



Brain Drain and Caribbean-EU Labour Mobility. ¹

Keith Nurse and Jessica Jones *

** Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services, UWI, Cave Hill
Barbados.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The issue of labour mobility and migration is a critical issue in Caribbean-EU relations and has an important impact on each region's development agenda. The Caribbean region has some of the highest brain drain levels in the world with some emigration rates of its tertiary educated populations of over 70 percent which are not compensated for by remittances or return and circular migration. The EU, on the other hand, is faced with a demographic transition -- the ageing of the population and a reduction in the working age population -- which has implications for global competitiveness and the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy.

This paper examines the key issues in to Caribbean-EU skilled labour mobility, particularly brain drain issues and trade policies, arguing that underlying the Caribbean-EU relationship is a mutual interdependence between the two regions that can be used to promote a more equitable and balanced relationship. Focusing on the CARIFORUM² countries of the region, the first section of the paper assesses the state of skilled migration from the Caribbean. Subsequent sections assess the brain drain problem and examine the demand and regulation factors. This is followed by recommendations on mitigating the negative impact of this loss of qualified human capital on the region, based on global best-practices, with a view to multiplying and disseminating successful experiences.

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² The CARIFORUM countries comprise the Dominican Republic plus the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago).

Introduction

Labour mobility and migration are critical issues in Caribbean-EU relations and have an important impact on each region's development agenda. The Caribbean region has some of the highest brain drain levels in the world. On a regional scale, on average more than 65% of CARICOM nationals with tertiary education migrated to the OECD between 1990 and 2000. Some countries have emigration rates of their tertiary educated populations reaching over 70 percent (Docquier and Marfouk 2004) and they are not compensated for by remittances or return and circular migration (Mishra 2006). The widening gap in economic, educational and occupational opportunities between the two regions has encouraged the flight of the highly skilled, professional and entrepreneurial groups.

On the other hand, the EU is grappling with a demographic transition towards an ageing population and a reduced working age population, which has implications for the EU's global competitiveness and the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy (CONSILIUM 2009). There is also the problem of labour shortages in key areas like agricultural production, science, informational technology, craft, and technical skills as well as health, education and personal services. The emigration of third-country nationals is a key pillar in the EU's strategy, leading to the recent adoption of the EU Blue Card, which is intended to address labour shortages by attracting highly-skilled individuals. As such with the proliferation of skill-based migration policies there is increasing interdependence between highly-skilled migration from the Caribbean given supply-push (widening income and security gap) and demand pull-factors (replacement labour³) in the EU countries.

This paper examines the key issues in to Caribbean-EU skilled labour mobility, particularly brain drain issues and trade policies, arguing that underlying the Caribbean-EU relationship is a mutual interdependence between the two regions that can be used to promote a more equitable and balanced relationship. Focusing on the CARIFORUM⁴ countries of the region, the first section of the paper assesses the state of skilled migration from the Caribbean. Subsequent sections assess the brain drain problem and examine the demand and regulation factors. This is followed by recommendations on mitigating the negative impact of this loss of qualified human capital on the region, based on global best-practices, with a view to multiplying and disseminating successful experiences.

³ For instance, it is estimated by the European Commission that based on current inflows of immigrant labour the European Union's active labour force between 2010 and 2030 will be 20 million short of the levels needed to sustain growth and pay for an ageing population (see EUObserver "EU considers US-style green cards for migrants" January 11, 2005).

⁴ The CARIFORUM countries comprise the Dominican Republic plus the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago).

I: Highly-Skilled Caribbean Migration to the EU

Caribbean nationals are migrating and acquiring citizenship of their adopted countries. On average, the Caribbean represented 1.5% of the persons who acquired EU citizenship from 2002-2007⁵. This is a significant amount for the relatively diminutive Caribbean region. And, while the data was not available to indicate the exact proportion attributable to skilled migration, of those Caribbean migrants who acquire EU citizenship, research shows that even a modest flow of highly educated emigrants can have an adverse effect on those left behind, whether there are few or many tertiary educated persons in a sending country (Lowell and Findlay 2004). In the view of Lowell and Findlay (2001, p7),

“[a] brain drain can occur if emigration of tertiary educated persons for permanent or long stays abroad reaches significant levels and is not offset by the “feedback” effects of remittances, technology transfer, investments, or trade. Brain drain reduces economic growth through loss return on investment in education and depletion of the source country’s human capital assets.

Although not a leader in terms of absolute numbers, the Caribbean has some of the highest percentage rates of migration of their tertiary-educated labour-force (Carrington & Detragiache 1998, Docquier and Marfouk 2004). As Table 1 illustrates, no member state of the CARIFORUM group has tertiary education migration rates of less than 20 percent and several have rates exceeding 70 percent. On the basis of these high migration rates of the highly-educated population, several studies have concluded that the Caribbean is severely affected by the brain drain (Carrington & Detragiache 1998, Docquier and Marfouk 2004, Mishra 2006). This significant level of skilled emigration from the Caribbean, without a commensurate exchange of foreign skills with the EU, and especially under conditions of domestic labour shortages in skilled areas such as the fields of health and education, is generally indicative that brain drain is occurring (Lowell and Findlay 2002).

⁵ Eurostat Citizenship Acquisition data (2002-2007) was available for the CARIFORUM countries of Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago

Table 1.

*CARIFORUM Migration Rate of Persons with Secondary and Tertiary Education to *OECD States*

	1990 Rates %		2000 Rates %	
	Secondary	Tertiary	Secondary	Tertiary
Antigua and Barbuda	31.7	65.3	35.9	70.9
The Bahamas	11.7	38.3	12.1	36.4
Barbados	24.8	63.5	24.3	61.4
Belize	48.6	62.6	49.2	51.0
Dominica	62.1	58.9	60.6	58.9
Dominican Republic	23.6	17.9	30.9	21.7
Grenada	61.1	68.8	69.5	66.7
Guyana	30.6	89.2	34.1	85.9
Haiti	23.7	78.3	27.5	81.6
Jamaica	28.9	84.1	30.0	82.5
St Kitts and Nevis	21.4	89.9	37.1	71.8
Saint Lucia	46.8	80.4	32.1	36.0
St Vincent & the Grenadines	56.7	89.8	53.4	56.8
Suriname	54.0	92.0	43.9	89.9
Trinidad and Tobago	19.3	72.2	20.6	89.9

Source: Extracted from Docquier and Marfouk (2004), showing emigration rates by educational attainment and country of birth (1990-2000).

* The OECD countries include EU Members – Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

Table 1 illustrates that persons with tertiary education are more likely to migrate, and in many cases substantially so, than those without secondary education; with the notable exception of the Dominican Republic. As such, emigration presents a more attractive option for persons with a tertiary education; reinforcing the notion that “[e]migration selects those who can afford it, whose skills are in demand abroad, and who stand to benefit most (the tertiary educated)” (Lowell and Findlay 2002).

Students pursuing studies overseas are an important source of the brain drain, as they make a significant contribution to the skilled and professional labour force of countries to which they migrated to study and gain further qualification (Thomas-Hope 2001). A good gauge of the extent of Caribbean students pursuing education in the EU can be obtained by examining the Eurostat statistics on foreign students enrolled in tertiary education⁶. The Eurostat data, by country of citizenship, shows that Caribbean students are indeed taking advantage EU tertiary education, often leading to advanced research qualification. This is particularly the case with the Dominican Republic, where in 2005, the advanced research rate reached almost 50% of those pursuing higher education. Many of the other CARIFORUM countries were in line with the

⁶ Provided by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) of the UNESCO levels 5-6 which denote tertiary education.

overall percentage of all tertiary advanced research students in the EU, ranging from 7-10% (Eurostat) over the period 2004-2007. This is a significant indicator of the research and development potential of the Caribbean, if this migrant population contributes to the region in some way, either by returning home, or contributing from abroad. In contrast, it is notable that the tertiary exchange between the EU and LAC is severely imbalanced, given that the level of non-CARICOM and British dependent enrolment at the University of the West Indies was just over 1%⁷.

Table 2. CARIFORUM* students in EU27** tertiary education (ISCED*** 5-6) by country of citizenship for 2004-2007.

Country of citizenship	2004	2004	2005	2005	2006	2006	2007	2007
	ISCED	%ISCED6	ISCED	%ISCED6	ISCED	%ISCED6	ISCED	%ISCED6
	5-6 Tertiary	Advanced Research	5-6 Tertiary	Advanced Research	5-6 Tertiary	Advanced Research	5-6 Tertiary	Advanced Research
Antigua and Barbuda	87	8	90	10	77	10	78	8
Barbados	480	7	494	7	525	6	529	7
Bahamas	233	3	248	3	93	8	260	2
Belize	104	1	75	3	105	4	65	5
Dominica	107	3	125	2	187	3	174	5
Dominican Republic	504	31	664	49	812	37	995	26
Grenada	51	12	60	13	125	3	124	2
Guyana	169	9	177	10	351	5	368	6
Haiti	1008	10	1118	10	1354	8	1530	6
Jamaica	1025	7	1052	9	2743	3	2749	4
St. Kitts and Nevis	31	6	49	4	996	0	59	5
Saint Lucia	189	6	204	6	304	3	288	3
Suriname	1013	0	1063	0	1010	0	960	0
Trinidad and Tobago	780	6	877	5	1667	4	1633	5
St Vincent and the Grenadines	84	10	79	6	152	3	172	4

Source: Eurostat. Percentages calculated by authors.

* No data provided by Eurostat for CARIFORUM member Montserrat.

** EU27: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

*** International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) of the UNESCO.

ISCED-5 - Tertiary education - level 5 (Not leading directly to an advanced research qualification (ISCED 1997)

ISCED-6 - Second stage of tertiary education leading to an advanced research qualification - level 6 (ISCED 1997).

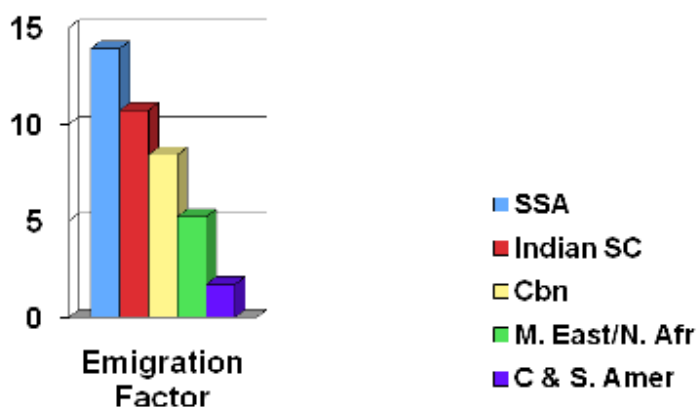
⁷ Although, no data was available to isolate the EU exchange with CARICOM countries, the University of the West Indies (UWI) statistics indicate that university student admissions to tertiary level and affiliated Institutions and distance education programmes, from countries other than CARICOM and British dependent countries in the region, stood at just 1.1% on average, from 2005 to 2007, of the number of students from CARICOM countries undertaking tertiary students in the EU for the same period.

A key sector which illustrates the dimension of the brain drain problem is the emigration of physicians to the OECD countries. Moreover, these recipient countries are under mounting pressure to increase the number of physicians available. For instance, the UK government has made a commitment to substantially and rapidly increase the supply of physicians available. They plan to do so by establishing more medical schools and a heightened recruitment drive abroad.

For the leading recipient countries (United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia), international medical graduates make up between 23 and 28 of the physicians, with 40-75 percent being supplied by developing countries (Mullan 2005). This reliance on sourcing medical professionals from abroad, and admission policies specifically geared towards attracting highly-skilled professionals, suggests that they would otherwise be experiencing substantial physician shortages, and has resulted in a reduction in the supply of physicians available in many developing countries.

Almost half of the countries with the highest emigration rates of their medical professionals are in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, the Indian sub-continent and in the Caribbean (Figure 1). Jamaica is the country with the highest emigration factor (41.4%) for physicians, beating out Ireland (41.2%), Ghana (30.0%) and Sri Lanka (27.5%). The next highest emigration countries from the Caribbean are Haiti (35.4%) -- the poorest country in the Western hemisphere -- and the Dominican Republic (17.2%). In contrast, Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago are estimated to have very low physician emigration. Cuba's scenario can be accounted for by the high output of physicians and the restrictive emigration policies. However, Cuba does play a critical role in supplying physicians in countries through-out Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa that are faced with a significant shortfall.

Figure 1: Physician Emigration Factor, by region



Source: Mullan (2005): 1816

Table 3. Emigration Factor by Location of Physician Practice.

Countries	Location of Physician Practice (no. of physicians)		Emigration Factor*
	Recipient Country**	Source Country	
Jamaica	1,589	2,253	41.4
Haiti	1,067	1,949	35.4
Dominican Republic	3,262	15,670	17.2
Cuba	2,069	66,567	3.0
Trinidad and Tobago	23	1,004	2.2

Source: Mullan (2005): 1814

Notes:

* The emigration factor for a region is computed as $[A \div (A+B)] \times 100$, where A is the number of physicians from countries in the region who have emigrated to work in one of the four recipient countries (either in their own or in another region), and B is the total number of physicians practicing in countries of the region.

** The recipient countries are the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia

II. Assessing the brain drain problem

Arguably some level of skilled migration is beneficial to the sending country as it has the potential to result in skill transfer and investment. Remittances contribute significantly to several Caribbean countries, especially Haiti, Jamaica and Guyana (see Table 4). The remittance propensity of highly skilled migrants is estimated to be low relative to unskilled migrants (Niimi 2008), while a more recent study (Bollard et al. 2009) has found that overall, the microdata indicates that educated migrants remit more. Added increases in skilled migration will, therefore, not necessarily hamper remittance growth. In any event, for most countries of the Caribbean, research suggests that, “the total losses due to skilled migration outweigh remittances” (Mishra 2006: 28).

Table 4. Remittances to CARIFORUM countries

Country	REMITTANCES	
	Total (millions of USD)	Percentage of total GDP 2007
Antigua and Barbuda	24	2.0
Barbados	140	4.1
Belize	75	5.9
Dominica	26	7.9
Dominican Republic	3414	9.3
Grenada	55	9.2
Guyana	278	25.8
Haiti	1222	18.2
Jamaica	2144	18.8
Saint Kitts and Nevis	37	1.2
Saint Lucia	31	7.1
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	31	3.2
Trinidad and Tobago	109	.5
Suriname	140	6.2

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division – International Migration 2009 Figure.

Migration can ease pressure on labour markets, and reduce unemployment, poverty and social inequality if it is surplus labour that is exported. It is also suggested that return migrants are an important source of skills, expertise and ideas (i.e. brain gain, circulation or exchange) to be drawn on for national and regional development. However, it is the experience and impact of brain drain which is differentiated in Latin America and the Caribbean. The key issue relates to the type of labour that is migrating. The problem for the Caribbean is that it is not surplus or under-employed labour that is the main group of migrants. It is the highly skilled and educated and the evidence for return migration and brain gain is limited relative to the outflow.

Some level of skilled migration is indeed beneficial to the sending country because it encourages skills and resource transfers. This is especially the case for the small developing states of the Caribbean, which can use the opportunity to link into the international economy and gain experience in a broader global setting. However, there may be an optimal level of skilled migration, beyond which the benefits of brain drain are negated. Beine et al (2003),

“found that most countries combining low levels of human capital and low emigration rates of their highly-educated are positively affected by the brain drain. By contrast, the brain drain appears to have negative growth effects in countries where the migration rate of the highly educated is higher than 20% and/or where the proportion of highly-educated in the total population is above 5%”.

From this standpoint the CARIFORUM can be considered a high-risk brain drain region, given that, for all of the Member countries, the rate of tertiary educated migration exceeds the 20% threshold. The policy implication of this observation is that the region should pursue options to reduce population outflows or encourage brain circulation, in view of the implications for social and economic stability. National and regional migration policies must therefore be adapted to mitigate the negative effects of brain drain, and exploit the opportunities associated with brain gain.

III. Brain Drain: Demand and Regulation

Highly-skilled migration to the EU is likely to expand given the supply and demand factors, as well as the growing trend towards skill-based migration policies, which are already employed by Australia, New Zealand, Canada, have become increasingly important for the EU, due largely to the Lisbon strategy. This plan aims to transform the EU economy into the world's most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010. With Eurostat conservatively estimating that the net gain's from immigration for the EU will swell from 1.8 million in 2004 to 40 million by 2050 (CONSILIUM 2006), Europe seems set to expand its share of international students and migrant workers. This will provide a much needed supplement to the EU's working population since, from 2015 positive net migration will be the sole contributor to population growth. It is anticipated that labour shortages will continue to increase between 2010 and 2030 and the region will have to source some 20 million people to make up for the decline of the EU's working-age population (CONSILIUM 2006). In the foreseeable future, especially over the next 20 years, to satisfy its labour market needs, Europe will have to attract an external qualified labour force, especially for the engineering and IT sectors, due to an aging demographic. The gravity of the EU's labour shortage dilemma is illustrated by the fact that the IT sector, which is a key plank to their knowledge economy development strategy, contributing more than 5% towards the GDP, will be short of 300,000 qualified personnel by 2010.

In view of this, migration of third-country nationals and their families, for the purposes of highly-qualified employment, has been accommodated by the recent adoption of the EU Blue Card, which is intended to address labour shortages through encouraging legal migration of highly-skilled individuals. Such an increase would likely exacerbate the brain drain from the Caribbean to the EU. It remains to be seen if this new phase in the wider EU migration policy, one of a managed skilled migration policy, will result in significant increases in labour migration as was the case in the UK, which has, especially since the turn of the 21st Century, increasingly looked towards a managed migration scheme focused on attracting increased numbers of skilled migrants.

The EU has a high share of the world's highly-educated immigrants and is seeking to attract more, through initiatives such as the EU Blue Card and the provisions for the movement of natural persons under the CARIFORUM-EPA. The EU Blue card⁸ seeks to attract highly-skilled

⁸ The EU Blue Card means the authorisation bearing the term 'EU Blue Card' entitling the holder to reside and work in the territory of a Member State of the European Union under the COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2009/50/EC of 25 May

non EU-nationals by establishing a fast-track admission procedure to provide a secure legal status and a set of guaranteed rights to smooth the process of integration. The provisions include family reunification, residence permit, equal social security treatment, expectations of equal pay, and free movement within the Schengen area (if in possession of a valid travel document and the EU Blue Card is issued by a Schengen Member state).

The CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)⁹ contains provisions to facilitate and attract investment within CARIFORUM, and to develop and improve the CARIFORUM services sector. These chapters are noteworthy as CARIFORUM and Europe have agreed, for the first time, to allow each other access to their services sectors and investment policy under a bilateral framework. Chapter 4, which lays out the market access for CARIFORUM and European independent professionals, makes provisions to facilitate the temporary presence of natural persons for business purposes. This is facilitated under the GATS-oriented Mode 4 supply of services in trade (Presence of natural persons) which, in this case, refers to persons of CARIFORUM or EU countries entering each others countries in order to supply a service. Professional employees of CARIFORUM firms not established in Europe or independent professionals (contractual service suppliers) will be allowed to enter the EU to supply services for up to 6 months, in several European sectors. It is significant that, with the exception of fashion model, chef de cuisine, and entertainment services, all contractual service suppliers must have professional qualifications and must be University Graduates. This conditionality also holds for all self-employed professionals who too must have professional qualifications and be University Graduates (Nurse, Francis, Niles 2009).

For both the EU Blue Card and the CARIFORUM-EPA, highly qualified labour is being demanded. These policy initiatives represent the convergence of immigration policy in the OECD and the EU, as these countries respond to the increasing global competition for highly-skilled labour (Meyers 2002). It is evident that, in today's global knowledge economy¹⁰, having a highly-educated and skilled population is a gateway to creating global trade linkages.

IV. Addressing the Brain Drain Problem

The brain drain poses, at the very least, an ethical question. This is exemplified by the EU's decision in the Blue Card directive to prohibit active recruitment in developing countries in highly-specialised sectors that are already experiencing diminished personnel capacity. Instead it urges ethical recruitment practices. Furthermore, the EU blue card directive encourages channels to facilitate circular and temporary migration, in an attempt to "minimise negative

2009 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment (CONSILIUM 2009).

⁹ See the CARIFORUM-EU EPA chapters of "Title 2: Investment, Services and E-Commerce".

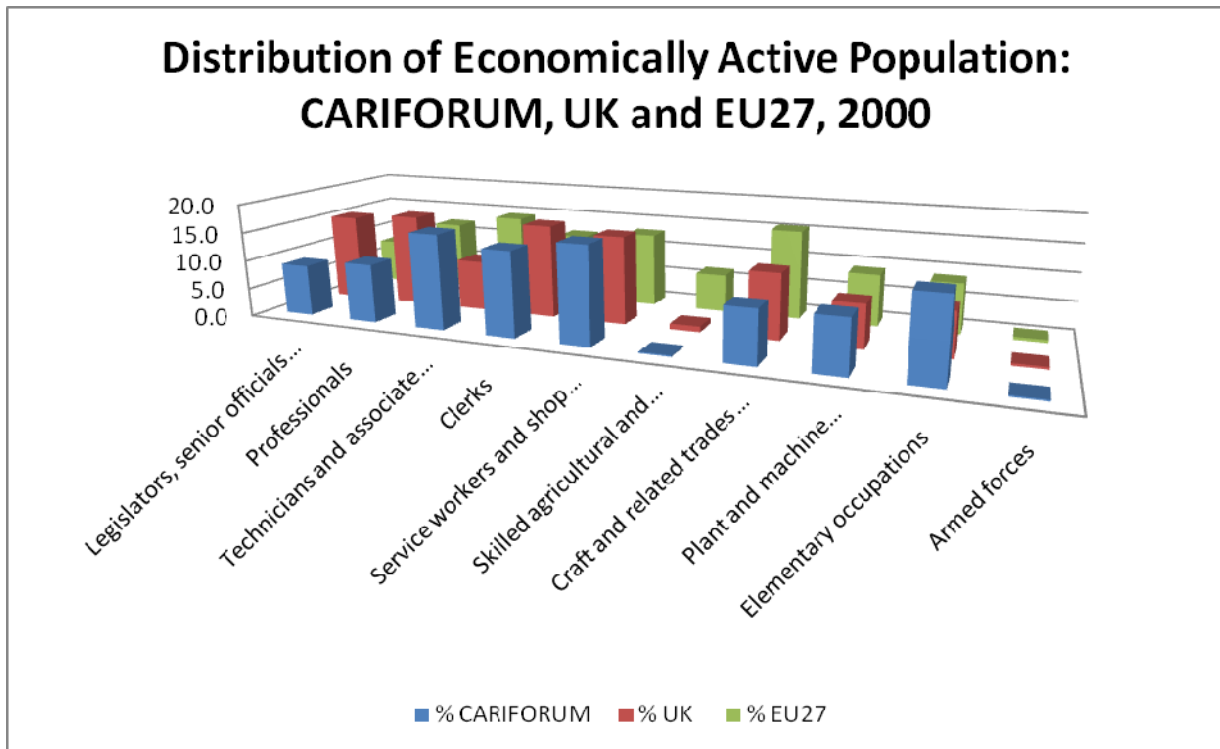
¹⁰ Powell and Snellman (2004) define the knowledge economy as "production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance, as well as rapid obsolescence. The key component of a knowledge economy is a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources."

and maximise positive impacts of highly skilled immigration on developing countries in order to turn ‘brain drain’ into ‘brain gain’” (CONSILIUM 2009).

However, limiting the recruitment potential of Member States effectively restricts the options for legal migration to the EU, and ultimately may not have the desired effect of promoting migration through official channels, but instead result in increased irregular and undocumented migration. On the other hand, measures to facilitate circular migration would increase the level of mobility offered to individuals, organizations and countries alike, thereby increasing policy space and options.

Caribbean migrants have a similar occupation profile to the EU citizens with whom they are in competition for the various employment opportunities that exist in the EU (Figure 2). Percentage-wise, Caribbean migrants have a greater share in some areas, including technicians and associate professionals. The competition for vacant positions may dampen the brain drain or on the other hand encourage brain waste, where people will continue to migrate, accepting a position for which they are over-qualified until they are able to transfer to their desired field. In any case, although the EU Blue Card directive recognises that the occupational and geographical mobility of highly qualified migrants from third countries should be “recognised as a primary mechanism for improving labour market efficiency, preventing skill shortages and offsetting regional imbalances” (CONSILIUM 2009) they have nonetheless decided to restrict occupational mobility for the first two years of legal employment, in an attempt to prevent abuses of the system. Measures such as these are indicative of the complexity of implementing a managed skilled migration program, where the concerns of brain drain have to be considered.

Figure 2.



Source: Eurostat and OECD Statistics, 2000. Percentages calculated by authors.

UK and EU27 data from Eurostat showing Employment by occupation.

CARIFORUM data derived from OECD Statistics - showing CARIFORUM immigration to UK by Occupation (no data available for Haiti and Suriname). The UK was selected as the basis for the study of the CARIFORUM data on immigration by occupation as it was the EU country with the most complete data set for all of the occupation categories.

In the final analysis, much of the movement of skilled migrants from the Caribbean to the EU depends on the acceptance and accreditation¹¹ of their qualifications. For the purpose of the EU Blue Card directive, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 1997 is used to determine whether education qualifications meet the requirements for tertiary-level education (levels 5a and 6 – for academic purposes, as opposed to occupational, and leading to advanced research, respectively). The higher education qualification signifies the completion of a post-secondary education programme, undertaken for at least three years, by an establishment which is recognised as a higher education institution.

Competition on the global labour market is intense, with new players such as India and China, in addition to the traditional stalwarts of Canada, US, Australia and New Zealand, also competing for global talent. Within this context, accreditation and the mutual recognition of skills is becoming an increasingly important factor for developing countries. One study shows

¹¹ Accreditation and the international acceptance of LAC qualifications is a key concern of the OBREAL BRIDGES-LAC project.

that accreditation may intensify brain drain if a minimum resource allocation is imposed to global knowledge instruction (Lien 2006). Conversely, accreditation requirements also have the potential to slow the rate of brain drain from the Caribbean to the EU as persons may be unable to immediately migrate into a position in their trained field due to non-accreditation of their degree. Accreditation processes tend to be based on the premise of reciprocity, thus disadvantaging overseas-based professionals with a desire to return home (Stillwell et al 2004). Accreditation fears may encourage prospective migrants to undertake all or part of their graduate studies in the EU, or at least with a Caribbean institution which has ISCED accreditation.

V. Conclusion

The paper has shown that the net migration rate in the Caribbean region is one of the highest in the world and the migration of tertiary level educated migrants represents a preponderant share of the outflows of human capital. This trend has been particularly evident in health services and the educational sector and has had a significant impact on development in the Caribbean region through the loss of human capital that was developed through state subsidized educational opportunities.

The brain circulation/gain argument has gained currency in migration and development circles, suggesting that temporary outward migration may give the country of origin increased access to newly acquired skills, business contacts and capital, on the migrants' return. However, the exploitation of the potential development boon of brain circulation cannot be left to chance, and requires a tactical policy response. While there will always be some element of autonomous return, home countries must adopt strategies to improve the attractiveness of return migration. Well-organised returns, which are linked to other aspects of national and regional policy (e.g. innovation policy), stand a far greater chance of contributing to the development effort than sporadic returns.

It is in this context, that a strong argument can be made for the establishment of a mechanism for the governance of diasporic recruitment, which allow migrants to return home and or participate in the development of the regional economy through investment or the provision of services. For success to be achieved in this area Caribbean countries will have to implement a range of strategies. The first and foremost is retention strategies for highly skilled professionals. Improved working conditions, institutional capacity building and other corporate and governmental policies are critical to offer a competitive work environment. The same policies would also benefit return migration, although much more promotional effort is required to get the message across to the diasporic communities.

Governments should aim to regulate international recruitment agencies so as to avoid excessive depletion of skills in key socio-economic sectors like health and education. National governments can also redress the imbalance in information and negotiating power between the recruitment agencies and the potential migrant by providing data and analysis of labour policy, practices and wage levels in the destination countries. This calls for the creation of migration observatories that would monitor, map, and document the migration phenomenon. These observatories could also play a more proactive role in terms of informing governmental and corporate policies.

One of the key strategies for regions like the Caribbean would be to enlarge training facilities to meet the expanding demand at home and in labour-importing countries. The question that arises is who is to pay for this investment. Caribbean governments are unlikely to make these social investments because the returns, for example, remittances, do not go into national coffers, except in terms of tax revenues on local expenditures. The alternative is bilateral or multilateral agreements that would encompass some investment by the labour

importing countries. A regional Caribbean approach would allow for collaboration with EU partners in workforce planning and serve to counter the problem of global poaching.

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