PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The philosophy of education in Lesotho has evolved as a direct response to socio-economic challenges of the times over many years and generations. The foregoing aspects that form the core in formulating a philosophy of education were captured in the report on the *Views and Recommendations of the Basotho Nation Regarding the Future of Education in Lesotho of 1978*. Education should therefore provide technological skills to learners in responding to individual and social needs. In pursuing the educational aspirations, the currently emerging issues such as HIV and AIDS, gender equity, human rights and democracy, and others should be integrated within the educational process in a dynamic and evolving nature. In its entirety education provision must be geared towards enhancing self-realization, developing better human relationships, promoting individual as well as national efficiency and effective citizenship, developing national consciousness and national unity.

LANGUAGE POLICY

While acknowledging, as the Lesotho Constitution states, that Sesotho and English are the two official languages, and in recognition of the fact that there are other languages besides Sesotho and English, mother tongue will be used as a med um of instruction up to class 3 while English will be taught as a subject at this and other levels. From grade 4 English shall begin to be used as a medium of instruction and to be taught as a subject as well. The rationale behind this is that English shall cease to be an impediment to further learning and success. However, limitations in English language proficiency become a stumbling block towards orienting Basotho to see themselves as global citizens and participating in the development of policies and trends that affect their lives. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that literacy is developed to its most effective to serve the needs of children who do not have the best access to it.

With respect to "Linguistic and Literary", the policy states that the curriculum should be able to, among other key areas, set the foundations of language and its usage. It states that language is a medium through which all learning areas can be adequately and effectively delivered because it promotes effective communication in all its forms. The policy states that the language and literacy curriculum should develop:

> • acquisition and understanding of linguistic skills necessary for effective communication in different contexts,
> • application of linguistic, creative and other skills in promoting literary works for socioeconomic Development because while education should address national aspirations, globalization exerts tremendous pressure on curriculum systems. Education systems should therefore take on the challenge of balancing national needs and globalization.

Integrated curriculum organization

The emerging trend towards knowledge production and problem solving is interdisciplinary, seeing life as an integrated whole with no distinctive compartments as reflected by various disciplines of knowledge. This approach recognizes that the learner is part of a community and that learning should take into account everyday experiences of learners. School life should thus be integrated with community life and

that of the individual learner. This perspective does not negate or undermine the contribution of academic subjects in provision of knowledge, but rather advocates flexible use of knowledge beyond superficial understanding of isolated events. Thus curriculum integration organizes education to a more manageable and relevant approach. Two major strategies have been identified as best practices that may be adopted to produce the desired results namely; curriculum aspects and learning areas. Curriculum aspects highlight the life challenges and contexts in which the learner is expected to function as an individual and a member of the society. Learning areas indicate body of knowledge necessary to equip the learners with competencies necessary to address their life challenges. As good as this looks on paper it is however quite difficult to translate it to something doable and applicable. As such teachers and teaching administration encounter stumbling blocks in terms of implementation and assessment.

Assessment

Assessment should evaluate the attainment of educational and curriculum aims of educational programs at all levels. Thus there is need to broaden the modes of assessment to include the following: *Formative assessment* which comprises both diagnostic and continuous assessment/ classroom based assessment, *monitoring of educational progress* through national educational assessment carried out at regular intervals; and *summative assessment* (which usually tests mostly cognitive domain) for selection and certification purposes.

This aspect can be enhanced through more practical testing methods centered on what students create for themselves versus recreating only what they learned in the classroom.

Pedagogy

The framework calls for radical approaches to teaching which could be summarized as follows:

Pedagogy must shift more towards methods that can develop creativity, independence and survival skills of learners. In essence learners should assume greater responsibility for their own learning processes but where does this leave the role of the teacher and parents as the most significant stakeholders in students' learning? Therefore, the new trend should be a move from teaching (spoon-feeding so to speak) to facilitating learning; from transfer of facts to student construction of knowledge; from memorization of information to analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application of information; from knowledge acquisition to development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; from categorized knowledge (traditional subjects) to integrated knowledge (broader learning areas); from didactic teaching to participatory, activity-centered and interactive methodologies.

In order to see that these are accomplished the policy itself states that: "To achieve the national educational aspirations and ensure successful learning, it is important to select knowledge and ideas to be learned carefully, bearing in mind the provision of necessary balance, the appropriate context and ideal perspective. In addition, the selected knowledge should be planned and organized in a manner that will foster commitment and motivation among all those entrusted with the success of the learning process, including the learners themselves. It should create enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the learning process." A theory that will do us a world of good if strategically and effectively put into place. As it stands the gap between policy and implementation with regards to language and literacy is

large and mostly strained due to excessive bureaucracy, resistance to change, little experimentation and lack of professional development.