

## Service Delivery, a challenge for Local government- The Case of Two Community Councils in Lesotho

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### Abstract

*After the 2005 elections of local government in Lesotho there was hope that local government system will function in a better way than the previous trails that had failed. This article seeks to assess the decentralization process under taken in the Kingdom of Lesotho after the 2005 local government elections, whether this process has any influence in the delivery of good services to the citizens. Challenges such as; the actual human resources based on its numbers, skills and knowledge were explored, whether there is an effort to strengthen the capacity of councilors to enable them to implement the functions of the authority properly. The two community councils were taken as case studies on their operations namely: Manonyane Community Council and Mohlakeng Community Council in Maseru district. The two Community Councils' secretaries and two planners were interviewed. I argue that the councils in Lesotho do not have capacity to handle development in their jurisdictions. The councilors will also be taken as a focus group to provide information. The findings revealed that there is little autonomy at the council's level for decision-making, raising funds and independence. Devolvement of powers has not yet taken place. They lack capacity in terms of human resources and funding, and accountability is not clear. This article concludes with the reiteration that decentralization is still has a long way to go and recommends that there is need to strengthen decentralized institutions for effective service delivery. Some specific recommendations are elaborated at the end.*

**Keywords:** Decentralization, Local government, Accountability, Service Delivery, Capacity, Devolution

### Introduction

When Lesotho returned to civilian rule in 1993 Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) won the elections. During its political campaigns BCP has convinced the nation that after the military rule of about seven years, the civilian rule will provide an opportunity to the nation to participate in the operations of government through local government system. BCP manifesto of 1993 had elaborated that BCP government shall (i) ensure the establishment of councils at district levels, constituency and village levels (ii) facilitate a democratic relationship between the central and local government (Kapa; 2005:10). The BCP government then established the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship in 1994 with the purpose of driving the process of decentralization in the country. This Ministry had a task to carry out the constitutional mandate from both section 20 and 106 of the constitution, which explains that citizens have the right to participate in government and that the parliament has to establish local authorities to enable communities to determine their affairs and develop themselves. The main thrust of Lesotho decentralization was to promote the socio-economic welfare of all citizens targeting two crucial pillars of service delivery and good governance namely; these are the improved services delivery and promotion of popular participation (Ministry of Local Government 2003:2). Through the white paper the citizens were consulted on decentralization process and the drafting of the bill that led to law making for local government. The BCP government

was rhetorically intent on establishing this system for it passed the Local Government Act No.6 of 1997 (Kapa: 2005:10).

Unfortunately, there was a change of government in 1997, though the country did not go for elections but the leader of BCP and some other thirty nine (39) members of parliament defeated to Lesotho Congress of Democracy (LCD) from Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), this means they formed a new political party, and because they formed majority in parliament they became the new government under LCD. Local Government Amendment Act 2000 was passed which led to the local government elections on the 30th April 2005. The Amendment Act did not change the structure and composition of the councils. At the end of the elections there were 139 councils made up of the following: 128 Community Councils, ten District Councils and one Municipal Council throughout the country. Following the second local government elections which were held in 2011 the number of councils was reduced to eighty-six. Ten District Councils, one Municipal Council, eleven Urban Councils and sixty-four Community councils (National Decentralisation Policy, 2014:3).

### **Methodology**

The researcher took two councils as case studies to demonstrate how service delivery is limited and has challenges. These two councils provided sufficient and clear problem under study, since all community councils are similar in Lesotho in terms of the structure, personnel and mandate.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the two councils' secretaries because they attend all councils' meetings and write minutes of the council, they are up-to-date with planning and implementation of policies within the councils. They normally get feedback from the communities who are at the receiving end of the services. The physical planners in the council were also interviewed because of the role they play in the council. But the planner of the other Council was not available then the administrative officer took her position.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with the councilors. The discussion here was intended to verify and strengthen the responses from the council secretaries and planners. They discussed mostly the problems brought about the decentralization process which does not commensurate with adequate resources. Councilors make plans and policies in the council and also oversee the implementation of these plans.

The researcher is quite aware that the results of these cases may not necessarily be representative of the whole country. However, since the problems of decentralization are the same throughout the country, some important parallels may be drawn from these cases and important lessons learned.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study intends to evaluate the extent to which the council delivery services to the communities. It will be shown that the councils still need a lot to be done in order to be fully functional. The challenges will be discussed such as lack of capacity, finances and the conditions within which the council operates. I argue that with the limited human resources and poor office conditions in which these councils are operating, they are not in the position to deliver proper services to the citizens. The assessment of the strength of councils to provide equitable access to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner will be explored. The study will be significant to the policy makers to speed up the process of decentralization together with all the resources that are needed.

## **Data Analysis**

The researcher packaged the factors that impede the councils to provide good services to their communities into the structure and human resources, Infrastructure, lack of political will, lack of capacity and insufficient funds. The study was also analyzed using qualitative approach which described major issues on the research undertaken, the contexts have been explained and the findings rely on words to encode the meaning of data collected.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Decentralisation can eliminate an enormous amount of the bureaucratic red-tape associated with centralized planning (Kotze, D. 1997). Lesotho government was introducing local government to enhance Vision 2020 which sees local government as a system that will enable the government to deepen democracy and improving service delivery. Decentralisation is seen as an integral part of democratization and public service reform programme, which enables citizens to participate in decision-making, becoming more responsible raising revenues for the authorities and to be accountable for their actions. According to Shale (2004) decentralization is the distribution of powers horizontally not hierarchically in order to gain more effective achievement of locally selected goals. In Lesotho decentralization was considered to be the main mechanism to promote good governance, enhance local development and services closer to the citizens (National Decentralisation Policy: 2014).

Political decentralization or devolution is characterized by local government which is given autonomy and independence over central government, it is legally recognized, provided with geographical boundaries over which they exercise authority. Decentralisation in Lesotho is a key strategy for addressing poverty and its one of the three pillars of the Public Sector Reforms Programme (PSIRP). Although Local Government Act was enacted in 1997, the process only began in 2005 with elections and subsequent creation of local councils (<http://www.gopa.de/en/projects>, accessed in December 2019).

Devolution refers to the transference of decision-making power to a subordinate authority operating within its own area of jurisdiction, such as a local government institution, which is politically responsible to the local population for its decisions (Kotze, 1997:26). It is characterized by having autonomy and independence, powers to raise sufficient funds to perform its functions and legally recognized geographical boundaries over which they perform public functions. Lesotho is taking the route of devolution which is political decentralization where councils have powers to make decisions, the government will devolve functions, responsibilities and resources relating to service to local government to the fullest extent possible (National Decentralization Policy, 2014).

Local government is part of government which is concerned with the well-being of the communities (Ismail et al, 1997). The objective of local government is to meet and satisfy the communities' needs by providing a wide range of basic services. It is government closer to the people and it brings closer efficiency and effective service delivery to the citizens. According to Gildenhuis (2011:8) local government has to create circumstances within its legal jurisdiction for the attainment of a satisfactory quality life for each of its citizens. It is beneficial to the grassroots people because it provides them with opportunities to exercise genuine power over development projects within their locality. As such people have sense of ownership on developmental projects. Local government plays an important role by giving communities a better understanding of institutions and way they are expected to function in a democratic environment. In local government communities have to elect

their leaders who have the felt needs and will be sympathetic to them. Shale (2004) opines that, local authorities need to have the requisite political, administrative, financial and development capacity in order to carry out their mandate.

Service delivery is the key task of government. There will be citizen satisfaction when goods and services are provided to the people as well as trust of the government. Services create value and provide benefits for customers as specified times and places, as a result of bringing a desired change in or on behalf of the beneficiary of the service (Lovelock and Wright: 2002). According to Eigeman (2007:1) Government is a supplier of key public services such as education, social security, legal protection as well as housing. Citizens will be satisfied when the goods and services are properly delivered to them. Since local government is an integral aspect of the total political and administrative apparatus through which a country is government and because it is close to the people hence why the central government can use it as an instrument for service delivery to the grassroots.

Local government has a series of services to provide to the citizen within its jurisdiction. This could be protective services such as the police to enforce the laws within their areas, civil protection, traffic control and roads law enforcement. Also, firefighting services should also be available for assisting in cases of fire. Local councils have powers to enforce regulations regarding the production and sell of food and drugs, which means they are providing consumer protection within their areas as well. They also provide social welfare services to people of ages and conditions especially for vulnerable groups in the society. Local government has to provide housing, building permits and services for leisure time like museums, art galleries parks. Services is not isolated something, but it is part of a complex relation between the government and the citizens (Eigeman, 2007:1).

### **The Structure of Local Government in Lesotho**

There are four levels of decentralized political structures in Lesotho which are summarized as follow:

- District council that constituted by councilors directly elected through electoral colleges. The council comprises members of Community and Urban Councils within the district. It has District Council Secretary who acts as the Head of the council secretariat.
- Municipal constituted by councilors representing wards within an urban area catogorised as Municipalities. Presently, the city of Maseru is the only urban area with the Municipal status.
- Urban councils are designated urban areas of Botha-Bothe, Leribe (Hlotse), Berea, Mafeteng, Mohales'Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, Thaba Tseka, Mokhotlong, Maputsoe and Semonkong.
- Community Councils are the lowest formal government structures in the hierarchy of government. They are constituted by councilors elected and two chief representing chiefs with the area (National Decentralisation Policy, 2014:3). The research is concentrating on these Community councils.

### **Functions of Community Councils**

According to Local Government Act 1997 the following are the functions to be undertaken by the community councils throughout the country.

- i) Control of Natural resources (e.g. sand and stone) and environmental protection e.g. dongas and pollution
- ii) Land/site allocation
- iii) Minor roads (also bridle-paths)

- iv) Grazing control
- v) Water supply in villages (maintenance)
- vi) Markets (provision and regulation)
- vii) Burial grounds

By 2015 central government transferred certain functions from some Ministries such as Ministry of Health where they had to relinquish, health education and promotion, adolescent health and other public health issues to the local councils. Ministry of Social Development should transfer social assistance services and community-based care services. Ministry of Forestry also had to transfer forestry development and outreach, land management and water conservation and management of rangeland Resources. Ministry of Energy had to take out for councils the inspection of petroleum products registration of electricity schemes, and Ministry of Local government had to hand over land tenure issues, physical planning, land use planning and land surveying (Local Government Transfer of Functions regulations No 138 of 2015).

### **Manonyane Community Council Structure**

Manonyane Community Council is base few kilometers from the National University of Lesotho. It has Fourteen (14) elected members who represent the citizens within the area in which it has mandate. There are only three (3) women and eleven (11) men. Inside the council they have four committees for operation purposes, the Land Allocation committee, Social Services Committee, Finance Committee and physical Planning Committee. Apart from these members the council has staff members who form the line staff for purpose of preparing for local government policies implementations. The staff members are supposed to provide services to the citizens, not only that they are to implement all the council policies. The staff at Manonyane Council constituted by the Council Secretary, Council Physical Planner, Accounts Clerk, Clerical Assistant, Assistant Administrative Officer cleaner, Messenger and Night Watchman.

The secretary, the physical planner and Assistant Administrative officers have high level education of first degrees. The staff shows clearly that human resource is limited to do all what the council has to do. National Decentralization Policy (2014) observed that, efforts to implement decentralization using legal instruments have only succeed in creating political councils with limited technical capacity, resources and guiding framework to deliver services to citizens. Although Setsabi (2009) argued that, educated individuals are gainfully employed by the central government in which case being posted to decentralised positions is often seen as being posted to inferior positions.

Manonyane Council has sixty villages under its jurisdiction, while electoral divisions are nine (9). Community councils cover relatively huge area encapsulating between nine and fifteen electoral divisions (Local Government Act 1997 section 6). This means there are lots of villages under one community council which makes its functioning difficult. Kapa (2005) maintained that, the electoral divisions cluster together many villages for purpose of electing councilors destined for community councils, this has widened the gap between the community members and these structures. According to Kapa (2005) these many villages under one community council forms what he termed 'Recentralization' instead of decentralization. The result of this situation is that local councils end up appearing to be inefficient administratively, unjust, incompetent and corrupt (Wallis and Scott, 2013). Within its jurisdiction this council has the University, police station, hospital, three high schools and a few primary schools and a shopping centre next to the University gate.

### **Infrastructure in Manonyane Community Council**

When responding to the question on how the council operates, the council secretary observed that Manonyane Council has a very small working space in an office that is rented from the Catholic Church. Ever since 2005 the council has been trying to buy site but they lacked enough funds to execute that plan. There is one board room for council meetings and two offices for officials. The furniture is old and not user friendly. The local government was implemented without proper preparations of the infrastructure to handle the operations of councils.

### **Operations of the Council**

The secretary maintained that; the council has not been able to operate well due to lack of approval of plans. Most of the plans from the council are supposed to be approved by the Minister in the central government. To that time there were no plans that were approved. The council only managed to allocate land for one primary school building and maintained water tapes in the villages that had them. But they could not start new projects of water in other villages which do not have either taps or clean water at all. She opines that, in 2005 the then, council made the bye-laws which had to be sent to the Ministry for approval but up to date they are still not approved so they cannot be put into action. She observed that, the other problem was the change of the central government which has happened frequently, this has adversely affected the operations of the councils. She observed that; the council could no longer clean the streets especially the area of the shopping centre due to lack of funds to pay those who are doing that job.

The physical planner elaborated on the plans that council had, ever since its inception in 2005. She also reiterated that the council seems not have enough power to come up with any development plans in their area since they have to be approved by the Minister. She mentioned that, the graveyard and dumping place, that the council wanted to have, did not get the approval from the Ministry. There is not enough space for the market around their jurisdiction, hence why, the street vendors are all over the place and it is very untidy. The council does not get any market fees from these street vendors. She maintained that she has not yet done anything as far as physical planning is concerned. It looks like it is difficult to plan anything without the approval of the central government. There is dire need for fully decentralization of powers so that councils could work on their needs in their area.

### **Lack of capacity In Manonyane Community Council**

Manonyane Community Council's officials showed that their numbers, knowledge and skills are not adequate for the implementation of councils' policies and programmes. Even to formulate policies is difficult because of the lack of enough expertise. The physical planner showed that she can handle planning easily but demise would be its implementation process. According to Kabi et.al (2014) decentralization process has suffered gaps because of capacity challenges in terms of numbers and quality of available human resource to lead, monitor the process, the necessary tools and manuals in order to sustain its functionality. Council officials were trained in Manonyane around 2005 on issues of Budget preparations, report writing and monitoring and evaluation. At the moment budget is done at the district level, this means all the thirteen councils of the Maseru district consolidate their budget together. The councilors were trained on issues of induction course on local government and HIV/AIDS, but the recent councilors have not yet had any formal training on the operations of council. Wallis and Scott (2013: 92) argued that, the capacity can be built, the expertise can be developed and the supervision can be strengthened.

## **Councils and Lack of Political Will**

The councilors in their discussion they felt that decentralization has not taken place for its purpose and intend. Central government remains in control through having to approve the bye-laws, approve budgets, giving instructions to the council. Many functions continue to be performed by central government ministries through their field officials (Kabi et al, 2014). Ministries find it difficult to transfer their functions to local government because either they don't trust the council or they feel local government does not have the integrity to handle such functions. Wallis and Scott (2013:92) maintained that, bureaucrats are reluctant to give up their powers to lower-level officials often 'invent' excuses for either delaying or stalemating decentralization implementation. There is a project in Manonyane council of installing lights in the villages surrounding National University of Lesotho, but the councilors are clear that this project is going to be under taken by central government and the council will do only what the central government will require of them. An example could be that of the Mantsebo-Chiboko road construction which was not finished because the council was ordered to refrain from hiring the plant and machinery and to wait for such from Maseru District Council which would rotate amongst the councils (Makana, 2010). Turner and Hulme (1997:151 in Kabi, et al 2014) contend that a major obstacle to the effective performance of public bureaucracies in most developing countries is the excessive concentration of decision-making and authority within central government. It is important for the central government to strengthen local capacity so that it can be left to decide and implement its own development according to its needs and wants.

## **Insufficient Financial Resources**

Without money local councils cannot pay for the human resources, the machinery or the materials with which to carryout local activities. It becomes imperative that the councils have enough funds for its operations. The government of Lesotho is providing grants for all councils in the country. After the 2005 local government elections 128 councils were allocated M15 000 000 for development projects which were road maintenance, water supply and construction of markets posts at different areas in the country (Ministry of Local Government, 2007). At the moment the numbers of councils have decreased. The law allows councils to source funds from different methods example; the fines and penalties, property rates, all donations, gifts grants or other sums otherwise accruing to the council (Local Government Act 1997).

The challenges are that, the councils cannot have a Bank account so that means all money they get from anywhere has to be put into the Sub-Accountancy books at district level and this is under the central government. It becomes difficult for councils to use such money because it is under the Accountant General who is at the centre. According to Kabi et al, (2014) this situation impacted negatively on the chances for councils to get donations. Donors are reluctant to give councils money since will be under central government and the councils are wholly relying on the centre for finances. Professor Meyer (1956:115) observed that, as soon as local governments have to live on income derived primarily from the central government the future of local government does not seem bright. While Shabbir (1996) argued that, political decentralization without financial capacity leads to frustration.

Manonyane Community Councilors were actually frustrated while they could not buy site to build their offices which was their intention. They had to stop roads construction project which was already going on. They also failed to acquire space for the new graveyard that is desperately needed. They cannot clean the surroundings where they use to clean especially in front of the National

University of Lesotho. They are also running a dumping place which according to the councilors is not in good shape. The road to this dumping place also needs maintenance.

### **Mohlakeng Community Council**

The secretary of this council provided the following information about this council. It is situated outside Maseru city towards the south of the Country. It could be thirty-five kilometres away for the city. It has about fifty-seven (57) villages under its jurisdiction while the electoral divisions are nine (9). This undermines the most important principles of local government that of bringing government closer to the people and that the people make decisions on their needs and wants within their villagers. When they are put into clusters under one community council the needs of their village may differ and make it difficult for the council to handle. Kapa (n.d) argued that this effort of introducing local government has negative consequences which he termed 'recentralization' within decentralization process. Looking at the terrain of the country it very difficult for community members to access services from these councils since they are very far and villages do not have good roads. This has widened the gap between the community members and their community councils.

### **Infrastructure for Mohlakeng Community Council**

The Secretary for Mohlakeng community council explained that the Council is renting offices although the researcher observed that these offices are better in terms of numbers and board rooms and the building is new. The council; has the following committees; Land allocation Committee, Planning and Finance committee and Social Services. They have new furniture, but the secretary maintained that their heaters are not enough so in winter they suffer. The councilors are fourteen in number; two have attained first degree and diploma level of education while the rest are high school leavers. There are ten men and four women. The number of officials at Mohlakeng is the same as Manonyane in terms of numbers, titles and education level. The difference here is that they have an official from the Ministry of Social Development to handle the functions to be transferred to the council, but nothing yet has been done on this issue, this officer is paid under Ministry of Social Development payroll not under the council. Council secretary complained that they were expecting that this officer will be followed by resources to enable her functions to be affected easily but nothing has been done yet. The physical planner in this council was unavailable.

### **Councilors of Mohlakeng Community Council**

In the discussion with councilors explained that, they have under gone an induction training which introduced them to issues of Land, Laws and dealing with staff. The officials have under gone training by Tobaka Consultancy Company on Good Governance. At the moment the council have not yet enacted the bye-laws since the previous council had send the bye-laws for approval by the Local Government Minister have not yet been approved. There is too much delay in the approval of bye-laws and plans.

The councilors maintained that their functions are to maintain the water supply system in some villages, they cannot come up with new water system as per law. They normally carryout cleaning campaigns within their surroundings and collect the garbage to the dumping place which is operating properly. They had planned to work on the roads that are connecting different villages but they have to be on the waiting lists for the rotating machines. They are also planning to have market place but there is no proper place yet. The street vendors are putting their shacks wherever possible. This has made their surrounding place very untidy.



### **Insufficient Financial Resources**

Mohlakeng community council, like other councils does not have enough funds to execute its functions. The councilors explained that since the law allows them to source funds, they explained that they have sand in their area, which they sell to the community, and they also levy fines from misuse of pastures but all these moneys go to the central government. They have tried to get donations but this is not available due to lack of council bank account. Kabi et al (2014) quoted Khoanyane when he remembered one developmental consultant was interested in funding some developmental projects in Mazenod 08 community council, but became skeptical after discovering about the financial status of the council, which could not have its bank account according to local Government Act. This lack of funds has led the central government to dictate what councils can do and even at times issued ultimatum (Kabi et al, 2014). The councils seem to lack autonomy and this has impacted very negatively on councils in the country. According to Setsabi (2009) local governments' ability to provide services is in part contingent upon their ability to mobilise taxes locally. But Mohlakeng Community Council at this point does not levy any taxes on the community members.

### **Discussions on these Findings**

The findings reveal that the local government system in the Kingdom of Lesotho negates democracy thesis which had hoped to take democracy to the communities in their villages by ensuring popular participation in projects and in decision making that affect them. The central government does not relinquish the functions and financial resources to enable councils to operate properly. Most of the decisions still come from the central government even with ultimatums. Kapa (2005) observed that, decisions have been removed from villages though Village Development Committees to community councils the structure which are remote from a common Mosotho villager.

It seems that central government has the prerogative to create change and even terminate the existence of the local councils as well to determine their competence. Local government is an integral aspect of the total political and administrative apparatus through which a country is governed (Humes and Martin 1969). This shows that there is a continuing dependence of local councils on central government, there is no local government that is completely self-governing.

It appears that the central government does not trust and doubted the integrity of local councils concerning financial management. But having looked into the two councils' capacity the central government has a point; the capacity of the staff members has to be boosted in terms of numbers and knowledge. There is a lot of training and capacity building that has to be done. The Accounts Clerks that are in the councils cannot really handle the huge amounts of money that could be pumped in the councils, there is no expertise as well to handle huge projects and programmes at the local level. Wallis and Scott (2013:93) observed that, this is a chicken and egg paradox, which comes first? Transfer functions in order to build the local capacity or do you build local capacity in order to transfer the functions? Something has to be done in Lesotho on this issue.

Central government is also reluctant to transfer the functions to the councils. Nyane (2018) argued whether devolution is an appropriate model for Lesotho as a unitary state remains to be seen, but what is clear about the new decentralization dispensation where there is mutual respect between spheres of government and local authority. Mahlakeng and Solomon (2013, 35-53) maintained that, a major issue that has detrimental to the Kingdom of Lesotho's development is its political culture, its remains a threat to the well-being, economics and political stability of the country. The elections of Local government in 2017 had been postponed because of political instability of the first form of

coalition government. The country has had three general elections in five years. It becomes difficult for councils to cope with so many changes of governments. Matlosa (2006) observed that, the Kingdom of Lesotho has had coups, internal political factions, which had hindered development and stability, twenty-three (23) years of authoritarian rule including seven years of military rule.

After the 2005 local government elections the move was to train all councilors in the country. Local Government Non-State Programme (LGNSP) under the European Union conducted training needs assessment and developed training programmes. This was done in the Northern part of the country. The three districts were; Botha-Bothe, Leribe and Mokhotlong. The purpose was to investigate whether weakness in the current human resources capacity inhibits the achievement of the goals and principles of the decentralization model (LGNSP. 2009). It had to prioritize training interventions to reduce skills gaps that would have an immediate positive impact on performance. But unfortunately, up to now nothing has been implemented. The challenge on this aspect is due to the changes of government which has happened more often than expected. It has been observed that from 2012 to 2017 there were three general elections that had led to change of governments. Since local government is a product of central government it became difficult for it to stabilize in this situation.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that there are centre-relations between central government and local government. Legally speaking all local councils are dependent upon and derive their authority from the central government though the legal document that establishes the councils. A healthy local government is one in which central government and local government through popular influence over the decision-making is nicely balanced. The findings from the two councils have shown that most decisions are still done by central government. That means decentralization has not taken place as it has been anticipated when the councils were established since 2005.

Decentralisation plays an important role in Lesotho, because it is taken to be a pillar that enables the country to deal with poverty. But in practical terms it is not assisting. The community councils have very many villages under their jurisdiction which make decision making processes to be cumbersome. This scenario undermines the concept of decentralization which has to bring services closer to the people. The government has gazetted certain functions to be transferred to local councils but this transfer does not commensurate with the resources to enable their implementation. Communities themselves are not empowered enough to have a role to play and make councils and government accountable for their actions and budget. The communities have not been empowered to hold councils accountable hence the councils are not responding to their needs.

The devolution path which Lesotho has taken does not bear fruits as anticipated, the council's areas are too big and it is not clear how people can participate and understand the operations of the councils. This paper attempted to highlight the importance of decentralization to the country. But the two council's cases have demonstrated that there are many pitfalls in the process of implementing decentralisation despite the good intentions. Lesotho needs to transform their councils to meet the needs for the agenda 2030 and 2063.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the paper recommends that:

- Government should provide proper infrastructure (Offices that are conducive) for councils in order for them to improve on service delivery.

- Both community councils need to nurture and foster community participation to strengthen the council capacity. So that the communities can be in a position to hold the council accountable for its activities.
- Councilors should be well trained so that they can be able to make decisions, raise revenue and have adequate autonomy, to create a culture of integrity in service delivery. (Based on the training needs assessment under taken by LGNSP; 2011).
- Councilors should be well trained to have knowledge on how to monitor development projects in their areas.
- Awareness programmes should be conducted through training institutions for the community members so that they can comprehend the operations of the councils and be aware on how they can influence decision making process.
- The council officials should be increased in numbers and expertise so as to have best practices that would improve council best service delivery.
- Legal document should be clear on what the council can and cannot do (the extent to which council can go) through the legal framework it will enable the council to handle matters better.
- The councilors should provide means and ways of getting feedback from the communities in order to evaluate how responsive they are towards community needs and wants.
- Central government has to build capacity through an ongoing process for both the councilors and community members; it will be easy for the councils to provide proper conditions for sustainable development.
- Sustainable development programmes need a favourable environment to be appropriate and that services delivery could be accessible timely to the community members.
- These councils should have proper capacity in all aspects of resources so as to work towards agenda 2030 and agenda 2063 of African Union.

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