

Creating Employment Opportunities in the Windward Countries of the Eastern Caribbean

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NOTE TO THE READER

This briefing paper grew out of, and goes beyond, a 1998 document (*Workforce Planning Study—The Windward Countries*) written by the author for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). That study identified existing Windward Islands workforce training programs and needs. In the course of executing the USAID study, the author learned about the shortage of good jobs in the Windwards. Therefore, the author produced an additional document that goes beyond the training activities identified for USAID and provides ideas for creating employment opportunities in the Windward countries. This publication is an edited summary of the second, expanded study. The full expanded study is described in the box on page 18 and is available upon request.

The Georgetown University Caribbean Project staff and advisers do not endorse the ideas contained in this briefing paper, but believe that they warrant circulation to a wide readership.

INTRODUCTION

The Windward countries of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) are small developing nations with an agricultural base that have historically been dependent on a single export, namely bananas. The prospect of a Free Trade Area of the Americas and recent World Trade Organization rulings accelerate the pace at which the Windward countries must meet international competitive standards in the banana industry and diversify their economies. There is agreement within the region that the Windwards must consolidate banana production, increase yields, and improve quality. Inevitably, some current banana farmers will be displaced, including farmers in countries that are already experiencing high unemployment.

This study attempts to identify workforce training *and development* activities that will best assist the unemployed, underemployed, and displaced rural workers in the Windward countries. At the same time, the study identifies sectors of the economy with emerging labor shortages; such opportunities are becoming increasingly important to the rural sector. It is anticipated that this summary, and the country profiles available in the full expanded study, will lend guidance to donor organizations in strengthening the competitive advantage of the Windward countries through effective programmatic and human-resource development initiatives.

Human-resource development is often seen as the key to progress for a developing country. This summary does not question that premise, but brings to the forefront certain prerequisites that must exist for human-resource development to be effective. "Training" in the absence of a job opportunity is not a useful investment either for the client, who feels misled, or for the donor, who has limited resources. It is not helpful to train a rural youth in construction work when he or she has no means of transportation to the city, or to train a farmer to grow a crop for which there is no potential purchaser. Thus, training activities must be part of

a comprehensive program if they are to be effective. This is particularly true in the Windward countries, where many secondary school and university graduates cannot find job opportunities.

The agricultural community in the Windwards has been trained, retrained, and trained again. It has demonstrated enormous flexibility, resilience, and patience, and is a master at changing focus when advised to do so. The primary problem lies not with the farmers, but rather in the lack of a market for the crop that the farmer has been “trained” to produce. There *may* have been a market at the time the farmer was first advised to grow the crop in question, but, in the case of a tree crop, that “market” will be four years old before the farmer can respond to it. More frequently, the quantity grown in a Windward country does not warrant a cargo ship, or the produce is damaged en route to the port, or another country can—and does—grow and ship the product more economically. Farmers can be trained to improve quality but, at some point, the limited quantity that the Windwards can produce must be factored into the marketing strategy.

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Effective marketing vehicles and programs are needed to create *opportunities* for farmers before training is offered. Furthermore, marketing should be a private-sector venture that pays the farmer upon his or her delivery of the product to the exporter. With the exception of Dominica, the Windwards have not yet identified the markets or developed a viable marketing entity.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has programs in all of the Windwards except Grenada. IFAD’s focus is on the farm and local market; its projects are intended to create a private-sector marketing entity. However, the IFAD coordinators are struggling with exporters unaccustomed and resistant to working as a unit, against a reputation of inconsistent production, and against the void in air and sea cargo transportation. The positive part of this picture is the existence of talented, committed, and resourceful individuals making noticeable dents in the marketing problem.

As the Windward countries reorganize policies and goals to create an organized agricultural sector, so too should outside actors funnel their training projects and resources through some coordinating body in order to avoid duplication and to accelerate progress toward goals. Although the IFAD projects are for targeted areas in Saint Lucia and Dominica, those areas have been targeted after careful analysis

of unemployment, poverty, and land productivity in order to identify the nonbanana production areas for the future. Any outside assistance to hasten accomplishment of IFAD’s goals will allow its programs to move on to other communities within a given country. In addition, IFAD programs incorporate all divisions of the ministries of agriculture (MOAs) and all nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in their activities. IFAD coordinators are in a position to assess the needs and activities in each country where an IFAD program exists.

Except in Grenada, the MOA/IFAD programs should be viewed by donor organizations as the coordinating unit for small farmer training related to food security and the local market. In Grenada, NGOs and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) are coordinating activities in the farming community.

The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States’ Export Development and Agricultural Diversification Unit (OECS/EDADU) was established by the eastern Caribbean countries to coordinate all facets of agricultural activity in order to create volume for an export market—a critical need for the Windward countries. OECS/EDADU’s strategies for building volume include the identification of a few crops that have proven market potential; identification of farmers willing to invest in their farms to ensure production goals; and consolidation of crop planting, both to increase production efficiency and to encourage the establishment of farmer cooperatives. Like IFAD, OECS/EDADU seeks to involve NGOs and all divisions of the MOAs in its activities.

The fact that each Windward country has accepted and is promoting OECS/EDADU’s approach of coordinating crop production with efforts to find or build markets for those crops signifies a positive and constructive reorganization of thinking. The OECS/EDADU strategy signals an end to disorganized planting schemes. More care is being taken in giving direction to the agricultural community, whose members understand that efforts are being made to create “real” markets for their produce.

OECS/EDADU has outlined a production and training proposal for each Windward country that concentrates on the agricultural strengths of that country. It has identified the most appropriate crops, the number of acres needed for each crop, and the suggested acreage for each country. OECS/EDADU is actively identifying international markets and sharing that information with farmers and marketing groups in each country. When OECS/EDADU finds a market, its goal is to link potential purchasers with MOAs, which establish a coordinating unit (usually including CARDI and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture [IICA]) to contract with farmers throughout the Windwards for that

market. Dominica has a distinct advantage because its farmers are accustomed to working through the Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA), which contracts directly with purchasers. The other Windwards have not yet created reliable marketing vehicles.

The OECS/EDADU effort should be viewed by donor organizations as the primary coordinating unit for training related to the export of Windward agricultural commodities.

OECS/EDADU's current focus is on dasheen (taro, a plant with edible starchy tuberous rootstocks). OECS/EDADU's training plan places heavy emphasis on farm management skills to guarantee consistent production. No group has so thoroughly planned the development of an export market for the eastern Caribbean as has OECS/EDADU. Its plan incorporates every aspect of production from site selection to wharf, including training of exporters and follow-up with purchasers. Working through the MOAs, OECS/EDADU contracts with outside entities to provide the necessary training to accommodate production for the export market. The training portion of this effort, some of which is provided by MOAs, is not fully funded.

OECS/EDADU sees its role as one of finding markets and coordinating training resources for those markets rather than one of directing production. Although OECS/EDADU has specified production goals for selected crops in each country, the assignments are for the purpose of guidance only.

Problems are likely to develop if there is no coordination beyond these recommendations. Suppose, for example, that there exists a purchaser for one hundred thousand pounds of dasheen per month. Every dasheen-growing country would be aware of this market and would plant for it. If the Windward countries (and others) simply grow as much dasheen as they can, the result could be a production glut.

Eventually, therefore, some entity must coordinate production. Ideally, this will be a local marketing/export corporation. Until those local marketing entities are created, OECS/EDADU has the knowledge base and relationship with each eastern Caribbean country to navigate these sensitive waters.

Except in Grenada, few farmers have been displaced thus far. Most farmers are well aware of who will and who will not be "certified"* to grow bananas. They are willing to raise other crops if a reasonable substitute for the banana "cash flow" can

* WIBDECO (the region's banana marketing group) has established a Certified Farms Program to develop a pool of farmers capable of producing, processing, and packaging bananas to meet specific requirements.

Acronyms

BGA	Banana Growers Association
CAIS	Caribbean Agricultural Information Services
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
DBMC	Dominica Banana Marketing Corporation
DEXIA	Dominica Export Import Agency
EAL	Entrepreneurial Approach to Labor
EC\$	Eastern Caribbean dollar
EU	European Union
GCA	Grenada Cocoa Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture (or whatever ministry is primarily responsible for agriculture)
NDF	National Development Foundation(s)
NEWLO	New Life Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OECS/EDADU	Export Development and Agricultural Diversification Unit
OECS/T-VET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
SGU	Saint George's University (in Grenada)
STEP	Short Term Employment Program
SVG	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
US\$	U.S. dollar
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WIBDECO	Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company
WINDREF	Windward Islands Research and Education Foundation

be found. Except for SVG, none of the Windward countries has a written agricultural plan that identifies which crops will be produced or where they will be produced. However, such plans are being developed.

This summary begins with a message *from the Windwards*: be cautious in providing training to the rural community. Such training programs need to be coordinated through a local entity such as OECS/EDADU or MOA/IFAD programs. Effective training is needed and greatly appreciated, but frustration is high in the community. It would be all too easy to “train” people out of agriculture at this time. Finding agricultural labor is already a problem. Once the markets are discovered and the country is poised to compete, who will work the farms? Nothing comparable to the flight of the Grenadian farmer from the fields has yet occurred in the other Windwards, but the MOAs, OECS/EDADU, CARDI, IICA, National Development Foundations (NDFs, private nonprofit institutions that encourage small business sector development), and other NGOs recognize that one more misguided directive to farmers may break their spirit. These groups are depending on that “spirit,” that “love of the land,” to add yet another chapter to the history of agricultural development in the Windward countries.

WHO IS THE CLIENT?

If establishing a market prior to providing crop-specific training is a prerequisite to effective human-resource development, so too is identifying the client—those who most need and can most benefit from training. Grenada’s Agricultural Census is an excellent document containing a wealth of information, including the fact that 78 percent of the country’s farm laborers are relatives of their employers. If farming ceases to be a commercially viable endeavor, more people than the farm owner will be displaced. Those who participate in the commercial production of bananas will be unemployed once consolidation of the banana industry occurs. For this reason, workforce training initiatives should be directed at the overall *rural* community rather than just the agricultural community.

There is no unemployment agency in any of the Windward countries. There is no central registry; no institution to evaluate skills and recommend job opportunities; no clearinghouse to connect businesses with would-be workers; no career or skills development guidance; and only limited opportunities for formal education even when career/skills goals are identified.

The question must be asked, who is being trained? If a donor organization is working through a group with a presence in the country, trainees are usually

found by making telephone calls to other organizations operating in the country until the available training slots are filled. Who needs training? Youth, women, and rural persons—all of whom are victims of an educational system that cannot offer secondary education even to all of the qualified. What type of training do they need? No one knows. Beyond the general description given above, no one knows what skills “they” already have, or where “they” are, or how many exist. A few surveys have been done, but there is no central registry to analyze the information beyond general statements that, for example, 25 percent of the population of a certain district are unemployed. Most surveys report an unemployment figure of around 16 percent. Most residents in each country say that unemployment is closer to 30 percent. Most officials believe that the latter figure is closer to reality. Also, the numbers cited do not include those who are underemployed.

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Throughout the Windwards, approximately 40 percent of primary students who sit for the Common Entrance Examination are awarded seats in a secondary school. This is not to say that only 40 percent have the academic ability to benefit from secondary school. Rather, the figure reflects the limited physical capacity of the secondary schools. Another way of looking at the situation is that 60 percent of students who believe that they have a chance for one of the coveted seats (as indicated by their willingness to take the examination) do not get one. If one adds in the remaining students who do not bother to take the test, the majority of youth can be categorized as potential “school leavers.” Because the Windward countries do not report “age-eligible” statistics, it is not known how many of the students who are encouraged to remain in primary school until approximately age fifteen “leave.” The number of youth in primary and secondary schools is known; however, once they leave school, for whatever reason, they cease being a statistic anywhere. It should be added that, of those who do remain in primary school and take the exit examination, only 8 to 12 percent pass. This statistic is hardly encouraging to a young teenager trying to determine what to do with his or her future.

What we do know is that over 50 percent of the unemployed population in each Windward country are between fifteen and twenty-four years of age. Also disturbing is the fact that most of these young people disappear from both the unemployment and employment indexes after twenty-four years of age.

They are either finding unreported employment or they are leaving the region.

Do the unemployed want to be employed? A dramatic example of the thirst for job opportunities took place in Saint Lucia, the only Windward country to attempt to identify the unemployed, when the government established a Short Term Employment Program (STEP) to employ a thousand people for six months, providing them with job opportunities that, even if short term, would build their marketable skills and thus make them more employable. The program was to last for one year (two six-month cycles). The government advertised the program, developed a questionnaire, and sent staff into communities on announced dates to interview candidates in person. The staff found lines of hundreds of people. In some cases, over a thousand applicants showed up. The response was so overwhelming that STEP placed 1,683 people in jobs within the first six months and presently has a database of over six thousand people. STEP will end after the conclusion of the current six-month cycle because the government lacks the resources to continue the program. What is needed now is for a private entity to step forward to take over unemployment and placement services on the island.

A database such as Saint Lucia's would be useful to the type of private-sector employment agency that is needed in each of the Windward countries. Every Chamber of Commerce has put forth proposals to become or to establish such an agency. The Chambers recognize the importance of determining what qualifications exist in the workforce available to the Chambers' member firms. Until the employment pool is identified, effective development of the workforce will not be coordinated or targeted. When rural workers are displaced, and they will be, who will know?

FOOD SECURITY

It is said that if a seed is dropped in any of the Windward countries, it will grow. Nevertheless, each of the Windward countries has identified food security as the primary goal of any agricultural and/or economic policy. Throughout the region, "food security" is defined as the ability of a country to feed its own people without dependence on imports. Although a variety of fruits and vegetables are grown in the Windward countries, none of the countries are producing and/or utilizing locally grown fruits and vegetables sufficiently to avoid the import of these items. Several countries are self-sufficient in pork and egg production, but that is the limit of food security in the Windwards. Easy access to processed, less nutritious food discourages anything beyond limited domestic use of locally grown

products. The fact that Grenada, the largest cocoa producer in the region and the producer of the finest cocoa in the world, *imports* every processed cocoa product is illustrative of the problem.

In short, rural people in the Windward countries do not make lemonade out of lemons.

Production customs vary from country to country in the Windwards, but the outcome is the same—the region's people do not utilize their crops for home consumption. Some do not plant and have never planted for home consumption. Some have only pure stands of bananas. Some have always planted for the table, but only use the crop in conventional ways. If there are too many tomatoes, mangoes, or bananas for a family to consume, and no other market, the fruit is left in the field. It is not juiced, canned, bottled, or preserved. In short, rural people in the Windward countries do not make lemonade out of lemons.

There is uniform agreement among governments, NGOs, and commercial enterprises on the need in each Windward country for a comprehensive public awareness program on nutrition, consumption of local produce/products, and processing local fruits and vegetables for future use. Preserving, canning, bottling, and substitutions are all skills that need to become a regular part of the home environment.

In this connection, IICA's focus has shifted from food production to food processing. IICA/Trinidad has recently hired a food processing specialist who should be a valuable resource in developing this program and in identifying processing devices suitable for home use. Grenada's Agency for Rural Transformation (ART) has developed a food security program but seeks assistance in implementing it. SVG's MOA sponsored a half-hour weekly radio and television program promoting recipes using local products. However, the program cost EC\$8,250 and could only be offered for three months.

POULTRY/LIVESTOCK FEED

Because all livestock feed must be imported, the Windwards have never been able to raise livestock for fresh meat. The enormous amount of chicken consumed in the Windwards consists largely of frozen imports, which are less expensive than local chickens raised on imported poultry feed. Frozen chicken parts are imported in bulk containers, which are transported in trucks (usually nonrefrigerated) to local retailers throughout a given island nation. These retailers employ packers to semi-thaw, separate, weigh, and individually package the chicken parts. The packages are then refrozen for sale to

consumers. Except for pork, all meat products are imported and distributed through a similar process.

Each Windward country has recognized the economic importance of becoming more self-sufficient in food production for local consumption. Grenada imports over EC\$100 million in food products (including EC\$20 million in chicken parts alone), Dominica EC\$67 million (EC\$11 million in chicken parts), SVG approximately EC\$112 million (EC\$17 million in poultry), and Saint Lucia (which has a large tourism industry) over EC\$200 million (EC\$26 million in chicken parts). Each of these countries has a large trade deficit. Any progress in reducing the need for imported food and animal feed would result in a clear economic benefit.

Increased local production of poultry and meat products would also improve the employment picture. There is clearly a local market for fresh poultry/meat. Livestock raising for an existing market would be an excellent alternative for the small banana farmer. Women, youth, and other small landowners could raise chickens, pigs, and rabbits, which do not require grazing space. In addition, producing feed would create an industry that does not currently exist.

Some of the incentives for encouraging local production are not purely economic. The poor quality of imported poultry/meat is a source of ongoing public complaint. Attempts have been made to address this concern by ordering higher grades of poultry/meat, but the region's governments and private sector believe that the Windwards always receive the same quality of poultry/meat regardless of the grade ordered. In addition, consumer groups are exposing safety issues arising from the questionable transportation and packaging practices outlined earlier. These health concerns can and should be addressed immediately through training, regulations, and mandatory inspection of the packaging industry. The quality issue, however, would remain.

Therefore, each government is committed to raising its own livestock for local consumption. If this effort is to be economically viable, locally produced livestock feeds, made of surplus available products, will have to be developed.

Assistance in developing a local poultry and livestock feed is perhaps the single greatest contribution that a donor organization could make to the region's people.

Several experiments are under way in the Windwards to develop local feed for fish and livestock production. An aquaculturist in Saint Lucia has developed a high-protein shrimp feed made of processed chicken, fish by-products, and vegetable

matter. The shrimp farmers can collect these materials and pelletize them to make the feed, thereby greatly reducing their costs and utilizing by-products that were presenting a waste disposal problem. CARDI/SVG and a Saint Lucian have developed a local sheep feed made of bananas, molasses, coconut meal, and a mineral block* developed in Saint Kitts. This feed is presently being tested through an IFAD project, but it is already known to produce better meat and fat than feeding farm leftovers to sheep. Grenada is experimenting with a poultry feed from local products but has yet to discover the correct balance. An excellent resource for this effort would be the University of Maryland's School of Agriculture, which specializes in the creation of livestock feed from locally available products. It recently created a local feed to raise poultry in Siberia.

Assistance in developing a local poultry and livestock feed is perhaps the single greatest contribution that a donor organization could make to the region's people. Introduction in the Windwards of a fast-growing, meat-heavy chicken raised on locally available feed would have the following beneficial consequences:

- the importation of poultry (presently the region's largest food import) would be reduced or eliminated, a development that would have a positive impact on trade deficits;
- residents would have access to fresh poultry;
- commercial establishments could contract with farmer cooperatives for a consistent commercial product;
- raising poultry could become a financially attractive alternative for the small banana farmer;
- current waste products (fish by-products and surplus/rejected produce) would be put to effective use;
- a feed production industry would be created.

MEAT PROCESSING AND PACKAGING

In addition to developing local feed, each Windward country has plans to build an abattoir, presumably after livestock production becomes a reality. Each country will need to train potential abattoir workers in the safe processing and packaging of poultry/meat products. Although it will not eliminate the overall shortage of job opportunities, creating abattoirs will generate some skilled jobs while providing consumers with fresh meat/poultry products that are packaged safely.

*A mineral block is a mineral-rich preparation condensed into a soluble block and placed in a pasture for sheep to lick for mineral nourishment.

In Grenada, the effort to build an abattoir is being spearheaded by the New Life Organization (NEWLO), a highly successful NGO that offers vocational and life-skills training to school leavers. This entrepreneurial group intends to have its students build an abattoir on an acre of land donated by the government. NEWLO hopes that the trade unions will donate their expertise through on-the-job training for the students. Once the abattoir is built, the students will be trained to operate the facility, and they will open sales outlets for the processed poultry/meats.

PESTICIDES AND FERTILIZERS

The proper use of pesticides, alternative pest control methods, and proper fertilizers can also contribute to meeting the Windwards' food security/food safety needs. The region's farmers have a tradition of employing pesticides and fertilizers intended specifically for use with bananas on all other crops as well. And, not unlike the average gardener, if the directions suggest one teaspoon per gallon, they believe that three teaspoons will work better. The Banana Growers Associations (BGAs) have cautioned against this practice and try to monitor the use of banana pesticide and fertilizer, but the high rate of consumption of these products suggests that more than bananas are being treated. Increasingly, the Windward countries are finding in the lowlands and rivers concentrations of pesticides that have been washed down from the mountains by rain. In 1998, SVG's Institute for Environmental Research and Technology released a study of the impact of chemicals on the country's environment, especially with regard to the decreasing river fish population. The study concluded that pesticides are having an ongoing adverse impact on the Vincentian environment.

The practice of using banana fertilizer and pesticide on all crops arises from the reality that, with few exceptions, there are no other fertilizers or pesticides on the islands. (The Grenada Cocoa Association [GCA] imports its own fertilizer and Saint Lucia's Agriculturalist Association imports or makes a variety of chemical fertilizers that are usually too expensive for the small farmer.) Fertilizer is the single largest expense of farmers. Given their limited cash reserves, farmers can purchase fertilizer or pesticides only if an "association" extends credit. Therefore, banana farmers, who also grow other crops for which there is no association, purchase banana fertilizer through credit from the BGAs. The BGAs are able to offer the fertilizer at a reduced price because they buy it in bulk and they can tolerate repayment risk because of their control of the banana sales.

As farmers move out of bananas, as some must, where can they purchase "proper" fertilizers and pesticides or alternative pest control substances? Commercial enterprises cannot offer these items at affordable prices and will not grant credit. At a recent meeting of small farmers in Dominica, most in attendance knew that they would not be growing bananas in the future. They were perfectly willing to grow other cash crops. However, they asked the Dominica Banana Marketing Corporation (DBMC) to purchase other types of fertilizer to accommodate their land and "diversified" crops. The DBMC responded that it could not continue to offer its current low prices for banana fertilizer if it also brought in other types of fertilizer.

[Banana fertilizer and pesticide [are used] on all crops [because], with few exceptions, there are no other fertilizers or pesticides on the islands.

Although instructing farmers on the proper use of pesticides and fertilizer is extremely important, such instruction will not be helpful unless the appropriate items are physically and financially accessible to the small farmer. It may be possible to reduce the problem somewhat by addressing tree and ground crops separately. Ground crops can often be fertilized through crop rotation methods, in which case fertilizer purchases can be reduced or avoided. Trees, however, are comparatively permanent and rotation techniques are not applicable.

The conventional answer is to establish a revolving credit fund through an established farmers' organization for the sale and purchase of nonbanana fertilizers and pesticides. With strategic planning assistance from the European Union (EU), the GCA has proposed a detailed plan for the establishment and maintenance of a revolving fertilizer credit fund. The GCA would be an excellent resource in developing this concept. In addition, the Windward Islands Farmers' Association in SVG and the National Farmers Union in Saint Lucia may be the appropriate vehicles for the establishment of a fertilizer/pesticide credit fund. Although it is not unreasonable to envision small growers of the various kinds of crops ordering pesticides and fertilizer as one entity, the BGAs are presently involved in privatization, an important and sensitive venture. Their attention should not be diverted from that mission at this time.

FARM MANAGEMENT BUSINESS SKILLS

Farming in the Windwards is becoming more sophisticated. Survival in the farming industry will not be determined by production alone. Quality,

ability to meet schedules, planting for an established market, finding those markets, and having adequate financial resources throughout the year will all be prerequisites for the viability of agricultural enterprises.

[A]ll farmers. . . need *on-farm instruction* in basic business skills. . . .

Consequently, all farmers, whether producing crops or livestock for home, local, regional, or international markets, need *on-farm instruction* in basic business skills such as bookkeeping, planting schedules, budget development, time management, and accessing resources. Virtually every development assistance group with a presence in a Windward country has agreed that the main focus of extension services should be to assist farmers in operating farms as business enterprises. Thus, all extension officers working with rural communities, regardless of the agency with which they are affiliated, need to be trained in facilitating business-skills development at the farm level.

Several MOAs are dedicating substantial local funds to the retraining of extension staff. OECS/EDADU, NDFs, CARDI, and IICA are sponsoring or encouraging farm business-skills training. The Chambers of Commerce with business-skills programs are interested in adapting these programs to farm management. This training is needed immediately, and such a massive effort will require targeted resources from donors.

The DBMC has developed a program (“Building a Crop Budget”) for training farmers and its own extension staff. The DBMC assists the farmer in listing, on paper, his or her approximate household, loan repayment, utility, and educational expenses. The sum of these expenses is the minimum amount that the farmer must make in crop sales if the farm is to be economically viable. The DBMC then assists the farmer in building a crop schedule, taking account of the loss rate for that farmer, factoring in current prices, subtracting the cost of food for the family, and, finally, calculating the income. For many banana farmers, this is the first time that they see that they are losing money with bananas. Farmers have focused so much on the weekly check that they receive for their bananas that their yearly net financial loss is not perceived.

This is an excellent example of how a farmer can be helped to benefit from the reading, writing, independent thinking, computing, and communicating skills that were learned in primary school but were not necessarily being used, given the farmer’s comfortable familiarity with traditional banana-production methods. The farmers assisted by the

DBMC gain confidence that they “can do” a financial plan, intimidating though that may sound at first. Rural persons are fully capable of understanding profit and loss. The key to the success of this project is the presence of personnel who are known and trusted by the farmers and who can work “with,” not for, the farmer in listing expenses. The availability of local staff to work with and follow up on farmers on a one-to-one basis is of paramount importance. As with any new and unpleasant task, farmers will abandon the budget if follow-up is not provided.

The DBMC’s program should be shared with other providers of farm management-skills training because the program was developed for and by farmers. Extension staff need to feel comfortable working with farmers in building a budget. Therefore, extension staff should be exposed to this program to use with the farming community.

THE “ADOPT THE FARMER” INITIATIVE

Beyond a farmer’s family is a potential market on their home island for the same products that they grow/raise for themselves. Therefore, food security initiatives should be directed at encouraging the production of food both for the family and for the local market. Except in Dominica (see below), the local hotel, restaurant, and supermarket industries represent a natural market for the small farmer. This market can maintain a large portion of the small-farming industry, providing the farmer, rabbit producer, chicken raiser, or juice supplier with a reliable and steady income just as the banana formerly did.

The tourism industry does not automatically purchase local produce. For many years, the quality of the produce did not warrant the purchase. Moreover, the hotels could not rely on farmers to deliver on a regular basis. Therefore, the hotels began to import fresh produce. However, that is changing. As farmers are giving increased attention to quality production and the timing of planting, more and more hotels, restaurants, and supermarkets are purchasing local produce. Once a farmer or group of farmers contracts with a hotel, they have an identifiable market and are more willing to phase out bananas.

A 1994 hurricane produced devastation in Saint Lucia’s fields and led to the “Adopt the Farmer” concept. The staff of a hotel went to a farm whose entire crop had been ruined. They helped the farmer clean up his field, purchased seeds, helped him replant, and pledged to purchase everything he produced. Other hotels, restaurants, and grocery stores followed suit until the Adopt the Farmer concept became a model for contractual relationships

between a commercial enterprise and a farmer. Dominica has also implemented this program, but there simply are not enough outlets for all of that country's farmers. Saint Lucia, on the other hand, cannot produce enough for its large tourism industry. The island's hotels and supermarkets often advertise their unmet produce needs on the radio to communicate with small farmers who may have produce available. So strong is the relationship between the tourism industry and farmers in Saint Lucia that the farmers openly praise the hotels and supermarkets for their contribution to the farming community.

The Adopt the Farmer program should be introduced or strengthened in each of the Windward countries. Each country has a program to enhance the ties between the farming and tourism communities. These programs should be formalized, with training assistance in farm management and planting schedules for farmers who enter contractual arrangements. This would also be the time to train in proper pesticide and fertilizer use.

VANISHING FARMERS?

Despite the region's widespread unemployment, every Windward country has a shortage of agricultural labor. Physical work in the sun for questionable income, which can be lost in one storm or to one pest, is no longer attractive to experienced farmers, much less youth. In addition, the mealy bug, fruit fly, drought, tropical storms, lack of appropriate fertilizer, and increased living expenses have driven many farmers into part-time work.

Although Grenada is an extreme example, its experience is instructive. For a variety of reasons, the country's banana production was so low and of such poor quality that the Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company (WIBDECO, the region's banana marketing group) suspended Grenada from the banana export coalition. At the same time, Grenada was infested by the mealy bug. Years of poor decisions with no outside markets (even local hotels would not purchase domestic produce) drove the farmer off the land. Fortunately for the farmer, there is a building boomlet in Grenada. Many, if not most, of the farming community, including women, are working in the construction industry. Unfortunately for the country that will need those farmers in the future, the agricultural worker turned construction worker is enjoying higher wages than he or she ever earned on the farm, those wages are reliable, jobs are secure for at least three more years, and evenings and weekends are not part of the workday. Many within the MOA have lamented, "How do we compete with that?"

Diversification in the Windward countries does

not and should not have a single definition. In most of the Windwards, farmers have always been diversified, interplanting bananas with other crops. In the future, and out of necessity, diversification for some may mean part-time farming to raise crops for the table and local market. Diversification may mean processing; it may mean raising rabbits; it may mean working construction. The challenge is to find opportunities for rural residents to expand their incomes without abandoning the land. Such opportunities will have to be made known to the residents and they will have to be attractive to the youth.

The challenge is to find opportunities for rural residents to expand their incomes without abandoning the land.

ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH TO LABOR (EAL)

Dominica has been struggling with the agricultural labor shortage since 1989. In the wake of a study (*Overcome the Shortage of Farm Labor in Dominica—1992*) produced by a broad-based government task force, the concept of the Entrepreneurial Approach to Labor (EAL) was promoted in agriculture. The goals were to encourage entrepreneurship, attract youth to farm labor enterprises, and guarantee farmers a reliable workforce. It appears that the DBMC is the only group that has actually implemented the concept, but the government continues to encourage private-sector farm-labor initiatives.

The DBMC provides training for would-be private contractors to spray for leaf spot. The DBMC also provides the contractors with appropriate equipment for leaf spot spraying. The contractors develop their own teams, for which they provide transportation, equipment, and food. These teams are "certified"* by the DBMC. Farmers wanting their fields sprayed consistently and properly for leaf spot contact the DBMC, which assigns a nearby contractor to the farm. The farmer pays the DBMC, which pays the contractor. If a farmer has a problem with the team, he or she complains to the DBMC. If the DBMC confirms that the quality of the work performed was poor, it drops that contractor from its certification list.

There are presently twenty leaf spot contractors in different sections of Dominica and, by all indications, they are a success. The main problem noted by the

* The DBMC provides the training for the contractor teams. The DBMC "certifies" the contractor if he or she demonstrates to the DBMC's satisfaction appropriate skill and management practices.

DBMC is a lack of management skills among the contractors. However, the contractors develop management skills quickly after not being paid for a job poorly executed.

The DBMC is looking to develop other farm-labor contractors in field maintenance, bunch protection, harvesting, packaging, weed control, and brush cutting. Teams could also be developed for products other than bananas. The EAL approach allows small farmers to continue to plant for their families while supervising teams of laborers, all of whom reside in the district. Youth see an opportunity to earn dependable income and a chance of becoming independent contractors themselves.

The EAL concept should be introduced in other Windward countries, with appropriate training in a specialty area and group management skills. The EAL concept by itself is not going to solve the agricultural labor shortage, but the approach introduces an opportunity to farmers, their workers, and rural residents to be independent while providing a service that is vitally needed. It allows farmers the flexibility to work off the farm while having their fields tended by professionally trained people. If well trained, EAL workers will ensure proper pesticide and fertilizer use.

IICA'S YOUTH INITIATIVE

IICA has developed a program called "Increasing the Participation of Youth in the Agricultural and Rural Development Process in the Eastern Caribbean States" (Youth Initiative). This is a five-year, US\$4.9 million program to empower rural youth to augment their earning capacity through an expanded technical knowledge base, training, skills development, and entrepreneurship. The Youth Initiative evolved through a growing awareness of the obstacles facing youth in the eastern Caribbean states. The major factors identified as the causes for the lack of participation of youth in the economic system were inadequate employment opportunities, lack of appropriate training, inadequate support systems, and lack of motivation and initiative among youth.

The program's goal is to improve the quality of life of rural youth through the establishment and promotion of small business enterprises that will earn and/or save foreign exchange, create employment, and reduce some of the social ills associated with rural youth. The program seeks to increase the participation of youth in the agricultural and rural development process by creating youth employment; providing information and support services to youth development activities; improving the technical and managerial skills of program beneficiaries and personnel associated with the program; establishing and/or strengthening the linkages and

coordination among relevant support institutions; and enhancing motivation, initiative, and drive among youth.

The program expects to reach 750 young microenterprise entrepreneurs; train three thousand youth in group dynamics, technical skills, and entrepreneurship; create 150 apprentices receiving on-the-job training in business management; develop one hundred trainers; and produce fifty regional industry specialists/trainers through scholarships and study tours.

The IICA Youth Initiative addresses the largest "displaced" population in the Windward countries. IICA is currently seeking US\$3.2 million from donors to help fund this program. Donor participation in this valuable program deserves strong encouragement. Currently, IICA is analyzing data gathered from a survey distributed to youth in Saint Lucia, Dominica, and Grenada. This data should provide information on youth attitudes, skills, work expectations, and educational attainments. It is already known that 80 percent of the youth surveyed saw their "potential" as being a store clerk.

The IICA funded a beekeeping project itself to launch the Youth Initiative. The beekeeping project, which has been notably successful, is integrated into ongoing IFAD projects in those places where these exist. IICA and its partner organizations identified fifty youth interested in starting their own beekeeping enterprises. IICA provided training in microenterprise and employment skills, established a credit scheme, and promoted an apprenticeship system to help transform the unemployed participants into self-employed workers.

Beekeeping for rural youth is an excellent endeavor because it requires a minimal capital investment and offers a reasonable income recovery over a short period. Once trained, each group of students built their own beehives, made their own equipment utilizing the talents available in their particular group (sewing, carpentry, etc.), formed a trade group, elected a steering committee, developed a constitution, and, in some areas, provided equipment and guidance to others who wanted to raise bees. IICA provided these students with colonies of bees at the conclusion of their apprenticeship. There are no dropouts from the program, which includes fourteen participants in Grenada, twenty-four in Saint Lucia, and twelve in Dominica. One student is branching into raising queen bees and is working with a bee inspector in the United States, where there is a demand for queen bees.

The Youth Initiative needs funding from outside sources to continue the beekeeping project and establish other entrepreneurial schemes among rural youth. Combining the EAL campaign with the Youth Initiative might be worth considering.

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

A small but successful group of agro-processors engaged in modest export activities exists in each Windward country. These processors are constrained by limited marketing experience and contacts as well as a lack of sea cargo transportation and/or affordable air transportation. For some products, air transportation, always more expensive than sea freight, is necessary. For processed products, sea transportation is adequate.

DEXIA, Dominica's well-established export-import agency, is one of many groups and individuals frustrated by the transportation situation. Unlike other marketing boards in the region, DEXIA does market processed products from its country. All of the agro-processors know of regional markets, and in some cases international markets, for their products to which they cannot sell because there is "no way to get from here to there." Dominica, for example, could supply Saint Lucia with all the cut flowers it needs, as well as produce, if only transportation were available. DEXIA reports Canadian interest in developing a regional cargo line but nothing substantial has developed.

OECS/EDADU cites transportation systems and associated services as "a serious bottleneck to the movement of OECS agricultural produce and [we] will seek to take better advantage of what services exist as well as to negotiate for improvement in the existing arrangement. [We will have as our] long-term objective the securing of dedicated air and ocean transport services for moving OECS agricultural produce."

Agro-processors have the potential to make a significant contribution to the "quantity" needed to support a regional shipping line.

OECS/EDADU is working with agro-processors and manufacturers in the same way that it is approaching the farming community. Export development first requires products of a quality sufficient to meet the standards of the international marketplace. Several agro-processors are receiving training assistance, on a cost-sharing basis, to upgrade production standards. Once the agro-processor demonstrates the ability to produce quality and quantity for the export market, OECS/EDADU incorporates into its marketing program the identification of markets for these products. OECS/EDADU's assistance is extremely important, because, apart from DEXIA's involvement, the agro-processing industry has hitherto been left largely on its own with regard to marketing and transportation issues.

The efforts of OECS/EDADU to secure dedicated air and sea transport of OECS agricultural products

strongly deserve donor support. It is reasonable to assume that some agro-processors remain small because they cannot expand their operations without access to a larger market. These processors also need to be provided with accurate information on international standards, a realistic evaluation of market potential, and the training needed to strengthen this sector. Agro-processors have the potential to make a significant contribution to the "quantity" needed to support a regional shipping line.

WINDREF

The Windward Islands Research and Education Foundation (WINDREF), established in 1994, focuses on health and environmental issues affecting Windward countries. WINDREF is located on the True Blue campus of Saint George's University (SGU) in Grenada. It has completed construction of a state-of-the-art research center with a separate forty-four-thousand-square-foot library. The university recently launched an accredited School of Arts and Sciences that will expand the areas of expertise of the faculty, which, along with graduate students, conducts research on issues affecting the eastern Caribbean.

WINDREF oversees four major programs:

- The Center Research Program conducts research projects, often in collaboration with scientists from other local and international institutions, on the epidemiology and control of communicable diseases (particularly zoonotic infections), non-communicable diseases, health systems, and conservation ecology.
- The Saint George's University Faculty Research Program provides a resource center for SGU faculty that offers advice on the preparation and funding of research proposals and provides facilities for conducting individual/group research projects.
- The Saint George's University Graduate Research Program provides a resource center where the research requirement of SGU students and students from other approved universities and institutes pursuing graduate degrees may be carried out.
- The Eastern Caribbean Research Program contributes to the research capability of eastern Caribbean researchers through collaborative projects.

Moreover, WINDREF is committed to providing facilities for local and international collaborative studies in a variety of disciplines and sharing all information gained through collaborative efforts with interested individuals, institutions, and organizations.

A key reason why donors need to be aware of WINDREF is its potential role in creating opportunities in the region's rural communities. For example,

WINDREF is cooperating with the IICA beekeeping project. A professional beekeeper in Grenada alerted WINDREF to a potential solution to the mite infestations that threaten beehives in all countries. Working with the beekeeper and IICA's apprentice beekeepers, WINDREF is completing research on a product that could have universal significance to the world's beekeepers. Thus, IICA's apprentices now find themselves fully involved in a research institute project, something few of them ever envisioned.

WINDREF's most serious problem is its lack of expertise on procedures relating to patent protection. It is reluctant to publish the eventual findings of the mite research until it can protect both the beekeeper and itself.

WINDREF is completing research on a product that could have universal significance to the world's beekeepers.

Concerns about obtaining assistance in securing patents for new products are surprisingly common in the Windwards. For example, women from SVG and Dominica have developed over forty products made from bananas. Until such time as they are confident about securing a patent, they keep these ideas in a locked file. Saint Lucia's NDF has been trying to persuade a woman from Dominica, who makes flour and cereal from breadfruit, to share her ideas with Saint Lucians, but she is reluctant to disclose her process until she learns how to obtain a patent.

If WINDREF can be helped to gain the expertise that it needs to protect the concepts it develops, it would seem an ideal institution to help resolve this problem throughout the Windwards by housing information and/or offering training to individuals and organizations on how to secure a patent or copyright.

WINDREF has formed relationships with many universities in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Using WINDREF as a base for academic research in universities abroad should be pursued. At the same time, WINDREF's increasing international salience may persuade donor organizations funding master and doctoral degree candidates from the region to allow these students to conduct the research portion of their degree program in their home countries under WINDREF supervision. In particular, many scholarships are being offered to the region's students to study agricultural issues abroad. Although this experience is undoubtedly worthwhile, it would be beneficial if these students could conduct agriculturally related research in the Windwards, where there is an abundance of agricultural issues that need research attention.

PROCICARIBE, CAIS, AND CARDI

Governments of the region have formed a Regional Transformation Program to promote internationally competitive production of agricultural commodities and services. PROCICARIBE is the vehicle for accomplishing that goal. PROCICARIBE (the name is a trademark rather than an acronym) is intended to be a regional agricultural and scientific technology system that will benefit Caribbean public, private, and NGO entities that become members.

CARDI is a cosponsor of PROCICARIBE and is its executing agency. IICA is a cosponsor and will provide technical assistance to PROCICARIBE. Also cosponsors are the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

CARDI has been designated as the lead agency responsible for the areas of technology generation, validation, and transfer; marketing development; and technical assistance services. A document entitled *CARDI Into the 21st Century—The Strategic Vision* provides details on the structure of PROCICARIBE. This briefing paper will examine only one of the PROCICARIBE components outlined in the CARDI document, although all of the proposals contained therein could prove significant for the agricultural community.

Anyone familiar with the Caribbean region is well aware that studies, research, surveys, reports, and many other types of information are often inaccessible to concerned citizens, researchers, international agencies, businesses, and, in many cases, even the national ministries. Besides the high cost of copying in the Caribbean, there is a pervasive view that information should be protected. Even *within* a country, those who should know of, say, a two-year-old document are startled to learn of its existence.

The Caribbean Agricultural Information Services (CAIS) initiative is intended to overcome the barriers to the free flow of information. According to *The Strategic Vision*:

With recent rapid technological developments in the field of information and telecommunications, information is now being considered on par with traditional factors of production such as land, labour and capital. In order to support the initiatives of developing a more competitive agricultural sector the CARDI of the 21st Century envisages a vibrant and productive agricultural sector, which utilizes an information intensive environment characterized by personal computers, networks and digitized information. All clients, staff and stakeholders will be able to obtain, process and disseminate information from anywhere and to any point in the world.

In order to support these initiatives, CARDI

developed an Information and Communication programme to oversee the development of these capabilities. The programmes will focus on installation of an information and telecommunication infrastructure to allow for the organization, storage and retrieval of information; the accessing of information to meet the needs of clients and stakeholders; the preparation and dissemination of marketing, production and technology information to supply various publics.

The Caribbean Agricultural Information Services (CAIS) initiative is intended to overcome the barriers to the free flow of information.

In short, CAIS will be an information network containing documents relevant to the agricultural sector. This will mean that poverty assessments as well as agricultural censuses will be accessible to members. There will be national hubs in sixteen countries with at least five computers per hub and a regional information center. Each national hub will need an information systems specialist.

Although such a major initiative as PROCICARIBE cannot be fully described in a few paragraphs, it can be pointed out that this represents a concerted effort to organize agricultural projects, programs, policies, research, technology, information, and services into an accessible network. The potential positive impact of this initiative on all donor organizations that strive to reduce duplication and access reliable information and services is immense.

PROCICARIBE and its components should be carefully evaluated by donor groups, which should consider supporting and becoming members of this entity.

ENTRY-LEVEL SKILLS TRAINING

Every Chamber of Commerce, business, and employer interviewed in the course of the author's research in the Windwards said that there was an urgent need for training of entry-level employees, regardless of the area of employment. These are countries where one must attend secondary school in order to be a receptionist. Due to a lack of space (not talent), the great majority of youth in the Windward countries do not attend secondary school. Many youth who are employed do have a secondary education, but no experience in the world of work. They do not know how to operate basic office equipment or how to do filing and basic financial management. Customer relations skills and telecommunications skills (including telephone etiquette) are

inadequate.

Time and again, employers complain that employees often demonstrate little motivation or understanding of the work ethic. Waitresses may let the only customer in a restaurant sit for thirty minutes before bringing a menu. Sales clerks are likely to finish personal conversations before waiting on a customer. Employees tend to consider arrival, departure, and lunch times as "flexible." If management complains, employees argue. Once an employee receives a job, he or she feels entitled to that job. Employees hold on to their position for thirty years without ever attempting to get more education or advance in the business.

There is a remarkable difference, however, between employees of large corporations (such as the telephone companies) and those of small and medium-size businesses. Large corporations sponsor in-house employee training, have promotion ladders, and will contribute to the continuing education of employees. Small and medium-size businesses do not have the financial ability to provide the training (a fact confirmed by training institutions). Nevertheless, there is an overwhelming need for their current employees to be retrained in entry-level business skills and for such training to be institutionalized for future employees.

The Saint Lucia Chamber of Commerce and Industry has developed an excellent "Certificate in Entry Level Skills" program that addresses these concerns. The Chambers of Commerce in each Windward country would be well advised to make similar programs available locally. In addition, the OECS Technical and Vocational Education and Training (OECS/T-VET) project has established in each Windward country fully equipped simulated offices. The combination of these two resources would result in an excellent training process.

[T]here is an overwhelming need for [the] employees [of small and medium-size businesses] to be retrained in entry-level business skills. . . .

The Saint Lucian "Certificate in Entry Level Skills" program offers two one-hour sessions per week for six weeks at a total cost of EC\$250 per trainee. The program outline describes the course as "designed to assist new entrants to the job market and junior level employees in acquiring the skills necessary to become more efficient and effective in performing their functions on the job, as well as developing proper attitudes and behavior patterns." The course trains applicants in effective communication skills, the importance of motivation, the work ethic, records management, basic letter-writing and reporting techniques, customer service, basic financial

management, time management, use of basic office equipment, telephone etiquette, and telecommunications skills.

The course is filled every time it is offered and is utilized mostly by government. Small and medium-size businesses, however, cannot afford to send all their employees to this course. Donor organizations interested in encouraging the development of entry-level employment skills should consider funding for this training as a priority. Because each country has different educational facilities, would-be donors should consult with the local Chambers of Commerce.

“Entry-level” training should be made available to school leavers as well as secondary school graduates. Because community colleges often require a secondary degree as a condition of enrollment, they may not always be the best institutions through which to offer such training.

THE SMALL-HOTEL SECTOR

The Organization of American States (OAS) has embarked on a major initiative to strengthen the small-hotel sector in twelve countries, including the four Windward countries, through four-year projects to assess the viability of small hotels, develop standards, advise small hotel owners of changes that have to be made to meet these standards, establish credit for small hotels, and provide training for current personnel in every occupation from bartender to owner. (A small hotel is defined as one having no more than seventy-five rooms.)

In discussions with the author, ministers of tourism emphasized the importance of small hotels to the success of their countries’ tourism sectors. Each of the Windward countries has a substantial small-hotel industry, which usually consists of family-owned small hotels and inns. In SVG and Dominica, the small hotels comprise the majority of accommodation establishments. Furthermore, there is a definite market for the small hotel and inn. The ambiance as well as the economy of Saint Vincent, some of the Grenadines, and Dominica necessitate development of this industry. However, most of these family-run businesses suffer from poor management skills, lack understanding of the expectations of tourists, and employ staffs exhibiting the same motivational shortcomings found in the general small-business workforce.

Just as the OECS/EDADU program attempts to address the training needs of every person involved in the export of produce, the OAS initiative is tackling the small-hotel and inn problem in its totality. The OAS projects are at different stages in the various countries. SVG is just getting started. Saint Lucia is currently incorporating the small-hotel/inn stan-

dards into its statutes, and beginning in 1999 the industry will be evaluated against those standards. Grenada is presently auditing its small hotels to determine their capital and human-resource needs.

Donors would do well to assist the OAS in the intensive training component of this commendable program, which is well organized, well researched, and needed. The small hotels/inns are failing in the Windward countries. The owners are not “hotel” people, they do not understand the hotel “industry,” and increasingly tour agents are avoiding these hotels/inns because of poor quality and/or poor service. Yet this industry provides incomes for many families. Investment in upgrading the capacity of small hotels/inns is essential.

LITERACY MUST BE EMPHASIZED

A reality of rural life in the Windwards is that much of the work performed in the countryside (e.g., growing bananas) has hitherto not required much use of the skills learned in primary school. This is now ceasing to be true, as the people of the Windwards face sometimes wrenching occupational dislocations and the prospect of having to compete in a demanding international marketplace. Therefore, it is essential that the international community include basic skills utilization as a standard part of all training programs and projects sponsored in the Windward countries. Basic skills are generally understood to be the abilities to read, write, think independently, compute, and communicate well enough to be self-sufficient in the society in which one lives. Recipients of training—whether in sewing, craft making, juicing, or pesticide application—should be exposed to activities that involve the use and demonstrate the importance of basic literacy skills.

Using training programs as a vehicle to reinforce basic skills development is particularly relevant in the Windward countries. A very high percentage of the rural community in the Windward countries receives a complete primary education—a reasonably sound education that covers the basic skills outlined at the beginning of this section.

The following statistics give a sense of the penetration of primary education in the Windwards:

- Grenada: 98.4 percent of all unemployed persons have a complete primary or greater education.
96.8 percent of the farming population have a complete primary or greater education.
- SVG: NA
- Saint Lucia: 79 percent of all unemployed persons have a complete primary education.

82 percent of the total population over age fifteen have a complete primary or greater education.

- **Dominica:** 85.5 percent of the total population have a complete primary or greater education.

The author does not mean to suggest that using training programs to encourage the practice of basic skills can or should replace formal adult literacy programs in instances where the need for such focused attention has been identified, or that persons who are deficient in basic skills should be denied opportunities. Rather, the recommendation addresses a universal responsibility for basic skills development. Far too often, training for the rural community, unemployed people, or displaced workers is conducted by “show-and-tell” techniques. It is implicitly (and wrongly) assumed that such trainees are illiterate. Even those training recipients who are in fact illiterate are capable of independent thinking and computing, and can explain a procedure or problem to another person. Trainers who identify individuals who cannot read or write are in an excellent position, and have a social responsibility, to provide them privately with information on resources available to help in skills development.

Far too often, training for the rural community, unemployed people, or displaced workers is conducted by “show-and-tell” techniques.

At a recent meeting of farmers, for example, an elaborate program of assistance was verbally described to the assembled group. Nothing was handed out in writing, the implicit assumption being that the farmers would not read it anyway. Although providing verbal explanations is certainly appropriate, why not also suggest that the farmers take a document home for reference? The odds are, if that document makes it into the home, *someone* will read it.

The DBMC has set an example that should be considered by the international donor community. DBMC staff members and DBMC programs endeavor to make the farmer self-reliant. Whether conducting training in harvesting protocols, spraying techniques, or creating a farm budget, the DBMC staff works *with* clients as technical and educational facilitators. Farmers are required to read, write, think independently, compute, and communicate. Farmers receive educational guidance and referrals through their association with the DBMC. Basic skills utilization is a standard part of every DBMC program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What follows is a summary of the author’s recom-

mendations concerning workforce development initiatives in the Windwards. The order in which they are listed is not intended to indicate their priority. An asterisk follows those recommendations included in the U.S. Agency for International Development report *Workforce Planning Study—The Windward Countries*.

1. Organize training of the agricultural/rural communities through specified coordinating bodies.*

To reduce duplication and promote the accomplishment of well-planned and clearly stated goals, donor organizations are urged to channel technical and fiscal training assistance for the rural community through the regional and local coordinating agencies of OECS/EDADU and the MOA/IFAD programs. OECS/EDADU is responsible for identifying and supplying export markets. It will train extension staff and farmers, primarily in business skills. The IFAD programs, which are present in every Windward country except Grenada, complement the OECS/EDADU program by offering training to small and marginalized farmers in food security and for local markets. The MOA/IFAD programs also train farmers in business skills and harvest/post-harvest protocols. Both OECS/EDADU and IFAD encourage the development of cooperatives so that small farmers can effectively contribute to the export markets, and both programs involve a wide range of NGOs. In Grenada, the NGOs have formed their own coordinating agency, with IICA/Grenada as the lead entity. Collective targeting of fiscal training assistance to these established coordinating agencies will have a major impact on the availability of effective training programs for the rural community. In addition, by working through these coordinating agencies, the international community will be demonstrating its advocacy of a systematic approach to identification of rural workforce needs and coordinated programmatic solutions.

Contacts: OECS/EDADU; MOA/IFAD coordinators; IICA/Grenada.

2. Establish a private-sector unemployment/placement agency in each of the Windward countries.*

Governments, the private sector, and NGOs all agree that there is a critical need for systematic identification of the resources available in the workforce, the skills-development needs of that workforce, and the employment needs of the business community. At present, there is no unemployment agency in any of the Windward countries, and the only available information on these matters is provided by sporadic and expensive surveys. Every Chamber of Commerce in the

Windwards seeks technical assistance in developing an unemployment/placement entity. It is not recommended that the Chambers themselves become those entities, but they are anxious to organize the effort. Saint Lucia's STEP project should be used as both a model for the unemployment/placement agencies and as proof of the tremendous need for these services. Establishment of such an agency, in the private sector of each country, is essential. These agencies will have a dramatic and long-term impact on the region and the donor community.

Contacts: Ministries of Labor; Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Saint Lucia's Office of the Prime Minister, STEP project coordinator.

3. Provide technical assistance to develop local poultry and livestock feeds.

Perhaps the greatest contribution that a donor organization could make to the people in the Windward countries would be to supply the expertise to develop a domestically producible feed for poultry. The region's people consume large volumes of chicken, yet the Windwards have been unable to raise livestock (except for pork) due to the expense of importing feed. Local poultry production would allow local people to raise or buy fresh chicken for the home and to supply the general markets and tourist establishments. The positive impact on the citizenry and the region's economies would be great. Grenada's MOA has done preliminary work in this field and would welcome assistance. An aquaculturist in Saint Lucia has developed a local feed for shrimp and CARDI/SVG has developed a local feed for sheep. The donor community should assist all these endeavors. Success in this area would help alleviate the Windward countries' trade deficit and enable each country to address a major component of its food security problems.

Contacts: Ministries of Agriculture, ministers and animal husbandry officers; CARDI.

4. Develop and provide training programs for poultry/meat processing and packaging.*

Each country plans to build an abattoir to process the meat produced through enhanced livestock raising. Because fresh meat is new in the Windwards, almost no one has the skills to process and package meat/poultry products. Saint Lucia is the only country that requires immediate assistance in this area. Eventually, however, all of the Windward countries will need training programs to develop a qualified workforce for this industry. The local commitment exists. The prime ministers of each Windward country have budgeted local funds for increased livestock production and for

construction of an abattoir. For food security and food safety reasons, a well-designed training program in poultry/meat processing and packaging is an important goal.

Contacts: Ministries of Agriculture, ministers and animal husbandry officers; New Life Organization, Grenada.

5. Develop and provide training programs for proper fertilizer and pesticide use and alternative pest control methods.*

Fertilizer is imported into the Windward countries. It is the single greatest investment that a farmer has to make. As a result of the emphasis on banana-growing, banana fertilizer and banana pesticide have been much more readily available than other varieties and therefore have been used on a wide variety of crops for which they may not have been ideally suited. The excessive application of pesticides has affected production, the land, and the water in each country. Every agency involved in agricultural development has emphasized the seriousness of this issue. Training of extension staff and farmers in alternative pest control methods and proper use of pesticides and fertilizer is strongly recommended *if* the appropriate pesticides and fertilizers can be made available and affordable to farmers. (See the next recommendation.)

Contacts: OECS/EDADU; MOA/IFAD coordinators; IICA/Grenada; Windward Islands Farmers' Association; National Farmers Union.

6. Establish a revolving credit fund outside of government for the purchase and sale of general fertilizers and pesticides.

Few commercial establishments in the Windwards import and sell fertilizer/pesticides, primarily because farmers do not have the cash reserves to pay for alternative crop maintenance products. The BGAs purchase only banana fertilizer in bulk, offer this fertilizer at a reduced rate, and extend credit to farmers. However, no entity provides a comparable service with regard to fertilizers and pesticides designed for other crops. Training farmers in proper fertilizer and pesticide use will not be effective if they cannot obtain the proper supplies. In keeping with the recommendation that all training be part of a total program, a credit fund for appropriate fertilizers and pesticides should be established through an established farmers' organization (e.g., the Windward Islands Farmers' Association or the National Farmers Union) so that training can be translated into effective outcomes. At a minimum, identifying the availability of proper pesticides and fertilizers should be a prerequisite for establishing training

projects in this subject.

Contacts: CARDI; IICA; Windward Islands Farmers' Association; National Farmers Union.

7. Provide training in farm management business skills through the OECS/EDADU and MOA/IFAD programs.*

Farm management business-skills training is essential for the agricultural community in each Windward country. Providing this training will be a massive task, but one that *must* be done as soon as possible. Governments have established that all extension officers will become farm management facilitators. Therefore, all extension officers, no matter the agency with which they are affiliated, need training in teaching basic business skills to farmers. Record-keeping, budgeting, developing planting schedules, and contracting to sell produce are only a few of the skills that farmers will need to master if they are to survive. OECS/EDADU has identified appropriate training programs, but seeks financial assistance to implement the training effort. In addition, the DBMC's "Building a Crop Budget" curriculum should be incorporated into the training programs.

Contacts: OECS/EDADU; Ministries of Agriculture; IFAD coordinators; IICA/Grenada.

8. Sponsor and facilitate the development of the Entrepreneurial Approach to Labor (EAL).*

Something similar to Dominica's EAL initiative, begun and currently utilized by the DBMC, should be introduced in each of the Windward countries. The EAL concept seeks to address the region's shortage of farm workers by encouraging the development of private contractors to supply professional services to farmers. Would-be entrepreneurs and their teams will need training in their specialty (pesticide application, field maintenance, harvesting, etc.) and the entrepreneurs will need business management training. The EAL concept builds private-sector businesses in rural areas. It is an idea that deserves to become a trend.

Contacts: Dominica Banana Marketing Corporation, general manager; IICA/Dominica, rural development specialist.

9. Provide funding for the IICA Youth Initiative.*

IICA has developed a five-year, US\$4.9 million program to give rural youth opportunities to become entrepreneurs. The initiative was launched with a beekeeping project that is applauded throughout the Windwards. This program, which IICA designed to be a grassroots effort to train and provide loans for youth with limited educational and work opportunities, is exceptionally well planned and vitally important.

IICA seeks US\$3.2 million to implement the program fully. Donors are urged to consider this a priority for the Windward countries.

Contact: IICA/Saint Lucia, director.

10. Develop and provide a comprehensive public-awareness program on food nutrition and processing for home consumption.*

Food security is a top priority of all Windward governments. Part of the solution is maximizing use of local products. Far too much food grown in the Windwards is not consumed. Home preserving, juicing, canning, and bottling is not often done. Small household juicing devices are not widely available. Seldom is the banana used as a substitute or ingredient. Food nutrition is neither taught in schools nor made part of a public campaign. Thus, the author strongly advocates educating the region's public on the value of food processing and preserving. Processing can eventually develop into a viable commercial enterprise, but the initial focus must be on changing the home environment. The relevant agencies in every Windward country commented to the author on the need for public education on food nutrition and processing for home consumption. IICA has shifted its focus from food production to food processing and has hired food-processing experts. IICA is an ideal agency to assist in the development of this needed initiative.

Contacts: IICA/Trinidad; Ministries of Agriculture; Agency for Rural Development, Grenada.

11. Support the expansion and strengthening of the "Adopt the Farmer" initiative.*

The Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association sponsored the concept of a hotel, restaurant, or supermarket "adopting" a farmer by contracting to purchase his or her produce. This has given many farmers the security of having an identified market prior to planting and also encourages them to develop planting schedules to meet the weekly harvesting deadlines. This strengthening of the link between local farmers and the local consumers of large quantities of food is securing a viable, accessible, and growing market. Saint Lucia is a good model for the effectiveness of this relationship. Dominica recently began to pursue an "Adopt the Farmer"-style campaign. This program is an excellent vehicle for creating contractual relationships between farmers and local businesses. Introducing or expanding this program in each Windward country is highly recommended.

Contacts: Saint Lucia Ministry of Tourism, Permanent Secretary; Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association, manager; Saint Lucia National Farmers Union, president.

12. Identify marketing and transportation assistance for agro-processors.

Maintaining the present industries in the Windwards is as important as establishing new opportunities. The region's agro-processors are small but successful, and would like to expand. However, lack of knowledge of outside markets and the inability to transport goods to markets that they have already identified are limiting factors. Generally, agro-processors are left on their own to find markets and reach those markets. OECS/EDADU is spearheading the establishment of air and sea cargo transportation, particularly within the region. Agro-processors are now linked with the OECS/EDADU program. Any success in securing regional freight shipping lines will open innumerable doors for the region's farmers and agro-processors. OECS/EDADU and the Windward countries would welcome any assistance in identifying individuals or corporations interested in providing air and/or sea cargo transportation throughout the Caribbean region.

Contact: OECS/EDADU.

13. Sponsor entry-level skills training programs for small and medium-size businesses.*

The current workforce in the Windwards' small and medium-size businesses is in need of professional retraining to improve their attitudes, discipline, and knowledge base. This is particularly true for entry-level employees who have no experience in the world of work. They do not know how to operate basic business equipment or correctly perform basic office tasks. The Saint Lucia Chamber of Commerce and Industry has developed an exceptional program that can easily be applied in the other Windwards. The OECS/T-VET project has established fully equipped simulated offices for training purposes in each Windward country. Donor organizations can make a major contribution to the development of a work ethic by making training available to small and medium-size businesses in the Windward countries.

Contacts: Chambers of Commerce and Industry in each Windward country; OECS/T-VET coordinator, Saint Lucia.

14. Sponsor training for current employees in small hotels and inns through the OAS Small Hotel Assistance Program.*

The OAS Small Hotel Assistance Program is designed to upgrade the physical facilities of small hotels and train all hotel personnel, including the owners, in hotel management and tourism protocols. The small-hotel/inn industry is extremely valuable to the Windward countries, but it has not

About the *Expanded Workforce Opportunities Report*

This publication is an abbreviated and edited version of a longer report that is divided into five sections. Section I covers the same ground as the present publication. The other four sections present snapshots of and offer recommendations for Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, and Dominica respectively.

Each country-specific section is followed by a summary of recommendations and the primary contact(s) for implementation, relevant country statistics, a discussion of information-gathering methodology, and a list of country-relevant documents reviewed.

There are two appendixes. Appendix A lists individuals and groups interviewed in preparation for country visits. Appendix B lists literature reviewed for preliminary research purposes.

The electronic version of the expanded report will soon be available on the Georgetown University Caribbean Project's Internet Web site (<http://www.georgetown.edu/sfs/programs/clas/Caribe/main.htm>) and can be obtained via e-mail from the author. Hard copies are available from the author, who can be contacted as follows:

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kept pace with the demands of the modern tourist sector. That the OAS has singled out an entire industry to refurbish and reinvent is highly commendable. The training portion of the program is excellent. Donors should offer financial assistance so that the training portion of the OAS Small Hotel Assistance Program can be fully implemented. Contacts: Organization of American States, Saint Lucia, director; Ministries of Tourism.

15. Secure patent and copyright assistance for the Windward Islands Research and Education Foundation (WINDREF).

For the average citizen in the Windwards, establishing intellectual property rights is difficult and costly. There is no neutral source for guidance in applying for a patent or copyright. As a consequence, participants in the microenterprise sector are often reluctant to share ideas for fear that someone else will reap the economic benefit of

those ideas, as has happened in the past. WINDREF, a foundation in Grenada dedicated to resolving social problems in the Windwards, has encountered this problem as it works to develop a solution for the mite infestation that kills bees. Donor assistance in providing WINDREF with the expertise to protect innovative concepts is needed and warranted. In return, WINDREF could become the resource for such guidance to individuals and organizations in the Windward countries. *Contact: WINDREF, director.*

16. Enable master and doctoral research activities by Windward nationals to be conducted in their home countries under the aegis of WINDREF.*

Windward nationals receiving scholarships to study abroad for advanced degrees should be allowed to conduct their research activities in their home countries. There is no shortage of environmental, agricultural, and marine issues in the Windwards that could be addressed. This research would be extremely beneficial to the region. WINDREF has the capability to establish the relationships with international universities that would make this possible. Donors should include this option in future scholarship programs for Windward citizens.

Contacts: WINDREF, director; CARDI/Dominica.

17. Review the proposed PROCICARIBE/Caribbean Agricultural Information Services (CAIS) system, which could become a clearinghouse of information for Caribbean countries and international organizations.

PROCICARIBE is a new organization (with CARDI as its executing agency) intended to promote the production of agricultural commodities and services in the region. One planned component of PROCICARIBE is CAIS, an agricultural information network. If it succeeds, CAIS will help resolve the international donor community's difficulty in obtaining reliable information on the Caribbean agricultural sector. Donor organizations should seriously consider supporting the CAIS proposal by becoming members of PROCICARIBE.

Contact: CARDI, executive director, Trinidad and Tobago.

18. Incorporate basic skills utilization into all training programs and projects sponsored in the Windward countries.*

In order to strengthen basic skills within the Windward countries, donors are encouraged to include reading, writing, independent thinking, computing, and communications activities as a standard part of all training programs and

projects. Encouraging and enhancing basic skills development is a universal responsibility too often relegated to formal literacy programs. Every training program is an opportunity to nourish self-confidence and promote self-reliance among training recipients. These opportunities, which frequently involve one-on-one interaction, should consistently remind trainees of the need for and value of using basic skills. Those who deliver training programs can easily apply basic skills activities to any subject. Training on pesticide use, for example, can include reading the directions on a pesticide container, writing out an application schedule, identifying appropriate crops for the pesticide, carrying out calculations on measurements, and explaining procedures to a colleague. Trainers of every subject should also be familiar with accessible educational resources, because involvement in these skills-using activities may lead to questions by trainees about the availability of tutoring and other educational opportunities. Constant and consistent emphasis on the value of and need for proficiency in basic skills will unite the diverse organizations at work in the Windwards behind a common standard.

Contacts: All donor organizations providing training programs in the Windward countries.

Janice Piccinini is an independent consultant for development in the Caribbean region, where she has conducted extensive fieldwork over the past three years, examining the linkage of economic development issues with government, education, agriculture, and private-sector policies and programs. Initially an educator, Ms. Piccinini is a former Maryland state senator who continues to work with the state's Department of Agriculture to enhance trade between Maryland and the Caribbean. She holds a master of liberal arts degree from the Johns Hopkins University.

Windward Islands Task Force

The Georgetown University Caribbean Project is taking an increasing interest in the Windward Islands and is functioning as cofacilitator of the newly formed Windward Islands Task Force. (The other cofacilitator is the Institute of Business [IOB] at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad.) The Task Force grew out of a June 1998 workshop in Dominica on “Transforming Small Island Economies and Societies in Preparation for the 21st Century,” cosponsored by the Project, the IOB, the Dominica Export Import Agency, the Fort Young Hotel (of Dominica), and the Windward Islands Farmers’ Association, with primary funding provided by the Ford and MacArthur Foundations.

Workshop participants, primarily grassroots entrepreneurs and farmers, proposed activities designed to help the Windward Islands adjust to globalization and nine participants volunteered to serve on the Task Force which is now supervising execution of these initiatives. The Task Force activities seek to enhance the links between agriculture and tourism in the Windward Islands and are designed to be eventually self-sustaining.

Inquiries regarding the Task Force can be directed to Caribbean Project Program Assistant Tiffany Mitchell at (202) 298 0250, e-mail address mitchet@gUNET.georgetown.edu.