

## Employment Stimulus

Over the years many traditions in our cultures both at society, community and organizational levels to which we have grown accustomed, have changed drastically. This specifically relates to what happens both outside and within the workplace. Within the workplace, these changes have significantly altered some of the practices and ways of doing business. The reordering that has come about extends right across the spectrum, with requisite changes being imposed from the point of recruitment, to the dictates of the management within organizations.

In the past, many were recruited to work based on nepotism, favouritism, colour, class and sometimes by who knows who. We have since transition to recruitment based on the level of personal academic qualifications. It would appear that this trend suggests that higher level qualifications are given priority in the recruitment process. This assumption is supported by the job advertisements which appear in the sections of the mass media and on the social networks. If this is rigidly applied, it means that many of our young graduates from universities and colleges, who hold a first degree, are more than likely to find the world of work a place of heightened competition.

The direct consequence of this is that many younger persons on entering the job market, stand to be denied work opportunities, or could find themselves being engaged in low level jobs that do not fall within the scope of their academic competencies. It therefore begs the question whether our systems are appropriately geared to absorb and fully utilize the human resource capital that is available to the country. Maybe there is a need to revamp current recruitment policies, and on the other hand, direct more attention to addressing the dictates and requirements of the local labour. The road map if carefully planned, could direct those perusing academic studies to seek the requisite academic and professional skills.

A plan therefore ought to be developed which has as its focus, the absorption of the human resource at the national level, and which provides for the exportation of labour, where there is a demand for such trained personnel in the regional and international labour markets. The possibility of this being a success story may be extricably tied to the establishment of bilateral relations and agreements with governments and other relevant strategic partners. This should therefore form part of the agenda of a country's foreign relations policy and business development thrust.

A country's economic growth and development has to be seen beyond the narrow confines of direct or indirect foreign investment that is limited to finance, plant and equipment. The creation of quality job opportunities that utilize the highly educated and trained members of the workforce is now an imperative. A country can not afford to have a high incidence of unemployment, as in the case of Barbados, where it stands at

13%; with a greater part of this number being made up of young graduates and persons with various skills and competencies. The level of unemployment and underemployment will serve to further devastate any ailing economy.

The traditional view remains that the creation of avenues for employment is mainly a responsibility of government. This view is premised on the fact that government should provide an enabling environment to drive the establishment, development and growth of business. If this is to take place as expected, then it requires that there is a vision which is underpinned by planned initiatives and policy implementation.

As forward thinking goes, it is a worthwhile strategy to promote entrepreneurship and innovation as part of the new business and employment creation thrust. There is unlikely to make a dent in the employment numbers if emerging enterprises are unable to identify niche markets, become competitive, and most importantly, create new employment opportunities.