

## ABSTRACT

### **An Evaluation of a Local Tour Guide Training Course**

**Debra Ferdinand**

This research study proposes to evaluate the local tour guide training programme offered by the local company Tours Incredible. This course is recommended by the Tourism Industrial Development Company Limited (TIDCO) for aspiring tour guides in Trinidad and Tobago. The evaluation will focus on the delivery and outcome of the training programme, in the context of meeting the needs of the tourism industry in Trinidad and Tobago. It aims to make recommendations for improvement in the tour guide syllabus.

The qualitative paradigm will be employed for the study, since tour guiding is a people-oriented activity. A case study approach will be used for the evaluation, as it will concentrate on a specific training programme. The sampling for the target population will be purposive and comprise of 80 persons directly involved in tour-guide training and operations. They include past and present Tours Incredible trainees; ground operators who hire them; tour-guide instructors; curriculum planners; tourists on tours; bus/maxi-taxi drivers; and other key stakeholders responsible for regulating our local tourism industry.

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Data collection will consist of interviews, observations, and document analysis, which allow for a first-hand understanding of the delivery and outcome of the Tours Incredible tour guide skill course. The conceptual framework for analyzing the data collected will include quality assurance criteria and an adaptation of Stufflebeam's four-phase approach to educational programme evaluation: context, input, process, and outcome. However, the context phase will not be included in the study, since in this instance, the Tours Incredible course is already in existence.

In interpreting the results of the data analysis, responses will be given to the research questions which include:

- Is the Tour Guide syllabus adequate in meeting training needs for our tourism industry?
- Are teaching methods effective in delivering the course syllabus?
- Are assessment practices appropriate for tour-guide training?
- Are visitors satisfied with tours conducted by the Tours Incredible graduates?

The findings will be subjected to the reactions of all the key stakeholders through consultations. Ideas generated at these consultations will be included in the final report. The latter will be distributed to key stakeholders like Tours Incredible, TIDCO, Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute, Tour Operators Association, and the Tour Guide Association.