

INPUT PAPER

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Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in the social work curricular: The case of University of Botswana

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Background of the country

Botswana is a land locked country in the Sub-Sahara region of Africa. It borders with South Africa on the south and eastern side, Namibia in the west, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the North and North West. It is a multi-party democracy with a relatively stable political environment. It gained independence from Britain in 1966 with the late Sir Seretse Khama being the first President, following a unicameral governing structure with strong emphasizes on a decentralized administration policy system (Davis, 1996). Currently there are nine (9) administrative districts in the country (Southern, South East, North East, Kgatleng, Kweneng, Kgalagadi, Ghanzi, Central, and North West). These have further been divided into sub-districts to enable efficient and effective service delivery at the community level. It has a population of about 2 million people which is concentrated on the eastern part along the railway line that runs from Cape to Cairo and the west is a hub for wildlife and tourism. It is a multicultural society characterized by the Hereros, BaNgologa, Bakwena, and the Basarwa in the west, Bayeyi, Bahambukushu, Basobeya, and Batawana in the North west, Bakalanga and Bakhurutse in the north east, Bangwato and Bakgatla in the central, Balete in the south east, and Bangwaketse and Barolong in the southern part and the dominant groups being the Tswana speaking (Tlou and Campbell, 1999).

Purpose of the paper

Botswana has suffered great losses from natural disasters like drought, livestock / cattle diseases, heavy rains and floods, thunder and windstorms, health hazards (malaria, HIV & AIDS, vectors, and cholera), wild land fires, and environmental degradation. These hazards are widespread across the country and the effects have been complicated by the socio-physical environment. As such, the impact of these hazards varies according to the districts depending on the socio-economic mode of the community living in the area. Some communities in the north east and western part of Botswana have been impoverished completely by the outbreak of foot & mouth, anthrax, and CBPP (cattle lung disease) which decimated their livestock. Foot & Mouth is the cause why the beef industry in Botswana has continued to shrink and fizzle through over the years. It is not known whether the beef industry will revive again and sustain the European Union market as at independence. Besides livestock related hazards, drought has a major threat for subsistence and commercial agriculture in the country. However, in 2000 there was a cyclone which originated from the Mozambique Channel that resulted in the heaviest floods ever recorded in the history of the country (International Resource Group, 2001). Continually, Botswana has experienced 14 natural disasters from the period of 1980 to 2010 with 95.5 per cent of the people reported to be killed by the epidemic while 4.5 per cent in that period were killed by floods. Similarly, 84.8 per cent of the people were affected by drought, while 12.4 per cent were affected by flood, and 2.8 per cent were by epidemics (EM-DAT, 2009.) In addition, some of the common disaster hazards in Botswana besides droughts are flooding, windstorms, wild land fires, motor vehicle accidents, structural fires, pest infestation, HIV &

AIDS, animal diseases, and asylum seeker / illegal immigrants' influx, strong winds, and transport accidents (United Nations Development Programme, 2009; EM-DAT, 2009; International Resource Group, 2001). Similarly, schools in Botswana have been affected severely by floods, windstorms, riots, class boycotts, and vandalism where classrooms and hostels were burnt, and heavy rains made it difficult for learning to progress smoothly. In the event of a disaster, children are the most affected, schooling systems are disrupted, therefore affecting a fundamental right of children, the right to education. Developmental gains in education are reversed with the damage or destruction of school facilities, the prolonged disruption of education, limited access to schooling, and decreased education quality (according to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Towards a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction).

IFRC (2007) has shown that the complexity of natural disasters is compounded further by climate change that presents unpredictable weather patterns. As such, changes in weather patterns make development a complex process and speeds up environmental degradation. World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (2005) indicates that 2/3 of all disasters are climate or weather related. The impact of these disasters is multifaceted, complex and most importantly, has serious effects on community development. This is complicated further by HIV and AIDS which is the lead consumer of Ministry of Health budget in terms of providing anti-retroviral therapy, prevention of mother to child treatment, monitoring systems, education and public awareness campaigns, and surveillance.

Review country, regional and global progress in integrating DRR into school curricula programs and material

Botswana is a member to regional, continental and international bodies. It's a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the United Nations (UN), the Commonwealth of Nations, and the European Union (EU). SADC was established to strengthen cooperation in economic and political development amongst member states while the AU was meant to fight to decolonise the whole Africa and to work for a strong Africa through cooperation on political, economic, and / or military areas (Tlou and Campbell, 1999: 388). The NAM was established by the leaders of the third world countries who feared that war might break between the western (USA) and eastern blocks (USSR). It was meant to work for world peace to end the cold war by not aligning with either the east or the west, to oppose any interference in the internal affairs of member states by big powers, and the division of the world into spheres. The country has benefitted from the United Nation Development Programmes and the Commonwealth of Nations to deal with economic, environmental, social, and political problems in the region. Botswana exports a great percentage of its beef to European Union member countries (Tlou and Campbell, 1999: 390).

United Nations and disaster organization

The United Nations is one inter-government organization that was established to deal with natural and man-made disasters to save the lives of the people. It has established under its coordination, different sub-departments to account for a specific legal mandate under its auspices. Some of the departments are the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which are mandated to coordinate humanitarian affairs and disaster emergency and build the capacity of national governments of disaster prone countries. OCHA in particular was established pursuant to the adoption of the Secretary General's Programme for Reform by the General Assembly Resolution 46/182 to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international humanitarian actors. The aim is to:

- Alleviate human suffering in disasters and emergencies
- Advocate for the rights of people in need
- Promote preparedness and prevention
- Facilitate sustainable solutions

According to UNISDR (2005), the United Nations declared the 1990's as the international decade for natural disaster reduction and in 1994 adopted the Yokohama strategy and plan of action for a safer world. The UN further resolved that all governments, Botswana included, should give more resources to preventing and reducing risk based on the five UN priorities for action. Thus, the role of social work should be to:

- Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
- Identify, assess, and monitor disaster risks and enhance community and individual early warning systems.
- Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at community and individual levels.
- Reduce the underlying risk factors and
- Strengthen district disaster preparedness for effective response.

United Nations Interventions

The United Nations has intervened in many countries which experienced various kinds of disasters from natech to manmade. It has intervened in Sudan, Somalia, Cotedevoire, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, and Israel. In terms of natural disasters, it has assisted Burma, China, Japan, Kenya, and Ethiopia. The UN has established an International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) to help communities become resilient to the effects of natural disasters and to integrate risk management in sustainable development (UN 1972-2002). This followed the intonations of the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that there must be a shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention.

National curricula and the inclusion of DRR in pedagogy, students' assessment, teacher professional development and guidance, learning outcomes

Botswana national curricula have not integrated DRR in the pedagogy, students' assessments, teacher professional development and guidance, and learning outcomes across levels from primary to tertiary level. DRR like gender has to be mainstreamed into policies, programmes, and curricula to ensure wider coverage and common understanding amongst citizens. As results, students do not have enough knowledge on disaster risk reduction.

Safe educational facilities: site selection, safe access, safe construction and retrofit and non-structural safety

The availability of safe educational facilities is key indicator of integration of DRR in wider spheres of the society including sustainable developments. This takes into account the safety of learners, the teachers, and other stakeholders within the school environment. School population comprise of divergent groups, people living with disability, boys and girls, and men and women who are affected by disaster hazards differently. As such, the safety of these groups must be taken into consideration during the planning process and selection of the site for an educational facility. These will include the features of the structural plan, site where the facility will be built, the environmental impact assessments, and the construction of the structures according to specifications. These should be in compliance with disaster risk reduction guidelines and accorded strict supervision by building inspectors and approving bodies. Structural failures have resulted in loss of lives, massive injuries, and loss of thousands of monies poured in the structure. This need to be avoided at the initial stage of structural planning and development and at the tendering process should assess whether DRR has been captured satisfactorily by tenderers.

Policy documents

The Botswana Government has an established disaster management system to coordinate at both national, district, and community levels. A National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) was established in 1996 in the office of the President to coordinate disaster related issues, after the national disaster policy was approved by Parliament (Botswana Government, 1996).

In 2009, the Government of Botswana and United Nation Development Programme produced a national disaster risk management plan which specifies roles and responsibilities for different stakeholders in the country (Office of the President, 2009). The year before, the NDMO with the assistance of a consultant, assessed disaster hazards and risks common to various districts and villages in the country and a report to that effect was released in 2008 (SRK Consulting, 2008). The report identified the following hazards: drought, floods, road and rail accidents, civil unrest, major event hazards, service delivery failure, and industrial hazards.

Existing training materials

Although the United Nations appears to be the lead agency in disaster coordination, the Red Cross Movement was the first organization that emerged to respond to humanitarian need posed by disaster. It was birthed in 1859 from the experiences of Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman who witnessed the battle of Solferino where dead and wounded soldiers were left without any assistance (IFRC, 2008). He had to abandon his business agenda to mobilize volunteers to bury the dead, attend to the wounded, trace the relatives, and later send the wounded to hospitals. Today, the Red Cross Movement is represented in over 183 countries to provide humanitarian assistance during and after disasters. Its legal and operational mandate is to prevent and alleviate human suffering working as auxiliaries to public authorities. The movement is guided by the seven fundamental principles which are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 2001; IFRC, 2009).

The International Red Cross Movement is a three arms organization with specified roles and responsibilities as follows; 1) the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) mandate is to help victims of war and internal violence, to promote compliance with international humanitarian law, and to ensure respect for the human being; 2) the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) is mandated to address natural disasters and build National Societies capacity to serve in the nation; and 3) the National Societies (NS) is authorized to act as auxiliaries to the public authorities of their own countries in the humanitarian field and provide a range of services including disaster relief, health and social programmes (Botswana Red Cross Society, 2006).

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, 2009) asserts that the global village is overwhelmed by disaster of varying magnitude and worst catastrophes. For example, the Philippines from 1971 to 2000 suffered nearly 300 natural disasters that killed 34 000 Filipinos while from 1990 to 2000, 35 million people across the country were severely affected (IFRC, 2009; IFRC, 2010). Until lately, many countries in the world have suffered severe economic losses as a result of natural and / or human induced disasters (IFRC, 2004).

Non-formal programs for DRR education

Indicators

- Disaster prevention and risk reduction education: the integration of DRR into teaching and learning, including DRR in formal school curricula and non-formal education within the framework of Education for sustainable development

Disaster Risk Reduction in the Curricular at the University of Botswana: Social work department

Botswana is one of the countries that monitor its progress on the Hyogo framework for Action. Botswana has been concentrating on issues of curricular inclusion for students with

special needs such as disability, not considering disaster risk reduction as one of the main issues. Therefore, Botswana has not tailored its education policies to be inclusive of the disaster risk reduction. According to Botswana progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo framework of action (2011) stated that in Botswana there is no disaster risk reduction in the national educational curriculum, in the primary school curriculum, secondary school curriculum, and there is no professional disaster risk reduction education programme. The report mentioned that there was only one course on disaster management offered at a university level. University of Botswana curricular is guided by the Tertiary Education which also does not specify the inclusion of disaster risk reduction. The Botswana tertiary Policy (2008) has the main objective to

“...achieve sustainable social and economic development, uplift the standard and quality of life of Botswana, and to meet the long term national and global challenges through the development of a tertiary education system that is relevant, dynamic, accessible, equitable and internationally competitive. The tertiary education system will be characterised in terms of increasing access, ensuring relevance and quality, providing diversity and choice and is linked to broader policies and national goals in particular those related to (1) Human Resource Development and (2) Research and Innovation.”

Due to the lack of specified guidelines of disaster risk reduction in the tertiary policy, the main objective is not met. As a result, students graduate from the university without knowledge to undertake an analysis of hazards and determine the likely consequence for individuals, groups, and communities.

The Department of Social Work, at the University of Botswana, established 30 plus years ago, has not mainstreamed disaster risk reduction in its curriculum as per the United Nations five priority areas. It might be assumed that social work students are technically competent to address disaster risk management based on their social work knowledge only. The perception might ignore the complex disaster risk management, techniques, concepts and terminology, and systems that must be undoubtedly understood. Although social workers are capable of assessing individuals, groups or communities for disaster relief assistance, the methodologies that are engaged for disaster risk reduction differ. Therefore, social workers without disaster appropriate training and knowledge are handicapped in their approach. Beauchesne (2007) defines comprehensive emergency management as an integrated program that includes a number of elements from hazard assessment and resource management to logistics, training, and finance.

Although disaster risk management can be mainstreamed in the diploma and degree level concurrent with course offered, this option has not been explored. It can be integrated in the following course at the diploma level; social work with communities and group (DSW 102), social work with disabilities (DSW 107), selected issues in social work (DSW 202) and social work and social development (DSW 204). While at Bachelor's degree level it can be amalgamated with helping in the community (SWF 102), social work and mental health (BSW 203) and / or run as a separate BSW seminar (University Calendar, 2009/2010). The

Department of Social Work has not institutionalized its role according to the UN disaster risk reduction priority areas and steered dialogue with stakeholders in the practice field.

As such, the interface between social work education and disaster risk management is inevitable, hence need for action. Social workers in the academia and practice have to define the parameters of practice to operationalize their influence in disaster risk management field. Morales and Sheafor (1995) identified disasters and disaster aid as an arena for social work practice. The founder of the crisis response organization Eye of the Storm, states that while the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics mandates that social workers deliver appropriate professional services in public emergencies, too many are unprepared. Nevertheless, this does not deter helping professionals from overcrowding crisis scenes only to impede or paralyze relief efforts, creating a situation which Mitchell describes as "helpers helping helpers rather than victims" (Robb, 2003). As change agents, social workers should have knowledge and skills to intervene in hazard identification and implement disaster risk management measures at micro, mezzo, and macro level.

Role of social workers in disaster management

Social work is a profession that aims at helping individuals and families, groups, and communities to enhance or restore societal function and or creating societal conditions favourable to that goal (Morales and Sheafor, 1995). Disasters are situations that grossly affect the functioning of individuals and communities worldwide and a concern for social work according to the definition. Botswana's National Policy on Disaster Management (1996: 7) defines disaster management as "an integrated series of activities and strategies involving disaster mitigation, disaster preparedness, and emergency response implemented within the national development context". Social workers are key national development players at the district levels in Botswana and have to mainstream disaster risk reduction. Victoria (2008: 271) states that a disaster risk reduction framework aims at:

- Reducing vulnerability and increasing capacities of vulnerable groups and communities to cope with, prevent or minimize loss and damage to life, property and the environment;
- minimizing human suffering, and
- hastening recovery.

According to Victoria (2008:276), a comprehensive community based disaster management programme must be characterized by the following which community social work must promote:

- People's participation: community members must be the main actors and propellers; they also directly share in the benefits of disaster risk reduction and development.
- Priority for the most vulnerable groups, families, and people in the community: in urban areas the vulnerable sectors are generally the urban poor and informal sector

while, in rural areas, these are the subsistence farmers, the fisherfolk and indigenous people, the elderly, the differently abled, children, and women (because of their care giving and social function roles).

- Risk reduction measures are community specific and are identified after an analysis of the community's disaster risk (hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities, and perceptions of disaster risks).
- Existing capacities and coping mechanisms should be recognized: Community Based Disaster Management builds upon and strengthens existing capacities and coping strategies.
- The aim is to reduce vulnerabilities by strengthening capacities: the goal is building disaster resilient communities.
- Disaster risk reduction links with development and addresses vulnerable conditions and causes of vulnerabilities.
- Outsiders have supporting and facilitating roles.

Methodology

The qualitative study which used was conducted during the 2012-2013 academic year first semester amongst 54 Bachelor Degree 3rd year students of Social Work to assess the knowledge and understanding of disasters and disaster risk reduction. A non probability sampling was utilized to select participants who volunteered to participated in an in-depth interview. The students were briefed on the study and were asked to volunteer to participate and those who participate were interviewed to ascertain their understanding on the subject. The third year students are between the early years of an under-graduate programme and completion of their studies. It is assumed that they have sufficiently covered a broad knowledge, theoretical, and skill base applicable in the profession and they would offer a better picture in this regard.

Results

Disaster Knowledge and types of disaster

When asked about their knowledge on disaster 48 participants stated that they had some knowledge on disaster. Participants indicated that the types of disaster which were reported on and are common to the participants were floods, fires, drought and those less common were tsunamis, earthquakes, and civil war. The most prevalent of these are floods (33), fires (29), and drought (26). However, there were students who did not have knowledge on disaster were asked to account for their lack of information to deter whether it was mere ignorance or not. They could not account for their ignorance of disaster information. It may be inferred that they may have not suffered from any disaster or encountered any in their communities and / or social work education has not introduced them to the subject on disasters or they did not want to disclose.

Knowledge on Disaster Risk Reduction

Of the 54 respondents, 27 (50) claimed to know something about disaster risk reduction and could define it while 27 (50 %) had no idea of what it meant. When they were asked to define the concept to validate their claim, this is how they conceptualized it:

- To halt any disaster that can negatively affects people's lives
- Careful use of fire, and avoid overgrazing and cutting down of trees
- Keep away dangerous objects that may cause disasters
- People coming up with prevention methods to reduce disasters
- Methods that are employed to reduce the occurrence of disasters
- Establishment of disaster management teams
- Learning how to swim to avoid drowning
- Utilizing social services offered by the government
- Educating people about possible disasters and interventions
- Avoiding leaving the fire burning without anybody to take care of it and also educate people about it
- Avoid making fires anywhere and be friendly to the environment
- Coming up with or implementing measures that can decrease chances of disasters
- Keeping away flammable substances, like petrol, from fire
- Not building houses next to rivers
- Helping or assisting those individuals affected by disasters
- Clearing fire breaks to combat disasters

All these are ways of reducing or minimising risk rather than defining what disaster risk reduction is and it is obvious that social work students do not know what DRR is except for one who stated that it is a method employed to reduce the occurrence of disasters. In actual fact, the answers from the respondents on DRR show that they have little or no understanding and appreciation of disaster terminology.

Sources of information on Disaster Risk Reduction

The respondents acquired information on DRR from reading (18), secondary school (11), Radio Botswana (10), primary school (9), other undefined sources (7) and workshops (5). The majority of the respondents acquired information through self-initiated reading then the schools, and unspecified sources. This might suggest that the disaster information dissemination does not target the University of Botswana community and the country Disaster Risk Reduction plans have not included them.

The table 2 above shows that 48 % of the respondents could define a disaster hazards while 52 % had no idea and could not even attempt a definition of the concept. The research did not probe further to verify whether those in the no category were just reluctant to do so or it was certain that they had no prior knowledge regarding the disaster hazards. The 48 % defined a hazard as follows:

- Hazards are dangers or anything that can harm or put your life at risk
- Things that can expose one to danger
- Things that cause accidents
- Accidents that happen in the household
- Dangers that can occur during disasters
- Bad things that can occur to an individual either at home, school or work
- Things that are dangerous to our lives
- Harmful, dangerous situations

Proposed solutions on disaster information dissemination

The participants were asked to propose ways of disseminating disaster information and suggest the possible medium of exchange. They were of the view that disaster workshops should be increased, self-directed reading on disasters should be promoted, individuals and communities should be educated on hazards and risks, community outreach should be encouraged, and information on disaster prevention should be provided to the community at the kgotla.

Participants perceived role of social workers in disaster risk reduction

The participants were asked to state the role social workers should play in disaster risk reduction. Their view is that social workers should play a significant role in information sharing with communities, shelter provision, education and mobilization of community before, during and after disasters. They should work with communities to plan, educate, and advocate for vulnerable groups; provide counselling; collaborate with other stakeholders;

provide therapy and education on safety measures; conduct research; ensure the welfare of survivors; and help the affected to cope and receive welfare assistance.

Social work educations role in equipping students to address disaster related challenges

The participants were asked to state how social work education has equipped them to address disaster related challenges. They showed that social work education has equipped them with communication skills (presentation and education skills), counselling skills, crisis intervention skills, and the ability to work with different clients. This does not show that social work education has not provided adequate knowledge and skills in disaster risk reduction besides reactive-based skills.

Participants' knowledge of the Hyogo Framework of Action

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005 -2015 is a United Nations initiative to build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. It is a political commitment of 176 governments to implement HFA, allocate necessary resources and set up the appropriate institutional and legislative frameworks to facilitate implementation (United Nations, 2005). The table 3 above shows that the 54 participants did not know anything about the United Nation Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 for disaster risk reduction. These are third year students of their Bachelor of Social Work degree who will graduate and somehow intervene in disaster related problems.

Way forward

Social work education must equip practitioners to undertake an analysis of hazards and determine the likely consequence for individuals, groups, and communities. Disaster risk management makes predictions about disaster occurrences based on the historical experiences of communities. Therefore, disaster risk management is topical to social work education and practice. The study depicts that there is need for mainstreaming disaster risk management to social work students so that they can be able to address disaster related challenges when they are on the field. Similarly, social work students have to be knowledgeable of the Hyogo framework of action to be able to intervene in disaster related problems.

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