

# **UNESCO's Information for All Programme launches pioneering Library Cadet Programme in The Bahamas**

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**A pioneering library cadet project was launched on 23 March 2006 in The Bahamas with support of UNESCO's Information for All Programmes (IFAP).**

The project was developed in collaboration with the Bahamas Library Service within the framework of UNESCO's actions to promote information literacy and equitable access to information and knowledge.

The project aims to equip primary and high school students with literacy skills that would enable them to access, retrieve, use and evaluate information effectively and efficiently, while participating in the promotion and development of libraries in their communities.

The training of trainers is a critical aspect of this programme, with the aim of encouraging a core group of Library Cadets to train others and at the same time develop interests in the fields of Library and Information as a future career.

During the launch, Unique Smith, a sixteen (16) year old Library Cadet shared her experience and views of the programme.

***"Recruiting Training Library Cadets for a Sustainable Bahamas"***

*"I often hear students say, when I grow up, I want to become a teacher, I wish to become a doctor, a lawyer, an accountant, a policeman, but I have hardly ever heard them say I want to become a*

*librarian. Why is this so? Because we are used to thinking in the same old way, that the library is for old, boring people, but some of us are not aware of the opportunities that we have at the library. Let us use our school libraries more and tell our friends to do the same. Let them know that the library is not just a place of books but also many computers, some video games and toys for children and it is really a fun place for all.*

*We all look forward to more training in Library Science, such as:*

- *More computers skills*
- *The essay competition on "Why We Need Community Libraries"*
- *Visits to COB's (College of The Bahamas) library, The Archives, Learning Resources Section and The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology*
- *Community service in public libraries*
- *Summer reading programmes*
- *Weekly "Story Hour", and lastly*
- *Graduation in July.*

### ***"Young Librarians Wanted"***

*This was the first sign I saw when I entered the Coconut Grove Library through Acklins Street. I went to visit a friend in Yellow Elder, and again I saw the same sign at the G. K. Symonette Library and again at the Lillian G. Weir-Coakley Library, which was once called the Southern Public Library on Baillou Hill Road. I went shopping down town, on Bay Street, and I saw some tourists rushing toward an unusual shaped building. It was a library, the oldest in The Bahamas, established since 1837. It was once used as a jail. I said to myself, this library is in the middle of town, and I am sure it does not need*

*any more librarians. It should be well staffed. I was wrong; there was the sign again, "Young Librarians Preferably Males Needed". This shows that males can and are needed to become librarians.*

*This experience has taught me that there is a great need for librarians and Information Specialists in our country. From what I have observed, it seems to be a great profession. I would encourage my friends to start thinking about making librarianship their career when they have finished high school. The old concept of librarians having the bookish image of thick glasses with their hair in a bun, and no life outside of the library is no longer the view of most people.*

*My experience as a Cadet has been great so far. The computer training and learning such things as the Dewey Decimal System was useful.*

*So I invite you to share in the RTLC Programme "Recruiting Training Library Cadets for a Sustainable Bahamas".*

Unique said that she was very thankful to UNESCO and IFAP and encouraged the consideration of a scholarship for outstanding Library Cadets to pursue studies in the field of Information.

The Bahamas is an archipelago consisting of over seven hundred (700) islands. Twenty-one (21) of these islands are inhabited, many of which are remote and difficult to access. The programme was initiated in New Providence and is foreseen for expansion to remote "Family/Out Islands" of The Bahamas.