

PASCAL Report to the Gaborone Region

PURE Work 2009-2010

A. The profile and context of the Gaborone Region

The Gaborone Region is in Botswana, a landlocked, semi-arid country in southern Africa with a total land area of 582, 000 square kilometres. Botswana is surrounded by South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Its total population is approximately 1.8 million people, and it is estimated that 53% of the population live in urban areas. A former colony of Britain, Botswana gained independence in 1966. While the economy has made remarkable improvements in the last four decades or so, Botswana is faced with the challenges of how to sustain its high economic growth in the light of other challenges, including HIV and AIDS, poverty, and environmental issues.

Gaborone Region comprises Gaborone City, with a population of 186,000, and its surrounding areas. The city is an administrative rather than an industrial centre. The population density of the Gaborone Region is 1,000 persons per kilometre. Village settlements on the periphery of Gaborone City have experienced rapid growth in recent years and this development has presented important policy implications for the city. This situation has created additional pressure on the provision and distribution of goods, utilities such as water electricity, sewage and refuse collection, and services such as employment, education, health and housing. Poverty is one of the major development challenges for Gaborone City.

While there has been a remarkable increase in educational levels, attested by the increase and diversity of tertiary education in Gaborone, the city evidences has high unemployment, especially amongst graduates. There is a significant need to attract sustainable inward investment. Environmental issues include a lack of renewable energy targets, traffic congestion and refuse disposal challenges.

The swift modernisation of Gaborone City has had noticeable impact on the 'traditional culture' of Gaborone Region (and the country of Botswana as a whole). As is the case in many parts of the world, it has created stresses and strains between the need to modernise and the need to maintain traditional indigenous values. The rapid increase in, and the attendant demand placed on the social and service infrastructure, is exacerbated by the problems of HIV/AIDS and its attendant problems of childcare (for orphaned children), the health care system and the workforce (where there is a shortage of the skilled labour necessary to feed economic development).

B. Formal and informal means of engagement

Initial Involvement for PURE began work with the University of Botswana (UB) as a consequence of the University's interest in using the networking services and analytical tools offered by the project. This work then expanded to include Gaborone City (GC), as UB took forward the models and expertise offered by PURE project partners. and by the analytical review teams which visited on behalf of PURE.

What developments have been registered in PURE reviews?

- *Networking:* The dialogue and discussion on how Higher Education Institutions can collaborate and partner with other development institutions in government, the private sector and NGOs has increased markedly between UB and GC. The main activities that have facilitated this process are the stakeholder workshops (one per year), which have been taken forward, and the high-level contacts furthered between the two institutions. The MoU signed between UB and Gaborone City Council is a sign of the sustainable development of this engagement process. The visits of the CDG have also allowed dialogue with the other, private sector, HEI in the city, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology.
- *Needs Assessment Study:* As part of the PURE study, a research team made up of UB and GC representatives took the responsibility of conducting a needs assessment study aimed at informing future partnership engagements between higher learning institutions and the city of Gaborone. The assessment focused on five possible areas of engagement, namely, culture, environmental sustainability, physical planning and economic empowerment. Respondents indicated that participation in PURE had produced useful engagement between UB and GC, something that had not been in place before the project's presence, and a strategic agenda which would form the basis of future collaboration.
- *Opportunity to learn from other experiences:* During the two years of the development and running of PURE, the region was represented at three PASCAL international conferences (in Limerick, Vancouver and Ostersund) and hosted the 2010 PASCAL Conference in Gaborone.

C. Benefits and prospective future gains from future networking

PURE Benchmarking tools: Colleagues within both UB and GC indicated that access to the PURE benchmarking tools was a significant lever in developing engagement activities. As with other PURE regions, the significance of the tool was that it provided an opportunity for joint adaptation and development of measures both to recognise and evaluate engagement activities. To this end the

PURE benchmarking tool acted as a significant frame of reference. During the UB/GC joint research team workshops, the participants adapted the tools in order to forge context-specific data- collection instruments to assess and evaluate prospective engagement activities.

Secondly, the participants noted that the list of substantive aspects of regional development provided within the tool was a direct support to the task of choosing areas of activity thrown up by the workshops as possibilities. The UB/GC teams focussed on four areas: SME development, cultural initiatives, identification of projects concerned with environmental sustainability and joint urban planning initiatives, as suggested by the first review team visit in 2009.

Cluster Forum Discussion. Although this was repeatedly offered to colleagues in the region as a means whereby the engagement of the City Council could be assisted and supported through networking with other urban conurbations within PURE, unfortunately this opportunity could not be more be fully explored.

Gaborone is not alone in facing the challenges to planning and service agencies that population migration and economic change presents. The other urban areas represented within PURE may have, indeed, learned as much from how Gaborone was facing these challenges, in the African context, as GC may have learned from its European and Australian sister projects.

At the same time, UB might have benefited from networking with other HE institutions in these projects. These have already demonstrated a range of approaches in HEI/public body engagement.

D. How the region can get more value from engagement

UB acknowledges that, while each partner manages its own affairs, it can engage effectively with its cities/regions through the following emphases:

On measures of joint capacity-building within the PURE region, as a means for partner organizations to develop trust, to recognise challenges faced (and in what manner these can be addressed) by colleagues in partner agencies, and as a means of developing objectives to produce benefits to be derived from the partnership.

On the development of joint Policy Frameworks, for both UB and GC, in order to set aims, objectives and budgets for further research and evidence-gathering, for setting targets and for implementing joint innovative activities.

E. Evidence that the work of pure work will be sustained in the future

On the basis of the indicators of development achieved during the lifetime of the project, namely:

- The MoU signed between UB and GC
- The Draft Strategic Plan developed from the needs assessment study framed by PURE
- The spin-off ITMUA (Implementing the Third Mission of Universities in Africa) project in collaboration with the National University of Lesotho, the University of Malawi and Calabar University with the support of the University of Glasgow.ⁱ The methodology from the PURE project is being made available to ITMUA and is being adapted for use in the project. PASCAL is making available its electronic networking infrastructure to project participants who will link to other PURE regions. This will allow continuing linkage for Gaborone to ongoing work of PURE.
- The University of Botswana has particularly strong links with the University of Glasgow with whom it has a strategic partnership, facilitated through the Glasgow Centre for International Development (see <http://www.gla.ac.uk/centres/gcid/partners/>). Among the activities are scholarship arrangements. It is hoped that a member of staff in the UB Department of Adult Education will be able to take up a place under the Eleanor Emery Scholarship Scheme which was made possible by the generous legacy of Eleanor Emery, a graduate of the University of Glasgow, who left money in her will to fund Botswana postgraduate students to study at the University. This staff member would join the cohort of PURE Doctoral students.

The foundation for engagement afforded by participation in PURE has left the region in good shape to continue discussion and dialogue in this and other ways. In particular, the relationship established between the UB and GC members of the joint research teams has ensured that the evidence base afforded by staff in the Planning and Engineering departments within UB, together with dialogue between GC officers and UB staff engaged in cultural and environmental studies, will take forward the two-way exchange of ideas, and the analysis of social and infrastructure challenges.

ⁱ (see <http://pascalobservatory.org/projects/current/more/implementing-third-mission-universities-africa-itmua>). This was developed directly as a result of PURE work in Lesotho and Gaborone. It is a support project of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in Africa, at the Association of African Universities (AAU), Accra under the [Mobilising Regional Capacity Initiative \(MRCI\)](#).