

# NEW FRONTIERS

The Ministry of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications  
(Training, Skills Development and Productivity Division)

Quarterly Newsletter Issue No 18 - June 2005

## Our Mission

*Driving strategically our Human Resources towards a Knowledge-Based Economy*

### ORIENTATION PROGRAMME FOR SDP TRAINEES (2002-2004)

This Ministry conducted a tracer study in February 2005 for 536 trainees placed under the Skills Development Programme (SDP) during the years 2002 to 2004. Based on a response from 310 trainees, the study revealed that 50 of them were still looking for a job and as at May 2005, 45 of them confirmed that they were still jobless.

To further assist those SDP trainees in asserting themselves on the job market, this Ministry organised an orientation programme on Wednesday 01 June 2005 at the Training Unit of the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms (Seminar Room), 6th Floor, Fooks House, Bourbon Street, Port Louis. Sixteen participants attended the programme, 1 in the field of aerospace engineering, 2 in humanities (sociology and psychology), 3 in management (law and administration), 3 in IT and 7 in science (agriculture, chemistry and environment). Those who could not attend the programme had recently secured a full-time and part-time job while the others were taken up in examinations.

Bearing in mind that the target audience for the programme have already benefited from one year work attachment under the Skills Development Programme (SDP) 2003-2004, the main objective of the programme was to add value to the self-image of the unemployed so that they may better present themselves on the job market

Mr David White, Human Resource Consultant from CIEL Group, gave an in-depth orientation on the different dimensions of self-confidence and gave concrete examples of rising from "Victims to Victors". His intervention was further supported by Dr Mahen Motah's insights on the roots of work ethics and the importance of adopting them in the new work environment. Mr Sanjeev Beechoo, former SDP trainee, now Managing Director of "Eco-Logic Green Solutions" shared his experience as a new entrepreneur in the business arena. Winner of Livewire, he is currently engaged in the manufacture of paper bags that are environment friendly. Those interested in setting up their own business (4 interested) were invited to network with S.Beechoo for practical orientations. Mr M.Vaghjee expanded on all the aspects of entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial activities focusing on the steps involved and the qualities required to succeed.

This exposure was followed, in the afternoon, by reflection and interactions group wise. Participants were split into 5 groups (Engineering, Humanities, IT, Management and Science) and each group interaction was facilitated by Mr A.Saroo, Principal Engineer, Ministry of Public Infrastructure; Dr M.Motah, Senior Lecturer, UTM; Mr V.Rowtho, Head of IT Faculty, DCDM Business School; Mr M.Vaghjee, Managing Director, Sustainable Resource Management Ltd and Mr K.Bheenick, Programme Manager, FARC.

The objective of the group facilitation exercise was to assist the participants in identifying the difficulties they are currently facing in their job search and propose short term actions to help them secure a job or enhance their employability.

An evaluation report has been prepared and will be expected to assist the HRD Unit in improving future actions at three levels (i) Individual follow up in each group (Engineering, Humanities, IT, Management and Science) to ensure that a job or a seat for higher studies is secured during the next three months (ii) HRD Unit follow up actions to further strengthen the job profiles of unemployed (iii) Designing future Orientation Programme.

### SDP 04/05 UPDATES

As at 14 June 2005, 648 trainees have been placed in public and private organisations. The detailed movement of trainees is shown in Table below:-

Table 1.1  
Movement of Trainees (SDP 04/05)

	Degree Placed	Diploma Placed	Degree Left	Diploma Left
Private	135	48	37	16
Parastatal	197	22	69	8
Ministries	179	67	55	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>36</b>

Around 30% of trainees who left prior to completion of the programme have secured jobs in the public and private sectors while a few are pursuing higher studies. Those trainees are being replaced upon request from employers.

### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AUDIT

To date, the Ministry of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications has ensured placement of 1050 unemployed degree holders and 260 diploma holders as trainees in different organizations for a period of one year under the Skills Development Programme (SDP). To ensure the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the programme, the Ministry has embarked, since June 2005, on the SDP Audit wherein the strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement of the programme are being identified.

In this exercise, officers from the Ministry are conducting site visits to the organizations where the trainees are placed, to assess to what extent the SDP is helping the trainees to acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes; the problems, if any, they are facing on the job; the suggestions of the trainees/employers to improve the programme; and whether the trainees/employees are complying with the SDP guidelines. The ultimate objective of these interventions is to come up with recommendations and actions to improve future implementation of this programme.

As at 14 June 2005, 5 private firms have already been visited and it is expected that the audit will be completed in 30 such firms by the end of July 2005. Thereafter, the same exercise will be undertaken in the public sector where trainees are placed.

## INDUSTRIAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING BOARD (IVTB)

### IVTB Congratulates its Successful Students at the Award of Certificates Ceremony

The IVTB organised its Award of Certificates ceremony at the Octave Wiehé Auditorium, Réduit on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005 for some 672 awardees. The successful students are from more than 30 different trades representing ten distinct fields of competencies: *Automotive Engineering, Building and Utility Maintenance, Electronics and Telecommunications, Food and Bar Services, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Industrial Engineering, IT and Multimedia, Printing and Graphic Design, Textile Production and Wood Technology.*

This year's ceremony was marked by two special features: the very first cohort of 18 female trainees who received their **Certificats in Computer Applications** after having followed a 500 hour training course at the IT lab of the *Mahebourg Training Centre*. The course and the IT lab were logistically supported and funded by the USAID as part of its initiative to promote training for women. Another first is the 14 students from the *Hotel School of Mauritius* who were granted a '**Certificat d'Allemand Touristique et Hotellerie pour Débutant**' by the Goethe Institute, Germany. This course responds promptly to the increasing demand of human resources in the Hospitality Industry who are proficient in German.

In his opening speech, Professor R Dubois, Director of IVTB, emphasised the importance of Vocational and Educational Training skills for employability and competitiveness. "***Our people must have high levels of skills relevant to dynamic industries if we want to have a vibrant economic growth into the future***" he commented.

In a brief address, Mr. A Salauroo, Chairman of the IVT Council, seized the opportunity to share with the audience the forthcoming projects of the IVTB. This includes the construction of a well-equipped IVTB Training Centre at Flacq, the setting up of a School of Training of Trainers at Curepipe to cater for the local and the regional needs. The third project concerns Training in Cleaning Technology to provide a skilled workforce to create a cleaner Mauritius.

### IVTB Delegation to Canada

Last month a top level team from the IVTB led by Mr A Salauroo, Professor R Dubois, Mr P K Joosery visited leading representatives in the fields of international development and training for a period of one week. Mr Joosery stayed back and was joined by another high level IVTB delegation consisting of Mr S Maudarbocus, Mr N Abdool and Mr K Munbodh who spent ten days in Canada to examine the Canadian vocational training system.

Following these two visits Mr Denis Moreau from Cegep Trois Rivieres was at the IVTB last week to help the corporate clients.

### Professor R Dubois shares his experience during recent African Regional Conference, Botswana

Mr Roland Dubois, Director of IVTB was invited to give a key note paper entitled "Vocational Training as a tool to combat poverty" at the 5th African Regional IVETA Conference in Kasane, Botswana from 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

His Excellency Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, graced the opening ceremony. The main theme of the conference was "Achieving poverty reduction through relevant quality vocational education and training in partnership with industry." Indeed, over 200 delegates from 16 countries, namely Botswana, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Holland, India, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe attended the conference.

Combating poverty has been recognized to be the greatest challenge facing the world today. In Africa, some 300 millions, that is, over half of the population live in abject poverty, going by the world definition of a poverty stricken person is one who earns less than one US dollar per day. Furthermore, 25 million people over the world (2/3 in Sub Saharan Africa) are affected by HIV/AIDS. The President of the Republic of Botswana in his welcome address mentioned that studies carried out have shown that Botswana's economy growth rate is 3 to 3.5% lower due to HIV/AIDS. It seems that Botswana is amongst the top 5 countries mostly hit by infections and deaths.

### IVTB Seeks Indian Expertise to Diversify its Portfolio of Training Programmes

Recently, a delegation lead by Mr A Salauroo, Chairman of the IVTB Council and Mr R Dubois, Director of IVTB proceeded to India to meet with, inter alia, the top management of the prestigious *Indian Institute of Banking and Finance*. The objective of this meeting was to explore the possibility of setting up of a *Mauritian Institute of Banking and Finance* (MIBF) to provide top quality training programmes for professionals in the banking and finance sector.

In addition, the delegation had meetings with the *National Insurance Academy* in Pune, The *Government Institute of Printing Technology* (GIPT) in Mumbai, The *Directorate General of Employment and Training* in the Ministry of Labour and Employment in New Delhi, The *Peregrine Security Pvt Ltd*, in New Delhi, the *National Institute of Fashion Technology* (NIFT) in New Delhi.

The delegation had a very fruitful mission in India in terms of networking and establishing personal contacts. With the realisation of these different projects, IVTB would further consolidate its new role as an enhanced provider of training. It will have a greater portfolio of training programmes to offer. For instance, with the possibility of an exchange programme for the trainers from the *IVTB, School of Design (SOD)* with foreign institutions, SOD will become a part of a reputed international network of Fashion Technology Institutes.



## **NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL (NPCC)**

### **Branding for enhanced competitiveness How does Mauritius look to you?**

During the Competitiveness Foresight\* organised in September 2004, it was highlighted that Mauritius is not adequately visible in the international arena: *'There is a need to have focused group(s) to work on the strategy for branding Mauritius as a source and not as a specific product/ service supplier. Mauritius is not adequately visible in the international arena (i.e it does not have the same generic brand image appeal as Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai as yet) due to the sectoral mindset that so far has led institutions to promote their specific products, namely freeport, tourism, EPZ, financial services etc instead of selling the Mauritian label as representing excellence, whatever be the field.'*

#### **The need for synergy**

Last May, the NPCC (National Productivity and Competitiveness Council) organized, in collaboration with Enterprise Mauritius, several working sessions with various audiences, to address the issue of branding Mauritius. The sessions were conducted by Keith Phillips, president of Quantel Business Services and an international expert, from New Zealand, in International Marketing and Branding. The first session was targeted at operators of the textile and garment industry to see how international marketing and branding can enhance their competitiveness. A second session was organised for a very diverse audience including advertising agencies, public relations professionals, marketing managers etc to answer the following questions: *'How does an industry establish a unique space in the mind of customers?' and 'How does an organisation build a brand and ensure it delivers its promises?'*. And a third session was targeted at top management of private sector associations and governmental institutions, especially those who are in the frontline of our international relations and transactions.

The overall aim was in fact to start the thinking process likely to create the adequate synergy, to go beyond the narrow focus of enterprises and sectors when dealing on the international market, to identify and bring out those multiple elements that make the unique flavour of Mauritius. It is about creating the necessary dynamism and adherence, at different levels, to a consistent national message and image. It is about improving the way we engage with the outside world, how we position ourselves in the global value chain, the way we communicate to investors, tourists, international organizations, professional bodies etc and develop our competitive edge.

Till now Mauritian branding has happened by accident, whereas serious policy assessment and planning with a coherent and integrated strategy are needed. As Mauritius is a complex society and has a complex identity - which makes it still more difficult to bring out that unique brand - it is particularly important that the country takes care over its image and reputation.

#### **Nation branding by the people for the people**

In this process it is of major importance that we realize that a nation's brand is defined by its people, their values and aspirations and their endeavors. A nation's branding is too important to be defined by a branding agency alone. The government, the business sector, other stakeholders must all feel concerned and committed. Care must be taken to avoid any gap between the perception of the people and the branded image. The necessary mechanism has to be devised to create the necessary dynamism and involvement.

#### **Think innovatively**

At this crossroad of our economy, we need to think innovatively on how to convert threats into opportunities and enhance all the experience and expertise we have acquired over the years. At the same time, we need to realize that fundamental changes are required in our enterprises, industries and policy models, as well as in our strategies, so that we can be more competitive than in the past. At the heart of our effort to repackage ourselves, is the need for better performance and credibility.

Branding is seen as crucial to many Central European countries that have joined the European Union and realized that their ability to compete against their neighbours for investment depend on how they are perceived by more developed EU countries.

Finland is starting a campaign to enhance its image as a center of high-tech innovation with the hope of helping its technology companies fare better in the United States.

Taiwan's reputation is built on the global ranking of its enterprises: first provider of chip foundry services, first producer of notebook PCs, first provider of LCD monitors, first producer of cable modems, first producer of wireless LAN equipment, ...

#### **The right competitiveness statement**

Though more and more countries are developing their brand identities, it has to be pointed out that the art of positioning countries is not very sophisticated yet. It will take time and determination but Mauritius has to go through the process and to go from the unfocused to the focused. The challenge is to unify the whole country behind something strong - to go hunting for the Mauritian imagery, to bring out a comprehensive lexicon so as to release the true Mauritian identity and outline the national brand. *'Make sure your point of difference is not trivial'*, warns David Ogilvy, world-renowned expert in advertising. Our competitiveness will largely depend on how we garner favourable perceptions and how we make ourselves attractive to the outside world. Let us work out the right competitiveness statement for Mauritius.

**\* The proceedings of the Competitiveness Foresight have been compiled in a book which is on sale at the NPCC**

## **MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (MQA)**

### **The 5<sup>th</sup> African Regional IVETA Conference**

Mrs R Domah, Programme Officer at the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA), attended the 5<sup>th</sup> African Regional IVETA Conference at Kasane Botswana, from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

IVETA is an organization and network of vocational educators, vocational skills training organizations, business and industrial firms, and other individuals and groups interested or involved in vocational education and training worldwide.

The main theme of the conference was:

**"Achieving Poverty Reduction through relevant Quality Vocational Education and Training in Partnership with Industry"**, and;

The aim of the conference was to:

1. Promote linkages among international vocational practitioners.
2. Provide a forum for sharing ideas in order to come up with solutions to problems in the VET sector.
3. Facilitate worldwide dissemination of vocational education and training.

Participants from about 12 countries, including South Africa, Mozambique, Germany, Netherlands, and America attended the conference. There were also about 30 local representatives of the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA).

Papers were presented by different resource persons and have enabled fruitful interaction amongst the participants.

The next IVETA conference will be held in year 2006 in Sevdhelles.

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
(HRDC)**

**Preparation of the National Human Resource Development Plan**

Following the visit of the HRDC delegation to the Institute of Applied Manpower Research in India in March 2005 in connection with the preparation of the National Human Resource Development Plan, the Head of the above Institution, namely Mrs H Sharma was at the HRDC from 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2005 in order to take cognizance of the actual situation and establish contacts with the stakeholders.

As at date, the HRDC has already initiated necessary action and preliminary works on the preparation of the Plan have started. The Plan is expected to be ready by December 2005.

**Visit of delegation from Ministry of Labour & Human Resource Development of Kenya**

A delegation from the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development of Kenya had a working session with the HRDC on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005 to take cognizance of the different activities carried out by the Organisation specially the Management of Levy Grant System.

**Financial Assistance for retrenched workers – BAT Project**

In line with its Strategic Objectives, the HRDC has provided financial assistance amounting to Rs58,000 to 39 retrenched workers who have been sponsored by the British American Tobacco to follow courses at the IVTB.

**Brainstorming session organized by Sectoral Committee on Public Services**

The Sectoral Committee on Public Services organized a brainstorming session at Le Labourdonnais Hotel on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2005. The objective of this 1-day workshop was to take stock of the existing training facilities in the public sector. Various recommendations have been made and the final report is being finalized. Various initiatives will be implemented by the HRDC in this connection.

**Training Levy & Training in Core Skills**

A delegation from the HRDC comprising the Chairman, the Senior Chief Executive of the parent Ministry, Dr A Jeetun, Director - MEF and the Director of the HRDC proceeded to Malaysia and Singapore from 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May 2005. The delegation had very fruitful working sessions and visits to the different institutions over the 6 days. The report and findings of the mission are presently being analysed so as

- (a) To bring necessary changes to the existing levy grant system in Mauritius
- (b) Look into the process of human resource development planning as practiced in these 2 countries.
- (c) Study the organizational structure of the human resource development function.
- (d) Look into the training facilities and training programmes available in these countries in connection with Core Skills Training for employability of the workforce including the retrenched workers.

**Chambre de Metiers**

A brainstorming session with the different stakeholders including the IVTB, SMIDO, NHPA and MQA was held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2005. Various recommendations have been made to launch the Chambre de Métiers on a pilot basis in some priority sectors. The HRDC is presently looking into the legal aspects of the setting up of the Chambre de Métiers and the support of other Institutions like the MSB and Enterprise Mauritius would also be enlisted in this activity. The HRDC will be coordinating the whole project

**Appointment of Staff at HRDC**

The following persons have been appointed at senior management level, Mr Raj RAGAVEN – Manager, Finance; Dr Kaviraj SUKON – Manager, Research; Mr Raj AUCKLOO – Manager, Corporate.

The following appointment have also been made at the HRDC: Research Officer: Mrs Vashuda JOORIA-DEGNARAIN; Mr Sharma Roopesh SEECHURN and Mrs Vinawtee KOKIL; Administrative Assistant: Mrs Farida NUNDLALL and Mr Omraj SARAYE; Accounting Technician/Senior Accounting Technician: Mr Noormohamed RAFFICK and Mr Satyaprakash NUNKOO

**MISSION**

Mr Senior Chief Executive, Mr R. Mudhoo was on mission on Paris for the conference of the Francophonie from 13 to 15 April 2005.

**VISITORS TO THE MINISTRY**

Calls on the Senior Chief Executive, Mr R. Mudhoo

11 May 2005 A delegation of the National Training Council of Kenya comprising Eng. M.O Kidenda, HSC, Eng A. Mbui; Mr Wellington Rajabu Mwandu, Mr Arthur Rateng, Hon. Reuben Ndolomp, Mr F. P. Owiti, Ms Esther Kebaya.

Mrs Harsh Sharma from Institute of Applied Manpower Research, Delhi, India

6 June 2005 Mr R. Keyfitz, Senior Economist of the World Bank

**WELCOME**

The following officers have assumed duty on:

4 April 2005 Mrs D. Tirvengadam, Personnel Officer  
20 April 2005 Mrs G. Hulkhoree, giving assistance at Clerical Level  
28 April 2005 Mrs S. Rambaran, Clerical Officer

**FAREWELL**

20 April 2005 Mrs P. Sohun, Assistant Secretary  
21 April 2005 Mr A. Nauzeer, Office Attendant  
20 June 2005 Mr A Safar, Driver

**CONDOLENCE**

Our heartfelt condolence to

Mrs F. Abdool Raman for the demise of his son on 30 April 2005.  
Mr G. Sandanum for the demise of his father on 7 June 2005.

**NOTE FOR THOUGHTS:-**

Man Proposes:-

I asked for **Strength**,  
..... and God gave me **Difficulties to make me strong**.

I asked for **Wisdom**,  
..... and God gave me **Problems to solve**.

I asked for **Prosperity**,  
..... and God gave me **Brain and Brawn to Work**.

I asked for **Courage**,  
..... and God gave me **Danger to Overcome**.

I asked for **Love**,  
..... and God gave me **Troubled People to Help**.

I asked for **Favours**,  
..... and God gave me **Opportunities**.

**I received Nothing I wanted  
... and I received Everything I Needed.**

**EDITORIAL TEAM**

*Mr R. Mudhoo                      Mr P. Pirthee*  
*Mr I. Seebaluck                  Mrs F. Joorawon*  
*Mr K. Venkatasawmy          Mrs A. Motalla*