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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Are displaced banana/plantain workers really benefiting from the Banana Sector Retraining Project?**

To get impartial answers to this question HEART Trust/NTA has employed two external consultants, Westminster Consulting Group Limited and UWI Consulting, to conduct Programme Evaluation and Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

### **UWI Consulting Group**

The aim of TNA is to facilitate access to vocational education, skills training and remedial learning in the participating parishes. To achieve this, UWI Consulting will administer surveys and hold focus groups with beneficiaries and host consultations with stakeholders.

The first consultation was held April 8<sup>th</sup> at UWI and was attended by representatives from the banana industry, government and the university. It was titled "Transition Strategies for displaced Workers in the Banana Industry – A Livelihood Approach" and consultations focused on the profile of displaced workers; transitioning strategies to pinpoint what training to offer and sustainability of the project after training. The next Stakeholders Consultation is scheduled for Friday June 12<sup>th</sup> in St. James.

### **Westminster Consulting Group Limited**

This group will assess the success of project activities which comprise Career Counselling Workshops, computer based training and pre-vocational and skills training. So far, Westminster has conducted face-to-face interviews with randomly selected beneficiaries who participated in CCW. "Preliminary findings indicate that most people who participated benefited from the Career Counselling Workshops in some way," reports WCGL's Emile Finlay. Workshops featured career counselling, motivational speeches and try-a-skill exercises.



Left and right photo: Westminster Consulting Group Limited conducts face-to-face interviews with beneficiaries at the Hampton Court Community Centre in St. Thomas.

### **Project Details**

Approximately 320 persons from the six targeted parishes - St. James, St. Catherine, St. Thomas, St. Mary, Clarendon and Portland - will be retrained in areas such as housekeeping, construction and agricultural applications. Adult Continued Education programmes will also be taught using traditional and ICT-enabled methods.

The project started in October 2008 and will end in December 2009.

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