



THE BAHAMAS CASE STUDY

April
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TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING (TVET)



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This project is an initiative of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in collaboration with the French Development Agency (AFD), and is designed as a proactive approach to produce documentation and provide recommendations for strategies and procedures to strengthen human resource capacities in cross-cutting areas necessary for a sustainable and competitive Regional Tourism Industry.



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EDITORIAL NOTE

Documents that are part of this study on "Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in tourism in the Greater Caribbean" were made between October 2014 and April 2015, on the basis of various documents made under the auspices of national, regional and international organizations since the themes, which form the central part of this consultancy, have been addressed extensively for more than fifteen years. Used as reference documents and dating from 1995 to 2015, those are the work of professionals of various nationalities.

When these authors are cited in our texts, it means having used the style of writing, vocabulary and terminology used originally; so, there is not a precise or rigorous homogeneity in the texts that make up this study with respect to the use of the languages (Spanish, English and French). Additionally, the final documents that compose this study were originally written in, either French, or Spanish or English. The translations of these documents are free-lance translations.

PRESENTATION

The Bahamas TVET Case Study was developed to provide information regarding the status of the technical vocational and training for the tourism industry. It starts with an overview of the economy and the tourism industry in order to contextualize the importance of tourism in the country.

It is not the purpose of this Case Study to reprint all the information that is available from other authors and/or publications, but instead to complement and amplify the contents of this document. Efforts have been made to make this Case Study as complete and as accurate as possible. However, for example there might be some differences in statistical information due to the fact that there are not accurate statistics on employment generation in the tourism industry in The Bahamas. Although several international and national organizations have carried out researches that include some projections on the topic and are included here. Therefore, this Case Study should be used only as general information reference and not as the ultimate source on statistics, tourism or TVET.

This Case Study on TVET in The Bahamas was developed by CERTIFICACIONES DE CENTROAMÉRICA, S.A. (CERTIFICA) under the consultancy “Training for Careers in Sustainable Tourism” of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) with the support of the French Development Agency (AFD). The CERTIFICA consultants that collaborated in developing this Case Study were M.Sc. Raúl Palma who made a field trip and had the opportunity to interview and visit several TVET-and higher education officials and Denia Del Valle who developed the tourism and education profile.

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

A. OVERALL COUNTRY PROFILE

The 100,000 square-mile (258,998-square kilometers) archipelago is officially named *The Commonwealth of The Bahamas*, composed by 700 islands and about 1,000 cays, of which only 30 are inhabited. Total land mass is estimated at 5,382 square miles. By 2013, the World Bank reported a population of 377,374 inhabitants. About 3 in 10 people are under 15; 69.2% are between 15 and 64 years old; 6.3% are 65 and older. The capital, Nassau, is in New Providence, while Freeport and Lucaya combined on Grand Bahama are regarded as the nation's second largest city. The ethnic distribution of the country is 85% Afro-Bahamians; 12% European; 3% Asian and Latin-Americans. English is the official language, and the Bahamian Dollar is their official currency, which is 1 to 1 with the US American Dollar.

The Bahamas is located 50 miles off Florida east coast, to the south with the island of Cuba and Haiti, south-east with the islands of Turk and Caicos, and to the north and north-east with the Atlantic Ocean.

The Bahamas became the first island reached by Christopher Columbus who discovered the New World, landing on San Salvador in 1492. Over the next centuries, the islands became key waypoints for explorers and adventurers along routes linking the old world with the new. During the 17th century, the islands became a crucial point for pirates who preyed upon merchant ships. The Bahamas became an official crown colony of Great Britain in 1717. Slavery was fully abolished in 1838. Limited self-rule was granted in 1964, and The Bahamas became an independent, self-governing nation on July 10, 1973, which is celebrated as the Independence Day.

The Bahamas has enjoyed political stability since independence, and its popularity elected Parliament traces its heritage to the House of Assembly, which first met in 1729. The political system is based on the British Westminster model with a Governor General, a Prime Minister and a Parliament. Queen Elizabeth II is the nation's sovereign. The two primary political parties are the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), and the Free National Movement (FNM). Prime Minister Perry Christie presides over a 38-member Parliament (30 PLP; 8 FNM). The districts of The Bahamas provide a system of local government everywhere except New Providence (which holds 70% of the national population) whose affairs are handled directly by the central government. There are thirty one districts plus New Providence.

The Bahamas, while actually located in the Atlantic, is a member state of the Association of Caribbean States and in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. About 60% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is related to tourism, which employs over half of the workforce. Main hotels development are located on New Providence. The next biggest economic driver is the financial services industry, which accounts for between 15-20% of GDP. The construction industry approximately 10%, agriculture and fisheries less than 5%, and mineral resources are salt and aragonite.

The financial services in The Bahamas have carved out a specialized niche as a leading offshore financial center, favored mainly by Canada, Swiss and US institutions. The Bahamas has around 270 licensed banks

and trust companies. One of the greatest appeals of using The Bahamas as a domicile for corporate and financial services is its tax-free status.

The country has abundant marine resources, and they have the third largest coral barrier in the world after, Australia and Belize. According to the UN Data, by 2011 the forested zone represents 51.5% of land area. The Bahamas has 27 National Parks, which represent more than 1 million acres of protected areas. This is possible because of The Bahamas National Trust, an institution created in 1959 by an Act of Parliament. This institution has a very strong education program, which includes teachers, workshops, children enrollment, and other initiatives that involve all the Bahamians.

Agricultural production in The Bahamas focuses on four main areas: crops, poultry, livestock and dairy. Exports consist mainly of grapefruits, limes, okra, papaya, pineapples, and avocado. Ninety percent of the agricultural land in The Bahamas is government-owned and falls under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

B. TOURISM PROFILE

Tourism background in The Bahamas starts at the end of the 19th century, but it is not an important activity until the end of the Second World War. By this time, the Government decided to develop two main activities: the tourism industry and offshore financial services. One of the biggest stimulus of the growing tourism industry was the trade embargo by the US government on Cuba in 1961, forcing the traveling industry to look for other locations, and this is when The Bahamas emerges as an important destination.

Since 2011 The Bahamas became one of the fourth most visited destinations in the Caribbean region, after Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Jamaica. According to the UNWTO, 2012, The Bahamas tourism activity grew 13%, and occupied the third position in the Caribbean. By 2013, the World Bank reported a small fall in terms of arrivals, 1,364 million (\$2,182,000 USD) against the 1,422 million arrivals of 2012, which represents an income of \$2,333,000 USD. According to Mr. Ian Ferguson, Director of Industry Training for the Ministry of Tourism, approximately 0.70 cents of each dollar is earned through the touristic activity.

Although all the destinations in The Bahamas are linked with the segment sand and sun, the most notable attractions are Paradise Island, cultural festivals, diving in the third largest coral barrier, nature reserves, casino and games, nature tourism, a well-known cruise ship destination. The nation's has its own unique culture – a fusion of the European, American and Afro Caribbean, which makes Bahamas an attractive destination. The highest season starts in November and ends in July.

According to the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association, The Bahamas is in the top five world cruise destinations, surpassed only by Alaska, and above of: Hawaii, Bermuda, Mediterranean, Turkey, Greek Islands and Europe in general.

At the end of 2014, visitors to the different islands of The Bahamas represented 6.3 million. From those the international arrivals by air represented 1.3 million and by cruise and sea landed arrivals were 5.0 million. With these numbers it is clear enough that the main source of international arrivals to the archipelago is, by far, the cruise ship industry, followed by air transportation. The main destinations are Grand Bahama (Freeport), New Providence (Nassau, this is the main destination of the archipelago and the one with most adequate infrastructure by air with the Lynden Pindling International Airport and the cruise harbor, Abaco, Andros, Berry Islands, Bimini, Cat Island and Exuma.

Undoubtedly, the most important foreign market to The Bahamas is the United States of America, followed by Canada; and from Europe, the leading country is the United Kingdom. Recently, the local authorities noticed an increase in arrivals from Latin American visitors; therefore, the Ministry of Tourism is placing more attention in developing Spanish skills with the people who work at the industry.

Nassau consolidated as the main destination for international tourists in 2014.

1. TRENDS IN NICHE MARKETS

In general, Bahamas main touristic areas are based on sea and beach activities, diving is one of the most popular one, along the archipelago; but, the best examples are on Bimini and Andros. According to Catherine Morris, an editor from the magazine “The Bahamas Investor” edition July-December 2014, “The Bahamas is consistently ranked as one of the world’s top diving locations”.

About cultural aspects, the Junkanoo Carnival is probably the best cultural example; there are some historical spots, like the Nassau Downtown, colonial fortress in between.

Tourism in The Bahamas has specific destinations for families; like the Atlantis in Paradise Island, Club Med in San Salvador Island, and Melia Nassau Beach at Coral Beach are some of the best examples.

Another important niche market in The Bahamas is the casino activity. With the opening of the Baha Mar Project at the end of 2015, Bahamas is adding at least 2,500 more rooms. The high end destinations are well developed in the archipelago, an example of this is Windermere Island, in Eleuthera.

It is important to mention that The Bahamas is making big efforts in positioning itself as a sports touristic destination, a few examples are Pure Silk-Bahamas LPGA Classic, The Miami Heat training camp was also in the archipelago, etc. According to The Bahamas Investor, the Ministry of Tourism spends an estimated \$25 million annually advertising that list of attributes around the world.

2. IMPACT ON ECONOMY

In The Bahamas, tourism has been identified as the main driver for the growth of the country's economy. It is also true, that is one of the wealthiest Caribbean countries, with an economy heavily dependent on tourism and offshore banking. Tourism together with tourism-driven construction and manufacturing, accounts for approximately 60% of GDP. This is confirmed by the World Travel and Tourism Council indicating that the contribution of tourism to the GDP, including the direct and total impact by 2014, was 63%.

In order to have a broader idea of the economic impact of tourism in The Bahamas, it is necessary to take the information shared by the World Travel and Tourism Council as well as that given by representatives of the Ministry Of Tourism during personal interviews. Some of the indicators that will be mentioned here are Employment: Direct Contribution, Employment: Total Contribution, Visitor Exports and Investment.

Visitor Exports: money spent by foreign visitors in the country is a key component of tourism. In The Bahamas, exports generated BSD 2,261.1 million (61.5% of total exports) in 2014.

Investment: in terms of tourism investment, the amount reported by the WTTC during 2014 was BSD 417.9mn. There are some examples like the opening of the \$3.5 billion Baha Mar Project that will be opened this present year.

3. EMPLOYMENT IN TOURISM

Direct Contribution: by 2014, tourism activity generated 51,000 jobs (27% of Bahamian labor force) directly and is expected to grow by 5% during 2015. This includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services; it also includes the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourism (WTTC, 2015).

Employment: Total Contribution: The total contribution of tourism (including wider effects from investment, supply chain and induced income impacts) was a total of 98,000 jobs (51.6% of total employment) and it is expected to grow 5% more during 2015 (WTTC, 2015).

4. COMPETITIVENESS

According to the 2015 Index of Economic Freedom¹, The Bahamas is No. 41 from a world rank of 186 countries. The Bahamas overall score continues to be higher than the regional average for this Index, and its economy is the fourth of a total of 29 countries in the South and Central American/Caribbean region in this ranking. This index is measured by four categories: rule of law (property rights, freedom from corruption), limited government (fiscal freedom, government

¹ The index of Economic Freedom documents the positive relationship between economic freedom and a variety of positive social and economic goals. 2015 Index of Economic Freedom (www.heritage.org)

spending), regulatory efficiency (business freedom, labor freedom, monetary freedom) and open markets (trade freedom, investment freedom and financial freedom).

Another aspects that contribute to the competitiveness of the archipelago are: close proximity to major North American and Latin American financial centers, peaceful and stable democracy since 1729, no local taxes on capital gains, inheritance, corporate and personal income, dividends and interest, proactive incentives for investment, highly trained industry professionals and an English-speaking workforce.

The Bahamas National Trust is the official institution in charge of the national parks in the country, which integrate by 2015, 27 Protected Areas throughout the archipelago. Two million acres are currently protected including marine and terrestrial sites. These protected areas are visited by local and international tourists.

II. EDUCATION IN COUNTRY

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Public Education Secretariat is the official body responsible for education. This ministry has responsibility for all educational institutions in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

The primary level covers Pre-School and grades one to six (1-6), then Junior High level (grades 7-9) and Senior High (grades 10-12). These levels are different in Department of Education schools in New Providence with slight variations in Family Island Schools, where some All-age schools remain.

Official school ages by level of education are pre-school: 3 to 4 years old, primary school: 5 to 10 years old, secondary school: 11 to 16 years old and tertiary education: 17 to 21 years old.

SCHOOL AGE POPULATION BY EDUCATION LEVEL²

| | |
|------------|--------|
| Pre-school | 10,897 |
| Primary | 26,607 |
| Secondary | 35,256 |
| Tertiary | 33,254 |

Compulsory education lasts 12 years from age 5 to age 16. For primary to post-secondary education, the academic year begins in September and ends in June.

² Table based on Country Profile/ Education System/ www.uis.unesco.org/datacentre 2013 data.

The literacy rate for The Bahamas is 95% effective, and that was confirmed by Mrs. Sharon Ferguson, Senior Education Officer, Family and Consumer Science Education from the Ministry of Education in personal communication. Education for children between the age of 5 and 15 is mandatory.

The students had a few options in terms of credentials or documentation such as:

| Secondary Documents | Description | Credential |
|--|--|------------|
| Bahamas Junior Certificate | External examination administered by the Ministry of Education. | A |
| High School Diploma | Does not provide access to postsecondary education. | B |
| General Certificate of Education, ordinary level | Awarded by various examination boards, including the University of Cambridge, University of London. | C |
| Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education | Administered by the Ministry of Education, introduced in 1993. | D |
| General Certificate of Education, advanced level | Awarded by various examination boards, University of Cambridge, University of London: two-year program following credential C or equivalent. | E |

| Post-Secondary Documents | Description | Credential |
|---|--|------------|
| Certificates awarded by the Bahamas Hotel Training College, Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute, and College of The Bahamas. | One Semester to two-year programs, admission based on credential C or D. | F |
| Diplomas awarded by the Bahamas Hotel Training College, Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute, and College of the Bahamas | One and one-half to two-year programs, admission based on credential C or D. | G |
| Associated degrees in Applied Science (Culinary Arts, Hospitality Operations and National Apprentice Cook), awarded by the College of the Bahamas | Two-year and two-and-a-half-year programs, admission based on credential C or D. | H |
| Bachelor in Science Degree (Tourism Management and Hospitality Management) awarded by the College of the Bahamas | Four-year programs requiring credential C or D. | K |

Upper secondary graduation rates have been increasing at an annual average of 3.6% between 2000 and 2011; but, a 47%. Tertiary education graduation rates have also been increasing representing 23% of 25-34 years old attending tertiary education. Labor market perspectives for students are positive at all levels of education. However, 24.7% of 15-29 years old were not in education and not employed in 2011.

BAHAMAS CREDENTIALS:

- Grade Level Assessment Test
- Bahamas Junior Certificate
- Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education
- Certificate from Bahamas Hotel Training College
- General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level
- General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
- Associate of Applied Science
- Associate of Arts and Science
- Diploma from Bahamas Hotel Training College
- Bachelor's degree from College of Bahamas
- Diploma from College of the Bahamas

GRADING SCALES: according to The Bahamas Education System.

**A. EDUCATION LEVELS**

Education by law in The Bahamas is compulsory between ages 5 and 16 and still based on the British system in many ways.

The Bahamas classified the level of education as follows:

| EDUCATION LEVEL | DESCRIPTION |
|----------------------|---|
| Primary Education | For the first 6 grades, children attend primary school. They must pass tests at the end of each year, in order to progress further. |
| Secondary Education | From ages 11 to 17 years, students attend secondary schools. These are usually functionally independent, but may be merged with primary schools on the smaller Family Islands where practical economics dictate this. Following these 6 years of largely academic education, the students attempt their Bahamas certificate of general education. |
| Vocational Education | The government launched its second technical and vocational training project in 2007 as part of a long-term plan to improve the system. The first phase included policy development, strengthening the apprenticeship system, improving cost recovery and tracing previous student's progress. Subsequent programs address skills training, tourism training, and building more muscle into the vocational preparation system itself. |
| Tertiary Education | There are several tertiary education opportunities available in The Bahamas, and more in the wider Caribbean network. The Princess Margaret Hospital has a Nursing School, The College of The Bahamas has a Centre for Hotel and Tourism Management which provides degrees in hotel management and tourism, as well as bachelor and associate degrees. |

III. NATIONAL TVET LEGISLATION, POLICY, STRATEGY, STRUCTURE AND STATUS

In 2006, Prime Minister Christie made a Cabinet adjustment initiating a policy shift that allowed for the primary Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institution, Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (B.T.V.I) to be removed from the portfolio of the Ministry of Education and be placed under the portfolio of a newly framed Ministry of Immigration, Labor and Training. The Government also recognized that the creation of a national entity to address such issues and coordinate and lead the efforts to solve issues and improve the TVET delivery system would be beneficial in reaching its policy goals.

The mandate of this national entity is to build a competency based training and job placement system, flexible and responsive to the actual requirements of the workplace via a network of suitable training institutions, organizations, and programs involved in the process of supplying qualified and skilled labor for The Bahamas. The institution is The National Training Agency of The Bahamas (NTA) established in 2013, and has collaborated with the existing TVET structure to build a competency based training and job placement system that is flexible and responsive to the requirements of the workforce.

The presence of the NTA has not only facilitated the goal of producing and maintaining a well-trained, skilled workforce, but has also positively impact one of the nation's most pressing challenges-reducing

the unemployment rate. According to Agatha Marcell, Director of NTA, unemployment rate is around 34%, affecting the population between 16 to 34 years old.

Currently, the mayor providers of Technical & Vocational education and training include the Department of Education, The College of The Bahamas, which incorporates The Centre for Continuing Education and Extension Services (CEES) and The Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute, The Bahamas Technical & Vocational Institute (BTVI)³ and several cade programs via the public utilities corporations. At present, BTVI is viewed as the main provider of technical and vocational training in the country.

It is important to mention that, nowadays, the NTA works only with the Bahamians who are not studying for any reason, could be economic or absence of necessary requirements to get into the school system. The NTA operates a competency based education and training (CBET) system, flexible and responsive to the actual requirements of the workplace. Competency based education and training incorporates the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes into the workforce preparation activity. In the near future NTA will run the national TVET strategy, adopting the CANTA-TVET philosophy of subscribing to a “standards driven, outcomes-based approach to education and training, in the process of preparing people for the world work”.

In December 2014, the Caribbean Development Bank evaluated a proposal from the Government to enhance the capacity of the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI) to provide quality, demand-driven workforce development in the country; and recommended a loan of US\$ 4.74 million.

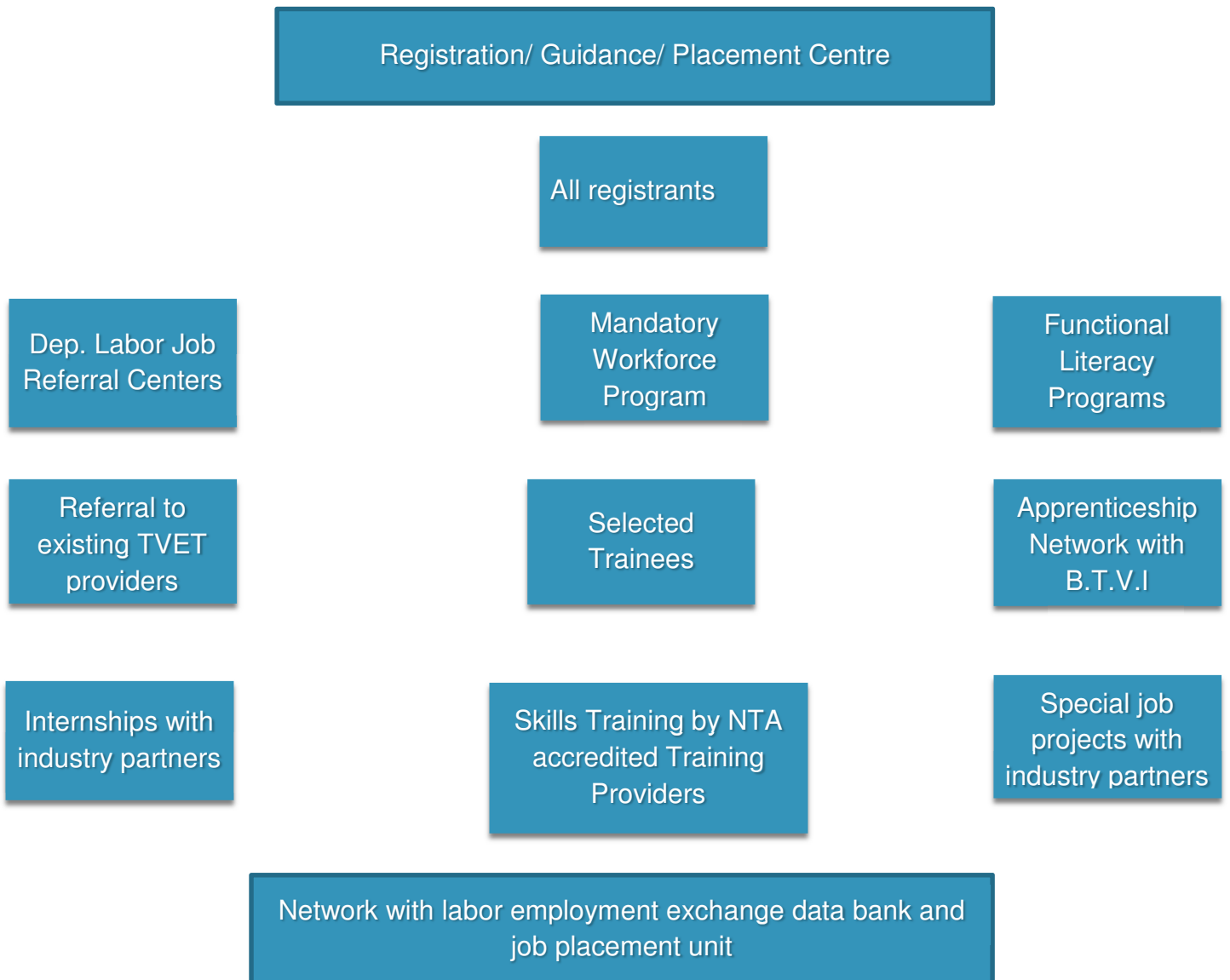
IV. NATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY CAREER STRUCTURE

The NTA program consists in a 14 weeks working, where the first 4 weeks with personal guidance and 10 weeks with practical skills. Now they have between 550-600 students, with a retention rate of the 83%, they have to pay only \$69.00 BMSD for the certification, but they can only miss two sessions, otherwise they are out of the program. After the 10 weeks of practical training, they must attend between 2 to 4 weeks working with the industry. The certification is granted by City and Guilds⁴, everyone that ends this program could apply for a job in any country from the Common Wealth.

³ BTVI technical and vocational institute do not offer any type of tourism, hospitality or culinary career.

⁴ City & Guilds, is an England Company, founded in 1878 and backed by a Royal Charter. They work with governments to develop skills solutions and embed qualifications into the national education system and curriculum.

NTA Training Paths Profile



V. THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION/ FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education through the Family & Consumer Science Education Unit, offer a variety of degrees concerning the tourism and hospitality area. They work with different types of certification of labor competencies. At education level, the Ministry of Education is applying to the 21st Century Competencies, defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Other

certifications are Bahamas Host, Food Handlers, City and Guilds, American Hotel and Lodging Management Educational Institute and Coterie of Butlers⁵.

The Hospitality and Tourism Studies is a three-year course, which offers instruction for students whether they are seeking immediate entry level employment in the tourism industry or continuing their studies at a tertiary institution, or pursuing an entrepreneurial career. The instruction given for this is as of the foundational type. Students will be exposed to six core competencies required by the industry: Professionalism, Effective Communication, Providing Quality Customer Service, Personal and Guest Safety, Tourism Promotion, and Environmental Consciousness. These core competencies are integrated in Tourism Studies of Tourism, Accommodations (S. Ferguson, 2015).

The Front Office and Housekeeping, Food and Beverage Service, and Food Preparation courses curriculum is designed to provide realistic learning experiences. Teaching strategies will include practical and theoretical experiences within the classroom environment. Learning through research and industry internship will enhance regular classroom experiences (Ferguson, 2015).

In addition, they have a Primary Program, named the Junior Hotel Program where they reinforce the importance of tourism, also works with values, and culture and traditions aspects of The Bahamas

The Ministry of Education also works with the teachers, in order to be able of teaching, they need to take a 4-year full program Certification on Education for the Bachelor level students, and, for those who applied in college or associated degree, teachers should need a Teacher Certification or a Bachelor Degree. The Ministry of Education works hand in hand with the Ministry of Tourism, this way the schoolteachers could teach in the Bahamas Host Program.

The Ministry of Education also works with the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association, with a TVET teachers' program, where 80 to 100 teachers participate annually for three days doing a "practical training" inside of the industry, then the teachers give feedback on the experience where through a presentation about what they have learn during those days they compete for the positions at the school.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR LABOR COMPETENCIES MANAGEMENT (ACCREDITATION ON COMPETENCIES FOR WORK) AT NATIONAL LEVEL

In The Bahamas, there is no official institution that could be related with the labor competences for workforce development and employability. The closest is the National Training Agency, but until they are not recognized as a national entity, they are only part of the system. As it was mentioned before, the Government requested, several years ago, to remove the TVET from the BTVI and transfer it to the NTA, at present time this action has not been done. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education is

⁵ The Coterie of Caribbean Butlers registered in Nassau, Bahamas, provides onsite butler training services nationally and internationally.

concerned in the preparation of students and teachers giving them the chance to get involved with the industry in a better way.

VII. HIGHER EDUCATION

A clear change in direction on higher education can be seen with the formation of the College of The Bahamas in 1974, when the government made sweeping changes in its approach to higher education. Since then, the number and types of institutions available and opportunities for students for higher education studies within the country, have increased.

The Bahamas higher education institutions are either publicly or privately managed. At present, there are no local universities and the highest qualification local institutions offer is an Associated Degree. Apart from the College of The Bahamas and The Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute, all other higher education institutions are privately funded. It is important to mention that the University of The Bahamas will open by the end of 2015 or beginning of 2016.

According to the higher education report, there are several private institutions in Bahamas, but only The College of The Bahamas offers grades in Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary matters.

There are no postgraduate studies offered by Bahamian institutions. However, institutions, foreign either based or local, in collaboration with overseas universities, offer students the opportunity to study for a post-graduate qualification while living in The Bahamas. For example, the University of West Indies offers distance-learning Master's degrees in Counselling and Education.

The Ministry of Education has no formal accreditation process. It does however, encourage institutions to engage in memoranda of understandings or other similar agreements with reputable institutions. There is a document named the National Accreditation and Equivalency Council of The Bahamas, 2006; however the information is only for that period. The entrance requirements to a tertiary education generally require to pass the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE), which must include English and Mathematics. In addition to the general entry requirements, institutions have their own College Preparatory Program or admission examination that can also be used to gain entry to College studies. Different requirements exist for non-traditional aged students.

An appointed council governs the College of The Bahamas (COB), which exists through an Act of Parliament. As it was mentioned before, the College is currently being re-structured, as it is preparing to become a university. In March 2014, the Caribbean Development evaluated a proposal from the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to enhance the capacity of the COB

VIII. RESULTS TO DATE OR RESULTS EXPECTED

At present time, a few efforts show the compromise of the Bahamian authorities and private sector in order to prepare all workforce related with tourism activities. It is important to summarize the main activities that have something to do with competencies in tourism. Before listing these, it is valuable to make it clear that currently, in the Bahamas, there is no TVET structure beyond the ones mentioned by the National Training Agency.

Public Sector:

1. Ministry of Education: a) Junior School Program: children are thought in tourism, cultural and nature aspects, just to make them more sensible about their country. It does not matter if the children would or would not study or work in the tourism business. b) Junior High School, at the Hospitality and Tourism Studies, which offers instruction for students whether they are seeking immediate entry level employment in the tourism industry or continuing their studies at a tertiary institution, or pursuing being an entrepreneur. Due to the fact that the majority of younger generations do not have access to college, this initiative of getting involved in a labor situation is a way to fight back the increasing rates of unemployment in the country, especially persons of this age.
2. Ministry of Tourism: the Bahamas Host Program is the most important trainee program at the Ministry of Tourism. This program includes all working force (e.g. taxi drivers) who have the very first encounter with tourism, and, they do not have a full education level. This program is also working with the Ministry of Transportation, which issues their driver license, so the drivers need to take a three level course about identity, service and leadership, otherwise the license is not issued to the driver.
3. National Training Agency: As it was mentioned before, this agency is at the moment taking care of all the persons who are not accepted in college or do not have the means to get in, and, they need to work. The agency's main goal is to reduce unemployment rates in the country. The idea of this agency is to be in charge of TVET Bahamas in the near future.

Private Sector:

1. College of The Bahamas: in charge of the higher education in tourism matters, will turn into a University next year. They work with a minor group of students (350 approx.), from different parts of the country. They have a variety of programs and degrees, such as Minor, Associated Degree and Bachelor Degree as well as a number of specialized courses all in tourism matters.
2. The Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association: as a private sector the BHA offer a variety of courses, some of them are worked together with the Ministry of Education and those are for teachers, students and parents. They also offer Business Certification Programs: **Total Service: The Bahamas is Quality, and the American Hotel & Lodging Education Institute Partners Program.** The Art of Customer Care Workshops in Cooperation with Atlantis University, and the Spanish for Hospitality,

are courses offered by the College of The Bahamas -COB- in collaboration with BHA and Ministry of Tourism and Aviation - MOTA -. They also work with Primary and Secondary Schools with the **Junior Hotelier Student Awareness Program**.

IX. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

1. The Bahamas needs to implement the TVET tools in order to develop a national strategy in order to successfully combat unemployment rates of the country. Due to the absence of a tourism training program at the Technical and Vocational Institute at Bahamas, it is clear that TVET should be adopted by an official entity.
2. All the institutions (private and public) are working hand in hand in order to achieve better results in tourism matters. The work with children and junior schools is one of the best examples in order to achieve different and better results in the coming years.
3. The absence of a Technical and Vocational Institute with a tourism and hospitality branch of formation is a gap due to the fact that no national institution is working specifically with this thematic.

X. IMPORTANT LESSONS AND FUTURE PLANS

1. First, the implementation of the TVET at the National Training Agency will bring a new face into the quality of experience for those working or studying tourism and hospitality matters.
2. It is important to have a framework for certification matters in tourism and education initiatives at local level, probably ruled by the Ministry of Education, and it can include higher education.
3. The Vocational and Technical Institute should introduce courses in tourism.

XI. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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|---------|---|
| BHA | Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association |
| BNT | Bahamas National Trust |
| BTVI | Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community |
| COB | College of The Bahamas |
| CBET | Competency Based Education and Training |
| CEES | Centre for Continuing Education and Extension Services |
| NAT | National Training Agency |
| OECD | Organization for Economic for Cooperation and Development |
| TVI | Technical and Vocational Institute |

XII. REFERENCES AND SOURCES

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