

INQAAHE CONFERENCE-2013

University of Botswana, Centre for Academic Development, Affiliated Institutions Unit

Sub-Theme 1: The QA of cross-border education: from quality providers to quality assured provision

Topic: From quality providers to quality assured provision: The Case for Botswana Cross Border Tertiary Education

1. bogopa-ncube

Audio Visual Aids: LAP TOP and Projector

The Botswana Government sees the role of human resource in the development of the country's economy. The government has a vision of an educated and globally competitive human resource by 2016. The Botswana National Development Plan 9 (2003-2009) and 10 (2009-2016) emphasise the importance of quality education as an important ingredient in achieving economic development and recognised the need for the country to urgently establish a national human resource development strategy that will help direct human development, locally, regionally, and internationally. In 2009, the then Minister of Education and Skills Development Mr Nkate J. (2009) noted that;

' by 2022 it will be universally accepted that the quality, productivity and motivation of its people will be Botswana's single greatest and valuable resource.'

The Ministry of Education and Skills Development therefore, embarked on developing its national human resource to help diversify the country's economy and to minimise dependency on diamonds and farming. Botswana's economic diversification is critically tied to having the right skills in place for the diversification of the economy to take place. To help the Ministry achieve its vision of human development, the Department of Student Placement of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, charged with the role of training Botswana at tertiary level intensified its training plan.

Botswana trains its human resource at tertiary level in various countries including within SADC region, e.g South Africa, Swaziland, Namibia, East and West Africa, the United Kingdom, Ireland, United States of America, Australia, Czech Republic, etc. In addition to training outside the country, there was a massification of non governmental tertiary institutions within the country to help address the critical need for human resource development. Most of the non-governmental institutions set up in the country offer programmes/courses from cross border tertiary institutions. For example, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) offering programmes from Zimbabwe and London, Limkokwing University for Creative Technology from Malaysia, and BA ISAGO University College offer courses from University of South Africa (UNISA), and Boston University, in USA.

The Botswana Gazette of 23 May 2012, noted that, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), Grace Muzila explained that

"the Ministry will with immediate effect start sponsoring learners who failed Form Five but managed to sponsor themselves for certificate courses."

Having more cross border tertiary education institutions led to a massive increase in students' enrolments in tertiary education institutions, including those in private owned tertiary institutions. The country's enrolment in tertiary education, increased from 20,011 in 2003/4 to 47,889 in 2008/9 (National Development Plan 10: April 2009- March 2016). The increase was due to Government's decision to sponsor students into privately owned tertiary institutions registered with Tertiary Education Council. (NDP 10, April 2009-March 2016). *Freedman (2005) in Ncube (2012) describes massification as " an indicator for improving both national economies and the well being of individuals)" pg1. He also reminds that it, needs more funding and high level of quality to satisfactorily serve the large numbers of students.*

Sponsoring people into cross boarder tertiary institutions has its merits and challenges. Cross border tertiary training institutions helps improve access and equity, improves the quality and relevance of education and provides competent human resources (NDP 10). It also helps Batswana to acquire diverse skills and knowledge.

Although the government of Botswana spends considerable amount of money on cross border training, it has limited control on the programmes/courses offered to students in these institutions. However, Botswana government through Tertiary Education Council (TEC) has introduced some quality control measures to help guide the transformation of Tertiary Education. The tools for the transformation include Tertiary Education Policy, the National Human Resource Development report, and the funding Strategy and Formula for Tertiary Education Institutions (NDP 10). However, these tools are not specific and detailed on the programmes and courses offered by these institutions.

Some Batswana in cross border tertiary institutions are concerned that their programmes are not up to standard and some of these programmes may not have much impact on the development of the country. Some graduands from these institutions are often told that their training is not recognised in Government departments and private industries as the courses are either inadequate or not relevant to the country and therefore, can not be absorbed in employment in the country. Some are required to take top up courses before they are considered for employment. The challenges faced from cross border tertiary education programmes/courses have therefore, made more people and some employers to question the relevance and validity of some of the programmes offered in cross border tertiary institutions.

This is a worrying situation for Botswana Government because the Ministry of Education key mandate is;

"providing efficient, quality and relevant education and training that is accessible to all" Botswana Government (2009)

For the Ministry of Education and Skills Development not to have much control on the programmes/courses offered and for some programmes in cross border tertiary institutions to be seen to be inadequate, is a set back for the country's human resource development. Currently, there is a widespread understanding throughout the country of the essential need to get the training accurate and more meaningful. The country is calling for more control in cross border tertiary education, and to ensure that the private tertiary education institutions are value for money. They are emphasising that government should ensure that programmes/courses in cross border tertiary institutions are quality assured, in line with Government thinking that;

"The quality of our insight in making the correct policy decisions is not only important in terms of the effectiveness of the tertiary education system that will evolve over time but is also critical to the future of Botswana." Botswana Government (2008)