

BOTSWANA

NATIONAL REPORT 1996

Introduction

Since Independence (1966), Botswana has always had a chapter on education in the *National Development Plans* (NDPs) and set priorities according to current needs, based on available resources. In addition, Botswana was engaged in two major reviews on education in 1976 and 1993 respectively, and held one conference (1991) following the Jomtein declaration (1990).

Background

The first comprehensive national education review exercise (1976) popularly known as Education for Kagisano (Kagisano is a Setswana word that is loaded in meaning. It encapsulates the concepts of peace, mutual assistance, interdependence, social justice and social harmony. came up with 156 recommendations which were implemented through four national development plans spanning over roughly twenty years (1976-1996).

Among the significant reforms that revolutionised the system were:

- the introduction of the National Service Scheme (Tirelo Sechaba) where high school leavers have to spend one year in the field to gain out-of-school experience in many sectors of the public service before proceeding to tertiary level education;
- the changing of the structure from 7+3+2 to 6+3+3 through the transitional phase of 7+2+3;
- preparing teachers to cope with the new structure;
- making primary education accessible to all which was later modified to become nine years of basic education;
- abolition of school fees (1980) to accomplish universal access to basic education;
- developing the curriculum which would prepare students for life out of school;
- taking over and providing assistance to private and unaided schools.
- involving the communities in running the primary and junior secondary schools;
- establishing the National Literacy Programme as well as Adult Education.

The second major education review (1993) examined the system with particular emphasis on universal access to basic education, vocational education and training, preparation and orientation towards the world of work, articulation between levels of the system and a re-examination of the structure after implementation of the first review. Among the key aims of the new policy was "to enhance the status and performance of the teaching profession."

The evolution over recent years, and present and changes in the development of education

The educational system has both expanded and striven to improve the quality of schooling at all levels, because of the ever changing social and economic factors. There are now four primary teacher training colleges from two, and two new colleges of education for junior secondary school teachers. The University of Botswana offers diploma and degree training in Design and Technology, Science and Agriculture Education. The ministry has identified the following areas affecting Basic Education as priority issues that would call for application in the short to medium term:

- (a) Introduction of the three-year Junior Certificate Programme in 1996.
- (b) Introduction of the three-year Primary Teacher Training Diploma Programme to improve the quality of Primary Education as proposed in the Revised National Policy on Education.
- (c) Vocationalisation of the school curriculum and also the need for diversification and expansion of vocational education and training as stated in the Policy.
- (d) Implementations of the special education guidelines as contained in the policy to fit the needs of the disabled and also to integrate them in the country.
- (e) Declaration of one day in a year as Teachers Day.
- (f) Introduction of sabbatical leave for teachers.

The massive expansion of Education delivery facilities in Botswana bears testimony to the political and financial commitment of the Government to Basic Education. In 1993, 23 percent of the recurrent budget was allocated to education, an increase from 5.2 million Pula in 1976 to 624 million Pula in 1993. In addition in 1993 education received 191 million Pula for capital development or 11 percent of the budget. This vigorous financial base, political stability and economic development are in line with the philosophy of the revised policy which states the goals as the type that would prepare Botswana from a traditional agro-based economy to the industrial economy.

However, some critics have expressed Government's inadequacy in implementing Basic Education especially in the fields of nonformal education, gender awareness and fairness, and outcomes of Basic Education that society deems worthwhile. They say that to provide relevant, fair and quality Basic Education there has to be a commitment to both access to Basic Education and the provision of quality foundation education for the majority of citizens. That is why Basic Education also includes such issues as relevance, quality, social justice, and efficiency.

National policies for the improvement of the professional level, the status and social standing of teachers

Most nations and institutions are showing keen interest in or concern for the status of teachers. Botswana is no exception, her children like all other children in the world deserve nothing but the best teachers institutions are capable of producing and providing. Research has established that a significant relationship exists between motivated competent teachers and good quality education. When teachers enjoy high esteem because of job satisfaction and a good living salary, they tend to be more motivated to give of their best service. Therefore, it is imperative that the success of any education system depends largely on teachers. In Botswana, Government and teachers have resolved to do everything possible to turn teaching into a real profession and to reward best teachers.

Available statistics show that to date there are 657 primary schools with an enrolment of 305,479, and 146 Junior Secondary Schools with an enrolment of 48,624. Most children have access to primary schooling and approximately 90 percent of the primary school leavers are able to enter Form 1 in community junior secondary schools. However, there are still 17 percent of children who are out of school. These are the handicapped, children of the poor, street children, and children of nomadic remote dwellers.

Statistics also show that in 1993 there were 11,190 primary school teachers, and in 1991, 2,202 junior secondary teachers and 1231 senior secondary teachers. These figures indicate the need for an increase in the supply of teachers to teach in the growing number of schools.

Considering the changes taking place in the education system, there also ought to be plans in place for the improvement of the professional level, the status and social standing of teachers. The status of teachers in Botswana and in Africa can rightly be enhanced or improved in a democratic environment. The UNESCO/ILO Recommendations concerning the status of teachers are based on democratic principles and practices. According to UNESCO/ILO Recommendations, "status" refers to the, "standing accorded teachers and as evidenced by the level of appreciation of the importance of their function and competence in performing their duties and the working conditions, remuneration and material benefits accorded to them relative to other professional groups."

The status of teachers therefore as viewed by UNESCO/ILO Recommendations recognises the fact that the improvement of the supply of teachers for basic education must be based on the need for quality education to be provided in the school. That is the quality of school education also depends on the quality of the teachers.

Teacher training

Teachers in Botswana are trained at four different levels, namely the two-year certificate (now to become a three-year diploma with a minimum requirement of third class Cambridge School Certificate), for primary school teachers, the three-year diploma for junior secondary, the degree level training of senior secondary teachers, and the post graduate level training. The number of Botswana teachers in primary schools show that primary education is virtually localised. In junior secondary schools, about 40 percent of the teachers are expatriates. The recruitment of more expatriate staff between 1984 and 1991 occurred due to the expansion of junior secondary education. Government hopes to reduce the number of expatriates to 3%. However, the ministry of education remains committed to localisation of all posts at primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. Government is emphatic that localisation will take place in a planned and organised way so that posts are not just localised for the sake of localisation, but only when experienced, qualified and capable Botswana teachers are available.

For those primary school teachers who do not have the necessary certification, Primary Teachers Colleges run upgrading courses for a total of nine weeks during school vacation after which they write a selection test that will qualify them to enter the colleges.

Those who have been through college but failed one or two subjects have an opportunity to go back to the college to rewrite the examination at the end of the year or during the supplementary examination. It is hoped that this move will reduce the number of unqualified teachers in the primary schools.

There is also a consensus within teacher education that an entry requirement of JC and the two years training period is inadequate to allow student teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge base and develop skills that today's primary school teachers require.

The University of Botswana offers a B.Ed degree in Primary Education. Entrants to the B.Ed Primary are teachers who have had several years of professional experience in the Primary School.

Some educators express their concern that the entrants to programmes should be people of quality and that the colleges be staffed by lecturers with competence. Ways to assess the quality and competence referred to have to be found.

Salary

Botswana has adopted the principle of "equal pay for a job of equal value" which follows the Paterson method of job evaluation and is applied to the whole government service including teachers. So, teachers receive the same salary as professionals of comparable jobs. Further, teachers like other government employees are credited with extra increment for additional qualifications.

UNESCO/ILO Recommendation states that other factors affecting the role of teachers are largely dependent, as in other comparable professions, on the economic position in which they are placed. Recommendations stated in the seminar of Botswana UNESCO Commission on "The Status of Teachers" are that teachers be remunerated according to their academic and professional qualifications, irrespective of the education institution or levels of education they are serving at.

The Government is to start implementing Parallel progression in the teaching service. This is an incentive scheme for teachers that will open more opportunities for them to be promoted into higher grades. The implementation of the scheme is expected to start on 1st April 1996. About 13 362 teachers will be affected by this scheme of service. This is a substantial resource in terms of the number, compared to the rest of the civil service. Secondly, salaries for the teachers in 1993/94 represented 45%. Of the Ministry of Education's recurrent budget making this resource also relatively expensive and one which needs effective utilisation and management to achieve efficiency and cost effectiveness in the education system.

Characteristics of the teaching force

The expansion of the education system in Botswana has remained consistent with the number of teachers employed to match the rise in number of pupils. The teacher-pupil ratio in primary schools is 1 to 31. The proportion of female teachers has risen steadily from 68% in 1976 to approximately 78% in 1992. In the community junior and senior secondary schools an even better teacher-pupil ratio has been maintained, from 1 to 21 in 1976, to nearly 1 to 18 in 1992.

While acting to maintain reasonable class sizes, Botswana has also moved to provide improved conditions of service for teachers, including salaries, housing, and other benefits. Compared to other countries in Africa the incentives package offered to teachers can be said to be attractive.

Teachers' working conditions

Teachers' terms of service are the same as those of the rest of the civil service. They also have more leave days and more years of service than other government employees. For example, teachers retire at the age of 65 while the rest

of the civil servants retire at 60. Teachers also have leave entitlement of about 50 working days while the top civil servant is entitled up to 35 working days. The only limitation is that teachers have to take their leave during school vacation while other employees exercise individual options regarding when to take leave.

The new policy provides for incentive schemes for teachers as a measure towards improving their status and performance. One such incentive is that of sabbatical leave, when a teacher can be released from school duties to do research on a specific professional project that may enhance instructional competency. This exercise is undertaken with full pay and extra support from government.

Another incentive is that one day of the year should be declared a Teacher's Day when awards will be given to teachers who made outstanding contribution through their profession.

The other incentive is that of rewarding teachers for long and continuous service of at least fifteen years.

Teachers are also encouraged to write textbooks either individually or collectively. Those who write books on behalf of the Ministry of Education for use in schools will be entitled to 75% of the royalties which has hitherto accrued solely to the Ministry.

A strategy also exists to recruit and retain teachers through merit pay. This merit pay is awarded in the form of a few increments above the starting notch for teachers of essential subjects like science, mathematics and Setswana (the local language).

The Parallel Progression is another incentive scheme that is meant to open up more opportunities for teachers to be promoted into higher grades without having to compete for an opening in the administration.

Based on the foregoing, Government as the employer is content that teachers in Botswana are by comparison with other countries in the region well rewarded, serviced and administered and should have least grounds for complaint. The working time of about 8 hours is considered reasonable for preparing and marking student work, supervising sports and other activities after school. The teachers work time in this respect does not warrant over-time pay nor any additional remuneration for extracurricular work.

Government, through the Ministry of Education, recognises the important role that teachers play through their organisations (notably Botswana Teachers' Union) as custodians of teachers' rights and welfare, professional interests and as partners in development and improvement of education in Botswana. Realising this essential role Government has provided a consultative machinery where constructive and responsible dialogue takes place between the two bodies. In this regard teachers'

organisations are represented in a number of consultative committees and councils in recognition of their input in the development of education and safeguarding their conditions of work and general welfare.

Major problems facing teachers

The Revised National Commission on Education has cited evidence received from both the teachers and the public confirming that the teaching profession is characterised by low morale and declining professional status. Although the salaries compare favourably with other public officers of comparable qualifications, teachers have not received many benefits available to public servants due either to administrative problems or communication lapses. For instance, their eligibility for housing has often not been treated on equal basis with that of other officers serving under similar circumstances.

There is shortage of teachers in some areas due to several factors. Many students only choose teaching as a last option. The science and mathematics subjects in particular suffer from a critical shortage because students who major in science have a number of what they perceive to be better professions to choose from than teaching. There is a general feeling among teachers that a great deal needs to be done to improve their conditions of service and the status of the profession. The main reason for lack of attraction was apparently low salaries, and absence of terms of conditions of service. For example, the starting salary for teachers compared to other professions is good, but in eight years the top notch is reached and the teachers are stuck there while counterparts in the civil service get promoted to higher and better paying positions. It is hoped that parallel progression will address this inadequacy.

Women teachers are disadvantaged because there are few of them in leadership positions in schools. This has contributed to their lack of confidence, and many do not apply for senior positions.

Aligning the professional and human characteristics of teachers with the requirements of society

An appropriate structure is needed to support teachers and ensure enhanced professional development. A more effective management of teachers will ensure an efficient education system.

According to the Report of the National Commission on Education of 1993, teachers have often complained about lack of support and supervision by their supervisors. Nevertheless there are official standards for evaluating teachers. The purpose of assessing teacher performance is to know the officer's performance in the present post, improve work performance, and award increment and promotion to post of responsibility. The Departments of Primary and Secondary Education hold inspectorial, supervisory, and advisory functions at their respective levels. The

Department of Teacher Training and Development holds human resources development function and the Department of Teaching Service Management holds the personnel management function. These departments therefore cooperate and liaise to effectively manage and assess the quality of teachers. However, due to lack of qualified staff and too much centralisation, teachers are not adequately inspected.

Teaching in private educational establishments

There are different types of private schools. There are self-help schools that were established by small communities, and Setswana medium private schools for adults and youth. These are usually staffed by untrained teachers and/or serving teachers in formal schools on part-time basis. They lack school supplies and thus performance is poor. The other type is the English- medium school.

There is significant difference between Government schools and English-medium (private) schools. The presence of library facilities, teaching aids and classrooms containing good quality furniture, and a favourable teacher-student ratio all combine to favour academic achievement. Also due to the high fees charged, the schools can recruit better teachers and provide better facilities. They have maintained good quality education based on better qualified teachers, lower teacher/pupil ratios and smaller class size. This allows individual attention by the teacher and promotes maximum interaction between teachers and pupils.

Teaching staff in the non-formal education system

The Government *White Paper No. 1* of 1977 emphasised that non-formal education would be given priority to providing nonformal education programmes serving the needs of women, out-of-school youth and the unemployed. Non-formal education programmes have been providing alternative primary and secondary education through literacy classes and correspondence courses. This is particularly true for children who were otherwise not able to enter a formal school for a variety of reasons, including the absence of universal access to both primary and secondary schooling. It is seen as an important ingredient in the general efforts to increase educational opportunities and to reduce inequalities in access to education.

The majority of participants in the literacy programme are women. Ironically this coincides with Government's emphasis on providing non-formal education programmes serving the needs of women. The programmes are designed to enhance their status. For example they are taught life skills for generating income such as sowing, baking, knitting, etc. -

Non-formal education is severely understaffed. There is a lack of specially trained staff and poor career development possibilities due to the fact that it is perceived as a volunteering job. Therefore it does not attract a lot of interest. In addition honorarium is not attractive and thus cannot entice better qualified

personnel. The personnel consists mainly of old primary and junior certificate school leavers. However, the situation is slowly improving with increases in remuneration attracting Cambridge Certificate school leavers. Government has reappointed Literacy Assistants with 13 years' experience to positions of permanent and pensionable status.

There is also a severe lack of resources in relation to the clientele the unit is supposed to serve. The unit lacks space, equipment, a management information system and an adequate operational budget. It is therefore unable to deliver some of the essential services.

Distance Education is one of the units of nonformal education which are experiencing success. Instructional materials are developed by qualified teachers from formal education who are employed on part-time basis by the department. They are paid for developing these materials as well as for tutoring and marking student's work.

The professional autonomy of teachers

University teachers and those who teach at degree awarding University teachers and those who teach at degree awarding institutions which are all affiliated to the university do exercise professional autonomy. They design their teaching/learning programmes without any imposition from Government. However, what is being taught has to have direct relevance to the world of work within which the student has to perform after a programme of study.

Institutions that are affiliated to the university have their instructional programmes designed in collaboration with the university which is also an authority that confers certificates and diplomas for affiliated institutions.

For primary and secondary levels the Ministry of Education takes over all instructional control; designs, and implements the syllabuses through the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation. At senior secondary level Botswana prepares candidates for the Cambridge Cverseas School Leaving Examinations. But it is in the process of localising these examinations.

Autonomy is exercised only through the teachers' organisation which can discuss with the Ministry matters relating to education policy. Their views are normally taken seriously since they are regarded as partners in development of education.

Recruitment into the teaching profession

The rapidly expanding education system has required the need to intensify recruitment campaign particularly for the junior secondary level. The rapid

expansion has led to high financial costs, accommodation problems, and frequent transfers of teachers to staff new schools.

The teaching profession has been highly unattractive for its traditional status as a low-salaried job. As such teaching has been taken up by school leavers with very low examination grades and they have chosen this career as the last option. As a result the quality of teaching, even with the current equitable conditions of service, is still below the standard.

The incentives referred to earlier will hopefully attract more able students and the process of localisation will hopefully be accelerated. The current situation regarding localisation is that at primary level, 97% localisation is accomplished. At secondary level 40% of the teaching force are expatriates and at tertiary level this proportion stands at 50%. Botswana is committed to localisation but it is careful not to jeopardise efficiency at the expense of this exercise.

Recruited teachers come from different parts of the world as long as they possess the qualifications required in schools. Some teachers apply as individuals while others serve under certain agreed bilateral arrangements.

Organisation of pre-service and training programmes

Pre-service training for primary teachers takes place at the four Primary Teacher Training Colleges. Admission into this programme consists mostly of Junior Certificate candidates who are required to have one year experience as untrained teachers at a primary school. There are also untrained teachers who gain admission after teaching in primary schools for a number of years and to upgrade their teaching qualification. At the end of the second year students write a National Examination in the six core subjects. Passing Teaching Practice is a requirement, as it is the core of teacher preparation. All newly trained primary school teachers are trained to teach any primary school class.

Students also engage in extracurricular activities such as social clubs, sports, and educational tours within the country and neighbouring countries. These activities enrich students socially and intellectually.

The newly introduced Diploma in Primary Education is a three-year course with a minimum entry requirement of a good pass in the Cambridge Overseas Certificate Examination. Specialisation will be in the third year of training. Unlike the Certificate curriculum, the Diploma curriculum will emphasise development of competencies in teaching methods across ability ranges with provision for remediation. Innovative and thematic priorities such as Environmental Education, Gender Education, and the World of Work are conveniently accommodated. The Colleges of Education are affiliated to the Faculty of Education of the University of Botswana that certifies the Primary Teacher's Certificate and now the Diplomas.

The other two Colleges of Education offer a three-year Diploma in Secondary Education (DSE) preparing junior secondary teachers. It consists of twelve teaching subjects in the academic programme.

The University of Botswana teaches various pre-service programmes for secondary school teachers. These are Diploma in Secondary Education (DSE), Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Bachelor of Education in Science and Bachelor of Education in Humanities. The minimum entrance requirement is the Cambridge International School Certificate in third class, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Senate or its representative.

In-service education

To support teachers and administrators and to improve the quality of classroom teaching, there is a network of education centres around the country that serve as resource centres for teachers. A wide range of workshops are conducted each year to serve the needs of the teachers, head teachers, and community members. The centres are equipped with a library, a materials production room, offices, boarding and catering facilities to enable teachers co reside at the centre for the duration of the workshop.

The Ministry of Education has also launched an initiative that will raise skills and classroom performance of teachers at junior secondary school level. The In-service and Pre-service project (BIPP) target is geared to raise skills and classroom performance of teachers. In-service Education Officers and Lecturers at colleges of education are its direct beneficiaries. It is hoped that they will pass the skills to the junior secondary teachers before they enter the teaching profession. The project is an initiative of the Education Ministry and is being supported by the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA). Thus BIPP will ensure that teachers in secondary schools are given the support they need and deserve to deliver the curriculum efficiently and effectively to pupils.

The training of teachers abroad

The Botswana Government, British Council (ODA), Australian Government, the Government of India, SIDA, German Aid, UNESCO, CIDA, Kellogg Foundation, and USAID, have over the years sponsored teachers to go abroad and locally for training programs. Other teachers further their studies through private initiatives.