

BUSINESS

Strong local libraries, stronger Bahamian societies

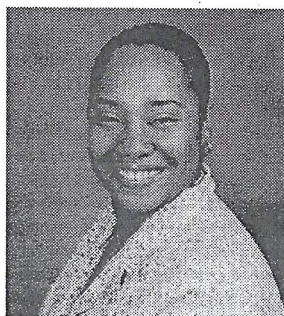
The National Development Plan: Vision 2040 provides a roadmap for the future development of The Bahamas, which focuses on the economy, governance, social policy and both the natural and built environment. This plan will guide government investment over the next 25 years in partnership with agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank, The College of The Bahamas and the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers' Confederation. Extensive research, analysis and public consultation is needed for the success of this plan. Therefore, Bahamian libraries must do their part to inform social policy while helping to undergird all four pillars.

The library's role as the great equalizer

As The Bahamas seeks to become a more developed and self-sufficient nation, there has to exist among the Bahamian people a deep need for a stronger and more balanced society. Deep down there is a voice in each of us that cries out to be treated with respect, dignity and equality. Some individuals

struggled and died for this truth to be embraced by all of us as a people. The late Sir Lynden Pindling and others shared this vision. He and other great Bahamians believed in a better Bahamas and that spirit must be kept alive in the hearts of all — both young and old.

The Free National Movement, under the leadership of the former prime minister, Hubert A. Ingraham, had a vision for libraries, which it built from 1992 to 2002. The former prime minister also remarked in April 2011 during the opening ceremony of the Harry C. Moore Library & Information Centre that, "The great promise of this center is the utilization of cutting-edge technology to make access to information and library resources, particularly on The Bahamas, easier and more direct for every island and community in The Bahamas". He also added, "Some of the most innovative websites today are a collection of contributions from others. Likewise, the great success of this library and information center must include the contributions from others who will



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add to its collection of print, photographic, audio-visual and other material."

Prime Minister Perry G. Christie and his administration also believe that libraries support national identity and development, as demonstrated when they officially launched the The National Development Plan - Vision 2040 at the Harry C. Moore Library at The College of The Bahamas on Monday, November 17, 2014. He called it "the most appropriate place to launch the process". The prime minister also remarked "the plan calls for the collaboration among the government, private sector and civil society and focuses on developing a comprehensive and publicly discussed long-term economic development strategy. It is a National Development Plan that will guide government's policy decisions over the next 25 years".

Libraries as a force for literacy and socio-economic development

Epictetus stated, "only the educated are free". If this statement is true, then it is the library's responsibility

to help educate the masses that will never walk through the doors of a college or university. Libraries are more than collections of books — no matter the format. They are community centers for the Bahamian people and others who walk through their doors. They are the gateways to childhood and adult literacy, the poor man's university, and centers for lifelong learning. Everywhere there is a need for information; a library in some form exists to fill that need.

Bahamian public, school, special and academic libraries provide support for economic development in our archipelago by making information available to help people develop job skills. They offer training, education and enrichment on many subjects and help to bridge technology and information gaps that exists in our Bahamian economy and society.

Libraries are vital to the quality of living and infrastructure of each community throughout The Bahamas. Libraries can provide the avenue for extricating people from the deep depression of

poverty and income inequality. Libraries help to create a stronger Bahamian society by serving as places to visit others with similar interests, places where brilliant minds come together to make new discoveries, and expand their horizons. Many persons who met often to discuss futuristic goals at local libraries have gone on to make considerable contributions to the nation. Therefore, the importance of libraries and their transformative impact on their users cannot be overstated.

Asking all librarians and library personnel to join us ...

During February 25 and February 26, the Libraries & Instructional Media Services Department at The College of The Bahamas will host its annual symposium for librarians and paraprofessionals under the theme, "Vision 2040: National development and library transformation throughout The Bahamas". Visit this web page <http://cob-bs.libguides.com/libsymp2016> for more information.