

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO ASSIST WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK TO MITIGATE DISPARITIES IN THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT THE BAHAMAS TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE

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#### 1. BACKGROUND

**1.01** The Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI), which was established in 1980 as the Industrial Training Centre, was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in April 2010 and came into operation on July 1, 2011. BTVI's mandate, among other things, is to provide Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for employment and entrepreneurship in partnership with public and private sector stakeholders, including employers. BTVI was established as a statutory entity with a governance structure which includes a Board, whose Chair is appointed by the Governor-General.

**1.02** The Institute is managed by a President, also appointed by the Governor-General, responsible for the administrative operations and instructional programmes. The institution has the authority to grant awards, as well as autonomy for its financial and administrative affairs. BTVI offers certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees in a range of skills development programmes. Enrolment in BTVI for the academic year 2021-2022 was documented as of Spring Semester 2022 at 2,324 students for the outlined programmes. A detailed breakdown of enrolment in courses for the 2021-2022 academic year, by gender, is provided at Appendix 1. This breakdown shows programming where participation is skewed in favour of one gender over the other.

**1.03 Complexities in Gender Parity in Post-secondary Education** – The [global] data shows that there is a disparity in access to TVET by sex and this disparity is in favour of men. Embedded in the 2030 Education Agenda as highlighted in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) is the focus on 'inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.' In a complementary fashion, with respect to TVET, SDG8 highlights the need to 'promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.' UNESCO Strategy for TVET 2022-2029 (2021).

The Bahamas Government is committed to both goals (SDG4 and SDG8), with a specific focus on meeting the outcomes as detailed in the following targets:

- 4.3 Equal access to technical/vocational and higher education: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
- 4.4 Relevant skills: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
- 8.5 Productive employment and decent work: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and

- persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value; and
- 8.6 Increase employment, education and training opportunities: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

The complexity of factors surrounding gender parity in post-secondary education is, however, much greater than the head count of the number of men or women enrolled in the sector. First and foremost, as shown below, gender equity, rather than gender equality considerations, are more important policy issues when focusing on achievement outcomes in post-secondary education:

- (a) **Gender equality**<sup>1</sup> - which does not always result in equal outcomes for men and women.
- (b) **Gender equity**<sup>2</sup> - where women and men are not only given equal access to resources and equal opportunities but are also given the means of benefiting from this equality.

**1.04** Access, enrolment and achievement in post-secondary education are means to opportunities for decent employment/work<sup>3</sup>. Productive employment and decent work are key elements of sustainable poverty reduction in developing countries and Small Island Development States (SIDS). Such an important prerequisite of wellbeing requires more than just equality outcomes for men and women. In this context equity outcomes in education are a necessity to sustainable development gains<sup>4</sup>. In summary, attempting to merely achieve numeric balances in education may result in higher levels of gender disparities at the impact level. Socio-economic, historic and cultural determinants of access, participation and achievement must be considered to:

- (a) Determine the levels of true disparity and where they exist.
- (b) Customize mitigation interventions to alleviate disparities.
- (c) Estimate achievable, incremental outcomes to gender equity. These cannot include only enrolment indicators but must include completion and achievement indicators as well.

**1.05** In the context of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, considerations should include:

- (a) **Factors in the broader post-secondary education sector of Bahamas** – post-secondary education includes academic, career/technical, and continuing education programmes after high or secondary school. In The Bahamas, post-secondary education is provided by institutions other than BTVI. Other major training providers include the National Training Agency (NTA) and the University of Bahamas (UB). In addition to these three “giants” in the sector, there is access to services from an ad hoc set of private sector service-providers offering programmes at significantly higher cost. These include offshore universities and distance education/online institutions. An assessment of disparity/parity levels in the sector should consider three major factors:

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<sup>1</sup> "Gender equality - equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards." (<http://web.unfpa.org/gender/resources3.htm#2>)

<sup>2</sup> "Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men." (UNFPA).

<sup>3</sup> Decent work - work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security (in the workplace) and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom to express concerns as well as organise and participate in the decisions that affects life and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men - <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--it/index.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Here development gains refer to economic growth, human development achievements, MDG/SDG and national development goals set by the country.

- (i) Although enrolment rates of men and women at BTVI indicate that there was a disparity in enrolment in favour of men, the rates of enrolment for women are gradually increasing. To date, 59% of the population at BTVI are female. However, there are still significant gaps in the enrolment of female students in the non-traditional technical programmes. However, despite significantly lower enrolment rates in the non-traditional fields for women, on average 51% of those who eventually graduated were female. When compared to enrolment rates, this suggests that women have a much greater chance of completing programmes and earning certification.
- (ii) Enrolment rates for women exceed that of men at other levels of post-secondary education in associate degree and graduate level programmes that are valued by society and considered to be “more sophisticated”. On average, close to 75% of the students enrolled at UB are female<sup>5</sup>.
- (iii) Despite women’s gains in access to post-secondary education and relatively high achievement rates in the sub-sector, rates of enrolment across the sector in the non-traditional areas of study, remain at persistently low levels. These are mainly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programmes. The CARICOM Regional TVET Strategy for Workforce Development and Economic Competitiveness (2014) argues that “gender must be a prime consideration in the renewal of TVET.... [and that] TVET needs to engage the female population differently, ensuring that the training choices they make are informed and lead to careers that offer decent wages to sustain livelihoods, especially for sole support parents” (p. 6). On the flip side, and equally important, men’s participation rates in tertiary education are low but concentrated in the STEM disciplines. Limitations in available spaces in STEM programmes, work to the disadvantage of men in enrolment to higher learning.

The dynamics within these factors suggest that there is a web of underlying causes that adversely affect gender parity at different stages of the post-secondary/tertiary education cycle.

- (b) **Labour market needs** – labour market entrants with certification in STEM subjects have access to higher income-earning opportunities. This puts women at a disadvantage. On the other hand, in a service-sector led economy such as The Bahamas, opportunities in STEM-related occupations, outside initial infrastructure developments, are limited. In the context of The Bahamas labour market, this places men at a disadvantage which will increase with time. Attempts to enhance participation of women in the STEM programmes, without concurrently attempting to achieve the same for men in the social and personal services disciplines, will therefore create disadvantages for both men and women. The diversity of the economy in sectors that demand skills under the STEM programmes will also have to be considered.
- (c) **Constraining factors that impact access for men and women in differential ways** - These include, but are not limited to:
  - (i) Financial barriers.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: The College of The Bahamas, Institutional and Planning Office.

- (ii) Norms, traditions, and perceptions that promote negative attitudes and gender stereotyping.
- (iii) Personal choice.
- (iv) Lack of reliable transportation.
- (v) Safety and security.
- (vi) Migration status.
- (vii) Absence of student housing or distance learning options.
- (viii) Education achievement in prerequisite requirements.
- (ix) Special needs.
- (x) Socio-economic status - marital and parental status etc., employment, poverty, place of residence.

## **2. OBJECTIVE**

**2.01** The overall objective of this consultancy is to mitigate disparities in participation for women and men across all departments of study at BTVI, to contribute to the incremental reduction of factors that inhibit gender equity in participation in the education sector and the labour force.

**2.02** The project considers the principles of the Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB) Gender Equality Policy and Operational Strategy (GEPOS), further recognizing that sustainable development can only be achieved where there is equitable access for all groups of men and women, at all levels of education. This is the only approach that will truly affect equity in the labour market.

## **3. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

**3.01** The Consultant, a Gender Specialist (GS), will work closely with the Offices of the Registrar, Public Relations as well as Student Affairs in carrying out the assignment.

**3.02** The overall responsibility of the GS is to formulate and assist with the implementation of best practices in student service and academic programming, to enhance equality in participation of women and men across all departments at BTVI and contribute to incremental reductions in gender disparities in participation in the labour force. Specific responsibilities of the GS will include:

- (a) Conducting research to provide a multi-contextual understanding of opportunities and constraints across several socio-cultural variables, to identify (specific to The Bahamas and the Family Islands) socio-cultural causes of gender disparities in TVET and labour force participation.
- (b) Designing, costing, and supporting the implementation of the following:
  - (i) A series of interventions to mitigate identified constraining factors to gender equity in education and labour market participation.
  - (ii) A public education/awareness strategy to effect change in practices that are the main causes of overt and subtle attitudes and other behavioural practices that promote gender disparities in participation in the education sector, with reference to post-secondary education.
  - (iii) A series of practitioner workshops on the application of gender considerations in their

respective professions, targeted at - secondary school teachers, Guidance Counsellors, curriculum developers, education policy specialists/ planners, and post-secondary managers, lecturers and instructors and other education practitioners.

All designs must include a “Results Monitoring Framework”, with expected incremental outcomes.

- (c) Developing recommendations for ongoing programming with cost estimates for incremental enhancements in gender equity in TVET and the labour market for the next 10 years.
- (d) Designing a framework to monitor and evaluate change.

#### **4. TIMING AND QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

**4.01** It is expected that the assignment will require a maximum of 30 days over a six-month period. The Gender Specialist should have an advanced degree in Gender and Development Studies or Sociology with specialist training in Gender and Development Studies.

**4.02** Technical expertise in the design and implementation of public education campaigns for gender equality in post-secondary education will be desirable. At least five years’ practical experience in the integration of gender considerations in development programming, career and guidance counselling, as well as an ability to communicate with a wide range of stakeholders is strongly recommended.

#### **5. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

**5.01** The Consultant will be expected to provide the following on email, containing the text, tables and all appendices done in Microsoft Word/Excel:

- (a) A Technical Proposal detailing the consultant’s approach to the assignment, the scope and methodology, and comprising a work plan inclusive of tasks and responsibilities, projected outcomes, and scheduling for completion of the assignment, within three weeks of the commencement of the assignment.
- (b) An assessment report documenting research findings, analysis, and recommendations (**see 3.02 (a)**), within two months of the commencement of the assignment. BTVI and CDB will provide comments on receipt of the Report.
- (c) Implementation plans, budgets, and Results Monitoring Framework separately for each of the three initiatives (i) series of interventions, (ii) public awareness/education strategy and (iii) practitioner workshops, listed at **3.02 (b)**, within five months of the commencement of the assignment. Implementation plans should include a defined scope, goals and objectives, an outline of deliverables and outcomes, task, due dates, and other information supporting comprehensive implementation. BTVI and CDB will provide comments on receipt of the respective plans, budgets, and monitoring frameworks.
- (d) Implementation plan, budget and monitoring and evaluation framework for ongoing programming, as per **3.02 (c) and (d)**, within five months of the commencement of the assignment. BTVI and CDB will provide comments on receipt of the Report.