

REPORT

**TECHNICAL COOPERATION ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
FROM MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY OF JAMAICA
TO THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP
RELATIONS OF BARBADOS, AND OTHER CARIBBEAN
MINISTRIES OF LABOUR – GRENADA, ST. LUCIA AND
ST. KITTS AND NEVIS, SEPTEMBER 10-17, 2018.**



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Brief Description of the Activity

Youth unemployment in the Caribbean has become a challenging problem for Governments in the region. At the same time, this phenomena is not confined to the Caribbean, but is also affecting developing and developed countries in other parts of the World. Most countries have programmes to address youth unemployment, either through Ministries and/or Departments of Youth or their Ministries of Labour. In Grenada, for example the Government of Grenada has established a Youth Development Programme called the New Imani in 2013, an improved version of the 2002 original Imani Programme which is implemented under the Ministry of Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts. In addition, the Ministry of Labour, through its Overseas Temporary Workers Programme, that is, the Canada Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme, provides seasonal employment for young people.

Whatever the organizational configuration that is in place to address youth unemployment, some countries have used successful strategies while others are still grappling with the problem.

It was at a Regional Forum on “Youth Employment in the Caribbean” in Barbados, December 2017, that strategies utilized by Jamaica prompted interest among other Caribbean States, resulting in a Study Tour to Jamaica by Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis, supported by the Inter-American Network for Labour Administration and the Organization of American States(OAS).

The Study Tour, organized by the Jamaica Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), occurred from September 10-14, 2018 and was attended by the following representatives:-

Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Jamaica

- Mrs. Ms. Colette Roberts-Risden, Permanent Secretary;
- Mrs. Andrea Miller-Stennet, Director of Manpower Services;
- Mrs. Andrea Patterson-Morris, Planning, Research and Monitoring Unit;
- Mr. Lyndon Ford, Labour Component Coordinator (ELE);
- Mr. Steven Kerr, Human and Community Development Manager.

Barbados- Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations

- Ms. Marva Howell: Deputy Permanent Secretary;
- Mrs. Yvette Walcott-Dennis, Senior Placement and Counselling Officer in the Barbados Employment Career and Counselling Service of the Ministry;
- Mrs. Tricia Browne: Administrative Officer.

Grenada – Ministry of Labour

- Ms. Lima Frederick, Permanent Secretary.

St. Kitts and Nevis – Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Ecclesiastical Affairs

- Mrs. Shernel James: Acting Labour Commissioner.

St. Lucia – Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour

- Mr. Celestine Alexander, Employment Officer *with responsibility for Local Government.*

The Team was warmly received by the Jamaica Ministry of Labour and Social Security, who prepared a programme of activities with public, private sector, and NGO stakeholders, and young persons who are involved in youth employment activities. The objectives of the Study Tour were as follows:

1. Engage those agencies that have created interventions/programmes that are working that are effective in bridging the transition between school and the world of work;
2. Examine any projections and labour market trends that influence the directions of studies/curricula for prospective young workers;
3. Understand the processes/steps used by the Providing Country to determine how best these can be applied/adapted to each of the participating countries situations;
4. Engage policy makers and some persons from the business community that actively participate in youth employment interventions to discuss labour policies and linkages to education and youth policies with a view of revisiting each country's policies and creating plans of action for necessary adjustments by the various policy makers; and
5. Have a general discussion on how to create that buy-in and commitment to addressing those identified gaps in the various policies and or the needs of the various players – government, private sector employers and the youth.

Main Results and Findings:

- I. The Jamaica Ministry of Labour and Social Security has established a computer-based “intake” system for job and job seeker registry through the use of an Electronic Labour Exchange (ELE) employment system that facilitates the efficient matching of job seekers with employers. The ELE is a component of the internet-based Labour Market Information System (LMIS) which permits increased access to labour market intelligence by stakeholders such investors, employers, job seekers and students among others.
- II. Funding and support is available for countries desirous of a labour market information system. Jamaica’s success of an enhanced computer based employment portal that is, Labour Market information System (www.lmis.gov.jm), which comprises the ELE, the Labour Market Intelligence(LMI) and the Skills Bank was due to funding provided by the IADB in 2012 in a policy based loan which created an integrated Social Protection and Labour Project. The overall objective of this project was to support the Government of Jamaica’s effort to improve human capital and labour market outcomes of the poor, by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public employment services and integrating them with various social protection initiatives.
- III. Youth unemployment and poverty reduction is seen as a top priority of Government and support is received from the highest level of Government. This support is normally stated in written Policy Statements of the Government. This indicates that Government is serious about achieving the economic self-sufficiency of poor households through labour market attachment.
- IV. The Steps to Work Programme which is a welfare exit strategy that provides interventions designed to promote economic self-sufficiency of poor working age persons, is a policy decision of the Cabinet (March 2007 Cabinet approved (MLSS/5/07) piloting a Welfare to Work Programme. It is further embedded in Vision 2030 Jamaica- National Development Plan. The Steps to Work Programme is an example of the link between Social Security/Welfare and labour.

In addition, case management is used in the psychosocial assessment of a family to understand the social issues within the family (education, financial, housing, etc.,) before a labour management program can commence.

- V. The Government of Jamaica has instituted a new policy where every secondary student leaving school must possess a skill. This means instead of leaving school at 16, students can stay an extra 2 years in a 6th form, and learn a skill during that two year period through the TVET training Programme. TVET is linked to career advancement, technical training and industrial attachment. The TVET integration into the Secondary School system is funded by the HEART Trust/NTA.

The Heart Trust/NTA of Jamaica is funded by a 3% pay roll levy on the private sector companies since training funded by Government benefits the private sector.

Teachers are asked to teach areas that are practical, contextual, engage in more field trips job shadowing and so on. In this way postsecondary education will be now aligned to labour market needs. This will facilitate ease of entry into the job market, thereby reducing youth unemployment.

- VI. A different set of employment strategies are necessary to engage youths who are a threat to national security and economic growth (youth gangs, youths engaged in violence and/or drugs,) or at risk (homeless,) disabled, unattached (can easily fall into a life of crime). The Housing, Opportunity Production & Employment (HOPE) Programme is the Prime Minister's initiative to support and assist at risk youths in building their lives to become productive citizens. This Programme is headed by a Senior Officer in the Jamaica Defence Force and partnerships are established with other public and private sector companies and NGO organizations for skills training, placements and apprenticeships with the ultimate goal of permanent employment, entrepreneurship or further training/education.

- VII. Public–Private Partnerships are necessary to tackle the high rate of youth unemployment in the region. In Jamaica, the Gallaghar Group (a construction company) has provided office space at its company's offices to support the YUTE (Youth Upliftment through Employment Programme). This commitment by the Company indicates that the Company takes youth unemployment and the subsequent impacts seriously.

An interesting aspect of the YUTE Programme is the preparation of students at ages 15-18+ to make them more employable, through a Programme entitled "Passport to Success". Students are taught life skills and are exposed to sessions on "building self-esteem", 'Perceptions of Success' and 'Personal Marketing.' The Team visited Dunoon Park Technical High School and observed a session in progress.

- VIII. The participation of employers/the private sector is very important in youth employment programmes to guarantee the success of such programmes. In the Employability Skill Training Sessions organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, for persons occur before they are placed on a job, employers are invited to speak to potential workers, on expectations, work behavior, conflict resolution, team work etc. In Barbados mock interviews are done with potential workers to improve their chances at success at the interview stage.
- IX. Exposure to the NEO (New Employment Opportunities for Youth) Project. NEO is a regional initiative dedicated to improving the quality of the workforce and the employability of poor and vulnerable youths in Latin America and the Caribbean. NEO is led by Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) – through the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and will end in 2019. It is responsibility of Governments in the Region to activate the NEO. In Jamaica for instance, the desired impact of NEO Jamaica is to increase job opportunities for 10,000 poor, vulnerable and low-income Jamaican young people ages 17 to 29, upgrade 11 training and employment centers according to NEO Quality Standards Guide and intends that 100 companies will benefit by employing skilled youths from the NEO programme. Partners include public and private sector institutions.
- X. The NEO Model utilizes a multi-sectoral approach for implementation through the formation of Public-Private Partnerships to scale up the most effective high-impact training models Similar to Programmes in the –region NEO uses the following standard areas in youth employability programmes which are being implemented by countries to move youths from a state of unemployment to employment that of Life Skills Training, Job Placement Services, Teaching Strategies and Career Guidance Services.
- XI. In order to improve unemployment and narrow the skills gap, strong labour market information based on research is important to respond to labour market needs and trends. The information must be timely, accurate and forecast driven. Data management of Labour Market Systems is also necessary to track and monitor progress in employment and make data driven decisions. The Planning Research and Monitoring Unit within the Jamaica Ministry of Labour acquires Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) in areas such as occupations and skills required by employers- those which are emerging and are in short supply, types of qualification, certification as well as education and training required for specific jobs, conditions of employment, performance of sectors in the economy and sectors which are hiring locally and overseas.

This information is used by job seekers, employers/investors students, guidance and career counsellors, curriculum developers, planners and policy makers. It also identifies the growth sectors/areas of the economy. The Presentation by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIJ) supports the work done by their Ministry of Labour and

focuses on the exchange inform in the market through published reports, newsletters, sector reports, labour market studies, articles on the labour force and the hosting of labour forums.

XII. Apart from exposure to the LMIS, the Visiting Team also received CDs from the Jamaica Ministry of Labour and Social Security on the following documentation:

- (i) **Labour Market Trends and Prospects for employment Opportunities in Jamaica : April 2018;**
- (ii) **Employment Opportunities for low skilled Workers in Jamaica: March 2018;**
- (iii) **National Labour Market Survey-A guide to employment opportunities in Jamaica 2017;**
- (iv) **Annual Performance Report: 2017/2018;**
- (v) **Sector Study- Employment in Renewable Energy:- A focus on Solar and wind Energy; Prepared by The Planning, Research and monitoring unit(PRMU): May 2016;**
- (vi) **Potential Areas of Employment Opportunities due to Logistics Hub Development in Jamaica: The Planning, Research and monitoring unit(PRMU): May 2016;**
- (vii) **Labour Market Transition of Young Women and men in Jamaica –School to Work Transition Survey Report 2013: April 2014;**
- (viii) **Labour Market Transition of Young Women and men in Jamaica – School to Work Transition Survey Report 2013: April 2013;**

Brochures:

- (a) **Steps to Work – Moving from its Social Welfare Programme of Advancement Through Advancement through Health and Education) to Employment.**
- (b) **Labour Market Information System**
- (c) **Electronic Labour Exchange**
- (d) **Resume Writing**

XIII. It was observed that the Jamaica Ministry of Labour has an International Office with Skype facilities to engage international employers directly for employment opportunities and to manage the relationship of the migrant programme.

XIV. The Presentation on “School to Work : International Policies & Policies” indicated that the average duration of transition from school to work for the region was estimated at 6 years, compared to 2.7 years for the countries of the EU. Reducing the duration of transitions from school to work for young people is extremely important since unemployment rates tend to mirror crime rates, and young people are the primary victims and perpetrators of crime. The cost of crimes to society is very high; therefore prevention of crime is not only corrective, but necessary, since maintaining a low crime rate increases economic growth. In addition, adapting school to work transition programmes is in itself a preventative solution to addressing unemployment among youths.

This presentation also identified the importance of carrying out assessments to determine ‘who is ready for work’. The GRIT Scale was recommended as a tool to determine readiness for work.

XV. Jamaica has a variety of programmes which target youth unemployment. Most of them are funded by the Government of Jamaica, through Government Ministries, Departments, Statutory Bodies and subventions to NGOs. Some of the initiatives such as “On the Job Training”, TVET Training are similar to what exist in the our countries.

XVI. However, in an effort to avoid duplication of its Programmes, cost over-runs, wastage improper targeting, and so on, the Government has merged all its Government funded programmes such as the HEART Trust/NTA, the National Youth Service (NYS), the Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) and the Apprenticeship Board, Agencies of the Office of the Prime Minister in order to offer an enhanced and streamlined programmes catering to all categories of youth: Persons with disabilities; Rural Youth; Unattached and Youth in Business.

XVII. Inclusive in the Study Tour were meetings with on the job trainees/interns and employers (COK Credit Union; First Heritage Co-operative Credit Union; Jewels Hotel, Celebration Brands – (a local Distribution Company for Red Stripe Beverage products) and Jamaica Producers. Meetings were also held with representatives of the St. Ann’s Chamber of Commerce (SACC), and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourism Association (JHTA).

The table below captures perspectives from employers, interns on the placements, the SACC and the JHTA:

Employers	Trainees/Interns	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -COK Credit Union likes interns who are bright, has the right attitude willingness to learn, is respectful and good communication skills; Employers are looking for persons who have the right attitude and the right personality; -Not all persons come with the right skill sets, so they have to be trained-will employ the attitude and train for the technical; -Even Managers have to be trained so as to interact with interns properly; -Be informed of when the interns are starting the placement; -It is the corporate responsibility of a company to engage youths; if the Company is committed to its corporate responsibility, then it is easier to accept placements; -Interns have good impact on the organization –they bring value to the organization; -Processing of payments of interns must be timely as interns are dependent on the stipend; -The Credit Unions are involved in the training sessions of interns before placement ; -See their involvement as giving back to society; more trained persons result in less crime and anti-unsocial behavior such as begging -Trainees are treated as employees and are included in Company's events; -Contribute to the welfare of interns(provides lunch; materials to make uniforms; transport) - Celebration Brands expect interns to take initiatives, understand the skill sets needed by the organization , be willing to provide feedback and be part of the team; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -placement contributes to growth of the interns; - Ministry needs to advertise the on-the job-training; -Signs a commitment form; -Interns must have drive and want to succeed; -Thrown in at the deep end and have to learn quickly; -HR recognizes talent. - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry supervises and monitors the interns while on internship and provides Indemnity Insurance for its interns; -The Ministry to include feedback from employers in the training sessions; The Ministry should customize the MOUs signed with Companies for the placement of Inters based on the nature of the services offered by Company and the training to be provided to the interns. -Orientation is very important prior to placement; -The employers have a good relationship with the Ministry; -The use of mentoring is recognized as a necessary strategy to assist interns to function in the world of work - Youths engaging in the informal employment sector leaves them unprotected

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jamaica Producers award Scholarships to high school students <u>Challenge of finding the right talent, the right fit;</u> -On the job training of the Ministry is a very good Programme; -SACC indicated that Interns should sign an agreement with the company during the internship period as a sign of commitment to the training and to give back to the company ; -Interns are covered under the Indemnity Insurance of the JHTA; -Jewels Hotel has an exit strategy at the end of the training and interns can return if they need to train further. -JHTA suggests that expatriates should train locals so as to reduce loss of knowledge 		
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NEXT STEPS:

This section of the Report indicate how the Ministry of Labour in Grenada intends to use the information obtained from the Jamaica's Study Tour. Some of the information will be useful to other Government Ministries and Departments and as such the information will be shared with same.

1. **National Employment Portal** – employment services through a web-based online services. Grenada is part of a CARICOM Regional Project for the implementation of a Labour Market Information System. The Jamaica experience informs the kind of information that can be generated from the LMIS. The Ministry will also determine how it can use the LMIS system to assist youth unemployment. For example, the creation of a Skills Bank (The skills bank provides public access to the database of available skills which are available in the country),, sharing of labour market intelligence by the Ministry, employers can post job vacancies, search and select for skilled workers, while employees can register on the system, post their resumes, search and apply for jobs and search for labour market information.

In addition the Ministry is now aware of the skills sets that would be required internally to operationalize and manage the LMIS and the need to create a private sector strategy to attract employers to use the service. Therefore, the implementation of a computer-based “intake” system for job and job seeker registry, capacity building for the Ministry’s public employment services that engages, and connects employers and unemployed citizens of Grenada is a priority of the Ministry.

2. **Establish and implement basic service:** The assignment of a dedicated officer to deal with the public employment services of the Ministry of Labour. This function has been carried out by a Labour Officer in addition to regular duties and the focus was mainly on the migrant programme. This did not allow the officer to address local unemployment. Therefore the Ministry has prepared a job description for an Employment Officer within the Ministry of Labour, since this Ministry is also responsible for performing the services of an Employment Agency.
3. **Expanding employment services:** The engagement of an Employment Officer would allow the Ministry to begin engaging employers, job seekers; conduct presentations/workshops at various institutions on labour matters; partner with other Government Ministries and Departments(Education, Youth, Social Development, Central Statistics Department etc.); various companies; secondary and tertiary institutions; organizations such as St. George's University on Career expositions and formalize partnerships with The Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce, The Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association, The New Imani Programme and The National Training Agency, among other organizations.
4. **Repositioning of employment services within a human capital development system for greater productivity (e.g. integration and linkage with conditional cash transfer programs, school to work, and work-based training and greater links between public and private providers, expansion of markets etc):** As the employment section of the Ministry expands, consideration will be given to setting up a similar initiative as the Jamaica's "Steps to Work Programme" in conjunction with the Ministry of Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts(New Imani Programme) and the Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment. A policy decision from the Government will be necessary to implement same, indicating commitment to the initiative.

The purpose is to graduate persons from Welfare (the Support for Education, Empowerment Development) to work. The intention is to create an integrated social protection and labour programme to empowerment of poor people, promote independence rather than dependence, and promote fair and equitable treatment of all Grenadians.

5. **Greater integration of social, labor and economic policies:** The hosting of an Annual Labour Market Forum as part of the celebration of Labour Week in conjunction with public and private stakeholders. Topics for consideration include '**new services tailored to national employment contexts;**' '**national employment barriers;**' '**supply and demand, shortages and trends in the labour market - the number of skills registered by sex, age, location, years of experience, qualification/certification and occupation;** **the number of skilled workers requested by employers by qualification, occupation and years of experience;**' and so on.

Recommendations from the Forum will be documented for record purposes, dissemination to interested stakeholders and for inclusion into public policies.

6. The establishment of a Labour Market Policy as an outcome of the implementation of a functioning LMIS, with support from the ILO.
7. **Promotion of initiatives for greater integration and expansion within the national programmes of labour, youth, education and training which promote low unemployment rate and lessen skills gap for youth employment, as follows:-**
 - Break the silos between Government Ministries, Departments and Statutory Bodies on various youth employment initiatives and integrate into developmental projects;
 - Incorporate soft skills, entrepreneurial skills, and work experience, into the formal education system;
 - Elevate partnerships between labour, youth education and training institutions and employers. More collaboration between companies and institutions so that students leaving learning institutions will be equipped with the necessary skills needed in the work place;
 - Systemic professional development of teachers, trainers and Labour Ministry personnel on new approaches for skill development, also through role modelling and mentoring and more time should be dedicated to classroom sessions on experiential training.
 - Strong labour market information- which is timely, accurate and forward looking. This serve as the base for curricular and career guidance;
 - Data management of Labour Market Systems- to track and monitor progress in employment , evaluate results and make data driven decisions on issues such as career choice etc;
 - Employers and educators share resources - such as staff, facilities, equipment, information and financial resources.
8. **A Recommendation to Government: Implementation of a National Service Enlistment Programme:** A preventative strategy for youths who pose a serious threat to national security and economic development (youths who are engaged in crimes, violence, illegal drugs, unattached, homeless). It is a training and apprenticeship programme for the 18 -24 age group, to provide an avenue for the development of fully rounded individuals, through a system of National Service Corps. This Programme can be attached to the Special Services Unit of the Royal Grenada Police Force and successful graduates can be included in the public service employment programmes, and /or as auxiliary support to the Royal Grenada Police Force(e.g Fire Department, Cost Guard, Traffic Department, etc.) It should be based on core values and attitudes of: Discipline, Learning, Selflessness, Respect, Honesty, Family Values, Patriotism, soft Skills and Life Skills, with the desired outcomes listed below:-

Desired Outcomes:

- **Citizenship/Civics**

- Know right from wrong
- Understand their role in Jamaica's future of development
- Be patriotic – they must love Jamaica and show it through strong civic pride

- **Teambuilding and Community Service**

- Conflict resolution
- Team building exercises
- Better decision making skills to enrich their livelihoods
- Have a spirit of giving of themselves and of teamwork and cooperation
- Know his/her strengths as a part of a team

- **Personal Development**

- Develop self-respect and self esteem
- Owning a bank account
- A good grasp of financial management and planning
- Basics of Entrepreneurship
- Be able to plan for his/her future
- Work ethics
- Job interview techniques

CONCLUSION

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

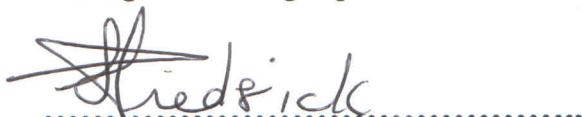
The Jamaica Ministry of Labour and Social Security developed a comprehensive programme of activities for the Study Tour in order to achieve the objectives. All of the objectives were successfully achieved.

As a public sector agency responsible for the implementation of public sector employment policies, the Ministry has developed an electronic system to bridge the gap between job seekers and employers, attracted funding to update and expand their LMIS, and partnered with both public and private sector organizations in tackling youth unemployment. The Ministry was very successful in exposing the Visiting Team to the strategies utilized to transition young people from school to work, thereby reducing youth unemployment. The strategies utilized are innovative, with the sole purpose that every citizen should benefit from the economic opportunities offered by the State.

A recommendation is that Study Tours and/or exchange visits should be utilized more frequently under RIAL to facilitate the exchange of best practices, information, to network, exposure to new trends and training opportunities among member countries in the Region. This will help to improve labour management in the Region.

Another recommendation is that education and training policies should not be separated from labour policies. Government Ministries and Departments should not work in silos to develop and implement transition programmes from School to Work for young people. Engagement on youth employment policies should be ongoing in order to respond to emerging jobs and skills. The future of work is continually changing and will involve re-skilling and upskilling and this requires lifelong learning.

I wish to thank the Inter-American Network for Labour Administration (RIAL) and the Organization of American States (OAS) for organizing and funding the Study Tour, the Government of Jamaica and its Ministry of Labour and Social Security for hosting the Visiting Team and the Government of Grenada/Ministry of Labour for participating in the Study Tour. It was a great learning experience which adds value to the work of labour administration.



**Lima Frederick(Ms.)
Permanent Secretary, Grenada
12th October, 2018**