

**Children Media Usage, Civic Interest and Political-Related
Practices among Botswana Primary School Pupils:
An Experience in Informal Civic Education**

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KEYWORDS Civics Education. Media. Civic Interest. Citizenship Education. Political Education. Botswana

ABSTRACT The study evaluated the impact of an informal civic education programme on primary school pupils' media usage, civic interest and political-related activities in Botswana. The current in-school civic education programme through the teaching of social studies, cultural studies and other related subjects have not produced the desired results. Hence, this study used the 'school civic club' approach in teaching the children about citizenship issues. The one group, time series, pre and post test design was used to collect data for the study. Four hundred pupils selected from ten primary schools across the country constituted the participants in the project. A Civics Scale with sections measuring media usage, civic interest, and political-related behaviour of the pupils constituted the instruments used for data collection. Pupils were exposed to a series of civic-related IEC activities that lasted for three months within their clubs. Findings from the study indicate that the television is the most medium used by the children and this is used mainly for watching games. A large majority of the pupils do not listen to international news, and most of their political discussions are limited to the classrooms. The children rarely discuss political-related issues with their parents or peers. The level of participation of pupils in leadership activities improved with their participation in civic club activities. Also pupils demonstrated a positive interest in political-related activities, especially in participation in politics in future. The pupils demonstrated a general aversion for violence and violent acts. The implications of the findings for sustaining democracy in Botswana were discussed in the paper.