

European Union and Youth in Lesotho







Supporting Lesotho's youth for a sustainable and inclusive future.



The European Union (EU) in Lesotho believes that young people must be given a real voice in shaping the solutions that will have an impact in shaping their future.

Through projects in energy, natural resources management and the Youth Power Hub, we empower youth participation at national and district levels. This includes the Youth Sounding Board (YSB), support for youth organisations, and initiatives fostering economic opportunities and international exchanges.

WHY THE EU SUPPORTS LESOTHO'S YOUTH:

-  **Large youth population:** Young people aged between 15 and 24 represent 19% of Lesotho's population, making them crucial to the country's development.
-  **Agents of change:** Lesotho's youth can lead efforts in climate action, gender equality and social justice, driving progress for a more inclusive society.
-  **Social equality:** Marginalised youth, especially in rural Lesotho, face barriers in education, healthcare, and job opportunities. Addressing these challenges is key to their empowerment.
-  **Political and civic engagement:** Encouraging civic and political participation ensures young people's voices shape policies that impact them.
-  **Education and skills development:** Gaps in education, particularly in rural areas, and the push for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education are critical to the country's future.
-  **Digital literacy improvement:** Improving digital skills helps youth innovate and thrive in the modern economy.

HOW?

The **European Union** supports youth in Lesotho through a number of tools:

Supporting youth voices: creating inclusive platforms for youth participation and dialogue at district and national levels, such as a Youth Sounding Board (YSB), using foresight tools, youth *pitsos* (gatherings), and civic education programmes, to ensure that young people's voices are heard and that they have a say in decision-making processes, and advocate for the protection of children and young people's rights.

Capacity building and funding for youth initiatives: providing support, through capacity building and grants, for youth grassroots organisations. This helps these organisations to strengthen their operations, develop skills, and implement projects that benefit the community.

Exchange and mobility: promoting transnational and international cooperation between organisations and higher education institutions in the fields of research, education, training, youth and sport. This includes exchange programmes that allow young people to gain new experiences, learn from different cultures, and develop broader perspective.

Education and research: supporting initiatives aimed at improving education and fostering research to equip young people with the skills needed for the modern workforce and to drive innovation.

Find out more about EU projects supporting youth:

The EU is committed to ensuring young people are included in all its initiatives and programmes, especially those in renewable energy, sustainable resources management, access to justice and others. In addition, the EU supports the following initiatives directly targeting youth:

The **Youth Power Hub** establishes a platform for youth dialogues and participation at district and national level, and a funding mechanism for 27 grassroots organisations.

LETSEMA is a collaborative initiative between the National University of Lesotho and Bethel Business and Community Development Centre in Lesotho, University of Turku in Finland, Linnaeus University in Sweden to develop education and skills on renewable energy.

PYWEIG, implemented by Democracy Works Foundation in collaboration with Financial Services Volunteer Corps, promotes youth participation in policymaking and socio-economic opportunities.

CVAVAC, implemented by World Vision Ireland in partnership with World Vision Lesotho, empowers communities to advocate for the protection of children's rights and end violence against children, including building and equipping of child-friendly courtrooms.

Erasmus+ supports and facilitates international cooperation in education, training, youth and sports, offering opportunities for student and staff exchanges at European universities.

A complete list of scholarships provided by Team Europe is available [here](#).

BACKGROUND

The EU, in collaboration with its partners, is dedicated to empowering the next generation of leaders in Lesotho by creating inclusive platforms for meaningful participation and dialogue. Central to this effort is the Youth Sounding Board (YSB), a vital space where youth representatives from diverse backgrounds can share their perspectives, influence decision-making processes, and ensure that they are equipped to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive future.

The EU's approach is tailored to align with the unique needs and aspirations of young people, making youth-focused initiatives more responsive to local challenges. In Lesotho, this includes enhancing youth participation and capacity-building, championing community advocacy, advancing renewable energy skills through specialised training and international collaborations, promoting international educational exchanges and modernisation as well as fostering inclusive economic growth.

