

# Bahrain

## Education & Training

September 2009



# Education & Training in Bahrain Factsheet

## Overview

- Bahrain has been at the vanguard of educational progress within the region, establishing the Gulf's first public education system in 1919 and giving its female population equal access to the Kingdom's educational resources.

*“Investing in people is very important to the future of Bahrain.”*

Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa

- Schooling is free and compulsory for all Bahrainis and the Kingdom boasts an 87% adult literacy rate - among the highest in the region with almost 11% of all government expenditure directed towards education.
- Bahrain also scores highly among Arab states in every measure of gender equality due to the advanced position of women in the education system.
- The number of students at the University of Bahrain has increased threefold in the last decade.
- Recent government reforms have included a teacher training programme, a new polytechnic college, improvement of the upper-secondary vocational programme and a quality assurance initiative which will raise accreditation standards and inspections for the education system and rank the performance of the system through regular national exams. These reforms were put in place to avoid a skills crunch further down the line. Over the next decade an additional 100,000 Bahrainis are expected to enter the job market.
- In 2001 the National Action Charter Reform was introduced which promoted greater emphasis on citizenship, human rights and Arab and Islamic identity and brought forth the official introduction of free and compulsory basic schooling for children, imposing fines on parents whose children fail to attend.

## Bahrain has the highest skilled native workforce in the Gulf

- In 2007 the Central Bank of Bahrain reported that the Financial Services sector employed nearly 12,000 people. There are more than 8,000 Bahraini National employed making up 67% of the sector workforce.

***“Bahrain has a very high quality local workforce who are dedicated and want to do well.”***

*Jean-Christophe Durand, Chief Executive, BNP Paribas Middle East*

- The Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAA) was launched in February 2009. The QAA reviews and assesses schools, universities and training institutes, as well as conducting national exams. The body will raise educational standards within Bahrain.

The QAA operates four monitoring units:

- Schools Review Unit
  - Vocational Review Unit
  - Higher Education Review Unit
  - National Examinations Unit
- Tamkeen, Bahrain’s independent authority which formulates strategic and operational plans to enhance the overall prosperity of Bahrain by investing in Bahraini employability and job creation, has an investment portfolio of \$175m. It formulates strategic and operational plans to enhance the overall prosperity of Bahrain by investing in Bahraini employability and job creation. Last year \$108.8 million was invested in training more than 19,000 Bahrainis to provide them with the skills the private sector requires.
  - The Bahrain government has commissioned a comprehensive skills gap study of the Bahraini job market.
  - A new Bahrain Polytechnic was launched on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2008.
  - Standard & Poor has recognized the strong political backing for reform underpins a high and sustainable growth trend in the country.

## Leading international and Bahraini schools

- Bahrain is served by more than 200 primary and secondary schools including 30 private schools that offer curricula from the UK, US, France, Japan, Pakistan and India.

## Vocational & Specialized training centres

- Vocational institutes prepare youth to enter a workforce with a practical skill related to specific trade. Several institutes in Bahrain have been successful in endowing learners with skills that relate to a specific trade, occupation or vocation. Vocational education is available across various industries such as tourism, hotel management, retail and technology. There are a vast number of specialist colleges offering courses in subjects such as finance, medicine, and IT.

### Specialized training centres

- NIIT Middle East WLL
- New Horizons Computer Learning Centres
- Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF)

## Higher Education

- As the platform for developing professional capacities and improving the career choices of Bahrainis, higher education takes the lead in providing cutting-edge skills necessary to thrive in an increasing global competitive environment.

### Universities and Higher education in Bahrain

- DePaul University
- New York Institute of Technology
- RCSI-Medical University of Bahrain
- Arab Open University
- Royal University for Women
- Arabian Gulf University
- Bahrain Polytechnic

## Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance

- The Institute (BIBF) is host to the Centre for Islamic Finance. In January 2009, the centre for Islamic Finance received the CPI Financial Islamic Business and Finance 'World's Best Islamic Training Institution Award' for 2008.

## University of Bahrain

- The University of Bahrain plays host to regular business symposia. For example, in December 2008 the University discussed the role and future of Islamic banking. The event is considered to be one of the most prominent and largest student activities in the Kingdom.
- The University offers education in arts, science, business, law, IT, education and engineering.

## Bahrain Polytechnic

- Bahrain Polytechnic is a new education institute committed to providing young Bahrainis with the education and skills needed to contribute to and benefit from the economic transformation of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Polytechnic is a bold and visionary initiative contributing to the support of social and economic development in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in line with its 2030 economic vision. The Polytechnic addresses the need for a skilled Bahraini labour force and will produce graduates who are work-ready. The programmes provided by the Polytechnic have been developed in consultation with business, industry, professions and international education and training institutions. It is a key initiative of the National Education Reform Project Board chaired by H.E. Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, the Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Education and Training Reform Committee.

## EduTrain@bahrain

## & Research@bahrain

- @bahrain is a unique commercial, educational and entertainment destination that is strategically located on 1 million square meters next to the Bahrain International Circuit, 'The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East'. @bahrain provides rich, cutting edge experiences that span 10 interconnected industry sectors: Exhibition & Convention

Facility; Hotels; Multi-Purpose Indoor Arena; Lifestyle Plaza incorporating Retail & Leisure and Techtainment; Auto Club and Engineering Facility; Research Institute; Technopark; Light Industry; and Education and Training.

- @bahrain businesses and foreign partners can be confident that the education and training offered @bahrain will provide an appropriately skilled local workforce. EduTrain@bahrain will partner with associated local governmental entities to create training opportunities for Bahrainis, as well as working closely with the local community and educational institutions to foster job skills and professional development.
- Research@bahrain will include a premier research facility where top minds will meet to tackle challenges of the future. @bahrain's research will be conducted onsite and will offer services to the transport industry. Other commercially feasible research opportunities will be investigated. The institute also promotes Bahrain as a world leader in the development and implementation of applied research, assurance, training, safety and sustainability programs.

## Enterprise Development Support (EDS)

- As part of Tamkeen's Enterprise Growth Management strategy, The Enterprise Development Support programme, which aims at supporting Bahraini enterprises in the private sector and particularly the SME sector, has developed the following five schemes: Technical Assistance Programme, the Growth Assistance Programme, the Business Development Scheme, the Business Information Scheme and a Quality Management Scheme.
- The five schemes give SMEs unprecedented access to new business methodologies, modernisation and ways to improve specific areas of the business to increase productivity through training, equipment upgrades, consultancy studies and implementation.
- The EDS has an allocated budget of \$54.14 million targeting 2229 small and medium sized enterprises.