



COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Research Agenda for the Higher Education Sub-sector

(2013/14 - 2023/24)

Tackling Developmental Problems in the Higher Education Sub-sector in Lesotho

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Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE	4
1.1 Background	6
1.2 Regulation of Research	7
1.3 Overview of Research in Higher Education.....	8
2.0 PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH AGENDA	9
3.0 CHALLENGES IN RESEARCH	10
4.0 RESEARCH GAPS	11
5.0 HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR LESOTHO	14
5.1 Higher Education subsector related research.....	15
5.2 Higher Education Institutions related research	18
5.3 Cross-cutting research with a bearing on Higher Education	18
6.0 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	20
6.1 Responsibilities of MOET	20
6.2 Responsibilities of CHE.....	20
6.3 Responsibilities of HEIs	21
6.4 Responsibilities of independent researchers.....	21
7.0 FUNDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH AGENDA	22

List of Acronyms

ATS	Appropriate Technology Services
AU	African Union
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
ECOL	Examinations Council of Lesotho
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005 - 2015
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
ISAS	Institute of Southern African Studies
LAC	Lesotho Agricultural College
LCE	Lesotho College of Education
LCN	Lesotho Council of Non-governmental Organisations
LGCSE	Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education
LIPAMP	Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management
LP	Lerotholi Polytechnic
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
NHTC	National Health Training College
NMDS	National Manpower Development Secretariat
NRC	National Research Council
NUL	National University of Lesotho
PSI	Population Services International
RCC	Research and Conferences Committee
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARUA	Southern African Regional Universities Association
TVED	Technical and Vocational Education Department
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Research is fundamental to any country's development because good data and good research findings are essential in making sound policy decisions and smart investments. It provides the knowledge that is needed to understand what is possible, what is not, and the best way to proceed with developmental efforts. The Kingdom of Lesotho is no exception to the need for evidence-based decision making which is informed by research. Reasons for carrying out research can be many and varied. They include, but not limited to satisfying intellectual curiosity; better understanding of issues; and learning new things.

Meek et. al. (2009) point out that internationally "there is a movement towards knowledge-based societies whose cornerstone is higher education and advanced research. The principle of ownership is crucial in order to ensure that knowledge production via research and higher education is directly relevant to national development agenda."¹ Countries have given priority to developing their knowledge base through higher education, research and innovation. It is imperative, therefore, that resources are committed towards achieving this important goal. Research outcomes should provide value to government and industry hence should be aligned to the national priorities and to the developmental needs of society. UNESCO during its Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge held in 2009 reiterated that middle and low income countries urgently need to build their own relevant knowledge bases. According to the report on the Forum current issues facing research and its environment include equity, quality, relevance, ownership, and international networking. Success stories are becoming more common in various regions of the world and they are characterised by the following:

- Innovative policies in higher education and research and in science, technology and innovation;
- A will to improve and profile the necessary infrastructure including universities;

¹ Meek, V. U. Et. al. 2009, *Report on the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge 2001 – 2009*. International Centre for Higher Education Research, Kassel.

- Efforts to train and attract highly skilled human capital; and
- Increased levels of investment in research and higher education.

Lesotho's research-strengthening policies are guided by regional protocols formulated by inter-governmental bodies in which the country is a member, such as the African Union (AU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) and UNESCO among others.²

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) has developed this research agenda to provide a framework for future investment and address how Lesotho's research efforts can be most effectively harnessed to improve developmental opportunities for the country in the education sector. This document seeks to articulate research priorities for the higher education sub-sector for the next ten years (2013 – 2024). The priorities will be used to guide research undertaken in this sector whether by higher education institutions, independent research institutes or individual researchers.

These priority areas for research were identified with a view to addressing national developmental needs. Thus, studies that are undertaken within the scope of this research agenda should inform the country's developmental priorities in one way or another. Naturally, most of the priority areas identified are directly related to the CHE mandate in that they are the kind of studies that can be used as a basis for advising the Minister of Education and Training on policy issues. The document has been informed by and is aligned to the key national policies and plans such as the National Vision 2020, National Strategic Development Plan 2013 – 2017, Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) (2005 – 2015), and Draft Higher Education Policy.

This document is structured as follows: section 1 is the background which discusses the general context in which research is undertaken in the Kingdom together with the regulatory environment. Section two presents the process followed in developing the research agenda, while section 3 looks at research challenges and gaps, and it goes further

² Lefoka (2012) The state of art review: Research on higher education paper presented at the Council on Higher Education workshop on development of research agenda Maseru: 22 November 2012

to distil them into national priorities. The subsequent sections consider implementation arrangements for the research agenda and finally make suggestions on how to finance implementation of the agenda.

1.1 Background

Research has always been the preserve of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) through its faculties, institutes and individual lecturers. For instance, until recently the university had an Institute for Southern African Studies (ISAS) which undertook multidisciplinary applied research locally and in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) sub-region. It also had Institute of Education which mostly focused on education related research in Lesotho. Through these research institutes NUL was able to undertake a substantial amount of research. NUL also encourages individual lecturers to undertake research through financial support that is channelled through faculties, and that is allocated to lecturers for their research activities and attendance of international conferences. Research is also done by the University through collaborations with international organisations and other universities on the African continent and beyond.

Outside the university there are other higher education institutions such as Lesotho College of Education (LCE), Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management (LIPAM), Lesotho Agricultural College (LAC) National Health Training College (NHTC), Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP) and others that undertake research though on a very small scale. Furthermore, there are such centres as Agricultural Research Centre, within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security which is dedicated to agricultural research. Bureau of Statistics has a mandate to undertake population based studies including national census, household income surveys, labour force survey, consumer index and others.

Additionally, Government Ministries and agencies commission research to address their policy and operational needs. There is no central repository for research undertaken in various ministries. Studies undertaken by different ministries are not always shared across ministries, thus they are mostly unknown by those outside the ministries in which they are conducted. Clearly, this leads to duplication in some areas by government ministries. For instance, on the one hand the Ministry of Labour and Employment undertakes labour

related surveys and develops comprehensive databases of skills that are available in the country with a view to reducing unemployment. On the other hand other government ministries while pursuing their own goals enter into contracts with large foreign companies to build large dams, construct roads etc. and they allow them to bring foreign employees including those with skills that unemployed Basotho have.

Besides HEIs and government ministries and agencies there are a few small private organisations such as Sechaba Consultants, Transformation Resource Centre, Lesotho Council of non-governmental organisations (LCN), Population Services International (PSI) among others which undertake applied multidisciplinary research. However, it is on a small scale.

1.2 Regulation of Research in Lesotho

In respect of regulation of research, there is no central body in Lesotho which deals with all research issues in the country. A National Research Council (NRC) has been mooted for a long time now, but it has not been established. Its mandate would be for instance, to regulate, coordinate, promote and finance research in the country. This means that there is a gap in a very critical area of leadership and coordination of research. This leaves various sectors to make their own arrangements on regulation of research. For example, the Health Sector has its own Ethical Clearance Research Board whose mandate is to ensure that research undertaken in that sector complies with ethical considerations. The Agricultural sector has its own too. The National University of Lesotho does not have a research clearance board, what it has is an arrangement for members of faculty or researchers to present their findings to their peers in a seminar once a study has been completed. This serves to share information and for peer review as opposed to regulating research. There used to be a Research and Conferences Committee (RCC) at NUL which considered research proposals from members of staff for funding, this function has since been decentralised to the faculties.

Within the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology there are departments of Science and Technology and Appropriate Technology Services (ATS) which are supposed to undertake research as part of their mandates, but there is no research clearance board in

this sector. This then suggests that research is not regulated nor coordinated or monitored in Science and Technology and other areas except in two sectors. The disjointed manner in which research is dealt with in the country lands it to being *ad hoc* and haphazard. Furthermore, it becomes vulnerable to being driven more by foreign interests of those who are willing to finance certain areas.

The Education sector is no different from other sectors in this regard. There are four centres that interact with research in this sector, namely higher education institutions, mostly NUL, the Ministry of Education and Training with commissioned studies; Council on Higher Education with studies to inform policy; and the last centre being the Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL). However, CHE recently established a central repository for studies on higher education. This portal is intended to ensure that research pertaining to this area can be found on one platform. It is however, not sufficiently comprehensive because not all available studies on Lesotho have been collected and captured yet. This makes it fall short of its main objective of providing all available research on one platform for users. Once it is fully stocked with all the studies the portal will minimise duplication which comes as a result of not knowing which areas have been researched and which have not.

1.3 Overview of Research in Higher Education

In terms of general areas in which research has been undertaken in higher education they include evaluation studies, review reports, baseline surveys, situational analysis reports, and multi-country studies. There are also studies on financing of higher education, and teacher training needs assessment among others. Research articles are mostly subject-area specific, and are generally local within higher education institutions with NUL dominating. The CHE Research Portal has 18 research reports and 20 research based articles. There are no studies that have been undertaken that look into issues of how the higher education sub-sector can be improved; or on the extent to which it contributes to national development; its structure and whether it is appropriate or optimal; tracer studies by higher education institutions; no studies on graduate employment and there are no studies on developmental needs of the country on which to base new programmes by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Basically most of what is available in terms of studies done in this sub-sector is provincial in scope

and too subject specific to be of much use at the national level to inform policy and key decisions on improving higher education in Lesotho.

1.4 Rationale for the Research Agenda

The rationale for developing a research agenda for higher education is to ensure that there is systematic research in this sector not just to make higher education better, but also to enhance CHE's understanding of the contemporary society, its challenges and possible future available to it. With higher education being so central to the development of the country, it is imperative that it plays a key role in shaping and influencing the Kingdom's future. The role that learning and knowledge, enhanced through research have to play in achieving such understanding is critical.

The agenda serves as a framework for articulating research priorities for the sub-sector. It will guide efforts and investments in this regard and therefore, enhance the country's focus on key issues, coordination and complementarity as opposed to the current situation in which there is duplication in research.

2.0 PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

The process of developing this research agenda started with stakeholder consultations in a workshop in November 2012. The workshop was attended by researchers, higher education institutions, representatives of statutory bodies such as the Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Council, Law Society, Nursing Council and Lesotho Institute of Accountants, as well as Government officials from key Ministries in education and agencies such as Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS), Ministry of Finance, Development Planning, Department of Science and Technology, Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) and Ministry of Health. The workshop identified research challenges and priorities. The identification process was informed by an expert paper entitled *'The State of Research in Southern African Region with Specific Reference to Lesotho: Research Challenges in the Kingdom of Lesotho for Higher Education.'*

The workshop was followed by examination of the research literature on higher education in Lesotho in terms of its underlying conceptual approaches and empirical findings with a view to identifying gaps. This led to the profiling of studies undertaken which were ultimately used to develop the higher education research portal. This process was followed by drafting of the research agenda document. A high level Research Advisory Committee was established to work with the CHE Secretariat on the development of the Agenda. It comprised four people from outside the Secretariat together with two members of the Secretariat. It served as a reference group which provided expert advice to CHE on the development of the research agenda. Once a draft had been developed it was shared with a number of people for review including those who participated in the workshop. After that a refined document was presented to the Research Committee for its inputs.

The Ministry of Education and Training through the Tertiary Education Office and Planning Unit was also consulted. Following the consultations the document was finalised and went through the formal approval processes within CHE.

3.0 CHALLENGES IN RESEARCH

Lesotho, being a developing country, has challenges that are associated with this condition and these are by no means peculiar to the Kingdom. The challenges are many and varied and can be categorised into inter-linked clusters, namely, resource-related and capacity-related challenges. Research requires substantial investment in terms of financial and infrastructural resources. Without these resources it becomes very difficult for a country to make progress in the area of research. Lesotho has a challenge in this regard and this hampers efforts towards strengthening research in such areas as Science and Technology and similar areas which require expensive laboratory facilities. Furthermore, there is no formal and institutionalised arrangement for funding research in the country. In other settings such as the Republic of South Africa, China, United States of America, among others, there are dedicated research funding mechanisms in place.

The National University of Lesotho is the only higher education institution which makes some budgetary provision for research by members of faculty even though this falls far

short of meeting the demand. This results in very low research output by the university. Needless to say, it has a bearing on the quality of teaching and learning, particularly with regard to ensuring that teaching is informed by recent research in the relevant fields of study. This situation also leads to many members of faculty who do not contribute to the body of knowledge in their areas of expertise as would be expected, but who rely on other scholars' work from other parts of the world. Again as a result of budgetary constraints there is limited collaboration with other institutions, international organisations or researchers from outside the country.

With insufficient financial support from within the country, research is done on an *ad hoc* basis and is mostly disjointed. Furthermore, external financiers end up setting the national agenda for research in their areas of interest. This is one of the key challenges that can only be resolved by the country making a concerted and systematic effort to support research financially on an ongoing basis, and establish requisite institutions to manage and coordinate it. Without such institutions the capacity of the country to undertake meaningful research to address developmental needs remains hampered. This results in the Kingdom losing its base for academic excellence and it leads to exodus of the best academics and graduates to other countries in the region mostly to the Republic of South Africa.

4.0 RESEARCH GAPS

The following are some of the key research gaps in this country with regard to the higher education sub-sector and other sub systems within the broader education sector.

4.1 Higher Education Sub-sector Research Gaps

Research gaps in this area are categorised into a number of themes, namely, access, quality, curricular and course relevance, financing, systems-related gaps and organisational and policy-related gaps.

4.1.1 Access to higher education

- Admission and accommodation of people/learners with disabilities in Higher Education programmes;

- Participation of students from poor backgrounds in higher education;
- Massification of access to higher education and success in HEIs;

4.1.2 Quality in higher education

- Internationalisation of higher education student population;
- Quality of teaching and learning in HEIs;
- Impact of CHE quality assurance mechanisms on higher education in Lesotho;
- Skills levels of school-leavers and their preparedness for higher education;
- Limited variety of programmes and courses in HEIs; and
- Learner/learning support systems in HEIs.

4.1.3 Curricular and Course Relevance

- The state of articulation between different sub-systems in education e.g. primary, secondary, technical, vocational training and higher education; and between different programmes offered at different levels.
- Scarce skill areas in different sectors of Lesotho's economy;

4.1.4 Financing

- Financing of higher education in general in Lesotho;
- Establishing the best way to finance higher education public institutions in Lesotho.

4.1.5 Systems related gaps

- ICT integration in teaching and learning in HEIs;
- Data management systems in HEIs and data utilisation for planning in HEIs;
- Open and Distance Learning (ODL) methodologies/approaches in HEIs; and
- Collaboration in and Integration of library systems/services in HEIs.

4.1.6 Organisational & Policy related gaps

- Investigation into policy alignment in Lesotho and its impact on the education sector;
- Factors and implications of reconfiguring period of study for first degree programmes.
- Implications of changing start-time of academic year for all HEIs;
- Viability of a common student admission system for all HEIs;
- Institutional configuration for establishment of National Qualifications Framework: implications for embracing CHE and TVED mandates under one body;
- Governance of Higher Education Institutions in Lesotho; and
- The level/extent of articulation between different sub-systems within the broader education sector, and between various qualifications;

4.2 Higher Education Institutions related research gaps

- HEIs student tracer studies;
- Pedagogy training and teaching in Higher Education Institutions
- Living conditions of off-campus students in HEIs in Lesotho and their impact on their studies;
- The extent to which HEIs graduates get into business and start own enterprises;
- Research in domain/subject specific areas; and
- Client satisfaction surveys.

4.3 Cross-cutting research gaps with a bearing on Higher Education

- Graduate employment and unemployment;
- Impact assessment of government policies that have a bearing on higher education;
- Viability of introducing A-Levels school leaving qualification in Lesotho and implications for HEIs;
- The extent of mismatch between the output of higher education institutions and the demands of the labour market;
- Impact of HIV and AIDS in HEIs for both staff and students;

- Quality of teaching and learning at the secondary level and implications for higher education;
- Implications of the changes in the basic and secondary education system including removing primary school leaving certificate and junior certificate in secondary schools;
- Study on failure of a critical mass of students from poor family backgrounds to access higher education; and
- The issue of language in higher education provision in Lesotho.

5.0 HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR LESOTHO

According to the CDC Injury Research Agenda (2009 – 2018) a research priority is a critical problem that can be meaningfully addressed with a number of research studies (approximately 2 – 5). CHE has adopted this definition of a research priority. The following two specific criteria guided the selection of the priorities:

Organisational Mission – Research areas have to be congruent to the mission of the Council on Higher Education which is to regulate higher education in Lesotho and assure quality in the sub-sector. Thus, the priority areas should have a connection in one way or another to the higher education sub-sector.

Developmental imperative – Priority research areas should also contribute to the developmental needs of the country through providing findings or data that inform policy and strategies that can be employed by policy makers in development initiatives.

The research priorities are derived from the list of gaps in section 4 above and they are categorised into three groups of:

1. Higher Education Sub-sector related research;
2. Higher Education Institutions related research; and
3. Cross-cutting research.

The first category comprises study area priorities that should be done at the national level to inform policy and decision making by Council on Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Training, and Government at large. The second category focuses on research areas that should be undertaken by higher education institutions to inform their operations and improvement of their services to students. The final category lists research areas that should be undertaken by other agencies within the education sector, but whose findings would have a bearing on higher education. For example, some studies are within the purview of the Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL) and yet higher education stands to benefit from the findings and recommendations of such studies. A study on the “Implications of introducing A-Levels Qualification” would have a direct bearing on the duration of degree programmes offered in higher education institutions. There are other studies in this category that go beyond the education sector into the labour sector and other sectors. Graduate employment related research is a case in point.

It is important to note that despite the categorisation, the general expectation is that higher education institutions should lead the way in undertaking studies across the board when the research agenda is being implemented.

5.1 Higher Education sub-sector related research priorities

- a) **Financing of higher education in Lesotho:** Financing of the public higher education institutions is entirely dependent on government support. Funding is an important factor that raises a number of points which include such issues as, should it be performance-based for HEIs or should it be left to the market forces through such mechanisms as coupon system for student financing, so that students are given scholarships that are not tied to an institution so that they go to an institution of their choice with their scholarships? This should be investigated through in-depth studies.
- b) **Factors and implications of reconfiguring period of study for first degree programmes:** NUL provides four-year degree programmes mainly because of the weaknesses of COSC

or O Levels school-leaving certificate. Students are not ready for rigorous university education after the O Levels. It is for this reason that the first year of study at the university is more of a preparatory phase for studying at this level. A number of different issues would have to be explored and some systemic changes would be required in the education sector.

- c) **Quality of teaching and learning in HEIs:** The importance of quality in teaching and learning is paramount and has been well documented. However, it is imperative to keep a close eye on the quality of Lesotho's higher education institutions through regular surveys and in-depth scholarly investigation. Learner/learning support systems in higher education institutions should form part of possible issues to be researched on.
- d) **Impact of CHE quality assurance mechanisms on higher education in Lesotho:** CHE is a relatively new organisation with a mandate to promote quality assurance. It has introduced a number of systems geared towards improving quality in higher education. It would be important to evaluate the impact of its interventions on a regular basis.
- e) **Governance of Higher Education Institutions in Lesotho:** Good governance is at the centre of well-functioning higher education institutions. It is important to investigate governing structures' effectiveness so that necessary policy or strategy interventions in this regard can be evidence-based.
- f) **Scarce skill areas in different sectors of Lesotho's economy:** The country needs to have its finger on the pulse at all times in respect of critical skills that are required for its development. There is a need to ensure that the needs in different sectors are determined in a systematic fashion through studies, and updated on a regular basis to ensure that human resources development plans at the national and at sectoral levels are informed by empirical findings of scientific research.
- g) **The level/extent of articulation between different sub-systems and between various; qualifications offered at different levels in the education sector:** When programmes offered at different levels of the education system are well articulated it becomes easy

for progression from one level to another by students. When they are not well articulated there is frustration among students and also that results in wastage in terms of number of years spent studying and money expended in the process. For example students starting at the diploma level would be forced to spend many years studying because they have to start at the beginning when enrolling for a degree programme. Do the programmes in the country at various levels articulate well with those in the SADC sub-region, and what could be the implications if they do not?

- h) **Institutional configuration for implementation of National Qualifications Framework: Implications for embracing CHE and TVED mandates under one body;** Lesotho is a small country with a population of 1.8 million and only a few higher education institutions. Regulation of the various components of the education system is critical, but it is also important that it is done in a manner that does not result in proliferation of institutions established for this purpose; for it can be expensive for the country to sustain many independent institutions. There should be an effective way of integrating regulatory functions of technical and vocational institutions, higher education, and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework.
- i) **Admission and accommodation of people/learners with disabilities in Higher Education programmes:** Empowerment of people with disabilities is critical. Is the environment enabling for them to study at higher education institutions in the country and be productive members of society? Lesotho as a democratic country that conforms to the principles of fairness, equity, human rights, equal access to education among other things, has an obligation to provide for people with disabilities. So it is incumbent upon government and HEIs to conduct research in this area.
- j) **ICT integration in teaching and learning in HEIs:** Developments in information technology have permeated every facet of life and present vast opportunities. Teaching and learning in higher education stands to benefit immensely from deployment of ICT. The extent to which HEIs are taking advantage of these technologies needs to be ascertained and gaps identified systematically through research.

5.2 Higher Education Institutions related research priorities

- a) **HEIs student tracer studies;** Higher education institutions should know where their graduates go and how they perform in the world of work. This information is gathered through tracer studies. Each higher education institution should undertake these studies on a regular basis. Feedback on how their graduates perform can also inform programme review processes.

- b) **Client satisfaction surveys:** Students are clients of higher education institutions and it is critical that regular surveys to gauge their satisfaction about services provided by the institutions are conducted. HEIs can only deliver effectively to the expectations of their clients if they understand their needs and are responsive to them.

- c) **Research in domain/subject specific areas:** Higher education institutions have to continually undertake scholarly research in domain/subject specific areas to expand their horizons and thereby improve the body of knowledge in areas in which they offer programmes. It is through this that teaching and learning at this level will be informed by research undertaken by the same faculty members offering programmes and courses to students.

5.3 Cross-cutting research priorities

These are research priorities that are not necessarily within the higher education sphere, but that have a bearing on the sub-sector and therefore, on the mandate of CHE. They are as follows:

- a) **Graduate employment and unemployment;** Graduate unemployment has, in recent years, become a serious problem in this country. Graduates in a number of fields such as humanities, law and social sciences take long to get placements in the world of work. The extent and depth of this problem needs to be ascertained through research and to check which areas are affected most.

- b) **Viability of introducing A-Levels qualification in Lesotho and implications for HEIs:** The Ministry of Education and Training is planning to introduce A-Levels school leaving qualification in the near future. While this is a progressive move that will go a long way in improving the quality of education, its demands in relation to facilities in schools, availability of qualified teachers, inter alia, need to be determined in a systematic manner. Content and delivery of subjects at A-Levels are very demanding. The key issue is, therefore, whether a critical mass of students would be able to cope at this level or this would just result in higher education being elitist. Research should be able to help answer these questions.
- c) **The extent of mismatch between the output of higher education institutions and the demands of the labour market:** Higher education institutions should be responsive to the developmental needs of the country. There is therefore, need for studies in different sectors to ascertain whether or not the academic programmes address the needs and the extent to which they do.
- d) **Quality of teaching at the secondary level:** It is always important to have quality of teaching and its outcomes on the radar screen at all times. Because this is the level that feeds into the higher education level, if quality improves here it could lead to a number of positive developments at the higher education level.
- e) **Evaluation of implications and impact of the changes in the basic and secondary education system;** The Ministry of Education and Training has introduced changes which include removing primary school leaving certificate and junior certificate in secondary schools. This suggests that exit examination will be written at COSC/IGCSE/LGCSE or A Level once introduced. There are a number of questions that can arise from these developments, including; what the implications for quality of teaching and learning are; what the implications for students who come out of the system not qualifying either for higher education or vocational training are; what the implications for HEIs together with TVET institutions in relation to absorptive capacity of school leavers among other things are.

f) **Study on failure of students from poor family backgrounds to access higher education;**

Education is one of the important factors in breaking the circle of poverty. It is through education that people from poor socio economic backgrounds get a chance to obtain life-changing opportunities. Hence the importance of increasing access to education for those who cannot afford. However, fewer and fewer students from poor backgrounds are making it with the implication that their situation would not change significantly.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The implementation of the research agenda involves a number of key players particularly because research is broad and therefore requires efforts from various quarters. The players include the Ministry of Education and Training, Department of Science and Technology within the Ministry of Communications, Council on Higher Education, Higher Education Institutions and independent researchers among others. All these have different roles towards enhancement of research in the country.

6.1 Responsibilities of MOET

The Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for policy formulation and implementation within the education sector as a whole including higher education sub-sector. Pursuant to this mandate, there are studies that the Ministry will undertake or commission in order to inform policy decisions and programme development. Thus, the Ministry has a clear and direct role to play in research. The Ministry also stands to benefit from research on Lesotho done by others as long as the findings are helpful to its course.

6.2 Responsibilities of CHE

The Council on Higher Education has a mandate to regulate higher education in Lesotho and to advise the Minister of Education and Training. It is therefore incumbent upon CHE to ensure that research that relates to higher education is coordinated such that it is easily available and accessible to all those who need it. This will ensure that there are no duplications in terms of the same areas being researched many times because involved

agencies or independent researchers are not aware of work that has already been done in a given area. CHE also has a responsibility to conduct research in order to base its advice to the Minister on findings that are informed by wide-ranging and in-depth investigation. Research in areas that CHE might wish to advise the Minister on do not necessarily need to be undertaken by CHE itself. All that the organisation needs is for such research to be available for its use, ideally having been done by HEIs or research agencies. If such research is not available then CHE has to do it since it is an important prerequisite to its work.

6.3 Responsibilities of HEIs

Higher Education Institutions are naturally the hub of research. They are centres of knowledge and research with abundant expertise and requisite facilities. As such they should play a leading role in research on, for instance, scientific areas, developmental themes and on higher education. The institutions do have a role and a responsibility to produce research that can be used to anchor and guide Government development plans and other national projects. The Ministry of Education and Training together with CHE will, therefore, rely on HEIs to support this research agenda by undertaking studies in the priority areas as articulated herein.

6.4 Responsibilities of independent researchers

Independent researchers contribute a great deal towards enhancement of research in Lesotho and around the world. It is for this reason that they are singled out and their duties and responsibilities towards implementing this research agenda noted. They are expected to use the agenda as a framework and guidance when they decide on studies to pursue in the area of Higher Education. This will ensure utilisation of the findings of their studies beyond their own personal or institutional objectives for undertaking them. The study findings and recommendations will also be utilised by the Government of Lesotho through CHE and other Ministries. That approach would also enhance chances for collaboration and cooperation between CHE and independent research institutes or researchers through joint ventures and partnerships when undertaking specific studies.

The fact that HEIs are independent implies that they are free to collaborate with other researchers at regional level – particularly at SADC level. Participating in international

research initiatives and collaborating with other scholars could inform local developments that have a bearing on the international stage.

7.0 FUNDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH AGENDA

CHE will advocate for establishment of a National Research Fund to support research in general and this research agenda in particular. The fund should be established and managed by the envisioned National Research Council. While establishment of the Research Council and the Fund is being contemplated by relevant authorities, CHE will endeavour to raise funding for research to address the higher education sub-sector category of research priorities. Other sub-sectors such as the Examinations Council of Lesotho and Secondary education sub-sector should do the same for areas that relate to their mandates.

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Appendix 1

LIST OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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