



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
(UWI)**

TERTIARY LEVEL INSTITUTIONS UNIT



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

**GRENADA
FEBRUARY 20-21, 2006**

.....Planning for Caribbean Development

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INTRODUCTION

The University of the West Indies, through the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU), has developed and implemented a project to assess the Human Resource Needs of CARICOM countries. This project was conceptualized to identify regional socio-economic development goals, identify jobs and skills needed for the future development of CARICOM countries; assess current and projected demands for tertiary education and training; determine the gaps between current education programmes and future programme needs and propose how they should be addressed. The project also emphasizes partnerships among development stakeholders: education providers (private and public), employers (public and private), government policy makers, students (potential/prospective and present), labour organizations (Trade Unions and Workers Associations) and professional associations. Ultimately, the project will establish priorities and propose strategies to advance regional development through tertiary education.

The project has two major components: Focus Groups and a survey. This is the report of the fourth Focus-Group activity conducted in Grenada, February 20-21, 2006. The Focus Group provides a forum for knowledgeable experts from among the major stakeholders (education providers, employers, policy makers, students, labour organizations, professional associations) to prioritize identified needs and the tertiary education response using an adaptation of the “*Delphi Technique*”.

THE OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the project is to provide information that should inform policy and establish priorities in relation to the advancement of a fully integrated tertiary education sector and the formulation of a human resource development strategy for the region. Specifically this activity will:

1. identify jobs and skills needed for the future national and regional development;
2. determine the tertiary education needs of individual countries and

- the region;
3. determine the nature, scope and level of the region's tertiary education provision; and
4. establish the gaps between existing supply and demand in the tertiary education provision.

THE DELPHI TECHNIQUE

The Delphi Technique (modified) was the method used in the Focus Groups. This technique originated at the Rand Corporation (Dalkey and Helmer) for the purposes of technological forecasting and futuristic opinion gathering. It is now an important methodology in industrial decision making, educational planning and quality of life studies. The technique uses a panel of experts to analyze situations and issues with a view to proposing prioritized alternative scenarios to address and improve the issues and situations. Further, it is used in forecasting, futurist opinion gathering, establishing importance, and strategies for action.

The technique is predicated on anonymity, through the use of questionnaires and statistical group response. The systematic procedures are intended to ensure some level of objectivity in the outcomes of the exercise. Further, the procedure is conducted as a sequence of rounds with the results of previous rounds being fed back to participants; it also summarized group results and enabled flexibility in its execution.

THE PROJECT OUTPUTS

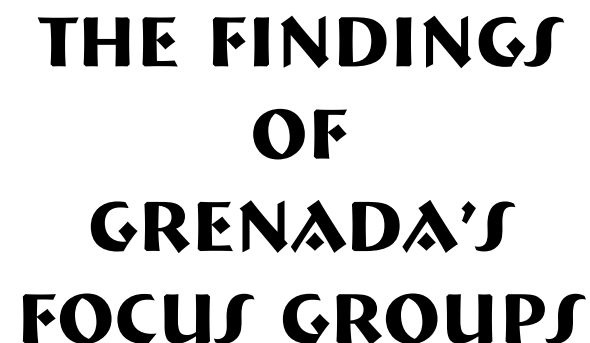
- Data from Secondary sources to give information on the Socio-economic and tertiary education environment.
- Country Surveys to elicit views on development imperatives and the required tertiary education response.

- ❑ Focus Group Reports will document the independent views of students, employers and providers about the program priorities which should be pursued to prepare students with the appropriate skills for the jobs which will drive the countries' economies.
- ❑ Overall comparative report.

THE PROCEDURE

The procedural steps used in conducting the Focus Groups were as follows:

1. A stakeholder specific questionnaire, comprising of five open-ended questions, was administered to a purposive sample of stakeholders (employers, tertiary education providers, students, labour organizations and professional Associations).
2. Completed questionnaires were returned to the TLI Unit where the responses were analyzed and master lists of responses prepared.
3. At the Focus Group sessions, the master lists of responses were given to the participants to determine the major needs, issues and concerns and to rank/prioritize them.
4. The ranking of the responses was conducted a number of times until consensus was reached.
5. The TLI Unit analyzed and is reporting the findings of the Focus Groups.



**THE FINDINGS
OF
GRENADA'S
FOCUS GROUPS**

**GRENADA FOCUS GROUPS
FEBRUARY 20-21, 2006**

Government planning documents indicated that the strongest economic sectors in Grenada are Tourism, Agriculture and Construction. The Focus Groups Workshops for students, employers and education providers confirmed this position and highlighted the importance of Agriculture as the principal area for development. They also endorsed Finance as a major barrier to tertiary education. A review of the outcomes provided a few surprises.

**Table 1:
Jobs and skills which will drive national development as identified by various stakeholder-groups.**

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 st	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture
2 nd	Education	Engineering	Hospitality
3 rd	Doctor/Nurse	Education	Technologist
4 th	Entrepreneur	Hospitality	Engineering
5 th	Hospitality	Management	Economist

Agriculture was unanimously identified as the major development area. However, there was much unease about the choice. The following points were raised about the ambivalence:

- sociological and historical factors which have attached a stigma to the field of agriculture,
- economic challenges including the economic uncompetitiveness of sugar and bananas in particular,
- hurricane vulnerability,
- demands of quality control,
- the need for food security.

**GRENADA FOCUS GROUPS
FEBRUARY 20-21, 2006**

Participants recognized that Grenada had the basic tools (fertile land, water and tradition) but that re-focusing was needed in terms of:

- greater financial input,
- change of attitude of workers and society,
- diversification of the industry,
- investment in agro-processing and agro-technology,
- confidence through evidence that agriculture could be profitable,
- career guidance and appropriate training.

It was surprising that the following areas were not included in the top five areas for development:

- culture and cultural industries,
- medical technologies,
- information and communication technology in the case of the students and employers, and
- that only students identified Entrepreneurship as one of the top ten jobs and skills for economic development.

Table 2:
Types of education and training programmes that should be offered to meet the skills and jobs identified above.

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 st	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture
2 nd	Engineering	Skills Training / Engineering	ICT
3 rd	Hospitality	Hospitality	Hospitality
4 th	Psychology / Social Work / Counselling	Education	Technologist
5 th	Business	IT	Engineering

It was surprising that students selected Psychology/Social Work/Counselling over Information and Communication Technology . It was explained that the development of the human being was considered to be more critical than the acquisition of job skills.

Table 3:
Levels of education and training (e.g. degrees, certificates, diplomas, associate degrees, on the job training, short courses, workshops) that are needed to meet the jobs and skills required by the country.

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 st	Bachelors	On-the-job training / Internships	Bachelors
2 nd	Post Graduate	Bachelors	Post Graduate
3 rd	Skills Training / Certificates	Certificates / Associate Degrees	Diplomas / Certificates / Associate Degrees
4 th	Associate Degrees	Short Courses	On-the-job training / Internships
5 th	A & O'Levels	Post Graduate Degrees	Short Courses

The results confirmed:

- the demand for bachelor's and other degrees by all groups,
- the importance of skills and competencies to the employer,
- the need for credentialing of competent, experienced workers and the training of others,
- inclusion of the Associate degree by students but with emphasis on the need for this qualification to be recognized by government and the private sector.

Table 4:
Major barriers to pursuing tertiary education:

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 st	Finance	Finance	Finance
2 nd	Availability of places / Quality	Paid Study Leave	Programme Quality
3 rd	Career Guidance	Rewards	Programme Relevance
4 th	Entry Qualifications	Job Demands	Programme Availability
5 th		Attitude	Undefined Career Goals

Here, there were no surprises.

- Finance was unanimously selected as the primary barrier.
- Students and providers were concerned about quality including the establishment of quality assurance systems.
- Students and providers were concerned about career guidance.

Table 5:
Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 st	Finance	Finance	Relevant Programming
2 nd	On-the-job-training / Internships	Incentives	Finance
3 rd	Relevant Programmes	On-the-job-training / Workshops	Quality Assurance
4 th	Flexible Delivery	Collaborative Planning	Career Guidance
5 th	Access Courses		Access Courses

It was suggested that:

- the private sector should offer more leave and scholarships,
- financial institutions should lower interest rates on student loans and defer repayment by another year,
- employers should reimburse fees paid by students for successfully completed courses and programmes,
- employers should offer incentive packages e.g. increments and promotion,
- government should offer tax incentives for contributions to educational development,
- UWI should increase the number of scholarships awarded,
- UWI should maximize alumni contribution and have a drive to increase endowment funds.

APPENDIX I
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
(STUDENTS & POTENTIAL STUDENTS)

NAME	INSTITUTION
Gervette Penny	Anglican High School
Kelvin Dragon	Grenada Boys Secondary
Nigel Francis	Grenville Secondary
Tessa Wendy Alexander	Grenville Secondary & UWI DEC
Rox-Ann Edwards	Happy Hill Secondary
Lakisha Andrew	MacDonald College Secondary School
Lovnie Bartholomew	Ministry of Education
Tisha Matthew	Ministry of Education
Cherella St. Paul	Ministry of Education
Jervis Dabreo	St. Andrew's Anglican Secondary
Winwy Lynch	St. Andrew's Anglican Secondary
Nikisha Bartholomew	St. David's Catholic Secondary School
Joslyn Pierre	St. George's University
Venus Pierre	St. George's University
Keisha Thompson	St. George's University
Karrym Forsyth	St. John's Christian Secondary School
Abubakar Phillips	St. John's Christian Secondary School
Jrellon Charles	St. Mark's Secondary

APPENDIX I Cont'd

NAME	INSTITUTION
Roland Antoine	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Noreen Cox	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Kerry Frank	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Adam Lafeuillee	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Lucy Lett	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Alston Mapp	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Petula Telesford	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Jenny Alexander	UWI School of Continuing Studies
Shwanda Andrew	Wesley College
Justina Niles-Noel	Westerhall Secondary School
Rasheba Pierre	Westerhall Secondary School
Mikhail Joseph	Westmorland Secondary

**APPENDIX II
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
(EMPLOYERS)**

NAME	COMPANY
Michelle Antoine	Antoine Woodwork
Deborah King-Murray	Creative Design & Building Construction Co. Ltd.
Lois Friday	First Caribbean International Bank
Cynthia Charles	Grenada Postal Corporation
Vashti Patrick	Grenada Development Bank
Ann Raeburn-Lewis	General Hospital
Archelous Joseph	Henry Henry & Bristol
Flavian Antoine	Law Office
Ashley Bernardine	Law Office
Claudia Lewis	Ministry of Carriacou & Petite Martinique Affairs
Pauleen Finlay	Ministry of Education
Maureen Baptiste	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nadica McIntyre	Ministry of Legal Affairs
Janice Francis	National Insurance Scheme
Pansy Ventour	National Water & Sewerage Authority
Elizabeth Henry-Greenidge	Prime Minister's Office

APPENDIX II Cont'd

NAME	COMPANY
Lucia Livingston-Andall	Public Service Credit Union
Yvette Payne	Public Service Credit Union

**APPENDIX III
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
(EDUCATION PROVIDERS)**

NAME	INSTITUTION
Garvin Glasgow	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Kathy-Ann John	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Jeanette Dubois	T. A. Marryshow Community College
Claudia Halley	UWI School of Continuing Studies

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