

Up-skilling young people

GRANT THORNTON international Limited Managing Partner Jay Ramesh said that shortage of skills in Botswana has been addressed by the establishment of some initiatives which includes establishment of the Education Hub, national internship programme, internship in partnership with private enterprise, setting up of Botswana's own accounting qualification Botswana Institute of Chartered Accounting BICA to empower the younger generation to transform Botswana into a knowledge based economy.

In expanding on the above Ramesh said the education hub was set up to facilitate educational institutions to function better and also to make Botswana a hub for the region. He pointed out that the government has reduced the number of people it sends outside the country to study and this on its own gave young people an opportunity to be enrolled in local tertiary institutions than before. This has reduced costs and paved way for many to get an opportunity to further their education.

Ramesh said BICA used to rely on CIMA and ACCA for accounting qualification and this meant all

the fees were paid in pounds to them. Now the country has its own chartered accounting qualification which is under the guidance of England and Wales. This is also said to encouraged more and more people to do accounting locally rather than go outside the country.

With this local qualification one has to enroll with BICA and is an obligation of doing both theory and practical. Students who study locally are attached to a number of accounting firms or corporates that are accredited training employers. This means no one can be said to have completed chartered accounting without going through both practical work as well as theory. According to Ramesh, this equip students with skills that help them fit well in the work market.

While with CIMA AND ACCA there is no obligation of doing practical as well as theory at the same time. One can actually graduate then have their practicals afterwards which makes them unskilled in their area as they do not have the experience for the job during training.

With the internship programme Ramesh noted that this up-skills graduates because it instills in them

work etiquette. He said as these graduates do not have the rightful skills, the internship programme gives them a chance to practically apply what they have been taught at institutions in the different companies they have been attached to.

On the issue of introducing skills at an early age, Ramesh said that this will help children grow with these skills so that when they are at tertiary level they already have them, the only issue is to sharpen them up.

Commenting on the issue of having too many Information technology graduates roaming the streets, he said that if only these graduates could be absorbed into schools to help in ensuring that computer studies is an obligatory subject for all students then this issue would not be a problem. He said the world nowadays is focusing on having computer skills every where and this will be a right move to up-skill students from a young age.

He was quick to point out that impatience is a major problem for most of the people. "People have a tendency of jumping from one job to another and this is bad because they do not gain experience" he said.