



An Exploration of Programmes Offered by Universities in Lesotho and how they Align with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), Agenda 2063 and Strategic Development Goals (SDGs)

Tawanda Mukurunge¹, Takura Bhila²

^{1,2}Academic Researcher, Senior Lecturer,

¹Communication and Media, ²Information and Communication Technology,

^{1,2}Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Maseru, Lesotho

ABSTRACT

Lesotho is an under developed economy and faces challenges of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, political instability, high poverty levels, high unemployment rate, high public expenditure, declining revenues and inequalities. The country has got three universities. This study sought to analyse the programmes offered by the universities and how they contribute to the development of the national fiscal and establish gaps that need to be filled. The study is explorative and investigative and uses qualitative analysis of the data.

Key Words: Universities` programs, NSDP, Agenda 2063, SDGs, Global citizens, Complex dynamic environment

INTRODUCTION

Education is the backbone of any country whether developing or developed. Higher education plays an even more important role as it prepares the youth or existing workforce for the working environment which is dynamic. The development, growth and long term success of any nation rests upon the talent, skills and professionals that a country can produce, attract and retain. With the right people (talented, qualified and skilled professionals), product/service and processes; a country's future and economic competitiveness can be guaranteed. The 21st century poses both challenges and opportunities to any economy whether developed or developing as it requires techno-savvy innovative talented people to keep up with the dynamic environment to facilitate and drive economic growth. "Quality education is essential for creating sustainable human resource base upon which to build a country's development" (Asia Development Bank, 2012).

"According to Partnership for 21st century skills' resources and policy guide (2008) creating an aligned 21st century education system that prepares students, workers and citizens to triumph in the global skills race is the central economic competitiveness issue for the next decade". Today's global village is driven by technology and innovation, knowledge, intense competition, new innovative products/services, risks and opportunities, complex political, economic, social, environmental and legal environments. New and futuristic thinking and updated practices are required to ensure students have access to quality education.

Lesotho is an under developed economy and faces a lot of challenges including the HIV/AIDS pandemic, political instability, high poverty levels, high unemployment rate, high public expenditure, declining revenues and inequalities between the poor and rich. Migration to South Africa by male Basotho to work in the mines and now women also working in the informal sector has been on the rise over the years and "Lesotho's economy continues to depend quite significantly on migrant remittances from the mines" (International Organization for Migration for Southern Africa, n.d)

Why align higher education programmes to strategy/policy

1. High unemployment rates in Lesotho (above 25%)
– This can result in social and economic unrest as has happened in South Africa with xenophobic attacks.
2. Fundamental changes in the economy and business; for example, less agricultural production, rural to urban migration, increase in

information(internet), knowledge and innovation, increase in the service economy, and increase in the production of information products and services (computers, e-books and e-journals, televisions, software's, and access to information).

3. New different skills set demand

The NSDP has prioritized 4 sectors although not neglecting the others, to create high, shared, and employment generating growth in agriculture, manufacturing, mining and tourism. Tertiary institutions need to respond to the demands for the targets to be achieved. To achieve growth in the economy, these industries need highly skilled workers who produce products and/or services that the market require.

Government Involvement in Higher Education

The Government of Lesotho (GoL) acts as a facilitator in all levels of the educational system. The public primary school is free and compulsory in all public schools as the GoL works towards achieving Education for All (EFA) goals. Most of the tertiary students in Lesotho are sponsored by the government for their tuition and monthly subsistence allowances. As long as a student can meet the entry requirements required by tertiary institutions; regardless of their background, the government will sponsor them. Therefore schools and tertiary institutions are places of learning and can incorporate sustainable principles in all their processes and operations. As shown in the figure below, a whole-institution approach is necessary in order to produce global citizens with knowledge who can work anywhere in the world. This leads to “incorporating sustainability into all aspects of the educational institutions. This involves rethinking the curriculum, campus operations, organizational culture, student participation, leadership and management, community relationships and research” (UNESCO, 2014).

FIGURE 1: The Whole-Institution Approach
(ADAPTED FROM UNESCO 2014A, 89)



PROBLEM STATEMENT

Currently Lesotho produces many graduates who after graduation remain unemployed for long periods of time. The unemployment rate is above 25% and every year higher education institutions including universities continue to graduate thousands of students which the labour market is unable to absorb. This study provides a direction on the kinds of things required in the academic fraternity and to develop the full potential of Basotho. The education system thus requires transformation to its programs to respond to the skills needed by our country.

Basic literacy rate for the nation of Lesotho is 88% yet the economy is categorized as underdeveloped. The problem of the poor status of the country therefore has got nothing to do with illiteracy but obviously with the kind of curricular offered in institutions of learning. This study therefore seeks to establish where the curricular has got the problem and how this is in alignment with the global strategic development goals as well as the Lesotho national strategic development plan.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the programs offered by universities in Lesotho and see how they align with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), Agenda 2063 and Strategic Development Goals (SDGs).
- To find the gaps that the existing universities can be able to fill up as an opportunity to grow and contribute to national development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the programs offered by the three universities in Lesotho?
2. Do these programs align with the three strategies – NSDP, Agenda 2063 and SDGs?
3. Identify the gaps in the market and what the universities can provide to fill the gaps it performs locally and at national level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review: The Theory of Sustainable Development

“Sustainable development can be defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, (Kates et. al., 2005). According to Reed, “Sustainable development is people centered in that it aims to improve the quality of human life, and it is conservation based in

that it is conditioned by the need to respect nature's capacity to provide resources and life supporting services. – the quality of human life is improved while living within the carrying capacity of supporting systems". It embraces the closely interdependent three general aspects: environmental, economic and social.

Economic dimension of "sustainability requires that society pursue economic growth paths that generate true income, not short-term policies that lead to long term impoverishment; requiring that organizations internalize all costs (including the societal and environmental costs associated with the production and disposition of goods thereby implementing the full cost principle. The social component requires that for a development path to be sustainable over a long period of time, wealth, resources, and opportunity

must be shared in such a manner that all citizens have access to minimum standards of security, human rights, and social benefits, such as food, education, shelter and opportunities for self development; and it also demands the active participation of all social sectors. The environmental aspect advocates maintaining the long term integrity and therefore productivity of the planet's life-support systems and environmental infrastructure. Using these 3 components of sustainable development should converge in such a way as to generate a steady stream of income, ensure social equity, pursue socially agreed upon population levels, maintain man-made and natural capital stocks, and protect the life-giving services of the environment", table below illustrates the six concepts of sustainability.

Table 2.1: Sustainability's main six concepts

1.	A sustainable state is one in which utility (or consumption) is non-declining through time.
2.	A sustainable state is one in which resources are managed so as to maintain production opportunities for the future.
3.	A sustainable state is one in which the natural capital stock is non-declining through time.
4.	A sustainable state is one in which resources are managed so as to maintain a sustainable yield of resources services.
5.	A sustainable state is one which satisfies minimum conditions of ecosystem stability and resilience through time.
6.	Sustainable development as capacity and consensus building

Source: Perman et. al. (1999)

Empirical Literature Review

Hutchings (2016) when a program seriously engages in the Tuning process, the results can be astounding in a positive way as was experienced at the Utah State University (USU) on its history students. Changes were made on course evaluations (incorporating self-assessment), and assignments more closely tied to the learning outcomes. However, pedagogical and curricular reform to happen, it requires patience and tenacity as changes occur slowly in small steps.

According to the Institutional Management in Higher Management (IMHE) Report (2012) "fostering quality teaching is a multi-level endeavor and takes place in three essential inter-dependant levels:

- At the institution-wide level: including projects such as policy design, and support to organization and internal quality assurance systems.
- Programme level: comprising actions to measure and enhance the design, content and delivery of the programmes within a department or school.
- Individual level: including initiatives that help teachers achieve their mission, encouraging them to innovate and to support improvements to student learning and adopt a learner-oriented focus".

A wide range of activities are required for quality teaching to be experienced which include:

- Establishing "a centre for teaching and learning development"

- “Professional development activities (e.g. In-service training for faculty)”
- “Teaching excellence awards and competitions for remarkable improvements”
- “Teaching innovation funds”
- “Teaching recruitment criteria”
- “Support to innovative pedagogy”
- “Communities of teaching and learning practices”
- “Learning environments (libraries, computing facilities....)”
- “Organization and management of teaching and learning”
- “Support to IMHE (2012)”

METHODOLOGY

This study makes use of qualitative analysis as it is investigative in nature. This is suitable for this study as there is need for in-depth information which is provided by qualitative data. Lesotho has 19 tertiary registered institutions but only 3 are universities. The data for this study was collected from all the 3 universities in Lesotho “National University of Lesotho” (NUL), “Limkokwing University of Creative Technology” (LUCT) and “Botho University” BU. Programs offered by the universities are tabled in the results below. Interviews to management and group focus interviews were conducted to gather data on long term plans/goals of the universities, staff development plans and issues of short courses.

RESULTS

TABLE 3.1: PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE NUL

Faculty	Programmes	Duration:	
		Direct Entrants	Indirect Entrants
Agriculture	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture	4years	3 years
	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Agricultural Economics)	4years	3 years
	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Agricultural Extension)	4years	3 years
	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Animal Science)	4years	3 years
	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Crop Science)	4years	3 years
	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Soil Science)	4years	3 years
	Bachelor of Science in Consumer Sciences	4years	3 years
Education	Diploma in Agricultural Education	3 years	
	Bachelor of Education	4years	3 years
	Bachelor of Science in Education	4years	3 years
	Bachelor of Education (Primary)	4 years Part-time	
Health Sciences	Bachelor of Science in General Nursing and Midwifery	5 years	

The above table shows that NUL has 7 faculties and offers over 60 programmes with a duration of 3 -5years. For the part -time programmes, NUL offers 5 programmes as shown in the table below.

(NUL: Institute of Extra Mural studies (IEMS))

Programmes are offered on a part-time basis for the working class where classes are after hours and at the weekends

TABLE 3.2: NUL- IEMS PROGRAMMES

Programmes	Duration
Diploma In Adult Education	3 years
Bachelor of Education (Adult Education)	4 years
Diploma in Management	3 years
BA in Business and Entrepreneurship	4 years
Diploma in Mass Communication	4 years

Limkokwing University of Creative Technology has 6 faculties offering 28 programmes which are all full time and their duration is either 3 or 4 years.

TABLE 3.3: LUCT PROGRAMMES

Faculty	Programmes	Duration
Business Management and Globalisation	Associate Degree (AD) in Business Management	3 years
	AD in Retail Management	3 years
	AD in Marketing Management	3 years
	Bachelor of Business (Hons) in International Business	4 years
	Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Entrepreneurship	4 years
	BA Hons in Human Resource Management	4 years
Information and Communication Technology	AD in Multimedia and Software Engineering	3 years
	AD in Business Information Technology	3 years
	BSc (Hons) in Information Technology	4 years
	BSc (Hons) in Business Information Technology	4 years
	BSc (Hons) in Software Engineering in Multimedia	4 years
Architecture and Built Environment	AD in Architecture Technology	3 years
	BA in Interior Architecture	4 years
Creativity in Tourism and Hospitality	AD in Tourism Management	3 years
	AD in International Tourism	3 years
	AD in Hotel Management	3 years
	BA (Hons) in Tourism Management	4 years
Design and Innovation	AD in Graphic Design	3 years
	AD in Fashion and Apparel Design	3 years
	AD in Creative Advertising	3 years
	BA (Hons) in Fashion Design and Retailing	4 years
	Bachelor of Design (Hons) in Professional Design	4 years
Communication, Media and Broadcasting	AD in Events Management	3 years
	AD in Journalism	3 years
	AD in Broadcasting (Radio and Television)	3 years
	BA (Hons) in Professional Communication	4 years
	BA (Hons) in Broadcasting and Journalism	4 years
	BA (Hons) in Digital Film	4 years

The recently opened Botho University offers only 9 programmes under 3 faculties.

TABLE 3.4: BOTHO UNIVERSITY

Faculty	Programmes	Duration
Business and Accounting	BSc (Hons) in Business Management	4 ½ years
	BSc (Hons) in Accounting	4 ½ years
	BSc (Hons) in Finance	4 ½ years
Computing	BSc (Hons) in Computing	4 ½ years
	BSc (Hons) in Network Security and Computer Forensics	4 ½ years
	Bsc (Hons) in Mobile Computing	4 ½ years
Education and Distance Learning	B Ed (Hons) In Primary Education	4 ½ years
	BSc (Hons) in Health Information Management	4 ½ years
	Master of Education in Higher Education (Distance)	2 years

Most students are locals who are sponsored by Manpower for their universities studies and allowances. All the universities have industry advisors on their boards so as to keep up to date with what is happening in the market place. Most of the lecturers are qualified with Masters and PhD degrees.

An overview of the strategies – NSDP, Africa Agenda 2063 and SDGs

The three policies are all inter-related. The goals or strategies of these policies are inter-dependent and when there is improvement in one area, it can lead to increase in other related sectors. The NSDP succeeded the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP). NSDP II is still in the progress of being formulated and it is a review of NSDP I which had the main goals as:

- “Pursue high, shared and employment creating economic growth”
- “Develop key infrastructure”
- “Enhance the skills base, innovation and technology adoption for accelerated development”
- “Improve health combat HIV and AIDS and reduce vulnerability”
- “Reverse environmental degradation and adapt to climate change” and
- “Build effective institutions and promote peace and democratic governance”

Some challenges highlighted in the NSDP facing Lesotho are poverty, poor health, high mortality, low employment and productivity, low life expectancy, brain drain, vulnerability to negative external and natural shocks, rural to urban migration. Goal number iii above shows that Lesotho can take advantage of its large young labour force and train it with relevant skills including entrepreneurship to develop the nation.

Most of the students in universities are sponsored by manpower and 40% of the education budget is for students' tuition and subsistence allowances.

Alignment of the above strategies with the educational institutions strategy

The above three strategies all have many commonalities and alignment by educational institutions is taking advantage of the opportunities in the local, regional and global communities which would in turn enhance growth and long-term competitiveness of these institutions. A closer look at all the strategies shows the importance of education and the crucial role it can play in achieving most of the goals. An educated society which includes women and youth addresses poverty issues zero hunger (SDGs), increasing employment (NSDP and Agenda 2063), and environmental sustainability (NSDP, Agenda 2063 & SDGs). Thus, these three strategies are inter-related and the achievement of them are all inter-dependent on education especially higher education provision.

According to the SDG Report, companies that align their “strategy with the SDGs are able to use the SDGs as a framework to steer, communicate and report their vision, strategy, goals and activities, and as a result yield the benefit of a range of benefits related to identification of future business opportunities related to specific SDGs; and meeting stakeholder expectations and future policy direction at national, regional, and international level”.

Education Statistics: Higher Education Institutions in Lesotho (HEIs)

According to the 2014 Education Statistics, they were 14 HEIs of which 9 were public institutions. A total of

24 073 students were enrolled at HEIs in the academic year 2012/13 and 58.6% were females while 41.4% were male. The table below shows enrolment by type of institution:

TABLE 3.5: ENROLMENT BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION 2012/2013

	Type of Institution		Total	Percentage
Sex	Public	Private	Total	Percentage
Male	8 338	1 621	9 959	41.4
Female	12 214	1 900	14 114	58.6
Total	20 552	3 521	24 073	100
Total (%)	85.4	14.6	100	

TABLE 3.6: ENROLMENT BY INSTITUTION AND SEX 2012/2013

Institution	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
NUL	3 893	6 362	10 255	42.6
LUCT	1 500	1 484	2 984	12.4
Other HEIs	4 566	6 268	10 834	45.0
Total	9 959	14 114	24 073	100
Total (%)	41.4	58.6	100	

Enrollment and percentage change from 2011/2012 to 2012/2013 for NUL was -9.75% and for LUCT -3.31% and total enrollment went down by 5.6%. Currently NUL and Botho are the universities offering postgraduate studies of which Botho currently offers only 1 Masters of Education in Higher education by distance learning. In the academic year 2012/2013 majority of students were pursuing Education (34.8%) and Social Sciences (29.8%); followed by Engineering; and Health and Welfare. Females dominated in Social Sciences and their male counterparts dominated in Science related fields such as Computing, Science, Agriculture, Engineering and Construction.

Usually not all the students that enroll in a programme pass or graduate at the end. Some may fail, withdraw or may not complete the final examinations. In 2012/2013 academic year, 83.9% students passed or graduated while 15.1% and 1% either withdrew or did not complete the examinations. 95.0% of HEIs staff in the academic year 2012/2013 were Basotho and 5.0% were Non-Basotho. The staff members who were Non-Basotho were from Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa and Nigeria. Four of the HEIs had no foreign staff members.

DISCUSSION

TABLE 4.1: SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Name of Institution	NUL	LUCT	Botho
Year established		2008	2015
No. of Faculties	7	6	4
Total number of Programmes		28	9
Full time Programmes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Part-Time	Yes	-	-
Distance Education	-	-	Yes
Post graduate programmes	Yes	-	Yes
Staff Members who are Non-Basotho	Yes	Yes	Yes
Short Courses	-	-	-

The Common faculties in all of the 3 institutions have an Information and Technology (IT) or Computing Faculty and that of Business Management, demands of entrepreneurs and or intrapreneurs is on the rise as many countries including Lesotho need the skills of these people because of high unemployment rates.

Although most of the lecturers are qualified, they lack teaching skills hence there is need to empower lecturers with appropriate teaching qualifications to ensure that they deliver and produce the best students for the industry. Many of the students in these institutions are locals who are sponsored by the government through Manpower and this is a good move by the GoL to improve its human capital. However, there is need to ensure payments/collections are made by the graduated working students to ensure sustainability and continued support to all generations. High turnover of academic staff usually because of low salaries of staff in all the universities is experienced to the private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other institutions. It should also be noted that Lesotho is one of the countries in the world with high rates of Pay As You Earn (P.A.Y.E) and net income for employees becomes even higher as the salary increases as they use a system equity considerations where those earn less are not taxed much and those who earn more are taxed more.

Professionals and highly skilled managers are dearly needed in Lesotho especially in the prioritized sectors by the NSDP. For the gaps that local universities cannot fill, partnerships with regional HEIs can help alleviate gaps in the labour market. As Lesotho has partnered with the University of Zimbabwe to train doctors for the health sector and with universities in South Africa for training in the mining sector, this is a good move as the local universities are still new especially the private universities and as they build and grow their campus the possibilities are endless. Investment in advanced information and communication technology by all the universities should be used as an opportunity by the universities to link regionally and globally with other universities thereby ensuring graduates have the necessary generic cross-cultural competencies and communication skills; and universities can learn from others by collaborations in research. Policy by the GoL through the Ministry of Higher Education becomes a notable index in integrating sustainable development of educational learning settings to provide relevant and

sound policies. As a facilitator, the Ministry of higher education should ensure that tertiary institutions are up to date with current sustainability challenges in Lesotho. However, when coming up with policies, to ensure buy-in and inclusivity; the GoL should involve all stakeholders like “private sector, local communities, academics and civil society” in the policy development process.

All the institutions currently do not provide short-tem courses yet they have the capacity to do so. Provision of short courses would empower and up-date the skills of existing workforce thereby supporting cooperatives, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), NGOs and worker-initiated trainings.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to create a properly focused education environment that educates graduates to be all rounded in their different workplaces with a competitive edge and this requires forward thinking leadership from national and local policy makers, and management of the universities institutions to respond to changes in the environment. The NSDP 2012/13 – 2016/17 noted that tertiary institutions “to be transformed so that they can provide world class competencies and entrepreneurial skills”. Educators are powerful agents as they can help by being responsive to changes and this is a requirement when the goal is to achieve the goals in all the three strategies (NSDP, Agenda 2063 and SDGs). Lecturers and teachers from all educational levels need to be aware of these strategies hence training of trainers is important.

Investment in higher education will help develop Lesotho to a growing economy. Government of Lesotho (GoL) has provided support for improving higher education systems especially by providing financial support to Basotho both for local and regional studies. Higher education reform should be pursued that are empower students with skills and knowledge especially given the graduates' unemployability locally and regionally. The number of HEIs in Lesotho is increasing at a faster pace posing better economic development in future. Alignment of programmes by HEIs to the strategies will ensure that the required skills are available in the industries/sectors and the universities have the capacity to provide most of the programmes demanded. As Lesotho has partnered with the University of Zimbabwe to train doctors for the health sector and with universities in South Africa for

training in the mining sector. This study thus recommends that policy makers, education officials, educators, curriculum developers and others must “rethink education in order to contribute to achievement of goals” set in the NSDP, Agenda 2063 and SDGs.

This study only focus on the 3 universities because of time and resources, there is need for a study of all the 19 tertiary institutions to see their programmes and their alignment to national, regional and international strategies. A look at the programmes also is necessary to check if curricula are incorporating sustainable development. There is also need “to establish a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning” thereby tertiary institutions will be able to provide programmes that are occupationally-directed.

REFERENCES

1. 2014 Education Statistics Report, Statistical Report No. 28:2015, Bureau of Statistics, Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho
2. Asian Development Bank. (2012). Improving Transitions: From School to University to Workplace, Higher Education in Dynamic Asia, Philippines, www.adb.org
3. International Organisation for Migration: Briefing Note on HIV and Labour Migration in Lesotho, Pretoria, South Africa. www.iom.org.za
4. Hutchings P. (2016). Aligning Educational Outcomes and Practices, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, Occasional Paper #26, Pretoria, South Africa. www.learningoutcomesassessment.org
5. Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) Pamphlets on Business Management and Globalization, Architecture and Built Environment, Creativity in Tourism and Hospitality, Design and Innovation 2017
6. National Skills Development Strategy III, Ministry of Higher Education and Training, Republic of South Africa.
7. National Strategic Development Plan 2012/13 – 2016/17 “Towards an accelerated and sustainable economic and social transformation” Government of Lesotho, Ministry of Development Planning 2014
8. National University of Lesotho Student Information Booklet 2017/2018
9. Perman R., Ma Y., McGilvary J. and Common M. (1999). Natural Resources and Environmental Economics, 2nd Edition, Pearson Education Limited, Great Britain.
10. Programmes Booklet 2016 Botho University
11. Prospectus 2017 Botho University
12. UNESCO. (2014). Shaping the Future We Want: UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014), Final Report. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002301/230171e.pdf>
13. United Nations Development Group. (2015). Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Interim Reference Guide for UN Country Teams