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LUCELEC has once again demonstrated its continued support for youth development in St Lucia, with the employment of dozens of students for the summer holidays. 22 students began training this week under the company's Summer Employment Programme. They join 23 others who started the programme in June.

The summer employment programme facilitates internships for students on summer vacation from secondary schools and the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, and provides employment for students on vacation from universities.

During their orientation on July 2, 2012, the students were introduced to the company's policies and standards, given an overview of the different departments and showed a short film detailing the company's history. The orientation ended with a tour of the power station, giving the students a first-hand look at the processes involved in the generation of electricity.

The summer employees are optimistic that this programme can help to shape their future careers. Tiffany Monplaisir, a second year student at Sir Arthur Lewis Community College said, "I want to be an engineer, so I'm hoping to get the experience to be sure that I'm entering the right field. They've placed me in the Generation department which I'm really excited about because that's where I wanted to be."

Magadi Louis of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College is doing his second stint in the summer employment programme. He said he's immensely grateful for the opportunity that has been provided to him. "I learnt a lot about engines", he said, after working in the Generation department in the summer of 2011. He added that he's hoping to land a job with LUCELEC once his training is over.

The Summer Employment Programme started in the early '80s and has grown considerably since then. It was designed to provide students with an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and to earn some money towards their school supplies. Currently, each year from early June to early September, the Company employs around 60 students, allowing them to gain priceless insights into what it takes to succeed in the world of work. They also receive valuable experience of the demands of working in an environment that places a premium on efficiency.

Mandy Boxill, an accounting student from the University of Texas is spending her third summer in the programme. She believes that students' experience in the programme depends largely on their approach to the job. "You can learn as much as you're willing to learn," she said, "especially if you have a curious mind."

The programme has also helped LUCELEC in identifying talent for potential future employment. A number of current employees, including some managers, started their careers through the summer employment programme.

During their placements, all students are expected to write monthly reports of their employment experience. For those on school internships, their performance is evaluated and reports are submitted to their respective schools. They are also required to adhere to the same level of professionalism and decorum expected of regular employees.

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