



Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa

Regional Country Profiles

The Study Team are responsible for the choice and presentation of the data and facts contained in this document and for the opinions expressed therein, these are not necessarily those of SARUA nor the AAU and do not make any commitment for either association.

The country study presented here was prepared as a part of the study “Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa” (SARUA, 2009). It forms the background data to that study and is published here as an appendix to that report. The Country Studies data has not been subjected to the same level of editorial scrutiny as the Report itself. However, we publish these country studies as supplemental information to that presented in the Report, and hope that they will be of value to other researchers in the region.

LESOTHO

4.1 Country Context

TABLE: 1. World Development Indicators

World Development Indicators	Yr 2006
Population, total (millions)	2
Population growth (annual %)	0.7
Surface area (sq km) (thousands)	30.4
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	42.9
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	102.3
GNI (current US\$) (billions)	1.9
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	980
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population ages 15-49)	23.2

Source: *World Bank Lesotho: Quick Facts*¹

Lesotho's economy is strongly connected to that of its neighbour, South Africa. Its currency, the Maloti, is pegged to the South African Rand. A large portion of Lesotho's economy is based on the water and electricity it sells to South Africa, along with manufacturing, agriculture, livestock, and earnings both from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), and from labourers employed in South Africa. Lesotho also exports diamonds, wool, and mohair. The majority of households subsist on farming or migrant labour, primarily miners who work in South Africa for three to nine months each year. High GDP growth rates in the late 1980s to early 1990s were primarily due to the Lesotho Highland Water Project (LHWP), which started in 1987 as a collaboration between Lesotho and the RSA. The negative GDP growth registered in 1998 was primarily due to the political unrest that resulted in massive destruction of infrastructure, especially in the Maseru area. In the late 1990s, Lesotho's economy was further weakened by

¹<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MADAGASCAREXTN/0,,menuPK:356378~pagePK:141132~piPK:141109~theSitePK:356352,00.html> accessed 19 August 2008

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/LESOTHOEXTN/0,,menuPK:356055~pagePK:141132~piPK:141109~theSitePK:356029,00.html>

reductions in the amount of Basotho labour needed in the South African mines. The GDP has been recovering steadily since 1999, primarily due to the boom in the textile industry. Lesotho has taken advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to become the sub-Saharan region's largest exporter of garments to the USA. However, in late 2004, Lesotho again began to experience a significant downturn in economic performance driven largely by uncertainty in the textile sector. (Vision 2020 p.xii)

4.2 Planning Context

Vision 2020: Objectives of Vision 2020: Second Pillar: Sharing the benefits of growth through improved health and education standards and the conservation of the environment; improved access to health care and social welfare; improved quality of and access to education; and better management and conservation of the environment. Within the second pillar great efforts are being made to match higher education provision to the practical needs of a modern economy.

(NIP & Country Strategy Paper 2008-2013 p.14-15)

Extracts from the PRSP 2004/5 – 2006/7 and other strategic policies:

'Improve access, relevance and quality of technical, vocational and tertiary education by bringing the courses offered at these levels more in line with national manpower needs.'
(no targets are set for Higher Education in the PRS.)

'Fighting poverty and ignorance through increased access to education at all levels.'
(Statement by Min of Fin & Dev Plan. on loan bursaries Aug 2003)

Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2005 – 2015

The overall sector goals and objectives for the education sector over the planned period 2005 – 2015 are to improve access, efficiency and equity of education and training at all levels. In this regard, efforts will be made to: (i) ensure that curricula and materials are relevant, of the appropriate standard and gender-responsive; (ii) to ensure that both vocational/technical and non-formal education programmes respond to the needs of industry and the communities in general; (iii) develop and implement a common system of regular collection and reporting of information on the current status and future demand and supply, and on priority educational areas in the country; (iii) progressively achieve the equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of the education and training systems nationally, regionally and internationally; (iv) effectively participate in regional and international educational sector development initiatives; (v) promote gender equality and ensure empowerment of disadvantaged groups; and (vi) address the challenges posed by HIV and AIDS in education and training.

The envisaged economic development for Lesotho is dependent on the availability of highly skilled manpower. To achieve this, the government will adopt a new Technical and Vocational Education and Training or skills development strategy and policy which will revolutionise the skills profile of the Lesotho workforce thus promoting economic growth and alleviating poverty through provision of demand-driven training programmes. (ESSP March 2005 p.2)

ESSP 2005 p.82-83 – tables strategic goals, targets and plans with the following break down:

- Increased enrolments
- Improved quality of training programmes
- Increased relevance of training programmes
- Establishment of efficient and effective management systems
- Integrating gender in higher education
- Reducing HIV and AIDS prevalence levels
- Effective partnerships in higher education in place

Table 22: Full cost of education provision under the strategic plan on the Higher Education Budget (in M1000) (ESSP 2005 p.87)

Strategic Plan Outputs Table

- Fighting poverty and ignorance through increased access to education at all levels (Statement by Min of Fin and Dev Plan. on loan bursaries Aug 2003)
- Developing a curriculum that responds to the national development priorities, thus promoting entrepreneurial life, and technical and vocational skills (Vision 2020 p.xii)

(Vision 2020 p.xii)

Two of seven objectives in response to situational analysis in PRSP are related to post-secondary education:

- Increase access to technical and vocational education and training
- Increase access to and appropriateness of tertiary education

4.3 Education Context

The churches are a dominant force in providing education in Lesotho, running 95 percent of schools. Lesotho is in a unique position in sub-Saharan Africa of having higher enrolment rates for girls in schools. More women than men are enrolled as students in the university.²

4.3.1 Focus on Higher Education

4.3.1.1 Policy environment

Vision 2020: 'Great efforts are being made to match higher education provision to the practical needs of a modern economy.'³ (NIP & Country Strategy Paper 2008 – 2013 p.14 – 15)

Poverty Reduction Strategy 2005

'Improve access, relevance and quality of technical, vocational and tertiary education by bringing the courses offered at these levels more in line with national manpower needs.' (no targets are set for Higher Education in the PRS)

Higher Education in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2005-2015

Strategic goals for higher education

- Increased enrolments
- Improved quality and relevance of training programmes
- Establishment of efficient and effective management systems
- Integrating gender in higher education
- Reducing HIV and AIDS prevalence levels
- Effective partnerships in higher education in place (ESSP 2005 p.87)

Outputs:

1. Enrolments increased by 30 percent in 2009 and by a further 40 percent by 2015
2. Intake into teacher training institutions significantly enhanced by 2015

² ESSP 2005 p.16, 80

³ NIP & Country Strategy Paper 2008-2013 p.14-15

3. Facilities in institutions of higher learning expanded by 2015 through offering of more training programmes

Indicators:

1. The higher education's human resource gaps established and well-structured quality improvement training programme in place
2. National quality assurance/accreditation mechanisms for higher education in place
3. ICT requirements of institutions of higher learning established and a programme of acquiring these in place at all the main institutions of higher learning
4. Teacher training reviewed by 2007 to incorporate life long skills and technical and vocational elements
5. More resources invested in the sciences and engineering fields in tertiary institutions by 2015 (ESSP 2005, p.161 – 167)

Lesotho's Vision 2020 and PRSP allude to a modern economy's 'manpower' needs. The strategic goals, outputs and indicators of the ESSP do not directly show how this will be addressed. The ESSP appears to be focused on current needs within the system and not outcomes related to economic development. Economic growth in Lesotho is based on the sale of water, diamonds and the textile industry. The textile industry is dominated by Chinese ownership and the Lesotho Highland water scheme is reliant on importing skilled labour. The ESSP makes no linkages with these growth nodes. There is an irony in that many Lesotho graduates leave the country for employment in South Africa with the result that Lesotho then employs skilled labour from South Africa at a premium, adding to a net loss to the economy.

4.3.1.2 Profile of Higher Education

In 1945 the **National University of Lesotho** (NUL) was established as the first university of the country, originating out of a small Catholic University College; later named Pius XII University College.⁴ The NUL is in Roma, 35 km outside the capital Maseru. (A study on the effect that NUL has on the local economy of Roma would make an interesting study of the effect of a university on a local economy, as the surrounding areas are fairly poor.)

Lesotho College of Education trains primary school teachers and junior secondary teachers at both pre-service and in-service training levels.

⁴ Bloom, D., Canning, D, and Chan, K., *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*, Harvard University, February 2006, Appendix C, p.59

Lerotholi Polytechnic falls under TVET. Currently an autonomous institution, LP has three schools: Technology, the Built Environment, and Commerce and Applied Studies.⁵ LP intends to upgrade to university status.

South African Distance Education students: Approximately 700 students are enrolled in distance education degree programmes through institutions based in South Africa.

The number of students enrolled in tertiary education increased from 4 000 in 1999 to 8 000 in 2005. Over the same period the GER increased from 2 percent to 3 percent.

TABLE: 2. Percentage distribution by field of study in 1995

Faculty	%
Education	32
Humanities and Art	8
Social Science, Business and Law	33
Science	23
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	1
Agriculture	1
Health and Welfare	1.1

Source: *EFA GMR, 2008*

4.3.1.3 Governance

⁵ ESSP p.80-81 and refer to Table 20

The Higher Education Act of 2004⁶ envisages the provision of a legal framework for the regulation of higher education in Lesotho and specifically focuses on the establishment, governance and funding of a Council for Higher Education (CHE).

4.4 Financing Context

At the time of writing, the consultants were not able to source detailed budget statements for the Kingdom of Lesotho. The budget information is gained from Budget Speeches delivered to Parliament. Lesotho also has only one vote for Health and Social Welfare and it is not possible from the documentation to distinguish spending between the two areas. The figures quoted are all budget estimates.

TABLE: 3. National Budget Allocations

Maloti Million	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Allocation	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Total Expenditure	4,781.7	6,157.2	7,502.5	9,337.1
Education	967.5	1,032.40	1,175.5	1,474.5
% of budget	20.23%	16.77%	15.67%	15.79%
% of GDP	10.24%	9.64%	9.98%	10.92%
Health & Social Welfare	372.7	466.3	838.1	940.4
% of budget	7.79%	7.57%	11.17%	10.07%
% of GDP	3.94%	4.36%	7.12%	6.97%
Defence	217.9	272.2	292.4	364.0
% of budget	4.56%	4.42%	3.90%	3.90%
% of GDP	2.31%	2.54%	2.48%	2.70%
GDP	9,450.4	10,705	11,775	13,501

Source: *The Kingdom of Lesotho, Budget Speech to Parliament, 2006, 2007 & 2008*

⁶ Kingdom of Lesotho, Ministry of Education and Training. National Report on the Education System of Lesotho (www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE47/English/Natreps/reports/lesotho.pdf)

Trends in allocation

Over the period 2005/06 to 2008/09, although the budget allocation to Education increased from M967,5-million to M1 474,5-million, as a proportion of the budget Education spending declined from 20,2 percent to 15,8 percent. Education spending as a percentage of GDP, however, remained fairly constant over the period at roughly 10 percent. Over the same period the proportion of the budget allocated to Health and Social Welfare increased from 7,8 percent to 10 percent and as a percentage of GDP increased from 3,9 percent to 7 percent. Allocations to Defence during this period, decreased slightly dropping from 4,6 percent to 3,9 percent of the budget while remaining fairly constant as a percentage of GDP at 2,7 percent in 2008/09. Allocations to Education grew at an average annual growth rate of 15,1 percent between 2005/06 and 2008/09; to Health and Social Welfare at 36.1 percent and to Defence at 18,7 percent.

4.5 Issues and Observations

The education pyramid narrowed from 73 000 students at secondary schools to a mere 5 137 students at the National University of Lesotho; 1 767 at Institute for Extra Mural Studies (IEMS); 1 120 at the Lesotho College of Education; 690 at the Lerotholi Polytechnic and no more than a few hundred at other tertiary institutions. In addition, there are approximately 2 000 Basotho studying in South African tertiary institutions, most of whom are sponsored by government. Although tertiary education accommodates only around 2 percent of the numbers at primary school, it absorbs about one quarter of the budget of the Ministry of Education. (INASP, 2008, p77)

Government is aware of the high per capita costs of the National University of Lesotho. However, to shape the leadership of the future, who will continue the struggle against poverty in years to come, it is vital that the university should fulfil its mandate in as effective a manner as possible. (INASP, 2008) At professional and managerial levels, the structural 'brain drain' to South Africa continues to deplete the pool of talent in the Lesotho and underlines both the lack of opportunities in Lesotho and the higher salaries and better working conditions in South Africa. The Government of Lesotho keeps on financing the training of key personnel such as doctors and nurses, losing them even before recouping its investment, and then replacing them with foreign staff. As long as the opportunity gap between both countries remains, it is difficult to foresee an end to this dynamic. There remains a large salary differential between Lesotho and RSA, resulting in Lesotho's continuing shortages of doctors, nurses, accountants, engineers, many kinds of skilled manual workers, and other professionals. National income per person in RSA is almost four times higher than in Lesotho, even by purchasing power parity estimates, and the actual monetary differential is even larger.

The 2004 PRSP made an interesting observation with regard to private return. 'A Mosotho's chances of being in wage employment are determined by education, age and technical training, in addition to location and gender. Nearly 80 percent of those with a diploma, senior secondary or higher education are employed, compared with 40 percent of those with less education. Educational achievement, especially secondary education, dramatically affects earnings, which increase marginally with education until 11 years, but then triples with the completion of the last year of education.' (PRSP 2004 –7 p.10 – 11)