



## Towards Accomplishing the Goal of the World of Work through Social Studies Instruction: Possibilities and Challenges

Obed Dube<sup>i</sup>

Department of Primary Education, University of Botswana

Paphani Moffat<sup>ii</sup>

Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education, University of Botswana

---

### Abstract

This study examined the extent of accomplishment of the goal of the world of work in social studies classes at the primary and secondary school levels in Botswana. Data were collected through questionnaires administered in both rural and urban schools nationwide. The researchers also interviewed teachers, students, school leavers, members of the public and the business community. Purposive, convenience and simple random sampling procedures were employed. The findings revealed that the goal of the world of work is not sufficiently achieved due to a number of factors such as the congested nature of the social studies syllabus, the theoretical nature of the methods used in delivering its contents, lack of equipment in schools and inadequate training of teachers on topics and concepts related to the world of work. Several recommendations were proffered, for example the need to review the syllabus so as to realign it to the demands and challenges of the work world; teachers should be well trained so that they can adequately prepare students for the challenges ahead, schools should be adequately resourced with computers and other forms of modern technology and that collaboration between schools and the business community be of high priority.

**Key Words:** Botswana, World of work, Career Awareness, Social Studies, Employment Opportunities.

Dube, O. & Moffat, P. (2009). Towards Accomplishing the Goal of the World of Work Through Social Studies Instruction: Possibilities and Challenges. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, Vol. 2(1), 1-12, Retrieved [DATE] from <http://www.ij sre.com>.

---

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

For as long as anyone can remember, the world of work has always been central to human lives and vital for the prosperity of all societies. It has regulated and continues to influence the quality of life of many people around the world (Hodson & Sullivan, 1995). In other words, human beings naturally strive for basic survival needs be it food, proper housing, health care and education (Beddis, 1989). As such, those who manage by whatever means to secure such necessities are at least assured of pleasure and satisfaction whereas the less fortunate ones experience misery, trauma and unhappiness for the greater part of their lives. Central to the importance of work in human history is the view that children should be 'schooled' thoroughly in order to be successful in their life endeavours; that education promotes economic development, self-reliance and global competitiveness of every nation (Republic of Botswana, 1977). Todaro (1999) emphasizes the same view that:

*the expansion of educational opportunities at all levels ... contributed to aggregate economic growth by creating a more productive labour force and endowing it with increased knowledge and skills; providing widespread employment... income earning opportunities... creating a class of educated leaders to fill ... vacant positions in governmental service, public corporation private business and professions...providing the kind of training... that would promote literacy, numeracy, and basic skills while encouraging 'modern' attitudes on the part of the diverse segments of the population. (p. 300)*

In fact, Thio (1986, p. 311) concurs that historically, education performed many functions and the most important one being to provide knowledge and skills while at the same time enhancing social mobility and custodial care. Citing the United States of America as a living example, he concludes that questions such as these were often asked; whether education can make a difference in terms of how much children learn; whether education is a useful vehicle for social mobility. In general, most of the United States people agreed that indeed education can improve the life chances of the poor that is the more education people have, the bigger their earnings are. The same study further shows that 60% of the College and College bound students felt that one must have a college education in order to advance in a career today.

In the context of Botswana, the importance of education for human development has never been down played. Botswana believed and still believes that education can prepare young people for better lives by providing them with the much needed work skills. In fact, when a child starts elementary education, he or she is socialized to understand that working hard at school guarantees economic success. Since Botswana's independence in 1966 for instance, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of primary, junior and senior secondary schools nationwide. Botswana's first National Commission on Education also called "Education for Kagisano" was set up in 1977 which emphasized the need to bring education closer to the demands and concerns of the nation (Republic of Botswana, 1977). The commission specifically spelt out that "education is close to the centre of any society's life and concerns, being intimately involved with its culture and values, its political system and its economic arrangements" (Republic of Botswana, 1977, p. 9.). Also in 1992, another Commission was set up which eventually gave birth to the 1994 Revised National Policy on Education. Its terms of reference included the need to review the country's education in terms of relevance thus emphasizing the need to identify the challenges and ways for its "development in the context of Botswana's changing and complex economy" (Republic of Botswana, 1994, p. 1). In other words, the 1994 Revised National Policy on Education aimed at creating an education system that would effectively address the needs of the people and manpower of the country. This commission re-emphasized the need to re-define the school system "to prepare adequately and effectively those that are unable to proceed with higher education" (Republic of Botswana, 1994, p. 1).

It was on the basis of the aforementioned recommendations that a number of subjects such as social studies, Business Studies, Commerce, Music, Home Economics and several others found their way into the schools' curricula. In the case of social studies which is the focus of this study, it was envisaged that learners would develop desirable work skills which are necessary for the betterment of their lives by the time they complete schooling. The notion of "readiness" was understood to mean that the school leavers would have developed awareness and appreciation of the values and attitudes towards all types of work (Republic of Botswana, 2002). Values and attitudes embraced "knowledge about the economy, the processes and organization of production and the demands of working life" (Republic of Botswana, 2002, p. 3). Furthermore, students who have studied social studies would integrate different aspects of their knowledge from the Social Sciences such as geography, history, political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology and philosophy to solve problems and be able to make sound decisions (Woolever and Scott, 1988 & Savage and Armstrong, 2004) hence the idea that "to educate a student in social studies would be to liberally educate an individual and to prepare a citizen" (Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation, 1990, p. 2).

Similarly, Botswana's vision for the future namely Vision 2016 reiterated the need to adequately gear education towards the work situation. The vision acknowledges that improvements in the relevance, quality and access would enhance economic stability and that ultimately, Botswana would "become the best producers of goods and services" (Presidential Task Group, 1997, p. 5). Put differently, improved education would create employment opportunities for Botswana and "raise their awareness on skills needed for life" (Presidential Task Group, 1997, p. 5). The challenge facing Botswana's social studies curriculum developers in general and teachers in particular has been to try as much as possible to realign the teaching of social studies with the demands and challenges of the work world. Other attempts have been to develop suitable instructional resources at the school level and train more teachers to enhance the acquisition of the required work skills.

It should however be underscored that educational reforms in Botswana have always revolved around the question of youth unemployment which to a larger degree has remained quite a thorny issue. For instance about 38.0% of young people aged between 20- 24 were unemployed by 2001 (Central Statistics Office, 2001). Those aged between 25-29 were estimated at 20.6 % and the figure included those candidates who were not able to continue with higher education. The problem of unemployment among this group is thought to be compounded by an acute shortage of senior secondary schools and vocational training institutions in the country. One other explanation for the increasing rate of unemployment is that the Junior Certificate holders in Botswana are not

adequately exposed to quality education in order to enter the labour market as competent participants or have not acquired the experience, skills and qualifications to adequately meet the demands and challenges of the work world. As a result of insufficient skills and exposure to work challenges, the majority end up entangled in marginal jobs that are institutionally irregular and relatively unstable (Hodson & Sullivan, 1995). Such conditions are thought to be deviating in significant ways from the ultimate goal of the Botswana's social studies syllabus whose aim is effective preparation of students for life, work and the range of occupations. In other words, the problem of lack of the required work skills and employment among these young people negates Botswana's cherished values of self-sufficiency, innovativeness and social justice.

In view of these educational challenges, the study was primarily carried out to establish the degree to which Botswana's social studies curriculum addresses the problem of unemployment among the school leavers. This was done by soliciting the views of the teachers, students, school leavers, members of public and the business community. The study also sought to establish precisely the meaning of the concept of "students' readiness" for the world of work and whether the goal itself is being accomplished. Furthermore, the study aimed at determining the extent to which teachers of social studies in Botswana have the knowledge, skills and the expertise to effectively teach issues and concepts related to the work world and the extent to which the conditions in the schools are conducive for the accomplishment of such a goal. In addition, the study intended to highlight the major strengths and limitations inherent in the teaching and learning of social studies and thereby providing measures that would transform the subject into a useful discipline worth of students' lives.

In this regard, the study is deemed highly essential in a number of ways because in the first place, students are naturally interested in the world of work in terms of how it is changing and the implications of such changes for their lives (Hodson & Sullivan, 1995). As such, the study serves as a benchmark for future reform of the social studies curriculum in Botswana. It should be noted that the study does not only provide theoretical modalities for the accomplishment of the goal of the work world but does provide some insight and practical means through which this goal can better be translated into reality. Curriculum developers and teachers as pivotal figures in the classroom would therefore use the recommended modalities to revitalise the teaching of social studies so as to bridge the gap that is currently evident between theory and practice.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Education and the world of Work**

The role of education in relation to the world of work has always been a subject of intense debate over the years with some scholars arguing that education increased the learners opportunity for prospective employment while other authors including Selvaratnam (1987) cited in (Boikhutso, 1988 unpublished) have argued that schooling tends to make the educational process too abstract and bookish by divorcing it from the needs, interests and problems of real life. Callaway 1972; and Blag 1974 also cited in Boikhutso (1988 unpublished) observe that academic education tends to promote too much rote learning of dead facts instead of equipping students with the necessary skills that will enable them to survive. Hurn (1993, pp. 19-20) averred that in thinking about schooling we expect schools to develop cognitive skills in students, teach cherished values and train students for work, yet we rarely reflect that the very organization of schooling may make any or all of these tasks quite difficult.

Illich (1971) cited in Haralambos and Holborn (1980) caution that it would be a grave mistake to consider schools as appropriate centres for preparing pupils for work only in terms of the curriculum. In his view, students more often than not emerge from the educational institutions with a variety of qualifications, which they and others believe have provided them with the necessary training, skills and competence for particular occupation (p.731). Illich (1971) further stresses that pupils are only schooled to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence (p.731). In other words, schools as learning institutions have not been able to provide the much needed work skills because effective education should be a liberating experience in which individuals explore, create, develop their faculties and talents to the full (Illich in Haralambos & Holborn, 1980, p. 731).

Hodson and Sullivan (1995) point to the fact that the credibility of schools as learning centres in the contemporary era rests entirely upon the degree to which they are able to respond to the technological imperatives of the modern work environment. Hodson and Sullivan (1995) emphasize the view that only those schools that respond in an effective way to these challenges will be more successful in dealing with life challenges. In justifying their argument, they cite studies that were carried out by Penn and Scattergood (1985), Cross (1985) and Ozaki (1992). In Penn and Scattergood's study, the finding was that the "high level maintenance skills requiring autonomous choices,

such as diagnosing problems in complex equipment, increase with advances in technology ” (Hodson & Sullivan, 1995, p. 236). Cross (1985) found that the increasing use of technology in the control and monitoring of production compels workers to adjust to important new skills including the ability to utilize and maintain such systems. Ozaki (1992) acknowledged that increased use of high technology in the work place occurs almost everyday hence posing a serious challenge for schools to seriously revise their curricula and pedagogical approaches.

### **Social Studies Education and the World of Work**

The United States of America is one of the first countries to introduce social studies as a school discipline followed by countries such as the United Kingdom and several others. In the United States, the subject was built around five major themes or perspectives namely; citizenship transmission, personal development; reflective inquiry; rational decision-making and social action (Woolever & Scott, 1998). As citizenship transmission, it was felt that social studies would enable young Americans become good citizens (Barr & Shermis in Woolever & Scott, 1998). By definition, good citizens are those citizens who are knowledgeable about their government, how it works and their economic system. In other words, social studies would train young Americans to be more involved in the running of their country’s economy. In addition, social studies would inculcate important ideals such as honesty, equality and competition. In this way, students would accept personal, civic, and economic responsibilities as adult members of society (Woolever & Scott, 1988, p. 11).

For personal development, social studies would help the learner develop to the fullest extent of his or her social, emotional, physical, and cognitive potential (Jarolimek in Woolever & Scott, 1998, p. 11). Personal development is considered an important dimension in helping learners set their goals and ways of achieving them. The learners should be able to solve problems they encounter in life. Furthermore, social studies should expose such learners to mathematical issues, career awareness and vocational skills hence enabling them to become productive members of their communities (Woolever & Scott, 1998). Social studies consist of a series of experiences designed to transmit citizenship skills to children. These competencies permit the effective citizen to make informed decisions regarding society's future welfare. The competencies include a range of skill areas, such as information processing communication, spatial awareness, social interaction, and time concepts (McGowan, 1987).

As reflective inquiry also, social studies would develop pupils critical thinking skills; problem solving; scientific inquiry; discovery or inductive thinking; legal; ethical, or jurisprudential reasoning; value inquiry; and rational decision-making. Equipped with this kind of knowledge, students would be able to “use their full human intellectual capabilities to seek answers to knowledge questions as well as to value questions (Woolever & Scott, 1998, p. 12). Other benefits include learners becoming more open-minded thus becoming responsible members of their communities.

The fifth ideal is that of rational decision making which was understood to mean reflective and informed decision making. Rational decision making was thought to include social action premised upon the decisions reached (Woolever & Scott, 1998). Examining these perspectives very closely, it is vividly clear that social studies in the United States would provide life skills which would enable the young Americans meet life challenges as they occur.

In Africa, the goals of social studies were clearly articulated in the African Social Studies Programme (ASSP). However, each African country had its own philosophy of the social studies program. In Nigeria for instance, social studies was introduced to promote total human understanding and problem solving. According to Salia-Bao (1990, p. 41) the discipline would enable young learners to focus on the totality of experience and understanding a child gets having been exposed to man’s problems in his environment to develop certain basic values and attitudes necessary to live in society.

Boahene in Adeyemi (2000, p. 185) further observes that social studies in Nigeria would imbibe nationalism and unity among its diverse populace. This means that the curriculum would expose or teach the young Nigerians life skills so that they become effective members of society. Similarly, the social studies programme in Ghana would address issues of national development. In this case, national development would imply the creation of employment opportunities and improved standards of living among its citizens. The Ghanaian leaders, championed by Kwame Nkrumah were convinced that if the system of education was to fulfil its functions satisfactorily in Ghana, it must rest on a foundation of national development. In other words, the school curricula should be more closely tied to national ambition, endeavour, hope and citizenship education (Adeyemi, 2000). In Ethiopia on the other hand, the aim was to change the conditions of the political culture of the country by placing more emphasis on citizenship empowerment (Boahene in Adeyemi 2000, p. 185).

### **Social Studies in Botswana**

In Botswana, with the introduction of social studies, it was anticipated that such a discipline would produce

learners who are dynamic, reflective and all-rounded. Such traits of character were considered very important because the country had just attained independence in 1966 and as such the economy was still somewhat precarious. As such, social studies would help address the problems the country inherited from the colonial administration. Drawing from the goals of the “ten year basic education programme”, students are expected to develop competency and confidence in the application of computational skills so that they [learners] could solve day to day problems. Computer literacy is considered very vital for meeting the challenges of the modern work world. Viewed in this way, social studies would effectively develop student’s understanding of business, everyday commercial transactions as well as entrepreneurial skills. This would further help them become more independent by not relying heavily on the government for employment creation. Also, is the view that social studies would help learners in Botswana develop desirable attitudes towards different types of work to enable them assess their individual achievements and capabilities realistically in pursuit of appropriate career opportunities; that they would acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes in food production and industrial arts for self-reliance and self-sufficiency and further expose them to issues of human resource development in terms of how education affects employment opportunities within the formal and informal enterprises (Curriculum Development Division, 1996, p. i-ii).

On the whole, the demands and challenges of the work world have always been at the heart of Botswana’s social studies curriculum. As already noted, aspects such as self-reliance, self-sufficiency, understanding of business, entrepreneurial skills, food production all testify to this commitment. In fact, Social Studies goals across the globe tend to emphasize similar aspects namely the acquisition of skills for personal development, problem-solving, human interaction and rational decision-making so as to instil in students desirable work ethics and traits of character to enable them meet life challenges.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is qualitative. This means that data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and observations. The reasons for using the qualitative approach was to capture the actual feelings, attitudes and perceptions of the people regarding the effectiveness of the discipline in preparing young people for the work world. Through the qualitative approach, the researchers were at liberty to consult both official and personal documents. As a result, the findings and conclusions were purely based on the

experiences of the participants and the weight of all the materials that were used. In addition is the fact that the qualitative approach enabled the researchers get valuable information on the historic roots of the world of work. As such, it was easier to understand the existing work situation and how education in Botswana can be re-organized to respond in a positive way to such challenges. In fact, Krathwol (1998, p. 235) agreed that through the qualitative approach, one can comprehend the perceived reality underlying individual and social behaviour”

### **Sample Size and Sampling Procedures**

The study employed a combination of purposive, convenience and simple random sampling procedures. In the case of purposive sampling, a total of 60 teachers (33 males and 27 females ) were selected by virtue of having been teachers of social studies for a significant number of years (2 years and above). This sample was selected in view of the experience these teachers would have amassed during their years of service. The 50 students (23 boys and 27 girls) were selected through convenience sampling. In other words, the students were conveniently available for interview. The 20 school leavers were selected through purposive sampling. This sampling procedure was also employed in selecting the 90 participants from the business community that is 30 participants from each of the business enterprises namely primary, secondary and tertiary. The reason for this sample was to solicit their views as they are the major employers of school leavers. As for the 75 members (37 males and 38 females) of the general public, simple random sampling was used. The rationale for this sample was to establish their perceptions about the quality of education in terms of its relevance to the work world. The advantage of employing simple random sampling was to afford each and every member of the general public equal chance for being selected. In this way, bias was easily controlled for (Fraenkel and Wallen (1996). However, there were also attempts to ensure gender equity for achieving validity and reliability of the results. The differences that appear in terms of gender balance were considered of no statistical significance. Also important to note is the fact that of the 20 schools selected for the study, 10 of them were in rural areas while the other 10 schools were urban based. Selitshena and Mcleod in Adeyemi, Boikhutso and Moffat (2003) describe an urban area by Botswana standards as a settlement that comprises 5,000 people or more with at least 75% engaged in non-agricultural activities and less for rural areas.

## Limitations of the Study

The researchers were however aware of the limitations inherent in the study. In the first place, the study is only limited to the teaching of social studies and does not employ a cross curricula approach to the problem of unemployment among the school leavers. As such, it should be underscored that school leavers in Botswana are also exposed to other subjects such as business studies, commerce, music, home economics, agriculture, design and technology which may complement efforts made in social studies to prepare such candidates for life. However, the researchers were fully convinced that investigating social studies as a discipline within the entire education system would shed some light in terms of the extent to which individual subjects can contribute to the realization of the envisaged goal. The other limitation worth noting is of course the employment of purposive and convenience sampling procedures. In most educational studies, various authors have maintained that the two sampling procedures are somewhat vulnerable to bias as they do not employ the chance selection system. However, the advantage of using them is that only those respondents with specialized and relevant knowledge can be engaged.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### Responses from the teachers

The 60 teachers had mixed reactions as to the extent of accomplishment of the goal of the world of work. None (0%) of them felt the goal is sufficiently accomplished. However, 15 teachers (25 %) felt the goal is fairly accomplished. The majority that is 40 teachers (67 %) were of the view that the goal is unaccomplished. The remaining 5 teachers (8%) were not very sure of the extent of accomplishment of the goal. In explaining why the goal is not sufficiently achieved, most of the respondents cited reasons such as the syllabus being too congested and also the fact that the syllabus dwells too much on history and geography at the expense of other critical areas. For instance, the teachers singled out the Junior Certificate social studies Module 3: Unit 3.3 which is on ancient civilisation (Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations) as the least favoured topics in the syllabus. Those respondents who felt that the goal is fairly accomplished noted that even though there are topics related to the world of work in social studies, the pupils are rarely exposed to the real work environment. In this sense, the content is just too theoretical and does not help students satisfactorily towards the achievement of the goal.

*Table 1: Teachers' Responses.*

Extent of accomplishment	Frequency	Percentage
Sufficiently accomplished	0	0%
Fairly accomplished	15 (9 males and 6 females)	25% (60% and 40%)
Unaccomplished	40 (28 males and 12 females)	67% (70% and 30%)
Undecided	5 (2 males and 3 females)	8% (40% and 60%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

During the interviews with teachers' it emerged that a number of issues were not well attended to. When asked how much they made decisions about the content they teach and the methods they employed, they were all unanimous in their views that they were rarely consulted nor involved in curriculum reform activities like contributing their ideas about the changes they would like to see implemented in schools. A major example given was the phasing out of the social studies syllabus at the lower primary school (Std 1-4) and was replaced by the Cultural Studies syllabus. Responding to the question of how the newly restructured upper primary school social studies and Cultural Studies syllabi helped learners acquire knowledge about the world of work, their responses were in the negative. However, some teachers confirmed that they occasionally took their classes on distant field trips when funds were available - though this was a "once-in-a-term or year" event. Teachers did not also rule out the possibility of using the locally available community resources in teaching the subject. Despite this effort, the intention by teachers was not specifically directed at developing learners' awareness about the importance of the work world, but it was done more as a matter of coincidence.

## Students' Responses

The reactions of the 50 students were to a larger degree similar to those of the teachers of social studies. None of them (0%) felt the goal is sufficiently accomplished. Only 9 (18%) felt the goal is fairly accomplished. Majority of the respondents that is 30 (60%) indicated that it is unaccomplished while the remaining 11 (22%) were undecided. Asked whether they ever had computer lessons, the majority indicated that they did Computer lessons at some point although the lessons were somewhat scanty. Shortage of computers and other related resources was cited as a serious problem because more often than not about 45 students would crowd around one computer. However there was a very interesting trend of gender in the distribution of the results whereby 25 (83%) of girls felt that through the study of social studies education the goal of the world of work is not accomplished.

*Table 2: Students' Responses.*

Extent of achievement	Frequency	Percentage
Sufficiently accomplished	0	0%
Fairly accomplished	9 (3 boys and 6 girls)	18% (33% and 67%)
Unaccomplished	30 (25 boys and 5 girls)	60% (83% and 17%)
Undecided	11 (9 boys and 4 girls)	22% (82% and 18%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

## School Leavers' Responses

In addition, the researchers interrogated some 20 school leavers (10 boys and 10 girls) aged between 18 and 21 who were employed to find out how their education, especially social studies, has contributed to their awareness about the world of work.

*Table 3: School Leavers' Responses*

Contribution of social studies	Frequency	Percentage
Sufficiently contributed	4 (2 males and 2 females)	20% (50% and 50%)
Fairly contributed	9 (5 males and 4 females)	45% (56% and 44%)
No contribution	6 (2 males and 4 females)	30% (33% and 67%)
Undecided	1 (1 female and 0 male)	5% (100% and 0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

During the interview, both the school-going students and school leavers were interrogated about how the study of social studies has helped them develop understanding of the world of work. Apparently some school leavers strongly agreed that they have benefited well through their studies about the economic world. They confirmed that by visiting some work places like industrial sites and learning about people in various economic sectors helped them understand the work world during their days of schooling. In retrospect, they could recall their visits to places like the Botswana Meat Commission, Game Reserves and National Parks where they learnt about the roles of people who work there. They also mentioned the importance of career fairs as some of the school activities that helped them gain some knowledge about the employment sector in their country. From the results above, it can be noted that there wasn't much disparity between the females and males' responses as regards the contribution of social studies towards the world of work. Both sexes felt that social studies did contribute in some significant ways towards their career decisions and choices, though this did not mean that the subject effectively prepared them for employment.

## Responses from the Business Community

The respondents from the three enterprises in general concur that the goal is minimally achieved. For instance, only 9 (30%) respondents from the primary enterprise felt the goal is sufficiently accomplished. As for the secondary and tertiary enterprises, none of the respondents felt the goal is sufficiently achieved. It is therefore evident that in the secondary and tertiary enterprises, skill requirements are higher than those expected of the employees in the primary enterprise. Such skill requirements may include among others word processing competencies, spreadsheet competencies and utilizing multiple windows and saving documents in different file formats. On the whole, the business community felt that the role of social studies in preparing the students for the world of work is very minimal.

**Table 4: Responses by Members of the Business Community**

<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>Sufficiently accomplished</b>	<b>Fairly accomplished</b>	<b>Unaccomplished</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Total</b>
Primary enterprise	9 (30%)	17 (57%)	4( 13%)	(0%)	<b>30</b>
Secondary enterprise	0 (0%)	10 (33%)	15 (50 %)	5 (17%)	<b>30</b>
<b>Tertiary enterprise</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>6 (20%)</b>	<b>22 (73%)</b>	<b>2(7%)</b>	<b>30</b>

### **Responses from Members of the General Public**

The perceptions of the public in general were similar to those of the teachers, students and the business community. For instance, none (0%) of the interviewees from the public were satisfied with the quality of students who complete secondary education in Botswana. Only 20 (27%) respondents felt the goal is sufficiently achieved whereas 45 (60%) felt the goal is unaccomplished. The last 10 (13%) were not sure whether the goal is accomplished or not. Members of the public in general felt that the social studies programme is just too short hence students leave school without having had sufficient time to attain the much needed life skills. In fact, some members of the general public felt that the social studies programme is a waste of student's time. Some discussions with members of the community highlighted some salient issues pertaining to the work world. When asked to comment about the quality of general education in Botswana in preparing children for the world of work, their common response was that the education in the country, especially primary and secondary education does not adequately prepare learners for employment. Surprisingly, they made comments about the ignorance of some students and school leavers who did not know what jobs they could do when they left school.

**Table 3: Responses by Members of the General Public**

<b>Extent of accomplishment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sufficiently accomplished	0	0%
Fairly accomplished	20	27%
Unaccomplished	45	60%
Undecided	10	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Adequacy of Social Studies Teacher Training in Botswana**

On this aspect, none (0%) of teachers felt they had received sufficient training to equip the learners with the relevant work skills. Only 13 (22%) felt they were fairly trained in this aspect. The majority that is 42 (70%) felt that they were not trained at all while the remaining 5 (8%) were not sure whether they had received the necessary training to meet the goal of the world of work. One of the findings was that although the teachers taught social studies as an area of speciality, not all of them specialized in social studies during their training. This is the case with the graduates from the University of Botswana who either did history or geography as their areas of specialization. The university graduates in particular indicated having problems of understanding the syllabus as compared to those who graduated from the colleges of education. In addition to the training of teachers, the researchers observed that students' written work, which includes class exercises, assignments, tests, and examinations did not reflect much on the issues of the world of work.

**Table 4: Social Studies Teacher Training in Botswana**

<b>Adequacy of training of Social Studies teachers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sufficiently trained	0	0%
Fairly trained	13	22%
Untrained	42	70%
Undecided	5	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Techniques for Content Delivery

The techniques used by teachers in meeting the goal of the world of work did not vary significantly. Data show that the majority of teachers were still yoked to the conventional techniques such as lecturing (13%), as group work (55%) and class discussion (20%). The other techniques that are considered very essential such as community projects and visits to the workplaces appear to be the least favoured. However, about 12% of the teachers indicated that they sometime involve the students in career awareness activities. The problem of lack of time was cited as a major constraint to effectively accomplish the goal of the world of

work. It also emerged from the interviews with teachers that the methodologies they used for creating awareness about the world of work were limited. This however did not appear as a surprise to the researchers because the methods that were commonly used by the teachers were teacher centred. In order to raise awareness about the world of world, it is imperative to get students to continuously interact with the work places and the workers or rather visit these places so that they get first hand information about what is going on in the world of work. Getting learners involved in community projects and work-simulations may create interest in the learners about the significance of the world of work.

*Table 5: Social Studies teaching techniques*

Techniques used by Social Studies teachers to accomplish the goal	Frequency	Percentage
Community projects	3	5%
Work-simulations	2	3%
Visits to companies	5	8%
Career fairs	7	12%
Class discussion	10	17%
Group work	25	42%
Lecture	8	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

## CONCLUSION

The findings reported in the study raise concerns that need thorough consideration by all social studies practitioners including teachers, field education officers, curriculum and policy makers in Botswana. It is evident that social studies teaching in primary schools and at the junior secondary school level does not sufficiently and effectively prepare learners for the intended goal of the world of work. As reflected in the findings of this study, the majority of social studies teachers continue to resist change in their approaches to the teaching of social studies content. Evidence has further shown that the teachers are continually yoked to the use of conventional techniques of content delivery such as the lecture, class-discussion and classroom group work. Techniques that are deemed critical to the achievement of the goal of the world of work such as involving learners in community projects, work-simulations, visits to companies and others are seldom accorded much attention and this makes it virtually impossible for the majority of learners to relate school life to situations outside of school.

The relationship between the world of work and the discipline of social studies is seen as a convenient means of helping the learners, who are tomorrow's citizens realise the importance of work so that they can make wise decisions and choices for their lives. Any effort made in this direction by all the stakeholders for the future of our children would not only help them gain knowledge but also help in reducing the apparent increase in the disinterest shown by some students in social studies. The other positive result of this approach to social studies as shown in research is that students are interested in work-related subjects and can be taught about work and other economic concepts.

Similarly, despite Botswana's government efforts to reform the entire education system, it is evident that very little of such efforts take place in social studies classes. It is also clear that the teachers of social studies in Botswana continue to be more concerned about finishing the syllabus to enable the students write the examinations instead of actually helping them develop the envisaged life skills. Such a scenario points to the fact that the methods, techniques, and strategies applied in Social Studies classes in Botswana over the years have not helped the learners in an effective way to accomplish the goal under investigation. Drawing from the National Council for the Social Studies (1993, p. 216-218) "A vision of powerful teaching and Learning in the social studies: Building Social understanding and Civic

efficacy”, Social Studies teaching is powerful if it is meaningful, integrative, challenging and active. Meaningful instruction emphasizes depth of development of important ideas within appropriate breadth of topic coverage and focuses on teaching these important ideas for understanding, appreciation and life application. Integrative instruction teaches skills within the context of applying knowledge. It includes the effective use of technology to enhance student’s learning. Challenging instruction models seriousness of purpose and a thoughtful approach to inquiry while active instruction requires a continuous update of the subject matter and related pedagogical knowledge needed to teach the content effectively. In this way, teachers would not just be delivering the content for the sake of the examinations but to help learners think inductively, deductively and reflectively.

Initially, when developing social studies unit plans, it is important for teachers to consider some initiating activities, literature related activities and culminating activities to raise learners’ awareness about the work world. In this respect, careful selection of several cross curricular activities prior, during, and at the conclusion of a thematic unit will provide your students with a plethora of learning opportunities and extensions that enhance the literature and make the unit relevant and meaningful about the work world. For instance activities like excursions, field trips, and visits to places like the post office, banks, industrial sites, etc. would create a better awareness about the importance of the work world. Alternatively, an invitation of a resource person such as a police officer, social worker, nurse, bank manager, etc would in essence enhance the quality of learning. Conversely, whereby teachers do not make any effort at all to integrate and relate social studies content to the outside world may result in learners not understanding more about the world around them. In other terms, work related skill areas, such as information processing, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, spatial awareness, social interaction, and time concepts are very important to teach in social studies (MacDowell, 1977).

Of major concern however, is the issue of lack of coordination, communication and consultation among social studies stakeholders in Botswana especially during curriculum development and implementation. The teachers observed that they are rarely involved in the process of curriculum development. More often than not, the syllabus is imposed on them from above. Adherence to the top-down approach has resulted in the syllabus not easy to handle. As pointed out by most teachers, the syllabus tends to be too congested and in some cases dealing with issues that are not very relevant to the current needs of the nation. As noted, topics such as the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations recur as some of the areas that need to be expunged from the social studies syllabus.

The use of unqualified teachers in social studies classes is also very common in Botswana. This is particularly the case with the graduates from the University of Botswana who are assigned social studies classes to teach. The assumption being that having majored in Geography and History automatically qualifies them to teach social studies at the Junior Secondary School level. As captured in the study, some of the University of Botswana graduates expressed difficulties conceptualizing certain topics in the syllabus because of lack of familiarity with the subject content. In other words, if such teachers do not know what to teach, nothing more can be expected of the learners. A similar finding was reached in a study that was carried out by Adeyemi, Boikhutso and Moffat (2002) on Citizenship Education in Botswana in which the graduates from the same institution lamented lack of understanding of certain topics and concepts related to citizenship education.

Furthermore, the question of resources such as modern technology stifles student’s performance in social studies classes. Such resources include the availability of computers. As outlined in the study, skills such as word processing, spreadsheet and saving documents in different file formats will remain key throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As such any attempt to accomplish the goal of the world of work in social studies classes without integrating technology will remain a nightmare.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Several recommendations were reached. The first recommendation calls for a thorough review of the methodologies that are used by social studies teachers in Botswana. This is in view of the fact that from the outset social studies was inappropriately lumped together with the so-called general subjects instead of being treated as a practical subject. Practical subjects are those which involve hands-on activities such as design and technology, art, home economics, agriculture, and others. In this regard, the study recommends that if social studies is taught in a manner which is more practical, teachers would have an opportunity to explore and deal very effectively with all practical dimensions of the discipline which have been ignored for too long. Learners would be afforded an opportunity to take part in community projects, visit companies, get more involved in career fairs and other activities that can fully develop them intellectually. It should be underscored that effective teachers of social studies are those who are able to concretize their teaching so that it becomes more realistic and meaningful to the learners. Changing from the general to the practical aspect will further encourage teachers forge closer links with the business community hence making teaching in social studies more focused, reflective and effective. There is no doubt that the essence of social studies teaching is to maximize student’s expectations and performance as they go through the difficult process of learning.

The above recommendation however, has serious implications for assessment and evaluation. In other words, if social studies is to produce learners who are competent and confident in the application of computational skills, develop student's understanding or appreciation of business, everyday commercial transactions, entrepreneurial skills, desirable attitudes towards different types of work, then the assessment and evaluation techniques that are currently used by most classroom teachers must also be reviewed. Furthermore, if social studies is to help learners acquire knowledge, skills, and aptitudes in food production and industrial arts for self-reliance and self-sufficiency and further expose them to issues of human resource development, methods such as excursions, field trips and other hands-on activities should be employed so that classroom knowledge connects well to practical realities outside of the class where the world of work exists. Through this approach, the use of modern technology particularly computers, and other modern forms of technology would be understood by all the learners and they will realise how much these technologies have positively impacted on their lives. They will inevitably learn about the different career opportunities that exist in various organisations, safety and improvements in work places, workers rights, etc. In this sense, the government of Botswana through its Ministry of Education and Skills Development should ensure that enough resources are provided to schools so that learners can use them to effectively acquire the needed work skills.

Furthermore, the Colleges of Education and the university should revise their syllabi or teaching modules and realign them to the demands and challenges of the work world. The purpose is to ensure that the graduates are adequately trained to be more confident once they become teachers. In other words, to fully accomplish this goal entails among other things improving the conditions in the schools, revising the curriculum, training teachers and lecturers and providing relevant and quality resource materials.

It is further recommended that social studies should only be taught by teachers who have majored in it if positive results are to be achieved. The recommendation is based on the view that only those teachers who understand the subject can teach it better than those who have not been trained to teach it. For example, graduates from the University of Botswana particularly those who majored in History and Geography expressed difficulties conceptualizing certain social studies concepts. In other words, such candidates are not competent to teach social studies as a subject in schools. In fact, most of the graduates from the University of Botswana tend to depend heavily on the graduates from the Colleges of Education for content clarification.

The other recommendation is the need for thorough review of the syllabus to avoid content congestion and provide more opportunities for practical work. The social studies syllabus should focus more on those aspects which are deemed critical to the socio-economic needs of the country and its people. This is what real learning in social studies classes should do for the citizens. In this respect, thorough consultation with the teachers is very essential so that the whole process of teaching and learning reflects the teacher's beliefs and actions in the classroom.

Lastly, partnership in education is very critical. In other words, the community should be more visible in the articulation / restructuring of programmes and syllabi so that whatever is taught in the schools has some relevance to the world of work. Effective partnership in education will encourage students develop interest in their school work and make education much more relevant to real life challenges.

## REFERENCES

- Adeyemi, M. B. (2000). *Social Studies in Education*. Gaborone: Pyramid Publishing.
- Adeyemi, M. B., Boikhutso, K., Moffat, P. (2003). Teaching and learning of citizenship Education at the Junior Secondary School level in Botswana. *Pastoral Care in Education\_ The Journal for Pastoral Care & Personal/ Social Education* Vol. 21 (2), pp 35-40.
- Beddis, R. (1989). *The Third World: Development and Interdependence*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Boikhutso, K. (1988). *Vocationalization of the School curriculum in Botswana*, Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education of the University of Bristol.
- Central Statistics Office (2001). *Labour Statistics 2001*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Curriculum Development Division (1996). *Three-Year Junior Certificate Social Studies Syllabus*. Gaborone: Ministry of Education.
- Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation. (1990). *Botswana Social Studies Teaching Methods: A Resource Book for Teachers*. Gaborone: MacMillan Botswana Publishing Company.
- Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, N. E. (1996). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill, INC.
- Haralambos, M. & Holborn, M. (1980). *Sociology - Themes and Perspectives*. London: Collins Educational.
- Hodson, R.. & Sullivan, T. A. (1995). *The Social Organization of Work*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Hurn, C. J. (1993). *The Limits and Possibilities of schooling – An Introduction to the Sociology of Education* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Krathwohl, D. R. (1998). *Methods of Educational & Social Science Research: An Integrated Approach: (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. New York: Longman.
- MacDowell, M. A. (1977). Work in the Social Studies: A Preliminary Review - Working Paper No. 55. Retrieved 13 March, 2009, from [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?\\_nfpb=true&\\_ERICExtSearch\\_SearchValue\\_0=ED144850&ERICExtSearch\\_SearchType\\_0=no&accno=ED144850](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED144850&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED144850).
- McGowan, T M. (1987). *Children's Fiction as a Source for Social Studies Skill-Building*. ERIC Digest No. 37. Retrieved 13 March, 2009, from <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-926/fiction.htm>.
- National Council for the Social Studies. (1993). *A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy*.
- Presidential Task Group. (1997) *Vision 2016 - Towards Prosperity for all*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Republic of Botswana. (1977). *Report of the National Commission on Education*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Republic of Botswana. (1993). *Report on the National Commission on Education*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Republic of Botswana. (1994). The Revised National Policy on Education – Government Paper No.2 of 1994. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Republic of Botswana. (2002). *Curriculum Blueprint: The Ten –Year Basic Education Programme*. Gaborone: Curriculum Development and Evaluation.
- Republic of Botswana. (2002). *Primary School Syllabus (2002) Cultural Studies: Standard One to Four*. Gaborone.: Curriculum Development and Evaluation Department.
- Salia-Bao, K. (1990). *African Social Studies programme – A Handbook for Teachers*. London: Evans Brothers.
- Savage, T. & Armstrong, D. (2004). *Effective Teaching in Elementary Social Studies*. Ohio: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall
- Thio, A. (1986). *Sociology: An Introduction*, New-York, Harper & Row Publishers.
- Todaro, M. P. (1999). *Economics For a developing World: An introduction to principles, problems and policies for development*. London: Longman.
- Woolever, R. & Scott, K, P. (1998) *Active Learning in Social Studies: Promoting Cognitive and Social Growth*. Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company.

---

<sup>i</sup> Obed Dube is a Lecturer, Social Studies, Dept of Primary Education, University of Botswana, Private Bag 00702, Gaborone, Botswana, Tel: (267) 3552255

<sup>ii</sup> Paphani Moffat is a Lecturer, Social Studies, Dept of Languages and Social Sciences Education, University of Botswana, Private Bag 00702, Gaborone, Botswana Tel: (267) 3552336