

# 1. An Introduction to Growth and Competitiveness Issues in the Caribbean

## 1.1 A Productivity Gap

Economic growth in the Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC) region lags behind that of the rest of the world with the exception of Africa. The development literature generally relates this to a deficit in productivity (de Ferranti et al, 2003; Gill, 2002, Marquez, 2002), and that this deficit is related, in turn, to weak knowledge absorption and use of technology throughout the region. In the past fifty years, per capita income in LAC went from \$3,000 to \$6,200, more than doubling, but that in the OECD countries it more than tripled, going from \$7,300 to \$23,000 per capita.

This “productivity gap” includes a number of factors that appear to be important antecedents to increasing productivity including the level of educational attainment of the population, the absorption of technical, scientific and mathematical knowledge, R&D expenditure, an innovation system, and use of computers.

To close the gaps, countries in the region need to synchronize improvements in educational access and efficiency, innovation systems and technology adoption in their economies. Ultimately, to close the gaps, the behavior of firms needs to change in order to make these economies competitive, and firms must work with their workers and with students to increase skills and knowledge, adopt new technologies, and develop innovations.

An examination of the countries in the Caribbean region shows the above analysis to be relevant to the Caribbean sub-region. During the 1990s, productivity grew slightly in the Dominican Republic and Barbados (but at only about half the rate of more economically successful countries), but declined significantly in

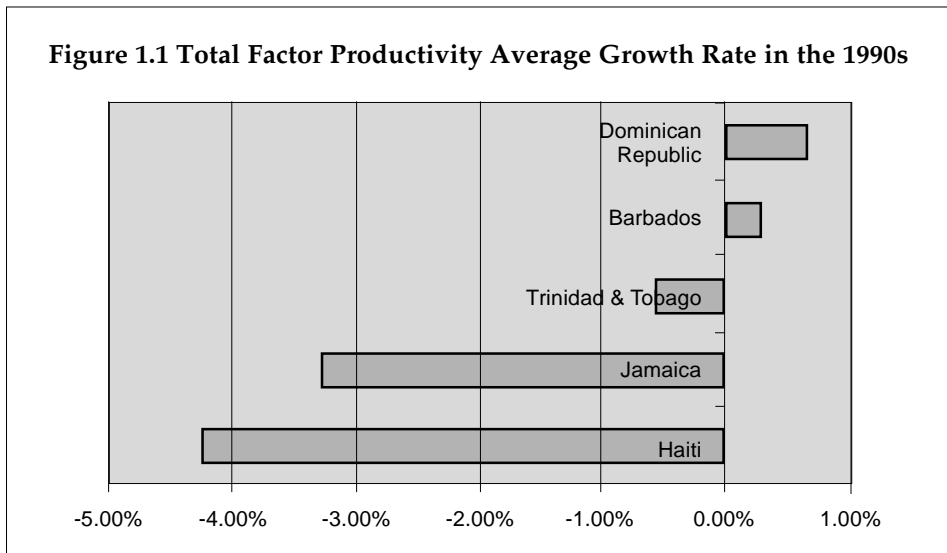
Jamaica and Haiti, and slightly in Trinidad & Tobago (no productivity growth data is available on St. Lucia). The raw data are shown in Table 1.1 and displayed graphically in Figure 1.1.

**Table 1.1 Productivity Growth in the 1990s (In percent)**

Country	Total factor productivity average growth rate in the 1990s
Haiti	-4.23%
Jamaica	-3.27%
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.56%
Barbados	0.28%
Dominican Republic	0.64%

Source: IDB calculations reported in Gill (2002)

It is important to note at the beginning, however, the great diversity among the countries in the region. Stretching from Guyana in the south to Jamaica and Belize to the northwest, there are wide variations in country size and popula-



Source: IDB calculations: [http://www.iadb.org/res/publications/pubfiles/pubB-2001E\\_235.pdf](http://www.iadb.org/res/publications/pubfiles/pubB-2001E_235.pdf)

tion, with the numerous very small islands presenting their own set of issues. This analysis focuses mostly on the English speaking Caribbean, and there is a fairly similar culture across these countries, but the Dominican Republic and Haiti feature quite different cultures, political legacies and languages. Further, the differences among the countries are significant enough that it is prudent to place the analysis of training against a background of the economic and social context from which the training systems arise.

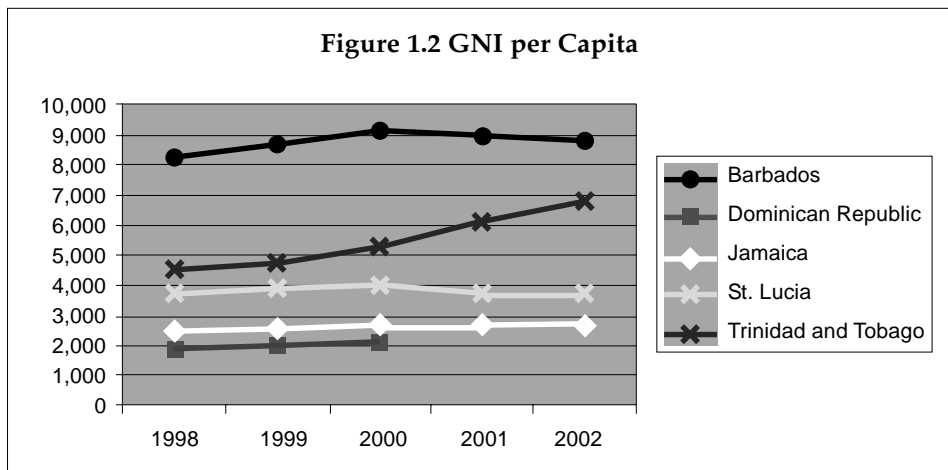
## **1.2 Basic Economic Indicators**

In terms of per capita income, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago and St. Lucia have upper middle-income economies, Jamaica is near the top of the lower middle-income range with Dominican Republic close to that, and Guyana is toward the bottom of the lower middle-income range. There are also important differences in the bases of the economies throughout the region. Trinidad & Tobago has oil and gas and light manufacturing with rising GNI per capita, the Dominican Republic has a significant industrial capacity in its Free Zones, bauxite mining is important in Jamaica and Guyana, while tourism is important in Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia and Barbados. The economies all have in common an increase in services as contributors to GNI and the declining contribution of agriculture to GNI.

**Table 1.2 Gross National Income per capita**

<b>Countries</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Barbados	8,230	8,650	9,130	8,980	8,790
Dominican Republic	1,870	1,970	2,140	—	—
Jamaica	2,450	2,610	2,710	2,710	2,690
St. Lucia	3,700	3,880	3,980	3,750	3,750
Trinidad and Tobago	4,540	4,740	5,300	6,160	6,750
LAC Region Average					3,280

Source: World Development Indicators database



Source: World Development Indicators, 2004

Inequality is an important feature of the socio-economic landscape of the region, with the gap between rich and poor apparent in differential access to education and to a better quality education. These patterns affect the quality of the inputs into both the training system and the labor force. In the labor market, there is a sharp distinction related to social class, between staff and line personnel, and labor relations troubles are common in some of the territories. It is likely that these distinctions affect the question of who receives training (e.g. Downs, 2003).

Several of the countries in the region are among those considered severely indebted; this includes Guyana, Jamaica, Belize, and Dominica. Economic crises are also a factor; Jamaica underwent a financial sector crisis from 1998-2002, and the Dominican Republic suffered a financial crisis just recently beginning in January 2004. During the conduct of this analysis, the Dominican Republic was dealing with floods that killed hundreds of people, and hurricanes periodically create considerable destruction.

The migration of skilled and highly skilled labor is also a concern, with Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and the Dominican Republic being most prone to the phenomenon. The Dominican Republic was cited by Lowell (2001) as genuinely experiencing "brain drain" and he cited some alarming statistics for Jamaica as well (see also Economist, 28 September 2002). The migration of teachers and nurses, lured by special incentives in the United States and United Kingdom, has

affected both health care and the education systems of the countries. On the other hand, remittances are also of increasing importance, especially to Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Programs in the United States for farm and tourism workers provide a kind of controlled, temporary migration that has particularly strong remittance factors. There are training programs aimed at this labor market, e.g. in Jamaica via the Ministry of Labor.

### **1.3 Basic Educational Indicators**

One of the main problems identified as inhibiting growth in the region is both uneven access to education and low quality of educational outcomes. This affects the trainability of the working age population and is briefly reviewed to establish a context for comparison of other issues more directly related to training.

The educational data appear to support and be consistent with the productivity growth figures cited above to some extent, although the Dominican Republic's economic performance is actually stronger than the educational indicators might predict.

The World Bank (Márquez, 2002) characterized education and human capital development as follows:

"Latin American countries are classified in three groups. First are those with relatively high human capital stocks: **Jamaica**, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Panama and Peru. These countries have educational attainment levels similar to those of Taiwan. Around 60 percent of their populations have some secondary schooling, and relatively few people have no schooling.

In the second group, referred to as "intermediate stock," around 50 percent of the populations have no schooling or only primary schooling, and they are less well endowed with secondary schooling or higher education than the first group. Costa Rica, Ecuador, Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil and Bolivia are classified in this group.

The third group—Paraguay, the **Dominican Republic**, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala—is labeled "low stock." Two-thirds or more of these populations have only primary schooling or less. Even taking these countries into account, however, Latin America is *not* a region with relatively abundant unskilled labor."

For the English speaking Caribbean, the countries not listed above are in a similar position to Jamaica in terms of simple educational attainment. The overall quality of education appears to be most important, as opposed to access and expenditure, although access to secondary education is still a problem in Jamaica,

**Table 1.3 Average years of schooling of adults**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Years</b>
Barbados (2000)	8.7
Trinidad and Tobago (2000)	7.8
Jamaica (2000)	5.3
Dominican Republic (2000)	4.9

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2004, Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

**Table 1.4. Public Sector Expenditure on Education**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>
Belize	2000	6.2
Barbados	2000	7.3
Dominica	2000	6.7
Dominican Republic	2000	2.3
Grenada	2000	6.8
Guyana	2000	7.3
Jamaica	1999	7.2
St. Kitts and Nevis	2000	6.2
St. Lucia	2000	6.6
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	2000	5.8
Trinidad and Tobago	1999	7.7

Source: World Bank, (Public spending on education Caribbean 99-00.xls)

Dominican Republic, Guyana, St. Lucia and Trinidad. Jamaica's education expenditure is relatively high, but outcomes are poor. The Dominican Republic has serious problems with both access to and low expenditure on education. Barbados has the strongest educational performance in the region, and Trinidad appears to be getting better results despite its lower expenditure.

**Table 1.5. Secondary School Enrolment (Net %)**

Countries	1998	1999	2000	2001
Barbados	88	90	85	87
Dominican Republic	40	40	40	41
Jamaica	74	75	74	75
St. Lucia	65	—	70	70
Trinidad and Tobago	72	67	72	65

Source: World Development Indicators database

#### 1.4 Outcomes of Secondary Education

The English speaking Caribbean uses the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), headquartered in Barbados, to administer national exams called the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) built upon the British model of the General Certificate of Education. These are subject tests in English, Math, Science, etc. and, in total, 36 different tests are offered, including ten that are technical and vocational. The core subject passes are used in the labor market as a valid signal of readiness for entry-level positions and are considered a good indicator of trainability. They are also used to determine who can gain admission to tertiary education<sup>1</sup>. The problem is that pass rates are low, and in a number

1 The CSECs are expected to be both a measure of secondary achievement as well as a signal of readiness for tertiary education; however, for those who cannot afford to sit the exams, the measure of high school achievement is not clear. The technical and vocational CSECs are also problematic in relation to industry-driven certifications of the national training agencies. The courses are not sufficiently practice-oriented to be considered vocational training and the schools are often not adequately equipped to undertake sufficient practical training. The value of these TVET certificates in the workplace is questionable, and it is likely that students take these to increase their total number of

of territories, especially Jamaica, the number of secondary completers who actually sit the exams is also low.

The overall pass rates for CSEC exams are an indicator of the readiness of the school leaving population to benefit from training. In the Caribbean at large, pass rates for English Language and Mathematics on CXC Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations for the January 2004 sitting were:

- English—59 percent pass
- Mathematics—57 percent (Source: CXC, 2004)

**Table 1.6 Secondary Passes in CSEC Exams**

Country	English	Math
Barbados (2002)	56%	75%
St. Lucia (2002)	45%	61%
Trinidad (2002)	64%	51%
Jamaica (2003)	45%	36%
Caribbean (Jan, 2004)	59%	57%

Source: <http://www.education.gov.lc/Statistics%20Website2/Ed%20at%20a%20Glance/CXC%20Exams2.pdf>

Barbados enjoys the highest pass rates in the region as noted in Table 1.6, but note that only 56% passed English Language. Pass rates for Technical and Vocational subjects are notably higher than these pass rates for the basic academic subjects.

In Jamaica, in 2003, 45% of students who sat the CXC examinations at the end of the upper secondary cycle passed the English language examination and 36% passed the mathematics examination. (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2004).

subject passes and to compensate for not passing in core subjects. These qualifications are now competing, to some extent, with the NVQs that have been introduced in recent years. In Jamaica, many secondary vocational students are pursuing both certificates.

The problems in secondary education reflect long-standing problems at the primary and even pre-primary level as well, especially in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

- In the Dominican Republic, some 16 percent of adults are unable to read and write, while only 16 percent of three-to five-year-olds in the poorest tenth of the population receives any education at all.
- In Jamaica, even though nearly every child completes sixth grade, one in three is still unable to read.

The result of the above facts is that all the countries have a proportion of their young people leaving school with essentially no (recognized) high school certification. These youth have high unemployment, are less likely to be admitted to training programs, and become at risk for anti-social behavior and crime. Programs are aimed at these young people, but the demand for them greatly outstrips supply, and the effectiveness of many of the youth programs is not apparent. This group presents a long-term problem for the countries which, in effect, have to carry an underclass who cannot be easily absorbed into the modernizing economies.

### **1.5 The Tertiary Education Factor**

The literature suggests that the tertiary sector is critical for improving productivity. In the context of the current analysis, the professionals trained in the universities would comprise the managers and technical specialists that direct the skilled labor the training system is supposed to provide. Tertiary enrolment rates are far from that of OECD countries, and, with the exception of Barbados, lower than those in much of Latin America. There is an increasing amount of tertiary education available in the region, and Trinidad has a serious push to increase capacity, since they recognize they are seriously behind. Table 1.7 summarizes gross tertiary enrollment rates for the region (note that net enrollment rates may be much lower with Jamaica and St. Lucia known to be in the nine percent range).

### **1.6 Educational Achievement of the Workforce**

The educational systems of the Caribbean produce a workforce that has an insufficient number of secondary and tertiary graduates. This is changing due to

**Table 1.7 Tertiary Enrollment Rates (Gross)**

Country	Description	Amount
United States	72.6 (2000)	
United Kingdom	59.5 (2000)	
Barbados	38.2 (2000)	
Saint Lucia	25.4 (1998-2002)	
Cuba	24.2 (2000)	
Dominican Republic	22.9 (1993-1997)	
Jamaica	16.4 (2000)	
Guyana	9.7 (1995)	
Trinidad and Tobago	6.5 (2000)	

Source: UNESCO

increasing amounts of education in successive age cohorts, however, the region lags in educational attainment, making it a continuing challenge to upgrade the existing workforce and be competitive with other countries.

**Table 1.8 Educational level of the workforce (%)**

Educational Indicators	Barbados 1998	Dominican Republic 2000	Jamaica 1998	St Lucia 1999	Trinidad 1998	U.K. 2001
Labor Force with Primary Ed	22	38.3	SEE TABLE BELOW	46	37.5	18
Labor Force with Secondary	74.7	18.6		20.6	55.4	47
Labor Force with Tertiary Ed	30.1	10.3		7.2	6.5	27
Literacy Rate	99.7	84.4	87.6	N/A	98.5 (2002)	99

Source World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2004; Barbados data from Barbados Labor Market Information System at [http://labour.gov.bb/blmis2/WEBDOC/trends/trenfore\\_ELFBHLOE.asp?stats=year](http://labour.gov.bb/blmis2/WEBDOC/trends/trenfore_ELFBHLOE.asp?stats=year) and include TVET.

Note that in Jamaica, the ranks of the unemployed have swelled with secondary school completers. This may reflect the fact that even though more persons are completing secondary education, their actual achievement (in terms of CSEC passes) is low and they are not attractive to employers. Anderson hypothesized that these secondary completers refuse lower level work taken up by drop-outs.

**Table 1.9. Education level and status of Jamaican Workforce, 1991 and 1998 (%)**

Education level	1991			1998		
	Labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Labor force	Employed	Unemployed
No secondary education	51.9	52.2	33.6	34.1	36.5	21.2
1-3 years secondary	8.9	8.0	14.0	14.9	14.2	18.6
4+ years secondary	39.1	36.8	52.4	51.0	49.3	60.2
Total	100.0 <i>N</i> =1,002,332	100.0 <i>N</i> =853,000	100.0 <i>N</i> =149,300	100.0 <i>N</i> =1,097,113	100.0 <i>N</i> =925,900	100.0 <i>N</i> =171,100

Source. Anderson (2000)

## 1.7 Technology Indicators

Countries in the region are far behind developed countries in access to computers and the Internet. A variety of initiatives are underway to increase access to technology, but according to the data the gap is quite wide both in terms of computers and Internet access.

**Table 1.10. Computers per 1,000 persons**

<b>Countries</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Barbados	75	79	82	93	104
Dominican Republic	Data not available				
Guyana	24	25	26	26	27
Jamaica	39	43	46	50	54
St. Lucia	133	138	142	146	150
Trinidad and Tobago	47	54	62	69	80
United States	452	507	572	625	659
United Kingdom		210	264	330	423

Source: World Development Indicators database

**Table 1.11. Internet users (per 1,000 people)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Dominican Republic	11.5	18.6	21.59	36.5
St. Lucia	19.7	51.6	82.4	
Jamaica	23.5	31.0	38.5	229.2
Barbados	22.4	37.4	55.9	111.5
Trinidad	58.01	77.3	92.3	106.0
United States	367	441	501	551
United Kingdom	303	338	366	406

Source: World Development Indicators database

## 1.8 Training Systems and Labor Market Characteristics

In *Matching Skills to Markets and Budgets* (2000), Gill, Fluitman and Dar analyzed numerous countries and distilled common characteristics among groups of countries with implications for how the training system might best be oper-

ated. The main variables used in the analysis were labor force growth, employment growth and unemployment. They categorized countries according to the pressures facing their systems. A similar analysis of the countries being examined in this analysis reveals interesting differences. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 1.12 and Figure 1.3 below.

**Table 1.12. Country Analysis According to Labor Market Conditions**

	Barbados	Dominican Republic	Guyana*	Jamaica**	St Lucia**	Trinidad & Tobago
LF Growth 95-02	11.9%	20.5%	-5.1%	-3.0%	8.9%	24.3%
Employment Growth 95-02	20.2%		-2.3%	-1.3%	19.1%	23.8%
Unemployment 2002	10.3%	14.5%	9.1%	13.1%	16.4%	10.4%

Source: compiled by author from country data

\*Guyana=2001

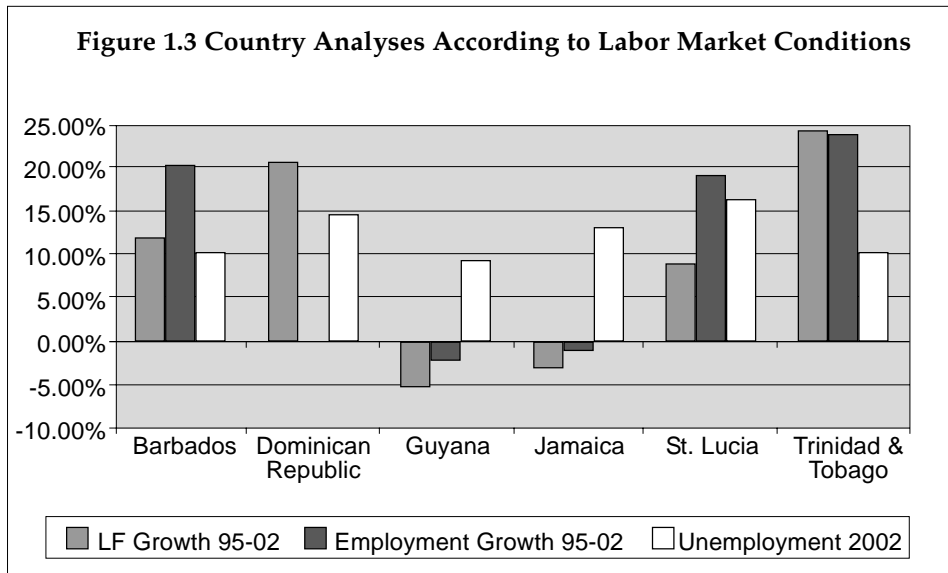
\*\*Unemployment figures JA=2003; St L= 2000

The analysis suggests that two countries, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, appear more like emerging market economies featuring both high labor force growth along with high employment growth and declining unemployment. In Barbados, employment growth exceeds labor market growth, while in Trinidad labor force growth is close to employment growth. One would expect that Barbados is experiencing labor shortages and may need to focus on worker upgrading and retraining. Trinidad would not be facing labor shortages, but would need to invest in worker retraining and upgrading.

The Dominican Republic and St. Lucia are somewhere between economies in transition to market and emerging market economies, mostly because they still have high open unemployment.

Jamaica and Guyana appear more like countries in transition to market.

According to this approach (see World Bank, 2000), the latter four countries could focus on reducing labor market participation among the young, possibly with education and training (which is keeping youth unemployment down in



Jamaica), while refocusing VET offerings toward the service oriented skills that are coming to dominate the newer job offerings.

### 1.9 An Overview of the Public Sector Training Arrangements in the Region

The public sector training arrangements within the region are quite variable. In the Dominican Republic there is a large national institution, “*Instituto Nacional de Formación Técnico Profesional*”—(National Institute for Vocational Training), or INFOTEP, founded in 1980, which operates and coordinates a large variety of training programs, and should be considered as accounting for most of the employment-oriented training in the country. This agency operates along the lines of other “apex” training institutions in Latin America, based on a training levy of one percent of payroll and one-half percent of workers’ bonuses, and is located within the Ministry of Labor. These Latin American systems, after a period of decline in the late 1970’s (Marquez, 2002) reformed themselves in more recent times, have operated effectively with a tri-partite structure, and have worked fairly well in terms of proper linkages to employers, especially for more traditional industries like manufacturing and construction. INFOTEP appears strongly connected to the Free Zones in the Dominican Republic, which have

served as an engine of economic growth in that country. The INFOTEP National Center is the keystone of the training delivery system, but a wide variety of collaborating centers in the regions are funded that serve the country, and the highest proportion of its training programs are offered within firms. INFOTEP has a variety of qualification pathways comprising different levels and modalities of training including basic training, further training, dual training with firms, and training for master technicians and instructors. Currently training capacity is projected to include about up to 180,000 persons per year.

Jamaica features a prominent apex agency, the HEART Trust/National Training Agency, founded in 1982 and financed by a three percent payroll tax, which has made it the dominant force in TVET in the country. The agency is not truly tri-partite in its governance, but is run more on political lines (Herschbach and Campbell, 2000) with a Board of Directors appointed by the Minister with a limited amount of industry and labor representation. The agency is located within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (with a separate funding stream through the dedicated levy). HEART Trust/NTA both finances and operates training programs, but supports a large number of community-based projects, on-the-job training and in-plant training programs, and assists other training providers with various technical and financial supports, including Technical High Schools and Community Colleges. The levy also supports the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET), a quasi-independent body that develops occupational standards, and provides the accreditation of institutions and certification of competency. Jamaica's training is mainly directed at unemployed young people, although an increasing number of older and working individuals are participating in training. A new technical framework for the organization of courses and certification has been introduced, which they are calling the "unit competency framework". This new framework (HEART Trust/NTA, 2004) is an important incremental step in achieving greater applicability of a standards-based approach, improving its flexibility and portability. Last year over 42,000 participants were enrolled, an increase of over 30% over 2002-03, and HEART's targets for 2004-05 are for 57,000 participants. Almost all programs feature 50 hours of information technology and 40 hours of entrepreneurship, and the training locations engage in income generating activities.

Both Barbados and Trinidad have fledgling national training entities in the form of the Barbados TVET Council, and the National Training Agency of Trinidad and Tobago (NTATT). These agencies arose from a consensus reflected in

the *CARICOM Strategy for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training*, in the early 1990s. However, both agencies are small, and only control a portion of the funding for training, with large portions of public funding going to the community colleges and other tertiary institutions that offer most of the public sector sponsored training, and to other youth-oriented programs operated by other ministries.

The Barbados TVET Council reports to the Ministry of Labor and is supported by a one percent tax falling half on employers and half on employees, administered under the National Insurance scheme. This becomes the Employment and Training Fund (ETF) administered by the TVET Council. Barbados's training portfolio includes the Barbados Vocational Training Board for apprenticeship type training, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, a Skills Training Program, and the employment-oriented offerings of the Barbados Community College.

In Barbados the operation, financing and coordination of public sector training is dispersed between the Labor and Education Ministries and institutions operating within the latter. In general, the orientation in the Eastern Caribbean divides training between youth programs and tertiary education. Programs aimed at unemployed youth, while in operation, are less prominent than in Jamaica, and do not usually fall within the scope of the training agencies. This probably reflects the higher secondary achievement of school leavers there relative to Jamaica. The countries in the Eastern Caribbean may be able to treat skills training as a tertiary (as opposed to post-secondary) activity, because they have more qualifying candidates to select for training in a tertiary setting.

The NTATT in Trinidad does not have the benefit of a payroll levy and reports to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE), which actually oversees nearly all of the training programs, the bulk of which are part of the tertiary sector. Although the NTATT was set up to be the coordinating body for training in Trinidad and Tobago, it is emerging that the agency is being tasked with coordination of the lower levels of training for employment and being restricted to the trades and crafts. The largest training institutions include the John Donaldson Technical Institute, the San Fernando Technical Institute, and the Metal Industries Company (MIC); these are operated via the MSTTE under the umbrella of the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT), with a tertiary education orientation. A major youth training program, the Youth Training and Employment Part-

nership Program (YTEPP) is operated by the MSTTE as well. National Youth Development Apprenticeship Centers, previously called Youth Camps, are used for vocational training, but are operated by the Ministry of Sport & Youth Affairs, with five centers located throughout Trinidad and Tobago. A new On-the-Job training program was launched this year, and the country is introducing a formal apprenticeship program and a new program for retraining of workers, all via the MSTTE. Trinidad is also planning the expansion of the programs organized by the National Energy Skills Center and the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology. Curiously, there is a move afoot in Trinidad & Tobago to revive the National Examinations Council for the certification of post-secondary and tertiary level vocational and technical offerings under COSTAATT. This would appear to be a departure from the approach based on occupational standards promoted by the NTATT, which uses employer input to determine the content of courses and competency-based assessment methods. SERVOL is an important NGO that operates both youth training and youth development programs in an interesting combination that is appropriate for the many disadvantaged youth; SERVOL receives government support for salaries, but also engage in fund raising and income generating projects.

St. Lucia has recently established a National TVET Council, and has in place one set of training programs aimed mostly at unemployed youth, the National Skills Development Center (NSDC) and a National Enrichment And Learning Program (NELP) aimed at low-income adults, and additional training at the community college for those who qualify for tertiary admission, and, like Barbados and Trinidad, is more oriented toward training as a tertiary activity at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC). Training activities are generally under the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Culture and Sport. Public sector training is financed from the central budget without any dedicated tax.

The national training entities of Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago have shared a commitment to a common framework being called National Vocational Qualifications. This approach is based on the British NVQs and is based on a hierarchy of occupational levels from one to five, and uses occupational standards as the basis for training curriculum. Jamaica's new, revised approach is based on the Australia and New Zealand adaptation of British NVQs and is resulting in greater part-time participation and decentralization in its (formerly centralized) approach to competency assessment. This common approach led to a Memorandum of Understanding in 2000 (which also included the Or-

ganization of Eastern Caribbean States Education Reform Unit (OECS/OERU), followed by a Memorandum of Association (MOA) in 2003. These agreements call for sharing of standards and mutual recognition of qualifications. This agreement can be the basis for the enabling of the free movement of skilled labor under the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). The MOA established the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA), and establishes a technical footing to develop a Caribbean NVQ (CNVQ) that would be recognized across the region.