

# **Barbados Vocational Training Board**

## **History**

The Barbados Vocational Training Board, formerly called the National Training Board was established under the Occupational Training Act 1979 – 28 Cap 42.

In its preamble the Occupational Training Act is described as

*“An Act to provide for the training of persons for, or in gainful employment in occupations in all branches of economic activity in Barbados”*

This essentially summarizes the function of the organization.

The Board began operations in March 1980 with a staff of three persons whose priority was to set up and make the new organization operational. Its first Director of Training was Mr. Lawrence Green. He was appointed to the post on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1980.

## **Objective of Organization**

The objective of the organization is encompassed in its vision statement, “To become the training institution of choice and to ensure that the nation is provided with an adequately trained workforce.”

## **Services Offered**

Training as opposed to education seeks to prepare persons for specific occupations. The Barbados Vocational Training Board currently has four main training programmes. These are the Apprenticeship Programme, the Evening Programme, the Skills Training Programme and the In- Plant Programme.

## **The Apprenticeship Programme**

The Apprenticeship Training Programme was introduced in 1982; it was the Board's first training programme. The Occupational Training Act Cap 42, and its regulations lays out the terms and conditions for Apprenticeship in Barbados. Apprenticeship provides on the job training and theoretical training simultaneously. The apprentices follow a scheme of training which sets out what training they must receive. Each apprentice is contracted to work with an employer in his chosen industry. Training is delivered under the supervision of that employer for duration of three years - one or two years credit maybe granted by the Director of Training if the applicant possesses the City and Guilds Certificate and Diploma. Supporting theoretical study is provided on a day release basis at an approved training center. The theoretical component of the

programme is currently provided at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. Twelve schemes are presently offered to the public. They are:

1. Automotive Engineering;
2. Carpentry
3. Masonry
4. Plumbing
5. Electrical Installation
6. Vehicle Body Repair
7. Radio and Television Servicing
8. Air Conditioning and Refrigeration
9. Welding and Metal Fabrication
10. Mechanical Engineering
11. Joinery
12. Apprentice Chef

At September 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 they were two hundred and sixty three registered apprentices.

### **Skills Training Programme**

The Skills Training Programme was established in 1979 as a department of the Ministry of Labour and Community Development. In 1983 the Barbados Vocational Training Board took responsibility for its administration. Essentially in the 1980's Barbados faced the challenge of massive unemployment especially among young people. At the same time there was a shortage of skilled workers in construction and manufacturing. The Barbados Vocational Training Board responded by developing skills training programmes to meet the market's needs. These programmes were designed to give individuals sufficient marketable/employable skills to allow them to enter the job market quickly.

The Skills Training Programme is one of the principle activities of the BVTB and is aimed at providing unemployed persons, especially the youth, with skills.

It is a modular programme based on the ILO concept of the Module of Employable Skills. This involves the mastery of a skill in a narrow well defined, complete operation or series of operations, which are part of a trade and can be performed as a discreet job. (For example: Block layers as part of the masonry trade). The programme emphasizes practical hands on training in the following seven trade areas:-

- 1) Agriculture
  - a) Landscaping and Horticulture
  - b) Tractor Operations, Maintenance and General Farming
- 2) Automotive

- a) Autobody Repair
  - b) Auto mechanics
- 3) Computer Applications and Office Procedures
- 4) Construction
- a) Carpentry Maintenance
  - b) Electrical Installation
  - c) Masonery
  - d) Plumbing
  - e) Steel Bending
  - f) Welding
  - g) Tractor Operations and Maintenance; Skidster/Backhoe Operations
  - h) Tiling
- 5) Craft and Textiles
- a) Basketry and Rug making
  - b) Garment Making
  - c) Sign Making
  - d) Screen Printing
  - e) Finished Wood Products
- 6) Food Technology
- a) Food Preservation
- 7) Furniture Manufacturing
- a) Joinery
  - b) Upholstery

The courses range from three months to nine months and are offered to young school leavers and unemployed adults. All persons who attend the programme receive a stipend of seventy-five dollars per week to assist them in attending classes.

Training is conducted at a number of community centers and facilities managed by the National Sports Council as well as some facilities under the direct control of the Barbados Vocational Training Board. These centers include the Valery Centre in Upper Collymore Rock, St. Michael; C. Lomer Alleyne Centre and Sayes Court Center at Sayes Court and the All Saints Skills Training Centre at Mile and a Quarter, St. Peter.

In 1996 the training programme was extended in response to the demand for labour being created by a boom in the construction industry. The programme was aimed at producing masons and carpenters who would be fully functional within the industry on the completion of their training. The programme exposed trainees to other related work in the construction industry including Painting/Finishing,

Steel bending and Fixing, Bobcat/Backhoe Operation and Landscaping. The training was primarily practical and took place on a live construction site. The end result was the successful construction of a three bedroom, two-bathroom house in Eden Lodge, which was later sold on open market. The proceeds from this project were used to build a second house. Several other projects have since been successfully undertaken.

During the financial year 2003, seven hundred and forty-four (744) persons graduated from this programme

### **The Evening Programme**

The Evening Programme was introduced in September 1996 and targets the following persons:

- Employed persons seeking to upgrade their skills.
- Employed persons who want to acquire new skills
- Persons who wish to pursue self improvement and further training.
- Persons seeking self employment.

Courses are three months in duration and are offered in the following disciplines:

AUTOCAD	Horticulture
Basketry	Interior Decorating
Building Drawing	Lingerie Making
Cake and Pastry Making	Masonry
Cake Decoration	Plumbing
Ceramics	Small Appliance Repair
Drapery	Small Business Management
Dressmaking	Small Engine Repair
Flower Arranging	Soft Furnishing
Tailoring	Tiling and Decorative Finishes
Upholstery	

### **The In-Plant Programme**

The In Plant Training Programme began in 1983 and has three main objectives.

1. To improve the quality of delivery of training within the Skills Training Programme.
2. To improve the quality of the delivery supervision of persons in industry who supervise apprentices on the job.
3. To implement specialized training programmes for persons already in the workforce.

These objectives are met by designing and implementing training as the need arises. In plant training Programme is offered to both the public and private sectors.

Mrs. Anne Hewitt is presently the Chairman of the Board of Directors. Mr. Raphael Cave is the present Director of Training. He is assisted Ms. Merna Jordan (Assistant Director Operations) and Mrs. Rhonda Howell (Assistant Director Administration)

The Barbados Vocational Training Board is constantly looking at upgrading it's services and expanding it's range of training opportunities. It's Vision is "*to be the occupational training institution of choice and to ensure that the nation is provided with an adequately trained workforce.*"

Interested persons should feel free to contact BVTB.

In March 2005 the Barbados Vocational Training will celebrate it's twenty-fifth anniversary.

### **Contact Information**

Barbados Vocational Training Board  
Lawrence Green House  
Cnr. St. Paul's Avenue and Culloden Road  
St. Michael  
Barbados

Tel # 436 – 7970

Fax # 437-8759

Email Vocational Training @BVTB.gov.bb