



**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**

**COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA  
MAY 9, 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 ninth Focus-Group activity conducted in The Commonwealth of Dominica, May 9, 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**

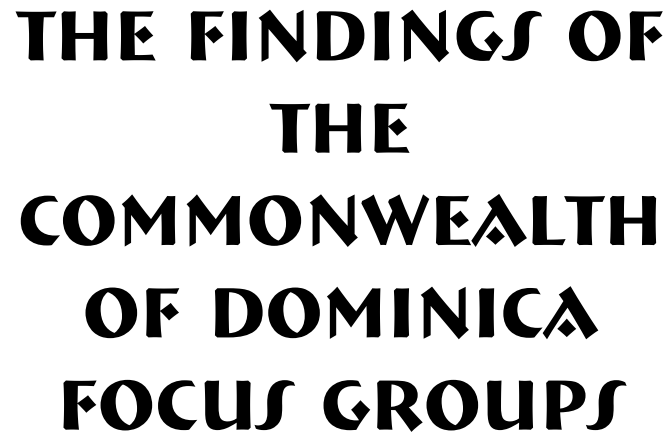
- Data from Secondary sources to give information on the Socio-economic and tertiary education environment.
- Country Surveys to elicit views on development imperatives and the required tertiary education response.

- ❑ 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  
COMMONWEALTH  
OF DOMINICA  
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>	Doctor / Nurse	Doctor / Nurse	Engineering / ICT
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Educator / Teacher	Educator / Teacher	Hospitality / Tourism
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agriculture / Manufacturing / Industrial Worker	Counselor / Psychologist	Management
4 <sup>th</sup>	Hospitality / Tourism / Soft Skills	ICT Technologist	Educator / Counselor
5 <sup>th</sup>	Counselor / Social Worker / Psychologist	Manager / Planner	Environmental Worker

### Surprises

There were a number of surprises namely:

- Absence of ICT from students' list.
- Presence of Agriculture and manufacturing in students' list.
- Debate by students about the relative importance of criminology and psychology and counseling, with the latter winning out as a proactive approach over the reactive approach to social control.
- Absence of Hospitality from Providers' Top 5.
- Absence of Agriculture, Manufacturing and Industrial Worker from Providers and Employers' Lists.

### Concurrence

- Students and Teachers about the importance of health and education over the skills.

- Agreement on the importance of counseling and psychology in the top five by all.

**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>	Medical Sciences	Education	Engineering, Tech Voc, ICT
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Education	Guidance, Counseling	Hospitality Tourism
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Hospitality/ Tourism/Soft Skills	Medical Sciences	Management
4 <sup>th</sup>	Agriculture, Food Nutrition Environment	Hospitality & Tourism	Environment
5 <sup>th</sup>	Management, International Business	ICT Technology	Social Work Psychology

### Observations

- All selected hospitality.
- Students and providers agreed on medical/health sciences, and education.
- Students and employers agreed on Management.
- Providers and Employers chose ICT.
- Employers' top choices were more skills and less human development oriented.

**Suggestions**

- Students suggested that research should be built into all training.
- Providers suggested that soft skills should be an integrating thread.

**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	Bachelor's Degree
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Post-Graduate Degree	Post-Graduate Degree
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Associate Degree	Associate Degree
4 <sup>th</sup>	Certificates / Diplomas	O'Levels
5 <sup>th</sup>	O'Levels & A'Levels	Certificate & Diplomas
6 <sup>th</sup>	Short Courses	Short Courses / OJT

Programs	Providers						
	SC	OJT	Certs/ Dips	AD	BD	PG	O & A
Education	XX XX			XX	XX	X	
Health				XX XX	XX X	XX	
Behavioural Science					XX X	XX XX	
Hospitality	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ICT	X	X	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
- O & A - O'Levels & A'Levels

**Observations:**

- Providers related the levels to the different types of programs.
- There was much concurrence between the students' and employers' rankings differing only in their ranking of importance of O'level ( access courses).

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

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 <sup>st</sup>	Finance	Finance	Attitude
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Programming	Inadequate Facilities	Finance
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Access	Lack of Motivation	Job Demands
4 <sup>th</sup>	Job Demands	Distance / Flexibility	Distance
5 <sup>th</sup>	Attitude	Attitude	Program Relevance

**Concurrence:**

- All three groups agreed on the importance of finance and attitude as barriers.
- Students and employers agreed on the importance of job demands and providers and employers agreed that distance was a major barrier.

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

Rank	Students	Employers	Providers
1 <sup>st</sup>	Financial Assistance	Financial Assistance	Collaborative Planning
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Access Courses / Decentralisation	Adequate Facilities	Motivation
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Program Development and Promotion	Incentives / Rewards	Financial Assistance
4 <sup>th</sup>	Collaborative Planning	Decentralization / Flexibility	Education / Information
5 <sup>th</sup>	OJT & Workshops	Access Courses	Adequate Staffing

**Observations:**

- Students only advocated program development and promotion.
- Providers only mentioned adequate facilities and incentives.
- Employers only suggested adequate staffing and motivation.
- All groups included finance among their top 3.
- Private sector employees thought adequate staffing was important presumably for granting leave.
- Public sector employers felt incentives like promotion and remuneration were important.

**Agreement:**

- All agreed that financial assistance would enable access.
- Decentralization and collaborative planning were suggested by two groups as two other strategies for widening access.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Attendance and participation were good and the level of enthusiasm was high.
- Someone underscored the value of this exercise amid the unpredictability of the job market, the challenges for planning human resource development in small states and the need for using multiple sets and sources of information in planning.

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

NAME	INSTITUTION
Maria Pascal	<i>Potential Student</i>
Donna John Baptiste	Business Training Centre
Eilmarie Elri	Business Training Centre
Christelle Laville	Business Training Centre
Vernandra Christian	Covent High School
Precious Akpata	Dominica Grammar School
Clerol Austrie	Dominica Grammar School
Naleem Bougouneau	Dominica Grammar School
Shilton Sabaroche	Dominica Seventh Day Adventist
Ardene Nicholas	Dominica State College
Geida Seaman	Dominica State College
Jerome Baidouille	Goodwill Secondary School
Verna Graham	Goodwill Secondary School
Melissa Davis	Marigot Secondary
Celia Robinson	Roseau J. S. P.
Shemima Francis	St. Andrew's High School
B. Laurel Mouau	St. Martin Primary School
Leroy Cyprien	UWI School of Continuing Studies

**APPENDIX I Cont'd**

NAME	INSTITUTION
Kalista McDowell	Wesley High School

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

NAME	COMPANY
Gloria Joseph	Cable & Wireless
Cyril Dalrymple	Dominica European Federation
Thomas Letang	Dominica Public Service Union
Juliet Lewis	Estab. Reis & Training Department
Max Andrew	Ministry of Education
Irene Duecrary	Ministry of Education
Ted Serrant	Ministry of Education
Rawlings Jemmott	National Workers Union
John David	Polacio Welfare Association
Marie-Louise Grell	Roseau Cooperative Credit Union

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

NAME	INSTITUTION
Denisha Toussaint	Business Training Centre
Adrien Durand	Dominica State College
Denise Edwards	Dominica State College
Corinne Francis	Dominica State College
Josephine Lewis	Dominica State College
Merrill Matthews	Dominica State College
Simpson M. Roberts	Dominica State College
Helen Francis Seaman	Dominica State College
Henry Volney	Dominica State College
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