

Basotho Educational Trust



Newsletter 2023

Khotso!

We would like to thank you for your continuing support. The trust has been operating for over 40 years and supported c1000 students.

The skills need in Lesotho continues. Global issues and political unrest are depressing the economy. We therefore wish to support more students and create a Tools Fund to help students like Lineo, profiled later.

The cost of living crisis is making it tough back home. But could you still help us do that little bit more? Perhaps update a standing order to take account of inflation or switch from one off donations to a standing order, giving us greater certainty of income?

We're proud of our supporters and hope you're proud to support us. Please tell your family, friends and church about us and encourage them to help more Basotho help themselves.

With many thanks and blessings for 2024

Philippa Bird

Philippa Bird TSSF
Chair of UK Trustees

The bigger picture in Lesotho that shapes our work

Lesotho gained independence from Britain in October 1966 and became a Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy. From 1970 to 1986 there was undemocratic rule followed by military rule from 1986 to 1993, both accompanied by politicisation of the civil service and security agencies. This provided a turbulent backdrop to the work of the BET. An Interim Political Authority (IPA) in 1998 devised a proportional electoral system to help stabilise the politics. However, there were fractious coalitions, many with vested interests. An Omnibus Bill

was introduced in 2019 with the intention of depoliticising the military, police, wider bureaucracy and to stabilise Parliament. The Bill failed to pass before the October 2022 elections. On the ground, the urgency of the reform process is evident. People want functioning government, the rooting out of corruption and stability that enables them to plan and invest. This would also benefit the work of BET. Lesotho has a very active and free press and political engagement is high but the failure to advance the Omnibus Bill undermines faith in the democratic system, hence a poor turnout in recent local elections.

Education has always been important to Basotho and schools have, even in times of turmoil, had their function relatively protected. Our expectation as far as education policy and strategy is that there will be continuity even if there were to be a change of government. Stakeholders like the BET play an important role in ensuring stability, plugging skills and material shortfalls and supporting what are often lonely but determined and dedicated educators. The potential of vocational training in alleviating poverty and improving youth employment in a country such as Lesotho cannot be overstated. As ever, the role of our supporters is vital.



Lesotho Parliament in Maseru

Meet the Students

Libuseng is studying Fashion Design at Makhhaliso Dress-making School. She chose the course so that she could make her own clothes, but also to help others by making school uniforms for those who need help. The best part of the course for Libuseng is to choose what she makes; the worst part is the unreliability of the sewing machines.

When she finishes her course, Libuseng plans to work in a factory until she has earned enough to start her own business, perhaps even starting a sewing school. The hardest part of starting a new business is the setup cost. A new electric sewing machine costs between £125 and £150.

Libuseng is very grateful for the BET scholarship, for without it, she would likely be a house-help for different families, but this has helped her achieve her dream.



Libuseng Khoaele



Nkejane Kobeli

Nkejane is studying Electrical & Solar Installation. He chose the course because he could see that there are plenty of job opportunities in that sector. On the downside, he recognises that it is one of the most dangerous professions, especially when installing high poles.

When he has completed his studies, Nkejane hopes to set up his own business and provide job opportunities for other people, but without the BET scholarship he would not have been able to afford his studies.

In his spare time, he likes to play football, but also supports Chelsea!

Lineo is studying *Fashion Design* at Makhhaliso Dress-making School. Lineo found out about BET scholarships through a chance conversation between her step-mother and the Principal of the college, and without she would have had to stay at home. Like Libuseng, she is aware that many others in her village would benefit from receiving a scholarship.

When she completes her studies, Lineo hopes to start her own business and make a living. The hardest bit about starting a business are the start up costs of buying a sewing machines, materials and finding somewhere to work.



Lineo Selibo

New College

Mohatlane Community Education Centre (MCEC), near TY. MCEC offers a slightly different form of vocational education. It is officially a 'Skills Training Centre'. It was founded as part of development of the Parish in the 1990's by Durham Link. During the first year of BET sponsorship we are supporting 10 qualifying students. The courses are run for 12 continuous months beginning in August. A few points about MCEC:

- The Skill Centre is located in a very rural area and draws most of the students from this area and the Mountains.
- The subjects covered are: Bricklaying/Construction; Carpentry; Metalwork/welding; and Home Economics.
- The buildings were funded by the Durham Link a number of years ago.
- Students sometimes have not completed secondary school (all other vocational schools require this). The emphasis is on practical skills.
- The school takes on projects which they produce as part of the training and then gain a small income.
- The last two months of the training are spent in placements. Many of these lead to employment and others become self-employed.
- They have a caged garden and produce and preserve produce (with two men in the Home Economics section).

- A main concern is that many drop out because of fees. Chiefs are contacted to confirm vulnerability of individuals and the awarding of sponsorship is based on this assessment of need.
- BET is very excited about this new venture and we look forward to hearing how the sponsored students have done next July.



Help a Basotho student complete their course

The average cost of an individual student's fees is £350 a year.

With a regular donation, you can help ensure stability in these young peoples' lives and make it easier for them to plan for the future. You can also contribute to our Tools Fund which provides practical items for students at the beginning of their course.

You can give in various ways:

Credit Card

You can make a donation using the credit card facility on our website: basothoeducationaltrust.org.

Bank Transfer

Alternatively, you can pay by bank transfer, which will save us credit card fees:

Account Name: **Basotho Educational Trust**
 Account Number: **28746783**
 Sort Code: **60-10-07**

Cheque

Make cheques payable to **Basotho Educational Trust** and post to *42 Ridley Avenue, London, W13 9XW*.

Standing Order

You can make a regular donation by setting up a Standing Order, using the Bank details shown above.

Alternatively, you can download a *Banker's Order Form* and *Donation Form* from our website and then post it to *42 Ridley Avenue, London, W13 9XW*.

Gift Aid

Don't forget to Gift Aid your donation. You can download a *Gift Aid Form* from our website.

I am a UK tax payer and want BET to claim the tax on my gift. My tax bill this year will be more than this gift.

giftaid it

GDPR

I do not wish to receive communications from BET.

UK Trustees

Ms Philippa Bird TSSF
 Dr Rebecca Chandler-Wilde
 Ms Sue Claydon
 Ms Kekeletso Mokete
 Sr Monica CHN
 Mr Graeme Shaw

Contact

42 Ridley Avenue, London, W13 9XW

BasothoEducationalTrust@gmail.com

BasothoEducationalTrust.org

www.facebook.com/BETstudents

Basotho Educational Trust is a Registered Charity No. 285541