

# Lesotho

## FACTFILE

**Title** Management of Unsafe Sex Among Young People

**IPPF Member Association** Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association (LPPA), [www.lppa.org.ls](http://www.lppa.org.ls)

Set up in 1968, LPPA is the country's leading non-governmental organization promoting and providing sexual and reproductive health services.

**Aim** To contribute to the improvement of the sexual and reproductive health status of young people aged 10 to 24 years.

**Duration** Five years: 2003–2007

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ The project's youth centre was unique, offering a combination of sexual and reproductive health information, clinical services and recreational activities.
- ▶ The project provided an innovative, workable model that the government is now replicating in other parts of the country.
- ▶ Despite a conservative environment, the project succeeded in providing accurate and frank information for young people.
- ▶ Outreach activities reached a diverse group, including those of primary to tertiary age, young men and women, in- and out-of-school youth and particularly vulnerable groups such as teenage parents and young people in prisons.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Flagship resource centre, youth-friendly and youth-owned

The project set up a youth resource centre, with a clinic and sexual and reproductive health information integrated with recreational services, a library and internet café. The project provided a holistic approach to reaching young people.

### Sports, entertainment, and career and educational support were all considered important to develop young people's skills.

The project was extremely relevant to the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of young people, and the recreational component was also found to be relevant to young people and the challenges in their lives. Sports, entertainment, and career and educational support were all considered important to develop young people's skills. In particular, young people felt they had ownership of the youth centre and felt that it was a safe space, where they would be listened to and provided with advice but not told what to do.

### "The education we receive here is relevant to the challenges facing us in our daily lives."

Youth centre user

### Innovative use of outreach activities

Outreach activities included working with schools from primary to tertiary levels, linking up with other youth-serving organizations, and working with young people in church groups, and both in- and out-of-school youth. The project also targeted specific groups of vulnerable young

## KEY PROJECT STATISTICS

**16,289 girls and 10,595 boys** received sexual and reproductive health information, including negotiation skills, enabling them to take more control over their lives.

**21,473 services** were provided to young people.

Number of **condoms** distributed: **160,859**.

**3,550 visits** were made to the youth centre to use the recreational facilities.

The project **distributed 113,330** information, education and communication materials.

**103** committed, well trained and skilled **peer educators** were involved over the lifetime of the project.

people including herd boys, young people with disabilities, teenage parents and young people in three correctional institutions.

### Young people taking control over their sexual health

Many topics were covered through the project including contraception, young people and sexuality, myths and misconceptions, emergency contraception, using male and female condoms, sexually transmitted infections, voluntary counselling and testing for HIV, and gender-related issues.

The project was particularly successful in increasing young people's access to family planning, including emergency contraception.

The project made good use of radio and TV to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues and was innovative in its use of drama, music and puppetry developed by peer educators.

Young people were empowered through the project – describing it as a 'protective and enabling environment'.

## Young people as key players in the project

Youth participation was very strong. Young people were involved at every stage of the planning process and became key players in implementing the project.

Peer educators and youth volunteers reported that they had developed as people through the project, becoming more assertive and developing specific skills such as communication and leadership skills.

## Increasing visibility among partners and stakeholders

Lesotho remains a conservative society with largely Catholic values. In this context, teachers and parents find it difficult to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues with young people even when they are aware that they are sexually active.

However, collaborating with partners to maximize the reach of activities, generate support and mobilize resources was a project strength.

LPPA worked with more than 40 different partners and stakeholders including educational institutions, civil society organizations, government ministries, people living with HIV, and local and international non-governmental organizations.

By the end of the project, this increasing visibility meant that LPPA no longer needed to initiate partnerships as other organizations were approaching the Member Association, viewing it as a priority partner.

## Strong partnerships with government and UNFPA

LPPA is viewed as a key partner in young people's sexual and reproductive health by the government and by UNFPA.

The Member Association has played an important role in the government's decision to replicate the project model: the government has even decided to use the project's brand name for the youth centres it is opening across Lesotho.

LPPA participated in developing the current UNFPA country strategy and sits alongside UNFPA at national-level fora on issues such as commodity security.

**“We like the place because although we come to learn, we get involved in implementing activities and this promotes a sense of oneness.”**

Youth centre user

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Defining a catchment area and carrying out community mapping by peer educators is an effective way to plan outreach and marketing.**

**Recruiting and training new peer educators each year is a good way to maintain a pool of skilled peer educators.**

**Providing targeted, ongoing support in life skills and sexual and reproductive health to vulnerable young people, such as those in correctional institutions, can have a significant impact on their lives.**

**Young people found the recreational activities enjoyable and relevant to the challenges they face.**

**“The staff of the centre are open and frank in our dealings with them. We have trust in them and believe they want to help us.”**

Youth centre user

## Project continuation and sustainability

LPPA now has its own youth resource centre and clinic on land that it owns, and the youth centre is now fully integrated into the Member Association's core programme.

SOUTH AFRICA



## COUNTRY STATS

**Population is 1.8 million, with 39 per cent under the age of 15.**  
(2008, Population Reference Bureau)

**39 per cent of population is aged between 10 and 24.**  
(2006, Population Reference Bureau)

**Human Development Index ranking: 138 out of 177 countries.**  
(2005, UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008)

**Average life expectancy at birth is 42.6 years.**  
(2005, UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008)

**The infant mortality rate is 91 per thousand live births.**  
(2008, Population Reference Bureau)

**The total fertility rate is 3.8 (2000–2005) with only 37 per cent of married women aged 15–49 practising family planning.**  
(1997–2005, UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008)

**Population living with HIV/AIDS (aged 15–49) is 23.2 per cent.**  
(2005, UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008)

**Only 55 per cent of births are attended by trained personnel.**  
(1997–2005, UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008)

