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CREATING A SUSTAINABLE  
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN  
BOTSWANA

Consultation and Partnership



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## INTRODUCTION

An observer in August 1995 of Botswana's Curriculum Development Division (CDD) within the Ministry of Education's Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation would have been immediately aware of the dynamic, collaborative atmosphere. Basic education curriculum developers, rushing to meet a deadline, had produced new syllabi in nearly record time after considerable involvement by hundreds of teachers, other educators, members of the business and agricultural communities, and countless other participants. Additional last minute consulting with instructional material designers, graphic artists, and expatriate advisors preceded the rush to the printer with the new three-year syllabi for seven junior secondary subjects, six of them core curriculum subjects. Other junior secondary subjects were on their way to completion for implementation in January 1996. When the new curriculum is in place, students will receive improved instruction about academic subjects and be provided with knowledge and skills for the world of work.

Results of Botswana's open and collaborative educational process, which characterizes not only curriculum development but also other elements of the educational system, such as administration, teacher education, and instructional materials development, are most visible in Botswana's classrooms. Unlike many other developing nations that struggle, often unsuccessfully, to enroll eligible children and retain them in primary school, Botswana has succeeded in doing so. According to some figures, 1993 primary school enrollments accounted for nearly 90 percent of the eligible age group. Even if that figure is somewhat optimistic—1991 census figures, for example, indicate that 17 percent of the eligible cohort are not enrolled—the accomplishment is considerable. In 1993, more than 300,000 primary school children were enrolled in school, in contrast to fewer than 200,000 in 1983.

In 1993, 86.5 percent of primary school students progressed to junior secondary school, a direct result of the steady primary school enrollment increases during the preceding 10 years. During the same 10-year period, increases and improvements in the teaching force kept pace with enrollments: The ratio of teachers to pupils remained at 1:31; the percentage of trained teachers increased to 91 percent. Nearly 100 percent (99.8 percent) of the primary school teachers were Botswana citizens.

Although at both the primary and secondary school levels Botswana still faces considerable challenges (for example, only about 30 percent of the students progress to senior secondary school; dropout for girls as a result of pregnancy is increasing; and at the secondary level, expatriate teachers are still in the majority), they cannot dwarf the astounding progress within the past 10 to 20 years.

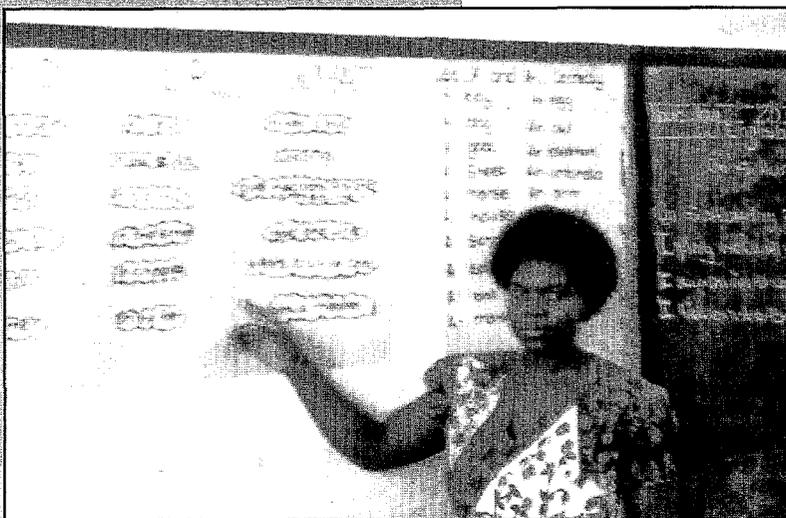
Today, Botswana is one of the few African nations that can boast of a successful educational system for two reasons: (1) responsible management of resources and (2) the decisions that the government has made over the years about the educational budget—and the commitment to carry out the decisions. In 1976, for example, Botswana allocated 10.5 percent of its recurrent national expenditures, or 5.2 million pula, to education; in 1993, the allocation was 23.1 percent, or approximately 623.8 million pula. But a combination of other factors has also contributed to the positive educational picture. As a Botswana education official noted, “Botswana has long had a plan and has worked toward it.”

This paper provides a closer look at certain elements of the process by which Botswana has achieved the goals of its educational plan. The elements include a strong commitment to educational reform and “ownership” of the educational system; openness to new ideas emanating from the classroom, community, and national government; collaboration in developing the system; and continuous assistance through sequential education and training projects funded by external donors, including the Overseas Development Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The paper also focuses in some detail on development of the basic education curriculum, particularly the agricultural curriculum, because that process might well be considered a microcosm of Botswana’s flexible approach to education in general. Furthermore, curriculum development is closely related to the other elements of the educational system, and improving the curriculum usually precipitates improving other educational areas. The production of syllabi, as the final evaluation of the Basic Education Consolidation (BEC) Project noted, “continues the school improvement cycle, which leads to the development of new and revised

text books and instructional materials, the training of teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum, the assessment of student performance, the evaluation of curriculum efficacy and further modifications in the curriculum to address gaps, problems and emerging needs.”

Curriculum development illustrates the consultative, or collaborative, approach the Botswana Government has long taken to education—consulting among educators at all levels of the system; with other elements of society such as parents, distinguished citizens, publishers, farmers, foresters, religious groups, and others; and with technical specialists from the United States and elsewhere to create an educational system that is relevant and first rate. Although the most recent curriculum advances occurred during implementation of the BEC Project, which USAID funded and the Academy for Educational Development managed from 1992 until 1995, the ground-work had been established well before that time.



Photo/Max Evans

## Botswana's Plan

During the past 17 years, the Government of Botswana authorized two major educational reviews, one in 1976 and one in 1994. In each case, the report of the commission studying the educational system led to a government paper that recommended reforms. Both educational reviews demonstrate Botswana's foresight and vision and awareness of the relationship of education to economic growth and to the progression from an agricultural to an industrial society. The ensuing actions demonstrate an awareness of the efficacy of creating a solid base and building upon it in succeeding years.

The first National Commission on Education, and the government paper that followed, created a framework for all educational reform since that time. The commission recommended that attention be paid to increasing enrollment and to developing a practically oriented curriculum, although the commission's report did not specifically prescribe the way in which to prepare children for the world of work. In response to the recommendations, the reforms of the 1980s stressed expansion of education, especially expanded enrollment in primary school, and quality of the instruction. The government's campaign to provide nine years of basic education, begun in the 1980s, achieved its goal of universal access in 1993.

In the 1990s, the reforms continued to focus on the quality and relevance of education, in particular its relevance to the world of work for which students needed to be prepared. The work of the second commission produced another government paper in 1994, *The Revised National Policy on Education*. Unlike the earlier white paper, which supported vocational education but did not prescribe the process, this one elaborated on "vocalizing" education and preparing students for life outside the classroom. This paper recommends that information about themes of national concern, such as population/family life education, HIV/AIDS, the environment, the world of work, and gender sensitivity, be integrated into the curriculum. *The Revised National Policy on Education* recognized that people are Botswana's major resource and that a certain level of education is necessary for national development, that is, for transition to an industrial economy. As a result, the new 10-year basic education program, which will be in place at the beginning of 1996 and will replace the nine-year program, will provide children with decision-making and problem-solving abilities, vocational skills, and practical applications that will increase their

appreciation of science and technology. The new curriculum is sufficiently diversified to offer more subjects than before at both the primary and junior secondary levels and a broader range of learning experiences. Such a curriculum, Botswana has determined, translates into education for life.

## **USAID Assistance and Partnership with Botswana**

As Botswana formulated its educational vision in the 1980s and 1990s and began to make it concrete, numerous international donors provided assistance that helped Botswana realize many of its goals. USAID was one of the major donors. Like Botswana's approach to moving forward with new educational reforms while building upon an established base, USAID's assistance followed a similar pattern. Working closely with the Government of Botswana to further its goals, USAID funded four sequential education projects and two workforce and skills training projects that had a cumulative, progressive effect both on the education sector and on development in general.

The BEC Project was the last in the series of the USAID-funded education and training projects in Botswana. When it ended in September 1995, USAID and Botswana's Ministry of Education (MOE) concluded a 14-year partnership that had helped improve practices throughout the primary and junior secondary school system and had helped to make Botswana's plan for creating an effective and efficient educational system a reality. The combination of Botswana's educational vision, commitment, and efficient management practices on the one hand, and U.S. resources and sustained involvement in Botswana for 14 years on the other, resulted in a process for developing curriculum, educating teachers, producing instructional materials, and administering the educational system that is worthy of study.

Distinguishing among accomplishments that directly relate to BEC and USAID funding or to Botswana itself or to other factors is not always easy, and, in most cases, the distinction is unnecessary. BEC was integrally tied to the structure and strategy of the MOE. During the BEC period, the curriculum unit made significant strides in clarifying curriculum aims,

improving content, and strengthening the focus on the world of work—goals that Botswana has long had and that U.S. funding and technical assistance helped make possible. BEC specifically addressed the lack of articulation and continuity between primary and junior secondary education including the curriculum, methodology, and conditions of teacher service. The project helped provide a smooth continuum of the primary-junior secondary curriculum and methodology and a smooth transition for students from Standard 7 to Form 1. In short, BEC focused on consolidating the basic education program into a single system marked by relevance and high-quality classroom instruction. BEC was both the beneficiary of the accomplishments of the previous USAID assistance programs and the catalyst for increased collaboration among and within Botswana’s educational departments.



Photo/Max Evans

Structures that were created during earlier periods when other donors, especially USAID, helped Botswana to improve its educational system, made the BEC and the Government-of-Botswana accomplishments possible. The sequencing of three earlier USAID-funded projects in particular—the Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP) I and PEIP II, and the Junior Secondary Education Improvement Project (JSEIP)—allowed major educational issues to be addressed systematically. The sequencing also allowed educational improvements in one project to be reinforced in a succeeding one that introduced new reforms. BEC was the culmination of those improvements and the mechanism for consolidating elements of the earlier reforms.

While the USAID-funded education projects were underway in the 1980s and 1990s, a program to improve workforce skills—the Botswana Workforce and Skills Training (BWAST) project, also funded by USAID—was in effect. Although little has been said about the relationship of BWAST to PEIP and JSEIP, as well as to other educational programs, BWAST appears to have contributed significantly to the overall development climate that enabled education programs to succeed. In fact, some of the Ministry of Education officials now in key positions and responsible for supporting and contributing to many of the major education reforms received training through BWAST.



# SEQUENTIAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS PRIOR TO BEC

## The Primary Education Improvement Project

PEIP began in 1981, just four years after the first government white paper on education that provided the framework for future educational reforms. Operating for 10 years, PEIP overlapped the JSEIP and the BWAST projects. Both PEIP I (1981-1985) and II (1986-1991), for which Ohio University was the prime contractor for USAID, contributed enormously to helping Botswana put into effect its plan to educate teachers: PEIP helped create the four-year Bachelor of Education degree, the two-year Diploma in Primary Education program, and the Master of Education degree at the University of Botswana. The two PEIP programs enabled the university to train teacher trainers and future primary school teachers. The contribution of PEIP I to *preservice* teacher education was considerable. It remained for PEIP II to focus on *in-service* training because when PEIP I concluded in 1985, nearly 26 percent of the teachers in primary school classrooms were still untrained. PEIP II, therefore, while continuing to assist with preservice training, also helped to enlarge and improve the in-service programs. PEIP II helped create a system for training teachers, head teachers, and staff in primary schools and teacher training colleges.

In addition to teacher education issues, the progression of students from primary to junior secondary school was problematic: In 1985, only 27 percent of primary school students entered junior secondary school. To address the problem, PEIP II helped shift the focus from curriculum development for primary school to an integrated curriculum for both primary and junior secondary school, thereby increasing the likelihood that students would remain in school longer. One of the goals of PEIP II—to increase the relevance and efficiency of primary education—was indirectly aimed at the junior secondary issues. JSEIP helped to address them more specifically.

## Junior Secondary Education Improvement Project

Operating concurrently with PEIP II, JSEIP, implemented by Florida State University from 1985 to 1991, provided both relevant and timely technical assistance. The goal of JSEIP, which included teacher training, educational management, and curriculum development, was twofold: (1) to help expand the seven-year primary education program to a nine-year basic education program and (2) to revise the junior secondary program to reach

the majority of students, who move directly into the job market from junior secondary school rather than progress to senior secondary or to the university. JSEIP helped create a procedures manual that leads a curriculum developer through the steps of developing a syllabus and curriculum materials and implementing and evaluating the curriculum. The manual is still used today.

All three projects—PEIP I, PEIP II, and JSEIP—provided for U.S. training that, like BWAST, exposed the trainees to other ideas and systems that appear to have influenced not only the education sector in Botswana, but other sectors as well.

## Botswana Workforce and Skills Training Project

Other USAID assistance, particularly funding of training programs in the United States in disciplines important for a productive workforce, influenced the education sector indirectly, if not directly, and complemented the school-to-work emphasis in the basic education curriculum. During the 1980s and the early 1990s, the USAID-funded BWAST project, managed by the Academy for Educational Development, enabled hundreds of Botswana<sup>1</sup> to receive bachelor's and master's degrees in U.S. universities. Many of those graduates of the U.S. education system now hold policy-level positions in Botswana's government, including the Ministry of Education, and in the private sector. These graduates have helped create a nationwide climate conducive to successful development, a climate marked by flexibility and openness to new ideas, as well as a concern about gender equity, environmental protection, and population growth, among other things. These are some of the same issues now dominating the basic education picture. Many of the former BWAST participants credit the U.S. educational system for exposing them to approaches and issues that have directly affected their thinking and, in turn, Botswana's development. Interviews conducted with former BWAST participants in sectors including education, agriculture, health, and others seem to confirm the assumption that training programs in the United States had a positive, complementary effect on development programs in Botswana (see *Training for Development in Botswana: Building a Human Resource Base*. Academy for Educational Development, 1995).

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<sup>1</sup>The plural form.



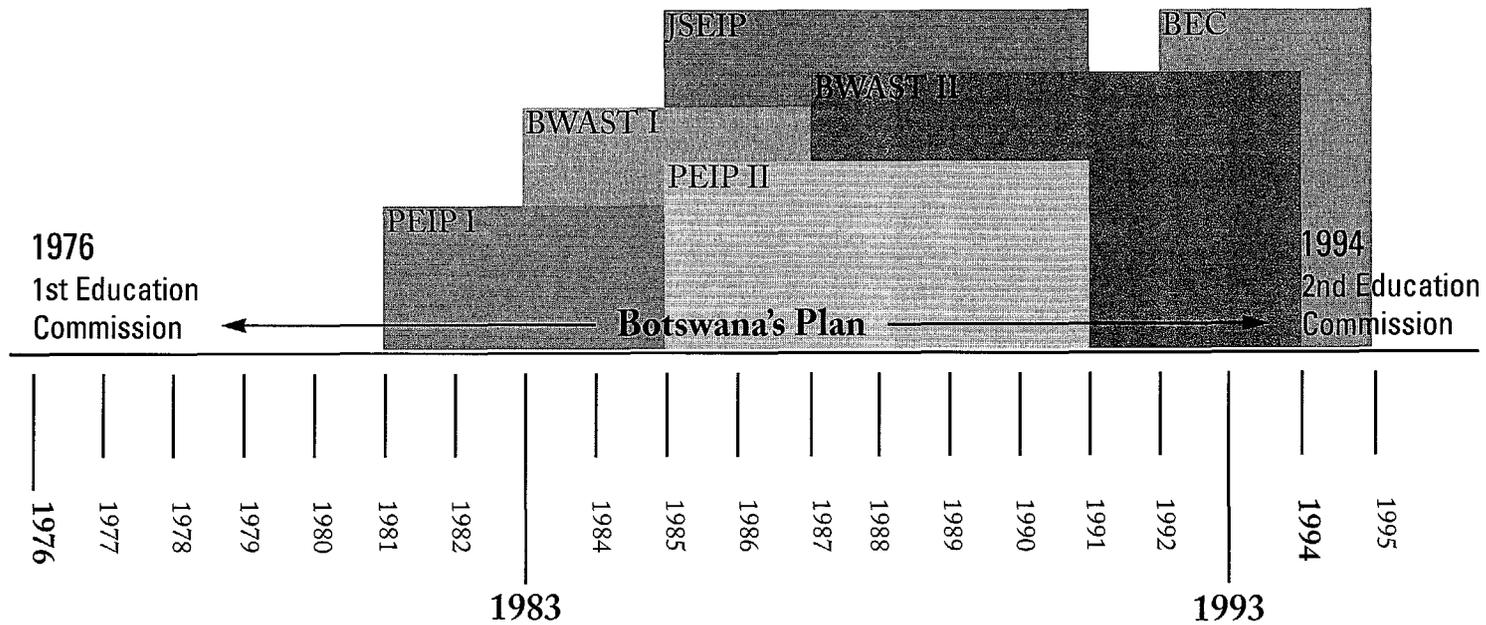
## Overseas Training Impact on Development

- The senior officer for development of the agricultural curriculum received both BS and MS degrees from U.S. universities, with some funding provided by the BWAST Project. The favorable impression the U.S. system made on him, especially the choices offered in the U.S. curriculum, is reflected in the flexibility of both the primary and junior secondary school agricultural curriculum for which he is responsible. Teachers choose from curriculum modules geared toward their geographical location. For example, teachers in arid areas can choose the module on farming in sandy soil; teachers in areas where water is plentiful can choose the module on fish farming.
- The U.S. management training program in which the Deputy Permanent Secretary for education participated, also with BWAST funding, emphasized delegation of responsibility, a lesson she applies today to her educational management style. Such an approach helps strengthen an educational system that draws its strength from openness to ideas from a wide range of contributors, not exclusively from top management.
- An agricultural economist, responsible for 200 employees, is a proponent of gender equity on the job and in agricultural credit programs. The trickle-down effect of such thinking cannot be measured easily, but he and others who share similar philosophies have an impact on actions in government and the private sector that eventually influence development activities. The agricultural economist attended a program on women's issues when he was a student in the United States in the 1980s. More than 10 years later, he has not forgotten what he heard.

In short, assistance provided with USAID funding during 14 years made it possible for Botswana to accomplish many of its educational goals. Such a combination of donor assistance, a country's educational commitment, and a clear sense of direction is, it seems, the basis for sustainability of a project's effects once the project has ended.

Graph 1 demonstrates Botswana's continuing commitment to education and the sequential assistance programs in education and workforce training that USAID funded for 14 years in Botswana. Perhaps even more important than the funding itself was USAID's agreement (1) to fund programs in which Botswana had a vested interest and helped structure and (2) to allow sufficient time to help strengthen local capabilities and institutionalize the educational reform. The 10-year sequencing and overlap of PEIP and JSEIP provided sufficient time for a large number of Botswana teachers to accept and implement new ideas in basic education so that today they are considered normal practice. The educational partnership between the Botswana Government and U.S. Government, which respected Botswana's "ownership" of the educational system, resulted in demonstrable and sustainable results. One of the most obvious is the collaborative process for developing the basic education curriculum.

USAID and Botswana's Educational Partnership: 1981-1995



Primary Enrollment	198,300	304,900
Progress to Junior Secondary School	28.4%	86.5%
Teacher-Pupil Ratio	1:31	1:31
Trained Teachers	70%	91%
Education Recurrent Expenditures (% of Total Government Expenditure)	21.1%	23.1%

# DEVELOPING THE BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The *Consultation Statement* that the BEC curriculum advisor prepared in February 1994 with selected CDD officers defines (1) one aspect of Botswana's flexible, decentralized approach to curriculum development and (2) the relationship between consultation and sustainability:

The consultation process includes both consultations within CDD by the professional staff (officers) across the curriculum, consultations by officers with other divisions of CD&E [Curriculum Development and Evaluation], consultations by officers with other departments affected by potential actions taken, and consultations by appropriate officers with higher MOE officials to assure that steps taken will be thoughtfully developed and will receive necessary support once implemented. Such consultation is essential in the implementation of BEC Project goals and work plan. It is important to understand that progress is being made toward implementation of the curriculum goals of the BEC Project. The progress, at times, may appear to be slow but I believe that we can be assured that the progress being made has the support of our Botswana colleagues and is more likely to be sustained after the Project ends than if more rapid progress is "forced" ahead of the appropriate consultative process. Since sustainability is one of USAID's primary goals of any project, it is important that those of us in the BEC Project respect such consultation even when it appears to take time beyond that which some would prefer.

The following discussion looks more closely at Botswana's consultative curriculum process, particularly as it is demonstrated in developing the agricultural curriculum. The activities were carried out during implementation of the BEC Project with assistance, in many instances, from BEC technical advisors.

## Curriculum Task Forces

Although Botswana's approach to curriculum development may not be unique, it is one of the most open and flexible. Not only is Botswana willing to entertain suggestions from outside the curriculum unit about the content of the curriculum, it also actively encourages suggestions to guarantee a curriculum that is relevant and practical. In fact, such outside involvement is a matter of CDD policy. Involvement in the curriculum reached its peak during implementation of the BEC Project when multiple

curriculum task forces were created to improve consultation and collaboration among key players, or stakeholders, in basic education.

Curriculum task forces with large, diverse membership advise CDD curriculum developers about curriculum design strategies, the aims of the subject, time frames, and additional resources, and help to develop the syllabi. Task forces advise, for example, about such matters as the varying educational needs of Botswana's diverse geographical regions and the type of information needed to prepare children for higher education and the world of work. Although the membership of a task force varies depending on the subject, it usually includes teachers, University of Botswana faculty and other educators, Ministry personnel, distinguished citizens, independent business people and other professionals, nongovernmental and private-sector organizations representatives, and a variety of other relevant community members. Figure 1 shows the suggested core membership of the task forces, exclusive of other relevant members from the community and elsewhere. Figure 2 shows the terms of reference for the task forces.

Figure 1

## Membership of Subject Task Forces

The membership of each subject task force should be relevant to the subject area and purpose to be served by the particular task force. Membership of a task force should include representation from the following:

- Department of Non-Formal Education
- Department of Secondary Education
- Department of Primary Education
- Department of Vocational Education and Training
- Department of Teacher Training and Development (Preservice, In-Service)
- Examinations, Research, and Testing Division
- Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation
  - Curriculum Development Division
  - Guidance and Counseling Division
  - Educational Broadcasting Division
  - Educational Publications Division
- Special Education Division
- University of Botswana
- Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry, and Manpower
- Practicing Teachers (Primary, Junior Secondary, Senior Secondary)
- Relevant Ministries and Nongovernmental Organizations  
(Health, Local Governments and Lands, etc.)

Figure 2

## Terms of Reference for Curriculum Development Division Subject Task Forces

Subject task forces are advisory to the Curriculum Development Division. CDD subject officers convene meetings and serve as secretaries.

- assist in developing subject aims of the Ten-Year Basic Education Programme by reviewing the old programmes against the new aims of basic education and identifying gaps between the two
- assist in developing strategies for designing the new programme
- assist in developing guidelines and setting time frames for development of the three-year JC programme
- assist with development of syllabus and support materials
- serve as a review committee for curricular materials developed by and/or commissioned from other agencies
- assist with identification of additional resources required for the subject
- serve as a reference committee for consultancies that may be required in assisting the development of the syllabus and supporting material

Broad task force membership alone, however, will not guarantee an effective curriculum. As an agricultural curriculum officer noted, "Unless the consultative process is guided, things won't go where you want them to go. You must first focus on what you want to get out of the consultation" and then teach the task force how to produce a successful "product," that is, how to make good recommendations about what the curriculum should cover. Teachers, for example, do not necessarily know how to do this; community members, farmers, and business people know how even less so. They must be taught. Furthermore, the quality of the product the task force produces depends on the "quality" of the curriculum officer: If this officer brings to the discussion a depth of knowledge about both course content and other influences on the curriculum, the task force's eventual contribution is likely to be more substantial than it might otherwise be. Therefore, before "educating" the task force, a good curriculum officer will do many, if not all, of the following:

- review *The Revised National Policy on Education* for recommendations and implications
- conduct/study the needs assessment to determine what is happening in the schools, how successful teachers have been, and what limitations/restrictions they face
- draw on the "realities"; visit schools and talk to teachers to hear firsthand what the needs assessment describes or, in some cases, what it does not; consult with community members
- read newspapers, journals, and other publications to understand social and economic issues since they affect the curriculum and contribute to it; know why primary school leavers cannot get jobs, if primary school is the problem, and if primary school leavers are simply too young to be employed; determine a kind of school curriculum, if any, that can help
- attend conferences and listen to debates to learn other curriculum perspectives; review curricula from other disciplines and other countries for ideas
- draft a preliminary syllabus for the task force to react to

In summary, a curriculum officer should invest time and study early in the curriculum process, so that in the long run this work will save time and create a relevant, focused curriculum. Understanding the policy statements and goals, the realities of teaching, the social and economic issues, and the approaches taken elsewhere will prepare a curriculum officer to undertake the next step of curriculum development—working with the curriculum task force.

## Composition of the Task Force

Botswana's agricultural curriculum task force for primary and junior secondary education is a good example of extensive, diverse membership that goes beyond the required composition. The force includes lecturers from colleges with training in agriculture; primary and secondary school teachers; education officers; in-service trainers; numerous specialists from the Ministry of Agriculture in disciplines such as animal production, crops, beekeeping, fisheries, and research; nongovernmental organization representatives involved in agriculture; and other representatives of the private sector.

The composition of the agricultural task force, like that of the other task forces, is in most instances, based on common sense. Teachers, for example, should be involved if they are expected not only to implement the curriculum but also to implement it effectively. Private enterprise representatives and other business people should be involved to advise educators about teaching business skills necessary for the world of work. Furthermore, entrepreneurs can advise educators about what motivates students to choose certain career directions. In-service trainers should be involved to help identify the needs of teachers and to contribute to a curriculum they will be expected to train teachers to deliver to their students.

## Schedule and Procedures

The schedule and procedures for developing the agricultural curriculum are also based on common sense—common sense combined with intense preparation and willingness by the curriculum officer to guide the proceedings at every stage. In that way, the task force receives the assistance it needs from a specialist, stays focused, and, as a result, delivers the product that both the CDD and the MOE desire.

The following steps are those followed in 1995 by agricultural curriculum developers for the basic education program. The steps might be considered a general blueprint for curriculum development.

**Step 1: *Preparing for the First Task Force Meeting***

- Curriculum officers across disciplines meet to determine if they agree on the issues: What does the MOE wish to see in the curriculum? What is required to implement government policy? What are the aims of the program? How do the aims relate to the world of work, that is, how will children persevering in the educational system be prepared for employment as a result of their courses?
- The agricultural curriculum officer drafts a syllabus for the task force to react to.

**Step 2: *Convening the First Task Force Meeting (one day)***

- The curriculum officer “in-services” the task force members so that they can begin to think like curriculum developers.
- Task force members recommend curriculum content options, especially those that would enable teachers to teach relevant issues to children in the diverse geographical regions of the country. They also consider issues such as teaching methodologies and student assessment.

**Step 3: *Meeting with Teachers***

- Teachers, including one agricultural teacher from each junior secondary school, meet in a group in each of five regions into which the country has been divided. Such division provides for five working meetings rather than one large, nationwide conference.
- At the two-day regional workshops, teachers learn how to participate in producing a new curriculum. (Involving teachers at this stage helped to compensate for eliminating the usual trials of new curricula in the schools, a measure that was necessary to enable curriculum developers to meet the urgent deadline for introducing the new curriculum into the schools in January 1996.)

- The teacher groups recommend changes to the draft syllabus. Their responses are compiled into a separate report for each region.
- The teachers nominate four teacher representatives from each of the five regions to represent them at a national workshop and to follow up on curriculum recommendations submitted by the various regions. Such representation ensures that teachers influence the final curriculum and eliminates the possibility of unilateral decision making—at the national level, for example.

**Step 4: *Meeting with Teachers*** (continued)

- Once the regional feedback has been computed, the 20 regional representatives attend a one-week workshop at which they consolidate the regional reports into one report to present to some members of the larger task force.

**Step 5: *Linking Teachers with the Task Force***

- The 20 regional representatives and 8 members selected from the larger task force attend a workshop to review the recommendations that emerged from the first task force meeting and from the regional teachers' meetings.
- Workshop members recommend content that addresses the curriculum aims.

**Step 6: *Continuing the Debate***

(It is sometimes necessary to continue the discussion about content and aims when the workshop debate has not been adequate.)

- The agricultural officer conducts another workshop (for as many days as necessary) for the 20 regional representatives and the 8 task-force members, as well as specialists in the areas in which further debate is necessary. For example, an inadequate discussion earlier concerning teaching about soil might precipitate a new review of curriculum aims and content, as well as repeated questioning about how each element prepares a student for the world of work.

**Step 7: *Convening the Second Task Force Meeting* (two days)**

- The curriculum officer explains to the full task force what has occurred to date.
- The task force reviews the curriculum document and recommends final revisions.

**Step 8: *Convening the Third Task Force Meeting* (three days)**

- The task force closely reviews the syllabus and fine-tunes it for final recommendations to the Ministry of Education.

As the eight steps reveal, Botswana's curriculum process welcomes, in fact encourages, involvement at all levels—from the national to the community and school levels. The process is marked by openness to new ideas and flexibility in introducing them into the curriculum.

## AN EXAMPLE TO BENEFIT FROM

What development lesson does Botswana teach that donors and other nations might learn? Botswana's commitment to education and strong management of the educational system—that is, ownership of it—are two characteristics essential to successful development. At the same time, Botswana's progressive approach to education allows for introduction of ideas both from within the country and from outside. The curriculum development process illustrates how consultation can occur in a centralized system.

USAID, one of the major donors in Botswana, was equally open to ideas during 14 years of providing assistance in education and training. It agreed, for example, to fund projects that Botswana wished funded and that directly supported Botswana's educational goals. The resulting partnership, although not without snags at times, eventually helped Botswana to produce a basic education system that is relevant and effective. Because USAID recognized that successful educational reform requires time, it funded for 14 years sequential projects that allowed one reform activity to build on another and the changes to be absorbed gradually and successfully. The result is an educational system that Botswana can claim as its own and that indicates it can survive without external assistance.