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IN THE ZONE

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Editorial

As part of its initiative to Promote foreign language learning and knowledge of the culture of the Greater Caribbean, the ACS Directorate of Sustainable Tourism is dedicated to bringing its member states and associate members closer. This effort hopes to benefit the people of the region as well as those from other countries through fostering an interest in learning a foreign language.

The issue of language training for the purpose of tourism development is highlighted in Costa Rica's article on its efforts to build Educational Tourism through immersion programmes, much like those currently being developed by our Directorate in collaboration with Guadeloupe's *Centre International de Guadeloupe pour une Approche Régionale des Langues (CIGAREL)*, as well as those in Venezuela, Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia among other countries.



A clear example of this is the programme currently being developed by Honduras through its mass education initiative implemented through recent educational reform which highlights the crucial place that English occupies in tourism development for Latin America. Finally, the Centre for Language Learning at the University of the West Indies (UWI) aptly addresses the perceived difficulty to learn a foreign language in the Anglophone Caribbean, a

hindrance, not only to advancement within the tourism sector, but in other areas. This issue of *In the Zone* aims to highlight the ways in which language learning is linked to development and competitiveness, as well as the overall improvement of the collective tourism industry of the Greater Caribbean.

Julio Orozco

Director of Sustainable Tourism

Language and Competitiveness: Positioning Trinidad and Tobago for Sustainable Development



Centre for Language Learning (CLL), UWI, St Augustine, Trinidad

'...human interaction and human communication in the tourism sector are dependent on a workforce being willing to learn and speak other languages. ...'

Global citizenship and employment in a globalised economy are increasingly premised on language and intercultural communicative competence. A strong correlation exists between country multilingualism/individual plurilingualism and country competitiveness. The tourism industry is a prime example of how language and intercultural communicative competence, country competitiveness and employability intersect.

“A Guide to Tourism Careers, Education and Training in the Caribbean”, classifies accommodation, food and beverage, adventure tourism, transportation, attractions, travel/trade, events and conferences and tourism services as the eight primary tourism sectors. Although Caribbean nations have traditionally marketed their tourism product in countries sharing their language, language trends point to Russian, Arabic and Mandarin as they fastest growing languages in terms of economic power. In 2013, for example, 70 million Chinese tourists travelled abroad. How many persons in any of the above sectors would have been able to interact with these Chinese tourists in Mandarin?

The reality is that while English has become the default language in science and technology, only 30% of the world’s population speak English as a first or additional language. Monolingual English speakers are especially reluctant to learn foreign languages because “English is enough”. But human interaction and human communication in the tourism sector are dependent on a workforce being willing to learn and speak other languages. English/French/Spanish etc. is not enough.

Dr. Beverly-Anne Carter
Director and Project Leader
Centre for Language Learning,
University of the West Indies, St. Augustine
Trinidad and Tobago



Multicultural class of foreign language students at the CLL.

How does the acquisition of a foreign language help tourism?



Trinagonian students in Costa Rica.

In August 2014, a group of students and teachers from Mason Hall Secondary school, Tobago travelled to Costa Rica to participate in an Academic and Cultural Immersion programme with San Marcos High School in Limon, organized by Trinitica International, with the support of the Embassy of Costa Rica accredited to Port of Spain.

The programme's objective was to give students the opportunity to practice Spanish, to fully immerse themselves in Costa Rican culture by attending San Marcos High School in Limon and to learn about family habits, customs and traditions.

The hospitality extended to these students was reciprocated in September 2014 when the Costa Rican students visited the shores of Trinidad and Tobago where they attended Mason Hall Secondary School and lived with Tobagonian families. This exposure provided opportunities for the Costa Rican students to practice their English and learn about the multicultural nation of Trinidad and Tobago.

This exchange between foreign language students highlights the existing market of Educational Tourism in Costa Rica and opens

the door for a new niche market for Trinidad and Tobago in its Tourism sector. Educational Tourism focuses on students' visits to another country to learn about their culture through tours & leisure activities and to reinforce and apply skills learnt in the classroom in a different environment.

Costa Rica is known for its exchange programs offered between local and foreign universities and language institutes where one can gain from full immersion experience while learning Spanish in the classroom which accelerates one's Speaking and Listening Skills. Trinidad & Tobago should explore the development of Educational Tourism through academic exchange programs between students of all levels with their Latin American neighbours.

The importance placed on English as a Second Language in Latin American society and Trinidad & Tobago's growing desire to declare Spanish as its official Second Language expose the importance that foreign language acquisition plays in the diversification of a country's Tourism Sector.

Aleah Guitan

*Director, Trinitica Internacional,
Costa Rica*



Trinagonian students

“Yes We Can”



We live in a global and digital world. Today, English is the language with the racing world. English is also the language of tourism. Everywhere you go, on any continent, cruises, hotels, restaurants and even taxis; English has become the common language of care.

Under the framework of the third educational reform promoted by the President of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernandez, is especially concerned with education for work, the English subject has become a fundamental pillar. Today 20,000 Hondurans have enrolled on the

Online English program "Yes We Can" that the mandatory of the National Vocational Training Institute (INFOP) (www.infop.hn) propels through. Recently the President signed an agreement with the Educational Testing Services (ETS) organization through which more than 200,000 people will be trained in the English language per year. Our aim is that the English language will become the second speaking language in the country.

With the arrival of more cruises to Honduran coasts and more tourists to the west side of the country, thanks to the construction of new airports, Honduras will position as a country that improves its infrastructure and human resources to better serve foreign visitors with a new attitude; the attitude of "Yes We Can".



Officials at a 'Yes We Can' meeting

Juan Diego Zelaya
INFOP Director,
Honduras

Upcoming Meetings and General Information

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

March 2015

- 10 - 20th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council
- 18-20 - Tourism Forum of San Andres: Components for the creation of Public Policies for Sustainable Tourism Development on the island of San Andres
- 23 - Ad Hoc Meeting of the Regional Network of Artisans of the Greater Caribbean
- 24-26 - Pilot: Entrepreneurship Training Workshop - ACS-ILO Collaboration Montego Bay, Jamaica

Additional Meetings, June 2015

- Workshop for Website Training and Presentation of Results of the STZC-RCM project, Fort-de-France, Martinique
- Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-26), Fort-de-France, Martinique
- Training for Careers in Sustainable Tourism Project Meeting, Fort-de-France, Martinique

In the Zone was conceived to increase interaction and the level of cooperation among ACS Member States and International and Regional Organisations as well as observer countries. It features destinations, events and activities in ACS Member States as well as from our partners.

The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism invites you to submit your photos and articles for the following issue of *In the Zone*.

Thank you in advance!

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Buccoo Reef, Tobago. (Photo courtesy Rishi Sankar)