

The Impact of Free Primary Education on Access and Quality of Primary Education in Lesotho

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ABSTRACT Although the Government of Lesotho progressively introduced Free Primary Education in 2000, many children still do not attend school. By reviewing literature, this conceptual article identifies the following factors that hamper access, quality and completion of primary education: grinding poverty facing many families especially in the rural areas, and the herd boy phenomenon, where young boys of school-going age look after livestock or engage in other forms of child labour. The anti-school practices such as the initiation school, a rite of passage for boys, also reduce their participation since it clashes with the school calendar year and school ethos. Some school factors such as ineffective teaching, a critical shortage of physical facilities and resources, especially in the rural schools where most teachers are unqualified, also discourage some children from attending school, and many parents from sending their children to school. To increase access this article recommends collaboration between different multi-level stakeholders.