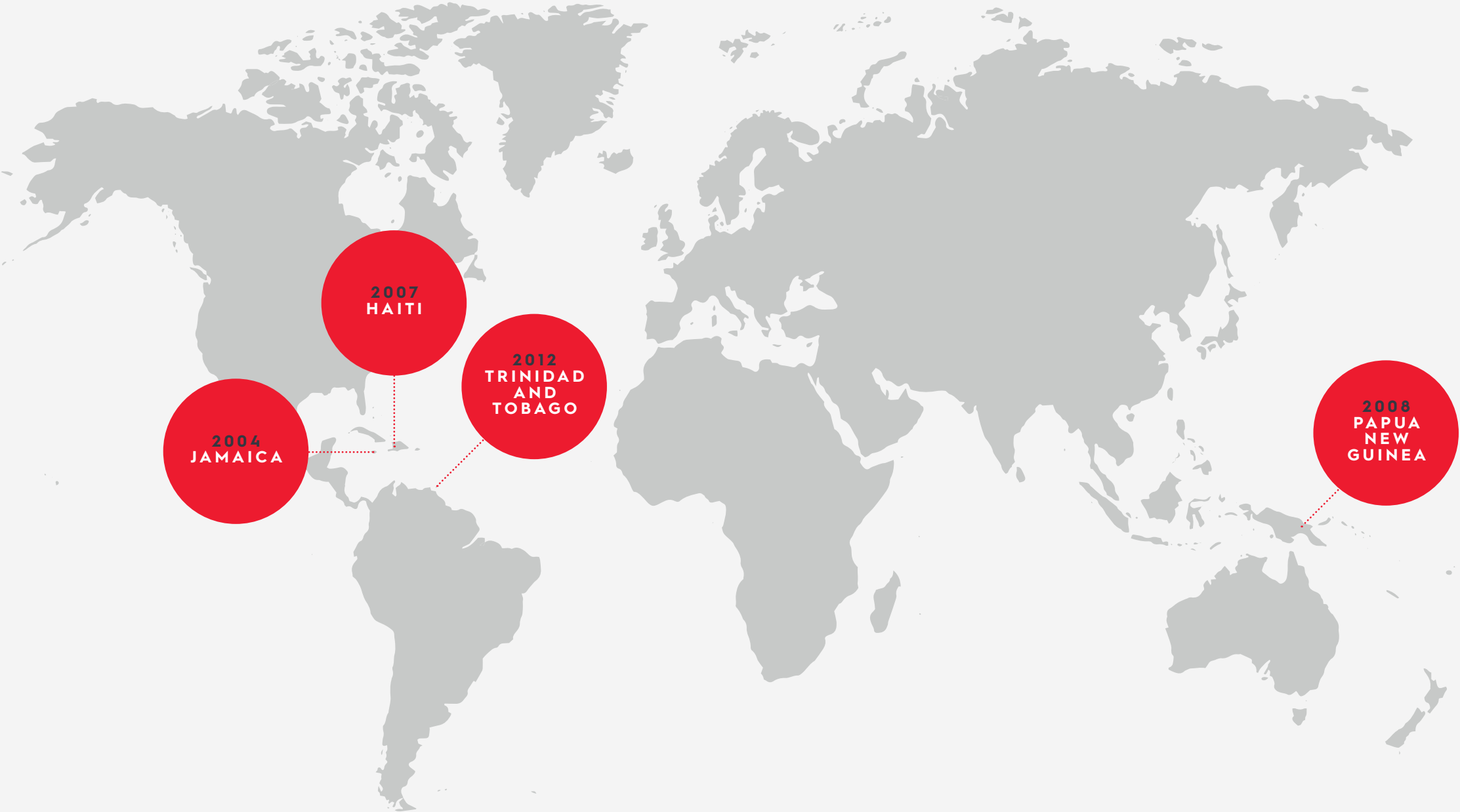
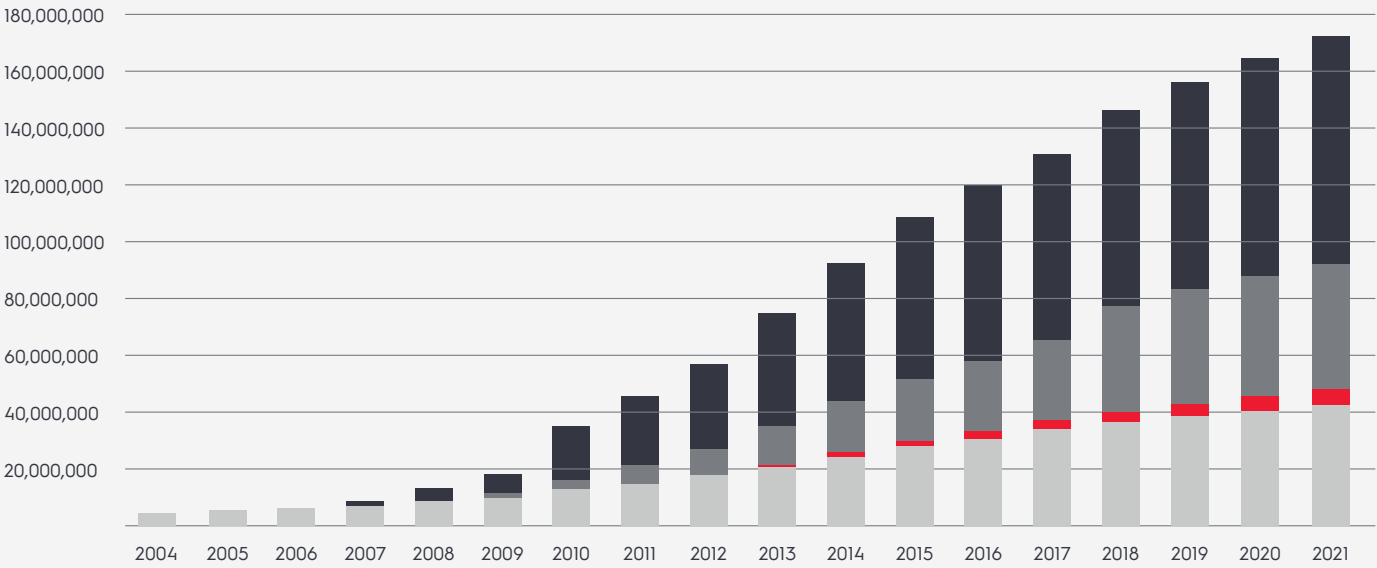
By activating these pillars, we sow seeds of courage, quality of life, access to education, and self-reliance. Creating sustainability through technology and experiences that make a difference, our Foundation and its partners are working to create a culture of inspiration throughout the Caribbean and Pacific.

Over almost two decades, we've invested over US\$173m in Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Papua New Guinea, reaching 3.1m people through 2,700 projects.

TOTAL INVESTMENT:  
**US\$173M**



DIGICEL FOUNDATION: TOTAL GLOBAL EXPENDITURE





# COLM DELVES

## AN APPRECIATION

Colm Delves was a giant in the lives of everyone in Digicel. He joined the business in 2003 and within a year was group chief executive. He, and his family, made Jamaica his home and, as well as running the business, Colm embraced Jamaican culture and music. Music was a constant in his life – the rumour was that he wanted to study in the Royal Irish Academy of Music but was, reluctantly, persuaded to pursue a career in accountancy by his parents.

Colm passed away in May 2020 after a battle with cancer. The Foundation was proud to be able to have honoured Colm and his love for Jamaican music through our funding of the Colm Delves Centre at the Alpha School of Music in Kingston.

The Alpha Institute provides a caring and committed environment to youth in need of educational, vocational and life skills training and the Foundation's investment allowed the Institute to finally realise its goal to build a dedicated music space for its longstanding music programme.

The School of Music includes a performance space, rehearsal rooms and a music resource centre. The school's administration had been developing plans since 2014 and in July 2020, a Digicel Foundation investment helped move this dream forward and into reality. It is a worthy memorial to Colm, to whom we all owe so much.









# COVID-19 GLOBAL RESPONSE

## SUPPORTING HEALTH AND LIVELIHOODS

The impact of COVID-19 was felt globally, but with reductions in international travel and consumer spending, less developed economies suffered more than most, with the World Bank reporting an increase in global poverty in 2020, the first such increase in 20 years.

The Digicel Foundation lived up to its commitment of leaving no-one behind by supporting its communities through the pandemic with healthcare and livelihood programmes.

In Haiti, Foundation staff worked with grassroots organisations and school councils, creating awareness around Covid-19 and shared messages of best practices for spread prevention. The Foundation funded ventilators, a country-wide billboard campaign in partnership with our Ambassador, Kako, for better dissemination of information. Donations totalling close to US\$300,000 were also made to health organisations actively helping communities affected by the virus. Food kits were distributed to vulnerable persons around the country and a near doubling of the Konbit Pou Chanjman grants.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Foundation's #StandingTogether programme, gifted 1,350 families, suppliers and vendors – identified as those worst affected by the pandemic – with grocery and digital vouchers. This US\$100,000 programme was met with resounding gratitude by recipients and the public.

In Jamaica, the Foundation launched a US\$1m+ programme which allowed for the sanitisation of public areas and at-risk facilities; allocated food to those most in need, distributed internet-capable devices to students and launched a public campaign advocating social distancing.

Papua New Guinea also contributed to the COVID-19 relief efforts through a digital awareness programme in partnership with Digicel TV reaching thousands of people in the community with accurate information on the pandemic. In partnership with Provincial Health Authorities the Foundation purchased vaccine fridges for health centres to assist in the vaccination efforts and the distribution of PPE gear to hospitals. At the height of the third wave we partnered with a logistics company to supply over 100 bottles of oxygen to the epi centre of the pandemic saving the lives of people who were in desperate need.







# JAMAICA



## A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

**A** glittering circle of celebrities congratulated visionary entrepreneur Denis O'Brien on making Jamaica the first home of Digicel at the company's launch in April 2001, but the company's impact went far beyond them.

Denis O'Brien, who notes that his mother Iris developed in him a strong social conscience, looked beyond the business, at the challenges faced by the Jamaican people.

In 2004, Denis O'Brien launched the Digicel Foundation in Jamaica, with the rebuilding of the Lakes Pen Infant and Primary School in St Catherine. Three pillars of the Foundation were established: Special Needs, Education and Entrepreneurship for Community Development. Trusting the vision of our Foundation, USAID, UNICEF, the Queen's Young Leaders, the Jamaican Government ministries and private sector partners joined in our efforts.

For the first time in Jamaica, a spotlight was placed on the Special Needs community, as Denis O'Brien mandated that at least 10 Special Needs schools were to be built. The Foundation has exceeded this target and the Digicel 5k Run for Special Needs has raised wide public awareness.

With the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in Jamaica in 2020, Patron Denis O'Brien mandated projects in the millions to ease its impact. The Digicel Foundation staff, led by Charmaine Daniels implemented all with excellence.

Over the past 17 years, over 700,000 Jamaicans have been assisted through the work of the Digicel Foundation, with over US\$42.2m invested in some 1,370 projects. We salute Denis O'Brien for helping us to ensure that no one in Jamaica gets left behind.

**Jean Lowrie-Chin CD, JP,**  
Chair, Digicel Foundation, Jamaica



*"there is  
no power  
for change  
greater than  
a community  
discovering  
what it cares  
about"*



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The author Margaret Wheatley wrote "there is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about".

How true that is.

The Digicel Foundation, along with the staff of the Digicel Group and in partnership with the people of Jamaica, has been on a voyage of discovery since 2004. We've reimagined how we do our work, and who we engage with.

We are developing social returns on investments to complement the financial returns we already use.

Our staff are undertaking sign language classes to ensure we are able to engage with members of the Deaf community.

We are having meaningful conversations with the communities in which we operate to talk about the impact that digital connectivity can have linking those communities. We are also learning how to leverage the technology that the Digicel Group can deliver, building on that incredible commitment to volunteerism that seems to unite all Digicel staff, no matter where they work or what they do.

The commitment to the Jamaica Foundation by the group and its staff, has been absolute. It is evident in everything that we do.

Not many people get to do something that they love and something which completes them. The Jamaica Foundation does that for me and I am hugely grateful for the opportunity it has given me.

**Charmaine Daniels**  
CEO, Digicel Foundation, Jamaica





## A LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR

The lives of many Jamaicans were changed significantly when Digicel, founded by Denis O'Brien, began its operations in Jamaica 20 years ago. In furtherance of its Corporate Social Responsibility, the Digicel Foundation, which was established in 2004, has transformed many lives, especially in the areas of education, community development and Special Needs.

The Digicel Foundation has enshrined deeply within its DNA, the commitment to answer the call of duty and to date, some 700,000 persons bear testament to a record of consistent outreach and care.

The Foundation has contributed to the restoration of the social fabric of our nation, whether through its various projects with the Special Needs community, contribution to health delivery services through its centres of excellence or expanding access to education through technology. The Foundation's work also extends to supporting and empowering survivors of domestic violence, supporting families with requiring medical care, and fostering a spirit of self-reliance through sustainable businesses within communities.

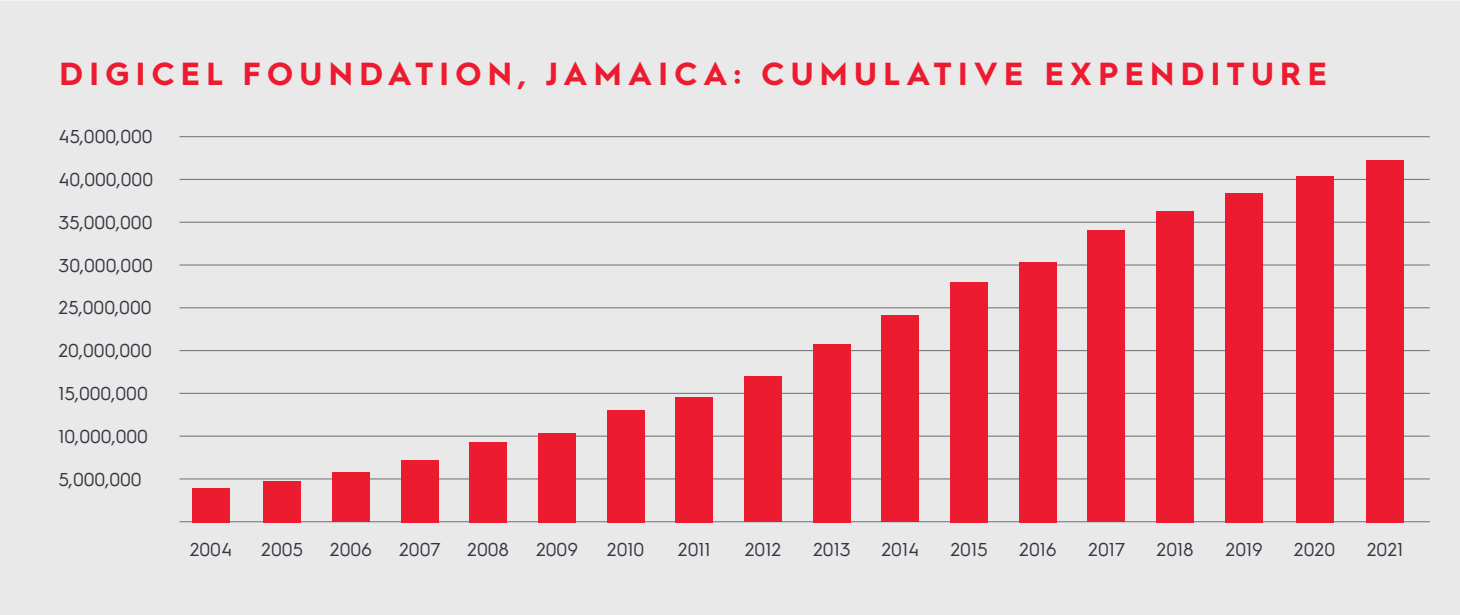
Our country can be assured that the spirit of charity and commitment to a better Jamaica shines brightly within the hearts and minds of every Board member, staff member, and volunteer of the Foundation.

Congratulations on achieving this milestone of 20 years and in highlighting the work of the Foundation as part of your anniversary celebrations. I trust that your philanthropy and sense of duty will inspire others to do their part to enrich lives across the length and breadth of our island.

I encourage you to build on your legacy of success as together we make Jamaica "the place to live, work, raise families and do business".

**His Excellency the Most Honourable  
Sir Patrick Allen, On, Gcmg, Cd, Kst,j**  
Governor-General





COMPARING IRELAND AND JAMAICA:

	Jamaica	Ireland
Size	10,991 sq km	70,273 sq km
Population	2,816,602	5,224,884
GPD	US\$15.83b	US\$398.59b
GDP per capita	US\$4,664	US\$83,812
Life expectancy	74.47	82.3
UN HDI Ranking	101	2

TIMELINE:

- 2004

Launched to support Hurricane Ivan National Recovery Effort with first project in partnership with the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF)
- 2005

Completed our first Special Needs Project at Widow’s Mite (Mustard Seed)
- 2006

Constructed the first-ever basic school in rural area of Montpelier, Manchester
- 2007

Donated US\$286,000 to Ministry of Education to repair schools after Hurricane Dean
- 2008

Established partnership with Ministry of Education and the Barita Education Foundation aimed at improving early childhood education
- 2009

12 Primary Schools benefit from technology in Enrichment Rooms through Ministry of Education partnership to aid students “at-risk of academic failure”
- 2010

Launched US\$267,000 project to develop science labs in high schools and reinvigorate student interest in STEM for over 7,000 students
- 2011

Broke ground on the first Digicel Foundation Special Needs school (three out of 10 were constructed in this financial year)
- 2012

Launched the first annual Digicel 5K Run for Special Needs and the Back to Roots pilot programme, which was the first social enterprise programme in Jamaica
- 2013

Awarded a 3-year Cooperative Agreement from USAID to expand its Enrichment programme to 95 schools
- 2014

Innovated to launch mobile science lab project with state-of-the art STEM technology housed in portable cabinets for high schools
- 2015

Horizon Park Primary School named School of the Year for 2015 for the high performance of its Digicel Foundation/USAID Enrichment Centre
- 2016

Over half a million votes were cast in Digicel Foundation’s first ever #FaceofChangeJA competition, with US\$3,000 awarded to Bethel New Testament Church of God
- 2017

Four-year partnership started with Comic Relief in the UK, the Queen’s Young Leaders Programme (QYL) and the Royal Commonwealth Society, providers of a US\$1.2 million fund to support social enterprise programmes in volatile communities
- 2018

Completion of 10th Digicel Foundation Special Needs school
- 2019

Launch of the first literacy lab to provide Deaf students with a medium to learn written English, Jamaican sign language and other communication skills
- 2020

Launched an over US\$1 million COVID-19 response campaign to Sanitise, Advocate, Feed and Enable Jamaicans
- 2021

Made our largest investment in arts education with launch of the Colm Delves Centre at the Alpha Institute

DIGICEL FOUNDATION IMPACT:

TOTAL INVESTMENT:

US\$42.2M

1370 PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED

FUNDED 231 SCHOOL ENRICHMENT ROOMS AS PART OF OUR LITERACY PROGRAMME

10 SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

394 TEACHER, CAREGIVERS & PARENTS TRAINED

250 TEACHERS TRAINED IN LITERACY BENEFITING OVER 100K STUDENTS

13 SCIENCE LABS & 6 PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH ECC

680 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROVIDED WITH IMPACTING OVER 210K PEOPLE

703,610 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

JAMAICA: FACTS AT A GLANCE



Digicel

Foundation

INVESTMENT  
FOOTPRINT

JAMAICA  
2004-2021

- LEGEND
- WS

WASH STATION
- SNR

SPECIAL NEEDS UNIT RENOVATIONS
- SNC

SPECIAL NEEDS CENTRES
- RAM

RAMPS PROJECTS
- ECC

EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMISSION RENOVATIONS
- PSE

PRIMARY SCHOOL ENRICHMENT ROOMS
- SLR

SCIENCE LAB RENOVATIONS
- MSL

MOBILE SCIENCE LABS
- SEN

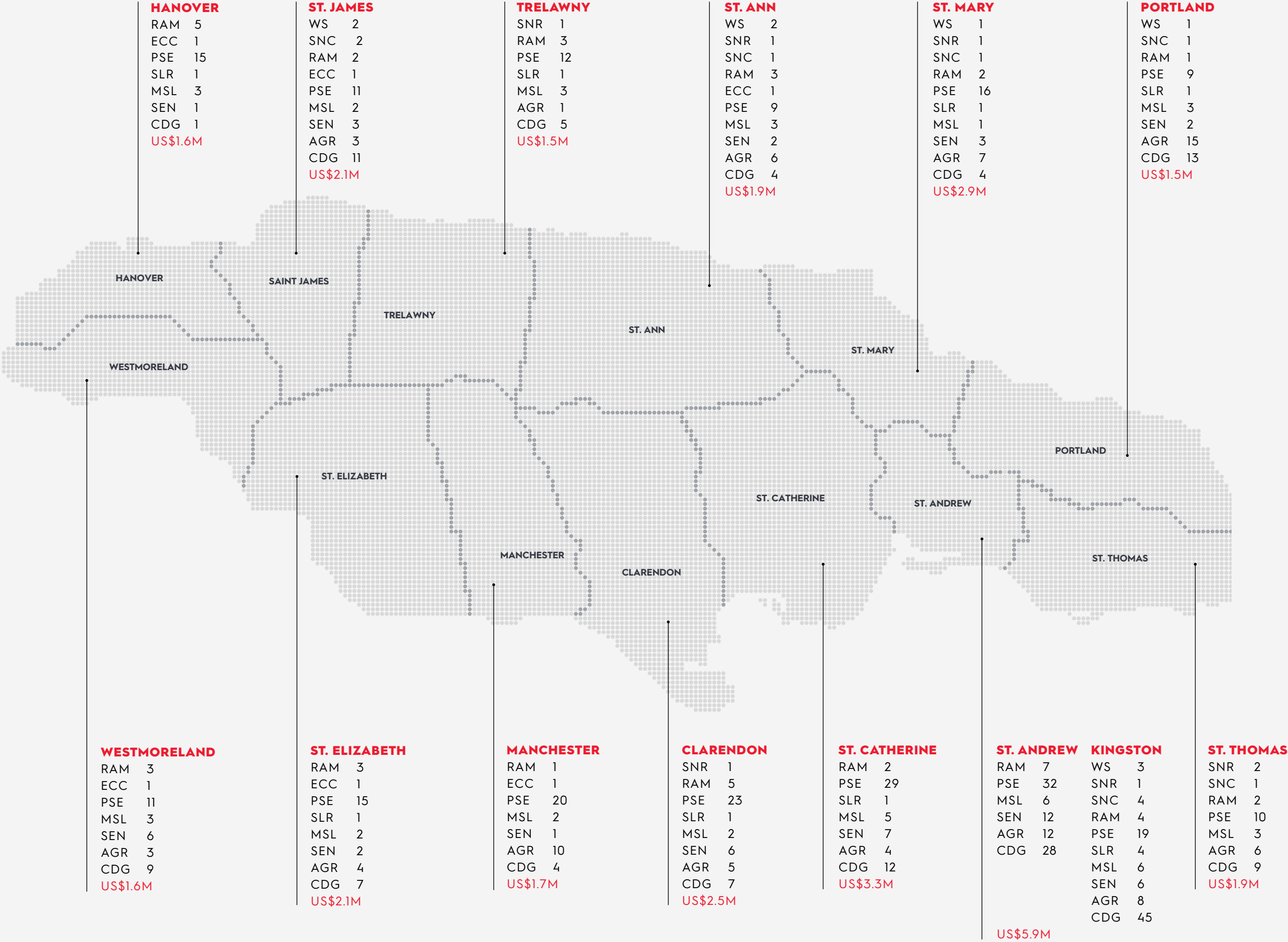
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
- AGR

AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS
- CDG

OTHER COMMUNITY GRANTS

TOTAL INVESTMENT:

US\$42.2M





## JAMAICA: SPECIAL NEEDS

Since its inception, serving the needs of people with Special Needs has been at the heart of the Foundation's agenda. Over that time, we've partnered with Special Needs organisations, government departments, and the UN to deliver on our objective.

We have invested in Special Needs education to increase access for students at all levels. Since 2005, we've partnered with the Special Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information to renovate seven special education schools. We also constructed 10 Special Needs Centres which are run independent of the Special Needs Units – all still in operation today. The coordinator of Lyssons school for Special Education, Jacqueline Hendricks Wilmot, commented: "Our students have shown vast improvement in all areas. This Centre of Excellence is poised for growth. We have the energy!"

The annual Digicel 5k funds both these Special Needs Centres and other Special Needs support organisations.

Over the past decade the 5k has raised close to US\$500k – a remarkable achievement which has helped ensure the sustainability of the sector.

The Digicel Foundation has a mandate to increase accessibility and inclusion for persons with Special Needs. In 2018, we partnered with the National Education Trust to build ramps and improve access for students as part of an ongoing 'Ramps In Schools' programme. As part of this programme – we donated US\$1m towards the Government of Jamaica's Workers' Week and Labour Day 2018 activities, being carried out under the theme "Ramp it Up, Fix it Up." The initiative allowed for the completion of wheelchair ramps at 130 schools across the island.

Finally, as in all of Digicel's markets, the Foundation is an enthusiastic funder and supporter of the local Special Olympics team and athletes.









## JAMAICA: EDUCATION



In the Foundation's very first annual report, there was an acknowledgement that the provision of educational opportunities is paramount to the growth of a nation and a region.

In the 17 years since, we have stayed true to this belief, investing in school building (including 13 science labs and 42 mobile science labs), primary school enrichment rooms, and a primary certification programme, all of which have combined to improve access to a quality education for Jamaican youth.

Jamaica began standardising its requirements for early childhood institutions in 2016 to ensure that all schools provided a safe learning environment for students. The Foundation has been working with the Early Childhood Commission to help

primary school institutions achieve a safe environment to nurture young minds, meeting the Commission's 12 standards for safe schools. Between 2017 and 2021, the Foundation constructed and aided in the certification of 6 schools.

Green Pond Infant and Primary School in St. James was one of the lucky schools to receive funding and was completed in 2021. Extensive renovations included reroofing the building, tiling classrooms, paving the driveway and installing playground equipment and fencing.

For students and other residents of the communities of Knockalva in Hanover and Savanna-la-Mar in Westmoreland, reading skills were a serious issue for some time, with a high incidence of illiteracy. The main problem inhibiting literacy was the absence of proper facilities within these communities.





The Digicel Foundation, recognising the need, responded, and Resource Rooms were presented to the Knockalva Technical High School and the Savanna la-Mar Prep and High School in 2007.

In 2009, we expanded this programme by twinning ICT with individualised instruction for students who were having extreme difficulties in achieving their grade level in reading. The pilot school saw its literacy rate rise from approximately 75% to 96% and the programme was expanded to 231 schools across Jamaica, with the support of an almost US\$2m grant.

During the project, over 40,000 children benefitted and over 250 teachers were trained. The schools, which were all below the national average for students passing their grade four and six achievement tests, saw significant improvements in literacy and numeracy.







## JAMAICA: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**M**ore than 400,000 people in Jamaica live in poverty and 14,000 live in extreme poverty. That's close to 15% of the country's population who don't have access to a sustainable livelihood.

Our Community Development programme looks to address this challenging statistic through its grants initiative. Since its inception, almost 700 projects have been funded – everything from farm projects to social enterprises, generating almost 3,000 permanent jobs. Recipients have included schools, youth clubs, community groups and organisations, all focused on tackling Jamaica's most intransigent issues.

One great example is a small urban farm Rock Springs Farm off Windward Road, Kingston, in the vicinity of the Jamaica Flour Mills, which is operated by a group of young people.

Based in the community of Rockfort, the group is showing young persons an alternative to gun violence and crime through their farming project. As a social enterprise, Rock Spring Farms is creating training, upskilling and employment opportunities in the community.

The project was funded as part of a wider partnership with Comic Relief for the Queen's Young Leaders Awards. The Queen's Young Leaders Awards recognises and celebrates exceptional people from across the Commonwealth, who are taking the lead in their communities and using their skills to transform lives. In 2016 we formed a four year partnership to award Queen's Young Leaders Grants to inspirational young people from at-risk communities in Jamaica, with an objective of reducing crime through the development of social enterprises.





# HAITI



## A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

I grew up with a strong need to share, always prioritising community involvement, and convinced that I had a role to play in the development of my country. I still remember the day I was selected to lead the Digicel Foundation in Haiti. Fourteen years later, I am so pleased to have been at the genesis of this impactful organisation, which has changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of persons across the country.

The beginnings of the Foundation were not always easy to say the least. Accompanied by my indefatigable collaborator, Maria Mulcahy, we often had to challenge our limits because the communities in which we worked were, for the most part, distant from the capital and difficult to reach. Nonetheless, the warm welcome and support from the latter kept us motivated and reinforced our vision of working to strengthen communities.

From the Foundation's school building programme and professional development programme to its grant programme, I have learned that nothing is impossible as long as we have the will and work in partnership.

My years spent at the Digicel Foundation have been some of my best, and I am grateful to Denis O'Brien and Maria Mulcahy for the opportunity to live this incredible adventure and my childhood dream: Your generosity towards Haiti has never ceased to amaze me, and I am incredibly proud of the Foundation's many accomplishments.

**Josefa Gauthier**

Chair, Digicel Foundation, Haiti







## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

It's easy to do 'stuff' – to build, give, and move on.

That's not the Digicel Foundation approach and I'm proud of that fact.

We recognised, in the early days of our work, that what we do needs to be sustainable, and that sustainability can be measured in many different ways.

Lessons learned throughout the years have changed the way we work. We are now re-engaging with those communities – with teachers, parents, students and members of the broader community – and supporting them as they imagine school development plans. We're building more complete schools, covering the entirety of the education curriculum programme – from kindergarten to 9th grade.

We now require that schools we work with have partners, who are already invested in the community, and in the delivery of education programmes. We use a newly introduced small grant programme to fund revenue generating programmes which are locally managed.

This commitment to sustainability is visible throughout all that we do as a Foundation. A school can be built in a matter of months, but without the active involvement of the community, without trained, competent and passionate teachers, the school is at risk of being just a building. Digicel's vision is that the school can be the beating heart of the community and I am proud to be part of the team helping to make that happen.

**Sophia Stransky**  
CEO, Digicel Foundation, Haiti



*"Guaranteeing a better future for our children is an endless, noble struggle that requires the contribution of all national stakeholders"*

## A LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

Few are the commercial institutions engaged in elaborate and directed activities for the benefit of communities. However, Digicel is clearly a company that assumes social responsibilities to the population through its Foundation by getting involved in areas such as education and community development. During my two years at the helm of the Ministry of National Education and Professional Training, I enjoyed collaborating with the Digicel Foundation team on many occasions, and I can testify that the organisation does excellent work in these domains across the country.

Convinced that equity in education inevitably requires adequate school infrastructure and equipment in unserved or underserved areas, I was pleased that the Foundation built 26 schools (including nine national schools) during my tenure at the Ministry. This contribution attests to a willingness to participate in quality education in Haiti.

Guaranteeing a better future for our children is an endless, noble struggle that requires the contribution of all national stakeholders. Therefore, it is very encouraging that institutions like the Digicel Foundation can set the tone by promoting the participation of our rural and urban communities in local development.

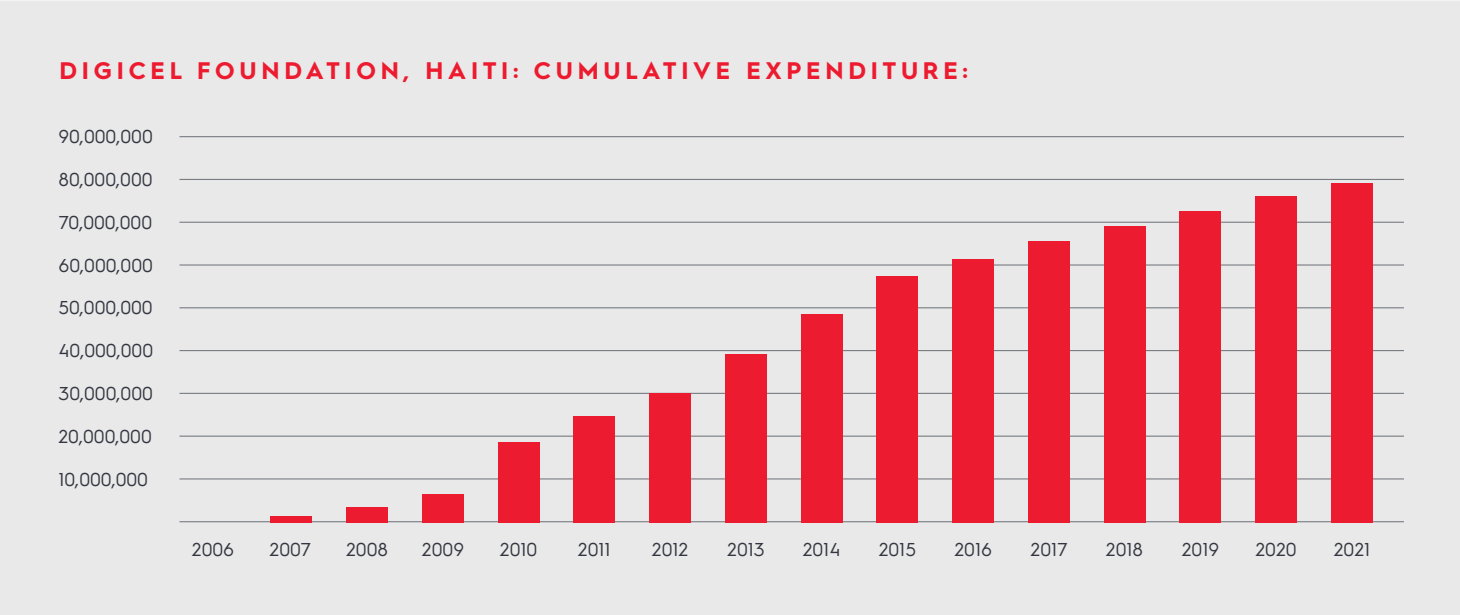
### **Nesmy Manigat**

Former Minister of National Education and Professional Training in Haiti.

He is the Chair of GPE's Finance and Risk Committee.







COMPARING IRELAND AND HAITI:

	Haiti	Ireland
Size	27,750 sq km	70,273 sq km
Population	11,198,240	5,224,884
GPD	US\$13.418b	US\$398.59b
GDP per capita	US\$1,176	US\$83,812
Life expectancy	64.0	82.3
UN HDI Ranking	170	2

TIMELINE:

- 2007

Launch of Digicel Haiti Foundation . Announcement of a two year programme to build 20 primary schools
- 2008

Continuation of the school building programme
- 2009

Programme expands to include education quality as well as school construction
- 2010

Haiti struck by one of the most destructive earthquakes ever: foundation announced a US\$6m fund to build 50 schools
- 2011

Since its launch, the foundation has invested US\$25m in Haiti, reaching almost 500,000 people; launch of the school of the year award
- 2012

The 90th school is completed, serving the community of Courte Forge, where it is the only primary school
- 2013

In addition to the education programme, the foundation delivered grants to 23 projects reaching almost 400,000 beneficiaries
- 2014

School #150 was completed, providing a quality education to 50,000 children
- 2015

The teacher training programme, which has already reached over 1,400 teachers and 180 directors, expanded with modules specifically designed for exceptional teachers
- 2016

In a single year, the Foundation built 11 new schools, and renovated a further nine
- 2017

To commemorate its tenth anniversary, a grant campaign entitled Konbit Pou Chanjman was launched, financing community projects across the country’s ten departments
- 2018

The total number of schools built by the foundation reaches 177
- 2019

The third edition of Konbit Pou Chanjman launched in May, generating hundreds of applications
- 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation held public awareness raising meetings; disseminated information through a bill board campaign and provided more than 2,000 food and sanitation kits to the poorest and donating almost US\$200,000 to medical organisations
- 2021

The foundation inaugurates its 187th school and makes a US\$1m commitment to rebuild schools in earthquake impacted areas

DIGICEL FOUNDATION IMPACT:

TOTAL INVESTMENT:

US\$79.4M

187 SCHOOLS CONSTRUCTED  
BENEFITING OVER 62K STUDENTS

396 PROJECTS

TRAINED

1719

SCHOOL DIRECTORS & TEACHERS

FUNDED

20

CERTIFIED SCHOOL TRAINERS

271 GRANTS

DISTRIBUTED IMPACTING 1.3M DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

US\$18M

ADDITIONAL FUNDING BY THE DIGICEL GROUP FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE IRON MARKET FOLLOWING THE DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE IN 2010

HAITI: FACTS AT A GLANCE



Digicel  
Foundation

SCHOOLS  
FOOTPRINT

HAITI  
2007-2021

LEGEND

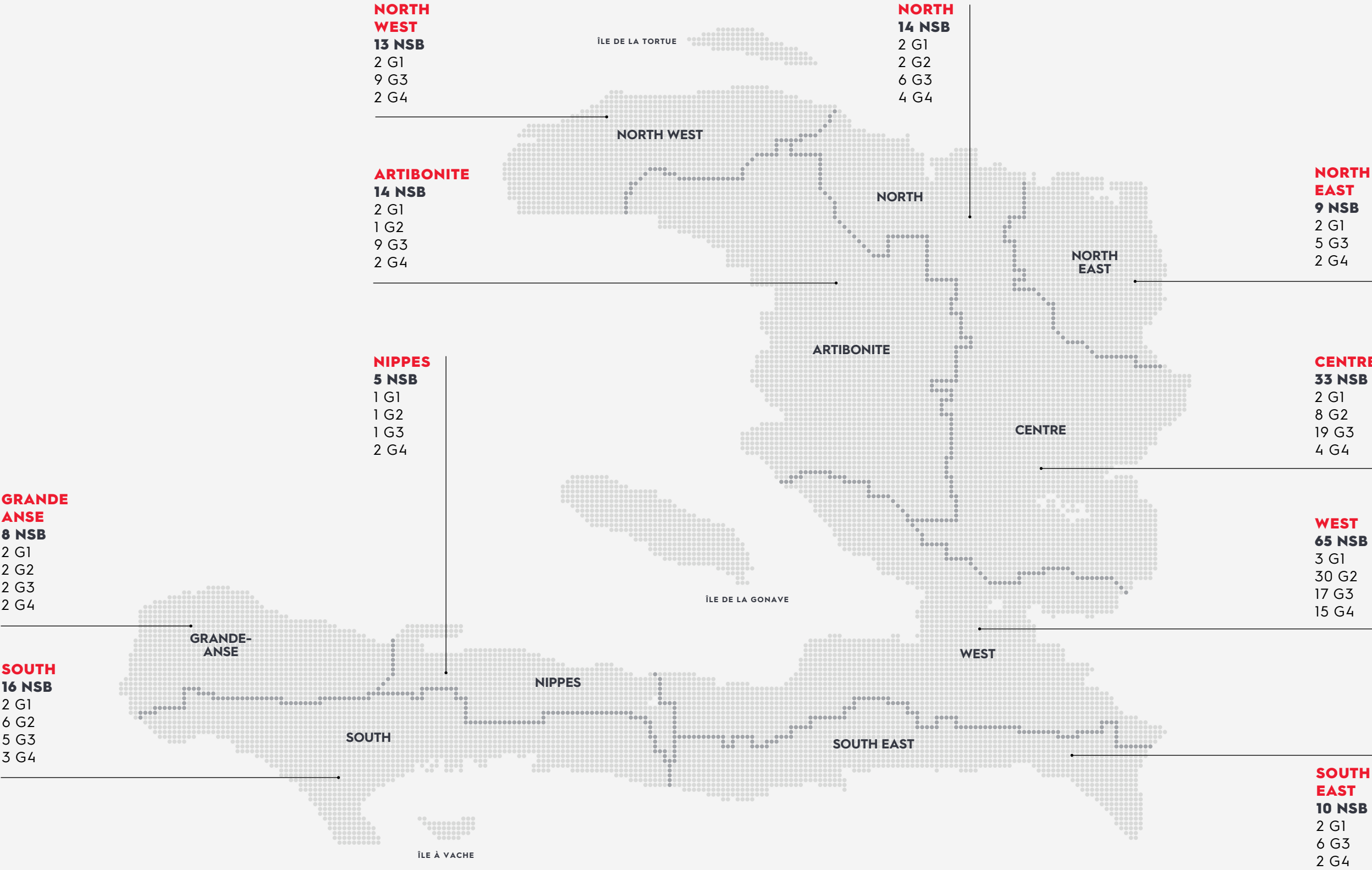
- NSB NEW SCHOOLS BUILT
- G1 FIRST GENERATION SCHOOLS
- G2 SECOND GENERATION SCHOOLS
- G3 THIRD GENERATION SCHOOLS
- G4 FOURTH GENERATION SCHOOLS

NUMBER OF  
SCHOOLS BUILT:

187

TOTAL INVESTMENT:

US\$79.4M







## HAITI: SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

The Digicel Foundation was launched on March 7, 2007, with the opening of Ecole Mixte Lageho in Thomazeau. Digicel Chair and Foundation Patron, Denis O'Brien, travelled to Haiti for this most special occasion and announced that he had a new challenge for the team: to rebuild 20 schools by March 2008, two per department. Thus, the Foundation's school construction programme was launched. It would eventually transform the learning experiences of more than 62,000 children across Haiti.

The programme committed to improving educational infrastructure by building schools that were safer and more appropriate to modern learning standards. Over the years, the school buildings evolved significantly, going from single-story units containing six classrooms to much larger structures consisting of multiple floors, depending on the topography of the available land.

After the January 2010 earthquake, a decision was made to build an additional 130 schools across the country, with a particular focus on the West department, which had been most severely affected. In addition, faced with the trauma of children afraid to return to classrooms built of concrete, 16 modular schools were built using shipping containers, and temporary facilities were also offered to the Ministry of National Education to allow them resume activities. This phase of our programme was completed with the inauguration of our 150th school at Saut d'Eau on November 19, 2014.

Today, the Digicel Foundation is proud to have built more than 187 schools, many in remote areas difficult to access.

What an amazing accomplishment, no other institution in Haiti can claim the same!





ÉCOLE COMMUNAUTAIRE  
DE LA RUCHE



FROM TOP:  
ÉCOLE NATIONALE DE CARREFOUR LUNDI  
ÉCOLE NATIONALE DE JOLIVERT  
ÉCOLE NOTRE DAME DU PERPÉTUEL SECOURS DE BEL-AIR







## HAITI:

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Digicel Foundation's mission places a particular emphasis on activities improving access to quality education. In a country like Haiti where it is estimated that less than 20% of teachers are certified in their profession, it is impossible to speak of quality education without investing in professional development. In addition to building modern schools conducive to learning, the Digicel Foundation needed to develop a programme to address the large gaps in training and experience.

Thus, in 2008 in collaboration with Initiative Développement (ID), we launched an in-school teacher-training programme for educators, through intensive development sessions held over the summer breaks. In 2012, an enhanced version of the programme was set up in partnership with the Université du Québec à Montréal, Quisqueya University, and the Ecole Normale Ayiti Education.

At first, 20 young education professionals were trained so that they could, in turn, train school principals and teachers employed at schools built by the Digicel Foundation. Intensive training sessions were organised over the summer months, followed by trainer visits to the participating schools to work directly with teachers in the classroom to assess the progress made and identify opportunities for improvement. Over the years, more than 1,700 people working in the field of education partook in the Foundation's professional development programme.

Based on its experience in training, in 2021 the Foundation published the Leadership Enrichment and Education Development Guide which summarises activities carried out by its Professional Development Programme team. Reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Education, the guide was developed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge with schools and partners and to serve as a tool to strengthen instruction in the classroom beyond the Foundation's reach.





## HAITI: GRANTS

The Digicel Foundation goes beyond its commitment to education by contributing to Haiti's progress through its investments in practical and sustainable community development projects that tackle a wide range of other issues facing the country. To date, more than 200 grants were approved in areas such as water and sanitation, Special Needs, environmental protection, economic development, and mental health. Close to 15 years after its foundation, these projects have served more than 1.3m direct beneficiaries.

To celebrate our 10th anniversary in 2017, we launched a new community grants campaign called "Konbit Pou Chanjman" (Come Together for Change), which aimed to support ten organisations, one per department, with a donation

of US\$10,000 each. With more than 300 applications received, the campaign reached many organisations across the country's ten departments in a relatively short period. The initiative was such a great success that it has since become an annual event with an average of 17 grants provided each year. The results of these projects on the terrain have been an inspiration to the entire Board and staff.

In addition, given the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, we have consistently stood by the Haitian people in times of need, including the 2008 floods in Gonaives, the devastating 2010 earthquake, Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and more recently, the 2021 earthquake.



# THE 2010 EARTHQUAKE

## AN UNPARALLELED RESPONSE

To list all of the Digicel Foundation's contributions post-earthquake is an almost impossible task, but one thing is for sure, they were massive and no other Haitian corporate foundation's actions or investments are even comparable.

Three days after the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010, the Digicel Foundation set to work by first meeting with the Haitian government to define priorities at the education level. The main offices of the Ministry of Education had collapsed and the Foundation procured and furnished a vast tent so that 400 Ministry staff could safely return to work.

Of course, the biggest contribution to Haiti's education system after the earthquake was the Foundation's commitment to build another 130 schools. The programme began by first providing schools in Leogane – the earthquake's epicentre – with containers fitted to serve as classrooms so that students could resume their studies in an environment where they felt safe. In parallel, hurricane and earthquake resistant school construction plans were developed and later used to improve the educational landscape across the country.

Beyond education, the Foundation helped persons impacted by the earthquake meet their everyday needs by organising massive distributions of food staples particularly in Leogane, which had been entirely abandoned in comparison to Port-au-Prince that was crowded by NGOs.

Generous funding was also provided to NGOs trying to make a difference on the ground. Sean Penn's organisation JP/ HRO received US\$500,000 to assist with rubble removal and Paul Farmer, through Zanmi Lasante, received US\$2m for multiple projects.

Digicel's involvement in the global response to the Haitian earthquake was unparalleled, not only in terms of the funds donated, but also in terms of the targeted impact through its programmes and unique willingness to leverage influence for the good of the poorest through the Haiti Action Network – quite simply a remarkable business.







# THE HAITI ACTION NETWORK

## TURNING HOPE INTO ACTION

During more than a decade of Denis O'Brien's chairmanship, the Clinton Global Initiative's Haiti Action Network (HAN) has evolved from a single call to action by President Bill Clinton in 2008 to a dynamic cadre of more than 300 companies, non-profits, multilateral organisations, and government entities in Haiti and around the world. To date, they have made more than 130 Commitments to Action (CTAs) in Haiti valued at over US\$600m.

HAN consistently acted as a connection point between needs and resources, building relationships between the private sector and humanitarian organisations; and building societal capacity to respond to crises.

At the heart of this achievement is Denis O'Brien. He has supported and encouraged HAN members to address extensive long-term development needs in Haiti, particularly related to agriculture, education, energy, health, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). For instance, more than 4,400 acres of forest have been protected or restored; over 65,000 farmers have improved access to inputs and markets; more than 100,000 children have been enrolled in educational programmes and schools; almost one million Haitians benefitted from improved access to healthcare and much more.

The Digicel Foundation has also made its own significant commitments over the years, resulting in the enrolment of thousands of children in school and the rebuilding of schools in all ten departments of Haiti as well as teacher training and enhanced connectivity. In 2020, Denis directly supported healthcare providers in the HAN such as Partners in Health/Zanmi Lasante in their efforts to prepare for and fight the pandemic as it arrived in Haiti.

Since the Network was founded, Denis has been steadfast in his commitment to Haiti and every HAN member. The legacy of the HAN under Denis' leadership will be that it is not enough just to talk about issues; its members and activities must drive action and impact. Denis has consistently motivated HAN members to push themselves and their organisations further and never give up despite the significant challenges Haiti has faced over the years. His leadership of the HAN as a convening platform for collaboration and change has not wavered once in more than a decade, and both the HAN and the Haitian people have benefitted immeasurably as a result of his extraordinary efforts.



# "HAITI HAS NEVER HAD A BETTER FRIEND THAN DENIS O'BRIEN"

PAUL FARMER  
PARTNERS IN HEALTH/  
ZANMI LASANTE



  
WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

September 22, 2021

Denis O'Brien  
Founder and Patron  
Digicel Foundation  
One Grand Canal Quay  
Dublin 2

Dear Denis:

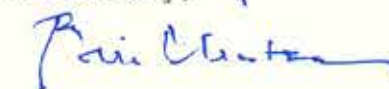
As you celebrate 20 years of Digicel's extraordinary philanthropic efforts in the Caribbean and beyond, I want to express my deepest gratitude and congratulations.

Over the last two decades, you have been an amazing source of empowerment and support for the communities in which you work—creating new opportunities for children to get a quality education, helping entrepreneurs pursue their dreams, and building a more sustainable future. Along the way you've touched millions of lives and proved that you can do well by doing good.

It has been one of the great gifts of my life to be able to work closely with you and become your friend over the years. I will always be especially grateful for your inspiring leadership of CGI's Haiti Action Network, your unwavering belief in Haiti's future, and your enduring support of the Haitian people.

Congratulations again on this anniversary, my friend. I look forward to continuing our work together and seeing you again soon.

Sincerely,







# THE IRON MARKET

## REBUILDING AFTER ALL IS LOST



Soon after the earthquake on January 12, 2010, in addition to announcing the Digicel Foundation would ramp up its construction programme to reach a milestone of 150 schools, Denis and Catherine O'Brien made a personal commitment to rebuild the iconic Iron Market located in the heart of downtown Port-au-Prince. They assembled a team of leading professionals to bring the project to fruition, including architect John Mc Aslan and construction experts John Milton and George Howard and set an ambitious target of having the market completed by December 2010.

The team evaluated the remains of the Iron Market to determine if some of the original structures were salvageable, especially the beautiful central clock towers. Orders were placed abroad for the materials needed for the

reconstruction, and the land was cleared of all debris. Like with most projects in Haiti, the challenges were herculean. Custom delays, insecurity, hurricane threats and cholera were just a few of the many obstacles that came into play.

Remarkably, the project was completed in time for the first anniversary of the earthquake. Crews worked around the clock, seven days a week, to ensure this new symbol of hope was ready for inauguration on January 11, 2011. The celebration was one to remember! The original vendors, delighted to be back to their stalls, watched as President Bill Clinton, Denis O'Brien, Catherine O'Brien, and other dignitaries gathered to formally re-open a bigger and better Iron Market.

For the hundreds of thousands of Haitians still living in camps, the Iron Market stood tall like a beacon of light.



# THE IRISH IN HAITI

## A 150 YEAR OLD FRIENDSHIP

In 1864, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny (SJC) dispatched delegations to two new missionary fields: Ireland and Haiti. The Irish nuns established schools in Dublin and Offaly. In Haiti, the congregation also ran schools, as well as medical centres and churches. A bond developed between these two out-reaches of the French order, and, over the following almost 160 years, there have been many examples of Irish members of the Joseph of Cluny community travelling to serve the poorest in Haiti. In recent years, the congregation has been responsible for educating some 10,000 girls annually, as well as running one of Haiti's four teacher-training colleges. The congregation – more than ably led by Sisters **Louis Marie Gown**, Maeve Guzman and Rowena Galvin – also built a strong engagement with the Digicel Foundation. One example was the construction of an orphanage at Lilavous. SJC contributed €100,000 to the construction cost, while the Digicel Foundation built the nine-classroom school on the site.

La Sainte Union, another French congregation with strong Irish roots, also brought a number of Irish sisters to Haiti; among them, **Sr. Helen Ryder**, from Banagher, who originally moved to Haiti in the 1990s and worked in the La Sainte Union's centres for the poorest members of the local community on the outskirts of Port Au Prince.

**Gena Heraty**, from Mayo, has also had a remarkable impact on Haiti, since she first arrived in Port Au Prince in the early 90s. As the coordinator of the Special Needs programme with Nos Petits Freres et Soeurs, her work is particularly focused on challenging prejudice against people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

For over 15 years, **Sister Veena Kelly**, better known as Sister Rose, has been working diligently to improve the lives of persons residing in the remote northwestern city of Jean Rabel. Responsible for a network of schools in the region in collaboration with Foi et Joie, her contribution to improving the quality of education is especially noteworthy.

**Colm Delves** is another individual who made his name in business but never forgot to ensure that those businesses had the most positive impact on the countries where they operated. In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, he famously slept on the desk in his office, directing at first hand response operations and building critical relations with US military to ensure relief flights were prioritised.

The connection between Haiti and Ireland must be unique. Two modestly sized countries, almost 7,000km distant, brought much closer by a community of business people, members of religious congregations, medical personnel, but, above all, humanitarians.





**Leslie and Carmel Buckley** and the team in Haven can also reflect on the significant difference they made to the lives of the poorest people in Haiti. Over twelve years, Haven spent over €29m digging wells, renovating homes and schools, and constructing latrines, benefiting tens of thousands of people. Almost 90,000 people received livelihood training and hundreds of businesses were established as a result of Haven's work. Not to mention the more than 1,500 volunteers who travelled from Ireland to help make this possible during the exhilarating – and fun – build-it weeks.



# PAPUA NEW GUINEA



## A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

I recall as if it were yesterday, the tropical Pacific sun beating down on my skin as I stood next to my mother on the roadside waiting patiently for a passing vehicle – any vehicle – that would take us to Rabaul. The provincial capital on the northern tip of New Britain Island was built in the shadow of Tavurvur volcano and, like most towns back then, it hosted a telephone exchange. There we would register our names, then join the long queue which would wind its way eventually to that tired black handset, inside of which would be the voice of a loved one in a distant part of the country.

Such were the lengths Papua New Guineans had to endure just to use a telephone. That is until Digicel entered the market in 2007. From that moment on, as Digicel grew, so too did our communities.

And so I am truly humbled that it has befallen on me to write this piece. For I walk in the footsteps of giants, each of whom have taken the baton from our Patron Denis O’Brien and ran with it to all 89 districts of Papua New Guinea, directly impacting over 900,000 lives. By connecting the unconnected, we have built classrooms, rolled out mobile health clinics, improved literacy and so on.

Such will be the enduring legacy of Denis O’Brien in Papua New Guinea. A giant among men.

**Michael Henao**

Chair, Digicel Foundation, Papua New Guinea





*"the Foundation has reached people who have never been reached before"*



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I learnt a new way of working through the Digicel Foundation: it's not just about accepting change, but also about our willingness to change with the times. Our philosophy is one of agility and responsiveness. Of partnering, and implementing not based on how we do things, but based on the needs of our communities, and our customers.

Lots of foundations use language around listening to the community, but the Digicel Foundation actually does it. We don't just run programmes: we have an approach, learnt from the business, of being close to the customer and of being driven by their needs. Like Digicel, the Foundation has reached people who have never been reached before.

For example over the years our school infrastructure projects has evolved in its design, from container classrooms to fully kitted prefabricated classrooms. We learnt - by listening - when the schools said the containers were too small for all that the community needed them to do - we partnered with a local steel supplier and contractors

to develop a modular building approach to school construction. We have over 320 school partnerships and have built 340 double classrooms in every district of the country.

Our work does not stop there. When we started, we measured our success by output: how many classrooms we built. We now measure by outcome: how are we improving quality education outcomes for our students. With the introduction of the LEED Programme focused on childhood literacy 3,100 students have been given the tools they need through their teachers to ensure they have a firm foundation to begin their education journey. Through our partnership with Digicel TV we are able to bridge the gap and ensure schools access learning content through our new Education Channel "BeLit".

I firmly believe there is no reason for poverty: it is a knowledge gap to be bridged and I look forward to continuing to work with the Digicel Foundation to bridge that gap.

**Serena Sasingian**  
CEO, Digicel Foundation, Papua New Guinea



# A LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

Digicel PNG has been transformational in its impact since it was established in 2007. Through Denis O’Brien’s visionary leadership, Digicel showed its commitment to the development of PNG when it established the Digicel PNG Foundation in 2008.

As Minister for Community Development at the time, I spearheaded several social policies within an umbrella policy of Integrated Community Development. These policies included Early Childhood Care and Development policy, Disability policy, revised Women’s policy, revised Youth policy, the Informal Economy policy and Sports For Development policy – the Department worked solidly but there was almost no budget for implementation. It was very frustrating until the newly established Digicel Foundation asked to meet with me to discuss introducing programmes that were in line with these people-centred and community-based policies. Their resolve to partner with and reinforce government policy established a unique public/private/community partnership.

Through the Foundation’s commitment to ensure no one is left behind, over 900,000 people have been impacted by its work, which has reached every district of PNG. This is no easy

feat considering the extremely difficult terrain and the cost of logistics to deliver services in rural and remote communities. Digicel PNG Foundation strives to ensure that it is not giving hand-outs to communities but rewarding strong governance, community leadership and service to those marginalised from formal systems.

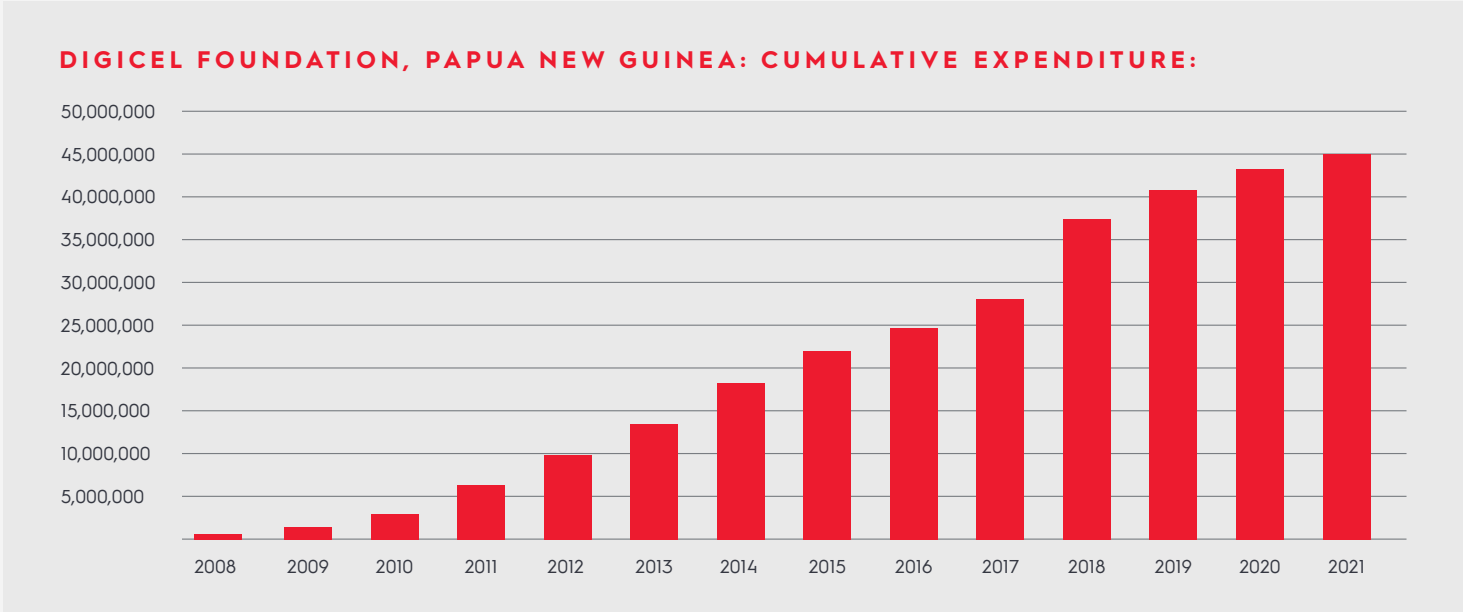
This contribution has been recognised by those who have been touched by the work of the Foundation and who want a better tomorrow for our children. Whether it be in Special Needs, early childhood education, teacher training or in health, you can be sure this Foundation has played a part in building a better and stronger PNG in line with the National Goals and Directive Principles enshrined in the Constitution of PNG.

My sincerest congratulations to Denis O’Brien and the Digicel team on your 20 year milestone – you exemplify the difference corporate philanthropy can make through your commitment to make sure no one gets left behind.

**Dame Carol Kidu**  
Former Minister for Community Development







COMPARING IRELAND AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA:

	Papua New Guinea	Ireland
Size	462,840 sq km	70,273 sq km
Population	7,399,757	5,224,884
GPD	US\$24.8b	US\$398.476b
GDP per capita	US\$2,636	US\$86,781
Life expectancy	64.5	81.45
UN HDI Ranking	155	2

TIMELINE:

- 2008

The Foundation was officially launched on 15 October 2008 as a not-for-profit charitable organisation with the aim of empowering communities and building community spirit
- 2009

By 2009, total of 18 elementary school classrooms have been built by the Foundation in rural PNG
- 2010

Four week teacher training provided to 57 teachers from a host of Community Learning Centres
- 2011

The Foundation supported National Capital District Mobile Health Clinic was launched and provided urban and medical and dental outreach clinics
- 2012

In its fourth full year, total Foundation funding for PNG projects surpassed US\$6.3m
- 2013

Solar solutions were included, for the first time, with every education and health infrastructure that we rolled out in PNG’s rural, remote and socially marginalised communities
- 2014

The basic education programme saw a further 37 double classrooms built, providing 2,640 children access to conducive learning environments
- 2015

Since the programme launch, the Foundation has funded 43 mobile health clinics, providing services to almost 400,000 people
- 2016

Men of Honour Awards was launched as a means to address Gender Based Violence. To date over 87 men have been identified as Men of Honour who are building peace in their communities
- 2017

In the nine years since its foundation, over 500 classrooms, 30 libraries, and 44 community learning centres have been constructed
- 2018

To commemorate Digicel PNG Foundation’s 10th anniversary year, the infrastructure programme team built their first ever two-storey double classroom building in Barakau Primary School
- 2019

The launch of the Foundations new strategy saw a strong focus on leadership for change, with Digicel staff and community leaders challenged to innovatively address societal issues through a newly launched grants programme’
- 2020

Since its launch, 900,000 people have benefited through 551 projects.

DIGICEL FOUNDATION IMPACT:

TOTAL INVESTMENT:  
US\$45.8M

551 PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

340 DOUBLE CLASSROOMS | 33 LIBRARIES

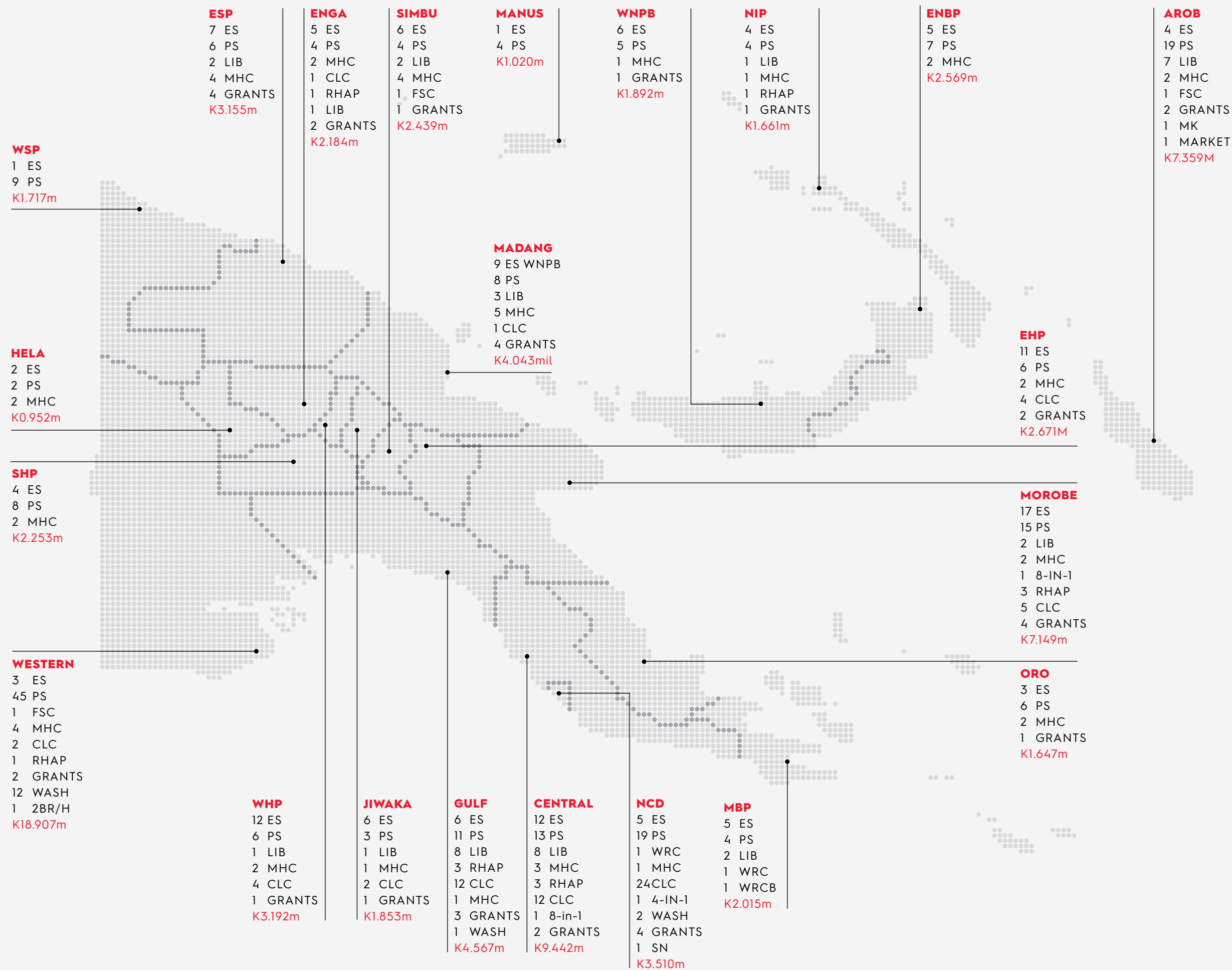
66 COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES | 43 MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS

12 RURAL HEALTH AID POSTS

901,704 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

PAPUA NEW GUINEA:  
FACTS AT A GLANCE





**Digicel**  
Foundation

## INVESTMENT FOOTPRINT





## PAPUA NEW GUINEA: EDUCATION

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), primary school attendance is at 63.4% for boys and 56.5% for girls – the lowest in Oceania. Adult literacy is similarly poor by international standards.

The Digicel Foundation invests in education in each of the markets in which it operates, and PNG is no different: towards the end of 2008, Digicel PNG Foundation launched its first ever double Classroom Project at Barakau Primary School in Central Province. From those humble beginnings the Foundation has gone onto build 53 early learning halls, 340 double classrooms, 13 elementary school platforms and a remarkable 32 libraries!

The only important indicator in any development project is the impact on the individual students. These words are from Karen Adam, a former student of Barakau Primary School:

“I remember when the Digicel staff came to visit Barakau. I was only in Grade 7 at that time and I recall seeing how much joy they had doing their jobs. When they visited, our teachers and parents told us that they were going to build new classrooms for us. Me and my friends were so happy to hear the news because up until that time, we had been using our old classrooms which were the same classrooms that my parents had gone to school in. Whenever it rained it spoilt the school grounds because it became too muddy for us to sit and most times school would be closed because of it.

We felt lucky that our school was chosen to be the first school ever to receive classroom infrastructure from Digicel PNG Foundation. We eagerly watched as the classrooms were built for both the primary and elementary schools. The classrooms were finally finished and we moved in to complete the rest of our academic year. In 2009 I completed grade 8 and left to move on to high school. My friends and everyone in Barakau are very grateful for all that the Digicel Foundation has done.”







# AN EPIC STORY

## A DRAMATIC CHANGE IN 41 COMMUNITIES

There was an 18 month period, in 2019-2020, in which 41 schools, wash facilities and a teacher’s house were built in the most inaccessible terrain imaginable. There were many who played a critical role in making this possible – the logisticians, builders, suppliers and contractors – but ultimately, this remarkable achievement was because of the strength of the relationship between the Digicel Foundation and Sustainable Development Program (SDP). SDP uses income from the Long Term Fund (LTF) to pay for their development programmes which are currently focused on the Western Province.

For Education Projects Igniting Change (EPIC), SDP provided the funding, and the Foundation project managed the US\$8.5m venture.

Rolling out infrastructure can be expensive and logistically difficult, but we never say no to a challenge, and we are proud that the Foundation’s collaboration with SDP transformed dozens of remote communities.

EPIC was built on two pillars: the Foundation’s knowledge that a conducive learning environment goes a huge distances in influencing education outcomes; and SDPs commitment to bring positive change to the poorest regions in PNG. These 41 schools are an achievement that the Foundation will take pride in for years to come and are a concrete example of our commitment to leave no-one behind.







## PAPUA NEW GUINEA: HEALTH



Papua New Guinea's health system is best described as fragile: maternal death rates are eight times higher in PNG than in other Asian and Pacific region countries; there is inequity in access to health care – rural children are twice as likely to die before their fifth birthday compared to urban ones; and there is a critical shortages of trained personnel – just 1 doctor for every 14,000 people (compared to one doctor for every 370 in Ireland).

In response, Digicel Foundation has prioritised investment in health services. The Foundation has built 12 Rural Health Aid Posts and has donated 43 ambulances around the country. Below is the story of Raymond Signamis who partnered with us to build a Rural Health Aid Post in his village, in the rugged mountains of Western Province. It was the first permanent infrastructure in the area since being discovered in the 1960s. The villagers usually walk two weeks into Tabubil through thick jungle forest to seek medical attention.

"It was in April 2014, that I first decided to build a proper Rural Health Aid post for my community where there is no airstrip and road network. What motivated me was my memory of getting dysentery and almost dying. My appeals for funds and support were unsuccessful. Rather than being down-hearted, I decided to work with members of the community and build one for ourselves.

Through assistance from the Digicel Foundation and local businesses, May 21st 2019 was a special day: We now have a permanent steel structured Aid Post that is delivering proper medical assistance for the Murray Valley people. It doesn't end there, Digicel built a mobile communication tower right in the middle of our village which has finally connected them to the outside world. Our hard work, prayers and patience just paid off with additional blessings."





## PAPUA NEW GUINEA: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

“What can be done to address Gender Based Violence in Papua New Guinea?”

This was the challenge given to our team in 2015 by Denis O’Brien. Our team got their thinking caps on and started consulting experts in the field that were doing work on the ground to address the violence. What became clear to us was that there seemed to be a lot of interventions dealing with the violence after it happened in the form of safe houses and support for women that were survivors of violence but very little was being done to break the cycle of violence with men.

It was from that place that we began the Men of Honour Campaign. To date over 87 men have been recognised through our annual Men of Honour Awards Programme for their work in promoting peace and stopping violence. These men are ordinary men who have been doing extra ordinary things. One of the many Men of Honour is Bau Sabadi who was recognised in 2018 for his work in Early Childhood Education. Shortly after receiving the award, tragedy befell his family after his daughter, Grace Gavera, was beaten to death by her partner.





**MEN OF HONOUR**  
-PAPUA NEW GUINEA-

**THE LEADER**

HE'S RESPECTED. HE'S A SHAPER OF DESTINY. HE'S THE ONE THAT COMMUNITIES LOOK TO FOR DIRECTION AND VISION. IF YOU KNOW A MAN LIKE THIS, NOMINATE HIM TODAY FOR LEADERSHIP AWARD AT THE FIRST EVER 2014 MAN OF HONOUR AWARDS.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR NOMINATE GO TO ANY DIGICEL OUTLET OR [FACEBOOK.COM/MOH](https://www.facebook.com/moh)

THIS IS A CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIOLENCE

Digicel FOUNDATION



**MEN OF HONOUR**  
-PAPUA NEW GUINEA-

**THE VISIONARY**

HE'S A DREAMER. HE'S A LATERAL THINKER. HE'S THE ONE WHO'S BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS AND TRANSFORMING HIS PEOPLE. IF YOU KNOW A MAN LIKE THIS, NOMINATE HIM TODAY FOR THE INGENUITY AWARD AT THE FIRST EVER 2014 MAN OF HONOUR AWARDS.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR NOMINATE GO TO ANY DIGICEL OUTLET OR [FACEBOOK.COM/MOH](https://www.facebook.com/moh)

THIS IS A CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIOLENCE

Digicel FOUNDATION



**MEN OF HONOUR**  
-PAPUA NEW GUINEA-

**THE MENTOR**

HE'S STRONG. HE'S MOTIVATED. HE'S THE CREATOR OF NOT ONLY CHAMPION ATHLETES BUT CHAMPION PEOPLE. IF YOU KNOW A MAN LIKE THIS, NOMINATE HIM TODAY FOR THE MENTOR AWARD AT THE FIRST EVER 2014 MAN OF HONOUR AWARDS.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR NOMINATE GO TO ANY DIGICEL OUTLET OR [FACEBOOK.COM/MOH](https://www.facebook.com/moh)

THIS IS A CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIOLENCE

Digicel FOUNDATION



**MEN OF HONOUR**  
-PAPUA NEW GUINEA-

**THE PROTECTOR**

HE'S A PROTECTOR. HE'S A PEACEMAKER. HE'S BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER AND MAKING THEM STRONGER. IF YOU KNOW A MAN LIKE THIS, NOMINATE HIM TODAY FOR TRUPELA MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD AT THE FIRST EVER 2014 MAN OF HONOUR AWARDS.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR NOMINATE GO TO ANY DIGICEL OUTLET OR [FACEBOOK.COM/MOH](https://www.facebook.com/moh)

THIS IS A CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIOLENCE

Digicel FOUNDATION



**MEN OF HONOUR**  
-PAPUA NEW GUINEA-

**THE TEACHER**

HE'S THE WISE, RESPECTED ONE. THE ONE WHO TAKES YOU UNDER HIS WING AND QUIETLY STEERS HIS COMMUNITY TO GREATNESS. IF YOU KNOW A MAN LIKE THIS, NOMINATE HIM TODAY FOR THE EDUCATION CHAMPION AWARD AT THE 2014 MAN OF HONOUR AWARDS.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR NOMINATE GO TO ANY DIGICEL OUTLET OR [FACEBOOK.COM/MOH](https://www.facebook.com/moh)

THIS IS A CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIOLENCE

Digicel FOUNDATION

"I was attending a Men of Honour Workshop when my daughter was killed. Even though my family and friends wanted to retaliate and the perpetrator and his family were willing to pay a huge compensation for the death of my daughter, I chose to do the honourable thing and let justice take its course. I will continue to seek justice for my daughter and all other women who are victims of domestic violence," Mr. Sabadi said.

Thousands of people have been impacted by the efforts of our Men of Honour. If we are to turn the tide against violence in our nation, then we need male role models to show the way for the next generation to follow.



# FR. JOHN M. GLYNN

## A MISSION OF HOPE

The settlements and neglected suburbs of Port Moresby are home to many poor and marginalised people. Under-served and unpoliced communities of people of many different ethnicities and languages live together in sometimes very fractious conditions. This is where WeCare does its work and it is where Denis O'Brien and the Digicel Foundation has made a dramatic impact since they began funding WeCare in 2007.

The Foundation's purpose is for Papua New Guinea to have equal access to opportunities so that no-one is left behind. What they have done in Port Moresby shows that they have a true commitment to this purpose. They have given a head-start in life to thousands of young people in the Early Learning and Care centres.

In addition young people with severe disabilities have received wheel chairs, medical treatment, and other support

to allow them attend school. Single mothers, people living with HIV/AIDS and chronic diseases have all been helped unstintingly. Young needy people have been supported in their education all the way through to university.

Some years ago, during one of his hectic business visits to Port Moresby, Denis accepted an invitation to visit one of these settlement Care Centres. We went into the settlement in three or four cars, and without any police escort. The community provided us with all the protection we needed. We were given a great welcome. Denis was Denis: enjoyed it all, engaged with people, and in no rush to leave. As always, he demonstrated respect and acknowledged the natural dignity of the people. WeCare are thankful for his and the Foundation's support.

Go mbeannaigh Dia ar an obair.

**Fr. John M. Glynn OL**







# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

**MARINA VAN DER VLIES REMINISCES**

In July 2006, my husband and I, with our two young children, made the adventurous move to Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea. Shortly after arriving, I joined the Digicel Group, and this is where I became involved with the local communities, and this is where my passion for community work began! At the start of 2008 I was asked to set up a Foundation for Digicel in PNG – the third Foundation for Digicel after Jamaica and Haiti. What a rewarding experience this would turn out to be.

Learning from colleagues in those countries, we established a Board, with an independent Chair, introduced a transparent funding process and identified effective partners.

This led to our first project and the official launch of the Foundation on October 15th, 2008, with the opening of our first Community Learning Centre at 8 Mile settlement in Port Moresby by Dame Carol Kidu, the Minister of Community Development as our guest of honour.

We were one of the first corporate foundations in the country. Fast forward and by the end of 2012 we had set up 180 health and education projects in all 22 provinces.

One of my favourite projects was started by a couple, Gaume and her husband Tirimo. They were already running a Sunday school in the backyard of their house in Port Moresby. The Foundation visited their humble school and saw the great work that was being done with so much passion. In 2009 a container classroom for early learning was funded. The school continued to grow and by 2012 the school had close to 100 children enrolled. After graduating to primary school these children were topping their class at the formal schools and being openly praised by their teachers. The Foundation rewarded them for their efforts by funding the school's first permanent classroom as well as their teacher training.







Looking back, we introduced a number of initiatives which I feel were critical to the Foundation's success:

- We had a committed and effective Board and staff who ensured we had a business approach to operations
- Community ownership of projects was a prerequisite for funding and we listened to and worked with partners
- We learnt by doing, and we focused on projects which could be scaled.

I look back on this time as the most enriching and rewarding experience of my life and am very proud to see what is being achieved. This would not have been possible without the tremendous vision of the founder and patron of Digicel Foundation, Denis O'Brien, and his unwavering belief in the people of Papua New Guinea for which I and many others are forever grateful.







# TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



# A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

My involvement with the Foundation actually began by sheer luck. Less than a year into the job as Legal & Regulatory Advisor at Digicel Trinidad and Tobago, I was assigned the task of incorporating a non-profit entity at the local Companies Registry. That entity was Digicel Trinidad and Tobago Limited. Fast forward to almost 15 years later on its Board of Directors and now as Chairperson, when I think of all the lives we have touched and the impact we have made on Trinidad and Tobago, the feeling is overwhelming. If Digicel is to be thought of as a living, breathing organism, the Foundation is its conscience, its heartbeat and its soul.

Our Founder and Patron Denis O'Brien is well-known for saying that wherever Digicel grows, our communities must grow with us. There is no better evidence of the sincerity of his commitment to this tenet than his investment in the Digicel Foundation, not just by funding it, but by getting deeply involved in the actual work that we do. The strong leadership provided by Mr. O'Brien as well as our Global Chair, Ms. Maria Mulcahy is a constant reminder to us about the significance of the task with which we have been entrusted. They are genuinely passionate about improving our communities, and we the Foundation Team are expected to roll up our sleeves and get into the trenches with the causes that we support. We don't just hand out cardboard cheques and smile for photographers. We get dirty. We do the work. We laugh and cry alongside the people we support.

There is generally no shortage of internal praise for the Foundation Team; Digicel employees are well aware of what we do and in fact, are a part of the effort; but the external validation we have been getting also speaks volumes. When your country's Government, as well as entities like the Red Cross, UN and IDB come knocking on your door to work with you, it means you are definitely doing the right things. These partnerships are a valuable part of our strategy going forward as they will enable us to expand our reach considerably.

**Desha Clifford**  
Chair, Digicel Foundation, Trinidad and Tobago







## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Anniversaries are a natural time to consider the journey we've taken, and perhaps reimage where we want to go. When the Digicel Foundation in Trinidad and Tobago was founded in 2012, we mapped out a vision of doing things differently:

We wanted to be hands-on with our partners – offering volunteer and technical support. In return, we demand the highest standards of programme delivery.

We wanted to be build respect for Digicel with our customers through the Foundation. We invest in what's important to them, and within their communities. A decade on, our connection with our customers is now at an emotional level.

What is the outcome? A legacy of inclusion. An employer of choice. A commercial brand whose attributes – trust, integrity, compassion – benefit greatly because of the wonderful work the Foundation has done. But most of all, a decade of impact.

We're happy that we've delivered. The business has benefited and the population of Trinidad and Tobago has benefited. But we also realise that there is a lot more to do. We are constantly analysing our purpose, and how we continue to be relevant. The perfect example is the Extraordinary Projects Impacting Communities initiative – small grants genuinely delivering transformative change.

I am beyond grateful to have witnessed the magnificent effect the Digicel Foundation has had on Trinidad and Tobago: it has been a journey of discovery and wonder and I look forward to the next decade!

**Penny Gomez**  
CEO, Digicel Foundation, Trinidad and Tobago



*"Digicel is a company that strives to grow in a way that causes the communities it serves to grow as well. This is the foundation of sustainable business"*

## A LETTER FROM THE UN REPRESENTATIVE

The Vision of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a world that, by the end of this decade, is just, equitable and tolerant. A world where human dignity is respected, the needs of the most vulnerable are met, and economies develop in harmony with nature.

In supporting the Trinidad and Tobago Government's implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the UN has found an excellent partner in the Digicel Foundation—which has invested US\$5.7m in projects that have impacted more than 180,000 lives.

Sometimes we worked apart, as when the Foundation used virtual reality games to help persons with disabilities practice drills for natural disasters in an immersive way. Increasingly, we're working together.

Together, the UN and the Foundation are helping the Government accelerate implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – and, crucially, supporting persons with disabilities in becoming their own agents of change.

Digicel is a company that strives to grow in a way that causes the communities it serves to grow as well. This is the foundation of sustainable business.

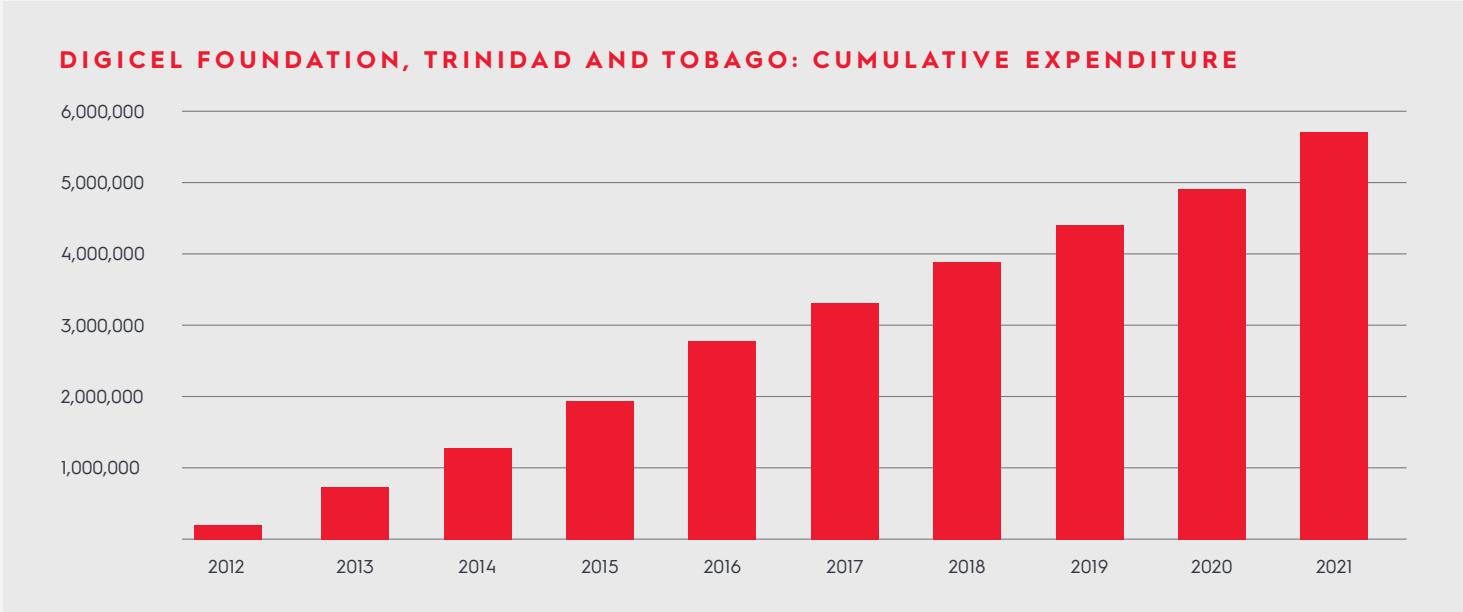
It's an approach that's especially important in Trinidad and Tobago – a high-income country that's not eligible for development assistance, but which still faces developmental challenges that would be difficult for the Government to handle without private sector partnership.

The UN in Trinidad and Tobago applauds the Digicel Foundation for nine years of support to Trinidad and Tobago's sustainable development. We look forward to accomplishing even greater things together.

**Marina Walter**  
United Nations Resident Coordinator







COMPARING IRELAND AND TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO:

	Trinidad and Tobago	Ireland
Size	5,128 sq km	70,273 sq km
Population	1,394,969	5,224,884
GPD	US\$23.2b	US\$398.476b
GDP per capita	US\$15,384	US\$86,781
Life expectancy	73.5	81.45
UN HDI Ranking	67	2

TIMELINE:

- 2012** Launch of the Digicel Trinidad and Tobago Foundation
- 2013** Hosted the first colour run in Trinidad and Tobago, showing full support for the Special Olympics International theme ‘Say NO to the R word’
- 2014** The Special Needs Therapy-Based Education Programme was launched in October 2014
- 2015** The Foundation supported Special Olympics team won 49 medals at the World Summer Games in Los Angeles
- 2016** The launch of EPIC – Extraordinary Projects Impacting Communities – delivering funding to a series of community based projects
- 2017** Continued support for “Preparing You” a disaster management and emergency evacuation programme for persons with Special Needs
- 2018** The Digital Citizenship Programme: computer labs established and a programme designed to educate students on cyber-bullying, cyber-security, safer internet use launched
- 2019** The Foundation partnered with The Shelter, a safe house for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, to develop a multi-functional space that provides children access to a library, reading and craft area
- 2020** Continued expansion of the community grant programme, facilitating initiatives such as back to school drives, supporting those affected by heavy rainfalls or floods, and providing food hampers for the socially displaced
- 2021** Outfit all 34 Special Needs schools and other mainstream schools with devices and high speed broadband

DIGICEL FOUNDATION IMPACT:

TOTAL INVESTMENT:

US\$5.7M

515 UNIQUE PROJECTS ISLAND-WIDE

SUPPORTED OVER

2,900

SPECIAL NEEDS ATHLETES & 240 COACHES

815 TEACHERS TRAINED | 18 REFURBISHED SCHOOLS

103 COMMUNITIES IMPACTED THROUGH EPIC

180,150

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO:

FACTS AT A GLANCE



Digicel

Foundation

INVESTMENT  
FOOTPRINT

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
2012-2021

- LEGEND
- AQ

AQUAPONICS
- ZF

ZIPPY'S
- CK

CKFTO
- TB

THERAPY BASED
- NS

NATURE SEEKERS
- WG

WORLD GAMES
- PY

PREPARING YOU
- KAL

KALEIDODASH
- AA

ARTS ALIVE
- AFT

AFETT
- BIL

BILLBOARDS
- PP

PLAYPARK
- SE

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR
- HT

HIPPOThERAPY
- BA

BEE APIARY
- SD

SIDC
- EP

EPIC
- CE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- COE

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
- GPT

GIRLS POWER TECH
- BT

BETTER TOGETHER
- CY

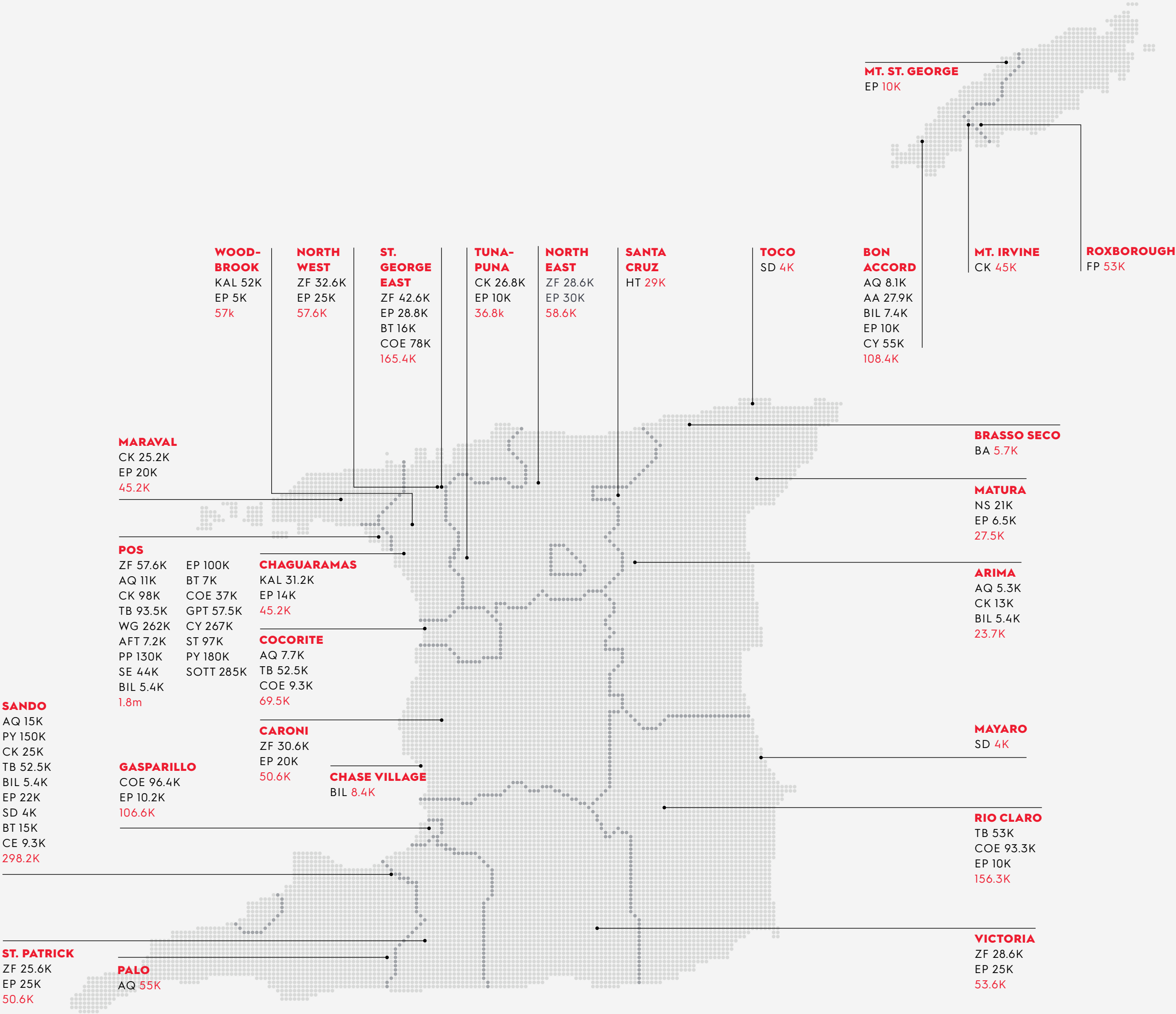
CONNECTING YOU
- ST

STANDING TOGETHER
- SOTT

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

TOTAL INVESTMENT:

US\$5.7M







## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: **SPECIAL NEEDS**

**W**hen Digicel first entered the market in Trinidad and Tobago in 2006, our first partnership was with Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago. That partnership brought awareness to the many challenges faced by persons with disabilities. Today, the Foundation supports all things Special Needs – from therapy, inclusion, education, disaster preparedness to sport for development. It’s an honour to support initiatives that really improve opportunities for persons with Special Needs. The programmes and projects are wide-ranging and include: 17 aquaponics systems; the refurbishment of 8 schools in the Centre of Excellence programme; therapy-based training for 307 teachers; and training in disaster preparedness and management for the full teaching staff and student bodies in 18 schools. The

investment in this space has made certain that key partnerships and programmes are guaranteed to address basic needs, close a gap and empower this under-served community, following closely in the footsteps of the Foundation’s Patron, Denis O’Brien.

Partnering with Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago (SOTT) has been a game-changer for the Digicel Foundation. This relationship has moved beyond simply sponsoring athletes to developing citizens and successful sportsmen/sportswomen and coaches. The Foundation’s ‘Community Training Programme’ ensures that participants receive the necessary in-depth training, skill development, mentoring and a holistic experience to compete locally and internationally in the Games.





In 2016, the Digicel Foundation launched a disaster management and emergency evacuation programme for persons with Special Needs. The programme has grown into a key flagship initiative with a dynamic public-private sector partnership that has contributed toward its success. International donor agencies in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) small grants programme and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Innovation Lab were drawn to the programme, with

significant sums in funding. In 2020, a digital component was added: 'Masters of Prep' – a virtual reality gaming app that allows students to practise safety drills and build disaster resilience in the form a treasure hunt at home or at school. This application increases accessibility for persons with disabilities and is yet another example of how the interventions at the Digicel Foundation have a community focus and are people driven.





## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



**A**t the Digicel Foundation, the community development portfolio is the spark in the engagement strategy. Whether it's building emotional literacy in young children, providing community grants, encouraging farming through aquaponics, working with bee-keepers or equipping digital citizens, the Foundation is guided by the needs of those on the ground. Through the Zippy's Friends programme over 15,000 students between the ages of 5-8 years were impacted over a three-year period. Zippy's Friends was an emotional literacy programme that built communication skills, taught coping skills and addressed emotions associated with loss and death. Zippy's golden rule is something everyone can learn from: 'It must solve the problem. It must make you feel better and it must not hurt anyone else.'

The Foundation has been a forerunner in community engagement through the roll out of its EPIC (Extraordinary Projects Impacting Communities) small-

grants programme. After four years of implementation over 48,000 persons have been impacted by 103 community grants in Trinidad and Tobago. Projects such as community water tank farms, play parks, aquaponics, upgrading youth friendly spaces and tech labs are just a few of the EPIC initiatives changing communities over the years.

The world is now digital! Our youth, especially our young women, need to be prepared to navigate the virtual world responsibly and with the right set of skills. The Foundation's Digital Citizenship Programme and Girls Power Tech initiatives aims do just that. Expose youth to essential training, outfit their tech spaces, surround youth with influencers in the ICT space. It is a great recipe to help them successfully carve a spot in this digitalised space.





## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: **DIGITAL CONNECTION**

**C**OVID-19 exacerbated the ICT needs for citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. However, prior to the global pandemic, the Digicel Foundation had been partnering with stakeholders to ensure that those most vulnerable were not being left behind in this digital age. In 2017, the Foundation launched its Digital Citizenship Programme, partnering with secondary schools in rural communities to increase access to computers and the internet. By 2019, with IT partner CISCO on board, teachers and students from 16 secondary schools were trained in ICT essentials and received computers and internet packages to upgrade their IT labs.

Empowering girls and young women is one of the UN's sustainable developmental goals. As a Foundation, we're contributing to this global target through our annual Girls Power Tech (GPT) event. A two-year partnership with CISCO threw the event into the spotlight. GPT inspires young women to consider careers in ICT by exposing them to influential speakers, tech demonstrations and a hackathon. In 2021, a new partnership with Shell Trinidad and Tobago allowed room for more innovation to stimulate the young women. The Foundation team incorporated virtual reality through the use of Microsoft Altspace VR, allowing

the girls to create an avatar and virtually participate in the two-day event in the same space, in spite of COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

The launch of the 'Masters of Prep' Virtual Reality app is yet another example of Digicel Foundation incorporating new-technology to increase its reach and widen its engagement with varying stakeholders. 'Master of Prep', is part of the wider 'Preparing You' programme that builds disaster resilience among persons with Special Needs. The app takes the user on a treasure hunt simulating likely disasters. For children with Special Needs, the game is educational and is simply fun.

One major tech highlight for 2020 was our 'Connecting You' project. The initiative was developed as a response to student migration to online learning, as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. After consulting Specials Needs teachers and parents, the Foundation purchased and delivered 1,719 tablets and 200 refurbished laptops to 34 Special Needs schools – which captured all the schools in the specials needs catchment – and 29 mainstream schools in Trinidad and Tobago. The initiative also included data and internet packages to ensure that students and teachers remained connected during this critical transition.





# PREPARING YOU

## A SPECIAL INITIATIVE

The Foundation's global theme 'Creating a world where no one gets left behind' resonates in all of developmental programmes. In 2016, through a partnership with the UN Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) and the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM), the Foundation launched its 'Preparing You' programme. 'Preparing You' a disaster management and emergency evacuation programme for persons with Special Needs, is one-of-a-kind. The programme includes risk-based assessments at Special Needs schools, teacher training on disaster response, development of emergency evacuation plans, installation of safety equipment and first aid kits, as well as emergency drills for teachers and students

The two-year US\$70,000 partnership with GEF SGP helped cover costs for implementation in seven schools – five in Trinidad and two in Tobago. In 2018, the Foundation entered a new partnership

with Inter- American Development Bank (IDB), whose investment of US\$150,000 allowed for the team to include ten additional Special Schools to the total programme beneficiaries.

'Preparing You' uses a multi-pronged approach to engage persons with disabilities. Role-play, music, puzzles, puppet shows, instructional videos where persons with disabilities (PWDs) are the stars and even virtual reality have all been incorporated into this flagship initiative.

The latest launch of the Virtual Reality app, 'Masters of Prep', further positions this programme as a sustainable, developmental programme. 'Masters of Prep' follows the adventures of 'Captain K', the friendly neighbourhood leatherback turtle as he takes the user on a treasure hunt to safe guard your immediate surroundings in the event of an emergency.





## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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THANK  
YOU  
DIGICEL  
FOUNDATION!



**Digicel** Foundation