



# ANNUAL REPORT | 2020

UNDP LESOTHO

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In Ha Nkhetheleng village, Mohale's Hoek district, villagers have been taught how to preserve seasonal fruits and vegetables to ensure a consistent balanced diet throughout the year. Training and equipment – including a vegetable drier – was supplied by UNDP as part of the Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change (RVCC) project.

# FOREWORD



**COVID-19 certainly created a challenge in our Decade of Action towards the Sustainable Development Goals, but it also presented an unexpected opportunity to re-examine our interventions in Lesotho to build forward better.**

2020 was a pivotal year. Not only for the Government and people of Lesotho (Basotho), but also for UNDP as part of the UN family in Lesotho. It marked the second year following the adoption of UN Resolution A/RES/72/279 (May 2018) which set out the UN repositioning of the UN development system. The subsequent reforms process translated into far-reaching changes in the way the UN supports countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the year began, we were set to continue with our ambitious goals of helping the Government and all Basotho to eliminate poverty and inequality. Our assistance was



**Ms Betty Wabunoha**  
Resident Representative  
UNDP Lesotho

channelled through our innovatively designed, carefully co-created and efficiently delivered development solutions, as articulated under the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019–2023. The aim of ensuring that UNDP Africa's leadership commitment to “disrupt the way our organisation thinks, invests, manages and delivers” remained at the core of our business processes. As informed by our Country Programme Document (CPD 2019–2023), we were prepared, once again, to demonstrate our relevance. Not only as part of the UN family, but also as the lead development agency bringing hope to millions of Basotho who look up to us for home-grown solut-

-ions to development challenges and innovative ideas from abroad through south-south cooperation.

The reforms of the UN system have given us, as UNDP in Lesotho, an opportunity to raise the bar in the way we support national efforts to realise long-term development aspirations. Our renewed aim is to do things better, faster and at scale. That is why, when COVID-19 hit, we were prepared to ensure our support to Lesotho helped protect livelihoods across the country and strengthen institutions so that development gains were not reversed.

Informed by the new reality, we supported the Government to address the needs of the poorest and marginalised. And once more, we demonstrated that we are an innovative, flexible, and capable partner. Both in times of crisis, with immediate responses, and with durable solutions for economic recovery.

Our commitment to the notion of resilience in development now seems prescient. While many of 2020's trials served to underscore the relevance of our pre-planned programme priorities, it became clear that effectively supporting Basotho meant producing faster results and supporting our respective

partners to do the same, working in close collaboration with our UN sister agencies and leveraging the collective might of the UN family. We are proud to say we rose to the challenge.

### Next-generation thinking

Using a plethora of previously underutilised tools – Zoom, Teams, Docusign, to name a few – we were able to quickly adapt our working processes to provide uninterrupted support and business continuity during the growing pandemic. These tools enabled us to continue to actively engage through lockdown periods and to keep our promise to “stay and deliver”.

Against expectations, COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be an unlikely spur for innovation. It has broken the hesitancy barrier around the use of digital technology so that we are now seeing accelerated digital transformation in Lesotho. Advances driven by necessity in e-commerce, e-governance, inclusive engagement and technological solutions to community problems will far outlive the pandemic's reach. These trends bring renewed hope and could provide a springboard for Lesotho to leapfrog as it recovers, spurring a societal transformation that does not leave anyone behind.

## LINKS AND FURTHER READING

**UNDAF Lesotho  
2019–2023**

*Available from:*  
<https://lesotho.un.org/en/21758-united-nations-development-assistance-framework-lesotho-undaf-2019-2023>

**UNDP Strategic Offer in  
Africa, 2020**

*Available from:*  
<https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/library/outreach-material/undp-strategic-offer-africa.html>

**2020 World Drought Day  
coverage**

<https://stories.undp.org/drought-rising-temperatures-and-extreme-weather-pose-risks-to-lesotho>

**UNDP Lesotho's  
Accelerator Lab COVID-19  
contact tracing app**

**Bophelo-ka-Mosebeletsi**  
*see:*  
<https://digitalhealthatlas.org/p/LS4zbq13bp>

# “Against expectations, COVID-19 has proved to be an unlikely spur for innovation”

The fact that these innovations dovetail with UNDP's focus on transforming economies, improving governance, and promoting resilience has brought out our unique strengths as a development partner. In this respect, the work done by the Lesotho Accelerator Lab (AccLab) stands out as a real example of UNDP's next-generation thinking.

This global programme to identify, test and scale-up local solutions was launched in Lesotho in late 2019 and during the pandemic, it showed its strength. Through our global network, we were able to quickly compare interventions across countries, bringing already-tested solutions on board, adapting and localising ideas when necessary. We also showcased Lesotho's achievements to the world. Lesotho's is one of the few countries that has managed to establish strong private-sector partnerships to scale-up innovations for impact, most notably with Econet Lesotho for free data to enable village health workers to use the COVID-19 contact tracing app Bophelo Ka Mosebeletsi, developed by the Lesotho AccLab in partnership with the National University of Lesotho.

## Thought leadership

Another example is our investment in initiatives that strengthen the resilience of Basotho households by extending access to safe energy. We consider this next-generation thinking because we do not just give eco-stoves to families, but also create jobs for women and youths as a solid safety net in a time of crisis and uncertainty. As a result of our support, hundreds of communities are better prepared to bounce back from external environmental shocks. But, importantly, systems have been enhanced to better manage resilience too. Our

investment is now contributing to national efforts aimed at protecting the country's biodiversity and nurturing the natural eco-systems. This work is showcased by UNDP's Reducing Vulnerability of Climate Change (RVCC) Project, which was featured globally during World Drought Day on 17 June 2020.

As the UN lead development agency in the country, we remain committed to working even more closely with partners across the UN system because we understand that we are more effective when we work as a family. We continue to demonstrate our thought leadership through upstream policy work to shape the design of new development approaches. Of particular note, we took the role of technical lead on the socioeconomic framework and recovery strategy for COVID-19.

If 2020 taught us anything, it is that when we work closely with other UN agencies and our development partners, we can achieve bigger impacts. For example, our work with WHO, UNICEF, and UNAIDS focused on using our comparative advantages to support national efforts to respond to COVID-19. By working as a team, we ensured that we reach the furthest behind first in the most efficient and holistic manner. In 2021, we will build on this collaboration and forge stronger partnerships under our CPD and focus on key growth sectors that contribute to national development priorities.

COVID-19 has challenged many traditional development approaches. But I sincerely believe the urgency created by the crisis helped us find new and better ways to deliver on our promise to accelerate progress in Lesotho. The gains from these entry points will inform our future approaches to build forward better with the SDGs as our compass. [▶](#)

70% of Lesotho's population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, which makes them particularly vulnerable to the climate-change related risks of increased food insecurity, poverty and vulnerability. Widespread environmental degradation exacerbates the challenge and places most households in a state of persistent economic struggle.









# FARMER SCHOOL

Growing tomatoes is just one of the new skills a group of villagers from Ha Nkhetheleng have gained as a result of their participation in the RVCC project. Group leader Tieho Nkhetheleng explains that the project supported the community to take on activities to improve the environment in surrounding areas and give them skills to improve their livelihoods. They are taught brush control, which involves getting rid of invasive species of plants that degrade the rangelands and limit land available for pasture, and they all contribute to the work by allocating 8 hours a day, 3 days a week. In return, the villagers are taught new skills to enhance their resilience. The project helped them to establish a community orchard and collaborative agricultural projects, including group crops of beans and maize, with seeds provided by the project. Working together as a group, they have been able to negotiate with landowners to increase the amount of land available for planting crops. And since October 2020, they have established a farmer training school (left), of which Tieho is the group leader, involving 25 village members where they learn cultivation of tomatoes and other produce. The first harvest of tomatoes enabled them to sell excess produce generating income of M4000. Now the villagers are at a stage where they choose the knowledge and skills they want to learn from the farmer school and transfer these lessons to their peers and family members. The benefits of the project are obvious to all, says Tieho. Livestock have far more vegetation to graze on thanks to the brush control activities and all villagers are benefiting from better nutrition and access to food.

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# INTRODUCTION



**In 2020, in the shadow of COVID-19, Lesotho continued its sweeping national reforms process to achieve political stability and economic transformation – with UNDP Lesotho’s support to address the country’s multiple vulnerabilities.**

Lesotho is a country where common development paradigms are turned upside down. Small, ethnically homogenous, and middle income, it has historically been relatively stable when compared with other nations in sub-Saharan Africa, though with cyclical political instability since independence in 1966, including period of military rule and frequent changes in coalition governments. On many traditional development measures – literacy, per capita income, women's empowerment – the country seems to have an impressive track record. Yet, almost 40% of the population lives in poverty; unemployment exceeds 30% (more among women and young people); only a tiny proportion of the mainly rural population has access to essential services such as electricity, water and basic health care; and it is classified as one of the 10 most unequal countries in the world.

Lesotho's dramatic mountainous landscapes are partly to blame. The topography means the costs of extending services to the population are five to six times higher than elsewhere.

But this challenging natural context is not the only reason why Lesotho is struggling to develop. The HIV/AIDS pandemic hit this country particularly hard, fuelled by a tradition of labour migration to neighbouring South Africa that also served to undermine economic development at home. During the past decade, Lesotho's political volatility has drawn the attention – and intervention – of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), due to fractious, and sometimes violent, relations between political parties involved in fragile coalitions that undermine government effectiveness.

## **Commitment to Reform**

Within this challenging context, Lesotho began 2020 with positivity, following a series of important steps forward. A second National Strategic Development Plan was published in 2019 and a large, national dialogue was completed, which sought broad participation, national consensus and trust-building for the country's reform process – supported by UNDP

through the National Dialogue and Stabilisation Project. These steps culminated in a government commitment to implement recommendations for sweeping reforms of the constitutional, parliamentary, security and justice sectors, medical sector, public service and economic reforms facilitated by SADC with UNDP and EU support. “The Basotho spoke in a loud and clear voice, let us implement their views because Vox populi, vox Dei - the people's voice is God's voice” declared H.M King Letsie III, marking a National Plenary event to adopt the agreed content of the reforms in late 2019.

However, while the basis for national reconciliation, sustainable peace and a reform path for democratic governance in Lesotho is now set, the country remains vulnerable to shocks. Predicted impacts of climate change and its implications for agriculture – on which the livelihoods of 70% of the population depends – bring the triple threats of increased food insecurity, poverty and vulnerability. A related

challenge is the extent of environmental degradation resulting from expansion in farming, grazing and use of biomass fuels for basic energy needs. And the overall background of economic struggle for most households is a constant barrier to growth.

UNDP recognises that political stability, strong and accountable institutions, and effective legislative and governance systems are prerequisites for inclusive socioeconomic and political transformation, sustainable livelihoods and resilience. For this reason, our support to Lesotho encompasses all these aspects. While the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown periods had a significant impact on the way our work was done during 2020, we are proud to have maintained our focus on our (UNDAF) 2019–2023 workplan and supported our partners to adapt and move forward.

## LINKS AND FURTHER READING

**UNDP Lesotho Country Programme Document 2019–2023**

<https://www.ls.undp.org/content/dam/lesotho/docs/Reports/UNDP%20LESOTHO%20CPD%20%202019->

**AFRICA'S PROMISE: The UNDP Renewed Strategic Offer In Africa (January 2020)**

<https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/library/outreach-material/undp-strategic-offer-africa.html>

**The Second National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II) covering the period 2018/19 to 2022/23**

*Available from:*  
<https://www.ls.undp.org/content/dam/lesotho/docs/Reports/NSDP%20II%202019-2023.pdf>

**Multi-Stakeholder National Dialogue Plenary II Report (November 2019)**

*Available from:*  
<https://lesotho.un.org/en/34305-multi-stakeholder-national-dialogue-plenary-ii-report>



## PILLAR 1

### ***Lesotho National Dialogue and Stabilisation Project***

Support for robust national dialogue and defining a consensus for reform.

### ***Support for Implementation of Justice Sector Reforms Project***

Supporting the Government of Lesotho to implement its reform agenda and prosecute high-profile security sector cases.

### ***Programme on Renewal and Enhancement of Government Architecture***

Support for Lesotho's governance institutions and promotion of participation of women and young people in democratic governance and public decision-making.

### ***Tripartite Partner Project to Support Lesotho Human Rights***

Establishment of human rights architecture in Lesotho.



## PILLAR 2

### ***Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth Programme***

Strengthening the capacity of businesses to create decent and sustainable jobs and facilitating increased economic participation, especially among women and youth.

### ***Joint Programme on Economic and Financial Management Integration for Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals***

Creation of a conducive policy environment for growth; strengthen public financial management processes; and provide platforms for public-private dialogue.

### ***Sustainability Support Project for Trade***

The Sustainability Support Project (SSP) focuses on helping the Government of Lesotho to manage the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Programme.

### ***Enhancing Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Economic Growth***

Addressing key barriers to starting businesses among youth, particularly a lack of creative thinking and low levels of innovation, in priority sectors.



## PILLAR 3

### ***Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change in the Foothills, Lowlands and Senqu River Basin***

Mainstreaming climate risk considerations into the land rehabilitation programme of Lesotho for reduced vulnerability to climate shocks.

### ***Small Grants Programme (SGP)***

Grants aim to promote and support initiatives to tackle global environmental issues in priority landscapes, focused on the Orange/Senqu river basin.

### ***Sustainable Energy for All***

Helping Lesotho use its abundant solar energy and wind/hydro resources to meet the energy needs of the rural communities.





## 2020: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

- The first full year of the Accelerator Lab project (launched October 2019)
- COVID-19 response (starting March 2020)
- Initiation of Justice Sector Reform Project (May 2020)
- Establishing agreements for the first renewable-energy-based mini-grids to extend electricity supplies to rural areas (SE4ALL, July 2020)
- Review and revision of Bill to establish the Human Rights Commission in Lesotho (July 2020), commemorated on Human Rights' Day (10 December)
- Launch of the Joint Programme on Economic and Financial Management Integration (October 2020)
- Finalisation of the Lesotho National Dialogue and Stabilization Project
- Enhancing Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Economic Growth (EYES project): 129 youths benefitted from social enterprise development, leading 71 to start their own businesses, employing over 50 people
- Reducing Vulnerabilities from Climate Change (ends December 2021): Over 2000 people were paid an estimated 9 million Maloti for their work to rehabilitate over 3000 hectares of land

## UNDP's Strategic Impact

Nested within UNDP's global Signature Solutions that stake out our comparative advantages as a development partner, our Lesotho country programme is tailored to the country's specific challenges and circumstances but in line with the areas we know we can create strategic impact to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

The Country Programme Document (CPD) 2019–2023 – the primary way that UNDP outlines priority areas of support and contributions to national results – is anchored in the NSDP II and the UN Development Assistance Framework and guided by the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Committed to the principle of leaving no one behind, the programme enhances the inclusion of women, youth and people with disabilities in Lesotho's socioeconomic and political processes.

In line with the NSDP II, which prioritizes promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector-led job creation to address challenges of political instability, persistent poverty, non-inclusive economic growth and inequality, the UNDP programme is structured around three pillars: (a) governance, accountability, social cohesion and stability; (b) sustainable and inclusive economic growth; and (c) environmental sustainability, climate change and resilience. The projects under each of these pillars will be described in more detail in the following sections. [▶](#)



In Shalane village, participants in the RVCC project explain that in the past they couldn't afford the basic inputs such as seeds and tools to grow enough food for themselves. But since UNDP and partners have been providing seeds for planting annually, they are now have enough to eat.

# UNDP LESOTHO 2

## Environmental Stability and Resilience to Climate Change

- 1 Reducing Vulnerabilities from Climate Change (RVCC) project implemented by Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation.
- 2 Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) project
- 3 Small Grants Programme



## Governance, Accountability, Social Cohesion and Stability

- 1 Justice Sector Reform
- 2 National Stabilisation Project
- 3 National Reforms Programme
- 4 Tripartite Partner Project support to Lesotho Human Rights



# 2020 PORTFOLIO



15%  
US\$905 055

## COVID-19 Response

- 1 Resilient health systems
- 2 Crisis management
- 3 Socio-economic impact
- 4 Business continuity

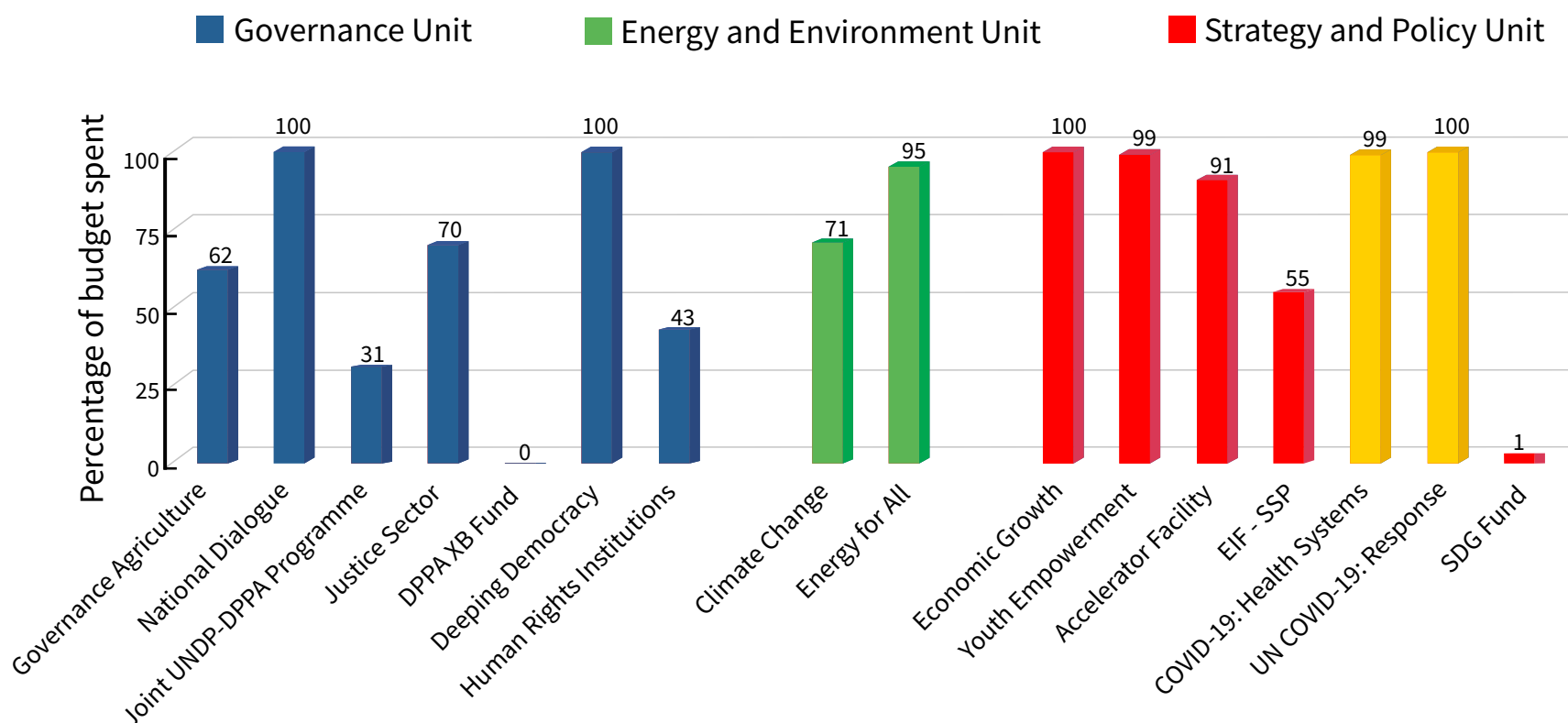


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## Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth

- 1 Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth (2019–2023)
- 2 Economic and Financial Management Integration for SDGs (2020–2022) [EFMIS]
- 3 Lesotho Accelerator Labs (2019–2021)
- 4 Sustainability Support for Trade (2020–2021)
- 5 Enhancing Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Economic Growth (2020–2021)

# DELIVERY AGAINST BUDGET, 2020



Despite the inevitable disruption to our 2020 workplan resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdown periods in Lesotho, we managed to find innovative and flexible ways to continue delivering on our programme goals. Activities that depended on large gatherings and significant government interactions, particularly those in the Governance Unit, were substantially delayed, affecting program spending. However, we were able to find innovative ways to work with partners and liaise with communities leading to better-than-expected results for the units dealing with Energy and Environment and Strategy and Policy. Of particular note, we managed to reprogram funds allocated to the Accelerator Lab to support the COVID-19 response, meaning that not only did we meet our pre-planned targets, we also adapted quickly to the changing context of the pandemic crisis. Additionally, the COVID-19 response funds obtained from global and regional initiatives were rapidly allocated and spent. As a result, overall performance for the year is impressive despite the challenges.

# PILLAR 1



**UNDP Lesotho's Governance and Peacebuilding Unit focuses on supporting the country to implement national reforms process and strengthen institutions of governance in a peaceful environment.**

Through the Programme on Reforms and Enhancement of Governance Architecture (PREGA), the Governance and Peacebuilding Unit (GPU) supports Lesotho on the national reforms process. This work includes providing capacity building for governance institutions and promotion of a National Peace Architecture (NPA). This programme Pillar is aligned to UNDP's Signature Solution 2 and is expected to enhance good governance, social accountability and social cohesion.

Programme activities involve establishing robust multi-stakeholder partnerships within government, civil society and with non-governmental actors including faith-based organisations. Our role is to provide technical support and strengthen capacity to improve implementation.

One of the major focus areas under this Pillar's portfolio is to support a range of inclusive national reforms involving: the constitution, parliament, security sector, media, judiciary, economy and public service. It also involves institutional and capacity support for democratic governance, national

## **UNDP Signature Solution 2:**

*Strengthen effective, inclusive and accountable governance*

peacebuilding and social cohesion and conflict prevention. Each aspect of the work includes a particular focus on the active participation and engagement of marginalised and vulnerable groups including women, youth and people with disabilities. In partnership with both civil society and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNDP also provides technical support and capacity-building towards the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission that is compliant with the Paris Principles.

## **Notable Achievements**

Overall, the unit managed to remain largely on track with its workplan despite the difficult conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there were some particular successes to highlight.



# The National Human Rights Commission

## *Adapting to the crisis*

It was a major achievement that we managed to use funds from our annual allocation for planned activities for their original purpose, despite the impact of COVID-19. There was no diversion of any funding in the unit. We are proud of the flexibility we were able to demonstrate of engaging with our partners and providing them with data and airtime when necessary to keep contact going. Although buying airtime for partners might seem like a minor detail, it is difficult to underestimate how significant it was that we were able to make those purchases.

## *Human Rights Commission*

In terms of our programme achievements, the most successful

work was on the promotion of the Human Rights Commission. The only task left to complete is to present the amended Act and see through an amendment of the Constitution to allow the Human Rights Act to be entrenched. This process will be followed by the Commission's appointment. This is a real success story, particularly because of the relationships that were established between government, civil society and academia.

For International Human Rights Day, we organised a high-level discussion on human rights that was attended by the Chief Justice. This occasion also serves as an awareness raising to the status of human rights in the country.

*“The ability to buy airtime  
seem minor, but it was*



# Human rights belong to all of us equally”

But the most important result is that communities have had the opportunity to express their fears and now have a mechanism to hold human rights abusers to account.

### *National Reforms Authority*

An enabling legal environment and operational capacity for the NRA to execute its mandate was created during 2020, with the technical and financial support of UNDP. Supplementary legislation was adopted by parliament and published in the Government Gazette. The NRA Members were inducted; and an organisational structure and operational instruments for the secretariat were developed and approved. The NRA is now operational with a CEO in place and EU-financed technical staff.

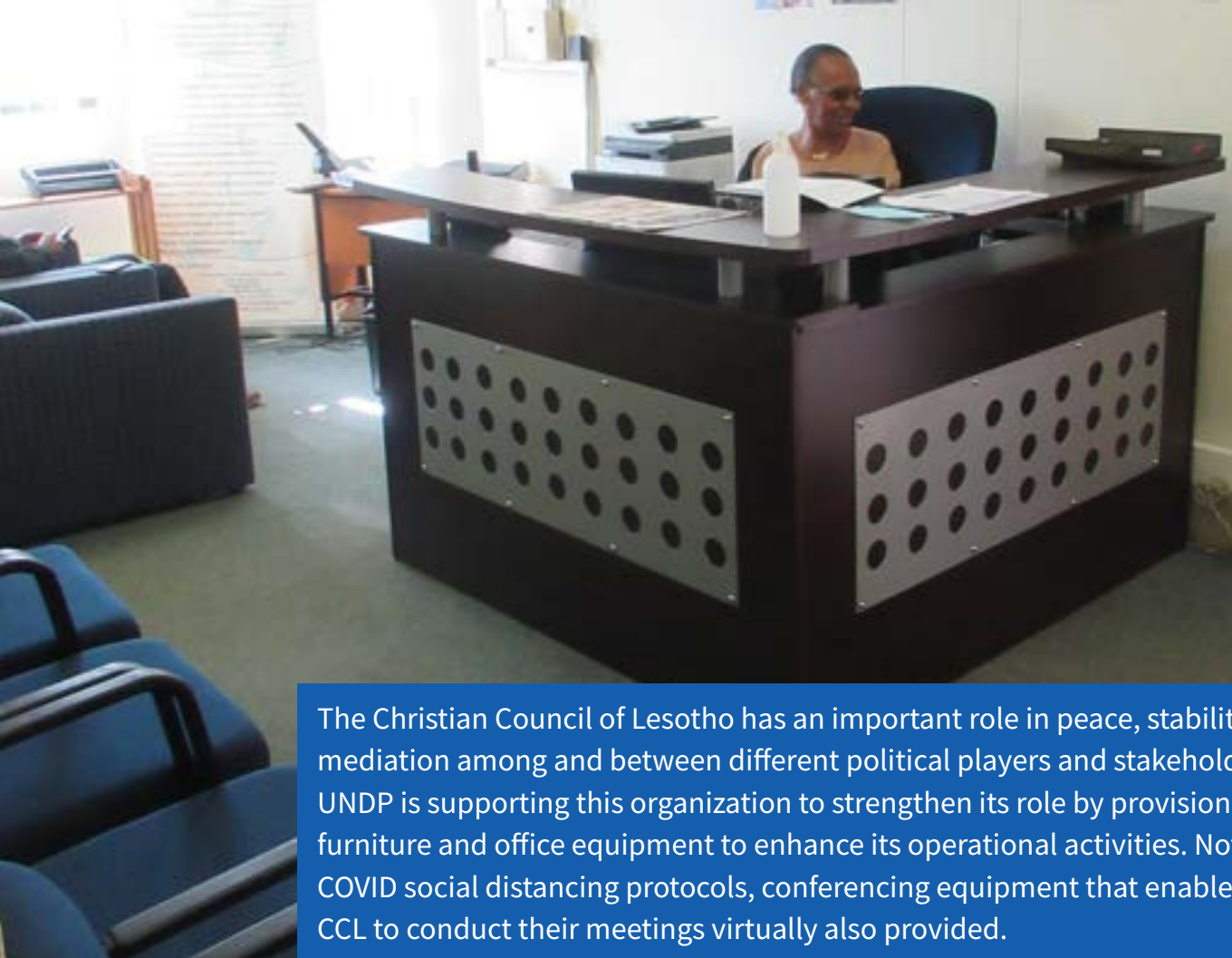
For coordinated support to the national reforms process, UNDP

convened government, development partners, civil society and other stakeholders, which led to the design and development of a comprehensive programme of support, with €2 500 000 mobilised for its execution.

### *Support to Justice Sector Reforms*

With funds from the EU, UNDP provided technical support and advice for expeditious and impartial trials of high-profile security-sector-related cases, to end impunity and sustain peace. Three independent and impartial foreign judges who will try criminal matters were maintained at post and are hearing eight cases. Additional support included improvements in the case-management system, monitoring of trial proceedings, and technical and operational support to judges.

*Time for partners might  
incredibly significant”*



The Christian Council of Lesotho has an important role in peace, stability and mediation among and between different political players and stakeholders. UNDP is supporting this organization to strengthen its role by provision of furniture and office equipment to enhance its operational activities. Noting COVID social distancing protocols, conferencing equipment that enables the CCL to conduct their meetings virtually also provided.



### *National Peace Architecture (NPA)*

Under the new project “Support to Conflict Prevention, Party Democracy and Consensus Building in Lesotho” we produced two major reports that highlight important themes underlying Lesotho’s ongoing political instability. The first deals with peace, conflict and gender context and was done under the NPA initiative. The second report focused on intra- and inter-party democracy because many of Lesotho's challenges emanate from contestation between political parties. These reports were subsequently validated by peer reviewers in advance of planned launch by the Prime Minister in 2021.

### **Looking ahead to 2021**

Our work during 2020 has laid a strong foundation for a more robust implementation in 2021, which looks set to be an interesting year. Not only because of the ongoing pandemic, but also because it is the penultimate year before the much-anticipated national elections in 2022. This period is when we work with the Independent Electoral Commission to define possible UN support to the 2021-2022 election cycle and work with stakeholders on national peace infrastructure around the country to diffuse tensions in the population to mitigate the risk of unrest. It will be an intense period, but we are ready. [▶](#)

**Table 1: Results achieved by Governance and Peacebuilding Unit Initiatives 2020**

CPD indicators	Selected 2020 achievements
<p><b>Output 1.1:</b> Capacities of government and national stakeholders strengthened to undertake and sustain gender-responsive, inclusive and participatory institutional and governance reforms processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of a comprehensive programme of support for the national reforms process</li> <li>▪ Donor engagement and resource mobilisation resulting in €2 500 000 from the EU and US\$1 500 000 from UN PBF</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishment of an enabling legal and regulatory environment for the launch of the National Reforms Authority (NRA)</li> <li>▪ Capacity building and operational support for NRA Secretariat</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for justice sector reform through policy and technical engagement with judiciary, EU and SADC, including resource mobilisation</li> <li>▪ Operational support for case management and trial process, including progress towards resolution of high-profile security cases</li> <li>▪ Negotiation of a new project on conflict, prevention, party democracy and consensus building, with programme management by UNDP (technical support by UN PDA)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Output 1.2:</b> Constitution-making, electoral and parliamentary processes and institutions strengthened to promote inclusion, transparency and accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support to Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) to review its National Anti-Corruption Strategic Plan 2015–2019 and commemorate International Anti-Corruption Day</li> </ul>
<p><b>Output 1.4:</b> Capacities of CSOs, communities and institutions at national and local level strengthened for conflict prevention, peace-building and social cohesion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completion of two assessments: 1) peace, conflict and gender context; 2) intra- and inter-party democracy</li> <li>▪ Support to the Christian Council of Lesotho to enhance capacity for conflict prevention and mediation work</li> </ul>
<p>Output 1.5: Rule of law and national human rights institutions and systems have strengthened technical capacities to promote inclusion, transparency and accountability</p>	<p>Technical, legal and consultative groundwork for the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission (to be finalized once Parliament reopens)</p>

The EYES project provides support for capacity building for youth on entrepreneurship skills and is run in collaboration with the National University of Lesotho; the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Innovation; The Entrepreneurship Network; and the GEM Institute. By engaging with the project, young entrepreneurs can access business management training, supportive services and mentorship.





# PILLAR 2



**Boosting private-sector growth to create jobs is one of Lesotho's key development goals. UNDP supports this focus while ensuring that economic transformation and increased prosperity leave no one behind.**

The Strategy and Policy Unit (SPU) leads the work on UNDP's sustainable and inclusive economic growth portfolio which is aligned to UNDP's Signature Solutions 1 and 6. Our diverse portfolio of six projects supports government objectives for growth and employment creation. We target youth, women and communities with projects that aim to generate opportunities for employment and economic activities on the ground.

The main aim of our work is to help Lesotho develop a competitive business environment and create employment through private-sector development, while reducing inequalities and encouraging active participation of women and young people in the economy. A major focus is skills development for young entrepreneurs and development of inclusive growth conducting policy environment. We also build capacity for evidence-based policymaking through support for

**UNDP Signature Solution 1:** *Keeping people out of poverty.*

**UNDP Signature Solution 6:** *Strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.*

monitoring and evaluation, research and policy analysis and promote Lesotho-led innovations through our Accelerator Lab. We work with different ministries – including the Ministry of Small Business Development and the Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation – to build capacities for employment creation through sustainable and innovative business and social enterprises. We also work with the Ministry of Development Planning, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Communications and Science and Technology to ensure the requisite institutional and policy environment for inclusive economic growth.

**Table 2: Results achieved by strategy and policy unit initiatives during 2020**

CPD indicators	Selected 2020 achievements
<p><b>Output 2.1:</b> National and local level institutions have enhanced technical capacities to coordinate and facilitate effective planning, implementation, analysis and national reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals using innovative and data-driven solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy mapping and assessment of SDG integration into the National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II); completion of NSDP mid-term review</li> <li>▪ Youth-led initiatives to create a policy repository and NSDP/SDG reporting platform</li> </ul>
<p><b>Output 2.2:</b> Capacities of government institutions and private sector improved to create competitive and gender-sensitive business environment and enable effective economic participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and development of ICT policies to promote digital transformation</li> <li>▪ Technology-based solutions for local challenges developed and piloted with government: e-commerce 'Marakeng oa Basotho, e-health (Bophelo Ka Mosebeletsi), e-policing (Lehokela) through the Accelerator Labs</li> <li>▪ Database and register of micro, small and medium enterprises created for the Ministry of Small Business</li> </ul>
<p><b>Output 2.3:</b> Capacities of national public and private sector institutions strengthened to promote enterprises development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth trained on business management skills and design thinking to promote entrepreneurship; 54 jobs created by project beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Piloting of Youth Diaries for youth engagement and dialogues on business development</li> <li>▪ Broadcasting of Tsa Mahlale TV programme on local innovations</li> <li>▪ Coordination and preparedness for COVID-19 response</li> </ul>

### The Year in Review

2020 was a challenging year for the SPU's work. The annual workplan was initially delayed and then lockdown restrictions for COVID-19 created a situation where we struggled to implement any of our planned activities. Most partners were not prepared for the changes that lockdown required. Activities had been planned under the assumption that the traditional way of working – physical meetings, travel, face-to-face workshops etc – would be available. Without those options, partners did not know what to do and did not have resources to support the required changes. Altering plans took a long time.

Spending our allocated resources also became a challenge because we did not have a robust way of monitoring the success of interventions conducted on virtual platforms. However, we slowly adapted to the new conditions and found ways to use social media to move projects forward.

From a resource mobilisation perspective, the year was actually very successful. We were able to mobilise over US\$800 000 for our work on the national response to COVID-19 and, although we were still affected by the same challenges as other projects in terms of delivery during lockdowns, this funding was key to some of the year's most important successes.

## Notable Achievements

### *Youth training and mentorship*

The EYES project implemented through the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sport and Recreation (MGYSR) and through a social enterprise called The Entrepreneur Network, in collaboration with the National University of Lesotho (NUL), is a particular success story. Its aim is to create capacity for youth-led employment opportunities to help them grow sustainable businesses and establish partnerships that will help enhance youth participation in the economy. The three core partners in the project each have individual success stories. First, the MGYSR set up a training programme for youth-led businesses that has transformed mindsets among young business owners equipping them with skills for design-thinking and human-centred business that solves customer problems. Second, we piloted programmes with The Entrepreneur Network for mentorship support which mobilises youth to put them in a position to win grants and linking them with the Ministry for business opportunities and training. Finally, the NUL also played a key role in identifying and disseminating local innovations that could address emerging development challenges and benefit from potential scaleup through the TsaMahlale magazine programme broadcast on the Lesotho Television. With the NUL and Vodacom Lesotho, we also hosted an innovation hackathon, from which six groups were selected for a mentorship support under Vodacom, UNDP and NUL to finalise their solutions.

### *Youth diaries*

Another best practice we have piloted Lesotho is our “youth diaries”. We are collaborating with a media company to capture and share experiences as told by young people themselves through social media platforms. They profiled youth stories broadcast on newspaper and Facebook, allowing young people to share business experiences, successes and giving advice to peers.

### *ICT policy review*

We commissioned a policy review of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) policy to facilitate technology adoption and improve mechanisms for management and governance. This work will be completed in 2021.

## Looking Ahead to 2021

It now seems clear that online platforms will be the norm for delivering programme activities for the foreseeable future, so as 2021 starts we are focusing on how to strengthen our monitoring systems and processes so that we can be sure we are getting the results we want. We are also keen to diversify our partnerships to include more civil society organisations which can respond more flexibly to circumstances and fill gaps in situations where government struggles to respond due to resource constraints. [▶](#)

*“From a resource mobilisation perspective, the year was actually very successful”*





## CYCLING FOR SDGs

Inspired by his own childhood experience of confronting financial difficulties when his parents were unable to afford his school fees, Tshepo Nkhabu has built the organisation Hands for Life to help young people like him come together to discuss their problems and, hopefully, find solutions. The organisation has been running since 2012, but in 2020, after a chance meeting with the Resident Representative of UNDP Lesotho, they obtained funding for a cross-country bike ride with the aim of connecting with youth all over the country and promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). “The trip helped us to create partnerships and see how our brothers and sisters are living in other parts of the country”, explains Tshepo. The group is now making a movie that documents their journey and are bringing their experience to bear on other projects run out of their youth centre base in Mafeteng, where visitors come for advice and guidance from peers. “Our programmes are just what youth need. The fact that at weekends we find them coming here to spend time with us rather than going anywhere else shows that we have created something that captures their interest”, he explains. “Because we are all young, they feel free and can make mistakes here without anyone judging them.” The campaign crossed the 10 districts, motivating and engaging with community leaders, youth and school children for SDGs awareness.

# PILLAR 3



**Lesotho's arid and degraded landscapes, combined with the country's vulnerability to climate change, make sustainable land and natural resource management an urgent priority – and the key to building resilient livelihoods.**

The Energy and Environment Unit (EEU) covers a broad mandate relating to three of UNDP's signature solutions: resilience (3); environment (4); and energy (5). In these three areas, the Lesotho office manages two projects – Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) and Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change (RVCC) – and a programme disbursing small grants (SGP).

Working with the Ministry of Energy and Meteorology, the main objective of SE4ALL is to promote private-sector participation in the provision and generation of clean energy, both through extending mini-grids to rural areas and the sale of energy-efficient equipment through trading stores known as energy centres. UNDP also works with government to establish an enabling policy environment, regulatory framework and performance-based financial incentives for private-sector participation in the energy sector. These measures aim to give businesses the necessary security for their investments and collect data for informed decision-making.

The second focus area for the EEU is on scaling up sustainable

**UNDP Signature Solution 3:** *Enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies.*

**UNDP Signature Solution 4:** *Promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet.*

**UNDP Signature Solution 5:** *Close the energy gap.*

land management models in the southern parts of the country that are particularly susceptible to climate-change impacts and land degradation. This work empowers local farmers and communities to implement sustainable natural resource management practices and reduce their vulnerability and enhance household food security and incomes. The SGP compliments this project's work to support communities with funding to rehabilitate degraded land, manage conservation activities and sustainably utilise natural resources to increase resilience and diversify their livelihoods.



The core of the RVCC project is rehabilitation of degraded rangelands by training villagers to clear invasive plant species from the land surrounding their villages. This process allows the land to be reclaimed for grazing animals. The images above show land before (left) and after (right) brush clearance.

### **The Year in Review**

Despite a disappointing first half the year, results achieved since June have shown that there are opportunities to move forward with the EEU workplan, even in a crisis. The programme initially suffered during the COVID-19 lockdown period because some government partners did not have capacity to engage in virtual meetings online and meetings with local communities could take place. However, it has become a new norm to work virtually and there is growing recognition that, in the absence of face-to-face communication, interactions are still required to get things done.

We successfully supported the government to put together the regulatory framework for guiding development and implementation of mini-grids, which now need to be presented to

cabinet for approval. A capital grant agreement for these locations, targeting private sector for mini-grid construction and energy centres establishment, has also been arranged. Working with the Ministry of Forestry, Rangelands and Soil Conservation, we have been working to reduce vulnerability from climate change and mainstream climate change into national development. As part of this work, we do not pay for services but instead emphasise that the communities own the natural resources so, by protecting them, they are supporting their livelihoods. We encourage them to work for 4 hours a day, 2 days a week, on land rehabilitation activities, so that for the rest of the time they can produce food for themselves and do other income generating activities alongside.

Finally, the SGP focused on the eastern escarpment of the country. It is run differently from the other projects, which are

In the village of Ramokhongoana, the RVCC project helped villagers with to gain access to a more reliable source of water by installing a new tap in the vicinity of their homes replacing the previous water source, a small mountain spring (insert).





**Table 3: Results achieved by energy and environment initiatives during 2020**

CPD indicators	Selected 2020 achievements
<p><b>Output 3.1:</b> Capacities of key institutions and sectors at national and local levels enabled to scale-up and enforce rangeland management initiatives for sustainable natural resources management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 17 015 ha (170 km<sup>2</sup>) of land rehabilitated and put under sustainable use through voluntary engagement of local communities</li> <li>▪ Partnership with WFP for disbursement of a cash-for-work incentive to more than 2000 households</li> <li>▪ Installation of portable water systems for 24 communities; 200 water harvesting tanks provided to schools, communities and farmers.</li> <li>▪ 27 schools supported with agricultural inputs for crop production to supplement school feeding programmes, after receiving training in 2019</li> </ul>
<p><b>Output 3.2:</b> Low-emission and climate-resilient objectives addressed in national, subnational and sectoral development plans and policies to promote economic diversification and green growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Institutional capacities built for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) of interventions to manage sustainable natural resources</li> <li>-Engineering capacity to design climate-appropriate technology-based rehabilitation structures</li> <li>-GIS capacities strengthened through trainings and upgrading of equipment</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Distribution of 1000 energy efficient stoves to reduce overharvesting of biomass and reduced emissions from cooking</li> </ul>
<p><b>Output 3.3:</b> Capacities of national government and private sector strengthened to enable universal access to clean, affordable and sustainable energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enabling environment and financial incentives established to secure private sector investments in provision of clean energy to Lesotho's mountainous districts</li> <li>▪ Concession agreements signed and capital grants awarded for eight mini-grids and energy centres to extend electricity supply to off-grid communities</li> </ul>

implemented through individual ministries, because it directly deals with benefits to communities. The community can apply for a grant of up to US\$50 000 so that they can use the money for activities to conserve, sustainably manage and utilize the natural resources, such as wetlands, in the areas surrounding their homes. It has been a challenge going to the field to monitor some of the work in the context of COVID-19, but there are some good news stories about communities that have managed to successfully use these grants to diversify their livelihoods through income-generation activities such as bee keeping to produce honey and wax products to sell.

### Notable Achievements

The achievements we are most proud of for 2020 are the ways in which we adapted our planned activities to be able to better respond to vulnerabilities created by COVID-19 and the lockdown measures. Particular highlights include:

#### *Mini-grids and capital grants*

We were very pleased to finalise concession agreements and capital grant agreements under the SE4All project. The capital grant agreement was particularly tricky to organise because we were not able to give grants to private-sector organisations directly and neither government structures nor local financial



# SOLAR POWER

Mats'iliso Poki (top right), who lives in Aiskop village, recently had a solar powered light system installed in the home she shares with her husband. The company who did the installation is a group called Solar Lights (Pty) Ltd which has a shop based in Quthing (left). One 5 KW solar panel linked to the "Home 60" system inside the house is sufficient to power three lights plus power sockets. Mats'iliso says the most valuable part of the system is being able to charge her phone without asking neighbours for help.

Solar products like these are being sold and installed through UNDP-supported energy centres (right insert) throughout the country. An NGO called the Rural Self-Help Development Association (RSDA) operates the centres through a performance-based agreement linked to the number of solar products they can sell. Lintle Tsumane, an RSDA field officer who is based in Maseru but regularly does supervisory visits to the energy-centre locations in Mohale's Hoek district, explained that independent distributors arrange public gatherings, radio programmes and distribute flyers to raise awareness of the products available. There is high demand because there is no electricity in villages and people are desperate to charge their phones, according to Lintle. Although there is competition from Chinese suppliers offering products at lower prices, she believes the energy centre provides better quality.



# “Our results...show that there are opportunities to move forward, even in a crisis”

institutions were able to take on the role. Finally, UNDP entered into a partnership with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to host and manage the SE4ALL Financial Support Scheme. Now that the agreements are in place, the work can start.

## *Changing attitudes to solar*

We faced a challenge around the idea of expanding renewable energy to communities through energy centres because of negative preconceptions about solar energy resulting from past experiences with standalone household systems which proved difficult to maintain. However, encouraging private-sector organisations to engage directly with communities is intended to address that problem so that people have a specific contact point for when problems arise.

## *Cash support for livelihoods*


During the COVID-19 period, we realised there is an opportunity to adapt some of our existing plans involving provision of agricultural inputs to communities to deliver greater benefits. We decided to offer once-off cash incentives to accelerate the rehabilitation works, which has had the dual benefit of supporting the livelihoods of many people who had lost income because of COVID-19.

## *Energy efficient stoves*

Many communities rely on harvesting small shrubs for firewood for cooking, but over-harvesting of these plants leads

to degradation of the land hence reverses the process made towards land rehabilitation. We are now providing communities that are voluntarily participating in UNDP-supported land rehabilitation works with energy efficient stoves that use as little fuel as possible to limit the long-term damage to rangelands. We have also provided communities with portable water systems so that they can have access to clean water – an especially important development in the context of COVID-19.

## **Looking Ahead to 2021**

Partnerships are crucial for the implementation of our workplan. During 2020, we have established working agreements to help us manage the construction and cash-for-assets aspects of the project activities and these partnerships have brought valuable knowledge into the organisation, building our capacity as we aim to build others. We intend to take this knowledge sharing and learning process forward in 2021 to find ways of building capacity at national level for handling grants and financial incentive systems targeting private sector particularly in energy sector. The work has given us an opportunity to collaborate with other agencies such as WFP and UNCDF in a way that will make us more effective and capable for similar projects in the future. 

# ACCELERATOR LAB



This global initiative set out to reimagine development for the 21st century. But the crisis created by COVID-19 has revealed just how valuable this new approach can be for responding quickly and flexibly to development challenges.

UNDP Lesotho's Accelerator Lab is part of a global 3-year initiative launched in July 2019 at the UN General Assembly to complement traditional development approaches by helping countries find faster, localised and durable solutions to daily challenges. The aim is to build a global network that can identify, test, implement and share effective solutions to development problems. By focusing on local ingenuity, the rationale is to help communities collectively learn from each other and glean immediate, demonstrable benefits from adopting practices that have proven successful.

UNDP's role is to test identified solutions, experiment with modifications and scale them up, while mobilizing a dynamic partnership of actors to support the process. In Lesotho, the Lab was set up with the intention of contributing to the NSDP II

## UNDP Accelerator Labs Brochure

Available from:

<https://acceleratorlabs.undp.org/content/acceleratorlabs/en/home/library/undp-accelerator-labs-brochure.html>

objectives of promoting economic growth and job creation. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it created an urgent need to rethink workplans. In this context, we were able to demonstrate just how flexible and responsive the Accelerator Lab approach can be. We helped UNDP pivot its work to address urgent needs and enhance UNDP's contribution to the UN-wide effort to combat COVID-19 and achieve the SDGs.

Framing COVID-19 as a real-time development challenge, we used the AcLab protocols to pinpoint innovations. We built up

**59** Solutions identified



**05** Experiments completed



**11** Partnerships established



**04** Blogs published





Thobeka Sofonia, a nurse based at Quting health centre, says the COVID-19 case notification and monitoring processes at community level have become much quicker and easier since she has been able to use the Bophelo Ka Mosebeletsi digital app, developed by UNDP's Accelerator Lab for the Ministry of Health as part of the national COVID-19 response.



## HAND WASHING

The Accelerator Lab has helped to construct and distribute 65 hand-washing stations in high-risk areas across the country. The aim is to encourage hand hygiene and reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19, since only 18% of Basotho are estimated to be washing hands regularly using soap and water. The solution is derived from a tippy tap made of a jerry can hanging on a pole (left) and was discovered through one of the Accelerator Lab's solutions safari in the rural communities of Lesotho.

a list of these ideas in our Solutions Compendium and analysed each of them in turn. From this list, we selected a few options for experimentation and looked for partners to support their roll-out.

Our COVID-19 response solutions included: floor stickers with social distancing messaging; an online registry for informal and small businesses; handwashing stations for congested areas; an e-commerce platform for farmers and small businesses; and a COVID-19 community alerts application used by village health workers. Thanks to efficiency gains made by shortening our timelines, we were also able to roll out our community policing solution – a demonstration of how effective our remote

working processes became.

Unlike some other UNDP activities, the Accelerator Lab has not been negatively affected by COVID-19. Our timelines got faster. Experiments usually require around 100 days, which generates about four tested solutions a year. During 2020, however, we were able to speed this up by working concurrently on multiple solutions. We reprogrammed our small funding very quickly. And we were also able to demonstrate our ability to step outside of UNDP's traditional mandate. This kind of cross-agency collaboration is exactly what was envisioned when the Accelerator Lab network was established. COVID-19 made that vision a reality. [↗](#)

*“Framing COVID-19 as a real-time development challenge, we used the Accelerator Lab to pinpoint innovations”*

# COVID-19 RESPONSE



**By keeping the Sustainable Development Goals front and centre in our COVID-19 support, UNDP is helping countries prepare, respond and recover while maintaining progress towards long-standing development targets.**

Although Lesotho only confirmed its first case of COVID-19 in May 2020, a compulsory lockdown was in place between 29 March and 21 April, 2020, and then again from 6 January 2021. WHO was appointed as the health lead to the national task force on behalf of the UN Country Team; UNDP's role was to mobilise resources and support interventions to improve coordination, planning, monitoring, case management and economic recovery. Our support was divided into three parts: health-system support (direct procurements); crisis management (supporting government with equipment and remote-working inputs); and socio-economic recovery.

Our major achievements were:

- Increasing the number of ICU beds from 5 to 15, and procurement of two ambulances, ten humidifiers, six oxygen concentrators, 400 oxymeters and accessories
- Bophelo ka Mosebeletsi, an app for surveillance and monitoring of COVID-19 suspects; procurement of

## COVID-19: UNDP's Integrated Response

*Available from:* <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/covid-19-undp-s-integrated-response>

- mobile devices for village health workers to use the app; and partnering with Econet Telecom Lesotho for free data to support roll-out
- Promotion of handwashing and social distancing in most populated and high-risk areas in the country
- Airtime credits and virtual platforms to support business continuity for critical government ministries, partners and the private sector
- Extending the SGP to target small scale producers, MSMEs, private sector and community networks
- Mobilizing around US\$3 million, including US\$500 000 from the UNDP Rapid Response Facility and reprogramming US\$400 000 from core resources. [↗](#)



Malebohang Nthunga is a village health worker who says her work has been made much easier since the COVID-19 reporting app, developed by UNDP, has been available. She used to aggregate paper-based reports on suspected cases by hand every month but now the process is automated, saving her a lot of time and effort.



# COVID-19 | RESPONSE

Coronavirus



## Building resilient health systems (including health procurement, training etc)

- Procurement of: life-support equipment for intensive care; personal protective equipment for staff; an ambulance
- Social cohesion and community mobilisation activities
- Support for healthy waste management

## Promoting inclusive and integrated crisis management and multi-sectoral responses

- Social distancing messages on floor stickers in local supermarkets
- Handwashing stations
- Bophelo Ka Mosebeletsi app – a mobile technology-based disease alert system
- Procurement of 1000 mobile devices for village health workers

## Addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19

- “The Mall” app to promote localized virtual markets for buyers and sellers
- Database for registration of informal businesses
- Small grants for community-based solutions (sanitizers, pharmacy, social cohesion, PPE production)
- Socio-economic assessments on various impacts of COVID-19 on: gender; small and informal businesses; unemployment; and disadvantaged groups and emerging inequalities

## Critical enablers for effective response and business continuity

- Business continuity and coordination support and facilitation to Ministry of Development Planning; Bureau of Statistics; National Assembly; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation

# THE WAY FORWARD



**2020 – and the unavoidable impact of COVID-19 – has been a lesson in innovation for development to help us build forward better. Challenges remain, but the knowledge gained will positively impact our future work programme.**


The pandemic brought important momentum into our work that we do not want to lose. We were able to work quicker, more effectively with less of the things we normally rely on to move our workplans forward. So, one of our first tasks for 2021 is to institutionalise these new ways of working – those that have enhanced our efficiency and productivity – and support our partners to do the same.

Based on our work to assess the socio-economic impact of the pandemic in Lesotho, we are supporting the development of the recovery plan and assessment of financing gaps. We are working with government to ensure that, while the pandemic response is ongoing, coordination and planning mechanisms are in place to align interventions to national development priorities and the SDGs. Importantly, we are also continuing our support for the implementation of the broad national reforms agenda, which is the essential foundation on which all future progress will be built.

## UNDP Strategic Plan 2018–2021

*Available from: <http://strategicplan.undp.org/>*

Taken together, the lessons we have learnt during 2020, which go far beyond pivoting our work for the immediate crisis response, have brought us closer to realising the goals of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018–2021. We have successfully strengthened UNDP's relevance as a trusted partner in a complex and evolving development landscape, while maintaining our strong commitment to eradicating poverty; we have become more nimble, innovative and enterprising; – a thought leader that succeeds in taking and managing risks; and we have become more effective and efficient in utilizing resources to deliver results.

With these transformational achievements, we are hopeful about the future development dividends that will help us deliver more, better, to all Basotho in the post-COVID period. 

# LESSONS LEARNT DURING 2020

01

## Valuable opportunities come from shaking up the development approach

International development partners have a standard way of working that has become entrenched over decades. We usually take a long view of challenges and interventions, use international comparisons to advise countries, and prioritize macro-level interventions to boost prosperity and tackle persistent poverty. But COVID-19 has challenged us to integrate crisis response with long-term goals. And we found that by focusing on how to solve immediate pandemic-relevant problems – such as lack of access to soap and water, sudden surges in unemployment, and communication during lockdown restrictions – we could make fast, robust progress built on home-grown innovations that had both short and long-term benefits.

02

## Resilience is not just about communities it is about business too

Building resilience is one of UNDP's Signature Solutions. It is a transformative process of strengthening capacity to respond to and recover from crises. We used several approaches to support Basotho during 2020, including dissemination of weather warnings to safeguard food security, and supply of water tanks to schools and households. But the real innovation was using the Accelerator Lab links to mitigate the impact of suspension of private-sector activities during lockdown which affected 60% of the labour force. We supported the development of an e-commerce platform to link small producers and suppliers with customers, and a Government-housed register for informal businesses to enable them to access relief funds.

03

## The Accelerator Lab approach has proved its value

COVID-19 created the right conditions to showcase just how flexible and responsive our global Accelerator Lab initiative can be. We successfully used digital technology to develop e-health and e-commerce solutions. Adapting a local solution, we designed and supported construction of handwashing stations in busy areas. In collaboration with government and UN agencies, we developed social distancing floor stickers. And by forging strong relationships with academia, civil society and private-sector partners to scale up these innovations, we were able to demonstrate our ability to bring people together and enhance our impact, even during lockdown. We will make it a priority to build on these new partnerships to ensure a robust recovery for Basotho post-COVID-19.

04

## Digital solutions still meet real-world challenges

As lockdown restrictions confined most people to their homes in Lesotho, many government services were suspended. Since our work plans depend on our partners, we had to find ways to get things moving. We purchased airtime and data for partners to use to attend meetings, workshops and communicate with stakeholders. We procured tablets for village health workers to enable them to use an app we designed. And by solving these bottlenecks, we found that even though only 28% of Basotho have access to internet services, digital platforms can still be effective in ensuring continuity of critical services, as long as logistical issues, such as access to airtime and data, are part of the solution.

05

## Delivering as one and working out loud

We are proud of the collaboration between partners during 2020, and, in particular, our joint response to COVID-19 and resources allocation. The Ministry of Health established a platform for development partners to share information which reduced waste and duplication of support. UNDP collaborated with the UN agencies, World Bank, IMF and the African Development Bank to develop a socio-economic impact assessment, and with UNFPA, WHO, UNAIDS for the UN joint project mobilizing an all-stakeholder approach. Collaborating with WHO for the scale up of our COVID-19 alert app eased implementation and further built confidence among village health workers. We observed that Working Out Loud through close partnerships has brought new and innovative opportunities for further collaborations that deliver better value to Basotho.

As part of the package of support given to communities who participate in the RVCC project, UNDP has supplied starter kits and beehives to villagers along with training on how to produce honey and wax, which can be sold to generate valuable income.



**Table 4:** Alignment of UNDP Lesotho's country programme goals and performance indicators with national priorities

National Priority or Goal	Undaf Outcome Involving UNDP	Related Strategic Plan Outcome	CPD Indicators
Strengthening governance and accountability systems	#1: By 2023, government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law, and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making processes in a peaceful environment	Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development	1.1 Capacity to undertake participatory 1.2. Constitution institutional accountability 1.3. Civil society advocacy, 1.4. Capacity local level social cohesion 1.5. Rule of have strengthened transparency
Enhancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector-led job creation	#3.1: Outcome 3.1: By 2023, government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security, and decent work, especially for women, youth and persons with disabilities	Outcome 1: Advance poverty reduction in all its forms and dimensions	
	#3.2: By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient	Strengthening resilience and shocks to crises	3.1. Capacity levels enabled initiatives

# ationally agreed development targets

## ators

ities of government and national stakeholders strengthened  
ke and sustain gender-responsive, inclusive and  
ory institutional and governance reforms processes  
tution-making, electoral and parliamentary processes and  
s strengthened to promote inclusion, transparency and  
ility  
ociety and citizen have strengthened technical capacities for  
public participation, oversight and social accountability  
ities of CSOs, communities and institutions at national and  
strengthened for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and  
esion  
f law and national human rights institutions and systems  
ngthened technical capacities to promote inclusion,  
ncy and accountability

## Sustainable Development Goals



ities of key institutions and sectors at national and local  
oled to scale-up and enforce rangeland management  
for sustainable natural resources management



