

# Financing Distance Education: Case Study of Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre, Southern Africa

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## **Abstract**

This paper reports the results of a study aimed at finding out the financial status of the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC), Lesotho, a tiny country surrounded by South Africa. The Centre provides basic, junior and senior school certificate programmes and has been in existence since 1974 under the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). The objectives were to study the funding pattern, income and expenditure, and the effectiveness of the management to reap economy of scale and achieve the planned activities within the given budget. Budget documents were analysed, and the officials at the MOET and LDTC (N = 13) were provided a questionnaire and were interviewed toward collection and analysis of data. The results of the study indicate: reduced student intake (except for basic education), decrease in financial support especially from the government, increase in non-academic expenses, and lack of initiatives and efficiency in resource mobilisation and efficient resource deployment. Implications have been drawn for further organisation and management of the centre and of distance education in the country, which may be of help to other distance teaching institutions elsewhere..

## **Key Words**

Distance education funding, Lesotho distance teaching centre, distance education management

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## Introduction

During the past few decades, there have been considerable developments in open and distance learning in many developing countries. The African continent has the oldest institutional provision for distance higher and further education in the globe. The spurge in the open schooling system is a phenomenon of the last part of the twentieth century (Daniel, 2010), and considerable progress has been made in respect of open schooling and open basic education in the African continent at school level and higher education.

Lesotho, like other African countries, is also striving towards expanding educational opportunities through distance education. To appreciate the current status of open and distance learning in Lesotho, one needs to trace the early educational developments in the country.

During the last part of the 1970s, the Lesotho government through the Ministry of Education realized that not every Mosotho has full opportunities of accessing tertiary education. It then established the Institute of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS) of the National University of Lesotho whereby the Basotho would access tertiary education through the distance mode (NUL Calendar 1988-89). The Open Distance Learning (ODL) Policy of Lesotho (MET, 2008) reveals that after the establishment of the former National Teacher Training College (NTTC), the Distance Teacher Education Program (DTEP) was launched in 2001 as a distance learning program of study for teachers. This program responds to the material needs for improvement in the quality and quantity of the primary school teachers. Therefore, this transformation eventually led to an increase in the number of ODL practitioners in the country.

Furthermore, ODL practitioners are also the members of the regional level Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA). At the national level there is the National Association of Open and Distance Education of Lesotho (NAODE). Both the associations bring ODL practitioners to cooperate and collaborate in terms of material development, sharing of resources and to advance access to education through open and distance education.

### Distance education in Lesotho

Distance education is not a new concept in Lesotho. It started almost four decades ago, when the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) together with the International Extension College (IEC) established the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC). Since then, there has been a very steady increase in the number of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) providers and the range of programs. A few important institutional initiatives are presented below for reference.

#### *Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC)*

It is basically an open school, and provides for literacy, numeracy and skills for income generation to rural youth and adults. LDTC also provides secondary school education to youths and adults who did not attend the formal school or dropped out of formal schooling. These learners sit for same external examination like that in the formal secondary schools.

The purpose of LDTC is to open wider access to Basotho who are educationally disadvantaged in basic literacy, Junior Certificate (JC) and Cambridge over Seas Certificate (COSC). In 2007, there was an increase in learners enrolled in literacy programs, JC and COSC programs. Teachers in formal schools are engaged and trained as part-time tutors to mark students' assignment, write workbooks, and tutor students.

#### *Institute of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS)*

The purpose of IEMS as the extension arm of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) is to bring the university to the people. Its major mandate is to democratise higher education in Lesotho by opening access through open and distance learning. This institute targets adults and youths who have completed their COSC in Lesotho and could not make it to the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and other colleges in Lesotho. It also caters for the adult population of Lesotho through non-formal and formal education programs. IEMS extended tertiary education on part-time basis up to the Masters level, and the main medium used is print, with occasional face-to-face contact.

#### *Lesotho College of Education (LCE)*

LCE (formerly the National Teacher Training College) was established in 1975 by order of the Lesotho Government, and it became a department of the Ministry of Education since 1975 to 2002. LCE is the only provider of training to the primary school teachers in Lesotho and it also plays a crucial role in the provision of junior, secondary and high school teachers for technical subjects. LCE launched the Distance Teacher Education Program (DTEP) in 2001 with the first enrolment of 502 students. The enrolment in 2006/2007 was 1,967. DTEP replaced the two in service LIET programs namely, LIET IV and LIET Primary Teachers Certificate that were phased out in 2001. This program responded to the need for improvements in the quality and quantity of primary teachers in Lesotho.

DTEP is specifically designed as an 'inservice' training program for the majority of experienced but underqualified and unqualified primary school teachers teaching in Lesotho Primary Schools. This program aims to improve the professional competence of the students and at the same time to increase their knowledge, improve their understanding of the subject covered in the curriculum, refine their intellectual and practical skills, and encourage the development of strong personal interest.

There are other institutions which are planning to offer distance learning in the near future, the example being the Lerotholi Polytechnic and the Faculty of Education of the National University of Lesotho. Higher education in Lesotho is substantially financed by the government. The Institute of Extra Mural Studies of the National University of Lesotho gets more than 3/4 of its funds from the State, while the LDTC gets more than 3/4 of its funds through the Ministry of Education and Training, and the LCE gets most of its funds from the government.

#### **The LDTC**

As mentioned earlier, the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC) was set up by the International Extension College (IEC) in 1974 at the request of the Ministry of Education of the Government of Lesotho. IEC was a charitable trust registered in Britain, which existed to establish and provide services for organizations using distance teaching methods in the

developing countries. According to LDTC biannual report (1982) the work at the centre began in February 1974, and its main aim has been to expand the use of distance teaching methods in Lesotho. These methods included correspondence courses and communication support such as visual aids, pamphlets, training courses for fieldworkers, instructional booklets and radio programmes.

Central to using distance teaching methods was the role of both non-formal education and distance education in ensuring development in rural Lesotho. Non-formal and distance education became increasingly accepted and used as one of the major tools for rural development. Lesotho was no exception in relying on distance mode in reaching out to rural masses and groups as it was used all over the world (Setsabi, 1987).

In its efforts to advance the correspondence courses, the LDTC was also confronted by the illiterate population who would not be able to use pamphlets and the instructional booklets. It saw the need to establish the basic literacy program for illiterate population of Lesotho in order to decrease the rate of illiteracy which was about 80% at the time. This program was launched in 1976 as a project but has since been expanded to other areas of Lesotho.

The Centre's work is mainly the following.

- (1) Acting as a service agency
  - (a) Material Development Assistance
  - (b) Training Assistance
  - (c) Communication Assistance
  - (d) Financial Assistance
- (2) Helping private candidates
- (3) Working with rural people on practical skills
- (4) Developing literacy and numeracy skills in young and adult people.

#### **Support for the Centre**

In the past (1980s) the Centre got the support from a variety of sources. The main ones were:

- The Irish Government
- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- The Netherlands Organization for International Development and Cooperation (NOVIB)
- The International University Exchange Fund (IUEF)
- The Training for Self-Reliance Project (a World Bank Project)
- UNICEF
- Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC)
- The World University Service (WUS)
- The Danish Voluntary Service (DVS)

- The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
- The British Government and the British Council.

The government of Lesotho also continued to finance the LDTC through the years, and there were additional grants and donations from other funding agencies. For example, the LDTC Annual Report (1988) shows the total income from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1987 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 1988 as: R369, 524.76 (of this amount, R177, 544.97 were grants and donations, while the total expenditure was R345, 535.18). The LDTC Annual Report (1991-1992), shows that the LDTC got the financial support from the donors such as Irish Consulate, the Australian Government through EPSA and the German Adult Education Association (DVV). The assistance had been able to keep the LDTC going, and of course the Lesotho Government was the main funder as it annually budgeted for LDTC. The Ministry of Education together with the LDTC continued to attract some other donors such as UNICEF.

Until today, UNICEF is the only donor for LDTC with about 3% of the LDTC budget. The Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Education and Training continued to finance more than 96% of LDTC activities. It further shows that the UNICEF and the German Adult Education Association continued with their financial assistance to LDTC. Table 1 is the financial statement for ten years.

Table 1: Receipts and payments account for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1991 (Barclays Bank PLC)

1. Receipts:	Folio	R
Opening Balances		532,338.41
Rent Received		1,512.00
Service Agency Income	1	48,456.12
Formal Courses Income	2	56,744.22
Sales of Text Books		35.00
Sale of LDTC Publications		5,144.11
Grants and Donations	3	67,033.89
Other Income	4	67,337.32
TOTAL		777,601.07
2. Payments :		
Fixed Assets	5	66,790
Printing Materials & Expenses		722
Library Expenses		-

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Motor Vehicle Expenses		28,911
Research and Evaluation Expenses		1,423
Radio Studio Expenses		154
Basic Rural Education Expenses		338
Students Advice Expenses		367
Course Writing Expenses		1,898
Salaries		133,004
Staff Training & Seminars		2,411
Repairs and Maintenance		184
Other Administrative Overheads		17,126
Literacy and Numeracy Expenses		671
Service Agency Expenses		10
Early Childhood Development Fund	6	406,000
TOTAL		660,014.13
SURPLUS	7	118,586.94

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Source: *LDTA Annual Report (1992)*; R = Rand

### Statement of the problem

Initially, the LDTA was the creation of the Lesotho Government hand in hand with the International Extension College of United Kingdom. Financing has always been a problem in distance education and as a result the attainment of educational goals is hampered. Therefore, it was of interest to find out how the LDTA is financed, and by whom. What are the patterns of its income and expenditure? Does it achieve its objectives as per its budget and planned activities? In essence, it was intended to study the impact of finances on the implementation of planned educational activities at LDTA. Such an exercise shall facilitate decision making in its future activities and programmes, and its organisation and management.

### Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

- i) Examine the policy towards the funding of LDTC.
- ii) Find out the sources of income of LDTC and the areas and patterns of expenditure.
- iii) Analyze whether it achieves its set objectives as per planned activities and as per its existing
- iv) Financial budgets.

### **Limitations of the study**

Conducting such a type of study was not an easy task especially when data are not easily available. Some of the respondents were high profiled officials with very strict and rigid schedule (like the Minister and her Deputies), therefore the next level of officials were contacted as alternatives. Sourcing information from the section was also an irritation for the accounts section and so some records from the Centre's library were used. Though the study has used both the primary and secondary sources of information, the latter has been used more than the former. We had plans to explore areas such as the effectiveness of LDTC Management on running the LDTC in relation to its financing and the systems and structures that form LDTC, but there were constraints in such a pursuit; and only limited information could be obtained and used for analysis and conclusion.

## **Method**

### **Research design**

This study required both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The qualitative approach allowed exploration and indepth discussion on the skills and knowledge needed by the management and financial staff at LDTC. The quantitative approach facilitated a clear picture on the trends of enrollment at LDTC, and was also effective in finding out the adequacy of sources of income and expenditure at LDTC. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches complemented each other to establish how the funds or financing of LDTC had empowered this institution to deliver quality services to the Basotho nation in general.

### **Population and sample**

The management of LDTC comprised of nine senior and junior staff, and the government education headquarters had four senior and junior staff. Therefore, all the 13 people were selected from both LDTC and the Ministry of Education headquarters in Maseru to be interviewed. These staff are the overseers of utilization of funds to the betterment, continuity and further development of LDTC. Given the nature of the study as a case study, the sampling technique used was the purposive sampling.

### **Tools and techniques**

A questionnaire was developed and used to collect data systematically from the financial records. The questionnaire, based on the works of Panda (2000), Gaba et al (2007) and Panda and Gaba (2008), included the aspects of sources of income, sources of expenditure, and activity-wise analysis over a period of time (see Appendix 1). Besides, an interview schedule was developed to interview the officials of LDTC, and the government officials at its

headquarters on financial usability, adequacy, and policy suggestions to augment additional resources to expand distance education at the school level. To supplement these, the available financial records on income and expenditure were also analysed.

### **Procedures of data collection**

Data was collected by the first researcher, using both the questionnaire and the interview schedule, from LDTC officials and the government officials, as also through document analysis. The pre-designed questionnaire was administered to financial personnel to source put the information on the aspects of sources of income, source of expenditure etc. They were also administered to sectional heads to collect information on the trends of enrollment at LDTC.

### **Analysis of Data and Results**

Data analysis was started when all filled-in questionnaires were collected and tabulated. The questions in the questionnaire were analyzed one by one; for example, if Question 1 asks for "trends of enrollment of your institution", then the comparison on a couple of years was grouped, and presented in forms of tables and figures to show the differences. Where in officers were asked to give their opinions, their responses were grouped and interpreted in percentages in relation to the total sample size.

Data analysis centred around analyzing the trends of enrolments of LDTC from 2004 to 2009, and the sources of income of LDTC for five years, i.e., 2004 to 2008 (the year upto which complete data was available). It also included the trends of expenditure on capital items over 2004 to 2009 collected from the institutional records. Data was also gathered on and analysed for the initial implementation of funding policy of LDTC by way of establishing whether the policy existed, the contribution of Lesotho Government in financing LDTC, and how LDTC met its deficits. Data collected through questionnaires were dealt with question by question, while the LDTC management and other senior staff from the Ministry of Education (N=13) were interviewed regarding the funding of LDTC.

#### *Programs on Offer at LDTC*

It was found that the programs on offer in the Continuing Education Unit were classified as Basic Course, Junior Certificate, and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate. Within the Basic Course, Introductory English and Introductory Mathematics were offered. The aim of the basic course was to bridge the gap between the literacy program and the continuing courses like JC and COSC. There is no certification for this course. The Junior Certificate had six subjects; and national examination is conducted by ECOL at the year end, and the successful learners are awarded their JC certificates.

The Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC or O'Level) comprised of six subjects, and national examinations are administered by ECOL and on successful completion learners are provided certificates at the end of their learning term.

*Staff Strength*

Out of the 10 districts, LDTC operates only in eight districts of Lesotho, where by the literacy program is offered in only six districts, and continuing education is offered in six districts. That simply means that there are some districts without some programs and services. The entire operational staff strength in eight districts is given in Table 2.

Table 2: LDTC staff

Category	Number
LPA's Learning Post Administrators	273
PTT Part-Time Tutors	110
AS Academic Staff	96
NAS Non-Academic staff	23
Total	502

*Enrollment Trends (Basic Education Program)*

Table 3 shows the trend of enrollments for the literacy program. Unlike continuing education and basic education, the total enrollment increased from 2004 to 2009. This is because the learning materials for this section were printed in bulk since the projections were clearly made for the coming year.

Table 3: Enrolment in basic education

Year	Males	Female	Total
2004/05	2229	2610	4839
2005/06	4650	1449	6099
2006/07	4916	1490	6406
2007/08	5109	1631	6732
2008/09	4338	2433	6771

Table 3 shows that there were more males than females in the literacy program; the important reason is that the males go to cattle post at an early age and they are left with no option but to go for out of school education. Most of the females who are engaged in the literacy program are domestic workers, or women who were married at an early age and were left without an option of attending formal schools.

### *Enrollment Trends (Continuing Education Program)*

Table 4 shows the trends of enrollments during 2004 to 2009. For Basic Course, JC and COSC, the enrollment declined from 2004 to 2009. The reasons were that there was lack of resources to produce learning materials; and that the males were left behind to herd cattle or sheep.

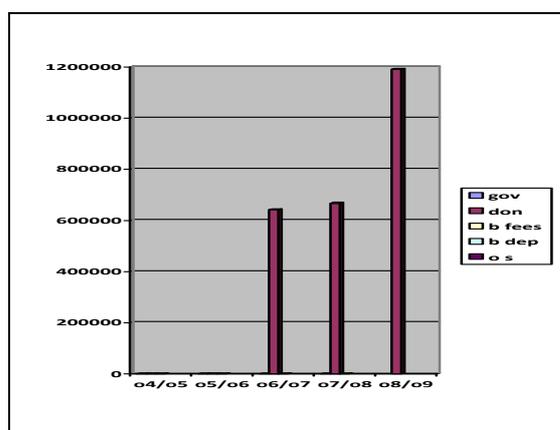
Table 4: Enrolment in CEP

Year	Males	Female	Basic course	Junior Certificate	COSC	Total
2004/5	615	700	97	515	703	1315
2005/6	369	670	52	525	462	1039
2006/7	348	712	88	526	446	1060
2007/8	279	545	61	390	373	824
2008/9	228	330	0	332	226	558

### *Sources of Income*

Figure 1 shows the sources of income for LDTC from 2005 to 2009. For the year 2006/07, UNICEF donated R641,131; for year 2007/08, it donated R667, 413 while, in 2008/09 it donated R1,191,288. When LDTC was out of funds in 2009/2010, UNICEF gave a helping hand with donations higher than those other of years. This clearly shows that while the government grant and income from student fees are at very low level, There have been increasing support from international agencies to help sustain the distance education programmes.

Figure 1: Sources of income at LDTC



### *Trends of Expenditure*

Table 5 shows the trend of expenditure from 2005 to 2010 which is a clear indicator of why the enrollments in continuing education were so low. Table 4 indicated decline in

enrollments in JC, COSC and Basic Course. According to Table 6, there were no funding for materials development and production for the year 2006-09. Further, money was not allocated for workshops, and the salaries for the Learning Post Administrators (LPAs) and the Part Time Tutors (PTTs) were allocated arbitrarily. (While on the one hand the salary expenditure went on increasing, on the other hand, the printing costs got reduced, student support workshops were conducted for only one year, and expenditure on learning post administrators got reduced. Expenses on mundane items like vehicle maintenance increased, so also fuel and lubrication, power, and maintenance of public assets.

Table 5: Trends of expenditure (2005-10) ('000 Rands)

Heads	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Salaries	3,337,006	2,096,737	2,795,650	3,900,241	8,152,656	4,462,542
Part-time Tutors	25,620	18,185	24,260	0	0	33,716
Learning Post Administrators	770,790	393,015	542,020	0	0	0
Materials Dvt. & Production	0	0	0	0	70,000	0
Student Support Workshops	0	0	0	0	250,000	0
Institutional Heads	0	0	0	0	0	0
Power	137,697	93,885	139,180	0	72,600	140,746
Communication	181,872	131,100	174,800	0	120,000	57,266
Printing	85,816	105,665	140,890	0	53,893	0
Maintenance of Public Assets	15,004	13,200	12,100	0	169,250	65,130
Upkeep of Inst	8,000	5,452	7,270	0	0	114,569
Running Costs (water)	354,364	258,532	360,710	0	2,700	9,000
Minor Works	60,000	75,000	50,000	0	100,000	0
Other Office Heads	458,698	345,142	455,190	0	0	0
Stationery	70,089	60,000	60,000	0	82,220	78,380
Vehicle Maintenance &	99,360	70,440	78,920	0	103,002	103,850

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Repairs						
Fuel & Lubrication	7,125	4,905	6,549	0	18,400	33,110
Short Term Hire	40,750	30,375	50,500	0	11,000	0
Motor Mileage	2,740	1942	7,590	0	2,799	0
Fare Local	20,580	12,390	28,300	0	15,000	12,938
Subsistence Allowance	202046	136710	191,815	0	50,000	0
Fright Charges	7,500	4882	3,255	0	5,500	0
Equine Hire	7,046	11,340	7,560	0	10,000	0

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#### *Awareness of Funding Policy of LDTC*

Only one respondent was not aware of any funding policy for LDTC while 12 respondents agreed that the policy existed. There is a new draft policy which though does not articulate funding.

#### *Place of Distance Education in Overall National Educational Planning and Funding*

All of the 13 respondents agreed that LDTC is the program of MOET (Ministry of Education and Training) Strategic Plan. It has a budget of 0.8% of the whole budget of MOET, therefore the place of distance education in overall national educational planning and funding comes from the MOET headquarters through the Parliament. Distance education is also placed high and regarded by the Lesotho Government as a vehicle for fostering good and meaningful life for all its citizens.

#### *Awareness of Government Funding Policy for Distance Education*

Only 8% believed that there was a funding policy for distance education, while 92% stated that they had never heard of it. They believed that distance education is embodied within the Global Education Sector Funding Policy. Attempts to have a separate funding policy for the sub-sector are underway. They believed that the NFE and ODL policies have not yet been endorsed. However, MOET recognizes a need to fund the LDTC programmes.

#### *Basis of Government Allocation (plan and no-plan grant to LDTC each year)*

Table 6 shows that the respondents agreed that the Government of Lesotho generally allocated grants according to planned activities.

Table 6: Views on government allocation of funds to LDTC

No. of Respondents	Responses
3	It allocated on historical expenditure patterns and projected out-turns. However, most of the time, it does not always turn out like that because of the "ceilings" given, probably by the MOFDP. This often undermines the policy reforms, structural changes and emerging developmental needs and changes.
4	Money is granted according to planned activities by sections and management. The government used to increase the budget every year quite a few years back, but decided to decrease it because it was not exhausted or used. Some departments would ask for LDTC's share, and have it without little resistance from the LDTC Director.
3	The plan grant to LDTC is to address the educational needs of youths and adults who are not able to attend formal mainstream education.
3	In accordance to MPOPPPO (Master Plan of Operations and Program Plan Operations), the overall objectives inter alia, is to provide basic education for 120,00 learners who have not been able to attend primary school or who have dropped out, in order to increase functional literacy rate.
Total 13	

#### *Adequacy of Lesotho Government Grants (Yes/No)*

Data show that 100% (13 respondents) of respondents agreed that the Lesotho Government grants were inadequate because the demand for access to quality education was high, but the allocated funds could not reach out to all LDTC clientele.

#### *How Does LDTC Meet the Deficit*

Table 7 underlines that the government grants are inadequate; therefore, LDTC seeks funds from private organizations such as UNECEF, World Bank, Global Fund etc. However, the inadequate grants are not effectively initialised and efficiently deployed.

Table 7: Meeting the deficits

No. of Respondents	Responses
2	<p>LDTC survives through small grants from UN partners such as UNICEF and UNFPA.</p> <p>There is also a small central fund account which accrues monies from students' fees and provision of services to other organizations such as printing, video coverage and audio-programs recordings.</p>
3	<p>It mostly depends on donor funding and if UNICEF did not offer assistance, it could have been liquidated two years ago, when Continuing Education Program went without Print Materials (learners' work books) for two years.</p> <p>Money accrued from sales of workbooks and other services sometimes helps meet the deficit. But, it is badly managed and used.</p> <p>LDTC used to raise its funding through activities such as Service Agency through trainings, but the channels have dried up because of poor management.</p>
5	<p>Generous donations/ support from Development Partners such as DVV, even though it has since stopped.</p> <p>UNICEF and Commonwealth of Learning support LDTC.</p> <p>Also support from World Bank through Educational Sector Development Plan (ESDP II) which was funded by a way of loan.</p> <p>Global fund offers grants sometimes.</p>
3	<p>This has been compensated by the policy of free primary education which kicked off by the year 2000 but however, this has placed more focus on the policy while the initial policy has been half heartedly met.</p>
Total 13	

## Discussion and Implications

### Findings

As has been reported earlier, LDTC offers Literacy and Numeracy Program, Life Skills Education and Basic English under Basic Education program; there has been a slight improvement as compared to the early days of LDTC whereby the program included only literacy and numeracy skills. The Continuing Education Program included Basic Course, Junior Certificate, and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate; not much has changed over the past years in the number of topics offered. As for the radio programs, they have been there since the establishment of the centre and they have been effectively utilized. There were times when there were no radio programs at all. This was because of high rates of air slots, and the LDTC could not afford the expenses.

The LDTC staff is categorized into four: namely, academic staff, non-academic staff, part-time tutors, and learning post administrators. It operates in eight districts namely Maseru,

Mafeteng, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, Mokhotlong, Leribe, Teyateyaneng, and Thaba-tseka. The Basic Education Program is offered in six districts, while the Continuing Education Program is offered in six districts too. In some districts there is no service at all. This means that the LDTC does not cover the country as a whole.

The enrollments in Continuing Education Program seem to be declining since 2004 because there were no learning materials, and the funds were not enough, and also because the previous income was mismanaged.

Unlike the Continuing Education Program, the enrolments in the Basic Education Program seemed to have increased basically because the projections on the future enrollments were accurately made. The learning materials were printed in bulk, and the program never ran out of learning materials. The Basic Education Program has more males than females. The reasons are that males, as a trend in the entire country, go to cattle posts at an early age and hence drop out of the formal school, and later on enter into non-formal or distance education. Whereas females get married at an early age as a result the family responsibilities hinder the process of learning. Sometimes learning posts are far from home, and the evening tutoring hours are not favorable to them.

With regard to funding of LDTC, it was found that it was exclusively funded through the Ministry of Education and Training, and was allocated only 0.8% of the whole educational budget. The Centre used to have plenty of donations from international bodies but they have since stopped funding, except for UNICEF which is still funding to date. The sources of income are student fees (JC and COSC programs) and Service Agency activities such as printing and audio-visual coverage.

The results on areas and the patterns of expenditure at LDTC suggest that they do not meet or enable the centre to achieve its aims fully. Since 2004/05 the budgets have been cut ruthlessly, as a result most of the activities are not implemented due to lack of funds. Also the expenditure on capital items shows that some of the items such as vehicle maintenance were not budgeted for since 2006. This resulted in some of the activities being scarified.

Although the interview was meant for the management and other top officials looking after LDTC, it was surprising to find out that others are not sure whether any DE policy existed or not. The fact is that the policy for distance education exists, though it does not articulate about funding.

It was established that the Lesotho Government allocated plan grant according to planned activities by sections and LDTC management. It did not provide non-plan grants because all the LDTC activities were planned. Further, the grants of the Lesotho Government were inadequate for LDTC because the demand for access to quality education is high, and the allocated funds cannot reach out to all the LDTC clientele; and so operations LDTC do not cover all the ten districts within Lesotho. This means that LDTC does not achieve its planned activities as per its financial budgets, of which are always cuts mercilessly by the Ministry of Education and Training.

LDTC meets its deficit through donor funding and small centre funds. It accrues money from student fees and provision of services to other organizations such as printing, video

coverage, audio programs recording, and through training organizations on non-formal activities. All these activities are done through Service Agency coordination.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the study suggest that the LDTC does lack good management in financial resources which further affect all other activities. It has limitations in expanding its services in Lesotho in general. Given that it started its operations in 1974, it is headed to its fourth decade with the same activities even though the needs of the society have changed. Most of its donors have since stopped funding. With the small central fund it has, one would have expected that it improves its services, but the fund is not properly managed. LDTC has academic and professional staff which would bear fruitful results for the centre, but if this staff is not utilized to its potentials, then the services of the centre will be disconcerted.

### **Recommendations**

It is therefore recommended that:

- If LDTC remains the program of MOET, the ministry should make a solid and realistic commitment to providing resources and to increasing the LDTC budget.
- LDTC may be transformed into a tertiary institution and transform its services to the changing needs of the society.
- The distance education institutions should be given the required autonomy because they will be self-governed and they will be able to make decisions on their own course of action.
- The governing body for distance education be separated from that of formal education, because it creates confusion and the formal education colleagues do not understand the dynamics of distance education.
- The services of LDTC should be offered in other districts as well, because the demand for distance education is very high. The experiences gained from its operation so far shall govern its corrective action in future, as also to effectively extend to all other districts.

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## (a) Continuing Education Programme

Years	Males	Females	Basic Course	Junior Certificate	C.O.S.C(O'Level	Total
2004/05						
2005/06						
2006/07						
2007/08						
2008/09						

## (b) Basic Education Programme

Years	Males	Females	Literacy programmes	Total
2004/05				
2005/06				
2006/07				
2007/08				
2008/09				

## 5. Sources of income of LDTC in the years indicated below (actual in thousand Rands)

Sources	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Government of Lesotho					
Donations					
Book fees					
Bank Deposits					
Other Sources specify					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

## 6. Trends of expenditure (Operational costs) in years indicated below (actual in thousand Rands)

Heads	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Salary of academic staff					
Salary of non academic staff					
Allowances of Literacy Teachers					
Allowances of part-time tutors					
Materials development and production					
Student support services e.g. workshops					
Institutional overheads					
Power					
Communications					
Printing					
Maintenance of public assets					
Upkeep of Institutions					
Running cost (General)					
Minor Works					
Other office overheads					
Stationary					
Vehicle Maintenance & repairs					
Fuel & Lubrications					
Short term hire					
Motor Mileage					
Fares & subsistence (local					
Freight Charges					
Equine Hire					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

7. Trends of expenditure on capital items in the years indicated below (special expenditure) (actual in thousand Rands)

Heads	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Building maintenance					
Equipment and furniture					
Library					
Others					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

8. Briefly outline the funding policy of LDTC?

(a) Place of Distance Education funding in overall national educational planning and funding?
(b) Does the Lesotho Government have a funding policy for Distance Education?
(c) On what basis does the Lesotho government allocates plan and non plan grant to LDTC each year? Please explain a bit further:

9. Do you think the Lesotho Government grants are adequate? (please Tick)

Yes

No

10. If the Governments grants are inadequate, how does LDTC meet deficit?

.....  
.....  
.....

Your Name.....

Signature.....

Designation.....