



# Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development presents Certified Knowledge Management Training under the Barbados Human Resource Development Strategy



## Excellent opportunity for Barbados to benefit

# 100 gain KM training

**THE GROUP of participants benefiting from KM training and certification with instructor Douglas Weidner. (RC)**

SOME 100 REPRESENTATIVES from public and private sector organisations in Barbados underwent sensitisation and certified training in knowledge management (KM) under the guidance of Douglas Weidner, of the KM Institute, a global leader in KM Certification and Training during a workshop held last week.

The training is an essential step towards implementing a fully integrated and rationalised knowledge management system (KMS) under the Barbados Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy which is funded by the European Union (EU). The KMS will allow the sharing of information, ideas and processes from multiple sources and support strategic decision-making, thereby improving the country's productivity and international competitiveness.

Under the HRD Strategy, it was recognised that the successful implementation of a KMS for Barbados requires a paradigm shift towards capitalising on knowledge as a productive asset and that training is a critical mechanism for achieving this change.

Last week's workshop comprised sensitisation (KM 101) and certification (CKM) programmes. The KM 101, which targeted 100 key personnel in public and private sector organisations, focused on a general introduction to KM; the fundamentals of using KM correctly; and the benefits of a KMS. Its modules included strategic justification and tactics for KM; crucial knowledge-intensive activities; introduction to a proven methodology that can be started at the grass-roots level and no-budget KM.

The certification (CKM) which is geared to those leading or improving a KM initiative, attracted 25 persons involved in research and statistics, programme and policy development associated with knowledge management, records and document management, archiving, and management information systems.

The Ministry said that from those certified as knowledge managers, it would have a core group of local expertise that would not only advance the knowledge management strategy and lead the implementation of knowledge management (KM) within their organisations but would also assist in future sensitisation and training in KM across the public and private sector.

Two of the participants in the CKM programme, Haseley Straughn, the E-government development officer in the Ministry of the Civil Service, and Brittany Brathwaite, labour management advisor at the Barbados Employers Confederation (BEC), spoke about their experiences, on the final day of the workshop.

Straughn commended the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development for organising the workshop, pointing out that it brought together a wide cross section of public workers as well as representatives from non-governmental organisations.

"This coming together resonates with a core concept of Knowledge Management which emphasises collaboration and the sharing of information not just among Government entities but within organisations in the country."

He said the training was timely and compatible with achieving the fourth of five pillars in the Barbados Human Resource Development Strategy, 2011-2016, which speaks to the development of a National Knowledge Management System. This National KMS is being currently designed by a team of consultants from the European Union.

Straughn also spoke about several aspects of the training course, noting that participants examined some of the requirements specific to implementing the knowledge management systems correctly. He said that two key pieces of legislation would have to be enacted, the Freedom of Information (Bill) and the Data Protection (Bill) before implementing the Knowledge Management System since they would create the right environment for sound records and information management within the public service, which is the foundation of any Knowledge Management System.

Noting the ministry's expectation that the soon-to-be

certified Knowledge Management managers will assist with the implementation of KM throughout Barbados, he said: "We want to set up a community of practice, where as persons with similar interests we will continue to work together, examining challenges, and finding solutions as we help to spread the practice of knowledge management throughout Barbados."

Like Straughn, Brathwaite described the one-week workshop as "very helpful". She noted some of the systems and processes, detailed during the seminar were already implemented in the private sector but added the workshop underlined the importance of sequencing.

She said that at times these processes were not correctly sequenced. "Sometimes businesses start projects too high up the chain and so miss opportunities to gain early support and engagement of workers by low or no-cost 'early win' methods. This prevents them from reaping the full potential of some of their implemented programmes."

In addition, Brathwaite said: "Knowledge management incorporates sharing and documenting of knowledge. We have a lot of duplication of processes and systems within organisations and within sectors but with proper knowledge sharing, much of this duplication can be eliminated. In today's world, every minute counts, every minute has a cost; it would be profitable to eliminate unnecessary processes."

Brathwaite is keen to transfer the insights she gained during the course to others. "I am thinking about starting an awareness programme for the organisation which may involve breaking down the methodology into segments. Another option, which I am considering, is the setting up of a training programme — this will be completed after my colleagues and I undergo the knowledge management 'train the trainer programme,'" she said.



**DOUGLAS WEIDNER explaining the knowledge management concept to workshop participants. (RC)**



**HASELEY STRAUGHN (waving) and colleagues returning to the workshop. (RC)**

CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF INSTRUCTOR of the United States-based Knowledge Management Institute, Douglas Weidner says Barbados has an excellent opportunity to gain tremendous benefits using knowledge management (KM) techniques. He also believes that the country can implement the system more successfully than the countries that pioneered the implementation process.

Weidner, who developed the internationally-acclaimed Certified Knowledge Manager (CKM) and Master CKM Certification programmes, has trained, certified and advised KM leaders in several United States government agencies and over 1 000 commercial firms worldwide.

He was in Barbados recently where he instructed a Knowledge Age Essentials Knowledge Management workshop organised by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development at Almond Bay Caterers.

The KM expert explained that knowledge management was part of the transition that the world was currently experiencing. He recalled that previously the world moved from an agrarian society into the industrial age, then into an information age and was now into the knowledge age and thus the emphasis on the discipline of knowledge management. Consequently, he said, Barbados can gain and maintain a competitive edge by being firmly aligned with the knowledge management system.

"A traditional definition of knowledge is understanding gained from experience but when knowledge is considered within knowledge management it is important to look at the processes. You collect data, give it structure and context and it becomes information. An analysis of that information gives insights and that is knowledge. Against that background, knowledge management is getting the best knowledge to the right person at the right time."

Weidner said many other countries started using KM techniques about ten or 15 years ago when the system was being worked on. "But today, we know how to implement KM successfully and Barbados will be able to learn from the errors made by those countries that started earlier and so will be able to leapfrog from these experiences."

In addition, he said given its geographical size, Barbados lends itself to greater collaboration and cooperation among employees especially when compared with large countries like the United States where the size of some government agencies alone dwarf the population of Barbados and provides challenges for cooperation and collaboration.

Referring to the workshop, he said: "Here in Barbados, employees from throughout Government and private sector are learning this [KM] together and if they stay aligned they will be able to do something no other country has done, that is convert the entire country into the knowledge age successfully."

Weidner said: "The real key to improved performance within an organisation using the KM process is people — how to keep them engaged. This can be done by changing things in the organisation and by people properly understanding themselves."