

Excellence Awards are of significance importance



His Excellency The President Seretse Khama Ian Khama officiating at the 5th Annual Excellence Awards

By Charles Keikotlhae

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Botswana, Lt. General Seretse Khama Ian Khama highlighted the significant importance of the 2014, 5th Annual Excellence Awards as they came in the background of the unacceptable performance in general education performance. However, President Khama told the guests at the 5th Annual Excellence

Awards held at Boipuso Hall, Fairgrounds Holdings, on Friday, 11th July 2014, that the decline is not only experienced in Botswana: "It is a global phenomenon experienced by different countries due to a variety of factors". "No one can celebrate when our young people fail to reach desired achievement levels. However, we take solace in the fact that the results made us pause and introspect. For

the Botswana Examinations Council (BEC), questions were raised on the grading system and the extent to which teachers were familiar with it. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education, there were questions on the curriculum and related elements", pointed out President Khama, adding that there were also serious questions about the physical environment

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Charles Keikotlhae
Senior Corporate
Communications Officer

Welcome to Volume 1 issue number 6 of our newsletter, "Maduo". A lot of changes have taken place since the last issue of "Maduo".

The appointment of Professor Brain Mokopakgosi as the Executive Secretary is indeed a welcomed move. Without a substantive head to drive the strategic direction of the Council, BEC would drift into uncertainties and lose sight of its mission and vision.

In order to offer quality products and services, BEC continues to improve in a number of ways. One such area of improvement is preparations for ISO9001:2008 certifications. The process will help BEC to have in place processes, procedures, and standards that will ensure business continuity and quality service.

Another area that BEC continues to improve on is research. The Council in collaboration with the parent Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) recently held information disseminated workshop on Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading and Literacy Studies (PIRLS) and Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), the most important milestones in the research cycles of studies.

The information dissemination workshop

was later followed by a Public Lecture themed, "The New Goals of Education: Implications for Assessment" that was presented by Professor Jaap Kuiper (PHD), a Senior Education Advisor & Consultant within MoESD. Professor Kuiper revealed some research findings on the decline of performance during national examinations. Further, two officers from BEC directorate of Research and Policy Development were sent to attend Item Response Theory training under the auspices of the International Association of Educational Assessment in order to empower them in research skills.

As a critical step, BEC continues to forge partnerships and collaborations by participating in events like the annual Tertiary Education Conference and Fair, Vision 2016 Awareness month launch, schools Price Giving Ceremonies and Celebrations and hosting of the annual Excellence Awards. The latter have grown and remain a highlight in BEC calendar of events; a pinnacle of the Council's Community Social Responsibility efforts. Meanwhile, BEC Transformation Project is gaining momentum with the introduction of "Change Fridays" that are intended to motivate staff.

Enjoy and let us have feedback from you.

Mission

Provision of a credible and responsive assessment and examination system.

Mission Commentary

Credible: Trustworthy and Error free assessments and examinations that conforms to both the local and international standards.

Responsive: Examination and Assessment system that is affiliated to the national curriculum, takes into cognisance candidates with special needs and is not detached from current issues in the environment, also relevant to the local market.

Vision

To be a provider of accessible and globally competitive qualifications.

Core Values

- Excellence
- Integrity
- Transparency
- People Focus

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including the condition of classrooms and laboratories in the schools and their conduciveness to learning.

He stated that the findings of the cabinet confirmed the above stated factors which resulted in him instituting working committees at different levels to work with the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) to resolve issues at hand, find durable solutions so as to improve performance.

Coming back to the Awards, His Excellency said that while very few receive the awards, others out there aspire to receive them the next time, "This is the positive side of excellence awards". He pointed out that the expectation is that those who are still in the primary and secondary schools system would be motivated to work harder and perform better so that they could be recognized during the next award ceremony.

For his part, the acting MoESD Minister Hon. Mokgweetsi Masisi implored the Awardees individually or collectively, to assist with 'tips' of improving performance in schools: "I am certain that you, the recipients of the 2014 Excellence Awards, will help us unlock the pulse of the Learner in Botswana". He said that their assistance can help the Ministry to better cater for the learners' needs and ensure that they too excel in their varying interests and multiple intelligences, "We need everyone's contribution to take Botswana to the next level of development".

When giving the overview of the Awards, BEC Executive Secretary Professor Brian Mokopakgosi explained that the BEC Excellence Awards go back to May 2010 and have since become the most important event in the Council's annual calendar.

"We take the awards very seriously because they fit perfectly in the overall

mandate of the BEC", Professor Mokopakgosi said, adding that through the monitoring of the quality of learning and education, BEC contributes to the national human resource development strategy.

Professor Mokopakgosi told the Awards recipients that their achievement should inspire those learners who were not present: "With your continued exceptional performance there is hope that Botswana may become a true knowledge based society".

When giving vote of thanks at the ceremony, BEC Vice Chairperson Dr. Nunu Tshoko extended heartfelt

thanks to the Awards sponsors and highlighting that without their partnership and support be it in kind or monetary form, the event would have failed to materialise as government coffers are no longer able to support such an initiative alone.

A total of 71 outstanding performers at primary, junior and senior secondary levels received the awards and have been selected from a total of 116,801 candidates who took the 2013 PSLE, JC and BGCSE national examinations. The Excellence Awards are a collaboration between BEC and MoESD since 2011.



Kago Goveya receiving his Golden Star Award from His Excellency, The President Seretse Khama Ian Khama.



Ministerial Award recipient Karabo Sankoloba receiving a cheque from Acting MoESD Hon. Mokgweetsi Masisi.



Onalethata Diane receiving a cheque from BEC Chairman Dr. Joseph Tsonope.

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Quality Education critical in the national economy and today's competitive environment

By Jacqueline Monei



Director PDS - Mrs Susan Makgothi

The Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) Director of Product Development and Standards Mrs. Susan Makgothi says that quality education is critical in the development of Botswana's economy and today's competitive environment.

Officially opening the annual Botswana Tertiary Education Fair Conference held in Gaborone at Boipuso Hall, Mrs. Makgothi pointed out that education and training prepares individual learners, workers, the citizens and the country to prosper in today's skills and knowledge-driven, global and competitive society. She said that the current education system and the current policy provisions, the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment systems seem not to be delivering these aspirations, adding that there is definitely a need to adopt change in the educational inputs and processes in order to ensure a competitive education system.

The BEC Director of Product Development and Standards emphasized that the Assessment of learning progress,

certification or selection and public examinations remain an important element of most education systems worldwide, and that Botswana is no exception. "Assessment generates informative feedback for the various stakeholders regarding the state of education. It is an integral part of the learning and instructional process as well as a part of a system wide improvement process", she stated. Mrs. Makgothi said that assessment provide information about the status of the education system, aides in instructional decisions about individual students and also brings greater curricular coherence to the system. "Assessment motivate students to perform better and parents to demand higher performance, it also acts as a lever to change instructional content and strategies holding schools and educators accountable for student performance and most importantly certifying individual students as having attained specified levels of achievement or mastery", Mrs Makgothi explained. Meanwhile, she informed the conference that BEC is going through change with its

transformation Bill to be presented to the July 2014 meeting of Parliament, adding that government adopted the 2009 National Human Resources Development Strategy (NHRDS) which called for a strengthened system level strategic capacity that is coherent and cohesive to be put in place with the capability to provide the human resources that Botswana's future requires.

The Strategy recommended that optimal structures be put in place in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and aligned in terms of strategic focus with the ability to collectively deliver NHRDS. As a result, she informed the conference, Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) formerly the Tertiary Education Council was established to assume the system level responsibility for planning and funding while the Botswana Qualification Authority, formerly Botswana Training Authority was established to deal with the national qualifications system and the development of a common quality assurance platform while BEC will be assuming a broader role to become a national assessment authority.

She pointed out that BEC transformation to be a national assessment authority should be seen as part of a package to improve quality of education whereby teaching and learning is key priority area requiring gathering evidence about how much students are learning with strong assessment systems that provide informative data. Mrs. Makgothi stated that monitoring and certifying learning levels need to be put in place as it will Review and introduce new qualifications that meet the demands of the labour market.

In her concluding remarks, the BEC Director of Product Development and Standards said that the importance of assessment is to improve the employability of young people with qualifications relevant to the labour market, adding that qualifications should therefore be based on occupation standards, educational standards and assessment standards.

Botswana Examinations Council Transforming

By Charles Keikotlhae and Fingile Makgalemele

The National Human Resources Development Strategy (2009) called for a strengthened system level strategic capacity that is coherent and cohesive to be put in place with the capability to provide the human resources that Botswana's future requires. The Strategy recommended that optimal structures be put in place in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and aligned in terms of strategic focus with the ability to collectively deliver the National Human Resources Strategy.

As a result, the former Tertiary Education Council (TEC) was in 2013 transformed into Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) to assume the system level responsibility for planning and funding while the former Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) was also in 2013 transformed into Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) to deal with the national qualifications system and the development of a common quality assurance platform with Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) assuming a broader role for moderation and assessment all under the theme of High Performing Organisations (HPOs).

Currently BEC Act is being reviewed to align the organisation to the system level transformation taking place within the education sector. The Draft Reviewed Act has been sent to Cabinet, where it was agreed that it should be tabled during the July 2014 Meeting of Parliament, however, since the reviewed BEC Act could not be discussed during the July 2014 Parliament Meeting, the hope is that it will be tabled before the November 2014 meeting after which the BEC Transformation Project will gain momentum.

With BEC assuming a broader role for moderation and assessment by thus becoming a national assessment Centre, the moderation and assessment functions that were with pre-tertiary institutions will be transferred to BEC. BEC Transformation project was introduced to employees in the beginning of 2013 and later on, a project team was formed to spear head the project.

The project started officially with the holding of two workshops on the 9th of April and the 25th of June 2013 during which the project charter was developed and later on in 2014 Innolead Consultancy was engaged resulting in the project initiation workshop. Currently, the Consultancy is conducting the situational assessment.

BEC BOPEU Members install standpipes

By Charles Keikotlhae and Jacqueline Monei

Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) employees who are members of Botswana Public Employees Union (BOPEU) officially handed six standpipes through BEC Director of Research and Policy Development Dr. Moreetsi Thobega in Khonkhwa village, Mabutsane Sub-District.

The six families that received the standpipes wore broad smiles throughout the Day's program with their faces radiating with joy and gratitude to the BEC BOPEU team that half-filled the guests' tent. While acknowledging the act of installing standpipes as a charitable gesture from BEC employees, Dr. Thobega stated that to someone BEC might have gone amiss in their Community Social Responsibility but that in the actual fact most families have school going children and as such those children could benefit from such standpipes and do well in their studies. Dr. Thobega, who was officiating at the event on behalf of the BEC Executive Secretary Professor Brian Mokopakgosi appealed to the beneficiaries to look well after the standpipes.

When giving project background, BOPEU Secretary General Mr. Tobias Marenga highlighted the important role that workers play in the economy of the country and called upon the public to be supportive. The new BOPEU BEC branch chairperson Mr. Beltos Ralebante stated that they started the project by initially contributing money from their pockets and fund raising through selling merchandise. He highlighted that the total amount they raised was P18 000.00 and that they aimed to connect 10 families but unfortunately four of the identified families did not have certificates for their plots. Nevertheless, on the latter, the Mabutsane sub-district Council Vice Chairperson Honourable Councilor Mokalare promised to collaborate with the Council Secretary's office to ensure that the four would be beneficiaries who missed out of the standpipes receive certificates for the plots they are staying in so that they also benefit from the benevolence of BEC employees.

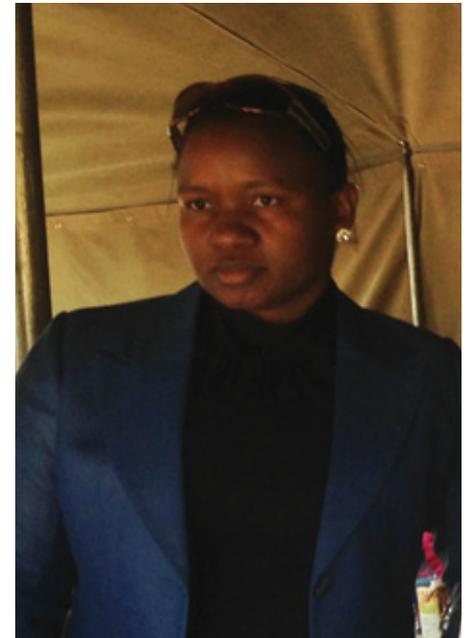
Beneficiaries were from five villages in the Mabutsane sub-district such as Khonkhwa, Sekoma, Mahotshwane, Keng and Morwamosu. Traditional leaders as well as Village Development Committee members from those villages came to celebrate with their compatriots.

Lorwana Primary School celebrates class of 2013 and Gareitsane

By Charles Keikotlhae and Jacqueline Monei



Lorwana Primary School 2013 top achievers



Standard Seven teacher Mrs. Gareitsane

For a school, especially in a rural setting area of Digawana, to move from 29 percent to 90 percent pass rate is not a small achievement by all standards. But, this is what Lorwana Primary School in Good Hope Sub district has done, attaining 90 percent pass rate in the 2013 Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) from 29 percent pass rate in 2012 and thus becoming the toast of the whole Southern region. It was then fitting for the school, in joint effort with the regional education office, to organize the class of 2013 standard seven student's victory party to celebrate the achievement to which Botswana Examinations Council contributed a printer and some promotional items.

Welcoming Guests at the ceremony, the school head Mr. Otladisa Mogwasa who was fidgeting with excitement and beaming with a broad smile was quick to point out that for the past 10 years before to the class of 2013, the school has been

under performing in PSLE. He was also quick to pay glowing tribute to the school's class of 2013 standard seven teacher Mrs. Mojwadi Gareitsane whom he described as a dedicated and committed teacher. Mr. Mogwasa stated that Mrs. Gareitsane is credited with Lorwana Primary School's 61.5 percent results improvement, adding that should it not have been her sickness during the latter part of 2013 the school would have attained 100 percent pass rate which was the target that Mrs. Gareitsane aimed for. He expressed fear that the school might lose Mrs. Gareitsane to other schools as everyone is talking about her.

One of the class of 2013 students, Losika Raphuti, was thankful for his former class teacher's dedication, "It was amazing and really surprising to get such results", he enthused when called upon to speak on behalf of the standard seven 2013 class. The Botswana Building Society (BBS)

branch manager Ms. Rachel Tlouetsile who was the Guest Speaker at the ceremony implored parents to be involved in the education of their children, pointing out that students face many challenges such as teenage pregnancies. She however acknowledged that parents also face challenges especially mothers who are sometimes left alone to fend for their children after fathers deserted their responsibilities. Ms. Tlouetsile gave the school a cheque of P5 000.00 from BBS.

Speaking on behalf of the regional education director, Mrs. Nametso Oitsile stated that education needs all stakeholders and committed teachers like Mrs. Gareitsane, adding that children need their parents support to do well at school.

The sponsors of the ceremony included BEC, BBS, Macmillan, Collegium Publishers and individuals.

HRDC Recognises Botswana Examinations Council

By Lesego Ntuluki



BEC Corporate Communications Manager Fingile Makgalemele (Second from left) receiving the Sponsors and Development partner award on behalf of BEC from Mr Tungie Moseki (DTEF) and Mrs Mpho Moremong-Gobe (HRDC Board Member) and HRDC CEO Dr. Patrick Molutsi

Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) has awarded Botswana Examinations Council (BEC), for its continuous support as a developing partner in the Botswana Tertiary Education Fair (BTEF) which was on its fifth edition this year.

BEC by virtue of being a sister organization to HRDC has for the past five years supported this initiative both as a sponsor and active participant in the activities of the fair. The Corporate Communications Manager for BEC Fingile Makgalemele who received the accolade on behalf of the council, said the partnership with HRDC and Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) is not only important for maintaining good relations as sister organizations but also for the prosperity of educating the nation. "To a very large extent our mandate intertwines and we have a common goal of producing competent graduates through education," she emphasized. She

added that though they have received the same award in the past, they did not expect to be also called to the podium during the night of the awards but they are very humbled by the gesture.

Developing partners were awarded a trophy and a certificate. Other recipients were the event's main sponsors and partners which included amongst others; Ba Isago University, Yarona FM, Design Surgery, and Botswana Accountancy College. Tertiary institutions also walked away with prizes for coming tops in different categories including, Best Local University, Best Stall, Best Government Institution etc.

This year the fair that is aimed at helping tertiary bound students with career guidance and choosing the best school for their dream careers was hosted under the theme "Gateway to Realizing Your Potential and Shaping Your Future."

RPD officers attends IRT training in Nigeria

By Charles Keikotlhae

Botswana Examinations Council (BEC Senior Research Officers), Mr Tshepiso Masukusuku and Mrs Kagiso Maule-Sethora of the Research and Policy Development Directorate attended the Item Response Theory (IRT) training in Nigeria.

The hosting and coordination of IRT training by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) of Nigeria has become an annual tradition. The training, which is conducted under the auspices of the International Association of Educational Assessment (IAEA), covered amongst others topics such as; Introduction to IRT, Assumptions, Models and Parameters of IRT, Application of IRT in Dichotomous Items and the Application of IRT in Polytomous Items.

Participants from various examination bodies in Africa normally attend the training and in 2014 only participants from Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and the host country, Nigeria attended. Mrs Maule-Sethora stated that they found this year's training exciting and insightful especially as they were introduced to Computer Based Testing (CBT), and even took part in the administration of the same. She revealed that the practical entailed site visits where tests were administered using both the Computer Based Test and paper and pencil approach with the demonstration of the biometrics and analysis of test items using IRT the most important exercise.



During an excursion, Kagiso Maule-Sethora, Tshepiso Masukusuku and Irene Ojiuobe (from Nigeria)

BEC takes part in actualisation of Vision 2016

By Jacqueline Monei



Finance Minister Mr. Kenneth Matambo

Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) took part in actualisation of Vision 2016 held in Tsootsha in the Ghanzi District where this year's Vision 2016 awareness month was launched.

Vision 2016 is a national annual project aligned to the National Development Plans (NDPs) to improve the lives of the citizens of the country. It is now in its eighth year celebrated in various parts of Botswana and this year's theme was "Living the Vision *Yame le Wena*" in which BEC took part as one of the drivers of "an educated and informed nation," pillar. The main aim of this pillar is to ensure that Botswana has a rising and high literacy rate aided by an increase in education.

Officially launching the Vision 2016 commemoration month

in Tsootsha, Minister Kenneth Matambo implored all stakeholders to embrace the vision saying it was crucial in guiding developments. Mr Matambo also said the vision should unite Batswana as people with common beliefs and goals. He therefore implored them to work together in the spirit of attaining the goals of the national vision.

Botswana has done a lot in the achievement of development targets as a result of the national vision. "Some of the notable achievements such are an increase of primary and secondary school enrolment from 108 373 to 318 629 in 1996 and 175 038 to 340 326 in 2013 respectively," Minister Matambo highlighted. With only two years to 2016, Mr Matambo implored all Batswana to re-double their efforts to live the vision.

He said if the objectives of the vision were achieved, all should be proud of attaining those goals and also said if some of the goals were not achieved; no fingers should be pointed but rather learn from the experience and move on towards the fulfilment of the next long term vision.

As part of Vision 2016 activities a week prior the Vision 2016 awareness month launch BEC and the Ministry of Transport and Communications took time to visit the villages around Tshootsha to educate people about their mandate and services. The two departments managed to hold Kgotla meetings at Charles Hill, Karakubis, Chobokwane, New Xanagas and Makunda. The people of these villages appreciated BEC's effort to educate them about their services as they are far from the city and they miss opportunities of many things.

Mr Mathambo toured the stalls and commended BEC for taking part in the actualisation of the Vision 2016 and Senior Corporate Communication Officer Mr Charles Keikotlhae explained to him that we visited the villages around Tshootsa to educate them about our mandate and services. The BEC Corporate Communications officers educated the public at the launch about internal and external examinations, private candidates, examination malpractice, replacements of lost and damaged certificates, special needs students, Annual Excellence Awards which aims at improving performance during national examinations and BEC transformation.

BEC gears up for iso 9001:2008 certification

By Lesego Ntuluki



Compliance and Quality Assurance Manager Mothusi Ntau

They say 'if you can dream it you can live it', this seems to be a motto the Botswana Examinations Council is keeping in mind as the Council works towards getting certified for ISO 9001:2008 implementation. The ISO 9001:2008 is an International Standard that specifies requirements for a quality management system (QMS).

Relatively new to BEC Mr. Mothusi Ntau, the Compliance and Quality Assurance (CQA) Manager seems to have hit the ground flying, as he is already on full swing towards the attainment of the ISO certification. In an interview with *Maduo* he attributes his morale boost to management's commitment to the success of the project. "Everyone should be involved in seeing

that this project is a success and management is very committed to making sure everyone is on board," he commended. Ntau admitted that there has been a gap in the implementation of the project and this calls for review of all the documents that are key in the process.

The road to QMS certification will see the implementation of the ISO 9001:2008 standard, processes and procedures put under scrutiny by the BEC Internal QMS Audit to determine whether the system conforms to the planned arrangements and that it is effectively implemented and maintained. It is then that a third-party audit will be conducted throughout BEC by a Certification Body that will be engaged as an independent

organisation to verify compliance to ISO 9001:2008 standard.

The project that is expected to be completed by end of December in 2015 and fully operational in February 2016 upon its certification, is spear-headed by CQA assisted by the ISO Implementation Team (IIT) that is made up of officers from other Directorates. Some of the IIT members have undergone training to prepare them for this diligent task, though there is still need for more training as highlighted by Ntau. "Training is a priority and members of the IIT and other staff members should be adequately trained so that they are able to drive this project," Ntau emphasized.

Some of the challenges that the project is facing include the congested calendar of events within the exam cycle as at times some IIT members are unavailable as they are engaged with other responsibilities. Simultaneous running of the project and training of the project team is also another challenge that is bound to delay the project. This however does not worry the project captain Ntau who is confident that they are on the right path despite the fact that a lot still needs to be done.

ISO 9001:2008 certification will help uplift the image of BEC and boost clientele and stakeholder confidence. "ISO 9001 should be seen as a business model that helps identify customer needs fulfill them and show our commitment to continual improvement," Ntau concluded.

School Coordinators Trained on the conduct of TIMSS 2015

By Karabo Morule



National Research Coordinator, Dr. M. Masole



Some of the School Coordinators who attended the training

The Directorate of Research and Policy Development (RPD) recently conducted training for school coordinators for the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) which is an international assessment of the Mathematics and Science achievement of eighth grade students (Form 2 students in Botswana). It is the largest international comparative study of educational achievement involving about 60 countries.

The activities of the country are coordinated by the National Research Coordinator (NRC). The objective of TIMSS is to provide a comparative international assessment of educational achievement in Mathematics and Science and to establish factors that contribute to it. Thus, it studies student outcomes, instructional practices, curricula, and cultural context.

Botswana is among the countries participating in this important study. Only a sample of schools has been selected to participate, and not all students in the selected schools will participate. Two classes from each chosen school will be selected to participate.

As an international comparative study, standardised materials and procedures

for various activities have been developed so that the data collected in each country will be comparable to the greatest possible extent. One of those activities is coordination of the study at school level. Following this provision, the Directorate of Research and Policy Development conducted training for School Coordinators at BEC.

Every school that has been selected to participate in this study has appointed a Coordinator to help facilitate the study. The School Coordinator's role is to assist BEC in preparation for administration of the instruments at their respective schools. In his welcome speech, the Director of Research Policy and Development, Dr Moreetsi Thobega thanked the participants for accepting the added responsibility of being School Coordinators. In emphasising the need for School Coordinators to have a sense of ownership to the study especially that BEC relies on them to coordinate the preparations at school level, he said "Your being here today, means that you form part of the research team and therefore you need to carry out your tasks as coordinators diligently. Let us be on the same level".

For his part, the NRC, Dr Trust Mbako Masole, gave a detailed and informative overview of TIMSS. He indicated that

the TIMSS 2015 cycle is the fourth that Botswana is participating in. He also deliberated much on the issue of ethics and advised School Coordinators not to force people into participation. The training which was conducted by Dr Kgosi Motshabi, Mrs Chawangwa Mudongo, Mr Boipuso Mosalagotla and Mr Mmoloki Gabalebatse emphasised the following aspects:

1. The role of the school coordinator
2. Identifying classes, teachers and students to participate in the study
3. Preparations that should be made for the test administration,
4. Administration of questionnaires to teachers and school heads.

The chairperson, Mrs Kagiso Sethora, gave the closing remarks. She urged the School Coordinators to adhere to the Coordinators Manual as trained during the 2 days training workshop. She underscored the sensitive nature of research ethics which should not be confused with "Botho". She said that the issues of research ethics are sensitive and should be adhered to without fail even though for some people *Botho* may take precedence. She cautioned coordinators against completing questionnaires for participants out of *Botho* as such would be considered violation of research ethics.

Professor Kuiper calls for focused learning

By Charles Keikotlhae



Professor Kuiper addressing participants



Participants at the public lecture



Dr.Tsonope giving vote of thanks

Teachers in Botswana have been called upon to focus their efforts in helping students learn rather than on delivering the curriculum through teaching. Speaking during a public lecture hosted by Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) on Thursday, 18th September 2014 at The Paddock Conference and Restaurant in Gaborone, Professor Jaap Kuiper (PHD), a Senior Education Advisor & Consultant within the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), argued that assessment within the school set up should not be a “little examination” but should assess whether students have understood the delivered curriculum content.

“Assessment in Botswana is traditional”, Professor Kuiper said, adding that teaching is done only to cover the syllabus with students memorizing content in order to pass the examinations.

“Teachers reckon their role is to prepare for the national examinations or finish teaching the curriculum and do little to check whether learning has occurred”, professor Kuiper pointed out.

He said that he once asked students in one of the schools he and others went to assess whether the teacher ever asked them about what they would want to learn in any particular day and the students laughed him off because that could not happen; “They only come to teach and give assignments”. As part of the solutions to the current

education problems professor Kuiper urged BEC to try to assess skills as teachers will also focus on that.

The MoESD Education Advisor and Consultant said that there is lack of education expertise, management expertise and balanced curriculum, content and skills in Botswana education, adding that whenever something new comes up it is added to the curriculum without having checked whether it is good for learning, and that, teachers do not know anything about assessing skills. He posited that more and more subjects are being added to the curriculum in the midst of declining professionalism amongst teachers who also lack school based assessment skills.

Professor Kuiper highlighted that there are recurring themes as far as education in Botswana is concerned and that these are; simplistic solutions, one size fit all allocation of funds and lack of follow through on innovation thinking.

He stated that Botswana education should strive for higher standards, more sophisticated solutions, allow for diversification and room for improvement and that teaching should now focus more on facilitating learning than teaching.

Nevertheless, Professor Kuipers praised Botswana Education as it is comparatively doing well in the SADC region.



Executive Secretary Professor Mokopakgosi giving welcome remarks

Giving vote of thanks at the Public Lecture event, BEC Chairperson Dr. Joseph Tsonope challenged Botswana to ask themselves what they want to do for the country, and as for BEC contribution, adding that, “we shall continue to interrogate issues that affect our education”.

The Public Lecture theme was: “The New Goals of Education: Implications for Assessment” and attracted the media fraternity as well as scholars of high caliber including those from the University of Botswana and sister Organisations such as Botswana Qualifications Authority.

Mokopakgosi appointed Executive Secretary

By Otsile R. Tapson

Botswana Examination Council (BEC) has appointed Professor Brian T.O. Mokopakgosi to the position of Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary is the Chief Executive Officer of the Council and reports directly to the Council. Prior to his appointment to the current position, the Council appointed Mokopakgosi as a Caretaker Executive Secretary in October 2013, a role that entailed the assumption of the full mandate and authority of a substantive Executive Secretary. These included driving the strategic mandate of the Council, as well as its day-to-day operations.

As the Executive Secretary, Professor Mokopakgosi will provide strategic leadership in the execution of the mandate of the Council including implementation of its strategic plans and the cost effective management of its operations. He will oversee the development and management of credible processes and programmes of examinations, research and testing, delivery of examination services to measure the achievement of learners in accordance with the highest standards of integrity and best practice. Of great importance within his role is to promote the Council as the leading provider of quality examination and testing programmes to serve Botswana's education system and facilitate the achievement of internationally competitive standards of education in line with the goals of Vision 2016's pillar of an Educated and Informed Nation.

Professor Mokopakgosi joins BEC from the University of Botswana where he worked for more than 28 years as an academic and administrator. He

has previously served the University of Botswana as a Dean of Faculty from 1993 to 1997, and Deputy Vice Chancellor; Academic Affairs from 1999 to 2005. From 2007 – 2011 he served as a Director for Health and Development Innovation Consortium.

As Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs he provided overall supervision and strategic direction for curriculum development, innovation and implementation, and research across all faculties of the University, Graduate school and Research Centres, the Colleges of Education and Institutes of Health Sciences. As Dean of Faculty Mokopakgosi served on and chaired several internal committees such as The Board of Humanities, Faculty Appointments and promotions, Academic Planning and Policy Review Committee. He also served as a member of Senate, Finance and Audit Committee, Human Resource Committee and the University Council.

Professor Mokopakgosi holds a Master's Degree in Modern European History and PhD in African History from the Johns Hopkins University and the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies respectively. He possesses extensive teaching experience at University level and has researched and published books and journal articles in reputable international outlets. He has taught and supervised research at both undergraduate and graduate levels and has presented papers around the world.

Mokopakgosi has also served on boards of several national and international Organisations including the Botswana Vision Council, the Open



Society Foundation; the Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation (BITRI). He served on the Advisory Board of the Botswana – Harvard Partnership for HIS/AIDS Research and Education. He has been a member of editorial advisory boards of a number of international journals.

Galekgutle appointed BEC Director Corporate Services

By Otsile R. Tapson



Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Letlhokwa Galekhutle to its Executive Management Team as Director Corporate Services effective 7th July, 2014. The Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for, among others, Finance, Facilities and Office Services. His additional

responsibilities include serving as the Council Board Secretary as well as the Principal Officer for BEC Employees Pension Fund.

Mr. Galekhutle is a graduate in Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Botswana and a Chartered Accountant with Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). He has extensive experience in Corporate Governance issues, having served as Secretary of some Board substructures such as Tender Committee, Audit Committee, Information and Technology at National Development Bank.

Before joining BEC, Mr. Galekhutle was the Deputy CEO (Support Services) for Botswana Housing Corporation (BHC) from 2008 to 2012. At BHC he was responsible for Finance, Legal Services, Human Resources and IT Division. Prior to joining BHC, Galekhutle held a position of Enterprise Support Director at National Development Bank (NDB) from 2007 to 2008, where his role included amongst others the formulation and implementation of corporate governance services, strategic

objectives in Finance, Information Technology, Treasury and General Administration.

At NDB, Mr Galekhutle rose through the ranks from being a Chief Accountant in 2000, Acting Head of Finance in 2001 and Finance Director from 2001 to 2007 where his portfolio included negotiating finance deals on behalf of the bank, ensuring adherence to budget and overall strategy, ensuring compliance with ISO 9000 quality standards, identify and manage financial risk and reporting financial performance to the Central Bank.

He started his career with Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) where he worked for 9 years, starting as Trainee Accountant and rose through the ranks to become Financial Manager.

With an illustrious experience spanning 22 years in Finance and Accounting, in addition to his qualifications, Mr. Galekhutle is strategically positioned to assist the Council in delivering on its mandate and to successfully implement its strategic plan.



BEC bid farewell to Dr. Utlwang

Botswana Examinations Council bid farewell to one of its longest serving colleague Dr Augustine Utlwang. Dr U, as he was affectionately known in the corridors of BEC cut his teeth in the education sector as a test developer with Examinations, Research and Testing in 1989 to 2006 within the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation in the Ministry of Education.

He was appointed Manager Programmes (JCE and PSLE) from 2007 until he retired in 2014. As a Programmes Manager his job entailed supervising and training teachers on examinations conduct standards and interpreting the regulations. He has produced a number of conference papers and produced working materials for training teachers and other educational professionals.

A holder of Doctorate of Philosophy

(PhD) Education Psychology, Educational Evaluation and Research from University of Pittsburgh, Dr U has taught educational research, statistics, measurement on part time basis at the University of Botswana from 2001 to 2003.

In his farewell message to his colleagues Dr U said "In the world of assessment and psychometrics, one never really say goodbye to the profession but rather to colleagues. Speculation has it that, once upon a time one may be snatched to continue elsewhere. I love you all and would like to see you being more composed, relaxed, knowledgeable, dynamic and systematic in your work. You are part of the broad aspirations of this country. There is an approaching ray of light at the end of the tunnel. You never fail until you stop trying. (SIC)

BEC wishes him success and good health in his retirement.

Remembering Mr. Loeto Nyepetsi

By Jacqueline Monei



The late Mr. Loeto Nyepetsi

Nyepetsi who grew up in his home village of Mmathubudukwane in Kgatleng District started his career at Schools' and Broadcasting Unit as a messenger from 1982 to 1989 before being promoted to an Assistant Administration Officer in 1990. Through his sterling performance Nyepetsi was later elevated to a position of Senior Administration Officer at ERTD. He earned a Certificate in Human Resource Management in 2005 and a Diploma in Public Administration and Management in 2010. He was appointed BEC's Programme Supervisor under PSLE in 2007 and later acted as Senior Programme Officer responsible for the PSLE level from 2012 until his demise.

He provided supervisory support for the Administration of standard 4 attainment test, PSLE, JCE, BGCSE, and miscellaneous examinations to ensure the efficiency and secure delivery of examination services in accordance with the examination administration processes and procedures.

Speaking at the memorial service EAC Programmes Manager, Mrs Lesang Puddefoot, who worked closely with Nyepetsi described him as a jolly man who was always cracking jokes, 'Hee banna!' was his common tag line in response to surprises. He would come to work very early and was equally willing to do work after hours to show his dedication and commitment to duty.

He very much enjoyed being ahead of time in delivery and was often worried when his colleagues worried less when they were issues to be dealt with. He was a principled and ethical person who never allowed unbecoming practises within the line of duty. Nyepetsi's persona earned him many nicknames, the prominent one being 'Misuse' because while employed as a Transport Officer, he made a startling observation of some officers who were misused government vehicles. He would often caution his fellow colleagues against misuse of government property especially vehicles. He used to joke by saying the greatest misuse occurred when you saw one driver transporting another during the course of duty and the nick name originated from there.

Mr Matlho also took time to share the dear moments he spent with his close colleague he met in 2011 when he joined BEC. They two became very close, after Nyepetsi introduced him to *Banna ba lekgotla*, where BEC men met every day to discuss issues that affected them. They had common interest like farming, during weekends they will meet and go farming and sometimes go out to socialise with their friends. Matlho described Nyepetsi as a generous person who was easy to associate with and a very carefree person. He was the kind of person who talked openly to everyone irrespective of age or position and was not afraid of confronting someone if he felt that person was not doing the right thing. Nyepetsi was a very playful person but when it came to work he would mean business. Not only was he called Misuse, Mr Matlho called him *Dr Mokento*, a name originated from the song *Mokento* by Wizards, as it was his favourite.

BEC choir led by Onkabetse Molaakgosi performed songs of comfort during the memorial service.

Mr Loeto Nyepetsi, met his untimely death on January 8, 2014 at the age 45 following a short illness. His death left the BEC family shocked and saddened. May the soul of a joyful, free and thoughtful man, loving husband, uncle and father of three rest in eternal peace, tears may fade but his memories will never fade away.



Mr. Nyepetsi (r) pictured with colleagues during their graduation ceremony



Mr. Nyepetsi (r) pictured with some members of 'Banna ba lekgotla'



2013 BGCSE Presidential Award recipient Kago Goveya getting his hard earned presidential hug from His Excellency the President Seretse Khama Ian Khama.



Orange Botswana Director Corporate Affairs Ms. Lepata Mafa presenting a gift to Tryphinah Tsaone Mosweu for JCE top achiever (Special needs - Visual impairment)



Kalamare Primary School standard seven students during the 2014 PSLE trial examinations session.



HRDC's Dr. Patrick Molutsi presenting a cheque to Orapa JSS for the 2013 Best Junior Secondary Category.



Executive Secretary Brian Mokapakgosi presenting a gift to one of the top achievers at Ntlhantle JSS.



BEC Corporate Communications staff handing over learning materials to Emang JSS.



Participants listening to Professor Jaap Kuiper giving a lecture on focused learning in Gaborone.



School Coordinators who attended the TIMSS training, conducted by Botswana Examinations Council.



BEC staff during one of the staff general meeting.



Charleshill residents during Vision 2016 awareness month launch outreach.



Assistant Corporate Communications Officer, Jaqueline Monei attending to students at the Botswana Tertiary Education Fair.



1. Guests of Honour. 2. Assistant Minister of Education Hon Keletso Rakhudu giving opening remarks 3. Welcome remarks by BEC Board Chairman Dr Joseph Tsonope 4. Professor Brian Mokopagosi, Executive Secretary of BEC giving overview of the studies that are being disseminated 5. National Research Coordinator – SACMEQ Mr O Mmereki presenting research Methodologists 6. Delegates commenting during the conference 7. Dr M Thobega presenting recommendations of the studies 8. Mr Richard Mathlare- Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Skills Development closing the conference 9. Mahalapye Prison Band entertaining the delegates

BEC ENGAGES STAKEHOLDERS WITH DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP FOR TIMSS 2011, PIRLS 2011 AND SACMEQ III

Botswana Examination Council (BEC) and Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) recently held a dissemination workshop for Trends and International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading and Literacy Studies (PIRLS) and Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), one of the most important milestones in the research cycles of studies.

MoESD Assistant Minister Keletso Rakhudu said data research plays a very important role in the decision making process in the ministry, as it provides the opportunity to make systematic improvements in the education system. He said the sole objective of these researches was to establish ways of improving the education system of Botswana. "MoESD sees a lot of value in making strategic decisions that are informed by empirical research. That is the reason why there is a research department within the ministry which is a sign of government commitment to research. Of late, the ministry has commissioned several studies for the sole purpose of informing decision making at strategic level. TIMSS, PIRLS and SACMEQ, are conducted by BEC and Department of Educational Planning and Research Services (DEPRES) for MoESD," he said, adding that, the purpose for all the three studies was to inform the system on the quality and relevance of education, which is one of the key deliverables in the strategic plan of the ministry.

Rakhudu said the reasons for disseminating the findings of the international studies are, "meant to share with all stakeholders the performance of our children and teachers in the learning and teaching of mathematics, science, reading of English and health knowledge our children have acquired about HIV and AIDS."

According to the BEC Chairperson Dr Joseph Tsonope the first dissemination conference for TIMSS research findings was held in August 2009, he said it was his Understanding that from that dissemination conference, solid recommendations for interventions were made, and that task teams were formed to ensure that such interventions were pursued and implemented. He said, "Today marks the dissemination of yet another set of findings of the Trends in Mathematics and Science

Study, referred commonly as TIMSS. Whether interventions from the last study were implemented or not is a concern for another day, more so that today's dissemination is one of a kind. We are not only disseminating findings from TIMSS but from two other studies. The two studies include specifically, the PIRLS and SACMEQ which makes this dissemination conference somewhat bigger in status. We can only urge stakeholders to ensure that interventions that are going to be recommended from the three studies will likewise be grander and have far reaching impact."

For his part, BEC Department of Research and Policy Development Dr Moreetsi Thobega said the conference has given them a platform to engage with stakeholders on the findings of their research in order to improve the education system. He said they used standard four and six as well as form two students and teachers to conduct the studies. He also added that studies are essential as they inform policy decision makers and help in planning for a better education system. He said during the research, they sampled both primary and secondary schools from different parts of the country, adding that they made a point to reach all the schools in the country.

TIMSS and PIRLS are coordinated by the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). They are international comparative studies of what grade four and eight students can do in reading, mathematics and science.