

CASE STUDY: SUN, SEA, SKILLS

Saint Vincent and the Grenadine islands are perhaps less well-visited than some of the other Caribbean islands. St Vincent itself is a volcanic island with steep roads, hairpin bends and beaches that are golden or black depending where on the island you are. It made a perfect location for the filming of the original *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

I was privileged to work there as part of a team, supporting the [Centre for Enterprise Development](#) in Kingstown, St Vincent. As you can imagine, I was the envy of my colleagues and friends, several of whom offered to carry my laptop all the way!



Background

CED's role is to advise and support growing businesses across SVG. Our job was to deliver accredited training to a team of business advisers, in partnership with a team of local trainers and assessors. When we arrived, not quite sure what to expect (and without half our luggage, but that's another story!) we found real commitment and dedication on the part of everyone involved. We went straight to work – the energy of the whole SVG team was infectious.

Work-based (sometimes known as competence-based) qualifications were a new concept in St Vincent, but our colleagues there were quick to recognise the advantages of implementing them. Instead of studying for exams, candidates have to demonstrate competence in every aspect of their work. Achieving these qualifications is not a soft option however; candidates are required to demonstrate that they have the knowledge, understanding and practical skills to carry out their role to nationally - and internationally recognised standards.

What we did

We had worked remotely with CED to identify the most appropriate qualification for the advisers and had selected the Certificate in Business Support, which is awarded by the Institute of Leadership and Management. An intensive 10 day training programme was set up which covered everything that the advisers had to deliver, from building relationships with clients to supporting the development of a robust business strategy for their businesses.

At the same time, we put in place a training programme to bring a group of four experienced advisers up to speed on work-based assessment and verification, so that CED could subsequently deliver the Business Support qualification for themselves.

Results

During our three trips to SVG, we worked closely with the teams of trainers, assessors and business advisors to deliver long days of intensive training. In between visits, we used email and skype to help the learning to "stick". By the end of our last visit, three assessors and one verifier were trained and qualified to the standard required by the ILM; the Centre for Enterprise Development then became the first in the Caribbean to be approved to offer the ILM's Certificate in Business Support. The business advisors went on to complete their portfolios and, in turn, receive their qualifications. It perhaps goes without saying that the links we made with our colleagues in SVG have lasted well beyond the life of the project. Shared learning, a warm welcome and the company of professional colleagues made for a very enjoyable project – and of course, the sunshine helped!

If your business could benefit from a focused approach to training or you would like to know more about work-based qualifications, get in touch on **07834 706553**