

# **Education**

## **Entrepreneurship Education and Community Outreach at the University of Botswana**

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### **Abstract**

This article is based on a study to assess and evaluate the benefits of the University of Botswana Business Clinic to students, and the outcome of its community outreach to the prospective and new enterprise owners. The business education programme at the University of Botswana incorporates a business clinic, through which students undertake a range of activities, where they are able to acquire skills while providing support to aspiring and new enterprise owners. As in other business education programmes elsewhere, the programme infuses entrepreneurship through incorporation of experiential learning and carefully arranged student placement in industries and workplaces, where students are able to put business theory into practice, alongside regular classroom activities. These placements also enhance the relevance of the business education to the particular socio-economic context. In this way, entrepreneurship education forms a critical component of entrepreneurship development. It signals a move away from the traditional business education programmes, and incorporates a variety of learning activities and experiences, which reflect the spirit and principle of entrepreneurship (Solomon, Duffy et al 2002; Wilson et al 2003).

### **Introduction**

As unemployment and poverty continue to plague economies around the world, increasing attention is being paid to the concept of entrepreneurship, in a bid to confront these challenges. Although entrepreneurial competency cannot be attributed to any one single factor, education and training are necessary components for the development of entrepreneurship (Galloway and Brown 2002). In view of this, governments around the world have increasingly acknowledged the need to reorient the education curricula and pedagogies in a manner that would ensure acquisition of skills and knowledge that reflect the spirit and principles of entrepreneurship (Niyonkuru 2005; Solomon Duffy et al 2002; Wilson et al 2003). Entrepreneurship education programmes incorporate various types of practical activities in order to enhance experiential learning, which is a crucial element in entrepreneurship training. If appropriately packaged therefore, entrepreneurship education has the potential to promote economic development through training for employability, where learners acquire skills, knowledge and values, to enable them to create employment for themselves and others. This is particularly relevant in a context where since there have been rising levels of graduate unemployment, such as in Botswana.

Through business and entrepreneurship education programmes, higher education curricula in Botswana and elsewhere increasingly reflect the role of education as a driver for entrepreneurship development. At the University of Botswana, the practical component of entrepreneurship training is partly pursued through the activities of the Business Clinic, which enables students to put the theory of their training into practice through involvement in a range of activities, which include a community business services outreach programme. This study assesses and evaluates the benefits of the University of Botswana Business Clinic to the University of Botswana students, and the outcomes of its community outreach to the prospective and new enterprise owners.

### **Background**

An entrepreneur can be defined as “one who has the ability to acquire and use information in order to exploit profit opportunities” (Von Hayek and Kirzner, quoted in Karlsson 2000:7). Bolton and Thompson (2004:16) define an entrepreneur, as a ‘person’ who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognised value around perceived opportunities.” Entrepreneurship can then be defined as the dynamic process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, and assuming the risks and receiving rewards (Hisrich and Peters 2002).

Entrepreneurship can be conducted through enterprise ownership, or within one’s chosen career following a formal business education programme. Entrepreneurship is associated with possession of personal characteristics, values and attitudes, among which are personal goal setting, creativity, and propensity for risk taking that might be expected to be influenced by a formal education programme (Gorman, Hanlon and King, 1997, quoted in Niyonkuru 2005, p20). Formal business education programmes are geared to meet both general education, and career and technical education needs. An entrepreneurship education programme combines the traditional business subjects with the knowledge, skills, and pedagogical approaches, which are geared towards the development of entrepreneurship in the individual student as well as in the society.

### **Entrepreneurial development and entrepreneurship education**

The education system is crucial to the inculcation of a spirit of entrepreneurship, and to the preparation of students not only for gainful employment, but for self-employment as well. This view aligns well with the recommendations of the Botswana Revised National Policy in Education (RNPE 1994) on the need to prepare students for the world of work throughout the education system. In that sense, it is also in line with the need to ensure that education responds to the national socio-economic imperatives. The challenges associated with the lack of an entrepreneurial culture in Botswana (Karlsson 2000; Briscoe 1994a; Botswana Government 2000), coupled with increasing levels of unemployment particularly amongst graduates, have led to a recognition of the link between business education entrepreneurship development.

Since the early 1990’s the policies of the Government of Botswana have also echoed the need to re-orientate and modify the education system to ensure training for self-employment (NDP 8 (1997/8-2002/3)). The government of Botswana particularly recognizes the potential of small and medium enterprises to alleviate unemployment, reduce poverty and generate rapid economic growth. However hitherto, the education system has tended

to prepare learners not for entrepreneurship, but for employment, for example, in “training for the world of work” only as employees. It has also been found that only entrepreneurs with professional qualifications felt that professional training prepared them for the world of work (Briscoe 1994b:6).

The developments in Botswana reflect worldwide acknowledgment that the education system should be re-oriented in order to foster entrepreneurship (Newby, 1998; Galloway and Brown, 2002; Solomon, Duffy et al, 2002). Accordingly, entrepreneurship education is recognised as a key driver in encouraging business start up potential among graduates (Wilson et al 2003, p 9). Moreover education can impact not only the immediate rate of business start-up, but can also contribute towards positive long-term intellectual and societal attitudes to entrepreneurship (Galloway and Brown 2002). Thus, although entrepreneurial competency cannot be attributed to any one single factor, education and training are necessary components for the development of entrepreneurship. This therefore means that deliberate measures need to be undertaken to provide education and training that are specifically geared towards development of entrepreneurship. One of the ways in which this can be done is through combination of a traditional business menu and some practical hands on experience to enhance business training and overall business learning experience (Niyonkuru 2005). Linkage to communities where business support can be simultaneously offered enhances both the learners’ and business owners’ experience. In other contexts, social entrepreneurship has also been found to be a necessary and value adding ingredient to the business education programme ([www.sifeafrica.org](http://www.sifeafrica.org), accessed 15/05/05).

A cross disciplinary approach to entrepreneurship development is generally favoured, as it has a greater curricula outreach, and can influence the range of industry sectors represented by graduate businesses, including the arts, science and technology as well as management fields (Galloway and Brown 2002; Wilson et al 2003).

The pedagogical approaches to entrepreneurship education are regarded to be just as important as the content of entrepreneurship education programmes (Solomon, Duffy et al 2002; Wilson et al 2003). The practical component is seen as a key component of entrepreneurship education. In this case, entrepreneurship education goes beyond the mere teaching of traditional business subjects, to include projects and experiential learning activities, with the overall objective of developing entrepreneurial competencies (Garravan and O’Cinneide 1994: Hills 1998: Solomon, Duffy et al 2002: Alberti, Sciascia and Poli, 2004). Moreover, entrepreneurial education should combine teaching about entrepreneurship and teaching entrepreneurship (Garravan and O’Cinneide, 1994). This type of a programme needs to target students’ acquisition of both skills and values, and requires classroom activities and the entire student experience to be aligned with the need to achieve the principle and spirit of entrepreneurship (Solomon, Duffy et al, 2002).

Teacher placements in industry have been found to add value to the business education programme in other contexts. These placements are also mutually beneficial to both schools and industry (Price 1991). However, in the Botswana context where enterprises are few, teacher placements would negatively affect the viability of teacher placements in industry. Hence, schools are generally confined to business simulations, which are carried out through school-based entrepreneurship-oriented extra-curricula activities. Under these circumstances, the resources are freely provided, ensuring that the participants are cushioned from real risk taking and its consequences.

### **Entrepreneurship education in Botswana**

In Botswana, a number of initiatives have been introduced to enhance business and entrepreneurship education. Programmes offered at different institutions around the country feature various types of offerings of entrepreneurship education. These range from those that offer traditional business education subjects to those that incorporate elements of entrepreneurship education (Farstad 2002, accessed from [www.mtti.go.ug/docs/WB2002](http://www.mtti.go.ug/docs/WB2002), on 07/04/08). Career guidance and counselling is offered as a compulsory subject at junior and senior secondary schools to develop career awareness and skills and attitudes of self-presentation. Elements of an entrepreneurship education are integrated as part of mandatory practical subjects which they are explored in a very general way (Farstad 2002: 28, accessed from [www.mtti.go.ug/docs/WB2002](http://www.mtti.go.ug/docs/WB2002), on 07/04/08). Entrepreneurship education is infused into subjects such as Design and Technology and Home Economic. It is also featured in Business Studies at Junior Certificate level and as part of Business Studies and Commerce at Senior Secondary level. At Junior Certificate level, students taking business subjects are expected to complete a school funded project, within the ambit of the Junior Achievement Botswana, with the benefits accruing to the school (Farstad 2002: 30, accessed from [www.mtti.go.ug/docs/WB2002](http://www.mtti.go.ug/docs/WB2002), on 07/04/08). The Junior Achievement Botswana (JAB) has been operating in the secondary school system for many years, with the aim of training young people for a future in business. It will be complemented by the Know about Business Programme, which is also intended to teach students business skills, as one way of weaning students of total reliance on government for jobs (Gazette, 19th December 2007 to January 8th, 2008). At the University of Botswana the SIFE and AISEC student organizations have been operating for a number of years, and are part of the entrepreneurial community outreach. However, at a formal level the UBBC works primarily with the SIFE members (See [www.sife.org](http://www.sife.org), accessed 15/05/05 for more details on this organization)

### **The University of Botswana business education programmeme**

The UB business education programmeme is a concomitant part of the university's strategy to align the University's mission with the country's goal of developing entrepreneurship in youth throughout all the levels of the education system. In the current scenario, accounting and commerce majors get professional training in the teaching of these subjects at the Business Faculty. Upon graduation, over the years some of them have been able to join corporations and organizations, as employees in various management areas and capacities. The need for teachers of business subjects at secondary school level, coupled with increasing graduate unemployment, has opened up options for training of accounting and commerce majors. Such training is carried out in the Business Education Unit, which is based in the Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education (LSSE) in the Faculty of Education under the auspices of the Business Education Programme. The programme is open to graduates of the traditional business disciplines, and is year-long in duration, with the last part comprising supervised teaching internship. The business education teachers are an important link in the entrepreneurial development process. In this regard, there is need to explore whether the current lack of linkages between the LSSE Department and the Business Faculty is doing justice to the training of teachers of these business subjects, given the importance of providing an effective business foundation to primary and high school

learners, who are potentially the future market for the business education programme. They are also potential future budding entrepreneurs of Botswana. It is also worthwhile to consider the possibility of infusing entrepreneurship into all University Programmes through entrepreneurial pedagogical approaches, to ensure that all graduates understand basic business principles, which they can apply to set up and operate enterprises that are linked to their own disciplines. This would also be in line with the University's objective of becoming "engagement and entrepreneurship", which is the third priority area of the University's Strategy (UB 2004). In this regard, the University is set to position itself as a key and leading player in the training in, promotion and development of entrepreneurship through its formal programmes and outreach activities (UB 2004: 5).

The University of Botswana business education programme combines the traditional business subjects with activities which include placements and some experiential learning where students offer advisory services to aspiring and start up business enterprise owners. Over the years, the UB Business Faculty has managed to secure student attachments with firms such as Air Botswana, Botswana Telecommunications Corporation, Deloitte and Touche, Ernst and Young, which have added value to the business education programme. The internship provides the students with hands-on training, and exposes them to general principles of management, financial management in the specific units of the firms. Connection to industry particularly enhances the link between theory and practice. It also eases the transition between formal educational institutions and work places.

The University of Botswana long-term efforts to develop entrepreneurship can piggy back on technological advances, through which the UB can explore the possibility of wide-ranging collaboration by using innovations, such as video-conferencing and staff-student exchanges, as part of the University's internationalization process. This would facilitate enrichment of the business education programme through exposure of students to other contexts and ideas.

The University of Botswana Business Clinic (UBBC) is an important part of business education training, and is currently operating under the aegis of SIFE and the Business Faculty. It is important to note that participation in extra-curricula activities such as are carried out under the aegis of SIFE and AISEC is not compulsory. Hence only a minority of students were actually found to be participating in them (Mellalieu 2006). However, the UBBC was mainly driven by the efforts of the members of the SIFE at the University of Botswana. This was particularly to with regard to the community outreach. Hence, the evaluation of the UBBC is primarily the evaluation of the work of the SIFE students through the facilitation of the members of the Faculty of Business.

### **The objectives of the study**

The study was undertaken to evaluate the University of Botswana Business Clinic, as an important component of entrepreneurship education. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives: to explore the services offered by the UBBC to individuals

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<sup>1</sup> These are international student entrepreneurship organizations which began operating in Botswana c.1995 and 2001 respectively. While the two organizations are free standing, some students hold membership of both.

and enterprise owners. To assess the extent to which the training was found to be relevant for the graduates' current responsibilities in formal or self-employment. To determine how services rendered by the UBBC were perceived by the entrepreneurs who accessed them.

### **The significance of the study**

The study is primarily informed by the emerging literature on general business education and entrepreneurship education (Solomon, Duffy et al 2002; Kuratko 2004). The study adds to the growing literature on the work done elsewhere on the evaluation of business support services (Reza, Ahmad and Mahmud 1992; Sarder, Gosh and Rosa 1997; Rue and Ibrahim 1998). The study also adds to the ongoing research into student entrepreneurship and its link with the wider community in Africa and elsewhere (Gouws 1997; North 2002; Kuratko and Hodgetts 2001; Kuratko 2004). These studies generally underscore the importance of evaluating business training and/or support services in order to understand their role in enabling business start-up, successful operation, growth, and overall survival. As Chrisman, Hoy and Robinson (1987) observed, "no matter which direction future research takes, if entrepreneurial activity is desirable and beneficial.....it should continue to be evaluated" (Chrisman, Hoy and Robinson, 1987, p326, quoted in Sarder, Gosh and Rosa 1997, p 35).

A business clinic comprises one of several components of an entrepreneurship education programme. The study examines the link between the business clinic and the business education programme of the University of Botswana. It also explores the way in which the Business Clinic sought to enhance the students' overall experience, in the development of entrepreneurship skills and capabilities, while providing outreach services to the community. The study also looks at ways in which this link could be strengthened so as to ensure a closer synergy of skills, knowledge and experiences that reflect the spirit and principle of entrepreneurship. The findings will contribute towards the formulation of a university-wide entrepreneurship programme that can enhance entrepreneurship education and development.

### **Study methodology**

This study uses the Kirkpatrick's Learning Evaluation Model (1959) was used for this study. The model is an effective method of determining the impact of training on the trainees and their work environment ([www.science.ulst.ac.uk/caa/presentation/kirkpatrick-accessed 18/06/05](http://www.science.ulst.ac.uk/caa/presentation/kirkpatrick-accessed%2018/06/05)). The study asked key questions in order to determine the perceptions and feelings of past students, aspiring entrepreneurs and enterprise owners regarding the services they received from the UBBC. Accordingly, the model is based on four levels of evaluation.

Reaction of student/trainee - what trainees thought and felt about the training. This part was concerned with assessment of a trainee/s, reaction to the learning. This was assessed through questions that sought the feelings of the respondents about the programme, in the case of past students, and about the training in the case of the UBBC clients.

Learning - the resulting increase in knowledge or capability. In this part, the resulting increase in knowledge or capability was examined. "How" questions were asked that specifically sought to determine if the respondents felt that they had acquired new knowledge and skills.

Behaviour - the extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application. In this case, the respondents were asked the extent to which they were able to carry out tasks, such as business planning, marketing, etc, on the part of the entrepreneurs. Past students were asked to stipulate specific things that they felt they had learnt from the programme.

Results - the effects on the business or environment resulting from the trainee's performance. Both sets of respondents were asked questions, which required them to indicate the usability of the knowledge and their actual use of it. (Kirkpatrick, 1959, also [www.science.ulst.ac.uk/caa/presentation/kirkpatrick-accessed 18/06/05](http://www.science.ulst.ac.uk/caa/presentation/kirkpatrick-accessed%2018/06/05)).

### **Sampling**

The sample consisted of 17 past students of business who participated in the activities of the UBBC, and 8 business entities, comprising 5 enterprise owners, 2 start-ups and 1 aspiring entrepreneur. The study employed the census sampling method because the numbers of informants were too small. A census aims to obtain information from all the members of a defined population (Thomas 2004, p 116).

### **The survey instruments, types and sources of data**

Both primary data and secondary data were used in the study. Survey data were collected by means of interview schedules, discussions with a variety of informants, semi-structured and structured questionnaires, as well as analysis of relevant official documents particularly those that were kept at the Business Clinic and the Mabogo Dinku organization. Mabogo Dinku is a non-governmental organization that links individuals with business advisory services was one of the key clients of the UBBC. The other client was the Women's Finance House (WFH), which offered business finance to women and facilitated linkages with other service providers.

The structured aspects of the questionnaire incorporated a variety of checklists, likert, numeric and semantic differential scales. The UBBC files containing correspondence with various stakeholders gave an indication of how the UBBC was set up, its activities and its linkages with businesses and the wider community.

Discussions were also held with the aspiring entrepreneurs and owners of small scale enterprises, who ever received support from the UBBC. Other interviews were held with past and current students who participated in the UBBC's activities. The data were triangulated for purposes of corroboration, as well as to minimize the effects of bias, by capitalizing on the collective strength of each method.

### **Data analysis**

The study employed qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. Content analysis was employed to evaluate qualitative data. Descriptive statistics comprising frequencies and simple percentages were generated with the Excel computer software.

### **Findings on past students**

*Educational background and subject major of respondents* :All the student members of SIFE did business-related subjects. Furthermore, the majority (70%) did accountancy-related subjects whilst the rest (18%) did management-related subjects, while 12% did marketing. The informants seem to have been well placed to go into business, or to follow a business-related career, in light of the fact that they were studying business related subjects. In terms of entrepreneurial venturing however, out of the whole group, three past students appear to have started business ventures. One of them serves as a subcontractor consultant for more established firms, while the other has his own consulting firm, and a third operates her textile business from her house on a small scale, while she works on the side as a full-time temporary teacher. One other past student owns a consulting firm and undertakes marketing assignments for organizations.

*Gender of respondents*: The sample comprised 71% men and 29% women. This reflects the general trend in the University of Botswana where men predominate in subjects that are science and math-related, such as economics and accounting.

*Employment status of past participants of SIFE/UBBC programme*: The research sought to determine the extent to which participation in the SIFE through the facilitation of the UBBC facilitated entrepreneurial venturing and gainful employment amongst the participants. 15 (88.2%) are formally employed, whilst only 2 (11.8%) of respondents are self-employed, one of which is a consultant. As observed above, the third, a sole proprietor is pursuing her entrepreneurial interests on the side, as she is temporarily employed.

*Type of business venture*: This part sought to establish the areas of self-employment in which the respondents were engaged, in order to determine the type of business venturing followed. 15(88.2%) of all past students are employed, while 2 (11.8%) of them are in a consulting environment, and one runs her venture in the area of textiles.

*Attempt ever to start a business*: The results show that 6 (35.3%) past students had attempted to start a business, even though they did not succeed. 7 (41.2%) did not respond, including one of those who are currently running a business venture, whilst 3 (17.6%) never tried to start one. The 1 respondent (5.9%) is one of the two people who are currently operating a business. Some of the reasons that were cited by those who did not start a business included problems with company registration, lack of start-up capital, and work-related responsibilities for those who were holding a job at the same time.

*Level of supervision*: This question was asked to gauge the students' opinions regarding the level of supervision they received from their lecturers while they were working with enterprise owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. The results indicate that 3 (18%) of the past students stated that they received no supervision from the Faculty of Business, while 5 (29%) felt that they received average supervision, and 9 (53 %) stated that they received only minimal supervision.

*Did you struggle to get a job?* The results show that the majority (76%) of past students did not struggle to get a job, whilst 18% did, and one is self-employed by choice. In the face of growing graduate unemployment, it may be that there is a value to be derived from either the training that is offered in the business education programme, or from the experiences, which the students gained through their involvement in the Business Clinic or a combination of the two. It should be noted however that interviewees included past students who graduated up to 6 years ago, when graduate unemployment was lower than it is now.



*What did you expect to learn as a result of participating in the UBBC?* The research elicited response, which include gaining business skills; learning how the business work; networking and learning how to work with others in the corporate world, and with clients; interpersonal communication; acquiring presentation skills; business skills to bridge business theory and practice; entrepreneurship skills; consultancy skills and leadership skills. In general, these expectations appear to be in line with the skills and knowledge that the past students believe they acquired from the UBBC-SIFE partnership. They are also in line with those which have been found to be critical to entrepreneurship generally (Wilson et al 2003).

*Were your expectations met?* The response indicates that 16 (94.1%) past students responded in the affirmative and only 1 (5.9%) felt that their expectations had not been met. Those who responded in the affirmative also revealed that they are able to use the skills and the values they acquired in the programme in their current line of work. They stipulated such issues as confidence building and communication and presentation skills. It would appear that the UBBC provides the context and the legitimacy for students to operate in a manner that enhances the practical component of the business programme. This then goes to show that if it is operated efficiently, with all the systems in place, the UBBC can be an invaluable resource to entrepreneurial education and training at the University of Botswana, and to the community at large.

*Skills acquired through participation in the SIFE/UBBC activities:* The findings indicate that the students who participated in the UBBC activities acquired skills, and exhibit characteristics, which are in line with those which are generally associated with entrepreneurship. The issues encompass leadership, communication, entrepreneurship, assertiveness, and cross-cultural awareness (Gorman, Hanlon and King 1997). During the discussions with them, the manner in which they generally expressed what they feel they have learnt also showed a great deal of enthusiasm and appreciation for the programme and how it has prepared them for their current line of work.

*What were the most useful aspects of the programme?* The issue was addressed in terms of what skills they felt they had gained, which they are specifically using in their current job. The responses included working with others, gaining business experience, learning about the problems that small businesses face, group dynamics, communication and presentation skills and confidence building.

*Use of knowledge and skills:* When asked to rate the usefulness of the training in relation to what they do in their current job, in terms of the degree of usage of the skills, 18% of the respondents stated that they are able to apply only a few of the skills they learnt in their current job/vocation, whilst 41% are able to apply several of the skills they acquired and the other 41% stated that they were able to use all the knowledge and skills they acquired. The responses indicate that there is good alignment between the skills which they acquired through the UBBC and what the respondents do in their current employment.

*How relevant/useful was the experience to your current work?* The responses included the following: communication and leadership skills; public speaking; good presentation skills; business mentoring; interpersonal skills; networking and confidence building; business consulting; general business knowledge; industriousness; competitiveness; negotiation with potential sponsors; teamwork; interpretation of financial data; and organizing and accountability. It is interesting to note that the responses reflect issues that

were identified elsewhere as essential skills for a dynamic workplace and entrepreneurship (Wilson et al, 2003, [www.leedsmet.ac.uk](http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk), accessed 16/06/05). The interviews with past students (graduates) also gave an insight into some of the most common problems experienced by the enterprises owners whom they assisted. These included lack of business commitment, Lack of financial management skills, lack of capital, poor customer service, lack of professionalism, lack of business planning, unrealistic market expectation, undermining competition and general lack of business experience.

The issues highlighted by the graduates with respect to the needs of aspiring entrepreneurs included low level of commitment; poor conceptualisation of the business idea; lack of motivation; lack of knowledge of business planning and lack of networking with established business people. Research conducted elsewhere also underscores the benefit that can be derived from business networking, as it enhances enterprise survival through the support extended to the enterprise owner (Kiggundu 2002).

*Challenges in the operation of the SIFE/UBBC programmeme:* In order to determine the lessons learnt in the way the activities of the Business Clinic were conducted, it was important to identify pertinent issues and the challenges in its operation. The responses included issues such as lack of alignment of UBBC activities with those of the University; lack of resources; especially funds to carry outreach community projects; lack of proper book-keeping; lack of follow up; lack of adequate supervision; lack of coordination by both the UBBC coordinator and the Faculty; time constraints; inability to meet projects completion deadlines; pressure from academic work and lack of sponsorship, which made it difficult to implement some of the project ideas, such as an entrepreneurship radio talk show.

*Suggestions for improvement of the programmeme:* Some of the most pertinent were the need for a full time business clinic co-ordinator, proper management of funds, appropriate procedures for obtaining sponsorships, assistance by the university in terms of transport, presentation equipment, training of students, establishment of fund raising committees, business counselling and consultants (advisors) should be thoroughly trained by professionals and this can be arranged during the 3 months long vacation and establishment of a radio talk show on entrepreneurship issues. The responses are invaluable, and would have to be taken into account in any future restructuring of the programme.

*Findings on entrepreneurs and individuals aspiring to be entrepreneurs:* This section discusses the responses from individuals who were either aspiring to be business people or were already engaged in some type of business venture. The respondents cannot all be said to be entrepreneurs in the true sense of the word. According to Bolton and Thompson (2004) an entrepreneur is one who possesses an idea or sees an opportunity, and mobilises resources to develop that idea into a value-creating venture of high return. As noted previously, many Botswana enterprise owners would seem to fall into the category of necessity entrepreneurs, as did some of those who were interviewed.

#### *Background of respondents*

The sample consisted of 5 (62%) men and 3 (38%) women. The gender composition of the respondents reflects the general norm, where most business people tend to be men. As previous research has shown, women are generally constrained from engaging in business, due to a variety of problems (Somolekae 1989, Briscoe 1994a). Although this was a pre-

selected sample, it is noteworthy that the only businesswomen who were traceable came from a women's organization, which meant they were a captive sample, as it only dealt with women entrepreneurs. Moreover, the fact that there were no women in the sample constituting aspiring entrepreneurs also shows that women are not well represented. It does seem however that Mabogo Dinku, the organization responsible for connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with service providers does not discriminate on the basis of gender. Nonetheless, women did not seem to attend the SIFE-facilitated UBBC workshops as well as the men did. Some (49%) of respondents were youth. They fell in the age category of 20-29 years group, which is generally characterised by high unemployment. This category of respondents comprised necessity entrepreneurs, as they wished to start a business in order to make a living.

### **Key issues covered in the UBBC programmeme**

In relation to this issue, 4 (50%) of respondents indicated that they were offered training in business planning and general business principles. 2 (25%) of the respondents also indicated that they were exposed to principles of business management and marketing, and 1 (12.5%) was exposed to principles of book-keeping (12.5%) while 1 (12.5%) stated that she had received none.

*Usefulness of training:* The respondents generally perceived the training to be useful. The table below shows that 6 (75%) thought the training was useful, while 1 (12.5%) stated that it was only slightly useful, and another 1 (12.5%) thought it was just useful. In spite of the perception that the training was useful, respondents do not seem to possess the expertise to make a business plan, as indicated below.

*Extent to which training aided understanding of business:* The responses concur with what the respondents expressed in the discussions. Both the aspiring entrepreneurs and the business promoters felt that they had a better understanding of business principles through the advice they received from the students who worked with them, and through the training workshops which were arranged by the UBBC. In total 6 (75%) of the respondents felt that training greatly facilitated their understanding of business, and only 2 (25%) felt that the training did little to aid their understanding of business.

*Have you done anything to improve your business after training?* On this item, 3 (37.5%) of enterprise owners were able to improve some aspects of their business operations, while 1 (12.5%) indicated that they made no improvements in their business, following training. Some of the issues they specifically felt that they understood better were marketing and pricing of their goods. However, there were 4 (50%) non responses, which consisted of 1 enterprise owner, the 2 start ups and the aspiring entrepreneur.

*What have you done to improve your business?*

The results show that 2 (25%) respondents were able to improve the marketing and 1 (12.5%) also improved pricing and customer service aspects of their business as a result of the training, while the question was not applicable to 5 (62.5%) of the respondents accordingly. Incidentally, the 2 respondents who improved their marketing had also indicated (above) that they were trained in business management and marketing through the Women's Finance House Botswana (WFH). While the results indicated that training was generally well received, there appears to have been little follow-up to ensure that what was learnt was actually practised and reinforced. Indeed the fact that 2 (25%) respondents

reported an improvement in their business following training, may suggest that the UBBC has potential to add real value to entrepreneurial training. However, it is also worth noting that the 2 respondents in question were also receiving services from other providers, in particular, the Women's Finance House (WFH). It is also worth noting that the 2 (25%) aspiring entrepreneurs reported being unable to formulate a business plan on their own. Without any follow-up or reinforcement of their learning, they were not able to get the full assistance they required. At the time the research was undertaken, some of them were planning to use professional consultants, if they could raise the funds required.

*Suggestions for Improving the Programme:* The suggestions on how the UBBC and the Faculty of Business can improve operations in the future included use of simpler language; integration of more practical exercises and case studies; teaching to be conducted in Setswana (vernacular), and separation of younger and older learners. On further elaboration, older learners indicated that they often took longer to understand business concepts, while younger learners seemed to grasp them faster, which made it difficult for the older learners to keep up with the pace. This negatively affected their ability to acquire the requisite competencies.

*Content-related suggestions for Improvement of Training:* Respondents were asked to indicate which aspects of business they would like to see covered in future workshops, if they were to undergo training again. 3 (75%) mentioned financial planning and management, while 1 stated a reason that was trade-specific, as they wished to get training in shoemaking instead of sandal making, and 4 (50%) of the respondents indicated that the item was inapplicable.

### **Summary and conclusion**

The University of Botswana Business Clinic is an important component of the business education programme. It enhances the students' learning through arrangement of a range of experiential learning activities, which included workshops, internships, and partnerships to its various clients. Overall, the UBBC provided the legitimacy and credibility that the SIFE members required in order to undertake activities. The UBBC also provided to the students, the required linkages to both the business community and key corporations, such as KPMG and the wider society. These linkages were important for accessing crucial resources, such as skills and knowledge, as well as funding required to run workshops for business people and individuals wishing to start businesses.

Regarding aspiring entrepreneurs/enterprise owners, more individuals seem to have required and received assistance with business planning than with any aspect of business. This seems to suggest that many of these individuals were either, first time/aspiring business owners and/or "necessity", rather than "opportunity" entrepreneurs. As Kiggundu (2002) observed in the context of Africa, the emergence of this type of entrepreneur is often closely linked to macro-economic conditions. These individuals are lured into business by economic need, rather than the identification of a viable opportunity. They are encouraged by the existence of various government financial schemes to "try their hand" at business, due to the economic hardships that they face. The study found that all would-be entrepreneurs only targeted government financial schemes, particularly CEDA. They had not approached, or even planned to approach commercial financial institutions such as banks for funding. Moreover, they were either not able, or were not willing to put down

their own savings to start an enterprise.

The research also highlighted the fact that entrepreneurship constitutes more than just having a business. According to conventional definition of an entrepreneur, in order to qualify to be regarded as such, entrepreneurs need to possess characteristics of seeking opportunities, taking risks and having the tenacity to put an idea into reality amongst others (Hisrich and Peters 2002; Bolton and Thompson 2004; Kuratko 2004). The University of Botswana students who were members of SIFE gained knowledge and skills, through their participation in special workshops and internships and attachment to businesses. The private sector support facilitated student attachment and professional advisory services, as well as giving direct financial assistance to fund training workshops for prospective and small business enterprise owners. The importance of private sector involvement resonates with other experiences in the continent and in other parts of the world (Gouws 1997; North 2002; Niyonkuru 2005). The experiences gained through these activities have served the students well in their chosen careers. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that these activities were ad hoc in nature, and do not seem to have provided students with a real opportunity to learn about the micro environment of small business. Hence, there was no incremental learning for the businesses concerned, in regard to student support to prospective entrepreneurs and small business owners.

In some instances the UBBC merely served to whet the appetite of would-be beneficiaries and enterprise owners, but challenged in terms of adding real value to their business ideas or enterprises. The students were primarily unable to provide this continuity, due to the fact that their stay at UB was inadvertently temporary. In order to address the situation, there should be adequate resource allocation including adequate funding and a proper organizational structure, in order to ensure continuity of services. The cost of services was also pitched at below market rates. If it were to continue to run along these lines, it would not be able to operate as an enterprising organization in line with one of the pillars of the UB Vision on entrepreneurship. In order to add value to the business education programme, the UBBC will need to be run as an efficient and profitable organisation along the lines suggested by Allen (1999). It would have to operate efficiently and charge market-related prices for its services in order to create real value in its operations. Moreover, future restructuring of the UBBC would have to integrate continuity and follow-up in its range of services.

The UBBC illustrates the importance of incorporating value-adding activities to a traditional business programme, so as to enhance the students' entrepreneurial education experience and that of the local community. Increased assistance and better alignment of its activities would enable the UBBC to enhance the educational outcomes for its graduates and the community support offered to its clients. Moreover, the UBBC should also be able to play an important role in facilitating and coordinating extension of entrepreneurship education across the University's programmes and disciplines. In this way it should be possible for example, for a history major to be able to enterprise within his/her disciplines, whereby they might go into production for various media, including radio and television in the form of plays, drama, documentaries and film. This approach would be in line with the University's pillar of an enterprising university, and would require the incorporation of appropriate pedagogical approaches that promote the spirit and principle of entrepreneurship. The Business Clinic would provide the support to the various Faculties and Departments,

in their endeavour to incorporate entrepreneurial approaches into their teaching.

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