

# THE LESOTHO RUGBY ACADEMY *Dolen* LESOTHO CYMRU



## Annual Report 2022



**Harlequins**  
FOUNDATION

# ABOUT US

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## THE PROGRAMME

1. The LRA programme uses rugby as an educational vehicle to teach school students aged predominantly 10-14 important lessons around healthy and responsible lifestyles. The programme consists of 10 sessions, each based around a learning theme. These themes range from the foundational pillars of the LRA programme (communication, commitment and respect) to healthy living (reducing the risks from HIV, healthy diets, the dangers smoking and alcohol abuse) and gender equality.

Each session links the learning outcome to its relevance in sport. At the end of 10 weeks learners have gained an introduction to rugby and identify sport with positive life choices.

2. The Atlas All Schools Programme was launched in January 2019, thanks to the kind sponsorship of The Atlas Foundation. We committed to delivering rugby training to three high schools in Maseru each week for three years to establish a senior girls and boys team at each school. We have worked with the children as they go through their high-school exams to offer them structured team sports each week and pass on important life skills

## OUR GOAL

- 1) To support and educate vulnerable children and adolescents through open group sessions;
- 2) To share our enthusiasm for a sport that provides inspiration, focus and a support network in a country with few opportunities for young people;
- 3) To produce a top-quality future generation of Lesotho rugby players, and truly place Lesotho rugby on the global map.

## WHY LESOTHO?

- Lesotho is one of the poorest countries in southern Africa, with a GDP per capita of USD 1,250 .
- 24% of its adult population is estimated to be HIV positive (of a population of 2.2 million).
- Life expectancy is around 54 years.
- Social problems, such as alcohol and drug abuse, are widespread and exacerbate social problems and physical health.
- Lesotho is one of the most unequal countries in the world, meaning most people in Lesotho face risks of poverty and food insecurity, particularly in rural areas.
- From a global perspective, all children in Lesotho are amongst the most vulnerable and marginalised. Many schools in Lesotho receive support from the WFP schools feeding programme, and all schools were due to receive support to feed children from government.

# NATIONAL SCALE UP

The end of September 2022 saw the completion of the successful, 2-year Lesotho Rugby Academy 'National Scale Up Project'. Funded by the UKAID Small Charities Challenge Fund, the grant enabled the LRA to scale up its pilot programme and deliver to a larger number of schools and learners across the country.

Based on outcome and output level assessment, the project has achieved what was initially intended and has significantly exceeded expectations in some parts. During the grant period (October 2020 – September 2022) we achieved:

- 108 schools vs. target of 80.
- 8500 learners vs. target of 5000.
- 130 teachers vs. target of 40.

The programme over delivered against its targets thanks to the economy and efficiency measures taken throughout the delivery cycle, and despite the disruptions caused by lockdowns in response to Covid. All participating schools demonstrated a better understanding of key messages, and 97% of respondents interviewed reported broader positive impacts in the classroom.

*"the project has presented positive impacts on the social and academic welfare of participating students.... while others have generally also improved in academic performance.... " – Independent Evaluation, 2022*

## DISABILITY, BARRIERS & INCLUSION

Equality and inclusion is a central message of the LRA. Over the course of the project, we worked with marginalised, vulnerable, and disadvantaged children. We targeted non-fee paying schools in World Food Programme priority districts like Mophale's Hoek and Mafeteng. We pioneered working with sight- and hearing-impaired learners and we ensured that girls – who are particularly vulnerable to abuse and HIV-AIDS - were equally represented, both amongst the learners and within the coaching team.



**The LRA is making a positive contribution to gender equality in rugby and supporting girls to achieve at all levels**





# LOOKING AHEAD

**The LRA believes in the power of sport as a vehicle for driving positive solutions to important social issues in Lesotho. The organisation is committed to integrating sustainability principles to ensure the long-term impact of it's work.**

We will continue to build relationships with schools and teachers and are committed to the future delivery of the programme. It was in the schools where we were able to go back regularly that we saw the programme impact being most effective. We aim to place much more emphasis on schools that demonstrate commitment and have a strong partnership with the programme - schools where there are stronger partnerships, where teachers continue to reinforce learning. Going forward we will emphasise deeper, longer-term relationships with selected schools rather than maximising reach to lots of schools on a one-off basis.

We hope that the successes of this funded Scale Up Project will give us an even stronger platform upon which to seek further funding to continue to improve the life chances of the young people in Lesotho and inspire the next generation to benefit from the positivity of sport.

Our aim for the next 12 months is to maintain our current level of funding and activity. We are exploring new pathways for our coaches, including funding of TVET courses. We will be working closely with our partners to establish LRA on a more stable and professional set of foundations for fundraising and delivery.

We have created opportunities for sport to thrive in communities. We have enabled boys and girls to engage with rugby at many different levels – from recreational to elite. Our structure allows for players to progress from grassroots and school competition level to newly formed Academy Teams and National Teams.

**We're taking rugby to the next level in Lesotho**



17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



**That Fat Guy**  
@NBuddie



Taking this rugby thing to the next level 🏉

09/09/2022, 05:43

# 2022 OVERVIEW

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## 2022 KEY STATISTICS



**schools  
visited**



**students**



**boys**



**girls**

## CUMULATIVE STATISTICS (2014 - 2022)



**schools  
visited**



**students**



**boys**



**girls**

## LEARNING

The greatest achievement has been in raising awareness of healthy life-choices amongst disadvantaged children in Lesotho. Participants of the programme have a better grasp of simple but vital life lessons, ranging from understanding of the risk of HIV/AIDS, to healthy diets, to gender equality.

Giving children a chance to participate in a sport they would not have otherwise had an opportunity to, putting role models into schools and demonstrating a positive set of attitudes and behaviours. This has left a lasting mark on many children and raised aspirations around health, respect, confidence and life skills, academia, sporting opportunities and broader employment.







Tholoana ea Bophelo playing cops and robbers with Coach Moliehi

*"My name is Kabelo S., and I'm 14yrs old. I attend school at Hermitage High School, and I'm in grade 9. What I like in rugby is the life skills lessons coaches have been teaching us to do. Coaches taught me to listen to my teachers, to respect everyone, to return home works when given and to avoid alcohol, drugs and sex at my age."*

**- Hermitage High School September 2022**  
**Qacher's Nek**



Learners at Mount Royal Primary working on the LRA's 3 core principles: Communication, Commitment & Respect



Mpho Community school a hive of activity

*"We thank Lesotho Rugby Academy so much for what they have done for us they have done amazing work by teaching us about the three pillars"*

**- Morija Girls High School, September 2022**

# IMPACT EVALUATION

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## MEASURING IMPACT

Each year we measure our impact through light touch quantitative data, gathered at each school throughout the year, and in a series of interviews conducted during our year-end team visit. Interviewees include the beneficiaries, programme graduates, teachers at LRA schools, and Lesotho rugby players.

## DATA

We collect a small amount of impact data in each school.

**Children** are asked whether they agree or disagree with seven simple statements, and we compare the results from the first week with the final one. The data indicates that **in all schools students are showing improved understanding in the topics covered by the Life Skills lessons.**

**Teachers** were surveyed on their perceptions of programme impacts against 14 dimensions of effective learning. These dimensions mirror the key pillars of teamwork and communication of the programme.

All teachers responding to the survey reported positive impacts on dimensions of effective learning:

- 'Contributing to discussions', (86% )
- 'Working collaboratively with others' (81%),
- 'Confidence to ask questions' (71%)
- 'Giving support to others' (71%).
- The lowest results were in 'Remembering information' (38%).

*"Ever since rugby programmes have been introduced in my school, we have seen our learners changing their behaviour and focussing more this time. They are now able to work as a team more than before."*

**- Tsebo Mokhahlane, teacher at Mazenod High School.**

# FINANCES

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## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2022

In 2022 Lesotho Rugby Academy finances were dominated by a grant from UK AID covering October 2020 – September 2022. This accounted for £26,294 and was allocated directly to Dolen Cymru, so does not show up in the LRA UK accounts.

The vast majority of this funding covered programme delivery, including coaches' salaries, transport and equipment costs. Additional costs included UK and Lesotho based administrative staff and around £2,500 spent on an independent evaluation.

LRA fundraising was limited and lower than previous years thanks to the expiration of grants from Atlas Foundation and Harlequins Foundation. No fundraising events were held in 2022.

LRA UK fundraising amounted to donations from individuals totalling £4,323.

LRA UK expenditure amounted to £11,267 covering match funding for UK AID programme delivery as well as the remaining quarter (October – December).

We ended the year with healthy reserves of £39,687. LRA UK established a reserves policy of holding reserves to cover a year of expenditure. This will allow coaches to be paid and the program to continue for up to 12 months in the event of no further fundraising occurring. We expect our reserves balance to decrease over the next few years in order to align with this policy.



# OUR TEAM

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## LESOTHO

The Lesotho Rugby Academy programme was designed and developed, and is still delivered, by local Basotho volunteers.



### Roy Zhou | Head Coach

Roy has been coaching rugby in Lesotho since 2012. As well as co-developing the Lesotho Rugby Academy syllabus and delivering it in many of our schools, Roy founded the Maseru Warriors Rugby Club. Having coached the Lesotho national team, the Likoatola (“the Stallions”) he now focuses on training the women’s team and delivery around Butha-Buthe. Roy is World Rugby Level 2 qualified and is trained in topics such as HIV awareness, gender and health.



### Litsitso Motseremeli | Country Director

Litsitso took up rugby in 2011 and is one of the pioneers of the Federation of Lesotho Rugby (FLR). After finding a passion for the sport, he started volunteering full time for FLR and is now an ambassador, regularly appearing on Lesotho TV. He is Secretary General for the FLR and Country Director for the Academy Programme.



### Makopano Copper Sennanyane

Copper joined the women’s Maseru Warriors in April 2018 and developed an instant passion for rugby. She joined the permanent coaching team in 2019, she is also part of refereeing team and obtained Level 2 sports administration. Copper always introduces improvised dancing and singing into her lessons.

# OUR TEAM

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In 2018 LRA welcomed five new volunteer coaches to support the scaling up of the programme. All our volunteers are trained in first aid and World Rugby Strength and Conditioning Level 1.



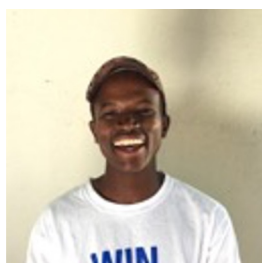
## Motheo 'Mortex' Mokhothu

Mortex joined rugby as he was coming back home from his daily work. He was head coach at Lesotho Defence Force and won a league with his newly formed team. He now plays for the LRA club and coaches teaching kids.



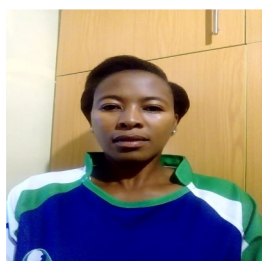
## Palesa 'Rose' Pitso

Rose started rugby in 2015 with the Maseru Warriors, but now plays for the Lesotho Rugby Academy women's team. She was the first female referee in Lesotho. Rose loves it when the school children chant "rugby! rugby! rugby!" and run towards the car when the LRA coaches arrive.



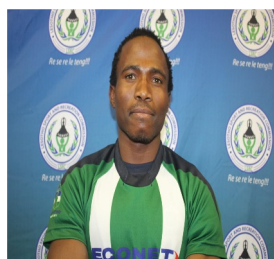
## Molefi Qejoang

Molefi used to think rugby was just for big men, until Coach Roy and the academy visited his school in 2014. Since then he has joined the Maseru Warriors, and loves teaching the LRA children. One of his favourite drills is the boys versus girls relay, as you never know which team is going to win!



## Moliehi 'Moli' Matsepo

Moli is a huge inspiration to the young girls in Lesotho. She was the second girl ever to play rugby in Lesotho. She has made so many strides to date. She is now a full-time development coach, and she is doing great with our participants.



## Bokang 'Alex' Nchele

Alex is a proud product of Lesotho Rugby Academy: he met with Coach Roy while at school. He immediately joined our program and coaching panel thereafter. He plays for the national team on the wing and is top try scorer. He has loved working with kids since joining the Academy team.

# OUR TEAM

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## UK

The UK team provides administrative and financial support to the programme. We run the charity accounts, compile annual reports and marketing materials, and lead the charity's fundraising through events in the UK. We visit our friends in Lesotho every year to monitor progress, discuss and advise on upcoming strategies, and capture data.



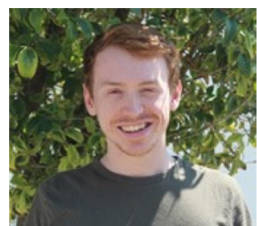
### **Dan Aylward-Mills | Programme Director | Trustee**

Dan kick-started Lesotho Rugby in 2011, coaching and training the national team and was President of the Federation of Lesotho Rugby. Dan co-founded the Lesotho Rugby Academy with Litsitso and Roy in 2014.



### **Mandy | Programme Manager**

A qualified teacher with a passion for education, Mandy began working in Lesotho in 2016 as a volunteer mentor on Dolen Cymru's Lesotho Teacher Placement Programme. She has been involved in a number of projects focused on teachers and young people in Lesotho.



### **Andrew Barton | Finance | Trustee**

Andy has volunteered as LRA's Finance Manager since 2016 and oversees all financial administration, including tracking fundraising and budgeting. Andy keeps the programme operating on a day-to-day basis. He is a qualified accountant and an auditor in the UK.



### **Steve Lloyd | Trustee**

Steve has been supporting Lesotho Rugby Academy for several years and has been a champion for us in Cardiff. He has organised several fundraising events. He has also coordinated logistics when our coaches have visited the UK.



### **Iain Richards | Trustee**

Iain has been fundraising and building UK partnerships for the LRA since it was launched in 2014. He organises events and manages our links with UK rugby clubs. Iain has previously worked with SKRUM, Rugby Business Network, London Welsh Centre and ran the Velvet Coalmine Literary festival in his hometown of Blackwood, Wales.



### **Ruth Aylward | Trustee**

Ruth is a qualified ACCA accountant who previously worked with St John's Air Ambulance and in the finance departments of several manufacturing companies.



# SUPPORT US

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you would like to support our programme, thank you. It means a lot to us, and your contribution will make a real difference. You can make a one-off or monthly donations online, please follow the links on our website:

<https://www.lesothorugbyacademy.org/>

If you would like to arrange a monthly donation by standing order, or assistance in reclaiming gift aid, please contact us directly.

## EQUIPMENT

Do you have an old laptop, smart phone, tablet or digital camera sitting in a drawer at home? Let us help you find it a new home with one of our coaches as we try and get them connected. We can even help in wiping your data.

And of course we're always grateful to receive donations of rugby kit – everything gets put to good use.

## VOLUNTEER

Whether you have a couple of hours a month and can help us with our newsletter or writing a grant application, or want to go and help deliver the programme in Lesotho, we're always delighted to welcome new volunteers to the team.

## CONTACT US

If you would like to find out more about the Academy or Lesotho rugby in general, or if you would like to talk to us about volunteering, please see our contact details on the right hand side. We would be delighted to hear from you.



@coach\_n



[dan@lesothorugbyacademy.org](mailto:dan@lesothorugbyacademy.org)



@lesothorugby