A CRITICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD’S LARGEST SKILLS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FOR ENTREPRENEURS: A PREDICATE TO PROGRAM EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) is an entrepreneurial training program created, sponsored and disseminated by the International Labour Organization. SIYB is, arguably, the world’s largest skills enhancement program for entrepreneurs. SIYB has been in operation since the early 1970s and currently operates in almost 80 countries. During the last decade, more than 100,000 entrepreneurs, thousands of trainers and hundreds of small enterprise development organizations around the world have participated in it (Samuelsen 2003). Surprisingly for an education program of this magnitude and potential global importance, there has been relatively little program evaluation performed. What evaluation has been conducted has been unsystematic, qualitative and unsatisfactory (Harper 1985).

Meanwhile, in the nation of Botswana, since the mid seventies, there has been a huge growth in programs devoted to the training of small and medium entrepreneurs. The SIYB program has formed a significant component of this entrepreneurial training effort in Botswana (ILO 1996). SIYB training was initially supported by the United Nations and later by the Botswana government. Since its introduction into Botswana in 1983, the SIYB program has been evaluated only once, in 1993 (Samuelsen 2003). The methods used (subjective questionnaire administered to an unsystematic sample of past participants) fails to provide a satisfactory evaluation of the program. So, in Botswana and worldwide, the world’s largest entrepreneurial training program continues to run in the absence of any knowledge concerning its efficacy. This paper describes the various elements of the SIYB program and places it in the context of the data-rich Botswanan environment. The descriptive work is a necessary predicate to creation of a research design capable of providing the detailed, critical program evaluation that has been so conspicuously lacking throughout the history of the SIYB initiative.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the subject of the relationship between training and small firm performance has been a heated debate. Stakeholders in training institutions, including academics and policy makers have sought to find a relationship between training and the performance of firms whose participants have undergone the training (Patton, Marlow and Hannon, 2000). Literature on this subject is inconclusive and a number of criticisms have been made with reference to research and methodology employed (Westhead and Storey, (1996); (1997). The relationship between participation in management training and small business performance is currently not well established (Westhead and Storey, (1996).

This paper is an attempt to synthesise the existing literature about entrepreneurial training and small firm performance and use the synthesis to critically evaluate the methodological approaches of the Start and Improve Your Business program (SIYB). This leads to recommendations on research design and the development of a framework for evaluating training and performance of the SIYB program in Botswana. The evaluation argues that the current entrepreneurship education regime embodied in the SIYB process in Botswana does not comply with either best practice or good theory.
Finally, the results of this study enable us to develop a model of evaluation for SIYB program in Botswana which could be used by other countries.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE START AND IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS PROGRAM

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Improve Your Business (IYB) is an International Labour Organization’s (ILO) program, which originated from business management training materials called “Look After Your Firm” which had been developed by the Swedish Employer’s Confederation in the late 1960’s (Samuelsen, 2003). During the late 1970’s, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) funded an ILO project which adapted the Look After Your Firm materials to suit the needs of small entrepreneurs in developing countries (Ridsdale, 1996). The new material was then named Improve Your Business (IYB). At the same time, the ILO developed a specific training methodology, which was based on participatory learning and with an action-oriented approach. The IYB training materials and methodology together became the IYB program (ILO, 1993).

The IYB was introduced to some African countries in 1983. During the same year, the Regional Project Office for Eastern Africa was established in Nairobi, Kenya. This project was, and still is, funded by SIDA. The project office introduced IYB in Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe between 1983 and 1988. In 1988, the project office moved to Zimbabwe, where it is still based. In the years following this move, IYB was also introduced to Angola, Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa (ILO, 1993).

In 1996, a business start-up package, Start Your Business (SYB) was introduced to cater for the training needs of people contemplating or engaged in business start-ups and it was introduced on a pilot basis in Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It was later introduced in other countries. SYB was then linked with IYB to form “Start and Improve Your Business” (SIYB) (ILO, 1993). IYB is a management training program for owners and managers of small businesses and it introduces the basic principles of management to the entrepreneurs, while the SYB component is aimed at prospective entrepreneurs who have business ideas and want to start new businesses.

Over the years, the integrated program has been introduced in other African countries and in Latin America, as well as in other countries globally. It currently operates in more than eighty countries. During the past decade, more than 100,000 entrepreneurs, thousands of trainers and hundreds of small development organizations around the world have participated in the program (Samuelsen, 2003). SIYB is now a global program operating in many regions of the world such as: West Africa, eastern and southern Africa, south-eastern and south-central Asia and Pacific, central Asia; Middle East, central Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. Its headquarters are in Geneva (ILO, 2003).

The main aims of the program are to contribute towards the economic growth of the participating countries as well as the creation of sustainable employment. Its immediate objectives are to enable small entrepreneurs to start and grow sustainable businesses and
to create sustainable employment for others in the process (ILO Report, 2003). In other words, it wants to help people become successful entrepreneurs.

TARGET GROUP

The program’s target group is divided into two: the immediate program beneficiaries and the ultimate program beneficiaries.

The immediate beneficiaries are local Business Development Services (BDS) organizations, and the trainers working for them. In addition, ILO always seeks collaboration with other agencies such as employer’s organizations, trade unions and government agencies for them to implement the Program.

To qualify for collaboration in the SIYB Program, BDS organizations should meet the following criteria:

- Have a proven record in or clear potential to provide BDS for small enterprises, particularly in training and follow up activities.
- Have, or have access to financial resource to carry out training.
- Be willing to integrate SIYB into their training providers.
- Be willing to cooperate with other SIYB training providers.
- Preferably, have a geographical spread of operations.
- Be willing to network with organizations providing other types of assistance to entrepreneurs, such as technical training and access to credit (ILO Report, 1993).

The above is important for the integration of the SIYB Program at the organizational level for sustainability (ILO Report, 1993). More specially, after the introduction of a program to a given country, local BDS organizations are given the mandate to independently implement the program with minimal supervision and support from ILO.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the program are small – scale entrepreneurs who either want to start or grow their own businesses. The ultimate beneficiaries are contacted via local BDS organizations. ILO builds capacity within BDS organizations to enable them to train and support entrepreneurs using the SIYB approach, methodology and materials.

To fully benefit from SIYB training, entrepreneurs applying for SIYB training courses should:

- Be willing and able to contribute towards the cost of training.
- Be internally motivated to attend the training.
- Be able to read and write in the language of training.
- Be able to make simple calculations.
- Be interested in starting a business.
- Have the technical skills or have access to technical skills, that are relevant for the planned line of business and.
- Be in business if they want to attend the IYB program.

INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH

The SIYB Program was designed around an institutional approach. Based on the assumption that local SIYB partner organizations are important for the development of the national economics, the SIYB Regional Project Office builds the capacity of local
BDS organizations in participating countries to effectively and independently implement SIYB training and related activities. The institutional approach of the program enables the SIYB Program to multiply its capacity to reach as many as possible of a participating nation’s existing small-scale entrepreneurs or would-be entrepreneurs.

The SIYB Program uses a multiplier strategy. Rather than directly training entrepreneurs in the participating countries, the ILO – SIYB Project Offices train SIYB Master Trainers in the Participating countries. The Master Trainers in turn, train SIYB trainers, who are responsible for training entrepreneurs in the different packages and components of the program. Some of the trainers are employed within BDS organizations while others are independent, private trainers.

**THE SIYB TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) PROGRAM**

One way of building capacity within BDS organizations to effectively and independently implement SIYB training and related follow-up activities is through training of SIYB trainers. Once an organization is selected as a partner organization in the SIYB Program, it nominates candidates for TOT seminar. SIYB trainers are the heart-piece of the program and form the driving force behind entrepreneurial activities (ILO, 1999). A rigorous selection criteria and process is therefore applied and followed in selecting suitable trainers. Candidates that have been selected for training, attend a two–week TOT seminar. Seminar participants are expected to plan and conduct SIYB training immediately upon returning to their organizations. They are assisted in the process through technical back-up support of the Master Trainers. TOT participants who successfully complete the training and conduct entrepreneurial activities including follow-ups, are then certified as competent SIYB trainers (ILO, 1999).

**THE SIYB TRAINING OF MASTERS TRAINERS (TOMT) PROGRAM**

SIYB trainers who are highly motivated and have a demonstrated track record in training entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply for the Training of Master Trainers’ (TOMT) program. The objective of the Master Trainers’ Program is to enable participants to effectively implement the various aspects of the SIYB Program in their respective countries. Selection is done following a rigorous process to ensure that the most suitable candidates are trained. This is because Master Trainers form the backbone of the SIYB program. It is through the Master Trainers that the SIYB Program can be adapted to local conditions and needs. Master Trainers are responsible for marketing the SIYB Program, selecting new partner organizations as well as training and developing trainers. Specifically, Master Trainers have the following key roles:

- Marketing the SIYB program and selecting new partner organizations;
- Organizing and conducting trainer development programs;
- Quality control of the SIYB Program;
- Conducting SIYB impact assessment and evaluations;

TOMT’s participants are not automatically certified upon successfully completing the seminar. Prior to final certification, potential Master Trainers have to provide in the field their ability to organize and conduct seminars. The ILO – SIYB Regional Project
Officers assess them during training, and in particular, the following competences are assessed with respect to:

- How marketing of the SIYB Program and selecting partner organizations was done;
- How TOT is organized and conducted;
- Management capability demonstrated during the process as well as;
- The follow-up on the trainers trained;
- Upon satisfactory performance, they are then fully certified as SIYB Master Trainers and are eligible for a license.

In addition to the TOTs and TOMTs, the following training interventions’ are conducted:

- Refresher TOT seminars;
- Generate Your Business Ideas (GYBI) Workshops;
- SYB Training of Potential Entrepreneurs (TOPE) seminars;
- IYB Training of Entrepreneurs TOE) seminars;
- IYB Refresher TOE seminars;
- Business Improvement Groups (BIG);
- Individual Counselling (IC).

The training output of the SIYB Program is measured using a monitoring and evaluation system operated by collaborating with all Master Trainers and training providers.

SIYB trainers and master trainers in participating countries are expected to maintain records about all their training activities and to send activity reports to the SIYB, ILO Offices (ILO, 1999).

**TRAINING MATERIALS FOCUSED ON THE ABILITY TO CREATE A BUSINESS PLAN**

SIYB is a materials–based training program. Each level of training has its own set of materials. These can be grouped into three categories as follows:

- Entrepreneurs;
- Trainers;
- Master Trainers

Start Your Business materials are introduced to potential entrepreneurs who want to start businesses. They consist of the following:

- SYB Manual;
- SYB Business Plan Booklet;
- SYB Directory of Advice and Assistance.
The SYB Manual guides the potential entrepreneur step by step in how to prepare and complete a business plan. Practical examples of start-ups, concepts and procedures as well as exercises and activities are an integral part of each step. The SYB Business Plan Booklet contains blank forms which potential entrepreneurs use to complete their own business plans. These plans form a sound basis for any business. The ILO obtained valuable inputs and feedback in developing the booklet from financial institutions, and thus the booklet meets the basic requirements of many financial institutions.

The Directory of Advice and Assistance gives the participants relevant country specific information regarding local sources of finance, business registration, and technical and functional skills training etc. The Directory of Advice and Assistance is updated periodically for each country.

The IYB Basic kit consists of a set of seven books, accompanied by four IYB Form Booklets. The materials are introduced to existing entrepreneurs during an IYB training seminar. The manuals introduce entrepreneurs to the principles of efficient small business management in a simple and practical way. Step by step examples are given and appropriate illustrations are used to explain concepts. Relevant examples and exercises are also important features in the IYB Basics, thus enabling entrepreneurs to identify their own business problems and actively engage in solving them.

The seven manuals cover: Marketing: Where participants are introduced to the basics of marketing; Buying: This manual introduces participants to the basics of buying for their businesses, how to choose their suppliers etc; Stock control: This a manual which introduces the participants to the basics of controlling stocks in their businesses, when and how to order their stocks and the importance of stock records; Costing and Pricing: This is a manual which takes the participants through the complex methods of costing their goods and pricing them. It has sections for costing and pricing for both retailers and manufacturers; Record keeping: In this module, participants are taken through a number of basic records such as, cash in and out record, debtors’ record, creditors’ record, purchase and expense record and sales record; Business Planning: In this module, a number of topics which are important for planning for the business are covered some of which are: The importance of having a plan, making a SWOT analysis, making a sales and marketing plan, making a production plan, making an operation plan, making a cash flow plan etc. The four accompanying IYB Form Booklets are a collection of blank forms which entrepreneurs can use to plan sales and costs; to do cash-flow planning; to control stocks and to keep simple but accurate records. The SIYB training modules are very simple, designed in a step-by-step manner with pictures to illustrate activities and in some countries they are translated into local languages (ILO, 1993).

The SIYB game is an integral part of the SYB and IYB materials and training. Playing this game gives entrepreneurs an opportunity to experience and feel the effects of their business decisions in a simulated environment. Both entertaining and instructive, the game emphasizes the importance of systematic business management. The game is modular as follows:

Module 1: The business cycle;
Module 2: Supply and demand;
Module 3: Reaching the market using the 4Ps;
Module 4: Managing a diversified business.

To ensure the quality of training activities, SIYB trainers use a core set of training materials. These materials assist certified SIYB trainers to effectively and independently implement SIYB entrepreneurial training and related follow up activities. Training materials are only introduced and distributed to participants during an SIYB training of Trainers seminar. The training materials for trainers consist of:

SIYB Trainers Guides;
Monitoring and Evaluation kit;
Game Trainers’ Guides;
Adults in a Learning Situation Booklet;
SIYB Promotional materials.

The SYB and IYB Trainers’ Guides assist SIYB trainers to plan and deliver training effectively. Each guide contains guidelines for organizing and conducting the training intervention, they have recommended training methodologies. They also provide seminar duration and structured session plans (ILO-Trainer’s Guide, 1995).

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) kit contains all the forms and tools to conduct SIYB monitoring activities. M&E contains information, techniques and tools that are easy to use and cost effective and are designed to enable trainers to measure the quality and effectiveness of their training and follow up inputs.

Through the M&E system, trainers are able to collect information; determine progress in carrying out planned activities and achieving program objectives as well as targeted outputs and providing feedback to all program stakeholders. Monitoring is an ongoing activity that focuses on program implementation. The basic tool used is the SIYB Activity Report. Both Trainers and Master Trainers are encouraged to report all training activities (entrepreneurial as well as trainer, respectively) by filling in and sending these reports to the regional SIYB ILO offices (ILO, 2004).

The SIYB Game Trainers Guide assists trainers to facilitate the four modules of the Game. It contains, among others, information about how to set up and lead the activities of the game, discussing after each module to analysing the main learning points.

The “Adult in a Learning Situation” Booklet introduces SIYB trainers to the theory and practice of training adults and adult learning. The booklet discusses among other topics, various training techniques and tools that are specially recommended for participatory, action-oriented SIYB training sessions.

The SIYB Marketing Manual assists SIYB trainers to develop and implement effective sustainable marketing of SIYB program for their organizations. It guides them through the steps of designing an SIYB marketing plan and introduces them to some techniques of successfully managing the marketing effort in practice.
Certified SIYB Master Trainers use a core set of training materials to effectively plan, organize and conduct SIYB training activities and related follow up and their trainer development activities. These materials are only accessible to participants in SIYB Training of Master Trainers’ seminars. SIYB Master Trainers use:

SIYB Training of Trainers’ Manual;
Monitoring and Evaluation Kit;
SIYB Marketing Manual

Although other training modules have since been introduced, the paper is concerned with the SYB and IYB modules only (ILO 1995). A summary of modules and associated materials follows.

THE SYB TRAINING MODULE

The SYB training module targets potential entrepreneurs who want to start their own business and do have a feasible business idea. The SYB module is designed to assist these potential entrepreneurs to develop, step by step, their own business plan. It consists of three phases:

The Training of Potential Entrepreneurs (TOPE) seminar;
Data collection;
The Follow-up Training of Potential Entrepreneurs (FTPE) seminar.

The SYB TOPE seminar usually lasts about 40 hours but it is flexible and can be adapted to suit the particular needs of the participants, taking into consideration their educational background and other factors. Training is largely participatory and action oriented.

Training sessions are based on the SYB materials. During the seminar participants are guided in a number of steps on how to develop their own Business Plans. These steps are:

Self–assessment of one’s entrepreneurial characteristics;
Introduction to the concept of a Business Plan;
The Business Idea;
The Marketing Plan;
Forms of Business;
Staff;
Legal responsibilities;
Costing products and services;
Financial planning;
Required start-up capital;
Types of start-up capital;
Developing an action plan for starting the business.

**The SIYB Simulation Game**

The business game can be incorporated in either SYB or IYB seminars. Playing the SIYB game provides the participants with an opportunity to experience the effects of their business decisions in a simulated business environment and gives them practical experience in planning. At the end of the SYB seminar, participants develop action plans that guide them when gathering information for their business plans.

After the TOPE seminar, and guided by the action plans developed in the TOPE seminar, the participants embark on a data collection exercise. They should personally collect and analyse the information necessary to finalize their own Business Plans. Such information should relate to, among other things, costs of inputs, profiles of market segments, prices of competitors, and legal requirements for the planned type of business operations, applicable taxes and others. SYB recommends that this period for data collection should be 4 to 6 weeks. Thereafter, participants analyse the collected data and fill it into their draft Business Plan. They are usually encouraged to contact the trainers for more assistance whenever they encounter difficulties.

Having completed the data collection exercise, participants gather again for two-days for a follow-up TOPE seminar. The follow-up TOPE seminar provides each participant with the opportunity to present his or her own Business Plan to the group for discussion and review by the SYB trainers and the other participants. Based on these comments, participants revise their draft Business Plans and then go ahead to starting their business. If participants are in need of a start up loan, they might use the Business Plan to submit an application with a credit institute for funding.

After starting their business, entrepreneurs eager to build on their acquired basic business management skills and eager to set up a simple business management system, can apply for participation in an Improve Your Business (IYB) seminar (ILO 1999).

**THE IYB TRAINING MODULE**

The IYB training module targets entrepreneurs who have been operating a small business. The module was designed to assist these entrepreneurs setting up a basic business management system. It consists of a sequence of material-based training interventions such as:

- The Training of Entrepreneurs (TOE) seminar;
- The Refresher TOE seminar;
- Business Improvement Groups (BIG’s);
- Individual Counselling;

The TOE seminar takes about 40 hours. The sequencing of the sessions can be flexibly designed according to the needs of the target group. The training method is largely participatory, using the IYB training materials and encouraging the entrepreneurs to learn from each other’s experiences in solving business problems. During the seminar, participants are introduced to the six basic concepts of business management that form the back-bone of the business management system, namely:
Marketing;
Buying;
Stock control;
Costing and Pricing;
Record-keeping and
Business Planning.

During the seminar, participants play the SIYB Business Game. The game helps them to experience the effects of their business decisions in a simulated environment. It is entertaining and instructive and it emphasizes the importance of systematic business management. The TOE seminars are normally followed by the Refresher TOE seminars (ILO, 1999).

**SIYB MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)**

SIYB Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a management tool for monitoring progress and an evaluation tool for measuring results. It takes place in national SIYB offices. Monitoring allegedly ensures that inputs lead to activities and produce outputs at acceptable speed and quality. Evaluation assesses to what extent outputs help achieve the objectives of contributing to new and improved businesses and creating jobs (ILO 2004).

A number of forms are used for the monitoring and evaluating SIYB programs worldwide and some of them are:

**SIYB ENTRY FORM**

The entry form is used by the SIYB trainers to collect a core set of information about each SIYB applicant. It includes current knowledge of basic management topics (only IYB). Its purpose is twofold:

To enable SIYB trainers to select and group SIYB applicants;

To allow for comparison of knowledge levels of participants before and after the training intervention, (IYB Trainer’s Guide 1995).

**SIYB TRAINING EVALUATION FORMS**

These forms are used by SIYB trainers to assess the satisfaction level of SIYB trainees after the training intervention.

**SIYB ACTIVITY REPORT**

The activity report summarizes SIYB participants’ personal and business background and provides general data on conducted SIYB training interventions.

**SIYB PERFORMANCE CARD**

The performance card assesses performance of SIYB participants (both potential and existing entrepreneurs) after training and their opinion on quality of SIYB training interventions.

Source: (ILO, 2004).
SIYB’S INTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESSES

As can be seen from the above, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) forms an integral component of SIYB training process and it has been in practice since the inception of the program (ILO, 2003). According to ILO 2003, M&E is a management tool for monitoring progress and an evaluation system for measuring results. Whereas monitoring ensures that inputs lead to and produce measurable outputs, evaluation assesses to what extent outputs help achieve objectives (ILO 2003). The monitoring system operates at different levels. It starts from the project office and reaches down to the field office. The following tools are used as monitoring tools at different levels of the program:

Programs office registration forms completed by the project officer regionally and the SIYB project staff – the function of these forms is to record the service information.

Training of Trainers (TOT) daily reaction forms which are completed by the TOT participants - their main purpose is to assess satisfaction level of the participants on a daily basis.

TOT workshop assessment forms which assess satisfaction level of participants at the end of the workshop and are completed by the workshop participants.

TOT workshop activity report, which summarizes information on participants and the cost, location duration etc, of the TOT workshop. These are completed by the project staff.

Training of Entrepreneurs (TOE) registration forms which is used for recording information on participants, their training needs and why they were selected for training. These forms are completed by SIYB trainers and the prospective participants.

Entrepreneur baseline survey forms which record information on prospective participants and their employment situation, completed by the SIYB trainers and project officers

Entrepreneur post training-survey forms used for collecting post training impact information on the enterprise, the employment situation and the entrepreneur completed by independent interviewers and external evaluators

TOE daily reaction forms which assess satisfaction level of TOE workshop participants on daily basis.

TOE workshop assessment forms used to assess the satisfaction level of participants at the end of the TOE workshop. These forms are completed by the participants.

TOE workshop activity report which summarizes information on participants and the cost, location duration, etc of the workshop and is completed by SIYB trainer

SIYB entrepreneur performance card - used to collect information on the performances of entrepreneurs after training at different points in time. The forms are completed by SIYB trainers

Management information system data base maintained by the SIYB project office
Quasi-experimental impact assessment forms which are used to assess the impact of the program in terms of behavioural change, business performance and employment gains after training.

EXISTING EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS OF THE IMPACT AND SUCCESS OF THE SIYB PROGRAM

BASIC MEASUREMENT OBJECTIVES

As mentioned earlier, the overall objective of the SIYB program is to increase the viability of small-scale enterprises through the application of sound management principles which may lead to improving the profitability and viability of their businesses and create employment or sustain it.

A lot of research has been conducted concerning what should be the objectives of an entrepreneurial training program as well as what performance indicators should be used to measure such programs. As Curran (2000) points out, since 1980 small businesses have had a key role in economic strategies of many countries. Curran perceives the key objectives of an entrepreneurial training program to be, job creation and the promotion of an enterprise culture and high level of enterprise (Hill and Leitch, 2004).

It is essential for any training program to assess and evaluate the extent to which the program is meeting its objectives. Evaluations of management training programs have generally raised questions like “do we get value for money?” Harper and Finnegan, (1998) “Why is the link between management training and small firm performance so weak?” Westhead and Storey, (1996) “Are they cost effective?” Bennett, (1994) hence there is need for the evaluation of the SIYB program.

The SIYB impact assessment tool has been designed to evaluate the impact that training has had on entrepreneurs and their enterprises. Methods and tools for data collection as well as sample size vary from SIYB operating regional areas. However, the systems for M&E of impact have been standardized for ease of comparison of results, Samuelsen, (2003). The most important performance indicators of SIYB which are used globally are: quality of training, business start up, business improvement and contribution to job creation (ILO, 2004)

To address this question, information was drawn from secondary data sources which have documented results of a number of SIYB program evaluation results. The results of the Start and Improve Your Business in the Pacific were obtained from ILO-Success Stories, (1999); those of Southern Africa were obtained from (SIYB Bulletin No. 46) while those of SIYB program in Viet Nam were obtained from their evaluation report of the year 2000. A paper by Samuelsen (2003) documenting SIYB achievements and experiences worldwide was also reviewed.
A PREVIOUS IMPACT EVALUATION OF SIYB PROGRAM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

An impact assessment of entrepreneurs trained in three countries in the southern African region from June 2001- August 2003. The evaluation was conducted at the end of 2003 by the regional office in Zimbabwe. It was conducted in Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess how the training related to entrepreneurs’ performances in starting and running viable businesses (SIYB Bulletin No. 46). Although the assessment mainly focused on classical SIYB indicators, namely: satisfaction with SIYB training, business start-up, business improvement and employment effects, other indicators such as: working conditions of employees employed by entrepreneurs who had undertaken training, cost recovery, SIYB outreach and follow-up activities were assessed. (SIYB Bulletin No.46)

The report does not clearly state evaluation methods employed. However, it reveals that the countries’ Master Trainers were engaged in the evaluation and they conducted surveys based on designed Terms of Reference. The survey was conducted on a total population of 5,781 made out of 3,707 SYB and 2,074 IYB ex participants in Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia. (SIYB Bulletin No.46)

SIYB outreach results indicate that 10,500 people were trained between July 2001 and August 2003. However, due to improper reporting which according to the previous studies amounted to 50% in the region, it was estimated that about fifty percent of the trained entrepreneurs were not reported hence it was estimated that the total number of trained entrepreneurs at that period was 20,000.

Satisfaction with SIYB training is regarded as one of the most important performance indicators of achievement. It is assessed by the way participants view relevance of the training contents, delivery mechanisms, the trainer and some general logistics (ILO, 2004).

It is indicated that 91% of the respondents were satisfied with the trainers’ skills, 83% indicated that SIB met their needs and 66% stated that seminars were well organized (ILO, 2004).

SIYB follow-up activities comprise of individual follow-ups, refresher courses and business visits. The results indicate that 42% of the respondents received follow-up services after participating in SIYB training interventions and 76% indicated that they did not receive any follow-up. Although follow-up is considered to be the most important aspect of the program, it remains to be the least performed globally.

Responding to the question on the use of business planning skills acquired during the course, 75% of the respondents stated that they completed their business plans, with 40% of them having been verified. Of the verified ones, 30% were submitted to the bank and 50% of them were approved. 67% of the SYB participants were reported to have started their businesses after the course and 65% were reported to have been started out of the business plan developed (ILO, 2004).

Existing businesses experienced job change after SIYB training and some managed to expand and generate extra jobs while others remained stable and some reduced
activities. The report indicates a total of 637 new jobs which were generated in the SIYB trained enterprises, while 190 jobs were lost due to decreased business activities leaving a net job gain of 447 jobs in 678 enterprises.

Almost all respondents reported to have benefited something from training. 78% of them reported increase in sales and 47% reported increase in assets. On average, 60% could describe concepts learnt, such as costing, record keeping and marketing, (ILO, 2004)

IMPACT EVALUATION OF SIYB IN VIETNAM

The SIYB project started in Vietnam in 1998 and by the year 2001, a total number of 7000 entrepreneurs had been trained. The impact evaluation was carried by conducting interviews based on questionnaires developed at the regional office which were based on the Papa New Guinea questionnaires model. A total population of 4,186 SIYB former participants/trainees was surveyed, with the useable figures of 1,242, comprising of 648 SYB and 594 IYB. The purpose of the survey was to measure the impact of the program after its three years of operation and to provide feedback and the strategy planning for improvement as well as to give feedback to the stakeholders.

The method of sample size calculation was used by utilizing a Sample Size Calculator. Survey questionnaires were adapted from the Papua New Guinea office. Limitations of the study included the fact that the data in the management information system at the program office did not always correspond with the actual numbers of trained SIYB participants. Another major limitation was to do with the missing data.

According to the Vietnamese SIYB project report, 4,615 entrepreneurs had been trained by 2001 and this reflected a larger outreach than anticipated at the beginning of the project (ILO Impact study report, 2001).

Out of the 3,592 SYB respondents 71% reported to have been satisfied with training and out of the 594 IYB respondents, 60% were satisfied with training. Concerning the quality of SYB, 71% of the respondents rated it “good and or excellent” and 29% rated it “acceptable” (ILO, 2001).

The report states that after training support was found to be one of the most difficult aspects of the SIYB implementation process. The results indicated that 40% of the SYB participants had been followed up. With regard to IYB only 30% had been followed up. In both cases, both methods of Individual Counselling (IC) and Business Improvement Groups (BIG) had been used.

The report states that the “vast majority of SYB participants completed their business plans after the workshop while for IYB a lower percentage completed action plans for the different modules taught. Profit and sales increased for more than 55 % of the enterprises. Of the surveyed 648 participants 348 (54%) did not have a business at the time of the training. Of these 348 people, 47 (14%) started a business after the training
According to the report, about 1,300 new jobs were created after participants had been through the SYB program.

**BOTSWANA AS A POTENTIAL PROGRAM EVALUATION SITE**

To design a formal quantitative program evaluation of SIYB, it will be vital to have a high standard of data and record keeping. This situation does not prevail in many developing countries but it does in Botswana. Therefore, a brief background of Botswana is important for us to appreciate the environment in which the program operates.

Botswana is a landlocked country in southern Africa. It shares borders with Zambia in the north, Zimbabwe in the east, South Africa in the south and south-east and Namibia in the west. The population of Botswana is a little above one and half million of which about 24% live in urban areas (Botswana Statistics report 2004).

Since its independence in 1966, Botswana has achieved a remarkable growth in economy, socio-political stability and education, (Briscoe, 1996). Although the discovery of diamonds has turned Botswana, in terms of average income, into the middle-income category, the country still faces the problem of economic diversification, employment creation, income distribution and poverty. The country’s economy is highly dependent on the mining and beef industries. To feed its population, Botswana depends highly on foreign markets for the import of basic goods.

To alleviate the problem of dependency in diamonds and beef, the government of Botswana has put in place a range of programs trying to develop Indigenous entrepreneurship in the country. Like any other developing country, organizational and managerial skills are considered to be crucial bottlenecks to entrepreneurial development in Botswana. Without such skills, Indigenous entrepreneurs are unable to take advantage of opportunities or to advance technical change seen to be more important than capital inputs (Jones-Dube 1984). The major obstacle to economic development in Botswana is not so much the shortage of capital but the shortage of skill and knowledge needed to mobilize, organize and coordinate capital and other resources of production (Jones-Dube 1984). The crucial role of entrepreneurs, as the key productive resource needed to coordinate and organize all the others is indicated by Lewis (1954) in Jones-Dube (1984). Lewis pointed out that, to hand money to entrepreneurs who lack managerial capacity is merely to throw it down the drain. Lewis further affirmed that the main deficiency of local enterprise is not capital but knowledge and experience. Botswana, like many developing countries, has been spending a lot of money on trying to train and foster Indigenous entrepreneurs with the aim of contributing towards economic growth and employment creation.

The Government of Botswana’s efforts to develop Indigenous entrepreneurship dates back to 1974 with the formation of the Botswana Enterprise Development Unit (BEDU). BEDU was formed to assist in the development of technical skills and the provision of advisory services to entrepreneurs. Thereafter, various different agencies and
programs aimed at assisting Indigenous Batswanan entrepreneurs were introduced and the SIYB is one of such programs.

OPERATIONAL ORGANISATION OF SIYB IN BOTSWANA

The IYB was introduced in Botswana in 1983 while SYB was introduced in 1997. The amalgamation of the programs created Botswana’s implementation of the SIYB program. The Ministry of Trade and Industry is the national focal point and the University of Botswana (UB) is the national training institution for SIYB Master Trainers. SIYB Botswana is conducted under the auspices of the Regional Project Office for Eastern and Southern Africa which is based in Zimbabwe. This project was, and still is, funded by SIDA. The Botswanan project was initially funded by the International Labour Organization, but it is now funded by the Botswana Government.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry is charged with the implementation of Small and Medium Entrepreneur’s (SME) policies and programs. And the Department of Industrial Affairs within the ministry has a division called Integrated Field Services (IFS) responsible for entrepreneurship training in the country. The IFS is responsible for coordinating SIYB activities in the country.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

In a very top-down approach, the Project office is responsible for training the Master Trainers who in turn train the Trainers on how to train entrepreneurs. Although the IFS is in charge of the SIYB training in the country, there are other collaborating/partner organizations which are engaged in the training of existing SME owner/operators and would-be entrepreneurs. In the year 2000, there were about twelve SIYB collaborating organizations ILO, (2001) The University of Botswana has been responsible for organizing and training in the SIYB Training of Trainers seminars since 1997 to date. Just as in other countries where SIYB training operates, TOT seminars in Botswana run over several weeks. In these seminars, trainers are introduced to methods and methodologies of the program. They are expected to plan and conduct SIYB training within two months after completion, where they are assessed. Trainers are also expected to conduct follow up sessions on their clients during which further assessment is conducted and a certificate of competence is awarded upon satisfactory performance.

Efforts to achieve a thorough-going Botswana SIYB impact assessment report have not been successful. The SIYB Achievement and Experiences Worldwide report states that the first SIYB evaluation in Botswana was conducted 1993, ten years after the introduction of the program. Subsequently, no other aggregate impact evaluation has been performed(Samuelsen, 2003).

Only three evaluation questions regarding SIYB Botswana were identified from the worldwide report and they are as follows:

What do the participants think of the courses?

According to the report, IYB participants in Botswana appreciated the program and only a minor share of 5% expressed dissatisfaction with teachers.
What did the participants learn from the courses?

Limitations were identified in terms of actual learnt business management skills. It was revealed that only half of the participants learned about 50% of the contents of the program and the remaining half much less. 30% were judged to have left the course without having gained new insights.

Do participants apply the new skills on the job?

The results reveal that those who learn the IYB message often apply their knowledge. Source: (Samuelsen, 2003).

THE POTENTIAL FOR A SYSTEMATIC PROGRAM EVALUATION OF SIYB

In a condition rare for developing countries, Botswana has an excellent system of public administration and public record keeping. This applies at a general level and specifically to the data relevant to the SIYB program. Following a thorough revue of both the theoretical literature of entrepreneurship education (as conditioned by developing country contingencies) and the methodological literature of program evaluation, a set of mandates for a detailed program evaluation of the SIYB program can be established. The combination of these mandates with the data collection potential available in Botswana will enable creation of a research design to evaluate the SIYB program dispassionately and professionally. The creation of that research design will form the next stage of this research project.

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