



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

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
APRIL 6, 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 seventh Focus-Group activity conducted in Antigua & Barbuda, April 6, 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
ANTIGUA &
BARBUDA'S
FOCUS GROUPS**

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

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 st	Medical Sciences / Allied Health	Entrepreneurs	Health and Social professionals
2 nd	Education	Planning	Engineering / Scientists
3 rd	Agriculture	Educator / Teacher	Management / Accountants
4 th	Counseling / Social Work	Technology / ICT	Hospitality / Tourism / Interpreters
5 th	Criminologist / Lawyer / Police Officers	Hospitality / Tourism	Mid-Level technologists
6 th	Entrepreneurs / Managers		People / Soft Skills / Customer Care

It was surprising that there was no unanimity across the three groups. As their number 1 jobs and skills, students and providers agreed on medical, allied health and social professionals. Students and employers selected educators in their top three. Hospitality and Tourism was third and fourth respectively for the employers and providers but did not make it in the students' list. It was surprising that students chose Agriculture as their number 3 Jobs and Skills and did not include Information and Communication Technology.

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	Medical Sciences /Allied Health	International Business	Education / Skills Training
2 nd	Education	Planning & Logistics	Hospitality / Tourism / Soft Skills
3 rd	Engineering / Skills Training	Management	Guidance and Counseling
4 th	Information and Communication Technology	Social Work / Behavioural Sciences	Entrepreneurship / Management
5 th	Hospitality & Tourism / Soft Skills	Education	Engineering / ICT / Technology
6 th	Agriculture		

Education was highly regarded by all groups. Engineering and Skills Training was short-listed by students and providers; and Hospitality and Tourism and Soft Skills by students and providers. The top two for employers: International Business and Planning and Logistics were identified only by employers. It is interesting that students thought that Hospitality Training was critical but did not list the sector as an economic driver.

Table 3:
Major barriers to pursuing tertiary education:

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 st	Finance	Attitude	Finance
2 nd	Attitude	Access / Entry requirements	Entry Requirements
3 rd	Entry Requirements	Finance	Awareness
4 th	Programme Relevance	Career Guidance	Accreditation / Validation
5 th	Access	Inadequate Facilities	Attitude
6 th			Family Commitment

There was greater consensus among groups on the barriers to tertiary education. Finance, attitude and entry requirements were in the top 5 of all groups. Career guidance and programme awareness were identified by students and providers.

Table 4:
Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 st	Financial Assistance	Collaborative Planning	Financial Assistance
2 nd	Incentives / Rewards	Incentives / Rewards	Programme Promotion
3 rd	Quality / Relevant Programmes	Financial Assistance	Increased Access
4 th	Increased Access	Access / Access Courses	Guidance / Counselling
5 th	Access Courses	Counselling	Relevant Programmes

Financial assistance and increased access were selected by all three groups. Incentives and rewards were short-listed by students and employers. Counselling was chosen by employers and providers.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the final session, employers re-iterated their interest in Finance, Banking and Accounting which needed to be tied to International Relations and International Business. It was felt also that Entrepreneurship was the biggest area that would drive the economy but it was difficult to identify the training which was needed to support this.

There was much discussion about access as a barrier to education and related advice was advanced that standards should not be compromised . It was pointed out that in a small region where employers were sometimes part-time providers, they had the opportunity to see educational standards compromised and this could affect their confidence in the institution and the currency of the qualification.

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

NAME	INSTITUTION
AnrekaBealer	Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute
Nerissa Caleb	Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute
Arielle Mills	Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute
Corinthea Nicholos	Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute
Melanie Stuart	Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute
Nickiesha Aska	Antigua & Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education
Rosline Conway	Antigua & Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education
Laoty Joseph	Antigua & Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education
La-Toya Peters	Antigua & Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education
Nikita Roberts	Antigua & Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education
Dwayne Anthony	Antigua Grammar School
Dylan Christian	Antigua Grammar School

APPENDIX I Cont'd

NAME	INSTITUTION
Justin Henry	Antigua Grammar School
Barry Samuel	Antigua Grammar School
Jeymol Small	Antigua Grammar School
Danielle Bennett	Antigua State College
Yendi Jackson	Antigua State College
Joseph Meade	Antigua State College
Kai Williams	Antigua State College
Jesette Perreira	Belmont School of Business
Sherrylanne Bowens	BSc Management Studies
Farrell Charles	BSc Counselling Group

APPENDIX II
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
(EMPLOYERS)

NAME	COMPANY
Joan Underwood	ABI Bank Ltd
Sharon Proctor	Antigua & Barbuda Board of Tourism
Michelle Henry	Antigua & Barbuda Museum
Fitzmaurice Christian	Antigua Commercial Bank
Sharon James	Economic Policy & Planning Unit
Lebrechtton Hesse	Gender Affairs
Sheila Roseau	Gender Affairs
Gail Daniel	Jolly Beach Resort
David Matthey	Ministry of Health
Alice Roberts	Roberts & Company
Dornalyn Beazer	State Insurance Corporation
M. Lyndell Francis-Butler	State Insurance Corporation
Rev. George Richards	The Map Shop

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

NAME	INSTITUTION
Dr. Peter Bell	American University of Antigua
Calvin Ambrose	Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Tourism Institute
Muriel O'Mard	Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Tourism Institute
Hyrarn Forde	Antigua State College
Casford King	Antigua State College (School of Pharmacy)
Eloise Hamilton	Antigua State College
Peecheeta Spencer	Antigua State College
Annetta Simon-Williams	Belmont School of Business
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