Gender Profile: The Bahamas

General

Total male population under 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 37,962

Total female population over 15 (CIA, 2015): 127,390

Health

Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births (2010) (CIA, 2015): 47
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (2014) (CIA, 2015): 12.5


Prevalence of HIV among males aged 15–49 (World Economic Forum 2013): 2.8%
Prevalence of HIV among females aged 15–49 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 2.7%


Education

Male youth literacy rate, ages 15–24: NA
Female youth literacy rate, ages 15–24: NA

Male adult literacy rate, ages 15+: NA
Female adult literacy rate, ages 15+: NA


Male gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education: NA
Female gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education: NA

Graduates from tertiary education who are female: NA
Students enrolled in engineering, construction and manufacturing tertiary education programs who are female: NA

Teachers in secondary education who are female (2010) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 76.4%
Teachers in tertiary education who are female: NA

**Economic Activity**

Males over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 79%
Females over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 69%

Men who have an account in a formal financial institution: NA
Women who have an account in a formal financial institution: NA

**Decision-Making**

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (World Bank, 2014): 13%

**Human Rights**

Girls married before 15: NA
Females married between 15 and 19: NA

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime: NA
Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner or a non-partner during their lifetime: NA
Gender Gaps

Health

• A 2014 government report on the country’s progress in fighting HIV/AIDS noted that “[m]inors are unable to access care without the permission of a parent or guardian, including birth control and HIV testing” (Commonwealth of the Bahamas, 2014, p. 44).

• In 2014, the accuracy of police reports of rapes against females was called into question, when Princess Margaret Hospital pointed out that it had dealt with 147 cases of rape (of females) in 2013, while the Royal Bahamas Police Force had reported only 104 (Virgil, 2014).

• In 2012, the Ministry for Social Service was questioned by the United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women for the Bahamian government’s lack of statistics on abortion, which is legal in the country when the pregnancy puts the woman’s health or life at risk (United Nations, 2012). To date, the government has not generated these statistics.

Education

• Data are not available for the number of women pursuing careers in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). However, the government reported in 2012 that it was pursuing initiatives “to erase gender stereotypes from grade school curricula [and] to increase the number of women entering engineering and technology careers.” It also noted that “[i]n an attempt to combat occupational segregation, the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute had significantly increased its outreach programmes, which had resulted in more women entering careers in agriculture, construction engineering, electronics, and automotive and electrical engineering and technology” (United Nations, 2012).

Economic

• A 2013 Bahamas Department of Statistics study revealed that 51.83% of those below the national poverty line were women, compared with 48.17% men. In addition, 9.7% of female-headed households were living in poverty compared to 7.9% of male-headed households (Jones, 2014).

Decision-Making

• Although women are achieving higher levels of secondary education, they still have low political representation. There may be socio-cultural reasons for this, and perhaps even Bahamians expectations about themselves. Dame Jennifer Smith (former Premier of Bermuda) addressed Bahamian women in 2011 and implored them to enter public service. She stated: “Women are so used to working discreetly, quietly and without being noticed that even though the walls preventing opportunity are breaking down—women are not moving in large numbers to come in” (Maura, 2013).

• Progress is being made, however. In 2012, the Minister for Social Services, addressing the United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted that “[w]omen had represented 16.5 per cent of all candidates in the 2012 general elections, while 118,574 more women than men had registered to vote (United Nations, 2012). In addition, “women represented almost 70 per cent of all permanent secretaries and heads of ministries, as well as 45 per cent of High Court justices, [but] there
still remained a notable gap in their representation in the private sector, particularly in international finance and off-shore banking.”

**Human Rights**

- Amnesty International (2012) reported that between 2006 and 2010, the number of female victims of homicide tripled, while between 2010 and 2011 the number of reported rapes against women increased by 37%.

- The Government of the Bahamas has come under criticism from the UN’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, for the “limited number of Staterun shelters for victims of domestic violence, particularly in the Family Islands, and the lack of access to shelters for women with sons over the age of 10 years” as well as the “absence of data on reported cases of gender-based violence and on prosecution and conviction rates with respect to violence against women, and the delay in establishing a protocol for the systematic and regular gathering and analysis of data and information on all forms of violence against women” (United Nations Human Rights, 2012).

**References**


