



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Basic Data

Despite progress, Lesotho is unlikely to meet the Education for All (EFA) Goals by 2015 and is ranked 103rd out of 127 countries in the EFA Development Index.

Primary Education Enrollment			Survival rate to last grade of primary		Secondary Education Enrollment			Adult Literacy (15 and over)	
M	F	GPI ¹	M	F	M	F	GPI	M	F
71%	75%	1.05	38%	56%	22%	36%	1.63	83%	95%

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report statistical tables (school year ending in 2009).

Girls' education

Although Lesotho's education system has achieved progress in raising literacy levels, major issues in terms of drop-out, student flow, quality, and equity² remain to be addressed. Throughout all levels of education, statistics show that a higher number of girls than boys are enrolled in school, a scenario that is different from most of the other Sub-Saharan countries. However, the total enrollment for girls is still very low and the enrollment of girls decreases significantly as the grades increase, indicating a very high incidence of drop-outs and a larger number of out-of-school girls. In 2009, 25% of girls at primary level and 64% at secondary level were out of school.

Women's literacy

The adult literacy rate in Lesotho is above Sub-Saharan average. According to recent statistics, 95% of women are literate compared to 83% of men.

Challenges and Issues

Despite the higher level of enrolment of girls in secondary education as well as women's high literacy rate, drop-out rates of girls remain very high. This can be attributed to social, economic, and cultural factors, such as poverty, distance from school the impact of HIV and AIDS, and teenage pregnancies.

Quality of education at secondary level also remains a challenge. According to the 2010 SACMEQ report³, girls' learning achievement in mathematics was slightly better than that of boys in 2000, but seven years later it decreased and was lower than that of boys.

Studies⁴ have shown that girls' course selection and performance at secondary education were influenced

¹The gender parity index (GPI) is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes.

²UNESCO (2012). Lesotho EFA Profile. Dakar: UNESCO.

³Saito, M (2010). SACMEQ - *Has gender equality in reading and mathematics achievement improved?*

⁴UNICEF (2003). *Report of the Gender Audit on the Education Sector*. Okwach Abagi, UNICEF.

by the persistence of traditional gender roles and cultural norms. For example, the perception that boys are good at mathematics, science and technology while girls are good at languages and home economics is widespread among teachers, parents and, consequently, male and female students. In addition, teachers and principals are often not gender-sensitive in their attitude, behaviour and teaching practices, which negatively influence the opportunities of girls' access to, retention in and completion of secondary education. There is, therefore, a serious need to pay attention to the differentiated learning processes of boys and girls, together with the promotion of increased access and participation of girls in education.

The situation also implies that access to education is not empowering girls and that gender disparities persist, not only in education but in all spheres of life, as decision-making and leadership roles continue to be reserved for men, regardless of the educational outcomes of boys.

Gender-sensitive training of teachers and school principals for girls' and women's access, participation, and advancement in mathematics, science and technology education

The project *Gender-sensitive training of teachers and school principals for girls' and women's access, participation, and advancement in mathematics, science and technology education* was initiated in March 2011, following an agreement established between UNESCO and the GEMS Foundation for a total amount of US\$ 1 million over a period of four years.

The purpose of the project is to improve girls' and women's access and advancement in the learning and teaching of sciences, mathematics and technology in Lesotho and Kenya (see also Kenya's Fact Sheet) and contribute towards the achievement of gender parity in education. Through the provision of gender-sensitive training for teachers and school principals, the project will enhance the teaching of mathematics, science, and technology using creative pedagogies. It will also reinforce the role of school leadership in promoting the participation and advancement of girls and women in scientific domains.

Involving the broader community in the programme implementation process will be one of the innovative characteristics of the approach. To this end the project will aim to identify in-school and out-of-school constraints to enrolment, participation and achievement of girls' and women in science, mathematics and technology education; empower school principals, with a focus on female principals, to assume leadership roles in addressing female teachers needs and creating linkages with decision-makers and the community; empower science, mathematics and technology teachers through acquisition of pedagogical skills (including peer review, mentoring, counseling and role models) in order to attract and ensure effective participation of girls in science, mathematics and technology.

The target beneficiaries will be teacher educators and trainers in science, mathematics and technology from the institutions providing pre-service and in-service teacher education and training; the principals of the selected schools and their deputies; teachers in charge of the teaching of mathematics, science and technology in selected secondary schools (at least five schools); trainees from teacher training institutions, and divisions responsible for teacher education, curriculum development and planning.

In Lesotho, one of the key challenges is the lack of mathematics and science teachers. In addition to ensuring teachers' gender awareness and sensitivity in scientific disciplines, the project will therefore also be aiming at contributing in enhancing qualified and effective science teachers in schools.

Following a consultative meeting in Lesotho in the second half of May 2012, the project was officially launched and implementation of activities has been initiated.

One Year On

May 2011—May 2012

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/>