

Botswana

Kgeledi George Kgoroba

Minister for Education



Born in 1934, Hon. Kgeledi George Kgoroba holds a B. Sc degree in Biology from the University College of Pius XII in Lesotho and a Master degree in the same field from the University of Manitoba, Canada. Subsequently, he taught at schools in Republic of South Africa and Botswana. He also Lectured at the University of Botswana for 8 years. A very active member of Botswana Teachers Union, he became its General Secretary and in 1972-1974 he became its President. He later joined the Private Sector and in 1992 became National Chairperson of Boccim (Chamber of Commerce in Botswana). From 1994-1999, he was Minister Of Trade and Industry in Botswana and became Minister of Education in July 2000.

Quality education for all: rights and costs

Since the conferences on education in Jomtein in 1990 and in Dakar in 2000, countries have been challenged to pursue the ideals of UNESCO particularly as this concerns promoting education as a fundamental human right, work to improve the quality of education for all and the provision of early childhood care and education. Botswana's current National Policy on Education and Vision for the year 2016 support these ideals.

To meet these ideals, Botswana has increased her educational expenditure to about 30% of the National Budget. Recently, however, Government has debated whether such expenditures are sustainable in the long term. The current National Development Plan emphasizes that present level of Government expenditure need to be contained if economic growth is to be sustained. **Although we support the idea that education is a basic human right, which means that it should be free and compulsory, we are aware that to have sustainable quality education there must be cost – sharing with all stakeholders, including government, parents/guardians and the private sector. Cost sharing, however, will be introduced mindful of the needs of the poor.**

The National Principle of Self-Reliance is being thwarted by the provision of free services. It is evident that as government spends more money in the provision of such services, our children and the nation at large are becoming less appreciative of the efforts of Government. The growing violence and acts of vandalism in the schools are testimony to this fact. Therefore, we strongly believe that cost-sharing and cost recovery will facilitate the transition from education for all to quality education for all. An added value of such transition is that more facilities will be provided to enable more children to have access to senior secondary education and divert some of the resources to problems that have become more pressing such as the fight against HIV/AIDS 