

Background: Poor Quality Childcare for Children of Factory Employed Mothers in Lesotho

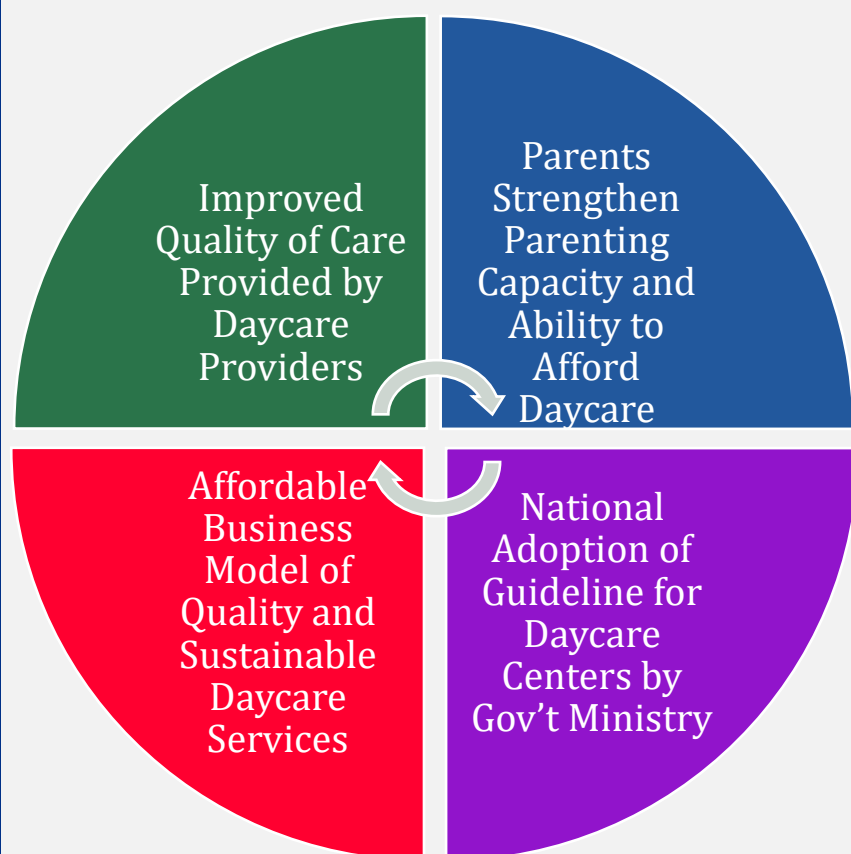
- The textile and garment industry, Lesotho’s largest private employer, employs mostly women (many single mothers), working 12 hours a day, earning USD\$ 146/month.
- For childcare, working mothers can only afford unregulated and poor-quality daycares to care for their children – including infants, toddlers, and preschool age-children.
- Government of Lesotho has national evidence-based minimum standards for quality daycare; however, these are only in draft form and are not required by law.
- Daycare providers lack knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) on evidence-based, responsive childcare, protection, nutrition, health, early learning; and have limited business management skills.
- Daycares do not adhere to minimum standards for quality care: 42% have no toilets, 5% with unsafe water, and 41% are located in hazardous environments such as a main road, liquor store and/or dam.
- Children lack play and stimulating opportunities.

Statement of Purpose: Catalyzing Quality Sustainable Childcare Services Project (CQSC)

With the support of the Bainum Family Foundation and in collaboration with key ECD stakeholders in Lesotho, CRS has established the Catalyzing Quality Sustainable Childcare Services Project (CQSC) to: a) help 30 daycare providers in Maputsoe and Maseru improve the quality of services for children ages 0-4, and b) to develop affordable and replicable model of quality daycare services.



Approach



Expected Achievements

- 30 daycare providers in Maputsoe and Maseru are equipped with KSA on nurturing care and child development and manage daycare environment that promotes age-appropriate stimulation and play-based learning; supports proper child nutrition and hygiene; and meets national guidelines for quality daycare.
- 30 daycare centers are linked with 10 village health workers from 3 health centers for immunization status verification, malnutrition screening and referral.
- 240 parents with 450 children practice key ECD behaviors: play-based and age-appropriate responsive care, positive discipline, and early learning activities, including age-appropriate feeding.
- 240 parents are engaged in microfinance opportunity to improve ability to afford daycare.
- 30 daycare providers have acquired business skills and have a sustainable and affordable model of care.
- Existing national daycare guideline is officially endorsed and housed by appropriate Lesotho ministry.

Conclusion

In Lesotho, children of factory working mothers are particularly vulnerable because they spend their day in poor quality childcare services. CRS seeks to continue to work together with ECD stakeholders (families and communities; government, donors, private sector) to promote/ensure quality childcare services for all children. The goal is to achieve a sustainable ECD model for scale that enables daycare providers to provide quality, affordable, and sustainable daycare.