



Journal of the African Library and Information Association

*of Library,
Archives &
Information
Science*

VOLUME 5

NUMBER 1

APRIL 1995

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN BOTSWANA SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Information service is a vital component of guidance programme in schools. It provides students not only with basic knowledge about themselves but also knowledge in the areas of education, occupation and personal-social issues and decision making. Information is also vital during the counselling interview as the individual is assisted to understand himself/herself better. Formal guidance programme is being co-ordinated in Botswana Schools by the Guidance and Counselling Unit in the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation in the Ministry of Education. The Unit serves as the source of information in guidance and counselling for schools in Botswana and provides material in guidance and counselling. The University of Botswana also provides training in Counsellor Education for practitioners who offer guidance services in schools.

INTRODUCTION

In any educational setting, information is significant if students are to be aware of training opportunities and requirements at various levels of education. Students need to be aware of subjects or courses required at various levels and the various requirements for entry into institutions. Students who are about to graduate and are ready to enter the labour market need information about jobs available to them and methods of entry into different occupations. While also in school, the student would need information that could lead to the understanding of self and various aspects of one's development as well as the understanding of others.

Development of Guidance and Counselling in Botswana

Some events seem to have shaped the development of formal guidance in Botswana. Guidance services were provided to secondary school leavers since 1963 but the services were predominantly career information. The need for career guidance, the need to achieve the national policy on localisation and need to provide services to pupils to enable them adjust to varying conditions of living seem to form the rationale for the formal introduction of guidance services in Botswana in 1963.

The Career Guidance Workshop held in Gaborone in 1963 was one of the significant events in the development of guidance and counselling programme in the country. At the end of the workshop, career masters were selected in each secondary school in the country, to provide career education to pupils. In 1985, a seminar on Policy Direction in Guidance and Counselling in Education was held in Molepolole. The seminar drew participants from the Ministry of Education, University of Botswana, Teachers Union, Headmaster's Association Tirelo Sechaba, Ministry of Local Government and Lands and teacher training institutions.

The seminar among other things addressed the critical importance of counselling in Botswana. Some of the recommendations at the seminar were that:

- (1) Guidance services be provided to all students in primary and secondary schools.
- (2) A unit be established within the Curriculum Development and Evaluation, to initiate, develop and co-ordinate guidance activities in the entire education system.

Subsequent to this seminar, a consultancy report was submitted by Navin (1985) on the status of guidance and counselling as well as counselling needs in the country. A guidance programme for the country was also suggested. The creation of a Guidance and Counselling Unit within the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation in 1987 was another significant event in the development of guidance and counselling in Botswana. The Unit among other things started to monitor the delivery of guidance services at the primary and secondary school levels in the country while it also designed guidelines and instructional materials for the school guidance programme.

The Role of Information and Its Impact on Guidance and Counselling in Botswana

Through the Guidance and Counselling Unit, information on guidance and counselling is disseminated to schools within the country. The Unit for instance provides information on training and employment opportunities for distribution to schools and out of school youth. The Guidance and Counselling Unit also began to collect, compile, classify, produce and disseminate guidance and counselling related materials to schools. The Unit upon inception, designed forms for data collection from labour market. These forms were later sent to industries. Officers from the Guidance and Counselling Unit later collated the data which were later re-organized, classified and compiled to suit groups of student population in Botswana. The information thus collected which address issues of personal and human development which influence career development, decision making, employability skills and career choice, is sent to schools in Botswana.

The Guidance and Counselling Unit thus serves as a source of information to guidance teachers in schools on matters related to guidance. The Guidance and Counselling Unit is also involved in the production of Career Manuals for Botswana Schools. The first volume of Career Manual for Botswana Schools was produced by the Guidance Unit in 1993 and this manual has been prepared primarily for secondary school students. The manual provided a wide range of occupations covering the nature, general description, preparation and benefits. For each career identified in the

manual, the following information are provided-specific duties, hours of work, conditions and preparation, entry requirements, prospects and projections about the job, possible institution of training and where the individual could work in Botswana.

The information on guidance and counselling available to students in schools is expected to lead to positive impact. The Ministry of Education (1990) through the services rendered by the Guidance and Counselling Unit envisaged that by the end of the nine years basic education course and/or senior secondary education programme, the student/pupil should have gained insight in the area of personal guidance, social guidance and vocational career guidance. Specifically, students through personal guidance are expected to gain knowledge about themselves, their value, needs, abilities and aptitudes. They are also expected to acquire good social relationships and communication skills through social guidance. Educational guidance will provide students/pupils with educational awareness, acquisition of work skills and the importance of education is expected to increase career education, career awareness, decision making skills, employability awareness and career information service.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF INFORMATION IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN BOTSWANA

Formal guidance is relatively new in Botswana schools while most of the activities to co-ordinate information on guidance and counselling emanate from the Guidance and Counselling Unit in Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation of the Ministry of Education. The extent of information supplied by the Unit is also limited by the number of specialists in Guidance and Counselling in the Unit. It is noteworthy however that more specialists in Guidance and Counselling are being encouraged to proceed for training in Guidance and Counselling. The provision of trained counsellors in each Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary School is yet to be achieved. These specialities are required to provide necessary information service, a vital aspect of guidance services in schools. With the availability of training and/or inservice facilities in the area of counselling in the country for interested personnel, information service and other guidance services could become more available to students/pupils who would be the beneficiaries.

Further development of the Guidance and Counselling Unit within the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation, where the professional staff in the Unit are expected to increase from 5 to about 10-14 as envisaged during the National Development plan (NDP) VII period is also a prospect for information service in terms of manpower. The increased personnel in the Guidance and Counselling Unit in addition to specialists trained in guidance and counselling would provide more services in the educational system.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR INFORMATION IN GUIDANCE COUNSELLING IN BOTSWANA

The Ministry of Education currently serves as the source of information in guidance and counselling to various Schools in Botswana. The Guidance and Counselling Unit in a bid to foster training in information services could be the facilitator of workshops, seminars and symposia for school teachers in the country. With the establishment of a Counselling Centre at the University of Botswana in 1992, staff in the Centre have embarked on the dissemination of information of guidance and counselling in addition to the provision of other guidance services such as appraisal, counselling, planning, placement and follow-up services. The Centre also serves as practicum site for interns in training in guidance and counselling.

The introduction of a Post Graduate Diploma in Counsellor Education programme at the University of Botswana in 1994 was a significant step in the training of professionals in counselling who could function in school, community and religious settings. The programme was also established to provide training for guidance practitioners to meet the envisaged expansion of guidance and counselling services in the educational system of the country. During the course of National Development Plan (NDP) V11. Provision of guidance and counselling services is also envisaged for the senior secondary schools while it is intended in the country to have a designated post of Careers Teachers in each Community Junior Secondary School by the end of 1979, when there might be well over 200 Community Junior Secondary Schools, which is the target figure set for (NDP) V1. Given the expansion that has characterized the Primary Education System during (NDP) V and (NDP) VI it is also envisaged that there would be approximately 600 primary schools by 1997. It is also intended to have a designated "Teacher/Counsellor" in each primary school in the country. In addition to the Post Graduate Diploma in Counsellor Education (PGDCE) training at the University of Botswana, some orientation to guidance and counselling is also provided to other students in the University. Such orientation is provided to pre-service training programmes such as the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) at the University of Botswana and the Diploma in Secondary Education (DSE) programme at the Molepolole College of Education.

Guidance and Counselling is also a compulsory one semester course in the University of Botswana's B.Ed. Primary Education and the Diploma (Primary Education) programmes.

It becomes apparent that there are efforts to provide teachers with some exposure to guidance and counselling in general, while the Post Graduate Diploma in Counsellor Education programme currently in place and other higher level Counsellor Education programmes envisaged in future at the University of Botswana would provide specialists who could render information and other guidance services to students in schools.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Information is central to guidance and counselling as a way of providing direction for the individual within the school system. Students also need clarifications on a number of issues related to educational, occupational and personal-social situations. Students

will have to make decisions which sometimes could be difficult if they lack sufficient information. The introduction of formal guidance and counselling in Botswana schools is a healthy development in the provision of services to aid adjustment in schools. The establishment of the Guidance and Counselling Unit in the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation in the Ministry of Education, the establishment of a Counselling Centre and the Post Graduate Diploma in Counsellor Education at the University of Botswana are significant developments in the training of specialists and provision of guidance and counselling services in the country. To sustain training and enhance guidance and counselling services in the country, the following are recommended :

1. Officials of the Guidance and Counselling Unit in the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation should meet regularly with the Careers Teachers or other providers of guidance services in schools to assist those staff who need help in the use of information materials which emanate from the unit.
2. Guidance counsellors should work closely with other information professionals such as librarians and information scientists. These information professionals will be expected to acquire, select and process relevant information for guidance and counselling which in turn will be made available to the counsellor.
3. The Botswana National Library Service in conjunction with the Guidance and Counselling Unit in the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation and relevant departments of the University of Botswana should organise regular seminars, workshops and conferences on the importance of information in counselling.
4. There is need for training of counsellors at other levels such as masters degree and doctorate degree levels. Such programmes should have substantial information component. This will necessarily raise the level of competence of specialists in the area of guidance and counselling.

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