

## ABSTRACT

### ACCESS TO TERTIARY EDUCATION IN SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES: ENABLING AND LIMITING FACTORS

by

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This study offers a definition of tertiary education and access. It takes a historical look at the evolution of higher education and highlights events and imperatives which have driven its expansion and patterns. It zeroes in on the development of the University of the West Indies and the emergence of other tertiary institutions in the Anglophone Caribbean.

Institutional applications and admissions data were analysed to determine St Lucian and Barbadian tertiary educational demand and supply trends in the nineteen nineties and in this regard, UWI was found to be quite responsive to Barbadians. The study looked also at the structure of educational opportunity by tracking the course of a 1990 eleven- plus age cohort through to CXC and 'A' level or Associate Degree achievement. It found that this structure imposed limits, particularly for St Lucians, on the size of the eligible pool for tertiary /higher education.

Frequency distribution patterns in questionnaire responses from over a thousand 1997 secondary school and community college graduates who were either employed, unemployed or enrolled in tertiary education indicated that the major limiting factors on tertiary enrolment were money, qualifications, preference for overseas study or preference for employment. Enabling factors included belief in the value of tertiary education, financial support and access to relevant programmes.

Chi Square tests showed a link between socio-economic status and access. Logistic regression established that in Barbados, father's occupation was a good predictor of access to tertiary/ higher education for males and mother's occupation for females.

**Key Words:** Access, Tertiary education