



**INTERVIEW with Clover Patricia Barnett:
Technical and Professional Training**

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Clover Barnett is the Chief Strategist for Dunn, Pierre, Barnett and Associates Limited and an Educator who has had vast experiences in the field of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). She was most recently at the HEART Trust/National Training Agency of Jamaica as the Chief Technical Director where she spent over 17 years contributing to the formulation and implementation of general management policies and procedures which guided the technical systems and processes for the organization.



According to your experience, what are the aspects of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) that you have been able to observe throughout your work in Jamaica and the Caribbean region?

The importance and commitment to TVET varies from country to country, so there are extremes, with some countries placing heavy emphasis on TVET while others, do not give it the prominence it deserves.

TVET also varies in terms of types of training offered in particular countries – Hospitality and Construction being the popular training areas. To a lesser extent, there is some emphasis on Information Technology and Entrepreneurship, the latter being very marginal in some countries.

There has also been the implementation of aspects of the CARICOM TVET Strategy in a number of islands in the Caribbean (primarily, Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago). This has been specifically in areas such as the:

- Engagement of industry in the development of occupational/competency standards to guide the TVET system.
- Training of instructors
- Development of curriculum and instructional material
- Development of assessment, quality assurance and certification systems

In terms of challenges, these are seen primarily in the following areas:

- a. Lack of a TVET policy in nearly all the countries in the Region
- b. The issue of resources is a common challenge throughout the region – insufficient numbers of trained personnel, limited pool of training materials and the obsolescence of tools and equipment.
- c. Quality assurance in education and training is also not deeply rooted in some countries throughout the Region and this stems from a lack of understanding of the importance this aspect plays in TVET.



***What aspects should be taken into account to formulate management policies related to TVET?
Do you think it is possible to create a regional model and what would be the advantage?***

A Regional TVET model already exists for the English-speaking Caribbean as there is an agreement among the Governments to introduce the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ). However, the management policies have not been developed in tandem with the regional approach to TVET, hence inconsistencies and lack of understanding among the policy makers.

Changes in the political landscape have also affected the depth and scope of knowledge and much is lost or discontinued with changes in governments.

TVET is expected to foster social and human values and respond to such challenges as equity and access, quality and relevance, lifelong learning and sustainable livelihoods. TVET management policies must therefore be aligned with the socio-economic goals and priorities and sustainable development plans of the country. The aspects that should be taken into consideration when developing these policies should include:

- The national context of TVET (socio-economic, regulatory and policy context)
- The characteristics of TVET (relevance to world of work, industry involvement, socio-economic goals)
- Governance of TVET (role of government and other stakeholders)
- Inputs to the TVET system (financing arrangements, training of instructors, quality of trainees, formal/informal participation)
- TVET processes (access, industry involvement, quality assurance)
- Outcomes (labour market mobility, employment patterns)
- Impact of TVET (reduction of poverty, social inclusion, socio-economic development)
- Evidence base (employment rates of graduates)



To develop a coherent policy on TVET, what are the responsibilities of the education system and those of the employers? In what way are these interests integrated to create a successful TVET policy?

The Education system should have a clear understanding of the link between school and work and the needs of the employers/industry. Employers should help to advise on the needs of the labour market, define the labour competencies, and advise on programme delivery standards. There has to be more dialogue between the parties so that the needs of both are met in developing TVET policies.

What are the competencies and resources needed to design a TVET policy?

The most important need is for competent leaders/facilitators to guide the process of development of the policy. The process must include research, analysis, consultation and synthesis of information to produce the relevant recommendations. Some of the resources that are needed to guide the design of the policy are:

- Relevant literature (particularly those related to TVET) for the particular country, National Education Policy, Strategic Plan for Education, National Development Plan, existing policies and legislations.
- Inputs from key stakeholders, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Employers Groups, Chamber of Commerce, TVET public and private training providers, industry groups, policy makers, professional organizations and the general public.
- Inputs from stakeholders through consultative processes and public-private partnerships
- Secondary data including, National Labour Market Survey Reports, National Economic Development Studies, etc.
- Data/reports gathered from international agencies such as, UNESCO, ILO, ILO/Cinterfor, OAS, etc.

How do you view the government's interest in designing an educational plan that promotes TVET in the region?

The government's interest varies from country to country and is based on level of emphasis that is placed on TVET. However, TVET ought to be a priority for the governments, not only for regional movement, but to improve TVET at the local level bearing in mind a primary objective – that of developing a competitive workforce.