

Infusion of Science & Technology from Ground up: A Decade's Experience Accumulated in Lesotho (1996-2006)

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SCOPE OF PRESENTATION

- Targeted results
- Problems at ATS
- Questions raised with interest groups
- Problems identified
- Realisation of the solutions
- Communication channels
- Specific success indicators
- Lessons learnt in Lesotho
- Recommendations

TARGETED RESULTS

- Inform, educate & entertain public on importance of Science & Technology
- Involve public & get its feedback and expectations in undertakings
- Create common understanding, appreciation & vision
- Get feedback, monitor & evaluate undertakings
- Influence & get support from public, government, private sector, etc
- Foster networks & partnerships

PROBLEMS AT ATS

- Professionals engaged & support given was limited
- Understanding & appreciation of ATS mandate was limited
- Lack of experience on S&T issues
- Service delivery was not diversified

QUESTIONS RAISED WITH INTEREST GROUPS

- How many times was media used to publicize S&T news?
- What were latest inventions?
- How much funding was devoted for Research & Development (R&D)?
- How many people were engaged in R&D projects?
- What was the basis for awarding bursaries?
- What training programmes were implemented?
- How was the number of students to be trained/ field determined?
- What was the criteria used in determining intake of students?

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

- No mention of science communication
- Lack of awareness on importance of S&T
- Public viewed S&T as a foreign issue
- S&T issues not covered by media in general
- Limited experience at organizational and national levels
- Improperly structured institutions and absent or non-functional national policies

REALISATION OF THE SOLUTION

- It was realized that substantive change and success could be achieved provided leadership and the general public was curious and made aware of the situation.
- We acted in line with three appropriate Sesotho proverbs: “Ho shoa hoa noha ke ho tsamaea e le ‘ngoe” (Loneliness of a snake is the cause for its death), “Letsoele le beta poho” (Partnership is power), “Kopano ke matla” (Unity is strength).

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- Radio and television programmes
- News bulletin
- Mobile outreach programmes
- Face to face interaction with public
- Exhibitions and awards
- Site tours
- Print media
- Special and traumatic events
- Famo lyrics and poems

SPECIFIC SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Targeted results achieved
- Identified problems solved
- Coverage of S&T issues by TV, radio and newspapers
- Established partnerships at local, regional and international levels
- Increased inventions per year
- Adopted S&T policy
- Introduction of technology driven Poverty Reduction Programme at Cabinet Office of GOL
- Higher demand of services offered by ATS
- Embracement of technology in the national vision 2020
- Composed famo song: “Technology Governs the World”

LESSONS LEARNT IN LESOTHO

- Science communication requires teamwork
- Simplicity and association of S&T with day to day usage is important
- Mobile outreach programme – most effective way of communicating
- Communication of local success stories accelerates understanding
- Collaboration with reputable media personnel is effective

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SDC

- Explore least cost communication options
- Communication may differ from country to country – Situation and Economic Setting
- Explore Lesotho's case: Establish partnership – Empower and facilitate media participation
- Stay tuned – be a good listener and persuasive communicator
- Formulate shared programme with SAASTA
- Access and involve RSA Media Power Houses
- Provide current affairs news wherever you are

Thank you

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