



Budget Briefing

BOTSWANA INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY ANALYSIS

2018 BIDPA BUDGET BRIEFING

An Insight into the 2018/19 Budget for the Education Sector: Briefing Note

1. Introduction

The Government of Botswana has over the years invested significantly in the education sector, with the sector receiving about 25% of total budgetary allocations for the past two decades (Budget Speech, 2018). Human capital development is one of the six priority areas for National Development Plan 11 (NDP11). This is meant to spearhead the transition of the economy from one that is resource-driven to a knowledge-based one as aspired by Vision 2036. The objective of this brief is to analyse the budgetary allocation to the education sector to determine as to whether it is in line with NDP11 goals and objectives. The brief also outlines the performance of the sector as well as challenges the sector faces and the recommendations for a way forward.

2. Challenges in the Education Sector

Despite a sizeable allocation of resources to the education sector over the years, the sector still faces a number of challenges. Some of these challenges as outlined in NDP11 include:

- declining learner performance
- low transition rates from secondary to tertiary education
- sub-optimal utilisation of Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- inadequate inclusiveness of the education system
- mismatch between skills produced by the education system and the needs of the economy

3. Goals of the Education Sector and Strategies During NDP11

The goals of the education sector during NDP11 are to address the challenges indicated above. A number of strategies were put in place in order to achieve the goals and objectives set for the education sector. Perhaps the most important strategy within the education sector is the Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP) which was developed during NDP10. The ETSSP contains the education sector goals and is expected to change the human development landscape of the country by introducing new strategies and reforms. These include; the revision of curricula across all levels; up-skilling and motivation of teachers; increasing access to tertiary education; matching training needs; retooling of skills in areas that have been identified as critical to improve the performance of the economy and increasing utilisation of ICT. These measures are expected to improve the quality of graduates, thus contributing positively to growth in all key sectors of the economy. Moreover, improvements in the quality of education should hasten the country's move from factor-driven to a knowledge-based economy.

Another strategy to be implemented during NDP11 is the National Credit and Qualification Framework (NCQF) which is meant to ensure the classification of qualifications according to set criteria for specified levels of learning. The main objectives of the framework are to: promote quality in Botswana's education and training system; ensure portability of local qualifications; improve mobility of learners, and promote internal and external systems articulation.

In order to address the growing unemployment of the youth, a National Human Resource Development Strategy (NHRDS) was developed during NDP10 and its implementation will continue during NDP11. The NHRDS seeks to improve the coordination, planning, quality as well as management of human resources development in country. The NHRDS calls for the development of sector plans as well as the National Human Resource Development Plan (NHRDP) aimed at matching of skills with the labour market and the needs of the economy.

4. Budgetary Allocation to the Education Sector

The above strategies are meant to drive the education sector forward so that it provides the necessary human capital to transit the economy from a resource-based to a knowledge-based economy. According to the 2018 Budget Speech, the ministries dealing with education have been allocated a recurrent budget of P12.72 million as shown in Table 1. These allocations amount to 28.2% of the total recurrent budget and shows government's commitment to the education sector. Additional recurrent expenditure to the education sector has been made through the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food Security (Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources) and Ministry of Health and Wellness (Institutes of Health Sciences).

Table 1: Total Recurrent Expenditure to Ministries of Education (Million Pula)

Type of Expenditure/Ministry	2017/18	2018/19
Ministry of Basic Education	6.80	7.97
Ministry of Tertiary Education	4.25	4.75
Total	11.05	12.72

Source: Budget Speech 2017 and 2018

Table 2 shows public investment in the education sector during the 2017/18 and 2018/19 plan periods. The table shows that the major items of planned expenditure are under Ministry of Basic Education (MoBE) and Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research Science and Technology (MoTE) followed by Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLG&RD) for primary schools' infrastructure. The 2018/19 budget has allocated a higher figure of P634.27 million for the Primary School Backlog Eradication Programme under the MLG&RD compared to the planned expenditure of P385.5 million for the same period as indicated in Table 2. This shows government commitment to improve infrastructure in primary schools. However, the backlog could also indicate limited capacity to implement the planned infrastructure development programmes. Looking at the planned expenditure between 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years, it is apparent that special education has received a larger share from P10 million to P80 million. This is in line with Government's commitment to improve inclusiveness in the education system by increasing access to students with special needs. The table shows a reduction in planned expenditure secondary schools infrastructure development from P751.2 million to P441.8 million and ICT development which suggests that a lot of infrastructure development projects have been undertaken in the previous budgets.

Table 2: Education Sector Planned Development Expenditure in P Million: 2017/18 – 2018/19

Ministry / Year		2017/18	2018/19
1	Ministry of Basic Education (MoBE)		
	ICT Development	16.3	16.3
	School Protection : Special Education	10	80
	MoBE Consultancies	10	10
	BEC	4	6
	Infrastructure Development: Secondary Education	751.2	441.8
	SUB Total for MoBE	791.5	554.1
2	Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoTE)		
	ICT Development	35	25
	Research and Development	49.4	68.2
	Detection and disposal of radioactive Material	10	16
	MoTE Infrastructure	100	0
	Sub-Total for MoTE	194.4	109.2
3	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLG&RD)		
	Development of Primary Education Services	153.2	387.5
4	Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food Security (MoA)		
	BUAN Expansion	91.7	91.7
5	Ministry of Transport and Communication (MoTC)		
	Schools Connectivity Project	60	60
6	Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoH)		
	HIS Infrastructure Maintenance	25	0
7	Ministry of Employment, Labour Productivity and Skills Development (MELP&SD)		
	Technical and Vocational Training Education	5.6	3.1
	Total	1 321.4	1 205.6

Source: NDP 11

5. Performance of the Education Sector

The section re+below the set targets throughout NDP10. Similarly, transition rates from junior secondary to senior secondary have improved steadily after a fall in 2010, from 66.1% in 2009 to 64.2% in 2016, although the actual performance has been far below the 100% set as the target. Tertiary Education Gross Enrolment Rate (TEGER) has improved from 15.1% in 2009 to 21.3% in 2014, but the country still ranks lowly compared to her peers and neighbours: South Africa, Namibia and Mauritius. However, tertiary enrolment has increased over the years as a result of the introduction of new universities, both public and private.

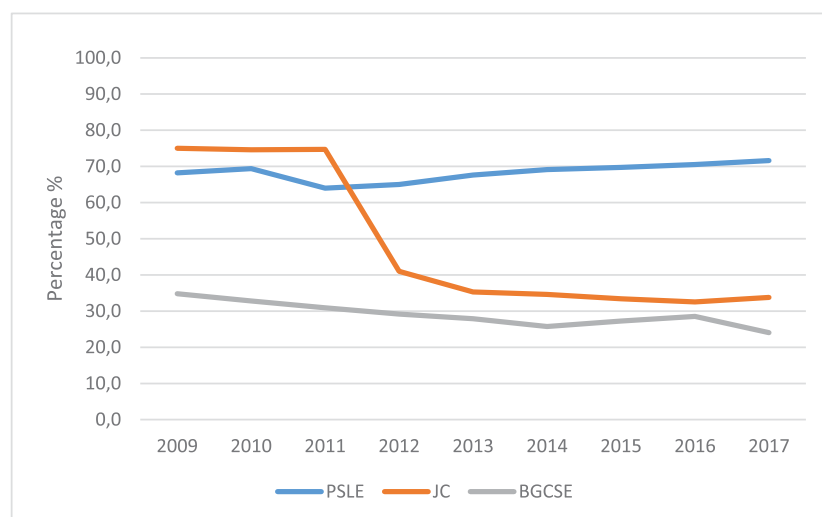
One of the goals of the education sector is improvement in the quality of education in order to improve human capital. The quality

of education can be measured by the educational outcomes and its relevance to the needs of the economy. NDP11 recognises the importance of quality education as a prerequisite for a competitive and productive labour force and hence calls for the review of the curriculum to improve the relevance and quality of education through a shift from content-based to outcome-based curriculum.

Figure 1 shows learner performance at different levels of schooling measured as

the number of learners who acquired a pass rate of C or better. The figure shows that for Primary School Leaving Examinations (PLSE) performance has been consistently at 70%, with a fall between 2010 and 2011. For Junior Certificate (JC) and Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) the general trend shows falling educational outcomes, with a steep decline in performance between 2011 and 2012 for JC.

Figure 1: Academic Performance for PSLE, JC and BGSE



Source: Botswana Examinations Council

One of the critical inputs in education is the school facilities such as classrooms and equipment (tables, chairs, and so on). For effective learning these should be provided in every school. However, in some schools especially primary and junior secondary schools there have been reports of shortages and critical inputs such as books arriving late. These render teaching and learning ineffective and ultimately affect the quality of education.

As a result of challenges in the education sector, the country performs unfavourably in the World Economic Forum (WEF) competitiveness rankings in the pillars related to education. For example, the country's overall ranking in 2018 was 63, while her ranking in health and primary education was 107 under the basic requirements sub-index. In addition, the country's ranking on higher education and training under the efficiency enhancers sub-index stood at 96. These rankings confirm that despite allocation of resources to the education sector there is still a lot to be done, especially in quality and relevance as well as access to tertiary education.

One of the goals of the education sector is to improve utilisation of ICT in order to improve the quality of educational outcomes. According to NDP11 progress has been made with regard to internet connectivity with all public secondary schools and colleges, and 73% of brigades having been connected. However, internet connectivity at

primary schools is still very low with four out of 755 schools being connected. Government has continued to allocate sizeable amounts as indicated by the allocation of P60 million for schools' connectivity under the Ministry of Transport and Communication and ICT development under MoTE. These are expected to increase ICT utilisation and improve learning outcomes.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Botswana has invested a lot of resources in the education sector and substantial progress has been made especially with regard to access in that net enrolment have increased, although still below the target of 100% at primary school. However, the same cannot be said about quality as seen by the stagnant or decreasing educational outcomes. In order to improve educational outcomes, the country needs to invest more on pre-primary education as it has been shown that this greatly improves the educational outcomes, not only at primary but throughout all levels of education.

One of the critical inputs in quality education is the physical resources such as classrooms and other equipment used in learning. The provision of these will greatly improve learning and hence educational outcomes. The budget intends to address this by removing the backlog in the construction of primary school facilities. Some of the additional classrooms will be used to offer pre-primary education as evidence suggests that early childhood greatly improves learner performance in the subsequent years of schooling. Since its inception in 2011, pre-primary enrolment has increased to 16,536 students with the number of schools participating having increased from 112 in 2011 to 382 in 2016.

While government has invested a lot in physical infrastructure, maintenance of these facilities has not been up to standard with

some failing to perform their functions. For instance, NDP11 mentions that transition from junior secondary to senior secondary fell because of the poor state of boarding facilities in some schools.

The human resources in the form of teachers and management are critical to the success of learning and one of the activities under the ETSSP is up-scaling and motivation of teachers. It is perhaps worth considering separating the conditions of service of teachers from that of the civil service so that their unique concerns are tackled adequately.

While the 10-year basic education programme is commendable, the policy through which every learner passes to the next level especially from standard seven to Form I has brought a number of problems such as learners passing from one level to a higher one without necessarily having learned from the lower level. This results in poor educational outcomes in the preceding levels. There is need to offer remedial classes as envisaged in NDP11 so that students who proceed to junior secondary are well-equipped to perform better at JC.

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