



Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

National Report of Lesotho

by the

Ministry of Education and Training

International Conference on Education: Geneva

November 2008

Contents

1	Introduction	5
2	Major Reforms in the Education and Training System of Lesotho	6
2.1	<i>The Organization, Structure and Management of the education and training system</i>	6
2.2	<i>The Goals and Objectives of the Education Sector in Lesotho.....</i>	8
2.3	<i>Curricula Policies, Educational Content and Teaching and Learning Strategies</i>	8
2.3.1	<i>Curriculum and Assessment Policy</i>	8
2.3.2	<i>The Content of Education</i>	9
2.3.3	<i>Teaching and Learning Strategies.....</i>	9
2.4	<i>The Legal Framework of Education and Training</i>	10
2.5	<i>Principal Characteristics of Current and Forthcoming Reforms.....</i>	11
3	Main Policies, Achievements and Lessons Learnt	13
3.1	<i>Access to Education.....</i>	13
3.2	<i>Early Childhood Intervention</i>	16
3.3	<i>Learning Outcomes/Achievements.....</i>	19
3.3.1	<i>Quality</i>	19
3.3.2	<i>Efforts to Improve Learning Achievement</i>	20
3.4	<i>Teacher Training, Recruitment, Deployment and Working Conditions</i>	22
4	The role of the Education and Training System in Combating Poverty and Other Forms of Social Exclusion and Cultural Marginalisation	24
5	References.....	26

not defined.

List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BTL	Breakthrough to Literacy
CEO	Chief Education Officer
COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
DTEP	Distance Teacher Education Programme
ECCD	Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development
ECOL	Examinations Council of Lesotho
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
FPE	Free Primary Education
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoL	Government of Lesotho
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEMS	Institute of Extra-Mural Studies
IDM	Institute for Development Management
LCE	Lesotho College of Education
LDTC	Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
LP	Lerotholi Polytechnic
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NTTC	National Teacher Training College
NUL	National University of Lesotho
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PIEP	Primary In-service Education Programme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSCU	Project Support and Coordination Unit
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination

SSRFU	School Self-Reliance and Feeding Unit
SSU	School Supply Unit
TSD	Teaching Service Department
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TTI	Thaba-Tseka Training Institute
TVD	Technical and Vocational Department
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVT	Technical and Vocational Training
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Science and Cultural Organisation

1. Introduction

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, formal education in Lesotho was developed through a partnership between the Government of Lesotho (GOL) and the Christian Missions. Lesotho has always placed education and training at the top of her agenda as a tool for economic development and hence the government has assumed more direct responsibility in the delivery of education playing a larger role as opposed to after independence when churches were the main providers of education.

The twenty first century witnessed evolution within Lesotho's education sector through various initiatives, discussed in detail in subsequent sections. Despite these efforts, the country is still faced with challenges of, inter alia, overall expansion of education where access is provided for all; increasing efficiency within the education system; geographic and gender disparities in education provision; curriculum which promotes practical skills allowing integration of graduates into the employment market; reduction of unqualified teachers; equitable distribution of qualified teachers especially to difficult areas; the increasing incidences of HIV and AIDS infection and impact therein within the education sector.

Education and skills development is an integral part of Lesotho's overall strategy for economic development and poverty reduction. The public expenditure on education is very high, thus indicating the importance the government places on provision of education. The total government expenditure on education sector increased from 15.6% in 2007 to 16.6% in 2008, while total education expenditure as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from 9.4% in 2007 to 9.6% in 2008. The MOET is currently finalizing the Medium Term Education Plan (MTEP) 2009-2012 emanating from the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2005-2015) where the focus is on prioritizing and streamlining some of the high and sometimes ambitious targets spelled out in national policies such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), where the demands within the education sector far exceed the government financial basket, thereby generating a financial gap. The government thus acknowledges the importance of optimal use of existing and additional resources to deliver education services effectively.

Lesotho's education system consists of seven years of primary education, five years of secondary education (three years of junior secondary and two years of senior secondary) and four to six years of higher education. Primary education is conducted in Sesotho for the first three years and in English in Standards 4 through 7. Post-primary education is entirely conducted in English. The MOET offers some non-formal education courses through the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) and the National University of Lesotho's (NUL) Institute of Extra-Mural Studies (IEMS). The Lesotho College of Education (LCE) trains primary and junior secondary teachers, while the Faculty of Education at NUL trains senior secondary teachers. Provision of early childhood education has largely been done by individuals and the private sector but in the recent past the ministry of education has begun to take a more direct role in the provision of services at this level.

This report by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of the Government of Lesotho (GOL) gives an overview and assessment of the development of education from the early childhood level up to the tertiary level and highlights key policy reforms and changes introduced since the presentation of the last national report in 2004.

2. Major Reforms in the Education and Training System of Lesotho

2.1 The Organization, Structure and Management of the Education and Training System

The Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for the management, provision and regulation of education and training in Lesotho and is headed by a Minister and an Assistant Minister of Education and Training. 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; two Directors, one for Technical and Vocational Education and Training and another for Planning; and the Secretary General of the National Commission for UNESCO. These Senior Managers head departments composed of programmes which form operational units of the education and training sector in Lesotho (see figure. 1).

CURRENT MOET FUNCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

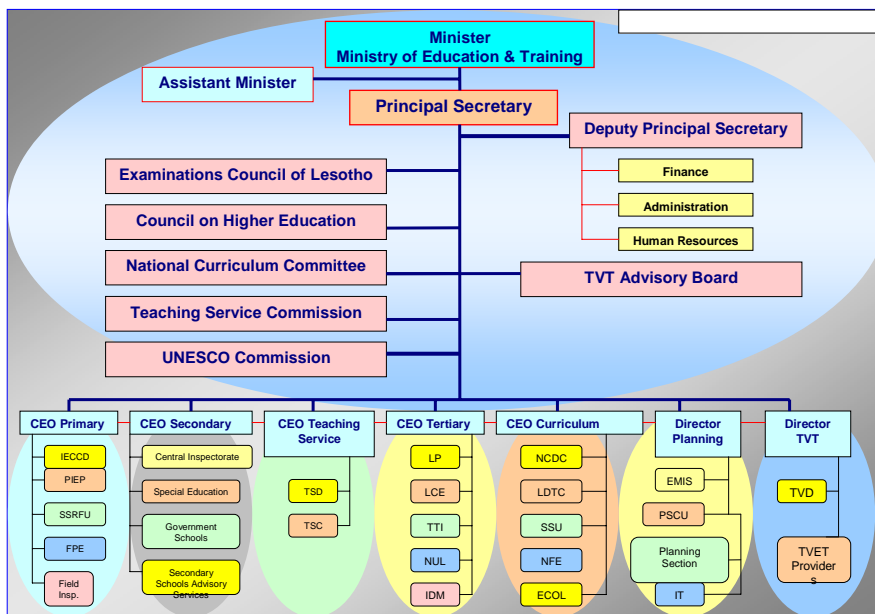


Figure 1

The current structure of the MOET depicted in figure 1 has been reviewed so that it is in line with the Public Sector Improvement and Reform Programme (PSIRP), whose main thrust is the professionalisation of the public service. The ministry thus aims to improve conditions of service based on the PSIRP. The review has noted many institutional and human resource capacity limitations that face the education sector and thus efforts have

been made in the review to build and improve the requisite capacities to ensure increased access to and improved quality of the education system through institutional reforms, capacity building, systems and processes improvement, and structural and management improvement of the education sector.

The review has addressed the urgent need to expand the establishment given that in the past eight years Free Primary Education, 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. Furthermore, Lesotho being a signatory to a number of international conventions such as MDG's, UNESCO's Education for all, AU's Decade of Education for Africa, and SADC Protocols on Education and Training, these have made the restructuring process a necessity as it will address the MOET capacity requirements through rationalization and coordination of functions. In the financial year 2009/2010, the ministry aims to establish several positions to strengthen the education sector and these will be filled in phases. The proposed new structure is in figure 2.

PROPOSED MOET FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE

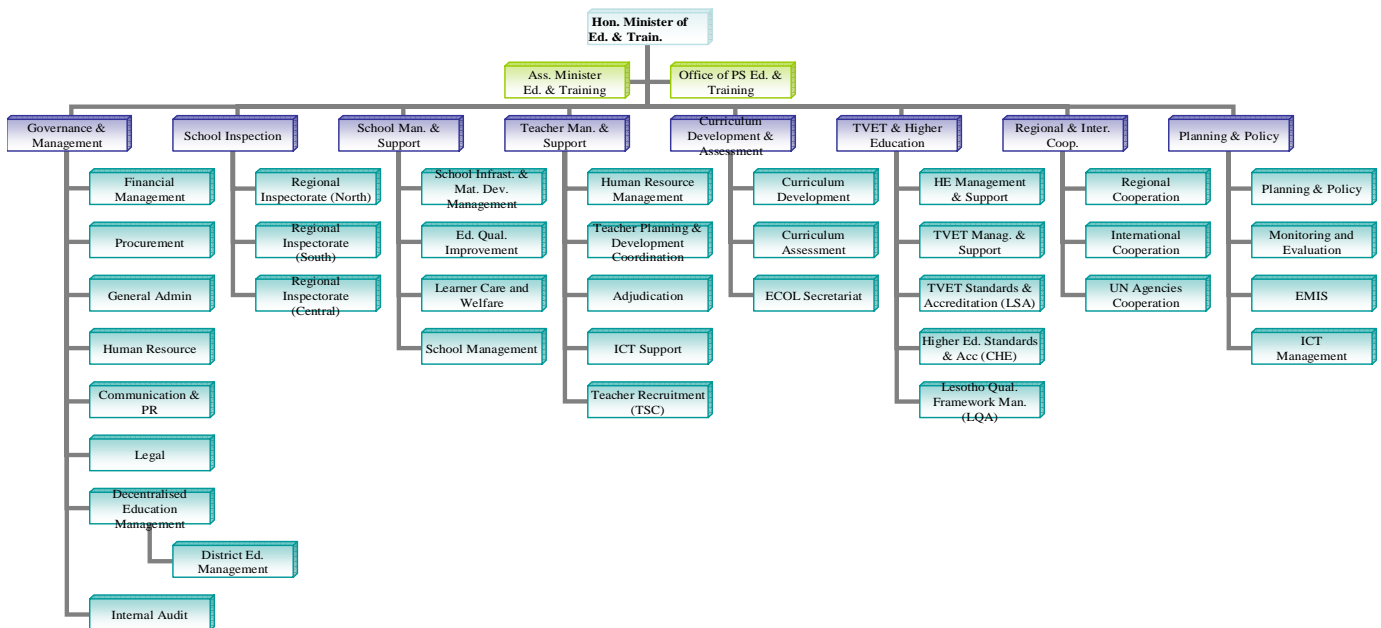


Figure 2

2.2 The Goals and Objectives of the Education Sector in Lesotho

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), which was developed in 2006, was anchored on national, international and regional initiatives such as the EFA, MDGs, the AU Plan of Action for the Second Phase of Education for Africa and SADC Protocol on Education. The development of the Plan was informed by intensive research and highly consultative process with all key education stakeholders. For operational purposes, the Strategic Plan was scheduled to cover the period 2005-2015 long-term plan.

The overall sector goals and objectives for the education sector over the 2005 to 2015 period in the ESSP were agreed as:

1. To improve access, efficiency and equity of education and training at all levels.
2. To improve the quality of education and training.
3. To ensure that curricula and materials are relevant to the needs of Lesotho, are consonant with the appropriate standards and gender responsive.
4. To ensure that both vocational-technical and non-formal education programs respond to the needs of industry and the communities in general.
5. To 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.
6. To progressively achieve the equivalence, harmonization and standardization of the education and training systems nationally, regionally and internationally.
7. To effectively participate in regional and international educational sector development initiatives.
8. To promote gender equality and ensure empowerment of disadvantaged groups.
9. Address the challenges posed by HIV and AIDS in education and training.

2.3 Curricular Policies, Educational Content and Teaching and Learning Strategies

2.3.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy

An integrated National Framework for Curriculum Development and Assessment has been developed and approved. The Framework was developed in order to respond and address the millennium development goals; the quest for more relevant national curricula as envisaged in the National Vision; the results from the Impact Assessment of HIV and AIDS on the Education Sector and the Gender Audit in Education. It also needs to urgently respond to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

The Curriculum and Assessment policy framework shall guide the transformation of the teaching and learning as well as assessment through the review of the entire primary and secondary education curricula with the purpose of making education at these levels accessible, relevant, efficient and of the best quality.

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, learnt 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.

2.3.2 The Content of Education

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 identify competencies to be promoted in different contexts.

Curriculum Aspects:

The five curriculum aspects which are used in the process of curriculum planning and organization are the following: Effective Communication; Awareness of self and others; Environmental adaptation and sustainable development; Health and healthy living; and Production and work-related competencies.

Learning Areas:

The five learning areas which are juxtaposed with the above curriculum aspects are the following: Linguistic and Literacy; Numerical and Mathematical; Personal, Spiritual and Social; Scientific and Technological; and Creativity and Entrepreneurial.

Core Competencies:

The identified core competencies indicate the capabilities which learners are expected to acquire as they go through the education system at different levels. These indicate the learner's 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 in the framework are: Effective and functional communication, Problem solving, Scientific, technological and creative skills, Critical thinking, Collaboration and co-operation, Functional numeracy and Learning to learn.

2.3.3 Teaching and Learning Strategies

In line with the framework, there is a need to shift towards methods that can develop creativity, independence and survival skills of learners. In essence learners should assume greater responsibility for their own learning. There is a need to move from teaching to facilitating learning; from transfer of facts to learner construction of knowledge; from memorizing 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-based and interactive methodologies.

“Breakthrough to Literacy” (BTL) is an approach which is being used in Lesotho primary schools to teach Sesotho to first year learners (standard one). The MOET due to the success of the approach intends to strengthen it and extend it to at least the first three years of primary and also to the teaching of English from the early years at primary. The MOET is exploring other approaches to assist learners to achieve Numeracy in the first three years of schooling. Strategies such as double-shift system to cope with large classes and multi-grade teaching in smaller rural schools continue to be refined to enhance children’s learning. The increasing number of orphans and vulnerable children has created a need to train teachers in psycho-social care and support techniques such as play therapy.

2.4 The Legal Framework of Education

Regional and international declarations have directly influenced and informed the national initiatives on policies and strategies within the education sector. The initiatives have been drawn in line with the Constitution that stipulates, inter alia, that Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at ensuring 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 freedom;
- b) primary education is compulsory and available to all...; and
- c) fundamental education is encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed their primary education.

(The Constitution of Lesotho, Section 28)

Some of the initiatives which show the Government’s commitment towards the achievement of the MDG’s and EFA initiatives include the following:

Public Sector Improvement and Reform Programme Policy Framework (PSIRP): The initiative at the national level aims to address the problems of inefficiencies in delivery, mismanagement of resources, unethical behaviour of public servants, weak control mechanisms, “ghost employees” and unbalanced staffing levels. Within the context of the education sector the PSIRP focuses at improving and increasing access, quality and efficiency of the educational system, including some commitment to decentralisation.

Lesotho National Vision 2020: The policy is set in a manner that acknowledges the important role of the educational sector in achieving its primary goals. The Vision Statement clearly stipulates 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 [emphasis added].”

Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) reiterates Government's commitment to the development of human resource base, again deriving encouragement from the EFA and MDGs. The PRS was endorsed by the World Bank and the IMF in September 2005 following a highly consultative and participatory process involving community members and most of the country's key stakeholders. In the PRS, it is stated that the:

“Government is convinced that investment in appropriate education is the single most important contribution that it can make to the long-term socio-economic development of the country. For this reason the education budget remains the highest of all ministries, and is set to grow over the next three years.”

The PRS sets five key objectives to be achieved over the period 2004/05 -2006/09, all of which are in line with the EFA targets, namely:

- a) expand and promote Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD);
- b) ensure that all children have access to and complete quality basic and secondary education;
- c) develop and expand Technical and Vocational Education Training to cater for the economic needs of the country;
- d) strengthen non formal education programmes;
- e) increase access to tertiary education

There was a need for harmonisation of current initiatives with the established policies and legislative framework. The MoET as indicated above subscribes to a number of regional and international agreements and protocols for which new policies need to be developed and existing ones reviewed.

The Education Act No.10 of 1995, amended in 1996 was enacted to regulate provision of early learning education, primary and secondary education. This Act has been reviewed and thus the Education Bill is awaiting enactment. Key changes are to ensure that all EFA issues are addressed including institutionalization of provision of early childhood education, 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 decentralisation 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.

Other legislatures that are needed to strengthen the capacity of MoET include the policy on higher education, policy on HIV and AIDS, the Teacher Education and Development policy and the ICT sector specific policy and the TVET policy. Most of these have been developed and are in a draft form.

2.5 Principal Characteristics of Current and Forthcoming Reforms

The more global policy principle of the Ministry of Education and Training is that basic education is an integral part of social and economic development and that it is 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 is expected to create the practical skills and knowledge that will facilitate rapid and better integration of the population, men, women and children, into society. In the context of this principle, the following are the broad policies of the Ministry of Education and Training:

1. The Government shall pursue the achievement of universalisation and equity in access to ten years of basic education. In this regard, the Government shall provide *free, compulsory* and *quality* primary education and support the provision of an equitable, gender-sensitive and quality basic education to all Basotho people.
2. Every pre-school child shall be provided with opportunities and facilities that enable him/her to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, socially and emotionally in a free atmosphere and under healthy conditions. In this regard, the Government shall provide an integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD) in line with different international conventions and in partnership with other stakeholders.
3. The number of children completing ten years of education shall be increased.
4. Access to secondary education shall be improved through the construction of additional schools, focusing more on remote areas and the densely populated districts.
5. Enrolment and retention in all educational sub-sectors shall be expanded and the minimum quality standards shall be raised while focusing on increasing equity in access, particularly for children from disadvantaged groups.
6. Basotho boys and girls shall be prepared for mid-level employment in the private and public sector through secondary education, technical and vocational training and life-long learning.
7. The quality of instruction shall be improved by focusing more on learner-centred teaching methodologies.
8. Functional literacy education shall be promoted through non-formal education.
9. Assessment practices and student performance standards across the sector shall be reviewed and improved upon in order to secure quality education.
10. The quality of education shall be improved by equipping schools and educational centres with the requisite skills (through investing in teacher training and professional development) and facilities (such as teaching and learning materials as well as adequate school infrastructure, including libraries and laboratories), and providing improved teacher supervision and support. Reforms of the curriculum at all levels of schooling and training shall be part of quality improvement and the strengthening of developmental relevance of the education system.
11. Effective partnerships with other stakeholders in educational services provision shall be developed, focusing on churches and other religious organisations, the private sector, NGOs, community-based organisations, traditional leadership, development cooperation partners/donors, and individuals.
12. The Government shall actively encourage the private sector to participate in educational services provision and training.

(2004, MOET, Lesotho Education Sector Strategic Plan: 2005 – 2015)

3. Main Policies, Achievements and Lessons Learnt

3.1 Access to Education

3.1.1 Primary Education

The MOET introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) on a phased basis from 2000, resulting in a substantial expansion in participation in primary education. Considerable resources have been invested in expanding the primary school physical infrastructure, increasing teacher supply and improving the quality of services through improved provision of textbooks, teacher training and support services. Since 2005 the MOET aimed to further strengthen gains in enrolment by providing additional infrastructure, improving efficiency and the quality of primary education, support to schools, teaching and learning materials and in-service training of teachers. The objectives of the sub-sector in the period 2009 – 2012 is to consolidate the gains in enrolment by making primary education not only free but also compulsory and to improve the completion rate and the numbers of learners achieving the desired learning outcomes. The ultimate goal is to improve the Cohort Survival Rates to at least 60% by 2012.

Enrolment Trends

The total primary enrolment rose from 364,952 in 2000 to 429,729 in 2003 and then declined slightly in the subsequent two years (422,278 in 2005) before rising again and reaching 424,855 in 2006. These enrolment figures brought the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) to 127% and the Net Enrolment Rate to 83.5% in 2006. The number of orphaned children registered in primary schools has also increased from 128,257 in 2006 to 134,943 in 2007, with more than 50 % having lost their male parent, while about one fifth (22%) has lost both parents.

While the improved pupil-teacher ratios, improving school infrastructure and enhanced teachers' skills emanating from interventions since 2005 are still to have a tangible effect on efficiency, other interventions are required to ensure that all children complete a good quality of primary education. Considering the opportunity costs that are borne by the Government resulting from the high repetition rates, the MOET shall develop, disseminate and enforce a policy on repetition and progression in all public primary schools from 2009.

School Infrastructure

The number of primary schools has been increasing steadily over the past few years mainly due to the establishment of new ones by government in areas under-served by existing school infrastructure. The total number of registered primary schools has increased from 1,488 in 2007 to 1,495 in 2008.

A total of 90 primary schools, including newly constructed, were supplied with school furniture for 360 teachers and for about 14,400 pupils. All these facilities were procured from GOL finances under FPE, UNICEF, the World Bank under the Second Education Sector Development Project and the Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund. Despite this progress, at least 400 primary schools do not have facilities that meet the minimum

standard for Conducive Learning Environment (CLE). This means that they either have inadequate or sub-standard classrooms, toilets and potable water. In many schools the classroom furniture for pupils and teachers is lacking or irreparably old. Most of these needy schools are church-owned schools located in remote mountain villages. Classrooms in several church schools need to be added to and/or renovated to bring them to the standard of being child friendly thus meeting the Conducive Learning Environment standards. It is only when equitable provision of infrastructure, furniture, water and sanitation services in all FPE schools is assured that the task of enforcing compulsory education shall be made more achievable.

School Feeding

The MOET provides food to all primary school pupils under the FPE policy. School feeding accounted for the second largest share of the basic education budget allocation, after teachers' salaries. With the recent increases in food prices in the global commodity market, the costs for food, to individual households and to the entrepreneurs engaged in catering to school pupils, has soared considerably. In response to this the MOET increased the unit cost of payment from M2.00 to M3.00 per meal since 2005. The government allocation for school feeding is M172 million in the 2008/09 fiscal year. Given the significance of school feeding as an intervention, not only for enhancing enrolment and attendance and relieving short-term hunger, but as an overall poverty mitigation intervention, it is likely to remain a feature in primary education for years to come. Whether the programme will remain affordable to the Government of Lesotho, especially with the increases in food costs and the pending withdrawal of WFP support by 2010, remains in doubt.

3.1.2 Secondary Education

During the plan period, one of the top priorities of the Ministry shall be expansion of access to secondary education. It is anticipated that at least 8,000 additional places will be required annually to accommodate the increasing number of students who enter this level. Strategies to be employed for improving access include construction of additional classrooms and establishment of new schools. Construction of additional classrooms in existing schools will be financed mainly through funding from the Government of Lesotho while costs for establishing new schools will be undertaken through assistance from the Japanese government, Chinese government, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the African Development Bank. However, skyrocketing price for building materials will adversely impact upon the scale of operations.

In situations where construction of classrooms is not commensurate with the demand for spaces, the double-shift system will be used to off set the negative effects of overcrowded classrooms. The double-shift system entails optimum usage of facilities, such that if the school knocks off at 1400 hours, for instance, another set of classes can be made to use the facilities until late in the afternoon. This strategy can be used by schools which experience overcrowded classrooms, so that one class is split into two classes and arranging for one group to attend morning lessons while the other group comes for afternoon lessons. Double-shift system is a short term measure intended to increase access, and it is currently being piloted in 10 schools.

Half-Way Homes

Construction of boarding facilities (half-way homes) in remote areas will also be undertaken in order to reduce walking distance to and from schools. There is also a growing concern that majority of the Ministry of Education and Training bursary scheme's beneficiaries increasingly find it difficult to attend lessons regularly owing to unfriendly conditions in their homes as well as long walking distances to schools. Therefore, the Ministry plans to put up special boarding units, known as half-way homes will serve the dual purposes of reducing children's walking distances and also serving as homes for double-orphaned children who are often subjected to unfriendly environments in their homes. The centres will be managed by a school board, and will be run by a matron and protected by a day and night watchman. While at the facility, the children will be provided with all meals and supplies for cleanliness.

Rationalization of School Fees

Rationalization of school fees will also be implemented in order to help bring down the cost of secondary education. All public schools will be required to reduce their fees, and each school will get capitation grant proportionate to their enrolments. The intention of the grant is to subsidize school fees to the level much more affordable to parents, while not depriving schools of revenue which they need. The effective date for the control of school fees is January 2009. The Government will continue to support vulnerable children through award of bursaries. The Government will collaborate with development partners in carrying out this huge social responsibility.

The number of orphans is increasing phenomenally. Many of these orphans increasingly find it difficult to access secondary education due to the high nature of school fees. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Training introduced Bursary Scheme in 2004, mainly to assist vulnerable children to go through their JC level, while students at COSC level are assisted by the Global Fund. Notwithstanding these initiatives, the Ministry is overwhelmed by high numbers of orphans to the extent that a sizeable number of them still cannot benefit from the scheme.

3.1.3 Non-Formal Education

The Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC) has two programmes, literacy programme and continuing education programme 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 JC (Junior Secondary Certificate) and seven COSC (Senior Secondary Certificate) courses through distance learning mode and has centres in six districts with intent to cover the remaining districts before the end of 2009. This programme is an important strategy to make secondary education accessible to many learners, e.g. graduates of FPE who cannot find a place in the few secondary schools, school drop-outs, workers, etc. The literacy programme offers literacy and numeracy – an equivalence of conventional Std 4. In order to facilitate mobility between formal and non-formal education systems, additional subjects need to be developed. The overall goal of increasing access has necessitated the revitalization and transformation of LDTC. It is thus planned to transform the LDTC to an open distance learning (ODL) college which shall offer a broader range of courses

including Technical Vocational courses and courses for professional development, in addition to the JC and COSC courses currently on offer.

3.1.4 Higher Education

In order to improve access to higher education, the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) established a satellite campus in Thaba-Tseka in 2006, the Lerotholi Polytechnic(LP) expanded their teaching facilities and there was also the construction of students' hall of residence at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). These three institutions were the only institutions of higher learning until the opening in 2008 of the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT). This new university offers job-related courses under the following faculties:

1. Faculty of Business and Globalisation
2. Faculty of Information Technology
3. Faculty of Communication and Media
4. Faculty of Design Innovation
5. Faculty of Fashion and Lifestyle and Design

As a result of these notable improvements enrolments at NUL rose from 5,140 (2,439 males & 2,701 females) in 2005 to 6,724 (3247 males & 3477 females) in 2007; while LCE intake stands at 4,526 (3,244 females & 1,282 males) in 2008 as opposed to 3,768 (2,673 females & 1,095 males) in 2007. The newly established LUCT has contributed to an increase to access and diversification of available courses. It has one thousand and fifty-five (1,055) roll in its twenty-seven (27) programmes in the current academic year.

All institutions are being encouraged to pursue and promote an all inclusive policy that ensures equitable opportunities for all. Institutions should ensure that facilities are accessible to all.

3.1.5 TVET

To ensure that training programmes and courses are relevant to the needs of the labour market, the Ministry is in the process of resuscitating the Technical and Vocational Training Advisory Board and its committees. These were to be disbanded in around 2004 to make way for the proposed Lesotho Skills Agency (LSA). Now that the LSA is not in place and that some of the information in the Draft Policy is outdated, it will be wise to have these structures fully operational so that all decisions and actions are carried out within the law. It is the intention of the MOET however, to finalise the policy and table the new TVET Bill before parliament during this plan period.

3.2 Early Childhood Intervention: Early Childhood Care and Development

The Government of Lesotho (GOL) recognizes the importance of the early years of life as a foundation for human development and lifelong learning. The 1991/92-1995/96 Education Sector Development Plan stipulated that all children from 2 to 6 years of age should have access to integrated early childhood education by the year 2000, a target that was not reached. The Education Sector Strategic Plan aimed at achieving a net enrolment rate of 40% by 2007 and only managed a net enrolment of around 35% during this

period. The Government of Lesotho remains committed to supporting ECCD providers, especially for the pre-school years from 2 to 6 years.

This slow rate of expansion of access to pre-school education prompted a review of strategies to open access to ECCD, especially from lower income rural communities. While the role of the MOET in the provision of ECCD will remain mainly facilitative, it has become apparent that greater state intervention in favour of the children from poorer households and OVC is required. Targeting the pre-school five year old population, the MOET intends to continue to incrementally introduce reception classes in public primary schools.

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.

The MOET notes the concept of reception classes has been well received among parents, teachers and communities, and that they also provide an opportunity for children in child-headed households to go to school with their younger siblings thus ensuring that OVC get access to education. The MOET plans to attach reception classes to 100 more schools in 2009 and 2010. Support from Development Partners continues to be invaluable in all activities of the IECCD especially in providing learning and teaching materials, training and capacity building within this sub-sector.

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.

Equitable Access

Mindful of the high poverty prevalence levels, the MOET intends to provide bursaries to children from poor homes that register their children into child care centres. The subsidy shall target mainly children that are orphaned, disabled, neglected and children from needy families. Since the reception classes in primary schools are meant only for five year old children, the MOET shall explore working with communities to set up and support existing IECCD centres to provide and ensure access to OVC of all ages. A total of 160 bursaries were provided to needy children for 2008.

In order to have a full picture of the level of participation in pre-school education and to provide a basis for possible government support to established IECCD centres, the MOET intends to establish and maintain a register of all centres and encourage schools to provide regular statistics of the centres to the statistical section of the MOET. This will require the allocation of formal registration numbers to all centres registered with the Ministry. In 2008, there were about 1,556 community centres countrywide with enrolments of about 43,825 children. These do not include the private IECCD 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. In order to address this problem the MOET will explore the possibility of rationalization of fees in community centres which shall include the provision of some subsidy grants to such centres to meet some of their costs after cutting down the fees and shall ensure that government is able to provide bursaries for more children into these centres.

Quality

The IECCD Unit of the Ministry of Education and Training continues to provide and support training for caregivers/teachers/facilitators on how best to provide care and pre-schooling 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 such that in June, 2007; the College began a two year Certificate in Early Childhood Education (CECE), which is an in-service teacher training programme for IECCD teachers who are still serving. Thirty two (32) teacher trainees enrolled into this programme in 2007. A second group of thirty one (31) is due to enroll for the 2009 academic year. It should be noted that the LCE does not have the capacity to enroll large number thus assistance is needed to empower LCE to enroll more IECCD teachers into the programme as the demand and the need is very high. The MOET intends to continue to provide ear-marked support to the LCE particularly to support the expansion of this important training programme.

The MOET intends to devise a quality monitoring and evaluation mechanism for IECCD during the period 2009 to 2012. The inspectorate section of the MOET responsible for supervision of IECCD providers will be assisted to devise indicators and measuring tools

for the quality of IECCD provision which will be a measure of the level of development of children at the point of departing the school and the quality of the services provided to children during their period under care. The MOET would also seek to conduct tracer-studies of children who have gone through different IECCD programmes as they progress through primary education to establish their levels of retention and attainment of learning outcomes.

3.3 Learning Outcomes/Achievements

3.3.1 Quality

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 2006/2007. Based on the recommendations from this study the Primary Inspectorate has devised training programmes for teachers to address some of the identified needs. Following the training of trainers undertaken in 2007/2008, 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 six pupils; the outcome of the study is expected early in 2009.

The 2007 Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) 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 FPE 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 currently underway 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. Therefore, during the plan period the target is to reach 85% pass rate at both levels by 2013. Efficacious measures will be instituted to turn performance around at these levels. These include intensification of school inspections, institutionalization of in-service training of teachers and reform of the inspectorate. Inspectorate reform entails merging the two inspectorate divisions, which are currently dichotomized into Field Inspectorate and Central Inspectorate. The former has been decentralized and it seems to concentrate mainly in primary schools while the latter operates from the central level deals almost exclusively with secondary schools.

The merger will result in a new breed of decentralized inspectorate which assists all educational establishments in the districts.

The low transition rate and average pass rates as illustrated in Table 5 above shows that there is a lot of room for improvement. The level of wastage is further illustrated by Table 6 below, which shows that of 26,226 students who entered secondary education in 2002, only 9,604 reached Form E in 2006.

Wastage in the sub-sector is intolerable. The school system is plagued by low transition rate, high drop out rate, high repetition rate and high failure rate. Therefore, during the plan period efforts will be put in place to curb these undesirable features of the school system. The activities include in-service training of schools' management structures which include boards, principals, deputy principals and heads of departments. Computerized financial management will also be introduced in schools.

3.3.2 Efforts to Improve Learning Achievements

1. Teaching and Learning Materials

While tremendous efforts were being made in ensuring *access* to education as the first priority, the MOET has not lost sight of the quintessential requirements of *quality*, *equity* and *relevance*. At primary school level a system of textbook rental scheme that has been in place since the early 1980s has been reviewed to ensure cost effectiveness and quality assurance in book supply, by opening up the book market and minimizing monopolistic supply. As part of the Free Primary Education programme, the government provides stationery and other teaching and learning materials for pupils and teachers. Some of these materials include Mathematics and Science kits, which are used instead of laboratories in primary schools. Schools without storage facilities especially those using church-halls and tents as classrooms are supplied with specially packaged stationery called '*school in a box*'.

From the 2004 school year the MOET has introduced a *Secondary Schools Textbooks Rental Scheme (TRS)* at a highly subsidized rate. The aims of this scheme are (a) to reduce the high cost of education at this level through a subsidy in the purchase of quality textbooks which have hitherto constituted one of the highest costs to parents, (b) to improve the participation rates at this level since the majority of students dropout due the escalating poverty and (c) to improve the quality of teaching and learning materials in use through a stringent screening procedure before textbooks can be recommended for use in secondary schools. It is this last aim that serves as a quality control measure while at the same time ensuring that a majority of students has access to good quality learning materials at a reasonable cost. The scheme covers Form A to Form C, the first three years of secondary.

The subsidy of textbook provision at Junior Certificate level will be extended to cover COSC as well, through support of the ADB. The book scheme at COSC level will initially cover the core subjects and will later be extended to other subjects depending on the resource envelope. This is planned to start during 2009.

2. In-service Training

Other strategies to address the poor efficiency of the education system include further in-service training of teachers to provide them with child-centred teaching methods and assessment skills for diagnostic and formative purposes. One of the issues that need to be addressed urgently to arrest high wastage, include the uneven distribution of teachers between and within schools often resulting in the lower classes having unacceptably high pupil-teacher ratios. The high pupil teacher ratio in lower classes in some schools is evident in school statistics and has been verified during school inspections.

In-service programmes will be developed to improve the teachers' teaching skills in the subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. In particular, the Ministry has received funding from the African Development Bank (ADB) for capacity building of unqualified Mathematics and Science teachers over the 4 year-period. The nature of the programme is to design a 6-month bridging course which will assist about 400 teachers to be admissible at the National University of Lesotho to teach at secondary level and another set to be admissible at the Lesotho College of Education to teach at primary level. In-service training shall also be increased in the English at the secondary levels and in Sesotho and English at the primary level.

3. School Supervision

The inspection of schools is one of the effective ways in which schools can be held accountable and be provided with professional feedback on their performance as centres of learning. The envisaged reform of the management and human resource structures of the MOET as highlighted in section 2.1 above is expected to establish the School Inspectorate as a specialised unitary department that emphasizes school supervision. The MOET in its endeavour to guarantee and safeguard the provision of quality education intends to merge the various inspectorates to form one united decentralized schools inspectorate. When fully functional the inspectorate shall cover early childhood, primary and secondary education including non-formal provision. The strengthening of the inspectorate function will go a long way in ensuring that all schools are regularly inspected and feedback given to relevant authorities on the required interventions. A well functioning inspectorate of schools, especially focusing on instructional supervision and teaching and learning processes, will contribute significantly to the improvement of efficiency and quality of the basic education system.

When well-managed, school inspections should provide the requisite information that is essential for informed interventions in curriculum development review, school management reforms, and teacher development. In addition, well-managed school processes should provide useful insights for taking appropriate decisions regarding school buildings, infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, safety, nutrition and feeding programmes, school enrolments, and the effects of increased access to quality basic education, retention rates, repetition rates and school finances. The primary aim of the inspectorate reforms is thus to ensure that school inspections result in system-wide improvements in the quality of education in Lesotho.

3.4 Teacher Training, Recruitment, Deployment and Working Conditions

It is expected that not more than 200 new teaching positions will be created annually, while the process of reallocation of grants will be pursued to achieve equitable distribution of the teaching force at this level. Reallocation will entail removing grants from overstaffed schools and transferring these to schools which have fewer teaching grants. Curriculum reforms will also be carried out in order to rationalize the current heavily loaded school curriculum which has proved to be very costly to be managed.

Teacher Supply

The total number of primary and secondary school teachers has been increasing steadily over the past years as a result of the Government's effort to reduce the pupil teacher ratio (PTR) by creating an average of 400 new teaching positions at primary and 200 new teaching positions at secondary per year. At Primary school teacher numbers rose from 8,225 in 1999 to 10,418 in 2006, and preliminary figures indicate a total of 11,050 in 2007. As a result of the steady increase in the number of teachers the average PTR has decreased from 42 in 2005, to 41 in 2006 and 39 in 2007. Nevertheless, due to uneven distribution of teachers and within schools, class sizes of up to 60 pupils are still common. The MOET target is to reduce the highest school level PTR to 45:1 by 2010 and to 40:1 by 2015. Given the population dispersal especially in the rural areas of Lesotho, multi-grade teaching continues to be an important strategy of ensuring good quality education for pupils in small rural primary schools.

In its quest to improve both the quality and quantity of its teacher output, the LCE has reformed its programmes replacing the certificate programmes with diploma programmes which demanded higher entrance requirements. There has also been an increase in intake in both pre-service and in-service programmes, for example, an increase from 925 in 1998 to 1739 in 2002. Through a Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) introduced in 2002, the LCE offers a four-year diploma for unqualified, serving teachers. The DTEP programme was introduced to mitigate the escalating number of unqualified teachers in primary schools especially due to the increased need for teachers following the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2000. In 2007, the first 439 graduates from the in-service Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) joined the Teaching Service, reducing the proportion of unqualified teachers to 36% from 40%. The MOET will need to increase its support to the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) to support DTEP and other efforts to increase its capacity to increase its intake and output. This is more so since negotiations with LCE and NUL are underway for the development of DTEP for secondary education. This endeavour is also aimed at upgrading education certificates to diploma.

The Ministry of Education has sought to review the career and salary structure of the Teaching Service¹ for the past five years. The key objectives of the review are to:

1. Enhance the professional quality of the Teaching Service and bring about quality improvement in educational attainment.

¹ The Teaching Service is established by Section 144 (1) of the Constitution of Lesotho

2. Update the old Teachers Career Structure established in the early 1990s, by developing guidelines on the career progression of teachers with clear benchmarks, milestones and competence breaks.
3. Accommodate, in the Teaching Service, policy developments in the public sector in line with the Government of Lesotho Public Sector Review and Improvement Programme (PSRIP).
4. Enhance the competitiveness of teaching as a career prospect for school leavers in the light of increased demand for good quality teachers and other available career opportunities in the public and private sectors.
5. Adopt a unified career and salary structure for teachers that will ultimately bring about parity between primary and secondary school teachers, on the principle of '*equal reward for equal work*'.
6. Eliminate undue gaps and overlaps in the teachers' salary structure.
7. Acknowledge and *incentivise* national priority areas in teacher development and remuneration, and optimise retention of rare-skills in the Teaching Service.

Proposed Interventions by the Government of Lesotho in order to address challenges in relation to teacher training, recruitment, deployment, and working conditions.

- a. Establish in the Teachers' Career Structure, a regular series of *competency breaks*, to place performance at the core of the structure.
- b. Revise the Salary Structure based on the principle that equivalent work merits equal reward.
- c. Reduce the emphasis on qualification and experience (though retain both as components) in career progression.
- d. Devise and apply support mechanisms to enable all teachers and managers to engage with the quality improvement processes that are more individually driven and emphasise self-evaluation with external validation.
- e. Put Teacher Registration (teacher certificates/qualifications), as provided for in the Education Act, on a more professional basis with stricter requirements for admission and so increase the professionalism of teaching.
- f. Provide a system of opportunities for all teachers to access relevant and readily available forms of professional development (Teacher Development and Training); with priority placed on national priority areas (such as natural sciences and information technologies, special education and early childhood education) and those identified as trainable on the lower end of the competency scales.
- g. Entice qualified and competent teachers to take up jobs in schools in the most difficult areas through a more attractive incentive package.
- h. Remove responsibility positions from the regular teacher Career Structure and instead institute Responsibility Allowances.

This combination of interventions instituted and phased in over a five year period up to 2012, will transform the Teaching Career into a professional outfit able to reward good performance and attract and retain an appropriate quality of human resource to improve the quality of education in Lesotho. The MOET is currently developing a teachers' management database. The general objectives of the assignment are to develop a web

based teachers' management database that will be able to i) identify all registered teachers in Lesotho, ii) manage all issues of teachers in service (appointment, promotion, leave, transfers and termination), iii) create a payroll structure for all teachers in service, compatible with current Government of Lesotho payroll and iv) determine teachers terminal benefits. All these will lead to improvements in the processing of Teachers' Emoluments and Benefits by 2012

4. The Role of the Education and Training System in Combating Poverty and Other Forms of Social Exclusion and Cultural Marginalization

Poverty and other forms of social exclusion

- ❖ Free Primary Education saw a massive increase of entrants into standard one where large numbers were above the requisite age. No fees were charged and pupils were supplied with textbooks and stationery.
- ❖ School Feeding ensured that children who before could not concentrate in class due to hunger are now able to do so. Increases in enrolments and retention especially in remote, poor areas has been anecdotally attributed to school feeding.
- ❖ Bursaries have been provided at secondary and this has increased access by the needy. These will also be provided at early childhood education level to further increase access by the vulnerable.
- ❖ Bursaries ensure that children can get admission into schools but some also need non-tuition support. Take home rations and other needs are to be supported from 2009 to maximize the chances of all OVCs attending and remaining in school.
- ❖ Textbook rental scheme at secondary has reduced extremely heavy costs of books and hence improved the quality of learning for pupils.
- ❖ The planned Half-Way Homes will not only take care of the large number of orphans mainly due to HIV/AIDS, but will also ensure that school children do not walk long distances to schools. This shall increase their chances of getting secondary education tremendously.
- ❖ The MOET is working hard in both constructing and adding classrooms to existing schools focusing on deprived areas. The intention is to ensure that primary children do not walk more than 3km to any school.
- ❖ All school buildings constructed since 2004 are such that they are made accessible to all paying attention to those with disabilities.
- ❖ Attachment of Reception Classes to primary schools (for five year olds) has improved the chances of OVCs to attend school and also for young children heading households to be able to go to school with their younger siblings.

Strategies to overcome exclusion

1. Advocacy and social mobilization

Campaigns and holding social dialogues on EFA within communities and specifically targeting the marginalized shall assist in ensuring that all access education.

2. Capacity development

This shall include training of stakeholders particularly teachers in areas including special education, psycho-social support including play therapy and issues related to the rights of children. The focus shall be on making schools centres of care and support especially for OVCs whose only contact with adults who can support them may be only in schools. The role of the teacher in this circumstance has to change to that of ‘surrogate parent’ and hence the teachers themselves need to be assisted with skills to cope.

3. Cash Transfer for non-tuition support

The sustained and continued provision of non-tuition support to children through schools and working hand in hand with the Social Welfare Department in this endeavour will ensure that not only children in schools are supported but that those outside school are also supported and enabled to come to school.

4. Monitoring

Access for all remains a major challenge throughout all levels of education in Lesotho. In most cases monitoring generally excludes vulnerable children who drop out of schools or are prohibited by socio-economic barriers to enter the education system. The group includes children with special needs, orphans, children infected or affected by HIV and AIDS, under-age heads of households, survivors of abuse and those from extreme poverty backgrounds. The MOET will enhance monitoring of vulnerable children in close collaboration with relevant Ministries, particularly Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, NGO’s and all key stakeholders to ensure that education is accessible for all Basotho children. MOET recognizes the complication of the task and possible and envisaged obstacles, and therefore will rely heavily on involvement of communities in various formations and churches.

5. References

- Government of Lesotho, (1984) Lesotho Technical and Vocational Training Act of 1984
- Government of Lesotho, (1994) *Teachers' Pensions Act No.9 of 1994*
- Government of Lesotho, (1996) *Education Act No.10 of 1995*
- Government of Lesotho, (1997) *Education (Amendment Act) No.5 of 1996*
- Government of Lesotho, (1997), *Lerotholi Polytechnic Act No.20 of 1997*
- Government of Lesotho, (1997), *Lesotho College of Education Act No.20 of 1997*
- Government of Lesotho, (2003), *Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2004 – 2007 (Draft)*,
- Government of Lesotho, (2004), Higher Act No. 1 of 2004
- Ministry of Education and Training (2004) *Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005 – 2015 (Draft)*,
- Ministry of Education and Training, (2002) Gender Audit on the Education Sector
- Ministry of Education and Training, (2003) Impact Assessment of HIV and AIDS on the Education Sector
- Ministry of Education and Training, (2008) Curriculum and Assessment Policy
- Ministry of Education and Training, (2004) Policy Document on Teacher Education and Training (2004)
- Ministry of Education and Training, (2004) *Lesotho's Educational Statistics Bulletin, 2006*,
- Ministry of Education and Training, (2004), Draft Policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- Ministry of Education, (1988), *Clarification of Educational Policies*
- Ministry of Education and Training, (2001), The Free Primary Education Programme 2001 – 2006
- Ministry of Education and Training, (2008), Transforming Open & Distance Learning in Lesotho: A review of the activities of the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
- Na University of Lesotho Institute of Education, (2008) Draft Report on the Evaluation of Free Primary Education (2000 – 2006)