

INSIDE TVET

CVQ programme officially launched

“BARBADOS’ macroeconomic strategy must be tied to its education and training strategy.”

Executive Director of the **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council** Henderson Eastmond made this observation during remarks delivered at the recent official launch of the Certificate Programme for the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in secondary schools.

He said: “With a high import food bill, and generally high import bill, we may ask ourselves how we are going to change this situation. I am suggesting that there are opportunities for business ventures in both agriculture and manufacturing for our young people. Must we give up in the face of international competition? I say no! The younger Barbadians are more eager than their predecessors to go into business ventures but the ones which depend on the use of newer technologies.”

Stressing that small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) were important to Barbados’ future economic development, Eastmond noted that CVQ standards had been developed in agriculture and agro processing, which incorporate the use of all the modern technologies such as greenhouse technology, pest management, irrigation technologies and hydroponics. He added that an NVQ in **Developing a New and Existing Business Enterprise** had also been developed.

“The **TVET Council** is at present working to develop standards for the alternative energy sector mainly in photovoltaic cell installation and maintenance and for wind power. These alternative energy standards will become very important as the country rapidly moves to reduce the cost of energy to improve competitiveness.”

The creation of the National Qualifications Framework, he added, was a step in removing the negative stigma often associated with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes since it would demonstrate the comparability or equivalency between TVET programmes and academic programmes. “It would also demonstrate the articulation possible between TVET programmes as well as between TVET programmes and academic programmes.”

The Executive Director further stressed that the next important step would be to develop TVET offerings in areas of demand at least to degree level equivalency. “This is important so that an individual can see a clear pathway within the TVET system. A seamless education system would be created where an individual can move



HENDERSON EASTMOND: Executive Director, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council. (GP)

between academic and TVET programmes and at the same time still progress upward in the qualifications framework.”

He added: “Issues as to how the CVQ qualification will be treated when a student leaves school and goes to Barbados Community College (BCC), Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) and Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVTB) or goes into the world of work will be made clear. The issue of the CVQ being placed on the qualifications order by the Ministry of the Civil Service will be solved.”

Eastmond also made a call for a national discussion to be held on the rationalization of TVET offerings with the view of creating efficiency in TVET delivery and the introduction of TVET programmes at the higher tiers of the qualifications framework — that is, which institutions would deliver what programmes and at what levels?

Assistant Registrar, Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Leona Emtage, speaking on behalf of the organization which is the Awarding Body for CVQs in secondary schools, noted the certification had the most potential for

transforming the region’s educational landscape.

“The successful implementation of the CVQ holds the greatest potential for helping CXC and the region to accomplish this ambitious goal; that is making every learner in the school system competent in at least one skill; equipping learners with the standard of competence required by industry; and by building and diversifying the human resource capacity of the Caribbean.”

At present, seven secondary schools, including five pilot schools, are involved in the implementation of the CVQs Level 1 in Carpentry, Masonry and Electrical Installation. The CVQ seeks to broaden the certification framework and provide for greater equity between the TVET and academic disciplines. The pilot schools are St Leonard’s Boys, St George Secondary, Grantley Adams Memorial, Princess Margaret and St Lucy Secondary School. The Alma Parris and Alleyne Schools are also involved in the CVQ programme but their work is facilitated through the St Lucy Secondary School.

A new phase in certification

EDUCATORS, EMPLOYERS, Government officials and students gathered at the **Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre (LESC)** recently to join the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) for the official launch of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) programme, a new phase in certification available to students in secondary schools.

Executive Director of the **Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (TVETC)**, Henderson Eastmond, during remarks delivered at the launch, described the CVQ programme, as well as the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programme, as part of the global effort by countries around the world to close the gap between technical and vocational education and training (TVET) — which is also referred to as either workforce training, workforce development or education and training — and performance in the workplace.

He said it was for this reason that **TVETC** had embarked on a path of moving the education and training system to one that was competence based. Eastmond explained that competence based meant workforce training, assessment and certification based on occupational standards that described the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which employers expected their employees to demonstrate in the organisation.

He further noted that occupational standards described the quality of performance expected in the workplace and when individuals were assessed against these occupational standards, by trained and certified assessors, they were deemed competent once they had successfully met the standards, and awarded a CVQ. Addressing the students, Eastmond said: “Your CVQ Level One then will represent tangible proof that you have demonstrated to practitioners, with the necessary expertise in the relevant occupational area, that you are indeed competent.”

Eastmond explained the CVQ was certification that had been sanctioned by CARICOM as proof that would allow the region’s skilled workforce to enjoy the benefits of free movement under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). He noted it was endorsed by regional employers who had met with the **TVET Council** and other national training agencies (NTAs) across the region to first develop the occupational standards on which the CVQs are based, and, validate the qualification for use in education, training and assessment across the region.

He said CARICOM had agreed that the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) would award the CVQ Level One in the secondary schools, while the NTAs — including the **TVET Council** — in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados had been approved by CARICOM to serve as awarding bodies in their respective countries for the NVQs and CVQs in the workforce.