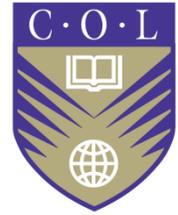


Gender Profile: Lesotho



General

Total male population under 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 321,017
Total female population under 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 318,265

Total male population over 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 637,600
Total female population over 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 665,126

Health

Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 births (2010) (CIA, 2015): 9
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 births (2014) (CIA, 2015): 35.37

Under-five mortality rate for males per 1,000 births (2012) (United Nations Gender Statistics, 2015): 106.5

Under-five mortality rate for females per 1,000 births (2012) (United Nations Gender Statistics, 2015): 92.4

Births attended by a skilled health professional (2009) (WHO, 2014b): 61.5%

Prevalence of HIV among males aged 15–49 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 18.7%
Prevalence of HIV among females aged 15–49 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 27.9%

Life expectancy for men (2012) (WHO, 2014a): 49
Life expectancy for women (2012) (WHO, 2014a): 52

Education

Male youth literacy rate, ages 15–24 (2009) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 74.19%
Female youth literacy rate, ages 15–24 (2009) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 92.09%

Male adult literacy rate, ages 15+ (2009) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 65.52%
Female adult literacy rate, ages 15+ (2009) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 84.96%

Male adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education: NA
Female adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education: NA

Male gross enrolment ratio in secondary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 44.52%
Female gross enrolment ratio in secondary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 62.26%

Male gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 8.65%
Female gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 13.07%

Graduates from tertiary education who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 61.4%

Students in engineering, construction and manufacturing tertiary education programs who are female (2005) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 36.5%

Teachers in primary education who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 76.6%

Teachers in secondary education who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 55.7%

Teachers in tertiary education who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 48.7%

Economic Activity

Males over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 64%

Females over 15 who are active in the labour force United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 68%

Men who have an account in a formal financial institution (World Economic Forum, 2013): 20%

Women who have an account in a formal financial institution (World Economic Forum, 2013): 17%

Decision-Making

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (World Bank, 2014): 27%

Human Rights

Girls married before 15 (2013) (Girls Not Brides, 2015): 2%

Females married between 15 and 19 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 18%

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime: NA

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner or a non-partner during their lifetime: NA

* * *

Gender Gaps

Health

- The Canadian non-profit organisation Help Lesotho indicates that “[o]ver half of the 260,000 adults living with HIV in Lesotho are women”; more than 23% of the country’s population is living with HIV (Help Lesotho, 2014).
- Abortion is only legal if it is medically prescribed to save a pregnant woman’s life. However, there is evidence to suggest that clandestine abortions are common. One Lesotho hospital reported in 1994 that 54.6% of cases involving women 24 years and younger admitted to the gynaecology unit were caused by unsafe abortions (Oyebola & Pengpid, 2010). The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare reported in 1997 that 16.8% of deaths among girls aged 14 were caused by unsafe abortions (United Nations System in Lesotho, 2005, p. 56). Unfortunately, more recent data are not available.

Education

- Although girls’ enrolment rates in primary and secondary school are higher than boys’ (for 2009: 75% versus 71% primary; 36% versus 22% secondary), they are still low; UNESCO indicates that “drop-out rates of girls remain very high. This can be attributed to social, economic, and cultural factors, such as poverty, distance from school the impact of HIV and AIDS, and teenage pregnancies” (UNESCO, 2012).
- Approximately a quarter of Lesotho’s population works in South Africa (IOM, n.d., p. 1); boys from Lesotho often go to work as herders or in South African mines, thereby missing out on educational opportunities, which they may view as providing no money and unnecessary for their future. Notably, since the government introduced free education in 2010, the gap between boys and girls at the primary level has narrowed.
- A report published in the late 2000s by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) noted that although migrant labour from Lesotho has been traditionally male, “[f]emale labour migration has been on the rise in recent years with increasing numbers of women participating in both internal and cross border migration. Internal female migrants who are often very young (15–29) migrate from the rural areas towards the cities and industrial zones in the country in search of employment” (IOM, n.d., p. 1–2). Such migration inevitably has a negative impact on the girls’ and women’s opportunities for education.

Economic

- According to a 2008 report by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, “More than half of all households in Lesotho are headed by women. While education has benefited many women, there are large numbers of poor women, particularly in rural areas, who remain disadvantaged. Households headed by single mothers or women who are divorced, widowed or abandoned by their husbands are among the households with the highest incidence of poverty. Women who are heads of poor households are likely to have lost the assets they once possessed and are less likely to own agricultural assets such as livestock. They have difficulty securing the cash they need to feed and provide for their families” (IFAD, 2008, p. 2).

- The African Development Bank in a recent report (2013) stated: “Although there has been an increase in the proportion of economically active women, their earned income is much less than that of men, and they continue to have low access to property ownership, financial credit and political power” (p. 9)

Decision-Making

- In 2014, Lesotho’s highest court ruled that chiefs’ daughters could not themselves become chiefs.
- A 2013 report by the African Development Bank noted that “discriminatory institutions and structures, coupled with ideology and social norms, continue to limit women’s progress in the country. Participation and representation of women remain low in the political and economic spheres despite the gains they have made in education” (ADB, 2013, p. 9).
- From 2005 to 2011, Lesotho instituted a quota system to increase female representation in the various levels of government; however, due to public backlash, the system was discontinued (Tang, 2014).

Human Rights

- A 2014 report released by the NGO Gender Links revealed that 62% of women in Lesotho had experienced intimate partner violence over their lifetime and 86% had experienced gender-based violence. The same study revealed that 8% of women had experienced rape, while 16% of men admitted to committing rape (Gender Links, 2014, p. 8).
- The same report indicated that 68% of physically abused women spent days in bed due to their injuries, and 24% had to miss work due to injuries (p. 12).
- Amongst women in this study who had been abused by intimate partners, 7% had attempted suicide. Of women who had been raped by non-partners, 12% had attempted suicide (Gender Links, 2014, p. 12).

* * *

References

African Development Bank. (2013). *Kingdom of Lesotho country strategy paper 2013–2017*. Retrieved from <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/2013-2017%20-%20Lesotho%20-%20Country%20Strategy%20Paper.pdf>

CIA. (2015). *The world factbook: Country profiles*. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>

Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy. (2008). *Lesotho women’s representation quotas*. Retrieved from <http://www.content.eisa.org.za/old-page/lesotho-womens-representation-quotas>

Gender Links. (2014). *The gender-based violence indicators study Lesotho*. Retrieved from <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/gender-based-violence-indicators-study-lesotho-2015-02-27>

- Gender Links for Equality and Justice. (2010). *Violence against women baseline research*. Retrieved from <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page/gender-justice-measuring-gbv>
- Girls Not Brides. (2015). *Child marriage around the world*. Retrieved from <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/where-does-it-happen>
- Help Lesotho. (2014). *HIV/AIDS in Lesotho*. Retrieved from <http://www.helplesotho.org/lesotho/hivaids-in-lesotho/>
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). (2008, May). *Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty in Lesotho*. Retrieved from <http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/Pf/factsheets/lesotho.pdf>
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). (n.d.). *Briefing note on HIV and labour migration in Lesotho*. Retrieved from http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/events/docs/Briefing_Notes_HIV_Lesotho.pdf
- Make Every Woman Count. (2010). *Lesotho*. Retrieved from http://www.makeeverywomancount.org/index.php?option=com_fjrelated&view=fjrelated&id=87&Itemid=107
- Oyebola, O., & Pengpid, S. (2010). Knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning following termination of pregnancy among Basotho women at Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Maseru, Lesotho. *Gender and Behaviour*, 8(1). doi:10.4314/gab.v8i1.54702
- Rural Poverty Portal. (2009). *Rural poverty in Lesotho*. Retrieved from <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/home/tags/lesotho>
- Tang, B. H. (2014, May). *Gender, policy-making, and politics: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in Lesotho*. BA Honours dissertation, Stanford University, Stanford, CA. Retrieved from [http://iis-db.stanford.edu/docs/870/BT_Thesis_MAY_2nd_\(FINAL_DRAFT\).pdf](http://iis-db.stanford.edu/docs/870/BT_Thesis_MAY_2nd_(FINAL_DRAFT).pdf)
- UNESCO. 2012. *Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education – One Year On: Lesotho*. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/eri/cp/factsheets_ed/LS_EDFactSheet.pdf
- UNESCO Institute of Statistics. (2015). *Education*. Retrieved from <http://data.uis.unesco.org>
- United Nations Gender Statistics. (2014). *Countries A–Z*. Retrieved from <http://genderstats.org/Browse-by-Countries>
- United Nations Statistical Commission. (2010). *Labor force participation, unemployment and economic sector of employment*. Retrieved from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/Annex%20tables%20by%20chapter%20-%20pdf/Table4Ato4D.pdf>

United Nations System in Lesotho. (2005, February). *Common country assessment of Lesotho: 2004 report*. Retrieved from http://www.undp.org/content/dam/lesotho/docs/Reports/UNDP_LS_CCA_2005.pdf

Wines, M. (2004, July 20). Women in Lesotho become easy prey for H.I.V. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/20/world/women-in-lesotho-become-easy-prey-for-hiv.html>

World Bank. (2014). *Proportion of women holding seats in national parliament*. Retrieved from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>

World Economic Forum. (2013). *The global gender gap report 2013*. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf

World Health Organization. (2014a). *Life expectancy: Data by country*. Retrieved from <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.3?lang=en>

World Health Organization. (2014b). *Women: Data by country*. Retrieved from <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main.1630>