

DEASA

Lesotho Country report 2016/2017



This report is a combination of reports from Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) of Lesotho College of Education (LCE), Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP), Institute of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS) of National University of Lesotho (NUL) and Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC) of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET).

DEASA – LESOTHO COUNTRY REPORT: 2016-2017

Highlights

Through Director of SADC-CDE, ODL practitioners in Lesotho were trained through short courses. For example, five ODL practitioners from Lesotho (institutions: Lesotho College of Education (LCE), Institute of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS) and Lesotho Distance Training Centre (LDTC) attended the Monitoring and Evaluation training workshop held in Botswana in July, 2016. The workshop was supported by the SADC-CDE Project. Some practitioners were, however, not able to attend the workshop due to some financial challenges like accommodation fees. Some countries were also represented in the workshop.

This report is basically about institutional reports. It is a combination of reports from three institutions namely; LCE, IEMS and LDTC as shown in the next sections.

1. BACKGROUND INTRODUCTION

1.1 LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) is one of the programmes, under Distance Education Section, which are offered by Lesotho College of Education (LCE). It is a four-year diploma programme that was specifically designed as an in-service training programme for experienced but unqualified or underqualified primary school teachers teaching in Lesotho primary schools following the Education for All (EFA) Initiative and following the introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Policy by the Lesotho Government.

The purpose of DTEP Is to provide instruction in the skills and knowledge including attitudes required to improve classroom practices throughout the country through distance education mode.

DTEP was evaluated and the main recommendation was to make some changes so that so that it should be conducted through ODL approaches. The recommendation was in line with College's intention to review DTEP. As a result, the College also decided to get ready to create ODL programmes.

Completion rates are shown in the Appendix 1. Appendix 2 will be submitted a little later due to corrections that are being made.

1.2 INSTITUTE OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

Mission statement

The purpose of the Institute of Extra- Mural Studies is to bring the University to the people and the people to the University by using facilities and resources of the University for the education of the out-of-school population of Lesotho and for its economic, social and cultural development. It endeavours to do this in consultation with the appropriate government ministries and departments, non-governmental organizations, parastatals, academic faculties and private sector institutions. To this end the Institute aims at encouraging, assisting and coordinating the efforts of the academic faculties and departments in all forms of University extension.

In line with the mission above, the Institute is in the process of redefining itself to becoming a fully-fledged Open and Distance Learning Institute that is going to support and facilitate the process of moving some of the programmes that are offered through face-to-face to distance and online provision. The new mandate of the Institute is to:

- i) Transform into an Open and Distance Learning Hub

- ii) Facilitate duplication of programmes through ODL
- iii) Promote quality assurance and control of ODL programmes
- iv) Support regional campuses that provide support for distance learners
- v) Facilitate growth of graduate programmes through ODL
- vi) Promote internationalization

1.3 LESOTHO DISTANCE TEACHING CENTRE

Globally, Open and Distance Learning was brought in the forefront of Education provision, with the hope that it can be a panacea to the inefficiency and wastage in the conventional education system. In Lesotho distance education was introduced with the birth of the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre in 1974. Since then Lesotho has embraced Open and Distance Learning to extend education access at all levels of education and training. There has been a steady increase in the number of ODL providers and the range of programmes offered.

The initial mandate of LDTC in 1974 was to prepare students to sit for Junior Certificate (JC) and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) external examinations. It was based in Maseru. It gradually expanded its responsibilities over the years to include literacy education for out of school youth and adults. LDTC district officers coordinate activities of Open Secondary Education and Literacy Education at district level. We use part time tutors to run tutorials and literacy teachers to administer literacy education in our study/learning centres.

2. DEASA KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

2.1 LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Research Activities

There is a Research Committee whose roles include organising meetings for staff to present their research proposals, abstracts and research findings; and encouraging staff to carry out research activities.

There have been some research seminars about research methodologies and about research studies that have been conducted by staff. More staff members need more skills that relate to research methodology that includes how to analyse research data.

The College is in the process of creating new ODL programmes. It is at the stage where the needs assessment survey is being conducted. Some data is being analysed.

Capacity Building

College participated in providing its staff with skills and knowledge. A few members of the college have specific skills like ICT skills and are able to train others. The pace is low and ICT skills are a need for practitioners to be able to develop accessible ODL teaching and learning materials of good quality. There are still areas of need as reflected in this report.

Plans for best practices

College plans that are intended to make the programme more sustainable and cost-effective at the end, and plans which are still outstanding, due to financial challenges are to:

- (a) Strengthen the programme through incorporating the e-learning components as part of the whole college ICT development strategy that includes integration of ICT in teaching and learning.
- (b) Capacitate staff on developing ODL learning materials.
- (c) Train staff on producing CD and DVD taped lessons and relevant information to which students could refer for their learning.
- (d) Capacitate staff on research methodology and data analysis.

- (e) Train staff on the use of audio-video equipment to produce or to capture useful information for teaching and learning.
- (f) Development of ODL Policy for the institution

Partnership and Collaboration

The College has relationship with some institutions that include those in country and out of country. For example, the College has relationship with the University of South Africa (UNISA). LCE is one of the UNISA centres where students and applicants get information among other things. This relationship may lead to forming partnership or collaboration with such institutions among others.

Policy Development and Facilitation

The College is yet to develop its own ODL policy. Quality Assurance Policy has been developed.

Quality Promotion

Council on Higher Education (CHE) in Lesotho asked and encouraged institutions of higher learning to deal with Quality Assurance (QA) seriously. A Unit for Quality Assurance has been established in the College and is functioning. A Quality Assurance Committee is there and QA requirements are being addressed to promote performance.

QA committees hold meetings to strategise on promoting performance to address CHE requirements and to improve on services rendered to the college community and visitors. Examinations are externally checked for advice and improvement to promote quality.

Some meetings are being held to review some college policies.

A few of college curricula are being reviewed to close some gaps.

Records are kept and reports are made to share information and ideas. Ways for improving on areas of weakness are determined to promote quality.

2.2 INSTITUTE OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

Research Activities

The Institute had one member graduating in December 2015. This particular member was a student at the University of Free State she was awarded a PhD. There is another member who is currently working on completing her PhD at the end of this year. The Institute is also hoping that one of the members of staff studying for PhD in Distance Education will also complete her studies next year.

Capacity Building

Actual development of ODL teaching and learning materials took place for first year for three diploma programmes and two degree programmes through workshops.

Training of facilitators and learners on the use of intranet (named THUTO).

In addition, three 5-day capacity building training workshops were held for the Berea District Council Staff in the area of Project Management, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Financial Management for Non-Finance Managers between August and November, 2016.

Dual mode ODL Policy

The Institute of Extra Mural Studies has developed a dual mode policy which will guide the Institute in offering Open and Distance Learning programmes. The policy was presented to NUL senate and was approved in March 2017. The development of the Policy was facilitated by Professor Mpine Makoe, Institute for Open Distance Learning, UNISA / Commonwealth of Learning.

Best Practices

- (a) Teaching and Learning

- Using the ODL policy first year courses were reviewed to suit the ODL mode of delivery with the view to implement them from 2017-2018.
- Teaching and learning occurred using THUTO.

Partnership and Collaboration

IEMS offers Diplomas, Bachelor's and Master's degrees in collaboration with other Indian Universities such as Amity and this collaboration is continuing.

Policy Development and Facilitation

- Two policies were developed and approved and they are now in place. These are
 - Teaching and Learning policy
 - Quality Assurance policy

2.3 LESOTHO DISTANCE TEACHING CENTRE

Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC)

Currently, LDTC has two major programmes of activities, namely: the Basic Education unit which is a Literacy Programme and the Continuing Education Unit which is basically an Open Secondary School.

- **The Literacy Programame** operates in seven of the ten districts of Lesotho in 2017.
- We have 340 established learning posts (Literacy Study Centres).
- There are 6344 learners in the Literacy programme in the year ending 2017.
- The curriculum has expanded from offering Sesotho and Arithmetic to include HIV and AIDS as well as Life skills Education to help learners face/cope with psycho-social challenges that they may encounter in life.
- There is a process of developing modules to bridge the gap between literacy level and secondary education so that learners can easily graduate into secondary education with ease.
- Learners have been trained on some vocational skills such as:
 - (i) Basic carpentry
 - (ii) Bread making
 - (iii) Candle making
 - (iv) Gardening
 - (v) Sewing

- (vi) Recycling of easily available resources in their environment such as bottles, soft drink and beer cans, animal horns, clay and sand stone as well as waste paper.

The purpose is to empower them to generate income for improvement of their families' livelihood.

- **The Continuing Education Unit** operates in 10 districts todate and each district has a study centre.
- 2,480 new students have been enrolled this year.
- 434 students have registered to write Junior Certificate (J.C.) examinations.
- 918 Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (C.O.S.C.) students have registered for final examinations.
- Mock examinations and 10 tutorials were carried out in 10 districts study centres.
- Final examination centres for J.C. and C.O.S.C. have been established to decentralize exams administration.
- There is a process of finalization of An NFE Policy is underway-funded by the World Bank.

3. NEW INNOVATIONS

3.1 LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Innovations include that:

The College **website address** is www.lce.ac.ls and is functional. Learners are able to access it.

New computer room has been built and it has started functioning. All staff members have access to it.

There is another computer room in the library that has been earmarked for special education learners. It caters for the students with hearing impairment and vision impairment so far. There are also Braille facility and a computer with guiding sound for communication and learning in the same room.

There is WIFI facility in the college campus. It is used by staff and students. Distance education students have limited chance to make use of this facility because some of them are in their workstations that are far from the campus.

3.2 INSTITUTE OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

- A new Centre for Teaching and Learning was established to look into issues of quality assurance in the teaching and learning process in all the University programmes
- Internet connectivity of offices on the west campus.
- Intranet facility (Thuto) has been extended to include IEMS.
- There is WIFI facility though limited.

3.3 LESOTHO DISTANCE TEACHING CENTRE

- Development of NFE Policy.
- Development of Quality Assurance Policy and push for Peer Institution Reviews.
- Decentralization of final examinations administration.

Introduction of technical and vocational skills education for improvement of livelihoods in the Literacy Programme

4. CHALLENGES

4.1 LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Outstanding challenges are those that follow.

1. To recruit or to train at least two staff members (one on Braille and another one on Sign Language Interpretation) who will be ODL practitioners. There is one for full-time lecturer for Braille.
2. To acquire an integrated machine system for the College that would help adequately manage records and reports including production of required and organised output. This would be an improved student information management system that allows for better access to records and information for all college students.
3. To capacitate staff on development of teaching and learning materials for ODL learners.
4. To purchase audio-video equipment to produce or capture useful information for sharing ideas and for teaching and learning.
5. To integrate ICT into teaching and learning and expand ICT infrastructure in terms of having spaces (buildings) and internet facilities.
6. To purchase or make available resources for teaching and learning in the resources centres (at least two) that are functional.

4.2 INSTITUTE OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

There is limited number of computers in relation to the numbers of learners. The challenge is to purchase more computers.

- To capacitate staff on the development of ODL teaching and learning materials.
- To solicit funds for improving information technology infrastructure in order to promote access to appropriate electronic information.

4.3 LESOTHO DISTANCE TEACHING CENTRE (LDTC)

- Budgetary constraints over the past year due to holding of general elections.
 - We need to explore alternative funds to supplement recurrent budget.
- Expansion of service coverage to three remaining districts is yet to be realized in the literacy programme.
 - There is a plan to post some NFE Officers in the remaining districts.
- Under staffing negatively affects progress.
 - Beef up Human Resource Office to effectively address vacancy and staff turnover problems timeously.
- Transport shortage also affects progress.

There is also need to push for a paradigm shift-integration of technology into the learning systems, and this needs massive training of staff.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The College is playing its role of improving on ODL section. It is in the process of creating new ODL programmes and it is at the needs assessment survey stages. Necessary resources to support learning and facilitation of learning are still another area of need.

ODL practitioners should apply appropriate skills and knowledge to support learning and to be able to help remove barriers to access to learning. All ODL practitioners should have necessary skills and knowledge to be able to perform even better. The practitioners should do their work and share ideas and information so that other ODL practitioners could contribute and assist one another.

Successful creation of new ODL programmes will lead to strengthening diploma programmes and Continuing Professional Development programmes. It may eventually lead to deciding on developing an ODL Degree programme after the diploma programmes. Improved relevance and applicability of skills and knowledge, and enhanced infrastructure to improve access and quality should be some of the pillars in supporting ODL. It is worth noting that ODL makes it possible for learners to learn wherever they are if carefully designed.

It is remarkable that the SADC-CDE is capacitating ODL practitioners from Member States. The practitioners should participate in ODL activities locally and regionally to reflect levels of performance in relation to skills and knowledge they are acquiring. Training is recommended on relevant areas that remain as areas of need.

5.2 INSTITUTE OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

The following recommendations are made for improvement of the departments:

- Intensify staff capacity building in the area of Open and Distance learning
- The existing cooperation and collaboration between the IEMS and other ODL partner institutions should be expanded.
- Construct a multi-purpose hall.
- Improve ICT infrastructure.
- Engage in aggressive fund raising activities in order to develop ODL materials.
- Train ODL staff at higher levels to improve on supporting ODL teaching and learning process..

5.3 LESOTHO DISTANCE TEACHING CENTRE

- The ODL policy is in place and approved by cabinet. There is a substantial enthusiasm about the finalization of NFE policy which proposes an establishment of an NFE department which hopefully will reinforce political will in terms of budget allocation and putting in place regulatory measures for ODL practicing organizations.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: LCE: Completion rates of DTEP students who graduated per year from 2006 to 2015

THE NUMBER OF DTEP STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED EACH YEAR FROM 2006 TO 2015				
Cohort	Numbers enrolled in cohort	Year of completion	Numbers of students who graduated	
			Number	Percentage (%)
1st	502	2006	447	89
2nd	447	2007	316	71
3rd	528	2008	437	83
4th	666	2009	638	96
5th	587	2010	502	86
6th	576	2011	543	94
7th	567	2012	525	93
8th	583	2013	572	98
9th	670	2014	617	92
10th	614	2015	529	86
TOTAL	5 740	N/A	5 126	89

IEMS appendices will follow. They are being prepared..