# RETIRED PROFESSIONALS AS A CAREER RESOURCE TOOL FOR SCHOOLS IN BOTSWANA: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

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## Abstract

Career resource tools may appear expensive to schools in Botswana moving towards a knowledge-based economy. However, a partnership between retired professionals and education in career development is identified as a cost effective, innovative, and impactful strategy towards addressing this need. A synthesis of studies on retired professionals conducted and discussed in this article indicates benefits that can be attained from utilising retirees' competencies to develop career skills of children in schools. Continuity in learning, reflection and changing one's career life is observed through an integration of Theory of Continuity (TC), Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and the life design of the Career Construction Theory (CCT); theories which guided this research study. Sampling was from articles dated 2005 to 2019 and the search key phrase was 'retired professionals.' A criterion for inclusion and exclusion was developed and used for sampling purposes. The findings were varied and included evidence of engagement, helping other people, and skilled activities by retirees post retirement. More engagements and skilled activities, which are associated with retirees professional expertise or skills acquired preceding retirement are highlighted.

**Key words**: career development, education partnerships, retired professionals, skilled activities, career resources tools, mentoring.

### **1.0 Introduction**

Learners need career resource tools that would enable them to be knowledgeable and skilled for the changing world of careers, and for moving towards a knowledge-based society. The world of careers and moving towards a knowledge-based society are critical to policy makers and employers at tertiary level exit in Botswana. However, as counsellor educator and curriculum specialists ours view are that learners should be prepared for careers, and for a knowledge-based economy at a young age before they join the labour market. With the dwindling economic resources, creativity, innovation, and flexibility are necessary to make use of those available (Schmitt, 2013). Early strategic partnerships and career resources are of paramount importance for career development of learners at career exploration stages (Fisch, 2019). Engaging retired professionals in schools as knowledge and skills experts in career development could benefit both the retirees and the learners. The learners would not only get information and training, but they would also get role models and mentors too, who they may ISSN 1021-559X /07/2020 © Hilda L Mokgolodi & Michael Gaotlhobogwe Mosenodi Journal Vol. 23(1): 57-69

not get outside of the advocated for strategic partnerships, while the retirees' functional capacity is improved at all levels (Boulton, Horne, & Todd, 2019; International Council on Active Aging, 2016). It is important that career education curriculum in Botswana take note of these retired professionals as a career resource tool for schools in the era of knowledge-based economies.

### 2.0 Career guidance and counselling in Botswana

Although Botswana started its career education in secondary schools in the 1960s and advanced this to include primary schools and the university in the 1990s, career education seems to have regressed back to periods before the 1960s (Government of Botswana, 1996). The deterioration is evidenced by employers complaining about the quality of graduates exiting tertiary institutions and organisations such as Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) conducting Career Fairs that concentrate on academic achievement at basic education level. Further decline of career development programmes is observed from the development of the Botswana Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (ETSSP), which was established to refocus the education system back to the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) of 1994. The RNPE is almost three decades old, and although it is commendable to go back to the basics, it is hoped in pursuant of a knowledge based economy, innovative ways such as retired professional education partnerships are considered (Ehrich, Nwaneri & de Santo, 2017). It is observed that schools do not run the take a child to work programmes suitable for primary schools anymore. Leard (2019) suggests a break away from the traditional way of career guidance and counselling to being more integrative and exposing learners more, such as participating in take a child to work programmes. Further to this, learners need to be helped to develop and set their career goals while still quite young, especially through intergenerational partnerships (Fisch, 2019). Early intervention does not seem to be a priority for the education system in Botswana as most career fairs are organized for completing students only. Career development in Botswana is a once off activity not built into the curriculum. The skills mismatch widely reported in Botswana is partly a result of the absence of career development within curricula which is more theoretical rather than experiential.

This study argues that an innovative, transformative, and progressive career development strategy should be continuous and impactful for young people to keep reflecting on their skills (Fisch, 2019). Additionally, learners with special educational needs may need role models and mentors who can relate to their needs (Stack, 2019; Murugami & Nel, 2012).

### **3.0 Retired people as career resource tools**

The view of ageing populations is gradually taking a positive outlook based on the lengthening life expectancies and aging populations of countries around the world (White House Conference on Ageing, 2015; International Council on Active Aging, 2016). It is time that stereotypes and negative attitudes, referred to as 'ageism,' are rejected. It is now important to accurately reshape societies' perceptions of the elderly as frail, confused, a burden and unable to participate in the rapidly changing and technology-driven world. Regardless of the common belief that older people find it difficult to learn in a technological environment, we have confidence that, given the right support, retired professionals can learn based on their

well-developed coping mechanisms as observed by Mokgolodi (2015). Besides, these retirees have amassed so much knowledge during their working life that no book amount of documentary could exhaust.

### 4.0 Theoretical framework

An integrative approach of Theory of Continuity (TC), Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Career Construction Theory's (CCT) life design was found more appropriate for this study. The Theory of Continuity highlights the idea that retirees who continue a similar kind of lifestyle in retirement to that held prior to retirement are likely to enhance their wellbeing (Lytle, Foley & Cotter, 2015). Conferring to Pushcar, Chaikelson, Conway, Etezadi, Giannopoulus, Li and Wrosch (2010) on testing the Theory of Continuity, older people continued to engage on activities they enjoyed rather than the ones they disliked post retirement. The implications for the TC here are that partnership of retired professionals with learners in divergent educational environments and levels will be based on both expertise and enjoyment. The CCT's emphasis is on individuals' construction of their own realities as well as adjusting to environmental contexts based on the development of individuals' inner structures (Zunker, 2016). Both ELT and CCT emphasise the ideas of reflection and abstraction. However, according to Passarelli and Kolb (forthcoming), Kolb's work of 1984 highlighted six characteristics of ELT. These are: "learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes; all learning is re-learning; learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world; learning is a holistic process of adaptation; learning results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment; and that learning is the process of creating knowledge" (pp. 2-3). Passarelli and Kolb focus the action and experience needed in the cycle of experiential learning. All the three theories seem to emphasise continuity in learning and construction and deconstruction of one's career life. Therefore, it seems realistic to think of retired professionals as a career resource in career development of young people who partner with the retirees as not only mentors but to enhance reflection and intergenerational collaboration.

## 5.0 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to highlight the role that retired professionals could play on career development of learners through strategic partnerships in the education system. Furthermore, the study highlights how retirement is a life transition rather than an end on itself and therefore encourages stakeholders to look at retirees as a career resource that no book can provide.

## 6.0 Methodology

A desktop literature review was conducted to gather data from different sources and databases including Google Scholar, Eric INFO, Psych INFO, Science Direct and Social Policy and Practice. The review covered scholarly research articles and studies from 2005 to 2019 with the key phrase 'retired professionals.' Google Scholar alone turned up 122,000 results and Science Direct turned up 2,192. However, most articles found in Google Scholar were repeating in other database searches. An Inclusion/Exclusion criterion was used to determine

which articles to use in the study and which ones to exclude. The following inclusion criterion was used. The articles had to be a) about retired professionals in any field, b) on any research study, original, based on original research or synthesis of literature and c) about engagement or possibility of engagement post retirement using acquired professional skills for the benefit of others. All articles focusing only on the health, financial or preparation or readiness for retirement of retired professionals as older adults were excluded. Articles from a variety of fields were then selected over the year of the study. Not all articles were read in full. Some abstracts were clear enough to provide the needed data while a few articles required reading of the full article. Some potentially good articles, about 10, could not be accessed due to access requirements. Although the key search phrase in varied databases was 'retired professionals,' obscure information that may not have been in the conclusions or a matter in the discussion sections of studies were identified for some themes. 'Professional' was looked at in two ways. Firstly, a professional was looked at as someone having at least a degree or post-secondary qualification and having worked in a professional career with ethical standards and rules and regulations to adhere to (Borrero & Kruger, 2015). Hence, action could be taken against this professional if he or she contravenes the statutes governing the profession. Secondly, a professional could be self-made through interest, engaging in a profession, becoming knowledgeable and skilled enough to interact with those with post-secondary qualifications.

#### 7.0 Results

Following the exclusion/inclusion criterion mentioned above, 15 articles which addressed the purpose of this study were identified and are shared in Table 1. Table 1 indicates the studies that formed the conclusions reached and the activities that the retirees engage in in order to use acquired skills to benefit others, especially young people.

Table 1. Research at ticles and summary of evidence of skined engagement post retirement			
Research /study	Work involvement pre- retirement	Evidence of engagement	Helping others
	reurement	and skilled activities post retirement.	
Dorfman, L. T., & Kolarik, D. C. (2005).	professor	volunteer activity, travel,	volunteer activity
Leisure and the retired professor: Occupation		exercise or sports, and work	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
matters. Journal Educational Gerontology, 31		around the house or garden	
(5), 343-361.		professional activities	
Dhami, M. K., & Joy, P. (2007). Challenges to	(judges, people in the	volunteers	"help victims to be heard and heal,
establishing volunteer- run, community- based	judiciary)	(1) define and educate the	offenders to take responsibility for
restorative justice programs. Journal		community, (2) create	their acts and make amends, and
Contemporary Justice, Review Issues in	restorative justice-	partnerships with funding	the community to reunite and
Criminal, Social, and Restorative Justice,	Victoria program in	and referral agencies, (3)	reinforce positive values" (p9)
10(1), 9-22. doi.org/10.1080	British Columbia,	recruit and train volunteers,	
/1028258060115745	Canada	and (4) obtain financial	prompted the integration of
		support.	restorative justice practices into
			traditional justice systems
Gannon, J. P. (2008). A retired newspaper	Journalist, a reporter,	created and launched	reports timely and gives solid in-
journalist takes what he knows to the Web	columnist, bureau chief,	(www.rappvoice. com), an	depth explanations and analysis of
'What "sold" RappVoice to the local audience	and editor of a big	online community	difficult subjects and sensational
was solid and timely reporting, analysis, and	newspaper organisation	"newspaper" for own home	stories
in-depth explanation of complex subjects.'		community	
Nieman Reports, Winter (2008), 77-78.			
McKnight, K., Bernes, K., Gunn, T., Chorney,	sport	resilience in other activities	
D., Orr, D., & Bardick, A. (2009). Life after			
sport: Athletic career transition and			
transferable skills. Journal of Excellence, 13,			
63-77. http://opus.uleth.ca			

Table 1: Research articles and summary of evidence of skilled engagement post retirement

Cole, M. B., & Macdonald, K. C. (2011).	Clinical. Educator.	volunteering in boards and	chairing boards or participating in
Retired occupational therapists' experiences in	Others including private	committees, religious based	associations
volunteer occupations. Occupational Therapy	practitioner, consultant,	work, professional	
International, (Special Issue Paper), 18-31.	CEO or administrator	associations/ roles (editor,	
		reviewer, presenter,	
		consultant), traditional	
		health care (hospital,	
		hospice, adult day care),	
		mission or health care	
		abroad, clerical work, and	
		traditional community	
		organization work (soup	
		kitchen, library, political,	
		fund raising, recycling, web	
		design), and creative	
		services (zoo, museum,	
		gardening, musical or	
		performing arts, decorating,	
		pet-related services).	
Cocca-Bates, K. C. & Neal-Boylan, L. (2011).	nursing	volunteers in formal nursing	nursing
Retired RNs: Perceptions of volunteering.		roles or were using their	
<i>Geriatric Nursing, 32</i> (2), 96-105,		nursing knowledge and	
doi.org/10.1016/j.gerinurse.2010.11.003		experience in non-nursing	
		roles, such as church work	
Ghilay, Y., & Ghilay, R. (2011). Retired	military officers	teaching and educational	can teach resilience, hard work and
officer principals' managerial characteristics.		management	leadership skills
<i>ISEA</i> , <i>39</i> (2), 43-63.			

Harold. C. (2014). The game of life: Retired banker helps teens get a grip on clubs and goals. <i>ABA Banking Journal</i> , <i>106</i> (2). www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1- 359612685/	Banker, state employee	state employee started while a banker, serves as chairman of the board of directors for the Midnight Golf Program, which is a 30-week empowerment and mentoring program that teaches life skills along with golf to Detroit-area teens.	teaches life skills along with golf to teens, financial literacy is among the skills and includes information on college finance and banking, along with a 12-week stock market game that demonstrates investment education.
Borrero, L. & Kruger, T. M. (2015). The nature and meaning of identity in retired professional women. <i>Journal of Women &amp;</i> <i>Aging</i> , 27(4), 309-329. doi:10.1080 /08952841.2014.950141	P1college professors, occupational therapist, nurse practitioner, teacher (all at masters and PhD levels)	volunteering acquired professional skills, teaching, leadership development programmes, part-time consultant, attend academic and professional conferences	help organisations improve people's awareness of environmental issues; volunteering with an animal therapy agency to help children with disabilities, offered money and time to people suffering and supporting people in need, elder advocacy, improve and empower by engaging them in local government agencies
Mokgolodi, H.L. (2015). Harnessing experiential knowledge and skills of retired educators to inform career development programmes in Botswana (PhD Dissertation). University of Pretoria. Pretoria. South Africa. http://hdl.handle.net/2263/44142>	teachers, education officers, counsellors, teacher trainers, permanent secretaries,	consultancies, counselling, farming, volunteer teachers and community members, mentoring full time employees in similar sectors, investors	volunteering, mentoring

Eucharia O.E. (2015). Social activities of	academics (university	declined academic activities	
retired Nigerian academics: The applicability	teachers)	and heightened social	
of the Continuity Theory. Activities, adaptation	academic activities	activities	
& aging, 39(1), 64-76. doi: 10.1080	(workshop/conference/		
/01924788.2014.966544	seminar,		
/01/21/0012011/000011	public lectures,		
	review of academic		
	papers,		
	academic/professional		
	associations), social		
	participation		
	(clubs/societies		
	political party		
	voluntary agencies,		
	marriages,		
	naming ceremonies,		
	burial ceremonies,		
	community festivals,		
	community development)		
McArthur, K., Wilson, A., & Hunter, K.	social work, teaching,	volunteer mentors emerged	mentoring and e-mentoring varied
(2016). Mentor suitability and mentoring	and counselling and may	who could be described as	challenging behaviours from
relationship quality: Lessons from the Glasgow	have had professional or	relational experts-	children such as inability to attach,
Intergenerational Mentoring Network. Journal	personal experience of	volunteers who possess	poor interpersonal skills,
of Community Psychology, 2017(45), 646–657.	working with vulnerable	a high level of relational	assisting with emotional readiness
<i>cj community</i> i <i>sychology</i> , 2017(10), 010 007.	youth and/or social	skill in supporting young	to go to the next level of education
	disadvantage,	people and confidence in	
	medical consultant	their ability to do so	
	1	1	<u> </u>

Pitte, J-R. (2016). Window onto the everyday	teacher, academic,	professor at a different	teaching
life of a retired geographer . The Arab World	geographer.	university in a different	
Geographer, 19(1-2), 112-116. doi.org	university president	country teaching food	
/10.5555/1480-6800.19.1.112	country representative in	quality, gastronomy and	
	UNESCO	wine twice a year,	
		participated in creation of a	
		school on Gastronomy,	
		Hospitality and Luxury.	
DeCesare, D., McClelland, A., & Randel, B.	teachers	mentoring young	mentoring
(2017). Making an impact: Impacts of the		professional teachers	
retired mentors for new teachers' program. IES			
National Center for Educational Evaluation			
and Regional assistance. U.S. Department of			
Education.			
Hunter, K., Wilson, A., & McArthur, K.	retired professionals,	mentoring high school	orienting 15-16-year olds towards
(2018). The role of intergenerational	university lecturers,	learners with potential to do	university and gaining
relationships in challenging educational	alumni	well but from disadvantaged	understanding of a profession,
inequality. Improving participation of working-		backgrounds	nurturing learning, providing
class pupils in higher education. Journal of			emotional support, drawing on own
Intergenerational Relationships, 16(1-2), 5-25,			networks to support learners
doi:10.1080/15350770.2018.1404382			

Table 1 indicates what the retirees were engaged in pre-retirement and the skills they used when engaging in after retirement activities. In 13 of the 15 journal articles, it was quite evident how the retired professionals were and/or could be helpful to others. However, although the remaining two journal articles did not specify how retirees helped others, it does not mean the retirees' experiences could not help others. For instance, a retired athlete who has acquired resilience during his or her prime time may help others be resilience vicariously. Furthermore, the professors in the 'Social activities of retired Nigerian academics' study above declined any academic activities post retirement; they were however active in social engagements. It can therefore be assumed that those social activities benefitted from the knowledge and skills of the retirees.

#### 8.0 Implications for career development and policy making

Practical ways of working with retired professionals in schools and for young professionals are highlighted from the study. These include mentoring programmes structured according to the needs of students or programmes. For instance, given that there are many professional retirees, it would be a less expense but a huge benefit for the Botswana government and private educational institutions to give these retirees an allowance to mentor learners. Learners would be given an opportunity to explore career fields they wish to venture into or to be mentored on areas they wish to develop in, say once a week as in Hunter, Wilson and McArthur (2018) and McArthur, Wilson and Hunter (2016). It does not need rocket science for one to realise how impactful a weekly, by weekly, monthly or by monthly mentoring activity can be on learners and society as a whole. Both learners and retired educators would be positively engaged.

Programmes such as Volunteer- Run, Community- Based Restorative Justice Programs (Dhami & Joy, 2007) for learners who were actually victims of crime and those who were offenders could be established in communities manned by retired people who worked in the justice system. The programme would be an integrative and experiential form of intervention that is likely to be transformational for young people (Leard, 2019).

Sporting activities can be used to help learners with critical life skills, including resilience (McKnight et al., 2009) and money matters. Mentoring of learners by retired sports people or using sport as a mentoring strategy may be an innovative way for career development as observed from the banker who used golf to build life skills in underprivileged learners (Harold, 2014).

Lastly, rather than the traditional once off career fairs or career talks in Botswana, which are usually common for all learners including those who do not need them, according to Hunter, Wilson and McArthur (2018), learners, especially disadvantaged ones, could be matched with appropriate mentors. These mentors could nurture young people's learning and be there to continuously give emotional support, and work on these young people's behaviour as also found in McArthur, Wilson and Hunter (2016). The mentors are expected to instil socially expected behaviour in Botswana and develop career search and preparation skills that

are not bound to a single career. Appropriate pairing of mentors with learner needs has been identified as an excellent strategy to reduce inequalities in educational opportunities (Hunter et al., 2018), which the ETSSP 2015-2020 and National Development Plan (NDP) 11 are concerned with.

### 9.0 Conclusions

This study set out to highlight the benefits young people in Botswana schools and workplaces can get in partnering with retired professionals. The articles in Table 1 indicate the varied professions out there and how skilled the retirees are. Most studies indicate systematically that retired professionals volunteer their acquired skills and mentor young people to develop more than self-knowledge or career skills. Furthermore, the retired professionals teach, lead, consult, work both full-time and part-time, counsel and guide all in the quest to develop life skills in the people they serve. Therefore, the continuous reflections and experiential nature of learning by fast forwarding today's student to having insight of the self and at least thirty years in the learner's future through mentorship by retired professional/education partnerships cannot be overemphasised.

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