
Florida Caribbean Students Association Inc.
Fall '07 Conference SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



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Topic: The Caribbean Brain Drain

All of you, I assume, are related to the Caribbean in some form. How many of you absolutely love your island? How many of you would ever go back there to work after your college education? Not many. This is an illustration of what we refer to as the “Caribbean Brain Drain.”

What exactly is this Caribbean Brain Drain? The dictionary describes the Brain Drain as “The loss of skilled, intellectual and technical labor through the movement of such labor to more favorable geographic, economic, or professional environments.” In other words, when we leave our countries to go study abroad and don’t return, we contribute to the Brain Drain.

What are some of the reasons that people migrate? Some may be that they have family abroad, or that they need a change of atmosphere. But the most common reason is because we have a stigma that the great America presents us with grand opportunities, especially for schooling and for jobs. This indeed may be true, because average earnings in the U.S are significantly higher than that of the native land.

Think about it: If we all decide to migrate because the pay will be better elsewhere, who will be left behind in our countries to work? Moreover, the highly skilled labor force, such as doctors, teachers, technicians, and nurses, are the ones who tend leave. If they leave, what caliber of expertise will be left behind to provide natives with these services? Why do you think our health care systems are so poor, and lack an adequate supply of trained specialists? Why do you think our economies are stagnant, some even failing? It’s because, by migrating, we *drain* our homes of intellect, of a labor force that we need to help boost our economies. And sadly

enough, the more the economy worsens, the more it forces people to leave. It's become a treacherous cycle that has to be broken.

Picture this: You have a humungous mango tree in your back yard that produces golden, succulent East Indian Mangoes. Now, in order for that tree to grow and produce those fruits of paradise, it requires certain nutrients that feed into the roots. Think of yourselves as the nutrients to your country and its growth. Without you, your countries can't produce juicy East Indian mangoes.

In closing, I'm not saying you should leave what you're doing and go back immediately. I'm here to reveal that there is a problem, and to encourage you to do something about it. Start a business back home, create more jobs, do some research of the economy and provide the government with solutions to improve it, so that it may create incentives for people to stay. It may initially seem heavy, but it's definitely achievable. Each and every one of us here are leaders, and possess capabilities beyond our measure. Don't be the one to allow your home to suffer. We need to be able to go back to a land where the beaches are still clean and sparkling, the people are warm, and everything is Irie. I solicit you all to take that step, be the nutrients, and grow some mangoes!