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Australia, Botswana in joint venture to open schools locally

In a bid to better the quality of education in Botswana, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with Botswana Export Development and Investment Authority (BEDIA) and the Botswana Education Hub, has since joined forces with Australian company, Ducere Foundation, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding to this regard.

This joint venture aims at ultimately opening six schools in Botswana, 3 in Gaborone, 2 in Kasane and the other one in the central Kalahari region in an area not yet decided upon.

At a ceremony to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, Di Flemming, from the Ducere Foundation, indicated that their main aim was to primarily focus on improving Maths, English and Science results in Botswana.

The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education, Ms Grace Muzila, indicated that as a Ministry they had a "huge mandate and we need help in delivery and it is intensified by working with various structures and meeting committee".

Muzila also stated that the Ministry of Education and the Ducere Foundation are mutually beneficial partners and the Ducere Foundation strategies were in line with those of the Ministry of Education. She concluded by assuring that, "Whatever is signed in the Memorandum of Understanding will be delivered."

The Ducere Foundation is an organisation aimed at "Promoting a model for educational excellence by global OECD standards to some of the world's poorest and most disadvantaged communities in Sub Saharan Africa".

The target locations of the Ducere Victoria Falls Educational Cooperative are Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia.

The foundation has based its fundamental principles on five pillars, namely: "Critical resources (food, access to schools, safety) passion (motivation, relevance, roll models - motivators not instructors) self Esteem (self esteem development, team skills, anti-bullying) Community Engagement (mentoring, roll models and community projects) Engaging learning resources (leading software programs, game based) and project-based learning (e.g. working with local councils, businesses, community groups, sporting groups)."

BEDIA's manager for international markets, Ms Reitumetse Aphiri, said their intention was to engage prospective investors who could partner with them in efforts to enhance the education of the country.

Aphiri also indicated that, in this regard, they were currently courting four potential investors from Australia as well.

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