



Lesotho's experience with the Assessment of Minimum Proficiency Level



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OUTLINE

Background and context

- Lesotho's basic education
- The place of the Examinations Council of Lesotho
- The Lesotho National Assessment of Educational Progress

The Assessment of Minimum Proficiency Level

- Experiences
- Successes
- Challenges
- Lessons

Conclusion





Background and Context

Ministry of Education and Training

- Responsible for overseeing education programs in Lesotho
- Covers early childhood to tertiary level education
- Traditional basic education structure: 7-3-2 (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)
- Examinations at the end of each phase: PSLE, JCE, COSC (later localised to LGCSE).





Recent education reforms

Education system review of 2021

To align with SDG 4 requirement to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong education for all”.

- Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) introduced to strengthen learner retention.
- PSLE phased out as a retention strategy (remove hurdles) and replaced with a non-selection End-of-Level Test.
- JCE also phased out in 2017
- Structure changed to 7 years of primary and 4 years of Secondary, with plan to introduce one year of Advanced-level qualification.



Role of Examinations Council of Lesotho



- Arm of the MoET responsible for developing and administering assessments
- Monitor progress through the biennial Lesotho National Assessment of Educational Progress (LNAEP) Survey.
- Conduct any other research as deemed necessary by MoET and ECoL



Assessment of Minimum Proficiency Level (AMPL)



- Collaboration initiated by the UIS to measure progress towards SDG 4.
- Came at an opportune time when MoET is about to embark on a review of the basic education curriculum.
- Hoped to generate data that will highlight areas requiring more emphasis.
- Also hoped to shed light into the magnitude of damage resulting from Covid-19 learning loss to aid recovery.





Experience with AMPL

- 2023 was the year to conduct LNAEP, so initial plan was to conduct AMPL alongside that.
- However, this proved impossible due to requirement to finish LNAEP data collection by end of April. AMPL preparations still behind.
- Also impossible to prepare for two largescale studies due to staff shortage.
- Initially, AMPLa and AMPLab were to be conducted, but this also proved hard to achieve so decision to settle for AMPLab alone.





Successes

- Good training and guidance from both UIS and ACER teams
- Clear and detailed manuals and tools provided
- Timely provision of related documents
- Great support from UIS and ACER teams
- Support from MoET senior management in liaising with schools. This led to good turnover of schools, leading to 100% participation rate.
- Commendable patience and cooperation from teachers

Working with experienced teachers as TAs and SCs.





Challenges

- Budgeting challenges due to limited conceptualization of materials required and their quantities.
- Delayed review and adaptation of instruments and manuals due to staffing issues.
- Long training workshops due to information overload and limited time
- Delayed sharing of learners' lists by some schools
- Scheduling conflicts with learners' mid-year examinations



Lessons learned

The experience has taught us that for similar studies in the future, there will be a need to:

- Allow time between data collection and school closure
- Conduct pilot testing in a small number of schools to better understand how things work and make necessary adjustments
- Engage additional staff to assist with preparations



Impact of AMPL

The Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL) appreciates its participation in the AMPL project, which has had long-reaching impact in terms of:

- Generation of valuable data on proficiency levels of learners in Lesotho primary schools
- Informing decision-making by different sections of the MoET
- Helping improve learning conditions for Basotho children.
- Aiding effective reporting on progress towards the attainment of SDG 4.1.1





Impact cont.

Moreover, the ECoL research team has gained valuable skills and knowledge through the AMPL project.

- These skills will help improve the conduct of future national assessments.
- The team has learned how to manage big data effectively.
- They have gained insights into considerations for sample selection.
- The team is now better equipped to manage large-scale projects and organise themselves better to handle the pressure that comes with them.





Conclusion

The AMPL project has not only contributed to the improvement of education in Lesotho but has also empowered the ECoL research team for future endeavors.





THE END
THANK YOU!

