

Lives
Changed
Communities
Transformed

We couldn't have done it without you.
Thank you!





BACKGROUND

The parched land thirsty for a positive change

Berea is one of the 10 administrative districts of Lesotho. It is where Lenkoane ADP is located, about 80 kilometres northeast of Maseru, the capital of Lesotho. The area lies in the foothills of the country with most villages located in the valleys. The community survives mainly on subsistence agricultural activities like livestock and cereal crops farming. It is blessed with fertile soil, an abundance of water and vast mountain ranges for livestock grazing.

However, incessant droughts and occasional excessive rains cause economic instability and food insecurity within the community. Women have to take on odd jobs in the urban areas or in the kitchens to feed their families. As the community is poor, stock theft is prevalent and this further affects the households' income and expenditure. Consequently, cases of child labour and the number of school dropouts increased. Children, especially the most vulnerable, were forced to drop out of school and search for jobs in the cities to sustain themselves and their families.

LENKOANE AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (ADP)

TOTAL POPULATION: 22,000

TOTAL CHILDREN: 11,658



FEMALE: 11,100

GIRLS: 6,875



MALE: 10,900

BOYS: 4,783

NUMBER OF REGISTERED CHILDREN: 2,000

ADP start date: October 1999

ADP end date: September 2015

HOW THE JOURNEY BEGAN

Lenkoane ADP started in 1999 and is fully-funded by World Vision Singapore. The key development interventions were in the following areas: food security, water and sanitation, and health and nutrition. Education-related projects were introduced in 2010.

WATER & SANITATION

Water is a highly abundant resource in Lenkoane ADP, and it is found in the mountain aquifers. However, the majority of Lenkoane ADP and its schools had little access to it. At the beginning of the programme, the surveys showed that 55.2% of the population did not have access to potable water and 54.5% did not use proper latrines. In some villages, water was drawn from unprotected wells, resulting in waterborne diseases. And as the wells were located a few kilometres away, some children who went to draw water were abducted too. Having to walk a long distance also compromised the women and girls' time for household chores and homework respectively.

In collaboration with the government's Department of Rural Water Supply, today, more than 90% of the households and schools have access to potable water from public taps and new protected wells that are located much closer to villagers' homes. These constructed water systems, either gravity-run or solar-powered, are now able to supply water even during dry seasons. In each village, there is a committee that has been trained on routine maintenance of the water systems.

There was a reduction of cases of waterborne diseases. By partnering with the Ministry of Health, the programme provided more than 400 households with improved pit latrines made of stones and concrete. They were also trained on proper hygiene and sanitation.

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Children in my school used to get drinking water that was collected from roofs, during rainy seasons. In dry seasons, we would walk to unsafe and unprotected wells. Diarrhoea was very common in our school and community then. But with World Vision's support, we are now able to get potable water from the taps in our school and in many places in our village. Because we're drinking safe and clean water now, we don't get diarrhoea anymore.”

— MOTSÉLISI

Grade 6 student
at Lereko Primary School



EDUCATION

The greatest achievement for education has been the establishment of Lipohong High School, the first high school in the community, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Training. Before this school was built, most project interventions were geared towards improving access to schools and raising the standard of education (i.e. boost literacy, learn numeracy skills, etc) in seven primary schools. There was capacity-building for teachers, and provision of teaching aids and various educational facilities. Yet, more than 70% of the pupils who passed primary school education were unable to proceed to the next level because high schools were too far from them (the nearest was approximately six kilometres from the programme area). Staying in boarding schools and hostels was too costly.

With Lipohong High School, children have an opportunity to be educated for life and positively-impact their families' livelihood sources in future. Currently, the school is in its third year of operation and has 165 pupils, from grades 8 to 10, and five qualified teachers.

In addition, 14 pre-schools, with an average enrolment of 20 children per school, have been established within the programme area (from just three in 2010). The schools are located within the villages and easily accessible to all children.

A footbridge has also improved access to quality education and essential life skills for school-going children. The Mantheki-Neko bridge boosts school attendance during rainy seasons. It is also a disaster-reduction facility when rivers are flooded, thus benefiting the entire community.

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I proudly refer to myself as a 'Giant raised by World Vision'. I completed my Grade 12 (Cambridge O-levels) in 2013 and I plan to enrol in a nursing college this year. When I was in primary school, I had a chronic illness that hindered my progress in school, and according to my parents, it was due to witchcraft. It got worse over time, and my parents tried traditional healers, but it was useless. World Vision's ADP staff visited me at home and took me to the doctor. I had to undergo abdominal surgery and when my parents refused, the staff took the heavy responsibility of consenting on my behalf. The operation eventually cured my sickness and I could complete my high school education. I'm so grateful to World Vision. It saved my life. Now, I want to be a nurse so I can help others as well."

— TSÉLE LEBŌEA, 19

HEALTH & NUTRITION

When the ADP started in 1999, Lesotho was fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic (with 23.2% prevalence), which wreaked havoc in the communities, including Lenkoane ADP. Most people associated HIV/AIDS-related illnesses and deaths to witchcraft. Many lost family members to the pandemic, resulting in an escalating number of orphans and vulnerable children and the chronically-ill. There were child-headed households as many children lost both parents.

A key intervention was the Hope Initiative as it focused on prevention from infection, care and support, and advocacy. World Vision educated both adults and children about the pandemic and on preventive measures within communities, in schools and churches. The stigma within the community eventually lessened and more people went for HIV-testing. More are still alive today due to the antiretroviral therapy that the government provides. They also formed a group called Lerato People Living with HIV & AIDS (PLWHA), which raises awareness about the pandemic, and counsels others to accept and live positively with the virus.

Child-headed households have also received more support, from community-based organisations, caregivers, support groups, and more. Some were assisted with government social grants and various bursaries to continue with their education. Children have also been empowered with skills on tackling issues like child labour, and understanding child rights and more.

Village health workers were better trained to administer healthcare services to treat

minor ailments and monitor children's health. Nursing mothers were also trained on proper ways of handling and utilising food, and proper hygiene. Medical equipment and supplies were provided to health centres in Lenkoane ADP.

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Initially, we thought that all those HIV/AIDS-related deaths were due to witchcraft. We did not want to believe the World Vision staff. However, with their dedicated coaching and encouragement, more and more people voluntarily-tested for the virus; those who tested positive were further counselled and supported with nutritional supplements to boost their immune system. We really cannot thank God enough for sending World Vision to our community."

— MALEBOHANG
RAMAQELE

who voluntarily-tested and was HIV-positive; she is now a member of Lerato PLWHA, and a HIV/AIDS activist.

FOOD SECURITY

Two major agricultural activities in Lenkoane ADP are cereal crops production and livestock farming, especially cattle. Initially, food production in Lenkoane was limited by factors such as a lack of knowledge on improved farming techniques and overcoming droughts. Traditional ways of farming were unproductive.

The sharecropping* initiative introduced by World Vision. This focused on improved productivity through the use of improved farming techniques - conservation agriculture, keyhole and trench gardens and gravity irrigation- which greatly benefited the farmers. Farmers also showcase their various agricultural produce at the annual agriculture exhibitions to inspire farmers to increase their productivity and quality. World Vision awards prizes to the winners, motivating farmers to grow quality produce.

World Vision has also equipped the community with skills on cash crop farming and homestead vegetable production using irrigation. This has contributed to improved vegetable production as more households can buy and plant the seedlings in their own gardens. The ability to buy fresh and nutritious vegetables has boosted the local economy. The farmers are then able to pay school fees for their children, and meet basic needs.

A highly productive chicken breed, koekoe, provided by World Vision to all registered children's households, has also improved household nutrition and economy through the sale of eggs and provision of chicken meat.

**The ADP provided the community with farming inputs such as seeds and fertilisers, and farmers concentrated on the farming. The produce was then shared in a 20(ADP):80(farmer) ratio, and the ADP's share was subsequently distributed to the vulnerable members of the community, and orphans and vulnerable children.*

ADVOCACY

Advocating for quality education has been a priority in Lenkoane ADP. Lipohong High School is a great example of the programme's labour and advocacy efforts. Parents were also strongly urged to send their children to school. The ADP has played a central role in getting local authorities and traditional healers (i.e. the administrators of the initiation/circumcision schools*) to form a united front in ensuring that practices that compromise children's opportunity for education are dealt with appropriately.

It has been agreed that children will only be admitted to the initiation school after completing their formal school examinations and will graduate from the initiation school in time to proceed with higher education the following year. The current school enrolment rate highlighted earlier has shown that children's education has become a priority in Lenkoane ADP.

**Initiation school (synonymous with circumcision school) is a ceremonial procedure or traditional ceremony which marks a boy's entrance into adulthood/manhood.*



SUCCESS STORY

no longer deprived
of an education

Witnessing children dropping out of schools in Lenkoane ADP was a common occurrence when World Vision first started supporting the community. But no child was as dejected and disheartened as Fusi Leponesa, 17, was.

Fusi is an orphan, and the last-born of seven siblings. When he was younger, he would attend school, and was even brighter than most. *"I'd always place top five in my class. For my PSLE examinations in 2011, I was the only one in my primary school to get a First Class pass,"* he said.

But shortly after, he was tasked to concentrate on herding cattle by his aunt (and also his guardian). He had to do that so that his cousins could attend school. It pained him as he saw his former classmates move on to high school, while he was stuck doing manual labour.

Despite not attending school, Fusi continued to display his smarts and intellect. When the ADP facilitated a game to test speed thinking and intelligence amongst school-going children, two male contestants ended up as the top two finalists. One of them was Fusi. Though he lost the competition in the end, this was significant as he was not enrolled in a school, while the winner was.

World Vision's ADP staff encouraged Fusi's guardian to apply for a bursary to permit Fusi to attend school. However, she was not cooperative. In addition, he did not have all the requisite documents for the bursary application.

After several reminders to Fusi's aunt to get the necessary documents to no avail, the ADP took the initiative and the

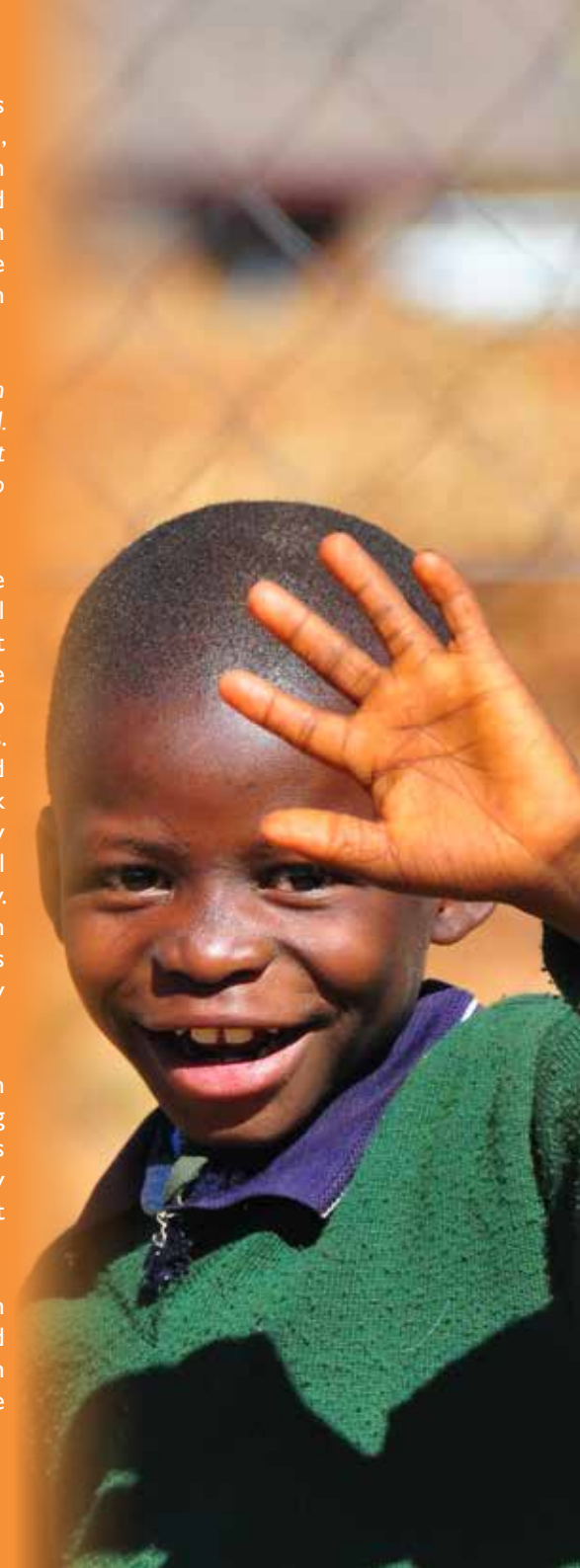
responsibility to acquire the documents from government officials. And by then, they had missed the school application deadline. Hence, they further negotiated with the school, and succeeded in enrolling him into both the school and the hostel. Moreover, his bursary application was approved.

Fusi was overwhelmed. He said: *"Even now, I can't believe that I got into high school. I'll definitely do my best and eventually get into university. I'm confident I can catch up and top the class, and even school, again!"*

But just when all problems were seemingly solved, Fusi got called to enroll into initiation/circumcision school. It was saddening as many who attend the initiation school typically never return to formal school to continue their studies. So it was with much celebration and fanfare when Fusi managed to go back to school after that. This was primarily due to the ADP's focus on making formal education a priority in the community. Staff ensured that the calendars for both schools did not clash, and so students could continue their studies immediately after initiation school.

Fusi is Grade Nine this year, and well on his way to fulfilling his goal of attending university. All thanks to World Vision's focus in not just education and advocacy work, but in every child's development and future.

Today, Fusi and many other children in Lenkoane ADP are no longer deprived of a basic right to education. They can finally dream big, and make a better life for themselves and their families.







THANK
YOU

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