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Thoboloko Ntšonyane and Ntsoaki Motaung

The Belo Electrification Project, launched with great fanfare as a catalyst for industrial growth in Botha-Bothe, has become a textbook case of mismanagement, spiralling costs, and institutional failure.

Four years after construction began on November 5 2021, the 33/11kV substation and transmission lines remain incomplete, with no certainty on when power will finally reach the area.

What was meant to be an 18-month project ending in April 2023 has instead devolved into a costly and chaotic dispute between the Ministry of Energy and the contractor, Phaks Joint Venture (JV).

The delays have stalled the opening of completed factory shells and derailed economic prospects for the district.

The project consists of three components: the construction of a new substation, the installation of transmission lines from Hlotse to Belo, and additional lines from Ha-Mopeli to Belo. Its prolonged delays have significantly affected the opening of the Belo factory shells, which remain idle despite being fully built.

Costs have spiralled dramatically, from the original M86 million budget to M129 million already paid to the contractor. The overruns stem from multiple variations, extensions of time, and penalty fees incurred due to late payments.

The escalating costs and persistent delays have raised alarm among key stakeholders, including the government, the World Bank, Parliament, and communities surrounding the industrial area. The Ministry of Energy is implementing this World Bank-funded initiative under the Lesotho Renewable Energy and Energy Access Project (LREEAP).

Background

More than 1,200 households were expected to benefit from the Belo Industrial Area Electrification Project, initially valued at M86 million and funded by the World Bank. The project was launched by former Prime Minister Dr Moeketsi Majoro, who noted that the 16 factory shells built in the area were expected to create approximately 1,400 jobs.

At the time, Dr Majoro also highlighted interest from investors engaged by the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), pointing to the potential for rapid industrial growth in Botha-Bothe.

The project was expected to electrify 21 schools, including pre-schools, alongside a clinic, 11 businesses, and several government offices.

"Our electricity installation needs a powerful electrical power station since more factories or industries are yet to be established in this area. This is a huge project," said then Minister of Energy Mohapi Mohapinyane.

Project Coordinator 'Mathapelo Silase noted that the World Bank-funded programme, totalling M900 million across three components, would extend the grid to areas such as the Tikoe Industrial Zone in Maseru, connect 30,000 households, and deliver mini-grids to remote regions.

"Under one of these components, the World Bank will bring electrical services to women-led businesses. It is high time women show their potential," she said.

Former LNDC Interim CEO, Advocate Molise Ramaili, said the unveiling of the Belo Industrial Electrification Project was critical to completing the Belo Industrial Estate and represented a significant milestone for LNDC.

He added that the project forms part of LNDC's broader Infrastructure Capital Programme, aligned with the National Strategic Development Plan II and implemented on be-

Ha Belo substation scandal deepens

- **M86 million becomes M129 million**
- **Government pays twice for equipment**
- **World Bank demands answers**



Botha-Bothe town

half of the government.

"The supply of electricity in this area brings us one step closer to developing and completing the utility infrastructure required for the project. This phase, which was expected to be completed in December 2021, includes the construction of 16 factory shells and supporting infrastructure, forming part of a masterplan that envisages a total of 51 shells," he said at the launch.

Several years later, the project that was expected to ignite economic activity in Botha-Bothe and surrounding areas remains unfinished. Its completion date is now uncertain, with no clear indication of when the electrification works will resume or be finalised.

Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Energy, Tankiso Phapano, told Parliament that government has already repaid M20 million to the World Bank for unjustified payments relating to the project.

He further disclosed that the Ministry has received correspondence from the World Bank demanding justification for an additional M45 million in cost overruns, failing which the government must repay the amount by year-end.

This week, the Natural Resources Cluster Committee visited the Belo Industrial Area, where completed factory shells stand empty because there is no electricity supply.

The visit followed a petition by the contractor, Phaks JV, which raised numerous concerns and asked Parliament to intervene.

In their petition, they called for an investigation into the handling of the project; alleged "value manipulation," delays, and undisclosed dealings; the awarding of a new contract to one of their subcontractors who they claim has already been fully paid; accountability for public funds; allegations of corruption within

the Ministry; and the basis for the termination of their contract.

Phapano told the committee that the ministry had evicted Phaks JV from the site, a claim the contractor disputes, insisting no meeting or communication ever took place to inform them of such a decision.

Phaks JV Finance Manager, Rapelang Sekatle, said the Ministry had never raised concerns about the company's competence or workmanship.

"We have no letter from the client [Ministry of Energy] complaining about our work or indicating that it was substandard," he said.

Sekatle explained that operations were halted solely due to non-payment, adding that the last payment was received in May 2024. The company has written repeatedly to the Ministry about outstanding fees, including letters dated 26 July 2022, 25 January 2023, April 2023, and 8 June 2023, addressed to both Phapano's predecessors and to him.

Absence of designs stalled progress

A major cause of delays was the absence of approved designs. The contractor submitted both preliminary and detailed designs, seen by this publication, but these could not be implemented without an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), a mandatory requirement for all World Bank-funded projects.

The responsibility for conducting the ESIA lies with the ministry, and it was never carried out.

Addressing the Natural Resource Portfolio Committee, Phapano said he would not go into detail as aspects of the project are currently before the courts.

He indicated that the project began in 2020, funded by a World Bank initiative. Initially, it was structured as a Design and Construction

project, which required a design phase, followed by construction, and ultimately handover to the client.

In this case, the contractor was responsible for designing the project and then submitting the design to the client, in this instance, the Ministry of Energy, for approval. Once approved, the contractor would return to the site to carry out construction, after which the project would be handed over to the Ministry.

"From 2021, after the contract was signed, I recall the project was advertised in 2020, but the contract was finalised in 2021, once work began, it no longer proceeded as a 10k project but was converted into a Bill of Quantities (BOQ) project. It remained in this format until I was informed that it stalled in 2023 and never resumed. When I arrived in January last year, I held several meetings about this project, trying to resolve the issues, but it remained unresolved," he said.

The main problem identified was that after changing to this type of contract, no equipment had been paid for. Wires were purchased from China, monopoles from South Africa, and transformers from the company Actom.

In January 2024, after assessing the challenges, Phapano said he visited the site and found the situation unchanged. On the route to Mokhotlong, wires were still hanging, exactly as he had observed upon his arrival in 2024.

Despite numerous attempts to resolve the matter, he said it became clear that the issues would not resolve on their own.

He explained that the government had initially paid for the equipment, but because it had no direct relationship with the suppliers, having been communicating only through the contractor, it had to engage directly with the contractor to reclaim or pay for the equipment still held by suppliers.

Phapano noted that equipment previously paid for had effectively been paid for a second time. The project was originally budgeted at M86 million. However, during reconciliations with funders last year, it was revealed that M129 million had already been spent, exceeding the original budget by M43 million.

Further investigation showed that this amount had been paid to the contractor, indicating that the contingency fund had been used in the early stages, over the actual project cost. Contingency funds are intended to cover unexpected costs during construction, not to inflate the budget.

Regarding the equipment, he explained that the government had paid for items still overseas, and agreements were signed to have them transferred, as suppliers threatened to auction them.

The wires from China had already been fully paid for in the initial reconciliation but were not delivered; a subsequent payment was made, and they are now en route to Le-

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sotho. The monopolies have arrived at LNDC, and transformers will be delivered once civil works are sufficiently advanced.

Even after agreements were signed, Phapano said the contractor was unable to continue work. The contract was reviewed, and termination was deemed necessary under the relevant clauses. The Attorney General pursued an eviction order in November, but the contractor did not comply, he said.

“The termination was amicable. The contractor was not blacklisted because they had facilitated supplier access, and the Ministry remained open to settling what was due and allowing them to participate in future procurement,” he said.

He added: “Before finalising payments, a trip was made with the DCEO to verify the purchased equipment.”

While Phaks JV claims another contractor has been engaged to complete the remaining work, Phapano said that the contract explicitly allows the client to remove the contractor.

Article 42.2.4 states: “The Client may enter the Site, expel the Contractor, and complete the Facilities itself or by employing any Third Party.”

Ministry pays for equipment sourced from supplier on behalf of the contractor

The Ministry of Energy has processed some payments for the equipment on behalf of the contractor. This according to PS Phapano was to prevent the supplier from auctioning such goods as they have been fully paid for but remains in supplier’s custody.

- The Ministry paid ACTOM High Voltage (Pty)Ltd, remaining sum of M2, 127, 479.73
- The Ministry settled outstanding M3, 144, 626.24 at Chinese company, Henan Qingzhou Cable CO.,Ltd
- The Ministry paid supplier, CIS Engineering (Pty) Ltd remining balance of M605, 229.87
- The Ministry paid the balance to ACTOM High Voltage (Pty) Ltd in the sum of M1, 111, 029.80



Belo Sub-station

Meanwhile, Natural Resources Cluster Committee Chairperson Moeketsi Motšoaane said the Committee contractor and will reflect on them and produce report to the parliament.

Contractor demands payments of settlement of contractual obligations

Phaks JV through their legal representatives, S.Phafane Chambers wrote a demand letter dated September 4, 2025, to the Ministry which this publication is in possession.

In that letter, the contractor wants payments following what they call “unlawful termination” of the contract. It should be noted that the Ministry had fired the contractor from the site but the contractor has resisted to vacate the premises and has since petition the court asking for the interdiction.

The demand the following fees:

- An outstanding payment of M20, 468, 018.09
- Payment for extension of time with associated costs in the sum of M11, 066, 266.21
- An interest accrued from delayed payments amounting to M6, 969, 019.45

“Our instructions are to further record as we hereby do and this being on the without

prejudice basis, clients reserving all their rights, that they are prepared to accept the termination... upon the following conditions being fully met; that in addition to the sums set out above, a payment retention fee in the sum of M7, 689, 040. 87 and damages for unlawful termination in the sum of M36, 765, 297.81 also to be paid immediately,” reads the letter.

In his response to these demands, Phapano wrote that: “We reject claims submitted by your client on that they lack a substantiated foundation in terms of the Contract. Nonetheless, your client is further requested to submit substantiated claims which will be subject to verification in terms of the Contract’s expended amounts, and subsequent payment where expedient.”

Phaks JV have secured a court order at the Northern Division of the High Court where Judge ‘Makampong Mokhorro ordered that the original contract remains binding on both parties and that the arbitration clause is still binding on the parties.

Audit findings on Belo Industrial

The Auditor-General, ‘Mathabo Makenete’s report have pointed to many incomplete components of this project.

The audit finds the following:

- According to the report the compensation for Belo Industrial zone project affected persons (PAPs) is 95% done.
- Construction works for the Mopeli-Belo 33/11kV 8km line halted pending negotiations between the client and the contractor.
- Substation construction has been halted, however excavations, soil compaction, earth mat trenching and concrete tests for casting of plinths completed and 95% done.
- 11kV indoors Switchgear equipment has been manufactured and delivered to site, pending installation and commissioning at 50%.
- 33kV Indoors Switchgear is yet to be manufactured for both Belo and Hlotse substation- at 0%
- 33kV outdoor Switchgear yet to be delivered to site.
- 33kV HV steel structures installation halted at 50%.
- Factory Acceptance Test (FAT) of Power Transformers factory visit conducted and approved of specifications granted, transformers are yet to be delivered on site.
- Hlotse Belo 33kV Line pole planting at 84.7% (19/229 Structure total), whereas dressing at 24% (56/229) and stringing yet to begin.
- Mopeli Belo 33kV line wooden H Pole planting at 100% stringing and dressing at 100%.
- Mopeli Belo 33kV line Monopole installation at 0% with Excavation & Casting of Concrete footing of Monopole Structures – 60% (3/5 structures total).
- Hlotse Substation Bay extension works have not begun.

The contractor said their last work was towards the end of 2023 and they have not been working owing to non-payment. Their equipment remains on site.

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How the LHDA bursary is transforming young lives in Lesotho

Staff Reporter

When Tlali Moferefere walked into the National University of Lesotho (NUL) for orientation week in 2018, he never imagined that a single scholarship announcement would eventually shape his entire future.

Nor did Kananelo Phakisi, a quiet but brilliant Computer Science student from Mafeteng, know that a phone call summoning him to the bursary office would change the course of his life and career.

Both young men are among a group of Basotho whose potential was unlocked by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) Bursary Programme, an opportunity that often goes unnoticed but continues to rewrite the stories of hardworking students across the country.

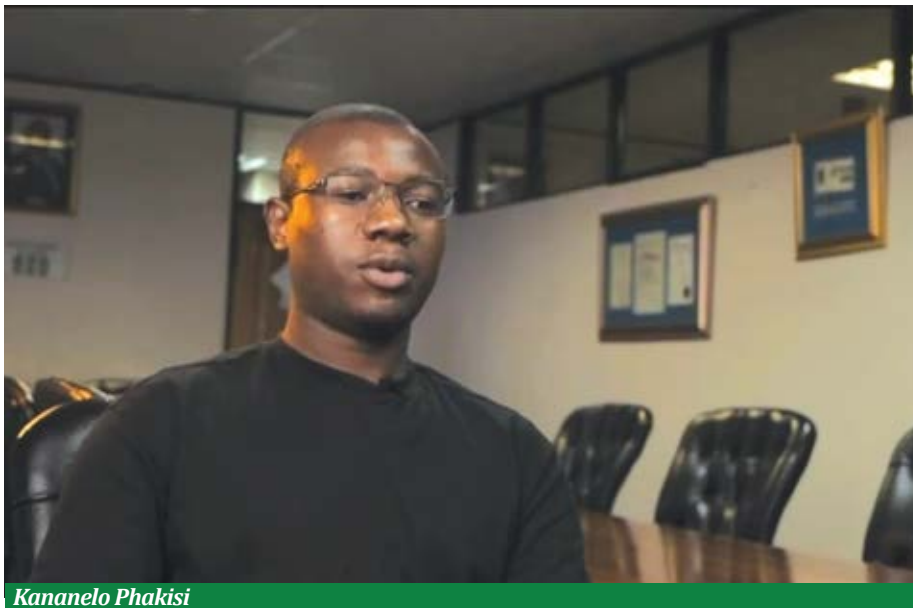
In Lesotho, tertiary education is primarily financed through the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS), the government's loan-and-scholarship scheme. For decades, NMDS has been the default route for students seeking higher education. But the system, constrained by limited resources and ever-growing demand, cannot reach everyone. Many bright young Basotho miss out on opportunities simply because they cannot afford tuition, accommodation, or basic learning materials.

This is where institutions like the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) step in.

LHDA, established to implement, operate and maintain the multibillion-maloti Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), is best known for engineering marvels such as Katse and Mohale dams, the tunnels that deliver water to South Africa, and the hydropower infrastructure that supplies electricity to Lesotho.

But LHDA's mandate extends far beyond engineering. As part of its social responsibility commitments, the Authority invests in the development of Basotho, especially in fields critical to the water, environment, engineering, and technical sectors.

One of its most impactful initiatives is the LHDA Bursary Programme, awarded to top-performing students in selected disciplines at institutions across Lesotho and South Africa. The bursary covers full tuition, accommodation, monthly stipends, and book allowances, lifting the financial weight from families and allowing students to focus entirely on their ac-



Kananelo Phakisi

ademic paths.

For Moferefere and Phakisi, the bursary became more than financial support. It became a source of dignity, confidence, and direction.

Tlali Moferefere: "The bursary gave me more hope."

From Lithabaneng, Ha Keiso, Tlali Moferefere grew up without the certainty that university would be financially possible. He studied BSc Environmental Science, completing in 2022. He first heard of the LHDA bursary in an unexpected place: orientation week.

"The first time I heard of the LHDA bursary programme was during orientation week in 2018. Secondly, I got a call from the bursary administrator telling me that I had been nominated for the scholarship."

The relief that followed was immediate and deep.

"The bursary covered tuition fees, accommodation, a monthly stipend, and a book allowance. On a personal level, the bursary gave me more hope in my studies and made me focus more on my studies and less on my family."

For Tlali, this support was not only financial, it was stabilising.

"It lifted a financial burden that I know my family would not afford, for example, paying the tuition fee and all other education expenses."

His hard work paid off.

"I was one of the best students in Environmental Science, and I even received an award for it."

That excellence opened a further door; something he attributes directly to being financially unburdened.

"Due to this LHDA bursary opportunity,



Tlali Moferefere

I managed to further my studies in a Master's of Water Engineering at the University of Cape Town. This is because I did not have any financial burden from the government."

Today, Tlali is driven by purpose.

"This experience has shaped my plans. It gave me love for dealing with water-related issues and the environment. That's why I ended up furthering my studies in water engineering. I would love to give back to the community after this big opportunity by expressing my expertise in both environmental and water engineering."

And to students waiting for their chance, he has a message:

"I advise them to work hard, value such opportunities, be respectful, be dedicated, and motivated all the time."

Kananelo Phakisi: "This basically gave me a stress-free living."

Born and raised in Mafeteng, Kananelo Phakisi pursued a BSc in Computer Science (Single Major) at NUL, completing in 2022. Unlike Tlali, he had never heard of the LHDA bursary, until the day he was summoned to the bursary office.

"To be honest, I had not heard of the LHDA bursary before, but I was called to the bursary office while in my second year of study. I was told that I was the recipient of the LHDA bursary because I was one of the top-performing students in Computer Science."

For a young man raised by his grandmother, after losing his mother years earlier, the bursary's impact was immediate.

"The bursary included tuition fees, accommodation or rent, a monthly allowance, and a book allowance. I come from

a family that is not well off, and I am supported by my grandmother. My mother died a long time ago."

For the first time, he could breathe.

"This basically gave me a stress-free living, and I was able to send my grandma some money because the allowance, the rent, and everything were quite higher than what I was used to. So I was able to surprise her here and there."

He remembers one instruction clearly: "We were told that we had to be at the top of our performance for us to continue getting the bursary."

That condition motivated him rather than intimidated him.

"Getting this showed me that my hard work in the first year had been noticed and allowed me to really focus on school and be the best going forward."

The results were remarkable.

"I received multiple awards during my graduation. When graduating, I received about three awards, one was from Standard Lesotho Bank."

Phakisi did not stop there. He dove deeper into systems, infrastructure and automation.

"I also ventured into site reliability engineering, learning further about IT infrastructure, managing infrastructure."

Today, he works at Standard Lesotho Bank.

"I am at Standard Lesotho Bank in IT as a Core Banking Administrator. But that is not my only job. I am also into site reliability engineering, making sure we detect problems before the system degrades further."

A programme that changes more than bank balances

The stories of Moferefere and Phakisi highlight something essential: the LHDA bursary is not just a financial aid programme, it is a bridge to possibility. It identifies talent where it exists and nurtures it, regardless of background or family income.

Where NMDS provides broad access, LHDA's bursary sharpens focus, producing graduates in fields vital to national development, such as water engineering, environmental science, computer science, and engineering.

The human impact is undeniable. When a young person no longer worries about meals, rent or unpaid fees, their mind becomes free to dream, innovate, and excel.

Auditor General exposes Tholo Energy's M31 million bombshell

... And the government's failure to act

- *Officials knew*
- *Tholo didn't pay*
- *Now the Petroleum Fund is paying the price.*

Staff Reporter

The Petroleum Fund is staring down a deepening financial crisis as the Auditor General, 'Mathabo Makenete, issues a blistering warning over a massive M31 million debt owed by Tholo Energy, an arrears now threatening to choke the Fund's already-tightening cash flows.

In a sharply worded audit opinion tabled in Parliament this week, Makenete did not mince her words.

"Without qualifying my opinion, I draw your attention to the long overdue debts on levies and slate settlements by Tholo Energy amounting to M31,029,912 that might result in litigations and adverse impact on the Fund's cash flows due to non-compliance," she said.

"This is despite the numerous efforts by the Board of Directors and the Management to address the matter and this needs collaborative efforts by all the stakeholders affected," she added.

The warning comes as the Petroleum Fund's newly released financial statements paint a grim picture of collapsing operational cash generation.

Despite posting a profit of M14.1 million for 2024/25, propped up mainly by M16 million in interest income, the Fund effectively generated no cash from its core operations.

In fact, it posted a cash deficit of M57,390, a catastrophic plunge from the M83 million operational surplus recorded the previous year.

Once depreciation, prior-year adjustments, and other non-cash items were stripped away, the Fund's liquidity position deteriorated further. Work-

ing capital movements, primarily rising receivables and payments tied to gratuity provisions, drained another M3.3 million.

These numbers expose a troubling reality that without interest earnings from its investment portfolio, the Fund's operations would be in the red.

If the Auditor General's warning sounds familiar, it is because this is far from the first time Tholo Energy has featured at the center of public-fund exposure.

Earlier this year, Newsday revealed that Tholo Energy owed the Ministry of Natural Resources a staggering M131 million in petroleum levies, an arrears so large that the Ministry refused to renew the company's trading licence pending settlement.

But that M131 million, we now know, is only the tip of the iceberg.

Newsday investigations established that Tholo Energy also owed the Road Fund roughly M48 million in road maintenance levies, pushing its known liabilities to state-owned institutions beyond M179 million.

Road Fund officials confirmed the debt but refused to disclose the exact amount.

"We acknowledge that Tholo Energy does owe the Road Fund under the road maintenance levy stream. The Road Fund Secretariat, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, is continuously engaging with Tholo Energy to ensure that the debt is recovered in the most reasonable economic manner, having considered several factors," Phumla Moleko, Road Fund's head of corporate communications, said in March.

"We will, however, not be in a position to divulge the specific amount as a show of good faith and trust



in the process being followed," Moleko added.

Natural Resources Minister Mhlonimi Moleko revealed to Parliament in March that Tholo Energy had repeatedly defaulted on agreed payment plans for the M131 million debt.

Moleko warned that the company's expired licence would trigger liquidation proceedings if payment continued to stall.

He admitted that the government had exercised "leniency" because Tholo is a locally owned enterprise, but that patience had been exhausted.

However, in a contradictory account, Ministry of Energy's Principal Secretary (PS) Tankiso Phapano insisted delays were caused by a dispute over the true amount owed. Phapano said the two sides only agreed on the M131 million figure last year and had since been negotiating terms.

Tholo Energy's problems extend even further.

In February, Newsday reported that the company and its managing director, Thabiso Moroahae, were implicated in an alleged M450 million tax-fraud scheme.

A whistleblower submitted evidence to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO), the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), Revenue

Services Lesotho (RSL), and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

FIU reportedly completed its investigation in 2024 and shared its findings with authorities, but no action has been taken.

With Tholo Energy owing millions across multiple public institutions, and showing repeated patterns of non-payment, the Petroleum Fund finds itself dangerously exposed.

Makenete's warning that the M31 million arrears could trigger litigation and undermine cash flows is not abstract. The Fund's own financials show it is already under liquidity stress.

The latest cash-flow position suggests that one more shock, be it delayed levy payments, investment underperformance, or further erosion of working capital, could push the Fund into a full-blown cash crunch.

Meanwhile, the government has yet to enforce decisive action against Tholo Energy, despite years of escalating arrears and a mounting list of scandals.

For now, the Petroleum Fund remains an institution carrying the weight of a private company's debts, unresolved investigations, and policy indecision, while its operational health deteriorates in plain sight.

Lesotho declared critically short of nurses

... Yet hundreds remain unemployed

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho has been placed on the international red list for its critically low nurse-to-patient ratio, a stark reflection of the country's worsening health-care crisis, even as hundreds of qualified Basotho nurses remain unemployed.

This was revealed in Parliament by Mokhetheoaneng constituency Member of Parliament, Mokhothu Makhalanyane.

Makhalanyane highlighted the troubling contradiction that while the World Health Organisation (WHO) has classified Lesotho as facing a severe shortage of nursing staff, more than 800 trained nurses in the country cannot secure employment.

He attributed this to prolonged bureaucratic hurdles, particularly the requirement for approval from the Minister of Finance before new posts can be created.

According to him, this bottleneck has persisted since 2023 and has created deep frustration. He warned that the crisis was worsening, with about 89 families expected to lose their income due to impending retrenchments by December.

Makhalanyane further stressed that Lesotho's

failure to absorb its own nurses was also a lost economic opportunity. He cited an instance in which 30 Basotho nurses applied for positions in South Africa in a single day, representing a potential revenue gain of M600,000 for the neighbouring country.

He added that while high-income countries such as Canada and Ireland were interested in hiring Basotho nurses, Lesotho's red-list status prevented them from doing so, as global recruitment relies on verified workforce numbers rather than policy assurances.

The crisis is reinforced by deep fiscal constraints. Minister of Tourism and former Minister of Health, Motlatsi Maselepe, confirmed that the doctor- and nurse-to-patient ratios were "very bad," contributing directly to the country's poor health outcomes.

Maselepe also revealed that Lesotho's public-sector wage bill was among the highest globally, an issue that prompted the African Union (AU) to withdraw an estimated M400 million in annual budget support, because the funds were perceived to be financing an unsustainably high salary bill.

He lamented that the country's internal mismanagement has now become an obstacle to Basotho nurses seeking better opportunities abroad as at-

tempts to preserve local staffing levels block them from taking up jobs even in South Africa.

He noted that, unlike South Africa, which relies heavily on the private sector for health workforce absorption, Lesotho remains trapped within the limits of its public-sector wage structure.

In a significant intervention, Speaker of the National Assembly, Tlohang Sekhamane, proposed privatisation of health services as a way to bypass wage bill constraints.

Sekhamane pointed to the existing infrastructure of church-owned health facilities under the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL), which already operate as private entities. The government currently supports CHAL institutions through subventions rather than salaries.

He argued that expanding their private nature could help resolve staffing shortages without inflating the public wage bill.

"The problem is already solved because there is already an infrastructure," he said, expressing concern that Lesotho had not yet moved to privatise more of its health services.

He described the health sector as a highly "attractive, lucrative area" that could draw staff away from overburdened public institutions.

Responding to the debate, Minister of Public Service Mphuthi Mphuthi agreed that the wage bill remained a major constraint, and acknowledged that the government cannot hire all unemployed health workers.

Mphuthi added that the Ministry of Labour was signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with other countries to create employment opportunities for Basotho abroad, while simultaneously working on strategies to retain local doctors.

According to the 2022 study Health Workforce Supply, Needs and Financial Feasibility in Lesotho: A Labour Market Analysis, Lesotho had approximately 20,942 active health workers across 18 health occupations in 2020.

The majority were community health workers (69 percent), followed by nurses and midwives (17.9 percent). Medical practitioners accounted for only 2 percent of the total health workforce.

The study found significant unemployment among trained professionals. Nearly one in three professional nurses and midwives (28.43 percent) were unemployed. Unemployment also affected 20 percent of associate nurse professionals, 13.26 percent of pharmacy technicians, and 24.91 percent of laboratory technicians.

Lesotho had 20.73 doctors, nurses and midwives per 10,000 people in 2020. This figure could rise to 31.49 per 10,000 by 2030. However, the projected need, based on disease burden, population growth and demographic changes, was 46.72 health professionals per 10,000 people by 2030.

"The existing stock of health workers covered only 47 percent of the needs and could improve to 55 percent in 2030. The financial space for the health workforce (HWF) employment was roughly US\$40.94 million in 2020, increasing to about US\$66.69 million by 2030," the study noted.

"In comparison, the cost of employing all health workers already in the supply pipeline (in addition to the currently employed ones) was estimated to be US\$61.48 million but could reach US\$104.24 million by 2030. Thus, a 33 percent gap is apparent between the financial space and what is required to guarantee employment for all health workers in the supply pipeline," it added.

The study concluded that Lesotho's health workforce stock falls short of population health needs by 53 percent. While unemployment among some health cadres remains significant, meeting the country's needs will require increasing the health workforce budget by at least 12.3 percent annually until 2030, or allocating at least 33 percent of the recurrent health expenditure to the health workforce.



Newsday Business

CAFI intensifies entrepreneurial ecosystem revival

Staff Reporter

Amid the socio-economic challenges facing Lesotho, a quiet entrepreneurship movement is taking shape to confront long-standing issues of unemployment, sluggish private sector growth, and limited economic diversification.

This emerging wave of innovation is being propelled by the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) project through the Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub and Seed Financing Facility (LEHSFF).

This week, 15 dynamic, high-potential enterprises took centre stage as they pitched their ideas and business models to investors, venture capitalists and private-sector leaders at an event dubbed Demo Day.

The demonstration fitted a growing momentum in a national effort to unlock job creation and stimulate sustainable enterprise development.

CAFI, conceptualised in the aftermath of the Covid-19 economic downturn, is an ambitious initiative designed to revitalise the private sector and create an enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable economic recovery.

According to the Bureau of Statistics (BOS), youth unemployment stands at 39 percent, a figure worsened by the loss of more than 20,000 textile and clothing jobs following the pandemic. MSMEs and start-ups, which already lacked resilience to external shocks, were among the hardest hit.

Supported by the World Bank and operating under the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development, CAFI responds directly to these economic disruptions by strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem and improving access to finance.

The Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub, one of its flagship interventions, was established in June 2023 to support early-stage enterprises capable of generating jobs and contributing to economic transformation.

The hub's demo day offered a platform to showcase progress made so far, particularly the incubation programme that has produced a pipeline of innovative, investment-ready businesses.

The 15 enterprises from the first and second cohorts pitched their solutions to an audience that included enterprise support organisations (ESOs), ecosystem partners, development agencies and private-sector representatives.



Trade and Industry Minister Mokhehi Shelile during the demo day

The hub consists of several components, including the establishment of a sustainable entrepreneurship facility, upskilling and certification of ESOs, integration of Lesotho's start-up community into the regional ecosystem through partnerships such as AfriLabs and ABAN, and the development of a diaspora engagement programme to link Basotho abroad as mentors, investors or partners. Another key pillar is the recruitment of a fund manager to administer a M54 million Venture Capital Fund, which will support high-growth enterprises. An acceleration programme for 50 businesses is also in the pipeline.

So far, more than 200 enterprises have been incubated through ESOs that have been capacitated by CAFI. Over the next three years, the hub intends to incubate at least 300 more, pushing the total to 500 by 2028.

The demo day drew high-level attendance, including Prime Minister Samuel Matekane, cabinet ministers such as Trade and Industry Minister Mokhehi Shelile and Labour and Employment Minister Tšelisio Mokhosi, along with prominent private-sector figures and members of the diplomatic corps.

Addressing the gathering, CAFI's Managing Director Chaba Mokuku described the event as a milestone in building Lesotho's innovation capacity.

"Today, we are celebrating a key milestone. We are showcasing the Kingdom's strong pipeline of innovative enterprises

to the Nation and to the World," Mokuku said.

He added that the hub will play a central role in accelerating 50 high-potential enterprises through the Venture Capital Fund.

"Over the next three years the Hub is expected to facilitate incubation of additional 300 or more enterprises, and this will bring the total to 500 by 2028. I should mention that CAFI Project prioritized youth and women owned enterprises," he said.

On his part, Shelile said the enterprises demonstrated the country's readiness to compete and diversify.

"Their presence here signals that Lesotho is not only open for business but ready to lead with bold ideas and competitive solutions. As such, as the Ministry responsible for Business Development, we are deeply committed to advancing economic diversification in line with the

National Trade Policy and the National Export Strategy," Shelile said.

Dr Dinara Djoldosheva, the World Bank Country Representative applauded the collaboration between stakeholders working to strengthen Lesotho's entrepreneurial pipeline.

Among the notable enterprises on show was Pay Lesotho, a fintech company working to close gaps in digital payments.

"We provide a seamless payment infrastructure that enables businesses, government entities, and individuals to transact through mobile money, bank cards, POS devices and online platforms," said Lerato Masupha. The company is seeking US\$350,000 to scale operations and expand its product offerings.

Another promising enterprise was Iconics Clothing, a manufacturer of climate-ready tech apparel and modern corporate wear, including electric-powered jackets and cooling vests.

TSIBISO! TSIBISO! TSIBISO!

Mona ke tsibiso ea Joy to The World. Re tsibisa sechaba, litho tsohle tsa mokhatlo, hammoho le ba amehang ka kotloloho le ka tsela e sa tobang hore Joy To The World e rerile ho hlakola molaoana/constitution oa khale o neng o sebetse pele. Nomoro ea ngoliso ke 8818.

Batho bohle kapa mekhatlo e nang le thahasello, lipotso kapa litlhakisetsa e ka li fitsetsa ofising ea rona liatere-seng tsena tse latelang, nakong ra libeke tse tharo ho tloha ka letsatsi la phatlalatso ena.

Ofisi mongolisi kakaretso
Government Complex
Pela Queen 2 ea khale
P.O. Box 33
Maseru 100

JOY TO THE WORLD
sebothoane Ha Mphuthing
P.O. Box 844
Leribe 300



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: 5th Incubation Cycle – Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub & Seed Financing Facility

Are you an innovative entrepreneur ready to scale your business and create a lasting impact? The future of business in Lesotho is YOU! If you plan to and have potential, or are a high-growth, high-impact innovative SME or startup, this is your chance to take your enterprise to the next level. The Government of Lesotho has received a loan from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank to implement the **Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project**. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to “increase access to business support services and financial products targeted at MSMEs and entrepreneurs, especially women and youth”.

The **Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub and Seed Financing Facility (LEHSFF)** under the CAFI Project invites innovative **SMEs and startups** to apply for the **5th Incubation Cycle**, running from **February 2026 to August 2026**. This program, a key component of the **CAFI Project**, is designed to empower high-growth, high-impact enterprises, particularly in **agriculture, tourism and hospitality, construction, manufacturing and green energy, creative industries and technology & innovation**, in alignment with the **Second National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II)**.

- Why Apply?**
- This six months incubation program will benefit selected enterprises as they will receive:
- Needs assessment for **tailored mentorship, coaching, and industry expertise**
 - Product or service refinement** for market readiness
 - Business model refinement** and technical assistance
 - Networking opportunities** with investors and market stakeholders
 - Digitization support** for enhanced efficiency
 - Training on **financial management, marketing, HR, and operations**
 - Facilitation of **access to finance and investment opportunities** for the enterprises by linking them with investors and other sources of financing
 - Assistance in developing a **scalable two-year business plan**

- Who Can Apply?**
- Enterprises with **high growth potential and are innovative**
 - Operational businesses with market-ready products**
 - Full-time entrepreneurs committed to the six-month incubation**
 - Businesses demonstrating **scalability and job creation potential**
 - Enterprises addressing **developmental challenges through technology, science, or innovation**
 - You are **not a one-person (permanent staff) company**.
 - Enterprises ready to abide by **environmental and social safeguards**

How to Apply

Visit www.cafi.org.ls to complete your application and select your preferred **Enterprise Support Organization (ESO)**. **Deadline: December 12, 2025**

Women- and youth-led enterprises are strongly encouraged to apply!

Please note: As an enterprise you are not allowed to apply to more than one ESO

TEAMS <https://teams.microsoft.com/join/34108454834516?p=X3aSa8iRJJQFy0aSeEt>

Meeting ID: 373 795 581 173 33

Passcode: oL2AE3Xi

Prime Cubate	-	09:00am - 09:45am
Sky Business Inc (SBI) -		09:45am - 10:30am
Development Solutions -		10:30am - 11:15am
Relationships Inspiring Social Enterprise (rise) -		11:15am - 12:00pm
Girls Coding Academy -		12:00pm - 12:45pm
Impact School	-	12:45pm - 13:30pm

Meet Your Incubators!

The incubation will be delivered by **6 Enterprise Support**

Organizations (ESOs):

SBI application link to be embedded
<https://entrephub.cafi.org.ls/public/application/inc/6909d687c-4432fa2c25d864b>

1) Apply to Sky Business Inc (SBI) if

- You are the owner of an early-stage, small business that has been **operating for at least six (6) months under Tourism Sector (including Accommodation, Parks, Tour Operators, Destination Management Companies, Arts and Crafts, Health and Wellness, etc).**

For inquiries, please contact: admin@skybusinessinc.com or call: +266 59311874 / +266 22 323 777
<https://www.facebook.com/skybusinessinc>

Impact School application link to be embedded
<https://entrephub.cafi.org.ls/public/application/inc/6909f000c-79158fad47a5f6>

2) Apply to Impact School if

- Your business operates within these tech categories:
- FinTech:** Mobile payments, digital banking, and blockchain applications
- AgriTech:** IoT, precision farming, agri-marketplaces, and mobile extension services
- HealthTech:** Telemedicine, AI diagnostics, and digital health solutions
- E-commerce:** Digital retail and online marketplace platforms
- EdTech:** E-learning platforms, education digitization, and online training tools

Note: We encourage applications from innovators across all technology-driven sectors with scalable and impactful solutions.

For inquiries, please contact: incubation@impactschool.org.ls or call +266 5836 4611 / +266 5048 9097
<https://web.facebook.com/ImpactSchoolLSO>
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/impact-school-ls>

Girls Coding Academy application link to be embedded
<https://entrephub.cafi.org.ls/public/application/inc/6909f21367b-4b181a715cfee>

3) Apply to Girls Coding Academy if

Your enterprise focuses: on two primary specialization tracks designed to strengthen and scale ICT-driven enterprises:

3.1 Robotics and Coding

This track supports enterprises or startups engaged in:

- Developing robotics-based educational tools,
- Running coding academies or digital literacy initiatives,
- Designing software or automation solutions that promote innovative ecosystems

3.2 Tech Hardware and IoT Solutions

This track targets MSMEs involved in hardware manufacturing and smart technology integration, such as: Tech Hardware and IoT Solutions MSME specializing in locally assembled USB cables, smart IoT devices, and digital electronics repairs.”

Eligible businesses include those engaged in:

- Manufacturing or assembling ICT devices and accessories (e.g., USB cables, chargers, sensors)
- Developing smart IoT solutions (e.g., trackers, monitoring systems, scanners)
- Repairing and maintaining digital hardware such as cell phones, laptops, or computers

For inquiries, please contact: info@girlscodingacademy.org or call +266 59076504/ +266 6229 6071
<https://www.girlscodingacademy.co.ls/>
<https://www.facebook.com/girlscodingacademy.ls/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/girlscodingacademy/>

Prime Cubate application link to be embedded
<https://entrephub.cafi.org.ls/public/application/inc/6909d8a867b4b1f7cc15cfd5>

4) Apply to Prime Cubate if:

Your business has been in existence for at least 1 year and it must be addressing a developmental challenge under manufacturing, namely Renewable Energy & Green Manufacturing, Agro-Processing & Food Manufacturing, and Recycling & Circular Economy. For inquiries, please contact: thalosompopo@gmail.com and rose@tekaneledimo.com in copy or contact +266 56649013.
<https://www.facebook.com/61569311407568/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/prime-cubate-pty/>

Development Solutions application link to be embedded
<https://entrephub.cafi.org.ls/public/application/inc/6909f057c-4432faa3e5d8773>

5) Apply to Development Solutions if:

Your business is in horticulture, and this covers the cultivation and commercialization of fruits, vegetables, herbs and ornamental plants, including all activities from production to market.

Examples include:

- Production:** Tomatoes, spinach, onions, cabbage, lettuce, herbs, flowers, apples, or strawberries.
- Value Addition:** Drying, packaging, juicing, or making sauces.
- Input Supply:** Seeds, seedlings, irrigation systems, compost, or organic fertilizers.
- Marketing & Logistics:** Cold storage, transport, and distribution to shops, hotels, or markets.
- Integrated Ventures:** Beekeeping (pollination & honey), fish farming (aquaponics), or organic waste recycling supporting horticulture systems.

For inquiries, please contact: developmentsolutions10@gmail.com or call +266 6279 5317 /+266 5788 8186 / +266 5911 5974/ +266 22316948
<https://developmentsolutionsltd.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61583232640212>

rise application link to be embedded
<https://entrephub.cafi.org.ls/public/application/inc/6909f-650c4432f7d5b5d878a>

6) Apply to Rise:

rise is looking for 10 innovative and hungry to learn entrepreneurs in the following sectors:

- Built Environment (architecture, construction and design)
- Sustainable Energy
- Circular Economy Solutions

For inquiries, please contact: projects@riseint.org or call (+266) 5092 4084 / 5848 8060
<https://riseint.org/>
<https://web.facebook.com/riseint>
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/rise-int/>

Don't miss this opportunity to take your business to the next level! #Innovate #Grow #Lead

Need More Info? Join our virtual information sessions every **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from November 24 to December 12, 2025** (details on the CAFI website). Call the Hub at 22315800 or email entrephub@cafi.org.ls

Southern African Children Demand Action as Lesotho Prepares to Host 2026 Commemorations



Over 200 children from across Southern Africa gathered in Botswana's Parliament chambers on Saturday, 15 November 2025, to deliver a powerful **State of the Children Address** in commemoration of the World Children's Day. Representatives from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe led by the Chairperson of Botswana's National Children's Consultative Forum, Madam Aumake Aaron, came together with one clear message for leaders: **turn promises into action**.

The children called for stronger child protection services to protect them from abuse and exploitation, better and more inclusive education, and promotion of their rights. Their united voices affirmed that children should shape decisions, their rights must remain at the centre, and their ideas are key to building a better future for every child in the SADC region.

World Children's Day, observed annually on 20 November, commemorates the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, affirming every child's right to protection, education, health care, and participation, among many. In today's rapidly evolving world, children face unprecedented challenges, from climate change to conflict and persistent poverty. This day serves as a global call to spotlight the issues affecting children, amplify their voices, and renew commitments to safeguarding their rights.

Since 2021, top leaders from Southern African countries come together to commemorate the World Children's Day and renew their commitment to improving the well-being of children. This year, Botswana hosted the event, joined by Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe. In a highlight of the commemorations, the President of Botswana officially passed the **Baton to the Prime Minister of Lesotho**, marking Lesotho as the host of the 2026 Sub-Regional World Children's Day commemorations. This symbolic handover ensures that the momentum of amplifying children's voices and advocating for their rights continues across the region.

Lesotho was represented by 20 children who actively shared their experiences and ideas on improving the wellbeing of children. **Thato Sello, youth delegate from Lesotho Lesotho, said**, "Many girls miss school because they cannot afford menstrual hygiene products. Some use old clothes or newspapers or stay home entirely out of fear and embarrassment. Free or affordable pads, private changing spaces, and improved school sanitation would make a real difference in helping every girl stay in school and succeed." **Amohelang Tsotetsi added**, "Poverty is another barrier keep-

ing children out of classrooms. Many families cannot afford uniforms, transport, or basic school materials. Some children leave school to herd animals or work in fields. Only 33% of children complete lower secondary, and just 14% reach upper secondary. Overcrowded classrooms, lack of textbooks, and limited support for children with disabilities make learning even harder. Bold action is needed to protect every child's right to quality education."

The Right Honorable Prime Minister of Lesotho, Samuel N. Matekane addressed the children in while in Botswana, saying, "We have listened to your voices today, and we hear the challenges you continue to face, including barriers to education, poverty, and limited access to resources. Your concerns remind us that much more needs to be done to ensure every child can thrive. As the government of Lesotho, we commit to continue working with partners and stakeholders to invest in programs that protect and empower children, creating safe, inclusive, and nurturing environments. By listening to your voices and acting on your concerns, we can build a more equitable, prosperous, and hopeful tomorrow for every child."

Alison Parker, UNICEF Deputy Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, urged governments to place children at the center of policymaking: "Investments in education, stronger child protection systems, and inclusive governance are critical. Every school and every home must be a place where children can grow, be nurtured, and thrive. UNICEF stands ready to support governments in advancing child-centered policies."

Through this commemorative event held in the Parliament of Botswana, children engaged directly with heads of state and leaders from their countries, demonstrating that they are powerful agents of change, capable of influencing policies and budgets, shaping community practices, and holding governments accountable. The 2025 Sub-Regional World Children's Day commemoration reaffirmed the need for sustained investments in children and cross-border collaboration to safeguard children's rights and ensure a more equitable and hopeful future for all.

-END-

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Office: + 266 2222 8000

In today's rapidly evolving world, children face unprecedented challenges, from climate change to persistent poverty and conflict, all of which are reshaping childhood. World Children's Day is a global call to action to spotlight these issues, amplify children's voices, and renew our collective commitment to safeguarding their rights and improving their well-being.

Here in Lesotho, children from all 10 districts are sharing their messages directly with leaders, reflecting on the challenges they face and the hopes they hold for the future. From access to education and protection to opportunities to thrive, these young voices call on decision-makers to turn promises into action.



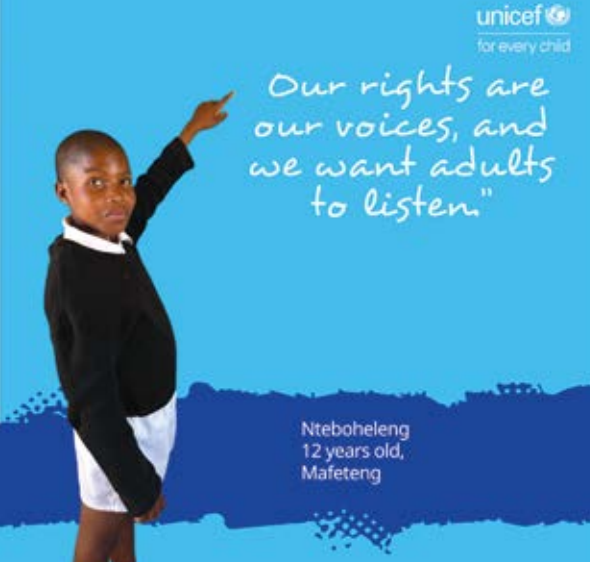
When I take care of animals, I cannot go to class. Many other boys like me have the same problem. We want to learn, but we have no time and no help. If we can learn new things, we can have a better life.

Kalelo, 14 years old, Quthing



Please help schools in rural areas to have all things they need to make learning successful, make sure children have medicine. Please protect children against abuse and child marriage.

Lineo, 10 years old, Mokhotlong



Our rights are our voices, and we want adults to listen.

Nteboheleng, 12 years old, Mafeteng



Dear Leaders, I need you to protect us from abuse and also help children from poor families. Again, I want you to involve us in things that involve us as children in the country.

Keneuoe, 13 years old, Mophalehoek



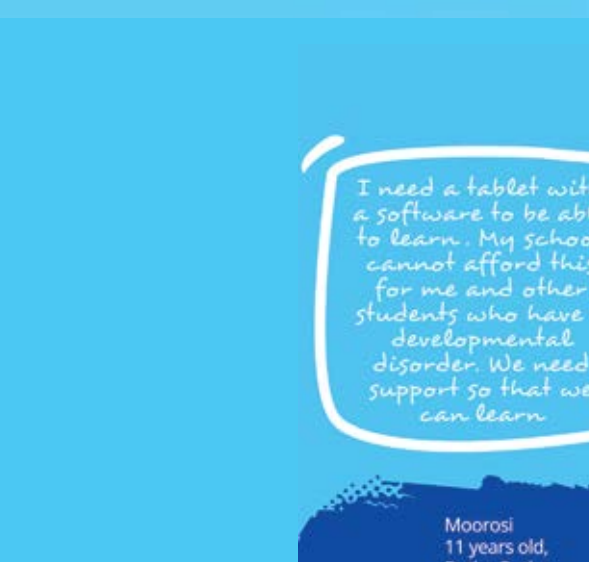
People with disabilities should enjoy their rights like everybody else. The government of Lesotho should make sure that children's rights are respected.

Ralekhekhe, 15 years old, Leribe



At our school, seven classes learn together in one big hall because we don't have classrooms. It is hard for us to hear our teachers. Also we only have three teachers. Please help our school get proper classrooms and more teachers.

Likhabiso, 12 years old, Thaba-Tseka



I need a tablet with a software to be able to learn. My school cannot afford this for me and other students who have a developmental disorder. We need support so that we can learn.

Moorosi, 11 years old, Buthe-Buthe



At my school, we have water only on particular days. Good sanitation is not real at our school because water is scarce. We need water every day.

Paballo, 12 years old, Qacha's Nek

The theme **"My Day. My Rights"** celebrates children's perspectives, highlighting real stories and the investments needed to meet their needs. These messages serve as a reminder that investing in children builds a stronger, fairer, and brighter tomorrow for all.



Compensation for silicosis and TB

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

TSHIAMISO TRUST CONTINUES OUTREACH CAMPAIGN FOR BASOTHO EX GOLD MINERS' SILICOSIS AND TB COMPENSATION

14 November 2025: The Tshiamiso Trust is pleased to announce the second phase of its outreach programme for former mineworkers who suffered permanent lung damage as a result of contracting silicosis or work-related TB during their employment on South African gold mines. During this outreach round, former Basotho mineworkers — including the families of deceased mineworkers — will be able to lodge claims, undergo Benefit Medical Examinations (BMEs), and receive support with the claims process.

To date, the Trust has paid nearly 10,000 Basotho claims, amounting to M930 million in compensation.



workers, it must be their documented cause of death. The criteria for silicosis is not as strict because it is not curable."

The broad eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Mineworkers must have carried out risk work at one of the qualifying gold mines (owned by African Rainbow Minerals, Anglo American South Africa, AngloGold Ashanti, Harmony Gold, Sibanye Stillwater or Gold Fields) during the qualifying periods between 12 March 1965 and 10 December 2019 indicated in Schedule F of the Trust Deed.

- Living mineworkers must have permanent lung impairment from silicosis or TB that they contracted while doing risk work at these mines, with specific assessment criteria out-

Over the next few weeks, the team will travel to Qacha's Nek, Thaba Tseka and Mokhotlong, before returning to Leribe, Maseru and Mafeteng to continue assisting claimants there.

Dr. Munyadziwa Kwindi, Chief Executive Officer of the Tshiamiso Trust, made the following remarks: "Having already paid out just under M1 billion to Basotho claimants, we look forward to assisting many more claimants through these efforts. With the support of government, ex-mineworkers' associations, the media, and other stakeholders, coupled with on-the-ground awareness and mobilisation efforts throughout the villages, we want to make sure that all potential claimants are given the opportunity to access compensation that they may qualify for."

Claim lodgement, support, and Benefit Medical Examinations (BMEs) are scheduled as follows:

- **Qacha's Nek:** 19 – 21 November at the Community Hall, located at Motse-Mocha Village, next to the Red Cross Building.
- **Thaba Tseka:** 24 November at Thaba Tseka Project Area, opposite the DHMT offices, Thaba Tseka Police Street
- **Mokhotlong:** 26 November at the TEBA office, located at Police Road, next to Old Taxi Rank.
- **Leribe:** 1 – 2 December at the TEBA office, Hlotse Airport Road, opposite Cashbuild Hardware
- **Maseru:** 4 – 5 December at the TEBA office, Moshoeshoe Road, opposite Lerotholi Polytechnique Institute
- **Mafeteng:** 8 – 9 December at the TEBA office, Mafeteng Reserve, opposite Passport Office, Main South Road

TEBA offices remain open for claim lodgements and claim-related support on an ongoing basis in Leribe, Mafeteng, Maseru, Mohale's Hoek, Mokhotlong, Qacha's Nek, and Quthing.

In addition to providing the crucial Benefit Medical Examinations for claimants who require them, the outreach campaign is also focused on reaching several key groups: claimants who can no longer be contacted on the numbers they originally provided; dependants of deceased mineworkers who still need to submit a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (where the original Death Certificate did not specify silicosis or pulmonary/cardio-respiratory TB as the cause of death); and families who need to take over claims on behalf of claimants who have since passed away.

Benefit Medical Examinations are a crucial step in the claims process. They provide the necessary evidence of lung damage resulting from silicosis or tuberculosis—the two occupational diseases that the Trust compensates under specific conditions. It is important to note that Tshiamiso Trust BMEs do not include TB tests. If active TB is suspected, claimants will not be able to complete their BME but will be referred for testing and will need to be scheduled for a BME after they are cleared of TB. The Tshiamiso Trust does NOT compensate for a mineworker having TB or Silicosis, but rather for permanent lung damage as a result of the disease, according to the specific medical eligibility criteria outlined in Schedule H of the Trust Deed.

Following the BMEs, the Trust's Medical Certification Panel (MCP) carefully analyses the findings to ascertain the appropriate certification for each claim, thereby determining whether a claim is certified as eligible or ineligible for compensation. Data shows that 70% of claims for living or deceased mineworkers are certified as ineligible, because they do not meet the criteria of a qualifying disease in terms of the Trust Deed.

Commenting on the eligibility criteria, Dr Kwindi adds: "Out of every 10 claims assessed, only 3 are eligible for compensation. We understand that this causes disappointment and concern; however, we are bound by the terms of the Settlement Agreement under which the Tshiamiso Trust was established. The high rate of ineligibility is attributed to the strict medical eligibility criteria, especially for TB claims. The mining companies are only liable for permanent lung damage caused by work on their mines. Because TB is a curable, community-acquired disease, compensation can only be considered for permanent lung damage from TB that was diagnosed during, or within one year of, their last qualifying risk work shift. And in the case of deceased mine-

lined in Schedule H of the Trust Deed.

- For deceased mineworkers, there must either be evidence that TB was the primary cause of death within a year of leaving the mine (if the mineworker died before 10 December 2019), OR evidence that they had silicosis (applicable if they died after 1 January 2008) or died from silicosis.

Claims are assessed thoroughly, following what is prescribed by the Trust Deed, and specific criteria apply to each of the 10 categories available for compensation. Claimants should be aware that the compensation provided by the Trust is a one-time payment. Once eligible claimants receive compensation, they cannot make further claims, even if their condition worsens over time. However, according to the Trust Deed, if a claimant is initially deemed ineligible but later develops symptoms of silicosis, they are permitted to lodge one further claim.

Claimants are reminded to be careful of people impersonating the Trust or promising to help speed up their claims. Only the Tshiamiso Trust can process claims, and this is a FREE service. The only cost that claimants may need to pay is M1400 for the BME – ONLY IF they did less than 5 years of risk work. However, this cost is paid back to them if they are found to have an eligible claim.

While a number of challenges continue to slow the finalisation of some claims — and many claimants are understandably frustrated when they do not meet the eligibility criteria — the Trust has nonetheless paid out over M2.4 billion across its entire footprint. This represents the largest payout ever made by a compensation organisation in this sector.

"Public education about the Trust's processes remains critical. Real impact is only possible through collaboration — particularly with local community structures, who are closest to former mineworkers and their families and can explain the eligibility criteria in ways that resonate. By working together, we can strengthen understanding of the process, manage expectations, and help ensure that eligible claimants receive the compensation they deserve," concludes Dr Kwindi.

For more information, potential claimants can dial the call-back number (00 27 10 500 6186), send us a text message on WhatsApp (00 27 78 504 9004), or a DM/inbox message on Facebook (Tshiamiso Trust- Silicosis Settlement) or email (info@tshiamisotrust.com).

ENDS

About the Tshiamiso Trust

The Tshiamiso Trust was established to implement the settlement agreement reached between six mining companies and claimant attorneys in the historic silicosis and TB class action. The companies are African Rainbow Minerals, Anglo American South Africa, AngloGold Ashanti, Harmony Gold, Sibanye Stillwater, and Gold Fields.

The Trust is responsible for compensating all eligible current and former mineworkers across southern Africa who have permanent impairment due to silicosis or work-related TB, or their dependents where the mineworker has passed away.

For further information, please contact:

Tshiamiso Trust

Stakeholder Relations & Communications

✉ communications@tshiamisotrust.com

☎ +27 60 890 1080

Useful links:

- To see if the mineworker qualifies to lodge a claim: <https://www.tshiamisotrust.com/information/status-check/>
- To view the claims process: <https://www.tshiamisotrust.com/information/how-to-claim/>
- To view the compensation classes: <https://www.tshiamisotrust.com/information/compensation-classes/>
- To view daily progress of claims and payments: <https://www.tshiamisotrust.com/information/progress-report/>

PETROLEUM FUND.

INVITATION

INVITATION TO REGISTER AS AN APPROVED SUPPLIER ON THE PETROLEUM FUND'S PREQUALIFIED SUPPLIER DATABASE

The Petroleum Fund is a statutory organisation under the Ministry of Finance, which was established through the Legal Notice No. 96 of 1997 under the Finance Order of 1988. The organisation is further delegated, under the Fuel and Services Control (Delegation Notice) Number 32 of 2021, the powers to set the price and time at which Petroleum Products may be adjusted. It is managed by the Board of Directors, while day-to-day activities are administered by the Secretariat, which is headed by the Chief Executive Officer, and its operations are guided by the Lesotho (Petroleum Fund) Regulations of 2021.

Petroleum Fund invites legally registered suppliers interested in doing business with the organisation to register on its database. The Fund specifically re-quest service providers in the following categories:

No.	Category	No.	Category
1.	Accommoda-tion	13.	Events Management
2.	Asset Valuers and Auction-eers	14.	Furniture and Fixtures
3.	Billboards and Outdoor Advertising	15.	General Supply
4.	Corporate Branding	16.	Graphic Design
5.	Catering	17.	Office Equipment and Stationery
6.	Clearing Agents	18.	Printing and Photocopy
7.	Computer Equipment and Elec-tronics	19.	Print Media and Advertising Agencies
8.	Conferencing Facilities	20.	Photography and Videography

9.	Corporate Gifts	21.	Radio Stations
10.	Corporate Wear	22.	Transport hire
11.	Courier Ser-vices	23.	Travel Agencies
12.	Editing and Publishing		

1. Mandatory Documents for submission
Interested vendors must submit the following mandatory documents:

- Company Profile;
- A valid Tax Clearance certificate;
- A valid Traders' Licence or equivalent;
- Evidence of physical location (depending on the nature of the company);
- Three Reference letters for services recently provided;
- Three Copies of client Purchase Orders or Service Agreements not older than three years

2. Submission Instruction:

Step 1

Interested vendors must first register their company details and select categories on the following link: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/vgGYN4PTaM>

Step 2

Mandatory documents must be sent by e-mail to supplier@petroleum.org.ls and the e-mail subject should be **PF Database 2025/26_ *Name of the Company***.

The deadline for registration and submission of mandatory documents is **Thursday, January 8th, 2026, at 12:00 noon**.

For further clarification, please contact the Human Capital and Administration Specialist at +266 22312137.



JOB VACANCY

HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

Block A, Development House
Kingsway Road Private Bag A96
Maseru 100

TEL: 22231000 / 22312012
info@lndc.org.ls | www.lndc.org.ls

The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) was established by an Act of Parliament as a parastatal. The LNDC Act No. 20 of 1967, as amended by LNDC Act No. 13 of 1990 and LNDC Act No. 7 of 2000, mandates the Corporation to: “initiate, promote and facilitate the development of manufacturing and processing industries, mining and commerce in a manner calculated to raise the level of income and employment in Lesotho. The LNDC invites applications from suitably qualified and experienced candidates for the position of **Human Resources Officer**

PURPOSE

To partner with management on strategic priorities including talent management, employee engagement, organisational effectiveness and change management. To advise and coach employees on driving the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) values and culture. The position reports to **The Human Resources Manager**.

QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Minimum Qualifications: Degree in Human Resources Management or other relevant Human Resources Degree

Minimum Experience: 3-5 years in similar role

TERM OF CONTRACT

This position is Permanent and Pensionable

HOW TO APPLY:

Interested, suitably qualified and experienced candidates should email their applications accompanied by educational certificates and transcripts in **PDF FORMAT ONLY to recruitment@lndc.org.ls**. Job title must be used as email subject. Closing date is **24th November 2025**.

To apply, candidates **MUST** download and fill an application form accessible on the Corporation's website: www.lndc.org.ls Detailed advert is also available on the website. **Hand delivered applications will not be accepted**.

Disclaimer: Only applicants who have used the LNDC application form and used the appropriate email subject will be considered. Only shortlisted applicants will be responded to



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CVs)

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS SPECIALIST FOR LREEAP

Name of Project: Lesotho Renewable Energy and Energy Access Project (LREEAP)
Project ID: P166936
Position: Environmental Safeguards Specialist for LREEAP Project Implementation Unit
Reporting to: Project Manager LREEAP
Selection Method: Individual Consultant Selection

The Government of Lesotho has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Lesotho Renewable Energy and Energy Access Project (LREEAP). The LREEAP demonstrates the GoL's commitment to advance the electrification agenda and the implementation of the Lesotho Energy Policy 2015 – 2025 by supporting the provision of off-grid electricity services as well as grid electrification of economic zones to enhance job creation. The project aims to accelerate electricity access along two (2) dimensions: (i) grid extension to economic development zones in peri-urban areas, and (ii) the deployment of mini-grids to reach rural and remote communities. A Project Implementation Unit (PIU) established within the Ministry of Energy is responsible for the overall implementation of the LREEAP. Within the PIU, the Lesotho Electricity Company (Pty) Ltd is implementing Component 1 of the Project namely Grid Extension to Peri-urban Areas of Lesotho through a Technical Unit established as an implementation arm of the PIU. Component 1 of LREEAP finances the design, procurement of materials and construction of works required to electrify selected industrial and commercial loads in peri-urban areas of Lesotho, as well as providing connections to residential customers in adjacent areas. The environmental safeguards function under the LEC Technical Unit within the LREEAP shall be led by an Environmental Safeguards Specialist who shall be responsible for the overall implementation and providing guidance on all the environmental safeguards activities. The LREEAP is therefore in the process of recruiting a capable individual for this key position in the LEC Technical Unit.

Objectives and Scope of the Assignment

The key objective of this position is to ensure that environmental, health and safety aspects are adequately observed and addressed during the design and implementation of project activities. The selected consultant will be responsible for coordinating and leading in planning, technical supervision, compliance monitoring and analysis, and reporting implementation on environmental aspects of the project in line with environmental requirements of the Government of Lesotho and in conformance with the World Bank Operational Policies and international industry's best practices. The assignment involves monitoring the implementation of the Environment and Social (E&S) documents, Environment Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), the Project Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs), Health and Safety Plans (H&S Plans) developed for the project, ensuring compliance with national legislation and reporting on all environmental and health and safety issues relating to the project.

The main responsibilities of the Environmental Safeguards Specialist are as follows:

- Provide necessary coordination and relevant input into the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and other safeguards documents deemed necessary during implementation;
- Undertake regular field visits to project sites to assess environmental impacts and verify environmental monitoring information provided in the reports of contractors and implementing partners, including photo documentation as applicable;

- Provide Environment and Social (E&S) oversight and support to the project in ensuring that the construction contractors prepare and implement the Contractors' Environmental and Social Management Plans (CESMPs), Health and Safety plans (HSP) and related safeguard management plans prior to the commencement of project related activities;
- Review, supervise and monitor progress of the contractors' occupational health and safety plan and ensure that the health and safety of the general public and the contractors' workforce are not compromised as a result of the programme;
- Conduct environmental due diligence and impacts of projects and develop implementable environmental action plans for implementation;
- Coordinating recruitment of environmental safeguards consultants, including drafting TORs, estimating budgets, providing assistance in shortlisting and evaluation firms/individuals consultants proposals/qualifications, negotiating, and preparing contracts;
- Analyzing project implementation reports to ensure that all work is completed in full compliance with environmental and social standards under the Operational Policies (OPs); supervising contractors' performance in handling specific environmental issues, such as Occupational Health and Safety, etc;
- Provide coordination support to review environmental instruments and liaise with the World Bank for clearance. Review for quality environmental risk management instruments (e.g., ESMP) as per the ESCP that are prepared by consultants prior to being sent to the World Bank for clearance and provide inputs and edits as needed;
- Build capacity of project teams and other stakeholders in identification and use of environmentally friendly practices including systematic implementation of environmental and social safeguards.
- Coordinate closely with the project team, including the Social Safeguards Specialist, consultants, contractors, and implementing partners in planning, managing, monitoring and reporting environmental risks and performance in the project, and provide necessary technical assistance;
- Support the Social Safeguards Specialist in the design and execution of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) with particular regard to environmental matters;
- Undertake stakeholder engagement and awareness creation on all environmental matters related to the programme in line with the E&S documents;
- Draft E&S documents as an when it is necessary;
- Monitor, coordinate and produce periodic (monthly and quarterly) performance reports on environmental and social safeguards of the programme;
- Any other related duties as may be assigned by the supervisor from time to time.

Qualifications and Experience Requirements

- Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Management or Environmental Sciences with at least seven (7) years' experience in environmental field and relevant experience in managing complex teams and/or projects; conducting environmental impact assessments, reporting and monitoring
- OR
- A Master's degree in Environmental Management or Environmental Sciences with at least five (5) years' experience in environmental field and relevant experience in managing complex teams and/or projects; conducting environmental impact assessments, reporting and monitoring.
- Significant experience in the implementation of similar projects especially fund-

- ed by the International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank;
- Proven experience in operationalizing environmental and Environmental standards, Environmental safeguard policies of major donor agencies, in particular the World Bank's Operational Policy OP4.01 on Environmental assessments;
- Field experience highly desirable;
- Skill in Word, Excel and PowerPoint;
- Must possess a driving license with at least three (3) years driving experience in Lesotho terrain.

5. Other Competencies:

- Must speak Sesotho and English efficiently;
- Team player with strong leadership abilities and experience in working with large teams of people from different background;
- Ability to work independently with limited supervision;
- Must have good interpersonal skills;
- Skilled in organising and prioritising work schedule to meet deadlines;
- Ability to work independently with limited supervision;
- Must have good interpersonal skills;
- Skilled in organising and prioritising work schedule to meet deadlines;

Recruitment Process and Contract Type

The selection method shall follow the World Bank's Individual Consultant selection method at the Project's office based in Maseru, Lesotho with frequent travel to other parts of the country. The assignment duration is 13 months and the envisages start date is no later than 1st January 2026. The incumbent shall be selected on the basis of their relevant experience, qualifications, and capability to carry out the assignment. Candidates shall be considered if they meet minimum relevant requirements which shall be determined by the Client on the basis of the nature and complexity of the assignment, and assessed on the basis of academic background and relevant specific experience and, as appropriate, knowledge of local conditions such as national language, culture, administrative systems, and government organization.

This is a time-based assignment. The incumbent shall be employed full time on the assignment at the Project's office based in Maseru, Lesotho with frequent travel to other parts of the country. The assignment duration is 13 months and the envisages start date is no later than 1st January 2026. The incumbent shall be selected on the basis of their relevant experience, qualifications, and capability to carry out the assignment. Candidates shall be considered if they meet minimum relevant requirements which shall be determined by the Client on the basis of the nature and complexity of the assignment, and assessed on the basis of academic background and relevant specific experience and, as appropriate, knowledge of local conditions such as national language, culture, administrative systems, and government organization.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours i.e. 0800 to 1700 hours, local time.

Submission of Expressions of Interest

Interested candidates must submit their curriculum vitae with covering letter and certified copies of their educational certificates in a **single PDF format** to the email addresses mentioned below on or before **27th November, 2025 at 17H00**. The subject of the email must be **“Application – Environmental Safeguards Specialist”**. Hand delivered expressions of interest shall not be accepted.

Email addresses for submission and clarification requests:

Attention: The Project Coordinator LREEAP (ai)
120 Lancers Road, Opposite New State House, Maseru West
Emails: makhabanel@lec.co.ls with a copy to lmokhutsokane@yahoo.com

T-Connect ushers in new era as Setipa takes the helm

...leadership transition marks a strategic shift as the company positions itself for a transformative future in Africa's fast-evolving connectivity landscape.

Keiso Mohloboli



T-Connect has announced a significant leadership transition, effective 1 December 2025. Long-standing partner and shareholder **Joshua Setipa** will assume the role of **Group CEO**, marking a new phase in the company's growth and regional impact.

The decision follows extensive and considered discussions on how best to strengthen T-Connect's operational foundation for the medium and long term. The shift reflects a shared commitment to building on the company's momentum while deepening its influence in communities and markets across Southern Africa.

Mr Setipa brings clarity, stability, and a deep belief in T-Connect's purpose. With his proven leadership experience, strategic discipline, and strong understanding of the connectivity landscape, he is viewed as the right figure to guide the organisation into its next chapter of expansion.

Honouring the leadership of advocate Phelane Phomane

T-Connect's success has been shaped significantly by the vision and resolve of **Advocate Phelane Phomane**, whose leadership has fostered an entrepreneurial, customer-focused, and pioneering culture within the company.

Although stepping back from day-to-day leadership, Advocate Phomane will remain closely involved in a strategic capacity during the handover period. His continued guidance will ensure stability, alignment, and a deliberate transition.

His role, the company emphasises, is not diminishing — **it is evolving**. He will continue to safeguard the values and direction that have brought T-Connect this far.

Advocate Phomane described this moment as a critical juncture for the telecommunications sector. With the connectivity landscape rapidly transforming, T-Connect is preparing to navigate a future defined by new technologies and shifting regulatory frameworks.

Satellite broadband, once seen as an emerging trend, has now become a **socio-economic bridge**, helping to close the digital divide in areas where conventional infrastructure remains too costly or impractical to build.

At the same time, licensing requirements, regulatory reforms, and transformation

considerations are reshaping how satellite providers operate across the continent.

In this changing environment, T-Connect sees its leadership transition as a strategic move — one that positions the organisation to thrive in a world where connectivity must be more inclusive, resilient, and val-

ue-driven.

"Looking ahead, I am deeply grateful to our team, clients, partners, and community for trusting the journey, for challenging assumptions, and for walking with us through both the exciting and the difficult moments.

"The future under Ntate Setipa's leadership is promising — full of possibility and firmly rooted in purpose.

"Here is to the next chapter: one that honours where we began and boldly embraces where the world is going," Advocate Phomane said.

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Youth in Botha-Bothe turn to unconventional hustles

...As unemployment deepens

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Youth in Botha-Bothe are increasingly turning to unconventional livelihoods as unemployment continues to tighten its grip, despite government declarations and promises meant to confront the crisis.

Afrobarometer findings released in August 2025 paint a bleak national picture: 62 percent of young Basotho are unemployed and actively seeking work. Young people cited lack of experience (26 percent), reluctance to accept certain types of work (24 percent), and insufficient training (18 percent) as key barriers to employment.

Although Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane declared youth unemployment a national disaster in June, little progress appears to have been made. No updated figures have been released on how many young people have since been absorbed into the labour market.

In Botha-Bothe, the effects are visible and painful. Many young people, despite holding school qualifications, remain trapped in a cycle of joblessness and survival-driven hustles.

Khotso Selimo, from Phaphama, abandoned school in 2021 while in Grade B after his parent lost their job. He sacrificed his education to allow his sibling to continue theirs. After selling fat cakes, he ventured into street photography in 2024.

Today, he mostly works as a tout for Catch a Ride taxis, often clashing with public transport drivers. Selimo be-

lieves his real talent lies in Sesotho hip-hop and hopes for support to turn music into a sustainable career.

Tebello Katali, from Serutle, also turned to street photography in October this year after previously selling moroho at home. A 2021 high school graduate who could not afford tertiary education, he now supports his family.

Katali dreams of creating jobs for others and is researching tea production as a viable business but needs capital to bring the idea to life.

From Thabong, Alex Moloi dropped out of a Tourism Management course at Lerotholi Polytechnic after realising it was not aligned with his aspirations, something he attributes to the lack of mentorship and career guidance.

Moloi now juggles work in the Catch a Ride sector with running a small photocopying business. He believes young entrepreneurs like him need financial support to thrive, though past collaborations with peers have not always ended well.

Mafa Mahlaha, from Baroeng, also works in the local taxi sector. He completed high school but could not further his studies. His workdays start before dawn and end late, sometimes forcing him to hide from public transport drivers who view touts as rivals. Mahlaha wants to acquire practical skills that would help him earn a stable living.

In her budget speech earlier this year, Finance and Development Planning Minister Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane introduced the Inclusive Growth Fund,



earmarked as a key instrument to stimulate private-sector-led job creation and support youth entrepreneurship.

“The Government has allocated M400 million towards the Inclusive Growth Fund... prioritising women- and youth-led enterprises,” she said, noting partnerships with commercial banks to improve liquidity and reduce credit barriers.

But seven months later, the fund remains inaccessible. The government has not created the required legal instruments to operationalise it, leaving thousands of youth-led SMMEs and SMEs unable to tap into the promised capital.

Botha-Bothe District Administrator Tšepa Cheba remains optimistic that ongoing development initiatives will inject jobs into the district economy. He cited

the Lesotho Lowlands Water Development and Sanitation Project, Phase III (LLWDP II) as a potential source of substantial employment.

Cheba said negotiations are underway to ensure that 60 percent of these jobs benefit young people. He also referenced the newly launched upgrade of the 9.5-kilometre gravel road linking Ha-Paramente, Seboche, Ha-Lebetla, and Khukhune to the main tarred road, promising to lobby for broader youth participation in the project.

For now, Botha-Bothe’s youth remain caught between ambition and harsh reality. With government programmes stalled and formal job opportunities scarce, many continue to carve out livelihoods through street photography, taxi touting, and small informal trades.

A mountain to climb: Rural learners still denied basic education in Lesotho

Ntsoaki Motaung

As global celebrations such as World Children’s Day spotlight children’s rights, the reality in rural Lesotho tells a very different story.

For thousands of children in remote mountain communities, the promise of quality education remains out of reach, blocked by geography, poverty, and years of government inaction.

The disparities are so stark that Katleho Mabeleng, Member of Parliament (MP) for Hloahloeng constituency, has taken the issue to the National Assembly, demanding urgent intervention to correct what he calls a “severe, undeniable imbalance” between rural and urban schools.

Tabling his motion in Parliament, Mabeleng said his fact-finding mission across his constituency revealed “unbearable conditions” that undermine education in the country’s highland districts.

“The aim of the motion is to expose the disparity between the urban area schools and the rural schools. There is a clear disparity, with rural schools suffering the most,” he said.

Although Lesotho’s Constitution guarantees education for all and the Educa-

tion Act of 2010 mandates compulsory primary schooling, Mabeleng insisted these legal protections are “impractical in rural areas,” where children face obstacles that lawmakers appear to have never confronted.

For many six-year-olds starting Grade 1, simply getting to school is a daily hazard.

“It is difficult for a child to move from places like Qoang, Likoeng, and walk to Tšenekeng. It is very far, mountainous, and has rivers which, on rainy days, such a child cannot cross,” Mabeleng said.

A three-hour walk to school, and another three hours back, is the norm in many villages. These treacherous journeys lead to high absenteeism, late enrolments, and parents choosing safety over the law’s demands.

The MP noted that compulsory schooling provisions are unenforced in rural areas: “There is no watching parents to guide them... restricting a child from going to school is not treated as an offence.”

For learners who do reach school, conditions are often no better. Mabeleng said schools such as Makoe Primary, Se-fateng, and Luka Primary force children to sit outside or under trees to write examinations because they have no usable classrooms.

Some buildings have collapsed; others were abandoned because they are unsafe. Many schools cram multiple grades into a single church hall, making meaningful instruction nearly impossible.

In addition to inadequate buildings, schools lack basic furniture, textbooks, and teacher resources. In winter, children sit in freezing, dilapidated blocks. In summer, they learn in the open.

Parents who want to move their children to better-resourced urban schools simply cannot afford it.

Lesotho’s education crisis mirrors its socio-economic inequalities. With more than 70 percent of Basotho living in rural areas, the divide is wide and worsening.

UNICEF’s 2021 report found that children in rural areas and the poorest households perform below the national average and are less likely to complete primary school. Many rural learners attend school hungry, a reality that undermines concentration, motivation, and academic performance.

Some children, UNICEF noted, simply do not believe education will change their lives, given the poverty they are surrounded by.

Despite the severity of the crisis, there are signs of renewed urgency. The recent Joint Education Sector Re-

view (JESR), supported by UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education, pushed for stronger accountability and evidence-based reforms.

UNICEF Representative Deepak Bhaskaran outlined priority areas including: increased domestic financing, expansion of early childhood education, digital transformation, tackling learning poverty, strengthening child safety, and equipping learners with digital and green skills.

Research by the global education watchdog Broken Chalk reinforces the same findings, highlighting classroom overcrowding, shortages of qualified teachers, inadequate study materials, and severe furniture shortages as structural barriers holding rural education back.

Mabeleng’s motion exposed what rural children already know. Lesotho’s education system is failing them long before they reach the school gate.

With classrooms that no longer exist, daily journeys that endanger lives, and a chronic lack of resources, thousands of children are being left behind, despite constitutional promises.

For them, education is not just a right denied. It is a mountain they are still being forced to climb alone.



Arts & Entertainment

Newsday

Fifi Ngoan’a Mosotho fuses Basotho heritage with Amapiano touch

Chris Theko

Refiloe Motšoane, better known as Fifi Ngoan’a Mosotho, is not just a performer but a cultural curator.

A rising star within the Southern African entertainment industry, the MMF Entertainment artist is dedicated to bridging the gap between deep Basotho heritage and the vibrant energy of modern African music and film.

The name “Ngoan’a Mosotho” for her is a guiding principle since her artistry is rooted in her homeland.

“I mostly sing about my heritage, so it influences my music in a big way,” she said.

“I draw inspiration from old Sesotho poems and narrations. They were very elaborative, almost romantically built. And because I am young, I blend modern with old inspirations.”

This commitment is evident in her signature sound. A fusion of Amapiano and Afro Traditional Fusion. Fifi sees Amapiano’s “infectious energy” as the perfect vehicle for the “rich culture of Basotho heritage.”

“Rhyming in Sesotho is not easy, but once you find it, it is so inspiring and vibrant. I listen to both genres for inspiration and relevance with both the old and young people. I still go back to the kind of songs we would listen to when I was growing up as a kid.”

Fifi’s versatility as both a vocalist and an actress is a professional advantage she harnesses fully. She notes that the two roles are highly complementary.

“I learned in acting school that it is important to use your voice, which has helped me to carry my voice well when singing,” she says.

Conversely, the high emotional stakes in acting have improved her musical expression: “It has helped me to put myself in songs; I can visualise

the story behind the song and express authentically.”

This intense preparation culminates in captivating stage moments. Her most memorable performance was at the recent edition of the Lesotho Music Awards.

“It was the first time I actually started performing with dancers on stage. We had prepared and rehearsed so many times and for a long time. It was very special,” she recalled.

While talent is abundant in Lesotho, she identified systemic challenges that local artists face.

“The one thing that artists from Lesotho have a challenge with is actually breaking through the industry, things like having access to a studio, access to the right management and distribution. And sometimes just doing it... Most people are afraid of starting.”

Her advice is to start small and gradually grow. She draws inspiration from Ntate Stunna for his “consistency and persistence”, and internationally, she looks up to Kamo Mphela, who encouraged her to fuse music and movement.

When discussing her ultimate goals, Fifi’s vision expands beyond her own success.

“My goal is to continue pushing boundaries, blending traditional Basotho elements with modern sounds to create a unique sound that inspires, not just here at home but beyond the borders and the seas. I want my music to be known and remembered for the energy and authenticity. I want to leave a lasting impact like legends such as Tsepo Tshola.”

She understands the power of presentation. Clad in sharp, powerful attire, her visual brand is intentional.

“Fashion and visual presentation are everything to me because I believe style is a very powerful form of art. When you see me even off stage, you have to already have an idea of, ‘Oh! Okay, she’s her.’ They are also key to my brand.”



A rising star within the Southern African entertainment Refiloe Motšoane, better known as Fifi Ngoan’a Mosotho

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Four cyclists set for two continental races

Seabata Mahao

The Cycling Federation of Lesotho (CFL) has announced four athletes who will represent the country in two major continental competitions, marking a significant milestone for the nation's rising profile on the international cycling arena.

The federation confirmed this week that Kabelo Makatile and Khotsofalang Rakaota will compete at the African Road Bike Championship, to be held in Kenya from November 19 to 23, 2025. The duo will be coached by seasoned trainer Malefatsane Lesofe.

At the same time, promising youngsters Tšaba Sefale and Seutloali Morie have been selected to represent Lesotho at the African Youth Games scheduled for Luanda, Angola, from September 10 to 20 next year. They will be under the mentorship of Coach Malefetsane Morie.

Cycling continues to emerge as one of Lesotho's fastest-growing sports, with more local athletes stepping onto international platforms.

In recent years, the country's cyclists have participated in major global events, including the prestigious Union Cycliste Internationale

(UCI) Road World Championships, where Kabelo Makatile and Pontšo Makatile previously flew the flag.

The growth of the sport has also been boosted by the Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC), which recently unveiled a list of athletes set to receive support as they prepare for the 2026 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Among those selected are Kabelo and Pontšo Makatile, reflecting the increasing confidence in their potential.

CFL's spokesperson Malefane Morie underscored the broader significance of these international opportunities.

"Having representatives at these competitions is important because it raises Lesotho's flag high, helps athletes reach higher levels of performance, and shows that our cycling sport is growing strongly," Morie said.

He added that the sport's development is evident in the growing number of young Basotho taking up cycling and participating in ongoing training programmes.

"We see growing interest among the youth, and this gives us hope that the future of cycling will be bright because we will have a strong pool of athletes," he noted.

Morie also highlighted the importance of



Kabelo Makatile



Khotsofalang Rakaota

sustained support for athletes, emphasising that the involvement of the LNOC has been crucial in providing access to equipment and opportunities for international exposure.

According to him, the Federation remains

committed to strengthening training programmes and expanding competitive opportunities, efforts he believes will elevate the sport while transforming the lives of young cyclists.

More than just a player: Mariam is Kick4Life's big talent

Seabata Mahao



At a tender age of 16 years, Mariam Monnapula is demonstrating huge promise not only in football but also in leadership and youth advocacy.

A skilful winger for the Kick4Life Junior Women's team and a committed participant in the Kick4Life Academy, she represents a new generation of Basotho youth who are ambitious and eager to uplift their communities.

Born and bred in Khubetsoana, Maseru, Monnapula's football journey started on the dusty neighbourhood pitches where she often played with older boys.

That experience sparked a competitiveness that continues to drive her growth. Her passion for football deepened through her uncle, who is a devoted Real Madrid fan.

"Whenever I visited him, we would watch matches together," she recalled.

"That is how I fell in love with Real Madrid. Vinícius Júnior is my favourite player, we are both wingers, and we even share a birthday."

By the time she reached Grade 8 at Lesotho High School in 2022, Monnapula's path was beginning to take a clearer shape. Her uncle encouraged her mother to enrol her in the Kick4Life Soccer Schools programme, where she soon witnessed the results of hard work and consistent training.

When a schoolmate, Hlompho, earned a place in the Kick4Life Junior Women's team, Monnapula felt encouraged to follow suit.

"Seeing how much she improved pushed me to work harder. I wanted to follow that path," she says.

Joining Kick4Life opened a transformative

chapter in her life. Benefiting from the organisation's holistic Academy model, she excelled both academically and athletically. This year, she completed her Grade 11 examinations and awaits her results with confidence.

She already knows she performed strongly in 2025, emerging as a top performer in Chemistry and Physics, and recording significant improvements in Sesotho and other subjects through Kick4Life's tutoring support.

On the field, her development has been equally impressive. She points to the 2024 winter training sessions as a turning point in her performance and self-belief.

"I pushed myself to ask for feedback after every session. During league games, when our names were announced and mine was there on the team sheet, it made all the hard work worth it," she said proudly.

Kick4Life's career guidance workshops further strengthened her ambition. Listening to testimonies from scholar-athletes such as Thabo Mahlaha motivated her to pursue excellence in every aspect of her life.

"The life skills programmes helped me build confidence and see the world differently."

Beyond daily training, she takes part in Run4YourLife, Kick4Life's weekly community run or walk. In October, she proposed and helped organise a Breast Cancer Awareness run, which became a successful awareness-raising initiative.

Monnapula's leadership extends far beyond football. She is an active member of the Child Leadership Team, where she advocates for children's rights, and she participates in Youth Voices for a Sustainable Future, contributing to discussions on environmental protection and climate justice.

Her commitment to leadership earned her a place at the 2024 Regional Child Leadership Conference in Lilongwe, Malawi, held on the Day of the African Child. Selected for her academic strength, leadership qualities and interest in law, she joined young change makers from across the continent to address issues affecting children.

"It was a new experience that opened my eyes," she reflects. "I built connections with young advocates from different countries and developed a strong spirit of advocacy."

Off the pitch, Monnapula continues to push boundaries academically and technically. As

a member of the Girls Coding Academy, she has completed two seasons in the First Tech Challenge robotics competitions.

In her debut 2023-2024 season, she served as Head of Assembly, helping design and build her team's robot, an effort that earned them sixth place at the Gauteng Sci-Bono competition in South Africa. In the





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**Metcach Building, Room 137F, Maseru**



9-time winner misses Roof of Africa race

Seabata Mahao

This year's Roof of Africa will proceed without one of its greatest champions, South Africa's Wade Young.

The nine-time Roof of Africa winner, whose victories stretch from 2012, 2014 and the dominant streaks of 2017–2019 and 2021–2024, announced on his social media page that he is currently undergoing medical treatment after sustaining severe self-inflicted burn injuries.

His condition has ruled him out of defending his title.

The 2025 edition of the Roof of Africa is currently underway, marking a historic milestone for Lesotho as the event serves as the decisive final round of the World Hard Enduro Championship (HEWC).

With the world's top riders battling for the world title on Basotho soil, Lesotho once again stands at the centre of global off-road motorcycling.

This year's race has attracted an impressive field of approximately 400 riders, one of the largest entries in the event's long history. Thirteen Basotho riders are competing across various classes, reflecting the country's growing reputation in hard enduro.

Among the most experienced local riders

are Timello Tšolo, Sechaba Chabeli, Besele Malakane and Shabeer Moosa, all eager to make their mark on home terrain.

In the Silver Class, Basotho hopes rest on Basia Maseatile, Sechaba Chabeli and Moiphepi Bereng. The Bronze Class features Timello Tšolo, Malakane Besele, Katleho Tlhaole and Joseph Motenane. In the Iron Class, Peter Andrews, Jabulani Mhlanga, Thabo Monaheng, Eric Salley, David Salley and Hlaoli Lesekele will tackle the demanding course.

Since its launch in 1967, the Roof of Africa, affectionately known as "The Mother of Hard Enduro," has become one of Lesotho's defining annual sporting events.

It has been cancelled only twice: in 1998 due to political instability and in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's action began with time trials on Thursday, with riders pushing through the rugged terrain from Mokema in Koro-Koro to Ha-Lebamang in Roma.

Two days earlier, on 19 November, spectators lined the streets of Maseru for a revitalised parade ride through the city, led by the Prime Minister on his off-road motorbike, an unprecedented expression of national support for the event.

The main races will start and finish at Ha-Lebamang today and Saturday, where



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thousands of spectators are expected to gather along the mountain passes to witness the showdown.

The HEWC designation has drawn some of the sport's biggest names back to Lesotho. Germany's Manuel Lettenbichler, returning after missing the last two editions, expressed his excitement ahead of the race.

Speaking on Wednesday this week, he said: "I am stoked to come back. I think it is going to be a good race. I hope this year the race is not as tough as last year's because I heard some crazy stories, but the organisers are doing

their best to make it even better."

Lettenbichler will face stiff competition from South Africa's James Moore and Dylan Jones.

"It has been a huge up-and-down year with a tight schedule abroad. Roof of Africa is a home race, so it's really cool to be here with the fans and organisers. It looks like it's going to be a better year," Moore said.

Spain's Sandra Gomes, returning after eight years, is aiming for a top-five finish. "The race is going to be long and rocky, but I'll give my best," she said.

Blockbuster VPL action returns

Seabata Mahao

After a week-long FIFA international break, the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) returns with seven fixtures, headlined by a highly anticipated clash between two clubs with contrasting fortunes.

Majantja FC, the surprise leaders this season, take on struggling newcomers Maroala FC on Sunday at the Sebatana Russell Techni-cal Centre.

Majantja have impressed with consistent, disciplined performances that have kept them at the summit. Their balanced attack and sturdy defence have sparked early whispers of a potential title tilt, provided they maintain the momentum.

But Maroala, who are languishing in position 15 with five points, have shown they can trouble big teams, most notably with their stunning 1–0 victory over defending champions Lioli three weeks ago.

Sunday will also mark Maroala's first match since parting ways with head coach Kenny Mohoanyane, the man who guided them to top-flight promotion. His move to Lioli as assistant coach leaves Maroala with

the challenge of stabilising quickly without their architect.

The weekend's action begins at Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena, where inconsistent Bantu FC face bottom-placed Members FC. Bantu are coming off a morale-boosting 4–1 win over LU FC, while Members were beaten 1–0 by Machokha FC and 2–0 by Majantja in their last two outings.

Fresh from lifting the Cherry Cup in Ficksburg, Lioli resume their title defence against Liphakoe. The champions sit fourth after a mixed start, while Liphakoe's turbulent run of only two wins in eight matches has left them flirting with the relegation zone. Both teams badly need points.

Manonyane's clash with Matlama, originally part of a triple-header, has been postponed due to Matlama players joining the national Under-20 side, Makoanyane XI. The delay may benefit Matlama, who are winless in their last three matches and would have been without head coach Shalane Lehohla, currently with Mehalalito for friendly matches in eSwatini.

Sunday's marquee fixture sees Linare and LCS meet in a battle between two of the



Majantja FC squad

league's most consistent sides. With identical records of four wins, two losses and a draw, both teams enter the match in confident form.

Elsewhere, Lifofane aim to build on their 3–0 win over Matlama when they face the

stubborn LMPS, while LU FC look to stop their losing streak against in-form Lijabatho. Machokha, who have slipped to 10th after a strong start, face an LDF side riding the momentum of three straight victories.



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