Innovative Planning Education for 21st Century in Botswana

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ABSTRACT

Planning education is relatively young in Botswana having only commenced as an undergraduate programme in the early 1990s at the University of Botswana. The main features of the programme is that it combines theory, design and practice in order to produce a holistic planner who can work in different types of environments; it also produces critical thinkers and professionals; it is flexible and adaptable to global changes in the field of spatial planning and it has strong links with industry. By and large the programme is well resourced both in terms of qualified academic staff, equipment for studio and library resources. There are plans to commence graduate planning studies and start intakes into a Ph.D. programme soon. The main challenges facing it however, are low student numbers and lack of space for now. All the same it can be said that the programme is facing a bright future in providing solutions to Botswana’s developmental challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Botswana is landlocked and shares borders with Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia and Zambia. The country covers a total land surface area of 582,000 km$^2$ but about two thirds of it is covered with thick sand layers of the Kalahari Desert. There is almost complete absence of surface water. Poor soils and unreliable rains discourage arable agriculture, though this is precisely what needs to be developed. Drought is a regular occurrence and disastrously affects the fragile food and agricultural situation in the country. Before the discovery of minerals, 90% of Botswana’s exports were beef and beef products.

When Botswana became independent in 1966, its GDP per capita was one of the lowest in the world, and the country was grouped among the least developed. With independence, the government set off on a course of rapid socio-economic development.

Botswana’s economy boomed at unprecedented rates compared to other states in sub-Saharan Africa. The GDP increased fourfold in real terms from 1966 to 1991. In 1966 Botswana’s GDP was 313 million Pula, ($1 USS=6.2 Pula) and by 1993 it had grown to a total of 8,329 million Pula (GoB, 1995). GDP growth has averaged around 6% per annum over the entire post-independence period. In 2004/2005, the GDP grew significantly by 8.3% compared to a growth rate of 3.4% recorded during the previous year (GoB, 2006). The GDP per capita in 2004/05 was P 33,000 or US$4700 and in 2007/8 was P40,000 or US$ 6,600.

The economy is dominated by the mineral sector, which as shown above has continued to expand. This sector has stimulated infrastructure development and financed the expansion of government services. As a result of rapid economic development, Botswana was ranked 71st out of 178 countries on the UNDP’s Human Development Index (UNDP8, 27). However, in 2001 Botswana’s HDI rank had fallen to 114 out of 162 countries (UNDP Human Development

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Unfortunately, however, the rapid economic growth has been accompanied by high income inequality and the persistence of poverty, both absolute and relative particularly, in the rural and peri-urban areas (Maruatona and Adeola, 1995). The 1985/86 Household Income and expenditure Survey estimated that 64% of the households were living below the poverty datum line (Datta, 1995).

**Administrative set up**

After independence, Botswana established a democratic political framework. The public administrative machinery consists of a number of ministries headed by the cabinet ministers and served by a hierarchy of civil servants led by Permanent Secretaries.

Below the central level, Botswana has local government structures. Local government at the district level includes four organizations of devolution and/or deconcentration: District Administration (established by 1965 Act of Parliament), District/Town Councils (1965 Act), Land Boards (established by 1968/1970 Act) and Tribal Administration (1965 Act) at the lowest level.

The Ministry of Local Government is the focal point in the central government for planning and coordination of local authorities. This minister coordinates national policies related to local government activities and liaises with other central government ministries.

**Urbanization Patterns and Processes in Botswana**

In Botswana, an urban settlement is defined by a minimum population threshold of 5000 residents, with at least 75 percent of the economically active population engaged in non-agricultural activities. Unlike most sub-Saharan African countries, over half of Botswana’s population currently lives in urban settlements.

The urbanization level nearly doubled from less than 10 percent in 1971 to 18 percent in 1981. Between 1981 and 1991, the percentage of the urban population more than doubled, from 18 percent at the base period to 45 percent, by the end of the review period. Although the broad upward urbanization trend has persisted since 1991, the 1991-2001 rate has receded. To date, just over 54 percent of the national population is urbanized (Gwebu, 2004).

The urbanization process, at the macro-level can be attributed to three factors. First, the number of places designated urban, has been increasing. Secondly, mining settlements have slowly grown into towns, for example Sowa Town and thirdly rural-urban migration has also played a key part in the urbanization process.

Gaborone, where the school is located, has experienced the most rapid population growth in the country as the pull factors in the migration mix are concentrated in Gaborone (Figure 1) since it is the national administrative headquarters. The frequency and variety of socio economic investments in Gaborone far outweigh those of other urban centres hence attracting migrant populations of every social category. Centralised investment in the city too and the considerable improvement to social and infrastructural services, in the areas of education, health and housing have also been attributed to the growth of the city (GoB, 2003).
Spatial planning in Botswana as we know it emerged in the 1960s, soon after Independence in 1966 and drew its inspiration from the UK, but it does not mean that there was no traditional spatial planning in the country. The Town and Country Planning Act 1977 (TCPA) was introduced to replace the Town and Country Planning Proclamation Order (1966). It established the legal framework for land use planning in the country in its current form. The TCPA was enacted to promote orderly and progressive development of land in both urban and rural areas. To-date several plans have been prepared to cover many parts of the country.

To ensure plan implementation is complied with, there are many development control mechanisms in use today. These include the Building Control Code 1995; Urban Development Standards 1991; Building Control Act of 1959 and many other laws and by-laws promulgated by the urban councils.

To supplement these laws there are policies and programmes that have also been adopted to direct development in both rural and urban areas. These include the Urban Development Policy, the National Settlement Policy, the Land Policy, the Housing Policy, the Rural Development Policy and many others. These have ensured orderly spatial development in the country.

Planning Agencies- Roles and Responsibilities

Currently there are several agencies performing planning functions. At Central government these include the following:

- The Ministry of Lands and Housing which provides policy guidance. According to the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA), the Minister responsible declares planning areas within which the provisions of the Act will operate. Outside these areas the local authorities, if not central government prepare the plan.

- The Department of Town and Regional Planning in this ministry, formulates planning policies, prepares development plans, advises the Minister and other stakeholders on planning matters, monitors implementation of development plans and provides professional support and guidance to councils.
The Town and Country Planning Board advises the Minister on any planning matter and also determines applications for planning permission.

At Local Level the agencies include the following:

- Councils (District and Urban Physical Planning Committees) which consider applications for planning permissions. Sometimes they prepare development plans and layouts and undertake development control.

- Land Boards participate in village land use planning which determine land use zones, allocate land i.e. grant rights to use land and change use of such land in tribal areas.

Other participants involved in the preparation of Development plans and plan implementation are: The Department of Lands that manages and allocates state land; the Department of Surveys and Mapping that does cadastral surveys etc.; the Ministry of Local Government (Department of Local Government and Development that deals with land servicing and finally, the local residents by contributing ideas during consultation. (Mosha, 2006).

**Levels of planning**

Spatial planning in Botswana is supposed to take place at national, regional/district, settlement and local/area levels. For all these levels, there are various types of plans produced, or specific development projects meant to address various issues. Currently, most plans are prepared at all levels except the national level where plans are now at foot to introduce it at this level.

**Regional Plans**

Currently, Botswana is divided into four planning regions based on socio-economic and physical/environmental parameters. Regional Plans for these regions, provide an overall framework for all district settlement strategies. These plans provide a framework for the equitable provision of infrastructure, services and investment in order to achieve balanced development within a region. They are also concerned with shared resources between districts, their exploitation and implications for settlements. Finally, they facilitate the creation of incentives for increased production through investment by both private and public sectors.

**District Settlement Strategies**

District Settlement Strategies are third on the hierarchy of plans. They provide a framework for the equitable distribution of infrastructure and services and identification of natural resources and provision of guidelines for their sustainable utilization within a district. The District Settlement Strategies are an elaboration of the National Settlement Policy at the district level. As spatial plans, they are complementary to the district development plans which are economic plans.

**Integrated Land Use Plans**

Such plans are at the same level as the District Settlement Strategies but differ from the latter because their focus is on the designation of zones based on soil suitability. An Integrated Land Use Plan determines how land is to be utilised and zones it appropriately and accordingly for different land uses. It may cover a district or a settlement.

**Settlement Development Plans**

This is a settlement or centre specific plan which mainly focuses on the resources, needs and demands of a particular centre. Such plans ensure that the physical development of an individual settlement or centre is carried out in an orderly and coordinated manner. They formulate proposals and recommendations for infrastructure and service provision on the basis of future population. The different land use zones in the settlement development plans are further planned through the preparation of detailed layout plans.
**Detailed Layout Plans/Special Studies**

Detailed layout plans are local/subject plans which are prepared for new development areas, upgrading areas and specific areas. They establish policies and proposals using zones, blocks, plots and sites as basic spatial units in a detailed manner. Detailed layout plans may refer to a neighbourhood, a local centre or even a portion of the above. They are highly accurate in terms of plot sizes, orientation and site specific demands.

**Dealing with Informal Settlements.**

The government has a two pro-pronged approach. For all past and existing informal settlements, the government has adopted in situ step-wise upgrading. For example in the case of sanitation the first programme was to provide pit latrines, then VIPs and now the policy is to provide a sewer reticulation system to avoid water contamination as Botswana depends on underground water most times. On the other hand, the government is very strict on any new or emerging squatter settlements. It is intolerant and will not think twice before bulldozing any unauthorised developments. The government policy is to provide serviced land before allocation to avoid the emergence of informal settlements and because it has the resources, this has not been so much of a problem.

**Achievements**

Despite the fact that planning is relatively young in Botswana, a considerable amount of achievement has been made. The need for physical planning has gained recognition and acceptance by government, local authorities and local residents. Many plans of all sorts have been prepared and have been successfully implemented across the country. Compliance to plans is around 85% which is a big feat indeed and this is attributed to availability of resources, good administration and governance and the use of development control mechanisms (Chepethethe, 2006).

**Emerging national challenges warranting planning intervention**

In spite of the above achievements, planning in Botswana is facing a number of challenges. These include the following:-

- The fast-growing population characterised by high fertility rates and a young population, which has implications for provision of services and education to meet demand. Further, this rising population puts pressure on the country’s fragile ecosystem, threatens the government’s ability to continue to improve the delivery of services and compromises its ability to create and sustain employment.

- The slow-down of the economy of late, due to a decline in incomes from minerals and lack of economic diversification, has led to unemployment and an upsurge of the informal sector with its attendant spatial needs. Planners have to contend with the needs of the informal sector.

- Rising urbanisation has meant that most towns in Botswana are doubling in population every ten years, leading to sprawl; major villages are quickly attaining urban status; the proliferation of new settlements in rural areas is a common occurrence; and the practice of squatting is slowly creeping in. Planning is needed to guide the growth of these settlements.

- Environmental problems caused by rapid urbanisation and unsustainable use of resources will need to be addressed swiftly, before the situation gets worse.

- There is an urgent demand for infrastructure development in all urban and rural areas following government policy to improve the lives of Batswana. This means that areas have to be planned, surveyed and serviced before development can take place.

- The scourge of social ills like the HIV/AIDS pandemic and poverty demands a holistic
approach from all stakeholders. HIV/AIDS awareness-raising in education curricula can play a role in limiting the spread of the disease.

- Lack of capacity to implement development plans and urban structure plans, due mainly to lack of professional staff such as planners, calls for a solution from the training institutions to meet demand.

- Public consultation and participation is not always adequate. Although provisions are provided for citizens and civic organisations to participate in planning at various stages of the planning process, such groups are not always involved or, if they are, their inputs are not factored into the ensuing products.

PLANNING EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA

The Urban and Regional Planning Programme (Department of Architecture and Planning) at the University of Botswana, Gaborone (See Figure 2 and Figure 3) was established in 1992 in the Department of Environmental Science in the Faculty of Science (ES). The programme was granted a semi-autonomous status in 1999, as a Unit of the Department of ES and was given full status in 2003 when the department of Architecture and Planning was launched following a massive reorganisation of academic programmes at the University. The curriculum drew its inspiration from the UK as well as from Tanzania.

The department was created to train planners to meet the then acute demand for planners countrywide. By the end of 2008, the department had produced 162 planners. Plans are afoot to introduce a Masters Programme and to recruit students in the faculty-wide Ph. Programme that was approved a year ago.

Figure 2: UB and its immediate surroundings

Figure 3: Aerial view of the UB Campus and Department of Architecture and Planning

Departmental Vision and Mission

The department is driven by a vision that can be captured in the following statement:

"Our vision is to be a world class School of Architecture and Planning, built on a deep appreciation of African and international values, engaged in qualitative and meaningful pursuit of knowledge in order to fulfil the aspirations of the community in the continuing search for humane living and working environments". (Department of Architecture and Planning, 2007).

Education Philosophy.

The department’s educational philosophy, as expressed in this statement, is to be a key player in the transformation of the built environment, to create an environment that satisfies the highest ideals of the people of...
Botswana and the continent of Africa. The department is poised to provide a quality, values-oriented, innovative and technically sound training programmes focused on the production of socially responsible practitioners in architecture and planning by conducting research that addresses critical issues in the environment; and by developing an advanced and continuously growing technical capability, with direct involvement in the resolution of problems in the built environment. The department has taken on the role of a custodian of knowledge about Botswana’s history and cultures, deriving its inspiration from the achievement of the African people over centuries in the domain of architecture and planning of human settlements.

**Features of the urban and regional Planning programme**

It has been realised that in the 21st century, a professional planner’s career in Botswana requires the ability to cope with multi-faceted developmental issues such as those cited in Section 1 of this paper. The BSc URP degree offers training in planning theory and practice and provides students with the technical expertise needed to create and evaluate different spatial scenarios and alternatives in line with the global environmental agenda. It combines theory, design and practice. It supports a commitment to democracy (traditional and modern), and equity and fairness as essential for the resolution of any burning spatial, development and environmental issues.

The URP programme trains future planners to be able to perform a wide range of roles in government’s main agencies, community organisations, private consulting firms, and development and parastatal corporations. The programme aims at producing critical thinkers and professionals who are able to implement the current planning agendas of the various plans cited in the previous section. The programme enables students to graduate as all-round planners, as well as specialists in any given socio-economic and environmental context in Botswana, the SADC region and the international arena. The intention is to offer a sufficiently firm conceptual and technical grounding to ensure that undergraduates are equipped to perform well and learn from any position in which a newly qualified planner might be employed. Such work might involve planning at any geographical scale from the local to the national, and could deal with essentially physical or spatial planning, or with a variety of social concerns linked to spatial planning and design.

By its nature the planning curriculum at the University of Botswana integrates knowledge developed within many disciplines such as geography, environmental planning, architecture, landscape architecture, economy, sociology, ecology, engineering, aesthetics, information science, geographic information systems, etc. The training of planners is a long and expensive process, and their practical engagement falls into the category of problem-solving and development professions. In developing countries like Botswana, such orientation has much more importance. This planning programme attempts to be flexible and modern, including local, regional and globally related topics. It is also an attempt to show the need for an internationally and regionally accredited planning school.

The curriculum covers sustainable development, social equity, participatory and deliberative training tools. Further, it emphasises technical skills such as statistical analysis and geographic information systems, communication skills such as working with officials and stakeholder groups, policy analysis, and analytical skills such as cost-benefit analysis, goals achievement matrices, project prioritisation methods and population growth projections in the research methods courses.

As much as possible, the students participate in ‘live projects’ for studio work. The students also undertake a six-week field internship as well as one international trip to familiarise them with what is happening in other countries in the region. During this period students are subjected to the codes, procedures, laws and other rules applicable in industry/organisations.

The programme is alive and flexible, as it has
been able to respond to local and global developments. For example, the following courses were not in the original programme but have since been introduced: Gender and physical planning; Public participation in physical planning; Planning and social theory and Development impact assessment the curriculum ensures professional preparation and allows students to take a variety of semester courses before they tailor a dissertation project to a particular area of planning specialisation. The curriculum is organised around a single major subject combining core and optional courses. The degree is normally completed in four years.

Course offerings and their rationale

Objectives
The core of the programme is the consecutive courses in design, consisting of studio work augmented by lectures and seminars in humanities, technology, environment and professional practice. At the end of the programme students are able to: (a) deal creatively and critically with urban planning problems on analytical, conceptual, and developmental levels; (b) undertake challenging, formal planning inquiry that will develop in them an aptitude for functional and pragmatic development decisions, environmentally conscious design, and contemporary urban planning practice and (c) Exercise independent judgement rooted in an ever-changing context of urban planning thought.

Course structure
The current semesterised BSc URP curriculum ensures professional preparation and allows students to undertake a variety of semester courses and a thesis project. The curriculum is organised as a single major subject combining core and optional courses. This is also supplemented with general education courses. The degree is normally completed in three years. Students have to take all core subjects and a number of chosen optional courses before they defend their dissertation thesis.

Rationale of the courses
A number of courses were included in the programme with specific rationales as illustrated below:

- **Design and creativity**: All studio courses, in all semesters in Years 2-4.
- **Theory underpinnings**: Planning theory is covered in all semesters in Years 2-4 in order to impart critical thinking among students.
- **Advocacy planning** calls for the distribution of planning services into low-income and minority neighbourhoods. Such knowledge is provided in all years in courses such as Settlement Upgrading; Settlement Development Planning; Planning Negotiation and Contracting etc.
- **Citizen participation**: The department has included courses in public participation in an effort to meet the demand of communities and civil societies. These include courses such as Public Participation in Physical Planning and Settlement Development Planning. The last two courses teach planners how to prepare a settlement plan and show that planners have a responsibility to assist those who are affected by plans to develop skills to actively participate in the creation of the plans.
- **Civic engagement**: Civic engagement is imparted in Planning, Policy and Politics.

Currently the Core and Elective/Optional Courses are as follows:-

**Year 2 : Semester 1:**
*Core Courses*: Introduction to Town Planning, Introduction to Drawing Techniques Studio; Infrastructure Planning and Management; Urban and Regional Economics and Planning and History of Settlements.
*Optional Courses*: Environmental Planning and Urban Morphology.

**Semester 2:**
*Core Courses*: Land Surveying and cartography, Site Planning Studio, Transport Planning and Management, Planning
Techniques and Internship (6 weeks field attachment)

*Optional Courses:* GIS for Planners and Globalization and Sustainable Cities.

**Year 3: Semester 1.**

*Core Courses:* Urbanisation and Planning, Neighbourhood Planning Studio, Housing Studies, Regional Planning and Research Methods and Techniques.

*Optional Courses:* Remote Sensing for Planners and Land and Property Valuation.

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**Semester 2**

*Core Courses:* Planning, Policy and Politics, Urban Land Use Planning, Planning and Environmental Law, Settlement Upgrading,, Directed Readings and Internship II.

*Optional Courses:* Land and Property Management and Building Technology and Materials.

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**Year 4: Semester 1**

*Core Courses:* Philosophy and Planning, Rural Land Use Planning Studio, Transport Engineering for Planners, Urban Management and Governance and Dissertation Project.

*Optional Courses:* Gender and Physical Planning, Public Participation and Physical Planning

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**Semester 2.**

*Core Courses:* Planning and Social Theory, Development Impact Assessment, Settlement Development Planning Studio, Project Planning and Management and Dissertation Project.

*Optional Courses.* Urban Planning Negotiation and Contracting and Urban Agriculture.

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**Professional training and Links with Industry**

In addition to class work, URP students normally undergo an internship of six weeks’ duration in a professional planning office after Levels 200 and 300. During professional training students are subjected to the codes, procedures, laws, rules and other regulations applicable to the industry/organisation within the planning profession where they are engaged. They are supposed to engage in all aspects of planning, from preparation of design layouts, settlement plan preparation and research work to development control. Apart from giving the students the tools of office practice, internship prepares them for professional work after they graduate from the university.

**International study trips**

The current curriculum provides for third-year students of planning to undertake international comparative studies within the SADC region to augment their planning studies. The department continues to review the structure of this international aspect, with the hope that it may be extended to two weeks instead of the current one-week period allocated. Plans are also under way to expand the scope from the current focus on South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe to other countries within the region like Mozambique and Angola.

**Academic standards, policies and quality assurance**

Performance in URP courses is evaluated through a combination of continuous assessment and final examination in the ratio of 2:3 for theory courses and 1:1 for practical courses. The duration of examinations is normally 2 hours for 2-credit courses and 3 hours for 3-credit courses. Studio courses are assessed by continuous assessment only as these are practical courses.

A project or design is evaluated by continuous assessment, oral presentation and/or demonstration and a written report. The ratio of marks for continuous assessment, presentation assessment and written report is 2:1:1. Where a course includes a written final examination, a course with a credit value of 3 or more is examined by a formal examination of 3 hours, and 2 hours for a course with less than 3 credits. Overall performance in a course is specified in the General Regulation 00.84 of the university.

At present there are no supplementary examinations. A student who fails a core or
pre-requisite or co-requisite course is required to retake the course when it is offered again. A student who has failed an optional/elective/general education course may retake the course or its equivalent.

Professional training is assessed as specified in the Professional Training (Internship) Regulations for the Planning Programme. During each professional training period, students are visited twice at the location of their placement to be assessed by staff teaching on the programme.

A student’s performance is normally assessed by means of: (a) a confidential report from the student’s immediate supervisor at the location of placement; (b) professional training reports and a logbook submitted by the student at the end of each internship period and (c) professional training visits by an assessor from the department.

The professional training sessions are evaluated as specified in assessment regulations. The ratio of Confidential Report marks to Professional Report marks to Professional Training Visits marks is 1 : 2 : 1. A student who has an incomplete grade is normally allowed to complete the Professional Training Course at a time recommended by the faculty. A student who fails to meet the requirements of the Professional Training Course is required to repeat the training at a time recommended by the faculty.

**Modes of delivery**

The modes of delivery are as follows: All theory classes are given in 2–3 lectures of 1–2 hours each per week. Currently, most lectures are given through three modes, viz: (a) face-to-face contact using traditional methods (white board) (b) electronic (Powerpoint presentation, video etc.) or (d) through web-based class delivery (WEBCT/Blackboard) which is gaining acceptance nowadays. In addition to the above tutorials and seminars are given to supplement teaching.

**Staffing and resources**

Currently the planning stream of the department has a staff complement of eight academic staff (three seasoned Associate Professors, two Senior Lecturers and three lecturers), two technicians and a secretary. One staff member is soon completing his Ph. D. Studies. In addition the university employs part time staff to help out studio work. The staff complement is expected to grow with the introduction of new programmes which are on the horizon.

**Departmental Resources and equipment**

Until the completion of a new faculty building scheduled for 2010, the department will continue to utilise the existing space in the university. Though this is a constraint, the functions of the department are continuing smoothly.

Currently the department has a comprehensive spacious GIS/CAD laboratory which is a state-of-the-art facility in ArcGIS and ArchiCAD training, with over 60 computers available for teaching and use by students. In addition, there are three scanners (A4, A3 and A0); three plotters; 3 photocopiers, one of which does colour work; two heavy-duty printers which are networked; and a fully equipped and functional model-making room. In the new facility in the faculty building, there are plans to have the following: specialised GIS/CAD/remote sensing and environmental planning laboratories for advanced spatial and environmental analysis; space for modelling and exhibiting facilities; additional computer rooms for postgraduate students.

The department has an in-house small reference/documents collection for use by both staff and students. This is supplemented by the university library which has an extensive collection of different textbooks, journals, project documents and other reading materials. In addition students are given free of charge books (two per subject) that are recommended for each subject by the teaching staff. On-the-spot assistance is provided by staff reference librarians. Students can access free of charge
on-line searching facilities, and can access through the university campus-wide network CD-ROM databases.

**Departmental Research**

All lecturers do take part in research projects regularly and do publish research articles at conferences and in refereed journals and academic books. To-date staff have written a few books, a number of book chapters, and several refereed journal articles. The main areas of research and publication have been in housing, environment, urban management, urban agriculture, gender issues, land and land issues and finally infrastructure provision. The department has recently embarked on a departmental book project and also a joint research project in which all the staff will participate. Senior members of staff provide mentorship to the junior staff as well as to students.

**Evaluation of the Programme**

The planning has seen some successes and has also faced some challenges. In terms of successes the department can pride itself of having produced planners who are now spearheading and manning planning departments in both central and local government as well as Land Boards and parastatals and the private sector across the whole nation. Secondly, such planners have performed very well as the course they have followed has prepared them to do a variety of work be it policy formulation, issues analysis, plan making or detailed layout design. It can be said that these planners are a jack of all trades.

Lastly, the syllabus that has been used in the department is not static. It has been changing over time to keep up with new developments in the planning profession and the emergence of new planning paradigms, and also with the needs of the local and international markets. To date there have been several minor revisions and one major revision of the programme during the semesterisation programme. One major review has commenced to accommodate the UK Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) accreditation requirements, i.e. moving from the current 1+3 mode to a 1+3+1 mode (1 year pre-entry, 3 years core planning and 1 year specialization resulting in a Master of Planning degree qualification) that will enable planning graduates to be fully accredited in the profession.

On the down side, the department is facing a few challenges too. One of the greatest challenges is the lack of studio space as at present students are sharing planning studios with architecture students. Another challenge is lack of resources such as staff as currently staff are overloaded with too much teaching instead of concentrating on research and professional work. Lastly, student intake has been low affecting outputs.

**The way forward**

The department sees a great future for the planning programme in that efforts will continue to be made to constantly improve the curricula so that planners from the programme can meet the national planning challenges head on.

It is hoped that accreditation of the course by the RTPI will be obtained by 2010 and this will open the market for our planners to the outside world.

More efforts have to be made to increase intake of planning students to meet the ever rising demand for planners both at central and local government level. The current output of between 10-15 students at the moment will not sustain demand of planners in the country.

Finally, there are plans to introduce quite soon a degree in Estate Management and Valuation and Housing. It is also hoped that some of the former graduates will join the recently launched Ph.D. programme.

**REFERENCES**

Challenges. Unpublished seminar paper presented at UB.


