

Skillshare Africa's programme in southern Africa

Botswana Country Plan 1999-2004



Skillshare Africa has worked in partnership with the Brigade vocational training centres ever since we first opened our programme in Botswana.



Statement of purpose: Skillshare Africa works for sustainable development in partnership with the people and communities of southern Africa.

We do this by sharing and developing skills, facilitating organisational effectiveness, and supporting organisational growth.

Values

We have identified overall values which will guide our work.

Skillshare Africa:

- recognises the right of people and communities to determine and develop their own future.
- is committed to organisational and individual development.
- believes working in partnership is central to effective economic and social development.

Strategic objectives

We have identified five key strategic objectives:

- to assist the reduction of poverty, improve living conditions and create long-term sustainable livelihoods through support for the development process both regionally and in each country where Skillshare Africa operates.
- to develop broad-based partnerships with organisations in southern Africa, working jointly with them to identify their needs in relation to skills and organisational development.
- to identify varied and innovative ways in which the needs of partner organisations can be met within the context of the evolving needs of the region, drawing on and learning from examples of good programme practice.
- to widen understanding and awareness of the importance of international development work through the building of a broader constituency.
- to develop and diversify our resource base, in terms of organisational, human and financial resources, leading to an enhancement of our activities.

Skillshare Africa has developed a new Corporate Strategy setting out our statement of purpose, values and strategic objectives for the five-year period 1999-2004.

At the same time, individual Country Plans are being developed for Skillshare Africa's programmes in each of the countries we work with in southern Africa.

These plans interpret our broader corporate objectives as more specific programme strategic objectives that identify the contribution we will be making in those countries.

Each plan also puts the particular development needs of that country in context, as well as giving background information to Skillshare Africa's involvement.

The development of the new Country Plans has been a process of review and consultation involving the participation of people connected to Skillshare Africa both internally and externally in each country. Participants have included Skillshare Africa's Country Office staff, Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) members drawn from the local community, programme partners and serving development workers.



Botswana Country Plan Development Process



Country context

The dimension of human development

Botswana is one of the most developed countries in southern Africa. It ranks 97th in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (1997) and is rated as a 'medium-level country' in terms of human development. This rating is influenced by factors such as:

- the country's political situation and democratic record.
- the country's socio-economic situation, especially relating to income and poverty.
- the empowerment and advancement of women in Botswana.
- the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The political situation

Since independence in 1966, Botswana has enjoyed peace and stability. This has, to a large extent, come about as a result of two factors: firstly, the quality of political leadership which has adhered to democratic principles, respect for human rights, good governance and good development policies; and secondly, the development of the mining industry. As a result, Botswana has progressed from being the one of the poorest countries in the world in the 1960s, to one of the African nations listed by UNDP in the 1990s as a middle-income country.

The Batswana people enjoy civil liberties such as freedom of the press, of speech and of association. Political opposition is accepted, and plays an important part in the political affairs of the country. Arguably, democracy and good governance have grown from strength to strength, with the government prepared to listen to public criticisms of undemocratic practice or law. For example, in 1996 the government submitted to opposition pressure to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18 years. It also agreed to limit the Presidential term of office to ten years, i.e. two terms, and to conduct national elections under an independent electoral office, rather than under the Office of the President as had previously been the case.

Another example is the Citizenship Act which was repealed in the early 1990s after being successfully challenged in the High Court of Botswana for discriminating against women. The Act had denied the right to Botswana citizenship to children born in Botswana with a citizen mother and a non-citizen father. The High Court found this to be in conflict with the National Constitution that guarantees all citizens equal rights before the law, and advised the government to repeal the Act.

For many people, *Vision 2016* stands as an important example of democracy in action in Botswana. This was a Task Force set up by the government to define a development vision for the Batswana people.

It included eminent people from the business/private sector and the legal profession, as well as politicians from the ruling and opposition parties.

The Task Force sampled the views of individuals and organisations on their hopes for Botswana as a nation in the 21st century. The reports and recommendations that resulted covered issues such as Botswana's place in the context of the regional and global economic and political environment, work ethics and productivity, moral and ethical values, crime prevention, income distribution, culture, and science and technology.

The recommendations of the Task Force have also helped inform important national documents such as the National Development Plan No.8 (NDP 8), which runs from 1997/8 to 2002/3. However, it is too early to say how such 'visioning' is benefiting the lives of people in Botswana. It has helped define though the areas where government bodies and partners in development such as donor agencies and other non-government and civil society organisations could focus their efforts.

*The socio-economic situation:
income and poverty*

Until recently, Botswana had one of the fastest growing and most stable economies in the world, with annual rates of growth averaging 10%. This growth had largely been due to exploitation of the country's vast mineral wealth, particularly in diamonds, that generates high export earnings.

Between the early 1980s and mid-1990s, Botswana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) progressively grew from 899.9 million Pula in the 1981/82 financial year, to 14,631 million Pula in 1995/96 (*Statistical Bulletin: Botswana Central Statistics Office, September 1997, Vol. 22, No. 3, page 31*). However, the picture changes dramatically when the contribution of mining is excluded from the GDP for the same period. The GDP falls from 899.9 to 698.3 million Pula in 1981/82 and from 14,631 to 977 million Pula in 1995/96.

Despite the economic growth, poverty remains a grave concern in Botswana with income distribution between the rich and the poor continuing to favour the rich. Estimated figures show that 20% of the population earn 60% of the national income, 41% of households live below the poverty line, i.e. on less than 100 Pula per month, and 46% of those living in poverty are from female-headed households.

In both severity and extent, poverty is worse in rural areas than in urban areas (*Botswana Human Development Report 1997, page 2*).

This is, in part, due to the lack of economic opportunities in rural areas, and the effects of unequal income distribution between rural and urban areas.

*Empowerment and advancement
of women*

Despite the overall level of development in Botswana, there are still significant gender inequalities concerning areas such as employment, education, health care and political activity which contribute to greater levels of poverty among women than among men. These inequalities are further aggravated by the burden of childcare being seen as the responsibility of women and by increasing levels of violence against women.

According to the Botswana Human Development Report 1997, gender inequalities result in the under-achievement of girls at school, leading to lower participation rates in post-school education and training, and reduced opportunities for employment. In 1994, 70% of the students enrolled at vocational training institutions throughout Botswana were men.

Violence against women and its relation to the economic, social and political structures which create and maintain gender inequalities has been considered worldwide. Issues of particular concern in Botswana include sexual harassment and abuse, and intimidation in schools and the workplace. Violence against women has been increasing in Botswana. According to the Human Development Report 1997, there were 1,101 reported cases of rape in 1996.

Women have been campaigning and raising awareness concerning gender equality through the activities of NGOs that promote women's empowerment. These NGOs have also been working together with the government towards the same aim. In 1995, Parliament adopted a National Policy on Women in Development and, in 1996, the government subscribed to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. However, men and women throughout Botswana need to continue working together to change attitudes and behaviour for further progress towards gender equality.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is becoming a major threat to human development in Botswana, impacting on the health of the people and consequently on the human resource base and therefore, in turn, on the productive capacity of the country.

According to the Botswana Human Development Report 1997, an increase in infant and child mortality is expected as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Children of up to the age of five years are soon expected to account for 25-35% of all AIDS victims.

It is also expected that the increase in adult mortality rates as a result of HIV/AIDS will deplete the country's workforce. The availability of skilled labour will be reduced and lost working hours will increase, with productivity falling and costs rising.

While, at a national level, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is expected to have a tremendous impact on the country's economic and social development, at the family level it is expected to impact on the main earners and providers, decreasing household incomes and increasing levels of poverty.

The role of NGOs and civil society in development

Efforts have been made to address political issues faced by women, the disabled, and other disadvantaged groups such as the Basarwa people.

NGOs such as the AIDS Action Trust, the Botswana Centre for Human Rights, the Botswana Society for People with Disabilities, and the First People of the Kalahari have been formed to respond to some of the problems faced by disadvantaged groups. Also, the Botswana Council of Non-Government Organisations has been established to guide and coordinate NGO activities, while civil society has in general been active in identifying and addressing issues of concern.

At the same time, the government has set up departments and units to address some of these same issues, including the AIDS/STD Unit of the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Remote Area Dweller Department of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing. In some instances, the government has also made commitments to provide financial support for NGO activities.

For example, the country-wide Brigade vocational training centres, as community-based organisations, receive annual government subsidies to cover a proportion of training costs and staff salaries.

On the whole, there has been a favourable environment of cooperation between NGOs and the government in tackling national development issues and problems. However, there is still a considerable amount that needs to be done, including:

- Addressing relevant constitutional matters.
- Closing the income gap between rural and urban areas.
- Ensuring the sustainability of many local NGOs. Since the mid-1990s, some foreign governments have either withdrawn or reduced their financial and technical assistance to Botswana. As a result, many NGOs that previously benefited from this assistance have now begun to experience financial difficulties.
- Fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In the last few years, this has become a major national problem with possible future economic and social impact throughout the country.

- Addressing the shortage of skilled labour. Skills development remains of prime concern in relation to the sustainability of the country's future development.
- Stopping environmental degradation and improving the management of natural resources to protect the livelihood of future generations.

These issues are all as much a challenge to the government as they are to civil society and other NGOs.

It is within the above context that Skillshare Africa's development objectives in Botswana for the five-year period 1999-2004 have been set.

Background to Skillshare Africa in Botswana

Skillshare Africa has been working in southern Africa in support of sustainable development since 1990, having grown from the overseas programme of International Voluntary Service (IVS), an organisation whose involvement in long-term development commenced in the 1960s.

Skillshare Africa currently works in six countries in southern Africa, namely Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.

In Botswana, Skillshare Africa has assisted local partner organisations with skills development and capacity building through the placement of development workers and, in some cases, project funding. Between 1994 and 1999, approximately 100 Skillshare Africa development workers have been placed with programme partners.

During the 1990s, and more predominantly in the last five years, skills development efforts have increasingly involved supporting organisations working to benefit young people, the disabled, and other marginalised and low-income groups. We have also become increasingly involved with key issues such as women's empowerment and environmental conservation.

Our programme partners have included the Botswana Council of Women, the Girl Guides Association and Emang Basadi, as well as the Thuso Lutheran Rehabilitation Centre. Skillshare Africa has also given committed support to the Botshelo Project in Serowe, which benefits the Basarwa people through the generation of income and the provision of essential services.

At the same time, focused assistance to the Brigade vocational training centres has been maintained. Skillshare Africa has worked in partnership with the Brigades ever since we first opened our programme in Botswana. The assistance we give has expanded in the last five years to include managerial and financial skills development, while our support at the technical skills level has been maintained. We consider the Brigades a key mechanism to ensure the development and creation of employment opportunities in rural areas.

In recent years, Skillshare Africa has also actively supported awareness-raising programmes concerning HIV/AIDS aimed at young people, including the YWCA PACT (Peer Approach to Counselling by Teens) programme. This assistance has been in the form of skills development and the provision of funding from the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) Joint Funding Scheme.

Skillshare Africa also works with organisations involved in environmental awareness and protection programmes, including Somarelang Tikologo (Environment Watch). We have a long-standing partnership with the Crop Production and Forestry Department, part of the Ministry of Agriculture, assisting with forestry management and extension programmes.

One relatively new area of work for Skillshare Africa has been helping with the development of tourism in Ngamiland District in ways that bring greater benefits to local communities.

Skillshare Africa's country programme strategic objectives

Empowerment of disadvantaged groups

In human rights, as in other aspects of Botswana's political life, Botswana has an impressive record. There have been no recorded incidents of political prisoners or intimidation of people for exercising their democratic rights. In general terms, all citizens have equal rights before the Constitution and many have exercised these rights.

However, Botswana does have its political problems. A common criticism is that, despite the country's record of democracy, the Botswana Constitution has allowed for the unequal treatment of some sections of the society, either by perpetuating traditional practices or inadvertently through legislation. The situation of women is one example. On page 445 of the National Development Plan 8, there are at least 25 statutes which provide for discrimination against women.

There is also the case of Basarwa, or San, people. They have traditionally been the most disadvantaged group in the country. Thirty years after independence and the introduction of democratic rule, the Basarwa remain disadvantaged. Many socio-economic studies have indicated that, more than any other group in the country, they have the highest rates of illiteracy, lack viable economic opportunities and suffer high rates of ill-health and disease.

Furthermore, unlike other tribes, they have no land or geographical territory of their own, nor do they have their own recognised representative leaders.

Similarly, there is more that needs to be done for other disadvantaged social groups, such as the disabled, for whom a national policy on development does not exist.

During the next five years we will:

- *assist with education and awareness-raising programmes on women's rights, leading to the empowerment of women and their consequent self-sufficiency and independence.*
- *assist in raising awareness about the rights of people with disabilities and of minority and other disadvantaged groups, leading to their empowerment.*
- *assist in the provision of vocational training for people with disabilities and so enhance their opportunities for employment.*

HIV/AIDS

According to the January 1998 Botswana Ministry of Health AIDS Update, it is estimated that over 207,000 (14%) of Botswana's 1.5 million population are likely to have been infected with HIV. This means an increase of 148,000 between 1992 and 1997. Furthermore, 25% of the sexually active section of the population are thought to be infected. While the problem is more widespread in urban areas, it is also increasingly affecting rural areas.

Measures to address the problem are in place through the work of government and non-government institutions. However, all sectors in the country need to contribute individually and collectively in the fight against the AIDS pandemic.

During the next five years we will:

- *assist in building the provision of care and counselling for people living with HIV/AIDS through support for government institutions and NGOs endeavouring to fight the AIDS pandemic.*
- *help increase awareness among women and young people about the facts and myths regarding HIV/AIDS by working with appropriate organisations concerned with HIV/AIDS.*

Education, training and employment

Despite the substantial contribution of the mining sector to Botswana's economy, Formal Sector

Employment has only been growing marginally by about 8% on a yearly basis to March 1996 (1997 Budget Speech). This is partly because the mining sector is relatively small as an employer. Also, the mining sector offers more employment opportunities for men rather than for women or young people.

Consequently, the overall national level of unemployment remains high.

In these circumstances, the government's main development strategy is to use the revenues from mining activities to promote new sources of economic growth and therefore job creation.

Alongside unemployment is the problem of human resources. Botswana is still very short of skilled labour and depends, to a large extent, on the contribution of foreign technical and professional personnel in various sectors of the economy. The government allocates financial resources to recruit and pay these expatriate workers, who are employed by both government and non-government institutions.

However, in the long term, it is not a sustainable option for Botswana to depend on foreign personnel at the current level. There is a clear need to develop the country's own human resource capacity. The government alone will not be able to address this problem. The private sector and non-governmental organisations should also play their part. There have been some encouraging efforts in this direction. For instance, vocational training institutions have been extended to cater for unemployed school leavers, while a national policy has been developed to guide training opportunities for young people. Also, the government is providing financial assistance to promote entrepreneurial and self-employment opportunities among individuals and communities.

In general, government policies are now directed towards entrepreneurship and encouraging people, as individuals or in groups, to take the lead in their own development.

During the next five years we will:

- *assist with management development at brigades and similar vocational training institutions through skills development and on-the-job training, leading to sustainability, viability and improved employment prospects for trainees.*
- *support brigades and similar institutions in the provision of vocational skills training for young people, and so improve the employability of trainees, including their potential for self-employment.*

Environment

Like many countries in the world, Botswana has disturbing environmental problems. A study undertaken in the late 1980s under the National Conservation Strategy identified a range of environmental concerns. These included: growing pressure on water resources, degradation of open-range pasture land, depletion of woodland resources, overuse and exploitation of veld products, pollution, and depletion of wildlife. The study emphasised the need for policies that would promote the sustainable use and management of natural resources as well as the need for environmental awareness programmes.

The government responded with, among other initiatives, a programme of forestry management and forestry extension.

Environmental organisations have also been established aimed at promoting self-sustainable and environment-friendly systems of agriculture. The activities of these organisations have covered environmental education in a broad sense, including tree planting, anti-litter campaigns and promoting bio-diversity, with school children and rural communities among the beneficiaries.

However, extensive environmental problems still exist in Botswana and more needs to be done in the area of public awareness and education concerning environmental issues.

During the next five years we will:

- *assist government institutions and NGOs with education and awareness campaigns aimed at involving the general public in environmental conservation.*
- *help sustain and increase forestry resources and secure a source of fuel for rural communities by assisting government institutions and NGOs with forestry management and extension programmes.*
- *assist government institutions and NGOs with commercial eco-tourism and nature reserve initiatives aimed at involving and benefiting rural communities, and sustaining the reserves.*

Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the Country Plan will, throughout the five-year period, be regularly monitored against the strategic objectives defined, as well as at the level of specific programme activities with partner organisations. This will be done using the appropriate systems already in place or creating the necessary systems for this purpose.

The Country Plan will also be evaluated at the mid-term point, after two and a half years, and at the end of the five-year period. These evaluations will look at the impact of the programme at the level of the beneficiaries, in relation to the strategic objectives and long-term partnerships with programme partners.

The strategic objectives will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated, if necessary, according to changes in the country's needs.

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