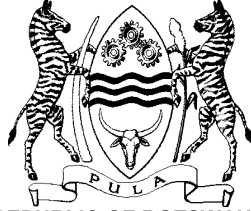


DRAFT



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA

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*“National Quality Education For All Young People:
Challenges, Trends and Priorities”*

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BOTSWANA REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

1. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY: AN OVERVIEW:

1.1 Curricular policies, educational content and learning strategies

Ongoing educational development and reform initiatives in the Botswana context are based on the recommendations and policy guidelines of current Government key policy documents amongst which are the following:

- *The Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE), (Government Paper No. 2 of April 1994)* whose recommendations are derived from the findings and conclusions of the 1993 Presidential Commission on Education. In accordance with the Revised National Policy on Education's recommendations, Government has identified seven key areas that are vital to the development of education in Botswana. These are:
 - i) Access and Equity.
 - ii) Effective Preparation of Students for life, Citizenship and the World of Work.
 - iii) Development of Training that is Responsive and Relevant to the Needs of Botswana's Economic Development.
 - iv) Improvement and Maintenance of Quality for the education System.
 - v) Enhancement of the Performance and Status of the Teaching Profession.
 - vi) Effective Management of the Education System.
 - vii) Cost Effectiveness/Cost Sharing in the Financing of Education.
- *National Development Plan 9: 2003/04 – 2008/09* which provides the framework for Government's socio-economic development perspective for the five year term (2003/04 to 2008/09) guided by the four national principles of **Democracy, Development, Self-reliance** and **Unity**.

Like its predecessors, the NDP 9 is intended to lay the basis for Government sectoral activities including Education and Training for the planning period in question with a proviso for a Mid-Term Review of the plan. According to National Development Plan 9, in line with the theme of *sustainable and diversified development through competitiveness in the global market*, the education system should, during the plan period, continue with implementation of the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE), Government Paper No. 2 of April 1994 with particular reference to the following.

- Provision of quality education and training with emphasis on equipping learners with skills to enable them to enter into self-employment and provide an opportunity for lifelong learning.
- Continued and sustained improvements in the relevance and quality of education as well as access to education as pronounced in the RNPE and the Long-Term vision for Botswana; Vision 2016.
- Provision of education that meets the need's of all learners and should be regarded as the core to sustained and diversified socio-economic development of the country.
- Commitment to improve access to pre-school education, provision of ten years of basic education for all, increase access to senior secondary education, expansion of Vocational and Technical Training and promotion of life-long learning.
- Provision of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in a form that prepares learners for changes in the world around them for the world of work and life-long learning with a view to achieving the realisation of the educational vision of the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2001 – 2006 that calls for *"provision of equitable lifelong education and training that is relevant and responsive to the rapid technological development and the changing socio-economic environment, and that produces knowledgeable, skilled enterprising and independent individuals."*

The Long-Term Vision for Botswana; Vision 2016 is a document that resulted from a Presidential Task Group that was constituted in 1997 to come-up with a national long-term vision for the year 2016 when Botswana will have been an independent nation for 50 years. The document identifies the major challenges that will need to be met in order to realise the vision and proposes a set of strategies that will meet them. One of the pillars of the vision advocates for "*an Educated, Informed Nation*" and in this respect, according to the Long-Term Vision for Botswana; Vision 2016, by the year 2016 Botswana should have a system of quality education that is able to adapt to the changing needs of the country in keeping with ongoing world-wide changes and pay attention to aspects such as:

- Improvement in the relevance, quality (of education) and access to education.
- Citizen Empowerment with a view to promoting production of quality goods and services and entrepreneurial development for employment creation.
- Opportunity for continued and universal education with options during and after secondary level to take-up vocational or technical training as an alternative to purely academic study.

The RNPE recommends that the curriculum be diversified, vocational in orientation, have a broad base of practical subjects and emphasize foundation skills applicable to the world of work (RNPE 1994, Item 7.3). The Policy stipulates that the curriculum developed, must relate to the world of work. In this regard, the curriculum needs to ensure a stronger interface between education and the world of work. The curriculum is thus required to provide for an increased emphasis on Information, Communication Technology (ICT), prevocational preparation and a greater practical orientation in the general subjects.

Vision 2016, an aspirational projection of what Botswana should have achieved after fifty years of independence, envisages an education system and by extension, a curriculum whose hallmark is quality, relevance and adaptability with the integration of ICT in the teaching and learning environment. According to the Long Term Vision for Botswana, (1997):

"The Education system will empower citizens to become the best producers of goods and services. It will produce

entrepreneurs who will create employment through the establishment of new enterprises. Public Education will raise awareness on skills needed for life”.

Vision 2016 views education as a vital mechanism for empowering citizens in economic and social participation. It envisages school products that are knowledgeable, entrepreneurial and can generate economic growth and employment through enhanced productivity and venture creation. Thus, education and training are perceived as pivotal in generating earnings, job prospects and in improving the general welfare of individuals. Harbison, as early as 1973 expressed a similar reflection as the one envisaged in Botswana’s Vision 2016: According to Harbison,

“Human resources ... constitute the ultimate bases for wealth of nations. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to do anything else” (Harbison, 1973:3).

It is in this context that the Revised National Policy on Education is interpreted into comprehensive components, which could easily be implemented leading to the development of curriculum frameworks or blueprints. Such blueprints have been developed for the different levels i.e. primary, junior secondary (both of which constitute basic education) and senior secondary. Subsequent to this process, planning, designing and development of programmes could then be undertaken. The focus for the current developments was meant to prepare learners who can effectively serve as a driving force for transforming Botswana from an agro-based society to a modern, informed industrial society of the 21st Century. To achieve these aspirations, it is important that educational content, teaching and learning strategies be reformed to centralise the acquisition of knowledge that is reconstructed through students and teacher experiences and for students to acquire skills and competencies that are transferable and applicable to the world of work. The teaching strategies should therefore be person/learner centred.

1.2 The Organisation, Structure and Management of the Education System

The education system in Botswana is organised under different departments/divisions within the Ministry of Education for purposes of addressing its various operational activities as follows:

- Headquarters including Ministry Management, Divisions of Planning Statistics and Research, Special Education and Examinations Research and Testing, Botswana National Commission for UNESCO.
- Department of Primary Education catering for youths ages 7 – 13 years including the implementation of Pre-Primary Education programmes. Department of Secondary Education catering for youths ages 14 – 23 years.
- Department of Vocational Education and Training catering for Technical and Vocational Education and Apprenticeship Skills Training, and links Education with Industry.
- Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation responsible for curriculum reform, revision and development of programmes including instructional materials development and production.
- Department of Teacher Training and Development catering for pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes.
- Department of Student Placement and Welfare catering for post secondary education and training through government sponsorship for tertiary education training programmes.
- Department of Teaching Service Management responsible for employment of teachers and their terms and conditions of service including welfare-related issues.
- Department of Non-Formal Education catering for out of school youths and adults including implementation of the National Literacy Programme.

2. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN REGARD TO ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION AND CURRICULUR REFORM

2.1 a) Access to Basic Education

The Botswana Government has introduced the Ten Year Basic Education Programme. Every child is eligible for admission into primary schools and can progress to junior secondary education. The Government has increased school places at all levels but with primary and junior secondary levels being accorded significant priority. For example, in 1980 there were 415 primary schools with an enrolment of 171, 914 compared to 770 primary schools with a population of 23, 500 compared to 206 junior secondary schools with a population of 36, 81 students in 2003. The increase in access to primary education is 93% from 1980 to 2003 whilst access to junior secondary education is 57% from 1984 to 2003.

Every child who sits the Primary School Leaving Examination and was graded is eligible for admission into junior secondary school. In principle, the transition from primary to junior secondary school is 100%. Admission into senior secondary school depends on the number of places available and is on merit. The transition rate from junior secondary school to senior secondary is about 52%. Out of school youth are also given an opportunity to continue with their studies through the Department of Non-Formal Education and the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning.

Whilst the education system has attained universal access to the ten years of basic education (seven years of primary and three years of junior secondary education respectively), it would be self-evident that the major constraint is with regard to the transition rate from junior to senior secondary education. Against this background, Government is committed to ongoing expansion of the senior secondary school system with a view to ensuring that all Batswana children should eventually have access to twelve years of basic education (seven years primary, three years junior secondary and two years senior secondary) in keeping with the ideals of the Long-term Vision for Botswana; Vision 2016 expansion of senior secondary enrolments is a key objective of National Development Plan 9.

2.2 b) **Curriculum Reform Initiatives**

Education in Botswana has made significant progress in making the curriculum consonant with the aspirations of both the RNPE and Vision 2016. The curriculum has been diversified, and also made practical in orientation, through the introduction of Computer and Business Studies subjects, Design and Technology, and placing emphasis on Career Guidance and Counselling.

A significant area where education has had some success is in broadening and diversifying the curriculum at all levels of education. A broad, practically oriented curriculum has been developed that provides opportunities for learners to develop technological skills that are related to the world of work, "pays attention to the development and acquisition of attitudes, values and skills required for economic development in a rapidly changing world" (Curriculum Development and Evaluation, 2002) and provides opportunities for learners to develop Information Technology skills, basic prevocational knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to acquire and sustain jobs. The programme is diversified to include academic, technical and commercial subjects thus accommodating a wide range of learners' abilities and interests. In addition, the programme seeks links with industry and the private sector to prepare learners for the world of work. Furthermore, the new programme has a strong Guidance and Counselling component that is meant to assist learners with life skills and in the choice of subjects and future careers.

To ensure subject diversification, the programme has been organised around two broad areas, a core area which is followed by all students comprising the conventional languages and sciences and optional groups including Humanities, Sciences and creative, Technical and vocational subjects as well as enrichment subjects. In addition to the conventional subjects, a whole range of practical subjects have been incorporated including Design and Technology, Agriculture, Art, Food and Nutrition, Computer Studies, Fashion and Fabrics, Business Studies and Home Management. It is worth noting that all learners have to study mathematics starting from primary until senior secondary (BGCSE). Thus, the curriculum has been diversified as part of the process of implementation of the RNPE and Vision 2016

ideals. This has gone a long way in addressing mainstreaming of the learners while at the same time addressing the mixed ability requirements of the learners. This has also assisted in increased access to the curriculum by most learners and thus also allowing for equitable provision of instruction to all. Equity is also realised in the choice of subjects as learners are given an opportunity to make a selection in accordance with their preferences and interests.

Regarding the Ten Year Basic Education, the RNPE (1994, Rec 29) that calls for diversification of the curriculum, the curriculum has incorporated four basic components of *foundation skills, vocational orientation of academic subjects, inclusion of practical subjects and readiness for today's global world.*

The foundation skills include such aspects as decision-making skills, problem solving, self-presentation, teamwork and computation. Worth (2002) contends that foundation skills can be transferred to a range of careers such as communication, word processing, programming, creative writing and instructional designing and therefore, they are of vital importance. In the instructional programmes, academic subjects are taught in such a way that they relate to the day-to-day life of the learners. Wherever appropriate, the academic concepts, knowledge and processes are translated into practical application, thus interweaving theory and practical orientation. In addition, the ten-year basic education programme has been designed such that it includes a number of practical subjects to help students develop an understanding and appreciation of technology, manipulative skills and familiarity with tools, equipment and materials. Through these, it is expected that learners will develop competence and confidence in the application of computational skills, entrepreneurial skills, critical thinking, interpersonal and enquiry skills in order to solve real life problems and work challenges.

Partnerships have been recommended by the RNPE as inherent in the provision of education at all levels. The stakeholders participate in dialoguing on issues of concern to educators and society at large such as the content of the curriculum, educational innovations and provision of quality education in general. The RNPE recommendation 122 is such a policy that calls for constant consultation between the curriculum developers

and stakeholders. So far, three consultative fora have been held in pursuance of this recommendation. The themes for these consultations were diverse and the following have already been addressed: "*Curriculum and Special Needs*," "*Curriculum and Employment*" and "*Curriculum and Assessment*". The use of subject panels is another avenue through which partnerships with all stakeholders is achieved to ensure input from all quarters. Even though some teachers are involved through the subject panels, a large number is involved through fora called consultation workshops, which are used for formative evaluation before implementation of any educational innovation.

2.3 Main Problems and Challenges

While policy guidelines and recommendations have been clearly articulated, the development and implementation of a comprehensive quality curriculum that addresses Botswana's socio-economic needs and prepares learners for a global world have been fraught with numerous challenges.

A pre-requisite for a curriculum that interfaces strongly with the world of work and is ICT driven is costly in terms of provision of equipment and infrastructure. This has been clearly articulated by researchers in the vocationalisation of education of the 1980s and 90s. A work related curriculum in Botswana for instance, calls for laboratories that are fully equipped with computers. It calls for Design and Technology laboratories equipped with supportive equipment. A similar conclusion drawn by Coombe (1998) after studying practical based curriculum in Malawi, Gambia, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago is also relevant to Botswana. He cited financial and structural problems of a work related curriculum as failure to get qualified personnel, expensive equipment, breakdown and redundancy of equipment, and the costly nature of acquiring and maintaining the requisite equipment. As a result, in some schools the curriculum, although practically oriented in documentation fails to be meaningfully realised in the manner in which it was intended.

Attempts at increasing the interface between the societal needs and the school curriculum through making the curriculum more practical in orientation has the inherent danger of creating a watered down curriculum that presents students with an overly simplified curricular content that may not sustain changes on the economic plain. The Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation, has therefore, had to produce

what it perceives as a curriculum that best suits the world of work and yet is broad enough to accommodate changes in the economic scenario.

The effectiveness of a curriculum can only be determined when it is negotiated at the classroom level. The paramount curriculum determiner is the classroom technician who is the teacher. For instance, the new curriculum has called for a child centred approach, yet studies by the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation (2001) found that there has not been applicable change in the teaching methods in Botswana's secondary schools. In this respect, the teacher continues to be the dominant factor in the classroom and continues with the chalk and talk method. Thus, the intentions of the curriculum at times flounder on the rock of the classroom reality if the teachers are not appropriately and continuously oriented to implement the new curricular approaches.

A more implicit challenge faced by education in Botswana in its quest for a comprehensive curriculum that addresses real life problems are the society's expectations of the curriculum. Society expects the curriculum to address issues from all walks of life. For instance, if there is indifference in voter participation at election time, it is common to conclude that learners should be taught civic responsibilities at school. Hence, the curriculum is expected to be a panacea for all social ills such as *road safety, substance abuse, diseases such as HIV and AIDS, Environmental issues, disaster management*, among many others. What society underplays is that the curriculum is, by its nature, selective and is determined by finite issues such as time and availability of resources for its implementation. The curriculum can thus accommodate a limited number of subjects and by extension, limited content and skills. It is important to note that the curriculum, would conventionally attempt to address such real life issues as demanded by society through infusion and integration. However, infusion and integration pose problems in regard to some of these critical issues being sidelined in favour of the examinable aspects of the programme. The major challenge occurs at implementation stage where they may remain latent.

In light of the foregoing, curriculum reform initiatives geared to improving the quality of education in Botswana have entailed the following:

- Development of the Ten Year Basic Education and Senior Secondary Education programmes with emphasis on

providing learners with skills applicable to work situations and ongoing personal development.

- Diversification of the curriculum with provision for increased number of practical subjects and orientation to technology.
- Adoption of the infusion and integration approach in curriculum development to accommodate emerging issues such as Environmental Education, HIV/AIDS, etc.
- Development of guidance and counselling services to facilitate students' life skills for ongoing personal development and preparation for the world of work and lifelong learning.

3. QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE: CHALLENGES, TRENDS AND PRIORITIES.

3.1 Education and Gender Equality

The National Policy Implementation Plan highlights gender equality in Botswana as one of the priority interventions in government and elsewhere. The issues of gender equality are reflected in the National Programme of Action. One of the major challenges for education in Botswana is to produce programmes and instructional materials that are gender neutral. However, the framework document deliberately ensures that all the instructional materials are gender sensitive. Checklists for textbook selection for instance, are designed such that the books selected are gender neutral. The programmes on offer allow for access by both male and female learners. However, actual changes in the composition of stereotypic classrooms remain unchanged despite the attempts at removing and ensuring a gender-neutral curriculum. It is against this background that subjects such as Design and Technology continue to be male dominated while Home Economics continues to be female dominated (Curriculum Development and Evaluation Report, 2003), but some progress is being made in changing the status quo.

The country's main concerns regarding gender and education relate mostly to unsatisfactory misinterpret performance and limited participation of girls in mathematics and science and the same for boys in the languages. Further, in some cases attitudes of both parents and teachers have negatively impacted on girls and discouraged them from achieving their highest potential in the areas of mathematics, science and technology.

With the advent of HIV/AIDS, girls' participation and benefit from education is challenged by the fact that they are caretakers for sick family members and siblings. Teenage pregnancy is still a major challenge for Botswana girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy. Despite the fact that policy allows them to be re-admitted after six months, there are still those who have to remain out of school longer because they have to look after their babies in the absence of support from the Social Welfare System.

Botswana considers education a fundamental human right (Recommendation 43 (e) of the RNPE of 1994). Hence, in an attempt to achieve the goals of Education For All [EFA], education and training in Botswana aims at achieving access to education for both men and women (boys and girls EFA Goal 5). Therefore, the provision of basic education to the entire school going population remains a priority in terms of government of Botswana's ongoing socio-economic development goals. The Ministry of Education has also developed an Equal Opportunities Policy which is to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity for all learners and staff to ensure that no one is discriminated against and/or disadvantaged on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, marital status, disability, age, social status or location. This policy therefore is aimed at increasing access to education for both males and females. Deliberate efforts continue to be made to encourage girls to enroll in science and technology and similarly all learners are encouraged to study subjects of their choice. Some of the programmes and activities geared towards encouraging girls into science and technology include:

- Career fairs
- Career guidance videos
- Gender Awareness Seminars and Workshops
- Use of female role models at fairs and seminars
- Life skills Education

It is therefore evident that opportunities for further education and training in Botswana are open to all irrespective of whether they are male or female. The imbalances that still prevail are due to attitudinal challenges.

Curriculum reform continues to be responsive to issues of gender neutrality and equity. For instance, there is a set selection criteria used to evaluate materials for prescription. This has taken on board issues of gender by calling for the rejection of any materials that perpetrate gender imbalances. Pictures, illustrations and language are carefully assessed to

ensure the prescription of gender sensitive materials. The ABC of gender is therefore used to assess materials that go into the schools. Other than the review of materials, gender issues are infused and integrated across the curriculum to sensitise learners, create awareness on such issues and dispel any lingering attitudinal behaviours. Some of the materials developed such as career manuals are specifically targeted to encourage girls into non-traditional careers. "*Build Botswana*" and "*Work with Water*" are examples of materials that were specifically designed to encourage girls into the building and construction careers as well as the water sector ones. Learners are also allowed to study optional subjects of their choice. Hence, the curriculum is accessible to all learners. Through collaboration with the University of Botswana Women in Science Programme, girls at junior secondary school level are being targeted for increased enrolment in mathematics and science related careers.

The Ministry has a Gender Reference Committee which is made up of Gender Focal persons from all departments of the Ministry of Education. The focal persons coordinate departmental committees so that the entire Ministry is on board. Terms of Reference for both the ministerial and departmental committees are in place. A major task for these committees is currently the review of the Schools Pregnancy Policy. The idea is to facilitate an increase in the retention rate for girls [EFA Goal 5] thus assisting them to complete their education and improve their quality of life. The policy encompasses how girls could be supported so that their academic performance is not negatively impacted by pregnancy.

3.2 Education and Social Inclusion

The RNPE calls for inclusion and equal access to education for learners with disabilities. In spite of this call for inclusion, learners with special needs continue to find it difficult to access education. The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of the mainstream learners and therefore excludes those with special needs. A group that has been largely affected is that of learners who are either deaf or have hearing impairment. This group is open to marginalisation because it is not always easy to determine the severity and level of their impairment. In most cases, they are included in the mainstream classrooms but cannot access the curriculum because of communication problems. A study has been carried out to come up with recommendations on ways of modifying the curriculum to make it accessible to the deaf and hearing-impaired. The challenge is to devise strategies of modifying the curriculum and develop

instructional materials such that they cater not only for the hearing impaired but also for all other learners with different learning disabilities. The Ministry of Education is in discussion with UNESCO, Paris to seek assistance for e-Learning for the BLIND with the aim of increasing access to all Learners in schools and tertiary institutions.

With the spread of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, a major vulnerable group that has emerged is AIDS orphans. The number of orphans who have become "street children" engaging in high-risk anti-social activities (prostitution, substance abuse and crime) has grown exponentially and is at crisis levels in some countries. The general consensus that emerges from the literature on the impact of HIV and AIDS is that orphans are more likely to drop out of school. Curriculum development should therefore in the event of the numbers of orphans increasing as projected, develop modified programmes to accommodate the orphans that may take cognizance of such debilitating factors as behavioural problems, poor concentration, problems with home work, physical and sexual abuse by adults and general isolation at school and in the community at large.

In light of the foregoing, equity in education and social inclusion remain issues of concern in the Botswana education system. In this context, government is committed to ensuring that all groups should be availed equal opportunities to participate in education and be prepared for meaningful participation in the national ongoing socio-economic development endeavours. In particular, there is need for the education system to pay particular attention to groups that are likely to be more vulnerable to exclusion (from participation in the education process) such as the following:

- HIV/AIDS orphans
- Learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds.
- Remote Area Dwellers
- Learners with various forms of disability.

3.3 Education and Competencies for Life

A major challenge for education is to develop a curriculum that provides learners with flexible learning opportunities and life skills development. The Botswana education system has adopted an approach that infuses and integrates life skills and prevocational skills into its curriculum programmes. Knowledge,

skills, values and attitudes have been combined in a form that prepares the learners on how to investigate, develop and apply concepts learned to real life situations at home, in the community, recreational, social and work environment. A deliberate effort has been made to stimulate innovativeness, problem solving and quality performance in a methodical manner in order to produce self-confident learners who in turn can lead successful lives. Regular reviews and evaluation have been planned to ensure that, life skills are included in the programmes. For instance, the 2004/5 Curriculum Development and Evaluation year plan indicates the review of Junior Certificate syllabuses. These regular reviews allow for changes and inclusion of life skills into the curriculum programmes. In addition, a Social Studies syllabus has been developed at Senior Secondary school level which aims to produce youth with knowledge of their rights and civic responsibilities to make the school one of the main tools for achieving social cohesion and understanding of democratic values and a culture for peace. Subjects such as Moral Education, a core subject at junior secondary school level, will help mould the learners' characters and teach them a sense of tolerance and values of Botho, a philosophy of the respect for other human beings which is one of the aspirations of Vision 2016.

The teaching of life skills is an integral part of the curriculum from primary to senior secondary. The curriculum has been diversified to take on board new subjects. The involvement of stakeholders in curriculum development processes and other consultations are ways of ensuring that the curriculum is responsive to both individual and societal needs. As espoused by Lindhard that 'Education Pays and You are Poorer Without It', the current curricula have taken on board emerging issues with emphasis on the holistic development of learners who should understand themselves and their environment. The life skills programme emphasizes self-understanding and a positive view of the self which will then radiate an understanding and appreciation of others as well as celebrating diversity. The focus of the Guidance and Counselling programme is to provide personal, educational, social and vocational guidance. This is indicative of the attempt to develop a total person who is capable of making informed decisions.

3.3.1 The Reform of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) System through the Botswana Technical Education Programme as an Avenue for Practical Skills Training – A Case Study

In response to the challenges of practical skills training for the needs of the national economy, Government, through the Ministry of Education began to modernize its technical/vocational education and training system in 1997 by instituting a curriculum blueprint closely based on the British general vocational qualifications with a view to creating a locally relevant 'hybrid' called the Botswana Technical Education Programme (BTEP).

The overall objective of the BTEP is "... *to ensure access for all Batswana to high quality lifelong education and training, with a view to producing self-reliant, knowledgeable and skilled individuals, who will engage in achieving Botswana's development goals, in particular the creation of employment, the reduction of inequity and eradication of poverty*" (CSS, 2001, p.20).

The BTEP was launched by the Ministry of Education to provide a relevant, quality, modular, outcomes based vocational qualification, with the overall aim of building both the social and human capital to promote access, opportunity and social inclusion with the following key objectives:

- development of employable skills;
- preparation of graduates for diversifying economy;
- development of a multi-skilled human resource that is flexible and innovative;
- preparation of graduates for higher education and life-long learning and, most importantly;
- compliance with international standards of content, delivery and quality assurance. (Qualifications Blueprint, 2000).

i) Relevance

To ensure the relevance of the BTEP, considerable market research has been done to guide the content of individual programmes to ensure compatibility with labour market demands. This has involved each programme undergoing a validation system whereby the content of the

programme and rationale for its implementation are scrutinized by an independent panel of industrialists and educationalists. Collaboration with civil society has been established with employers participating in an education-business partnership in various ways: for example through, membership of Programme Advisory Committees; representation on Validation Panels; appointments as External Verifiers and in voluntary provision of student placements for the mandatory work experience component of the programme. This involvement is intended to ensure that the new programmes enhance the economic and industrial value of the qualifications by influencing the content and structure of the programmes as well as ensuring timeous response to labour market change. In this way, the BTEP aims to provide an increased pool of flexible and adaptable workers with a body of knowledge and skills, assessed and quality assured to international standards as well as responsive and willing to adapt to employers needs (Qualifications Blueprint, 2001). Indeed to ensure flexibility and relevance to the needs of industry, to enhance the qualification's economic and industrial value and gain the trust of employers, The Ministry Department of Vocational Education and Training has designed its programmes based on primary market research which has identified the skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes demanded by employers to compete in a fluid and modernizing 'global market place'. Vocational areas such as: Clothing, Design and Textiles; Construction; Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy; Hospitality; Engineering, Multimedia, ICT, Business, and Travel and Tourism have been identified as key areas for employment and the exposure of students to broad areas with a vocational programme seeking to ensure their awareness of the wider aspects of the business and flexibility to be deployed in a range of situations. Employers have also identified a range of transferable 'key skills' necessary for employee flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace. As a result, communication, numeracy, ICT, problem solving, entrepreneurship, personal and interpersonal skills have been incorporated as mandatory components

of the BTEP to provide students with the necessary skills for flexible deployment.

ii) Quality

In order to achieve the level of quality and currency required for the BTEP, all stakeholders considered it essential to establish stringent quality assurance mechanisms. As a result, a new awarding body, the Quality Assurance and Assessment Unit (QAA) was established under the auspices of the Ministry of Education¹. The most important function of this awarding body is to oversee the quality assurance systems and procedures developed to support the delivery of the BTEP, to register and certificate its candidates. Early in the project, it was clear that Technical Assistance would be required to establish the new awarding body and assist with the formulation of its regulations, policies and procedures. To this end, the Scottish Qualifications Authority was contracted by the Ministry of Education to work with the QAA core staff, to develop a quality assurance strategy and operationalise its activities. The mandate covered a wide range of assistance to:

- establish an administrative structure of the new awarding body.
- define its roles and responsibilities;
- define its relationships with other organisations in Botswana, focusing in particular on the need for an arms-length relationship with the Ministry of Education;
- defining skills profiles and the full staff establishment required;
- establish management and governance arrangements, including the need for accountability to stakeholders.

Once the overall strategy had been agreed, SQA consultants worked with staff of the new awarding body to draw up the quality assurance systems and procedures it would deliver for the regulation and certification of the BTEP. While the systems were firmly grounded on the SQA's in-house quality elements of validation, approval and verification of assessment decisions, development

of the detail of each element and the procedures associated with it required careful consideration to their adaptation to the specific context of Botswana.

During these formative years of the QAA operations, the SQA has continued to provide support in the form of developmental audits of each stage of the quality assurance process for the regulation of the new BTEP. The audits include SQA undertaking a technical audit of each of the new BTEP unit, a pre-validation scrutiny of each new BTEP before its formal validation in Botswana and support for external verification of each BTEP. This support enables the SQA to monitor and suggest remedial action for the improvement of the delivery of the new systems and procedures, to offer advice and guidance on their effective implementation and, critically, to assess the extent to which they are comparable to SQA's standards.

The QAA Unit's progress is assessed by six monthly SQA audits against a set of endorsement criteria. SQA's agreement to endorse the certificates of candidates completing each BTEP is a two-stage process, and is dependent on:

- successful audit of QAA, and
- successful outcomes from external verification of each BTEP and from an audit of each centre's generic systems and procedures. External verification and audit are both supported by SQA.

The audit visit although an evaluation tool, is also intended to provide a valuable contribution to build the capacity of the QAA and ensuring sustainability on the closure of the SQA support project.

The Capacity Building Support has taken two approaches:

- Institutional Capacity Building

This has focused on the development of the policies, management structures and

information management systems in both the Awarding Body and the Technical Colleges to ensure that the institutions are able to effectively deliver and assess the BTEP. A system of Centre Approval is a mandatory quality assurance strategy of the QAA Unit applied to ensure that Centres are able to deliver the BTEP and continue to maintain standards.

- Individual Capacity Building

This has focused on the development of teachers within the technical colleges through a four phase staff development programme. This has aimed to ensure that a critical mass of change agents are in the technical colleges with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to implement a student centred outcomes based vocational training programme.

These quality assurance mechanisms are both demanding and resource-intensive. But both the Ministry of Education and Scottish Qualifications Authority, however, believe that they are essential to ensure the quality and therefore the credibility of BTEP. As this credibility becomes firmly established, the Ministry of Education will assume full responsibility for certification and SQA endorsement will end. This will mark the real arrival of BTEP as a qualification recognised in Botswana and beyond.

iii) Access and Equity

Traditionally, access and equity within the TVET system has predominantly favoured males. Government's commitment to improving access and equity has therefore been focused within the BTEP. Firstly, it was necessary to transform the former Vocational Training Centres into "flexible community colleges", that were subsequently renamed Technical Colleges. In the year 2000, existing Technical Colleges received substantial financial support and technical assistance to readjust to the very different structures and management systems required by a flexible

college system. The key role of the new 'flexible' Technical College, is to respond to the needs of the community at various levels by providing progressive qualifications; open access and flexibility of choice. Before this could be achieved, however, BTEP policy makers, realised that a series of national initiatives would be required to implement such changes. These initiatives included quality assurance measures, equal opportunities and admissions policies, a wide spread marketing strategy, flexible delivery times for evening or day release classes and systematic in-service teacher training programmes to introduce new teaching and learning methodologies. In particular, the Department of Vocational Education and Training Equal Opportunities Policy completed in 1998, required the technical colleges to reflect carefully on how to manage and administer admissions procedures in a fair and equitable manner developed in accordance with QAA approval rules and regulations, the equal opportunities policy lays out the guidelines for admission onto the BTEP Programmes and positively addresses many cultural sensitive issues such as teenage pregnancy, disadvantaged students, rural area dwellers etc. In this way, it is hoped that BTEP will be accessible to a wider community audience whose membership and development of knowledge and skills in the form of human capital will bring the added benefit of increased social capital.

The above stated initiatives have gone a long way towards achieving a 'realistic and representative equilibrium' through increased participation of women, minorities and disadvantaged groups in the programme.

Flexibility of provision to cater for divergent needs and career choices has been achieved by BTEP through:

- a choice of elective units within the same qualification;
- freedom by the teacher and learners to choose learning approaches to suit individual preferences;

- flexible timing, allowing the learning pace to be varied;
- accreditation of prior learning;
- flexible timing of assessment;
- constructivist and student centred teaching/learning methods incorporating a high degree of cooperative group activity to engender cohesion and facilitate a conducive environment for building social capital.

4. **QUALITY EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF TEACHERS**

In accordance with the recommendations of the Revised National Policy on Education regarding the Teaching Profession, “... the quality of instruction is one of the most important determinants of the level of learning achievement”. In this context, the policy notes that teachers as agents of curriculum implementation are therefore central to the education system and can make or break the system. Accordingly, the Revised National Policy on Education advocates for the enhancement of the status and motivation of teachers to enable them to discharge their role effectively as agents of curriculum implementation and promotion of quality education.

The foregoing recommendations of the Revised National Policy on Education have thus provided the major focus of the ministry’s programmes and related support services in regard to teacher training and development. With the advent of the Revised National Policy on Education, improvements in teacher training and development have entailed the following, amongst other aspects:

- incorporation of pre-primary education in the pre-service teacher training curriculum to allow for training of pre-primary education teachers. This is in recognition of the critical importance of Early Childhood Education/Pre-primary Education in terms of laying the requisite foundation for all subsequent levels and forms of education and training. The minimum entry requirements for pre-service training of pre-primary/early childhood education should be the same as the entry qualifications for primary school teachers.
- raising of the primary entry qualifications into primary teacher training to a minimum of Senior Secondary Education/General Certificate of Secondary Education and upgrading of the training programme from a two year Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) to a three year Diploma in Primary Education that is to all intents and purposes comparable and equivalent in status to the three year

Diploma Programme that was formerly intended only for the secondary school system. The three year Diploma in Primary Education qualification is also available to in-service teachers with the PTC qualification through the distance education mode.

- ongoing in-service teacher training programmes through both short and long term release arrangements for purposes of professional skills enhancement and subject content upgrading for teachers to be abreast of developments and changes not only in the curriculum but also in the teaching profession as advocated by the Revised National Policy on Education.
- institutionalisation of Annual Teachers Awards (presented to deserving candidates on Botswana Teachers Day) to teachers who have demonstrated excellence and commitment to the Teaching Profession. Since inauguration of the event in 1999, the Botswana Teachers Day has become an annual event in the country's teaching profession and this has indeed gone a long way in motivating teachers.

Besides the foregoing, in keeping with the recommendations of the Revised National Policy on Education teachers are active stakeholders and participants in all reform and innovations related to curriculum development and ongoing educational policy review. As already pointed out with regard to curriculum reform and innovations concerning instructional materials review, development and production, teacher's participation takes place through subject panel/Review Committees under the coordination of the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation. This ensures teachers' full ownership of the curriculum reform process as well as proper orientation to face the challenges inherent in its implementation activities.

With regard to ongoing policy reform and review, the teaching profession is formally incorporated into the Government consultation process through the Teaching Service Consultative Committee (TSCC). The TSCC is a forum in which all the teachers organisations are represented and is intended to provide for continuous dialogue with government, under the coordination of the Director of Teaching Service Management. Its role and functions are legally provided for in the provisions of the Teaching Service Act and its Code of Regulations. The forum continues to play a critical role in regard to consultations with the teacher's organisations with particular preference to:

- teachers' welfare issues
- teachers' conditions and terms of service

- dialogue and consensus building on matters of national concern and policy formulation and implementation
- ongoing curriculum reform initiatives and implementation.

5. CONCLUSION

Meeting the challenges of the 21st Century that are not only facing Botswana but all nations in the quest for quality education and training. Whilst constraints have been pointed with regard to the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the Botswana education and training system one constraint that cannot be over emphasised relates to the HIV/AIDs pandemic that if left unchecked is likely to reverse all the gains that the country has hitherto made in the national socio-economic development agenda including development of the education sector since attainment of independence in 1966.

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