

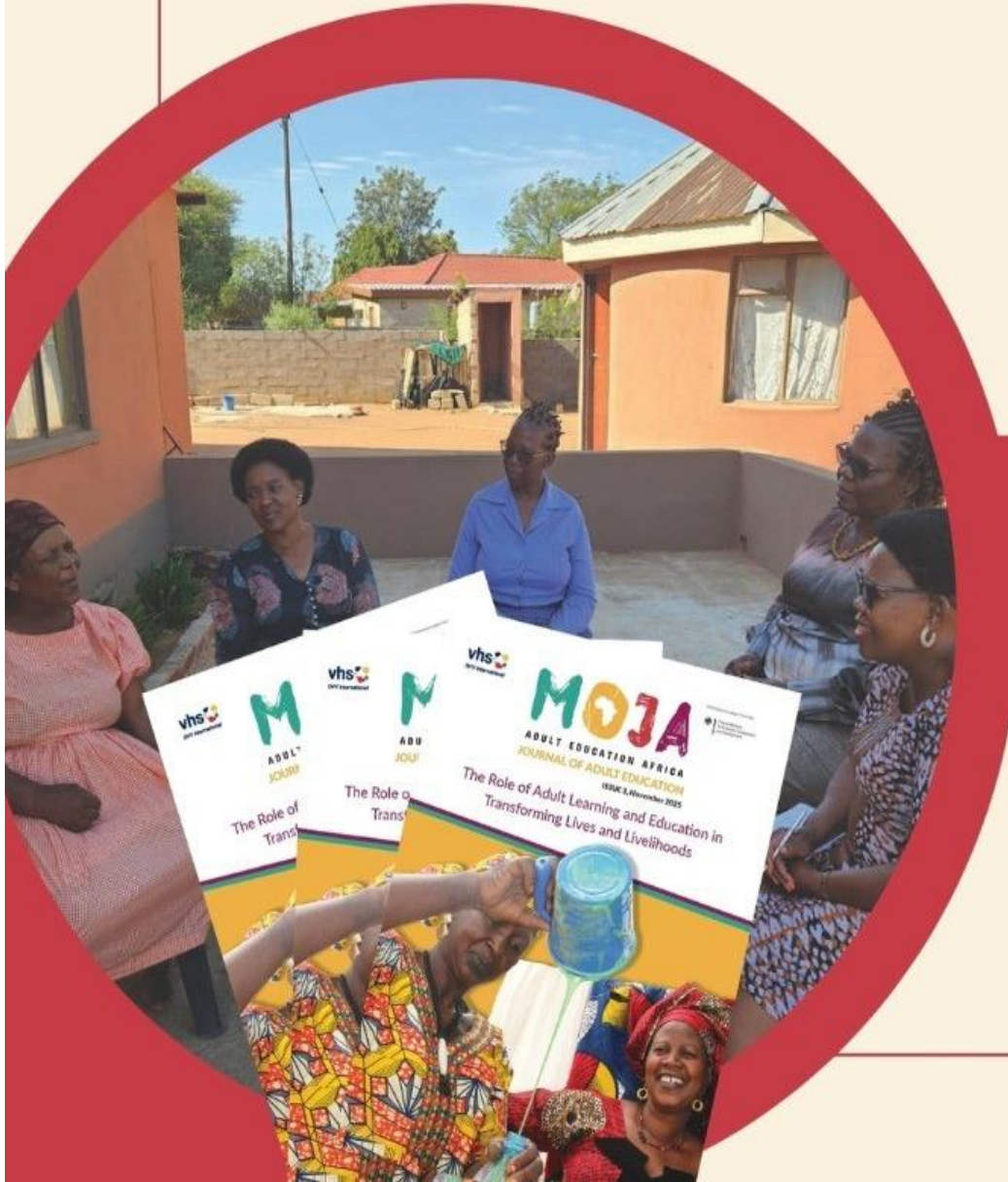
WEBINAR SERIES

MOJA JOURNAL: Learning Across Generations: Community Learning Centres and Entrepreneurial Pathways in Adult Education

**Entrepreneurial Pathways in Adult Education,
Botswana
PROF RN LEKOKO**

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

MOJA
ADULT EDUCATION AFRICA



by Rebecca Nthogo Lekoko and Ontlametse Kebatenne

“Education has an important role to play in the lives of adults, no matter their age.”

Through the voices of two senior entrepreneurs in Botswana, this article shows how adult education, mentorship, and community recognition enable older adults to improve livelihoods, contribute meaningfully, and pass on wisdom. [Read the full article here](#)

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ENTREPRENEURIAL SENIORS: THE ROLE OF OUT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OSET)

I knew I found
Ms Rotwane



Rebecca Nkoloko is a professor of adult education, lifelong learning, and community development. Her work integrates a wide range of critical issues including life skills development and the empowerment of marginalized adults. She has conducted extensive research in non-formal education and has contributed significantly to the Department of Adult, Youth and Education and Training. She has various capacities as a learner, advisory trainer of trainers, advisory committee member, and researcher. Rebecca has been widely featured in the media for her facilitation of various adult education and training projects.



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Introduction

Introduction

This article focuses on how adult education played a catalytic role in the lives of two junior entrepreneurs who graduated from the Out of School Education and Training (OSET) programme in Malaysia. By sharing their stories, the authors are hoping to understand how their two women have been able to look after their children, understand their families, despite being a single mother, and the article reflects on the challenges and opportunities that arise from this group. The article reflects on cognates and translocates senior cognates and translocates methods and plays a role in the development of

Context

Context

Since independence in 1960, the Government of Botswana has prioritised eliminating poverty and inequality. The goal has been integrated into all national plans since Vision 2016. Vision 2036, and even more recently development plans, are to accelerate inclusive, sustainable economic growth while maintaining social and economic empowerment.

In March 2018, a conference was held which led to the development of a National Poverty Eradication Policy (NPEP) and a Implementation Plan for Poverty Index. These initiatives, issued by the Office of the President and supported by the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, are part of Vision 2036's Human and Social Unlithness Pillar.¹

The NPEP aims to foster a moral, middle-income society and eliminate extreme poverty as well as poverty. As a way to deal with poverty eradicating, the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, the Ministry of the President, and the Ministry of Coordinating Unit provides free

start-up equipment and materials for various income-generating projects, such as kiosks, home-based laundry, leather works, jam production, vegetable gardening, bakeries, textiles, food catering, tent hire, landscaping, backyard tree nurseries, and hair salons⁴.

The plight of seniors

These visions, plans and strategies, according to the World Organisation of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Regional Office for Africa, Botswana's socio-economic development has not kept pace with the rapid growth of the adult population, the gap between the needs of the elderly and the services and facilities available in the health care system, and the situation in the country.

Figure One shows the range of businesses/activities.

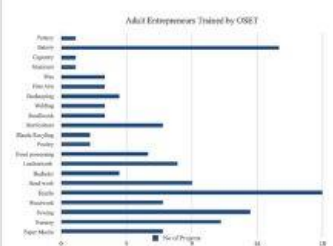
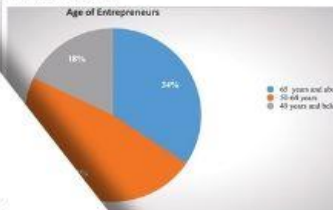


Figure Two shows the entrepreneurs who attended the OSET programme as per the 2024 OSET Report.



defined as older adults who commence ownership of a small business (e.g., Soto-Simone & Kautonen, 2021).

2

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A note on mentorship



The entrepreneurial journey of two seniors

As mentioned earlier, this article focuses on two senior entrepreneurs: Ms Rotwane and Ms Orsmang.

[illegible]

In both cases, social learning theory played a part in how the women (two were girls at the time) learned. They observed, imitated and modelled what others (their mothers) did. Conferences align with findings in the literature that it is useful for girls to experience to contribute a wealth of value to whatever it is they do (Rahak et al., 2014).

One major and common reason for both women starting their own businesses was the need to survive as mothers, grandmothers, siblings, and community members. Following in their parents' footsteps (who also struggled with issues of poverty) and armed with issues of power, they sought for opportunities to improve their livelihoods and their family's way of life.

...literary and entrepreneurial are ad-
vantages that can be explained by the
fact that children don't go to school with
empty stomachs, bare, frosted and dis-
tressed (Mr. Rothman).
Hunger is a real, perpetual, and
harmful (Dr. Chomsky).

Community support and respect

Community support and respect

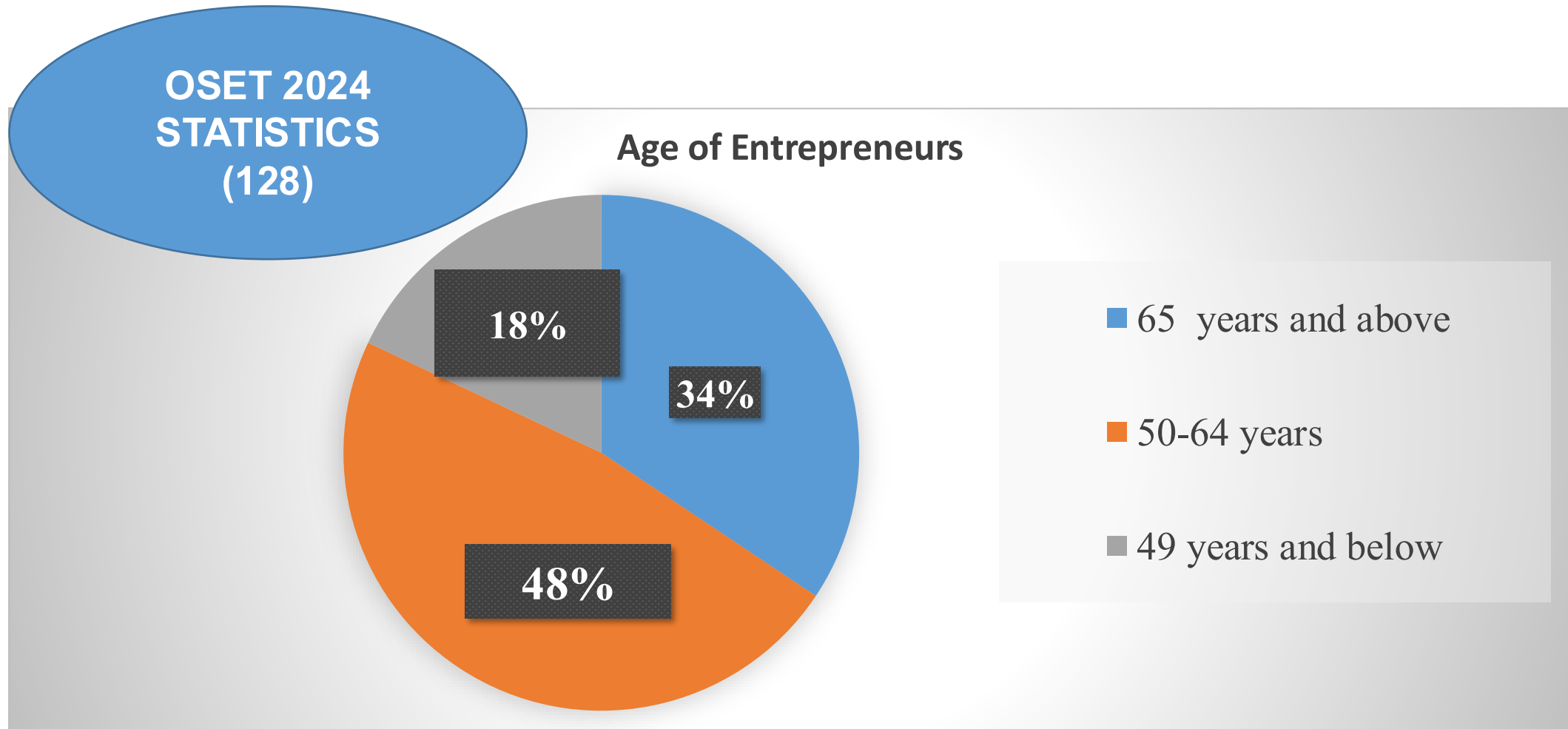
Ms Rothwell explained the growth of her business, lack of support, grants or loans.

INTRODUCTION CONT.

- OSET is mandated with provision of functional literacy and entrepreneurial skills to deserving adults to equip them with the necessary skills to engage in various economic activities.
- Functional literacy goes beyond basic literacy. It gives learners the ability to use reading, writing, and numeracy skills to live their lives in the most productive way possible by addressing two dimensions of vulnerability: lack of/low income and participation poverty.
- Participation poverty refers to the situations where materially poor individuals lack meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives, such as a lack of access to resources, information, or decision making processes. This hinders their ability to be industrious.
- Lack of income is promoted by entrepreneurial training choosing from diverse areas such as agriculture; home economics; tourism and hospitality; arts; design and technology; construction; performing arts; automotive engineering; Indigenous Knowledge Systems

PARTICIPANTS & SELECTION

Out of School Education and Training (OSET) Entrepreneurial Training of Adults



INTRODUCTION

Borrowing from Paul Segreto (2024)

Embracing Entrepreneurship in Senior Years: A Path to Continued Growth and Legacy Building

- Seniors are increasingly stepping into the entrepreneurial arena. They are proving that age is not a barrier to starting a business; rather, it's an asset that brings depth, resilience, and a unique perspective to the entrepreneurial journey.
- Age brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and a network that is unparalleled. Seniors can navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship with a level of grace and wisdom that is hard-earned.
- Senior entrepreneurship challenges outdated notions of retirement, showcasing that the senior years can be a time of dynamic growth and contribution.



To share two amazing stories of senior entrepreneurs in the field of adult education

- These adults were trained through Out of School Education and Training and still enjoy a firm support and guidance from the Department of Out of School Education and Training
- Two entrepreneurs selected were among those who demonstrated remarkable resilience, having to face and overcome multiple setbacks such as no financial support for start up, no market to sell the produce

SELECTED SENIOR ENTREPRENEURS



- Ms Kentsenao Rotwane, 67 years a hard worker and multitasker. She does both basketry and pottery and she is passionate about her businesses.
- Her choice to pursue basketry and pottery comes from years of experience gained through 'sitting next to Nellie' - observing, learning and doing hands-on 'work' under the guidance of her mother. Her business started in 2013.
- Her baskets and pots are used during traditional activities and events like weddings and Dikgafela (a festival that celebrates the 'first fruits' of the year).



- Ms Gadifele Onneng, 65 years - a hustler, a hard worker, with profound commitment and dedication to her projects.
- She does sewing and plastic recycling. She is the only person in the area actively and enthusiastically producing recycled plastic items such as shoes, bags, and hats.
- Her business started in 2013 due to both the demand for products and lessons learned from OSET about the environmental benefits of plastic recycling. She also hoped the business would generate enough income to support her and her family,
- She has been able to do home improvements, like painting, flooring, and some fixtures.

OSET-ENTREPRENEURIAL EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK

Mandate

- Provision of functional literacy and entrepreneurial skills to deserving adults

Targeted Training

- Relevance & Demand-Driven - Training designed to match specific high-demand enterprises, e.g. Personalized Choices

Practical

- Hands-on experiences, e.g. spend their time in real-world work environments; Using Industry-Standard Tools where possible

Ecosystems Support

- Highly interconnected network of support for the necessary socio-economic, logistical, and technical support and access to tools, equipment, or finance

Post Training Mentorship

- Post-Training Guidance & Mentorship: For Sustainability Networking opportunities, Organized fairs, Monthly or weekly visits as per needs

BARRIERS TO NAVIGATE AS A SENIOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN BOTSWANA

- Individuals 65 years and over
- In Botswana, they are classified as part of a vulnerable group together with the poor, orphans, single parents, unemployed persons, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, migrants and others (The World Bank, 2022).

WHO Botswana (2022) – Socio-economic development in Botswana has often not kept pace with rapid speed of the ageing population, thus, misalignment of some services and systems with the needs of older adults

BARRIERS TO NAVGATE Cont ...

Socio-economic Inequalities/ Insecurities	Approximately 91% of older Batswana live below the poverty line. There is a critical 5-year "pension gap" between the mandatory retirement age of 60 and the eligibility age for the government pension at 65, leaving many without income.
Lack of Legal Protection	No older adult policy in Botswana, so very few services dedicated to older adults' needs. A Policy is being developed.
Gender Inequity	Older women are more vulnerable than men, often carry a heavier unpaid care burden.
Inaccessibility of knowledge and services	Services such as Poverty Reduction Schemes are available and many older adults are unaware of them or can't access them for various reasons like requirements
Personal Insecurity and Thought bottlenecks	Place and location determine the business to be engaged in for older adults, Older adult, for example, in rural areas have more difficulty accessing markets.

THRWISH

- Senior entrepreneurship support systems like policy guidelines, marketing strategies
- Certification of the indigenous skills
- Empowerment to participate in the existing government empowerment poverty reduction schemes

HOW INFORMATION WAS SOURCED

Telling their stories and documentation of these transformative tales of journeys from tacit knowledge to entrepreneurial stories that inspire and motivate

REFERENCES

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*Thank
you!*