Rationale for job-ready secondary graduates
Education remains one of the best investment decisions an individual or country can make. However, there is evidence of growing challenges relating to the transition from secondary education to work. Secondary education produces too many graduates who end up unemployed or economically inactive. There are 450,000 out-of-school youth with secondary education who are unemployed in Botswana, Lesotho, and Zambia. In Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia, respectively, 34 percent (87,000), 34 percent (70,000) and 19 percent (302,000) of young graduates are unemployed.

Secondary education, however, is expected to continue to expand in the future, with the potential to add additional youth to the current ranks of unemployed secondary education graduates. By 2030, four of five workers in Botswana and 33% of Lesotho workers are expected to have secondary education. The writing on the wall is clear: Graduates of secondary education must be better prepared for the world of work. If not, challenges associated with youth unemployment will balloon.

Key reason for low level of job-readiness
From employer surveys in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia, employers rated 21st century skills, (as defined in box below) highest for job-seekers (Figure on next page). Employers are looking for practical skills and relevant job experience. Therefore, graduates from secondary education must demonstrate 21st century skills in addition to foundational skills to be job-ready. Further, a sub-set of graduates particularly those not proceeding to a university education, would benefit from improved vocational skills to successfully transition to the world of work.

How can these 21st century skills be adopted by secondary education graduates?
1. Teacher Instruction
2. Curricula and Assessments
3. Structure of Education

Teacher instruction
To understand the current state of instruction in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia, the methodology consisted of a total of 18 classroom observations in 6 secondary schools per country and indicators were rated on a scale of 1 (not evident) to 4 (extremely evident). Therefore, the sample is not nationally representative. However, the sample and the consistency of the results give a clear indication of what is happening in classrooms across Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia. These indicators include:

Instructional findings
Instruction in all classrooms observed across all three countries was generally teacher centered. The teaching technique observed is traditional, with a strong focus on lecturing wherein most of the talking is done by teachers.

Teamwork, collaboration and active learning
There is no evidence that the pedagogy in the three countries strengthens teamwork. Students work alone,
do not seek support from other students or the teacher, they generally do not challenge their peers and do not provide constructive feedback to one another. They generally do not challenge their peers and do not provide constructive feedback to one another.

**Critical thinking**
The pedagogy does not foster critical thinking. While teachers in all three countries observed, asked open ended questions, most answers to these questions required only memorized responses regarding specific facts. In addition, teachers tend give answers to students’ questions instead of pushing them further with guiding questions to foster analysis and critical thinking. Students do not try, and are not encouraged, to investigate other strategies to find solutions to problems.

**Technology**
While the setup of the classroom environment allows for the acquisition of basic learning it is insufficient to
facilitate the inculcation of 21st century skills. Significant challenges were evident regarding the learning environment, including a lack of Wi-Fi, and a general absence of appropriate technology, learning materials and resources for demonstration and experimentation, as well as reference materials.

**Curricula and assessments structure**
Curricula and assessments in all three countries are structured to allow students to develop competencies in reading and, to a lesser extent, writing. However, curricula in Lesotho, Zambia and Botswana present little evidence of interdisciplinary problem solving, teamwork, initiative/
entrepreneurship, self-management, learning, and technology. The curricula reviewed do not expect students to learn how to choose among technologies nor use technology to identify or to solve problems.

**Structure of secondary education**
Zambia recently introduced a vocational and academic educational track in junior and senior secondary schools, which would provide students with sufficient opportunities to develop technical and vocational skills. Botswana and Lesotho, on the other hand, only have an academic track for junior secondary, and a comprehensive track for senior secondary education. The introduction of a multiple pathway model not only facilitates a quicker transition from schooling to employment, but also serves to reduce the wasting of student’s time and government resources. It would ensure that student don’t have to perform sub-optimally, or fail in academic education before embarking on a vocational qualification, and ensures that the preparation of students for tertiary education would be focused on those who would further their education.

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<th>General Recommendations</th>
<th>Lesotho Specific Recommendations</th>
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<td>Governments consider working with teachers and school directors to initiate a national debate on teaching style, followed by a teacher in-service training program to improve instructional practice and encourage more active, collaborative, and exploratory learning on the part of students.</td>
<td>Strengthen pedagogy through effective in-service teacher training. Regular teacher training in pedagogy can be integrated into the training on the new curriculum and assessment. This requires changes at classroom level starting now to ensure that students are equipped with the in-demand employability skills.</td>
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<td>All the countries accelerate the implementation of competency-based curriculum that fully specify 21st century skills as learning objectives, including self-management, entrepreneurship, team-work and problem solving. In turn, the curriculum should de-emphasize rote memorization of knowledge.</td>
<td>While reforming the structure of secondary education and the TVET system, MoET should make sure that all students complete basic education before going to a specialized system. Without strong basic knowledge and skills that should be gained from basic education, youth are not well equipped to efficiently embrace more specialized streams. This means that focus should be on core curriculum at junior secondary and elective curriculum should be introduced as first steps to more technical and/or vocational pathways.</td>
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<td>The countries should complement the national written exams with an element of school based assessments of skills and competencies. Instruction, curriculum, and assessment must all be aligned and focused on the development and acquisition of 21st century skills. If the assessments are not changed, the students and teacher are unlikely to focus on these broader 21st century skills.</td>
<td>A TVET system that contributes effectively to meeting the key socio-economic needs of the country is best tackled by contemplating a broad-based structural reform of TVET. This includes: (i) Introduction of specialized schools that focus on key economic sectors such as Mining and Construction, Agriculture, Tourism and Hospitality etc.; (ii) Change the current governance structures of the TVET sector; and (iii) Change of current funding structures.</td>
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<td>The report strongly supports the education strategies of the governments of Botswana, Lesotho, and Zambia to introduce or scale-up the combined vocational and academic pathway in secondary education. It is recommended that a combined pathway provide a rigorous academic foundation to facilitate tertiary studies, if the student so desires, while concurrently developing certified technical skills and presenting opportunities for students to accrue job training through internships.</td>
<td>Identify sustainable strategies to improve retention and to expand access to secondary education for students from the poorest families and those living in rural and mountainous areas. The ongoing pilot activities on school based management provides good basis for a mechanism to retain students at school. Discussions on the financing mechanism of secondary education should start to make it affordable for the poorest and most vulnerable. To make expansion of secondary education in rural areas with extremely limited access sustainable, the unit cost of classroom construction should be reduced, and use of well-trained multisubject teachers should be carefully analyzed.</td>
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