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**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, HUMAN RESOURCES
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**Ad hoc Experts Group Meeting on Assessment of
Confidence Building Factors in School Curricula**

18-21 October 1993, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)

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CONFIDENCE BUILDING FACTOR IN SCHOOL CURRICULA
IN LESOTHO**

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IN LESOTHO^{1/}**

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Introduction

Lesotho is a small country completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. It has a population of 1.8 million. It is a former British colony. The education system consists of a seven-year primary cycle, three years of junior secondary and two years of senior secondary or high school. There is one teacher training college, a number of technical and vocational schools, and one university.

National Development Goals and Objectives

The first Lesotho Five-Year National Development Plan (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1970) communicated the overall development goal as the achievement of socio-economic development and economic independence. In order to achieve this, the development targets were stated as follows (pp. 23 - 24):

- (a) To attain an average annual rate of growth of gross domestic product of not less than five percent;
- (b) To achieve a marked increase in productivity in the agricultural sector;
- (c) To promote as far as possible non-agricultural productive activities, putting special emphasis on small-scale indigenous industries, and to secure the economic, legal and institutional preconditions for a self-sustained development of these activities;
- (d) To prepare for the full exploitation of the country's water and mineral resources, and in particular to carry out the first construction phase of the Malibatso River Project;
- (e) To accomplish a radical and government controlled development in education and post-school training, related to the needs for economic and social advancement of the country;
- (f) To create 10,000 - 15,000 new government employment opportunities, mainly in non-agricultural activities;
- (g) To bring about drastic changes in public administration, so as to make its functioning more economical and its structure more development oriented;

- (h) To apply a realistic and systematic localisation policy, primarily in the public sector, in accordance with the supply of qualified local personnel;
- (i) To effect a substantial improvement in social services in general and health standards in particular;
- (j) To end the dependence of the government recurrent budget on external aid;
- (k) To strengthen the economic relation and cooperation between Lesotho and other African countries and in particular with the countries of the South African Customs Union.

The above goals have basically been the same in substance in subsequent plans, with minor variations on emphasis and wording. They may be summarized as the "socio-economic transformation of the country" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1970, p. 28), mainly through the improvement of agricultural and industrial sectors.

Educational Goals, Aims and Objectives

General

With reference to education and training, the First National Development Plan states as follows:

The attainment of the development targets for the five-year period as well as of the long run objectives of socio-economic transformation of the country depend on the capability of the Basotho people to execute the development programmes. This can be secured only with education and training, which will provide in appropriate quantities and quality the skills required for economic development (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1970, p.28)

The plan stipulates the following as the objectives of education (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1970, p.164):

- (a) To gear the development of the education system to the requirements of manpower for economic development by lessening the academic bias of the system, and putting more emphasis on the teaching of science and mathematics. This involves expansion of secondary as compared with primary education. At University it implies relating

teaching to the country's needs for trained high level manpower.

- (b) To improve the efficiency of the educational system in terms of the numbers and the quality of its output and in relation to the money spent on it. This requires improvement in the training of teachers and provision of basic equipment for schools.
- (c) To use scholarships as a means of channeling individuals into those fields of training needed for economic development.
- (d) Through appropriate educational planning to strengthen Government control and supervision over all educational activities.

However, the overall guiding link between national development goals and education was the policy of education for development, which was adopted in 1971. The policy basically marked a departure from the colonial one which was "unrelated to the development of skills and aptitudes required to achieve rapid economic development and to improve the standard of living of the majority of the people" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1970, p. 163). According to the new policy,

every school, whether primary or secondary is henceforth to be seen as a workshop for a sound education embracing the intellectual, cultural, moral and physical development of a pupil or student. The truth must underlie our approach to learning with a decisive bent towards appreciation and respect for work and the acquisition of at least one skill" (Ministry of Education, 1972, p.23).

In addressing the issue of what is wanted of education, the Education Sector Survey Task Force Report provides the following empirically based answers (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1982, p.11):

- (a) Everyone should be provided the opportunity to develop competencies necessary for personal growth and social life through the provision of universal primary education;
- (b) Sufficient numbers of individuals should be provided with appropriate occupational, technical and managerial skills to ensure the country's socio-economic development;
- (c) Opportunities for continuing education should be provided through non-formal programmes in literacy, numeracy and basic skills; agriculture, community development and vocational training programmes; and in-service education in industry, government and organizations;

- (d) Education programmes should incorporate cultural values and activities that enhance individual and social development; in particular the role of the family and communities in school activities should be expanded;
- (e) There should be an active, co-operative partnership in education administration and the provision of education services between and among the churches, the government and the community.

Currently, there are two general priorities for the development of education in Lesotho. The first one is the provision of basic education for all. By basic education is meant

...those skills and competencies required for individual development and social interaction. Basic education is to be achieved in the first instance by providing for complete primary education for all children. It also implies the opportunity for continuing education for youth and adults, particularly those who have no access to formal training (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1992, p.4).

The second general priority for the development of education system is "the policy of providing sufficient numbers of people with appropriate occupational, technical and managerial skills to ensure the development of the modern sector of the economy" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1992, p.4).

Primary Education Goals and Objectives

The process of articulating specific aims and objectives of primary education began with the work of an Education Study Commission set up by Government in 1976 (Ministry of Education, 1976). In 1978 the Government, through the Ministry of Education, "went to the public to seek expressions of their aspirations through a National Education Dialogue" (Ministry of Education, 1980a, p.304). Following the Dialogue, the Government established an Education Sector Survey Task Force in 1980 with a mandate "to prepare a policy document in the field of education that could guide government in planning an education system that is appropriate to the development needs of Lesotho" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1982, p.ix). The Task Force Report, which was adopted as an education policy document up to the year 2000, recommended the following as objectives of primary education:

1. Every normal Mosotho child should complete a seven-year primary course. This course should enable each child to acquire:

- (a) An adequate standard of oral and written communication in Sesotho;
 - (b) Basic skills of reading, writing and speaking in English, as a basis for further learning;
 - (c) A sound foundation of arithmetic and the application of mathematics to practical problems;
 - (d) The ability to make careful observations, to form hypotheses, to reason, to formulate and to solve problems;
 - (e) Practical skills and manual dexterity through productive activities integrated into general studies;
 - (f) An understanding of the local, national, African and world society, with emphasis on local and national history, geography, culture and resources; and
 - (g) Knowledge and conduct related to standards of effective social living including personal and family health; ethical and religious values; and participation in civic and social affairs.
2. Primary school leavers, as far as possible, should have the opportunity of training for a decent livelihood, whether in family, wage, or self-employment.

Secondary Education Goals and Objectives

The same process for developing goals and objectives of primary education was also followed in the case of secondary education. The Education Sector Survey lists the following as the goals and objectives of secondary education in Lesotho (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1982, p.89):

- (a) To build on the primary education base the foundation required for advanced academic, vocational and professional training;
- (b) To give broad academic as well as practical and pre-vocational skills to those selected into secondary schools;
- (c) To give special emphasis to maths and science teaching, to meet the manpower needs of the country;
- (d) To give each student an opportunity to achieve the full development of his talents by providing

options for specialization;

- (e) To develop a consciousness for national objectives and a commitment to the fulfillment of national as well as personal priorities;
- (f) To encourage the spirit of co-operation and service to less privileged members of their community and to discourage a feeling of superiority; and
- (g) To provide moral instruction and the development of socially acceptable character.

Technical and Vocational Education Goals and Objectives

The general aim of technical and vocational education is to produce skills that can be employed directly "in wage or self-employment" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1982, p.99). Specifically, the objectives of this type of education are as follows (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1981, p.8):

- (a) To provide individuals with occupational, technical and managerial skills required for the country's economic advancement;
- (b) To encourage self-employment and the development of employment opportunities in the community;
- (c) To encourage students to accept responsibility for involvement in community development.

Teacher Education Goals and Objectives

The objectives of teacher training as spelled out in the Education Sector Survey Report (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1982, p. 119) indicate that the teacher should:

- (a) be able to plan and carry out learning activities based on established curriculum objectives in his field and related to the needs of the students and the environment of the area;
- (b) be able to design and use instructional materials using locally available resources and to participate in curriculum development activities;
- (c) be able to effectively monitor, assess and record students' performance and growth;
- (d) have at least one specific skill that is directly useful to the people in the area where the teacher

lives and works;

- (e) have knowledge about the social, economic and cultural conditions where one is teaching and to apply this knowledge in carrying out education activities; and
- (f) be motivated and committed to co-operating with and helping others and to have a consciousness of social needs both locally and nationally.

Major Curriculum Reforms

Primary Curriculum Reforms

The first post-independence primary curriculum reform took place in 1967. It was designed to achieve more integration in the social science and physical science areas, and also to make education more relevant to the national needs (Ministry of Education, 1967). Its instructional subjects were Sesotho, English, Mathematics, Science (Nature Study, Hygiene, Elementary Science, and Agriculture), Social Studies (Current Affairs, Geography, and History), and Skills (Music, Physical Education, Arts, Crafts, Handwork, Needlework, Handwriting, and Gardening). Further reforms, undertaken in 1980, attempted more integration, resulting in the offering of the following instructional subjects (Ministry of Education, 1980b, pp. 6-7):

- (a) Basic Communication Skills in
 - (i) Sesotho (speech, reading and writing)
 - (ii) English (speech, reading and writing);
- (b) Basic Numeracy Skills in basic Mathematics to encourage better communication and understanding of Science;
- (c) Basic Science to encourage the understanding and appreciation of environmental phenomena and ensure maintenance of good health;
- (d) Cultural Studies: Social Development Studies for awareness and appreciation of the national culture, of technology and of effective citizenship. Religious Education and Moral Instruction are an important aspect of Cultural Studies;
- (e) Practical and Creative Activities such as found in Physical Education, Traditional and other

Dances, Music, Art, Crafts, Gardening, Hygiene, Creative Movement, Creative Poetry, keeping of pets and of economically-valuable animals, Home Economics, etc.

In 1968 the system of automatic promotion was introduced as a means of reforming assessment aspect of the curriculum in order to reduce both the repetition and drop-out rates (Turner, 1968). However, the system had to be terminated in 1979 because it was misinterpreted by teachers and was not well implemented. The current reform at the primary level is the reconceptualization of basic education within the framework of the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs as derived from the 1990 World Conference on Education for All.

Secondary Curriculum Reforms

According to the Second Development Plan (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1975), "curriculum revision to restructure the content of education was the principal means proposed to implement the first objective of the (First) Plan" (p.170), namely to gear education development towards the manpower needs of the country. It further states that "at the secondary level a core curriculum was developed consisting of Mathematics, Science, Sesotho, English, Development Studies and one practical subject" (p.170).

Before and immediately following Lesotho's independence in 1966, the first three years of secondary education followed the then High Commission Territories curriculum, while the last two years followed the "O" level Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) curriculum. A continuous high failure rate at the COSC level prompted the Ministry of Education to introduce on an experimental basis a jet system in a few selected senior secondary (high) schools in Lesotho. This was a system whereby the High Commission Territories was to be abolished so that a regular four-year COSC curriculum could be offered. In 1982 a conclusion was made that the jet system experiment was not working and a decision taken that a comprehensive five-year programme be introduced. This programme involved the alignment of the secondary and high school curricula and syllabuses into a five-year programme. The resultant curriculum is as follows (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1984):

(i) For secondary level:

Group	Subjects
I. Compulsory for all students	English Language Mathematics

Sesotho
Science

2. Students choose two from
this group

History
Geography
Development Studies *
English Literature
Religious Knowledge
Additional Mathematics **
Arts and Crafts ***
Music ***
Physical Education ***

3. Students choose one from
this group

Practical Studies
a) Agriculture
b) Business
c) Home Economics
d) Technical/Vocational
Headmaster's discretion

Notes: * Not to be taken with Geography or History

** Taken only in Form C

*** Students may take only one of these. If one is taken then two subjects must be taken in
this group

(ii) For high school level:

Group

Subjects

1. Compulsory for
all students

English Language
Mathematics
Science
Sesotho

Practical Studies

2. Students choose two

Science
Additional Mathematics
History

Geography
English Literature
Development Studies
Bible Knowledge
Health Science
Art
Music
Physical Education
Practical Studies

Other on-going reforms include the localization of the high school examinations and the integration of basic education and practical skills into the school curriculum (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1987, 1992).

Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Educational Outputs

The major focus of educational reforms as described above is to achieve the two education policy priorities of providing basic education for all and producing sufficient numbers of people with appropriate occupational, technical, and managerial knowledge, skills and attitudes. Evidence shows that todate the outputs of the system do not possess these attributes (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1982, 1992).

Major Constraints and Challenges on Education

There are a number of constraints and challenges militating against the provision of basic education for all and production of appropriate manpower for development. The current Education Sector Development Plan (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1992) succinctly articulates the situation as follows:

The existing system of schooling suffers from critical problems including the decline of quality; lack of relevance to occupational and social realities; high drop-out and repeating rates; very poor facilities and staffing in primary schools; high costs to government and parents; weak management and professional supervision; and lack of effective quality control (p.4).

Measures Taken by Government (Present and Future) in Orienting Education to National Development Priorities

In general major steps that the Government is taking to orient education to national development priorities involve overcoming the constraints and challenges discussed earlier. High priority is, however, given to the provision of basic education for all, including curriculum review, provision of resources and facilities, and improvement of teaching and learning strategies. There are also plans to inject strong elements of supervision, monitoring and evaluation in the operation of the system.

General Observations in Relation to Confidence Building

A number of factors are responsible for the observable lack of confidence in curriculum design and implementation efforts in Lesotho. The following are some of them:

1. Often policy documents are not adequately distributed at the operational level. This results in teachers not being fully aware of what is expected of them in terms of relating instruction to national development.
2. Lack of clear guidelines for translating educational goals into specific objectives in order to facilitate curriculum development.
3. Colonial legacy or the influence of past experience. Here, because of a long period of dependence on colonial masters, we find it difficult to relinquish some of its long-held yet irrelevant values, attitudes and practices. This has a bearing on the design and implementation of curricula relevant to the national needs.
4. In Lesotho we are still dependent on external examining bodies at the high school level. These bodies also control the curricula, which are not designed to meet Lesotho's national development needs. Another consequence of this phenomenon is that we are sometimes used as guinea-pigs on which theories, programmes and strategies conceptualized in the West are experimented.
5. Dependence on external aid, particularly through projects. Some of the donor agencies dictate, through "aid with strings", conditions and what should be done in terms of education for development. Others follow their aid and projects with experts who run the show. In some cases this may run counter to the concept of capacity building, particularly in those

situations where such experts are concerned about meeting project deadlines and therefore having little time, if at all, to train local staff on the job.

6. Lack of resources, which leads to demoralization and reluctance to try new ideas. However, there is also a tendency to undermine the value of locally available resources.
7. A number of people who are charged with the task of educating for development are trained in the West. Since the context in which they are trained is different from the ones in which they are going to practice, they tend to feel unsafe trying to transfer knowledge.
8. Because our culture has been devalued in our education system, our aspirations are directed at something we are not completely familiar with. This leads to inferiority complex. In other words, we lack confidence in our capacity to design and implement our education system.

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