

Current Development in Botswana

August 2006

The Horse Society of Botswana's Rider Development Programme

The main objectives of our **Rider Development Programme** is to expose more people to and get more people involved in riding in Botswana, therefore broadening the base of our sport. As with the rest of the world participation in the sport and keeping horses is expensive and therefore prohibitive to many, especially in a developing country like ours.

The average Motswana, has never had the opportunity to see, let alone participate in any form of equestrian sport, but most have been exposed to horses at cattle posts or have watched "horse racing" on television. We aim to nurture an understanding of equestrianism and develop more citizen riders that will in the future be able to represent our country on an equal footing with the rest of the world.

We have started this process on a small scale by teaching a group of ten children from a day care centre for orphaned and HIV children. This we hope will not only help develop the children but also our sport and create an understanding of equestrianism generally .

We are now in a position to roll out the process by involving schools (at this time very limited due to lack of funds), through our contacts with the Botswana Integrated Sports Association (BISA) a fellow member of the Botswana National Sports Council.

Principals of the Rider Development Programme are:

HSB has set up a training module to train groups of 10 children at a time, 2 hours per week, 1 hour riding and 1 hour stable management. The first module is 6 months long, the second will be longer as the development of the rider increases.

The HSB has undertaken to allocate money from its own general funds to pay for a limited number of modules.

The HSB hopes that the BNSC will allocate funding from their Development Fund directly for this project, should this happen and depending on the level of the grant, the HSB will then be able to expand the number of children being taught. We are also soliciting sponsorship from the private sector and to date have received several donations of equipment, from companies and individuals both in Botswana, South Africa and France.

HSB has contacted and is in discussions with several institutions to assist in this program and hopes that with the help of the Botswana Integrated Sports Association (BISA) will be able to fully integrate the public schools in Botswana into the program.

BISA or the institution concerned will allocate a person to be responsible for each group (contact person), the contact person will then be the point of contact for HSB and the riding school that is to carry out the training.

The contact person will organise a group of 10 children, ideally between the ages of 10 to 13 years, which have been selected for their aptitude towards learning to ride horses and arrange transport to bring the children from the school / institution to the riding school for the lessons and back, on the agreed day and times with the riding school.

The contact person will **as far as possible make sure that the composition of the group does not change**, without prior discussion with both the riding school and the HSB. This is to ensure that the training schedule once started is not unnecessarily upset or progress hampered, by having children at different levels within the group.

The riding school will provide the tuition for the children as laid out in a letter of understanding between the riding school and the HSB, which will outline the aims and objectives of the program.

The riding school will liaise directly with the contact person concerning time of lessons and will keep the HSB informed.

The riding school will be responsible for submitting monthly updates to both the contact person and the HSB, outlining progress to date and any problems incurred or anticipated for the future.

Goals of the Rider Development Programme are:

It is hoped that by the end of six months the group(s) as a whole will have a basic knowledge of and aptitude towards horses, basic stable management skills and be able to walk, trot, canter and have taken and passed the British Pony Club D and D+ tests. The riding school and the HSB will as far as possible, try to organise a suitable show around the end of the training for the children to be able to take part in, as a type of “graduation”.

The Horse Society Botswana hopes that they will be able to obtain sponsorship to further the training of these children as well as expanding the training to more groups throughout the rest of the country. In developing this program we are creating the opportunity for people that would not normally have ridden, to be able to do so.