

# Road Side Vending, Growth of the Informal Sector and Learning

## Needs of Vendors in Gaborone City of Botswana

Idowu Biao<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Adult Education, University of Botswana, P. Bag 0022, Gaborone, Botswana

\* Idowu Biao, E-mail: idowubiao2014@gmail.com

Received: December 20, 2016 Accepted: January 3, 2017 Online Published: January 7, 2017

doi:10.22158/wjer.v4n1p151

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/wjer.v4n1p151>

### **Abstract**

*This study examined the phenomenon known as road side vending within the spatial arena of Gaborone city of Botswana. In clarifying the concepts employed in the study, a difference was made among the terminologies “street vendors” (mobile vendors moving all over within and about the streets), “hawkers” (mobile vendors moving both within and beyond the streets), and “road side vendors” (immobile vendors using road sidewalks and road/street corners for economic activities). The study employed a 15-item inventory on the one hand, to elicit the factors that accounted for the recent phenomenal surge in road side vending in Gaborone and on the other hand, to highlight the expectations of the actors of this sector of the economy. The findings revealed that between 2012 and 2014, road side vending grew by 50% in Gaborone and 74% of Gaborone road side vendors were aged between 38-54 years, suggesting that this market is currently run by mature adults. The findings equally revealed that the growth of road side vending in Gaborone coincided with an era when unemployment began to be discussed within government circles, the press and in the streets of Botswana. This finding is supported by the literature which states that in general, the informal sector of the economy of less developed countries tend to grow under the impulse of unemployment and increasing poverty rate. The study ended with one major recommendation that called on the Gaborone City Council to use the instrumentality of learning to bring about the change it desires for Gaborone without excluding road side vendors from its Gaborone developmental blueprint.*

### **Keywords**

*roadside vending, informal sector, learning needs, Botswana*

### **1. Introduction**

When Botswana attained political independence in September 1966, it was one of the poorest countries in Africa (World Bank, 2015; Sekwati, 2013; Gobusamang, 2008). Yet, the informal sector of the economy was virtually non-existent in this Southern African country. However, beginning from the

1990s, the informal economy began to grow gradually with mainly indigenous skills (traditionally woven articles, carvings, traditional medicinal potions, etc.) displayed for sale in towns and urban villages (Botswana Training Authority (BOTA), 2013). For example, it has been found that between 1996 and 2006, the number of people employed within the informal sector grew by 10% and that trading in “livestock throughs”, “wood carvings”, “woven artifacts” and other such articles remained on sale (BOTA, 2013). It has equally been reported that the number of women participating in the informal sector activities around the same period (1999-2007), grew by 19% and income (computed in amount of money/cash taken home on a daily basis) within the sector equally grew modestly (Moffat & Kapunda, 2013).

Concomitantly, and especially between the early 1990s and 2012 Botswana’s economy blossomed due principally to the discovery and commercialisation of diamond (World Bank, 2015; Sekwati, 2013) giving hope for both tremendous government and private sector employment and expansion. Indeed, beyond the first decade of the 21st century, Botswana was lifted to the category of medium income countries in the world (World Bank, 2015). Unfortunately, the Botswana’s economic boom while it has lifted quite a few out of extreme poverty through generous social welfare packages, has not provided the level of employment expected of it (Moffat & Kapunda, 2013). In fact, by December 2015, half of Botswana population have been found to be either poor or vulnerable “with 46.2% of them children under 15” (World Bank, 2015, para. 2).

It is therefore not surprising that beyond the findings reported by the 1996-2006 and 1999-2007 informal sector studies, and as a result of inability to bring massive employment on stream, observation shows a gradually growing phenomenon characterised by street and roadside vending especially within Gaborone, the Capital City of Botswana. The aim of the current study is both to investigate the causes of the recent soaring in road side vending within Gaborone, the Capital City of Botswana and to highlight the learning needs of the actors within this sector.

## 2. Area of Study

The study area was Gaborone, the Capital City of Botswana. Beginning from September 1966, when Botswana became independent, Gaborone has been receiving impressive developmental attention from government, business and international organizations. Consequently, throughout the first and a half decades of independence Gaborone benefitted from lavished development policies, initiatives and implementation of infrastructural provision (United Nations Commission for Human Settlements (UNCHS), 1997). It was not until 1979 that,

*...the National Settlement Policy (NSP) was introduced during the National Development Plan 5 (NDP5) (1979-1985) to counteract the then prevailing bias of investment towards towns, especially Gaborone. The main concern was the inordinate growth of Gaborone threatened the balance of development in the country to the detriment of other major centres which also needed to be stimulated to enhance their development potential* (UNCHS, 1997, para. 1).

According to the 2011 Population and Housing Census, about a quarter of the national population lives in Gaborone (Republic of Botswana, 2012). However, recent internal and international migrational tendencies suggest that about half the national population may be residing in and around Gaborone (Biao, 2015). Because the majority of Botswana population lives at about 100kms from Gaborone (World Population Review, 2015), the nature of some of this migration may be temporary but long enough to impact sanitation, urban dwelling and urban transportation and movement.

HIV/AIDS, inadequate housing, unemployment and poverty are four main issues currently challenging the Botswana nation (Republic of Botswana, 2016). These four challenges are represented in Gaborone to a large measure. While Gaborone's rate of HIV/AIDS is not known, it is known that about one quarter of the national population carries the HIV virus (AVERT, 2015) and that only 45% of the most vulnerable persons (commercial sex workers and men who indulge in sex with men) are currently not catered for within the national HIV/AIDS support programme (AVERT, 2015). Many of the people living with HIV/AIDS and especially most commercial sex workers and men who indulge in sex with men live within Gaborone where it is easier to make more and fast money and where more modern facilities may be accessed for the promotion of their business and pass time. Because the housing policy of the government of Botswana is biased towards the rural area (Gobusamang, 2008; Mazonde, 1996), inadequacy of urban housing has been found to contribute toward exacerbating poverty (Gobusamang, 2008; Mazonde, 1996). While delivering a report on the activities of his office, Botswana's Assistant Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration posited that,

*Since 2008 to date, a total of 21,284 graduates were registered of which 6, 612 (30.29 percent) were absorbed by the public service and the parastatal sector.* He equally submitted that,

*...unemployment in general, including graduate unemployment remains a pressing challenge that the country has to contend with. Available figures show that from 1991 until 2010 Botswana unemployment rate averaged 18.10 percent, reaching an all-time high of 23.80 percent in December of 2006 and a record low of 13.90 percent in December of 1991. The latest figures from Statistics Botswana show that the country's unemployment rate is at 20.0 percent, ...*(Baatweng, 2015, p. 1).

When the time comes for these unemployed graduates and youths to go hunting for jobs, Gaborone is thought about first. When they arrive there, they usually discover that the waiting period for a job is not a short one. Meanwhile they add to the stress of the Capital City while they wait. In its recent report the World Bank has submitted that *"half of Botswana's population remains either poor or vulnerable, with 46.2% of them children under 15"* (World Bank, 2015, p. 1). The same report equally stated that household with many children and families with single parents were tipped into greater poverty than households with both parents (World Bank, 2015).

In Gaborone, there is no shortage of distressing factors that may contribute to making the poverty experienced by the urban poor, more debilitating and agonising. These factors include anxiety, inadequate housing, poor feeding and the inability to know when one's unemployment issue will be resolved.

### 3. Informal Sector

Not only was the terminology “informal sector” virtually non-existent before the early 1970s, this term eventually originated in connection with irregular and illegal economic activities carried out in less developed countries (Gerxhani, 1999). Hart (1971) was the first to use this terminology in his famous article *Small Scale Entrepreneurs in Ghana and Development Planning*. However, the International Labour Office was the institution that eventually popularized and internationalised both the term and concept in its 1972 study (Gerxhani, 1999).

Basically, the concept “informal sector of the economy” is discussed within two distinct frameworks. One concerns the nature of employment and the other, the nature of the enterprise or organisation. Where labour is unregulated, unprotected by legal frameworks and where the same labour yields low social benefits and operates outside all tax regimes, such a labour or employment is informal and belongs to the informal sector (Gerxhani, 1999; Fields, 1990). On the other hand, where a productive organisation is unregistered, of a relatively small size and operates in a way as to evade tax, such an organisation is informal (La Porta & Shleifer, 2011; de Paula & Scheinkman, 2007). Informal labour includes self-employment that exhibits the characteristics of informality highlighted earlier and it equally includes employment taken up within informal sector organisations. The phenomenon investigated in this study concerns the informal employment sector in general and self-employment in particular.

### 4. Road Side Vending in Gaborone

The specific social phenomenon investigated in this study is christened “road side vending”. Road side vending is one of the many economic activities that take place on the streets of less developed countries’ towns and cities. Although road side vendors are often referred to as street vendors, implying that all those involved in all the economic activities taking place within and around the streets are all street vendors (Shanker, 2014; Roever, 2016), the current article makes a difference among road side vendors, street vendors and hawkers. Hawkers roam all over the place including within residential, business and around the streets. Street vendors stay and roam in the streets. However, road side vendors as conceived in this study, are immobile and do not roam about, even if their wares are displayed under the bare gaze of the sky. Road side vending is therefore different from street vending and hawking in that, while street vendors go to meet road users (cyclists, motorcyclists and vehicle drivers) with their wares, road side vendors are pitched and immobile by the side of the road and street where they have either raised a tent or identified a tree or other naturally provided shades for their wares. Under these shades or under the open sky, road side vendors usually wait patiently for their customers who invariably cross roads to transact business with them. Road side vending and not street vending is one significant aspect of informal economic activities carried out in less developed countries and that was the focus of this study.

The response of Gaborone Council Authority to the astronomical growth in road side vending (as for all other aspects of commercial activities in the streets) is the administrative enforcement of the

provisions of the 2001 Hawking and Street Vending laws (fines and imprisonment) (Republic of Botswana, 2001). Yet, the pressures exerted by unemployment and poverty on the population are such that threats of fines and imprisonment may no longer deter populations from violating some of the provisions of these laws. Therefore, in order to avoid the breakdown of social order, a more realistic approach to the issue of roadside vending in Gaborone needs to be pursued.

The response of Gaborone City Council Authority to the astronomical growth in road side vending as well [as for all other aspects of commercial activities in the streets] is the administrative enforcement of the provisions of the 2001 Hawking and Street Vending Laws [fines and imprisonment] (District Council Laws, 2001, Section 38). Yet, the pressures exerted by unemployment and poverty on the population are such that threats of fines and imprisonment may no longer deter populations from violating some of the provisions of the said laws. Therefore, in order to avoid possible breakdown in social order, a more realistic approach to the issue of roadside vending in Gaborone needs to be pursued.

### **5. Training, Poverty Reduction and Employment Creation**

There exist myriad strategies for alleviating poverty. “...*sound macroeconomic management, employment creation, entrepreneurial development, citizen empowerment, and attraction of foreign direct investment*” (UNDP, 2005, p. 6) are a few of these strategies. However, only a few societies are endowed with the capacity to operationalise all or most of the pro-poor instruments listed above. Hence, the tendency in most societies is to create a minimum conducive environment within which poverty alleviation educational programmes could be conducted.

The literature on learning/education and poverty alleviation/decent living in Africa has so far generated three schools of thought. These include the school that maintains that primary schooling generates the greatest returns on education (Psacharopoulos, 1985; 1980). They also include the school that suggests that only university education can bring about sustainable development in Africa (Teferra, 2013; Teferra, 2009; Tilak, 2009) and that which posits that only relevant post-basic education has the highest prospect of significantly alleviating poverty in Africa (Palmer, 2005).

The relevance and potentials of lifelong learning having been both acknowledged and accepted in all learning societies (Faure, Herrera, Kaddoura, Lopes, Petrovsky, Rahnema, & Ward, 1972; Delors, 2013) and poverty being a social phenomenon that is better addressed within the world of realities, formal education is often seen as a foundational type of education regarding the process of poverty alleviation. It was within this context that Palmer (2005) submitted that if primary education was found to yield greatest returns on education in Africa between 1950s and 1980s, it was because that level of education had not become quite wide spread as it was still growing. It was also within this same context that Potts (2013), Palmer (2005), and Garrett (2005) suggested that the type of education that most positively impact the process of poverty alleviation is non-formal education or post-basic education.

The actors of road side vending in Gaborone may therefore be expected to benefit from all relevant non-formal learning programme that may be mounted for them.

## 6. This Study

The motivation for this study was supplied by this author's observation that, although the walls of the University of Botswana, Gaborone and the city of Gaborone have been dotted with a few road side vending tents and desks prior to 2012, the number of these road vending tents and desks blew out of proportion and became undeniably visible throughout the length of the campus fence and in every corner of Gaborone city, displaying a great variety of articles and products in recent years.

Road side vending was neither so visible in Gaborone nor was this type of business able to offer such a variety of products prior to the beginning of 2013. As stated at the opening of this article, the informal sector of the economy in Botswana opened up in the 1990s with the commercialisation of indigenous skills and artifacts. The commercialisation of these skills was carried out on a relatively small scale and at clearly designated areas by city and town authorities. For example in Gaborone, this activity was carried out in the Main Mall (the premier mall in the city) and around a few other government institutions and ministries. Up to 2007, the informal economy was driven heavily by economic activities that aimed to exploit the indigenous knowledge market potentials and by the need to irk a more than rural living style through the commercialisation of a knowledge that much of the Botswana population is familiar with.

However, beyond 2007, as a result of a growing complexity in the socio-economic growth recorded by the country, Botswana (citizens of Botswana) began to look beyond indigenous knowledge systems to satisfy their livelihoods quest. Having begun to realise at the beginning of the 21st century that proceeds from their activities were producing diminishing returns in terms of the quality of living they guaranteed, they began requesting the Botswana Training Authority to facilitate modern skills training (BOTA, 2013) with the hope that such a training will equip them with skills that could eventually enable them upscale the quality of their indigenous products which could in turn attract higher prices.

The period 2007 and 2012 had proved both critical and eventful in the socio-economic life of Botswana. Whereas Botswana remained virtually unscathed by the 2008 economic recession that negatively impacted most African countries (Bakwena, 2013; Hillbom, 2008), it began to experience some difficulties in placing its tertiary education graduates in employment starting 2012 and the national poverty rate that fell from 47% to 23% between 2003-2009 (UNDP, 2013) had risen to about 30% between 2009-2015 (Biao, 2015). These events of 2007-2012 tend to reinforce a few theories advanced in literature which are summarised below as the theoretical framework of this study.

## 7. Theoretical Framework

While activities within the informal sector have been said to originate from less developed countries (Gerxhani, 1999), the main factors that facilitate their birth and growth have been found to be "mass

poverty” and “unemployment” (Chen, 2012; Gerxhani, 1999; Hart, 1973). At another level, learning has been found to be able to impact both poverty and unemployment so positively as to significantly alleviate them (Hayman, 2005; Palmer, 2005).

### 8. Assumption

The assumption of this study therefore was that, on the one hand, the recent growth in road side vending in Gaborone was a result of increased poverty and unemployment rates in Botswana and on the other hand, vendors will be desirous of some kind of learning with a view to ameliorating their vending activities and socio-economic conditions.

### 9. Methodology

The current study is a survey of the factors that have recently fuelled the growth of road side vending in Gaborone. It is specifically a case study of Botswana’s Capital City.

At the moment of this study, there was no comprehensive official list of road side vending tents/desks from which a population for this study may be established. Suffice it to say however, that this study’s population is made up of all vending tents/desks existing within Gaborone city.

Out of this population, a sample of road side vending tents and desks was drawn through a clustersampling technique which first broke down Gaborone city into its five politico-administrative units (Gaborone South, Gaborone North, Gaborone Central, Gaborone East and Gaborone West) and secondly proceeded in drawing 20 tents and/or desks from each of the politico-administrative unit thus:

**Table 1. Distribution of Sample of Road Side Vending Tents/Desks in Gaborone City**

Politico-Administrative Units of Gaborone						
	Gaborone South	Gaborone North	Gaborone Central	Gaborone East	Gaborone West	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of Road Side Tents/Desks</b>	20	20	20	20	20	100
<b>Total</b>						<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows the manner in which 20 road side vendors were drawn from each of the five politico-administrative units of Gaborone.

A 15-item inventory of factors that may have induced respondents to take to and remain within the road side vending activity was used for the collection of data in this study. In addition to these 15 items, an open ended section was provided within the instrument that was filled using a short interview session whose aim was to further probe into responses that may have been collected by the inventory or to clarify other issues relevant to the concerns of this stud.

## 10. Findings

The following were the findings of the study.

**Table 2. General Information about Respondents**

Politico-Administrative Units of Gaborone	Gender		Age Brackets								Highest Educational Attainment		
	Male	Female	16-19	20-25	26-31	32-37	38-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	Pry Educ.	Sec. Educ.	Tert. Educ.
Gaborone South	3	17	0	1	1	2	5	8	3	0	1	16	3
Gaborone North	1	19	0	2	1	1	8	4	4	0	0	18	2
Gaborone Central	2	18	0	3	2	1	5	8	0	1	0	16	4
Gaborone East	1	19	0	1	3	2	4	9	1	0	2	16	2
Gaborone West	2	18	1	2	1	0	9	5	1	1	1	15	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (9%)</b>	<b>91(91%)</b>	<b>1(1%)</b>	<b>9(9%)</b>	<b>8(8%)</b>	<b>6(6%)</b>	<b>31(31%)</b>	<b>34(34%)</b>	<b>9(9%)</b>	<b>2(2%)</b>	<b>4(4%)</b>	<b>81(81%)</b>	<b>15(15%)</b>

Table 2 shows the gender distribution and age brackets of Gaborone road side vendors that participated in this study and the highest education levels attained by these vendors. Ninety-one percent of these vendors were female while 9% of them were male. The majority of the vendor-respondents (65%) fell within the age bracket 38-48 years. Only 1% and 2% of these vendors were 16-19 years and 55-60 years respectively. Most of the respondents (81%) were secondary (high) school certificate holders while only 4% and 15% attained primary and tertiary levels of education respectively.

**Table 3. Starting Years, Reasons for Vending and Number of Dependants Per Vending Desk**

Politico-Administrative Units of Gaborone	Starting Years of Vending				Reasons For Vending				Average No. Of Dependants			
	2006	2008	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Love of Vending	Supplement to income	Lack of Employment	
Gaborone South	1	0	2	1	7	6	2	1	1	3	16	5
Gaborone North	0	1	3	4	2	9	1	0	2	1	17	6
Gaborone Central	0	0	1	5	6	5	2	1	0	1	19	4
Gaborone East	0	1	2	1	4	4	5	3	0	4	16	5
Gaborone West	2	2	5	2	3	4	2	0	1	0	19	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>3(3%)</b>	<b>4(4%)</b>	<b>13(13%)</b>	<b>13(13%)</b>	<b>22(22%)</b>	<b>28(28%)</b>	<b>12(12%)</b>	<b>5(5%)</b>	<b>4(4%)</b>	<b>9(9%)</b>	<b>87(87%)</b>	

Table 3 presents the years indicated by respondents as corresponding to the period they entered road side vending and the reasons that motivated them to enter this line of activity. Table 3 equally shows



the average number of dependants that derive livelihood from the type of vending investigated in this study. Half of the respondents began road side vending in 2014 and 2015 whereas 13%, 12% and 5% of the respondents entered road side vending in 2011/2012, 2015 and 2016 respectively. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents became road side vendors as a result of lack of other types of employment. Four and nine percent of the vendors entered road side vending for the love of it and for the purpose of supplementing income received from other jobs. Table 3 also shows that, apart from the main manager(s) of the road side vending desks, between 4 and 7 other persons' livelihood depended on the proceeds from the Gaborone road side vending. Gaborone West (with an average of 7 dependants) and Gaborone North (with an average of 6 dependants) were found to be the politico-administrative units with the highest dependence on road side vending in Gaborone.

**Table 4. Lines of Vending**

Politico-Administrative Units of	Lines of Vending
<b>Gaborone</b>	
<b>Gaborone South</b>	Catering, Airtime, Cigarette, Fruits & Vegetables, Hot dog, Snaks & Drinks, Photocopying & Printing, Icepop, Clothing, Ice Cream.
<b>Gaborone North</b>	Catering, Airtime, Cigarette, Fruits & Vegetables, Hot dog, Snaks & Drinks, Photocopying & Printing, Icepop, Clothing, Ice Cream.
<b>Gaborone Central</b>	Catering, Airtime, Cigarette, Fruits & Vegetables, Hot dog, Snaks & Drinks, Photocopying & Printing, Clothing, Ice Cream.
<b>Gaborone East</b>	Catering, Airtime, Cigarette, Fruits & Vegetables, Hot dog, Snaks & Drinks, Photocopying & Printing, Icepop, Clothing, Ice Cream.
<b>Gaborone West</b>	Catering, Airtime, Cigarette, Fruits & Vegetables, Hot dog, Snaks & Drinks, Photocopying & Printing, Icepop, Clothing, Ice Cream.

Table 4 shows the most popular lines of vending to be catering services, sale of snacks, fruits and vegetables, clothing and various types of drink. Apart from the Gaborone Central where the sale of Ice pop was not recorded, all the politico-administrative units put virtually the same items on sale.

**Table 5. General Assistance Needs & Desire to Quit**

Politico-Administrative Units of	General Assistance Needs	Desire to Quit
<b>Gaborone</b>		
<b>Gaborone South</b>	Financial Support	18 (90%) From individuals
		2 (10%) From Governments (both
		<b>No</b> 20 (100%) Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think

				local & national)			government job will give me as much as I earn here.
<b>Gaborone North</b>	Financial Support	Material	19 (95%) individuals	From	<b>No</b>	17 (85%)	Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think government job will give me as much as I earn here.
			1 (5%)	From	<b>Yes</b>	3 (15%)	If I get a government job.
			17 (85%) individuals	From	<b>No</b>		Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think government job will give me as much as I earn here.
<b>Gaborone Central</b>	Financial Support	Material	3 (15%)	From			
			17 (85%) individuals	From	<b>No</b>		Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think government job will give me as much as I earn here.
			3 (15%)	From			
			17 (85%) individuals	From	<b>No</b>		Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think government job will give me as much as I earn here.
<b>Gaborone East</b>	Financial Support	Material	1 (5%)	From			
			19 (95%) individuals	From	<b>No</b>		Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think government job will give me as much as I earn here.
			1 (5%)	From			
			19 (95%) individuals	From	<b>No</b>		Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think government job will give me as much as I earn here.
<b>Gaborone West</b>	Financial Support	Material	*12 (60%)	From			
			*18 (90%) individuals	From	<b>No</b>		Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think government job will give me as much as I earn here.
			*12 (60%)	From			
			*18 (90%) individuals	From	<b>No</b>		Because <b>i).</b> This is the only job I have <b>ii).</b> I do not think government job will give me as much as I earn here.

Table 5 presents the responses of participants in regards to the general assistance they would need and whether they felt any desire to quit road side vending for any reason. Almost all the road side vendors (95%) indicated that they would need financial and material assistance. Curiously however, almost all of them (95%) indicated that they would need this financial and material assistance from individuals and not from governments (local and national). Only in one of the five politico-administrative units of Gaborone (Gaborone West) was about 60% of vendors suggested that they may obtain this kind of assistance from government whereas in all other units, the highest percentage of those who indicated that they would need this type of assistance from government was only 15%.

Table 5 equally shows that between 85% to 100% of the respondents would not quit the vending business because either it was the only job they had at the time and/or because of their belief that they would not make as much money as they were making on any government job.

**Table 6. Learning Needs As Expressed by Respondents**

<b>Politico-Administrative Units of Gaborone</b>	<b>How To Keep Simple Accounts</b>	<b>To How Better Organise Vending Activities</b>	<b>To How To Expand Vending Activities</b>	<b>to How to Keep the Environment Clean</b>	<b>Total Average</b>
<b>Gaborone South</b>	19(95%)	17(85%)	16(80%)	12(60%)	<b>80%</b>
<b>Gaborone North</b>	19(95%)	18(90%)	12(60%)	14(70%)	<b>79%</b>
<b>Gaborone Central</b>	18(90%)	16(80%)	15(75%)	11(55%)	<b>75%</b>
<b>Gaborone East</b>	20(100%)	19(95%)	13(65%)	11(55%)	<b>79%</b>
<b>Gaborone West</b>	20(100%)	19(95%)	11(55%)	13(65%)	<b>79%</b>
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>61%</b>	

Table 6 indicates that 80%, 79%, 75%, 79% and 79% of road side vendors in Gaborone South, Gaborone North, Gaborone Central, Gaborone East and Gaborone West wished to receive some learning aimed at improving their road side vending. Specifically, 96% of road side vendors in Gaborone expressed the desire to acquire some basic knowledge in book-keeping. Eighty-nine percent of these vendors expressed the desire to acquire knowledge that will assist them better manage their vending activities. Sixty-seven percent and 61% of these vendors wished to learn about how to expand their vending activities and how to keep the environment clean in the process of conducting their activities respectively.

## 11. Discussion of Findings

Ninety-one percent of road side vendors in Gaborone have been found to be women. In Botswana as a whole, women are more visible than men in government offices, schools and the streets, boys and young men being generally in the cattle posts, mines and other more muscle energy demanding work. This finding is therefore not surprising especially in a country that has about equal size of male and female populations.

The fact that 74% of the vendors were found to be aged between 38-54 years proved that road side vending in Gaborone and by extension in other places of the country is not only an important business for survival, but also a significant domain of adult work force in the country.

Eighty-one percent of the vendors were found to have attained secondary (high) school as highest educational achievement while only 15% of the vendors had tertiary education. However, further probing did reveal that some of the road side tents/desks manned by secondary (high) school education certificate holders were actually set up by a few tertiary education certificate holders who recruited secondary education certificate holders as vendors and keepers while they themselves were on other chores or errands. Therefore, the percentage of tertiary trained road side vendors may in reality be higher than 15%. It may be in the region of 40% which is a significant percentage highlighting to some extent, the rate of graduate unemployment in the country.

True to observation, 50% of the road side vending activities began in Gaborone in 2013 and 2014. Sixty-three percent of these activities were started in 2013, 2014 and 2015 while 76% of Gaborone road side vending activities were found to have been started in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. Conclusively therefore, the phenomenal growth of road side vending activities in Gaborone is a recent phenomenon that could be said to have begun in 2013. This period coincides with the era during which graduate unemployment began to become visible in government documents, the press and street talks.

It was therefore not surprising that 87% of the vendor-participants submitted that they took to road side vending as a result of lack of employment. It is to be expected that a people that have a total average of 6 dependants to cater for, would look for means to get by in the absence of an official employment. One of those alternatives as revealed by this study happened to have been road side vending.

Unlike in India and West Africa, the Gaborone vending arena is still very light, selling only light products such as food, snacks and some clothing. Heavier products (manufactured products, some machineries and domestic gadgets) can be found on side walks of India and West Africa. The reason for the light nature of the Gaborone vending market may be linked to the fact that this market is still a growing one.

Between 85% and 95% of the vendors indicated that they would need both financial and material assistance. That which was curious however, was the fact that about 90% of those who would need assistance indicated that the said assistance was to be sought from individual persons and not from local and/or national governments. While this author did not return to the respondents to clarify this finding, it is conjectured here that the vendors excluded the government from their source of assistance

because they feared that instead of assisting them, government was going to arrest them for what government viewed as an illegal activity. During the course of collecting data these vendors had expressed the view that the Gaborone City Council was harassing them and had even wished to know whether the research assistants were not some sort of spies for the Gaborone City Council. Under a suspicious atmosphere such as this, it is reasonable to believe that these vendors would not readily wish government to come to their aid.

Between 85% and 100% of the respondents would not wish to quit road side vending because of two main reasons. First, because they do not have another job and secondly because they did not believe they would make as much money as they made a day if they took up a government job. The belief that they were making more substantial livelihood from their road side vending than they would from a government job, is telling. It implies on the one hand that roadside vending is somewhat lucrative, viable and sustaining in the sense of having the ability to provide regular livelihood. On the other hand it implies that even if some day a number of these vendors eventually get a government employment, the newly employed may not quit road side vending.

About 80% of the vendors wished to learn something. This finding is quite refreshing and encouraging. It does suggest that there is plenty of room for bringing about change through learning within the informal sector of the economy. This prospect is better than the current one within which the vendors fear and hate to see Gaborone City Council personnel and vehicles. The finding points to the fact that Gaborone City Council would achieve more positive results and would have put its resources to better use if it would think of educational/learning programmes to help resolve the issue of road side vending. Specifically, the vendors wished to be empowered in the realm of bookkeeping, management of economic activities and environment. The Gaborone City Council can partner with the University of Botswana to deliver these programmes and achieve its intended objectives towards road side vendors through learning instead of through harassment and force.

## **12. Conclusion**

The findings of this study suggest that indeed the informal sector of the economy represented here by road side vending began to grow in Gaborone as a result of both lack of government and other formal sources of employment and as a result of a growing rate of poverty. This is consistent with literature report wherein it has been said that unemployment and poverty tend to fuel the growth of the informal sector of the economy in less developed countries (Chen, 2012; Gerxhani, 1999; Hart, 1973; International Labour Office, 1972).

## **Recommendations**

If the informal sector tends to grow under the impulse of unemployment and poverty, it does imply that a strategy different from the harassment being meted out to Gaborone road side vendors should subsequently be applied to the informal sector of the economy in Gaborone and Botswana.

- The Gaborone City Council should draw out its blue print regarding its vision for Gaborone in this first half of the 21st century.
- Such a vision should include roadside vendors since road side vendors are also citizens who are expected to receive a minimum service from government and who, by that token, cannot just be elbowed away under any pretext.
- Such a vision should be subjected to the review of those the Council consider partners in development (University of Botswana and other ministries).
- The University of Botswana particularly should be made to evolve learning programmes aimed at driving the Council's vision especially regarding Gaborone road side vendors.

## References

- AVERT. (2015). *HIV and AIDS in Botswana*. Retrieved from <http://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/botswana>
- Baatweng, V. (2015). *Botswana graduates: Unemployed or unemployable?* Retrieved from <http://www.sundaystandard.info/botswana-graduates-unemployed-or-unemployable>
- Bakwena, M. (2013). *The recent economic reforms in Botswana: Acritical assessment*. Retrieved from <http://www.ub.bw/ojs/index.php/pula/article/viewFile/154/27>
- Biao, I. (2015). *A 12-month case study of the development policy linkages between Gaborone, Francistown and their adjoining rural areas*. A research proposal submitted to Office of Research & Development, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana.
- Biao, I. (2015). *Lifelong learning, traditional African education and development*. A public lecture presented at the University of Botswana on 28 October, 2015.
- Botswana Training Authority. (2013). *BOTA disseminate findings of the informal sector*. Retrieved from <http://www.bota.org.bw/177>
- Chen, M. A. (2012). *The Informal Economy: Definitions, Theories and Policies UK: Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)*.
- de Paula, A., & Scheinkman, J. A. (2007). *The informal sector*. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w13486>
- Delors, J. (2013). The treasure within: Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. What is the value of that treasure 15 years after its publication? *International Review of Education*, 59(3), 319-330. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-013-9350-8>
- Faure, E., Herrera, F., Kaddoura, A. R., Lopes, H., Petrovsky, A. V., Rahnema, M., & Ward, F. C. (1972). *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow*. Paris: Unesco.
- Fields, G. S. (1990). *Labour Market Modelling and the Urban Informal Sector: Theory and Evidence*. Retrieved from <http://www.digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles>
- Garrett, J. (2005). *Beyond rural urban: Keeping up with changing realities*. Retrieved from <http://www.ifpri.org>
- Gerxhani, K. (1999). *The Informal Sector in Developed and Less Developed Countries*. Retrieved from

- <http://www.econstor.eubitstream1041985481199083>
- Gobusamang, B. (2008). *Limitations of the national policy on housing with respect poverty alleviation in Botswana*. Retrieved from <http://www.hdl.handle.net/10539/4825>
- Hart, K. (1971). Small Scale Entrepreneurs in Ghana and Development Planning. *Journal of Development Planning*, 1(1), July.
- Hart, K. (1973). Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 11(1), 61-89. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X00008089>
- Hayman, R. (2005). Are the MDGs enough? *Donor perspective and recipient visions of education and poverty reduction in Rwanda*. Retrieved from <http://www.fid.gov.uk/pdf/policystrategy/final.pdf>
- Hillbom, E. (2008). Diamonds or development? *A structural assessment of Botswana's forty years success*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022278x08003194>
- International Labor Office. (1972). *Employment, Income and Equality: A Strategy for Increasing Productivity in Kenya*. Geneva: ILO.
- La Porta, R., & Shleifer, A. (2011). *The unofficial economy in Africa*. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w16821>
- Mazonde, I. N. (1996). Old Naledi and poverty in the city. Retrieved from <http://www.archive.lib.msu.edu/pdfs/PULA/pula.pdf>
- Moffat, B., & Kapunda, S. M. (2013). *Notes on the Informal Sector and Employment Creation in Botswana*. Retrieved from <http://www.ub.bwojsindex.phpbnrarticleviewFile>
- Palmer, R. (2005). *Beyond the basics: Post-basic education, training and poverty reduction in Ghana*. Retrieved from <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/policystrategy/palme.pdf>
- Potts, D. (2013). *Rural-Urban and Urban-Rural Migration Flows as Indicators of Economic Opportunity in Sub-Saharan Africa: What Do the Data Tell Us?* Retrieved from <http://www.migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/files/file.php?name=wp9-potts->
- Psacharopoulos, G. (1980). Returns to Education: An Updated International Comparison. In T. King (Ed.), *Education and Income*. World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 402, World Bank: Washington.
- Psacharopoulos, G. (1985). Returns to Education: A Further International Update and Implications. *Journal of Human Resources*, 20(2), 583-604. <https://doi.org/10.2307/145686>
- Republic of Botswana. (2001). *District Council Laws, 2001*(Section 38). Gaborone: Government Press.
- Republic of Botswana. (2012). *Population of towns, villages and associated localities*. Gaborone: Statistics Botswana.
- Republic of Botswana. (2016). *State of the nation address by his Excellency Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana to the Second Session of the Eleven Parliament, 9th November, 2015*. Gaborone: Republic of Botswana.
- Roever, S. (2016). *Empowering informal workers, securing informal livelihoods*. Retrieved from <http://www.wiego.org/specialists/sally-roever>

- Sekwati, L. (2013). *Economic Diversification: The Case of Botswana*. Retrieved from <http://www.resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/RWI>
- Shanker, A. (2014). *Overview of Street Vendors—A Little History*. Retrieved from <http://www.nasvinet.org/newsite/overview-of-street-vendors-a-little-history/>
- Teferra, D. (2009). *Higher education in Africa post-World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE)*. Retrieved from <http://www.CIHE.Edititorial04.8/27/2009>
- Teferra, D. (2013). *Funding higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137345783>
- Tilak, J. B. (2009). *Financing higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Retrieved from <http://www.gracembiponfoundation>
- UNDP. (2005). *Poverty status report of Botswana: Incidence, trends and dynamics*.
- UNDP. (2013). *Botswana 2013 acceleration compact*. Retrieved from <http://www.bw.undp.org/content/botswana/mdgoverview/>
- United Nations Commission for Human Settlements. (1997). *Social aspects of sustainable development in Botswana*. New York: United Nations.
- World Bank. (2015). *Botswana poverty assessment*. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/botswana/-poverty-assessment-december-2015>
- World Population Review. (2015). *Botswana population 2015*. <http://www.worldpopulationreview.com/countries/botswana-population/>