** INVESTING IN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT** 

**PRESENTATION GUIDE**

**PRESENTER: JOHN ROACH – COORDINATOR DOMINICA YOUTH BUSINESS TRUST**

**THEME: GOOD PRACTICES / MODELS IN YOUTH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Dominica Youth Business Trust (DYBT) is an initiative of the Commonwealth Youth Program - Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) and the Government of Dominica. DYBT was first conceptualized at a Commonwealth Youth Ministers meeting in 2002 as an offshoot of the Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative (CYCI).

The first financial contribution for the establishment of the facility was £27,000.00 from the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2003. Following a series of consultations with relevant stakeholders from 2003 to 2004, the Dominica Youth Business Trust was officially launched in May 2004.

***TARGET GROUP***

The Dominica Youth Business Trust targets all young people in Dominica between the ages of 18 to 35 years old who do not possess the ability to procure the necessary funding to establish and operate a small business.

***VISION***

“Empowering Dominican youth in realizing their entrepreneurial potential”

***MISSION STATEMENT***

To empower Dominican youth in realizing their entrepreneurial potential by facilitating access to financial, technical and social assistance geared towards the development of viable businesses, thereby contributing to the growth and development of the national economy.

***GOALS***

1. To develop a successful program for the facilitation of youth business in Dominica that will increase the number of young people going into business.
2. To implement a successful program that will foster cooperation among the public sector, the private sector and the donor community.
3. To improve the quality of service, support and assistance accorded to Dominican youth.
4. To create awareness and mobilize support for the initiative of enhancing the entrepreneurial ability of young people in Dominica.

**SUCCESS STORIES**

* 317 Trained
* 75 Accessed Loan Guarantee Facility
* 42 Business Plan Innovation Awards
* Loan Portfolio over 1 million XCD (£250,000.00)
* 4 Consecutive NYC Entrepreneurs Awards (2008 – 2011)
* Over 150 Employments Generated
* Over 100 Businesses in operation
* Increase of the Loan Guarantee Facility from 75 % to 100%
* Increased level of interest among the financial institutions in the programme
* Increased level of interest among organizations & resource persons in the mentorship programme
* Recognition by international organizations such as YBI & GEW
* Strong national and regional network

**WHAT MAKES THE PROJECT /PROGRAMME INTERVENTION AS A GOOD MODEL/PRACTICE?**

The Program combines attributes of several past initiatives and involves inputs from several institutions and donors into a coordinated project that delivers an efficient package of services to young entrepreneurs.

* A comprehensive entrepreneurship development programme which is well executed by a competent team of trainers.
* A loan guarantee facility which accords the young people an opportunity to access funding for their businesses without seeking collateral elsewhere.
* A mentorship model which has been reviewed and improved over the years and satisfies international standards.
* Strong support and commitment from both public and private sectors.
* A Business Plan Innovation Awards initiative which brings out creative business ideas and innovation among the young entrepreneurs.

**WHAT IS THE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT SET UP IN THE PROJECT/PROGRAMME?**

**ORGANOGRAM**

YOUTH MINISTER

PERMANENT SECRETARY

CHIEF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

COORDINATOR

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

MARKETING OFFICER

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

VOLUNTARY MENTORS

**PROPOSED POSITIONS**

 **GOVERNMENT EMPLOYED**

**Ancillary Institutional Arrangement**

* A Recruitment Panel
* A Training Team
* A Business Plan Team
* A Business Plan Innovations Awards Committee
* A Youth Business Forum
* A Mentors Club
* Support Staff from the Youth Development Division

**WHAT IS THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM IN PLACE?**

1. DYBT as a member of the Youth Business International Network is guided by the YBI Principles, Policies and Standards which emphasizes:
* Assistance to young people with a good business idea who are unable to access start-up support elsewhere.
* Provision of a volunteer business mentor to the young entrepreneur and full access to the business support network.
* Facilitation of access to start-up loan finance without requiring guarantees, security or collateral.
1. DYBT keeps quarterly reports on Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) which includes loan performance, assignment of mentors, training updates and business performance.
2. DYBT obtains quarterly reports from the financial institutions on all loans guaranteed by DYBT.
3. DYBT updates its general statistics on existing and new businesses on a quarterly or biannual basis.
4. Monthly reports on the programme are submitted to the Board of Trustees and Director of Youth.
5. The Board of Trustees meets at least once monthly at which policies, programmes and procedures are reviewed and major decisions taken to improve efficiency.
6. The Youth Business Forum is held on a monthly basis to address issues affecting the entrepreneurs and seek means to provide solutions.
7. The Mentors Club meeting is held monthly to promote the mentoring model, recruit new mentors, and dialogue in order to improve on the mentoring service offered to the entrepreneurs.
8. The Training Team meets occasionally to review the training package and make changes to the content or format as deemed necessary.
9. Upon review of the business plans, the Business Plan Innovations Awards Committee provides the Board of Trustees with a comprehensive report which includes strengths and weaknesses of each plan, a grade to each plan and recommendations for improvement of the business plans and the training programme.

**WHAT ARE THE LESSONS LEARNT?**

* Prior to this initiative by the Commonwealth Secretariat, financial institutions had a negative attitude towards doing business with young people. In Dominica we have seen a drastic change in behaviour among the lending institutions to the extent that some institutions are reporting that the loans of the young entrepreneurs are performing better than the older groups.
* The success of youth entrepreneurship initiatives depends heavily on a strong mentorship programme.
* In addition to the technical skills the young people bring to the business, they require initial training in business management and ongoing training in areas such as customer relations, costing & pricing, record keeping, and keeping current with market trends.
* That the involvement of young people in the business sector is critical for the socio economic development of any country, especially small economies such as Dominica.
* That the youth constitutes a significant proportion of the labour force and this resource must be nurtured to the maximum in order to reduce the occurrence of crime, violence and abuse of illicit drugs which are usually associated with unemployment.
* That the public and private sectors are unable to employ all the young people leaving formal and informal training institutions, thus more emphasis must be placed on strengthening programmes such as these in order to better address the global issue of high unemployment rates among the youth.
* That many contemporary business opportunities which are presented by the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are more likely to be initiated by young people, but require a strong support in place to enable them to take advantage of such opportunities.
* That young people are in fact bankable if given the opportunity and provided with the support system.