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A critical study of the implementation of the education decentralisation process and its effect on secondary schools in Botswana: a case of the South Central region

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of the education decentralisation process and its effect on secondary schools in Botswana in the case of the South Central Region. This topic was chosen against the wide-scale adoption by African countries of the international policy of educational decentralization, which takes different forms in different purposes. Literature on decentralization and school monitoring and support was consulted as well as evidence from different African countries.

The study uses a qualitative approach and case study of a region to collect data through interviews and document analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from the Ministry of Education headquarters, national Secondary Education Department and the South Central Region Office. Six Secondary Schools were sampled for the purpose of illustrating the impact of the regional administrative decentralization on different kinds of schools.

The research findings reveal that Botswana has adopted the particular form of regional administrative decentralization for the purpose of administrative efficiency and the improvement of its school monitoring and support functions. The study revealed that some benefits, such as speedier response to teachers' welfare matters, facilitation of distribution of resources in particular, learner- support materials and teachers, did occur. However, contrary to expectations, it surfaced that the process was ridden with more problems than solutions, mainly because many of the preconditions necessary for effective administrative decentralization were not present. For example, there was a lack of common understanding of the form and extent of decentralisation, human and other resources, role clarity and proper accountability lines, resulting in duplication of effort and tension between the regional and national offices as well as misaligned decentralization functions within the education bureaucracy.

The main recommendations of the study are that the Ministry of Education should revisit the strategy to take on board and empower the regions to effectively execute their mandate of monitoring and supporting secondary schools in their jurisdiction. This will require increased capacity and resources as well as strategic leadership on behalf of the region.

Key Words: Education decentralization and delegation, Administrative decentralization, Evaluation, School monitoring and support, Decentralization pre-conditions.