

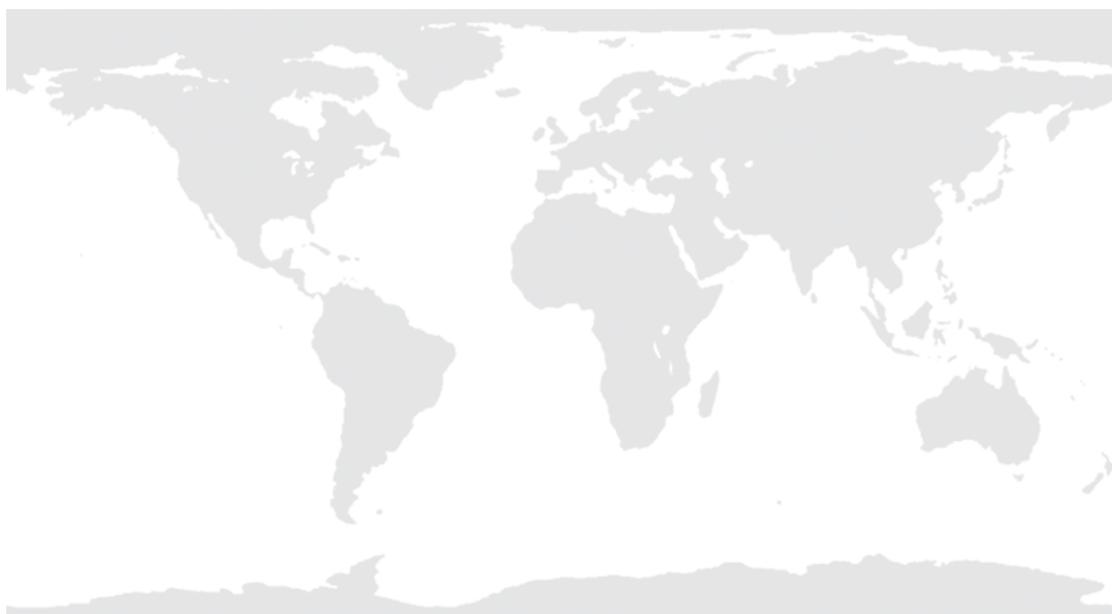


World Data on Education

Données mondiales de l'éducation

Datos Mundiales de Educación

VII Ed. 2010/11



Lesotho

Updated version, August 2010.

Principles and general objectives of education

According to the Constitution, education is directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. The broad goals and policies of the education system in Lesotho can be summarized as follows:

- everyone should be provided the opportunity to develop competencies necessary for personal growth and social life through the provision of universal primary education;
- a sufficient number of individuals should be provided with appropriate occupational, technical and managerial skills to enable them to participate in the country's socio-economic development;
- opportunities for continuing education should be provided through non-formal programmes in literacy and numeracy and basic skills, agriculture, community development and vocational training programmes, and in-service training in industry, government and organizations;
- educational programmes should incorporate cultural values and activities that enhance individual and social development; in particular, the role of the family and communities in school activities should be enhanced;
- there should be an active, cooperative partnership in education administration and management and provision of education services between and among the churches, the government, the community and other non-governmental organizations.

The Government envisages the provision of an equitable basic education to all of the population as a key development goal, at the same time as ensuring acceptable standards of quality. Basic education is regarded as an integral component of social and economic development and as a fundamental human right. It is also seen as an essential pre-condition for mid-level employment and secondary and post-secondary education and training, which will create the practical skills that, will facilitate rapid integration of the population into society, particularly into the employment market.

The agreed *Lesotho Vision 2020* Statement is that: "By 2020, Lesotho shall be a stable democracy, united prosperous nation at peace with itself and its neighbours. It shall have a healthy and well-developed human resource base. Its economy will be strong, its environment well managed and its technology well established."

Education provision should be directed toward individual and social development. Education should help an individual to lead a full life as an individual and a member of the community and cherish the principles of justice, peace, equality, equity, integrity and human rights as prescribed by the laws. Education shall foster participation in democratic processes so as to promote peace, stability and prosperity and preparing people to take control of their own destiny. Education shall strive to equip learners with skills that promote good personal health and healthy environment.



Similarly education shall equip learners with skills in conserving and maintaining their environment for the benefit of all. In developing a strong national economic base, education shall equip learners with entrepreneurial skills necessary for participation in national, regional and international economic levels. Increasingly, technology, especially Information and Communication Technology (ICT), is becoming a driving force in every economic sector. Education should therefore provide technological skills to learners in responding to individual and social needs.

In pursuing the educational aspirations, the currently emerging issues such as HIV and AIDS, gender equity, human rights and democracy, and others should be integrated within the educational process in a dynamic and evolving nature. In its entirety education provision must be geared towards enhancing self-realization, developing better human relationships, promoting individual as well as national efficiency and effective citizenship, developing national consciousness and national unity. In conclusion, the educational provision should be directed towards the following:

- the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Basotho society;
- the training of the mind in the understanding of the world;
- the acquisition of the appropriate life skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as tools for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his/her society;
- conformity to the egalitarian ideal that all people can and should achieve basic learning as a minimal educational attainment. (Ministry of Education and Training, *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*, June 2008).

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The **Education Act** of 1971 was the principal law governing education in Lesotho. Several amendments were approved between 1971 and 1992. The **Education Act No. 10** of 1995, amended in 1996, was enacted to regulate provision of early learning, primary and secondary education. The Act is being reviewed to ensure that all Education for All issues are addressed, including institutionalization of provision of early childhood education, the Convention on the Rights of a Child, the Millennium Development Goals, the Constitutional provision of free and compulsory education, and the *National Vision 2020* which are all aimed at eradicating poverty through the provision of basic education for all. The new Act shall also align education laws with government policy of decentralization of services and the provisions of the **Local Government Act** and to finally provide the state, through the Ministry of Education and Training, greater supervisory powers in all schools supported from public funds.

The **Technical and Vocational Training Act** of 1984 regulates technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes. Whereas under this Act, TVET is the responsibility of the Minister of Education and Training (MOET) acting on the advice of the Technical and Vocational Training Advisory Board, the law is also under review to provide for greater participation of the private sector in skills development and in enhancing; enhance greater correlation between training

programmes and the labour market and put in place governance and management structures that are appropriate to a demand-led system and above all, enable the system to respond quickly to the needs of the economy. The Department of Technical and Vocational Training of the MOET is the policy-implementing arm of the Board, and the nerve-centre of the TVET system.

In 2002, the MOET promulgated the **Teaching Service Regulations** which guide teacher management and support, asserting the provisions of the Education Act and Teachers' Pensions Act.

The **Higher Education Act** enacted in 2004 regulates provision of higher education in a new context where there are public and private providers. This Act seeks to: a) regulate higher education through the establishment and registration of both public and private institutions; b) establish a Council on Higher Education, whose main functions are accreditation and quality assurance of higher education institutions; and c) provide guidelines on governance and funding of public institutions in the subsector. Two public institutions of higher learning, e.g. the Lerotholi Polytechnic and the Lesotho College of Education (formerly the National Teacher Training College), to which provision of autonomy was legislated in 1997, were granted this status effective from 2002. This move was aimed at enhancing the professional effectiveness of these institutions with greater academic freedom and a degree of self-determination in human and financial resource management.

In Lesotho currently there are no legal provisions concerning compulsory education. Nevertheless, according to Article 28 of the 1992 **Constitution** "Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at securing that: a) education is directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; b) primary education is compulsory and available to all; c) secondary education, including technical and vocational education, is made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education; d) higher education is made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education; and e) fundamental education is encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed their primary education."

The introduction of the free primary education (FPE) policy in 2000 necessitated a review the teaching strategies that are mainly teacher-centered and emphasize knowledge over skills.

Administration and management of the education system

The provision and management of education is characterized by a strong partnership between the government and the churches. The churches own and operate over 90% of the schools. The government pays the salaries of more than 95% of the teachers. In addition, the government provides school facilities through its capital budget. The government, through the **Ministry of Education and Training** (MOET; formerly, the Ministry of Education), is responsible for the management, provision and regulation



of education and training in the country. The Principal Secretary, who is the administrative head and chief accounting officer of the Ministry, is assisted at the executive level by: the Deputy Principal Secretary; five Chief Education Officers responsible for primary, secondary, teaching service, curriculum services and tertiary education; and two Directors, one for technical and vocational education and training and another for planning. The curriculum is centrally developed by a unit of the MOET—the **National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC)**.

The immediate responsibility for the appointment, transfer and discipline of teachers usually has been vested in the school manager who is a representative of the proprietor. However, the legislation now provides for the appointment, transfer and discipline of teachers by a **Teaching Service Commission** composed by representatives of the government and the churches. The community is represented through advisory **School Committees** and School Management Committees, whose role is to advise the school proprietors in the administration and management of schools.

The Ministry of Education is decentralized at the district level through the **Inspectorate**. The major role of the **District Offices** is to provide support for schools in the form of administrative assistance and professional guidance.

The structure of the MOET has been reviewed to be more in line with the Public Sector Improvement and Reform Programme, whose main thrust is the professionalization of the public service. The review has addressed the urgent need to expand the establishment given that, after the implementation of the Free Primary Education policy, a new procurement system, e-governance, text book rental scheme and the decentralization process, were introduced and these new trends have impacted on the ministerial structure. Starting from 2009/10, the Ministry aims to establish several positions to strengthen the education sector and these will be filled in phases. The envisaged structure includes eight major departments: governance and management; school inspection; school management and support; teacher management and support; TVET and higher education; regional and international cooperation; planning and policy; and curriculum development and assessment. The latter would include two divisions (curriculum development and curriculum assessment) and the ECOL Secretariat.

All assessment and examinations in technical education subjects are the responsibility of the MOET through the **Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL)** in close collaboration with Technical and Vocational Education and Training Commission.

Other ministries and non-governmental organizations play an important role in the provision of adult and non-formal education programmes. The coordination of these programmes is vested in the Ministry of Education through the **Lesotho Distance Education Teaching Centre (LDTC)**. The Centre coordinates two main programmes, literacy and continuing education, which are intended to offer educational opportunities for out-of-school youth and adults who are unable to benefit from the conventional education system. The continuing education programme offers six Junior Secondary Certificate and seven Senior Secondary Certificate courses through distance learning mode and has centres in six districts. This programme is an

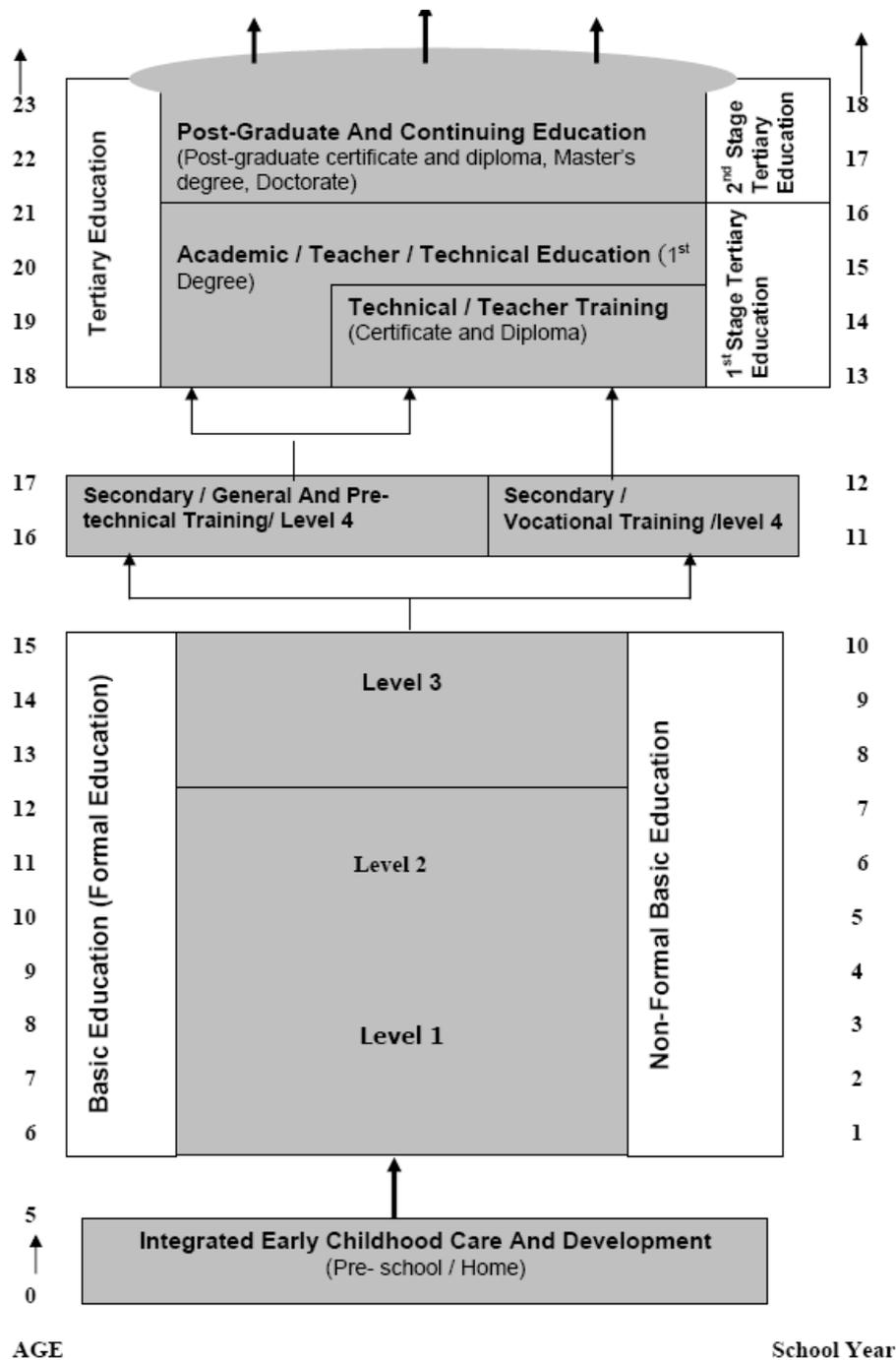


important strategy to make secondary education accessible to many learners, e.g. graduates of free primary education who cannot find a place in the few secondary schools, school dropouts, workers, etc.

The **National University of Lesotho** is an autonomous institution granting its own degrees and is governed by a Council, with academic matters being in the hands of academic persons. External assessors and examiners participate, respectively, in the selection of senior members of staff and in the main examinations, thereby assisting in the maintenance of proper academic standards in degree and diploma programmes. Special relationships, exchanges and research projects are shared with several universities abroad. The university is responsible for the management of its resources. However, the main source of support is the government, which provides the university with a subsidy required to meet its recurrent costs.

Structure and organization of the education system

Lesotho: structure of the education system



Pre-school education

Pre-school education (which includes integrated early childhood care and development) caters to children aged 3-5 years. Day-care centres are mainly operated



by the local communities and non-governmental organizations. Attendance is not compulsory.

Primary education

Primary education lasts seven years and the official entry age is 6 years, although many children enrol at 6+. Primary education is divided into two cycles: lower primary (standards 1-4), and upper primary (standards 5-7). At the end of standard 7, pupils sit the Primary School Leaving Examination. A policy of free primary education has been introduced in the year 2000.

Secondary education

Secondary education extends over five years (Forms A to E), comprising the three-year junior secondary (Forms A-C) and the two-year senior secondary education (high school) cycles. Progression from the junior secondary to the senior secondary school is through the nationally administered Junior Certificate Examination. The Junior Certificate is the minimum requirement for admission to craft courses and other forms of pre-vocational training. Senior secondary education culminates in the external examination of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (GCE O-level), granting access to most tertiary programmes, including higher education. Technical and vocational education and training are offered in some secondary and post-secondary level institutions. A number of vocational schools are for girls only, offering home economics as a three-year post-primary programme. Some secondary schools offer pre-vocational training programmes. A few technical schools offer three-year craft courses. One institution offers two-year post-secondary diploma courses.

Higher education

At the post-secondary and university levels, the duration of technical or vocational programmes leading to a diploma is normally two to three years (three years in the case of teacher education). Most university studies at the undergraduate level leading to a bachelor's degree take four years to complete (five years in the case of engineering). The duration of master's degree programmes is normally two years after the relevant bachelor's degree, while doctoral degree programmes usually last three years.

At the primary level, the school year consists of 190 days, divided into four terms extending from January to December, with a six-week winter break in June-July and a six-week summer break in December-January. At the secondary level, the school year consists of 180 days. The post-primary vocational institutions and the craft-level technical institutions follow the same school calendar as the rest of the secondary schools. The academic year in the polytechnics starts in August and ends in June. It is estimated that the school year consists of 32 working weeks.

The educational process

The Government recognizes the need for regular curricular review to ensure the relevance, flexibility and affordability of school curricula. The National Curriculum



Development Centre (NCDC) was established in 1980 to facilitate the development of curriculum that responds to the learners' and the country's needs.

The NCDC works through national subject panels comprising representatives of teachers, teacher-training institutions, the Inspectorates, teacher associations and subject specialists. The National Curriculum Committee (NCC), upon recommendation from the NCDC, advises the Minister of Education and Training on all school curriculum matters. The NCC is a widely representative statutory body including senior government officials, representatives of tertiary institutions, teacher associations and school proprietors. Through these two mechanisms, the curriculum development process has representative of a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

All curriculum materials intended for use in the schools must be approved by the government on the advice of the NCC. Instructional materials are prescribed or recommended by the Government and provided to schools. At primary level, as part of the free primary education policy, the MOET School Supply Unit provides a range of curricular materials including textbooks, science kits and mathematical instruments. The curriculum in secondary schools is guided by the government policy of diversification that ensures that, in addition to the core subjects such as Sesotho, English, mathematics and science, there is a selection of practical subjects comprising agriculture, basic handicrafts, woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing, home economics and business education.

Whereas there has been a curriculum review process which started in the mid-1990s for primary and secondary education resulting in the current curricula organization, fresh challenges in response to the imperatives of Millennium Development Goals and the quest for more relevant national curricula as envisaged in the *National Vision 2020*, results from the impact assessment of HIV and AIDS on the education sector and the gender audit in education, have necessitated a need for a review of curriculum and assessment framework. The need to mainstream the response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the curriculum is one of the main imperatives for curriculum and assessment review process. The MOET, established a task force with broad stakeholder representation including, academics, teacher educators, policy-makers, curriculum developers, examinations officers, teacher representatives and school administrators and school proprietor representatives, to develop a new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework, published in June 2008, is expected which is to guide the transformation of teaching and learning as well at the primary and secondary levels. The Framework aims at:

- determining the nature and direction of the national curriculum and its objectives;
- monitoring quality, relevance and efficiency of basic and secondary education;
- aligning the assessment methods to what is taught so that there is established necessary link between what is taught, learned and assessed;
- addressing the emerging issues pertaining to new demands, practices and life challenges of the modern global world;



- integrating curriculum and assessment functions so as to strike the necessary balance between the two and avoid the excessive paper-pencil nature of the examinations as is currently the case;
- proposing a fully localized secondary education curriculum and assessment.

This new approach to curriculum and assessment issues has been motivated by several factors, in particular: the realization of the need for well articulated and comprehensive policy guidelines which offer universal direction to desired educational practices; new developments, including the free primary education policy, which require policy re-articulation and refinement; and the need to redesign the primary education system to accommodate for an increase in the programme duration from seven to ten years of basic education.

The Framework is derived from the Basotho philosophical statements of justice, equality, peace, prosperity, participatory democracy and mutual co-existence which underpin their way of life. These have been captured in various documents, most recently in the *Lesotho Vision 2020*. The Framework recognizes the pluralism of the Basotho nation and the existence of other languages besides the two official languages of Sesotho and English. In that regard, the framework boldly asserts that mother tongue will be used as a medium of instruction up to standard 3 (resources permitting), while English will be taught as a subject at this and other levels. It goes further to indicate that sign language shall also form part of the new language policy.

The document advocates the establishment of a very strong link between curriculum and assessment so that the feedback on the learning progress should be used to formulate strategies that will improve the teaching and learning processes. Thus assessment strategies should assist in improving the learning processes and achievement of the curriculum goals and objectives. Unlike in the past where traditional school subjects were used as organizing elements to achieve curriculum integration, the framework uses curriculum aspects and learning areas which are juxtaposed to identity competencies to be promoted in different contexts. Curriculum aspects highlight the life challenges and contexts in which the learner is expected to function as an individual and a member of the society. Learning areas indicate a body of knowledge necessary to equip the learners with competencies necessary to address these life challenges.

In the process of curriculum planning and organization the curriculum aspects are the following: a) effective communication (listening, speaking, writing and reading); b) awareness of self and others (learners need to acquire skills towards managing emotional and sexual feelings and enjoyment of safe and responsible relationships; they should be aware of their rights and responsibilities, and respect the rights of others); c) environmental adaptation and sustainable development (learners should develop knowledge and skills towards sustainable use of the environment for individual and societal development); d) health and healthy living; and e) production and work-related competencies (learners should develop entrepreneurial skills that would facilitate creation of employment and alleviation of poverty).

The five learning areas which are juxtaposed with the above curriculum aspects are:



- Linguistic and literacy: is concerned with the foundations of language and its usage. It is a medium through which all learning areas can be adequately and effectively delivered. It promotes effective communication in all its forms. Learners should be helped to: communicate effectively through listening, speaking, reading, and writing in formal and informal situations; and use and select appropriate words, colours, signs, sounds, graphics, symbols and media to communicate and interpret scientific, social, economic, technological, and political information.
- Numerical and mathematical: it promotes the acquisition of numerical and mathematical skills for effective participation in scientific, technological and socio-economic development; the application of numerical and mathematical skills in solving everyday problems and promoting socio-economic development; the appreciation of the contribution of numerical and mathematical skills in scientific, technological and socio-economic development; and the development of positive attitudes towards mathematics as a foundation for further learning and career development.
- Personal, spiritual and social: it promotes the development of the learner as an individual and a member of the community she or he lives in.
- Scientific and technological: it concerns the understanding of scientific and environmental phenomena in terms of physical, economic, social, political and technological development. It should promote: the acquisition and understanding of scientific and technological concepts, principles and processes for socio-economic development; the understanding of environmental phenomena in terms of physical, socio-economic and technological developments; the application of scientific and technological skills in solving everyday life challenges; and positive attitudes and values towards the use of science and technology in everyday life situation.
- Creativity and entrepreneurial: it promotes understanding and application of creative and entrepreneurial concepts, principles and skills in addressing everyday needs, as well as attitudes and values in responding to such needs.

Core competencies indicate the capabilities which learners acquire as they go through the education system at different levels. They also indicate the learners' ability to apply knowledge and acquired skills and to demonstrate values and attitudes which are necessary to address current and new situations. The core competencies identified by the framework are: effective and functional communication; problem solving; scientific, technological and creative skills; critical thinking; collaboration and cooperation; functional numeracy; and learning to learn. The framework organizes the school curriculum into learning areas at primary education level with subjects emerging in the last three years of basic education, i.e. first three years of current secondary education. This new arrangement is expected to reduce the number of subjects in the currently overloaded primary education curriculum, while at the same time include life skills. Thus the purpose of primary education is to serve as a foundation for providing reading, writing, arithmetic skills, as well as respect for environment and acquisition of necessary life skills. At secondary education level, its purpose should be to serve as preparation for tertiary education, further personality development as well as preparation for the world of work. The integrated approach of the organization of the school curriculum assures continuity of knowledge construction and acquisition of appropriate skills and values from the core contributing subjects that have been identified.



The framework calls for a new approach to teaching. Pedagogy must shift more towards methods that can develop creativity, independence and survival skills of learners. In essence learners should assume greater responsibility for their own learning processes. Therefore, the new trend should be a move from teaching to facilitating learning; from transfer of facts to student construction of knowledge; from memorization of information to analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application of information; from knowledge acquisition to development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; from categorized knowledge (traditional subjects) to integrated knowledge (broader learning areas); from didactic teaching to participatory, activity-centered and interactive methodologies. Assessment should evaluate the attainment of educational and curriculum aims of educational programmes at all levels. Thus there is need to broaden the modes of assessment to include the following: a) formative assessment which comprises both diagnostic and continuous assessment/classroom based assessment; b) monitoring of educational progress through national educational assessment carried out at regular intervals; and c) summative assessment (which usually tests mostly cognitive domain) for selection and certification purposes. In summary, assessment will be broadened to test achievement not only in one domain area but also in a range of other domains. Continuous assessment (CASS) has been undertaken in practical subjects but has been mainly targeted towards examinations requirements and not necessarily to promote self-reliance. Trial testing of CASS in subjects like science raised concerns over issues of reliability and validity impeding implementation. Eventually, the system of national continuous assessment is nonexistent. Despite efforts to integrate curriculum and assessment functions, they continue to run parallel. Examinations at all levels still partially address the assessment of curriculum objectives, especially the cognitive domain.

To achieve the national educational aspirations and ensure successful learning, it is important to select knowledge and ideas to be learned carefully, bearing in mind the provision of necessary balance, the appropriate context and ideal perspective. In addition, the selected knowledge should be planned and organized in a manner that will foster commitment and motivation among all those entrusted with the success of the learning process, including the learners themselves. It should create enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the learning process. Curriculum should therefore promote the creation, acquisition and utilization of knowledge and skills as well as development of attitudes and values necessary for participation in advancing personal and socio-economic development and participation in globalization. It should help learners to select relevant concepts and skills to better understand the world. Curriculum should strive to endow learners with skills, attitudes and values such as creativity, critical thinking, initiative, working with others, communication, problem solving, scientific, technological, entrepreneurship, psychosocial and a willingness to learn in order to promote personal and social development and to achieve an improved quality of life for all. The design of the curriculum should reflect the interconnectedness of knowledge and ideas within the areas of learning, and the relevance of the areas of learning to each other and to the learner's everyday life individually and communally.

The emerging trend towards knowledge production and problem solving is interdisciplinary, seeing life as an integrated whole with no distinctive compartments as reflected by various disciplines of knowledge. The Framework sees curriculum integration as a model for effectively addressing the issues discussed earlier.



Integration refers to the holistic view and treatment of issues related to intelligence, maturity, personal and social development of the learner for survival purposes and economic development of the nation as opposed to the compartmentalized subject-based form of instruction. This is in recognition of cross-cutting issues that have to be treated in this manner. This approach recognizes that the learner is part of a community and that learning should take into account everyday experiences of learners. School life should thus be integrated with community life and that of the individual learner. This perspective does not negate or undermine the contribution of academic subjects in provision of knowledge, but rather advocates flexible use of knowledge beyond superficial understanding of isolated events. Thus curriculum integration organizes education to a more manageable and relevant approach.

To achieve the goals of curriculum integration, organizing elements have been identified. These elements encompass life challenges and issues facing Basotho as a nation and member of the global village. Critical among these challenges are high unemployment rate and slow economic growth, high poverty, rampant HIV and AIDS and other contentious diseases, environmental degradation, gender equality and equity, human rights and democracy and many more. Traditional school subjects within the current school system do not adequately address most of these problems and challenges. Hence they have to be refocused, by placing them within the social context. In doing this, two major strategies have been identified, namely the above-mentioned curriculum aspects and learning areas.

The first seven years of basic education (e.g. the current primary education programme) shall follow an integrated approach managed through the mentioned five learning areas. The linguistic and literary area should include as core contributing subjects: Sesotho, English, art and crafts, drama, music, and other languages; Sesotho and English should be compulsory. The numerical and mathematical area includes mathematics. The personal, spiritual and social area should include as core contributing subjects: history, religious education, health and physical education, development studies, organized under the compulsory subject life skills. The scientific and technological area should include as core contributing subjects: science, geography, agricultural science, and technical subjects, organized under the compulsory subject science. The creativity and entrepreneurial area should include business education, home economics, and ICT. (Ministry of Education and Training, *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*, June 2008).

Pre-primary education

Whereas access to integrated early childhood care and development (IECCD) remains low with an estimated 30% of the age cohort accessing this service in 2003 from 22% in 1999, there are gradually more boys accessing this level of education than girls. Increased levels of household poverty and minimal support from the state have made this level of education inaccessible for most children. A draft policy that will guide provision of this level of education has been developed.

The MOET is piloting a home-based approach to early childhood care which seeks to empower parents with parenting skills providing care for children within their homes and in neighborhood groups at minimal costs. The home-based approach is intended for families that are jobless and cannot afford heavy fees paid in the IECCD



centres. Each village has identified a caregiver, who is in turn provided with training by the IECCD Unit of the MOET through workshops. The caregivers work as volunteers, because there are no fees paid by parents; they work from Monday to Friday. Each day of the week the caregivers take about 3 hours (9 to 12) with children in the presence of parents, who take turns on different days of the week. Parents attend these sessions so that they can have an insight into what takes place and have a better understanding of child development and what kind of activities can be done with young children. This helps in that some of the activities can even be continued at home with the help of parents.

The process of developing a draft National Policy Document on ECE started in 1998, while the directory of ECE centres in Lesotho was completed in July 1999 with financial assistance from UNICEF.

The curriculum covers widely the five areas of child development and ways to stimulate children positively so they can realize healthy development. As they reach 5 years of age, they are engaged in a school readiness programme that will enable them to get prepared for formal learning.

The number of ECE centres increased from 1,530 in 1997 to 1,578 in 1998, while children's enrolments increased from 35,124 in 1997 to 36,079 in 1998. In a majority of cases, there was one teacher in each centre. Since 2003, the MOET started to capture statistical data on IECCD. Due to the high mobility of many centres and the fact that many are inaccessible, current data on IECCD seems to portray less centres, e.g. only those that were reached during data collection; efforts are in place to continue data capturing of all centres, including the most inaccessible ones.

In order to expand access, especially to the poorer mountain regions, the Government decided to explore the attachment of reception classes on a pilot basis from 2006. Reception classes were thus attached to 11 government primary schools. The piloting proved successful and in 2007 reception classes were attached to 86 more schools bringing the total to 97. The total number of government-supported primary schools with reception classes was 120 in the 2008 school year. The plan is to continue with the attachments including church-owned government-supported schools where space is available from 2009. The criteria for attachment is that the school must have available space i.e. classrooms not in use, that the school should preferably be located in a rural area or poor urban area to increase access to the most deprived and underprivileged children, and the school management should be keen on the attachment of reception class. The MOET assist the primary schools attaching reception classes by providing cash grants to be used by the school to purchase teaching and learning materials, pay teachers' wages, and for feeding the children in the reception classes. The MOET also provides training to the school management and also orientation training to the teachers.

Reception classes complement and reinforce the home-based approach which continues to provide access to the needy and vulnerable children in the remote and poor communities. Communities provide a free room and volunteers take turns providing guidance to children in these centres. The MOET trains these caregivers to give them skills to enable them to provide guidance to the children in their care. This has resulted amongst others in the production and dissemination of manuals including



the home base manual with a teacher's guide (on holistic development of the child) and the parenting skills manual. One major challenge however, for home-based centres has proved to be sustainability. In 2008 there existed about 57 home-based care centres country-wide, enrolling about 1,445 children aged 3 to 6 years.

The IECCD Unit of the MOET continues to provide and support training for caregivers, teachers and facilitators on how best to provide care and pre-school education to children. The Government as a way of strengthening this provision has successfully negotiated with the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) to offer in-service and pre-service IECCD training. In June, 2007 the College began to offer a two-year Certificate in Early Childhood Education, an in-service training programme for IECCD teachers. Thirty-two teacher trainees enrolled into this programme in 2007. The MOET intends to continue to provide ear-marked support to the LCE particularly to support the expansion of this in-service teacher training programme.

According to existing information, in 2004 there were 1,225 IECCD centres and home-based care centres, with a total enrolment of 34,552 children assisted by 1,452 teachers. The net enrolment ratio was estimated at 35% in 2007. In 2008, there were about 1,556 centres with a total enrolment of about 43,825 children, not including private centres not registered with the MOET. Currently access to IECCD is mainly in the urban areas among higher income families. Since IECCD is mainly funded from parental contributions, the majority of parents do not afford the high fees especially those charged by private schools. The high prevalence of HIV and AIDS pandemic has also contributed to a large number of orphans who are not able to access early childhood education no matter how low the fees may seem to be. (MOET, 2008).

Primary education

The aims of basic education in Lesotho, as defined in the Curriculum Framework of 2008, are as follows:

- Developing functional and permanent literacy and numeracy as well as creative and critical thinking for effective living and life-long learning.
- Equipping learners with knowledge, attitudes and skills which enable them to respond to socio-economic and technological changes.
- Promotion of understanding and acceptance of high standards of living, social and moral values and awareness of emerging issues and their impact in socio-economic development.
- Developing understanding, appreciation as well as awareness of environmental interactions in ensuring sustainable development.
- Developing appreciation and acceptance of national culture and cultural diversity, history, values and norms basic for national unity and development.
- Developing scientific, social, entrepreneurial and technological skills to promote independent and critical thinking in solving socio-economic problems.
- Ensuring promotion of aesthetic and creative skills through different forms of literary work.
- Providing suitable opportunities for a variety of practical and creative skills aimed at improving health and healthy living styles.



- Promoting basic understanding of democratic principles and human rights and responsibilities for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- Providing moral and religious awareness as a foundation for promoting positive attitudes, acceptable social behaviour and skills for coping with life challenges.
- Preparing learners to respond to social, economic and technological challenges.

At the completion of ten years of basic education, learners should:

- Have acquired communication skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Sesotho and English and apply them in everyday life.
- Have acquired numeracy skills of counting, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing and apply them in everyday life.
- Have developed creative, productive and entrepreneurial skills for survival.
- Be able to appreciate interdependence existing between human beings and the environment for sustainable development and good health.
- Have developed positive attitude and aesthetic awareness towards cultural and religious heritage.
- Have acquired scientific and technological concepts and principles for everyday living.
- Have acquired knowledge and understanding of the civil and human rights, and gender, equity and equality for effective participation in society.

Primary education has been recognized as a component of basic education with the purpose to help the child to develop fully as an individual and become a member of society and the community, and to lay a foundation for further learning and effective living. According to the current curriculum, at the end of seven years of primary education pupils should:

- Have acquired communication skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Sesotho and English and numeracy skills of counting, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing.
- Communicate effectively in all learning situations and in everyday life.
- Have acquired survival and self-reliance skills to improve their living.
- Have developed creative skills in arts and entrepreneurial skills for personal development in their daily lives.
- Know their natural and technological environment.
- Be able to demonstrate awareness and appreciation of interdependence existing between man and his environment.
- Be able to initiate and participate consciously in activities aimed at managing and improving the environment, health and standard of living.
- Understand and appreciate their culture.
- Have developed positive attitude and aesthetic awareness towards cultural heritage and humanity.
- Be able to demonstrate awareness and appreciate cultures of other people.
- Have acquired scientific and technological concepts and principles for further learning and everyday living.



- Have developed and be able to apply scientific and technological methods in learning, solving problems and improving health and standards of living.
- Have acquired knowledge and understanding of the civil and human rights.
- Be able to utilize the acquired knowledge of their civil and human rights as well as their obligations and responsibilities for effective participation in their society.
- Have developed awareness and appreciation of various religious beliefs.
- Be able to react positively to scientific, technological and socioeconomic situations which contribute to expected change of behaviour.

The seven-year primary education cycle (standards 1-7) is not compulsory. The government is implementing a policy of free primary education in phases, beginning with standard 1 in the year 2000. In addition, the MOET is exploring the feasibility of extending the primary (basic) education cycle from seven to ten years, incorporating the three-year junior secondary education cycle. (Ministry of Education, 1999; MOET, 2008).

Most primary schools are in the lowland areas. Schools in the remote mountain areas are small and most of them do not offer the complete primary course. In 1994, about 33% of pupils enrolled were above the age of 12.

The curriculum is centrally developed by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), a unit of the Ministry of Education. Five core subjects are offered at primary schools: Sesotho, English language, mathematics, science, and social sciences. Following a revision carried out by the NCDC, an additional five subjects have been included, namely: agriculture, home economics, Bible study, arts and crafts, and music. Sesotho, English and mathematics are the core subjects. Practical and vocational subjects have also been introduced, as a result of the national conference on the clarification of education policies in Lesotho.

The length of a school day is normally 6½ hours. This time includes both instruction periods and break/lunch times. During the first four years of primary education, Sesotho (mother tongue) is the medium of instruction and English is offered as a subject. In standards 5-7 the medium of instruction is English. The following weekly time allocation per subject is recommended:

Lesotho. Primary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each standard/grade						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
English language	9	9	8	6	6	6	6
Sesotho language	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Science	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Agriculture	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Home economics	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Health and physical education	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Social studies	2	2	3	4	4	4	4
Religious education	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Fine arts	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total weekly periods	39	39	40	38	38	38	38

Note: The timetable is organized according a school year including 32 working weeks. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes.

The recommended teacher-pupil ratio for primary schools is 1:40, but the national average in 1990 was 1:55. In many districts the average number of pupils per classroom is more than 120. In 2003, the average pupil classroom ratio was estimated at 67:1 and the pupil to teacher ratio at about 46:1; the ratio of pupils per qualified teacher was even higher at 69:1. (Government of Lesotho, 2005). In 2007, the pupil to teacher ratio was estimated at about 39:1. Nevertheless, due to uneven distribution of teachers and within schools, class sizes of up to 60 pupils are still common. (MOET, 2008).

At the end of standard 7, pupils sit a national examination, the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) in five subjects. The examination is composed mainly of multiple choice questions, except in the two official languages (Sesotho and English) where candidates write compositions, stories and letters. Successful candidates are awarded certificates issued at the Ministry of Education; these are classified according to students' performance. The PSLE forms the basis for selection into post-primary institutions.

Repetition is highest in lower primary, exacerbating the already serious overcrowding in standards 1-3. Repetition, overcrowding and poor quality of education create a particularly vicious cycle: classrooms swell with repeaters; learning suffers because there are too many pupils for the teacher to handle, many of them overage (e.g., about 30% of pupils enrolled in standard 1 are aged 9+); the teacher's morale and self-confidence are undermined and school performance of pupils is affected; and because of poor performance, a large proportion of pupils are required to repeat the grade. Drop-out rates are also high, reaching 14% in standard 1 and 11.5% in standard 6.

A 1990 cohort analysis of repetition and drop-out rates showed that for every 1,000 pupils currently entering the system, less than 50% graduate with a PSLE pass.



If all pupils are taken together (including the drop-outs) over fourteen years per pupil are required to produce one graduate at the primary level.

In 2003 there were 214,746 boys to 214,974 girls in Lesotho primary schools, representing—according to national estimates—a gross enrolment ratio of 124.9% and a net enrolment ratio of 85%. Efficiency in primary education has remained poor in spite of the gains in access in the past five years of free primary education. In 2002 repetition rates for males and females were 23.5% and 18.65 respectively. Contrary to the repetition rates, dropout rates declined between 1999 and 2002 from 8.6% to 6.4% for boys and from 5.5% to 3.2% for girls. Overall promotion rates increased over the period for both males and females, and in 2002 the rate was above 70%.

According to national data, in 2006 the total enrolment at the primary education level was 424,855 pupils and the total number of teachers was 10,418; the gross enrolment ratio was 127% and the net enrolment ratio was 83.5%. The total number of registered primary schools has increased from 1,488 in 2007 to 1,495 in 2008. (MOET, 2008).

Secondary education

Secondary education extends over five years, comprising the three-year junior secondary (considered as part of basic education) and the two-year senior secondary cycles.

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework of 2008, secondary education builds upon basic education and continues to prepare learners for further education and training and the world of work. Secondary education aims at:

- Building on basic education for preparing learners for higher learning locally and outside the country.
- Equipping learners with knowledge, attitudes and skills which enable them to respond to socio-economic and technological changes.
- Providing learners with advanced entrepreneurial, vocational and technological skills for the world of work and further studies.
- Providing suitable opportunities for environmental exploration to promote socioeconomic development.
- Providing students with moral and religious education for the development of a socially and culturally acceptable character, promoting the spirit of co-operation and service to others.
- Promoting advance skills in literacy and numeracy for effective communication in all areas of life.
- Providing opportunities for learners to participate in activities promoting democratic principles, human rights and emerging issues in a society.
- Promoting scientific and technological skills in responding to socio-economic challenges.
- Promote psycho-social skills to deal with personal and social developmental challenges.

At the end of secondary education, students should:

- have acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes that enhance permanent and functional literacy and numeracy for continuous effective learning and for application in various situations;
- have developed advanced entrepreneurial, technological and vocational skills for world of work and further studies;
- have acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact appropriately with the environment and promote socio-economic development;
- have acquired religious knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote socially and morally acceptable behaviour;
- be able to apply scientific and technological knowledge and skills in developing new ideas to respond to socio-economic challenges;
- apply acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for effective participation in democratic processes and social activities.

The normal school day at the secondary level is eight hours long. There are four core subjects at the junior secondary level: English, Sesotho, mathematics and science. In addition, schools offer several other subjects, including practical subjects. English and Sesotho are compulsory at the junior secondary level, while only English remains compulsory at the senior secondary level. English is a medium of instruction throughout the secondary cycle. An example of the weekly lesson timetable at the junior secondary level is shown in the table below:

Junior secondary education: example of weekly lesson timetable (1996)

Subject	Number of weekly periods		
	Form I	Form II	Form III
<i>Compulsory subjects</i>			
English language	7	7	7
Mathematics	7	7	7
Sesotho	5	5	5
Science	5	5	5
<i>Two elective subjects chosen from:</i>			
History, geography, development studies, English literature, additional mathematics (only in Form III), religious education (four weekly periods for each subject)	8	8	8
<i>One elective subject chosen from:</i>			
Arts and crafts, music, physical education	3	3	3
<i>One practical subject chosen from:</i>			
Agriculture, business, home economics, technical or vocational subjects	*5	*5	*5
Total weekly periods	40	40	40

(*) Schools offering practical studies are strongly advised to allocate ten weekly periods to practical subjects and to operate on a forty-five weekly period basis. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes.



Progression from the junior secondary to the senior secondary school is through the nationally administered Junior Certificate Examination. The Junior Certificate is the minimum requirement for admission into craft courses and other forms of pre-vocational training. Senior secondary education culminates in the external examination of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC, GCE O-level), granting access to most tertiary programmes, including higher education. In addition, individual schools use their internal assessment on a quarterly and yearly bases. A continuous assessment system is being encouraged in mathematics and science, although it still has problems. Promotion from one level to another is strictly based on examination performance.

Technical and vocational education and training are offered in some secondary level and post-secondary level institutions. A number of the vocational schools are for girls only, offering home economics as a three-year post-primary programme. Some secondary schools offer pre-vocational training programmes in basic handicraft which includes technical drawing, metalwork and woodwork. A few technical schools offer three-year craft courses in: leatherwork, bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, fitting and turning, plumbing, auto mechanics, basic electronics, electrical installation, masonry and upholstery. Only one institution—a Polytechnic—offers two-year post-secondary diploma courses. These courses are: civil engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, business studies and secretarial studies. In 1994, a total of 1,697 students were enrolled in technical and vocational institutions, of whom 677 were girls enrolled in home economics courses. In 2003, the total enrolment was 1,837 students.

The recommended teacher-student ratio for secondary school is 1:25, although the national average is 1:21. As already mentioned, poor overall regulation and the failure to implement systematic plans has resulted in a proliferation of secondary and high schools, many of which have enrolments which are too small for them to be educationally or economically viable. Almost 70% of secondary schools and 60% of high schools fall in this category.

There is also a high degree of wastage at the secondary level, but the pattern differs markedly from the primary level. Repetition is relatively low, but drop-out in all forms is very high. This is particularly true for Form 5, where the low number of COSC passes gives rise to a very low promotion rate (promotion at Form 5 level is measured in terms of COSC passes).

The total enrolment for secondary education (Form A to E) increased from 72,437 in 1999 to 83,104 students in 2003. In the same year, there were 228 secondary schools and 3,470 teachers, of whom 3,093 were qualified. According to national estimates, the gross enrolment ratio for secondary education increased from 24.9% and 36% in 1999 to 30.1% and 39.1% in 2003, for males and females respectively.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

In the late 1980s, the Evaluation, Research and Testing (ERT) section of the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) produced skills checklists and end-of-level tests for use in schools. Checklists were produced for standards 1-3, while



end-of-level tests were produced for standards 4-6. These were for the following subjects: Sesotho, English and mathematics. There were plans to extend to other subjects later on. The skills checklists are tools to measure pupils' achievement in relation with each objective. End-of-level tests were used by teachers as guidelines to draft their own tests.

In 1993, USAID sponsored the Primary Education Project, where attainment tests were prepared to replace end-of-level tests. These were produced to be used as checkpoints at two levels—standards 3 and 6. These were also meant to work as a prediction tool for performance at the end of primary schooling. The first administration of these tests in 1993 helped to establish a national average of 70% in all the three subjects. In the subsequent sittings, pupils were said to have mastered the tests if their individual scores were 70% or better.

Following the second Southern African Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II) survey of 2001 and the National Assessment conducted in 2005 by the MOET, a needs assessment study for the training of primary school teachers to improve their skills in teaching mathematics, science and English was undertaken in 2006/07. Based on the recommendations from this study the primary education inspectorate has devised training programmes for teachers to address some of the identified needs. Following the training of trainers undertaken in 2007/08, in-service training of teachers is expected to continue from 2008 through to 2012. Purposeful follow up on teachers by inspectors as they get back in their respective classrooms shall be essential in ensuring that the quality of interaction between learners and teachers improves. It is hoped that ultimately noticeable improvements can be realized in the attainment of learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy. The third SACMEQ survey was administered to the 2007 standard 6 pupils.

The 2007 Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE, which assesses Sesotho, English, mathematics, science and social studies) was sat by 42,512 candidates of whom 35,336 passed. This indicated a decline in overall pass-rate from 85.8% in 2006 to 83.1% in 2007. The pass rate for the first free primary education cohort in 2006 was lower than the preceding years and it further declined in 2007. There were also indications of decline in performance in specific subjects including English, mathematics and science. The curriculum review for basic education is not only expected to repackage the curriculum to make it more responsive to contemporary challenges, but also to give sufficient priority to the attainment of numeracy and literacy in mathematics, Sesotho and English. The revised curriculum is to be piloted in selected schools from 2009 and its full implementation including the introduction of appropriately revised teaching and learning materials is expected by 2012. The perpetually low average pass rates of about 70% and 50%, from 2003 to 2007, at JC (Junior Certificate) and COSC (Cambridge Overseas School Certificate) levels, respectively, are a cause for great concern. (MOET, 2008).

In general, roughly two-thirds of all those taking the JC exam pass the examinations. Roughly half of all pupils who make it to Form A reach Form C, while 36% pass the JC examination. Of all of those entering Form A, only 21% reach Form E, and only 8% obtain the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) i.e. for



every 1,000 pupils that enter secondary education, only 92 complete Form E and pass their COSC. (Government of Lesotho, 2005).

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy of 2008 stipulates that national educational assessment will be used to monitor the curriculum by checking attainment of defined minimum competencies at different levels of education. This will be conducted at the end of grades (standards) 4, 7 and 9 (Form B). At grade 4, the national assessment will be in the form of surveys and analysis will not necessarily cover all learners. At grade 7, the national assessment will be used for two purposes: to check attainment of competencies for individual learners in individual learning areas and their level of readiness to proceed to grade 8 (Form A), and to monitor the progress of the education system. Consequently, statements of success indicating attainments of candidates in key areas will be available at the end of grade 7. These together with school reports will provide evidence of candidate's performance when a learner is required for transfer from one school to the other. At grade 9 (Form B), the national assessment will be in the form of a national survey focusing on broad educational objectives.

As regards assessment for selection and certification purposes, at the end of grade 10 (Junior Certificate) and grade 12 (senior secondary) levels respectively, assessment will be in the form of examinations that are used for selection of learners to higher education levels. Performance will be checked at all learning areas per learner and all learners will be assessed. Examinations will assess acquired knowledge and skills as defined by the curriculum namely: knowledge with understanding, application and interpretation, problem solving and analysis, critical thinking and evaluation through various modes: paper and pencil tests, objective tests, coursework or alternative to coursework papers, practical tests or projects or alternative to practical papers. Grades will be defined by standards of achievement likely to have been displayed by candidates. Grade descriptions will be interpreted in relation to the syllabus content and not designed to define content. Such grades will depend in practice upon the extent to which candidates have met the overall assessment objectives as outlined. Each subject syllabus will be graded as an aggregate of the components and will lead to the award of a grade for certification. Both group examinations and subject examinations will be available for candidates of different abilities and circumstances. (Ministry of Education and Training, *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*, June 2008).

Teaching staff

The Lesotho National Teacher Training College (NTTC, now the Lesotho College of Education, LCE) was established in 1975 when it was decided to replace the teacher training colleges operated by the Lesotho Evangelical Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church. This decision was taken in response to a long-felt need for a centralized institution for both pre-service and in-service teacher training. The mission of the NTTC is to train teachers for the primary, secondary and vocational/technical schools. Since its creation in 1975, the College has been a department of the Ministry of Education and its budget has been provided by the government. The College is open to all prospective teachers from Lesotho and from the rest of the Southern Africa sub-region, upon agreed terms. The NTTC is the main



provider of primary school teachers and it plays a role in the provision of junior secondary school teachers and secondary/high school teachers of technical subjects.

The College offers four full-time, pre-service programmes. Each of these programmes is of three years' duration leading to a certificate which is accredited by the National University of Lesotho. The programmes offered are: the Primary Teacher Certificate (PTC), the Secondary Teacher Certificate, the Diploma in Primary Education, and the Diploma in Technology Education. In February 1995, the College introduced a specialization in lower primary education, a course intended to train standards 1-3 teachers. The new Diploma in Education (Primary) (DEP) programme started in September 1998 in order to replace the PTC. It is a programme lasting three and a half years; the first semester is a bridging course, designed to upgrade student achievement in the core subjects and to prepare them for tertiary study. (Lefoka and Stuart, 2001).

In addition to the pre-service programmes, the LCE provides a number of in-service programmes for unqualified teachers serving in the schools. In 1986, an in-service programme was introduced for primary school managers and administrators. In 1992, an in-service primary teacher certificate programme was introduced to address the pressing issue of the 4,300 primary teachers with either no teaching qualification or unsatisfactory qualifications. The part-time distance education programme lasts three years and a half for unqualified teachers and two years and a half for principals. It is offered on-campus during school vacations and through outreach workshops held eight weekends per year.

The minimum qualifications required to teach in the LCE are a bachelor's degree in or with education, plus a minimum teaching experience of three years. A majority of lecturers, however, now hold a master's degree. It is also envisaged that some of the lecturers should begin to enrol for doctoral studies as a way of improving standards in general.

Prospective teachers enrolled in the primary teacher certificate programme are expected to master five core subjects (mathematics, science, Sesotho, English and social studies) taught in primary schools, in addition to professional studies. There are also other subjects that are offered, some as semester courses. These are: art and crafts, music, health education, home economics, agriculture and physical education. These are intended to produce a well-rounded teacher, able to teach pupils in schools, as well as identify and nurture children's talents. The diploma in primary education trainees specialize in two teaching subjects and education administration. They also complete other semester courses, among those stated above.

As for the secondary teacher certificate and the diploma in technology education, prospective teachers are required to specialize in two subjects and one teaching subject respectively. The subjects in which students specialize may be English, Sesotho, mathematics, science, agriculture development, development studies and home economics for the secondary teacher certificate, and metalwork, woodwork and technical drawing for the diploma in technology education.

All prospective teachers spent four months in schools on teaching practice or assignment. They are visited in schools, at least four times during their service period,

in order to provide the necessary support and assessment of their teaching performance. All teachers, whether newly qualified nationals or expatriates, will be required to register with the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) and will be interviewed by a member of the TSC staff.

The National University of Lesotho (NUL), through the faculty of education provides pre-service teacher education programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels for secondary schools. These include four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree and Bachelor of Science education (B.Sc.Ed.) programmes. The University also offers a Bachelor of Education (primary) on a part-time basis. Diploma programmes are also offered by the University in Agriculture (Dip.Agric.Ed.) and in Science (Dip.Sci.Ed.). At the postgraduate level, the courses include Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Master of Arts in Education (M.A.Ed.), Master of Education (M.Ed.), Master of Science Education (M.Sc.Ed.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

Generally speaking, salaries depend on teachers' certificates and leadership positions occupied (such as head or deputy head). Working conditions vary widely across schools. On first appointment, the teacher is allocated to a corresponding grade and step in the career structure, according to qualifications and experience. The teacher will then proceed, by annual increments, to the highest step of the grade. At this point no further progress can be made without applying to the TSC for advancement, which will only be granted on a satisfactory assessment of performance, experience and qualifications (PEQ). On satisfactory assessment, the teacher will be promoted to the next grade. Advancement can continue to the top of senior teacher position (grade). Further progression in the career structure is by competition and interview for leadership positions. Leadership positions in the primary school include the posts of deputy principal and principal. When these posts become vacant, they are advertised nationally by TSC and all teachers eligible may apply. The posts are filled by the TSC on the recommendation of the management committee responsible for the school.

Posts within the post-primary career structure are divided into classroom positions (from non-graduate assistance teacher to graduate senior teacher), leadership positions (from head of department to high school principal) and advisory positions (area resource teacher). Advisory positions are held by staff with responsibility for work in more than one school.

The number of teachers has been increasing considerably in attempt meet the increasing need as enrolments rose and in an attempt to reduce teacher pupil ratios. Given the low level of output from our teacher preparation programmes and high teacher attrition rates of qualified and experienced teachers, the system has had to resort to unqualified teachers and expatriates to meet teacher shortages. The need for regular and continuing professional development for teachers and improving their working conditions has to compete with the urgent need increase numbers of qualified teachers. To address this need, a comprehensive Teacher Education and Training policy is being developed to provide guidance for a balance between quality and quantity in teacher supply and demand (MOET, 2004).



The qualitative and quantitative impact of HIV and AIDS on teachers has been estimated to be high. The projections from the impact assessment study show that, in 2003, teacher prevalence was 27% and 22% for high and low prevalence projections, respectively. (Government of Lesotho, 2005).

The number of teachers in primary education increased from 8,225 in 1999 to 9,294 in 2003. In this period the ratio of unqualified teachers increased from 22% to 32%. The majority of primary school teachers are female (almost 80%). The challenge to increase intake levels and to improve the quality of output is taken seriously at the Lesotho College of Education. The primary teacher qualification has now been raised to diploma from certificate level and a four-year distance teacher education diploma programme for serving under- and unqualified teachers, has been instituted. Whereas this will easily produce double the number of teacher usually coming out of the pre-service, it will still fall short of the required numbers to reverse the current level of unqualified teachers. There is still a net shortage of qualified teachers in subjects such as science, mathematics, business studies and technical subjects (MOET, 2004).

References

Government of Lesotho. Ministry of Education and Training. *Kingdom of Lesotho. Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005-2015*. Maseru, March 2005.

Lefoka, P. and Stuart, J. *Analysis of the curriculum as documented at the National Teacher Training College in Lesotho*. MUSTER Discussion Paper No. 23. Center for International Education, University of Sussex Institute of Education, Falmer, Brighton, UK, May 2001.

Ministry of Education. *The development of education. National report of Lesotho*. Document presented at the 42nd session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, 1990.

Ministry of Education. *Lesotho's country paper on the development of education 1990-1992*. Document presented at the 43rd session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, 1992.

Ministry of Education. *Education sector development plan 1991/92-1995/96*. Maseru, 1992.

Ministry of Education. *Lesotho's country paper on the development of education 1992-1994*. Document presented at the 44th session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, 1994.

Ministry of Education. *The development of education 1994-1996. National report of Lesotho*. Document presented at the 45th session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, 1996.

Ministry of Education. *Education For All 2000 Assessment: country report of Lesotho*. (Under the co-ordination of N. Kokome). Maseru, 1999.



Ministry of Education. *Education sector strategic plan. Final draft.* Maseru, October 2002.

Ministry of Education and Training. *National report on the development of education. Kingdom of Lesotho.* Document presented at the 47th session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, 2004.

Ministry of Education and Training. *The development of education. National report of Lesotho.* Document presented at the 48th session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, 2008.

Ministry of Education and Training. *Curriculum and assessment policy. Education for individual and social development.* Maseru, 2008.

P. Ntsonyane & E.M. Sebatane. *Baseline information on ECCD issues. Lesotho country report.* (ND, presumably end of the 1990s.)

Web resources

Ministry of Education and Training: <http://www.education.gov.ls/> [In English. Last checked: August 2010.]

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare: <http://www.health.gov.ls/> [In English. Last checked: August 2010.]

National University of Lesotho: <http://www.nul.ls/> [In English. Last checked: August 2010.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>