



INSIDE TVET

THE International Training Centre (ITC) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) in September conducted a five-day training workshop on promoting effective skills policies and systems for educators, policy makers and other participants in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) field.

National skills development policies and systems encompass vocational training, lifelong learning, workplace learning and learning opportunities in the informal economy. Skills development is considered to be a key factor for the employability of workers, the sustainability of enterprises and for ensuring that young people entering the labour market have the skills for which employers are looking.

The course covered major challenges and options for building effective skills development systems that are responsive to current labour market and economic challenges and help achieve long-term development goals.

Explaining the rationale behind the workshop, the ITC's Dr Alessandra Molz said: "What we are looking for as the training arm of the ILO is to have the informed policy maker, to equip participants with the knowledge to do better policy making and programme development. We want them to be able to better define policies, to develop policy and to review policies and implement programmes in their countries."

Dr Hassan Ndahi of the ILO's sub-regional office further noted: "Since 1990 the Regional TVET Strategy was developed (and) countries in the region do not have their own TVET strategy. At the end of this workshop participants should be able to go back to their countries and contribute to the development of a national strategy. This is an issue that UNESCO was looking at in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries, so a decision was taken to collaborate to develop the capacity to formulate national TVET policies across the region."

Dr Ndahi added that a major outcome of the workshop was therefore equipping participants with the knowledge and skill to be able to review national TVET policies where they existed and if none existed to be able to design national TVET policies. "This becomes the basis of which you do everything in TVET because once you don't have a policy you are operating in a vacuum and speculating about things," he said.

Dr Ndahi pointed out that a national TVET policy would address every issue including administrative, management, curriculum and disability. "Ideally, the idea is to have TVET in all schools so that every child will have the opportunity to be exposed to work-related training. Part of the policy will help to correct the misperception of what TVET is, that is improving the image of TVET. The policy is a framework that deals with every area of TVET and guides what we do."

The regional TVET Strategy that was developed in 1990, is currently under review. It is anticipated that the hosting of the workshop will assist in the process as participants will be able to participate by reviewing and providing feedback on every aspect of the strategy.

Representatives from 19 Caribbean



PARTICIPANTS paying close attention during the workshop on Promoting Effective Skills Policies and Systems held last month. (GP)

Developing a TVET policy for Caricom member states



FROM LEFT. ITC's Dr Alessandra Molz with UNESCO's Keith Holmes, Katerina Ananiadou and Dotlyn Minott. (GP)

territories and countries participated in the workshop.

UNESCO Programme Specialist Keith Holmes noted that TVET was to be a key strategy for social and economic development: "TVET is one of the three building blocks for all lifelong learning whether acquired through formal or non-formal approaches."

He added that internationally the debate had moved beyond the issue of the separation between education and training for intellectual versus manual work.

Katerina Ananiadou, also a programme

specialist with UNESCO, noted that the hosting of the workshop would help to move the debate forward.

This view was supported by programme assistant with the UNESCO Kingston office Dotlyn Minott, who added the workshop was a major achievement which would help participants to return to their respective countries and move the debate forward on the perception of TVET.

This was very important because the traditional way could no longer be supported, Holmes stressed.

Promoting effective skills policies in Barbados

AS A FOLLOW UP to the regional workshop held in September, the **Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (TVETC)**, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVTB) and the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), hosted a seminar on **Promoting Effective Skills Policies and Systems** last month.

The purpose of the seminar was to engage stakeholders and entities with influence in the national TVET system to discuss approaches to effective skills policies and systems in Barbados.

During the seminar participants had the opportunity to discuss the importance of TVET/skills development policies, identify relevant features of comprehensive skills and TVET policies, discuss important elements of career guidance, discuss youth employment training strategies and understand the importance of quality assurance in implementing the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ).

During the delivery of brief opening remarks, Executive Director of the **TVET Council** Henderson Eastmond stated that with new partnerships being formed in addition to increased small and medium sized enterprise (SME) business ventures and the fast pace of change, especially for young people, there was a clear role emerging for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and enhanced career guidance.

"TVET is important but TVET alone can't provide employers with the workers needed, more emphasis has to be placed on career guidance in Barbados."

He noted the lifelong learning process, including school and continuing education, called for lifelong career guidance. A fusion of a basic education plus TVET produced self-determined and self-actualizing young people, he said: "Few of our schools can produce young people with these skills – imagination, creativity and motivation. We need to build positive work habits because all of the skills in the world can't replace this."

Eastmond also called for closer relationships between structured workplace learning and career guidance.