



Launch of 'Productivity Champions' Principals

Endorsements

The Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Education Institute (HLSTUEI) and the Jamaica Productivity Centre, (JPC) launched the Workplace Productivity Champions under the theme *Creating a New Culture* on Tuesday January 25, 2011 at the Mona Visitors Lodge. The event was attended by representatives from the tripartite community, namely the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU), The Ministry of Labour and social Security (MLSS) and the Jamaica Employers' Federation (JEF); and endorsed by the private sector with representatives from the Jamaica Manufactures Association (JMA), The Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ), The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce (JCC) and the Heart Trust NTA.

The initiative was supported by the University of the West Indies Open Campus and sponsored by National Commercial Bank.

The audience of over one hundred and thirty persons was addressed by representatives from the participating organizations. Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of the UWI Open Campus gave the programme a tremendous endorsement. According to Professor Simmons-McDonald "the concept paper for the champions programme leaves me with no doubt that the participants will not only walk and talk like champions but they will become champions after their involvement in this programme." The UWI Open Campus principal went on to state that the programme fits in neatly with the vision and goals of the Open Campus, responding to the calls of governments of the region for the university to have a greater impact."

The impact the principal referred to in her presentation is needed in an effort to undo the findings of a International Labour Office 2008 report. The report emphasized that "there is a difficulty of getting information that would allow for reviewing the relationships between trends in education, productivity and employment for even a handful of (developing) countries (because of) the lack of up to date comparable data." The report went on to "compare productivity levels by country groups for the years 1996 and 2006 and indicated that productivity levels in OECD countries was significantly higher than in developing countries in both years and in 2006 it was noted that productivity in high-income OECD countries was four times higher than

Productivity in developing countries and nearly 18 times higher than in least developed countries." This particular reason has ushered the need for "urgency re: developing countries like ours in the Caribbean to forge partnerships between higher education institutions, centres like the JPC and the workplace to offer in-service programmes that will improve productivity levels and acts as a catalyst for turning around the trends described in the report."

Mr. Joseph A. Matalon, chairman of the JPC in his endorsement of the Productivity launch stated that "the mandate of the Jamaica Productivity Centre calls for the establishment of strategic partnerships that will lead to the enhancement of the productivity and competitiveness of the Jamaican economy and the development of a productivity-conscious citizenry." And with the UWI Open campus principal endorsing the partnership The HLSTUEI stands ready and willing to partner with JPC and other partners to make this Productivity Champions programme a success. Mr. Matalon went on to state that "growing the Jamaican economy is about growing the individual businesses that comprise the economy. For this to happen, enterprises must place greater emphasis on increasing productivity. The workplace Productivity Champions Programme is a step in this direction." This statement underscores the need for the Productivity Champions programme. Mr. Matalon expressed the philosophy that "We are convinced that the adoption of methods and techniques of productivity management would significantly improve the competitiveness, efficiency and profitability of enterprises and provide increased resource availability for more equitable distribution among employees, according to the JPC chairman in order to achieve this "we must first improve awareness and promote better understanding about the role and significance of productivity, in other words, develop a 'productivity culture' at the workplace."



In endorsing the initiative on behalf of the trade unions Mr. Lambert Brown, president of the University and Allied Workers Union, UAWU, stated that the trade union movement and he himself fully supports the Productivity Champions programme. Mr. Brown also mentioned that the trade unions have long called for a productivity based programme, where workers would be encouraged to maximise productivity and properly rewarded from the increased output.

The Launch was fully sponsored by National Commercial Bank (NCB) and in his address to the audience Mr. Rickard Allen, Vice President of Marketing, NCB and Vice President of the Jamaica Employers' Federation asserted that "the Workplace Productivity Champions programme, is nationally relevant, critical to the sustainability of the private sector and an imperative to our labour force", he also made reference to the fact that the programme was fully endorsed by the National Commercial Bank and the Jamaica Employers' Federation.

Mr. Allen went on to quote from Jamaica Productivity Centre's data; this data underscored his point of how significant this initiative really is. The JPC research data stated that "the output per worker has been declining at an average annual rate of 1.3% over the past 36 years! Over the past 5 years (2003 - 2007) this decline increased to 1.8% per annum. Even more worrisome is the comparison with our trading partners and other neighbouring countries where productivity has been increasing at the rate of 1.5%.

In Trinidad in 1997 the average worker was 3 times more productive than a Jamaican worker - a gap that widened to 5 times more productive by 2007! Based on the Study, Jamaica has registered decline in all the sectors that can be referred to as traditional sources of income.

Planning for Retirement Seminar

The HLSTUEI continued its series of workshops geared toward bringing relevant information and issues to the attention of the UWI Open Campus staff. The latest in the series was a collaborative effort with the Director's Office of the Consortium for Social Development and Research, (CSDR). The seminar was entitled: *Planning for Retirement*. In his remarks the Director of the CSDR Mr. Lincoln Williams spoke about the need for everyone to be more proactive in saving for their pension and planning for their retirement. These sentiments were echoed by the seminars two presenters, the presenters for the seminar were Mr. St. Elmo Whyte, Pension and Insurance specialist, Director, FIRM Insurance Brokers Limited and founder of ACTMAN International Limited and Mr. Neilson Rose, Development Manager, Barita Investments Limited. The seminar proved to be very informative to the staff as Mr. Whyte presented data that showed the inadequacies in the Jamaican pension system however he gave staff members valuable advice as to what needs to be done in an effort to improve their chances of a rewarding retirement.



Rex Nettleford Round Table Forum

In recognition of the first anniversary of the death of Professor the Honourable Rex Nettleford, the HLSTUEI hosted a round table forum entitled: *Whither the Trade Union Movement, the Next Decade*. The forum brought together trade union leaders from all the major trade unions and UWI academics Professor Trevor Munroe and Dr. Noel Cowell. The forum discussed the state of the trade union movement today and put forward a case for the next decade. The issues coming out of the forum were very enlightening, it brought into focus the fact that the trade union leaders are aware of deficiencies in the movement, and they also know what needs to be done to secure the future, the problem lies in the implementation of a succession plan. The HLSTUEI plans to have more discussions with stakeholders of the trade union movement in Jamaica in our bid to have consensus on the issues facing the union groups and identify a suitable plan of action to bring the trade unions in line with the changing needs of the people they represent in the 21st century.



Calendar Events

- Pension & Social Protection Benefits in an Era of Crisis- Feb 23 & 24 2011 @ HLSTUEI classroom 8:30am - 4:00pm
- Delegates Development Initiative- March 16 & 17, 2011 @ Verney House Hotel Montego Bay, St. James 8:30am- 4:30pm
- Introduction to labour Studies course- April 4-29,2011 @ HLSTUEI Classroom
- Seminar on Public Sector Transformation looking @ entrepreneurship March 30, 2011
- Open campus Forum With Social Welfare Training Centre (SWTC)