



LESOTHO

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Key Challenges and Opportunities

1. Capacity building in a number of areas and also in skills development (see section on priorities).
2. Training in use of Moodle and Notes Master is very critical.
3. Support in the areas of Livelihoods and Health; Lesotho has not been able to participate in these areas of dire need.

Status of ODL

1. The SADC ODL Project has invested in the capacity building process for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) practitioners. Each of the key institutions has had different staff members involved in one week training of about ten different aspects of ODL. This has helped to build an ODL resource base in different sectors.
2. Draft Policy on ODL – was again revisited with more stakeholder consultations, involvement of SADC ODL project to ensure alignment with the regional policy, the draft is now at the stage of launching.
3. Council for Higher Education has established draft ODL Accreditation Criteria, ODL practitioners as key stakeholders were part of the consultation process.
4. National chapter of Distance Education Association of Southern Africa – DEASA continues to play a critical role in raising awareness for ODL. More line ministries and public sector now realise the importance of ODL.

COL Activities

1. Open Schooling/Development of OERs

- The Lesotho Distance Teaching Center (LDTC) is still involved in open school, and a team has development material to be used at open school level in print and also as online material.
- A number of Basotho nationals have participated in OERs activities sponsored by COL and we feel that an OER culture is being appreciated in many institutions. OERs are now being used especially at university level.
- In 2013, COL sponsored two LDTC officers to study with the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand to do certificate in Designing and Facilitating E-Learning.

2. **Mainstreaming Child Friendly Schools in Teacher Education**

- There is a lot of enthusiasm among teachers about the concept of child friendly schools. Following the curriculum review many schools appreciate special education and early childhood development. There has been mass production of teachers and more teachers are receiving training in special education in order to mainstream it at all levels of education.
- There is, however, still more sensitization and empowerment to be promoted not just at school level but even through COL's other programmes, like livelihoods, to promote this culture at community level.

3. **Other COL-Funded Initiatives**

- In 2012, Lesotho hosted a COL workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation. As a result about five participants from Lesotho were able to attend even though only two participants per each of the SADC-based countries of the Commonwealth were catered for.
- In 2013, the Institute of Extra Mural Studies hosted a workshop on ODL Learner Support. This workshop was fully funded by COL through the Center for Distance Education in Botswana.
- In March 2014, COL sponsored two officials from LDTC to attend a quality Assurance Policy workshop held in Zambia. The policy on quality assurance is being finalised.
- VUSSC has a great presence in Lesotho. VUSSC graduates to start the content development process, thus using the experiences gained from different boot camps.

Top Priorities for 2014 and beyond

1. Capacity building in ICT skills especially Notes Master training for teaching and learning at different level.
2. Training needed in the use of cell phone technology to support programmes in learner support.
3. More capacity building in use and development of OERs.
4. Introduction of the programme of Livelihoods and Health, relating to healthy communities, especially with the challenge of HIV in this country.
5. Use of the accreditation and standardization tool for all levels of training not just higher education.
6. Monitoring and Evaluation as a special area of need.
7. Capacity building at technical and vocational level to develop more flexible skills delivering methods.
8. Promoting human resource development in business and entrepreneurship at tertiary level (VUSSC efforts now hindered by the accreditation process taking place at tertiary level).

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