

Lesotho



Archibald Lesao Lehohla

Minister of Education

He was born in 1946. He completed his high school education in 1965. He obtained Bachelor of Science Degree at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (UBLS) in 1970. He did his Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree at Oxford University in 1975 and in 1982 he was admitted to a Master's degree at the same University.

From 1971 to 1972 he was a Mathematics Teaching Assistant at UBLS. He was a teacher at Bereng High School from 1975 to 1976 and a Headmaster at the same school from 1977 to

1993. He was elected Member of Parliament in 1993 and was appointed Minister of Home Affairs. In 1995 he became Minister of Transport, Posts and Communications. He has been the Minister of Education from 1996 to date.

Quality education for all

It has become necessary for all countries of the World to work together because of increasing international trade and diplomatic relations. All nations have to join hands to reduce poverty and accelerate economic growth. Quality education for all is required to enable different nations to achieve these noble ideas. It should enable people world wide to lead decent lives and live in harmony in their communities and fit in the international community.

In 2000 the Lesotho Government introduced Free Primary Education in an attempt to implement the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on education for all and also because the government had realized that many children of school going age did not attend school because their parents could not afford to pay for their education. Free Primary Education is introduced in stages to contain the high cost. It began with Standard One in 2000 and continued to Standard Two in 2001.

According to the Free Primary Education system pupils do not pay fees. The government is responsible for employment and payment of teachers' salaries, construction of classrooms, funding feeding scheme, purchasing teaching and learning materials. The parents buy uniform. However, children who have no uniform are not kept out of school.

The introduction of Free Primary Education was, however, not without problems. Too many pupils enrolled on Standard One. Some were under age and others over age; the oldest was fifty-two years old. The school going age in Lesotho is six according to policy. There was shortage of classrooms, teachers, learning and teaching materials.

With the assistance of our partners in development, new classrooms are being constructed, in some areas temporary accommodation in the form of tents is being provided, learning and teaching materials are purchased. The inspectorate is being strengthened to ensure that the quality of education does not decline and in-service courses for unqualified teachers are going on. There is regular review of the curricula to ensure their relevance to the needs of the country and they are developed when need rises to include important emerging subjects such as HIV/AIDS. Further, we begin to emphasize Science and Technology, provide life long skills and reach out of school learners through non-formal and distance education. ✍