Changing Pedagogy, Curriculum Development and Education Management Systems

Hon. Makabelo Mosothoane
Minister of Education & Training, Lesotho
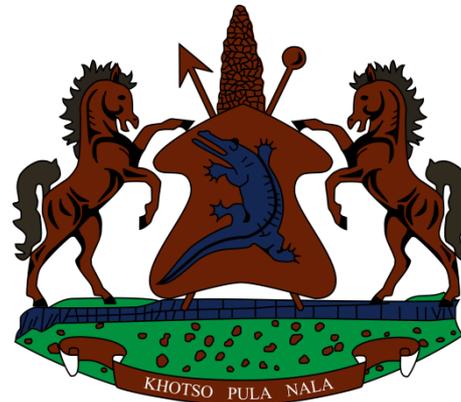
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN LESOTHO

Hon. Minister of Education and Training

'Makabelo Mosothoane MP

THE LESOTHO CONTEXT

1. *CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT*

2. *EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN LESOTHO*

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and the Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL) has embarked on the process of overhauling the whole curriculum and assessment for Basic Education by:

Developing a Curriculum and assessment strategies in Lesotho.

This paradigm shift is necessitated by the newly developed **Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009,** to develop all instructional materials at the level of basic education and secondary education.

In Lesotho, Basic Education covers the first ten years of schooling (6-15year olds)

Whereas, Secondary Education is equivalent to O 'level (16-17 year olds) before tertiary education

The aims of Curriculum and Assessment policy (C&A)

The aims of this framework, to mention but a few, is to:

- Determine the nature and direction of the national curriculum and its objectives
- Monitor quality, relevance and efficiency of basic and secondary education
- Address emerging issues pertaining to the new demands, practices and life challenges of modern global world
- Integrate curriculum and assessment functions so as to strike the balance between the two and avoid excessive paper-pencil nature of the examinations, Traditional way.
- Propose a fully localised secondary education curriculum and assessment

Curriculum Organisation

Learning Area

The new arrangement has reduced the number of subjects from twelve to four units per grade. Curriculum is organised around learning areas, curriculum aspects, and core competencies. There are five:

Learning Area:

1. Linguistic and Literary;
2. Numerical and Mathematical;
3. Personal Spiritual and Social;
4. Scientific and Technological;
5. Creativity and Entrepreneurial

curriculum aspects:

1. Effective communication;
2. Awareness of self and others;
3. Environmental adaptation and sustainable development;
4. Health and Healthy Living;
5. Production and work-related competencies

core competencies

1. Effective communication;
2. Awareness of self and others;
3. Environmental adaptation and sustainable development;
4. Health and Healthy Living;
5. Production and work-related competencies

Units within the Ministry

Within NCDC, Curriculum aspects and core competencies into units/themes are:

- About myself
- How I relate to others
- The world around me
- Looking after myself

There was also a felt need in the integration with "windows" to reinforce the integrated curriculum and ensures that learners reach the expected level of functional literacy and numeracy

Assessment Strategies

- C&A advocates a Paradigm shift from "assessment of learning" to "assessment for learning".

    Assessment for learning is used by teachers for diagnosis of learners' difficulties to identify areas requiring remediation or extra attention.

- C&A policy has introduced continuous assessment (CASS).

    This is an on going system of monitoring and assessing learner's progress closely integrated with teaching and learning process and supports learning. CASS is a formative assessment carried out at school level through daily classroom teaching.

Other issues taken on board in curriculum development

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

This is another initiative by the MOET which was introduced in 2007 in selected schools for (9-15 year olds)

A consultant has been engaged to assist in the revision of all the instructional materials in the form of syllabi, teachers' guides, and learners books.

Language issue

C&A policy recognises the pluralism of Basotho nation and the existence of other languages besides the official languages of Sesotho and English.

- *Policy asserts that mother tongue will be used as a medium of instruction from grade 1-3.*
- ***Sign language** also forms an integral part of the issue of language in order to ensure access to information and effective communication for all the learners.*
- ***French** has also been introduced as a foreign language in the last three years of basic education since 2010. French is considered to be one of the internationally recognised languages globally.*

  Negotiations are underway to adapt French curriculum and assessment for secondary level.

Localisation

The MOET has decided to localise curriculum and assessment for secondary education in phases.

The first grouping of subjects have already been adapted

Included in the curriculum is the basic computer literacy which is taught in only some 50 high schools in urban area.

At the **Lesotho College of Education** we have the Microsoft School Technology Centre for the training of both in-service and pre-service teachers.

Other projects such as **SchoolNet** and **NEPAD e-school** are also involved in training of teachers.

Our Challenges

- High cost of Curriculum Implementation.

- Teachers' professional development programme.

- Appropriateness of Teaching and Learning materials.

- Resistance to change by teachers and parents.

- Alignment of curriculum in tertiary institutions to socio-economic needs.

The way forward

- Soliciting funding for curriculum development implementation

- Embarking in teachers' development programme.

- Reward and punish teachers.

- Get parents to buy in the implementation of culturally sensitive topics.

- Introduce French at secondary level (COSC).

- Localisation of secondary education curriculum and assessment.

- Partnership with public and private sector for students employability.

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN LESOTHO

At the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), we understand that running an Education Management Information System (EMIS) system is complex and complicated, and has become more so due to tighter budgets and increased country's mandates. But while we can't change the scope of our operations, we can significantly change how efficiently our educational entitiesare managed.

We always ask ourselves:

What are the best practices for implementing education management information systems (EMIS) to improve planning, organizational efficiencies, data collection and analysis, information sharing and transparency in the education sector to help meet objectives related to the Millennium Development Goals?

The Lesotho Context

The Lesotho Government believe that in countries struggling to meet education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, which have great needs related to data collection, analysis and dissemination, but limited experience with and capacity for the effective use of EMIS, these EMISs should accommodate the local environment; so that they are not imposed by donors as control mechanisms, but as tools for learning and effective planning.

We also believe that *(EMIS) is an important tool to improve planning, organizational efficiencies, data collection and analysis, information sharing and transparency in the education sector, in addressing the objectives related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*

Challenges implementing EMIS

- Develop a web-based solution for EMIS

- Major capacity development and the provision of new equipment for enhanced ICT infrastructure

- Dissemination of information

- Alignment of the policy of decentralisation with the collection and analysis of education data at the district level.

- Manual collection of accurate data by well trained staff.

Other Challenges

- The gap between planning and implementation, or theory and practice, is very large and there is evidence to suggest that the EMIS system is characterised by a number of systemic and capacity issues. One of the main systemic issues is the lack of support or commitment from the district offices or the schools to the process of data collection and analysis. Part of the problem stems from their lack of capacity, both in terms of **skilled personnel and equipment.**

- Another significant problem identified is the apparent **lack of articulation between the donors and the Ministry** in terms of their support for data collection initiatives.

- A final concern of the present EMIS unit is the anticipated **lack of mechanism of dissemination**. There is a lot of useful information but in many cases, no strategy developed for dissemination.

Way Forward

Despite the short-comings identified above, EMIS in Lesotho is expected to provide a number of important policy lessons for the Ministry to embark on the process of decentralising their educational system.

The government is aware of these limitations and has started to tackle them through a revised strategic plan for EMIS. This strategy is based on a carefully designed needs analysis and contains a number of guidelines.

At the Ministry of Education and training, we believe EMIS plays an important role in helping to formulate strategic policies, develop operational plans and monitor subsequent progress towards pre-defined targets.

- *The EMIS unit will be setup and works in conjunction with other units to carry out these activities.*
- *The relationship between them will be simple, namely EMIS provides data to these units and they in turn undertakes the analysis and produces performance and monitoring reports for the Ministry. The EMIS unit and others will report to the Ministry of Education and Training.*

The Council for Higher Education (CHE)

- The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) also collects and analyses data from tertiary institutions.

- As a result of these various educational reforms the EMIS unit will be in the process of transformation, reflecting its new functions. Under these proposed changes an EMIS management committee will be established within the Ministry and this will contain representatives from different operational units, including NCDC, LCE, LP, NUL, LAC and others. This will help improve coordination of data provision and subsequent dissemination

- At the international level, Lesotho participates in SACMEQ which uses EMIS.

Rationale behind this approach

- The rationale behind this approach is that through using EMIS stakeholders will be able to monitor progress of policies towards defined targets and to take appropriate action, if required, to ensure that polices are successfully implemented.

- At the national level the EMIS unit plays an important role in helping the Lesotho Education Services to formulate operational plans and also monitor progress towards achieving such plans.

  However, at the district level EMIS is also expected to play an important role in supporting the whole process of decentralised planning.

  Under this process of decentralisation the MoET would retain responsibility for overall policy, teacher training, curriculum development and the monitoring of policy but the districts would take responsibility for their own operational plans based on accurate and up-to-date information obtained from EMIS.

Thank you