

Education For All Fast Track Initiative Endorsement Report Lesotho

Introduction

The Kingdom of Lesotho is a small mountainous country of 1.8 million people. The Government of Lesotho, recognising the importance of education for the future of the country has identified education for all as a key development goal, and as a basic human right. The Ministry of Education and Training has developed an ambitious plan for primary education, aimed at increasing enrolment and retention, and improving the quality of education. These aims are articulated in the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005-2015 (ESSP), published in March 2005.

In its quantitative and qualitative improvements of the education sector, the Government relies on partnerships with religious organisations, the private sector, NGOs, communities and donor community. Participation in the Fast Track Initiative is important to the Government of Lesotho offers the potential for immediate additional resources from the catalytic fund, but also the potential to leverage additional resources following endorsement. Additionally, the process of preparing the donor assessment for the plan has contributed to donor coordination, and provided a forum for important policy dialogue.

This document is an assessment of the strategic plan for primary education and its financing, conducted for the purposes of endorsement of the strategic plan by the donors and FTI. This assessment was conducted during 2005, and was based on review of the documents and interviews with key personnel. Key areas explored in the evaluation were:

- The consultation process used in the development of the strategic plan.
- The quality of the strategy for primary education.
- The financial implications of the plan.
- The processes and indicators that will be used to monitor the development of primary education.
- The capacity of the ministry to implement the plan.
- The implementation structures and readiness.

The Education Sector Strategic Plan is the culmination of a lengthy process of planning, review and consultation. The process was led by the Ministry of Education and Training, with personal involvement by the Minister and the Permanent Secretary. Support was provided by the development partners, who were closely involved with the development of the strategy. During the development of the draft plan, a series of consultative

meetings and workshops, and a national stakeholders' conference were organised to allow feedback. The final plan was presented to the cabinet and approved.

Key indicators

Primary enrolment increased consistently in the period 1974-1994, in line with a gradual increase in the number of schools. The economic difficulties from the mid 1990s resulted in a significant decline in enrolment. This trend was reversed in 2000 with the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE). FPE was introduced on a phased basis, starting with grade 1. Initially FPE had a very dramatic impact, with enrolment increasing by 12.5% between 1999 and 2000. Since then enrolment has continued to increase, but at a slower pace.

Trends in Enrolment 1999-2003

Primary Enrolments	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total	364,951	410,745	415,007	418,668	429,720
Males	176,365	202,760	206,665	209,024	214,746
Females	188,586	207,985	208,342	209,644	214,974
Number of schools	1,272	1,283	1,295	1,333	1,355

The gross enrolment rate (GER) has risen from 106% in 1999 to 125% in 2003. This very high figure is a result of enrolment of overage pupils following the introduction of FPE, and the repetition rate. There have been real increases in net enrolment. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) has risen from 60% to 85%. However, the Net Intake Rate (NIR) is lagging behind the NER, suggesting that many children do not start school at the intended age.

Key Enrolment Indicators 1999-2003

	Gross Enrolment Rate			Net Enrolment Rate			Net Intake Rate		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
1999	102.3	110.7	106.5	56.6	63.8	60.2	26.8	28.3	27.5
2000	118.1	122.6	120.3	78.7	85.3	82.0	26.8	26.8	26.8
2001	120.6	123.2	121.9	79.5	85.4	82.7	63.2	63.2	63.2
2002	122.7	124.9	123.8	81.1	87.0	84.0	61.7	61.7	61.7
2003	128.3	125.9	124.9	82.0	88.1	85.0	60.2	60.2	60.2

These increases in enrolment have not been matched by increases in efficiency. The dropout rate has declined, but the repetition rate has increased. Overall, the primary completion rate has dropped slightly, and remains a cause for concern.

Primary Efficiency Indicators 1999 – 2002

Year	Repetition Rate				Dropout Rate				Completion Rate			
	'99	'00	'01	'02	'99	'00	'01	'02	'99	'00	'01	'02
Male	21.8	20.7	21.6	24.1	8.6	7.9	7.4	6.4				
Female	16.8	16.4	17.4	18.7	5.5	6.6	4.2	3.2				
Total	19.3	18.6	18.5	21.4	7.1	7.3	5.8	4.8	59.3	66	64.5	57.5

The education sector strategy identifies increasing net enrolment as a priority, setting a target NER of 90% by 2007, and 100% by 2015. At the same time, it is anticipated that the GER will be reduced by a fall in over-age enrolment, and by measures to reduce repetition.

The education system also faces challenges of equity. Enrolment is lower in mountain areas, where access to school is more difficult. The plan envisages the construction of new schools in rural areas, with the aim of reducing the average walking time to school to less than one hour by 2015. The plan defines a target of reduction of rural-urban disparities to 5% variance by 2007, and 1% by 2015. In addition gender equity in primary education should be achieved by 2007. The drive for universal enrolment will be supported by community campaigns on Education For All, urging people to ensure that all school-going age children are enrolled and retained in schools.

Teachers

The total number of primary teachers in Lesotho has increased steadily, more than doubling from 4,139 in 1974 to 8,908 in 2002. This increase has exceeded the growth of enrolment, bringing the pupil teacher ratio down from 53 in 1974 to 46 in 2003. The ESSP aims to further reduce the pupil teacher ratio to 40:1 and to address the inequitable distribution of teachers between and within regions and schools.

The proportion of unqualified teachers has risen sharply in recent years, as the output of trained teachers from the Lesotho College of Education has not kept pace with recruitment. In 1999, only 22% of teachers were unqualified, but by 2003 this had risen to 33%. As a result, the ratio of pupils to qualified teachers (PQTR) has risen, reaching 69:1 in 2003.

Teacher qualifications

	Degree	Diploma or certificate	Unqualified	Total	% unqualified
1999	1802	4614	1809	8225	22
2000	1811	4551	2216	8578	26
2001	1817	4741	2204	8762	25
2002	1746	4720	2442	8908	27
2003	1743	4516	3035	9294	33

The shortage of qualified teachers is among the factors that contribute to low quality and efficiency of primary education. The ministry has committed itself to reducing the PQTR to 55:1 in 2007, and 40:1 by 2015, by increasing the output of the pre-service and distance teacher education programmes. The quality of primary teacher education will also be upgraded, bringing all teachers to at least diploma level. In addition, the plan anticipates a review of the teacher education curriculum by 2007, which will be fully implemented by 2015.

Other inputs

In 2003 the pupil classroom ratio was estimated at 67:1. About a quarter of primary pupils did not have seats, and there was an average of six books per pupil. The Government is determined to continue to provide teaching learning materials, facilities and services that will enhance the quality of life and education of primary school pupils. The strategy aims to construct new classrooms to bring the pupil classroom ratio to 40:1, in line with the PTR, by 2015. All pupils should have seats, and a minimum of five books each, covering the core subjects. In parallel with these activities, the ministry will organise a review of basic education curriculum, to be completed by 2007 and fully operational by 2015.

Quality

Quality of educational outcomes was measured by the Southern African Consortium on Measuring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) survey in 2001, and the Baseline Study on attainment in numeracy and literacy in 2003. Both studies revealed that the majority of primary school pupils in Lesotho do not attain the minimum expected levels of competency at both grades three and six. This level of attainment is a concern to the ministry, and improving quality is a core target of the education sector strategy. The plan aims to achieve learning achievement rates of 50% in 2009, and 70% by 2015.

Quality assurance and management

The ministry actions for improved access, equity and attainment are supported by measures to improve management of the systems and assure quality. The strategy calls for a strengthening of the inspectorate, to enable it to undertake regular, purposeful supervision and inspection of schools to ensure quality education delivery. Management of schools will be further decentralised, and management capacity at district level will be strengthened. There is also recognition that central management alone is not sufficient, reflected in actions to strengthen the local management of schools. Actions include building management capacity in schools through training of head teachers.

Financing the plan

Lesotho has seen a significant rise in enrolment since the introduction of Free Primary Education on a phased basis beginning in 2000. This expansion has put the system under strain. The average pupil teacher ratio has increased to 47, and many teachers face much larger numbers, particularly in the younger classes. Additional infrastructure is also needed. The pupil classroom ratio of 67 is much higher than the pupil teacher ratio of 47, reflecting the teaching of some children in open air, or in temporary structures. The average walking time to school is over one hour, reflecting the need to build additional schools to serve the isolated communities. The education sector strategic plan anticipates building of new schools to provide coverage in remote areas, thus reducing both the distance to school, and the pressure on existing schools.

The ministry anticipates that the total number of primary school children will fall gradually over the next ten years. In part this is a result of the expected decline in school age population, reflecting falling fertility rates. Gross enrolment rate is also expected to

fall, as the surge of over-age children who enrolled with the introduction of free primary education pass through the system. The combination of these factors will lead to a drop in the primary school population of about 5% over the next ten years.¹

At the same time, the government plans to reduce the average pupil teacher ratio to 40, which will require an increase in the teaching force of 8.7% (798 teachers). This improvement in the teacher provision will be matched by in-service training of unqualified teachers, bringing the majority of teachers up to diploma level.

The table below summarises the cost structure of the primary education system in 2005. The three main cost drivers are the cost of teacher remuneration, the cost of the school feeding programme, and the capital expenditure on new school construction. Each of these three factors is considered in more detail later.

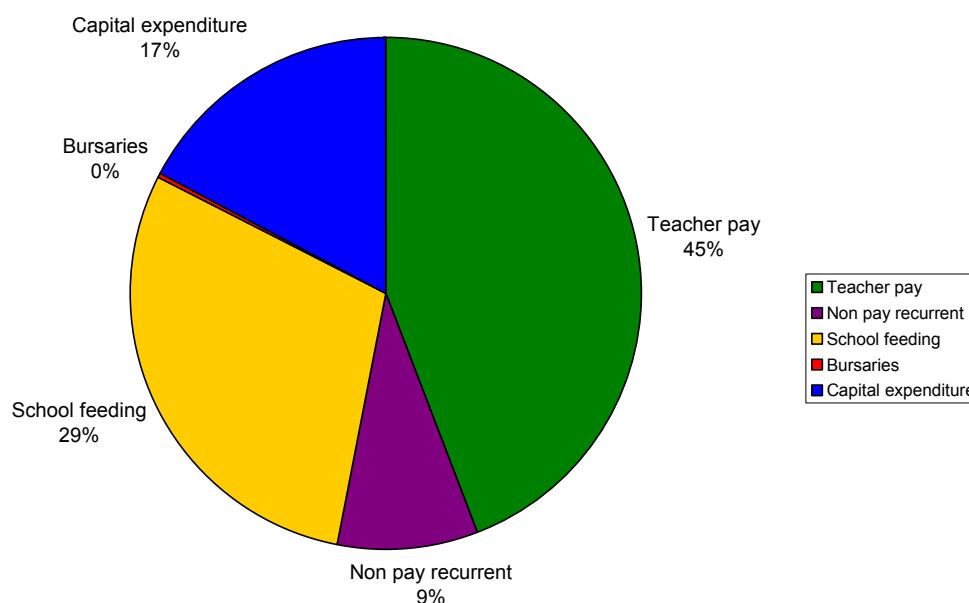
Cost structure of primary education²

Cost structure of primary education	Maloti	Dollars	%
Teacher pay	234,620,917	39,103,486	44.2
Non pay recurrent	47,089,000	7,848,167	8.9
School feeding	155,623,000	25,937,167	29.3
Bursaries	2,141,000	356,833	0.4
Capital expenditure	90,992,000	15,165,333	17.2
Total	530,465,917	88,410,986	100
N of students	421,863	421,863	
Annual cost per student (CPS)	Maloti	Dollars	
CPS teacher and non-pay recurrent	668	111	
CPS including feeding	1,037	173	
CPS including capital and bursaries	1,257	210	

¹ These population projections are taken from a study commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Training and the World Bank. Some feel that these figures underestimate the school age population, as in some areas the enrolment is higher than expected. A degree of inaccuracy in these figures is possible, because of the time since the last census. A new census is planned for the next year, which will allow more accurate figures.

² Fuller costs are presented in Appendix A. These figures are based on the costs reported in the ESSP, but adjusted to show only the costs associated with primary (grades 1-7) education. The ESSP document describes basic education, which includes primary school and the first three years of secondary school.

Cost structure, Primary education 2005



Teacher salaries

Teacher remuneration is one of the major costs of the primary education and accounts for 40% of the primary education expenditure. In Lesotho the average teacher salary of 22,000 Maloti is equivalent to 5 times GDP per capita, while newly qualified teachers start at 3.3 times GDP per capita. Teacher pay is thus higher, as a multiple of GDP per capita, than the benchmark suggested in the FTI indicative framework.

Teacher salaries relative to GDP per capita

	Maloti ³	Dollars	Salary as a multiple of GDP per capita
GDP per capita	4,550	758	
Average teacher salary All teachers, including head teachers and district resource teachers.	22,832	3,805	5.0
Starting salary, qualified teacher	14,988	2,498	3.3
Starting salary, unqualified teacher	9,576	1,596	2.1

However, Lesotho has an atypical economy and labour market conditions. Approximately 86% of the population is engaged in subsistence farming, and 56% of the population lives

³ Taken from Lesotho Country Status Report, Chapter 3, Table 3.10

on less than \$2 per day.⁴ At the same time Lesotho has an economy that is inextricably linked with that of its nearest neighbour, South Africa. Prices of goods and services, and labour rates for skilled workers, are heavily influenced by the South African economy. This highly varied income pattern is reflected in the high GINI index of 63.2⁵. This atypical context reduces the usefulness of GDP per capita as a benchmark for teacher salary.

Indications of the appropriateness of teacher salary might be made from a labour market analysis, but the most recent labour market survey was in 1999, and is now dated.⁶ Current salaries in some other areas of the public service are higher than teacher salaries. For example, a holder of a Diploma in Business Studies or Accounting (requiring two years' full-time study or equivalent), with two years' experience, could earn a salary of M32,436. A person who had completed secondary education, with 2 years experience, would earn M14,232 as an Assistant Storekeeper or a Graphic Artist in the ministry of education and training, but only M12,072 as a primary school teacher⁷.

There are indications that migration to South Africa has been a major cause of teacher attrition. The Teaching Service Commission reports that traditionally, many male teachers left to seek employment in the mines in South Africa, but that this has diminished in recent years as a result of retrenchment in the mining industry. For the better qualified teachers, there have been opportunities for work as teachers in South Africa and elsewhere in the region. A study of secondary teachers found that Basotho teachers could almost double their income by moving to South Africa.⁸

Despite the higher pay and benefits in other civil service positions, Lesotho has sufficient applicants for places in teacher training, and is able to fill vacant positions. However, it does not appear to be able to attract qualified teachers to rural areas, and in the most remote areas, the majority of teachers are untrained. In response, the government has introduced an in-service distance training programme for teachers, which will upgrade existing teachers to qualified status while they continue to work in their schools. This will have some financial impact, as teachers who are qualified earn higher salaries, but it is seen as an essential part of the aim of improving quality.

School construction

At the start of 2005, the Ministry of education had 5,319 viable primary classrooms, giving an average of 80 students per viable classroom. A total of 215,869 students, roughly half of the school population, are in substandard classrooms. 117,000 students are learning in local buildings of various types, and the others are in borrowed church halls, tents, or learning in the open air.

⁴ UNDP (2004) Human Development Report, p148.

⁵ UNDP (2004) Human Development Report, p190.

⁶ Ministry of Labour and Employment (1999) Labour Force Survey.

⁷ Urwick, James, Mapuru, Puleng and Nkhoboti, Michael (2005) Teacher Motivation and Incentives in Lesotho. Figures from the 2004/5 payscales

⁸ Williams, Tom (1998), Secondary Teaching in Lesotho: Who Stays, Who Leaves. P49.

Primary pupils in non-standard learning environments

	No. of Classrooms	No. of Pupils	Average students per classroom
Open Air	186	36,902	198
Church Hall	829	40,809	49
Rondavel	50	1,321	26
Heisi	49	1,863	38
Plat	662	15,173	23
Op-Tak	2,612	98,721	38
Tent	155	9,538	62
Other	197	11,542	59
Total	4,740	215,869	46

The government is committed to building permanent school buildings throughout the country, to provide complete primary coverage. Schools are constructed to a high standard, to minimize maintenance, withstand seasonal storm damage, and to provide a reasonable standard of accommodation even in severe weather conditions.

Schools built to lower standards have frequently suffered structural damage, particularly in the mountain areas, as illustrated in the picture below. This shows a school building constructed to government standard beside a church school, after a storm.

The importance of building quality: A government school building and a church-constructed building, following a storm.



The unit cost of construction is much higher than in many other African countries. A standard seven classroom school in the lowlands can cost \$240,000, while schools in the highlands cost an average of 20% more. The high cost is a result of three factors:

- A) The high standard of construction specified
- B) The high cost of materials in Lesotho
- C) The high cost of transport, particularly to remote locations. In the remote areas, contractors frequently have to construct a track to get vehicles to the school. In some cases, the ministry has found it difficult to attract any bids for construction in remote areas.

Unit cost of school construction (standard 7 classroom school)

	Qty	Unit cost	Maloti	Dollars
Classrooms of gross floor area 68m ²	7	121000	847,000	141,166
Administration block of gross Floor area 66 M ²	1	140, 000	140,000	23,333
Kitchen/stores gross floor area 57m ²	1	110, 000	100,000	16,666
Staff latrines 2seater	1	40,000	40,000	6,666
Students latrines,5 seater girls	1	60, 000	60,000	10,000
Students Latrines 3 seater +urinal boys	1	50, 000	50,000	8,333

Provisional sum for water supply			150,000	25,000
Provisional sum for electrical conduiting			60,000	10,000
TOTAL LOWLANDS			1,447,000	241,166
Average Location factor 20%			289,400	48,233
TOTAL HIGHLANDS			1,736,400	289,400
Furniture			194,000	32,333
TOTAL WITH FURNITURE			1,930,400	321,733

A geographical system is being used to conduct a school mapping exercise, which will highlight the priorities for school construction. The plan anticipates an accelerated building programme, expanding to nearly 300 schools per year. This rate of construction is not sufficient to replace all of the substandard classes by 2015, but it is a realistic figure, given the capacity constraints. Capacity is limited by both the capacity in the ministry to manage large numbers of construction projects, and by the limited capacity within the construction industry in Lesotho.

As new schools are constructed in the most populous areas, there will be an increasing need to examine the possibility of smaller, and lower cost structures for the smallest centres of population. The ministry is currently running a pilot project examining low cost community structures. If successful, this strategy may be used to provide coverage in the smallest communities.

School feeding programme

As part of the free primary education programme, the government committed itself to providing feeding in all primary schools. Some schools, mostly in the mountain districts, are supported by the World Food Programme (WFP). In these schools, WFP provides the food, and the ministry funds the cooking, which is done by local contractors at a fixed rate of 0.7 Maloti per child per day. These schools provide two meals per day using an agreed menu. In the remaining schools, mostly in the lowlands, the government finances both the food and its preparation. This is also done through local contracts, at an agreed rate of 2 Maloti per child per school day (360 Maloti per year).

The feeding programme is in part a response to high levels of malnutrition in Lesotho, particularly in mountain areas. The majority of the population are engaged in subsistence farming, and food security is limited. In the mountains, 36% of children under five are malnourished, and even in urban areas the rate is over 28%. There are also high levels of vitamin A deficiency and goitre among children.⁹ Furthermore, the impact of HIV/AIDS is more pronounced on orphans and vulnerable children (estimated at 100,000), about 25% of children under 18 years are either single or double orphaned¹⁰. Thus the number of child-headed households is increasing as result food insecurity for these children is an issue. The World Food Program (WFP) 2004 baseline survey provides evidence that,

⁹ Carr-Hill, et al (2002) Evaluation of School Feeding Programme in Lesotho, p3.

¹⁰ UNAIDS (2003)

without the school feeding some children have nothing to eat especially during the periods of bad harvest.¹¹

A second aim of the feeding programme is to encourage school attendance. It is difficult to isolate the impact of the feeding on attendance, but there are some indications that the food is an incentive to attend. Studies by WFP the show that short term alleviation of hunger in children (including the malnourished) during school hours is essential for learning. It helps to increase their concentration resulting in gains in cognitive function and learning¹². This still remains to be proved by research specific to Lesotho.

Primary education expenditure

Education has been attracting an increasing proportion of government spending over the years, with the sector claiming 29.9 percent of the government budget for the 2004/05 financial year. This expenditure on education is higher than the average for comparable Sub-Saharan African countries. The recurrent budget for primary education has also been rising steadily, from M182 million in 1999/2000 to M404 million in 2004/05. The recurrent costs of primary education account for an increasing proportion of recurrent expenditure on education, rising from 41% in 2001 to 51% in 2005.

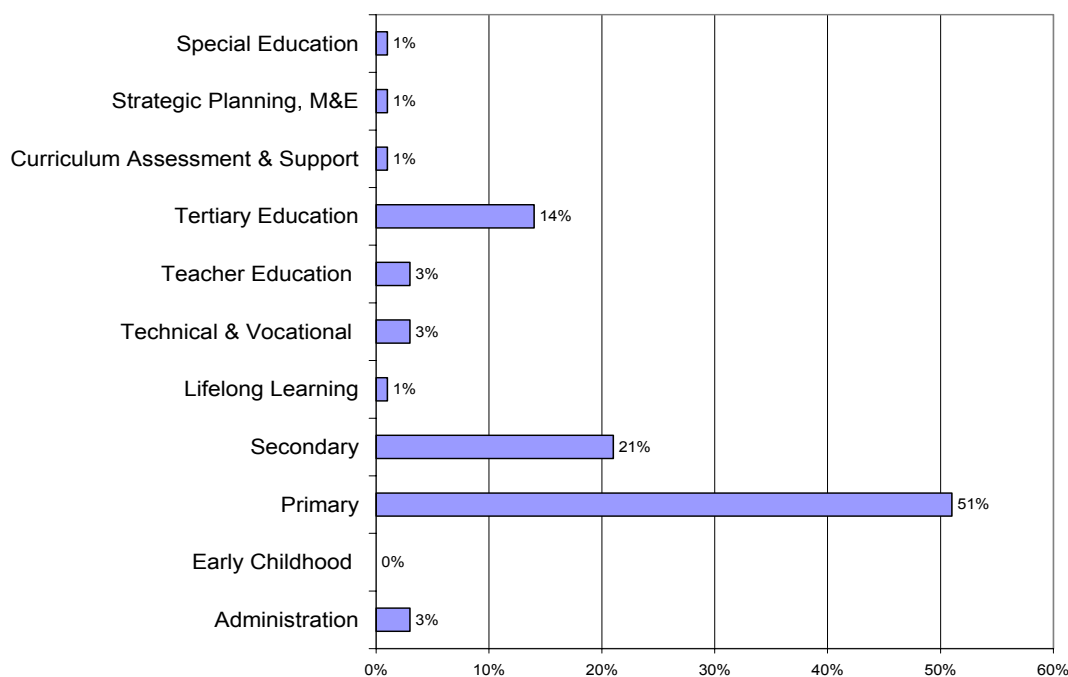
Recurrent education expenditure, 2001-06

Program Area	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
Total (Maloti)	702,038,545	778,574,540	747,831,900	794,321,470	851,971,390
Administration and Management	1.3%	1.2%	2%	1%	3%
Early Childhood Care & Development	0.2%	0.2%	0%	0%	0%
Basic Education and Senior Secondary	67.5%	70.7%	72%	74%	72%
<i>Of which: Primary</i>	<i>41.3%</i>	<i>47.2%</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>51%</i>
<i>Of which: Secondary</i>	<i>23.5%</i>	<i>21.1%</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>21%</i>
<i>Of which: Lifelong Learning</i>	<i>0.8%</i>	<i>0.7%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>Of which: Other</i>	<i>1.9%</i>	<i>1.7%</i>			
Technical & Vocational Education	4.2%	3.7%	3%	3%	3%
Teacher Education and Supply	3.7%	3.3%	3%	3%	3%
Tertiary Education	18.7%	16.9%	16%	15%	14%
Curriculum Assessment & Education Support	2.0%	1.8%	2%	1%	1%
Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	2.2%	2.0%	2%	1%	1%
Special Education & Other programmes	0.3%	0.3%	0%	1%	1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹¹ WFP School feeding Baseline Survey: Lesotho Country Data Report May 2004

¹² World Food Program (2005) Free Lunches and Take Home Rations

Breakdown of recurrent expenditure on education, 2005/06



Currently the finance available is insufficient to support the plan. Government finance availability is dependent on economic conditions external to the education system, making reliable figures difficult to obtain more than three years in advance. The projections in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework for 2005-2008, show a financing gap of US\$10.7 million in recurrent expenditure over the next three years, and a gap of US\$6.2 million in capital expenditure, a total financing gap of US\$17 million.

Finance requirements, primary education 2005-2008 (US dollars)

	2005 / 6	2006 / 7	2007 / 8	3 year total
Recurrent finance required (Salary, non-pay, feeding and bursaries)	73,245,653	75,477,089	79,150,127	
Capital finance required	15,165,333	11,293,333	11,293,333	
Total finance required	88,410,986	86,770,422	90,443,460	
GOL Recurrent budget - primary	70,239,167	72,346,342	74,516,732	
GOL Capital for primary education	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,000,000	
Donor capital finance available	8,498,833	7,250,000	6,983,167	
Total available	81,238,000	82,096,342	83,499,899	
Recurrent financing gap	3,006,486	3,130,747	4,633,395	10,770,629
Capital financing gap	4,166,500	1,543,333	2,310,167	8,020,000
Total financing gap	7,172,986	4,674,081	6,943,562	18,790,629
Financing gap as a % of total expenditure	8	5	8	
Capital gap as a % of capital expenditure	27	14	20	

Lesotho has relatively few active donors, and most of the donor resources are provided in-kind (as in the case of WFP feeding), or directed towards capital works or other special projects. There is currently no donor providing direct financial support to the ministry for recurrent expenditure.

Breakdown of external finance (donors and credits), 2005-2008 (US dollars)

Donors				
Development Cooperation Ireland	1,000,000	1,333,333	1,166,667	1,166,667
African Development Fund	216,667	83,333	116,667	116,667
JICA, Japan, School construction project	5,000,000	166,667	0	0
Loans				
IDA/ World Bank	1,615,500	3,166,667	3,199,833	0
African Development Fund	666,667	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
Total capital funding available	8,498,833	7,250,000	6,983,167	3,783,333
Other donor assistance (in-kind, project funding)				
UNICEF Basic Education Project	250,000	300,000	333,333	333,333
UNICEF School Health Project	33,333	66,667	100,000	100,000
WFP School Feeding Project	0	2,521,500	3,876,333	0
Total of other (off-budget) finance	283,333	2,888,167	4,309,667	433,333

Evaluation

Quality of Basic Education Plan

The education partners welcome the content of the education sector strategy document. It has clearly articulated the priorities and actions for the year ahead, and charts the way to achieving the Millennium Development Goals for education. The interventions to improve quality are particularly significant, including enhanced teacher education, a revised curriculum, better teaching materials and improved supervision and support structures. The stronger focus on assessment of educational outcomes is also welcome.

The plan includes comprehensive strategies to move towards equity in educational outcomes, including school construction, policies to focus on OVC and disadvantaged groups, and measures to encourage gender equity.

Significant partnerships have been formed with other Ministries, including Health and social welfare, increasing the capacity to implement the strategy.

Concerns

The development partners believe that the plan could do more to explicitly address the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education system. A sample of education personnel tested revealed a 22% infection rate¹³, which is likely to result in increased attrition in coming

¹³ World Bank (2005) Country Status Report, Chapter 1, Table 1.4.

years. Predictions for mortality, fertility, and school age population will need continuous revision as the situation changes. In addition, the plans for teacher education may need to be modified to account for additional attrition of teachers. A national population census, planned for 2006, may help to refine the existing population projections, and provide a solid foundation for future projections.

The development partners welcome the focus on quality of education in the plan, and the inclusion of explicit quality targets. A number of the strategies, including reduction of pupil teacher ratio, improved infrastructure and reducing the number of untrained teachers, are clearly aimed at increasing quality. Beyond these inputs, further work may be needed to ensure quality.

The plan could have been strengthened by more examination of the sub-sector linkages. Increasing primary completion will have an impact on secondary enrolment. Likewise, secondary completion will have an impact on the demand for higher education, and the capacity in some areas of higher education (such as teacher education) will impact on the primary education system.

There is also some concern about the financial modelling used in the construction of the plan. The tradition has been to develop models from existing budgets. A far more flexible planning approach would be facilitated by a model based on population and policies. This could be used to facilitate more accurate planning as well as simulation of the impact of policy options.

Monitoring

The strategic plan defines clear and measurable targets, which can be used as the basis for monitoring. Cross-cutting issues such as HIV and gender have been mainstreamed throughout the plan. The plan includes details of the targets, and the implementation timeframe. The national assessment of educational achievement is particularly welcome, as, if continued systematically, it will provide reliable diagnostic information.

Critical knowledge and data gaps

The capacity to monitor the development of the primary education system is constrained by gaps in the information systems available. Information on OVC and children with special needs is limited. Data collected using the Education Geographic Information system still needs to be verified against the school census data.

There are some remaining knowledge gaps. More needs to be known about the transition from Free Primary Education to Universal Primary Education, the impact of the abolition of school fees, and the implications of compulsory primary education. Further analysis may also be helpful in examining the impact of textbook provision, school feeding and repetition policies.

Capacity Issues

Much of the monitoring of the education system is done through an Education Management Information System (EMIS). While this has proved very valuable as a

reliable source of data, more needs to be done to verify the data, and to integrate the EMIS with other data sources (such as the HR records of the Teaching Service Commission, and the salary records of the Ministry of Finance). This will require a significant investment in information technology and in data collection and verification.

There is a need for a stronger mechanism for the management of the teacher supply. At present the teacher training is the responsibility of the Lesotho College of Education, teacher allocations are the responsibility of the ministry, and planning for the retirement of teachers falls to the teaching service commission. Strengthening of the links between these groups, in the interests of a coordinated plan for teacher supply, would be welcome.

The plan involves greater reliance on local management structures, both at the level of school management committees and at district level. The capacity of these structures needs to be developed to enable successful decentralisation.

Implementation Readiness

Lesotho is well placed to implement this plan. In some areas the implementation process is already ongoing, and there is political will to drive implementation.

There remain some issues concerning implementation capacity:

- Government of Lesotho Position on the future of PSCU has to be clearly defined.
- Weak capacity of the planning unit to be strengthened.
- The requirement for closer donor harmonisation creates new challenges for the donors and the government. The education donors have already formed a donor group and are committed to greater collaboration, including joint reviews where possible.
- Implementation of the decentralisation of local government has been slower than had been anticipated. This may delay the decentralisation of education management.
- The strategy may face challenges arising from the impact of HIV/AIDS on the ministry personnel, and the loss of experience resulting from this.

Conclusion

Lesotho has developed a comprehensive plan for the development of its education system, including building towards universal primary education by 2015. The plan encompasses school construction, recruitment of additional teachers, provision of training for existing untrained teachers, and improvement of the quality of education. Benchmarks of progress are provided through a series of targets, including increased net enrolment, reduced repetition, improved pupil teacher ratio, reduction in the proportion of unqualified teachers, and improvement of the pupil classroom ratio. The targets are realistic, and can be attained on schedule, if the additional finance is available.

In the absence of additional finance, the plan will not collapse, but will not reach its targets on schedule. In this scenario, the ministry will trim the budgets for activities in the plan, reducing the number of new classrooms constructed, and reducing the number

of new teachers recruited. As a result, the improvements in net enrolment, retention and attainment will be attenuated.

The prospects for sustainability of the ESSP are good. The government hopes to use endorsement by the Fast Track Initiative, and its own record of progress in education, to mobilise additional funding. Evidently this cannot be guaranteed, so the scenario of a fall in funding in three years time must be considered. Such a fall would not destroy the system. Capital expenditure, such as construction of new schools, can be adjusted to meet the available resources. Falling resources for recurrent expenditure could be borne, but less easily. Lesotho currently finances the recurrent costs of primary education from exchequer resources. While it forecasts a financing gap in recurrent expenditure for the coming years, in the long term the projected fall in school population may provide opportunities for cost savings. Recurrent expenditure can also be moderated by adjustment of the rate of recruitment of new teachers, although this has implications for quality.

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Appendix A: Primary Education Expenditure (in US dollars)

	2005 /6	2006 /7	2007 /8	2008 /9	2009 /10	2010 /11	2015 /16
School age population (1)	334,812	333,511	332,649	332,774	335,030	337,662	362,503
Expected GER (2)	126	126	125	124	122	120	110
Enrolment	421,863	420,224	415,811	412,640	408,737	405,194	398,753
Teacher remuneration							
Expected average PTR (3)	46.0	44.5	43.0	42.5	42.0	42.5	40.0
No. of teachers required	9,171	9,443	9,670	9,709	9,732	9,534	9,969
Percent of teachers qualified	71	71	76	79	82	85	100
Average teacher salary (trained)	4,805	4,805	4,805	4,805	4,805	4,805	4,805
Average teacher salary (untrained)	2,308	2,308	2,308	2,308	2,308	2,308	2,308
Hardship allowance	1,681,339	1,731,259	1,772,839	1,780,015	1,784,168	1,747,897	1,827,619
Total teacher salary cost (5)	39,103,486	40,264,512	42,438,599	43,337,547	44,167,526	43,983,693	49,722,875
Non pay recurrent costs							
Administrative costs (6)	38,667	44,667	47,667	52,500	55,000	56,889	66,333
School self reliance	341,167	386,500	412,667	454,000	499,333	511,806	574,167
Subvention to primary schools	421,667	461,000	634,833	698,333	768,167	787,361	883,333
HIV/AIDS activities	833,333	833,333	833,333	833,333	833,333	833,333	833,333
Travel and transport	326,833	344,833	363,833	382,000	401,000	404,361	421,167
Pupil and teacher stationery	3,402,000	3,830,833	4,575,000	5,261,333	6,050,500	6,201,750	6,958,000
Classroom maintenance	378,000	398,833	420,833	441,833	463,833	467,722	487,167
Purchase of textbooks	1,737,833	1,833,333	1,934,333	2,031,000	2,132,667	2,150,417	2,239,167
Sport and cultural	71,833	85,000	103,333	118,833	136,667	140,083	157,167
Public campaigns	41,667	103,333	118,333	136,167	83,333	83,333	83,333
PSLE costs and National Assessment	166,667	175,000	183,833	193,000	193,000	193,000	193,000
Other overhead costs	88,500	93,333	98,500	103,500	108,667	109,556	114,000
Total non pay recurrent cost	7,848,167	8,590,000	9,726,500	10,705,833	11,725,500	11,939,611	13,010,167

Continued...

	2005 /6	2006 /7	2007 /8	2008 /9	2009 /10	2010 /11	2015 /16
School feeding programme	25,937,167	26,455,910	26,985,028	27,524,729	28,075,223	28,636,728	31,617,261
Bursaries	356,833	166,667	0	0	0	0	0
Capital costs							
Classrooms required	9,171	9,443	9,670	9,709	9,732	9,534	9,969
Classrooms available start of year	5,319	5,695	5,975	6,255	6,535	6,815	8,215
New classrooms	376	280	280	280	280	280	280
Classrooms at end of year	5,695	5,975	6,255	6,535	6,815	7,095	8,495
Unit cost of classrooms	40,333	40,333	40,333	40,333	40,333	40,333	40,333
Capital costs	15,165,333	11,293,333	11,293,333	11,293,333	11,293,333	11,293,333	11,293,333
Total capital and recurrent	88,410,986	86,770,422	90,443,460	92,861,443	95,261,582	95,853,365	105,643,636

Notes on cost items

Cost line	Comments
Administrative costs	Office of CEO primary (salary, secretary and office costs)
School self reliance	Personnel and overhead of the school self reliance programme. See also under capital heading for revolving fund.
Subvention to primary schools	Grant to every school, calculated on a per pupil basis. Intended to cover small maintenance and services (water etc). Grant is M5 per registered pupil to all schools that complete the required financial reports.
HIV/AIDS activities	HIV awareness campaigns, ARV treatments for teachers.
Travel and transport	Vehicle maintenance, fuel, helicopter hire (in some remote areas, textbooks are delivered by helicopter).
Pupil and teacher stationery	Exercise books, pens and pencils. Calculated in 1999 as 11 per pupil per year and 37 per teacher.
Classroom maintenance	Central unit for maintenance, now being phased out, replaced by direct subvention to schools.
Purchase of textbooks	Purchase and production of textbooks and teaching materials.
Sport and cultural	Funding for schools sports and cultural activities.
Public campaigns	Public awareness campaigns are expected to peak in the next few years, with the introduction of compulsory schooling. In the later years, the costs will fall to a lower level.
PSLE costs	Subvention to the examination council for the primary school leaving examination. This will be phased out in the medium term, but resources will be needed for regular National Assessments to be used for diagnostic purposes.
Other overhead costs	Office overheads and miscellaneous costs.
School feeding programme	Highland districts are supported by WFP and provide 2 meals a day. In these schools WFP provides the food, and MOET provides payment for cooks at a rate of 70cents per child per day.
Bursaries	Bursaries to orphans and vulnerable children, to cover school fees. Phasing out as free primary education is extended to all grades.
Infrastructure	School building
School self reliance	Finance to schools to engage in self-reliance feeding programmes. These are agricultural activities at school level (pig rearing, cultivation, etc). Financed through revolving fund, repaid by schools.
Gender activities	Extra sanitation works in older schools to encourage attendance by girls.
Classrooms required	Requirements are calculated as one classroom per teacher, as dual shift teaching is not practiced.
Classroom available	These figures are drawn from the Geographical Information study, and show only the classrooms considered to meet the ministry specification.