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Does foreign aid make a difference? a case study of the Boseele Association in Northern Lesotho.

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Abstract

Lesotho is a country plagued by underdevelopment and poverty. This research is a case study of an indigenous community organisation in the northern district of Botha-Bothe in Lesotho. Boseele is a rural development organisation which attracted international donor investment in the aftermath of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. The study aims at investigating the impact of capacity development processes on Boseele and its members. The study identified capacity building landmarks over a period of ten years. A case study approach was used within a qualitative research design. Data was collected through individual and group interviews, observations, story-telling and transect walks. The results were analysed through thematic, chronological, narrative and document analysis. Boseele's successes with CIDA funding reflect positive foreign aid contributions towards the work of civil society organisations in Lesotho. However, setbacks and lack of continuity by a nursery project funded by MS-Lesotho show that the empowerment process is vulnerable where social and economic problems of individual members and communities are not fully addressed.

TEN KEY WORDS: capacity building; foreign donor interventions; community; rural development; human capital theory; empowerment; conscientisation; networks and collaboration; sustainable development.