

Prospects for establishing an education hub: The case of Botswana

INTRODUCTION

Globally, a rapid increase of mobile tertiary education seekers has been observed. In 2005, more than 2.7 million tertiary education students were studying in a country other than their own, representing an increase of about 61% since 1999. Trade in education services is increasingly becoming important worldwide. Saner and Fasel (2003)* observe that the value of annual trade in higher education services was estimated at US\$30 billion, which was 50% of trade in financial services.

The common destination for consumption of tertiary education is the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.**

While the provision of primary and secondary education generally remains the responsibility of governments in many countries, provision of tertiary education continues to gradually move away from being in the purview of governments. The pressures of globalisation have a role to play in redefining the market forces that govern the provision of higher education. Education is increasingly becoming a private good that is paid for, as opposed to a public good to be provided for solely by governments. Further, there is an observation that the demand for publicly provided education is growing against the limited resources of governments due to budget limitations, the changing role of governments and the

Saner R. and S. Fasel (2003) *Negotiating trade in educational services within the WTO/GATS context* Aussenwirtschaft, 59, Heft II, Zurich

** OECD member States are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States

increased emphasis of the market economy and privatisation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Botswana is a net importer of tertiary education services. A significant proportion of public funds are spent on educating citizens in foreign institutions. The deliberate policy of government to educate the citizens is clearly articulated in different public policy documents. Developing the skills of the population through education and training has been translated into tangibles through the government budgetary spending in education.

This research reviewed the current state of trade in education services in Botswana, with particular emphasis on tertiary education, with the view to assess the country's standing on the prospects of establishing an educational hub.

The research was based on information available from official statistics, accreditation bodies and tertiary institutions and used structured questionnaires and interviews.

This brief discusses the flows (imports and exports) of trade in tertiary education

The information in this brief is extracted from a report prepared under the SADRN programme:
Prospects for the establishment of an education hub: The case of Botswana,
by Johnson Tsoro Maitetso
Available on the TIPS/SADRN website
www.tips.org.za/programme/sadrn
For more information contact TIPS,
info@tips.org.za
Tel: +27 12 431 7900

ESTIMATES OF IMPORTS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION SERVICES BY COUNTRY (2004 and 2007) IN BOTSWANA PULA: BOTSWANA STUDENTS STUDYING IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

2004	Number of students	Average cost per student	Total cost
Australia	550	160,000	88,000,000
UK	700	330,000	231,000,000
USA	488	340,000	62,900,000
Canada	137	215,250	29,489,250
Malaysia	152	77,000	11,704,000
South Africa	7,012	70,000	490,840,000
Other	327	198,708	64,977,625
Total	8,585		1,081,930,875

2007	Number of students	Average cost per student	Total cost
Australia	537	184,000	98,808,000
UK	629	379,500	238,705,500
USA	232	391,000	90,712,000
Canada	123	247,538	30,447,113
Malaysia	1,218	88,550	107,853,900
South Africa	4,963	80,500	399,521,500
Other	398	228,515	90,948,804
Total	8,100		1,056,996,817

Sources: UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Botswana Ministry of Education

and the modes of supply involved (see table above), and analyses the policies, institutional and regulatory framework on tertiary education in view of their enhancement of the conditions for the establishment of an educational hub.

Two aspects are important in developing the tertiary education sector in Botswana.

Government policy

Increased accessibility to tertiary education is the main objective of government and the programmes offered should be in line with national policies. Government's responsibility is also to ensure the programmes are internationally competitive.

Institutional and regulatory setup for tertiary education

Setting up the Tertiary Education Council to develop tertiary education and maintain standards is commendable. That its services include registering institutions and programme accreditation ensures that quality is upheld.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having realised that importing education costs the economy large sums in terms of revenue Botswana has started making inroads in developing the tertiary education sector. Between 2006 and 2008 the Tertiary Education Council registered seven new tertiary institutions.

Existing institutions are being expanded to include new programmes such as a medical school. A new institution, the Botswana International University of Science and Technology has been established.

Considering these developments, it is suggested that Botswana become an education hub. It should seek input, financial or abstract, from the smaller countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland so as to have a buy-in and subsequent ownership.

In the longer term, Botswana can serve as an alternative to South African institutions, as was the case with Zimbabwe before the political challenges.

The Southern African Development Research Network (SADRN) was launched in 2007 as a broad-based policy and research network. It aims to increase the supply of policy-relevant research in the SADC region and strengthen evidence-based policy-making. The project is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)



SADRN focuses on three themes: industrial policy, services sector development at the regional level and trade policy and its linkages to pro-poor growth. The Botswana Institute for Development and Policy Analysis is the host of the trade and pro-poor growth theme working group, Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies hosts the industrial policy theme and the University of Mauritius hosts the services sector

