INTRODUCTION:

BACKGROUND:
The Structure of the education system in Lesotho:
The lowest level of education consists of 3 years on integrated early childhood care and development (IECCD) services for children between the ages of 2 to 5. The other levels consist of 7 + 3 + 2 + 4 structure corresponding respectively to the following 4 cycles: primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and tertiary. There is also a parallel technical vocational diploma course (senior secondary + or 3 years TVET) in TVET. This system operates within a:

- Unitary state; 10 administrative districts
- Four ‘ecological zones’ used for statistical definition:
  - Lowlands
  - Foothills
  - Senqu River Valley
  - Highlands
Schools and training institutions:
- 622 IECCD centres
- 1,477 primary (430,000)
- 256 secondary (93,096)
- 21 skills training centres
- 7 technical institutes
- 1 polytechnic
- 1 teacher training college
- 1 university

> 90% schools owned by churches

**EDUCATION CHALLENGES**

1.0 SECONDARY LEVEL

1.1 Influx of children in Form A due to Free Primary Education, projected at 55,000 in January 2007.

1.1.1 provision of physical infrastructure such as classrooms, science and home economics laboratories, and technical and vocational subjects workshops

1.1.2 provision of additional qualified teachers

1.1.3 provision of additional textbooks (Textbook Rental Scheme)

1.1.4 provision of additional bursaries for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC)

1.2 Identification of educational services to be devolved to local government structures.

- Identification of school sites
- Establishment of school committees and boards.
- Identification of school caterers
- Procumbent school/teaching material
- Payment of teachers’ salaries

1.3 Weak leadership skills of school principals

- Inability to set the school vision
• Inability to formulate school development plans
• Poor financial management, etc.

1.4 Secondary level not free and yet primary education is free while at tertiary government operates a loan bursary scheme.

1.5 Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Sub-Sector.

1.5.1 Increased number of OVC with most becoming heads of families
• More bursaries required
• Boarding facilities required for those school-going OVC.
• Greater liaison with Ministry of Health and Social Welfare for the non-school-going OVC.

1.5.2 Increased demand for teacher supply as other than the normal causes of attrition such as retirement, transfers to other sectors, teacher are lost due to the pandemic.

1.5.3 Change of roles of teachers to become lay counselors to the infected and affected.

2.0 TERTIARY/HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) LEVEL

2.1 Funding of HE institutions:
Lesotho funds this level directly. For instance in 2001 the government spent more than 12 times the GDP per capita per student at the National University. In 2005/06, 4% of ministry’s budget went towards subvention to HE institutions.
• Decrease subvention by a certain percentage annually
• Utilize subvention for capital budget
• Charge “realistic” fees for use in recurrent budget.

2.2 Governance
2.3 Relevance of programmes to respond to economic needs.
   • Review of programmes to be demand-driven e.g. innovative teachers training programmes to respond impact of HIV and AIDS on the sector.
   • Review of the programmes to respond to technological demands such Lesotho Highlands Water Project

2.4 Impact of HIV and AIDS:
   2.4.1 Establish clinics within HE institutions to combat the spread of pandemic and provide support.
   2.4.2 Some graduates die soon after completing their training.
   2.4.3 Strengthening of counseling services to serving teachers.

2.5 The strategies to be employed to solicit the private sector to participate and increase its commitment in the affairs of HE institutions.
   • Reviewing curricula;
   • Attaching students in their companies as part of training;
   • Donating current machinery used in their industries as teaching aids;
   • Attaching lecturers in their organizations as part of in-service teacher development.

3.0 TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

3.1 Governance of the TVET system;
Establish a semi-autonomous Lesotho Skills Agency (LSA) with a balanced stakeholder representation which has both advisory and executive authority and responsibility for governing, managing and funding the system and for controlling and managing the National Training Fund.
3.2 Financing of the system;
Establish the National Training Fund which will raise sufficient finance to support high quality training, allocate funds in such a manner that supports national and sectoral skill priorities and that promotes the delivery of quality and market relevant training.

3.3 Align training more closely to job demands in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy to address skills requirements of the two sectors:

- Make the training delivery flexible in terms of entry and exit requirements through modularisation of courses where successful completion of a module will mean a step towards a qualification;
- Design, develop and implement a Vocational Qualifications Structure. This will facilitate recognitions of the skills and knowledge already possessed, and progression within and across trades/occupations;
- Introduce traineeship programmes and trade tests at ‘Operative’ and ‘A’ levels;
- Integrate entrepreneurial skills development into training and establish business incubation centres in existing institutions. This will help reduce the number of job seekers and increase that of job creators and will go a long way towards eradicating poverty;
- Introduce an incentive fund for purposes of funding training programmes which institutions design, develop and run to meet specific skills need as identified by the institution and the employer;
- Register and accredit all TVET institutions that meet the set criteria and de-registering and de-accrediting those that no longer meet the criteria;
- Provide vocational skills training programmes parallel to the general education in High Schools to equip students with employable skills.

3.4 Expand infrastructure capacities for TVET institutions and provide construction of offices, classrooms, workshops and laboratories.

3.5 Encourage females to enroll in traditionally male dominated courses.

3.6 Train TVET staff to implement the envisaged reforms.