EXPERIENCES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CODIS IN BOTSWANA

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INTRODUCTION



BOTSWANA

>AREA(SIZE) : 580.730 sq km

POULATION : App. 2.5m people

Forensic Science Services is established within the Botswana Police Service



INTRODUCTION

The collection, use and storage of DNA for forensic purposes has increased rapidly since 1995 when the World's first DNA database was set up.

Countries across the world are now establishing and expanding human DNA databases for use in civil and criminal matters.

Such DNA databases range in sizes from a few hundreds DNA profiles to millions of profiles.

DNA databases exist to assist law enforcement agencies to identify DNA profiles of criminals involved in cases such as those of rape, homicides and property crime.





CODIS a software system developed by FBI as a National DNA information repository platform.

CODIS blends Forensic Science and Computer technology into an effective tool for solving crimes.

COMBINED DNA INDEX SYS

CODIS Allows for linking of DNA profiles from violent crime scenes to one another or to identified offenders CODIS allows laboratories to store, compare and match DNA records obtained after analysis of Forensic Material.







CODIS was officially activated as a database platform in the United States in 1998



As at 2021 CODIS was Installed in 58 countries across the World.



Botswana is one of the few countries using CODIS as a National DNA Database in Africa.





BOTSWANA NATIONAL DNA DATABASE



The database system runs on a Local Area Network (LAN) and it is therefore not linked to any other system

Access to the system is controlled by use of password for authorized users

The current server platform has a 2 terabytes capacity and uses Microsoft Windows Server Standard Edition and SQL Server

The system operates on the latest version of CODIS Software; Version 9

The system currently holds a total of 24 500 DNA profiles from different categories forensic material.



BOTSWANA NATIONAL DNA DATABASE



THE CODIS SYSTEM USES SEVERAL FUNCTIONAL MODULES:

DATA ENTRY MODULE

SPECIMEN MANAGER

SEARCHER MODULE

AUTO-SEARCHER MODULE

MATCH MANAGER MODULE

POPSTATS MODULE



DATA-ENTRY WINDOW

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SPECIMEN MANAGER WINDOW

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MATCH MANAGER WINDOW

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CATEGORIES OF INDICES WITHIN THE NDD





IMPLEMENTATION OF CODIS IN BOTSWANA







IMPLEMENTATION OF CODIS IN BOTSWANA





USE OF NDD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE CASES

The NDD has offered great assistance in the investigations of GBV cases through generation of identifications (Hits).

The Crime Scene Index of the NDD mostly comprises of samples from victims of sexual offenses (>95%) in which assailants were unknown.

So far a total of **358** offenders have been identified through the database and were linked to cold cases.

14 % of the identified suspects were involved in more than one cold case (repeat offenders), most notable being one suspect who was identified in 16 cold cases.



NUMBER OF OFFENDERS IDENTIFIED EACH YEAR THROUGH THE DNA DATABASE

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFENDERS IDENTIFIED IN COLD CASES (HITS)
2011	11
2012	10
2013	6
2014	16
2015	Nil (system upgrading)
2016	2
2017	40
2018	82
2019	49
2020	70
2021	57
2022	Nil (System upgrading and server breakdown)
2023 <i>(to date)</i>	15
TOTAL No. Of IDENTIFIED OFFENDERS	<u>358</u>



CODIS BREAKHROUGH CASE [A CASE OF A SERIAL OFFENDER]

A series of rape incidents occurred in 2017 and 2018 where several women were attacked and raped by an unknown assailant around Gaborone area.

The victims were attacked at night in their homes when they were asleep.

The unknown assailant covered his face with a balaclava mask during the attacks and could not be recognised by any of the victims

In cases that were reported samples were collected from victims and submitted to the laboratory for analysis and searching from the DNA database.

The **16** cases generated a hit against a single suspect whose DNA was already in the database and the suspect was identified. He currently holds the highest number of "Hits" from our database so far.



CODIS BREAKTHROUGH CASE [A CASE OF A SERIAL OFFENDER]



Identified in 16 cold cases of rape



CASES PER POLICE STATION [A CASE OF A SERIAL OFFENDER]





SERIAL OFFENDERS IDENTIFIED IN MULTIPLE OFFENSES THROUGH CODIS





NDD MANAGEMENT

The NDD is managed through an Act of Parliament [Forensic Procedures Act,2014].

Also established under the Act is the National DNA Database Advisory Board which provides an oversight responsibility on the use of the NDD.

The Act places limitations on the data allowed into the NDD and the use of that data.

The Botswana Police Service is the custodian of the NDD.



CHALLENGES IN OPERATION OF THE NDD

Under utilization of Information generated from DNA database



- Low action by investigators on investigative leads provided through the database.
- This results in ineffective investigations by law enforcement on cold cases allowing repeat offenders to evade justice.
- The FSS records comparatively low numbers of evidence/exhibits relating to volume crimes (e.g. burglary).
- Most samples are from high level crime such as rape and homicides.
- There is a possibility of non-detection of offenders in those cases if such evidence is disregarded.
- The result is a loss of opportunity to utilize databases for possible perpetrator identification.

Low use of Database in volume crimes





BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING NDD

The benefits that accrue from implementing the DNA Database include:

- Increased resolution of unsolved crimes.
- Allows investigators to channel resources directly into the provided leads for crime and removes potential suspects from investigation.
- Increased detection of suspects reduces recidivism (repeat offending).
- Increase in the effective and timely identification of disaster victims and missing persons.
- Database can also assist in identifying suspects who commit cross-border crime (through Interpol DNA Gateway).



DNA DATABASES : THE ANSWER





