

Promoting inclusive Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Botswana

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the promotion of inclusive Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Botswana by attempting to answer four critical questions: What measures can be put in place at TVET institutions to ensure inclusiveness? Is it necessary to categorise institutions according to learner different disabilities about enrolment? What can be put in place to ensure TVET learners' employability post- training? Is it necessary to tailor make a programme for learners with a disability or they can just be taught using the one for main stream learners? This is done through an in-depth literature review of relevant literature and descriptive data analysis from various sources. Hopefully, the findings will be of benefit to the government of Botswana and developing countries in general in their decisions on the development and implementation of their TVET policies and reforms.

Keywords: Inclusive, Employability, Disability.

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1. Introduction

Abraham Lincoln once said "If I had six (6) hours to chop down a tree, I would spend the first four (4) hours sharpening the axe."

It's all about strategy and planning. By taking time to build a strategy, you are setting yourself up for success. The risk of not sharpening your axe could be costly and mean the difference between success and failure.

Take the tree for instance: by aiming to cut it down straight away, without first thinking to sharpen the axe, you have skipped the "preparing" stage. If your tool is poorly suited to the task, you are highly unlikely to get the desired result.

However taking time to think about the appropriate method, you will in fact save precious time later on while ensuring that your action is effective.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training is seen globally as a vehicle for improving the labour market outcomes especially for the youth and marginalised groups. However vulnerable populations continue to encounter significant barriers when it comes to accessing quality skills training.

The Theory of Inclusion

The term inclusion "replaced" integration, and is often contrasted with "exclusion".

Mag, Sinfield and Burns (2017) argue that inclusive education is a right to every child and not a privilege. According to them inclusive education is a serious priority. This is critical for Botswana as it has not yet attained such a status.

Inclusion promotes the active participation of all regardless of race, ethnicity, caste, disability, gender, sexual orientation, language, socio-economic status, and any other aspect of individual's identity that might be perceived as different.

Inclusion/Mainstreaming in the classroom would mean that the lecturer/instructor:

- Works to meet the needs of every learner on daily basis.
- Provides different instruction and practice for different learners.
- Deliver different instructional methods.
- Use different teaching approaches.

Q1: What measures can be put in place at TVET

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institutions to ensure inclusiveness?

- An enabling policy or strategy should be put in place and regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Modify facilities/infrastructure and transport to be accessible to accommodate all.
- Entry criteria, teaching methods, materials and evaluation methods should be reviewed and adapted.
- Strengthen TVET workforce capacity to teach/facilitate trainees with disabilities alongside non-disabled trainees.
- Operational alliances should be formed with key partners.
- Resources should be allocated to make this possible.
- Career guidance and other awareness building measures regarding TVET should be strengthened.
- Social Marketing-to use most appropriate channels adapted to local context, from local media, TV and radio to direct interaction with target groups.
- The case/story of Marobela and Marapong Brigades.
- Admitting learners with disability related to hearing and intellect for trade c (p) courses in carpentry and joinery and dress making. Also admit few with physical disability.
- Community involvement is also a key aspect in the promotion of inclusion e.g. by involving community social workers in the mobilisation and accompaniment of target groups.
- Working with change agents can be effective by showcasing good inclusion examples undertaken by some institutions and employers around the globe.
- Employ good governance and management within the institution for the right direction toward proper implementation of inclusive TVET.
- Motivate staff to promote research and development in relation to new skills and technology.
- Engage private sector enterprises in the implementation of quality training programs including work based learning.

Q2: Is it necessary for the department to categorize the institutions according to the learners' different disabilities with regard to enrolment?

- Disability is a form of diversity (Dunn & Andrews, 2015).
- Inclusion is a way of bringing together and harmonising diversity (British Council, 2014).

Classification of disability- Physical, vision, hearing, voice, speech, mental/psychological, intellect, haemophilia, Autism, multiple, multiple.

Second Classification- complete disability, severe disability, moderate disability, mild disability.

- Two examples of dealing with learners with disability:

The case/story of Marobela and Marapong Brigades.

- Admitting learners with disability related to hearing and intellect for trade c (p) courses in carpentry and joinery and dress making. Also admit few with physical disability.
- Staying in a hostel sharing with the mainstream learners.
- Difficult to communicate with those who use sign language since the majority do not know sign language.
- Those for dressmaking are transported on daily basis from Marobela Brigade to Marapong Brigade.
- Their results for the learners are very impressive.
- Tracer study being conducted.

The case/story of Timbi Primary School in Tutume.

- Hosting learners with disability, majority being intellectual.
- Learners admitted after being assessed and divided into three(3) groups:
- Simulation- taught activities of daily living skills
- Academics - taught basic academics(English, Maths, Setswana) and those who excel are integrated back into the main stream to write PSLE
- Prevocational- Taught skills for independent living/ skills that will expose them to the world of work e.g. carpentry, flower pots, welding, hair dressing, dress making and beading.

Transition

- 5 learners graduated in painting & decoration in 2022 at CITF in Nkange.
- 2 learners currently serving in Tirelo Sechaba in Tutume.
- 4 learners graduated in dress making at Rekakgona skills development centre in Selebi-Phikwe.
- 2 of the graduates are employed in the textile industry.
- 2 learners started training this year 2023.
- 1 learner was admitted at Nswazwi Brigade for a trade C (P) course in Bricklaying and Plastering.
- 1 learner employed by a medical practitioner in Tutume.
- 5 learners are currently attached at Tutume Brigade for six (6) months.
- Learners also compete at the Special International Olympic Games.
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Q3: What Measures can the government put in

place to ensure their employability post training?

- For the government inclusion in TVET finally contributes to a more inclusive society.
- The importance of TVET in nation building cannot be over emphasised
- Factors affecting school to work transition (STWT).
- Lack of core skills for employability and job search skills.
- Lack of access to labour market information and networks that facilitates access to jobs.
- Lack of access to inclusive career guidance and counselling services.
- Lack of resources for self-employment and business start-ups and social networks that facilitates job creation.

Measures by Government:

- To enact TVET ACT- Rights based approach.
- To address the issue of perception on TVET.
- Allocate additional funds to TVET institutions to cover for any additional costs that may be incurred in making institutions more inclusive/accessible.
- Policy framework for inclusion in education, training and labour market.
- Recognition of prior learning and skills for inclusion of workers from the informal economy e.g. the Zezuru tribe in Botswana.
- Training courses for trainers and assessors should focus on inclusive delivery. The case of Zambia.
- Take graduates through job counselling services, training options and job placement support. The case of Costa Rica.
- Construction Industry Training Fund (CITF) could be used to target the participation of the disadvantaged groups, including people with disability. The case of Australia & Malaysia.
- Provision should be made for monitoring, periodic review and revision of the TVET policy or strategy to inform adjustments to programs and planning and to insure continued relevance and effectiveness.
- Creating regional vocational teacher training institutes in order to train TVET- teachers at various levels according to the expansion of TVET institutions.
- Developing TVET system by providing different types of training e.g. formal, non-formal, dual cooperative, informal, distance and e-learning.
- Despite all the initiatives made by the Botswana government in the past, to date employers still complain of huge disparity between skills and competencies of graduates and the job demands (HRDC, 2015).

Q4: Is it necessary to tailor make a programme for learners with disability or they can just be taught using the one for mainstream learners?

- The right to inclusive education demands that all

mainstream educational institutions welcome all the learners and adapt their infrastructure and services to meet the needs of every learner .

- Investment decisions for new courses or the adaptation of existing courses should be undertaken with a view to address existing inequalities in access and participation.
- The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education of 1994 states that: "Inclusive education is the most effective means for building solidarity between children with disabilities and their peers. Within inclusive education system children from disadvantaged groups can socialise with their peers and vice versa".
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal No. 4.5 states that: "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations".
- The UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disability and optional protocol (UNCRPD) Article 24: "Persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on equal basis with others."
- Convention on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) ILO convention No. 59 states that: "...the governments to provide vocational training for persons with disabilities using mainstream services whenever possible and appropriate, with necessary adaptations."

Advantages of mainstreaming/ inclusion include:

- All learners learn empathy, understanding, and acceptance of differences.
- Learners learn that everyone has strength and weaknesses.
- Learners begin to look beyond the disability to see the whole person.
- Learners see and come to appreciate different ways of thinking.
- Learners shift their thinking from the separate because of differences.
- Learners with learning disabilities see that they can learn like their peers and those without disabilities see that those with disabilities can also learn.
- Through interaction learners learn from each other.

Disadvantages of mainstreaming/inclusion include:

- Behaviour problems related to the learning disability can be disruptive
- Other learners may think that learners with disability are favoured somehow.
- Learners with disabilities may be overwhelmed due to the crowded environment.

- Through interaction learners learn from each other.
- Disadvantages of mainstreaming/inclusion include:
- Behaviour problems related to the learning disability can be disruptive
- Other learners may think that learners with disability are favoured somehow.
- Learners with disabilities may be overwhelmed due to the crowded environment.
- Learners with disabilities may feel on the spotlight and intimidated.
- It may be difficult for the instructor/lecturer/teacher to give special and individualised instruction to one (1) learner as others also want to be attended to.

Conclusion

TVET education is an important part of a lifelong learning approach to the development of education and training systems as it promotes knowledge, skills and attitudes for work and life.

Inclusive education is one which all children or learners have access to quality education in an inclusive environment (Mag, Sinfield and Burns, 2017). There is an urgent need for Botswana to increase funding TVET in order to improve the training of TVET trainers and infrastructure development.

It is therefore critical for Botswana to create inclusive and equitable access to TVET, improve quality and relevance in TVET to support transitions and transform TVET to be inclusive and sustainable.

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