

Deepening Decentralization and Non-State Actors

Despite the establishment of local government authorities through the enactment of Local Government Act 1997, the country has been haunted by lack of decentralised decision-making power and authority. The development initiatives set for implementation at local level are still determined by the central government, resulting in irrelevant and unresponsive interventions at local communities. The allocation of material and financial resources has failed to trickle down to local authorities, making it difficult for local structures to make any meaningful contribution in the development of people's lives. Public participation is yet another challenge in decentralisation in Lesotho. Communities failure to participate in development agenda-setting platforms and failure to hold authorities accountable has led to poor service delivery.

To bridge this gap, the European Union has funded the Deepening Decentralization and Non State Actors project that will run for three (3) years with the view to accelerate progress and deepen decentralization in Lesotho. The project will be implemented in Mokhotlong, Botha Bothe, Leribe, Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek is aimed at promoting decentralized service delivery for social and economic growth through the development of transparent funding mechanisms and by improving the accountability of local authorities.

Lesotho Council of Non Governmental Organizations will implement the project in collaboration with the following organisations: Campaign for Education Forum, Send a Cow Transformation Resource Centre, Centre for Empowerment of Social Analysis, Lesotho National Council of Women and Patriot Vision in Action. They have been chosen to facilitate the activities they are already working with at local communities and have structures and relations within the local communities in the project areas.

The project seeks:

- To enhance participation of Non-State Actors in contributing to poverty reduction at community level;
- To build organizational and institutional capacity of local CSOs and local authorities to influence inclusive development agenda at community level;
- To facilitate a more productive interaction between NSAs and local government structures through policy dialogue;
- To promote gender equality in local governance processes.

Anticipated results

- Enhanced skills and knowledge of local CSOs and local authorities in influencing inclusive development agenda at community level;
- Improved participation of CSOs and local communities in design, implementation and evaluation of local level development interventions;
- Enhanced accountability, responsive and transparency of local authorities to members of local communities.

Target groups and final beneficiaries

Target groups

CSOs, local authorities and relevant central government ministries, relevant portfolio committees and women groups

Final beneficiaries

Local communities in the project areas in Butha Buthe, Leribe, Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Mokhotlong

Main activities

- Deliver skills and knowledge aimed at improving organisations and institutional performance of CSOs and local authorities;
- Engage with central and local government structures through advocacy budget tracking, social mobilization, policy dialogue and community parliament.