

# The University of the West Indies

## Tertiary Level Institutions Unit

Assessing the Human Resource Needs of CARICOM Countries:  
Planning the Tertiary Education Sector Response

Workshop Details  
Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands  
October 3, 2006

### **Phase I: Workshop I**

The first phase of the proposed Project was operationalised through a Workshop held on April 25-27, 2005 in Kingston, Jamaica. The workshop facilitated the participation of a wide representation of tertiary education stakeholders, including:

- students (past, present and prospective),
- employers (public and private sectors),
- heads of tertiary level institutions and
- government policy makers.

The central purpose of the Workshop was to identify regional development goals, assess current and projected demands and advance ideas for closing existent gaps. An adaptation of the "Delphi Technique" - which facilitates information-gathering for problem-solving, planning and decision-making from expert-groups - was used as a central research strategy. As a precursor to the workshop, questionnaires were sent to various stakeholder groups to gather information. This information was subsequently collated and summarized. At the workshop the participants were separated into small focus-groups and given the collated information for their perusal, comments and adjustments. Their final task was to prioritize and rank particular issues related to national needs.

### **Method**

The Delphi Technique:

- (I) is an effective methodology and process for problem analysis and for determining priorities

for improvement,

- (ii) originated at the Rand Corporation (Dalkey and Helmer) for the purposes of technological forecasting and futuristic opinion gathering (now an important) methodology in industrial decision making, educational planning, quality of life studies,
- (iii) entails forecasting, futurist opinion gathering, establishing importance, and strategies for action,
- (iv) uses Panel of Experts combined with participatory and focus group process (brainstorming),
- (v) is participatory and consensus seeking,
- (vi) enables sub-groups to arrive at descriptive/normative scenarios related to priorities for improvement,
- (vii) depends on anonymity (through use of questionnaires) and statistical group response, the systematic procedures are intended to ensure some level of objectivity in the outcomes of the exercise,
- (viii) is conducted as a sequence of rounds; the results of previous rounds feedback to participants; ensures summarized group results, enables flexibility (modification) in its execution.

The procedure entails the following: (1) participants generate a list based on initial questionnaires (2) responses are clustered, i.e., a master list prepared by TLIU (3) participants rank and rate items (4) results are ranked and rated again (i.e., a number of times until a consensus is reached). TLIU analyzes and reports results of findings.

The Delphi sessions were held at the University College of the Cayman Islands on Tuesday, October 3, 2006.

Below are the results of the Delphi session.

## Delphi/Focus Group Results

### Comparison of Focus Group Responses: Questions 1-5

**Question 1:** Major Human Resource Needs for Economic, Social and Cultural Development.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<b>TLI Heads</b>
1st	Educator / Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Educator / Teacher</li> <li>★ Hospitality / Tourism (Soft Skills)</li> <li>★ Finance / Banking / Lawyer</li> </ul>	Finance / Banking
2nd	Doctor, Pathologist		Educators / Teachers
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Hospitality / Skilled Workers</li> <li>★ Finance / Banking Professionals</li> </ul>		Medical / Allied Health
4 <sup>th</sup>		Building Relater Worker / Engineer	Hospitality Tourism
5 <sup>th</sup>		Doctor / Nurse	Emergency Services
6 <sup>th</sup>		Law Enforcement	

**Question 2:** Education and Training Programmes required to meet future Development Needs.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<b>TLI Heads</b>
1st	Education / Teacher Training	Management (Sales / Marketing / Project and Product Management)	Medical / Allied Health
2nd	Medicine, Allied Health	★ Skills training / Technical Vocational / Apprenticeship ★ Education / Literacy	Skills Training / Technical Vocational
3rd	Hospitality / Tourism		★ Education / Teacher Training ★ Finance and Banking
4th	Finance and Banking	Finance / Banking	
5th	ICT Training	★ Hospitality / Tourism ★ Soft Skills	Hospitality Tourism

**Question 3:** Levels of education and training needed to meet the jobs and skills required by the country (e.g. Degrees, Certificates, Diplomas, Associate Degrees, On-the-job training Short Courses, Workshops).

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<b>TLI Heads</b>
1st	Bachelors Degrees	Basic Education	Associate Degrees
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Associate Degrees	Internship / On-the-job training	Certificate / Diplomas
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Post-Graduate Degrees	Short Courses	Bachelors Degrees
4 <sup>th</sup>	Certificates / Diplomas	★ Certificates / Diplomas ★ Associate Degrees	Short Courses / Workshops
5 <sup>th</sup>	Internships / OJT		Postgraduate Studies
6 <sup>th</sup>		Bachelors Degrees	
7 <sup>th</sup>		Post-Graduate Certification	

**Question 4:** Barriers to participating in Tertiary Level Education.

- ◆ Students were asked to identify the top five barriers to pursuing tertiary education.
- ◆ Employers were asked to identify the top five barriers to providing and/or facilitating education and training for employees.
- ◆ Providers were asked to provide the top five barriers to persons participating in tertiary education.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Employers</b>
1st	Availability of Programmes	Job Demands
2nd	Finance (incl. Government Funding)	Meeting living expenses
3rd	★ Attitude / fear of embarrassment / Lack of motivation ★ Career Guidance	Availability of Programme
4th	Job Demands	Finance
5th	Distance of Programmes / Flexibility	

**Question 5:** Ways to overcome / address barriers to Tertiary Level Education.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<b>TLI Heads</b>
1st	★ Collaborative Planning ★ Parental Guidance & Support	★ Decentralized / Flexible delivery ★ Financial Assistance	Enhance perceived value of education.
2nd	★ Adequate Staffing ★ More summer courses / Wider programme range		Financial Assistance
3rd	★ Financial Assistance of Non-Business education ★ Scholarships / Loans	Career Guidance	Programme promotion
4th	On-the-job training / Workshops	Incentives Rewards	Decentralized / Flexible delivery
5th	Increased access and Access courses	On-the-job training / Workshops	Improved transportation

## Discussion

The focus group sessions culminated in a final ranking of priority areas for development. This narrative provides a summary and a brief preliminary analysis of the responses and rankings.

- Question 1:** There was general consensus among the groups in their selection of the major human resource needs of the Cayman Islands. The employers ranked three (3) items at first place: "Educator/Teacher," "Hospitality/Tourism/Soft Skills," "Finance/Banking/Lawyer". All the items above were also ranked in the top 4 by both the students and the TLI providers. "Educator/Teacher" was most central to all groups and ranked first by students and second by the TLI providers. "Hospitality" (Tourism/Soft skills) was ranked third by students and fourth by TLI providers while "Finance/Banking professionals" was ranked third and first by the students and the TLI providers respectively. Another item common to all groups was "Doctor/Pathologist/Medical and Allied Health" which was ranked second, fifth and third by the students, employers and TLI providers respectively. Other pertinent human resource needs identified were; "Building Related Worker/Engineer" ranked only by the employers at fourth position and "Emergency Services" ranked only by the TLI providers in fifth position.
- Question 2:** "Hospitality/Tourism" and "Finance/Banking" were the two items common among the three groups and ranked relatively low. Surprisingly, "Hospitality/ Tourism" which is a major industry in the Cayman Islands was ranked third by the students and fifth by both the employers and the TLI providers and "Finance" was ranked fourth by both the students and the employers and third by the TLI providers. The students remained consistent in their response to question two coming out of question one, they ranked in order: "Educator/Teacher," "Medicine/Allied Health," "Hospitality/Tourism," "Finance/Banking" and they included an additional item, "ICT Training." "Educator/Teacher" as well as "Health/Allied Health" were also ranked by the TLI providers at third and first respectively. Not surprisingly, the employers and TLI providers saw as very important the need for "Skills Training/ Technical/ Vocational Training/ apprenticeship" (for emphasis the employers included Education/Literacy) which was ranked second by both groups. Only the employers identified "Management" (including Sales/Marketing and product Management) and thought it very important and necessary for Cayman and ranked it first.
- Question 3:** The students responded in line with the traditional hierarchy of the levels of education needed to meet the demands of the country. They ranked in order; "Bachelors Degree," "Associate Degree," "Post-graduate Degree," "Certificates/Diplomas" and "Internship/On the Job Training. The TLI providers chose a similar trend, with the "Associate Degree," "Bachelors" and "Certificates/Diplomas" in the top three, "Short Courses and Workshop" merged with

"On the Job Training/Internship" ranked fourth and "Post-Graduate Studies" ranked fifth. It was not surprising however that the employers did not rank Post-Graduate studies in the top five but ranked Bachelors at sixth. The employers identified as very pertinent and significant, the least traditional levels of education; "Basic Education" ranked first, "Internship/On the Job Training" second, "Short Courses" third and "Certificates/Diplomas" ranked fourth. The providers felt that the students should aspire for certification and regarded the "Associate Degree" as most relevant to becoming employable. However the Skills/Training/Voc-Tech would be addressed through the "Certificates" and the "Diplomas."

**Question 4:** This question was only answered by the students and the employers.<sup>1</sup> Both groups identified "Availability of Programmes" ranking it first and third respectively, also "Job Demands" and this was ranked first by the employers and fourth by the Students. It was however a surprise to see "Finance" (including Government scholarship) in the top four considering the economic prosperity of the Cayman Islands. "Finance" was ranked second by the students and fourth by the employers. Beyond financing tertiary education, the employers thought it necessary to include "Meeting living expenses" as a barrier, which was another interesting response. The inclusion of "Distance of programmes/Flexibility" in the top five was not a surprise, in light of the geography of the Islands. The item was ranked fifth by the students. "Attitude/Lack of motivation" was also another common response, ranked third by the students and fifth by the employers which later in the discussion among the groups became an issue of paramount importance.

**Question 5:** There were some surprises to the question of overcoming barriers to tertiary level education. One common thread among the groups was the need for "Financial Assistance," ranked third, first and second by the students, employers and TLI providers respectively and "Incentives/Rewards" ranked fourth by the employers. Also of significance was "Decentralised/Flexible Learning" which was also ranked first by the employers and fourth by the TLI providers. Both the students and the employers believed that "On-the-Job Training/Workshops" was necessary and ranked it fourth and fifth respectively. A particular surprise was "Enhance Perceived Value of Education" ranked first by the TLI providers. This is particularly important because of the apparent economic stability of the Cayman Islands and the feeling by many that higher education is not necessary. Other responses of equal significance were: "Adequate Staffing/More Summer Courses" (including Wider Programme

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<sup>1</sup> Although the TLI providers were not able to rank question three (3) - Barriers to Education, the information was extracted from the master list for information purpose: Distance of Programme/Flexibility, Entry Requirements, Finance, Availability of Programmes, Career Guidance, Lack of Vision, Population size, Changing Government Policy, Technology, No Day Class, Scheduling of Classes, Time off/Study Leave.

Range) ranked second by students and Programme Promotion ranked third by TLI providers. Students saw it necessary to emphasize "Collaborative Planning" and "Parental Guidance/Support" as ways of overcoming some of the barriers. Employers too felt it important for some amount of support for individuals and ranked "Career Guidance" third. The TLI providers felt that through "Programme promotion," students and parents would have a better understanding of what was available at the colleges and how such programmes would be pursued through career guidance among other things.

## **Conclusion**

There were indeed a number of interesting and unanticipated responses from the Delphi sessions in the Cayman Islands. On the background of an economically prosperous territory, it was surprising to discover that Finance and by extension "meeting living expenses" were identified as barriers to tertiary education. Finance was ranked by students and employers in the top four barriers to tertiary education and following that was ranked by all three groups as necessary to reducing the barriers to tertiary education. Another unexpected item was "Improved Transportation" ranked only by the TLI providers but equally important based on the economic stability of the country. It was not a surprise that Agriculture did not emerge as an item for any of the groups and neither was it a surprise that employers gave more priority to hands on training rather than graduate or post graduate certification as levels of education and training needed for the future of the Cayman Islands. There was congruence among the groups to the question of the major human resource needs of the country and the groups maintained some similarity to the questions of required programmes for future development, levels of education and overcoming barriers to higher education.