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# The Botswana Campus of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (UBLS): 1971 Student Cohort and Subsequent Opportunity for a National University in Botswana

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## Introduction

The University of Botswana's Undergraduate Academic Calendar, 2023/24 includes a 'historical note' that makes scant mention of the establishment of the Botswana Campus in 1971 (University of Botswana, 2023:11). This article is intended to fill the gap in the narrative about the initiation of the Botswana Campus of the University of Botswana Lesotho and Swaziland (UBLS). It is written from the author's memory as a member of the 1971/72 cohort with input by some peers at the UBLS Botswana Campus. The Campus formed the foundation for the establishment of the University of Botswana (UB) and its subsequent development. These memories are augmented by content derived from published sources and unpublished documents to provide a context and meaning to the history of UB. The UBLS Botswana Campus was established following a decision by the Governing Council in 1970, to devolve the University and establish a physical presence of infrastructure, buildings, staff and students to a new campus in Botswana and add to existing facilities in Swaziland (Vernon-Jackson 1973:199). Establishing the Campus was a race against time, and presented a host of challenges, including procuring accommodation and facilities, recruiting staff, beginning the construction of infrastructure on a virgin site, registering and managing new students. Although no campus premises for teaching and accommodation existed, postponing the beginning of the 1971/72 academic year was not an option. Qualified school leavers were waiting and could not miss the academic programmes for that year. Keeping pace and maintaining established standards of programmes at the other two campuses in Lesotho and Swaziland was imperative. The Governments of Botswana and Swaziland demonstrated full support for the Council decision, hence the implementation in establishing the new campus in Gaborone. The Lesotho Government, however, was a reluctant participant in the devolution exercise (Mokgopakgosi 2013:467). All along, Lesotho had enjoyed the prestige of hosting the University and the status of a senior campus and administrative headquarters.

## Brief History of a Tri-National University: 1945 to 1982

A higher education institution named Pius XII University College was established in Basutoland (colonial Lesotho) by the Roman Catholic Mission in 1945. The degrees earned were given by the University of South Africa (UNISA). Out of this, the three High Commission Territories of Basutoland (Lesotho), Bechuanaland Protectorate (colonial Botswana) and Swaziland (now Eswatini) were brought together in 1964 to form "The University of Basutoland, the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland" (UBBS),

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headquartered in Roma, Basutoland under the British Royal Charter as the only institution of higher learning in the three Territories. The partnership made sense at the time, given their small population and limited financial resources (Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNARS) 1963; World Bank Atlas 1976).

Following the attainment of independence by these countries in the mid-1960s, the institution became the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (UBLS), through the amendment of the Royal Charter by the Privy Council of the UK (BNARS 1966). This tri-nation partnership disintegrated in 1975 when the National University of Lesotho (NUL) was declared by the Lesotho Government (Masire 2006:224). The remaining countries soon after formed the University of Botswana and Swaziland (UBS). The latter operated with campuses in the two countries, which gradually transformed into nation universities that became the University of Botswana (UB) and the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) in 1982.

### **Higher Education in Botswana Before Devolution: A Void to be Filled**

Sheila Bagnall made the following observation about the UBLS campus in Roma, Lesotho in June, 1968: ‘Roma as a university was disappointing...the university should be in the capital [Maseru], 22 tortuous miles [35 kilometres] away so that various specialists on the academic staff could act in advisory capacities to the Ministries, and the extension resources of the university could be better used’. She was in Lesotho for a conference at Roma, in the company of some senior Botswana education officials, namely Ralph Atkinson, Ray Molomo, Serara Ketlogetswe and Sebotho Modisi (Grant 2001:159). A disadvantage for Botswana was the distance of some 800km that separated it from Lesotho, through apartheid South Africa with its racist laws and practices. ‘Botswana pays [a hefty sum] a year to UBLS for the privilege of sending 30 to 40 students there... These students could be educated more cheaply and more efficiently if they were sent to England for further education’, Bagnall observed (*Sunday Standard* 2016. [www.sundaystandard.info/not everyone saw..](http://www.sundaystandard.info/not everyone saw..)).

In early 1969, before the debate and resolution of the UBLS Council in 1970 on devolution, President Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana remarked in his address to the convocation in Roma:

But we still have some ways to go. We need to achieve a better balance in student intake between our three countries. It does not make sense-or so it seems to me that Botswana should have only 50 students here, while Lesotho has 145. I know that the Council and the Senate are aware of this problem of imbalance, and I commend the efforts they are making to resolve it... If we are to look further into the future to the day when each of our countries will have its own institution, we must do what we can at this moment, in a modest but far-sighted manner, to lay the foundations. We must, as the Stevens Commission advised, deploy more of our resources, limited though they are, into Botswana and Swaziland (Mokopakgosi 2013:473).

In 1969/70, the Academic Planning Mission of the three former High Commission Territories, headed by Sir Norman Alexander, recommended a structural devolution leading to the establishment of the UBLS campuses in Botswana and Swaziland (Vernon-Jackson 1973). The financial challenges for Botswana in particular, gave currency to the wisdom that it was more viable for the Commonwealth to provide an extended scholarship and training programme abroad. The three governments concerned finally agreed to go ahead with the recommendation in late 1970 (Vernon-Jackson 1973).

### **Mineral Discovery and a Brighter Financial Future for Botswana**

At independence in 1966, Botswana was among the world’s poorest nations with a per capita income

of about BWP60.00 per year (then equivalent to about US\$80.00) (Colclough and McCarthy 1980)). It should be noted that there are slight variations by different economists of the figures used to define this. In 1971 when President Khama opened parliament, he announced that Botswana, for the first time since independence, would have a balanced budget for the 1972-73 financial year. According to his widow, Lady Ruth Khama, this was one of the proudest moments of his life (Parsons *et al.* 1995:294). This coincided with the opening of the Orapa Diamond Mine and thus the anticipated revenue from the sale of diamonds. The mine was officially opened by Sir Seretse Khama and Harry Oppenheimer of De Beers mining company on 1 July 1971, the day after Khama's birthday (Brook 2010:84).

The mining of mineral resources was anticipated as the result of mineral exploration. Political leadership in this sector was given by Motlatsi Keseabetswe Segokgo as Minister of Mineral Resources and Water Affairs. On 14 November 1968, De Beers Consolidated Mines issued a press release announcing a major diamond discovery in Botswana. In the release the Chairman of De Beers, Harry Oppenheimer, stated that 'This is important for us, and we also believe it is very important for the new country Botswana'. (Brook 2010:84) Oppenheimer continued to say that he was proud of what the Group's geologists had achieved, adding that 'I do hope that our friends here in Botswana will feel, as we do, that the discovery of an important diamond mine is going to make a real contribution to the development of the country'. The discovery of copper and nickel deposits at Selebi-Phikwe added to the country's fortunes whereby the mining sector contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) grew from 0.6% in 1965 to 10.8% in 1971 and continued to grow substantially in subsequent years (Colclough and MaCarthy 1980). Other fortunes came from increased revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU).

### **Botswana Education Leadership**

President Khama's Cabinet consisted of a team of patriotic ministers at the apex of national executive decision making. The Vice President and Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Quett Masire with the pragmatic Quill Hermans as Permanent Secretary brought solutions and recommendations for consideration by Cabinet, education matters included. At the crucial period during which the devolution of UBLS was considered, the Minister of Education was the fast-talking pioneer educationist-turned-politician, Benjamin Cogo Thema (Tumedi 1981; Ramsay 2018). The Permanent Secretary was the trusted and fearless policy implementer, Bias Mookodi. The latter had been suddenly recalled from his post as the country's High Commissioner to the UK. He had gone to Moscow, along with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edison Setlhomu Masisi, in December 1969. On his return to London, he found a letter from President Khama requesting his immediate return to Botswana, to re-join the Ministry of Education as Permanent Secretary (Obituary 2017). According to his widow, Rosemary Mookodi, he complied without complaint, despite the inconvenience. The family had only settled in the UK for just under six months (Personal communication with Rosemary Mookodi, 2023).

The Ministry had a strong team of experienced and dedicated education officers, including the Director of Education, Gaositwe Chiepe. The Permanent Secretaries of Education and Finance represented the Botswana Government on the Governing Council of UBLS. Before Council meetings, a briefing session chaired by the Vice President, would be convened to define the Botswana position in the UBLS affairs. At one such meeting held on Monday 10 July 1972 (BNARS 1972b), the devolution of academic programmes was discussed and the continued membership of Mookodi on the UBLS Council, despite his recent transfer to Foreign Affairs. The recommendations were to be tabled at Cabinet by the Minister of Education. The new campus in Botswana was intended to produce an educated workforce to meet some of the urgent human resource requirements of the newly independent country, in accordance with the government's localisation policy.

### **Leadership and Governance of UBLS at Roma Campus, Lesotho**

Professor Cyril Rogers, a New Zealander, was appointed Vice Chancellor of UBLS in 1971 on a four-year contract, and was based at Roma, the main campus in Lesotho. He likened Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland to three shining stars in the darkness of racist southern Africa. He had been Dean of Education at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, then Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of Zambia (Mokopakgosi 2013:466). He was deemed eminently suitable for the post of UBLS Vice Chancellor. This appointment was synchronous with that of Dr Hugh Vernon-Jackson (V-J) as Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) at the Botswana Campus. The campuses in each of the three countries were represented by staff members at the UBLS Senate based at Roma. The Governing Council consisted of the UBLS Officers and government representatives from each country, normally permanent secretaries in the ministries of education and finance.

### **Programmes at the Botswana Campus**

The degree programmes at UBLS were four years; two years for Part I and the subsequent two years for Part II. The exception was the Bachelor of Laws (LLB), which was not initially offered at the Botswana Campus. In 1971, the programmes below were offered in Botswana, only in Part I:

- Bachelor of Science (BSc) (Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, then Biology or Geography).
- Bachelor of Arts (BA) Government and Administration
- Bachelor of Arts (BA) Economics
- Bachelor of Arts (BA) Humanities (English, History, African Languages)
- Concurrent Certificate in Education (CCE), taken by students designated for teaching.

The subjects provided in brackets are each a Major chosen for graduation. The subjects were taken for the whole year with examinations at the end of the academic year. English was compulsory for all students in Part I, to develop communication skills.

Some students, especially those studying for Bachelor of Science, were designated for transfer to other external institutions after Part I for skill development in programmes not available at UBLS. These include medicine, veterinary science, engineering, pharmacy, architecture, geology, etc. (BNARS, 1972a).

### **Students**

Apparently, there were only 80 school leavers in Botswana who were qualified for acceptance to UBLS programmes (Vernon-Jackson 1973). The candidates were the cream of the crop, based on the grades obtained in the Cambridge Overseas Secondary School Examination performance at O-Level offered by six senior secondary schools in the country. These were the St. Joseph's College near Gaborone, Mater Spei College in Francistown, Moeng College in the Tswapong region and Moeding College in Otse, and the newly built Swaneng Hill Secondary School in Serowe and Gaborone Secondary School (Fawcus and Tilbury 2000). A number of top performers were picked for further training by such agencies as De Beers. In addition, international students from Lesotho, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) and South Africa were registered at the UBLS Botswana Campus. Classes in Botswana started 'miraculously' on 27 July 1971 as reported by the Roma-based UBLS Newsletter (BNARS, 1971).

Most of the 1971 Botswana Campus cohort completed their degrees in mid-1975 in Roma, where Part II was offered. Some of the students, however, transferred to other institutions to pursue specialized

programmes as indicated above. The only First-Class pass for the UBLS Graduating Class of 1975 originated from the Botswana Campus pioneering 1971 cohort (UBLS, 1975). About a month after the graduation ceremony in October 1975, the National University of Lesotho (NUL) was declared. Students from Botswana and Swaziland of the 1972 and 1973 cohorts were left stranded and had to leave Lesotho for their respective countries (Mokopakgosi 2013; Masire 2006).

**Table 1: UBLS Botswana Campus Students for the 1971/72 Academic Year**

No.	Surname	Name	M/F	Nationality	Career
1	Bulawa*	Kotini	M	Botswana	Education
2	Chakaodza*	Bornwell, K	M	Zimbabwe	Education/Journalism
3	Chaya	Ali Agbar	M	South Africa	Unknown
4	Chigodora*	Freddie, Farai	M	Botswana	Education
5	Dintwa*	Bathusi	M	Botswana	Administration/Author
6	Disele*	Boikhutso, M.	M	Botswana	Economics
7	Habangana*	Morris, A	M	Botswana	Education
8	Khabele*	Taelo	M	Lesotho	Telecommunications
9	Kupe	Godfrey	M	Botswana	Hospitality
10	Kuswane	Bigboy, M.	M	Botswana	Administration
11	Leburu*	Felicity, M.	F	Botswana	Education/Publishing
12	Lehloba	S.L. 'Manzini'	M	Lesotho	Unknown
13	Lerotholi	Clement, S.	M	Lesotho	Mining
14	Maine	Ezekiel, D.	M	Botswana	Medicine
15	Majaha	Julia	F	Botswana	Economics
16	Malau*	Ketsile Doreen	F	Botswana	Administration
17	Manake*	Elizabeth P.	F	Botswana	Education
18	Mangole*	Isaac, I	M	Botswana	Education/HR
19	Matlhaku*	Alpheus	M	Botswana	Economics/Diplomat
20	Modise	C.G. 'Sweetie'	F	Botswana	Education/Bogosi
21	Modisi	Motsoptse, P	M	Botswana	Geology/Academia
22	Mogale*	Harold, M.	M	Botswana	Security Services
23	Mogale*	Kgamanyane, A.	M	Botswana	Education
24	Mogano*	Bareedi 'Rex'	M	Botswana	Education
25	Molefi*	Martha, N.	F	Botswana	Economics
26	Monese	A.P. "Push"	M	Lesotho	Unknown
27	Morake	Sheila, D.	F	Botswana	Health/Academia
28	Moreosele*	Kgakgamatso, W.	F	South Africa	Unknown
29	Mosaka*	Naledi	F	South Africa	Academia
30	Mosetlhi	Billy, T.D.	M	Botswana	Architecture
31	Mosienyane	Matz, G.	M	Botswana	Veterinary Medicine
32	Motlhatlhedhi	Freddy, O.	M	Botswana	Energy
33	Motsie*	Hubert, C.	M	Botswana	Education
34	Mpofu*	Ernest, Siphon B.	M	Botswana	Administration/Diplomat
35	Mswela*	Francis, S.	M	Botswana	Education/HR

36	Mudadi*	Benhura, N.	M	Zimbabwe	Biochemistry/Academia
37	Mutloane	Thomas, M.	M	South Africa	Medicine
38	Ncube	Isaac, S.	M	Botswana	Geography/Academia
39	Ndlovu*	James, J.	M	Zimbabwe	Unknown
40	Ndzinge*	Batatu Emelda	F	Botswana	Administration
41	Ntshabele	Mable, B.R.	F	Botswana	Unknown
42	Ntsabane*	Baitumetse, N-M	F	Botswana	Education
43	Nyathi	Morris	M	Botswana	Economics
44	Pelekekae	Charles	M	Botswana	Local Government
45	Ramatsui*	Philemon, T.	M	Botswana	Education
46	Seboka*	Motsoane, Everitt	M	Lesotho	Economics
47	Sebalo*	Gloria, M.	F	South Africa	Humanities/Library
48	Sechele*	Peter, L.	M	Botswana	Education
49	Sekgoma	Tsetsele, C.	F	Botswana	Human Resources (HR)
50	Selato*	Vincent, K.	M	Botswana	Economics
51	Selema*	Diamond, M.	M	Botswana	Education
52	Seloilwe*	Gaoralalwe, S.B.	M	Botswana	Economics
53	Tangane	Cletus, M.	M	Botswana	Mining Engineering
54	Tebape*	Obonye P.	M	Botswana	Administration
55	Thamane	Edgar L.	M	Botswana	Banking
56	Thipe*	Dwight, D.	M	Botswana	Education
57	Tlhogane*	Marcia, F	F	South Africa	Unknown

Male/Female (M/F) and Human Resources (HR) are so abbreviated in the table. \*1975 UBLS graduates are 61%, mainly due to transfers. Female students account for 26% of enrolment. Some female students graduated with married names. International students account for 25%. Zimbabwe was then Rhodesia. Education accounts for 37% of citizen careers and 30% of the total. List sourced from BNARS 1972c.

### Careers

Botswana students who transferred after Part I were to train in careers approved by the Botswana Directorate of Personnel (BNARS 1972a). The students who were identified for external transfer interacted with the Bursaries Secretary, CIB Sekgwa, for placement, travel arrangements and other government support. Some of the students benefited from scholarships offered by such international agencies as the Commonwealth and the World Health Organisation (BNARS 1972a).

On completion of their programmes, students at UBLS and other training institutions abroad were guaranteed positions in government and public institutions long in advance of course completion. About 30% pursued careers in education, with lesser proportions in a diversity of disciplines. Most of them held senior positions in organisations they were employed at, commonly in the public sector and a few in the private sector.

### Staff

The PVC, Dr Vernon-Jackson, arrived in Gaborone in February 1971. He was described as Scottish-Canadian (Grant 2001:309). He had extensive experience with assignments in many parts of Africa including Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, normally under the auspices of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (*The Globe and Mail* 2001).

The academic and senior administrative staff were international, recruited from Britain, Canada, USA, South Africa, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), Lesotho, Holland, Australia, and last, but not least, Botswana (Vernon-Jackson 1973). Full-time academic staff members were about 20 in number with an equal number of skilled support staff members (See Table 2 below). Some of the academic instructors and advisors offered their services on a part-time basis. A number of academic staff members continued with their studies and attained doctoral degrees. Some stayed long enough to be promoted to the professoriate and to administrative positions. All staff members did their work with a sense of purpose and pride.

**Table 2: UBLS Staff Members (Full-time) for the 1971/72 Academic Year.**

No.	Name	Title	Department
1	Vernon-Jackson, Hugh O.H	Dr.	Administration (Pro-Vice-Chancellor)
2	Jenkins, David E.	Mr.	Administration (Campus Registrar)
3	Gould, I.D.	Mr.	Administration (Campus Bursar)
4	Marumo, Balebeng C.	Mr.	Administration
5	Slave, Adrian .B.	Mr.	Administration (Accounts)
6	Pule, Thomas	Mr.	Administration
7	Willet, S. M.	Ms.	Library
8	Raseroka, H. K.	Mrs.	Library
9	Lardner, Peter J.	Dr.	Biology (Campus Faculty Head, Science)
10	Khabele, P.	Dr.	Biology
11	Mckinney, Michael	Mr.	Chemistry
12	Robinson, D.	Mr.	Chemistry
13	Cooke, Harold John	Dr.	Geography
14	Hartney, J.F.	Mr.	Mathematics
15	Ludvigsen, M.	Mr.	Mathematics
16	Landheer, B.	Dr.	Physics
17	Taole, S.	Mr.	Physics
18	Macartney, W.J. Allan.	Mr.	Government & Administration (Campus Faculty Head, Social and Economic Studies)
19	Cohen, D.L.	Mr.	Government & Administration
20	Muzorewa, B.C.	Mr.	Economics
21	Melamu, Moteane John	Mr.	English (Campus Faculty Head, Humanities)
22	Pastryk, R.	Mr.	English
23	Young, Leloba	Mrs.	English
24	Ngcongco, Leonard D.	Mr.	History
25	Moilwa, James	Mr.	African Languages
26	Ulin, R.O.	Dr.	Education
27	Russell, George	Mr.	Education
28	Crowley, David W.	Mr.	Extra-mural Services (Assistant Director)
29	Kidd, Ross	Mr.	Extra-mural Services (Ag. Assistant Director)
30	Seager, E.	Mrs.	Extra-mural Services (Tutor)
31	Colclough, M	Mrs.	Extra-mural Services (Tutor)
32	Moshabesha, M.	Mr.	Extra-mural Services (Graduate Assistant)

33	Pule, S.	Mr.	Field Instructor
34	Mophuting	Mr.	Campus Services
35	Oliphant, K.	Mrs.	Domestic Services
36	Matthews	Mrs.	Campus Health Services
37	Semausu	Mrs.	Kitchen
38	Watkins,L.L.	Mrs.	Personal Assistant (Pro-Vice-Chancellor)
39	Bulmer, J.	Mrs.	Secretary (Campus Registrar)
40	Chikella, H.	Ms.	Secretary (Campus Bursar)
41	Ratshosa	Mrs.	Receptionist
42	Ramaabya, Duma	Mr.	Transport/Driver
43	Semi-skilled staff#		Domestic work and kitchen/cafeteria

Whereas the majority of staff members were on site at the beginning of the academic year, several joined during the course of the year. Some of the courses were taught by part-time and visiting instructors who are not listed in the table. #Unskilled and semi-skilled labour engaged on campus and domestic services approximated half-dozen. The source is UBLS, 1971: 24-26).

### Physical Facilities

The Roma campus in Lesotho was isolated from the capital Maseru, and students a were accommodated on campus. Botswana chose to build a campus that is engaged with the society, where students could be enrolled while living off-campus. In planning devolution, adult education, provision of part-time continuing education, extra-mural activities and polytechnical training were considerations (Vernon-Jackson 1973:200).

When the decision to devolve UBLS was made, the Botswana Government allocated sufficient land in the capital centre. The main piece of land was plot 4775, Notwane Road, which had previously been used as a horse race course and for agricultural shows. Plots 4714 and 4715, opposite the Botswana Training Centre (BTC) (currently Botswana Public Service College). were sizable pieces of land in the Gaborone Village on which the National Institute of Research (NIR) was later based. Staff residential premises were constructed on the rest of the two latter plots. Some plots in Extension 5, Extension 9 and later in Extension 11 in the capital centre and residential plots in the Village were allocated for staff accommodation. The Ministry of Local Government and Lands and the Attorney General had significant roles in this regard.

In 1971, Gaborone had been in existence for about five years as a capital town with a population of 18,799 people (Central Statistics Office 1995; Crone 1972). The place was just an under-developed *klein dorp*, hardly perceived as host to a national university. Plot 4775 became a construction site for student accommodation, teaching classrooms, laboratories and administration building during 1971 and 1972. Financially, there were commitments from external sources in Canada, Britain and the United States of America for capital and infrastructure development (Vernon-Jackson 1973).

Before construction started, facilities were borrowed for student accommodation, teaching and learning and housing staff. The BTC, then a vocational training institution made available dormitories to accommodate the male students. Eight men shared a room with shared bathrooms and showers. Some BTC classrooms were freed for UBLS teaching. Some teaching also took place on the premises that eventually housed the NIR. At these premises, female students were accommodated in one of the buildings in which two shared a room.

The library was a building, owned by the Dutch Reformed Church (Vernon-Jackson 1973.) in the Gaborone Village and the cafeteria was a corner-located prefab house along Phuthadikobo Way. Mathematics was taught at the 'Shaw Hall', next to the Central Transport Organisation (CTO). The



sizable Hall was used whenever large groups needed indoor space, and was also the normal venue for Student Representative Council (SRC) meetings. Chemistry and Geography were taught at the Botswana Nurses Association (BNA) premises at plot 2684, Phiri Crescent, in Extension 9, now Botswana Nurses Union (BNU). Biology, Physics and Geography, especially in the second year were taught at Gaborone Secondary School (GSS) at plot 327 in Extension 5. Science laboratory sessions were also done at GSS. Transportation included a five-tonne Bedford J5 lorry, normally driven by the alert and youthful Duma Ramaabya. A smaller vehicle, a Chevrolet one and half-tonne bakkie with canopy, travelled between the various premises ferrying students up and down. After the labs at GSS, transport was not always available and science students would walk, usually in groups to the Gaborone Village wearing their white lab coats. These coats gave some feeling of importance and status, causing curiosity and stares from community onlookers. As the students began their studies, the plot 4775 site was gradually getting developed, and by the time the second batch of students were admitted, the new site provided accommodation for both men and women (now called 'barracks') towards the end of 1972. The cafeteria was still at the Village and students were trucked by the J5 lorry. Academic staff members were mainly accommodated in former government houses in Extension 9, within walking or cycling distance from the teaching classrooms. At the time, public transport was not available and there were not many motor vehicles in the capital. Cycling was the favoured option of Dr John Cooke.

### **Student Social Environment**

The 1971 student cohort lacked mentors of earlier years on campus and the opportunity to learn by example. Encouragement was provided by staff members, led by the PVC. Similarly, family, friends and the community played their part in supporting the pioneering group of university students. The PVC, Vernon-Jackson (V-J) would advise students not to be shy and to speak up: 'Don't be backward in coming forward', he would say at meetings with students. In his absence, students referred to him as 'PVC' or 'V-J'. He came across as affable and a gentleman. He always had something to say, if he was not busy working in the office.

The first president of the SRC was Benhura Mudadi who was inspired by the liberation movement and socialist ideologies that made an impression on a good proportion of the student population. At SRC meetings, some excited and impatient students were induced to cry 'Action! Now!'. The succeeding president for the next academic year, Alpheus Matlhaku was more moderate and came across as an able, level-headed negotiator. He managed to forge collaboration with the student government counterparts of the other two campuses and visits were exchanged to discuss student matters of mutual interest.

There was a significant amount of interaction between staff and students. The English lecturer was quoted to have declared: 'I have never taken anything stronger than Coca-Cola'. It was the intonation of the last words that students were fascinated with. This was not the 'khokha khola' they were used to. Regularly abused words such as chaos, determine, extraordinary, conscience etc. were promptly corrected to their proper pronunciation and usage in communication by Mr John Melamu, who was always impeccably dressed and loved white shirts. He was a role model in poise and confidence. The English Department organized a memorable drama production of the play by the Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka, *The Lion and the Jewel*.

History lessons were sessions to remember for the booming voice and energy of Leonard Diniso Ngongco. Students would speak and act like him outside class. Social interaction with staff at times occurred at wine and cheese parties. Dr John Cooke, the founding lecturer in Geography was an experienced cave explorer and mountaineer who had a good rapport with students. One student, Billy Moseitlhi, easily solved a trick question posed by Dr Cooke that was impossible to solve if one thought in one or two dimensions only. Billy immediately perceived its three-dimensional context and provided an

answer before anybody else. Dr Cooke laughed it off, pronouncing that the student was a natural architect. Billy ended up studying architecture after Part I and had a life-long career as a professional architect. Dr Cooke's clarity in explaining natural environmental processes encouraged the author to study geology and have a life-long career in mineral exploration, geology and academia. Life in the dormitories was lively with competitive peer interactions. Arguments were many, with the most memorable rivalry being of two students, namely Billy and Matz. One became known as 'USA' and the other as 'Russia', analogous to the Cold War rivalry between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. This rivalry was basically dominance in personality and winning arguments at elevated decibels to the amusement of on-lookers. Going to the movies at the Capitol Cinema in the Main Mall was a favoured pastime and students would 'date' each other to go there, eligible suitors and damsels from town included. Inevitably, romantic relationships ensued. Some of these affected even those who eventually proceeded to Roma to complete part II in Lesotho. When UBLS broke up, some of these social relationships were affected. A few hearts were broken as co-lateral damage, one could say.

Those who chose to consume alcohol did so off-campus. The favoured drinking hole was the Copper Bar at the President Hotel, but other sites were not off-limits. Constraints would be imposed by the level of appetite and pocket cash, or lack thereof. 'Functions' took place at the Town Hall, to listen to live popular dance music by The Scarers. The closer Notwane Club House usually featured Every Mother's Son, and Bontleng Community Hall normally featured the Raiders. Others would attend private parties in town during weekends. The Shades from Francistown once visited Notwane Club House in the second year and sent young ladies crazy. Music bands from South Africa would also visit, causing even more excitement during weekends. After the weekend adventures, there would be plenty of stories, and back to Math class on Monday morning. Mathematics homework scripts would be given back, causing all traces of the weekend excitement to evaporate due to some of the miserable grades on the scripts. However, a number of serious students were always high performers, and less distracted by social adventures. UBLS male students and BTC students used to mix and play table tennis and other games together as recreational facilities on the shared premises. For those talented and fit enough to play for football teams in town such as Notwane, Township Rollers, Gaborone United among others, the stadium or other football fields would be a good way to spend the weekend afternoon, when studying was out of the way.

### **End of The UBLS Higher Education Partnership**

When Rogers's contract came to an end, Botswana and Swaziland supported its renewal. This was accompanied by the notion that the central administration should move to Mbabane, Swaziland. Many in Lesotho saw this as a conspiracy between Botswana and Swaziland against Lesotho. This was the beginning of the end of the tri-nation institution. Lesotho on one side favoured the continued centralisation of a main campus in that country, while Botswana and Swaziland on the other side were in favour of gradual devolution and continuing development of campuses in their respective countries (Mokopakgosi 2013).

The above differences on the future of UBLS culminated in the unilateral declaration of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in October of 1975 (Masire 2006). The nationalisation of the UBLS Roma Campus to NUL prompted President Seretse Khama to say that 'The traumatic effect of the action of Lesotho were incalculable as they threw out plans for gradual and smooth devolution of the University into complete disarray... The breakup of the university, caused by Lesotho, happened before we had embarked on the second phase of the development of our local campus, which was to have been the establishment of Part II teaching in Botswana' (Mokopakgosi 2013:466, originally Botswana Daily News, 31 March 1976). Botswana and Swaziland had no option but to come up with a new plan for development. The Botswana solution was partly through the Botswana University Campus Appeal (BUCA) or '*Motho le motho kgomo*'

(Mokopakgosi 2008; Makhurane 2010).

### Conclusion

The UBLS Botswana Campus initiation in 1971 was a landmark development marking the physical presence of university education in Botswana. There was no physical infrastructure and the priority was to kick-start intellectual capacitation and skills development by teaching and learning. Utilizing of temporary and borrowed premises and facilities were improvised pragmatic solutions to challenges. Time was of the essence as the project was implemented in order to fulfil the Botswana Government vision and policies in higher education and the localisation of high-level skilled jobs. It was also imperative to maintain the standards of quality education and governance that already existed in the UBLS partnership.

The establishment of the campus began an 11-year long journey of devolution beginning with initial cooperation, then the unilateral departure of Lesotho, and ending with Botswana and Swaziland finally and amicably parting ways to form the University of Botswana and University of Swaziland. The visionary, courageous and pragmatic leadership that was the hallmark of the founding leaders needs to be re-ignited, going forward amid new developments and challenges.

### Acknowledgements

The article, though written largely from memory, was assisted by the collection of historical material archived at our home by my wife, Lily Mafela-Modisi. She also provided comments on the early manuscript. Comments and encouragement were received from peers, the most significant were by Felicity Leburu-Sianga, Philemon Ramatsui, Francis Mswela, Godfrey Kupe, Gaoralalwe Bigshot Seloilwe, Ernest Mpopfu and Boikhutso John Disele. A conversation with Mrs Rosemary Mookodi, widow to Bias Mookodi provided corroborating memories. Special thanks are made to the anonymous reviewer, who made it possible to substantially improve the manuscript and give it a more historical focus. Prof. Moteane John Melamu provided detailed comments to a late version of the manuscript. Lastly, our son Arona Modisi, who assisted with some of the document formatting is acknowledged.

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