



COMMITTED
TO EDUCATION
EXCELLENCE



EHL CASE STUDY

Invest in vocational education to help travel and tourism

How the Kingdom of Bhutan developed
vocational hospitality education

The Kingdom of Bhutan is a small, landlocked country located in the southern foothills of the Himalayan Mountains, sharing borders with India and the Republic of China. It is one of the most isolated and most preserved nations in the world. Foreign influences and tourism are regulated by the Government to retain the country's traditional culture and national identity.

Today, Tourism is a vibrant business with a high potential for growth and further development. The Royal Government of Bhutan adheres strongly to a policy of "High Value, Low Volume" tourism, which serves the purpose of creating an image of exclusivity and high-yield for Bhutan.

Travel and Tourism industry: impact and skills gap in Bhutan

Tourism is vital for the success of the economy of Bhutan. There are several benefits of tourism for Bhutan: boosting the revenue of the economy, creating thousands of jobs, developing the infrastructures and plants a sense of cultural exchange between foreigners and citizens. There is a pressing need to improve the quality of tourism products through a better skilled workforce.

There is high youth unemployment in Bhutan, with a rate of above 22% in 2020 (Labor Force Survey 2020). At the same time, employers find it difficult to recruit skilled workers. According to the National Workforce Plan, 2016-2022, more than 33% of employers face skills shortages, impacting on productivity and business performance. Equipping new graduates with market-oriented skills is a toll order for the tourism industry.

Vocational Training: opportunity for skills development

The government of Bhutan attaches great importance to skills development for jobs and is highly committed to improving the vocational education and training sector. The government plans to offer more diversified learning opportunities including vocational training to secondary school students and raise the proportion of higher secondary students enrolling in Vocational training by 20% by 2024.





How WGC invested in Vocational training to help tourism

In order to support the tourism industry of Bhutan, Wangchuk Group of Companies Private Limited (WGC) decided to invest in Vocational training and deliver the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) approved short duration certificate level programs in 2010. WGC has been in the hospitality, travel and tourism industry for over 16 years, owning and operating five hotel properties across Bhutan.

In July 2018, EHL and WGC joined forces to offer the Swiss VET by EHL Certificate & Diploma programs in close collaboration with the government. Programs train local students in Culinary, F&B Service, Hotel Administration and Rooms to prepare them for the local hospitality workforce and support the tourism industry.

5 essential characteristics of an investment in vocational education

The stakeholders of the WGC vocational education venture identified the elements that made their approach successful

1. Focus on serving the tourism industry and responding to the expectations of the tourists travelling to Bhutan.
2. Put employers at the center of the initiative, giving them the ownership of which skills are needed and will be taught.
3. Match the local needs with internationally recognized skills
4. Invest in Train the Trainer program, to scale the teaching infrastructure while achieving high quality standards.
5. Collaborate with the local government to tailor the learning programs to the local education standards for expanded recognition.

An investment in education leading to 95% employability

The Bhutan International School of Hospitality and Tourism (BISHT) was the first VET by EHL center to open its doors.

The development of a strong talent pool actively recruited by local businesses in Bhutan allowed that 95% of graduates were placed throughout the country and abroad, with 60% of them directly hired by local industries and internationally.

There is a clear scaling opportunity through the integration of the program with the national education system at the secondary school level. Successful graduates receive an international education without needing to travel abroad and complete their high school education with a vocational certification.

The advantages of Vocational Education and Training through an international partnership model.

WGC's vocational education development with VET by EHL provided 4 advantages

1. Improvement of the employability of young graduates
2. Enhancement of quality and relevance of skills developed with graduates moving quickly in supervisory positions
3. Changing the mindset about Vocational Education, increasing the awareness on the benefits of vocational training path.
4. Creating synergies with local businesses: The education considers the needs of local businesses, which encourages them to confidently hire graduates.

“

With the launch of VET by EHL Programs at BISHT, we aim to improve the employability of youth in Bhutan and help them achieve befitting career options in the hospitality sector within the country and overseas. We are providing a Swiss benchmark course in the country without the hassle of students travelling elsewhere to get the Certification. The students are also be exposed to a live working environment through the internship as part of their curriculum, allowing them to gain exceptional experience. BISHT provides support in employment opportunities for graduates.

Ms. Chencho Tshering, Chief Executive Officer of BISHT.



Conclusion

By working together with the Bhutan government and local businesses, the vocational training program implemented by WGC has become a major contributor and developer of a skilled and knowledgeable youth who are well-positioned to contribute to government targets and the local tourism economy. The ease and rapidity with which the program was implemented enabled Bhutan to see an immediate impact on the prosperity of individuals and of the tourism industry at large.

“

Bhutan International School of Hospitality & Tourism is a great place to learn culinary skills with experienced chefs as faculty. Before enrolling into my Culinary Diploma, I was working overseas in the Kitchen department in Hotels for last 2 years. But then I realized that I needed to upgrade my qualifications and enhance my skills, hence I opted for the VET by EHL Culinary Diploma at BISHT. It proved to be a great learning experience for me as now I am equipped with international standards' skills, and I am looking forward to joining The Westin Kolkata, in India.

Mr. Dorji Tashi, Student of BISHT.



Learn more about

