CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

(1) Evidently, from an examination of the sample population responses about the TNA process, it has been revealed that training needs assessment is successfully being conducted in Belize. Accordingly, a proper foundation for the TNA process is established because of several factors:

- Overall, MOEYS is informed about the course of action when TNA is conducted.
- Most of the stakeholders are well informed about the key areas of the TNA process.
- Cost estimates are devised for the respective areas before needs assessment is conducted.
- Most individuals who ought to be involved in the process are rated as playing a vital role when TNA is conducted.
- Most of the stakeholders are included in communication activities and are considered audience to whom information is disseminated to.
- Goals, overall description of the needs assessment phase and the target population are highlighted as being imperative during the process.

From the analysis of the various factors of the TNA, as it is conducted in Belize, it is apparent that overall when TNA is being conducted to formulate TVET programs a proper foundation/basis for the process is synchronized since important areas are placed in the spotlight.

(2) In theory, the training needs assessment process as it exists in Belize has many areas that can be highlighted to pinpoint its success. For the most part, MOEYS plays an important role in the TNA process primarily because the group that is responsible for conducting
needs assessment, ETES, is a direct umbrella organization under the ministry. What is apparent from the research is that government has pledged to support the enhancement of Technical Vocational Education Training programs in Belize and as such has taken steps to ensure that the foundation blocks are in place to make skills training become a thriving venture throughout the nation. There are several factions of personnel all funded and supported by the government and tasked with the sole responsibility of developing an area of TVET in Belize; and this includes, the overall TVET project, the establishment of the National Apprenticeship Program, and ETES just to draw attention to a few.

(3) The main focus (drive) of the training needs assessment conducted for the development/modification of TVET programs in Belize is meeting long-term strategic goals for human resource development and/or economic development. Meanwhile, the main data collection tool is surveys followed by group processes. And, the primary data collection indicator is number, location and size of and enrollment in existing vocational education and training programs followed by employer reported skills shortages by industry.

(4) Industry personnel who have been consulted to partake in the TNA process indicate that group processes is the most commonly employed data collection tool used to collect data from them about key areas in the labor market. They have an average level of participation in the entire process and maintain that they should play a more pertinent role in TNA for the development of training programs in Belize.

(5) Other key persons involved in TVET projects throughout Belize highlighted that more has to be done when it comes to program development and needs assessment. Many say while indeed appropriate TNA is conducted that it is not timely enough to effectively pinpoint the current needs of the industry. In addition, they stress that MOL needs to play a more
predominant role in the TNA process and that traditional programs at the various branches of CETs need to be improved to efficiently cater to the times.

(6) Notwithstanding, what is gotten from the research is the fact that CETs are the predominant training schools throughout the country and at present steps are being taken to establish training centers in the country’s entire six districts inclusive of one on the South Side of Belize City. The government was able to secure funding to the tune of USD 13.079 million from the CDB to improve the quality, coverage and delivery of TVET within Belize. GOB made a commitment that by September, 2005 these training centers would have been established and fully furnish in terms of facilities, equipment, trainers, staff, administration and state of the art buildings to adequately cater to the needs of the emerging workforce by elevating their skills, knowledge and technical expertise to be on par with workers from other competing Caribbean and Central American countries. As the country is moving forward, fast bent on expanding the various industry sectors throughout the country such as the service sector, agriculture, construction and most predominantly, tourism, then human resource development is indeed vital thus workforce education and development is a definite area of focus. Training needs assessment; therefore, is seen at the forefront to the development of the workforce in an effort to accomplish economic expansion, reduce poverty levels and establish stability throughout the nation. Clearly, the government is justified in its commitment to establish training centers in each of the six districts as it is indeed imperative for the population to have access to a means of enhancing their competence and becoming productive workers in the labor market.

(7) Apparently, persons in charge of conducting TNA for developing training programs in Belize strive to ensure that suitable procedures are followed so that the imminent training needs are identified. They certainly ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the
process and that MOEYS is informed about what is taking place at the various stages of the process. While indeed training programs in Belize are based on traditional vocational training programs, it is imperative that needs assessment be conducted in an effort to modify skills training to cater to the existent needs of the society. Chartered with this task, persons in charge of needs assessment conduct baseline studies to collect key information about the predominant trends across the country in relation to the various industry sectors. In addition, highlighted by findings of the research is the fact that examining labor force trends, skills shortages, the country’s current employment situation, and evaluating existing training programs are major factors emphasized during the TNA process. From the results of the TNA questionnaire, it can be concluded that the appropriate procedures are followed when TNA is conducted for developing training programs in Belize.

(8) Via the interviews with directors of CETs along with other persons involved in TVET, it is apparent that there are plans to increase the level of training being offered at the various CET training centers. From needs assessments that have been conducted over the years, especially based on the input from persons in the industry, it is clear that level one certification is undoubtedly not adequate for giving the graduates the skills and expertise that they need to successfully partake in the labor force. In sync with the aforementioned, via interviews with owners and managers of various industries, it is evident that trainees from CETs still have a lot that they need to learn, most especially in terms of interpersonal skills training before they can be effective in the job market. While it is not to say that all graduates of CET lack the necessary expertise, many of the interviewees pinpointed that the level of training the graduates received is not sufficient and thus when they reach the industry money still has to be spent in order to train or rather re-train them.
(9) Training is essential to gain increased productivity as well as serve as motivation for the workforce because once equip with the ‘know-how’ to effectively perform on the job, workers are inspired to continue their development and in effect boost the effectiveness of the industry, resulting in financial gain and stability.

**Recommendations**

(1) Training Needs Assessment ought to be conducted more regularly throughout the country. From findings it is apparent that while persons in charge of developing TVET programs know the importance of conducting TNA often, protocols are not in place for it to be engaged in as an ongoing process.

(2) There needs to be more involvement of persons from the districts’ business/industry sector, educational leaders, directors and instructors in these areas during TNA because findings of the research denote that persons involved are mostly from Belize City. To gain a well-rounded more balanced assessment of the overall trends in the labor market, student population and their needs, advice from industry and so forth, focus needs to be placed not only on key persons in the city, but also on those who operate in the districts.

(3) TNA needs to be conducted at a more in-depth level, meaning that persons in charge need to develop a more systematic strategy that highlights a 360 degree approach when it comes to the TNA process.

(4) Educating the masses about TNA and its importance to developing training programs along with information about exactly what the process entails is a must throughout the country of Belize. Too many people involved in key areas of TVET are unaware about basic information related to needs assessment.
(5) The business sector needs to be informed via follow-ups about the outcome of the needs assessment that they took time to participate in. Many say that after they have given up time, effort and their expertise to leaders of the TNA process, they never get informed about what the outcome of the workshops is and they believe that they ought to be informed. In addition, persons from the industry need to be more involved in aiding in the development of training programs because they believe that via more in-depth consultations with them educators will be better able to understand the needs of the industry and develop curriculum for training accordingly.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

(1) At the end of the TNA process, recommendations are made about how to develop training programs and in so doing there needs to be focus on curriculum development and modification. Further research; therefore, can extend beyond the scope of this paper by examining how curriculums for TVET training programs are developed in Belize, especially in terms of what procedures are taken to ensure that entry level as well as employability skills are taken into consideration when developing the curriculum for training programs.

(2) Notwithstanding, one key area that can improve the findings of this research is a study in which graduates from vocational training programs in Belize can be tracked and follow-ups with them can be done to ascertain whether or not they were able to use the skills gained from the training program to successfully place themselves in the labor market. A research like the latter will be an extension to this research on TNA primarily because it will aid in highlighting whether or not one of the major goals of the assessment process (determining the needs of the labor market) is effectively being carried out. Such a research can also highlight the quality of TVET programs by examining whether or not graduates of training programs are able to
effectively perform on the job. By gaining information from employers’ perspectives about the graduates whom they employ, the research can strive to pinpoint the quality of TVET programs.

(3) One area that is important to TVET programs is that of testing and certification and while this study did touch slightly on the level of certification that are being granted to TVET graduates, it was limited in scope of the matter because TNA is the primary focus. An overall examination of the testing and certification standards and how they are determined for TVET programs in Belize is clearly a good extension to the research at hand. Skill certification should be appropriately developed to ensure the quality of TVET programs in Belize.

(4) Future research can strive to look beyond the scope of this paper in terms of examining the other TVET agencies, besides CETs, that are in Belize and decipher what kinds of needs assessment is conducted to modify existent training programs and most important whether or not TNA is effective to the development of training programs.