



**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**

**ST. KITTS & NEVIS  
MAY 16, 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 tenth Focus-Group activity conducted in St. Kitts & Nevis, May 16, 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 THE ST. KITTS & NEVIS FOCUS GROUPS**

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

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 <sup>st</sup>	Hospitality / Tourism / Soft Skills	Engineering / Building	Planning / Research Methods
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ICT / Technology	Educators / Teachers	ICT / Technology
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Criminologist / Forensic Science	ICT / Technologies	Engineering / Building
4 <sup>th</sup>	Educator / Teacher	Hospitality / Tourism	Hospitality / Tourism / Soft Skills
5 <sup>th</sup>	Counselor / Social Worker / Psychologist	Agriculture / Farmer / Environmentalists	Counselling / Psychology
6 <sup>th</sup>		Criminologist / Forensic Science	Non-sugar Agriculture

### Surprises

There were a number of surprises namely:

- Absence of agriculture from students' top 5 in spite of expressed support for non-sugar Agriculture.
- Absence of Entrepreneurship and Education from Employers' top 5.
- No group chose cultural studies in their top 5.

### Concurrence

- Agreement among all 3 groups on the importance of Hospitality, Tourism, Soft Skills, ICT and Technology.
- Agreement on Criminologists, Psychologists, Social workers by all in top 6.
- Educators selected by students and providers and Counseling by students and employers.

**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 <sup>st</sup>	Hospitality / Tourism Soft skills	Hospitality / Tourism Environmental Studies	ICT/ Technology
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Criminology Forensic Science, Law / Paralegal	Management	Management Planning Research
3 <sup>rd</sup>	ICT / Technology	Engineering / Skills Training	Hospitality Soft Skills
4 <sup>th</sup>	Medical Sciences Allied Health	Education / Teaching	Engineering Skills Training
5 <sup>th</sup>	Engineering Skills Training	People Soft Skills	Accounting Financial Services

### Observations

- All selected hospitality and engineering.
- Students and providers agreed on medical/health sciences, and

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education.

- Students and employers chose ICT in their top 5.

**Surprises**

- Students only chose Medical Sciences and Criminology as priority training areas.
- Only providers selected education. Employers did not select it because they did not consider education to be a discrete discipline but cutting across every area.

**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
1 <sup>st</sup>	Bachelor's Degree	Associate Degrees / Certificates / Diplomas
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Post Graduate Degree	On-the-job-training / Internships
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Certificate / Diploma / Internships	Short Courses / Refresher courses
4 <sup>th</sup>	Associate Degrees	Bachelor's Degree
5 <sup>th</sup>	O and A Levels / CAPE and CSEC	Postgraduate studies

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Providers						
Programs	SC	OJT	Certs/ Dips	AD	BD	PG
Management				X	X	X
Skills Training			X			
Soft Skills		X				
Hospitality		X	X	X	X	X
Teacher Education		X	X	X	X	X

**Key**

- SC - Short Courses
- OJT - On the Job Training
- Certs / Dips - Certificates / Diplomas
- AD - Associate Degrees
- BD - Bachelor's Degrees
- PG - Post-Graduate

**Observations:**

- Providers related the levels to the different types of programs.
- There was no concurrence between the students' and employers' rankings.

**Table 4:**  
**Major barriers to pursuing tertiary education:**

Rank	Students	Providers	Employers
1 <sup>st</sup>	Finance	Attitude	Attitude
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Programming	Job Demands	Lack of Motivation
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Attitude	Programming	Family Commitment
4 <sup>th</sup>	Access	Access	Finance
5 <sup>th</sup>	Job Demands	Finance	Confidence Self Esteem

**Concurrence:**

- All three groups agreed on the importance of finance and attitude as barriers.
- Students and providers agreed on the importance of job demands, programming and access.

**Surprises:**

- The greatest surprise was the ranking of finance fifth by providers and fourth by employers. Discussions revealed that this may be related to free tertiary education in St Kitts/ Nevis.
- Employers' barriers were identified as mainly attitudinal.

**Table 5:**  
**Strategies for Overcoming Barriers**

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 <sup>st</sup>	Adequate Resources in Institutions	Collaborative Planning	Changing mind set
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Financial Assistance	Adequate Resources	Motivation
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Access Courses	Relevant Programming	Financial Assistance
4 <sup>th</sup>	Program Development & Promotion	Financial assistance	Distance offerings
5 <sup>th</sup>	Family Support	Decentralized Flexible Delivery	Access courses

**Observations:**

- All 3 saw financial assistance as an enabler.
- Students and providers agreed on resources, students and employers on access courses and providers and employers on decentralized, distance programs.
- Students alone chose program development and promotion and family support.
- Employers only suggested changing the mind set.
- Compared to the others, students gave a higher ranking to financial assistance.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Attendance and participation were very good and the level of enthusiasm was high.
- Some persons felt that Entrepreneurship should have made it to the top 5 because this is a growth area for the future.
- Perhaps because of the recent demise of the sugar industry, there was continual reference to the need for Agricultural diversification. Some suggested Fish farms, Aquaculture, Horticulture, Recreational Agriculture, linking Tourism with Agriculture, subdivision of fertile cane lands into small farms and generally planning for a backlash.

**APPENDIX I  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
(STUDENTS & POTENTIAL STUDENTS)**

NAME	INSTITUTION
Ferrona Boddie	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
Melinda Brown	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
Hilary Browne	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
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Alicia Wigley	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
Amanda Williams	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
Damon Bacchus	UWIDEC
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**APPENDIX II  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
(EMPLOYERS)**

NAME	COMPANY
Igna Rogers	Bank of Nova Scotia
Pammeler Walwyn	City Shoe Store
Peaches Nicholls	Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
L. Polydore	Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
Ismay Taylor	Ministry of Education
Elvis Newton	Ministry of Health
Elvin Bailey	N. I. A.
J. D. Quinlan	Quinlan, Walwyn & Associates
Tresseur Prentice	SNIC News
Latchini Findlay	Super Drugs
Denrick Connor	TDC

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

NAME	INSTITUTION
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Lorrell Bradshaw	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
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APPENDIX III Cont'd

NAME	INSTITUTION
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