

# 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WORKER



Magazine of the Technical  
and Vocational Education  
and Training (TVET) Council

*Our Goals, Our Careers, Our Future*

Volume 1 No. 1 | April 2015

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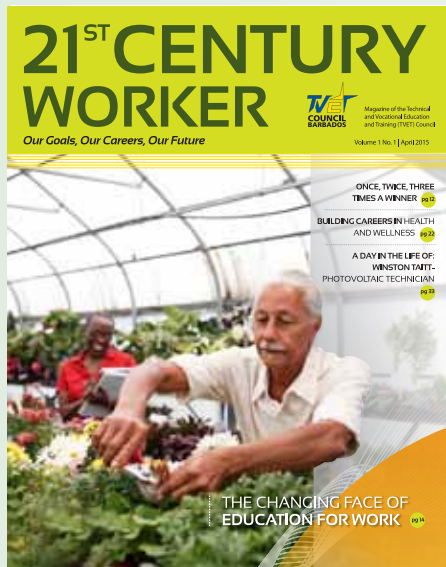
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## 21st Century Worker: Our Goals, Our Careers, Our Future Second Edition 2015/Vol 1

This is the second edition of the **21st Century Worker**, a new online magazine that will be published twice a year by the TVET Council Barbados, a statutory corporation established in 1993 under the Ministry of Labour. TVETC's mission is to develop a competent, certified and competitive workforce in Barbados and the region through the promotion and coordination of demand driven technical and vocational education and training. The **21st Century Worker** promotes the national TVET vision and the TVET Council's achievements. It serves as a forum for sharing best practice information, discussion and analysis of issues and events pertaining to the workforce education and training sector.

The TVET Council is a tripartite organisation made up of training institutions, employer associations, trade unions and government representatives.

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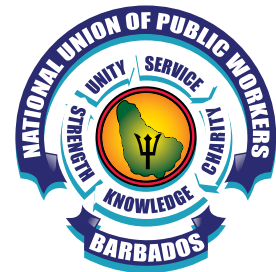
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

On behalf of the TVET Council Barbados, it is my pleasure to introduce the second edition of our online magazine the **21st Century Worker: Our Goals, Our Careers, Our Future**.

This second edition of what is intended to be a bi-annual magazine is a long time in coming. However, after much patience and perseverance it is finally here. The Council is a small agency of less than 30 staff members with a big mandate. The 21st Century Worker magazine is meant to assist us in achieving a key function of promoting competence-based technical and vocational education and training (TVET). That is, education for the world of work which is expected to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, attitude and work experience to be certified as competent to perform a work role to the standards expected.

The **21st Century Worker** will serve as a forum for the sharing of best practice information, discussion and analysis of issues and events pertaining to the workforce education and training sector but with a human interest focus. It will

also serve as a marketing tool which brands the TVET Council (TVETC) as the government agency responsible for coordinating and managing Barbados' TVET system and promoting a competitive workforce that is based on competence and productivity.

The magazine's overall theme is investing in workforce development. In each edition you will therefore find stories on important issues from our key stakeholders, career advice and guidance, international perspectives on TVET and a youth perspective on career and learning choices and experiences. This second edition has as its focus the theme 'Transforming Barbados' TVET System from supply-led to demand-driven'. This theme is in keeping with the establishment of the **Competence Based Training Fund (CBTF)** which was set up as part of the Skills for the Future programme. The purpose of the CBTF is to help employers and training providers to better collaborate on workforce training that meets the needs of employers and leads to skilled, competent and certified workers who help to drive productivity.

We hope our readers enjoy this second edition and we welcome your comments, ideas and feedback which can be provided at <http://www.tvetcouncil.com.bb/Contact/>.

Samantha Jones  
Editor

“ The 21st Century Worker magazine is meant to assist us in achieving a key function of promoting competence-based technical and vocational education and training (TVET) ”





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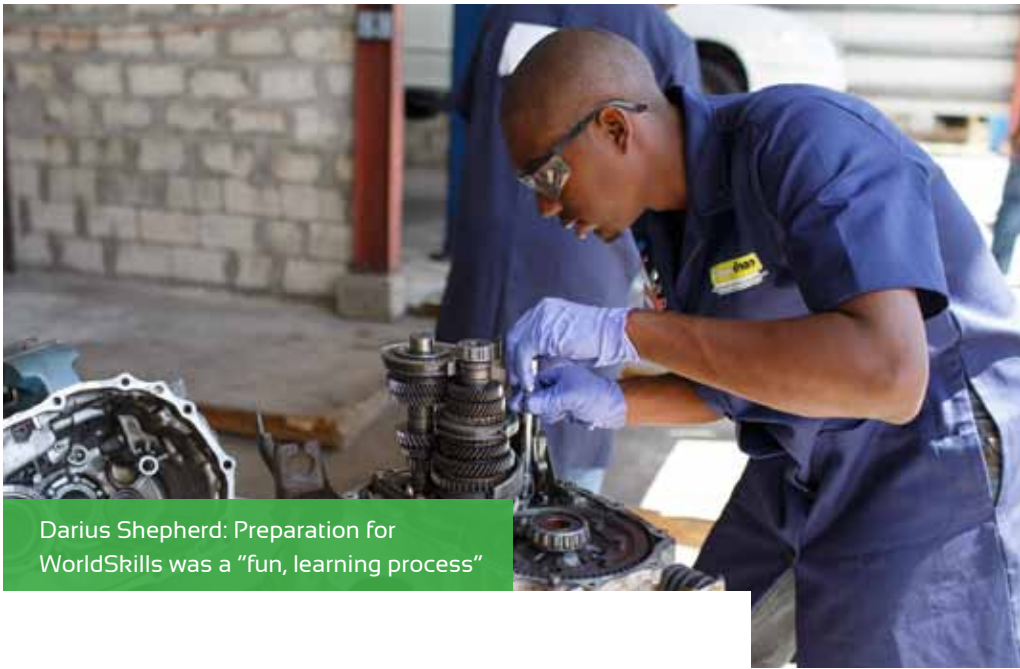
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Omari Lamming: The whole competition thing, it really had my heart racing



Darius Shepherd: Preparation for WorldSkills was a "fun, learning process"

## TVET – IT'S LIFE CHANGING!

The WorldSkills Barbados experience has highlighted a simple truth for youth on the island – technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is life changing. The competition puts the skills of young professionals to the test and they emerge self assured and ready to take on the world; and while the path of each student is distinct, as you will see in this story which features two WorldSkills Barbados gold winners, Omari Lamming and Darius Shepherd, the common link is their pursuit of excellence and determination to fulfill their dreams.

Pan seared chicken liver, marinated in red wine, paired with a christophene slaw and mango chutney, followed by a sweet potato mash with flying fish in wine sauce; and for dessert, rice pudding with a caramelised zucchini base.

A meal fit for a king? It certainly was fit for a champion, as it provided the winning combination for Omari Lamming, who struck gold in the Culinary Arts segment of WorldSkills Barbados 2014.

While information technology was his intended pursuit, a twist of fate led him to the kitchen.

"One day, I was having a conversation with my uncle and he asked me what I really wanted to do and I told him I always wanted to go to PomMarine to learn cooking so he told me BVTB does it...so he signed me up and paid for it," recounted Omari.

It was during this 12-week course at the The Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVTB) that tutor Steve Philips took note of his talents.

"He actually came to me and told me he has a full time class going on soon and, if I was interested, I could come and sign up because he liked how I work. So I said I'd give it a try."

It was Omari's growing confidence and skill during this subsequent 12-month programme which led Mr. Philips to urge

him to participate in WorldSkills Barbados, a suggestion that was met with skepticism from Omari.

"[I had] no problems when it came to flavouring food, but plating the food was a bit of a challenge...to be honest...the whole competition thing, it really had my heart racing. I wondered if I'd win, [if] I'd do well; I [didn't] want to let down my instructor," the 22-year-old said frankly.

Despite his reservations, Omari took the plunge and began to prepare for the competition. He took both the achievements and challenges in stride and admitted that the process was an enjoyable one; but then, the day of reckoning came.

"I was unsure...[mainly] because of the mystery basket. I was really skeptical about that."

Omari managed to use the given ingredients – which included chicken liver, eggplant, fish and ginger – to create an inventive three course meal which wowed the judges, won him the



competition and changed his mind about allowing self-doubt to take over.

On a wave of new-found confidence Omari was welcomed into the fold at Savannah Hotel and he hopes this path will eventually take him overseas, to Italy, to pursue his cuisine studies.

His eyes are set on establishing himself as a head chef and a family man in the long term but Omari believes that appreciating the short term is also crucial.

His advice to others who may be uncertain about the future is to choose your career path carefully.

“Some people may go into something, don’t like it and [keep] switching all the time - and that’s time and years wasted,” he

said, stressing that every point in life has its value and purpose.

Darius Shepherd, 21, would certainly agree with this sentiment. While his current job as a customer service agent for a renewable energy company, is not directly related to his passion – cars – he appreciates that he is still on his journey.

The winner of the 2014 WorldSkills Barbados Automotive Technology competition, Darius explained: “I’ve been working around a mechanic all my life. I love cars.”

With encouragement from his instructor, Cyril Beckles and his fun loving spirit leading the way, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) alumnus said he welcomed the opportunity to compete. For him the preparation for WorldSkills was a “fun, learning process” and while he had worthy competitors, his thoughts on competition day were a relatively confident “I kinda got this”.

When that March day arrived, rainy and overcast, it was not the weather that worried Darius.

“The time just seemed to be running away, it was going along very quickly...[lack of] time made everything seem a lot harder,” he explained.

“We had to change suspension parts...dismantle a gear box... dismantle the engine... [but] everything was familiar. I finished before the time and I felt it had gone okay.”

Days later, Darius sat in the SJPP auditorium, waiting for the victors in his category to be announced.

“I was thinking that I could be the winner, but I still wasn’t sure,” he said.

But then, all his doubt was erased, when his name was called.

“I was shocked at first, but then I was very happy!” he said, adding that the experience had definitely boosted his confidence.

Now, with new skills in tow, Darius is striving to grow his home-based mechanic services, which he pursues at the weekend. His present job gives him the opportunity to develop a new craft and learn more about renewable energy, including the emerging electric car market.

“You have to start somewhere. You make a start and then you eventually build to what you want to do ... Vocational education is great. You don’t always have to go to [traditional education institutions], you can go to SJPP or BVTB... it’s important to pursue your passion.”

◆ Nikki Hutchinson



WSB 2014: Omari (top) and Darius (inset) receiving their first place awards at the Closing Ceremony

Rukiya going through her paces with Maxine Thomas in preparation for the WorldSkills Americas 2014 Competition



## THE RELUCTANT WINNER

**R**ukiya Clarke wanted to say “no” a lot in 2014. She wanted to say “no” to her tutor, Wildina Callender-James, when she asked her to participate in a national competition; and she wanted to say “no” when she was chosen to represent Barbados on the international stage; but destiny said “yes”.

The soft spoken young woman, who won bronze in both the WorldSkills Barbados and WorldSkills Americas Ladies & Men’s Hairdressing competitions, describes herself as “quiet and shy”, but clearly her skill speaks for itself.

Rukiya’s WorldSkills story began when she enrolled with the Semaj International School of Cosmetology and Trichology. It did not take long for Director Mrs. Callender-James, to pick up on Rukiya’s natural talents. She suggested that they would be well placed in the upcoming national hairdressing competition, which would take place in six months. Rukiya declined; but as her talent continued to surface, her tutor made an executive decision.

“...She kept asking me about it...[eventually she said] you’re going to be in this competition, you have no choice. I was like ‘fine’, I wasn’t arguing...I just started practising,” Rukiya recalled.

With hairdressing classes in the morning and beauty therapy classes in the evening, Rukiya’s schedule was full during the months which followed; and while her skills continued to blossom, her fear threatened to overtake her talent. Despite months of preparation, competition day arrived too quickly for the 21-one-year-old and her doubts got the best of her on day one.

“I was thinking ‘I don’t want to do this’, I can’t get this done. I was just scared. The very first day of WorldSkills [Barbados], the very first hairstyle I had to do, I didn’t understand what the instructor said...,” she revealed.

Fortunately, Mrs. Callender-James was on hand to help her focus and get her back on track.

“My instructor...she didn’t discourage me she just said that the second part [of the competition], I could get it done. So in the second half I had a plan, [but in] the first one I didn’t have *any* plan,” she said while laughing, as she reflected on that day.

Her perseverance carried her through and the outcome of the competition came as a complete surprise to her. “When I came third, I was excited – I’d placed, I did well, I was shocked!” But

that shock was multiplied when she was told that, because of age limits enforced in the WorldSkills Americas competition, the first and second place winners – Tahira Hurdle of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and Jessica Willoughby of Semaj - could not represent Barbados. So the mantle would be passed to her.

“No, no, no, no, no...I came third! I came third for a reason! That was my first reaction, honestly,” she said candidly.

However, with just a month to prepare for WorldSkills Americas which would be held in Bogota, Colombia, Rukiya put her nose to the grindstone and prepared for competition once again. This time, she had additional support from WorldSkills trainers Tricia Marshall, Adzil Stuart and Maxine Thomas, who helped her hone existing skills and acquire new ones.

“Ms. Thomas helped me with the blow-drying, holding the brush...[she] showed me a different way of holding it and how to do all two together... there’s an art to it,” she said, as it was these tips that would help her complete her tasks within set time limits.

“Ms. Marshall and Adzil, they told me to be elaborate. They said in Colombia, the competitors will be elaborate so it’s okay [to] think outside the box, think Nicki Minaj,” she said chuckling.

As Rukiya approached the arena for the first day of competition in Colombia, she repeated a simple mantra: “I have to do this; I have to get it right”.

But unfortunately, her first day in Colombia proved to be a repeat of the one she had had at home.

“Day one didn’t go well so I was ready to go home,” she said. “The dye didn’t come out how I wanted it to. The writing was in Spanish and the translator didn’t explain everything [that was] said...I had like a red patch on one side and another patch on another side...That was day one.”

Rukiya credits the unwavering support from her team – on the ground and in Barbados - as the reason for her capturing a bronze model.

“My instructor called me every day...Every lunchtime she Skyped me, and that helped. Everybody was excited, more excited than I was at first, so that gave me confidence...and Adzil, before every [stage], would help me decide what style I was doing...[and he said] if you’re putting the hair one way and it is going the other way, don’t fight it, go with the flow.”

Sage words which made for an improved performance on the days that followed.

“Day two was avant garde; that’s my comfort zone. I finally discovered how to get the [hair] colour done.... Day two was good. The third day was good too,” she said, adding that she had felt more confident in Colombia than in Barbados. “My hairstyles looked way better, maybe because I practiced more... and how I used my blowdryer, brush, scissors, razor comb, washed the mannequin’s hair - all those things mattered, and I did those things right...[The experience] taught me to be more confident in myself because if somebody has confidence in you, you should be confident in yourself,” she said.

After the Colombia experience, Rukiya returned home to finish her nine-month programme with Semaj, which she completed last July. She has also completed an internship and hopes to open a home-based salon.

“I see myself having a salon - with other people working in it,” she said, “and I’d like to have my own cosmetology school... I’ve always wanted to teach...I’m still trying to figure out how to get involved in it; my heart is in teaching.”

● Nikki Hutchinson

*Her perseverance carried her through and the outcome of the competition came as a complete surprise to her*



Rukiya pictured with Director, Semaj International School of Cosmetology and Trichology Wildina Callender-James and Executive Director, TVET Council Henderson Eastmond

## THE WORLDSKILLS BARBADOS COMPETITION

The **WorldSkills Barbados (WSB) Competition** is a uniquely modeled, biennial competition, first held in March 2012, which targets students in the 16 – 20 age group enrolled in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.

The WorldSkills Barbados Competition is based on the international **WorldSkills competition** - a global “skills olympics” - which is held in one of 72 member countries every two years to provide young people enrolled in training institutions the opportunity to compete and demonstrate their excellence in the skilled professions.

The global competition is promoted and managed by **WorldSkills**, an international not-for-profit membership association open to agencies or bodies which have a responsibility for promoting technical and vocational education and training in their respective countries/regions. Started in 1950 in Spain, **WorldSkills** is the leading global authority for skilled professional development, setting an international standard for excellence. The **WorldSkills** movement provides an invaluable means of exchange and comparison of world-class competency standards in the industrial trades and service sectors of the global economy.

Barbados is an Associate Member of the **WorldSkills** association on which it is officially represented by the TVET Council.

## ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES A WINNER



WSB Competition 2014: Samantha Yearwood is a picture of concentration

**S**amanthe Yearwood is not your average 21-year-old. She will get the “likes” that so many crave on social media but put that down to the budding fashion designer’s creativity.

“The styles [today] leave nothing to the imagination, everything nowadays is see-through. Everybody tells me I’m old fashioned ... [but the way] I’m dressed, if I go through town, I’ll still get attention,” she declared.

With a personality that could easily be described as straightforward and no-nonsense, it comes as no surprise that Samantha was a winner in the 2014 WorldSkills Barbados

competition – three times over. Although she said she had never won a competition before, it is fair to say that Samantha, with her quiet approach and determined spirit, was destined for greatness.

“From a young age, I was always taught to go for what I want and strive for excellence...I have a competitive determination inside of me,” she declared; and it was this determination that led her to excel in her field of dressmaking, even though it was not her first choice.

With hopes of undertaking studies in psychology, Samantha

was disappointed when she discovered that the programme she wanted to pursue had an age requirement of 18, and she was too young to enroll at the time. So, upon her father's suggestion, she signed up for the Garment Technology programme at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic.

"My grandmother does sewing and I would always sit and watch her and draw little dresses for her to make for me...I was just doing [garment technology] until I could do psychology, but then, I kind of fell in love," she admitted.

But how did this blossoming love for sewing evolve into competing at the national level? Samanthe credits her instructor, Lisa Holder, with encouraging her to be a part of the WorldSkills Barbados experience and helping her believe that her talents were worthy of the competition. Even as her skills improved, Samanthe was still not certain how well she would do on the big day; but when that day came, she proved that she could be cool under pressure.

"I knew I would've done well but I didn't know I would've won...Those [competition] days were hectic, everybody was trying to get everything done...all these mistakes were going on in between – I undid my skirt three times!...I was nervous that I was not going to get it done, but I got it completed," she said.

Samanthe revealed that she was quite pleased when her name was announced as having won in her category; but when it was called across three categories, her jubilation turned to shock. "When I was announced the overall winner for SJPP and then the overall winner for the entire competition I was like 'they called my name?! They're sure they have the right name?!' she exclaimed.

It was an emotional moment for Samanthe, who admitted that despite all the challenges she faced during those three days, it was well worth it.

"It was a good experience because it helped me to work on my nervousness and be open minded that even if you make a mistake, don't give up ... It helped me to keep pushing [and realise that] no matter what comes your way, you'll always get to the end.

"WorldSkills has made me a lot more confident in my work. When you finish school, as a new designer, you get nervous making clothes for people. So it has given me that confidence to push myself and be confident in my talent and my skills," she stated.

Samanthe has continued to improve on her skills and, while she is not one to emulate any particular fashion designer, she did share her appreciation for the knowledge shared by Barbadian Antonio Cumberbatch. Cumberbatch, who is now an Assistant Designer with Zac Posen in New York, conducted a fashion clinic last year, which helped her develop her skills even further.

"He had this workshop with BCC and some SJPP students, showing us how to draw, [how to] price our clothes...So WorldSkills got all of that in play for me. I'm proud of him because he's a Caribbean designer and [look] how far he's



Samanthe Yearwood won first place in the garment making category and best in competition for achieving the highest overall score

gone!" she said.

She did add however that, for locally based designers, she would like to see them chart their own paths and create functional pieces with flair.

"I think for a Caribbean island, we want to make our fashion too 'Western', I don't like it. It's an island, [we should] make things that people will wear everyday...beachwear, big hats, beach bags...If we keep gravitating to [Western styles], we won't have any culture for ourselves. I would like to see more Caribbean designers [getting back] to their roots," she stated, adding that while fashion could be avant garde, it should still be functional and suitable for the climes.

Samanthe continues to keep herself busy and is using the scholarship she won at WorldSkills to pursue further studies.

"I'm currently at SJPP doing food studies [which is like Home Economics...I [also] made some uniforms for Red Cross," she said, adding that another contract for uniforms was on the horizon. She explained that she chose food studies, as she believes that field, combined with her completed studies in other related areas, will help her reach her ultimate goal.

"I want to have a fashion house, have my own brand and have a fashion school. My career is going to revolve around fashion," she stated.

Years have passed since Samanthe's dream of studying psychology took a different path; and she has no regrets about forsaking academia for her vocational pursuit.

"A lot of people think that you have to be in a book all the time to make it in life... that's not true. This world is becoming more [skills focused] ...at least you can work with your skill until you get to where you want to be - if you still want [something else]," she said. It's clear that for Samanthe, her second choice was the right one.

● Nikki Hutchinson



## NURTURING THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY

**H**orticulture is an industry with a high turnover rate. In spite of this, Russell Corrie, Managing Director of Nature Care - one of the Caribbean's leading full service plant nurseries and landscaping businesses - believes it is critical to invest in technical and vocational education and training.

Since establishing his company in 1983, Mr. Corrie has seen numerous people enter "the industry because they need a job". And, he has seen many go simply because that job wasn't something they wanted to do.

He decided the best way to combat this challenge was to ensure training was engrained in Nature Care. Each worker has to undergo on-the-job training provided by Nature Care's best supervisors who have more than 20 years of experience in the industry.

The company, which also has a franchised operation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, established the Green School, a National/Caribbean Vocational Qualification (N/CVQ) assessment centre for Amenity Horticulture Level 1 at its Balls, Christ Church location in Barbados.

Nature Care partnered with a training provider called Asymmetric Consulting Inc. to receive a grant to fund the initiative from the Competency Based Training Fund (CBTF).

"We have been granted funding to train 200 people to certification in CVQ Amenity Horticulture Level 1 by the end of

next year. Our goal is to do 25 candidates every cycle, so every six weeks we will train some of our employees and people from outside," Mr Corrie said.

"We recognised people are going to come and go and that a lot of people don't stay very long in the industry. But if Nature Care is going to deliver consistent standards, a high quality service and high quality products to its clients, we have to ensure that all of our people who are on the front line have a certain degree of training that is in keeping with the job they are supposed to do," he reasoned.

In 2013, Nature Care copped the top spot in the TVET Employers Recognition Awards in the agriculture sector. Organised by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council, the national biennial awards competition acknowledges and celebrates employers who provide quality workforce training and integrate such development in its business planning through innovative design and delivery.

"Winning the award was a milestone for us... there is a sense internally that we are doing something good, we are doing something right," the Nature Care Managing Director said. He added that the publicity was a plus.

"It never hurts to have our photograph in the press and the Nature Care brand out there. People get to see that although we are in the business of landscaping, we are not just here to make a quick buck. They see we are here for the long term and that



Training Consultant with Asymmetric Consulting, Inc.  
Dr. Richard Graham, conducting a class at Nature Care

we are reinvesting in our staff.”

Mr Corrie pointed out that the Green School is designed to become “a purpose created facility that delivers horticulture training to Nature Care’s staff and the public”. The next step is for the institution to provide Level 2 and 3 NVQs certification.

He insists that when this training is introduced, staff would acquire technical skills in areas such as carpentry, masonry, irrigation and installing lights.

“We do a lot of masonry and carpentry work in landscaping but generally we subcontract that. So we would bring in somebody to build a pathway or build a deck but these are all landscaping skills that at some stage in the NVQ training will be taught. So staff would now get an understanding of how those things work and gain skills they would not have learnt on the job,” he explained.

Although Nature Care is investing heavily in training, Mr Corrie is not afraid of staff leaving. As a matter of fact, he can point to five landscaping businesses that were started by persons who worked and trained at Nature Care.

While some people may see this as creating competition, he acknowledges that his business has not suffered as a result. Ironically, he has subcontracted some of those five firms to assist Nature Care on large projects and when it faces tight deadlines.

According to him, “It is good that when we go to someone we

know the quality and standard that we would get and although they won’t quite deliver the Nature Care standard, we are able to jump back in and polish up the rest.”

Furthermore, he sees it as another way to develop the horticulture industry.

*Winning the award was a milestone for us...  
there is a sense internally that we are doing  
something good, we are doing something right*

“The reality is that if the standards in the industry keep going up, the industry will get bigger and the whole pie gets bigger. I see in other islands where the

landscaping industry is a little younger and less sophisticated, clients generally won’t invest the sort of money that they would in Barbados because they have confidence that if they buy landscaping or a horticultural product in Barbados, they are going to get value for money and good quality.

“That doesn’t mean they are going to buy from Nature Care, but the pie that might have been a million dollar market is going to become a hundred million dollar market because people know that they are going to get good quality work,” he surmised.

So regardless of how many people enter and leave the industry, or how many stay, Nature Care is committed to providing quality training in horticulture.

“That is where I see the future benefits to the company... Training and constant improvement of skills are critical to us adapting to a changing market. This keeps Nature Care on the cutting edge with developing technology and customer trends,” Mr Corrie concluded.

◆ Shamkoe Pilé

## TVET EMPLOYERS RECOGNITION AWARDS

The TVET Employers Recognition Awards is a national awards competition intended to acknowledge and celebrate employers that invest in workforce training.

The purpose of the awards is to increase the amount and quality of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) currently provided by employers in Barbados. It does so by recognising the employers who are involved in TVET and the positive impact they have through quality workforce training. The awards help to identify and celebrate the achievements of employers within specified sectors who utilise TVET.

They are designed to encourage the provision of job attachments and other workforce training opportunities for employees of all ages, in both the private and public sectors.

The TVET Employers Recognition Awards aim to:

- Recognise employers who invest in the development of their staff through the use of TVET
- Promote the benefits of TVET as a driver for staff and organisational development
- Increase national recognition of quality training practices
- Encourage increased buy-in for competence-based TVET from public and private sector employers.

At the 2013 Awards, the winners were as follows: Tourism/Hospitality - The Courtyard by Marriott Bridgetown Hotel, Financial Services - CGM Gallagher Insurance Brokers (Barbados) Limited, Retail - Barbados Port Inc., Agriculture - Nature Care and Special Awards (Job Attachments) - Barbados Port Inc. and (Youth Development) - Monnis Farms .

Technical and Vocational Education and Training is 'education for the world of work'. It includes all programmes, courses, and in particular, practical training that contribute towards the development of the knowledge, technical skills, core skills and attitudes essential to being competitive in today's world of work. Core skills refer to communication, applying and using numbers, information and communication technology, problem solving, working with others and improving one's own learning and performance.



Staff of the Courtyard by Marriott

## TRANSCENDING STAFF THROUGH TRAINING

**D**eidre Green's boast "our associates are our biggest asset" is no empty bluster when it comes to the work of the team. The guest care manager at the Courtyard by Marriott, a 118-room hotel located in the UNESCO Historic Garrison district on the south coast of Barbados, regards all employees, any level, as associates.

"We are not on the beach like some of our competitors, we don't have a large staff complement but we are very team focus," she said. With an attitude like this, it's no wonder that in 2013 the Courtyard by Marriott won the **TVET Employers Recognition Awards** in the

tourism/hospitality category. The hotel beat back stiff competition from the world renowned Hilton Barbados Resort and the natural wonder Harrison's Cave to take first place.

Hosted by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council, the biennial national awards competition celebrates and rewards employers who invest in workforce training and encourage job attachments. Meeting such criteria wasn't at all challenging for the Courtyard by Marriott. In fact, according to Ms. Green, "training is a part our culture."





Training is a part of the culture at Courtyard by Marriott

Ms. Green explained the Internal Cross Training Programme is introduced during orientation when employees are asked to identify another area in which they may wish to work. The information is placed on their records and after the associates become “settled and experts in their initial position”, they are given the opportunity to cross train in the other department.

“This is part of the culture we have here, where we don’t expect that a person would want to stay in one position for ever and ever. If there is a possibility for someone to move internally in the company to an area he or she identifies, we ensure that can come to light,” she stated.

In addition to internal training, associates attend external courses, whether they are offered locally, regionally or internationally. Ms. Green said that because the Courtyard by Marriott is an international brand, training is required annually.

“We have an Internal Cross Training Programme where all associates are given the opportunity to cross train in each other’s department. For example, you have the line cook in the kitchen being crossed trained in purchasing. The correlation between this is that in the event that the purchaser is not here, the cook would know the procedure because it directly affects his or her level of service and delivery,” she said.

The Guest Care Manager pointed out that the Courtyard by Marriott is part of an international chain of more than 3000 hotels which consists of 17 different brands.

“A Courtyard is considered a select service within the brand, meaning we are not a resort. We have alternative services from a full service resort, still providing an optimum level of service with a twist,” she said, adding that they are primarily a business hotel surrounded by numerous resorts.

“We still have to remain competitive and offer the same level of service and standards that hotels like that provide. We recognise we have limited associates in comparison with a lot of these other properties. So our associates have to multitask and because they have to multitask, they have to be well trained and trained up. Especially in the event they are required to do anything different from their job specifications and have to go outside the box.”

And, contrary to this being seen as extra work, associates welcome the Internal Cross Training Programme. Many have embraced the culture, benefited from the exposure in other fields and gained upward career mobility as a result.

Such is the case with Jennifer Haynes who started as a front desk agent. She crossed trained and worked temporarily in the accounting department and was promoted to accounts clerk. Then there is Shondelle Hinds who started as the housekeeping coordinator but during orientation mentioned she had a background in accounting. When the purchasing officer’s post became available, Shondelle was more than eligible and today she still holds that position.

“For example, we have the Foundations of Cleaning course. The associates from the housekeeping department have to take this every two years so they are certified. They would travel to wherever the course is being offered in the region.

“We also have the Foundations of Leadership course, which all the associates who are in leadership positions, from supervisory to management, have to do. Again, you earn a certificate that needs to be renewed every two years,” she explained.

Consultants are also brought in from time to time to teach new concepts or refresh staff about customer service and other technical skills. Additionally, associates are sent on various training sessions throughout the year usually offered by organisations such as the TVET Council and the Barbados Employers’ Confederation.

The fear of investing and then losing staff is not a deterrent.

“This is all about empowering the associates so that in the event that they want to move on... they are a representation of what Marriott stands for. We want them to explore new opportunities because we are so confident in our product and training that when we bring on new people, we will hone their skills so those persons would also become services experts,” Ms. Green said.

Moreover, she stressed that the Courtyard by Marriott fosters team spirit and some people stay because they like the culture. Opportunities and challenges are discussed internally at monthly town hall meetings where feedback is encouraged as well as open ended discussions.

“We are a small team that engages on a regular basis so we know each other’s challenges and successes. We celebrate the successes and if there is a challenge we are there to assist. This is how we have the edge, because we are smaller and more intimate, we have more time to fix our problems as a team as oppose to separate as departments.”



2013 Awards Flashback: HR Manager, General Services, Karissa Beharry-Shepherd and Vice President, Property and Casualty, Michael Tomlin accept the award for winner in the financial services category from Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister Senator Darcy Boyce.

## DEVELOPING INSURANCE PROFESSIONALS

CGM Gallagher Insurance Brokers (Barbados) Limited is on a mission to develop a cadre of insurance professionals. Sounds simple enough, but it is not as easy as one may imagine.

According to Senior Vice-President for Human Resources, Karissa Beharry-Shepherd, "Insurance is not a career you wake up one day wanting to go do. You just kind of fall into this job and then you become an insurance person".

That is why the Caribbean's largest insurance brokers launched its Graduate Training Programme targeting university students. The company, which is also a part of Arthur J Gallagher, the fourth largest insurance broker in the world, also invests heavily in staff training.

It is for these reasons that CGM Gallagher Insurance Brokers (Barbados) Limited won the TVET Employers Recognition Awards 2013 in the financial services sector.

The biennial national awards competition, which is organised by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council, rewards employers who invest in workforce training and encourage job attachments. Judges assess the extent and quality of the training provided as well as the benefits such development has brought to the organisation and staff.

Ms Beharry-Shepherd explained that CGM Gallagher Insurance Brokers (Barbados) Limited intentionally established the Graduate Training Programme because it wanted "to sell

insurance as a prosperous career to the young people".

"We found the university students would run to the accounting firms and banks but they don't really run to insurance. We thought if we offer a competitive package and educate the young graduates that it is a career... it's a profession..., then we would be able to develop young people wanting careers

in insurance. And, the money is here too, part of our remuneration is sales commission so the sky is the limit for you in insurance," she reasoned.

*We never turn down an employee who wants to do an insurance designated programme; most of them here want to do that in any event*

The Graduate Training Programme lasts for one year and successful candidates benefit from a comprehensive internship with regional and international experience.

CGM Gallagher has offices in eight Caribbean territories and licenses to operate in eleven. Barbados is home to the largest branch with 50 employees. The firm is unique because it satisfies regional and large commercial clients. Although the company "acts as the middle man between the client and the insurance companies", it does more than canvas the market for the best rate and cover.

With CGM Gallagher's international network, it also provides reinsurance services for companies with very large risks that cannot be covered in the local market. As a result, graduates are given in-depth exposure to the multifaceted world of insurance.

"Every two to three months graduates are rotated throughout

the company. They spend one month in a regional office which is smaller and they get to understand how to run a branch because those branches only have two to three people.

“The final part of the programme is that they go overseas to either the US or the UK and partner with other graduates in Arthur J Gallagher to learn how to do sales, negotiations, and communications. They also receive technical training. We make it a very attractive programme to get the bright university student who is leaving the university and looking for a career,” she affirmed.

Now in its third year, the programme has been reaping success as the graduates remained with CGM Gallagher.

Ms Beharry-Shepherd revealed that the company’s goal to develop insurance professionals is also pursued internally. Employees working directly within the field are required to complete certified courses with the UK based Chartered Insurance Institute – one of the world’s leading professional organisations for insurance and financial services. Training is also provided in anti-money laundering, insurance broking, risk management and re-insurance.

“We never turn down an employee who wants to do an insurance designated programme; most of them here want to do that in any event. Some of them also do MBAs and we support that as well, because it helps when they move into management or leadership roles that they have that business knowledge,” she added.

In fact, the company has taken training to another level by seeking to create specialists in various types of insurance. On an annual basis, an employee is selected to become an expert in a specific area. That person would benefit from an international internship and training.

“The insurance market in the Caribbean is very basic... but overseas there is insurance for every single thing - bloodstock which are horses, jewellery block, and marine insurance for example. So if we choose a person to specialise in bloodstock insurance, she would become the expert throughout the group and she would deal with clients in that area. She would also try to develop that particular portfolio,” Ms Beharry-Shepherd explained.

Training within the organisation extends beyond insurance



**2013 Awards Flashback:** The winners pictured with Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development Dr. Esther Byer Suchoo (front row fourth from left), Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister Senator Darcy Boyce (front row, fifth from left), project coordinator Technical Officer Andrea Harding-Waithe (back row, fourth from left), TVET Council’s Executive Director Henderson Eastmond (back row, fifth from left) and the Council’s Chairman Dr. Hensley Sobers (back row, sixth from left).

personnel. Information technology employees complete Microsoft Certified Specialist Programmes, while the firm provides funding for its accounting staff to be ACCA, CAT and CGA certified. It also pays for the annual membership fees and for the courses to ensure workers retain their designations.

An array of soft skills training is provided on a continuous basis. These include excel training, supervisory courses, customer service, sales, presentation skills and Dale Carnegie courses.

“Every year we have an errors and omissions training for all staff. Being in an insurance field you can be held liable for many things, so we ensure that everyone from the janitor to the highest person is trained in this area because if you forgot to write down something a client told you, and you didn’t put cover in place, you could be held responsible,” she noted.

The Senior Vice-President for Human Resources believes that workforce development is essential for CGM Gallagher Insurance Brokers (Barbados) Limited.

She pointed out that after receiving training or a designation, employees become more responsible, accountable, and analytical. Moreover, there is improvement in work quality and productivity.

The biggest benefit could very much be the fact that the company is developing a team of professionals who are better able to serve its clients.

“Investing in training makes our clients feel more confident in our services because insurance is a profession. You must be qualified to be able to advise clients appropriately, especially someone who has major risks. It shows we are credible. We just don’t get quotations but we can advise you on the type of cover and risks,” Ms. Beharry-Shepherd concluded.

● Shamkoe Pilé

**CAREER CORNER**

Jeffrey Gay Jr:  
Personal Trainer/  
Massage Therapist



Jeffrey Gay: "I believe this career must be a passion"



Jeffrey Gay with fellow students of the PBHC: Sherie McGeary (right) and Rosanne Maxwell also achieved their diploma in Swedish massage in 2014.

With a touch of the hand Jeffrey Gay Jr. is helping others improve their mood by relieving their stressed out mental and physical state.

Under his care clients of the massage therapist and personal trainer experience the euphoria of a state of pure relaxation.

After graduating from Queen's College with eight CXC's and completing the Associate Degree in Sports Management at the Barbados Community College, Gay undertook a personal training workshop and a basic course in massage therapy. In an unlikely combination Gay is now a final year University of the West Indies Social Science student in management with marketing, an American College of Sports Medicine certified personal trainer and an International Therapy Examination Council (ITEC) certified Holistic massage therapist. He was one of 10 students to gain a distinction in the ITEC Level 3 qualification, Diploma in Holistic Massage, in July last year.

"I was always interested in pursuing massage therapy even before I had ever done a course. It was a part of the vision I had for my business and personal life. I've always felt my purpose was to help other people achieve a better quality of life by influencing their mental and physical wellness. I had liked the idea of being able to decrease another person's stress level and improve their mood and wellbeing. Massage therapy was one of the mediums through which I would be able to achieve this purpose," said Gay, who plans on adding life coaching to his career training.

His career choice was a follow-up to his burning desire while at secondary school to be in the health or medical areas as he had a leaning towards, chemistry, biology and physics – all components related to the body.

The basic course in massage therapy at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic intensified his interest in the area and Gay enrolled in ITEC following the recommendation of a friend. ITEC is an internationally recognised examinations board that offers qualifications in Beauty & Spa Therapy, Sports & Fitness Training and Complementary Therapies among other areas.

"I was told that Ms. Berry- Greenidge of the Personal Body Health Care Clinic (PBHC) was the best in the field. I enrolled during my time at university and it was one of the most challenging experiences of my life managing the massage course and my studies. The tutors at PBHC were very understanding and that facilitated my ability to complete the course successfully. The work load was much more than I expected and the depth of the course really surprised me, as some of my other classmates stated they had a much deeper respect for massage therapy after the course as did I," he stated.

Gay compared his assessment and testing at UWI with those of ITEC and TVET Council's Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ).

"At UWI students are assessed in the typical coursework and examination methods and then graded. I personally am not very fond of this method of assessment because in my opinion it does not

necessarily show whether I am able to perform the skills that I am being tested on theoretically. I find most students usually 'learn' the material within the few weeks prior to the examination after which most if not all material is forgotten," Gay explained.

On the other hand, said Gay, the ITEC Diploma in Holistic Massage and TVET Council's CVQ in Assessment Level 4 assessed competence rather than strictly theoretical knowledge.

"I found this type of assessment method more reassuring to me that I could in fact perform the tasks I was being taught to perform. Assessment was ongoing rather than a straight pass or fail grade and this allowed me to continually work on areas where I may have been slacking and to which I needed to pay particular attention. I found this made me more confident as well, as I continued to work on my skill I would be allowed to work on my weaknesses and have them tested again for improvement rather than being failed," Gay reasoned.

Now, having reached this far, Gay is mapping out a further plan.

*I plan to master my craft, to use every available opportunity to become better in my field and other ventures related to my field*

"I plan to master my craft, to use every available opportunity to become better in my field and other ventures related to my field. I have already started my own massage business at The Family Health Clinic and within three to five years I would like it to be successfully offering the service full time as well as being able to incorporate the massage therapy into my personal training. I am about to start sports massage therapy which I would like to make my specialty, I'm really excited about that," declared the business operator.

Gay is working as an on call therapist for a hotel but intends to assist the PBHC which will help to keep his skills sharp while he gives back in much the same way the tutors helped him.

His immediate plans are to: continue to gain more experience in Swedish Massage Therapy; obtain a Diploma in Sports Massage Therapy with ITEC, grow the business to a sustainable point and aid athletes through sports massage therapy to improve their performance and recovery.

"I believe this career must be a passion, so my first piece of advice is to be truly honest with yourself about why you are pursuing it. It is a career in which you have the ability to improve the quality of life of others by reducing stress, inducing relaxation and relieving pain. That is a big responsibility, so make sure your intentions are pure. My teacher told me don't worry about money or any other gains, focus on providing a good service and those things will follow. She was right. My next piece of advice would be once you have started, practice! Mastery is achieved through time and repetition," advised Gay.

He thanked the tutors at PBHC for providing a high quality course, his classmates who were an instrumental part of helping him during that time and his friends and family who supported him.

◆ Samantha Jones

## BUILDING CAREERS IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS



Head of PBHC Patricia Berry-Greenidge

The Personal Body Health Care Clinic and School of Holistic Therapies (PBHC) is an accredited training provider with the International Therapy Examination Council (ITEC) and the International

Federation of Professional Aromatherapists (IFPA). It also has regional accreditation and is registered with the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) as a post-secondary training institution.

Head of the institution Patricia Berry-Greenidge said her aim was to see the PBHC contribute to the development of the Health and Wellness industry in Barbados and the region. Growth, she added, that is based on recognised standards. Established in 2007, the PBHC is also an approved National and Caribbean Vocational Qualification (N/CVQ) Assessment Centre with the TVET Council Barbados.

Her plans for expansion of the institution's offerings include Level 3 Sports Massage Therapy, Aromatherapy and Reflexology with ITEC and the CVQ Level 3 in Massage Therapy.

"These various qualifications allow students to have career options which would not have been available previously. It expands their career choices. More Barbadians are aware of what a good, competent, properly trained massage therapist should or should not be able to do."

She added: "Students have scope for career growth among the local population as well as in the tourism and hospitality industry. Tourists and visitors come looking for services such as these at a high quality level."

As part of this effort, the PBHC, in collaboration with the Barbados Coalition of Services Industries (BCSI), has been awarded a grant by the Competency-Based Training Fund (CBTF) to facilitate training leading to Level 2 certification in Complementary and Alternative Therapies. Level 2 certification would enable persons seeking to enter the health and wellness sector to acquire the fundamental knowledge, skills and competence required for work as well as their further educational development.

Berry-Greenidge explained that the project is in keeping with the need expressed by industry professionals for greater levels of training and certification for persons seeking to enter and advance their careers in the health and wellness sector. The project seeks to fill the gap created by a lack of locally and internationally accredited programmes which could complement the basic level certification that was previously available.



The partnerships named among this year's awardees are Nature Care/ Asym-metrix Consulting Inc.; Barbados Coalition of Service Industries (BCSI)/Personal Body Health Care Clinic; Rayside Construction Limited/Barbados Employers' Confederation (BEC); Barbados Film and Video Association Inc./Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity; FieldTech Staging Solutions and IGM/ Springer Secondary School; COT Holdings; St. George Farmers Marketing Corp/ Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); and Williams Industries Limited/the National Initiative for Service Excellence (NISE)

# FROM SUPPLY TO DEMAND: PUTTING COMPETENCE FIRST

From left: Peter Carrington, HR Manager, Barbados Port Inc; Marcellus Louis, Reserve Forklift Operator, Barbados Port Inc; Emerson Alleyne, Director, Caribbean Maritime Institute



From the majestic ships to the weather beaten vessels all sail into this port of entry yearly depositing precious cargo vital to the functioning of the country.

It can be anything from crucial medical supplies for residents to the visitor who sustains the tourism industry that is the among the major foreign exchange earners for Barbados.


Include in those vital statistics that a whopping 90% of our imports is handled through the Barbados Port Inc. (BPI) and the impact of competency-based training (CBT) on the employees there becomes clearer.

As one of the winning partnerships in the first cycle of the Competency-Based Training Fund (CBTF), the Bridgetown Port, in conjunction with the Caribbean Maritime Institute (CMI), has an ambitious vision to see its entire workforce benefit from competency-based training, redefining the way it does business.

"The work here is very pragmatic and the nature of dock work involves persons using both physical skills as well as technology. What was absent before was employees being able to demonstrate what they do in systematic way and follow set standards. This is where competency-based training (CBT) comes in," explains Peter Carrington, Manager, Human Resources.

*"It's OK to learn on the job but it's even better when your knowledge can expand a bit more. I always wanted certification to show that I'm qualified to do what I'm doing."*

**Sharon Smith-Callender**  
Head Gardener, Nature Care

  
"You're Green is OK"

**TRAINING PROGRAMME**  
**Amenity Horticulture - Level 1 (NVQ)**


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L-R – Peter Carrington, HR Manager, Barbados Port Inc; Emerson Alleyne, Director, Caribbean Maritime Institute; Glenn Roach, Quality Assurance Manager, Barbados Port Inc.



Glenn Roach, Manager, Quality Assurance shares his view and adds that the CBT takes into account the different learning abilities of candidates and that the occupational standards on which the training is based provide assurance of the quality of the services.

Carrington believes that as a successful port, the organisation must have efficiencies and ensure that employees are trained to take on associated responsibilities, handle new equipment and adjust to any new infrastructure in place. A critical part of that involves the stevedores.

"We want him [the stevedore] to be proud of himself, knowing that he's certified and can match his level of performance with that of persons in the region and internationally. And we'd want a port worker who is able to perform at the required level at all times; one who is empowered knowing he's certified in a very specialised area to deliver quality service and recognises that he has to meet certain standards and qualifications to obtain work here.

It is part of the reason the BPI applied to the CBTF.

"The port's broad policy is to provide training and development for all employees to ensure we're cutting edge in technology and procedures. It is part of our strategic plan to have staff training and it takes funding to do so, and the CBTF provides that opportunity. We've had assistance from the Employment and Training Fund in the past but the CBTF will cover training over a two-year period," says Carrington.

He anticipates more efficiency and effectiveness after the training which would be reflected in, among other things, a reduction of the time it takes to complete a task.

*"The port's broad policy is to provide training and development for all employees to ensure we're cutting edge in technology and procedures."*

"We expect to gain efficiencies as we do tasks in less time. Also there'll be a reduction in work place accidents and cost of insurance premiums. We can also let ship owners and persons doing business with us know that we're operating at international standards. And for the economy it should lower cost of doing business in the port," he states.





The worker can start as a docker and through the process reach the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) in Stevedoring Foundation Skills Level Two as an equipment operator before progressing to Level 3 where they can become a supervisor. The Level 4 stage can lead to promotion as an assessor but there is diversity at the BPI.

“The port is a diverse operation. We have finance, accounting, engineering, IT, and technical skills careers. We want to offer a CVQ in customer service followed by engineering and we’re working with the TVET Council to develop standards in other areas. The ones most ready are the customer service modules.

Our vision is for everyone employed at the port to have gone through competency-based training within the next five years,” Carrington states.

Meanwhile Roach is firm that the BPI wants its employees trained, assessed and certified to international standards.

“That’s something that we’ll be interested in pursuing in the longer term to ensure that we have a port that is internationally certified in terms of quality and health and safety,” he declares.

### COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING FUND (CBTF)

*The Competency-Based Training Fund, part of the Barbados Human Resource Development Skills for the Future programme, awards grant funding to projects designed to transform the Barbadian workforce and make businesses more competitive. In the first cycle \$3.6 million was awarded to seven projects partnerships in July last year. These are focused on several emerging and priority sectors and will equip more than 800 persons with the skills needed for a rewarding and competitive career path – whether in Barbados or overseas.*

*The winning partnerships at a glance:*

AC Manufacturing/Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic	Described as a principal area of economic activity in Barbados the skills of employees in the manufacturing industry, mainly women, will be updated to take modern innovations on board
Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association/ The Potter Centre	Training for 300 supervisory and management employees is provided so that the hospitality sector can position itself for improvements in effective leadership and management
Barbados Port Inc./Caribbean Maritime Institute	With 90% of imports into Barbados being handled through the port training is crucial for dock workers, forklift operators and supervisors for maximum efficiency and safety
Barbados Youth Business Trust/CILC Action Coach	Fifty entrepreneurs will be equipped with skills especially in the area of customer/client service, lead generation, budgeting and financial mastery, leadership and team building through a newly-developed NVQ
Guardian General Insurance/ Barbados Institute of Management of Productivity (BIMAP)	Recognising that competent employees are central to an organisation’s growth 81 employees will be trained, and receive multiple NVQs
Intimate Hotels/Career Development Institute	Training for more than 150 “front line” staff in the tourism industry in a variety of CVQs including Customer Service and Reception
West Toonz Inc./ BIMAP	With a sustainable growth path of seven to 12% in the animation industry almost 50 artists will be equipped with the Level 3 NVQ in Animation

## MARCELLUS LOUIS: CBT IMPROVES WORK PERFORMANCE

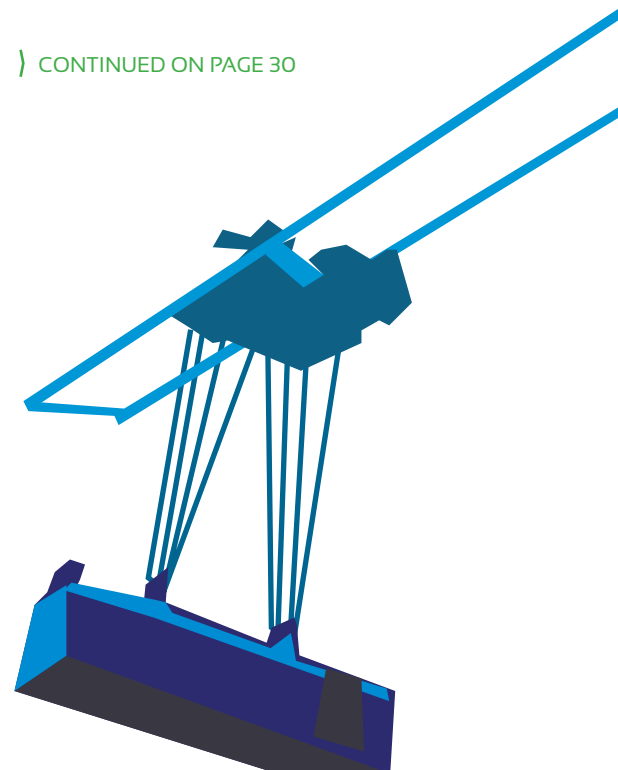
**M**arcellus Louis sees a buoyant future for himself at the Bridgetown Port due, in large part, to receiving his Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) in Stevedoring Foundation Skills at Level 1.

Louis, 49, thought the on-the-job training which required him to master and effectively demonstrate skills would have been challenging but he declares: "It's the best thing that could have happened to me."

For one, he and his colleagues are much more confident in their roles as they board ships having gone through training in areas such as Occupational Health and Safety and Loading and Unloading Cargo.

"The first unit we did was Health and Safety and afterwards, on the job, you could feel the difference. We now try to implement 'safety first' in everything we do. The whole process of working, everything, has improved," Louis explains.

} CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



Marcellus Louis: It's the best thing that could have happened to me.

## CBTF: STAFF PROFILES



K. Anderson Lowe, Manager, CBTF Management Unit



Standing from left: K. Anderson Lowe, Manager, CBTF Management Unit; Corey Morris, Procurement Officer, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology & Innovation; Henderson Eastmond, Executive Director, TVET Council, Andrea M. Austin, Liaison Officer, CBTF Management Unit and Richard Skeete, Administrative Officer, CBTF Management Unit.

Seated from left: Lisa Fenty, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, CBTF Management Unit; Sonja Griffith, Administrative Assistant, CBTF Management Unit.

## K. ANDERSON LOWE

– Manager, Competency Based Training Fund (CBTF), Management Unit (CMU)

### What past experience now serves you best in your role?

What I found that have really served me well are the many professional contacts and business relationships I have built and maintained over the years. The capacity to speak to people directly and solicit their support has been a source of encouragement.

### What lessons have you learned in your role as Manager of the CBTF?

I view every opportunity as a learning opportunity and my current position is no exception. Despite having had senior positions in large companies prior to this role, opportunities to interact on a regular basis with the public and the media were not part of those roles.

Up until now, I tended to view being talkative as not a good thing; just take a look at my school report cards and you will see that. Now it is a good thing as a major part of my work is to promote the benefits of, and encourage participation in the Fund, and that requires a lot of talking. The ability to effectively handle the media was a skill I always thought I needed to develop but never quite got around to. Having now been thrown in at the “deep end” I believe I have done well so far.

I am also learning how to work with the next

generation; how to play a supporting role and provide direction and encouragement.

### Explain briefly how the CBTF’s mission will enhance/benefit Barbados’ TVET system?

One of the mandates of the CBTF is to promote TVET in Barbados. By providing funding for TVET education to the tune of BDS\$13 million over the next three years, we expect to see a major boost in the number of institutions offering TVET, the number and level of occupations for which training is offered and improve the level of certification in the Barbadian workforce. It is anticipated that at the end of the CBTF the institutions, systems and programmes developed will be firmly established and expanded to serve the public for the future.

### What is your vision for the CBTF programme?

Apart from the initiatives previously mentioned, I see the development of new and emerging industries, avenues for persons to become entrepreneurs and for persons to become multi-skilled. I would like to see TVET education as an option for everyone including the “best and brightest” so to speak. I hope that as a result of the outcomes achieved and lessons learned the Fund will serve as a future model for the development and funding of TVET education.

### What is the link between the TVET Council and CBTF?

The CBTF is a pilot project designed to provide funding for private sector training initiatives leading to certification. As we are both promoting technical and vocational education, the TVET Council has overall responsibility for the successful outcomes of the project in terms of the number of people trained and certified as well as the number of standards developed.

The CBTF and the TVET Council therefore work closely to ensure that proposals submitted for funding are in accordance with occupational standards that exist or are to be developed. We also collaborate to market and promote the acceptance and benefits of TVET education in Barbados.

### What values are most important to you in the workplace?

This is a project environment so the achievement of performance targets within the required timeframes is important. Time is valuable and I see punctuality as an expression of that. I don't like surprises of any kind and the sooner I know of the problem, the sooner I can work on the solution. I also believe that on any given day a good attitude and an open mind generally goes a long way towards business success.



K. Anderson Lowe (left) in discussion with Henderson Eastmond, Executive Director, TVET Council and Hon. Senator Dr. Esther Byer Suckoo, Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development.

**What activities do you enjoy doing outside of work?**

I am involved in a number of activities. I have two teenagers who, although they don't know it, need my attention. I am also an entrepreneur of sorts. I am a Chartered Accountant and that also leads me in a particular direction. I have an interest in renewable energy and I have designed and installed my own system. I also do a lot of reading and make time for my favourite TV comedies. Health is a major issue these days and I make sure I get my exercises in at least five days per week.

**What is your guiding philosophy?**

Humility is a good thing. The persons you pass on your way up to the top are the same persons you will pass on your way down. Life is filled with ups and downs so be kind to everyone regardless of their station in life.

**What skills do you think are the most relevant for 21st century workers?**

I think that the traditional concepts of employment, job for life, good benefits, retirement and company pension are quickly disappearing. As technology advances traditional jobs continue to be redefined, reshaped and even replaced by new roles. Twenty-first century workers must therefore see themselves as their own product and service company, and be ready to take on the market whether it be the labour market as an employee or the wider market as an entrepreneur or both.

They must now take on the responsibility for planning their own career and their retirement. Therefore knowledge of investments and financial planning must be part of their skills set. The ability to communicate effectively will become even more important and this should be reflected

in the ability to speak multiple languages. They must also adopt and harness the technology to maintain and enhance their capacity to meet the needs of their customers, wherever they may be.

## CBTF: STAFF PROFILES

### ANDREA M. AUSTIN

– Liaison Officer, CMUFund (CBTF), Management Unit (CMU)



Andrea M. Austin, Liaison Officer, CBTF Management Unit.



Andrea M. Austin in discussion with Paul Collymore, Operations Manager, Ocean Two Resort at a CBTF information workshop.

#### What past experiences now serve you best in your role as CMU Liaison Officer?

My formal training and experience in marketing has prepared me for my duties as CBTF's marketing and PR strategist. I have also done project work across a handful of industries so I am well versed in working in deadline-driven environments.

One of my proudest moments to date is my implementation of a pilot e-mentoring programme while serving as Education Co-Chair for the United States-based Young Barbadian Professionals Society. I facilitated matches between Barbadian undergraduates studying abroad and seasoned professionals of Barbadian heritage. My passion in the field of education, which led me to that project, inspires me to provide the best possible support to all parties involved in the CBTF, which I believe is an extremely important initiative.

#### What lessons have you learned as Liaison Officer for the CBTF?

Working on this project has exposed me to life outside of the private sector as the CBTF is a government/Inter-American Development Bank-sponsored initiative. Prior to the CBTF, I spent over 10 years working in the United States so this role has also served as a reintroduction into the Barbadian workforce. The most important lesson I have learned is that good work ethics, team work and communication can produce great results

in any environment.

Through discussions I have also learned a lot about the concerns of local industry and training providers and have kept those concerns in mind when encouraging them to apply to the Fund.

#### What advice do you have for anyone who's thinking about applying to the Fund?

I would advise potential applicants to begin with a legitimate training need and to follow the application template instructions closely. I would say there is definitely room for thinking outside the box to come up with programmes that meet both the employers' needs and CBTF's requirements.

I would also tell applicants to tap into the resources that the CBTF Management Unit offers. Our focus is on distributing all \$13 million of grant funding to finance viable training proposals and providing continuous support throughout the implementation of those projects.

#### What has surprised you most about working with the CBTF?

I have seen firsthand that where there is a will there is a way. Some applicants have surprised me with their resourcefulness, persistence and diligence in taking a valuable idea and developing it into a comprehensive proposal on which the evaluating committee could firmly place its stamp of approval. I am also amazed at how quickly CBTF's team members were able to pull together as a unit and roll out two funding cycles within its first year of existence.

#### 2ICW: What is the most rewarding part of your role?

**AMA:** As with any other project role, there is great reward in seeing intended outcomes following months of hard work. In this case, the CBTF received an overwhelming response to its first funding cycle as a result of a carefully targeted marketing campaign and hard work by the CBTF management team in giving its unbridled support to potential applicants. I look forward to the same kind

Andrea M. Austin speaking at a CBTF training workshop.



**If you could choose, what would your next role/ project be?**

After CBTF I would like to continue to work on developmental projects that have local and or regional impact. I want to continue to be challenged in terms of my personal and professional development and to put my efforts behind other worthy initiatives such as this one.

**What N/CVQ programme would you want to pursue and why?**

I have dabbled in bartending before so I would I choose the Bar Service NVQ to see which skills I already have and which I still need in order to be considered a competent bar server.

of response in subsequent cycles and for the approved projects to have a positive national impact.

On a personal note I am proud that I was able to dive right into my role and complete

all my contracted deliverables before their respective deadlines. As with any start up project, there were/are some kinks that need to be worked out; but none that can't be overcome with the help of a good sense of humour.

need in order to be considered a competent bar server.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

**Marcellus Louis: Better equipped to do job**

Louis has been employed at the port since 2006 with a role that includes unloading containers as well as locating barrels and transporting them to the examination area. As a result of doing the CVQ he feels better equipped to do his job.

"I've unlearnt bad practices and am following guidelines. Health and Safety was my favourite unit because as dock workers there were a lot of unusual practices that the training helped to highlight. So the training has come and has improved work all round."

Louis is not content to rest on his laurels, however. In addition to gaining the Level 1 CVQ he has undergone training in cargo supervising, which falls under Level 3, and is currently a reserve forklift operator, covered under Level 2. And he is aiming to fully complete the Level 2 and 3 CVQs. "There's no function at the port, that if it comes to me and I'm capable, that I'll turn down," he declares.

While acknowledging that working at the port often comes with long hours especially during the tourist season, the father of three says his job has helped him provide for his family including

Mr. Louis recommends CBT for workers



the education of his children. His oldest daughter is studying dentistry at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, his son is an accountant, and his younger daughter is in sixth form at the Foundation School.

The docker is a keen advocate of competency-based training (CBT) among his co-workers.

"I have been encouraging my colleagues, and telling them this is for you and for the betterment of the port. These are procedures we do every day so when the assessor comes you just carry on your duties as normal."



Linda Cooke

## REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE TRAINING CARICOM CITIZENS TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE WORKPLACE

By Linda Cooke, Ph.D.

Senior Technical Advisor OECS, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados/Regional Coordinator  
CARICOM Education for Employment Program (C-EFE)  
Colleges and Institutes Canada

**T**he 1990 *Regional Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)* envisioned the impact advances in technology and science would have on training CARICOM citizens to be effective in the workplace.

But by 2012, CARICOM had moved forward, the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA) had been formed, and the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) was introduced to support the movement of certified workers throughout the region. It was time to update the Strategy.

The CARICOM Education for Employment Programme (C-EFE) engaged the services of two consultants, one Jamaican and one Canadian, to hold consultations with representatives of the private sector, educational institutions, ministries of labour and ministries of education. Based on the input from 12 countries and hundreds of stakeholders, they produced the new Regional TVET Strategy for Workforce Development and Economic Competitiveness, which was approved by the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development in May 2013. Since that time, the C-EFE has been supporting CANTA and its members to implement the strategy, which calls for a regional approach to the delivery, assessment, and certification of TVET programmes.

The C-EFE is a seven-year project (2011 – 2018) funded by the Government of Canada and implemented in the region by

Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan, formerly the Association of Canadian Community Colleges), the national, voluntary membership organisation representing publicly supported colleges, institutes cégeps and polytechnics. Key areas of focus include innovation, applied research, and international development. CICan has extensive experience in coordinating support to training institutions, employers, employee associations and governments looking to strengthen their TVET systems in more than 90 countries.

Through Education for Employment Programs, CICan works with international partners to ensure that training programmes align with the labour market, ensuring graduates have the skills that employers are asking for and that educational programming responds to emerging occupations with new or updated programming. The C-EFE's planned results include an:

- ✓ Improved ability of National Training Agencies and tertiary institutions across the region to provide training and N/CVQs for workers and graduates based on occupational standards;
- ✓ Improved process for regional coordination amongst TVET stakeholders in government agencies, industry and institutions;

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

- ✓ Increased access to relevant information on TVET and the labour market for TVET stakeholders;
- ✓ Increased access by male and female TVET students, including disadvantaged groups, to competency-based, demand-driven and gender and environmentally-sensitive TVET programmes;
- ✓ Enhanced skills of TVET faculty and leadership to deliver competency-based, demand-driven and gender and environmentally-sensitive programme; and
- ✓ Increased ability of TVET institutions to collaborate nationally and internationally with private sector and institutions in the design and delivery of competency-based, demand-driven programme.

To achieve these results, C-EFE has supported CANTA as it works to develop regional approaches to establishing and delivering CVQs. The C-EFE has also worked closely with the Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions to establish the Caribbean Educational Leadership Institute, a peer-led programme that brings leaders from the tertiary education system together annually to strengthen the capacity to introduce the changes to become more demand-driven.

In response to needs identified by TVET stakeholders, C-EFE has delivered regional workshops and toolkits on gathering local labour market information, providing career counselling to persons considering TVET training, integrating entrepreneurship and essential skills throughout the curricula, working closely with the private sector, and managing CBET training institutions.

At the country level, C-EFE works with the National Training Agencies to develop the systems needed to award N/CVQs. In most cases, C-EFE sponsors officers from well-established NTAs to travel and provide training and coaching to those NTAs just beginning the process of implementing quality-assured certification systems.

At the institutional level, C-EFE has established 16 partnerships twinning Caribbean colleges and TVET training institutions with Canadian colleges and institutes. These three-year partnerships focus on the development or updating of labour market responsive programmes that will lead to the award of a CVQ and, in many cases, to the award of an associate degree as well. Each partnership workplan includes working with an occupational standard to develop or revise a curriculum, introducing or strengthening the capacity of instructors and leaders to deliver competency-based education and training, setting up an industry-led programme advisory committee,



Dr. Linda Cooke and Orlando Hewitt at last year's CANTA dinner

*“Through Education for Employment Programs, C-Can works with international partners to ensure that training programmes align with the labour market.”*

developing competency-based assessment tools, and incorporating gender, environment and entrepreneurship considerations in the design and delivery of the programme. Each partnership conducted a small labour market survey to determine the exact focus of the programme under development, and all of the teams are working on marketing tools to help shift the perception of TVET as an educational last chance to a perception of TVET as the path towards gainful employment or self-employment.

The curricula under development span the TVET landscape, from agriculture and food processing to heavy equipment maintenance; from cosmetology and early childhood development to logistics and aircraft maintenance. Three programmes have already started training students – one in aircraft maintenance in Antigua and Barbuda delivered in partnership with LIAT, and two in renewable energy technologies, in Jamaica and Barbados. Once the curricula have been completed, they will be shared with institutions across the region for implementation in any CARICOM country where there is a demand for workers with the skills developed through the programme.

As the programme enters its fifth year, C-EFE is beginning to see some strong results, and as more territories seek accreditation to award the CVQ, CANTA is implementing consistent approaches to training and certification, and the private sector is engaging more fully with training institutions to design programmes that build today's skills. The shift to applied, competency-based teaching and learning is well underway in institutions throughout CARICOM, and the new programmes are reaching the stage of implementation.



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF: WINSTON TAITT – PHOTOVOLTAIC TECHNICIAN



Mr. Taitt started his career as a solar technician with an electrical background

## ☀️ What is your job title and what duties are involved at this level?

I am the Sales Manager at CaribSol but started my career as a solar technician with an electrical background. As a business we were formed in 2011 but we rebranded as CaribSol about a year ago. The core business of CaribSol is alternative energy or even alternative electricity.

## ☀️ What is the key function of your occupational area?

When I am hired by a customer, I first have to do an energy audit to determine the size or type of energy system that the customer needs. By that I mean the photovoltaic (PV) system which we will have to install. A PV system includes solar panels, inverters and other electrical components. I then have to do a site visit and assess what is required for the job and then we proceed to the installation phase

## ☀️ What does your job entails on a daily basis?

On average, as a solar technician, most of my time is spent sizing jobs and working on the installations which can take sometimes three to four days. However, as Sales Manager, my day is usually spent interacting with the sales agents and the prospective customers.

☀️ **Could you explain the key tasks you have to perform – both technical and business?**

In addition to the other things mentioned, there are tasks such as submitting applications to Barbados Light & Power, creating audit reports which identify how to increase energy efficiencies for the few customer complaints that we might receive.

☀️ **What is the most interesting thing about your job?**

Everything...I love it

☀️ **What benefits do you see in developing occupational standards on which to base assessment and certification?**

The benefit is that we can make sure that proper emphasis is placed on topics or areas of learning that are important to Barbados' PV sector. For example, greater focus needs to be placed on training solar technicians to work with direct current (DC) and correctly attaching the panels to the roof.

☀️ **How about to guide performance on the job as well as training/development?**

It is a good way to ensure the quality of one's performance on the job.

☀️ **How did you enter this field?**

An interest and desire to reduce my light bill prompted me to find out more about it. Once I left school, my father arranged for me to train on the job with a self-employed electrician and later I completed training in electrical installation but I made the jump to the PV sector because of my initial interest in the area.

☀️ **What are your long term goals or aims, career wise?**

CaribSol is undergoing rebranding with the aim of expanding our services into more areas of alternative energy across Barbados throughout the Caribbean.

☀️ **What advice do you have for those who are interested in a career in your line of work?**

I would like for them to preferably have an electrical background, a knowledge of roofing and a willingness to learn.

☀️ **Do you have any other plans from here on?**

We want our company to be a household name within the sector, not only in Barbados but across the region. We want to be synonymous with alternative energy products and services. ■

Winston Taitt



## YOUTH VOICE

THE WINDING ROAD TO  
BUILDING A CAREER

Miguel King

Assistant Registrar - Measurement  
Caribbean Examination Council  
(CXC)

**M**iguel King is an Assistant Registrar at the Caribbean Examination Council, one of the youngest measurement officers. The 34-year-old professional is responsible for the management of examinations for various educational

areas of study from conception to evaluation.

*King is part of a team in the Examinations Development and Productions Division, an essential part of this world class organisation which provides comprehensive assessments at various educational levels across the Caribbean and beyond.*

Today this sounds like a success story, but just seven years ago I was a delivery driver with nothing but a secondary school education and many hard life experiences. It was my ninth job since leaving secondary school and I still wasn't happy. I was always searching because I knew I could achieve more. I was far from the ideal student, but when I left Queen's College with a desire to be an architect my issue was that I had received no guidance on how to achieve this goal, and the disappointment of not being accepted to a college to pursue my chosen field because I didn't have the correct prerequisite subjects left me feeling dejected.

One bad decision after another meant that the following seven years of my life were very unproductive. Then one day I decided to stop blaming others for my every bad decision and actually do something that could influence my destiny. While searching for something new to do with my life, I came across an advertisement for persons to be trained as teachers, and my love for children grew an idea into an application. Six years later, an Associate Degree, a Bachelors Degree and a Masters Degree and the favour of God, have led me to my current career.

The path hasn't been easy however. Attending school full-time during the day along with working six-hour nights to pay for classes and books was exhausting. Neither was studying to complete assignments during breaks at work or while on the last bus to home ideal. But, I knew it would be worth it. The Associate Degree programme at Erdiston Teacher's Training College was an eye-opener. Having no teaching experience allowed me a

different perspective to the many teachers in my cohort which turned out to be more of an advantage than it initially appeared as I graduated top of the class.

While in the programme, I met Dr Hamilton Jemmott who encouraged me to further my studies which I did in the educational degree programme at the Barbados Community College. As expected, this was more challenging and after the first year the pressures of a full-time work and study life became too much. I gave up my job at that time, a decision made easier thanks to my now wife, Tisha, whom I met, and married during this time and who supported me through every phase of my study and career choices. Immediately after completing the degree programme with first-class honours, I applied for a teaching job and I will always thank Mr Vere Parris for taking a chance on an inexperienced teacher.

I was inspired and so immediately I started my masters studies at the University of the West Indies as well. Just to add some excitement to my busy life, I also purchased a home and had a son during this time. My life was indeed moving fast.

It was the Masters programme in testing, measurement and evaluation that had the greatest impact on my career choice, even though at times I doubted that I would make it that far, as managing a home and a new born baby and a full-time job meant that this was the most difficult time in my educational life. However, my lecturer, Dr Halliday, made the job of a measure officer seem so exciting that I immediately knew this was the career for me. The field is very small and opportunities are few, but Mathew 6:33 says, 'but seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well'. Two years after completing my studies an opportunity arose that I could not ignore and today I am building a career in the area that I spent most of my educational life preparing for.

The authenticity of the skills gained in the Masters programme and the start of my career were relatively close, making the transition from studying to working virtually seamless. Daily, I get the opportunity to apply what I spent much time studying, which is always satisfying for anyone who spent years studying. You see, my career choice may not have been a plan years in the making, but it shows the importance of being willing to recognise potentially beneficial opportunities and to adapt to those situations. My journey wasn't easy, nor was it the most difficult, but the end result was well worth any obstacles I needed to overcome along the way. ■

# NQF COMMUNICATION ADVOCACY IN FULL EFFECT



The panellists for the town hall meetings were (from left) Executive Director, BAC Valda Alleyne; Instructional Development Specialist, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Dr. Sylvia Henry; Quality Assurance Officer, University of the West Indies, Pamela Dottin; Education Officer (Secondary), Ministry of Education, Science, Technology & Innovation, Henderson Wiltshire and Executive Director, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council, Henderson Eastmond.

The Barbados Accreditation Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development embarked on the Communication Advocacy programme for the proposed National Qualification Framework (NQF) for Barbados in January this year.

To date, the general public has been involved in the discussions and given an opportunity to offer valuable feedback through attendance at town hall meetings and interactive programmes on television. The panellists for the town hall meetings included Executive Director, BAC Valda Alleyne; Instructional Development Specialist, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Dr. Sylvia Henry; Quality Assurance Officer, University of the West Indies, Pamela Dottin; Education Officer (Secondary), Ministry of Education, Science, Technology & Innovation, Henderson Wiltshire and Executive Director, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council, Henderson Eastmond.

A wide cross section of stakeholders, from students to educational providers also benefitted from a number of targeted information sessions, which were held to garner the buy-in for the game changing NQF in Barbados.

The feedback will be taken into consideration when the final report is submitted to Parliament for approval of the NQF for Barbados. The next phases will be the pilot and implementation of the NQF.

A critical challenge that faces Barbados is the development of a competent workforce that can compete in a fierce global environment. Human Resource Development through well-planned educational initiatives can contribute significantly to promoting the interests of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society within Barbados. By helping individuals to gain access to decent work and sustainable jobs, education and training, particularly technical and vocational education, can impact positively on the region's economic development, thereby achieving full employment and promoting social inclusion. A National Qualifications Framework is a pre-requisite for the transformation that is required in the changing global economic environment.

According to the Barbados Human Resource Development Strategy 2011 – 2016, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) will be the major mechanism to transform education and training in Barbados. Through well-planned educational initiatives such as the NQF, individuals will be given the opportunity to gain quality assured, nationally and regionally-recognised qualifications, and recognition and credit for the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

#### By design, the NQF will:

- consolidate the delivery of education and training under a single framework;
- make it easier for learners to enter the educational system and to move and progress horizontally and vertically within it;
- improve the educational quality in Barbados;
- expand access to learning and work opportunities for all; and
- enable learners to develop to their full potential.

Further, it is recommended that an integrated, internationally comparable, credit and standards-based NQF be implemented in Barbados. The NQF should be comprehensive; provide a strong link between different educational sectors represented by a single set of levels and descriptors specifying what the learning outcomes should be at each level and for each type of qualifications; and inclusive of all educational sectors within the country.

#### ■ Barbados Accreditation Council



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