

ABSTRACT

For reasons of mismanagement, corruption and nepotism, poor quality and delivery of education and community perceptions of general inefficiency and ineffectiveness, the government of Botswana embarked on the process of centralizing the Brigades in 2009. The purpose of this study is to examine how the centralization of the Brigades was handled and its impact on the future of the concept of Education with Production (EWP).

The research uses a qualitative approach and case study method to collect data through interviews, focus groups discussions and document analysis. The study was conducted in two of the twenty-one Brigades taken over in 2009. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. Principals, teachers and former board members were interviewed individually while students were interviewed through focus group discussions. Also interviewed were two Department of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (DTVET) officers who were involved in the Brigades takeover.

The findings from the study show that while there was evidence of prior consultation by the government of Botswana before taking over the Brigades, emphasis was laid on positive outcomes at the expense of potential negative outcomes.

The study reveals that the takeover of the Brigades by the government was a noble gesture as evidenced by some gains in terms of financial stability, staff training, and improvement in staff conditions of service and plant maintenance. However, there was a range of undetected issues that emerged as a consequence of the takeover which includes job losses by some staff due to austerity-driven structural adjustment; lack of proper organizational structures for managing new enterprises; poor remuneration for some staff and the discontinuity of the concept of EWP.

The study concludes that centralization of educational institutions needs a more rounded approach based on more holistic consultation with a range of beneficiaries. The future of EWP in Botswana is in jeopardy largely due to the government takeover.

Key words: Brigades, Education with Production, takeover, centralization, policy disconnect, community disfranchise.