



Republic of Botswana



**United
Nations**



**BOTSWANA TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SUMMIT
NATIONAL CONSULTATION REPORT**

15th August 2022

INTRODUCTION

The COVID 19 pandemic has affected education in different ways across the globe. In response to the challenges posed by COVID 19, countries put in place different measures and ways in which they can fast-track recovery from the effects of the pandemic on education while ensuring that quality is not compromised. Subsequently, the Secretary-General of the United Nations decided to put forward a vision for transforming education. Recognising that education is a human right and foundation for peace and sustainable development, he decided to convene a Transforming Education Summit (TES) in September 2022. Local authorities, in their unique context, working collaboratively with stakeholders, societies, youth and the marginalised should actively contribute towards transforming education.

Heeding a call by the Secretary General to transform education, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MESD) in collaboration with United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) embarked on a nation-wide consultation process. This sought to consult on the impact of COVID 19 on education and the subsequent mitigation strategies to ensure continuity and quality education for all. The consultations provided an opportunity for Botswana to rethink its educational models and policies in order to effectively respond to the detrimental effects of the COVID 19 pandemic including putting fourth a comprehensive education transforming plan as well as the President’s recent, Reset Agenda.

Various stakeholders from different regions of the country such as civil societies, donors, policy makers, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, learners, youth, teachers, education advocates, academia, the private sector, people living with disabilities and remote area communities convened to share views, experiences and innovations on how best education can be transformed amidst COVID 19. Botswana adopted a three phased national consultative process on education transformation. The first phase of the consultations took place on the 25th May - 3rd June 2022. The target groups were Teacher

Unions, Parliamentarians, Non - Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Youth, Learners with Special Educational Needs, Public Servants, Learners, Finance Ministry, Teachers, Donors (UNICEF, EU, GIZ), Parents Teachers Associations, Tribal Leaders, members of the community and religious organisations. The first consultation process was convened by the MESD in preparation for the Pre-Summit in Paris held from the 28th- 30th June 2022. Subsequent to this, MESD in collaboration with UNICEF convened a Transforming Education Summit Youth Consultation on the 3rd August 2022 at Avani Hotel in Gaborone. The consultations attracted youth of different age groups and gender from various institutions and organisations including those with disabilities across the country. The last consultation phase targeted schools and education stakeholders in all the ten (10) educational regions across the country.

The report is organised in seven (7) sections. The first section presents the introduction based on the consultation process. The second presents the purpose, objectives and the significance of the consultations. The third section presents the methodology. The fourth section focuses on ethical considerations. The fifth section is on profiling of participants. The sixth section is on participants' contributions with emphasis on the four key components of the consultations. Furthermore, the section covers the five thematic action tracks of: **inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools; learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development; teachers, teaching and the teaching profession; digital learning and transformation and financing of education.** The last section is the conclusion of the report.

2. 1 OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATIONS

The purpose of the consultations was to gather information on education transformation following the education disruptions in the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic. The consultations focused in particular on education recovery strategies. More specifically the objectives were:

1. To ensure full recovery from COVID 19 education disruptions.

2. To identify main strategic transformation and levers for re-imagining education for the 21st century and accelerating progress towards shared education goals.
3. To ensure strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education.
4. To raise the ambitions of national education targets and benchmarks.

In addition to the components above the consultations were carried out on the following thematic action tracks:

1. Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools
2. Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development
3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
4. Digital learning and transformation
5. Financing of education.

2.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONSULTATIONS

Botswana hopes that the consultations will be beneficial as some of the constraints that hinders teaching and learning would be revealed and could be mitigated for with an informed position during and post COVID 19. The outcome of the consultations is believed to add value to the body of knowledge on how to deliver education during difficult times. The findings of the consultations would give all the stakeholders such as; teachers, politicians, learners, donors, researchers and teacher unions insight on how to transform education. This will also help to improve the quality of education towards the realisation of Agenda 2030 of a prosperous, healthy and informed nation.

3. 0 METHODOLOGY

This section describes the sampling procedures, sample, instrumentation and data collection and the data analysis based on the responses from the participants. The four key components were adopted to guide the consultation on the extent of education transformation in Botswana. The consultation process employed a mixed method

approach of qualitative and quantitative. Purposive sampling was employed to strategically target the relevant groups based on the selected criteria of;

- Whole government approach
- Inclusion and equality
- Focusing on youth as agents of change

The consultations employed four methods of data collection, namely; questionnaires, oral interview, focus group interviews and desktop review. Data analysis included transcribing of the data gathered from the interviews, desktop and demographic data analysis. The intention was to cover one thousand people based on location, age bracket (Youth/ Adult), sex, designation and various organizations. A total of one thousand and sixty- one (1061) participants were reached. This is slightly more than the targeted one thousand (1000).

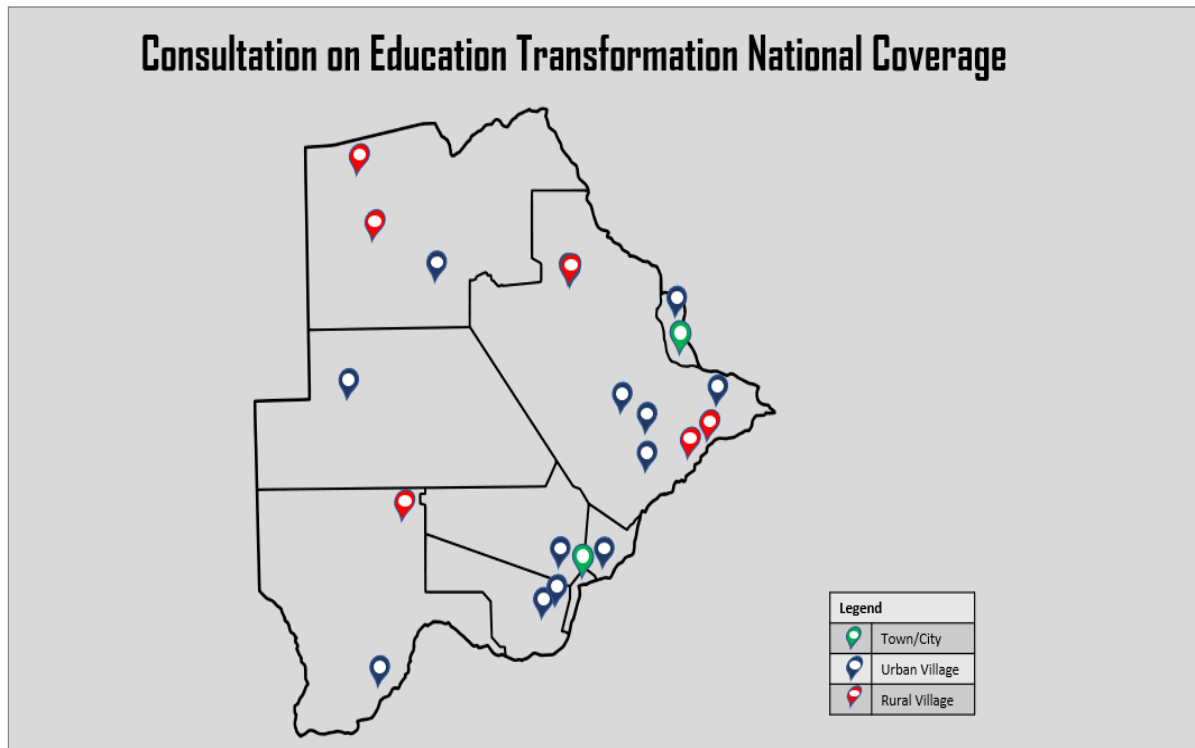
4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In line with the ethics of research and consultation the Government of Botswana considered the dignity of the participants whose data was used as of paramount importance hence ensuring that the data gathered from the participants were kept confidential. The names of the participants remained hidden. Such level of confidentiality is considered sufficient to guarantee protection of peoples' human rights. Furthermore, a permit to conduct the consultations was sought from the Department of Educational Planning and Research Service.

5.0 PROFILING OF PARTICIPANTS

5.1 Geographical distribution of national consultations

Figure 1: Geographical distribution of national consultations

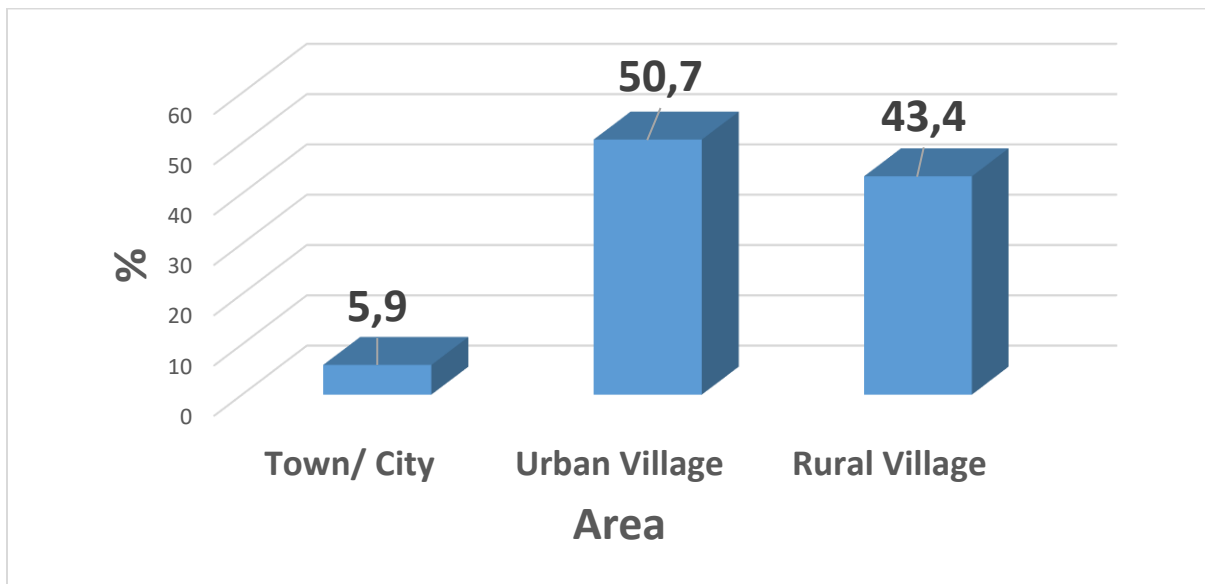


The majority of places covered were urban villages. The urban villages house the majority of the population.

5.2 Percentage coverage by location

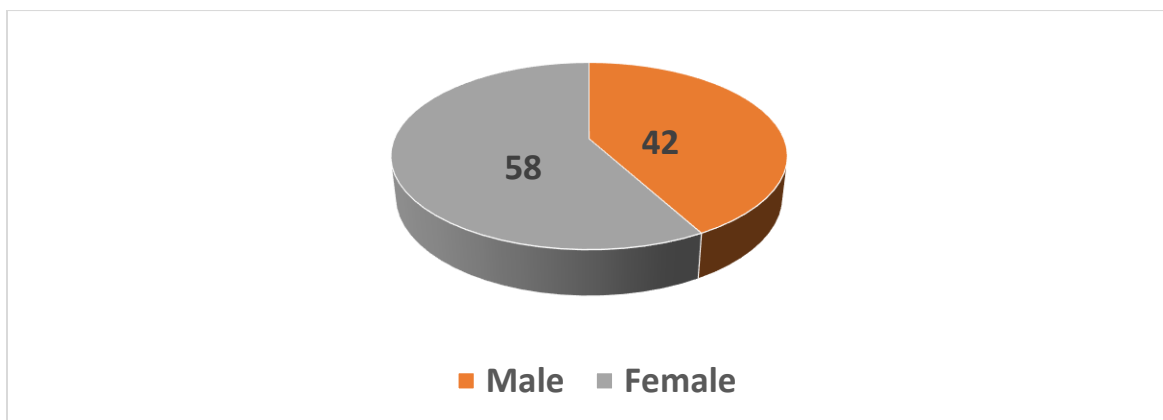
The consultations were designed to cover towns/ cities, urban and rural village. Figure 2 shows the distribution by location.

Figure 2: Percentage coverage by location



5.3 Participation by gender

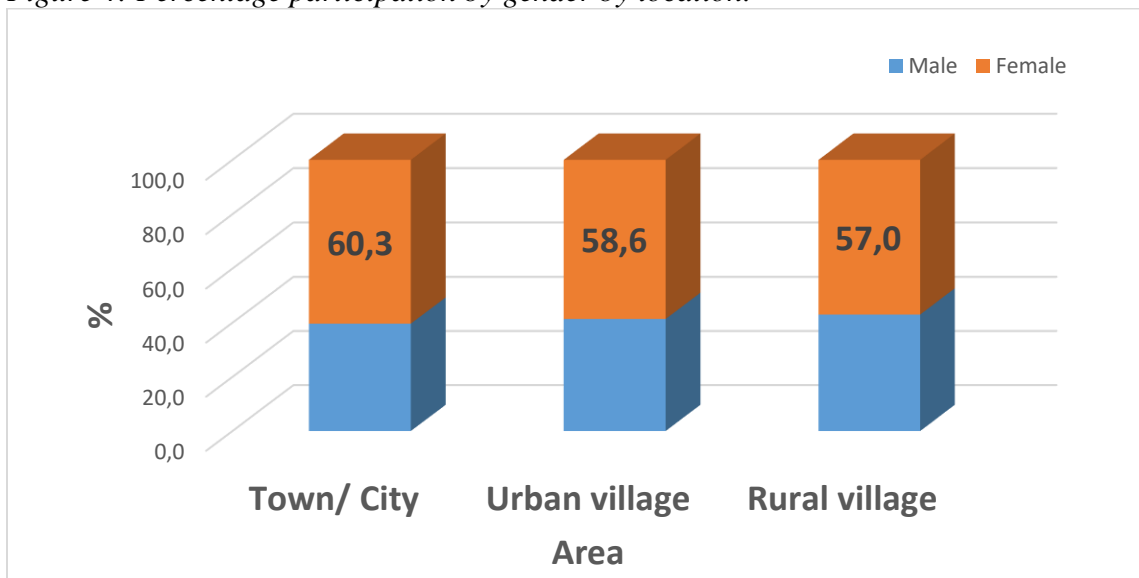
Figure 3: Percentage participation by gender



More women and girls participated in the study. This addresses inclusion and equality.

5.4 Participation by gender by location

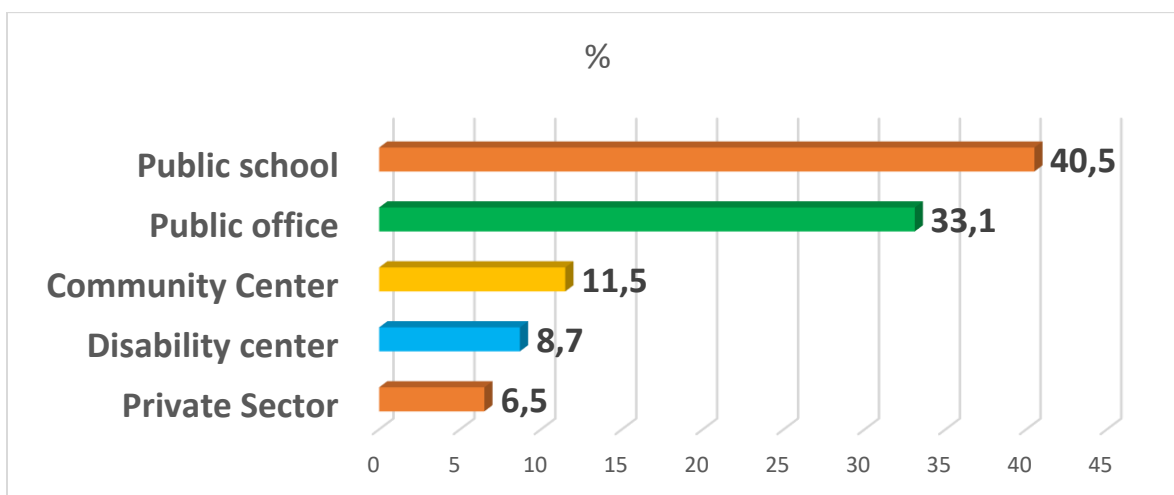
Figure 4: Percentage participation by gender by location.



Across all the three different locations, females were the majority participants.

5.5 Participation rate by type of organization

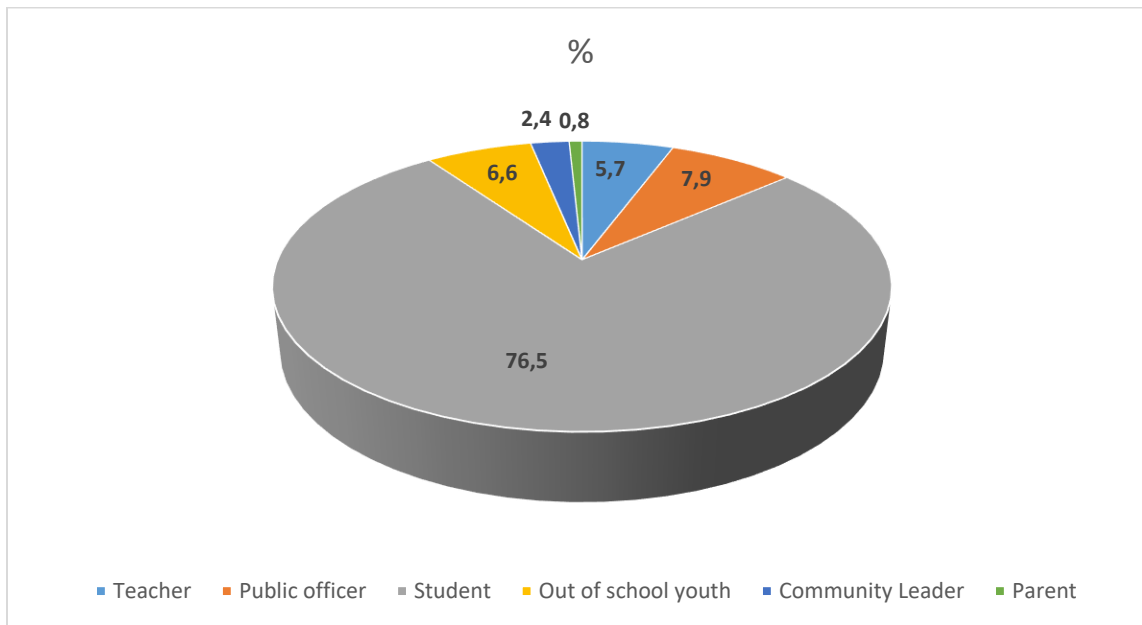
Figure 5: Percentage participation by type of organization



Public sector was in the majority.

5.6 Participation rate by designation

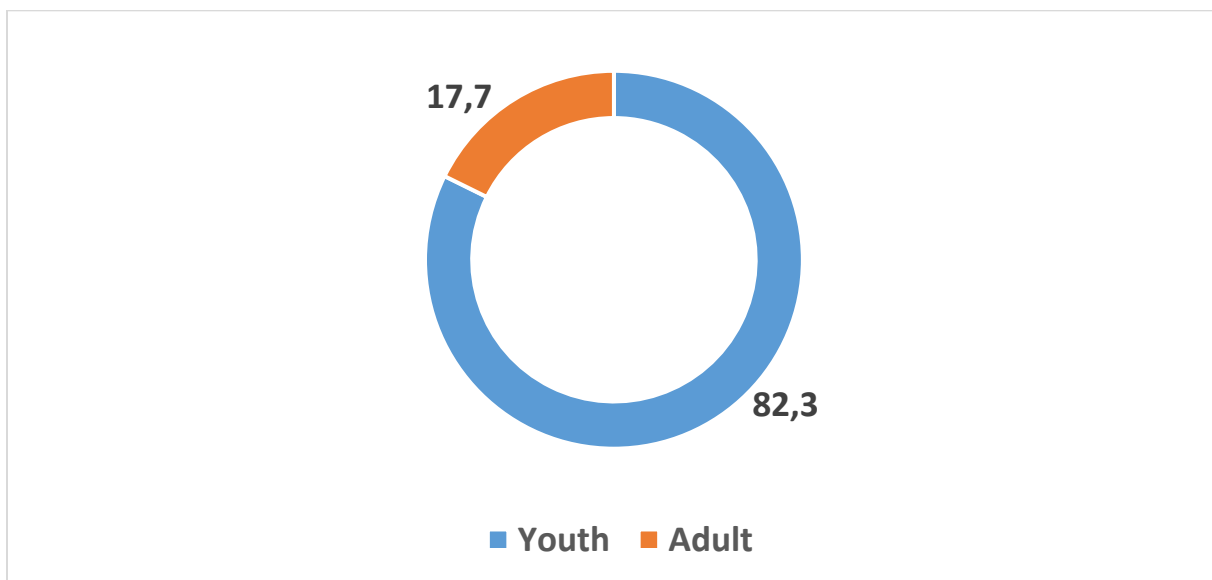
Figure 6: Percentage participation by designation



The majority of the participants were the students, appreciating that they are agents of change.

5.7 Participation rate by age bracket

Figure 7: Percentage participation by age bracket



There was focus on youth to access fresh ideas and future aspirations.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

The focus of this section was to analyse and interpret data from the respondents based on the four key components of the consultations and the five thematic action tracks critical to education transformation in the wake of COVID 19 pandemic.

a. To ensure full recovery from COVID- 19 education disruptions.

Covid-19 pandemic has presented an urgent need for a global unplanned change in the delivery of education. Participants reflected on the main transformations and strategic actions after having conducted the following diagnosis of the education situation:

- ✚ Digital learning - introduction of e-learning which includes; provision of educational gadgets to teachers and learners, internet connectivity, capacity building and availing of electronic education content.
- ✚ Enhanced psycho-social support- teachers and learners were given support to cope with the mental, emotional and social needs posed by the effects of COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✚ Reduction of class sizes- the class size was revised to 30 learners which promoted social distancing and effective learning.
- ✚ Double shifting: was adopted to avoid overcrowding in schools in an attempt to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infections.
- ✚ Enhanced Health and safety precautions: employment of Safety Health Environment (SHE) Officers in schools across the country to enforce adherence to COVID-19 protocols was adopted. These included among others; washing of hands, sanitising, wearing of masks, temperature screening and social distancing.
- ✚ Public education: awareness campaigns were carried out to sensitize the public on COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✚ Reviewing of the school calendar: due to lockdowns, abrupt and frequent closure of schools, the school calendar was reviewed to cater for the lost time.

b. Identifying main strategic transformation and levers for re-imagining education for the 21st century and accelerating progress towards shared education goals.

- ✚ Digital learning - introduction of e-learning which includes; provision of educational gadgets to teachers and learners, internet connectivity, capacity building and availing of electronic education content.
- ✚ Home schooling - the advent of lockdowns due to COVID-19 gave rise to teaching and learning at home. Therefore, home schooling should be an official established system.
- ✚ Industrialisation of education: vocationalisation of education so that it becomes more relevant to industry.
- ✚ Review of policies: there is need to review and align existing educational policies to the current educational needs and demands. There is also need to introduce policies to address emerging issues such as language heritage and the use of technology in teaching and learning.
- ✚ Deploy primary school infrastructure and financial responsibilities to Central Government to avoid dual responsibility.

c. Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education.

- ✚ Private Public Partnerships (Triple Helix): Promoting affordable quality education and better access on a sustainable basis through partnership with the private sector state institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations and schools.
- ✚ Cost sharing: To ensure continuity and sustainability of financing education for future generations, there is need to engage stakeholders such as parents with the capability to play a visible role in financing educational needs of their children.
- ✚ Investing in education and skills development: there is need to develop a TVET policy which outlines education for skills development to meet the local and global economic needs.

- ✚ Sustainable financing of education: there is need to engaging in strategic dialogue between Ministry of Finance and MESD for sustainable financing of education.
- ✚ Cost recovery: the need to expedite cost recovery to enable payment of the loans after completion of studies is critical for continuity of tertiary education financing.
- ✚ Improved accountability in education spending: inclusive sector dialogues which enables civil society participation in budget tracking and monitoring to improve transparency and accountability in education spending needs to be activated.
- ✚ Political will: it is a key force in driving educational change to ensure access to quality education.
- ✚ Taxation: there is need to raise more revenues to increase education budgets through improved tax systems. The core financing of education comes from progressive tax systems. Tax payer education can be a key tool to boost willingness of individuals and businesses to voluntarily pay tax and play a vital role in the heart of mobilising tax revenues urgently needed to help achieve the Sustainable Development goal no 4.

d. Raising the ambitions of national education targets and benchmarks.

- ✚ Inclusive education policies which are target specific: there is need to review policies to cater for learners from different backgrounds (learners with disabilities, Special Educational Needs, socio-economic status, Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Rural Area Communities etc).
- ✚ Participation in early learning: To enhance early learning participation, Early Childhood policies should be adopted towards hastening the necessary variations for the education of all learners. This will ensure a strong learning background for future learning. Furthermore, the implementation of the Language Policy at lower primary, as a medium of instruction will provide the basis for a better learning outcome.

- ✚ Completion: there is need to implement 12-years uninterrupted basic education for all learners.
- ✚ Teacher qualification and accreditation: In order to promote quality education, it is imperative to have qualified and accredited teachers across all levels.
- ✚ Learning outcomes: it is essential to review and align policies to provide an outcome based education system.
- ✚ Financing: building a broad base for sustainable financing of education is imperative.
- ✚ Gender equality: it is important to have a gender responsive education system which caters for all (curriculum, leadership, sports, facilities etc).

Participants also carried out discussions around the following five thematic action tracks:

e. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools

The outbreak of COVID- 19 revealed inequalities in education, increased educational exclusion for vulnerable groups and exposed poor health and security conditions in our schools. The following were the reflections of the participants on thematic action track 1;

- ✚ Violence in and outside schools had a negative impact on teaching and learning which resulted in high levels of truancy and drop outs.
- ✚ Compromised nutrition due to the reduced number of meals provided in schools while some parents were unable to provide meals for learners.
- ✚ Gender Based Violence and children’s safety affected more especially the girl child.

To address the aforementioned challenges, the participants suggested the following solutions:

- ✚ Provision of blended counselling for psychosocial support for learners, teachers and staff.

- ✚ Engagement of school based psychologists and medical personnel in all the schools across the country.
- ✚ Enhance health and hygiene standards in all schools.
- ✚ Promote a healthy and safe environment for conducive learning.

f. Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development.

COVID-19 revealed a lot of inefficiencies, weaknesses and gaps in our education system. The following were the reflections of the participants on thematic action track 2:

- ✚ The current education system is devoid of skills, competencies and proficiencies needed by a 21st Century learner.
- ✚ Mismatch between the curriculum and industry needs.
- ✚ Examination oriented curriculum.
- ✚ One-year Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) is not sufficient to provide foundational basis for learning.

To address the aforementioned challenges, the participants suggested the following solutions:

- ✚ Provision of pre-vocational and skills based education within a multiple pathway approach to cater for the various needs, interests and potentials of the learners.
- ✚ The curriculum need to be reviewed and aligned to the industry needs.
- ✚ Introduction of a competency based curriculum and provider based continuous assessment.
- ✚ Broaden ECCD participation by all stakeholders to cater for two (2) years of ECCD.

g. Teachers, teaching, and the teaching profession.

Teachers are critical in the transformation of education because they are the drivers of change. The participants cited the following as deficiencies in the teaching profession:

- ✚ Disparities in the qualification levels and the non-professionalization of the teachers.
- ✚ Poor working conditions and lack of motivation in the teaching profession leading to teachers being demoralised.
- ✚ High student teacher ratio leading to more workloads.
- ✚ Teachers unwillingness to work in remote areas.
- ✚ Teaching of all subjects at primary level by one teacher.
- ✚ Limited use of ICT as a platform for teaching and learning.

To address the foregoing challenges, the participants suggested the following solutions:

- ✚ Upskilling of teachers to a minimum of a degree level as well as the professionalization of teaching.
- ✚ Improvement of the teachers' working conditions and more incentives for those willing to work in remote areas.
- ✚ Implementation of the policies recommending reduced class sizes to 1: 30 for effective pedagogical delivery.
- ✚ Integration of ICT in the teacher training programs.

h. Digital learning and transformation

Teaching and learning need to be relevant to the 21st century and the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The following deficiencies were outlined by participants with regard to digital learning:

- ✚ Shortage of relevant ICT resources.
- ✚ Inadequate relevant electronic educational content.
- ✚ Lack of appropriate ICT skills by teachers.

To address the aforementioned challenges, the participants suggested the following solutions:

- ✚ Facilitate internet connectivity and provision of gadgets to teachers and learners across all levels.
- ✚ Integration of ICT teaching pedagogies in the teacher training programmes.
- ✚ Develop policies to enable a friendly ICT environment for teaching and learning.
- ✚ Facilitation of multi modal e-content mining.

i. Financing of education

Impactful education requires a sustainable financing model which embraces learners from all backgrounds. This also requires collaboration of all actors to reduce burden on the government budgets. The participants identified the following gaps and challenges:

- ✚ Donations are skewed towards urban areas.
- ✚ Unfair distribution of funds in the education sector (more funds allocated to Tertiary Education).
- ✚ Centralisation of funds limiting operational efficiency in schools.
- ✚ The burden of financing of education is solely borne by the government.
- ✚ Minimal involvement of stakeholders in education financial decision making.

The following mitigation strategies were suggested by the participants:

- ✚ The government should adopt a societal than a governmental approach to funding of education.
- ✚ An affordable cost sharing approach should be introduced to reduce the burden on the government.
- ✚ Decentralisation of funds to schools for operational efficiency.
- ✚ Proportional distribution of funds according to priorities.
- ✚ Engagement of all stakeholders in financial decision making for education.

7.0 CONCLUSION

It was the general view of the respondents that COVID -19 negatively affected teaching and learning warranting a holistic approach in transforming education to cater for access, quality and inclusivity. Pursuant to this, nations need to commit and invest in innovative strategies to reform education at both local and global level.

It was also appreciated that the implementation of Botswana's Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP) will deliver most of the necessary education reforms desired to address issues and concerns raised through the consultation process.

