

Identifying Employment Opportunities in Select Parishes: A Steps-to-Work Exploratory Study



*Ministry of Labour and Social Security
November 2009*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security expresses sincere gratitude to all of the organisations which provided invaluable information that helped to narrow the focus of the research. They are the Manchester and Clarendon Parish Development Committees; the Clarendon, Trelawny and Manchester Chambers of Commerce as well as HEART Trust/NTA.

Deepest thanks are also being extended to all of the organisations which participated in the survey as without them this report would not be possible. It is greatly appreciated that they gave of their time, shared their knowledge of their sectors and gave permission for quotations from their interviews to be used.

Thank you to all.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During 2008, the Government of Jamaica introduced a new dimension to the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) called Steps-to-Work. The goal of this Programme is to get the chronically poor off welfare by focusing on remedial education and training in order to improve their chances of becoming gainfully employed. In addition to grooming persons for employment, Steps-to-Work aims to provide assistance to individuals who want to become entrepreneurs. The Programme has been introduced in the parishes of St. James, Trelawny, Manchester, Clarendon, and Kingston and St. Andrew with a view for expansion in the future. Provisions have been made for 12,000 persons to participate during this initial phase.

This study attempts to identify current and future employment opportunities in the six parishes. The intention is to provide policy makers and planners with information on the sectors within each parish that provide the best employment prospects for the Steps-to-Work participants. The survey was conducted during the second half of 2008 through semi-structured interviews.¹ Narrative description was used to present the information gathered and attempts were made to identify themes and patterns.

The information collected suggests that the Steps-to-Work Programme could target the agriculture and hospitality sectors in most of the parishes. In Manchester for example, there is cattle rearing (beef and milk), and food tree crop as well as irish and sweet potato cultivation. Pig, poultry and goat rearing were said to be popular in Clarendon. Sweet potato, hot pepper and poultry were identified for St. James. In the case of Kingston and St. Andrew pig and cattle rearing were said to be viable options. The Steps-to-Work participants could seek to sell their produce to supermarkets, hotels, agro-processing plants or niche markets.

The responses suggest that hospitality sector could provide employment opportunities in the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew, Manchester, St. James and Trelawny. Most of the employment opportunities identified were in hotels. They included housekeeping, wait and customer service staff as well as highly skilled chefs. The belief was expressed that casino gambling could provide jobs in the future especially for people in entertainment such as singers, dancers and choreographers.

Other sectors which were examined included:

- Construction;
- Mining and Quarrying;
- Manufacturing;
- Transport, Storage and Communication;
- Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities;

¹ Most of the interviews were conducted before Jamaica began to feel the effects of the global financial crisis.

- Wholesale and Retail Trade;
- Private Security Companies; and
- Other Community, Social and Personal Services.

The interviews conducted with the representatives of companies in these categories suggested that there were limited employment opportunities available. Construction in particular was considered to be unattractive as it seemed to offer short term employment which means that the workers could be unemployed for extended periods.

The entry requirements for the sectors seemed to vary. Most of the employers wanted employees who could pass an entry test, had Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) passes or had vocational certification. The entry requirement for agriculture and the hospitality sector were different. In agriculture it ranged from the individuals not being required to meet any specification to persons with basic literacy skills. The requirements for the hospitality industry on the other hand ranged from persons with CXC passes to people with first degrees depending on the position. The information provided can be used not only to help Steps-to-Work participants to gain entry into the labour market but also to plan their career advancement.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Steps-to-Work Programme was developed as part of the Government of Jamaica's (GOJ) Social Safety Net (SSN) reform which is a new dimension of PATH. According to an evaluation report prior to the development of PATH, the Jamaican government financed 45 safety net programmes through 12 Ministries.² The effectiveness of these programmes however was sometimes low.³ Consequently a social safety net reform programme was implemented to create a fiscally sound and more efficient system of social assistance for the vulnerable and the extremely poor.⁴

One focus of the reform effort was to consolidate the major cash and in-kind programmes into PATH. This new Programme combined social assistance with the accumulation of human capital to fight poverty.⁵ PATH seeks to fight poverty by encouraging poor families to invest in the health and education of their children.⁶ The Programme was designed in this way as it was found that although children from poor families tended to be registered in school their attendance was often poor.⁷ Additionally, secondary and tertiary education was found to be strongly related to employment and economic status.⁸

The goal of Steps-to-Work is to promote self-sufficiency among poor families receiving welfare and break the inter-generational cycle of poverty by removing barriers such as lack of skill and low educational attainment. It also seeks to empower these persons to seek and retain employment and earn an adequate income.

It is a structured Programme that focuses on providing opportunities for human capital development and economic improvement. It targets employable persons in households receiving assistance from PATH aged 15 to 64 years such as older children, youth, caregivers and other adults. It is geared towards job readiness as well as the acquisition of skills and competencies. Through the Programme persons can access remedial education and skill training as well as assistance in job readiness, job matching, business development and micro-financing.

In order to achieve its goal, Steps-to-Work has established partnerships with a number of government agencies. They include:

- Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/National Training Agency (HEART Trust/NTA) which is expected to provide vocational training for the participants who meet its entry requirements;

² URL: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/evaljamaica.pdf> Accessed 26 May 2009

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

- the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) which should provide remedial education;
- the National Youth Service (NYS);
- the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA); and
- the Jamaica Business Development Centre (JBDC).

Prior to the full implementation of the Steps-to-Work Programme, there is a limited introduction or pilot phase. The pilot project is being conducted in the parishes of Kingston, St. Andrew, Clarendon, Manchester, Trelawny and St. James. It will give planners a chance to assess the methodologies being used and help in the identification of problems and corrective measures to ensure effective implementation nationally. It is expected that 12,000 persons from 4,000 households will participate in the pilot phase.

1.1 Objective of the Study and the Research Questions

A study was commissioned to identify current and future areas of employment opportunities in the six parishes and the types of skills required. This will ensure that the participants are channeled into those areas. The objective of the study is to provide policy makers and planners with information that in addition to indicating the potential areas for employment will indicate the types of skills required. This is deemed to be important, as it will be used to determine how the participants in the Steps-to-Work programme are channelled. It is also expected to indicate the training and certification levels which the employers require.

The objective is achieved by:

- Identifying the employment opportunities and programmes for people who are unskilled and those with low skill levels.
- Determining the minimum level of training and certification that was required for the categories of workers identified.
- Identifying niche markets that could provide entrepreneurial opportunities.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology describes the rationale and assumptions on which the study is based as well as the research design and method, and data interpretation and recommendations. It also states the validity and reliability of the study. In addition, it outlines the challenges experienced during the research activity and the possible negative impact on the results.

2.1 Assumptions

The underlying assumption of the research is that the top two economic activities in each parish provide the best opportunities for employment. This influenced the sampling techniques that were chosen. In relation to the sample selection, the organisations were contacted based on the perception that they could provide reliable information on the economic activities of the parishes. There was also the assumption that the respondents

were credible and had a broad knowledge of what was happening in their sectors therefore the information that they provided was accurate.

2.2 Research Design

Qualitative research techniques were used, in particular interviews, in order to use the limited resources that were available effectively. The parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew were combined and one set of findings is presented for them since it was difficult to separate them. The economic activities were identified with help from Parish Development Committees, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security's regional offices, Parish Councils and HEART Trust/NTA. These organisations were used since there was reasonable expectation that they would be able to provide reliable information based on their knowledge of the parishes economic activities.

The information received was used to compile a list. In the case of St. James two activities were initially identified however, this was expanded to include others as a result of information received during interviews. The sources that were expected to guide the identification process in Kingston and St. Andrew were unco-operative. As a result an attempt was made to focus on activities that it was perceived, used a large number of persons who had low skill levels or who were unskilled.

Two types of sampling techniques were used – purposive and snowballing – which are non-probability methods. Purposive sampling is the selection of elements of the population based on the special needs of the research (Broom and Dozier, 1990). Consequently, this was the primary technique used. Snowballing was the secondary method and it refers to the identification of members of the target population who lead the interviewers to others (Broom and Dozier, 1990). These two techniques were used to shorten the sampling process and lower the cost. They also facilitated the use of a small sample.

2.3 Research Method

The data were collected in two phases – June to July and September to November 2008. Prior to each interview the respondent was assured of confidentiality. They were informed verbally and in writing that their organisations would not be referred to by name and that the information would not be used in a manner which would result in them being easily identified. Permission was also sought for the use of quotes in the report.

The data collection was done through semi-structured interviews. Each interview was conducted using one of two interview guides – generic⁹ or customised. The customised instrument was tailored to reflect the activities of the organisation and get information that may not have been volunteered with the generic guide. All of the questions were open ended and the interviews were conducted in a conversational manner to put the participants at ease

⁹ See Appendix I for a copy of the generic interview guide.

and encourage them to talk. In addition, probes were used to get more information. The interviewees were Human Resource Managers and the heads of organizations and all of the interviews, except one, were face-to-face. The exception was done via telephone. The information from the interviews was captured via audio and/or manual recordings. The recordings were transcribed verbatim to facilitate the compilation of this report.

2.4 Data Interpretation and Recommendations

The data collected is presented using narrative description since this is deemed to be the best way to identify the availability of opportunities for employment. The information is organised by parish and industry. Where possible similarities, differences, themes and patterns are identified and appropriate hierarchical categories are used to show relationships.

2.5 Reliability and Validity

According to Daymon and Holloway (2002) the most salient issue in qualitative research is objectivity. Consequently reliability in this context refers to the audit trail which allows others to follow the process, understand the decisions and use this information to evaluate the study (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). The reliability of this research can be determined by the ability of others to understand the objective and research questions, and follow the methodology. Validity in qualitative studies is related to the credibility of the description, explanation, interpretation or conclusion (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). The validity of this study can be determined by examining the findings which provide a description of the activities and the quotations. Other factors which can be used are data interpretation and recommendations. The criteria which have been outlined for adjudging reliability and validity can be used to determine the trustworthiness of the study.

2.6 Limitations

The findings of the study have been impacted by factors such as the way that the population was identified and the global financial recession. The identification of the population was based on people's beliefs and perceptions of what was happening in the parishes. Furthermore the focus on the major industries in each parish precluded the identification and exploration of other viable options such as new economic activities. In addition, the effects of the global financial crisis which Jamaica began to experience in the last quarter of 2008 negatively impacted the value of the information received. This was due to the fact that most of the interviews were conducted prior to this time.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

One definition of social welfare is "the [welfare](#) or well-being of a society; in economics, the utility of people considered in aggregate; the provision of a wide range of social services, for the benefit of individual citizens".¹⁰ "This usage is closely related to the idea of the [welfare](#)

¹⁰ URL: http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Social_welfare Accessed 23 October 2009

state.¹¹ Midgley (1997) offers an alternative definition of social welfare which is “a state or condition of well-being that exists when social problems are managed, human needs met and social opportunities maximized.” It is Midgley’s definition of social welfare that informs this paper and permits the concept to be considered as empowerment.

3.1 Social Safety Net

In some cases social welfare programmes are called Social Safety Nets (SSN).¹² Social Safety Nets are “... non-contributory transfer programmes targeted to the poor or those vulnerable to poverty and shocks.”¹³ Some of the elements which are common to SSN are cash transfers, food related programmes, health care services, and education, electricity and housing.¹⁴ “Safety nets enable households to make productive investments in their future that they may otherwise miss e.g. education, health and income generating opportunities.”¹⁵ Information from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) website indicates that “social safety nets have traditionally been used to help people through short term stress and calamities.”¹⁶ “They can also contribute to long term development.”¹⁷

SSN can be viewed as a means of empowering the poor and vulnerable in the society.¹⁸ Empowerment is defined as a “stock of skills and knowledge embodied in the ability to perform labour so as to produce economic value.”¹⁹ Page and Czuba (1999) describe it as a “multi-dimensional social approach that helps people gain control over their own lives.” Luttrell and Scrutton (2007) indicate that empowerment is achieved by fostering human capital development with the expectation that the wider community will benefit. Three SSN in developing countries with empowerment features are Bangladesh, Brazil and Barbados.

3.2 The Bangladesh Experience

Bangladesh has made considerable progress in reducing poverty through the implementation of SSN programmes.²⁰ The Government used social protection as part of its poverty reduction strategy.²¹ Consequently policies were implemented to promote physical growth and there was investment in human and physical capital.²² Bangladesh also developed social policies and programmes to address poverty and vulnerability among its population.²³

The aim was “...to help the poor cope with shocks to their incomes by improving coverage, timeliness, scale and delivery of safety net programmes; help workers

¹¹ Ibid

¹² World bank Website URL: <http://web.worldbank.org> Accessed 23 October 2009

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ URL: <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/nets.pdf> Accessed 7 September 2009

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_capital Accessed 7 September 2009

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Social Safety Nets in Bangladesh: An Assessment. The World Bank Office, Dhaka

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

retrenched during industrial restructuring, provide access to credit, and strengthen disaster prevention and mitigation strategies.”

This was accomplished through safety nets, social insurance and labour market policies/programmes.²⁴

An example of a social programme in Bangladesh was the Microcredit programme.²⁵

“The Grameen Bank, founded in Bangladesh in 1989, is one of the best known microcredit systems. Designed to extend small loans to entrepreneurs too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans, Grameen lends as little as US\$60 and up to US\$2 500 to support projects such as poultry raising or providing community mobile phone services. Microcredit is one of the more successful and cost-effective ways to enable the poor to develop longer-term self sufficiency”²⁶

3.3 The Brazilian Approach

The Brazilian Government in 2003 launched a programme in response to the situation of increased poverty and polarization occurring in the country.²⁷ From this, two objectives emerged, the first being “...to reduce Brazil’s current poverty and inequality by means of direct monetary transfers to poor families.”²⁸ The second was “...to reduce future poverty and inequality through incentives for poor families to build their own human capital.”²⁹ This was to be achieved through encouragement of children to stay in school by providing incentives for good attendance, and also easier access to health centers and complimentary social services.³⁰ What was done therefore was “a sweeping reform of Brazil’s social safety net, the Bolsa Familia Program (BFP), which integrated four cash transfer programs into a single program under the umbrella of a new Ministry of Social Development.”³¹

3.4 Barbados Social Welfare System

Barbados is an example of a social welfare system in the Caribbean that focused on the importance of investing in the human capital development of the most vulnerable groups. “The impact of the structural adjustment programme in the early 1990s had resulted in record unemployment and had placed enormous pressure on the social welfare system.”³²

The Programme advocated for services on behalf of clients from other Ministries and non-governmental organisations.³³ “To this end, strategic alliances were established with a variety of interest groups e.g. churches and service clubs which could supply services to meet the

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/nets.pdf> Accessed 7 October 2009

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Brazil: Bolsa Familia Program-Scaling up Cash Transfers for the Poor. Kathy Lindert. World Bank.

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² URL: http://www.oas.org/usde/foro_probreza/hamilton_lashley.doc Accessed 7 October 2009

³³ Ibid

needs of disadvantaged persons.”³⁴ A multi-dimensional approach to poverty was adopted which took into consideration the economic and social dimensions of development.³⁵ This new strategy sought to move away from the concept of “welfarism” or a “hand out” to one of a “hand up”.³⁶

“Relief 2000 was introduced within in Barbados in January 2000 as a coordinating mechanism to further assist the most vulnerable families.”³⁷ It facilitated timely interventions for the issues that affected the poor by ensuring access to services and development programmes in order to break the cycle of poverty.³⁸ It aimed among other things to:

- Facilitate employment training exercises and personal development sessions for clients;
- Increase the access of indigent families to opportunities that can help to improve their social status; and
- Offer developmental assistance with the view to achieving self-sufficiency within the families enrolled on the Programme.³⁹

In order to curb the dependency on SSN, families (primarily headed by a single mother) were encouraged to empower themselves to a state of self sufficiency.⁴⁰ This process was facilitated by these individuals receiving employment training at established private and public training institutions.⁴¹ Unemployed, able-bodied members of households were offered opportunities to participate in training courses of their choice.⁴² Since meeting the cost of these courses was a challenge for these individuals, the Programme covered tuition fees, uniforms, equipment and other associated expenses.⁴³ In addition, day-care fees were also covered in instances where the families had infant children and could not arrange alternate care while they attended classes.⁴⁴ Participants in Relief 2000 received training in areas such as computer applications, applied technology, housekeeping as well as food and beverage, and bar and wine services.⁴⁵

3.4.1 Welfare to Work Programme

“The Welfare to Work Programme commenced in 2000 and also benefited from the Relief 2000 programme in the early stages in that some clients of the Welfare Department were re-directed to this programme.”⁴⁶ The administrators of the Welfare to Work Programme

³⁴ Ibid
³⁵ Ibid
³⁶ Ibid
³⁷ Ibid
³⁸ Ibid
³⁹ Ibid
⁴⁰ Ibid
⁴¹ Ibid
⁴² Ibid
⁴³ Ibid
⁴⁴ Ibid
⁴⁵ Ibid
⁴⁶ Ibid

employed a more aggressive approach to get individuals enrolled.⁴⁷ What oftentimes occurred was a mismatch between the area these individuals were trained in and the jobs in which they were placed.⁴⁸ This however was not a discouragement to the participants as "...the training acquired seemed to have triggered an interest in work regardless of the job type"⁴⁹

Participants in the Programme were also exposed to training in personal development. Some of the skills to which they have been exposed included:

- Dress Making
- Nail Technology
- Massage Therapy
- International Cookery
- Care of the Elderly⁵⁰

3.5 The Jamaican Situation

Jamaica's Social Safety Net incorporates several programmes for the benefit of vulnerable groups in the society through income transfer, individual care and training.⁵¹ "In order to mitigate the adverse short-run impacts of macro-economic stabilization measures on the poor, the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) implemented the FSP⁵² in 1984."⁵³ The aim of the Programme was to offset the economic effects of liberalisation and the removal of subsidies from basic food items on the most vulnerable groups to ensure that their nutritional status was at the minimum acceptable level.⁵⁴

The Food Stamp Programme (FSP) had two main types of benefits, health and income.⁵⁵ The persons benefiting from the health component included pregnant women and lactating mothers as well as children under six years old.⁵⁶ The beneficiaries of the income element included elderly and incapacitated persons as well as single member households.⁵⁷ FSP was discontinued in 2002 and was subsumed under the Programme for Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH).⁵⁸

FSP was created to:

- Alleviate poverty by increasing the value of cash transfers to poor families;
- Increase educational attainment and improve health outcomes of the poor by breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty;

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Food Stamp Programme (Unpublished work)

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Jamaica's Food Stamp Program. Impacts on Poverty and Welfare. October 1999

⁵⁴ Food Stamp Programme

⁵⁵ National Employment Report 2006

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Food Stamp Programme

⁵⁸ Ibid

- Serve as a safety net by preventing poor families from falling further into poverty.⁵⁹

The need to encourage human capital development is central to the origin of the Steps to Work initiative.⁶⁰ This “branching off” of PATH is similar to the Welfare to Work Programme in Barbados and it is designed as a mechanism of empowerment. Steps to Work seeks to engage working age members of PATH households in a set of initiatives geared at job readiness, and the acquisition of skills and competencies.⁶¹ “It targets employable persons in households receiving assistance from Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) such as the youth, caregivers and other adults.”⁶² “Training is an integral part of the programme as it will enable the participants to gain and retain suitable employment.”⁶³

3.6 Sample Distribution by Parish

As is shown in Table 1, data were collected from a total of ten sectors:

- two sectors in Trelawny;
- two for Manchester;
- three sectors for Clarendon;
- five sectors in St. James; and
- seven sectors in Kingston and St. Andrew.

Economic Activities by Parish

Table 1

Economic Activity ⁶⁴	Parish				
	KSA	Manchester	Clarendon	Trelawny	St. James
Agriculture	x	x	x		x
Mining and Quarrying			x		
Manufacturing	x				
Construction				x	x
Wholesale and Retail Trade	x				
Hospitality and Restaurants	x	x	x	x	x
Transport, Storage and Communications	x				x
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities					x
Private Security Companies	x				
Other Community, Social and Personal Services	x				

Although the original intention was to focus on two sectors per parish, snowballing led to three sectors in Clarendon and five in St. James. In the case of Kingston no co-operation was

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ministry of Labour and Social Security Annual Report 2008-2009

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Appendix II indicates what each economic activity includes.

received from the organizations that it was felt could give assistance in identifying the sectors. Consequently a decision was made to target sectors that were labour intensive.

Initial contact was made with employers via telephone, email and facsimile informing them of the nature of the study, its importance and the value of their input. The first contact was followed by telephone calls when necessary in order to secure a date for the interview. A total of 84 organizations were contacted and attempts were made to secure 84 interviews. In the case of one organization, representatives were contacted in four parishes to get information specific to their locations. Table 2 shows that most of the interviews were conducted in Manchester and that the overall response rate was 48.8 per cent. Although every attempt was made present information by parish, in some cases it was more convenient to group Manchester and Clarendon; St. James and Trelawny; and Kingston and St. Andrew together.

***Number of Interviews Sought and Conducted and the
Response Rate by Parish Grouping***

Table 2

Parish	Interviews Sought	Interviews Conducted	Response Rate %
KSA	28	12	42.8
St. James & Trelawny	34	13	35.3
Manchester & Clarendon	22	16	72.7
Total	84	41	48.8

As is shown in Table 3 more than half of the participants were in the hotels and restaurants, and agriculture sectors. Most of the respondents (13 or 30.2 per cent) were in the hotels and restaurants category which was followed by agriculture with 11 or 25.6 per cent. The sector with the smallest number of respondents was mining and quarrying with one or approximately two per cent.

Interviews Conducted by Parish and Industry

Table 3

Economic Activity	Number of Interviews Conducted		
	Clarendon and Manchester	St. James and Trelawny	Kingston and St. Andrew
Agriculture	9	1	1
Manufacturing	2	0	3
Construction	0	2	0
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0	0	2
Hospitality and Restaurants	4	7	2
Mining and Quarrying	1	0	0
Transport, Storage and Communication	0	1	0
Real Estate, Renting and Business Services	0	2	0
Private Security Companies	0	0	2
Other Community, Social and Personal Service Activities	0	0	2
Total	16	13	12

4.0 FINDINGS

The findings were presented in relation to the major economic activities in the parishes. It gives an indication of the types of employment opportunities which were available at the time that the research was conducted and those which were anticipated in the next two years. In addition, it documents the complaints of some employers in relation to potential and actual employees.

4.1 Agriculture

Respondents indicated that agriculture provided an opportunity for income generation in the parishes of Manchester, Clarendon, St. James, and Kingston and St. Andrew (KSA). It was identified as the predominant economic activity and an important source of employment in Manchester and Clarendon. As a result most of the interviews (52.9 per cent) were conducted with organisations in this industry. The interviewees indicated that farmers in these parishes engaged in the cultivation of a wide range of crops and rearing of various types of livestock. Two crops – sweet potato and hot pepper - were identified in St. James by the lone respondent as having the potential to provide employment. While in KSA although the respondent indicated that agriculture was not popular, it was noted that individuals could benefit from a government initiative.

All of the respondents were asked what the minimum level of education should be for persons who want to become involved in agriculture. The answers ranged from none to secondary level. Although some persons felt that it was not necessary for individuals in this industry to be literate, others felt that they should be able to read so that they can follow the instructions for the use of pesticides and other chemicals. The employment opportunities which were identified in agriculture were in the areas of livestock rearing, crop cultivation, agro-processing, greenhouse/protected agriculture and niche agricultural products.

4.1.1 Livestock Rearing

Livestock rearing was suggested as an income generating option in the parishes of Clarendon, Manchester and KSA in areas such as:

✓ *Pig Rearing in Clarendon, and Kingston and St. Andrew*

The participant in KSA stated that pig rearing was suitable to small farming while one respondent from Clarendon stated that there had been a shift from crop cultivation to pig and poultry rearing in the parish. The individual stated that:

“Clarendon over the years was mostly involved in sugar cane and the farmers there mostly concentrated on crops, but things have drastically changed. A lot of farmers now concentrate exclusively on pigs and poultries.”

The popular breeds of pigs are Large White, Duroc and Landrace. It was suggested that farmers prefer the Large White as “The white pig converts the feed better, they have larger litters... and they have no problem with back fat.”

✓ *Poultry and Goat Rearing in Clarendon*

Poultry rearing is considered to be a potentially lucrative area for Steps-to-Work participants. It was noted that participants could be channelled into raising broiler or layer. An interviewee stated that many of the major producers of poultry meat have contract farmers in Clarendon therefore broiler rearing is a feasible choice for income generation. The respondent contended that “...the big producers in the broiler industry - could be Caribbean Broilers, it can be Jamaica Broilers - have a lot of contract farmers who operate in Clarendon...” It was also noted that poultry, especially broilers, could provide a means for participants to earn an income in the short-term as it gives a turnover in about six weeks. This short time contrasts with larger livestock such as pigs and goats which were deemed to be long-term income generating activities since they take a longer time to be ready for sale. Clarendon also has poultry farmers who rear layers to produce eggs. According to one participant “...we also have egg producers. Most of the egg producers in Clarendon are small...”

There is also a goat-rearing project in Clarendon that has been made possible through the collaboration of three organisations. The respondent indicated that the target group for the project is men and women under 32 years old and that its goal is to expand goat rearing through youth involvement. The project is described as:

“...a project to develop agricultural entrepreneurship using livestock whereby each participant will be given a group of three mature does and access to service bucks.”

The participant was asked “Is it suitable for persons with limited income?” The response was “It is suitable for persons with no or low income and they have to have access to certain resources for example, land and grass for grazing.” The respondent stated that the project

was a practical economic activity as it has the potential to produce value-added products such as processed meat which includes smoking, chevron sausage and ham. Other products are goat milk, cheese, and leather craft from the skin.

✓ ***Cattle Rearing in Manchester***

The respondents in Manchester indicated that cattle rearing was popular in the parish while the one from KSA stated that there were plans to increase this activity in Jamaica. The Steps-to-Work participants could focus on the four local breeds of cattle - Jamaica Hope and Jamaica Red Pole for milk production, and Jamaican Brahman and Jamaica Black for beef. The KSA participant also said that small farmers had the opportunity to form partnerships with large farmers. In this arrangement the small farmers could sell their produce to the large establishments.

4.1.2 Production Incentive Programme in Clarendon and KSA

The respondents from Clarendon and KSA provided information on Production Incentive Programme which is a Government project. The respondent from KSA stated that the initiative was for new and small farmers. Persons can become involved with the assistance of the area's Member of Parliament. The interviewee from Clarendon said that the purpose of the Programme is to help families involved in farming to increase production and minimise losses. Participating farmers received training from and their progress was monitored by Government agencies. The focus in Clarendon was livestock rearing especially poultry while in Kingston and St. Andrew it was the cultivation of crops such as calaloo, tomato and hot pepper.

4.1.3 Crop Cultivation

The parishes of Manchester, Clarendon and St. James were identified as providing opportunities for persons to earn an income from crop cultivation such as:

✓ ***Tree Crop Cultivation in Manchester and Clarendon***

One respondent indicated that it allows farmers to use 'slightly marginal' lands as well as property not under production for food tree crop cultivation. Participating farmers received technical assistance from a Government entity. The assistance was in relation to production practises, land preparation, fertilisation and insecticide. The tree crops in Manchester included were ackee, june plum, sour sop, otaheiti apple, breadfruit, jackfruit and guava. Another activity under this project in Manchester was the Fruit Tree Resuscitation Programme. The aim of this Programme is to bring down fruit trees to a manageable size so that farmers can avoid stressful reaping. In Clarendon tree crops which were identified as providing new opportunities for farmers were avocado, citrus and mango.

✓ ***Other Crops in Manchester and St. James***

Three other crops were identified as providing viable opportunities for income generation in the parishes of Manchester and St. James. Sweet potato cultivation was identified in Manchester and St. James. Sweet potato farmers in St. James had the added benefit of assistance under a Government of Jamaica/Food Agricultural Organisation (FAO) project. While the information received suggests that sweet potato farming in Manchester was a small farmer activity, in St. James the respondent indicated that the crop was cultivated on large farms. Hot pepper was identified for St. James however as is the case with sweet potato it was said to be cultivated on large farms. The respondent indicated that the farms for both crops provided employment opportunities for labourers. Irish potato was the third crop and it was recommended in Manchester.

4.1.4 Agro-processing

Agro-processing was mentioned as a potential area for income generation in KSA and Manchester. The KSA interviewee pointed out that farmers in Mavis Bank and St. Peter's cultivate hot pepper for the agro-processing company Walkerswood. In the case of Manchester the potential crops were Irish and sweet potato. One participant lamented the waste of sweet potato which is not sold. He said

“We recognised that the minimum of 30 per cent of the sweet potato crop is wasted every year and once we have collected all of that from farmers we put it in [the] potato processor, add value to it...then minimally process sweet potato. I'm sure if you had candied sweet potato from a tin you'd enjoy it.”

Another organisation that specialises in developing value-added products from agricultural commodities supported the argument about the potential for income generation through agro-processing. The entity develops formulation and prototypes for products that can be purchased by micro, small and large enterprises. The representative stated that

“We find that over the years that micro and small [customers] are our largest clients. They come in and they buy the formulation for various products ranging from spice blends straight through to juices and fried products and smoked products, you name it. So that's one aspect of our activities, we add value to our local agricultural commodities.”

4.1.5 Greenhouse/Protected Agriculture in Manchester and Clarendon

Respondents indicated that greenhouse or protected agriculture was being practised in Clarendon and Manchester. One participant explained that protected agriculture is a method whereby the plants are cultivated in a controlled environment where they are sheltered from rain and pests. This results in the plants being less prone to disease and humidity and results in less pesticides being used.

All of the respondents indicated that this type of technology is not economically feasible for persons with limited income since it is expensive. An institution stated that the Government

has put programmes in place to make greenhouses more affordable, such as access to loans through PC Banks and credit unions. Information received also indicated that the programme includes government subsidy of up to 90 per cent of the cost to set up greenhouses for farmers who are part of the Manchester Cluster Project.

One participant indicated that greenhouse in its pure form (not protected agriculture) is prohibitively expensive and very technical. In both parishes the responses suggested that the crops that were being cultivated in greenhouses were vegetables such as iceberg lettuce and sweet peppers. The crops cultivated using protected agriculture tend to have a more uniform shape and there is a ready market for them in supermarkets and hotels. One participant indicated that his organisation was

“...distributing some things to Sandals, SuperClubs and in recent times we have made contact with one of the new Spanish chains that will be requiring produce by September.”

The respondent indicated that the crops which were most in demand by the hotels were sweet peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, and to a lesser extent cucumbers and irish potatoes.

4.1.6 Agricultural Products for Niche Markets

Persons in Clarendon and Manchester have several agriculture based niche markets options to explore. Organic farming is one such option and it is said to be suitable for protected agriculture since chemical products such as pesticides cannot be used for the cultivation of organic crops. One participant in the survey was asked whether organic farming is economically viable for small farmers and the answer was to the affirmative. He stated that in South and Central America there is a structure in place to work with rural poor families who are illiterate. The interviewee lamented that in Jamaica there is not enough trained personnel. The individual went on to express concerns about the productivity levels of Jamaican farmers. This respondent stated that “...we don't have many farmers who are producing at optimum level[s].”

Another respondent indicated however that establishing organic farming in Jamaica could be daunting as the farmers would have to use virgin soil or soil which has not been exposed to chemicals for a number of years. This individual stated that the water would also have to be free of chemicals and that no pesticide could be used. The view was expressed that non-reliance on pesticides would be challenging since many Jamaican farmers depend on chemicals to control pests and diseases.

The information received from the respondents suggested that there is a local market for organic farm products. One respondent indicated that there is a great demand for these products by local hotels and supermarkets. Some of the crops that can be cultivated to capitalise on this market are ginger, peppers, pimento, sour-sop, ackee and herbs. He contended that “...the hotel industry requires organic foods and that's imported...” The

respondent also stated that businesses such as Superplus, Hi-Lo, Strawberry Hill, Half Moon and Sandals have expressed an interest in buying local organic products.

Agricultural products for niche markets that are not related to organic agriculture were also identified. They include crops such as mushrooms and raspberries in Manchester. In the case of Clarendon bee production was highlighted due to the high demand for honey and breadfruit for which there is an export market. Several types of poultry were also said to have niche market potential. They include quails, pheasants, ducks, ducklings and turkeys. In support of this argument one of the respondents indicated knowledge of "...one man in Clarendon who raised a lot of quails and he has a nice little market." The same respondent also stated "...turkey can almost be classified as a niche market because it is seasonal. We import baby turkey and grow them."

4.2 Mining and Quarrying

The lone company in this category indicated that it requires primarily skilled labour. The representative stated "The critical skill for us would be welding, pipefitting, millwrights, machinists and electrical installation work." At the time that the interview was conducted the respondent stated that the company was planning to expand and that 200 additional workers would be needed in the construction phase. An additional 100 new jobs would be created after the construction for highly skilled persons such as administrative personnel and process operators. The representative stated that the organisation was not experiencing a shortage of skills and would be able to access the skills needed after the expansion. This is as a result of the relationship that it has with a training institution that provides the required certified workers.

Information received indicated that although the organisation needed highly skilled labour for its operation, it also employed unskilled persons from the surrounding communities. The respondent stated that

"All our projects are deliberately set out to employ as many unskilled persons as possible as part of our community outreach effort so yes we provide unskilled jobs."

Some of the jobs that are provided through these projects are in relation to beautification projects and drain cleaning.

4.3 Manufacturing

Two of the manufacturing companies were from Manchester and three were from KSA. The two representatives from Manchester indicated that they employed a large number of unskilled labourers. They indicated that they anticipated a demand in the future for skilled workers such as Machine and Oven Operators, Millwrights and Mixers.

The educational requirements for workers in the manufacturing sector ranged from a minimum of high school education to a maximum of vocational training. KSA respondents

stated that they hired workers with a minimum of HEART Trust/NTA Level 1 certification while one participant in Manchester said that it was Level 4. The other respondent from Manchester said that the skilled workers could be from a vocational institution or a technical high school. No preference was given to graduates of vocational training institutions to fill vacancies.

A participant from KSA noted that the problem with the workers is education, "People cannot read and write." The view was expressed that there is a need for more highly educated workers especially Technical Engineers and it was pointed out that some people have the qualifications but lack the experience required. As a result they have to be apprenticed so that they can learn the skill.

Attempts were made to identify the fastest growing areas in the manufacturing sector. Consequently participants were asked "In your opinion what is the fastest growing area in the manufacturing sector?" One respondent from KSA stated that it was agro-processing as it was a "...good market for export because there are people in the Diaspora who like you know the sauces, the spices, the juices. You know, they do very well at export, plus it is consumed locally as well."

4.4 Construction

Construction was deemed to be important in St. James and Trelawny due to the number of current and planned activities in these parishes. The respondents indicated that with the increase of activity in construction, it was possible that employers would have to look outside of these parishes to satisfy the demand for workers.

The information received indicated that the construction activities were concentrated in the private sector. According to one respondent:

"A lot of commercial is going on. I don't think you have a lot of room for government development because you had some for the last four years but that was in schools. Apart from schools, I can't think of anything more...mainly private, commercial."

Most of the construction activity was linked directly to the building of hotels. Respondents indicated that there was also the potential for residential construction. One participant said that "...for the past seven years most of the schemes have been done by construction companies in collaboration with NHT."

Four occupations were identified in the construction industry - labourers, masons, carpenters and steel men. No skill level requirement was stipulated for labourers. One respondent said, "The labourer would need none. The labourer would need to have the ability to be supervised, trustworthy, honest, hardworking and overall good work ethic." There is no skill stipulation for carpenters and steel men and a number of the workers are taught the skills

over time on the construction sites. In relation to masons, the employers indicated that there were two different categories of masons - Level 1 and Level 2. A Level 1 mason needs supervision while the Level 2 can work without supervision. Questions were also asked about the opportunities for full time and seasonal employment in this industry. One respondent said, "There is no full time opportunity on a construction project." The individual stated that labour is only needed for the duration of the construction project.

4.5 Wholesale and Retail Trade

The two participating organisations in this category were located in Kingston and St. Andrew. Both of the companies stated that most of their staff was workers with low skill levels. One respondent stated, "What we are looking for is somebody who has the right demeanour and the right attitude. We don't care if you have never worked before, we prefer to train you." Another participant supported at least one of these sentiments as he indicated that the right attitude is an important attribute.

Some of the workers which the employers indicated that they needed were janitors, cashiers, forklift operators and landscapers as well as accounting and computing staff. The information received suggested that forklift handlers and landscapers were in short supply. In fact it was noted that it was more lucrative for landscapers to freelance than to be attached to an organisation. The participants stated that the demand for persons with accounting and computing skills was increasing. The argument was proffered that computing skills were in higher demand as the society was becoming more technologically advanced.

4.6 Hospitality and Restaurants

Personnel from 10 hotels, two tourist attractions and one restaurant were interviewed in Clarendon, Manchester, St. James, KSA and Trelawny. One of the hotels was located in Clarendon and its focus was health tourism. It was small and had no plans for expansion. Two were in Manchester and the representatives indicated that their focus was on nature, adventure and people tourism as well business (corporate) and private functions. Seven of the hotels were in St. James and their emphasis was on resort tourism and the two were in KSA indicated that they had a predominantly business clientele. The two tourist attractions were in Trelawny and the lone restaurant was located in Clarendon.

4.6.1 Hotels

The hoteliers indicated that they employed a wide cross section of workers and as a result the entry qualifications varied however, the general basic requirement was CXC passes. The employment opportunities in the industry included:

✓ Housekeeping

The hoteliers in Manchester and St. James indicated their dissatisfaction with the level of housekeepers that they have been getting from vocational training institutions. Respondents

contended that there is a deficiency in the way that this category of persons is taught in training facilities. They stated that room aids had to be taught basic things such as how to make beds on the job. One respondent from Manchester said “I have to be training them from scratch how to make a bed because they haven’t learnt that yet...” The consensus in St. James was that Jamaican room attendants should be trained in the practises that are being promoted worldwide. One of the St. James hoteliers asserted that room attendants should be taught about green tourism. The individual stated “...with green tourism you try to minimise your use of chemicals.”

✓ **Wait Staff**

As was the case with Housekeepers, hoteliers in St. James and KSA expressed the need for wait staff that is trained to international standards. This category includes waiters, waitresses and bartenders. One respondent from St. James said, “Yes, there are times when you find that there is a shortage and again it’s because in order to get one person sometimes we have to interview ten...”

A representative from KSA said that there is a problem finding good bartenders. The interviewee said sometimes

“...it’s a challenge because some of them were used to just serving ordinary drinks. They’re not used to getting more involved in the mixology type of drink. They’re more able to serve like Pepsi and Appleton like the roadside bars but in the hotels industry you have to be able to mix all sort of cocktail drinks.”

✓ **Gardeners**

Hoteliers in Manchester and KSA indicated that they had difficulty filling vacancies for ground staff such as gardeners. The interviewee from Manchester said “we just need some gardeners who understand plants, clipping, budding, grafting, cutting and fertilising.” The respondent further stated that “The company needs skilled gardeners, hence it should be recognisable that it is not any and anybody who can make a plant green and flowers bloom.”

✓ **Customer Service Staff**

The lack of competent customer staff was cited as another problem by hoteliers in KSA and Manchester. The respondents in KSA stated that persons who are recruited to work as front desk staff should have at least a first degree. One hotel in Manchester stated that its solution to the problem was to provide on-the-job training and practical experience. The respondent went on to say

“Now if we are taking someone for the front desk, we take someone who has been HEART certified, maybe someone who has done customer service at a bank or government agency and train them in terms of hospitality.”

✓ **Foreign Languages**

The hoteliers in St. James and KSA indicated that there is a great demand for persons who speak foreign languages. They stressed the industry's need for persons who speak more than one language so that they can take advantage of the development of the tourism market worldwide. A participant from KSA noted that "As everything become[s] globalised you want persons at your front desk to speak French, Chinese, Japanese; and these are now becoming an asset for employees to have." A respondent from St. James said, "You have a lot of Spanish hotels with the potential for further expansion. They do bring a lot of Europeans other than Spanish. You have German, Italian, Dutch..." Another St. James hotelier indicated that

"Skills that are in high demand I would say is language skills. In order of priority - Spanish, German, French, Chinese and Japanese. Chinese and Japanese are really linked to the future."

✓ ***Culinary Skills***

The hoteliers in Manchester and St. James stated that they were experiencing difficulty getting certain categories of kitchen staff such as pastry, executive and sous chefs locally. One respondent from Manchester asserted,

"You can always get line staff from HEART Trust; we don't have a problem there. But say you need a sous chef, you either have to go overseas or go to the Caribbean and search for these people."

This was corroborated by two respondents from KSA. One stated that "...certificate one or two and your foot is in the door in terms of the kitchen." The other asserted that there was difficulty finding executive and sous chefs locally. The individual argued that Jamaican chefs receive their training at a certain level and for limited types of cuisine. It was felt that the Jamaican chefs needed wider exposure in the preparation of foreign dishes to make them more marketable.

A St. James respondent noted that,

"We still have to be getting work permits because we don't have the number of highly trained, highly skilled chefs the industry requires. So you find that we do have a lot of expatriate chefs. I am talking about Executive Chefs."

✓ ***Water Sports/Yachting***

The hoteliers in St. James expressed the need for persons to supervise water sports. They argued that with the expansion in mariner management, the demand for a number of skills has increased. It was noted that trained persons were needed to supervise popular activities such as yachting, deep sea fishing and scuba diving. The respondents pointed out that the expansion of yachting in Jamaica could result in the demand for people with certain skills. "The whole thing of taking care of these boats, piloting them, crewing them, it is a lucrative job." Some hoteliers expressed difficulty in filling some positions such as water sports

manager. One individual contended, "It took me two years to find a water sports manager, which should not be." Additionally there is also a need for trained lifeguards.

✓ ***Niche Market in Tourism***

A hotelier in Manchester indicated conferencing as a niche market in the hospitality industry which involves the use of public relations skills, pricing and hospitality. The interviewee noted that

"Conferencing is becoming a whole area so we need people to work in the conferencing room with a theatre style setting or a herringbone setting, that kind of thing. You need to know what I am talking about."

✓ ***Anticipated Demand***

The participants were asked for which occupations they foresaw an increase in demand. Representatives of the hospitality industry in Manchester, St. James and KSA identified areas of anticipated demand in the next three years. It should be noted however that the interviews were conducted prior to the global economic crisis. Both of the respondents from Manchester stated that they were planning to increase the number of rooms. They claimed that this would provide additional employment opportunities for housekeeping and wait staff. KSA also indicated an anticipated increase in the demand for housekeepers and wait staff as well as salespersons and engineers. The participants also indicated that recently there has been a demand for graphic designers by the hospitality sector. Hoteliers have not traditionally demanded this occupation.

The St. James respondents noted that recent developments could result in a demand for new categories of workers. They noted that the construction of luxury condominiums could lead to a need for butlers. They indicated that the butlers would have to be highly trained and noted that no local institution is equipped to supply this category of workers so it is likely that expatriates will be employed. It was also anticipated that landscapers will be in high demand.

Casino gambling was another development which the St. James hoteliers expected to impact the local hospitality industry. The respondents stated that its introduction will result in the demand for new occupations. An interviewee stated

"Very high priced jobs will open up...The models that have been utilised elsewhere is that casinos have to rely on imported labour until locals acquire the skills to do it. [If] Our training begins well in advance, then we have a cadre of skills to draw on."

The interviewees indicated that the introduction of casinos on a wide scale would also impact live entertainment. This could result in an increased demand for dancers, dance instructors and choreographers. It was felt that measures should be put in place to deal with this anticipated demand. A participant noted that,

“We will have to envisage it before and put together the means of training whether at the Edna Manley School or elsewhere. Assess the demand and see if we can supply it for example, in certain skills such as stand-up comedy, stage entertainment of various kinds, a reggae band, provide a sort of sophisticated entertainment that the rest of the world is accustomed to.”

4.6.2 Tourist Attractions

The two tourist attractions which agreed to participate in the survey were located in Trelawny. They will be referred to as Attraction 1 and Attraction 2. Attraction 1 expressed the need for qualified tour guides. The representative stated, “We have problems getting quality workers as tour guides.” The respondent lamented the lack of basic knowledge of Jamaica’s history and geography. Additionally, it was declared that local tour guides should be trained to international standards and it should be mandatory for them to speak more than one language. It was felt that this improvement could have a positive impact on the tourism of the country. Attraction 2 which is into heritage tourism expressed the need for amateur actors to do role playing. Persons who are employed in this capacity are required to do dramatisation of previous and current Jamaican culture. The representative indicated that persons who are recruited to fill these vacancies are trained on-the-job.

4.6.3 Restaurant

The only restaurant in the survey was asked how its growth has influenced the occupations that are needed. The response was

“Right here is a manufacturing plant, right? And then the other spin off to it is the retail outlets. So the occupations that are mostly needed in the retail is counter clerk, sales clerk, bakers and so on. Say, if we have a new store opening, then you know that those positions will be needed at the retail level.”

The representatives also indicated that the company has contract farmers who supply all of the agricultural produce that it needs.

4.7 Transport, Storage and Communication

The representative of one organisation from St. James was in this category. It is affiliated to the hospitality sector and its clients include traditional tour operators who purchase airline seats with the intention of offering vacation packages. The organisation is responsible for airline transfers and provides tours across Jamaica. This interview was conducted after the global financial crisis had begun and the respondent indicated that the organisation was feeling its effects as a number of vacation packages had been cancelled.

Information supplied by the respondent indicated that most of the organisation’s work force comprised self employed persons or independent contractor. The skills that the organisation requires include customer service representatives, electricians, bodywork personnel, air conditioning technicians, mechanics and drivers. According to the representative the

organisation also needs persons who speak foreign languages and they are usually recruited from overseas. Opportunities for unskilled workers were also identified. They include janitorial duties and persons to clean vehicles.

4.8 Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities

The businesses which have been included in this category are a call/contact centre and a web-based marketing solution from St. James. The call/contact centre is based on work which is outsourced by multi-national companies to cost effective or expert locations. The web-based marketing solution entity provides services to its clients via the Internet. Both of the companies in this category were located in St. James.

✓ ***Call/Contact Centre***

The representative of the call centre stated that the organization was experiencing difficulty finding competent workers. The respondent lamented the lack of readiness of applicants for employment. It was stated that a large number of persons had to be interviewed to get the required staff. After the recruitment exercise the interviewee stated that the organisation had to spend thousands of dollars to train the selected individuals.

It was noted that Jamaica has several strengths which could facilitate the expansion of this type of business. These include its proximity to the United States of America (USA), the telecommunications infrastructure and the fact that the people speak English. One possible area of expansion which was identified was a service for USA nationals, which allows them to consult a medical practitioner via telephone for advice on medication among other things. Growth in call/contact centre could provide several employment opportunities.

A Development Executive for the company provided a list of competencies which are needed in order for persons to excel in this industry (See Appendix III). The competencies are at two levels - the introductory level (Level 1) and a more advanced stage (Level 2). Some of the competencies are customer service, voice and speech, data operations, speed typing, and sales and marketing. Voice and speech were said to be very important in the industry as persons calling from overseas need to understand what the contact centre employee is saying. Persons working in this area also need to speak English fluently. The Development Executive suggested that the list of competencies could be used to develop the curriculum for a training programme.

✓ ***Web-based Marketing Solutions***

The company provides a wide range of products to small businesses and it has a foreign based clientele. The organization is involved in the development of business cards, letterheads, t-shirts, lawn signs, car door magnets and web pages. The information received indicates that the organisation employs different types of workers (occupational groups) who are expected to have good problem solving skills.

Some of the occupations which are demanded by this company are,

“Design sales and service specialists for which the local term is customer reps, that’s our biggest demand. In order to provide marketing solutions for our clients, we need marketing consultants as well. Copywriters, because that group is growing...”

The representative indicated that there was a growing need for graphic designers. They are employed in its creative department. Their role is explained in the following quotation.

“If you want to do web pages and you are not sure what to do for your logo, business concepts and identity. If you give us a[n] idea of what you want to do say a salon, beauty shop or real estate; creative services department can assist in designing your logo, your business products and present that to you.”

When asked about the skills and qualification needed to work with the organization. The representative said that customer, service representatives “...have to demonstrate a high level of customer service” and be able to work “...with minimum supervisory intervention.” They are also required to show a high level of professionalism, be articulate, have good diction and have at least intermediate computer skills. “Copywriters and graphic designers...need to have some training background in advertising/marketing...” It was also stated that knowledge of Photoshop and Adobe would be an asset.

In relation to qualifications, customer service representatives are required to have four to six CXC subjects as well as good customer service skills. The other groups such as copywriters, graphic designers, and marketing consultants are considered to be professionals and the minimum qualification required is a first (bachelor) degree.

4.9 Private Security Companies

The two private security companies which participated provide armed and unarmed security guards as well as guards with dogs. When asked about entry requirements one of the participants noted,

“The good old security guards was like a watchman type person right, where there was really no requirement for academic achievements. You could take [a] man off the street as a watchman and put him to watch a place. We not into that anymore...”

The respondent added that security guards have to be functionally literate and must be able to write their names.

The entry requirements for both companies were different. One entity (company A) indicated it had a relationship with a training institution to train its security guards. The representative stated that in order to become an unarmed security guard an individual guard has to complete the training course and achieve at least Level 1 certification. The other respondent (Company B) indicated that applicants have to sit an entry test which includes English, Mathematics,

Comprehension and General Knowledge. The pass mark is 70 per cent. Successful persons are sent on a two weeks training programme before they begin to work. Company B asserted that it liaises with institutions to provide training for supervisors. The respondent indicated that specialised training is provided for the security guards who work in the hospitality sector especially in relation to customer service. Additional training in aviation security is provided for those who work at the ports.

Although the private security industry is labour intensive, Company A noted that there has been an increase in the use of electronic security technology. The respondent stated that electronic security is cheaper than the guards. It was noted that while clients have shifted to electronic security in some cases where it is practical, it has not made security guards obsolete.

4.10 Other Community, Social and Personal Service Activities

Two organisations from KSA participated in the survey. Both of the companies stated that applicants should have basic literacy skills. One of the companies indicated that it prefers people with secondary education however many persons cannot meet this requirement. This has resulted in both companies changing the recruitment emphasis to those who can read and write. They indicated that the recruits need to be able to understand the instructions on the chemical bottles which are used on the job. None of the companies had established a relationship with a training institution although they expressed a willingness to collaborate with one.

Both of the companies were asked if there has been a change in the demand for existing occupations. They indicated that there was an increase in demand for carpenters, painters and “persons who sew at a high level”. In addition, Company A indicated that there was a shortage of male employees to be handymen. While one respondent stated that there was no decline in the demand for any of the occupations, the other companies stated that there had been a reduction in the demand for janitors. The respondents were also asked about niche areas in the sector. One individual highlighted plumbing and air conditioning services as areas which could provide good employment opportunities for persons who want to work on their own.

4.11 Partnership with Training Institutions

The respondents were asked about forming partnerships with local training institutions in order to get the skills required. One respondent indicated that a training institution had approached his organization with a proposal for them to forge a partnership. According to the participant a document was drafted two years ago and up to the time that the interview was conducted there had been no further action. The respondent saw this as a waste of time and very frustrating.

The other participants did not have a relationship with local training institutions. The respondent however lamented that persons who claimed to be trained in the use of computers could not execute basic tasks such as cut and paste in Microsoft Word. Additionally the view was expressed that problem solving should be included in customer service training.

4.12 General Complaints of Employers

Four of the employers from Manchester indicated that they had problems with potential employees. One respondent complained about the way that persons dress for interviews. "The attire that some of them wear to an interview...along with the bashment hairstyle." Another participant lamented, "Their clothes [are] wrong, their social approach is wrong...they need finishing." This finishing refers to a course which would teach them about grooming, how to behave at an interview and the right attitude to work. There were also complaints about how job seekers perform during an interview.

"They need to teach them interview skills as well. They need to know how to speak to people, how to converse and how to sell themselves because the letters that you get and the persons that come in don't match."

Concern was also expressed about the performance of new recruits on the job. A respondent gave the example of

"...persons coming with three CXC subjects including accounting and say that they are computer literate. They don't know anything about accounting. Even if they have done it at school, they are unable to transfer it to the work environment."

It was argued that people who do business courses should be taught basic things like how to operate the telephone.

5.0 DATA INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The persons interviewed did not provide entry requirements for all of the categories of workers that they identified. The information received was classified into four groups. This information was used to assist in the identification of the sectors with the most employment opportunities for the Steps-to-Work participants. It was also used to determine the occupations which are currently in high demand, and the economic activities which could result in demand for new occupations in the future.

5.1 Entry Requirements for the Economic Activities

The information that was supplied by the organisations led to the classification of the entry requirements in four categories – nothing, basic literacy, unskilled and skilled. Some of the organisations indicated that people do not have to be literate to gain employment in the industry and this is classified as nothing. Employers referred to basic literacy as being able to read but not having passes in external examinations such as CXC and who were not required to do an entry test. These persons can read and write well enough however, to follow written

instructions. Unskilled in this context refers persons who have passes in CXC. The employers who stated that they wanted skilled workers indicated that these persons should be certified as having certain competencies for example, a degree or HEART Trust/NTA qualification.

As is shown in Table 4 Agriculture had the lowest entry qualification which ranged from nothing to basic literacy. Only Agriculture and Construction indicated that some workers did not have to meet a minimum entry requirement. Three sectors indicated that they only recruit skilled workers. Manufacturing had the widest recruitment range as the companies indicated that they employ persons with basic literacy as well as unskilled and skilled workers. No information was received on the entry requirements for the Wholesale and Retail Trade category.

Entry Education/Skill Level by Economic Activity

Table 4

Economic Activity	Nothing	Basic Literacy	Unskilled	Skilled
Agriculture	x	x		
Mining and Quarrying				x
Manufacturing		x	x	x
Construction	x			x
Hospitality and Restaurants			x	x
Transport, Storage and Communications				x
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities				x
Private Security Companies		x		
Other Community, Social and Personal Services		x		

5.2 Employment Opportunities

The potential of the sectors to absorb Steps-to-Work participants varied. Although Mining and Quarrying was a major economic activity in Clarendon and the company indicated that there were plans for expansion, it had limited ability to employ Steps-to-Work participants. This is due to the organisation's need for a relatively small force of highly skilled workers. At the time that the interview was conducted it was not anticipated that there would be a shortage of skills after the expansion. Since the conclusion of the fieldwork this organisation has been negatively impacted by the global financial crisis and several posts were made redundant. Another entity which was negatively impacted by the crisis was the Transport, Storage and Communications organisation as tours booked by tourists were being cancelled.

Other economic activities which seemed to have limited employment prospects were Manufacturing; Construction; Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities; Private Security Companies and Other Community, Social and Personal Services. Although the entry requirements for the Manufacturing sector ranged from basic literacy to skilled, the organisations which participated did not have large work forces and were not experiencing labour shortage. In relation to construction, the employment prospects seemed dim as this sector does not provide full time employment. The period of employment is dictated by the duration of the construction project.

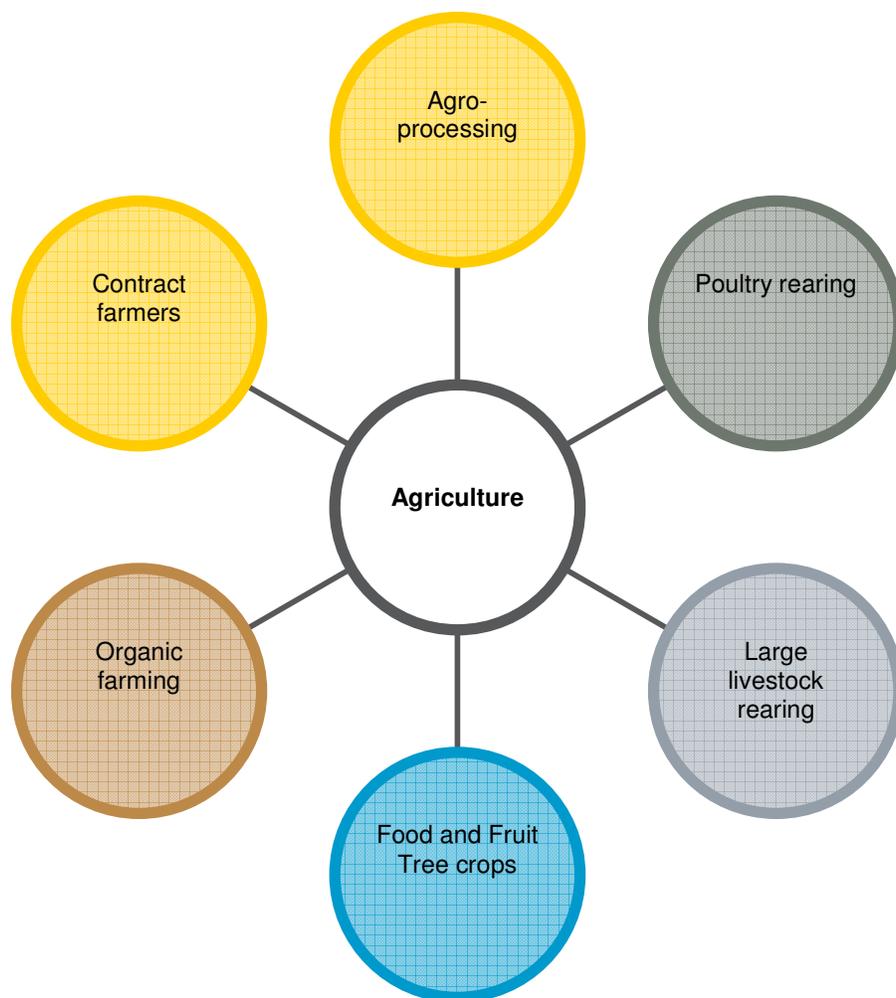
The two organisations which were in the Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities were involved in different types of business activities and required different types of skills. The Call/Contact Centre seemed to require lower skill levels and the information received gives the impression that HEART Trust/NTA could develop a programme for the certification of its employees. This type of activity could be suitable for Steps-to-Work participants although it was unclear whether it would be practical to expect employment opportunities in this area. The web-based solution company seemed to need highly qualified and skilled staff. This type of employment would be unsuitable for persons who are a part of the Steps-to-Work programme. Private Security Companies and Other Community, Social and Personal Services sectors seem to be suitable for persons in the Steps-to-Work programme as they are:

- labour intensive;
- help their employees to access training; and
- do not have stringent entry requirements.

Several potential income-generating activities were identified. They include employment opportunities in the Agriculture and Hospitality sectors. As is shown in Figure 1, there is a wide array of employment opportunities in agriculture. Steps-to-Work participants can be employed to an individual or company or they can work for themselves. All of the options in agriculture lend themselves to self-employment. An individual can for example, become a contract farmer for a hotel, supermarket or agro-processing plant. The most important thing is to be a reliable supplier. Organic farming in Jamaica is underdeveloped however this area could prove to be challenging as the farming practises are different from what is usually practised locally. Poultry and livestock farming can provide regular income. Additionally food and fruit tree crop cultivation can provide agricultural produce for both the local and export markets. Steps-to-Work could explore the potential of agriculture in all of the parishes.

Employment Opportunities in Agriculture

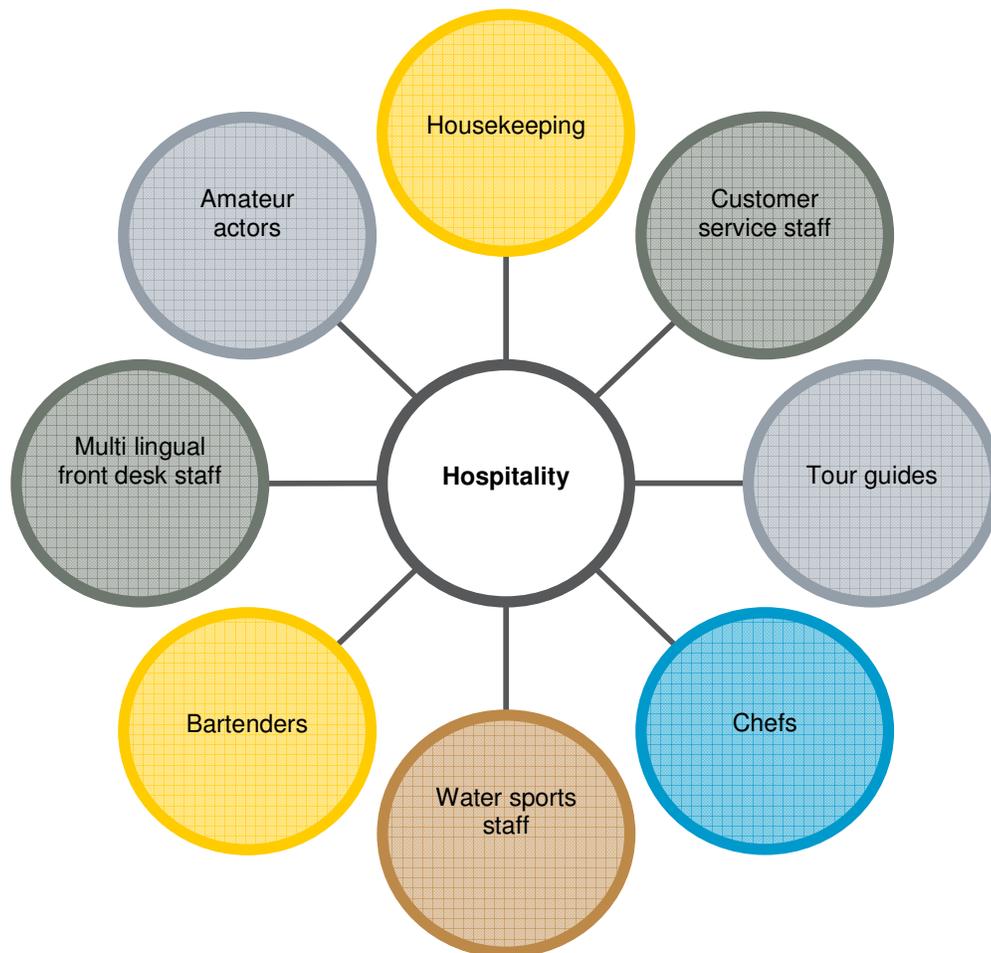
Figure 1



The hospitality sector has a wide range of employment opportunities (See Figure 2). Most of the options are in hotels and only two were in relation to attractions. The Steps-to-Work Programme could consider channelling participants in Kingston and St. Andrew, Manchester and St. James into housekeeping, customer service, bartending and training as chefs. Multi lingual front desk staff was not considered to be appropriate as the minimum qualification is a first degree. In relation to water sports staff, the minimum qualifications were not given. The attractions indicated that they need the services of tour guides and amateur actors. Steps-to-Work could explore the suitability of these options for its participants in Trelawny.

Employment Opportunities in the Hospitality Sector

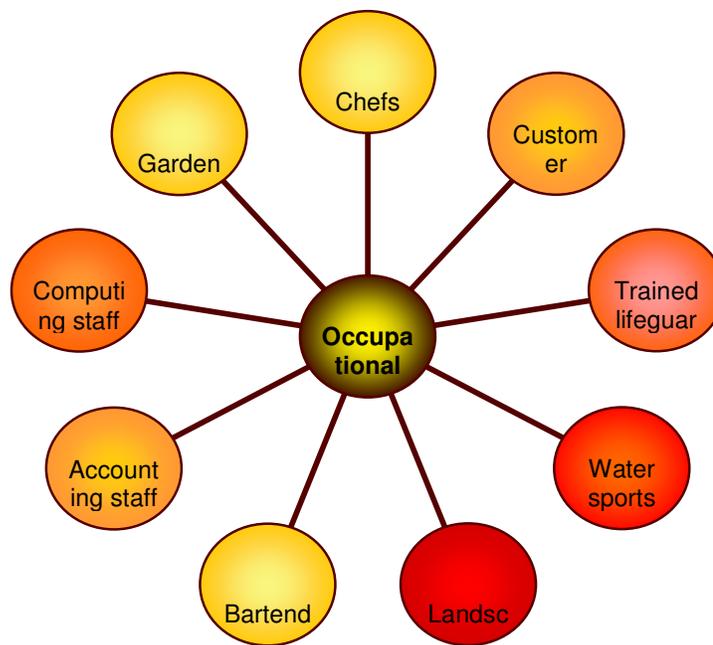
Figure 2



The employers indicated that there were several areas of high demand and they are presented in Figure 3. Based on the information received on the entry requirements, the areas which are considered to be appropriate for Steps-to-Work to pursue are bartending, gardeners, chefs and customer service personnel⁶⁵. The entry requirements for landscapers, lifeguards, and accounting and computing staff were not provided however they could be explored.

Occupations in High Demand

Figure 3

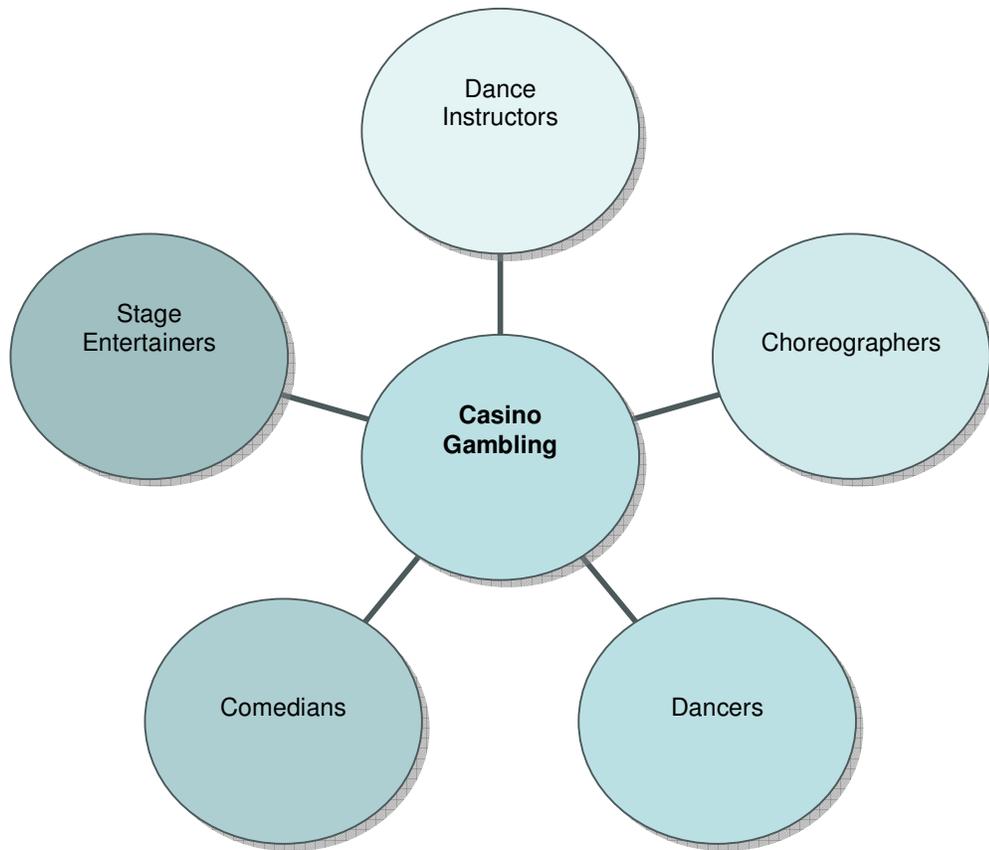


⁶⁵ This recommendation does not include multi lingual front desk staff that would require a minimum of a first degree.

Two areas of the hospitality sector were identified as having the potential to create additional employment in the future. They are casino gambling and hotels. Casino gambling was mentioned in relation to St. James and Clarendon. Figure 4 indicates the occupations which it is anticipated will be associated with this economic activity however the entry qualification for each occupation is unclear. Despite this, Steps-to-Work could explore the feasibility of training persons in these areas.

Anticipated Demand in Casino Gambling

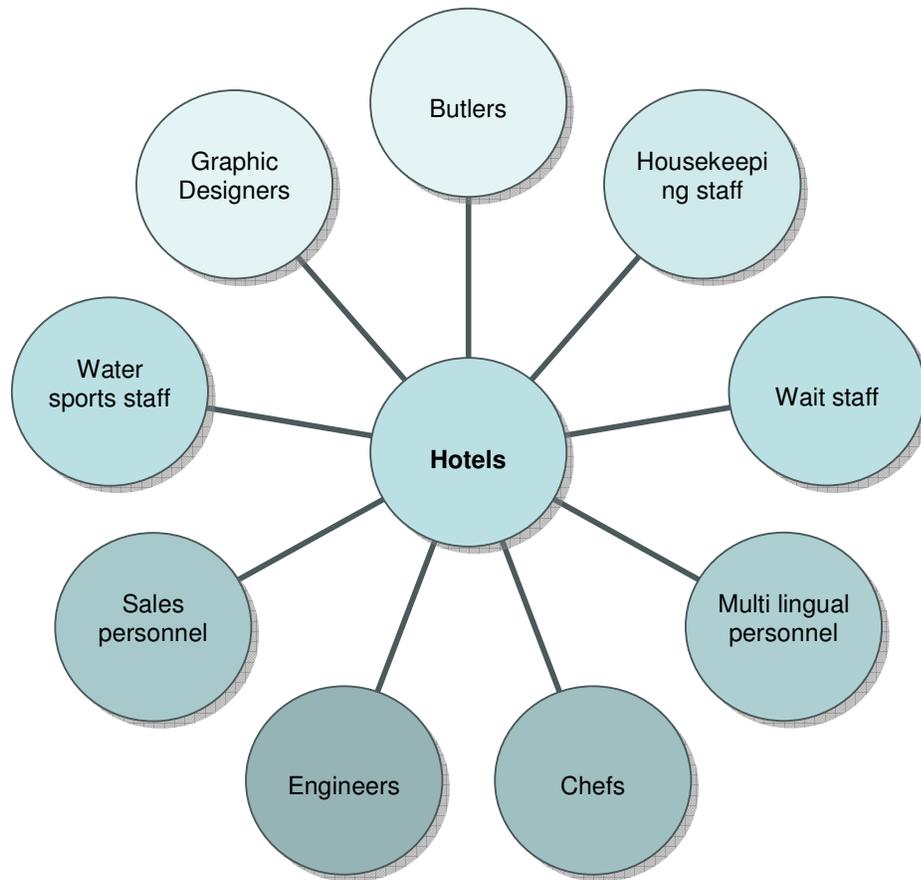
Figure 4



Respondents in the parishes of KSA, Manchester and St. James identified a total of nine groups of workers for whom they anticipated an increased demand (See Figure 5). Only two of the groups of workers – housekeeping and wait staff - are considered to be suitable for Steps-to-Work participants. Highly qualified and trained persons are required for most of the other occupations consequently, they are not considered to be suitable for Steps-to-Work.

Anticipated Demand for Hotels

Figure 5



As is shown in Figure 6, a number of income generating opportunities were identified for persons who are interested in self employment. All of the agricultural activities which were mentioned in Figure 1 except agro-processing can be pursued by individuals in the Steps-to-Work Programme. Agro-processing is not recommended as it would need a large capital outlay. The other areas which could be explored are plumbing, air conditioning technician, mechanic, electrician, body work and landscaping especially since HEART Trust/NTA trains people in most of these areas.

Employment Opportunities for Entrepreneurs

Figure 6



5.3 Workplace Readiness

Many of the employers had several general complaints about actual and prospective employees. If Steps-to-Work is to be effective it has to ensure that its participants are properly prepared for the workplace. Some of the issues which its workplace readiness component should include are application letter and résumé writing; general deportment and basic computer literacy. Persons participating in the Programme should be taught how to draft job application letters and résumés that accurately reflect their work history and experience. In terms of their general deportment they should be taught how to dress for interviews and work, grooming and interview etiquette. During the interviews it was stated that more computer literate people are needed consequently, they should also be taught basic computer skills.

Several of the persons who represented companies in the hospitality sector complained about housekeeping, wait and customer service staff. Emphasis should be placed on training housekeeping staff to make the beds in the way that is acceptable to hoteliers. A green tourism component could also be added to the training programme which places less importance on the use of chemicals and teaches them alternative methods. Steps-to-Work participants being trained as wait staff especially bartenders should be given wider exposure. Attempts could also be made to identify the specific problems that the hoteliers have with their customer service staff and special effort could be made to address them when the Steps-to-Work participants are being trained. Additionally, the participants who are interested in working in this area could be encouraged to learn a second language.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Steps to Work can effectively invest in human capital and promote self sufficiency by focusing on the employment opportunities in each parish. This will ensure training in areas that are in line with the needs of the labour market and increase the chances of participants becoming gainfully employed. The participants in turn will be empowered as this approach will help them to gain control over their lives while providing short term help and facilitating long term development.

Since there was a wide range of economic activities in each parish, an attempt was made to narrow the focus to the major ones. Some of the major sectors such as agriculture and hospitality seemed to have the potential to provide a large number of employment opportunities. Others such as Construction, and Mining and Quarrying seemed to be more limited in scope. Entry positions were identified that Steps-to-Work participants could be directed towards. Information has also been provided which can be used to help the participants make long-term career plans. In addition, there is the possibility to train persons to fill positions which are expected to come on stream in the future.

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APPENDIX I
GENERIC INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What are the skills that your organisation uses the most?
2. Are persons in these areas required on a full time basis?
3. Is there a shortage of some categories of workers?
4. Have you been able to get the staff needed from the local labour market?
5. Do you have employment opportunities for people with low skill levels or the unskilled?
6. What are the skills for which you foresee an increase in demand in the next five years?
7. What are the skills for which you foresee a decrease in demand in the next five years?
8. Do you plan to expand your operations?
9. Do you know of any niche market related to your industry which could provide employment for people from your area who are unskilled or have low skill levels?

APPENDIX II

DESCRIPTION OF THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Agriculture	The cultivation and harvesting of crops, animal rearing, and the production of production of crop and animal products.
Mining and Quarrying	The extraction of metal ores as well as materials used predominantly in construction.
Manufacturing	The production, processing and transformation of materials into new components.
Construction	General and specialised construction activities such as site preparation, the construction of entire buildings or parts of buildings, civil engineering and building installation.
Wholesale and Retail	The wholesale and retail of all types of goods and the delivery of services.
Hospitality and Restaurants	Organisations which provide furnished accommodation and additional services such as food and beverage, parking, laundry, recreation as well as convention and conference facilities. For example hotels, villas, guest houses, restaurants and fast food outlets. It also includes tourist attractions such as historical places, buildings and structures.
Transport, Storage and Communications	The provision of passenger or freight transport by rail, road, water or air as well as post and courier activities as well as telecommunications.
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	All forms of real estate and business activities (except private security) including the rental of machines and equipment without operator, rental of personal and household goods, computer and related service and research and development activities.
Private Security Companies	Investigation and surveillance activities, guard and other protective services for individuals and property.
Other Community, Social and Personal Services	Includes activities of sewage and refuse disposal such as the collection and treatment of garbage and other waste from household, industrial or commercial units by non-government agencies.

APPENDIX III

LIST OF COMPETENCIES FOR THE CALL/CONTACT CENTRE

Level 1

1. Craft Entrepreneurial Strategy
2. Introduction to the Hospitality
3. Basic Computing
4. Introduction to customer service
5. Communications
6. Voice and Speech Training
7. Call Centre Industry
8. Grammar
9. United States of America Culture, Geography and Society: Communicating with Americans
10. Speed Typing
11. Mathematics-Computation
12. Professionalism
13. Career Development
14. Introduction

Level 2

1. Call Centre Industry
2. Data Operations
3. Career Development
4. United States of America Culture, Geography and Society: Communicating with Americans
5. Customer Service
6. Speed Typing
7. Business Management
8. Voice and Speech Training
9. Telecommunications
10. Introduction to Travel Industry (Airline Reservations)
11. Hotel Industry (Hotel Reservations)
12. Health Care and Insurance Service
13. Sales and Marketing (Up selling)