

## **Evaluation of the African Girls' Education Initiative Country Case Study: Botswana**

**David W. Chapman  
Holly Emert  
Botsalano Coyne**

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### **Context**

Botswana is a landlocked country in southern Africa with a total population of 1.6 million people. Since independence in 1966, Botswana has had a stable, democratic government, sound economic policies, and a strong education system. Approximately 40% of the population is below the age of 15. By the beginning of the AGEI, in the mid-1990s, Botswana had already achieved near universal primary education with a 99.2% net enrolment rate for girls, 97.5% for boys. At the primary school level, girls have lower drop-out and grade repetition rates than boys. There are female role models in the schools, as about 82% of primary teachers are female.

Over the last decade, these impressive achievements have been threatened by the HIV/AIDS epidemic that has hit Botswana especially hard. Botswana, after Swaziland has the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the world, with 37.4% of pregnant women attending antenatal clinics now infected. About 60% of those infected with HIV/AIDS are female. An estimated 64% of deaths of children under five years of age are thought to be caused by AIDS related diseases, transmitted by their mothers during pregnancy in nearly all cases. There are an estimated 65,000 children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic. It is estimated that a third of the children in Botswana will grow up without one or both parents. Child-headed households are becoming common.

In response, UNICEF programmes in Botswana have been progressively amended to focus on responding to the consequences of this epidemic. For that reason, the AGEI programme in Botswana has been considerably modified since its inception in 1996. The current issues that need to be addressed in girls' education in Botswana centre on: (a) preventing the fast spread of HIV/AIDS and (b) reducing drop-out among girls at the junior and senior secondary levels. The high drop-out is due, in part, to the high rate of teenage pregnancies and school policies that expel pregnant girls from school for one year and then bar their return to the same school. More recent data (1998) suggest that one impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is that girls' enrolment may have now dropped slightly below that of boys.

The AGEI has only a small programme in Botswana. Total funding in Phase 1 was US\$705,000. Botswana may have received less funding than other countries participating in the initiative. This was partly due to the favourable enrolment, retention, and achievement levels that girls had already achieved. The original Phase I proposal focused on increasing access to schooling for children of Remote Area Dwellers (RADs), improving the gender sensitivity of instructional materials used in the schools, providing gender sensitivity training for teachers, and promoting multi-grade teaching in rural schools.

Given the HIV/AIDS epidemic, several of those initial emphases were dropped or revised in the transition to Phase 2. The Phase 2 activities continued support for the RAD programme. It also supported the Basic Education for Pregnant Girls (Diphilana) pilot project being implemented in

Mahalapye and the Botswana Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (BONEPWA+) project. The Diphilana project seeks to provide uninterrupted quality basic education for students who would otherwise drop out of school due to pregnancy. The goal of BONEPWA+ is to remove the stigma of HIV/AIDS through community outreach efforts.

### **Description of AGEI Activities in Botswana**

The current structure of the UNICEF/Botswana programme activities is presented in its Country Programme of Cooperation (2003-2007) which, in turn, is linked to its strategic framework. There are four programmes: HIV/AIDS Prevention and Mitigation; Policy, Legislation and Social Services; Mobilization for Children and Women's Rights; and Cross-sectoral Support. Each programme area comprises individual projects that have sub-projects or interventions subsumed under each category.

The AGEI initiative is part of the Policy, Legislation and Social Services programme. There are four projects in this program: Policy and Legal Analysis; Integrated Early Childhood Development; Integrated Girls Education, and Project Support. AGEI activities are part of the Integrated Girls Education (IGE) project. In 2003, ongoing AGEI projects were reorganized under four project headings: Schools Improvement Project, Remote Area Dwellers (RADs) Project, Girls Education Movement (GEM), and Psychosocial Support. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the changing nature of the programme from its inception to its current design.

### **AGEI Interventions**

Relative to other AGEI countries, the AGEI programme in Botswana underwent an unusual amount of revision, for two reasons. First, significant levels of staff turnover (specify the period) in UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, and the participating schools resulted in loss of continuity and sustainability. New personnel reworked the programme to reflect their own commitments and choice of strategies. Second, as the HIV/AIDS rates increased, a majority of the GoB/UNICEF programme activities were refocused to address the causes and consequences of this epidemic. In response to the combined effect of these factors, several aspects of the AGEI programme were postponed, redirected, or abandoned.

### **Programme Components**

***Remote Area Dwellers project (Basic Education for Children of Remote Areas Dwellers project (RADs).*** Started in Phase 1, the RADs project seeks to improve the quality of primary education for children of remote area dwellers through a three-part strategy of pre-schools, hostel development, and improvement of instructional design. Four districts took part in the project: Ghanzi, Kgalagadi North, Kweneng West, and North West. The implementation of these activities was undertaken through 12 separate but related activities, described below.

Figure 1

AGEI Interventions in Botswana by Phase/Years (Initial Formulation)

Year/Phase	Phase I activities as reported in 2001 YTR (1997-2000)	Phase II activities as reported in 2001 YTR (2001-2003)	Phase II activities as reported in 2002 YTR (2001-2003)	Phase II Project Reorganization in 2003
<b>Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diphilana project (began in 1996)</li> <li>• RADs project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools Improvement to be Child Friendly Community Outreach Centres for HIV/AIDS Information and Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools Improvement to be Child Friendly Community Outreach Centres for HIV/AIDS Information and Services (<i>continued from Phase II 2001</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools Improvement Project (SIP)</li> <li>• RADs project</li> <li>• Girls Education movement (GEM)</li> <li>• Psychosocial Support project (See Figure 2, AGEI 2003 Interventions in Botswana)</li> </ul>

Sources: UNICEF/Botswana (2001). AGEI Technical Report, 2000, Gaborone, Botswana.  
 UNICEF/Botswana (2002). AGEI Technical Report, 2001, Gaborone, Botswana.  
 UNICEF/Botswana (2003). AGEI Technical Report, 2002, Gaborone, Botswana.

Figure 2

AGEI 2003 Interventions in Botswana (2003 reorganization)

Project	Schools Improvement Project	Remote Area Dwellers Project (RADs)	Girls Education Movement (GEM)	Psychosocial Support Project
<b>Subprojects</b> (*HIV/AIDS awareness activities cut across all projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making Schools Child Friendly and Gender Sensitive -BONEPWA+ -Diphilana Project</li> <li>• Lifeskills Education</li> <li>• Monitoring Learning Achievement at Standard IV (MLA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Triple A (Assessment, Analysis and Action)</li> <li>-- Community based training in several locations</li> <li>-- RADS Hostel Development</li> <li>-- Tirisanyo Catholic Commission Pre-schools</li> <li>-- Integrated Playground at Motokwe</li> <li>-- Museum-in-a-Box</li> <li>-- Mantshwabisi and Maru-a-Pula School (MaP) Twinning</li> <li>-- Private Sector Initiative</li> <li>-- Multi-Grade Schools and Teaching in Primary Education</li> <li>-- Fundraising from the Private Sector</li> <li>-- Ministry of Education Policy for Early Childhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local GEM clubs</li> <li>• Gender training manual for teachers</li> <li>• Advocacy Forum for Children in Education (AFFCIE)</li> </ul>	<i>In planning stage; discussion with partners has begun</i>

1. **Triple A (Assessment, Analysis and Action):** Triple A is a form of community mobilization that involves a participatory rural appraisal (PRA). The objective of Triple A,

which is used widely by UNICEF worldwide, is to get key stakeholders in the community and local schools to collaborate to identify the needs and problems of their community, analyze those needs, and make collective decisions about what actions are required to solve problems. The Triple A workshops ran from the project's inception in 1996 to June 2000, when UNICEF officially changed its emphasis. During that time, UNICEF conducted Triple A workshops for communities and schools in remote area dweller settlements in Kweneng West (also attended by school personnel from Mantshwabisi, Salajwe, Motokwe, and Kaudwane primary schools)

2. **Community based training at Motokwe, Khekhenye and Tshwaane:** UNICEF supported a Triple A (Assessment, Analysis, Action) workshop in these three villages conducted by a team from the University of Botswana.
3. **RADs Hostel Development:** With support from UNICEF (among others), five new hostels were constructed for primary school children in RADs areas. Administrative responsibility for their management is divided among the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Education, and District Councils.
4. **Tirisanyo Catholic Commission Pre-schools in the Kgalagadi North and the Pre-school at Dobe in the North West:** Funds were provided by UNICEF to assist the faith based organization Tirisanyo Catholic Commission, in the development of its Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme in Kgalagadi North through the development of five pre-schools and a playgroup. Basarwa children adapt to schooling, integrate with other children, learn about hygiene, and prepare for entry to Standard 1. In the pre-school the girls (56%) outnumbered the boys (44%), though in the primary schools into which the pre-schools pupils were enrolled the situation reversed. In Standard 1, boys (56%) outnumbered girls (44%) in all but one primary school. This suggests that not all the girls are going on to Standard 1 in these five communities.
5. **Integrated Playground at Motokwe:** UNICEF has provided playground materials for hostels in primary schools in Kweneng, Kgalagadi, Ghanzi and North West district councils in order to enhance the friendliness of the hostel environments and hostel life.
6. **National Museum and Art Gallery "Museum-in-a-Box" at Motokwe:** The Museum-in-a-Box program, as developed at Motokwe, used local experts from the village and surrounding communities to serve as volunteers to teach the teachers and pupils crafts characteristics of the San cultural tradition (e.g., woodcarving, weaving, ostrich egg shell decoration, ostrich egg beadwork, leather craft).
7. **Mantshwabisi and Maru-a-Pula School (MaP) Twinning:** A twinning arrangement between Maru-a-Pula School, UNICEF and Mantshwabisi Primary School (36 km north of Molepolole) was initiated in late 1998, implemented in 1999, and discontinued in 2001.
8. **Private Sector Initiative (PSI):** The PSI involved a coalition of private companies in Botswana that agreed to work as partners with the Kweneng Council, the Ministry of Education, and UNICEF to improve hostel conditions for RADs children.
9. **Fundraising from the Private Sector:** Linked to the PSI, this was an effort to mobilize private sector firms as official corporate sponsors of Botswana's National Programme of Action for Children.

10. **Multi-Grade Schools and Teaching in Primary Education:** In 1998, AGEI funds were used to support a study tour to the Philippines for government and education officials to explore the feasibility of multi-grade schooling for Botswana. This was viewed as part of the RADs project, since multi-grade schooling was seen as a possible alternative to boarding students in RADs areas.
11. **Ministry of Education Policy for Early Childhood Education (ECCE):** No information on this activity was yet available.

**Diphalana project (Basic Education for Pregnant Students Project).** A major cause of school dropout among females in Botswana is unwanted pregnancy. The Education Act of Botswana (Regulation 34), until recently, required students to withdraw from school once they became pregnant or were known to have caused a pregnancy. Girls were required to stay out of school for a minimum of twelve months after the end of pregnancy and they could not re-enrol in the same school. Due to these constraints, students often did not return to school at all. To combat these difficulties, the Diphalana project was started in 1996 in an attempt to mitigate these constraints. The project was intended to: (a) provide uninterrupted basic education for targeted girls by helping to reduce first and repeated pregnancies; (b) ensure that students who do become pregnant complete school, and; (c) improve the scholastic performance of teenage mothers. In support of the project the MOE provided a five-year waiver of the legislative mandate for girls taking part in this project. Through this waiver, pregnant girls were allowed to remain in school longer after announcing their pregnancy and could return sooner after the end of pregnancy. While the waiver set the post-pregnancy exclusion at three months, some girls were allowed to return sooner.

The pilot Diphalana project, implemented in Pekenene Community Junior Secondary School in Mahalapye, was intended to have four main elements:

- (a) longer retention and earlier return of pregnant girls;
- (b) instructional modules pregnant students could use while on pregnancy leave;
- (c) onsite day care for their babies to allow them to return to school; and
- (d) guidance and counselling of all girls about sex and pregnancy.

Only one component was fully implemented as intended, discussed later.

**Schools Improvement to be Child Friendly Community Outreach Centres for HIV/AIDS Information and Services.**

The goal of this initiative is to develop child friendly schools through strengthening linkages between the school and community. Specific activities to achieve this goal include the creation of resource centres; advocacy opportunities on behalf of people with HIV/AIDS, students, and teachers; MOE capacity building in project management; the development of reading materials for primary school; and the creation of a Girls Education Movement (GEM). Specific activities include:

1. **Botswana Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (BONEPWA+).** BONEPWA+, started in 2000 as a community/schools outreach activity within the larger School Improvement Project. Its aim is to reduce the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and to foster acceptance of individuals with HIV/AIDS by society. UNICEF supports the effort through partnerships with the Ministry of Education and BONEPWA+.
2. A primary component of the project is the utilization of PLWHAs (People Living With HIV/AIDS) in outreach efforts. Training of 30 adult PLWHAs was conducted in December 2002. The remaining activities were not started until April 2003 due to internal differences between BONEPWA+ and a partner NGO. PLWHAs began their school visits in mid-

August 2003 and continued for approximately three months, the approximate point at which funding support will be exhausted. For their participation in the project, PLWHAs receive a monthly stipend that includes transportation to the sites. To gain access to the schools, PLWHAs are introduced to the District Education Officer, who in turn introduces them to the Regional Education Officer who provides them access to each school's headmaster. The headmaster then arranges for the PLWHAs to meet with students.

3. *Lifeskills Education.* This initiative was designed as part of the Making Schools Child Friendly and Gender Sensitive project. Its primary goal was to prevent and mitigate HIV/AIDS in a planned, consistent manner through two activities: (a) research to develop criteria for child friendly and gender sensitive schools and (b) the design and production of three resource guides. One guide is meant for primary schools (e.g., a lifeskills education program), one for managers (e.g., a resource centre guide), and one for how to establish and support Social Service Clubs that would, in turn, provide lifeskills programming. These activities were undertaken by the Botswana Christian AIDS Intervention Programme (BOCAIP) as part of a UNICEF consultancy.
4. *Girls Education Movement.* The Girls Education Movement (GEM) is an initiative aimed at starting GEM clubs in local schools as a forum for girls to address issues in their own education and development. The clubs are led by girls and often involve boys in activities aimed at encouraging school retention, and helping girls cope with mistreatment. They have been quite successful in Uganda and other countries in the region. The GEM movement is part of the GEM Network, which comprises GEM chapters throughout participating African countries. The Network helps its members through the sharing of information and experiences. Four Botswana youth (two girls, two boys), accompanied by two senior MOE officials, attended the launch of GEM in Uganda in August 2001. Participants in this trip were expected to help start GEM chapters in Botswana schools. UNICEF also planned to develop materials to support these GEM clubs. As of October 2003, one school has an active GEM chapter. Other GEM chapters have been started but are stalled due to lack of coordination and leadership.
5. *Monitoring Learning Achievement at Standard IV:* UNICEF helped support the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) at lower primary. A national MLA was conducted by sampling 76 schools, from which a total of 5,460 pupils (2,726 girls and 2,734 boys) participated. The study concluded that student mastery of key competencies was low in numeracy (21.2%), English (21.9%), and Setswana (39.6%). Students demonstrated higher competency in life skills (77.7%), most of which were not taught in formal settings, but rather through informal learning.
6. *Capacity building of children.* Two children attended a workshop on gender, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS in Education at an ESAR workshop in Malawi in July 2001.
7. Information sharing and empowerment activities around HIV/AIDS in the Southern district conducted with the participation of 30,000 students, teachers, and communities (40 secondary schools, 156 primary schools, 2 tertiary level institutions).
8. A study on Instructional Setting Improvement by University of Botswana.
9. Publication of 150,000 HIV/AIDS fact books (with teacher and facilitator guides) for primary school students developed at reduced cost (P0.50 instead of P3.00 per copy) through partnership with the NGO Botswana Book Centre Trust.

10. Formation of a high level advocacy forum (Advocacy Forum for Children in Education or AFFCIE) on the issue of sexual exploitation in schools. The AFFCIE met twice but then ceased to be due to a lack of leadership.
11. Research on young people, gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

### **Implementation issues**

To a large extent, Phase I AGEI funds were used in Botswana to support activities that were already planned or underway, but which also offered benefits to girls. For example, the primary concern in the RADs project was the integration of minority children generally although monitoring data was not collected by gender. BONEPWA+ was primarily concerned with removing the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Both sets of activities were already planned or started prior to the beginning of the AGEI without a specific focus on girls. One notable exception is the Diphilana project, which focuses specifically on the welfare and education of pregnant girls.

On one hand, this approach to project selection (e.g., blending into existing activities) leads to little innovation or experimentation that would not have occurred anyway. On the other hand, such opportunistic project selection can represent a very reasonable strategy (a) if project funds are small and (b) if it helps embed AGEI activities in a larger programme framework. In the case of Botswana, given the relative advantaged position of girls within the education system and the urgency of HIV/AIDS prevention, this use of AGEI funds to support activities that would have happened anyway seems quite appropriate.

However, this strategy of building on existing initiatives seems to have had an unintended consequence. It led to support for a rather large number of relatively small activities, e.g., hostel construction, achievement testing, materials development, study trips, playground construction, research studies, etc. In a Country Office with a large education staff, this might not have posed a problem. However, in a Country Office with a small education staff, it posed a considerable challenge, especially in a context in which the Ministry of Education held a limited view of their own responsibility and eventually for project activities. The turnover of UNICEF education staff further raised the complexity of coordinating such a diverse set of activities.

*UNICEF staff turnover.* UNICEF/Botswana staff turnover was a significant factor behind implementation issues in AGEI. Soon after the beginning of Phase 1 activities, the EPO who had designed the AGEI programme for Botswana took a Special Leave Without Pay for one year. The two consultants hired to manage the AGEI work during the EPO's absence were away when the EPO returned to work, leading to some problems of continuity and information flow. Additionally, both the Programme Coordinator and the Representative departed for new postings early in 2000. These personnel transitions slowed preparations for Phase 2 activities, as the office was insufficiently prepared to either rollover funds or make necessary preparation to secure funds. A new EPO started her assignment in April 2003 and had only been in her position for six months at the time of this evaluation.

*The Office is to be complemented for formulating the conceptual framework introduced in early 2003 that now guides the AGEI activities.* The current framework represents a consolidation and focusing of what previously appeared to be a somewhat scattered set of activities with little connection, continuity, or cohesion. This seeming fragmentation was the result of three factors: (a) changing UNICEF/Botswana priorities as the focus on HIV/AIDS displaced virtually all other

agenda; (b) unusually high staff transition; and (c) initial activity selection that emphasized putting AGEI money into activities that were already underway.

While AGEI activities seemed somewhat fragmented, they were highly integrated within the larger UNICEF programme. The UNICEF programme focus in Botswana is the prevention of HIV/AIDS infection and mitigation of the impact of the virus among the children of Botswana and their families. While activities were more broadly conceived in the initial Phase 1 proposal, Phase 2 proposal concentrated almost exclusively on a smaller set of activities that directly supported the larger HIV/AIDS programme agenda.

## **Outputs**

The RADs Project was the largest and longest lasting effort supported by AGEI funds. Several components were successfully completed, but overall impact and sustainability were low. Specifically:

- The Triple A strategy for promoting community participation was judged to be successful in the communities in which it was used but was not sustained. Triple A workshops were conducted from the beginning of the project in 1996 to June 2000, ending when UNICEF changed its emphasis and dropped support for this component.
- With UNICEF support, five RADs hostels were built. A 2003 evaluation of the RADs hostels was highly critical of the conditions in which the young children had to live and judged the hostels to not have been successful (BEST, 2003). The study found a lack of adult supervision, a lack of security, and generally unsanitary living conditions in RADs hostels. The problems were due, in part, to a breakdown in the coordination of responsibility among the multiple governmental units involved in their operation.
- The Monitoring Learning Achievement at Standard IV was successfully completed. A UNICEF-supported consultancy to make recommendations on the Monitoring Learning Achievement at Standard IV was successfully completed but recommended actions were never implemented.
- Five Catholic Commission Pre-schools were started.
- A playground was constructed and several others were equipped with AGEI funds. A recent evaluation, however, found that community members failed to fulfill their part of the arrangement: facilities were poorly maintained, e.g., the playground was overgrown (BEST, 2003).
- The Museum-in-a-Box was implemented at Motokwe. Although many participants enjoyed the Museum-in-a-Box, the activity encountered resistance and was discontinued after less than two years. Non-San teachers objected to the focus of the activity on the San culture and conflicts developed with teachers and local experts over time utilization and remuneration.
- The twinning arrangement between Maru-a-Pula School, UNICEF and Mantshwabisi, implemented in 1998, ended in 2001 due to the loss of leadership for the programme within the schools (due to job transfers) and shifting priorities within UNICEF.

- The Advocacy Forum for Children in Education (AFFCIE) formed in 2002, met twice, and ceased activity due to lack of initiative by its leadership.
- The Private Sector Initiative was phased out in 2001, attributed in part to changes in UNICEF priorities.
- The study tour of multi-grade schools in the Philippines was completed in 1998. No action was taken on the recommendations put forward by the study team and no further action was taken with respect to multi-grade schooling.

A recent evaluation of the RADs project, commissioned by UNICEF/Botswana, offers a more holistic assessment of the project (BEST, 2003). This evaluation concluded that, overall, the RADs project suffered from poor planning and implementation of the project components, resulting in an under-utilization of some of the resources (BEST, 2003). The evaluators found little evidence of commitment or sense of ownership of these projects on the part of Government units that were expected to assume responsibility for these activities at the end of the pilot period. They observed that some of the pilot projects did not last until the end of the scheduled pilot period and were abandoned. They also found that there were few administrative arrangements in place for the responsible Government units to consider the pilot project activities as essential aspects of the education of RADs children. They found no evidence that long term funding of activities covered under the pilot projects would be picked up by sources outside the Government departments responsible for primary education. They did suggest, however, that some aspects of the pilot projects might be sustainable if included in the core educational activities of the RADs schools.

In the **Diphalana project**, only one component, the policy change to allow longer retention and earlier return of pregnant girls, was fully implemented as intended. From 1996 to 1999, pregnancies in Pekenene CJSS were reduced from 8 to 3. The instructional modules for pregnant students to use while on pregnancy leave were developed but never used (in part because some students returned to school quickly). The community-sponsored day care centre was established and serves the community, but none of the student-mothers put their babies in the day care, preferring to have family care for their child. The guidance and counselling component was judged by the MOE to be inappropriate and stopped.

Conversations with senior MOE staff raise doubts that Diphalana will either be taken to a larger scale or even sustained in the one school in which it now operates, should UNICEF support decline. MOE staff does not see the pilot as an MOE initiative, suggesting that it is up to the community to keep it going. However, Diphalana community members see this pilot as largely a UNICEF sponsored activity and are unlikely to pick up costs themselves (Tswapong Management Services, 2003).

A key senior MOE staff member was dubious about Government granting a Diphalana-type waiver (allowing pregnant girls to sit for exams and return to school within three months following end of pregnancy) on a wider scale than this pilot project. He pointed out that national policy had already been liberalized to allow return after just six months, at the headmaster's discretion. He believes that this policy change adequately addresses the problem. Schools Improvement to be Child Friendly Community Outreach Centres for HIV/AIDS Information and Services: Overall, activities undertaken as part of this programme strand have not been particularly successful. GEM activities have been sporadic and the effort is struggling. At present one school in Gaborone has an active chapter. Two other chapters were recently started in schools in Serowe and a consultation process between UNICEF and school leaders is underway to discuss sustainability. A gender training manual for teachers was developed as

part of early GEM activities and is expected to be mailed to schools in an effort to build capacity among teachers. The main problems appear to be a lack of committed GEM leadership at both school and national levels and poor coordination of activities. The original expectation that GEM would serve as a demonstration project has not, as yet, occurred.

As part of the BONEPWA+ project, 30 PLWHAs completed training in late 2002, to serve as outreach officers in 2003. However, the organization has funds to support only three months of outreach activities. Consequently, much of BONEPWA+ staff time will be directed toward fund raising in the near future. It is too early to assess outcomes or effectiveness of this component as much depends on the success of fund raising. Sustainability of the programme is in question.

**Lifeskills education** efforts, based on research and three guides completed as part of a UNICEF consultancy with BOCAP, will begin in late October 2003.

The research study by the University of Botswana on instructional setting improvement was started but has not yet been fully completed. The research study on young people, gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS was never commissioned. A high level advocacy forum on the issue of sexual harassment in schools was started, as planned, but participation in the forum diminished to zero due to lack of coordination with members and poor leadership.

### **Outcomes**

There is some evidence that girls in the Diphilana pilot school did benefit from one strand of the AGEI intervention, specifically, the modification of rules governing the retention and return of pregnant students. Little evidence is yet available that suggests other outcomes were achieved.

### **Impacts**

To date, there is little or no evidence that longer-term impacts have occurred as a result of AGEI-funded activities. On the other hand, AGEI funding needs to be seen within the larger context of UNICEF work in an emergency country. These funds helped support a wider effort aimed at combating a devastating epidemic.

Figure 3 summarizes the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the community and school level interventions which that were supported, in part, by AGEI funds.

**Figure 3**

**Summary of AGEI Accomplishments**

Project	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts	
RADs project	Hostels for primary school children were built	Formal data on change in enrolment, retention, or pass rates not available.	None anticipated	
	Community advocacy conducted	Established increased capacity for participation	None anticipated	
	Series of studies were conducted	No action taken on study recommendations	None anticipated	
	Monitoring learning achievement exercise conducted	No action taken on results	None anticipated	
	Gender sensitive training materials developed	None, see text	None anticipated	
	Twinning with Marula Pula school (discontinued in 2001)	None	None anticipated	
	Private sector initiative (started in 1998; ended in 2000)	None, discontinued	None anticipated	
	Museum-in-a-Box (began in 1997; ended in 1998)	None	None anticipated	
Diphalana project	5 year waiver allowing pregnant girls to remain in school until late in their pregnancy and return to same school soon after the end of pregnancy was enacted for one school (pilot project)	Informal data suggests that most girls with babies returned to school; their achievement was about at level that would have occurred without their pregnancy leave	Positive impact on the pregnant girls in the one pilot school  Wider adoption seems unlikely	
	Community day care centre established in conjunction with pilot school	No babies from students who had been pregnant were enrolled in community day care centre; only used for children of community members.	None anticipated	
	Instructional materials for use by pregnant girls while out of school for delivery of child were developed but never used	None, due to non-use of materials	None anticipated	
	Child care classes were not designed or delivered	None, due to lack of implementation	None anticipated	
	Strengthen school guidance and counselling functions through programme development around student reproductive health needs and related sensitization efforts of students, teachers, parents, and the community.	None. Activity was judged by the MOE to be inappropriate and stopped	None anticipated	
	BONEPWA+	Training of 30 PLWHAs trained; training materials developed	Too soon to know; implementation only started in 2003. Future depends on new funding	Too early to determine
	School Improvement/Child Friendly Comm. Outreach Centres	GEM delegation to Uganda launch; 3 chapters started; 1 still operating	Only 1 active chapter still operating	None anticipated
Lifeskills Education		Too soon to know; implementation only started in 2003.	Too early to determine	
Research studies - One of two studies commissioned; none yet completed		Not yet available	Too early to determine	
high level advocacy forum was started and discontinued		None, due to discontinuation	None anticipated	

## **Key Observations**

### ***Prominence of girls' education in official policy***

In Botswana, girls' education is not a particularly salient issue for Government. Girls are not disadvantaged in initial school enrolment, persistence or achievement and other, more crucial issues prevail. It is not a specific priority in the Government Five Year Plan or in the UNICEF-Government Framework. This may have contributed to some of the implementation issues that emerged over the life of the project.

### ***Start-up vs. follow-through***

Implementation of AGEI activities was uneven, though not always for reasons that could have been anticipated. The shift in UNICEF priorities to concentrate on HIV/AIDS, and the concomitant drop in UNICEF support for some of the initial AGEI activities was a contributing factor to the demise of several components of the AGEI programme. Nonetheless, in activities that did go forward, there appeared to be more emphasis in both UNICEF and in the MOE on the initiation of activities than on resolving issues that arose during implementation. Consequently, little action was taken when no children of students were enrolled in the day care centre developed, in large part, for those children. Children's poor living conditions in the hostels went largely undetected and unremedied. With no further action from Government or UNICEF, the number of GEM chapters dwindled.

### ***Confusion about roles and responsibilities***

A key factor across the major programme components that undercut effective implementation was a confusion of roles and responsibilities across government units involved in the project. For example, there was disagreement between MOE and the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) about responsibility for resolving issues that arose in the RADs hostels; there was lack of clarity between the MOE and the participating community about responsibility for continuation of Diphilana activities.

### ***Limited Government buy-in***

Recent evaluations commissioned by UNICEF/Botswana suggest that one of the factors constraining the success of AGEI activities was limited ownership by Government at different levels. For example, key participants in both the central Ministry and the pilot community saw Diphilana as primarily a UNICEF-driven project. In the views of people at both levels, its continuation depended heavily on UNICEF making it happen.

### ***High turn-over of personnel***

While personnel turn-over is cited in many countries as a factor in the success and sustainability of AGEI interventions, it posed a particularly acute problem for Botswana. Significant turn-over of UNICEF staff, Ministry officials, and school personnel is cited by UNICEF, Government and project personnel as a reason why (a) the overall programme was revised on several occasions, (b) so many AGEI activities were either dropped, postponed, or abandoned soon after they

started (e.g., twinning arrangement in the RAD project), and (c) activities were not sustained or taken to any larger scale. This suggests that the success of AGEI activities was heavily dependent on individuals. Institutional commitment has not yet developed.

### ***Data dilemmas***

Little evaluation of the effectiveness of AGEI funded activities was conducted prior to 2003. The RADs evaluation and the UNICEF/Botswana commissioned evaluation of AGEI activities, both conducted in 2003, found that a lack of needed data hindered their efforts to assess key outcomes. For example, no data are available that indicate the extent to which the RADs project affected student enrollment, persistence, or transition to junior secondary. Data that are available were not disaggregated by gender, so it was not possible to determine whether there was any disproportionate benefit to girls. Similarly, no data were available on the enrollment, retention or pass rates of girls in the Diphilana pilot school, though informal information suggested these indicators had improved.

### ***UNICEF monitoring systems***

The Botswana case suggests that YTRs were not a particularly effective way for other levels of UNICEF to detect weaknesses in the conceptualization or implementation of AGEI activities. The YTRs generally did not capture the position of AGEI activities within larger initiatives of which they were a part, the implementation problems that were being encountered, or the lack of evidence regarding outcomes. Some of this loss was due to the way the YTRs were structured, some to the way that UNICEF staff chose to report on progress. Even when problems were clearly identified in the YTR, it is not clear what regional or headquarters could have done to help. For example, the 2000 YTR *does* clearly lay out the problems in programme implementation and management caused by staff transition within UNICEF, yet no solutions were offered.

### ***Timeliness of funding flows within UNICEF***

The EPO in UNICEF/Botswana has done an impressive job of more clearly targeting and rationalizing AGEI activities since she began six months ago. Previous EPOs displayed commitment and energy in getting initial activities started, but staff turn-over (discussed earlier) eventually undercut some of their efforts. A factor that further complicated their efforts to maintain a coherent programme was difficulty experienced by UNICEF/HQ in getting AGEI funds dispersed to Country Offices in a timely manner. Initial Phase 2 funds were received late in the year, making it impossible to engage partners and implement activities in the remaining time available.

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### **People Contacted**

Ali Asghar, Operations Officer, UNICEF/Botswana

Ruth Baloi, Project Coordinator for UNICEF/MOE/BONEPWA+ project, BONEPWA+

S. Basiamang, Director, Department of Primary Education, MOE/Botswana

Michael Blundell, evaluation team leader, Tswapong Management Services

Mmamiki Kamanakao, Project Officer, Integrated Early Childhood Development, UNICEF/Botswana

Gordon Jonathan Lewis, Representative, UNICEF/Botswana

Keletso Mokobi-Makgekgenene, team member (Law and Human Rights), Tswapong Management Services

Gaongalelwe Mosweu, GEM volunteer

Kgosi Motshabi, RADs evaluation team member

Reuben J. Motswakae, Director, Department of Secondary Education, MOE/Botswana

John Ntseane, RADs evaluation team member

Philamon Ramasui, Permanent Secretary, MOE/Botswana

Annah Ramotsisi, PLWHA field officer with BONEPWA+

Mareledi Segotso, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF/Botswana

Pranchande Man Shrestha, UN Volunteer/Programme Advisor to BONEPWA+

Sheldon Weeks, RADs evaluation team member