Management Issues in the Botswana Adult Basic Education Program:
A Case Study

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter is a case study analysis of the management of the Adult Basic Education Program in Botswana. The chapter focuses on management issues in the ABEP program using two districts as a case study. The case study examined management issues faced by those implementing the program. The findings reveal that while the program has undergone several comprehensive structural changes, the reality on the ground has remained the same and worsened in some areas. The program faces a problem of lack of resources such as office accommodation, office furniture, and transport to effectively run the activities of the program. The lack of transport leads to poor supervision, late payment of facilitators and at times to cancellation of planned program activities. Responses were consistent in the two districts to suggest there are some wide ranging issues that probably affect all parts of the program.

THE CASE BACKGROUND

There is a general desire by countries of the world to accord education to all its citizens. These have given rise to a number of declarations such as the millennium development goals and Education for All. As a result developing countries of southern Africa are making concerted efforts to achieve Education for All and to meet intensifying requirements for skilful labour across all areas of the economy and at all levels of development from the village upward, have synchronously elevated the demand for improved adult education programming (Modise,2005). There have been few prospects for tertiary training in adult education or in the skills required for good management of such programs.

The specific purposes of adult education in present development approach have been underscored by Easton, Sidikou & Crouch (2003) thus

[Adult and non-formal education] programs typically target the acquisition of particular skills, knowledge and attitudes by participants and are generally designed both to enhance their individual lives and to improve the situations of their families, their enterprises, associations or communities in some specific fashion. The most important common denominator of these programs [from a development perspective] is that they contribute in critical ways to local capacity-building – that is, to helping priority target groups and widening strata of the population to play enhanced roles in decision-making, in management of economic and social service activities and in the implementation of development programs. (p. 1 cited in Modise, 2005, p.16).

Adult education is ordinarily regarded as having the social function of providing adults with the skills required for vibrant and effective involvement in matters that affect them. ... at an individual level, the need for industrious living and personal fulfilment -- the need to enhance one's own competencies and to develop leadership skills..(Beder, 1989; Modise, 2005.p.17).

The situation in Botswana can be better understood by discussing the education background at independence. One of the major limitations that affected Botswana's development initiatives in its years as a colony and early years of independence was the lack of an educated and skilful population. There were very few schools at the time of independence. These schools were mostly made through local communal efforts and by external missionaries. The education structure preceding independence only accommodated a small number of people and was largely fashioned around the British structure. Entrance was reserved for the children of the prominent (the chiefs and their associates) and this education did not go beyond the primary level until soon before independence. As a result, Botswana faced an acute shortage of skilled human resource at independence.

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