

Findings

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Good Practice
Infobrief



Findings Infobriefs reports on Good Practice in ongoing operational, economic and sector work carried out by the World Bank and its member governments in the Africa Region. It is published monthly by the Knowledge and Learning Center on behalf of the Region. The views expressed in Findings are those of the author/s and should not be attributed to the World Bank Group.

Lesotho

Education Sector Development Project

The World Bank provided Lesotho US\$56.7 million, including US\$25.2 million under the Education Sector Development Project (ESDP I). The funding, provided under five different projects, helped development of the education sector to keep pace with population growth by expanding enrollments at the primary level; improved the quality of primary and secondary education; upgraded vocational training facilities; and established programs for non-formal education. The fifth project, ESDP I, undertook a broad approach to sectoral reform in line with the Government of Lesotho's (GOL) Fifth Five-Year Plan.

These objectives of ESDP I were to address critical needs in the areas of basic education, such as expanding access through the construction and furnishing of new classrooms. The project aimed to revise curricula, develop instructional materials, and strengthen the system of assessment. In addition to recruiting more teachers, training for teachers at both pre- and in-service was planned to upgrade the standards of teaching. To address the needs of students enrolled in Technical and Vocational Education programs, the project proposed to introduce standardized craft curricula, strengthen skills certification and testing, and improve policy and management capacity within the sub-sector. The project planned to support the National University of Lesotho in its efforts to introduce quality enhancement and cost containment measures. Finally, the objectives included improving sectoral management by reorganizing the Ministry of Education (MOE), promoting decentralization and school-level management.

Results

Basic Education

- Under the project, the MOE exceeded expectations for civil works by building 1,094 new classrooms, 241 offices, 2,200 latrines and renovating 49 classrooms. Despite initially weak capacity for procurement of goods, all associated furniture was provided for new classrooms and over half of existing classrooms were furnished. Ten District Resource Centers (DRCs) were constructed, furnished and made operational.

- The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) reviewed and revised the entire primary curriculum, trial-tested the materials, evaluated their effectiveness and trained teachers in their use. The curriculum for junior secondary school has been reviewed and revised and is being tested. The project improved the organizational infrastructure supporting examinations. The Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) is now under management and supervision of a newly formed unit, the Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL). ECOL received a renovated building, expanded staff and new management.

National Teacher Training College

- NTTC improved its infrastructure under ESDP I. More faculty have been trained and the college initiated new programs to improve teacher education. Graduate numbers increased but the expanded numbers did not meet expectations. This was largely due to the withdrawal of USAID funds during its Africa-wide reduction of funding support. Significant improvements were made in programming by upgrading pre- and in-service training.
- 1,400 primary school teachers were hired and over 70% of these allocated to Standards 1 to 3. This has resulted in a lower pupil:teacher ratio of 47:1 at the primary level.

Technical & Vocational Education

- The Technical and Vocational Department (TVD) experienced severe problems of understaffing, a high level of dependency on technical assistance and a lack of strong leadership in the area of policy development. Most of the agreed studies were carried out but with limited impact. Evening classes were introduced at only one of the 12 technical and vocational schools expected. A review of the TVE Act did not produce any results due to inactivity of the TVE Board and weak institutional capacity. A key achievement of this period was the passage of the Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP) Act, granting LP autonomy. In addition, six craft curricula were standardized and are currently used in 8 institutions.

National University of Lesotho

- The library was computerized and books provided. The unit system was revised and NUL now uses a modified subject system. However, this system is implemented only to a varying degree across departments and it is not clear that any improvements in student outcomes have eventuated as a result.
- After many delays, the project made significant improvements in NUL's capacity for science research and instruction. It remains to be seen whether NUL will properly maintain the science laboratories and equipment provided under the project.

Sectoral Management

- The MOE completed a reorganization process and improved its monitoring and evaluation capacity. Understaffing remains a concern in several departments.
- The establishment of over 800 Advisory School Committees (ASC) has positively impacted parental participation in education services.
- The establishment of 10 District Resource Centers (DRCs) further strengthened the devolution of educational operations to the districts and schools. The District Resource Teachers (DRTs) provide essential support to rural schools.

Lessons Learned

- The implementation of ESDP I has demonstrated the advantages and disadvantages of donor coordination. While working with several donors provides needed leverage and support, it also requires persistent consultation and good planning, particular with regard to changes in financing.
- Without adequate leadership in a department or sub-sector, investment will ultimately have little/no impact. Investments are better focused on areas with strong leadership and vision.
- Clear procurement regulations are critical to smooth implementation progress, and advice from the Bank must be consistent.
- It is difficult to have a positive impact on implementation capacity without support from the Government in terms of staffing key positions.

*This Infobrief is based on **World Bank Implementation Completion Report No: 20063**, from which detailed information can be obtained.*

Persons accessing the Bank's internal and external websites can find more information on **Education** by clicking on **Topics**.