

*Full Length Research Paper*

# The status of education for sustainable development in the faculty of education, views from faculty members: University of Botswana

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The paper is based on a study which sought the understanding and appreciation of, and activities on issues of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) amongst the staff of the Faculty of Education, University of Botswana (UB). A survey design was adopted with a questionnaire for collecting data from academic staff members while Heads of Academic Departments (HoDs) were interviewed. The findings show an agreement between academic staff and HoDs that ESD issues are inadequately addressed in the Faculty of Education in UB and that ESD is confused with Environmental Education. Whilst staff paints a rosy picture of ESD in teaching, assessment and curriculum, their responses with regard their willingness to take part and their expertise in ESD issues as well involvement in ESD related research is negative. This might imply that the alleged teaching, assessment curriculum development and community engagement are not informed by research. Amongst the recommendations made are, that there is need to sensitize and provide in-service training to the staff of the Faculty of Education on the concept, activities and issues of ESD, so that they are able to engage in research to ensure informed ESD related teaching, research and service to the community.

**Key words:** Education for sustainable development, natural resources, environmental education, community engagement, higher education, Botswana.

## INTRODUCTION

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is a vision of education that seeks to balance human and economic well-being with cultural traditions and respect for the earth's natural resources (Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005 – 2014; UNESCO, 2005). The earth's climate has been warming and cooling and continues doing so now in a life threatening way as it affects for instance, rainfall, agriculture, health due to high temperatures, tsunamis, and earthquakes. There's no doubt that the climate continues growing warmer. Indications of that change are all around us. Though climate change is not new, the deliberate and conscious efforts to address this phenomenon are fairly new to most nations. Attempts to address issues of climate change

cannot be confined to any particular field of study as they affect each and every sector of life. Therefore, they must be addressed through all disciplines.

According to The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the average surface temperature of the earth has increased during the twentieth century by about  $\pm 0.2$  to  $0.6^{\circ}\text{C}$ . While temperature increase part of the natural processes, human activities are also seen as being a catalyst, primarily for instance, the burning of fossil fuels, which has increased the greenhouse gas content of the atmosphere. Whilst this may seem like a small increase, it has a significant impact on global general climate in that it is warmer today around the world than at any time during the past 100 years (Global

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Climate Change, 2002).

The current trends with regards to addressing issues of climate change have to do with the ability for nations to be able to utilize the natural resources, whilst at the same time ensuring long time maintenance of these for the benefit of future generations. Whilst there are causes of climate change which are mainly natural, a vast number of other causes are due to human activities. There is, therefore, a need for sustainable usage and management of natural resources through human awareness, sensitization and implementation of the best practices. Higher Education has therefore a critical role to play in this respect as it produces a key human resource for the future of any country.

The International world is making efforts to address environmental mismanagements to reduce unacceptable toxic wastes. For instance conventions, agreements, frameworks such as *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)*, *The Convention on Wetlands of Importance as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention)*, *The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*, *The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer*, *The Copenhagen Accord of November, 29, 2009*, *The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, have been entered into and signed. However, except for a few countries such as China and Sweden who have made headway into implementing environmental sustainability practices, most countries, especially the developing ones have not come to terms with the concept of environmental sustainability.

These conventions are intended to sensitize, alert and educate everyone, young and old through various governments subscribing to them. It is to be noted that when it comes to addressing people who are already mature and have already developed their negative attitudes towards the environment, it is a difficult task to change them away from these negative, hard and engraved ways of thinking and dealing with the environment in a positive and sustainable way. Besides the negative attitudes towards the environment that adults have, there are other factors which influence their thinking, such as poverty and ignorance. For instance, in the case of Botswana, cutting firewood without due care for re-planting to replace the trees seem to be a thorny practice fuelled by ignorance and short-sightedness. This is so because whilst these adults cut trees they do not realize that if they do not reforest, the future generations may not be able to benefit from the very resources that they themselves are benefiting from now in an attempt to fight their own poverty. This is a pure question of lack of education and entrenched negative attitudes towards the natural resources. Thus, efforts need to be made to build a positive attitude toward environmental sustainability so that whilst the current generation benefits from it, the same generation must also be aware of the future consequences. Higher education should have a role to

play in this respect.

### Research focus

The United Nation's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) emphasise on ESD. In order to realise the UNDESD and the MDGs especially goal 7 of 'ensuring environmental sustainability', the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Treaty: Article 5(1) stresses the importance of sustainable utilization of natural resources and effective protection of the environment, and above all, the promotion of sustainable development. The Botswana's Vision 2016 emphasises on environmental and sustainability issues while the Botswana's Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) calls for Environmental Education across the curriculum.

To realise the aspirations of ESD at global level through UNDESD and MDGs, at the regional level (SADC) through SADC REEP, and at National level through RNPE and Botswana Vision 2016, the University of Botswana (UB) through its vision of becoming a centre of excellence in Africa and the World has as one of its values as follows:

Ensuring "*environmental sustainability by deepening awareness and ensuring that environmental issues are incorporated into student learning, teaching and research, the development of environmentally sustainable campus and through contributing to the environmental sustainability agenda in Botswana and beyond*" (University of Botswana: Undergraduate Calendar, 2011:3).

Since it is through the various faculties and their programmes that the UB Vision can be realised, the paper focuses on the Faculty of Education and intend to find out the level of understanding and appreciation of issues of Education for Sustainable Development amongst the staff members. The focus is on staff members as they are the machinery through which sustainability knowledge can be dissemination through teaching; produced through research and put to use through engagement with the community. Therefore the extent to which these functions of staff members of the Faculty of Education with regard ESD knowledge was sought through this study.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Cherry (2013), a survey is a data collection tool used to gather factual information or self-report or opinion data from research participants. The current research adopted a survey design which allows for gathering large numbers of responses to a set of questions. The survey was used to get information on respondents' understanding of the ESD as a concept and the actual activities that are performed to address ESD issues. The instrumentation was basically a questionnaire for the Academic

Staff of the Faculty of Education of the University of Botswana and a face to face Interview with Heads of Academic Departments of the Faculty using a semi-structured interview schedule.

The questionnaire was administered to all academic staff of the Faculty of Education. The questionnaire focused on six areas of the academic member's functions which are as follows: the curriculum; teaching approach; research and scholarship activities; community engagement; assessment; and staff expertise and willingness to participate in ESD related matters.

The Faculty of Education, UB has seven academic departments. All members (120) of the academic departments were requested to fill in the questionnaire. Out of one hundred who received the questionnaire, a total number of Forty Three returned fully completed questionnaires. It is to be appreciated that it was very difficult to get questionnaires from members of staff despite continued persuasion and follow-ups. Resentment by and reluctance of some staff members to complete the questionnaire has therefore to be treated as a limitation of this study.

All seven academic heads of department in faculty were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. The questions consisted of items related to understanding of the concept of ESD and sustainability, reflections of issues of ESD in Visions, Missions and Values statements of various departments as well as infusion of issues related to ESD in the existing courses.

The questionnaire data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data was coded and presented with the help of Tables and Graphs using SPSS Version 19 while the qualitative data was presented using descriptives and verbatims.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### *Academic staff members*

To assess the realization for ESD in the curriculum, teaching staff were asked a number of questions relating to teaching approach, research and scholarship activities, community engagement, examination processes, staff expertise and willingness to participate in ESD related activities.

### **Curriculum**

Academic staff members were asked questions regarding the curriculum offered in their respective departments. From Figure 1, it is clear that majority (53 to 65%) felt that adequate measures relating to ESD issues were taken in the curricular areas. Departments offered courses that engaged sustainability concerns; sustainability topics were integrated into courses; teaching programs of various departments included both local and global sustainability issues and challenges; and students were enrolled in courses that engaged sustainability concerns. The problem lied only with the level of cross faculty collaboration in teaching sustainability programmes. More than half of the respondents (51%) rated this aspect as inadequate, whilst, only 26% of the respondents found it to be adequate and the rest did not know about it. The result paints a rosy picture about curriculum and ESD. The only gap found in curriculum and ESD is in cross faculty curriculum collaboration. This implies a need to

explore the possibilities of inter-faculty curriculum in ESD as appropriate Figure 1.

### **Teaching approach**

The respondents were asked about the contributions that the teaching approaches make to develop the capacity to make informed decisions, critical thinking skills, a sense of responsibility, respect for the opinions of others and integrated problem solving skills in the students. Figure 2 indicates that majority (72 to 81%) of respondents felt that adequate measures were taken while choosing a teaching approach to instill in learners most of the skills listed above which skills are critical in addressing ESD issues by the students. The problem, however, lied with the extent to which academic staff instills in learners their capacity to make informed decisions. The number of staff members who felt that adequate efforts were being made to instill this skill was at par (49%) with the ones who felt it to be inadequate (44%). This showed that students need to be provided with information and encouraged to research and learn more about various issues so as to be able to confidently take decision regarding sustainable development confidently Figure 2.

### **Research and scholarship activities**

The next item in the instrument was research and scholarship activities in the area of sustainability issues, challenges and development, that the departments, faculties and the institution engage with. It was found that 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the respondents (35 to 42%) felt that the engagement was inadequate in almost all the areas like department's involvement in research in the area of sustainability; local and global sustainability issues; collaborative research regarding sustainability with other faculties; institutions and stakeholders; selection/ execution of research in sustainable development and the research outputs (Figure 3). Around 28 to 44%, on the other hand found that adequate measures were taken in the area of research in sustainable development. Findings also showed that a number of respondents (19 to 30%) indicated that they did not know anything about any ESD research related activities or any initiatives for that matter. This clearly establishes a gap which needs to be bridged immediately with research, applied or action research, that can complement the curriculum with hands on experiences. Without sufficient involvement in research activities in issues related to sustainability, how can ESD be realised by the Faculty of Education?

### **Community engagement**

The next item was with regards community engagement and ESD. A cluster of indicators established the extent of

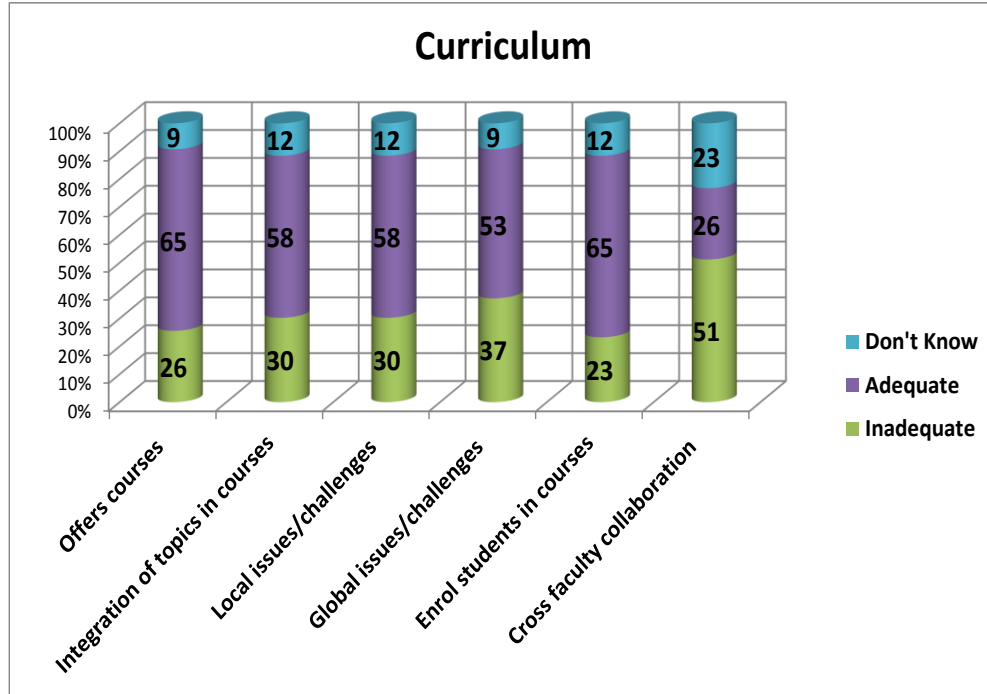


Figure 1. Curriculum and ESD.

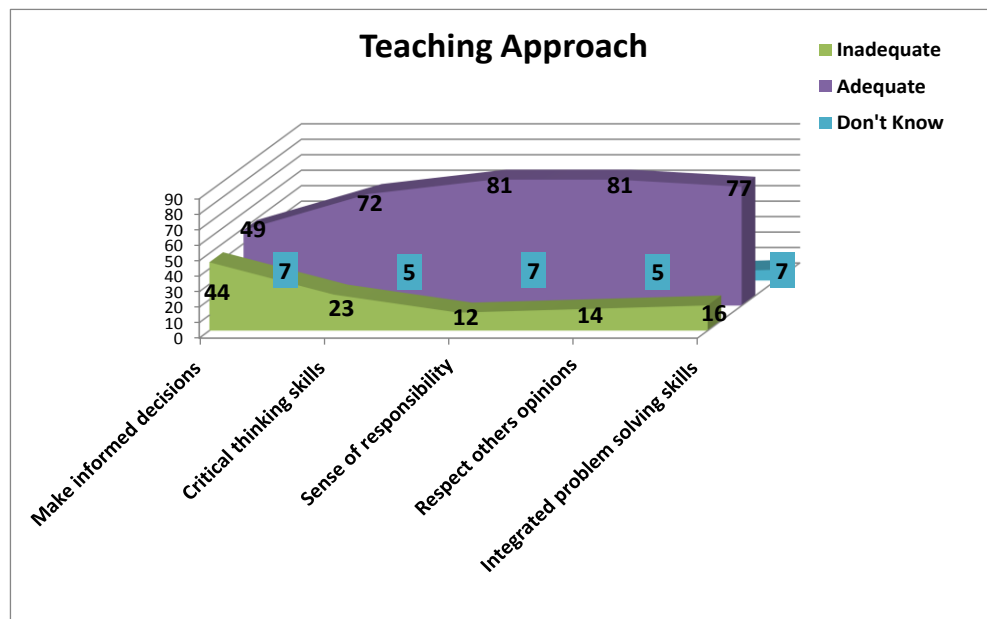


Figure 2. Teaching approach and ESD.

the departments' (staff) involvement in the area of education for sustainability. Indicators to this community engagement were the level of commitment respondents showed in using department's resources in sustainability projects; the degree to which local sustainability issues

and challenges were addressed in the departments' community engagement programmes; the extent of departmental collaboration with other stakeholders in addressing community sustainability challenges and; the extent to which aspects of sustainable development were

used in selection or execution of community engagement projects. More than half (51 to 56%) of the respondents indicated that inadequate efforts were made to use departmental resources for community projects and resolving local sustainability issues and challenges (Figure 4). Whereas, 47% felt that adequate measures were taken to involve the department in community engagement projects and 42% said collaborations with other stakeholders were made to address community sustainability challenges, the majority found the community engagement either inadequate or did not know about such programmes. There is a discrepancy between what the staff says in terms of collaboration with the community on ESD matters and execution. For instance whilst they indicate a high collaboration with stakeholders on ESD matters, they are unable to show the resources they use, community projects they are engaged in as well as local issues and challenged that they address. Therefore, this discrepancy may imply that there is not much happening in terms of community engagement Figure 4.

### **Assessment and ESD**

Under this segment, questions regarding the assessment and examination of sustainability issues in courses, projects and service learning programmes were asked. The findings show that almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> (28 to 35%) of the respondents found them inadequate, whereas 40 to 42% stated them adequately observed while assessing through examinations and projects. When the question of service learning programmes was asked, 44% of respondents said they did not know (Figure 5). Perhaps, the concept of service learning programmes, a method of teaching that combines formal instruction with a related service in the community, was either not understood, or Faculty of Education, UB does not sufficiently cater for those programmes Figure 5.

If the curriculum infuses both local and global sustainability issues into courses and teaching programs, then the examination/assessment procedure needs to emphasise those aspects in the assessment tool as well. This aspect is however wanting.

### **Staff expertise and willingness to participate in ESD related matters**

Lastly, the indicators under this cluster determined staff expertise and willingness to teach and carry out sustainability research and community services related to ESD. Faculty of Education staff was asked to state their own level of expertise and that of their co-staff members in the area of sustainability. They were also asked to state the extent to which staff members were willing to carry out research and service activities on sustainability aspects/

topics and the extent to which staff members were willing to teach sustainability topics. Less than half (37 to 47%) of them rated the staff expertise in teaching sustainability topics, conducting research in the areas of sustainability and their willingness to teach sustainability topics as adequate (Figure 6). As indicated in Figure 6, the rest of the respondents have no expertise or such expertise is inadequate or they did could not evaluate the state of expertise and willingness to participate in ESD related matters. If the majority of staff are on the negative with regards this topical area of ESD, this then is a cause for alarm and has to be addressed. However, considering the recency with which the ESD issues have entered the arena of education in Botswana and Faculty of Education in particular, the minority which is in the affirmative could be capitalized on and be used as the headlights for the majority still in the dark Figure 6.

### ***Heads of the Departments***

The Heads of various Departments of the Faculty were interviewed in order to gauge information, regarding ESD. The interview consisted of guided questions that elicited responses related to the meaning of ESD and its reflections in the Mission and Vision of Faculty of Education and its departments, as well as infusion of ESD in departmental courses. The interview also sought for suggestions on achievement of ESD in Faculty of Education and subsequently in UB.

All HoDs felt that ESD refers to something that looks at the present in such a way that it does not destroy the future, and helps in regeneration and durability. They further said that ESD is a lifelong process that ensures survival with available resources and transfers knowledge to the next generation whilst advancing socio-economic development. The HoDs were of the opinion that ESD prepares teachers to be innovative, self-sufficient and enables them to survive in any demanding environment. This is in line with Osterwalder's (2009) definition of ESD as accepting responsibility for the wellbeing of future generations and the planet habitat.

Regarding reflections of issues pertaining to ESD in Missions and Visions of UB and its departments, all the HoDs confirmed this reflection. They felt that the departments had ESD component and were informed by the mission and vision framework of the UB. They voiced their opinion that a teacher must focus on practical aptitude, be innovative and benefit from content class and pedagogical experiences for achieving ESD. They further said that teachers should skill themselves on ESD and deskill from old and defunct skills.

On the other hand, two (2) HoDs noted that ESD is not quite internalized by the departmental staff, and felt that more emphasis needed to be given on ESD.

The HoDs were also asked about infusion of ESD in departmental courses. They revealed certain ESD

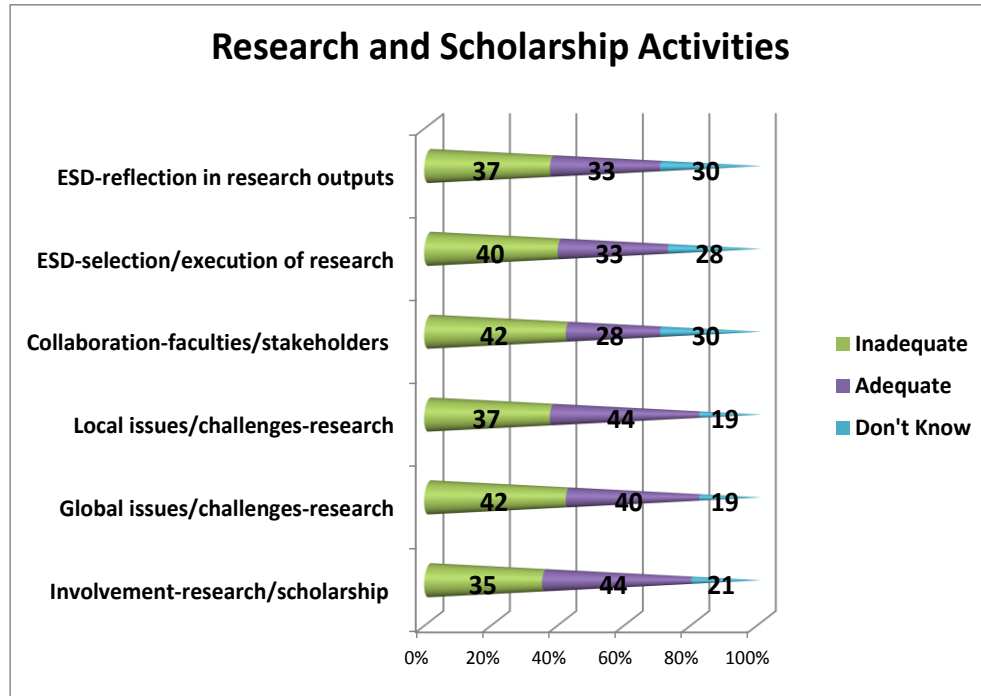


Figure 3. Research activities and ESD.

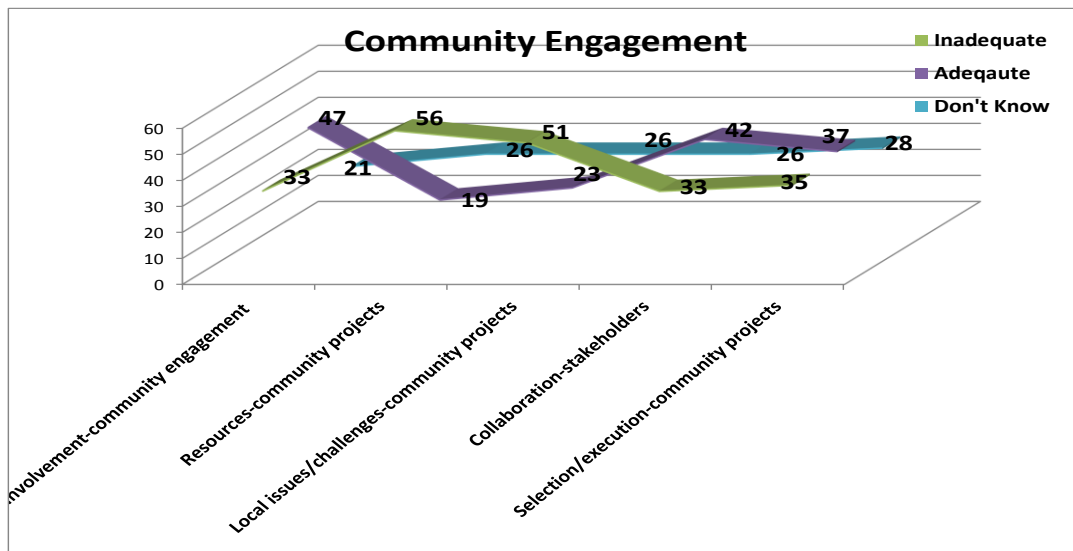


Figure 4. Community engagement and ESD.

implementation challenges. They, for instance, noted that the departmental research outputs were poor which they say clearly indicates that teaching was not supported by research on the current issues, which prohibits attainment of sustainability. They showed concern that content taught was passed from year to year, without making any changes or adjustments to suite the contexts. They felt

that most staff members at their departments lacked expertise of innovative teaching methods that could enhance sustainability. They noted that the procedure used for educating students is not commensurate with ensuring sustainability, and negatively affected students' academic, critical, and mental growth, the ingredients of a strong resourceful human. They further complained that

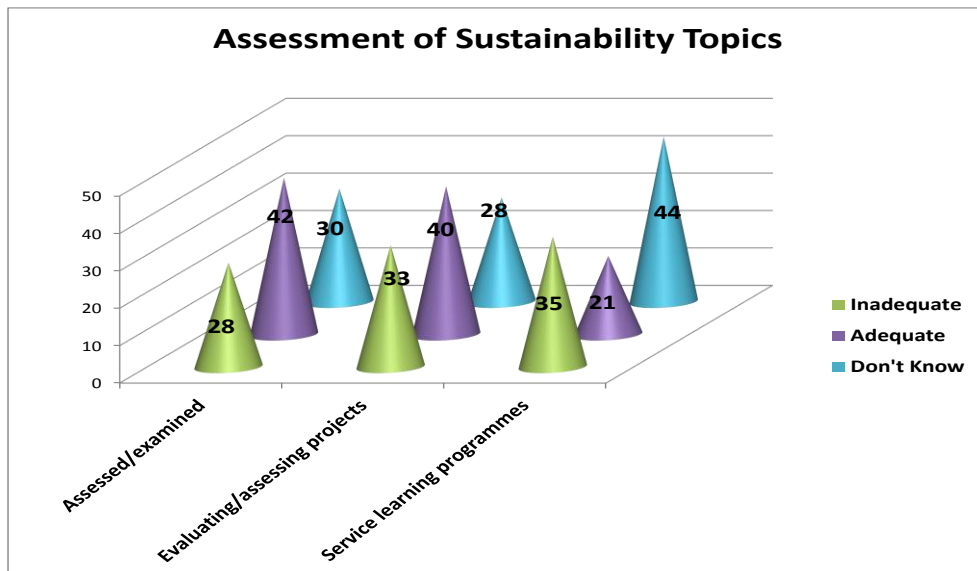


Figure 5. Assessment and ESD.

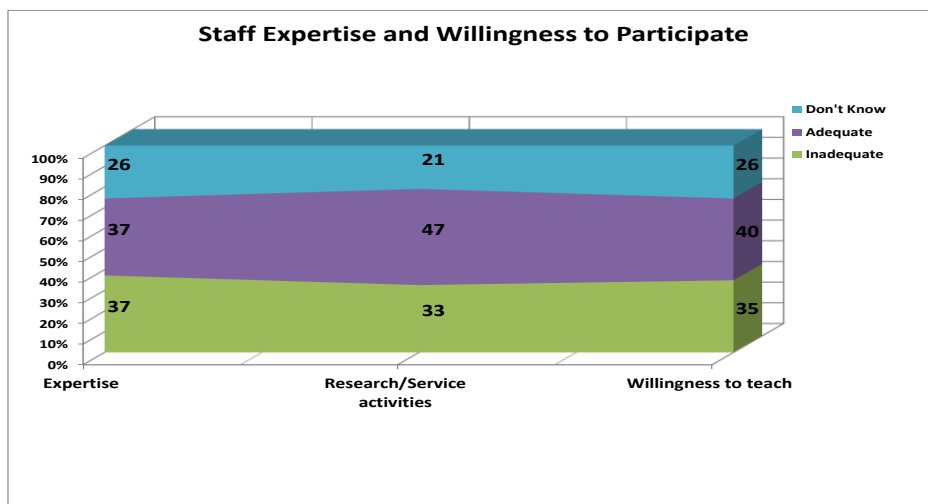


Figure 6. Staff expertise and willingness.

the UB graduate attributes were not understood and therefore not realized through the courses taught. The UB attributes are as follows: critical thinking, technological proficiency, effective communication, competent decision making and problem solving. These are also key indicators of understanding of ESD as an ESD proficient being must be able to display all the above attributes. If academic staff members cannot display these attributes in their courses, it is unlikely that they may be understanding issues of sustainability in general, and in ESD in particular. This apparent absence of graduate attributes in the course outlines is probably due to lack of know-

ledge on same or lack of knowledge on how to infuse ESD in the regular courses by academic staff members.

Some HoDs were of the opinion that a lack of clarity between ESD and Environmental Education (EE) could be a challenge to staff who might be thinking that since the Faculty has a unit which addresses EE issues, there is no need for them to duplicate the efforts of this unit. They therefore suggested that, it is imperative upon the Faculty to make a clear distinction between the two concepts.

Heads of the Departments were asked to give some suggestions regarding the achievement of ESD. The

suggestions that emerged from their deliberations were a need for Action Research to find out the current issues, constant review by the staff as well as students regarding course outlines and necessary teaching materials to establish whether these address ESD issues through graduate attributes.

The findings show a general agreement between the academic staff and HoDs that ESD issues are inadequately addressed in the Faculty of Education in UB. Whilst in teaching, assessment and curriculum there is a positive picture of addressing ESD related issues by the academic staff members a contradiction is found in the same staff members' responses regarding their willingness to take part in ESD related matters as well as indicated lack of expertise. Findings related to research also show that not much is researched on ESD related issues and yet, teaching and community engagement must be informed by research. With regard to community engagement in particular, it was clear that whilst staff claim to collaborate with the stakeholders, they were not able to identify resources they use, the ESD related community projects they are engaged in, as well as the local issues and challenges they address.

The above contradictions are corroborated by the findings from the HoDs which point to inadequate addressing of ESD matters in the curriculum, teaching, research and community engagement.

## DISCUSSION

With regards to cross faculty teaching in sustainability issues, the findings are in synch with the findings by Rietje van Dam-Mieras (2006) who notes disciplinary oriented education as a challenge to attaining education for sustainable development. He suggests that it is important to look further than the borders of one's discipline and/or faculty in order to complement and supplement one's activities with regards education for sustainable development. Mieras (2006:15) calls for competencies of looking "*further than the borders of own field of specialization or culture to work together with different people of different beliefs, to communicate orally, in writing and via new media, and reflect on the own personal dedication, involvement and performance*" in ESD.

The competency alluded to above is lacking in the Faculty of Education, University of Botswana. This could be interpreted as inability of staff involved in ESD not attaching value to cross- involvement as something that can grow and benefit the Faculty and society at large. Could it be that each person wants to be the owner of the discipline and therefore be the sole authority or simply a lack of understanding of cross-disciplinary learning as critical to ESD? If that is the case, it may imply clearly that the whole essence of ESD is not fully understood and appreciated as a challenge that requires jointed

efforts from various stakeholders and therefore, that the challenge can only be managed in unison. The disjointed approaches to issues of sustainability as they manifest themselves in the Faculty are definitely not a good germination ground for the realization of one of its values of ensuring environmental sustainability through deepening awareness. According to Dawe et al. (2005), it is critical to ensure that sustainability literacy is made a core competency among graduates. The culture of Botswana is such that traditionally, the nation had its own way of providing sustainability competencies from youth. Methodologies of providing these competencies have since been neglected or not incorporated in modern learning. For instance, as early as childhood, children were taught how to work in teams across families and ethnic groups, by implication, inter and across discipline interactions were engaged in. The youth would be engaged in debates while sitting around a fire in the evening after supper, and would interpret riddles which enhanced their critical thinking. The atmosphere of such learning would be typified by peer education with background support from the adults. The education processes took into consideration, contexts which modern education seem to be lacking in. Modern education in Botswana depends mostly on those from elsewhere and in most cases without knowledge of the culture of the learners. Currently, only those educated from a modern point of view are teachers and hardly natural or traditional teachers are used. This is a gap because when that happens, learners view education as an alien and difficult exercise composed of harsh disciplinary measures for those who cannot easily learn. It is therefore not an enjoyable and leisurely experience. It is argued therefore that the country has a rich culture of natural sustainability competencies which can be drawn from. The traditional education of Bojale (initiation for girls) and Bogwera (initiation for boys) are typical examples of traditional schools which taught youth all the competencies of self-sustainability. These schools taught morality, environmental sustainability by observing certain practices which prevented the uncontrolled felling of trees, indiscriminate killing of fauna and even preservation of soils through taboos for example.

As a way of enhancing the teaching of ESD one suggests the use of traditional education as way to complement modern education, by implication, this should be seen as some form of interdisciplinary education.

The traditional education competencies and their methodologies could be incorporated into the higher education curricular either as part of courses or as extra-curricular activities. These activities would no doubt, as had been the case in the olden days, embed in learners the right sustainability attitudes with regards the general ecosystem. The use of collaborative teaching through involving traditional teachers or community elders in higher education is an aspect that can be explored. The idea is not to go native perse, but to include within the



learning environment those positive aspects which may be alien to modern teachers who are in most cases not exposed to this contextual education.

To further acknowledge the importance of traditional education as an important compliment of modern education with regards sustainable development, curriculum reviews should be embarked on to create space for this traditional education and/or infuse it into modern syllabi. There is no doubt that this would add more work to higher education lecturers, but as noted by Dawe et al. (2005) it is important to review curriculum to create space for ESD.

Research plays a critical role in providing informed decision relating to any policy and/or practice in any field. With the advent of intensification in issues of climate change and their negative ripple effects on humanity, it is imperative that institutions of higher learning be proactive in providing evidence based policies and practices as they relate to ESD. Hametner et al. (2010:1) clearly articulate the importance of evidence-based decision making which accordingly *“attempts to link knowledge and policy...to make policies more effective, manage risks, achieve transparency strengthen accountability and support learning”*.

The research findings point to the fact that not much research takes place in ESD issues within the Faculty of Education. The reason could probably be failure to understand and appreciate issues of sustainable development because if indeed faculty appreciated these ESD challenges, it would be puzzling to understand why not much research activity is taking place in this area.

The Faculty of Education is closely linked to the Botswana Educational Research Association (BERA) whose mandate is to conduct educational related research. In the research agenda for BERA, it is important to bring in issues of sustainable development. This is the avenue that can assist researchers to access topics that may have sustainability impact. Botswana Educational Research Association conducts workshops for potential researchers on problem identification; methodology writing; data collection and analysis. Conducting research in itself is a way of sustainable development as it explores issues, and attempts to answer questions that border on issues of sustainability as a cross cutting challenge. Instead of feeling that researching about education is not a sustainability issue, it must be understood as such. A deliberate effort has to be made to ensure that within the BERA workshops, the concept of sustainability is explained and how it relates to all disciplines in the Faculty and that each and every member can, in their respective disciplines, talk to and research on sustainable development. Researching issues of sustainability as a process could make teachers appreciate and internalise *this* concept and therefore practice as well as impart to the learners the right competencies. Through our own discovery of issues, answers to challenges, we develop ownership of the solutions. The systems research approach enhances ownership of solutions by involving

the researched as part of the researchers. Their subjective views of the world and participants observation of the world would make succinct their understanding of the sustainability challenges and therefore come up with relevant and realistic interventions.

Within the Faculty of Education, the dominant research methodologies are quantitative where researchers fail to make connections across and between different variables within the communities. The Faculty needs to re-focus its methodologies and embrace those that would lend themselves well onto sustainability issues which are usually socially constructed and caused. As pointed out by Welsh and Ingram (2012) systems research approach, which is holistic and assumes things are interconnected, interact and control one another, could be one of the most appropriate research approaches to use. In order to be pragmatic in addressing sustainability challenges, it is critical to be problem focused. Therefore, to understand and critically appreciate such problems, it is important to include clients, as part of the research processes as participants and the researched, all the interconnected tissues which are victims and beneficiaries of sustainability impacts as well as perpetrators. Community engagement in research should therefore be through research methodologies which are social systems inclined or ethnographic. In other words, the conventional research approaches dominant in Botswana particularly the use of questionnaires could be minimized to engage in qualitative methodologies which use the researched as part of the research teams. It is argued that ethnic groups have their traditional ways of sustaining their environments. In particular, Botswana groups have taboos, customs and beliefs as well as their behaviour towards the environment. Engaging with them in participant observation modes of research would entice them to feel free and share with the external researchers, which are University staff and students, how they currently or used to sustain their environment. As noted by Genzuk (1999), ethnography is a description of a particular culture, customs, beliefs and behaviour of a particular group of people. Engaging people in these sustainability actions would sensitize them in terms of how, despite their challenges of poverty for example, they can still conserve their resources.

The University of Botswana, like many institutions of higher learning has, as one of its key performance areas, Engagement with the Community. It is anticipated therefore that the Faculty of Education would therefore among others, be engaged with the community in sustainability issues. The research results however, show that not much is done by staff members in this regard. The Faculty of Education has a responsibility to produce teachers who must provide a national education foundation on ESD in both primary and secondary school children. As noted earlier, adults who are already malpractising environmental sustainability management by, for instance indiscriminately destroying the vegetation,

have *'they cannot be dehorned lest they die'*. In other words have engraved negative attitudes towards sustainability. The focus must therefore be on the youth who are still malleable in their absorption and retention of knowledge and best practices in sustainability concepts and practices.

Every subject that is taught at the University is an expansion of subjects offered at both primary and secondary education. It is imperative for curriculum to spiral upwards so that there is continuity in education. That continuity is an aspect of sustainability and has to be enhanced as such through, for example, engagement of University academic staff in subject panels at both primary and secondary education levels to provide the link.

According to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (2009), some higher education institutions focus on bridging the theory practice divide by providing students with opportunities to apply their learning in surrounding communities. The Faculty of Education does this through teaching practice and internships. It is argued that more can still be done in the area of ESD by making sure that every student engages with the community one way or the other demonstrating acquisition of the graduate attributes within the communities. A deliberate policy could be made that every student undertakes a community project showcasing anyone or multiple graduate attributes as a way of ensuring that students internalize the understanding of sustainability as espoused through the graduate attributes. A policy of this nature accompanied by its practice can enhance in both staff and students an appreciation of these attributes as competencies of sustainability.

It is argued that while academic staff as well as students always find their curriculum packed making it difficult to accommodate extra work, conscious decisions could be made to put aside a day in every two weeks for students in their respective disciplines to interact with the community in various social responsibility activities such as working with children at primary and secondary schools in various projects which are aligned to sustainability issues. Pasque et al. (2005) point out that serving society is one of the most important higher education functions and that at this time when nations are faced with lots of difficulties such as issues of poor sustainability, the question is not whether universities need to concern themselves with these societal problems but rather whether they are discharging them as they should.

It is therefore imperative for the Faculty of Education, the source and producer of teachers to take a deliberate initiative of internalizing the ESD concept in order to impart it to the teachers who in turn must engrave it in the minds of the young ones. For teachers at Higher Education to appreciate this activity, the students must be made to interact with societal challenges throughout their training hence a suggestion to get them put aside specific

days for just that as part of the curriculum. This would obviously require a re-working and reviewing of the curriculum, to shred any superfluous content.

As noted by Buchan (2012) the book of Proverbs in the Bible says that if we raise a child in God's ways, he will not lose his ways when he or she grows older. By the same token, if children are raised in good ESD ways, they will not lose these good ways when they are older and there will be no need to discipline or fight with them as they will be in good understanding of sustainable development. The statement above denotes a need to engage teachers in ESD throughout their training, as these teachers have to go and impart such knowledge to their pupils and students. The question that arises as also noted by Kethoilwe (2010) is inadequate policy and support by the institution coupled with a dearth of understanding what sustainable development really means by staff. To sensitize the staff would demand a deliberate engagement in continuous seminars and debates by higher institutions

## Conclusion

In general, there seem to be a trend in the University of Botswana, Faculty of Education that not much is happening with regards education for sustainable development. This is picked up from responses to curriculum implementation, research and community engagement, the three key performance areas of the University of Botswana academic. Carteron, Vermont and Stoll with the cooperation of members of the Responsible Management Network and the Euro Med Management Sustainable Development Student Association (Unis Terre) (2013), note that there are different types of people whose characteristics could act as a barrier to achievement of sustainable development goals. In particular, which one feels may apply to Faculty of Education, UB, is what they call the Darwinists inclined people. According to Carteron et al. inference from the Darwin theory, those who do not do anything about education for sustainable development believe in fate. Carteron et al. (2013:1) note that these types of people believe that:

*"ecological, cultural and sociological changes have always existed.....and they led to extinction of some species, changing the lifestyles, forcing people to change... natural selection.... That the way it is its natural selection... You cannot save everyone .... Let people do what they want... It is fate, a series of coincidences will solve the problem. Life is competition... self-regulation."*

If the above is the case in the University of Botswana, Faculty of Education, the highest learning institute in the country then there is a lot that needs to be done to conscientise the staff who themselves are critical in

educating the nation.

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