

Chapter 3

Botswana's National Poverty Eradication Policy and Strategies

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3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Botswana's National Policy on poverty eradication, and previous efforts to eradicate poverty, and a critique of poverty eradication strategy.

Poverty eradication programmes have been in Botswana from time immemorial. It is important to note that the post independent Botswana has intensified poverty reduction programmes to prevent human loss, brand it with names such as poverty reduction, eradication, and be politically correct as a democratic state. The government also became very ambitious and strategic that poverty reduction was just a bridge, a transitional means to an end to the ultimate and most desired goal of poverty eradication. Earlier programmes discussed below, some of which failed and got replaced, focused mainly on reducing poverty. The National Poverty Eradication Strategy was incepted upon the realization that piecemeal efforts would not significantly reduce poverty. The Government of Botswana decided that what would make meaning is to not just reduce but eradicate poverty "*Nyeletso Lehuma*". The Government of Botswana embarked on poverty eradication through programmes such as agriculture and land use reform, resettlement policy, entrepreneurship and youth empowerment. Several programmes with poverty reduction strategies were put in place for the citizenry. Amongst these packages that include backyard gardening

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3.2 State Based Poverty Reduction Policies and Programmes

Two of the most important developments during the period 1974–1978 having consequences on the agricultural land rights and tenure of the San are the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) in the Western Sandveld and the settlement policy in the Ghanzi district. *The Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP)* In 1975, in the area called the Western Sandveld, located east of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), the government published a planning document for the TGLP. Tribal land would be de-gazetted; their control removed from the tribal authorities and handed over to the land boards. Its purpose was to “...set out guidelines for the implementation of a land tenure reform designed to halt the degradation of land by overgrazing, which had become particularly severe in the populated parts of eastern Botswana. The policy proposed to do this principally by enclosure. Individuals with many cattle... would be assigned exclusive rights over defined areas of grazing land, which they would be encouraged to enclose” (Wily 1981p. 1).

By the time this policy was announced, the San were already severely disadvantaged. Comprising only an estimated 6% of the area's population, they lived in a serf-like relationship with their Tswana patrons. The official rationale given for the TGLP policy was for veld-conservation measures, to promote income equality in rural areas and allow sustained commercialisation of the livestock industry (Hitchcock 1996, p. 30). In reality though the desire of wealthy Tswana cattle owners to acquire fenced ranches, among them politicians and civil servants, long pre-dated ecological concerns (Wily 1981, p. 34, 46). The influential cattle lobby prevailed, despite Wily's efforts and land use plans developed by experts as well as detailed studies of a host of sympathetic anthropologists and other researchers. These demonstrated the presence and promoted the interests of the significant numbers of San (so-called non-stockholders) in the intended TGLP areas. The TGLP proceeded in spite of the demonstrated unlawfulness of giving populated areas to cattle farmers and syndicates (Hitchcock 1987, p. 325–9). Thomas (personal communication 1999) argues that the settlement policy actually became a tool for dispossession. Registration of the traditional waterholes and sip-wells of the San was systematically refused; while others were able to have hand-dug wells registered by the land Board and were subsequently allocated grazing rights over an area of 40,000 ha. Hitchcock (1991, p. 4) concludes that

Many of the areas where ranches are being established are the same ones that have supported foraging and part-time food producing populations for generation. The TGLP, initiated with World Bank support in Botswana in 1975, led to the dispossession and impoverishment of substantial numbers of people, a significant portion of whom were San. The Government of Botswana later acknowledged the adverse effect of the TGLP as contributing to the displacement of San for their hunting and gathering activities (Ministry of Local Government and Lands 1987, p. 14). This has however not been followed by policy reversals or the reallocation of land.

3.2.1 *The Ghanzi Settlement Policy*

The white farmers had been able to oppose the settlement of coloured and black farmers in the Ghanzi area until independence. Since 1966 however, Tswana have also been able to settle and buy farms in this prized free-hold farming area. Concern had already been expressed in the early 60 s about the plight of the Ghanzi Farm Bushmen. They had been made landless by the steady expansion of a block of fenced, freehold farms and had lost employment opportunities as farmers began to work more commercially and preferred the “more reliable Bantu labour”. These concerns however did not prevent a great expansion in this period and another 150 farms were given out. This virtually eliminated all hunting and gathering opportunities in the Farm block. Wily subsequently pursued an active settlement policy in the Ghanzi district. Her purpose was to secure as much land as possible in the traditional hunting and gathering territories and provide a secure source of water, before the remaining land would also be given out to cattle farmers. The establishment of water rights through the drilling of boreholes would provide the community with land rights. At the time that this policy was advocated, the San lived scattered over 208 cattle posts in the Ghanzi farm block (Childers 1976, p. 86). The only settlements that had already been established were Bere (where Wily herself has served as a teacher) and D’Kar, a mission project. This area is very important to study because it was originally left out but later included in development projects before the advent of donor fatigue. The idea of settlements was not new. Failed settlement schemes had already been undertaken in 1910 and 1937 with the objective of resettling Naro in order to reduce squatting, prevent bush fires and reduce stock theft (Hitchcock and Holm 1991, p. 8, Hitchcock 1987, p. 307). Wily writes: “... (i) In Ghanzi District...the whereabouts of San were largely known. Scattered, independent San groups would be assisted to “settle” in their present location and these were marked in District Land Use maps. The 5,000 squatters on the Ghanzi Freehold Farms would be provided with land and water in areas adjacent to the farms ... Plans were made for the 500 or so squatters on the Xanagas freehold block to “have their own place” off the farms under the auspices of an agricultural project” (Wily 1981, p. 48). Later, the settlement policy of the RAD programme was severely criticized. In an evaluation, Hitchcock (1988, p. 2) argues: “There are a number of problems with the villagisation approach supported by the Government of Botswana: (1) many RADs do not want to live in villages. (2) There is not enough money...to establish the number of settlements that would be necessary. (3) The amounts of land being granted to RAD settlements are insufficient to maintain a mixed subsistence base involving foraging, food production, and wage labour. (4) It is still an open question as to whether or not RADs will be given full title to the land on which they are living or will be moved to. (5) There are many environmental, social, and economic problems relating to the settlements, including higher levels of morbidity, mortality, fertility, social conflict, resource depletion and expanded poverty.” The problem was clearly the dual nature of the programme objectives. Where Wily and others saw the settlement strategy as a way to secure rights of land tenure and water, the official policy became one of integration and assimilation

into the Tswana society through a villagisation policy. The main objective of the RAD programme was to "...facilitate the integration of the marginalised sections of the population into the mainstream of society and to develop rural settlements to a level that is comparable with that of other rural villages in the country..." (Draft policy MLGLH 1993 as quoted by Saugestad 1994, p. 6). In retrospect, the official and the hidden objectives of the initial settlement policy were probably mutually exclusive. The Botswana government did not consider hunting and gathering as a civilized or proper use of the land (Guenther 1986, p. 313) expecting Bushmen residents to use land and water development for agricultural and herding schemes, and not making enough land available to support foraging activities. As the settlements were officially intended for all "RADs" and not exclusively for the San, security of tenure was not achieved. Other ethnic groups encroached on boreholes supplied to the Basarwa RADs (Young 1995, p. 3, Hitchcock 1996, p. 37). There is a structural conflict of interest between the need for defensible land rights for the rural poor and the interest of cattle owners to make use of the public services that are available, that cannot be solved by a public policy of free settlement for all citizens (Saugestad 1998, p. 178). The long-term viability of the settlements is still highly questionable. Production and income-generating activities have yet to be dealt with effectively (Hitchcock 1985, p. 61) and more recently, the Government itself has questioned the intrinsic economic viability of the settlements in terms of their remoteness from markets, since hunting and gathering are no longer viable options for subsistence (MLGLH 1994, p. 3). In most official documents, improved access of RADs to land is a stated goal. However the alliance of cattle wealth with political and government authority is increasingly at the cost of the small stockholder and the growing portion of the population who have no stock at all. RADP expanded its focus to all remote area communities. A major component of the RADP was the Economic Promotion fund to facilitate employment creation in identified areas defined as settlements. Remote area communities' settlements between 250 and 499 people with inadequate water and no or few land rights.

The 2009 RADP document indicates that in 1985, the government of Botswana reviewed the programme and renamed it Accelerated Remote Area Development Programme (ARADP) in 1987. A special rural development program was launched in 1989 covering seven districts: North West, Kweneng, Central, Ghanzi, Kgalegardi, Southern and Kgatleng. This was formed to establish permanent settlements, foster economic activity and provide public services with a view to improving living conditions of remote area dwellers.

During NDP 7, a reorientation of the RADP was suggested to incorporate political, social and economic empowerment. The 1990 review identified predominance of poverty as the main challenge to the programme. In 2003, the RADP was revised to align it to Vision 2012 and other national policies. Remote area issues are mainstreamed into Revised Rural Development Policy National Poverty reduction strategies of 2003 and National settlement policy (NSP).

In 2011, the Government of Botswana consolidated the three into the Affirmative Action Policy (AAP) which spreads across several sectors within the Government of Botswana and Parastatals. This covers issues of tax windows, waivers for access

to education, access to land and financial assistance for elimination of absolute poverty. Due to harsh climatic conditions, drought has rendered Agriculture very unreliable as the backbone of peasant economy. The Ipelegeng programme (self help) has become a prominent welfare poverty eradication programme.

3.2.2 *Poverty Eradication Programmes*

- *Ipelegeng Programme*

Sustainable livelihood programme is a programme designed to assist small business people on what they are capable of doing for poverty eradication funded projects include juice making, landscaping, and basketry and jewellery production. Others were trained in food preservation and later sewing from homes for those who can later establish sustainable businesses. Other beneficiaries are engaged to clear major roads as part of the cleanup campaign.

- *Basarwa Development Initiative*

In 1970, the Government of Botswana introduced these Basarwa Development initiatives to help Basarwa adapt to the evolving economy of post-independence Botswana. This initiative was established cognizant of underdevelopment perceived very rife in Basarwa inhabited areas. This was struck off in 1978 and replaced with Remote Area Development Programme

- *Accelerated Rural Development Programme*

Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP). This was an agricultural programme in the early 1970s which aimed to control grazing and improve livestock rearing. Marginal sections of the rural areas were displaced by expansion of livestock farming.

- *Remote Area Development Programme*

RADP had a broader scope of average than the Basarwa Development Initiative. The Government of Botswana realized that there were other equally poor but neglected ethnic groups which needed the same level of support as Basarwa. When reflecting back years later on this turbulent period, Wily admits that the original RADP strategy was opportunistic.

The launching of an explicit land rights programme was unthinkable and RADP could only survive as long as it did not directly challenge land distribution. The system was to be “manipulated” to the maximum extent possible and be addressed to the “very poor” citizens, not the San per se (Wily 1994:16). Thus, the settlement policy was built on San citizenship, not their ethnicity (Saugestad 1994, p. 3). On the district level there may have been an initial awareness among government officials that the settlements were to provide for “Basarwa who desire to live in a place away from the Ghanzi farms” and prospective residents were to be judged by their ethnic status (Childers et al. 1982, p. 15), but such an ethnic preference was never officially adopted and also in practise quickly abolished.

3.2.3 Citizen Entrepreneurship Development Authority (CEDA) Programs

CEDA programmes target citizens interested in small to medium scale businesses by providing them with business training, finances and expertise to start and sustain businesses. The first step is to have a business idea, and convert it into a draft a business development to be considered for sponsorship by CEDA. Projects sponsored in the past range from agricultural projects to other income generating projects. There are a few success stories of successful CEDA sponsored projects while others have collapsed.

3.2.4 Young Farmers

Youth unemployment is very rife and the Young Farmers sponsorship initiative was designed to provide technical and financial assistance to the youth (18–39 years old) who would like to transform the agricultural sector through commercial farming. Projects include pastoral and arable agriculture type throughout the country. Some farmers rear cows for producing milk, while others rear same for meat. Others specialize in small stock (Sheep, goats, poultry, piggery). The project faces many challenges because the youth would like to engage in income generating projects that bear fruits immediately. To transform the agricultural sector from subsistence to commercial mode is a long term projects that requires a lot of resilience and enormous investment before any gains are made.

3.2.5 Backyard Vegetable Gardening Projects

The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the Office of the President Poverty Eradication Unit are key actors in encouraging Botswana to grow backyard vegetable gardens to ensure food security as part of the efforts to reduce poverty. Residents of Phuduhudu, Lesoma, Ramotswa and other villages have joined the bandwagons to grow vegetables. Although lack of water is the major constraints, a few success stories were noted in 2012 with documentation of what worked for a few resilient individuals. Everyone in the country including people with disabilities were, during the launching of one of the vegetable projects, encouraged to participate in income generation projects that would integrate everyone (Botswana Daily News, Monday 3rd September 2012, p. 1). The backyard gardening project is one of the twenty three Government of Botswana's presidential initiatives in assisting less privileged members of society to better their lives. (State of the Nations Address, November 5th, 2012). It is believed that the project is one of those pivotal to ensuring that Botswana's economic growth becomes viable and sustainable.

3.2.6 Sponsorship for Education and Training

The Ministry of Education and Skills development is a key player in administration of sponsorship especially for needy children, formal school from early childhood to tertiary institutions. The Government of Botswana through the Ministry of Education and Skills Development has gone an extra mile to sponsor students with grades as low as 36 to study in private tertiary institutions science and Technology, scarce courses badly needed for growing the economy, needy and children living with disabilities (Botswana Daily News, 2012, p. 5). This move was taken in recognition that if needy children are not sponsored, the chain of poverty would forever say in their families. To address issues of quality of education, schools are expected to work with Parents' Teachers Associations (PTAs), educational mentors and community volunteers at large. Sharing community services would ensure continuous improvement of the primary and secondary school educational systems.

3.2.7 Education and Training of Learners with Mild Intellectual Ability

Training is provided generally for employees on the job, and in a variety of special schools and technical colleges for learners with disability. In June 2012, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) through the Gaborone Technical College advertised two access programmes under the Botswana Technical Education Programme (BTEP) offered by the Special Education Unit of the Gaborone Technical College (GTC). Altogether two pilot programmes targeting learners with mild intellectual ability were introduced. The two programmes, each with 10 students, are meant to promote learners on Access to Hospitality and Access to Retail Business. They were introduced on a pilot basis and started running 10th September for two years under the GTC Special Education Unit. It is expected that after 18 months of coursework and 6 months of attachment, the learners will be able to access the hospitality or retail sectors to reduce poverty by finding a source of livelihood.

3.3 Botswana's Poverty Eradication Strategies

There are currently 23 packages which have been developed that the beneficiaries can choose from; and these include (1) Backyard gardens, (2) Bakery, (3) Backyard Tree Nursery, (4) Beekeeping, (5) Fashion Design, (6) Fish Farming, (7) Food Catering, (8) Hair salon, (9) Beauty salon, (10) Home based laundry, (11) Jam making, (12) Vegetable pickles, (13) Kiosk, (14) Landscaping, (15) Leather processing, (16) Packaging of food grains, (17) Small stock, (18) Tent hire, (19) Phane, (20) Bottle recycling, (21) Fire beaters, (22) Basketry (being developed), (23) Child

care (being developed). (*Mmegi Newspaper 2nd November 2012, Vol. 29. No. 164. p. 23*). In 2012, The Government of Botswana provided and officially launched the legal framework/Policy/Act Guideline for those responsible. The guidelines provide background to the Poverty Eradication Strategy, objectives to be achieved, expected outcomes and each of the components of the 23 packages and projections up to 2015.

Over 770 backyard gardens had been completed, and the rollout was for 8000 during the 2012/2013 financial year. For alternative packages it was expected that 5089 beneficiaries would be reached. The above packages have been predicated on the belief that Botswana can step out of poverty and create wealth. All alternative rolled out packages had been reported successful. Markets and cooperatives were to be created for all the products from the 23 packages. Botswana would be encouraged to purchase produce from the local producers. (*Mmegi Newspaper 2nd November 2012, Vol. 29. No. 164. p. 23*). The Chapter further notes the role of non-state actors who have served as great partners to the Government of Botswana in the transition from poverty reduction to poverty eradication. These include organizations of the civil society, international development partners, and the private and parastatal sectors.

3.3.1 Research and Development

As of 2013, in the past decade, the UB through the Office of Research and Development (ORD) has contributed to research on poverty in the following areas:

3.3.2 Poverty and Illiteracy

One of the ORD funded projects illuminated that poverty is often identified with illiteracy and other social ills. Poverty eradication entails tackling socio-cultural conditions that are often identified with the poor. Amongst these are promotion of literacy for better access to information, and training literacy experiences into lifelong sources of livelihoods.

3.3.3 Adult Education and Poverty Reduction—A Global Priority

This is one of the first and historic conferences hosted by the Department of Adult Education (DAE) on Adult Education and poverty reduction. This conference, held in 2004, attracted over 45 countries to Gaborone, University of Botswana who dialogued on Adult Education and poverty reduction: a global priority. The conference culminated with several publications and issues for research, policy and practice. Poverty eradication through adult and continuing education conferences on Adult and continuing education and is perceived as a global priority in which AE has to partner with other disciplines for poverty reduction.

3.3.4 Poverty and Post Literacy

This study, carried out in Central and Kweneng Districts of Botswana, suggest that not only is it important to acquire literacy skills but post literacy programmes and activities are crucial for the poor to make a transition from poverty to non- poverty (Raditloaneng 2006).

3.3.5 Poverty and Identity Formation

Post-independence Botswana has graduated from a list of the poorest non-oil producing African countries to one of the richest nations in Africa. Since 1966, Botswana has created the necessary physical and social infrastructure to reduce poverty from the current rate 47% of the national population living in absolute survival poverty to non-poverty by 2016 (Botswana National Institute of Development and Policy Analysis 1997/1998; Presidential Task Group on *a long term vision for Botswana* 1997). Despite these commendable efforts, poverty as an individual and as a structural problem still exists. Globally, some of the poor experience insufficient upward mobility beyond the PDL, while the poor which the author of this article studied had disproportionately experienced excessive downward mobility below the PDL. People learn to discover themselves with situations that are often identified with structurally- induced poverty; low wages, lack of education and poor public schooling, and individually become dependent on Government of Botswana welfare rations which are designed sustain their lives physically but cannot move them up to a stage where they graduate from structural or individual poverty.

3.3.6 Identity Formation

The process of poverty-identification goes through phases and is developed over time as a result of sustained poverty conditions, creating complex learning and psychological needs that have to be addressed in education programmes. According to Brown (2005), poverty is integrated into the self-perception image that a person constructs as a result of the internal self-perceptions with the perception of self as part of a social environment in which they live. Living in poverty shapes belief systems resulting in context-specific interpretations of physical, emotional, and psychological consequences of poverty as articulated by Illeris (2002). Since identity and learning have close correlation, assessing poverty influences on identity and how poverty is incorporated into adult identity is an important factor in understanding the appropriateness of adult education interventions. A significant feature of identity formation is that identities are multiple, fragmented and constantly in progress, and interlocked, influencing strategies for educational intervention.

3.4 Critique of State Based Responses to Poverty

Several writers on Botswana have made a critique of state based responses as having serious shortcomings of creating a dependency syndrome on the Government of Botswana, rural bias, and programmes and not planned from a gender perspective. Programmes such as Ipelegeng are seen to create a dependency syndrome on the Government of Botswana, and making it difficult for beneficiaries to graduate from poverty to non- poverty.

3.4.1 *Charity for Exploitation of the Poor*

In his critique of poverty eradication programmes, Dipholo (2013) argued that the political leadership, particularly Botswana's president derives maximum pleasure in distributing blankets, houses, shirts, food hampers to the poor. The practice is described as "treacherous...heartless...the art of deception..." (Sunday Standard Feb. 3–9, 2013, p. 9). Publicizing charity and exploiting the poor is giving without necessarily being charitable is not right. He quoted the bible as totally against exploitation of the poor (Proverbs 22; 22–23) and announcing what is given to the poor (Matthew 6; 2–4). The president must focus on broader policy matters to avoid trivializing the importance of the presidency. Charity should not be used as a political weapon to exploit the poor.

- Mismanagement of charity

Mismanagement of charity also leads to disempowerment of beneficiaries.

Dipholo further argues that:

Charities are central to welfare provision but for them to remain relevant and dignified, it is advisable that they are managed by relevant experts or bodies....A majority of today's charitable activities are careless, disgusting and distorts the basic tenets of charity....Charity is used as a weapon to convert people with little regard to their choices and dignity. (ibid, p. 9)

To him charity must be left or channeled through many existing charitable NGOs and Community Development Offices.

3.4.2 *Non State based Responses to Poverty Reduction*

Non-state bases responses address the needs of people as individuals & collectives. They are run mainly by local organizations of the civil society (NGOs, CBOs) with backing from International Development Partners. Some of the local activists are activists, self-employed and free to address poverty in ways most appealing to them. One major critique of non- state based responses is that they benefit only the elites who have access to international NGOs, and they are greatly dependent on external funds that are frozen anytime depending on the mood and discretion of the financier.

Gender based and non- state based responses

Rights- based approaches

Human Rights issues such as poverty reduction are linked in several foras to wider issues of sustainable development. Environmental crises were linked to sustainable development during the Earth Summit+5 in 1997. (Special Session of the UN General Assembly to Review and Appraise the Implementation of Agenda 21 1997). A connection was drawn between poverty and Human Rights violation, poverty and gender, environmental degradation. Issues of women's status in poverty, access to water and sanitation, environment and women's health, management of natural resources, commercialization of agriculture, and environmental activism were amongst those discussed during the summit.

In Botswana, poverty reduction programmes that target gender transformative policies are based on definitions of poverty as a gender-based problem. At this stage, it is crucial to illustrate the different dimensions of poverty as a gender-based problem, and how this is addressed in the journey towards realizing gender parity.

- Children's Act of 2009
- Gender Transformative policies and legislation
- Adoption of the 2000 National Gender framework & strategic areas
- Advocacy against passion killings
- Abolition of marital power
- Paternity leave to give fathers opportunities to take care of their children
- Enforcement of gender based laws still lagging behind
- Movement from advocacy to best practice still lags behind
- Corrupt practices, misuse of public funds, low implementation of projects

3.4.3 Non-Formal Educational Interventions

There are many Non Formal Educational interventions that are efforts of state, civil society parastatals and the private sector. The ultimate goal of NFE projects is to reduce poverty by promoting access to income, capabilities and participation in civic life. Some of the key actors in these programmes, displayed through brochures from various departments during the 4th International HIV/AIDS Conference (Botswana HIV Clinicians Society, 19th to 22nd September 2012, GICC) are as follows:-

- The Department of Roads for education on road safety and accident prevention.
- Ministry of Health on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, maternal and child health. Specific programmes include "Open the windows to prevent TB infections.
- Ministry of Education and Skills Development on Non- formal education (National Literacy programme and post literacy) and livelihood training.
- Department of Lands on access to land in urban and rural areas, and land use for various poverty reduction initiatives.
- Women Against Rape (WAR) programmes on Violence Against Women, rape, defilement, alcohol abuse and "Your Voice Can Make a Difference" and "Your journey to recovery"

- Kuru Family of Organizations Community Health Programme “Re Batla botshelo” on HIV/AIDS prevention, Care and Support.
- Letloa Trust on “We want life” community health project sensitizing people on HIV/AIDS, and San Arts and Crafts for sale to reduce poverty.
- Bokamoso Trust for early Childhood Training on the child’s developmental needs survival and protection from various forms of abuse.
- Gaborone Game Reserve on tourist attractions in Botswana to promote access to information for conference participants to take excursions after the main conference agenda.

The above displays during the conference were on different stakeholders’ projects done to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS, which is a global factor in global life expectancy, longevity and poverty. Some displays were income generation projects for people to learn to earn or obtain a source of livelihood, partnerships for education, production and research. Others were on multi-sectoral flexible curriculum rather than focusing on literacy alone for empowerment, and illuminated works and achievements of different people in different organizations for communities they serve. The overall conference participants from the SADC region and Europe picked up materials displayed and were expected to spread word and learn better through immediate application rather than theory.

3.5 Poverty Eradication

Poverty eradication means making a transition from absolute poverty to a world without poverty. From the early days of political independence, the Government of Botswana has been determined through a variety of welfare programmes, to eliminate poverty among Botswana. There are categories of poverty eradication programmes that are run by different stakeholders in poverty reduction. Stakeholders include the state, (Government of Botswana) and non- state actors, (Organizations of the civil society, international development partners, parastatals and the private sector. The scope of the programmes cover a variety of objectives such as Economic growth monitoring programs, provision of Welfare and safety nets, housing for the poor, and other aspects of community based programmes to ultimately reduce absolute poverty.

Since poverty in Botswana is defined as a multi-dimensional problem, a variety of interventions state and non- state responses are used to help reduce poverty in all fronts. Poverty reduction programmes in Botswana initially targeted destitution as a major social ill in tackling poverty. Since 2008, there has been a gradual shift from poverty reduction to total eradication by 2016.

The Government of Botswana has launched the multi-sectoral poverty eradication strategy for a world without poverty to be achieved by 2015. Amongst the most prominent programmes in the multi-sectoral approach are the Presidential Housing Appeal, and other testimonies of successful projects form the 23 packages mentioned earlier.

3.5.1 President's Housing Appeal

Botswana's president set up a housing appeal for the needy, in recognition of housing as a basic human need for individual dignity. The appeal called on the individuals, groups and companies to help build houses for the needy who cannot afford housing without assistance. The overall goal is to house all the needy by 2016. This is aligned to the 50th anniversary of Botswana's independence as articulated in the National Vision 2016. As of 7th February 2013, 542 houses had been pledged by 124, cash and kind assistance by a total of 201 individuals and companies. Overall the appeal has attracted pledges nationwide (Botswana Daily News 2012, p. 4).

3.5.2 Access to Housing for Public Servants

Housing is one of the most basic needs for human dignity. Houses in the open market are some of one of the most expensive needs that everyone without their own house has to meet. The poverty situation is compounded by high rentals that are charged, especially in the open market, regardless of salary adjustments/increments for public servants. To meet housing needs, the government of Botswana secured a P20 million loan for 540 housing units to address the challenge of housing public servants.

The Botswana Housing Corporation is tasked to construct houses for the SHHA, Turnkey beneficiaries and government pool houses. Application procedures and processes will be administered by District Councils. (ibid. p. 1)

3.5.3 Poverty Eradication Requires a Multi-Sectoral Approach

According to Chirimubwe (2012)

Poverty has many facets to approach and there is no one solution to approach it, hence the need to complement each other...What is required is different solutions of eradicating poverty not specializing on unconstructive attacks of initiatives. (p. 5)...

3.5.4 Poverty Disproportionately affects Human Populations

Chirimubwe further argues that:

While poverty can strike anyone, it is not an equal opportunity offender. Certain demographics and groups are over represented among those living in poverty. Rural dwellers and people with disabilities generally experience higher rates of poverty. (ibid, p. 5).

The inception of two access programmes—Access to Hospitality and Access to Retail Business in 2012 at the Gaborone Technical College, targeting people living

with disability is a step in the right direction towards catering for one of the most disadvantaged groups (Botswana Technical Education Programme Document, September 2012).

3.5.5 Poverty Eradication and the National Agenda

The Office of the President has since six years ago spearheaded the poverty eradication drive by linking it to the country's FIVE DS: (Delivery, Discipline, Democracy, Development and Dignity), MDGs and the national Vision 2016. The state maintains the highest machinery for disciplinary policies, democratic practice and protection of civil rights and constitutional obligations. Delivery is a productivity issue influenced by good work ethics. Both the 5 Ds, MDGs, and Vision 2016 pillars can be released with poverty eradication Discipline is a "system of rules of conduct or method of practice which is geared towards developing behavior "by instruction and practice"(Presidential address, 2000 cited in Lenyatso, F 2012.). In summary, the five Ds were articulated as follows:-

We need disciplined people with positive work ethics to achieve high levels of productivity, effective service delivery leading to high levels of development to produce a dignified and Democratic Society. (Lenyatso 2012, p. 5).

One of the major anti-thesis of poverty eradication is the problem of HIV prevention, treatment and care. Botswana's Human Development Report of 2000 themed "Towards an AIDS free generation" focused on HIV/AIDS as an antithesis of human development which has drained the country of resources for HIV prevention, treatment, care and development. HIV/AIDS worsened poverty and income inequality.

Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of ill health. Thus poverty and HIV and AIDS raise the death toll of able bodied persons, working people who support scores of dependents-children and elderly persons who often do not have alternative sources of income." (p. 17).

Overcoming poverty and inequality would create opportunities to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

3.5.6 Direct Foreign Investment

Through the Banks such as ABC, Mascom, Orange, Debswana in Sports development and donations, Life Insurance Companies, private sector participation is evident. (Witness Magazine 2012, p. 24-26.)

3.5.7 Education and Training

Education and training are perceived as poverty reduction tool. Examples of existing initiatives include the transformation of BOCODOL into an Open University

by 2013. This is taking place already and is expected to be fully institutionalized by 2016. The role of BOTA in licensing and accreditation of tertiary institutions from 2001–2011, and the implementation of the National Human Resource Strategy (NHRS) are efforts towards transformation of education towards poverty eradication. This NHRS is a framework targeted at

Ensuring a better alignment between the nation’s ambition and individual capabilities and potentials and also education and skill development as a poverty alleviation tool for households and an economic stabilizer at the national level. (p. 22, Witness Magazine)

Several successful sensitization and other programmes such as the ones supported by the University of Botswana, UNICEF, Citizen Entrepreneurship Development Authority (CEDA), Mogotsi Morekwe Mills, Peo-Boswa Insurance Brokers Botswana Insurance Holdings LTD and donations from individuals and the private sector are discussed in brief as contributing to the multi-sectoral approach to poverty eradication.

3.5.8 University of Botswana Advocacy

The University of Botswana Model UN held a panel discussion under the theme “Poverty eradication by 2015” on January 14, 2009 to address ways to eradicate poverty. The panelists comprised of experts in the field of socio-economics from various backgrounds including United Nations, the banking sector, entrepreneurs and the youth. Education was perceived by the National Human Resource Development Strategy of 2009 as a key to poverty eradication.

UNICEF Social Policy Advisor, said as part of the opening remarks that there are many factors to poverty than the division of income per household. He said lack of education, health and any opportunity is poverty. He negated the notion that economic growth is constructed by equating high income and high employment. He gave an example with Botswana saying that Botswana has high economic growth but not necessarily high employment rate. Botswana has extended policies, strategies, legal codes and child acts that are trying to address poverty alleviation but they are not well coordinated. “We hear rural-urban poverty being addressed but not so often do we get information about adult-child poverty” said the UN policy advisor.

Commenting on the government’s efforts to eradicate poverty, representatives from the BMD said that Botswana needs a stand-alone micro-economic strategy. They gave an example that Botswana has been fighting a long battle as programs like Food Agricultural Program and ARAP were devised and the government’s desire to improve poverty elevation is still seen in its new Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through various programmes like school feeding and maternal child health programs.

Other speakers challenged the audience to explore possibilities of mitigating the economic class inequalities that exist as ninety percent of wealth remains concentrated on the hands of few at the expense of the poor majority. They said that

in order for Botswana to win the battle against poverty and attract foreign direct investment (FDI) the country needs to examine itself and bring out distinct aspects that differentiate Botswana from other countries and offer them to the world to give us a competitive edge. Another area that needs to be done differently is to ensure that the people sent to negotiate economic ties for Botswana should be men and women with requisite skills.

They emphasized that citizen participation is of critical importance in terms of policy formulation if we are to eradicate poverty by 2015. They expressed their disappointment with NDP10 because it was drafted by a consultancy in Britain instead of citizens, saying such practices militated against government's citizen empowerment programmes and how are they (foreign consultants) going to address the root cause of the problems when they do not know issues on the ground locally? A local economist, whilst acknowledging that there had been much reduction done on high levels of poverty in Botswana since the 1960s, said government priorities were misplaced by spending money in rural areas. He said that injecting money in rural areas was a waste of resources because it had not helped halt the rural-urban drift.

For her part, Model United Nations member said Botswana must step up its citizen empowerment drive and create more jobs. She urged the youth to stand up and be counted in this regard as they have much potential to drive the vision.

The event was graced by members of the media fraternity, government sector, corporate sector as well as UB staff and students. The UB MUN team left to benchmark with Harvard University, Boston, USA, on February 5, 2009. The trip is sponsored by UNICEF, UB office of international education and partnerships, UB office of student welfare and the generosity of individuals who pledged during the sponsor-a-word panel discussion. This was one of the participatory processes in ensuring that poverty eradication is everyone's business.

3.5.9 CEDA and other Poverty Eradication Success Testimonies

Several stories of CEDA beneficiaries indicate success in CEDA as a catalyst to the Economic Diversification Drive (EDD). A franchise of Planet Nails of South Africa funded with P250, 000 in 2009 is a successful beauty products distribution business in Gaborone with pedicure, manicure, facials, and short beauty training courses with branches in Gaborone and Francistown. Planet nails has 10 employees and there are plans to extend the business.

3.5.10 Mogotsi-Morekwe Mills

Since 10 years ago Mogotsi Morekwe Mills has been producing and distributing cereal, mostly seboana, millet (lebelebele, nlatlawane, mosutlhane, Boleta and Moroko brands. The mills employed 42 in

Mochudi with outlets in Gaborone, Square Market in Kanye, Shoppers and Pay-less. During Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) fares for Small and Medium Enterprise Schemes (SMMES), the mills displayed their cereal brands.

3.5.11 Peo Boswa Insurance Brokers

Sponsored by LEA, Peo-Boswa is one of the SMMES under the CEDA funded businesses to sell its products to the public. Peo-Boswa was founded in 2002 and granted an operating license in 2003.

3.5.12 Makaleng Brick Moulding Project

The VDC in Makaleng set up a brick moulding project September 2010 and by 7th Feb. 2013, it was reported by the project team to have been successful in poverty eradication. The project was funded with P20, 000 and had employed 7 brick moulders. Although the Makaleng community had supported the project by buying the product, major challenges are the need for more seed funding and transportation for bricks.

3.5.13 Botswana Insurance Holdings Limited

Cognizant of Vision 2016 of a just and compassionate nation, BIHL launched the BIHL Trust in 2007 to promote worthy causes such as community projects that alleviate poverty and suffering to deserving beneficiaries in Education, Arts and Culture, Sports and Recreation Social and welfare developments, health and social security. During the launch of the Trust, the CEO had this to say:

We do business where there are people in the community and the objective of the Trust is to give back to the community in which we exist (p. 16).

The Trust has assisted Thapong Visual Arts Centre, Gamodubu Child Care Trust, Housing projects in Partnership with local government, Thuso Rehabilitation Centre with New Xade, and Maru a Pula Orphan and Vulnerable Children Fund.

Love Botswana Mission Economic Empowerment Project 2013

Launched seven years ago, the project initially targeted women and later included men. The project features a vegetable garden project, a goat project, and a knitting and felting project with 10 women creating artwork. It is the intension of the project to include sophisticated methods of farming as it grows.

Products sold from the project include vegetables, goat meat as needed during funerals, trendy shawls, flower pins, scarves beannes, and cell phone holders. The group, named maatla a Basadi (The Strength in Womanhood) aims to combat unemployment and dependency syndrome by projects that eradicate poverty. The project has expanded but the greatest challenge is that the group only accesses local markets (The Voice, Friday February 1st, 2013, p. 10).

Donations from individuals, charitable organizations and the private sector

Individuals and charitable organizations passionate about support and contributions to poverty eradication and alleviating the plight of disadvantaged societal groups have continued to offer donations for orphans and vulnerable children, housing appeal for destitute and Christmas presents and food hampers for the needy in various hospitals across the country. (p. 17/24). Stanbic Bank donated to Camphill Rankoromane in (2012 (p. 17)). Debswana also donated to various sports development initiatives in July (2012). P500, 000 sponsorship from Debswana was given to the Botswana National Olympic Committee (BNOC) to assist athletes in preparations for the London games. (p. 26).

Other village poverty eradication projects that have been recorded as successful are found in Letlhakeng and Tutume. Letlhakeng community embraced the poverty eradication projects subsidized by the Government of Botswana. (Botswana Daily News Feb. 11th, 2013, p. 10).

In Tutume, a person living with disability was awarded a house after struggling for many years without housing. People completely destitute are assisted with food baskets and others by the Social and Community Development offices across the country.

3.5.14 Dedicated Markets as Outlets

Dedicated markets as outlets in Districts and purchasing programs to support Poverty Eradication Programme beneficiaries help reduce poverty. Examples include supply chains of stores for beneficiaries, and backyard gardening markets.

3.5.15 Community Development Projects

Community Development Projects such as tree planting, CEDA Economic Diversification Drive (EDD), LEA, SMMES, Mills for cereal products, insurance brokers and the Office of the President Poverty Eradication projects were launched since 2011. Launching poverty Eradication at Diphuduhudu, Botswana's president had this to say:

It is through eradication of poverty that dignity and equality of all will be achieved. Owing to these fundamental objectives, Government is fully committed to this noble and just national imperative...over a thousand beneficiaries had been identified from 67 settlements for enrolment in the poverty eradication programme (ibid, p. 8).

This statement of intent demonstrates that poverty eradication is one of the topmost political agenda items supported by the Government of Botswana.

The policies and programmes articulated above were conceived with good intentions of giving Botswana an opportunity to make a transition from poverty to non-poverty. Some few very innovative individuals and groups are able to successfully

earn a source of livelihood out of the programmes. Success depends on how well projects are managed by beneficiaries of Government of Botswana packages and innovations. Horticultural programmes are popular even though harsh climatic conditions work against their success. It can be argued that there are still some gaps that need to be addressed to avoid a dependency syndrome on the Government of Botswana. One strategy is to ensure that handouts are minimized because even though they prevent destitution and death from lack of basic provisions, they create a dependency syndrome on the government. Able bodied people who are beneficiaries must also be given some work to do in return for handouts. It would also be crucial to do a summative evaluation of success and failure rate of programmes every five years to make firm and informed decisions on way forward. A mixed methodology of quantitative, qualitative and participatory methodologies would be the most appropriate for evaluating the programmes every five years before Botswana finish their approved plans and especially that they go to the polls to vote every five years. This evaluation as suggested is not meant to be used to oust the day government but to give any incoming team an indication of which direction should be taken to map the way forward for success and what needs to be done to curb failing programmes.

3.6 Conclusions

It can be concluded that Botswana has a very comprehensive poverty eradication infrastructure with policies, and well resourced strategies supported through a solid political will. There are a variety of state-based programmes and non-state actors aligned to the national agenda of vision 2016, NDP 10 and other relevant documents. A multi-sectoral approach to poverty has been adopted to make a transition from poverty alleviation to poverty eradication, which is the ultimate goal. There is no perfect programme as poverty has not been eradicated. However, there are statements of intent and poverty eradication programmes that bear fruits, while others have dismally failed and had to be scrapped off. Through lifelong learning from the poverty eradication programmes, some programmes were modified, while new ones were introduced to replace obsolete ones. Mid-term and summative evaluation of all the programmes and 23 packages are very crucial to check if the programmes are operating as intended, and if they make impacts worth the cost.

3.7 Recommendations

Based on the above aspects of the National Poverty Eradication Strategy, it is recommended that:

The current phase of the National Poverty Eradication strategy needs to be carefully monitored and evaluated to detect impact of the 23 packages on Botswana stakeholders.

Comprehensive database of documentation of all empirically-based success stories must be established to gauge success.

There must be comprehensive documentation of all failed projects to alert stakeholders on pitfalls to avoid, and when to modify or terminate troubled businesses.

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