

HIGHLIGHTS ONLY

Summary of Background Paper Prepared for Heads of Government Tourism Summit: *Human Resource Development in Caribbean Tourism:*

Elements to a Regional Tourism HRD Strategy:

1. **Creating a vibrant training culture** to enhance professional standards
2. **Improving access to quality, industry-endorsed training**, especially for micro, small and medium tourism enterprises
3. **Promoting career opportunities** for young persons who can add value to the sector in the long term
4. **Researching and systematically addressing pertinent tourism issues** in order to guide policy and decision makers on a variety of issues including product issues, hotel performance, human resources, employment and labour issues etc.
5. **Implementing continuous public awareness activities** to make tourism more acceptable in the eyes of the public by educating the public about the important role of tourism in the economies of Caribbean countries
6. **Promoting tourism education in the schools** in a more systematic way so that young persons are more informed about the many facets of tourism and may more readily choose to work in tourism as a career of first choice
7. **Developing a financing mechanism** at the national level to promote and support a culture of education and training for the sector
8. **Educating potential employees of the highly rewarding career opportunities** in the field of tourism and letting them understand that opportunities are not only available at the operational level

External Challenges: Key Issues –

1. Global competition
2. Forces of globalization
3. Consolidation of companies
4. Needs of the visitor are changing: implications for international standards
5. Industry is having difficulty attracting motivated and dynamic employees
6. Modern technology is rapidly changing the way business is conducted

Internal Challenges Key Issues

1. More Caribbean workers are entering the tourism workforce
2. Region also has problems attracting highly motivated and dynamic employees
3. Region has a high rate of unemployment or underemployment - basic skills training and re-training must be provided
4. International standards required in areas such as health and hygiene, the natural environment, occupational standards etc
5. Issues of employee retention and workforce sustainability must be addressed
6. Outmoded management styles in the region have overall negative impact on the performance of tourism enterprises in the Caribbean
7. Local and regional tourism training institutions are often not perceived by the industry as important or effective in satisfying its training needs.
8. Training in the Caribbean tourism industry holds low priority in most organizations
9. Region must create and nurture a vibrant tourism education and training culture and work together to better coordinate human resources initiatives and activities (Tourism Learning System development)
10. The University of the West Indies (UWI), needs to seriously upgrade its teaching of tourism and hospitality
11. Our region is far behind regarding the application of multiple technologies to deliver education and training programmes
12. The region needs to give Caribbean nationals early exposure to tourism, at the primary and secondary education levels
13. Special attention needs to be paid to addressing the human resources needs of small, medium and micro tourism businesses in the region

Policy Requirements

Governments in the Caribbean Region need to demonstrate a commitment to –

1. Tourism human resource development as an important competitive strategy
2. An overall coordinating agency for tourism human resource development (Caribbean Tourism Human Resource Council)
3. A sustainable mechanism, funding formula incentives which seek to support the demands for tourism education and training at different levels and for different target groups.
4. Inclusion of tourism education in the formal school system
5. To the non-university post-secondary and tertiary education sector including Community Colleges and Hospitality Training Institutes
6. The University of the West Indies, to make it a world class tourism education institution
7. Addressing with employers and trade union representatives, in a consistent manner, concrete issues that relate to the welfare of the tourism worker
8. The support and development of an integrated tourism learning system
9. Supporting the efforts of students, employees and employers to participate in education and training/continuous learning.