



# rise International

Relationships Inspiring Social Enterprise

# Quarter One Report

January - March 2026

Graphics by Limpho Maqolo  
Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Written by Minah Lekau  
Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Coordinator

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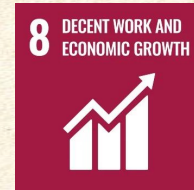


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## Our Strategic Focus:

Our work aligns with the following key SDGs:



**At the heart of our approach is a simple belief: when young people and communities are equipped with the right skills, tools, and trust, they build the futures they want.**



## Executive Summary

This quarter, our work across Lesotho and Kenya continued to focus on practical solutions to real challenges: unemployment, limited access to dignified school infrastructure, environmental degradation, and the need for more sustainable ways of building. Across all three pillars, the emphasis remained on strengthening local capacity, creating opportunity, and turning community needs into visible, lasting change.

**Under the pillar of Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation**, 10 promising enterprises were onboarded into the 6th cycle of the Business Incubation program called **Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion - CFI** project funded by World Bank. This comes at a pertinent time when Lesotho continues to face high unemployment, youth unemployment estimated at around 39%, and poverty affecting nearly half of the population. Supporting local enterprises is not only about business growth; it is about creating pathways to jobs, income, and community resilience. Practical youth employment support also expanded through a Work Ready Training of Trainers with nine staff members from The Hub in Morija, Lesotho, while in Kenya, all 14 participants from the 4th Work Ready Cohort successfully completed their three-month internships.

**Under the pillar of Education, Knowledge Exchange and Community Engagement**, children and communities were supported to connect learning with action. In Jacaranda, Kenya, 144 children participated in the Junior Rangers Club, gaining practical knowledge in ecosystem protection and conservation.



## Executive Summary

A separate community clean-up brought together more than 115 children from five local schools & community members, removing 350 kgs of waste from shared spaces. In Lesotho, the visit by Ambassador Michael Murphy of the **Sovereign Order of Malta** connected progress at **Makoanyane Primary School** with the urgent sanitation needs at **Cenez Primary School**, while the Living the Heritage project at the Royal Village in Makeneng opened new opportunities for heritage preservation, community identity, & cultural tourism.

**Under the pillar of Innovative Building Methodologies**, work continued to show how construction can respond to social needs while using resources more thoughtfully. At Leqele & Makoanyane Primary Schools, **new ablution blocks** sponsored by **Action Ireland Trust** are nearing completion, helping address the lack of safe & dignified sanitation in school environments. At **Kick4Life Stadium**, four shipping containers were repurposed into a **new community gym**, creating a practical social enterprise space while demonstrating how existing materials can be given a second life.

These achievements demonstrate a clear, consistent approach: **building skills, strengthening partnerships, & delivering practical infrastructure** that improves everyday life. Whether through young people entering the workforce, children learning to protect their environment, schools gaining access to safer sanitation, or unused materials becoming community assets, this quarter's work demonstrates how targeted support can create meaningful change at the community level.



## Pillar 1:

# Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Creative Learning

## Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Program

Following a competitive selection process, **rise** International has onboarded **10 high potential enterprises** into the 5th cycle of the Business Incubation Program under the **Competitiveness & Financial Inclusion Project, funded by World Bank.**

The program responds to a real economic challenge in Lesotho: unemployment remains high, youth unemployment is estimated at around 39%, and 49.5% of Basotho live below the national poverty line. In this context, supporting local entrepreneurs is about more than business growth; it is about creating stronger pathways to jobs, income, and community resilience.

# Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion - CAFI Program

Through incubation, coaching, mentorship, and market-focused support, the 10 enterprises will be helped to strengthen their business models and prepare for growth. This cycle reflects our commitment to backing local enterprise as a practical driver of inclusive economic transformation in Lesotho.



CAFI Incubation Program sessions - Lesotho

# Work Ready Program - Lesotho

**rise** International delivered a two-day **Work Ready training of trainers** for nine staff members from The Hub in Morija, Lesotho. The workshop covered practical topics, including professional conduct, CV and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and career mind-mapping. By training The Hub's team as Work Ready facilitators, we are expanding access to practical career guidance for more young people. This partnership reflects the power of local collaboration in strengthening our response to youth unemployment



Work Ready program facilitators' training at The Hub - Lesotho

# Work Ready Program - Kenya

The Work Ready Training Program (previously called the Employability Training Program) reached a significant milestone, with **100% of the 4th Cohort**, all 14 participants, successfully completing their 3-month internships and moving directly into real-world professional environments. This means the program is not only equipping young people with skills, but helping them take a clear next step into the workplace, where they can **build experience, confidence, and stronger pathways to employment**.



Computer classes for Work Ready graduates - Kenya



Work Ready graduates in their work placements - Kenya

# Growing Environmental Awareness Through the Junior Rangers Club:

## Junior Rangers Club

Kenya generates an estimated 22,000 tonnes of waste per day, totalling more than 8 million tonnes per year. As waste levels rise, children need more than classroom knowledge; they need practical environmental learning that helps them understand conservation, ecosystems, and their role in protecting the spaces around them.

Through the **Junior Rangers Club**, **144 children** took part in hands-on learning about **ecosystem protection and conservation**, helping them build care, responsibility, & confidence as young environmental stewards.



Junior Rangers Club attracted 144 children - Kenya

# Growing Environmental Awareness Through the Junior Rangers Club:

## Community Clean-up

Kenya's waste challenge is also evident in shared community spaces, where poor disposal and limited recycling can leave waste in streets, open areas, drains, rivers, and neighbourhoods. Nationally, each person generates about 0.5kg of waste per day, and only a portion of it is properly managed.

In **March**, more than **115 children from five local schools** joined community members for a **clean-up day in Jacaranda**. Together, they removed **350 kgs of waste**, including 30.2 kgs of recyclable plastic and 323.5 kgs of non-recyclable material.

The clean-up reduced visible pollution while teaching children the value of recycling, waste separation, and shared responsibility for the places they use every day.



Community Clean-up Event - Kenya



## Pillar 2

# Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building

### Order of Malta Strategic Visit

Ambassador Michael Murphy of the Sovereign Order of Malta visited Makoanyane Primary School, where new sanitation facilities sponsored by Action Ireland Trust are currently being built. The visit showed the kind of safe, dignified toilets that are being delivered to learners and staff.

The Ambassador also visited Cenez Primary School, a potential future project site, where the current toilets clearly need similar improvement. The Sovereign Order of Malta is exploring fundraising support for new toilets at Cenez, a school that the Ministry of Education has prioritised for assistance.



## Order of Malta Strategic Visit

With more than 50% of schools in Lesotho still lacking access to basic WASH services, this work speaks directly to a national challenge. Makoanyane shows what progress can look like in practice, while Cenez points to where that commitment can go next, helping reduce the number of school communities still learning without safe and dignified sanitation.



New toilets at Makoanyane Primary School - Lesotho



Current pit latrines at Cenez Primary School - Lesotho



## Preserving Heritage at the Royal Village in Makeneng

In March, a three-month heritage conservation project was launched at the Royal Village in Makeneng through *Living the Heritage*, led by Master's students in Architecture and Conservation from the **University of Malta**. Working with the Seriti sa Makhoarane Heritage and Tourism Network (SSM) and the Makeneng Chief, the project focuses on stabilising this important cultural site while supporting wider efforts to protect and **revitalise the local heritage landscape**.



SSM representatives and the Chief of Makeneng - Lesotho

The work matters because heritage sites like Makeneng carry memory, identity, and community pride. By combining technical conservation skills with local knowledge, the project is **helping the community explore practical ways to preserve the site**, strengthen the potential of cultural tourism, and keep the story of Makeneng alive for future generations. The strategies which the students will develop will provide useful guidance for how the site can be cared for, interpreted, and connected to broader heritage-led development opportunities as well as how to develop tourism strategies.



## PILLAR 3

# Innovative Building Methodologies

## Strengthening School Sanitation at Leqele and Makoanyane Primary Schools

At Leqele and Makoanyane Primary Schools, the **5-Hub School project** addresses a serious challenge facing many schools in Lesotho: learners are still expected to study in environments where safe, dignified sanitation is not guaranteed.

More than 50% of schools in Lesotho still lack access to basic WASH services. This challenge is made worse by poverty, with nearly half of Lesotho's population living below the national poverty line. For many school communities, improving toilets is not something they can solve on their own.



## Strengthening School Sanitation at Leqele and Makoanyane Primary Schools

With support from **Action Ireland Trust**, new ablution blocks are now nearing completion at both schools. These facilities will give learners and staff **access to safer, cleaner, and more dignified toilets**, helping improve hygiene, protect wellbeing, and create school environments where children can learn with greater confidence.

This is the kind of practical infrastructure **rise** International is committed to delivering. Each completed toilet block helps reduce the number of learners facing unsafe sanitation at school and shows how targeted investment can turn a national challenge into visible change at the community level.



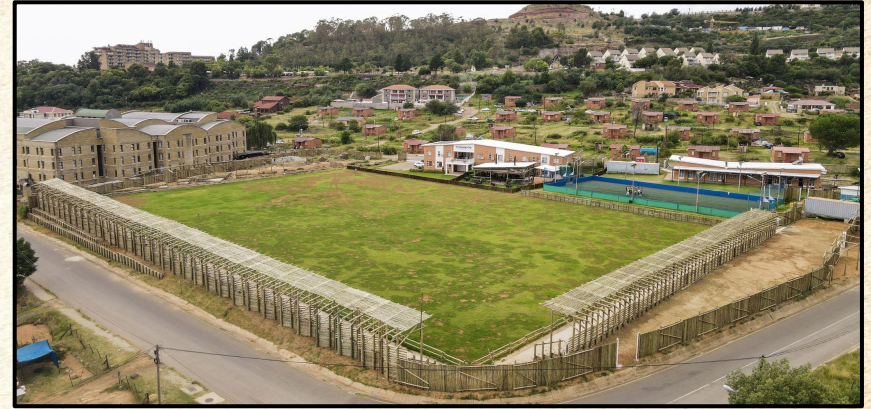
Before and After Leqele and Makoanyane P.S Toilets - Lesotho



## Innovative, Climate-Smart Infrastructure at Kick4Life Stadium

At Kick4Life Stadium, four shipping containers have been repurposed into a new community gym, creating K4L's latest social enterprise space. The gym will serve K4L participants, young people, athletes, and community members, while also supporting income generation for wider community programs.

The project addresses a common construction challenge: useful materials are often discarded or underused, while communities still need affordable, functional spaces. By giving the containers a second life, the project demonstrates how **existing materials can be transformed into practical infrastructure** rather than adding to construction waste. The result is a gym that supports **health, wellbeing, and income generation**, while demonstrating a more resource-conscious way of building.



Stadium of Life & Bophelo Health and Gymnasium - Kick4Life | Lesotho



# Key Challenges

## 1. Community needs remain greater than available resources

Across the quarter, the work highlighted the widespread and urgent nature of community needs. Schools such as Leqele, Makoanyane, and Cenez demonstrate that access to **safe, dignified sanitation remains a major challenge for many learners and staff in Lesotho**. While progress is being made at Makoanyane and Leqele, the visit to Cenez showed that many schools still require similar support.

## 2. Poverty and unemployment continue to shape project demand

The need for enterprise incubation and work-readiness support remains high, as many young people and small businesses operate in a difficult economic environment. With **youth unemployment estimated at around 39%** and nearly half of Basotho living below the national poverty line, **demand for practical pathways into work, income, and enterprise growth remains significant**.

## 3. Environmental challenges require long-term behaviour change

In Kenya, the Junior Rangers Club and community clean-up showed strong participation from children and community members. However, **waste pollution cannot be solved by a single activity alone. Poor disposal, limited recycling, and pollution** in shared spaces require continued education, community participation, and stronger habits around waste separation and environmental care.



# Key Challenges

## 4. Partnership coordination takes time and careful alignment

Several initiatives this quarter depended on collaboration with schools, local partners, donors, community leaders, and international institutions. While these partnerships are a major strength, they also require careful coordination, shared expectations, and consistent communication to ensure that activities remain grounded in community priorities.

## 5. Sustainable construction needs stronger awareness and buy-in

Projects such as the Kick4Life container gym demonstrate the value of repurposing materials, yet resource-conscious construction remains poorly understood and underused. More **awareness is needed to demonstrate to communities, partners, and clients that reused or repurposed materials** can create high-quality, functional, and socially valuable spaces.



Executive Director-Daniela Gusman equips entrepreneurs at the CAFI Sess<sup>19</sup>



# Lessons learned

## 1. Practical solutions make the strongest case for impact

This quarter showed that impact is most visible when projects respond directly to everyday problems. Safe toilets, work-readiness training, clean public spaces, and functional community facilities may seem simple, but they address real barriers to dignity, health, employment, and well-being.

## 2. Local partnerships help extend reach

Training nine staff members from The Hub as Work Ready facilitators demonstrated that **working through trusted local partners can expand access to skills support beyond a single organisation's direct delivery**. This approach strengthens local ownership and allows more young people to benefit over time.

## 3. Children learn best when environmental education is hands-on

The Junior Rangers Club and community clean-up showed that **children respond strongly when environmental learning is practical**. Learning about ecosystems and then taking part in a clean-up helps children connect knowledge with action, building a sense of responsibility for the places they use every day.



# Lessons learned

## 4. Donor visits are most powerful when they connect current progress with future need

The Order of Malta visit worked well because it showed both what is already possible at Makoanyane and what is still needed at Cenez. This helped **connect visible progress with a clear future opportunity for support.**

## 5. Repurposed materials can create both social and environmental value

The Kick4Life gym showed that underused materials can become useful infrastructure. By converting four shipping containers into a community gym, the project demonstrated that **sustainable construction is not only about reducing waste**; it can also create spaces that **support health, wellbeing, enterprise, and community programs.**

## 6. Infrastructure projects must be explained to the people they serve

The school sanitation projects are not only construction updates. Their real value lies in what they make possible for learners and staff: safer school days, improved hygiene, greater dignity, and better learning conditions. Future reporting should continue to connect infrastructure outputs with the human change behind them..



## Financial Report Jan - Mar 2026

Expenses	LSL	% of Total Cost	USD
Administration Costs	50,421	14	3,090
Bank/Mobile Money Fees	4,484	1	275
Construction Material	77,511	21	4,750
Labour	192,287	52	11,783
Other	15,871	4	973
Tools & Equipment	15,120	4	927
Transport	16,647	4	63
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>372,341</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21,859</b>



[www.riseint.org](http://www.riseint.org)



[info@riseint.org](mailto:info@riseint.org)



5C Happy Villa, Maseru,  
Lesotho



45 Dan Road, Suite 126  
Canton, MA 02021 USA

