

Lesotho

General

	MALES	FEMALES	YEAR
Total population under 15	317,933	314,849	2017
Total population over 15	701,498	673,256	2017

** ALL DATA FROM CIA, 2017*

Health

Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live birth	487	2015 est.	CIA, 2017
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	47.6	2016 est.	CIA, 2017
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (male)	51.2	2016 est.	CIA, 2017
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (female)	43.8	2016 est.	CIA, 2017
Under-five mortality rate for males per 1,000 live births	97.1	2012	UN Statistics, 2015
Under-five mortality rate for females per 1,000 live births	83.1	2012	UN Statistics, 2015
Births attended by a skilled health professional	78	2014	WHO, 2016
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15–49	22.7	2015	WHO, 2017
Life expectancy for men	52.9	2016 est.	CIA, 2017
Life expectancy for women	53.1	2016 est.	CIA, 2017

Education

	MALES	FEMALES	YEAR
Youth literacy rate, ages 15-24	76.98%	93.40%	2015
Adult literacy rate, ages 15+	70.07%	88.29%	2015
Net enrolment rate in primary education	78.82%	81.53%	2015
Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education	45.67%	62.04%	2015
Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education	8.04%	11.69%	2014

** ALL DATA FROM UNESCO INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS, 2017*

- Female graduates from tertiary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 61.4%
- Female students in engineering, construction and manufacturing tertiary education programs (2005) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 36.5%
- Female teachers in primary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 76.6%

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- Female teachers in secondary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 55.7%
- Female teachers in tertiary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 48.7%

Economic Activity

- Males over 15 who are active in the labour force (2014) (UN Data, 2017): 73.6%
- Females over 15 who are active in the labour force (2014) (UN Data, 2017): 59.1%
- Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution, or with a money mobile service provider (2014) (UN Statistics, 2017): 68.1%

Decision-Making

- Proportion of seats held by women in National Parliament (2011) (World Bank, 2017): 25%

Human Rights

- Girls married before 15 (2016) (UNICEF, 2016): 2%
- Females married before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2016): 19%
- Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime (UN Women, 2014): Insufficient data
- Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner or a non-partner in the last 12 months (UN Women, 2014): Insufficient data

Gender and Development Trends in Lesotho

Health

Lesotho has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world – a Medicins Sans Frontiers report notes that mortality rates in rural and isolated areas are especially high, citing “long distances to the nearest health centre, lack of transport, often impassable terrain in the winter season, as well as user fees charged at major hospitals” as key factors preventing women from accessing necessary antenatal care (MSF, June 2013).

Lesotho’s HIV prevalence is second highest in the world after Swaziland (Avert, 2017). This is said to disproportionately impact women; Lesotho’s 2014 Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS) found prevalence among women increased from 26% in 2004 to 30% in 2014, while prevalence among men remained stable at 19% over the same period (Avert, 2017; Lesotho Ministry of Health, 2014).

Education

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Lesotho has nearly 1.6 girls for every boy enrolled in secondary school – girls are also overtaking boys in both enrolment and performance in secondary and tertiary education (UNDP, 2016). Possible reasons for this may be that boys are strongly encouraged to migrate to South Africa, to work in the mines, rather than complete their education (Al Jazeera, 2016).

Economy

Laws in Lesotho do not prohibit the use of children in illicit activities; this is further complicated by a gap between the compulsory education age (13) and the minimum age for employment (15), which leaves children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour (US Department of Labour, 2015).

A 2016 Human Rights Report conducted by the U.S. State Department, found that, with the exception of inheritance rights, women in Lesotho generally enjoy the same legal status and rights as men. The report notes that “the law prohibits discrimination against women in access to employment or credit, education, pay, housing, or in owning or managing businesses” (p. 20). Both formal and customary law prohibit discrimination against women.

Governance

Women make up almost 60% of local government positions in Lesotho and the country has a greater proportion of female voters than males (UNDP, 2016).

Human Rights

Formal law in Lesotho criminalises all forms of rape, including spousal rape, and domestic violence. However, a U.S. State Department report indicates that in 2015, most incidents of sexual assault and rape went unreported to the police (U.S. State Department, 2016). The national Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU) does not compile data on domestic violence, which is purported to be widespread (U.S. State Department, 2016).

Lesotho SDG Progress Profile

- Lesotho is currently ranked 113th for overall performance under the SDGs, with a median rank of 110th.
- Lesotho has ranked 160th in the UN’s 2015 Gender Inequality Index (GII) (UNDP, 2015).

SDG 4: Achieve universal access to affordable and quality education at all levels. (Data retrieved from SDG indicator profiles, 2016)

- Expected years of schooling (years): 11.1 (significant challenges remain)
- Literacy rate of 15-24 years old (%): 83.2 (major challenges must be overcome)
- Net primary school enrolment rate (%): 79.6 (major challenges must be overcome)

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Following mandatory (and free) primary education policies implemented in 2010, Lesotho's overall net enrolment rates have increased. However, dropout rates remain high, particularly in rural areas (UNICEF, n.d.).

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality, protect and empower women, the youth and persons in vulnerable situations.

(Data retrieved from SDG indicator profiles, 2016)

- Women in national Parliaments (%): 25 (significant challenges remain)
- Female years of schooling (% male): 123.7 (SDG threshold met)
- Female labor force participation (% male): 77.4 (SDG threshold met)
- Unmet demand for contraceptives (%): 24.5 (significant challenges remain)

Women in Lesotho have held prominent positions in both government and private industry. According to a 2016 U.S. State Department report, the speaker of the National Assembly in 2015 was a woman, as was the Chief Justice, Governor of the Central Bank of Lesotho, and the Chief Executive of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority.

The same report notes that “promoting the rights of women is among the responsibilities of the Ministry of Gender, Youth, and Sports...[which has] supported efforts by women’s groups to sensitize society to respect the status and rights of women” (U.S. State Department, 2016, p.20).

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