

THE LESOTHO RUGBY ACADEMY



Dolen Cymru
•Wales Lesotho Link•



Annual Report 2019



Harlequins
FOUNDATION

2019 SUMMARY

2019 has been a year of highs and lows for Lesotho Rugby Academy (LRA).

The year got off to a good start with the addition of several new coaches to the team, the Launch of the Atlas All Schools programme and the confirmation of Harlequins Foundation as a partner. We had a fantastic London fundraising dinner in summer, and enter 2020 as a fully registered charity after some fantastic work by Andrew. Lesotho was able to visit the UK in November and spend time in London and Wales continuing to build LRA relations with our partners.

The coaching team has done a fantastic job delivering the programme across Lesotho. In total, the Academy programme has run its 10-week programme in 29 schools (9 more than last year) and teaching 2,173 children, whilst a further 6 schools are receiving weekly coaching through the All Schools Programme. The team in Lesotho continued to deliver their programme to children in Maseru and beyond, teaching them life skills, communication, commitment and respect through the fun and discipline of rugby.

This annual report contains fewer success stories than previous versions. The UK team had been due to visit Lesotho in March 2020 to conduct its annual review, including gathering evidence of impact through interviews. The outbreak of COVID-19, however, prevented us from crossing into Lesotho to meet with the coaches, teachers and graduates of the Academy programme. This report is, therefore, high level and relies on our statistics to tell the story. Last year's report contained evidence of impact through feedback from teachers and students, and in the success of Lesotho rugby overall. We know that rugby continues to create employment opportunities for young people in Lesotho and improving school children's academic performance. Women's rugby is flourishing – despite this year's tragedy when several graduates of our programme lost their lives - and the LRA graduates continue to feed into the national team and league teams, some becoming school or club coaches themselves.

In 2019 the rugby community in Lesotho was faced with tragedy, when 5 members of the Lesotho U16 girls team lost their lives in a road traffic accident in Free State on the way to a match in Bloemfontein.

In loving memory of our girls
22.6.19

2020 and COVID-19

Lesotho Rugby Academy Response to Covid 19

As of 2 April 2020, Lesotho remains one of only 18 countries with no officially reported cases of Covid-19. Although this may partly reflect a lack of testing capacity, it is nonetheless reassuring to know that the pandemic hasn't got a foothold in Lesotho. South Africa moved early and aggressively to lockdown movement and this will undoubtedly have helped protect Lesotho, which also closed down schools in the last week of March and moved to full lockdown from 30 March. If and when it does, the combination of a high HIV rate and low capacity in the healthcare system could be devastating.

In the early stages of the global pandemic the Lesotho Rugby Academy put on hold its usual syllabus and focused its messaging on the importance of handwashing (with some great tips from Dolen Cymru) to prevent the spread of the virus. However, with the schools closed our programme has gone on hiatus.

Unfortunately, Lesotho does not have the public funding available to replicate programmes of income support we are seeing in Europe and the USA. As such, following an emergency trustees meeting, Lesotho Rugby Academy has confirmed that it will continue to pay salaries to all our team, including our volunteer coaches who were paid on a day rate. LRA believes it has an obligation to look after our staff during this time and ensure they are not torn between adhering to the lockdown and leaving to try and find replacement income. We trust all of our sponsors will agree with this decision.

We look forward to restarting our programmes in the near future.

Looking ahead

Once the current restrictions have been lifted, Lesotho Rugby Academy hopes to swiftly kick start its programme. Our goals for this year ahead include:

- a major scale up and roll out of our programme with Government backing
- the purchase of a vehicle for our coaching team after a successful summer fundraiser
- the addition of a handwashing session to our syllabus

A heartfelt thank you to our partners, the hardworking volunteers, and generous donors.

ABOUT US

THE PROGRAMME

The Lesotho Rugby Academy tackles social problems in Lesotho through the fun, teamwork, and discipline of rugby. We have two main branches: the roaming 10-week Academy Programme, and the Atlas All Schools Programme.

- 1) The 10-week Academy Programme visits boys and girls in disadvantaged schools across Lesotho. We teach the basic rules and skills of rugby, and the three pillars that any rugby player should live by: communication, commitment and respect. Each session informs children about, and encourages them to discuss, important life skills and socially sensitive issues including gender equality, good nutrition, protection from HIV and AIDS, and how to live a healthy and responsible lifestyle.
- 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 will work with children as they go through their high-school exams to offer them structured team sports each week and pass on important life skills. By December, we had increased the All Schools Programme to [Mazenod High, Thetsane High, Lithabaneng High schools] schools.

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 1,360.
- 24% of its adult population is estimated to be HIV positive (of a population of 2.2 million).
- Life expectancy is around 51 years.
- There are few employment or career opportunities in Lesotho.
- Social problems, such as alcohol and drug abuse, are widespread and exacerbate social problems and physical health.

2019 OVERVIEW

2019 KEY STATISTICS



schools visited



students



boys



girls

CUMULATIVE STATISTICS (October 2014 to December 2019)



schools visited



students



boys



girls

SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

We visited 29 schools across three districts. The first half of the year was spent in Maseru district (with schools from Maseru City Centre and Matsieng). In September our coaches travelled to Thaba-Tseka, 170 kilometres outside Maseru, where we worked with 12 schools (including a cluster in Mat'sonyane). The last district was in Butha-Buthe, 125 kilometres from Maseru. Accessing schools in all five districts involved driving off-road on unmaintained tracks, climbing up mountains and / or long bus journeys and walks for our coaches.

Thanks to extra volunteer help and greater financial support, we reached nine more schools than last year, increasing our reach by almost 50%. This allowed us to accommodate our coaches in the further districts and deliver to a greater number of schools whilst they were there. Our average class size also increased to approximately 70 children. Coaches Roy and Copper bring at least one volunteer to each class, and split the groups into two or three, to ensure the children have plenty of ball time and the opportunity to ask questions.

The Coach's Handbook, which we published in 2017, is still the core manual for all training. Each school is given a copy, which teachers can use to continue rugby training.



IMPACT EVALUATION

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.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 prevented the annual report visit to Lesotho from going ahead, so this year's annual report is based on statistics rather than stories.

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 below shows the 2019 results.

STATEMENT (and model answer)	Week 1 correct	Week 10 correct
Rugby is a sport only for big men (Disagree)	18%	82%
The most common way of catching HIV is through sharp objects like needles and razors (Disagree)	30%	89%
Vegetables are more important in my diet than pap (Agree)	56%	78%
Smoking is a sign of maturity (Disagree)	36%	91%
Playing rugby can create a risk of passing HIV (Disagree)	39%	63%
When I grow up I will drink alcohol a lot (Disagree)	71%	83%
Men are better leaders than women (Disagree)	32%	67%

These results show a marked improvement across all areas, particularly in debunking myths surrounding rugby and HIV, and that smoking and drinking are desirable or signs of maturity. The questions on women's leadership and healthy diets saw the smallest improvement, but there were marked changes in understanding and attitude all the same.

FINANCES

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2019

This year marked both a year of significant growth in our fundraising and a change in our financial administration and reporting.

In previous years we have reported donations to Dolen Cymru restricted for Lesotho Rugby Academy delivery in Lesotho. This had the result of under-reporting charity related expenditure by trustees, e.g. travel expenses. As this expenditure was not recorded as charitable income / expenditure, we were previously unable to reclaim gift aid.

This year, several steps have been implemented to improve our financial administration. These have included:

- Registering Lesotho Rugby Academy as an independent legal entity;
- Registering Lesotho Rugby Academy with HMRC as a charitable organisation;
- Creation of a bank account for Lesotho Rugby Academy;
- Establishment of a Paypal account; and
- The recording of all charitable expenses and reclamation of gift aid.

The latter step in particular has contributed to the growth in reported income. In 2018, there were around £3,000 of expenses either specifically sponsored or reclaimed and then donated back to the charity, which would previously have been unreported. The reporting of these expenses has enabled the charity to reclaim an additional £750 of gift aid.

Income for the newly registered Lesotho Rugby Academy for the year was £18,704 and expenditure was £7,535, leaving an end of year cash position of £13,232 (including £1,300 of outstanding loans).

Expenditure primarily related to a fundraising dinner (£3,300), a visit by three LRA coaches to the UK (£3,100) and flights purchased for a visit by UK team to Lesotho (£1,100).

Income was significantly higher than previous years thanks to the first instalment of a three-year grant from Atlas to launch the All Schools programme in 2019 (£6,500), a large donation from High Impact (£3,500) and a number of one-off and recurring pledges made at the LRA Fundraising Dinner in May amounting to around £3,000 received by Lesotho Rugby Academy (in addition to donations made directly to Dolen Cymru – see below), and HMRC Gift Aid (£1200).

Income received directly by Dolen Cymru for the LRA amounted to around £6,600 with a final cash position of £5,200. Programme expenditure (money transferred to Lesotho via Dolen Cymru) was around £3,900.

OUR TEAM

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 the majority 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 the Atlas Lesotho schools.. 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 and has delivered sessions for LRA in HIV, alcohol abuse and healthy diets. Copper always introduces improvised dancing and singing into her lessons.

OUR TEAM

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.



Thato Vanessa Liphata

Thato first learned rugby under the LRA programme in 2014 and plays for the Maseru Warriors. She was the first female volunteer coach and Women's League Director. Thato loves using rugby to teach children to believe in themselves, and be proud of who they are.



Palesa Emely Pitso

Palesa ("Rose") started rugby in 2015, and currently plays front row in the women's league with the Maseru Warriors. 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, a you never know which team is going to win!

OUR TEAM

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

Dan kick-started Lesotho Rugby in 2011. He coached and trained the national Lesotho rugby team for two years and was President of the Federation of Lesotho Rugby until 2017. Dan co-founded the Lesotho Rugby Academy with Litsitso and Roy in 2014. Dan currently works as a development economist in the UK.



Andrew Barton | Finance

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 | Fundraising and Partnerships, Wales

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 | Fundraising and Partnerships, England

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 runs the Velvet Coalmine Literary festival in his hometown of Blackwood, Wales.

SUPPORT US

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.



@LesothoRugAcad
@coach_n



dan.c.aylward@gmail.com



@lesothorugby