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A capabilities approach to an African inclusive education in the technical vocational education and training sector in Botswana

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This study investigates the experiences of students with disabilities, the effectiveness of the programmes they are enrolled in and the understanding of what it means to be included in two Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Botswana. The thesis argues that the interpretation and implementation of inclusive education in higher education is a contentious issue among various stakeholders. Polarity in the debates around the educational needs of students with disabilities, particularly among people working with them, results in exclusionary practices despite TVET's best efforts to respond to the global concern for the educational needs of students with disabilities. These exclusionary practices range from discrimination, victimisation, labelling, and bullying to social and epistemological exclusion. While the stakeholders' understanding of inclusion has been drawn from the Batswana philosophy of humanness (*Botho*), this study finds that their lack of policy awareness and the knowledge on disability issues was a major barrier to students' inclusion. This study applied a qualitative research method within an interpretivist phenomenological paradigm. This study's distinctive contribution comes from its use of the capabilities approach, African philosophy of Botho to inclusive education, disability and TVET. This framework advances new understanding of how an inclusive African TVET with a vision of developing human potential could be imagined. It also unlocks the significant opportunities and freedoms valued by the students as opposed to the stakeholders' value of employability. The study`s key findings showed that despite the experiences of exclusion faced by students, the TVET programmes were beneficial to them. This key finding demonstrates how an African inclusion is played out in TVET education in Botswana.

KEYWORDS: Botho; Botswana TVET system; Capability Approach; Inclusive education; students with disabilities.