



CARE Lesotho

Livelihoods in Lesotho

Stephen Turner

with contributions by

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Preface

This report draws on work done in Phases I and II of the 1999-2000 national survey of poverty and livelihoods in Lesotho, undertaken by CARE Lesotho and Sechaba Consultants. A number of funding agencies gave generous support to the survey. They included, for Phase I, Lesotho's Ministry of Education, Ireland Aid through the Irish Consulate in Lesotho, the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organisation, and the UK Department for International Development. The UK Department for International Development funded Phase II of the survey and the publication of this report. CARE Lesotho and Sechaba Consultants are grateful to all these agencies for their contributions to the survey.

A draft of the report was presented to representatives of government departments, funding agencies and NGOs on 14 December, 2000. A wide range of helpful comments were received at that meeting. Many of the suggestions that participants made about how to present and structure the material in a more accessible and useful way have been taken into account in preparing this final version. I am also grateful to the colleagues who have since reviewed the draft in detail and provided additional comments and suggestions.

As the one who has pulled this report together, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and thoughtful contributions of all the colleagues in CARE Lesotho and Sechaba Consultants who are named on the cover. They will join me in thanking the field staff who worked on the two phases of the survey, as well as many other people in the two organisations who provided guidance and support. Despite many shocks and stresses, CARE and Sechaba have produced work that I hope will be useful in promoting better livelihoods in Lesotho. We thank the thousands of Basotho who took part in one or both phases of this survey. We hope we have represented their circumstances and opinions accurately.

The report was drafted as John and Judy Gay were ending their 25 years in Lesotho. Like many of those involved in this study, I have benefited enormously from John's wisdom and support over the years. This is the last major piece of work to which he contributed during his time in the country. It is not the best of the many analyses of life in Lesotho that he has helped to produce, but it is certainly written with warm appreciation of all he has done for us.

Stephen Turner

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Abbreviations

COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
DRWS	Department of Rural Water Supply
GDP	gross domestic product
GNDI	gross national disposable income
GNP	gross national product
hh	household
IGA	income generating activity
JC	Junior Certificate
LEC	Lesotho Evangelical Church
LFCD	Lesotho Fund for Community Development
LHDA	Lesotho Highlands Development Authority
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
RC	Roman Catholic
RSA	Republic of South Africa
VIP	ventilated improved pit
WASA	Water and Sewerage Authority

Summary

The concept of livelihoods is not new in Lesotho, whose people have been pursuing multiple livelihood strategies for a century or more. Since the 1970s, analysts have increasingly appreciated the diversity and interdependence of these strategies, and the ways in which the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life in Lesotho are linked. Nevertheless, the emerging paradigm of livelihoods as a framework for development understanding and action can usefully sharpen our perspective on the challenges that Basotho face, and the ways in which outsiders can help them to tackle those challenges.

Following the two seminal poverty mapping studies undertaken by Sechaba Consultants earlier in the 1990s, CARE Lesotho therefore worked with Sechaba to undertake a **national survey of poverty and livelihoods in Lesotho** in 1999-2000. Phase I, undertaken by Sechaba, was intended as a successor to the 1991 and 1994 poverty studies. Phase II, designed by CARE and executed jointly by CARE and Sechaba, was intended to explore and explain the character and prospects of livelihoods in Lesotho. This synthesis report outlines the findings of both phases with regard to Basotho livelihoods.

The study is guided by another emerging view of life in Lesotho. As in many other countries, it has been conventional to see Basotho as victims of poverty who need outsiders' support in trying to better their lot. A more accurate view is that Basotho are ingenious and resilient and have achieved a substantial amount in raising their standard of living despite doubling their population since independence in 1966. These achievements are impressive in view of the deteriorating regional economic climate and the parlous state of the nation's natural resource base. The participatory approach of the livelihoods paradigm gives the lead to local people in analysing and explaining their circumstances, and facilitates their choices about how to enhance them. It resonates well with this more assertive view of Basotho's capabilities and achievements.

Two key imperatives guide the structure of this report. First, that, it should give prominence to the **views of Basotho themselves** about their livelihoods. Secondly, that it should focus on the **practical concerns of policy** for the sustainable development of Lesotho.

The report is therefore divided into two parts. After an introductory outline of the livelihoods perspective (section 2), **Part I** focuses on the key content of a study of livelihoods in Lesotho. First, it outlines **how Basotho see livelihoods** (section 3), drawing on the many statements by local people that were recorded during Phases I and II of the survey. Secondly, in section 4, it places these perspectives on Lesotho livelihoods in the broader **national context**, by outlining a number of key issues and trends in economy and society. Thirdly (section 5), it identifies the key **policy implications and recommendations** that arise from this study. Those with no time to read further will gain a full view of the survey's key findings and recommendations from Part I of the report.

Part II of the report fills in more detail about Basotho livelihoods, drawing on the wealth of data generated by the two phases of the 1999-2000 survey and working through some of the key features of the CARE livelihoods model. Those who want a fuller explanation of the recommendations in Part I, and those with an analytical interest in Basotho livelihoods, should find further useful material in Part II.

HIV/AIDS now poses a very grave threat to Basotho livelihoods. Over the coming decades it will dangerously weaken the social and economic fabric of the nation. The AIDS catastrophe is one reason why the traditional equity and social interdependence of Basotho livelihoods are now at risk. The ratio between those who must exploit these social networks and those who are able to provide support to them may tilt catastrophically into deficit.

Meanwhile, Basotho's outlines and analyses of their livelihoods continue to give more emphasis to **agriculture** than is warranted by the economic facts. The only way to farm economically is with minimum external inputs and with minimal, but sometimes positive, net returns. It is a long time since agriculture was truly the backbone of Lesotho. But it still plays an important role in the livelihoods of the poor. Better off Basotho still seem to assert the importance of the land in their livelihoods by investing in farm inputs and implements – and generally losing money in the process.

What Basotho really see their livelihoods revolving around is **wage employment**. It is many generations since the nation was incorporated into the regional cash economy, and money certainly circulates through most dimensions of Basotho livelihoods. But those generations of wage employment have stifled local economic initiative. They have led Basotho to believe that a livelihood without wages is unfulfilled, and that poverty can only be addressed through wage employment. These are misapprehensions that they must be encouraged to discard in the current hostile economic climate, where wage employment opportunities are dwindling in real terms. Migrant labour by Basotho to South African mines has halved in the 1990s.

Another dangerous dependence that is characteristic of Basotho's livelihood analysis is their assertion that **government must solve their problems**. At least in public debate, they identify government as the lead agent for almost all kinds of development change. They therefore call on government to give them jobs. Government exacerbates this distorted view of its capacity and role with its labour intensive *fato fato* public works programmes, although these make a very real – if temporary – contribution to the livelihoods of the poor. In practice, however, Basotho show the resilience and ingenuity that we asserted above. Many are making the best of a bad situation and developing their livelihoods with very little input from government.

Much of the burgeoning **small enterprise** sector in Lesotho operates on the margins of legality and/or morality. In addition to street vending, small workshops and other such enterprises, Basotho are exploiting the cash economy vigorously through the brewing and sale of alcohol, the widespread production and marketing of dagga (marijuana) and casual and professional sex work. But although these are some of the ways in which Basotho have managed to keep their livelihoods afloat, they also contribute directly to the weakening of the national social fabric and to the steady rise in **social pathologies** such as violent crime and the abuse of women and children. While stock theft is an ancient tradition in southern Africa, it has reached crisis proportions in Lesotho, devastating many rural livelihoods overnight. Bringing it under control is a national priority. These social pathologies are also often linked to HIV/AIDS. Bringing that under control is the most urgent priority of all.

Like the preceding poverty studies, this study shows the continuing concentration of **deep poverty in the remote mountain areas**, where conditions contrast sharply with the growing economic vibrancy of the lowlands, the foothills and above all the urban areas. Much development support should continue to focus on helping Basotho assure basic livelihood needs in the remote mountains. Indeed, the **overarching paradigm for development strategy in Lesotho** should be the dual one of directly strengthening safety nets in these poorest regions while focusing on the indirect enhancement of enabling frameworks for Basotho enterprise in the more promising areas.

Unlike the preceding studies, however, this review emphasises a **new kind of poverty** in Lesotho. On many indicators, this is now the worst poverty of all. It is the poverty of those at the bottom of the livelihoods profile in **urban areas**. Much more needs to be done to understand the plight of the poorest Basotho in and around the towns, and to find ways of helping them achieve an acceptable economic and social standard of living. Basotho have rarely known economic or social destitution. But it threatens some of them now in the rapidly expanding urban areas.

The livelihood problems revealed by this study reflect the **vulnerability context** of Basotho livelihoods. Overall, these are the problems of livelihoods in which good health cannot yet be taken for granted, owing to the prevalent standard of living and level of health services. They are the problems of livelihoods that are seeking to engage with and depend upon the formal sector economy, but are very poorly equipped to do so. Moreover, it is a highly competitive economy with far too few opportunities for the number of Basotho seeking to exploit them. Many households are dangerously dependent on a single breadwinner, whose death or retrenchment may be a blow from which they cannot recover. These are also the problems of a society beset by increasing criminality. Finally, they are the problems of livelihoods that continue to depend in part on agriculture and a natural resource base whose condition is deteriorating. The inadequacy of a farming livelihood is particularly notable among the very poor, who commonly lack the means of agricultural production but have few economic alternatives.

In the **rural areas**, agriculture remains a prominent livelihood strategy across all economic strata. But many of the very poor must engage in sharecropping their own or others' land, or (typically in the case of old

widows) rent out their land to economically stronger households. At the other end of the scale, we find the better off households commonly involved in the sale of crops, wool and mohair. Some are also able to make money by renting out their agricultural equipment. The most lucrative cash crop of all, dagga, shows up in the livelihood strategies of the whole spectrum of rural households. Legalisation of the herb in South Africa could be catastrophic for Lesotho livelihoods.

Urban participants in this survey seemed to be able to name very few **livelihood strategies for the very poor**. By contrast, the very poor in rural areas can engage in a number of livelihood strategies that will usually preserve them from complete destitution. Many of these strategies exploit the **social capital and networks** that still reinforce Lesotho society. Their sustainability depends on the continuing integrity of Lesotho's social fabric – which is far from assured.

Basotho who participated in this study ranked **female headed households** in the poorer livelihood categories much more often than the overall average. But the livelihood status of female headed Basotho households is mixed. Those headed *de facto* by women actually show a higher cash income per member than male headed households. This is because so many of these households can profit from the wage income of absent husbands. On the contrary, households headed *de jure* by women form the poorest class of livelihoods in Lesotho. These are usually households headed by ageing widows who have lost many of the human and material assets that they enjoyed in their younger days and who may find it hard to secure any cash income at all. In the rural areas, these are often the households that suffer the deepest poverty. The question for the *de facto* female headed households is whether their current comparative prosperity, usually grounded in the wage earnings of absent husbands, will be sustainable in the changing livelihood context of the coming decades.

Overall, Basotho are now able to assure little of their household **food security** from their own agricultural production. The proportion of households who can reach FAO cereal self sufficiency standards is now very small. Female headed households are less assured of food security than male headed ones, but the differences between them are modest.

Poor health remains one of the principal stresses on the livelihoods of the poor. The reported incidence of disease is the same in the lowlands and foothills as it is in urban areas, but is somewhat higher in the mountains. The poor report more illness than the better off, with the gradient particularly steep in the urban areas. There have been significant improvements in **water and sanitation** conditions during the 1990s, but one fifth of Basotho households must still use unsafe water sources and over half still have no kind of toilet. *De jure* female headed households are the worst provided with sanitation facilities.

Basotho have managed to increase their exposure to **education** during the 1990s. But the poorest households have achieved the smallest increase in their levels of educational contact. Male headed households have been considerably more successful in getting their children to school than female headed households, particularly those with *de facto* female heads.

Reflecting on the multifaceted character of Basotho livelihoods, it is tempting to propose **recommendations** that are equally multifaceted, covering virtually all known sectors as well as the broader macro-economic and political issues that shape the context in which people live. The report on Phase I of this study took such an approach. Rather than repeating the arguments made in the Phase I report - as valid as they may be – **we choose in this synthesis report to take a more strategic view**. We suggest that the sets of recommendations in the Phase I report and in this report be treated as complementary.

Lesotho's highest social and development priority must be achieving a coordinated and effective response to HIV/AIDS. All the recommendations we make below must assume that this highest priority is being addressed.

Our strategic view of livelihoods in Lesotho identifies several key areas of intervention. The first concerns **democracy, governance and rights**. Secondly, and still centrally important in Basotho's view of their livelihoods, is the **rural natural resource sector**, and the livelihood activities it comprises. Thirdly, policy needs to find ways to help Basotho optimise the flexibility, creativity and responsiveness of their **multiple livelihood strategies**, often linking back into agriculture but spreading into many different income-

generating sub sectors – many in the urban and peri-urban areas. A fourth, related area of intervention concerns facilitation of mutually beneficial livelihood **links with the South African economy**. Finally, our strategic view proposes a different kind of policy imperative: **the provision of safety nets**, or livelihood protection, for the significant sector of Basotho society who are so crippled by poverty or other circumstances that they have no prospect of getting ahead.

Based on this strategic view of livelihoods, we go on to propose a **strategic vision** to guide the design of development policy in Lesotho. This vision combines **two forms of support**. For much of the nation, the best mode of support is **facilitation** of Basotho's own efforts to enhance their livelihoods in a number of spheres. Secondly, it remains important to provide **safety nets** as more direct livelihood protection for those who are afflicted by deep poverty, whose vulnerability context is overwhelming, or whose broader livelihood context is predominantly hostile. Transcending most of the areas of development facilitation that we identify is a primary strategic thrust: helping Basotho to **redefine 'work' and successful livelihoods**.

While most development projects over the decades have had little or no success in contributing to sustainable development in Lesotho, Basotho have been getting ahead in whatever way they could. They will continue to do so. But there are many ways in which their path can be made smoother, by the removal of obstacles and constraints and by the development of human resources. Our strategic view suggests **key areas in which such targeted facilitation is needed**: in the fields of **governance; agriculture and natural resources; enhanced interaction with South Africa; and the overall promotion of capability and flexibility in the pursuit of multiple livelihood strategies**. In the lowlands of Lesotho, and in the urban and peri-urban areas that are so rapidly spreading across them, Basotho do not need much conventional development help from outside. Instead, they need facilitation, to enhance the legal, economic, social and institutional frameworks within which they try to better their lives.

A special kind of facilitation concerns the **redefinition of 'work' and successful livelihoods**. Basotho need to be helped in abandoning concepts of formal sector wage employment as the necessary foundation of a viable livelihood. There are many signs of change in this direction, as this study shows. But the survey also reveals how much Basotho continue to look to wage employment and the provision of outside assistance as the most likely ways out of poverty. **Strategic areas of facilitation** that we recommend in this regard include fundamental **changes to educational value systems, curricula and institutions**; the enhancement of access to **credit and essential services such as electricity and water**; and intensified efforts to ease **marketing** constraints.

We also identify a number of more direct, **safety net interventions**. These include a **targeted pension scheme**; programmes to **support those affected or infected by HIV/AIDS**, in particular AIDS orphans; support for **NGOs working with the destitute**; programmes to address the **energy needs of the poor**; the facilitation of **sharecropping**; continued efforts to **enhance infrastructure and services in the most impoverished areas**; renewed attention to the basics of **sustainable and profitable crop and livestock production**; **school feeding** programmes; and the maintenance and upgrading of **health and nutritional surveillance systems**.

The report urges caution with regard to adjustments to Lesotho's **land tenure** system. Great care must be taken to preserve the equity of access which households currently enjoy. Where it is not possible to provide land for crop production, efforts should concentrate on stimulating or facilitating sharecropping arrangements that are beneficial to the poor.

The facilitation of **sustainable agricultural development** efforts by Basotho must remain central to development strategies in this country. Support for basic food production, in particular in home gardens, has an important role to play in safety net strategies too.

There can be no quick fix for agriculture in this country, but a number of **technical ideas** would reward more committed attention in government and donor programmes. Some work has already been done on all of them. They include the **integration of soil and water conservation with enhanced crop production**; the **reclamation of limited areas of degraded land, such as dongas, for intensive food production**; **zero grazing** systems; and **mixed and low external input cropping practices**, in particular the indigenous Machobane farming system.

Overarching these technical ideas for agriculture are **three strategic considerations**. The first is that things are likely to get worse in the Lesotho economy before they get better. It is therefore essential that the nation **maintain the advisory services and infrastructure** necessary to support a likely future revival of interest in agriculture; and that it facilitate the creative agricultural experimentation already being undertaken by some Basotho. Although much of the future of Lesotho is urban and peri-urban, Basotho will need all the agricultural and horticultural ideas they can get in the years to come.

The second strategic consideration concerns another kind of redefining. We have spoken of the need to redefine work. Linked to this, as we have pointed out, is the need to redefine learning. In agriculture, this means the **adoption of radically different extension strategies**, such as the experiential learning methods being promoted by CARE. These strategies facilitate creative experimentation and the sharing of ideas by and among Basotho, rather than the conventional transfer of technical knowledge from extension worker to farmer.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need to **assess the likely impacts of HIV/AIDS on Lesotho agriculture**. How far will current or alternative production practices remain feasible as people are incapacitated and die?

As with agriculture, there is considerable policy and donor fatigue with regard to local government in Lesotho. But **effective local government – and thus effective natural resource management** – remain critically important for stronger and sustainable livelihoods in this country. Our strategic recommendation is that government, NGOs and external agencies all commit themselves afresh to providing the **capacity building and logistical support** that local institutions need to perform effectively.

Only if local institutions are reinforced and developed in this way will there be a prospect of sustainable, **community-based natural resource management** in Lesotho. We recommend an integrated effort by the Ministries of Agriculture and Local Government to empower **Village Development Councils** (or the bodies that may succeed them under the Local Government Act, 1997) for their central role in coordinating range management, forest management, land administration and local land use planning. To be effective, such measures must be linked to the enhancement of rural security.

We go on to make more detailed strategic recommendations for the urban and rural sectors in Lesotho. We conclude our recommendations by looking at **regional policy for Lesotho**, taking into account:

- the increasingly **urban or peri-urban character of many Lesotho livelihoods**;
- the continuing gravity of **poverty in the remoter mountain areas**;
- a new kind of **poverty that is emerging in the (peri) urban areas**. On many indicators used in this study, the poorest livelihood category in these areas is worse off than any other group in the country. This poses new challenges for welfare support and development policy;
- the **decreasing relevance of the conventional division of Lesotho into four agro-ecological zones**. In addition to the lowlands/foothills and the mountains, the third major zone of the country is now the urban and peri-urban sector.

The **strategic regional vision** proposed in this study builds on the established recognition of severe poverty in remote mountain areas, but proposes a slightly more differentiated spatial view of development challenges and strategies:

- much of the **safety net** work that the nation needs should continue to be focused in the **remote mountains**;
- a new kind of **safety net** provision also needs to be designed and delivered in the **urban areas**, particularly Maseru;
- broadly speaking, **facilitation** strategies (including those for land, agriculture and natural resources) should focus on the **western and northern lowlands and foothills**, from Quthing to Butha-Buthe;

- however, **nodes and regions of growth should also be identified and promoted in mountain areas**. These include zones affected by the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (which ironically also need some specialised safety net provision) and mountain growth points like Semonkong, Mapholaneng and Mphaki. These nodes and regions should be the targets of the rural livelihood facilitation initiatives that the study identifies.

Part I. How Basotho see their livelihoods, and what this means for policy

1. Introduction

1.1. The background to this study

The people of the Kingdom of Lesotho have a long history of adapting their livelihoods to changing, mostly adverse circumstances. The kingdom first formed as Basotho with a wise leader began to build political and social frameworks that could sustain them through the turmoil of the 19th century. Since then, the Basotho have been the objects of colonial exploitation and racial oppression, but have managed to survive as an independent nation. During the second half of the arduous 20th century, Basotho and their livelihoods have been the object of an increasing amount of academic and more practical analysis. For some decades, the kingdom was all but engulfed by a flood of ‘development’ assistance. The primary concern of all this attention (framed within the context of hostility to apartheid in neighbouring South Africa) has been the poverty of Basotho. While few analyses have adequately understood or explained the reasons for the national condition, most have focused on the impoverishment and hardship of life in Lesotho, and have sought to identify ways of helping the Basotho in their plight.

Focusing on poverty has helped outsiders to a better appreciation of how they can support Basotho in alleviating some of the hardships that have so constrained them. The waves of development money spent on alleviating or relieving poverty have had many beneficial effects – although, as in most of the third world, the overall cost effectiveness of this support has been embarrassingly low. The standard of living of Basotho has risen substantially in the last quarter of the 20th century, and would be the envy of many other Africans if they knew how people live in this southern kingdom. But many Basotho continue to live in real and unremitting hardship which, as this report will show, is getting worse for the very poorest.

Meanwhile, a new perspective has recently emerged to challenge the dominant view of Basotho as victims of poverty. Driven partly by an appreciation of the contrast between the lives of rural black South Africans and their neighbours in Lesotho, this view emphasises the strengths of Basotho’s achievement. Despite having been forced into a small space and a harsh environment by colonialism and apartheid, Basotho have survived. Although twice as many of them occupy this small space than at independence from Britain in 1966, their standard of living has risen over the decades. Although the productivity of their agriculture has been dwindling, many are finding new ways to sustain themselves. An ingenious farmer in the south west converts dongas (erosion gullies) into fields and sells his produce to South Africans across the border. “They fold their arms and wait for their pensions”, he says of his lucrative market. There is no state pension in Lesotho.

This new perspective urges respect for the ingenuity of Basotho in keeping abreast of changing and still adverse circumstances. It acknowledges the hardships and injustices that many of them must still endure, but it calls for a more subtle approach than the simple donation of aid to the victims of poverty. It has emerged alongside, and partly because of, a deepening appreciation of the complex and often sophisticated bundles of strategies that Basotho deploy to maintain and enhance the material and social quality of their lives. It therefore blends well with the emerging international focus on understanding livelihoods as a means of designing more effective development support. It also resonates with the growing global emphasis on letting the poor speak and act for themselves through more participatory approaches to the development process.

CARE Lesotho has been at the forefront in applying livelihoods perspectives to the design and delivery of development programmes in this country. Achieving this fundamental paradigm shift has not been easy, but its programmes are starting to achieve results in some areas. Sechaba Consultants, a local company, have spearheaded a deeper understanding of poverty and development problems through their seminal poverty mapping studies in 1991 and 1994 and their thorough analyses of a host of national development issues during the decade.

1.3. The approach of this report

This study of livelihoods in Lesotho draws on the findings of both phases of the 1999-2000 national survey. It draws data and some discussion from Sechaba's Phase I report, and links them to presentation and analysis of the findings of Phase II. These are two very different data sets, grounded in two different paradigms and styles of rural survey work. The challenges of bringing the two approaches together are discussed further in section 6 below.

Two key imperatives guide the structure of this report:

- a fundamental principle of the livelihoods approach is that those living out the livelihoods should be the leading participants in its application. In theory (though certainly not always in practice), outsiders should only be facilitators, helping local people to explore their livelihoods and act to enhance them with the concepts and tools that the approach offers. A report that is guided by this approach should therefore give prominence to what its subjects themselves think about their livelihoods. The views of the authors and of other development people should not obscure the attitudes and perceptions of those living the livelihoods. While it is important for us outsiders to offer interpretations and recommendations about Basotho livelihoods, these should be clearly distinguished from what Basotho themselves have to say;
- this report, and the studies that led to it, are meant to be practical contributions to effective development strategies for Lesotho. Practical suggestions about what Basotho, their government and outside agencies can do to enhance livelihoods should not be confused or obscured by lengthy analysis of the subject – however important that analysis may be in guiding the recommendations that are made.

We were reminded of these two key imperatives at the December 2000 workshop where the draft of this report was discussed. That draft report outlined the livelihoods approach – and CARE's version of a livelihoods model – and then worked analytically through each component of Basotho livelihoods. In the process, data from Phases I and II of the survey, including many statements from participating Basotho, were presented along with the interpretative comments of the authors. Many of the reviewers at the December workshop felt that the resulting document was too long and technical. They found it hard to disentangle the views of local people from those of the authors and other development people. They felt that the leading messages and recommendations of the survey were not sufficiently clear.

This final report is therefore divided into two parts. After an introductory outline of the livelihoods perspective (section 2), Part I focuses on the key content of a study of livelihoods in Lesotho. First, it outlines how Basotho see livelihoods (section 3), drawing on the many statements by local people that were recorded during Phases I and II of the survey. Secondly, in section 4, it places these perspectives on Lesotho livelihoods in the broader national context, by outlining a number of key issues and trends in economy and society. Thirdly (section 5), it identifies the key policy implications and recommendations that arise from this study. Those with no time to read further will gain a full view of the survey's key findings and recommendations from Part I of the report.

Part II of the report fills in more detail about Basotho livelihoods, drawing on the wealth of data generated by the two phases of the 1999-2000 survey and working through some of the key features of the CARE livelihoods model. Those who want a fuller explanation of the recommendations in Part I, and those with an analytical interest in Basotho livelihoods, should find further useful material in Part II.

Analysis of development conditions and prospects in Lesotho conventionally refers to the country's agro-ecological zones (the lowlands, foothills and mountains). The Senqu valley is sometimes identified as a fourth zone, within the mountains. While these zones are still important determinants of socio-economic differentiation, it is increasingly necessary to differentiate as well between rural areas and the urban and peri-urban areas that are rapidly expanding in the lowlands. This report will refer repeatedly to the differences between agro-ecological zones and between (peri-) urban and rural conditions. But it will avoid exhaustive cataloguing of all livelihood conditions in each and every zone and area. For the most part, it will offer national generalisations, with comments on key spatial variations. We have decided that the most useful

spatial differentiation is between the urban areas and two types of rural area: the lowlands and foothills, and the mountains (in which we include the Senqu valley). Section 5.7 focuses on geographic variation in Lesotho livelihoods, and its implications.

2. The livelihoods perspective

2.1. Applying the approach

This report aims to review poverty and development prospects in Lesotho from a livelihoods perspective. Phase II of the 1999-2000 study complemented the Phase I survey, which emphasised quantitative data collection at household level, with a more intensive and participatory investigation of livelihoods at a smaller number of sites. The Phase I survey used some participatory methods too, and incorporated many elements of livelihoods analysis in its reporting (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 125-172). This report focuses more specifically on the concept of livelihoods as a way of explaining how people live, what they aspire to, and what their prospects of achieving those aspirations may be. It therefore aims to rely more heavily on Basotho's voices, views and mental constructs of life than conventional survey analysis would do. In the latter, the issues and their presentation are strongly influenced by the analytical perspective of the investigators. In livelihoods analysis, those writing the report should stay further in the background, applying less of an analytical filter to the worldviews of their subjects. They are unlikely to succeed completely in this regard, since livelihoods analysis has had to develop its own models of the key elements in these worldviews and in the strategies they inspire. As will be argued below, there is a risk that the model and the method obscure the real stories that livelihoods analysis should tell.

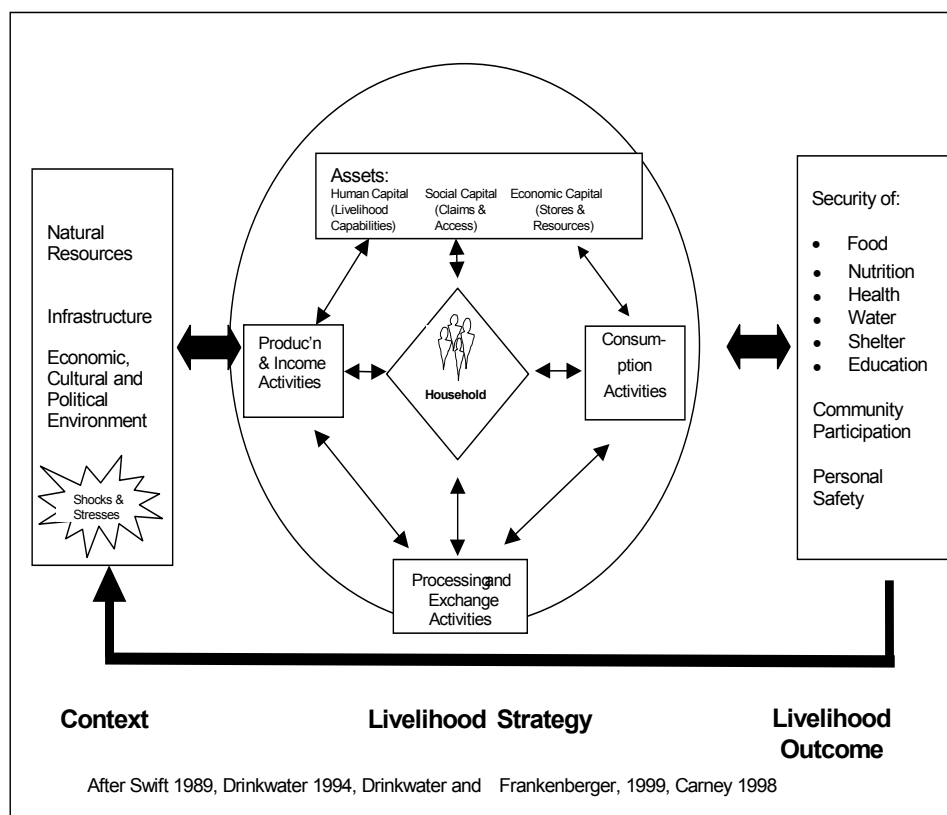


Figure 2. CARE's livelihoods model

The concept of livelihoods has attracted widespread attention from development agencies and analysts during recent years. As a result, there are a variety of livelihoods frameworks and diagrams, and many analyses based on the concept seek to elaborate or refine it in one way or another. This report will be guided (but not restricted) by the CARE livelihood model (Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999; Carney *et al.*, 1999; see Figure 2). Most readers of this report will be familiar with livelihoods models, so it does not seem useful to take space explaining the CARE model here. The diagram itself shows the main features of livelihoods analysis (section 2.2), and emphasises the holism and interaction that characterise this view of life.

New challenges arise when the livelihoods approach is applied at national scale, rather than at the local, village levels where it has typically been used. As will be explained in section 6, the national scale of this review has necessitated various adaptations of conventional livelihoods methodology, and a more synthetic and quantitative mode of analysis than is usual in livelihoods studies. Nevertheless, the analysis continues to be driven by the framework, concepts and strengths of the livelihoods approach. It aims to use these strengths to develop new and more useful insights into the ways Basotho live, and the ways in which they might be helped to live better.

2.2. Strengths of the approach

The key strengths of the livelihoods approach are:

- its emphasis on the people that development is meant to help, rather than on governments, resources or externally driven priorities or programmes (DFID, n.d.);
- its consequent emphasis on, and respect for, the views and priorities that people express;
- its positive approach to the strengths, capabilities and resources that people have. This leads to development strategies that assert and build on strengths rather than just identifying weaknesses and needs. People are treated as leading partners rather than passive beneficiaries;
- its awareness, nevertheless, of the shocks and stresses that people must face – leading to thorough efforts to identify and understand the vulnerability context in which livelihoods are pursued;
- its holistic approach to the context and spaces in which people live, to the multiple livelihood strategies that people pursue, and to the cultural, spiritual, political and other non-material dimensions of hardship, capability and wellbeing;
- its acknowledgement of the dynamic character of livelihoods. Real lives are not static, in either temporal or socio-economic terms. They must adjust to constantly changing context and conditions. They must tackle tensions between livelihood motives and values, balance threats and opportunities, and strive for strategies that make the most of fluctuating personal relationships within households, between households and across the local and broader community. They may grow stronger or weaker over time. Their bundle of strategies, and the relative importance of its component parts, are likely to vary as individuals and households make their way through the years;
- its concern with social, economic and environmental sustainability.

2.3. Problems with the approach

Despite all these strengths and the many advances in understanding that the livelihoods approach has achieved, the practice of the approach has revealed risks and weaknesses too:

- the holism and the participatory character of livelihoods work can easily generate such a vast mass of ideas and concerns that purposeful action becomes hard to prioritise and deliver. The livelihoods approach presents a formidable management challenge. It needs to be driven sensitively but purposefully. Otherwise, years of work may generate only mountains of workshop reports and PRA data;

- the livelihoods approach is intellectually demanding of staff at all levels in development agencies and programmes. Unless they are thoroughly trained and strongly supported, those implementing livelihood programmes in the field are unlikely to be effective;
- many analysts and academics have responded enthusiastically to the insights and intellectual challenges of the livelihoods approach. Constant generation of refined models, diagrams and papers may alienate those committed to practical change on the ground;
- because the approach has been so enthusiastically adopted by several development agencies, it risks becoming a new orthodoxy where form matters more than substance.

2.4. What's new?

Although the application of the livelihoods approach to the development challenges of Lesotho has been refreshing and useful, its message of holism is not new for this country. Since the 1970s, a growing number of analysts have recognised that rural Basotho should not be called 'farmers'. They have acknowledged that, for generations, rural Basotho livelihoods have depended on a bundle of subsistence strategies that are practised in remote as well as local spaces and that change over time as a household's circumstances evolve (section 4.9). A new dynamism is now being injected into many Basotho livelihoods as urbanisation accelerates and people look away from the rural sector for their future. (25% of the population now live in urban or peri-urban areas.) The livelihoods approach is thus a welcome opportunity to reinforce existing insights into how Basotho make a living.

2.5. What next?

The challenge for this report is therefore to refine and update current thinking about the range of livelihood strategies that Basotho pursue, and to describe and explain the context and challenges that frame the business of living in Lesotho. The ultimate result of this analysis should be practical recommendations for people, government and development agencies. What can be done to help Basotho enhance their livelihoods and alleviate the poverty that currently afflicts so many of them? Government is currently drafting a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and the outcomes of the two phases of the national poverty and livelihoods study should be a useable input to that process (Norton and Foster, 2001).

3. How Basotho see livelihoods

3.1. How Basotho live

3.1.1. What makes a livelihood?

A variety of recent participatory surveys have included differentiation exercises in which Basotho have specified criteria to distinguish between the poor and the better off. These criteria give us a more specific picture of how Basotho view the elements that make up livelihoods, and how they define wellbeing within livelihoods. Asking people to build their local definition of categories of wellbeing, and to place themselves in the category that best describes their own condition, is a central method in many livelihood studies. In section 6.3, we outline the problems that we faced in trying to apply this primarily local approach in a national survey, and the solutions that we adopted. We begin this discussion by outlining another set of categories recently developed in Lesotho.

In a 1999 IFAD study reviewed in Phase I of this survey, rural people undertook wealth ranking exercises in which they identified 17 criteria, based on livelihood elements, that distinguish the poor, the average and the wealthy. 12 of these were quantified in Phase I of this survey as follows:

Table 1. Factors making up IFAD wellbeing index

	0=poor		1=moderate		2=wealthy	
	lowlands	mountains	lowlands	mountains	lowlands	mountains
small stock	0-4	0-10	5-25	11-49	>=25	>=50
cattle	0	0-1	1-7	2-19	>=8	>=20
fields	0-1	0-1	2	2	>=3	>=3
farm tools	0	0	1-2	1-2	3	3
food shortage	>6 months	>6 months	1-6 months	1-6 months	0 months	0 months
rooms in house	1	1	2-3	2-3	>=4	>=4
wage earners	0	0	1	1	>=2	>=2
schooling of children 6-15	none in school	none in school	some in school	some in school	all in school	all in school
ownership of formal business	no formal business	no formal business	formal business income>0 & <5000	formal business income>0 & <5000	formal business income>=5000	formal business income>=5000
active household members	none from 16-65	none from 16-65	some from 16-65 but head >65	some from 16-65 but head >65	some from 16-65 and head <= 65	some from 16-65 and head <= 65
disabled members	>=2	>=2	1	1	0	0
ability to hire workers	inc/memb/month <250	inc/memb/month <250	inc/memb/month 250-500	inc/memb/month 250-500	inc/memb/month >=500	inc/memb/month >=500

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 136.

It can be seen that, in the IFAD study, rural Basotho defined wealth in terms of livestock, fields, other assets (including housing), the household's access to wage income, whether children are in school, food security ownership of a business, the number of active or disabled members a household has, and whether the household can hire workers itself. They also distinguished between the number of livestock needed to make a household 'wealthy' in the lowlands and the higher number that a 'wealthy' household in the mountains would be expected to have. It is worth emphasising that this study did not cover town dwellers, who make up a growing proportion of the national population.

Social differentiation exercises were a major part of Phase II of the current study. Basotho in the 15 places visited during this phase based their definitions and comparisons of wellbeing on several groups of criteria. The following tables present typical profiles for each livelihood category, based on Basotho's application of these wellbeing criteria during the Phase II survey. From them, we can gain a comprehensive picture of what Basotho think makes up a livelihood. Looking at Table 1 - Table 4 and referring back to Figure 2, we can see Basotho identifying most of the livelihood elements that are shown in CARE's model of a livelihood framework. They refer to assets; to a variety of activities; and to the range of livelihood outcomes that different households achieve.

Table 2. Consolidated profiles of livelihood categories in urban areas

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Assets	Few with any livestock	Few with livestock – usually chickens or pigs Rarely have cattle	Pigs Chickens May have a few cattle Sewing machine	Cattle May have some savings Some have cars/ taxis/bakkies Chickens/pigs Donkeys/horses Sheep/goats
Income sources	Piece jobs, e.g. weeding/washing Some rely on pensions Receive help from relatives/friends/neighbours Begging Selling brooms, mats, hats	IGAs, e.g. sell snuff, fruit, veg, cooked food Assistance from relatives <i>Fato-fato</i> Brewing <i>joala</i> Building - although few jobs available Rent out rooms Rely on pensions Piece jobs, e.g. weeding/transporting luggage	Work in Lesotho or RSA in the factories or as conductors for taxi owners, as miners or domestic workers Brewing <i>joala</i> Sewing and sale of clothes Remittances Breeding pigs for sale Sale of vegs/fruits/snacks/milk/cooked food Sale of broilers Building - although few jobs available Brick making Rent out rooms/houses Piece jobs	Traditional healer Taxi/transport business Knit and sale of jerseys Brewing <i>joala</i> Waged employment in Lesotho/RSA e.g. clinic staff/conductors/ miners/shop workers/civil servants Remittances Some own shops/ cafes/businesses Sale of broilers Rent out rooms/houses Knitting jerseys for sale Brick making
Education/ skills	Driving		Sewing Builder Shoe repair Carpentry Brick laying Usually can see their children through primary school, but find the secondary school fees high	Driving Electricians Carpenters Knitting Mechanics
Land/ Food production	Some have fields which they sharecrop, but usually get little returns May rent out their land as they are unable to farm it	May have small gardens May have fields but have limited ability to use them so sharecrop with others who have draught power or can afford inputs	Some have small gardens and they produce vegetables and sometimes a little maize Very few have fields	No land - have small gardens where they grow vegs Few have fields due to shortage of land If have fields, practice sharecropping What they produce does not last the year
Food security	Eat 1-2 times per day <i>Papa and moroho</i> Sometimes have to beg food from their neighbours	<i>Papa and moroho</i> 2 times a day May eat meat when they have money following piece work	<i>Papa and moroho</i> Eat meat when can afford - at least once a month Eat 3 times per day Sometimes eat meat and rice at weekends	Purchase their food needs <i>Papa and moroho</i> Eat rice and meat on the weekends Eat 3 times per day: "they eat anything they like because they have money"
Health	Go to government hospitals if they have money	Some in this category are old	May struggle to find the money to attend the clinic, but some can afford private doctors	Private doctors
Fuel	Wood, shrubs, cow dung	Wood Aloe	Wood Shrubs Paraffin	Gas and paraffin Wood
CBOs	Try to keep up with payment for burial societies, but some just cannot afford	May be members of burial associations	Burial society members May also be members of stokvels/grocery associations	Burial society members May also be members of stokvels/grocery associations

Source: Phase II data.

Table 3. Consolidated profiles of livelihood categories in the lowlands and foothills

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Assets	Some have a few chickens and sometimes a donkey and a few goats Often do not have farm implements	Often have small stock (chickens, goats, pigs) and a few large (cows, donkeys) Some have farm implements	Usually have cattle, pigs, chickens, goats, sheep Have farming implements Some have woodlots Usually have coal and paraffin stoves Have radios	Many have cattle/ sheep/ chickens/ pigs/ donkeys/goats Usually have scotch carts, Often have vehicles, cars, tractors Some have woodlots Fridges, freezers, radios, TVs, HiFis Coal, gas and paraffin stoves
Income sources	Piece jobs both in RSA and Lesotho Brewing <i>joala</i> Begging for food Depend on friends and relatives for handouts May grow and sell vegetables and fruit locally May collect and sell thatch grass	Piece jobs in RSA and Lesotho Brewing <i>joala</i> Some do shoe, umbrella, paraffin stove or radio repairs Depend on relatives/friends for handouts Sale of livestock in crisis Sale of vegetables and fruit Hire out sons as herdboys <i>Fato-fato</i> Hire out farm implements	Rent out fields Sell chickens Sell livestock in crisis Sell part of crops Sell fruit and vegetables Some have at least 1 waged worker in the hh (domestic work, mines, factories, driving, security) Brewing <i>joala</i> Remittances Piece jobs and casual labour May rent out rooms/houses/shops	Remittances Sale of wool/mohair Sale of livestock/livestock products Sale of crops, fruit, vegetables At least one member in waged employment in RSA or in Lesotho e.g. nurse/ soldier/ teacher/ miners/ factory workers Own businesses – taxi, shop, cafe Some in the hh may do piece jobs Hire out vehicles, tractors, scotch carts Brewing <i>joala</i> and selling bottled beer Several wage earners doing a variety of businesses, casual, and waged labour Often own vehicles to transport people and goods May rent out rooms/houses/shops
Education/ skills	Brick making Making brooms, hats, traditional furniture Repair of farm implements, shoes, radios, umbrellas, paraffin stoves	Builders Carpenters Brick making Sewing Repair of farm implements, shoes, radios, umbrellas, paraffin stoves Making brooms, hats, traditional furniture Children often pulled out of school when the hh cannot afford fees any longer	Carpenters Builders, roofers Stone cutters Drivers Mechanics Electricians Sewing, knitting Traditional healers Endeavour to keep their children in school	Sewing, knitting Teachers Traditional healers Driving Mechanics Builders Stone masons Some children educated to university level
Land/ Food production	May not have land for farming May have fields but often remain fallow due to no draught power Sometimes agree with others in the village to plough their fields but this is done too late to allow for good harvest as these people first plough their own fields	May have fields but often have to sharecrop to access draught power and other inputs Mostly plant maize	May have more than 1 field Sharecrop with others (as they have farm equipment and draught animals) Mostly plant maize but also beans and sorghum	May have more than 1 field Sharecrop Plant maize, beans and sorghum Can usually grow enough food to last the year round and may even sell some Good yields as can afford to buy fertiliser
Food security	Eat 1 - 2 times per day <i>Papa</i> and <i>moroho</i> Eat meat usually at festivals Eat 'cactus' when it is in season to alleviate hunger	Eat 1 - 3 times per day depending on if there is piece work Eat <i>papa</i> and <i>moroho</i> Eat bread if they have done piece work Meat is rare - usually eaten when there are funerals or feasts in the village	2 - 3 meals per day Some have grain throughout the year but not all Eat <i>papa</i> and <i>moroho</i> and sometimes bread, eggs, beans and soup Eat meat once a month if they have a wage earner and others have good casual work	Eat 2 -3 times per day, and sometimes snacks Food from own fields lasts 10 - 12 months Eat <i>papa</i> , <i>moroho</i> , beans, milk, bread. Eat meat at least at month ends and often once a week for those who have a good income
Health	Many in this category are old and alone Mostly rely on traditional herbs when they are ill as cannot	Mainly depend on using traditional herbs when they are ill Sometimes visit the clinic but	Can afford clinics and traditional healers Some can afford private health care	Consult private doctors - usually in RSA; pay up to R70 per consultation

Livelihoods in Lesotho

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
	always afford to pay at the clinic	usually cannot do so due to the expense		
Fuel	Wood and shrubs taken illegally	Wood and shrubs taken illegally Paraffin when they can afford it Cow dung and crop residue	Wood from the woodlot Paraffin when they can afford it Shrubs	Cow dung Wood and shrubs Use paraffin/ gas / coal
CBOs	May be member of burial society but often in arrears.	May be members of burial societies, but some have to borrow from friends and neighbours to pay their fees	Usually members of burial societies May be members of farmer's groups, stokvels	Members of burial societies (sometimes more than 1): "Death does not wait for money in the house" May be members of farmer's groups, cooperatives, stokvels, and other associations

Source: Phase II data.

Table 4. Consolidated profiles of livelihood categories in the mountains

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Assets	Some have a few chickens and sometimes a donkey and a few goats	Often have small stock (chickens, goats, pigs) and a few large stock (cow, donkey, horse) May have scotch cart Said to "possess very few animals"	Usually have cattle, pigs, chickens, goats, sheep May have a horse Usually have farming implements May have scotch cart Some have woodlots Usually have coal, gas and paraffin stoves Have radios A few may have vehicles	Most have cattle (up to 20)/ sheep and goats (up to 120)/ chickens/ pigs/ donkeys/ /horses Usually have scotch carts and other farming implements May have vehicles, cars, tractors Some have woodlots Radios Coal, gas and paraffin stoves
Income sources	Piece jobs (weeding, harvesting, herding, smearing houses) Brewing <i>joala</i> for households engaged in this business Begging for food Weave and sell hats, mats, brooms, tables Depend on friends and relatives for handouts May collect and sell thatch grass, firewood Sale of dagga (small amounts) If have a donkey, will hire out Renting out rooms Assistance from church <i>Fato-fato</i>	Brewing <i>joala</i> Depend on relatives/friends for handouts Sale of livestock in crisis Sell chickens and fish Renting out horse, donkey Weave and sell hats, mats, brooms, tables Sale of vegetables and fruit Sale of dagga Piece jobs (weeding, harvesting) Plastering houses Sale of wood and shrubs Begging	Sell chickens Sell livestock in crisis Sale of wood, milk, grass ropes, clothes, tobacco, snuff, matches Hire out cattle for ploughing Hire out donkeys/horses for transport <i>Fato-fato</i> Traditional healers Sale of commercial beer Sell part of crops Sell fruit and vegetables Some have at least 1 waged worker in the hh (domestic work, mines, factories, driving, security) Brewing <i>joala</i> Sale of dagga Building Remittances Piece jobs (weeding, smearing houses, washing clothes) Sale of wool and mohair Sewing clothes for sale	Remittances Sale of wool/mohair on large scale Sale of livestock/livestock products Sale of crops when yield is good, fruit, vegetables At least one member in waged employment in RSA or in Lesotho e.g. nurse/ soldier/ teacher/ miners/ factory workers Own businesses – shop, cafe [49.1]63.7[11]P and selling bottled beer Some in hh involved in casual labour, e.g. block making Sale of dagga Hire out donkeys, horses Write "babeisi" for others Sewing clothes for sale

livelihoods of the better off – the highest of the four livelihood categories into which the various research sites' categorisations have been distilled. This category includes households who were described as wage earners (mine workers, civil servants), the self-employed (particularly those who own their own businesses) and farmers who are doing well.

3.1.2.1. Land

Aside from the urban - and to a lesser extent peri-urban - areas, households in this category generally own land (both residential sites and agricultural fields). Those who are engaged predominantly in farming own on average between two and three fields, and some engage in commercial production (often of dagga (marijuana) in remoter areas). Although these households are food secure (see below), they do not necessarily produce enough field crops for home consumption to last the entire year.

Many of these better off households - both those with fields and those without – also sharecrop. The better off are also able to afford inputs such as commercial fertilisers and improved seed varieties, as well as owning draught power and farming implements. Many households categorised as wage earners that do not own fields do practise sharecropping with other households. For example, the 'richest' residents of Mankoaeng (a northern lowland urban community) are predominantly wage earners who do not own fields due to a shortage of land. Some do rent fields from others, however, to produce for home consumption.

3.1.2.2. Income sources

Households classified as better off generally have at least one member engaged in wage employment or activities that generate a cash income. Such occupations in the urban and peri-urban areas include workers on South African mines, civil servants, shop owners, taxi owners, transport truck owners, brick makers, construction workers, bankers and nurses. In the rural areas, such households mainly earn cash from mine work; selling wool, mohair and livestock; selling dagga; owning and operating small businesses such as cafes and milling machines; owning and operating vehicles for transport; and selling bottled beer.

3.1.2.3. Skills, capabilities and education

In general most of the adults in these households have attained high school level, and some have also obtained COSC (the high school leaving certificate) or higher qualifications. The capabilities of the better off were often described as the ability to send children to school, as well as being physically able to perform casual work. This was especially mentioned in the rural areas, where farmers who are doing well were placed into the better off categories. In general, the better off households were described as possessing different skills and capabilities, enabling them to engage in different types of work that generate additional income for these households. Skills include driving, sewing, knitting, mechanical, construction, roofing, electrical, carpentry, business management, sheet metal works, and farm management. In Ha Makhalanyane, a central peri-urban community, the better off category was described as 'being capable of producing more food and making other investments'. Interestingly, in Ha Rakhoboli - another peri-urban community - those residents taking part in the social differentiation exercise stated that people in this category 'have no specific skills', aside from a few drivers and those with the agricultural skills to improve their harvests.

3.1.2.4. Assets

Better off households generally own farming equipment such as ploughs, tractors, and scotch carts. Many of these households also own vehicles for private use or for renting out. People in this category were said to have 'big and beautiful houses' in the urban and peri-urban areas, and more than one house in the rural areas. Other assets include sewing machines and household furniture such as fridges, televisions, large radios, and coal and gas stoves. In general their houses are well furnished. Fruit trees were mentioned as an asset of the better off in a few of the research areas. Also mentioned as an important asset in this category is the number and size of livestock people own, particularly if used for means of production such as draught power and for the sale of wool and mohair. Many of the better off households also own and operate small businesses such as cafes and hammer mills. In Ha Lechesa, a rural mountain village, households in the 'better off' category have high yields as a result of possessing the productive means such as land, animals and farm equipment. Ha Lechesa residents also stated that members of better off households are 'working hard on their farms and use their assets to access other people's farm land'.

3.1.2.5. Food security

Those in the better off households are in the position to enjoy a sufficient level of food security – eating on average three meals a day and a variety of foods such as *papa* (maize porridge), vegetables, meat, beans, lentils, rice, eggs, fish, milk, bread, coffee and tea and fruit. In many of these better off households, meat is only eaten once or twice a week, usually on a weekend. People from these households were described as ‘eating snacks whenever they feel like it’ and being ‘able to change their diet more frequently’. Food stores from the fields (if they own fields or are sharecropping) generally last for several months of the year and are supplemented by other food purchases that are made year round. In Ha Ramoholi, a southern rural area where the better off households are engaged predominantly in farming activities, these households were described as eating up to four times a day and having the option to ‘slaughter a sheep whenever they need meat’. Both the community level discussions and the individual household case studies indicated that there is no difference in food consumption among household members, though many respondents indicated that if there is a shortage of food the children are given priority.

3.1.2.6. Health

Only Mankoaeng – a northern lowland urban community - and Sheeshe – a northern rural border community - discussed health as an indicator of well being. People from better off households in Mankoaeng were described as ‘always being in good health despite the illnesses they are living with such as high blood pressure, ulcers, diabetes... they always go to private doctors’. In Sheeshe, the better off were described as having ‘good and promising health’ and seldom suffer from flu or diarrhoea.

Participants from the village of Ha Makopela, a rural lowland community, also cited ownership of toilets, or access to them, as a livelihood indicator. Almost all of the better off households own Ventilated Improved Pit Latrines (VIPs) in Ha Makopela.

The two boxes below present case studies of households that were categorised as being in the ‘better off’ category. Names have been changed. These households are among the few we interviewed that indicated a positive change in their livelihood since 1993.

A ‘better off’ household in the mountains

’Me Nthabiseng, the household head, is a widow. Her household consists of 11 members, of whom three contribute to the household’s income. Her granddaughter is a primary school teacher, and her son and his wife are both involved in farm work. The other members comprise grandchildren and one relative, none of whom bring in any additional income. Two of the grandsons (both aged 11) are hired out as shepherds.

’Me Nthabiseng is happy to have four of her grandchildren attending school as ‘it shows progress and a bright future for the household’. She is very proud of her granddaughter, who reached her COSC and is now teaching at a local primary school.

The family generates income through the sale of wool and mohair, as well as the sale of animals. This brings in a lot of money for the household, enough to maintain the household and send the grandchildren to school.

’Me Nthabiseng owns five fields which produce ‘nice yields every year’ and provide enough grain (predominantly maize) to feed all of the family members throughout the entire year with surplus for sale. She also owns numerous livestock: 15 cows, 89 sheep, seven goats, four horses, three donkeys, and 21 chickens, a plough, planter and a scotch cart. She also owns a radio. ’Me Nthabiseng says these assets really belong to her son who will take over her role as household head when she is dead.

The household eats *papa*, *moroho* (vegetables), beans, peas, milk, bread and tea throughout the week and up to three times a day. The same food is eaten by old and young alike, and for a change during the weekend a chicken is sometimes slaughtered.

People in this village do not help one another except during funerals, where everyone in the village will contribute something (however small) and extend helping hands toward the bereaved family. Most of the expenses are covered through the Community Burial Society, such as coffins and money for purchasing food.

‘Life is much better now compared to six years back (1993), as we are able to do whatever we want to do with money. It is true that we do not have savings, but when we need money we need only sell some sheep’.

This household is looking forward to future help from the grandchildren who are presently attending school. 'We hope that in the future they will find plenty of work in their professions'.

Serious stock theft was experienced in the past, which resulted in the son returning home from his work in the South African mines to provide support to the family and help in rearing the livestock. Since he has returned they have not experienced any more stock theft. The son is also a member of the community Anti Stock Theft Society, which is working well. As a result stock theft has decreased in the area. 'If the government would provide a police station in the area then we think the stock theft would stop forever'.

A 'better off' household in Maseru

The head of this household lost his job in 1989 and received no compensation other than his monthly salary at the time. He had some savings in the bank that he used to purchase one taxi with the intention of running his own taxi business. 'Me Florence, his wife, has a sewing machine which she uses to knit jerseys, enabling her to purchase food and other basic household items for the family.

In 1993, the household head still owned only one taxi, so he saved hard to purchase another one in 1994. After this life became much better. In 1996, he was able to buy one more taxi for his business, and life has improved so much for this household since 1993 that they 'are finishing their second, bigger and better, house'. Money earned through the taxi business is mostly 'handled by the husband', although planning expenditures is done by both the household head and his wife.

When their daughter was married in 1995, the groom was not in a position to pay *bohali* (bridewealth), as his parents were deceased and he was struggling at the time. The household was not concerned with this and only wanted their daughter to be happy. Two other children are attending high school and one is in boarding school. This is said to be financially draining on their current budget, but they are still managing. Though they do not have a high standard of education themselves, the parents want their children to have a good education, as they feel that nowadays 'education is very important for survival'.

The household head and spouse are members of a village Burial Society and one other Burial Society, which was formed by taxi owners in the area. The families of the owners, drivers and conductors are assisted with money if there is a death. The taxi owners' wives are heavily involved in this Burial Society, and it was these women's suggestion that drivers and conductors should also be assisted. The rules were established by the women themselves, and they are also involved in assisting in burials of people who have been hit and killed by taxis and visiting those who have been injured.

Although Florence has been knitting jerseys for income generation, she is no longer receiving orders for the jerseys as much as in the past. The household never borrows from neighbours or relatives, although they do lend to them. Neighbours often delay in paying back any loans they have received, and some relatives are not prepared to pay anything back, so it is perceived as problematic. Florence sometimes gives *moroho* to bereaved neighbours.

The availability of water is not a problem as the household has a tap located just outside the house. Household members eat three times a day. All meals are prepared by Florence and her daughters. A good variety of foods are consumed every day and meat is taken two to three times a week. Gas is used for cooking and paraffin is used in the winter for heating the house. Florence does not find the price of gas as expensive as paraffin.

No fields are owned as they live in an urban area (Maseru), and attempts to sharecrop with people from outside areas have failed, as those with land do not want to contribute any other inputs. All ploughing, planting, weeding and harvesting activities had to be undertaken by this household, so they gave up sharecropping.

Threats to the taxi business are breakdowns and the cost of spare parts. Taxis will sit until they are repaired, thereby losing potential income. When drivers or conductors have family members who pass away, money has to be advanced, which the employees pay back only bit by bit. The stealing of taxis and their parts also poses a threat, and the household head has been surprised in the night by would be thieves. Florence thinks that more taxis would help to improve their lives even more, but feels that the emotional stresses associated with this may outweigh the benefits. 'Drivers and conductors would need more careful monitoring, as they tend to steal from the taxis'.

This household also has parents whom they assist. Coupled with the relatives who do not pay back borrowed money, this puts a strain on the household's financial resources. Florence says that 'all in all life has been improving steadily since 1993, although the cost of building the new house has been substantial'.

3.1.3. What makes a livelihood better?

Another way that Basotho characterised wellbeing during Phase II of this survey was to say what led households to improve their livelihood condition and move upwards through the livelihood categories. Table 5 shows the results of discussions held in Phase II about how livelihoods could improve. Factors shown in bold type were mentioned at more than one site in the area in question.

Table 5. Ways Basotho see for livelihoods to improve

Area	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Urban	Paid employment Remittances	Paid employment Good yields	Securing better paid jobs Wise use of retrenchment money Wise use of remittances Communal savings	Expanding businesses, e.g. taxi business Wise use of retrenchment money Wise use of remittances Communal savings
Lowlands/ foothills	Good yields Sharecropping Sale of dagga Receiving bridewealth Receiving cattle/sheep as herding payment Decrease in household size Household member finds paid employment	Availability of piece jobs Securing wage employment Good yields Sharecropping Receiving bridewealth Free Standard 1 education Livestock received as payment for herding Sale of dagga Decrease in household size Subsistence farming Poultry farming	Good yields Sale of surplus crops Brewing beer Sharecropping Access to more farm land Sale of dagga Decrease in household size Communal savings Commercial farming Wage employment Remittances Good crop prices Support from relatives	Good yields Sale of surplus crops Sharecropping Wise use of money Sale of bottled beer Sale of dagga Increase in number of working members of the household Receiving bridewealth Decrease in household size Commercial farming Wage employment Business ventures Remittances Sale of livestock Communal savings
Mountains	Receiving bridewealth Sharecropping Good yields Wage employment Consistency of piece jobs	Securing wage employment Able to farm and have good yields Receiving bridewealth Decrease in family size Increase scale of dagga sales Consistency of piece jobs Piece jobs offered by LHDA mean people have more to spend on beer and IGAs of other households	Securing wage employment Having surplus crops to sell Good yields Sales of wool/mohair Good markets for their crops Receiving bridewealth More than 1 household member working Decrease in family size Increase scale of dagga sales	Sale of surplus crops Good yields Good markets for their crops Receiving bridewealth Businesses More than 1 household member working Sale of dagga Wise use of money

Source: Phase II data.

3.1.4. Threats to livelihoods

As we shall see in section 4, the context for Lesotho livelihoods is mostly unfavourable, and growing more so. Basotho households are increasingly vulnerable to a range of shocks and stresses. Many of the deteriorating trends in livelihood context constitute long term stresses on households that struggle to survive in increasingly adverse circumstances. Before we consider in detail how people construct their livelihoods in order to strive for the ideal of wellbeing outlined above, it is important to assess the obstacles that will lie in their way.

Phase I of this survey recorded many shocks and stresses that respondent households said they were experiencing. A number of these, primarily the shorter term shocks, were combined into a composite score of shocks experienced. This score takes into account

- loss of income from 1998 to 1999;
- loss of crops harvested from 1997 to 1998;
- death of a household member in the last five years;
- denial of a requested loan;

- permanent departure of household members;
- robbery within the last year;
- violence within the last year;
- burning within the last year;
- murder within the last year;
- rape within the last year;
- witchcraft within the last year;
- stock theft within the last year;
- land dispute within the last year.

The resultant composite scores are shown in Figure 3 below, tabulated against ‘livelihood quintile’ – a composite measure of livelihood status, from least to greatest wellbeing, that we built with the variables and information generated from our Phase I data set (section 6.4). Overall, more than half the households surveyed had experienced one or more of the shocks defined above. It is significant that, among the poorest households, those living in urban areas suffer more shocks than those living in the mountains. Conversely, among the best off households, the problems are most severe for those living in rural areas. This is probably due in part to their greater vulnerability to stock theft. However, it is also significant that there is comparatively little variation between the aggregate ‘shock scores’ of the different livelihood quintiles or the different zones of the country. The biggest gap by far is in the best off quintile, between urban and rural households.

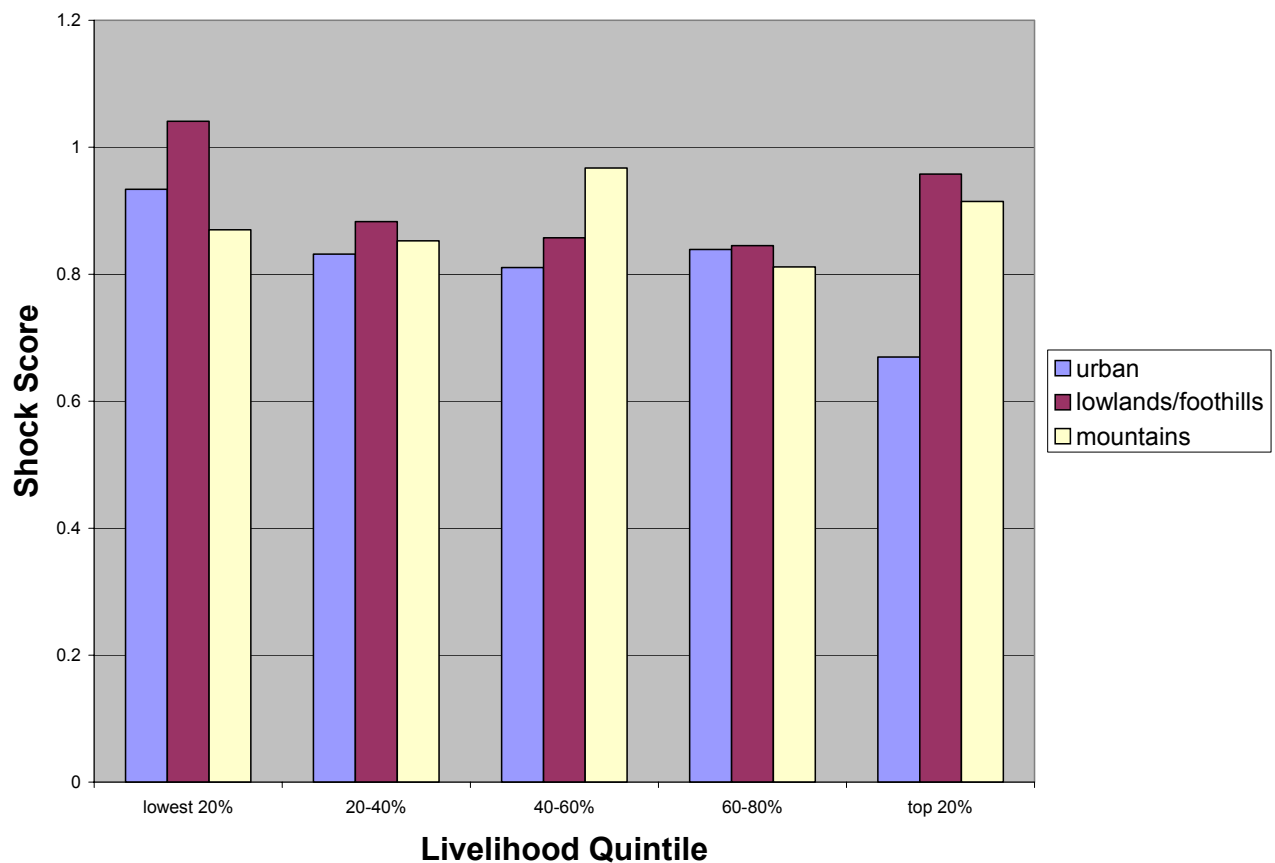


Figure 3. Household shocks by area and livelihood quintile

Source: Phase I data.

Two shocks/stresses were identified during Phase II of this survey throughout all regions of Lesotho and across all livelihood categories. These were long-term illness/death of breadwinner/multiple deaths in family/old age, and unemployment/loss of jobs/retrenchment.

Table 6 below presents data from the Phase II survey on what were perceived by households to be the most significant or prevalent shocks and stresses in the three geographic regions of Lesotho, in addition to the two mentioned above. Factors shown in bold type were mentioned at more than one site in the area in question. The shocks and stresses imposed by illness and death in all kinds of livelihoods across all regions are clear to see. The long term stress of having many family members is also evident. There are more mouths to feed, more bodies to clothe, and more school fees to pay. Stock theft is a common concern for better off mountain households, and for all except the poorest households in the lowlands and foothills (where it is often cited as a major reason for declining involvement in livestock production). Other economic problems are more frequently mentioned in the lowlands and foothills, and not only by the better off. All except the poorest refer to the crisis of retrenchment and the longer term stress of poor markets.

Table 6. Shocks and stresses by region

Region	Livelihood categories			
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Urban	Increase in family size (sometimes due to death of relatives leaving kids behind or having more children) Old age - inhibit the ability to work Long term illness limits the ability to work Death of family members Accessing fuel wood Infertile land Not having land to plough Unfavourable sharecrop arrangements	Poor health and increase of dependants Death of family members Poor market Old age Accessing fuel wood Infertile land Not having land to plough Unfavourable sharecrop arrangements Few piece jobs or permanent jobs available	Deaths in the hh Long term illness Cost of educating kids Poor market/ competition Retrenchment Not having land to plough	Deaths in the hh Long term illness Poor market/ competition Not having land to plough Cost of repairing vehicles when they break down Dependence on a single breadwinner Stock theft
Lowlands/ foothills	Large/increasing family size/# of dependants Long term illness / old age Death in the hh Cannot afford to utilise their lands effectively (cannot afford inputs or draught power and lands are degraded) Stock theft Poor sharecropping arrangements (where the hh is cheated out of their fair share) Scarcity of piece jobs Not having any farm land Desertion by spouse, breadwinner, children Little/no food stocks No regular cash income - uncertainty Family conflicts over land/property Have to pay for rented housing	Stock theft Large/increasing family size/# of dependants Long term illness / old age Death in the hh Cannot afford to utilise their lands effectively (cannot afford inputs or draught power/ lands are degraded) Poor market Compensation talks with LHDA stalled No regular income Have to pay for rented housing Poor sharecropping arrangements (where the hh is cheated out of their fair share) Abandoned/deserted by wife, breadwinner, children Breadwinner loses job/retrenchment Scarcity of piece jobs Drought Cost of initiation for boys Credit not paid back in time Cost of educating children Family conflicts over	Retrenchment/job loss Long term illness (e.g. respiratory diseases) Increasing family size/# of dependants Death of breadwinner Poor market/competition Not having their own land to plough or access to land for sharecropping Drought/poor yields Stock theft People delay repaying debts Large family size Cost of educating children Low salaries/high inflation Breadwinner losing job Divorced/ deserted by spouse, children Theft of farm implements Expense of buying food Loss of animals to disease Cost of farm inputs Sharecropping arrangements are stressful	Retrenchment/job loss Poor market/competition Illness Death of breadwinner Increasing family size/# of dependants Not having enough land to plough Drought/poor yields Stock theft Poor market for crops and other goods Delays in people repaying credit Loss of fields to LHDA Cost of repairing vehicles when they break down Cost of educating children Loss of animals to disease Cost of farm inputs Disputes over sharecropping arrangements Low wages/high inflation

Region	Livelihood categories			
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Mountains	Threat of being caught selling dagga Long term illness Death in the hh Increase in family size Not having own land or lands are infertile Cannot afford costs of farming inputs Stock theft Old age Desertion by breadwinner Large family to feed Unemployment/loss of jobs/retrenchment	land/property Long term illness/ill health Death in the hh Stock theft Not having enough food to eat/ last the year Poor markets/ competition Cannot afford transport costs to better markets outside the village Unable to fully utilise their fields Inability to plough land and purchase inputs Increase in family size People buy from them on credit but delay in paying back Poor sharecropping arrangements Not having land to farm Threat of being caught selling dagga Increase in family size/large family to feed Separation/divorce Debts Unemployment/loss of jobs/retrenchment	Cost of educating children Long term illness Death in the hh Fields may not be very fertile/ are eroded Insufficient land to farm Delay in ploughing as rely on others for draught power Stock theft Loss of livestock to predators Cost of farming inputs – they struggle to raise the money to buy them People buy from them on credit but delay in paying back Poor market for vegetables Fear of the breadwinner losing their job Some have debts – they borrow money to buy food/ pay school fees/ pay funeral costs Increase in family size Some breadwinners spend all their money on alcohol Threat of being caught selling dagga Poor sharecropping arrangements Large family to feed Competition and poor markets Unemployment/loss of jobs/retrenchment Family conflict/ divorce/abandonment	Long term illness Death in the hh Increase in family size Some breadwinners spend all their money on alcohol Drought Poor markets and increasing competition Stock theft Loss of livestock to predators Spending money on purchasing food rather than on other needs Threat of being caught selling dagga Retrenchment/job loss/unemployment Animals dying due to disease Family conflict/divorce/ abandonment

Source: Phase II data.

These data reflect the vulnerability context of Basotho livelihoods. Overall, these are the problems of livelihoods in which good health cannot yet be taken for granted, owing to the prevalent standard of living and level of health services. They are the problems of livelihoods that are seeking to engage with and depend upon the formal sector economy, but are very poorly equipped to do so. Moreover, it is a highly competitive economy with far too few opportunities for the number of Basotho seeking to exploit them. Many households are dangerously dependent on a single breadwinner, whose death or retrenchment may be a blow from which they cannot recover. These are also the problems of a society beset by increasing criminality. Finally, they are the problems of livelihoods that continue to depend in part on agriculture and a natural resource base whose condition is deteriorating. The inadequacy of a farming livelihood is particularly notable among the very poor, who commonly lack the means of agricultural production but have few economic alternatives.

3.1.5. Poverty

3.1.5.1. The distribution of poverty

For many Basotho households, the net livelihood outcome (section 9) is poverty. Poverty can be defined and measured in many ways, and the report on Phase I of this survey analyses the issue in some detail (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 65-123). In this report, we outline the financial dimensions of Basotho livelihoods in section 9.7 and show the widening gap between the stagnation or reverses of the poorer households and the continuing progress of the better off. Overall, the Phase I analysis shows that the proportion of Basotho households falling below the 1999 poverty line of M80 per member per month rose from 49% in 1990 to 71% in 1993 and has since declined slightly to 65%. Of all areas of the country, Maseru urban had the fewest households below the poverty line in 1999, while the eastern mountains had the highest proportion of households living in poverty as defined on this measure. Since 1993, the strongest improvement in poverty status has been achieved by Maseru and the northern lowlands and foothills. The greatest increase in the proportion under the poverty line took place in the south eastern mountains. In fact all mountain areas have at least 79% of their households under the poverty line – compared with a national average in 1999 of 65%. As we point out repeatedly, however, financial income is not the only way to measure poverty or the quality of livelihoods, and these mountain areas that have most households below the poverty line are also the areas of Lesotho that score most strongly on ‘traditional’ indices of wealth.

3.1.5.2. The status of female headed households

Table 36 on page 97 casts interesting light on the financial poverty status of female headed households. Those headed *de facto* by women actually show a higher cash income per member than male headed households. This is because so many of these households profit from the wage income of absent husbands. On the contrary, households headed *de jure* by women form the poorest class of livelihoods in Lesotho. These are

Overall women earn 30.9% of the reported total national income, while men earn the remaining 69.1%. Clearly women are active in the economic sphere. Unfortunately, they dominate in the less productive areas, including informal business, sale of joala, hawking, sale of fruits and vegetables, sale of animal products, sale of home-grown vegetables, other small-scale sales, sale of assets, food aid, and finally gifts. Many of these means of survival are desperation measures, as in the case of one woman who stated that, because her husband is sick and in hospital, she brews beer every week.

Households receive a mean annual income of M7,567 from men with wage work, but only M5,517 from women with wage work. This disparity exists despite the fact that women with wage work have a mean of 7.8 years of school, while men with wage work have only 5.8 years of school. Clearly women are discriminated against in the work place.

Sechaba Consultants, 2000, 79.

usually households headed by ageing widows who have lost many of the human and material assets that they enjoyed in their younger days and who may find it hard to secure any cash income at all.

Another way of looking at the poverty status of female headed households is to consider what proportion of the households surveyed in Phase II of this study were ranked in the two poorest livelihood categories by the participants. Table 7 shows that for these villages, the proportion of female headed households ranked in the two poorest categories was much higher than the overall average.

Table 7. Percentage of female headed households ranked in poorest categories

Village	% of all households ranked in poorest categories	% of female headed households ranked in poorest categories
Ha Rakhoboli	17	91
Ha Sepelemanane	38	61
Ha Makopela	40	81
Ha Sebotha	39	67

Village	% of all households ranked in poorest categories	% of female headed households ranked in poorest categories
Makhalanyane	55	82
Mankoaneng	50	67
Khoaba la e-ja Bohobe	60	77
Ts'uts'ulupa	19	36
Tsikoane	58	79
Ha Ramoholi	50	67
Ha Lechesa	56	77
Ramaboella	57	57
Phomolong	33	100
Sheeshe	43	55
Matala	55	80
Total	45	72

Source: Phase II data.

Looking overall at what this study has shown us about the livelihood outcomes achieved by Basotho (see also section 9), we can see the following characteristics of female headed households:

- female headed households are more likely to be ranked in the poor or very poor livelihood categories;
- female headed households are less assured of food security than male headed ones, but the differences between them are not enormous;
- households with female *de facto* heads report a lower occurrence of disease than those with male or female *de jure* heads;
- *de jure* female headed households experience substantially more deaths per household member than other households. Those headed *de facto* by women enjoy lower death rates;
- the poorest *de facto* female headed households recorded a substantial increase in usage of unsafe water supplies between 1993 and 1999/2000;
- *de jure* female headed households are the worst provided with sanitation facilities;
- male headed households have been considerably more successful in getting their children to school than female headed households, particularly those with *de facto* female heads.

Overall, these features confirm that, while women continue to be discriminated against in the Lesotho economy and suffer greater poverty in their livelihoods overall than men, there are significant differences between households headed by women *de facto* and *de jure* respectively. It is for the latter kind of female headed household that poverty is deepest (although it is possible that our study under-surveyed *de jure* female headed households in which the woman is a high income professional). The question for the *de facto* female headed households is whether their current comparative prosperity, usually grounded in the wage earnings of absent husbands, will be sustainable in the changing livelihood context of the coming decades.

3.1.6. Livelihood strategies of the poor

Section 3.1.2 outlined the livelihoods of the better off, as Basotho described them to us during Phase II of this survey. We discussed the better off there in the context of what Basotho aspire to as a desirable livelihood. We turn now to what is likely to be the primary interest of many readers of this study: the livelihood strategies of the poor. In this section, we outline those strategies in much the same way as we presented those of the better off in section 3.1.2.

Participants in Phase II of this survey generally identified four livelihood wellbeing categories: the very poor, the poor, the average and the better off. In this section, we consider the livelihood strategies of the first two of these categories.

3.1.6.1. Land

Very poor households generally do not own land for cultivation, aside from small home garden plots. Most of those who do have their own fields do not cultivate them due to lack of inputs such as labour, implements, seed and fertiliser, and/or because of ill health, disability and old age. Some of those who have fields have given the land to their children or allow their children to cultivate it. This makes them dependent on their children for any of the yields; it was stated by some of the case study participants that their children do not always provide them with any of the harvest. Some of these households do practise sharecropping, but in general receive fewer shares because they can only supply land as opposed to draft power, inputs and labour. Drought and subsequent late ploughing and planting also affect these households' ability to sharecrop, and their fields are frequently left fallow. The yields of those who do harvest were stated as generally poor and of not sufficient quantity to last even three months of the year; a few were cited as lasting up to six months. Most of these households do, however, own a residential plot.

Many **poor** households in Lesotho own fields, but face similar constraints. They do not have the means to plough them because they lack draught animals and have

insufficient human labour. They generally have no or very few farming implements. The number of fields usually does not exceed two, and more commonly only one is owned. As a result of the dearth of farming inputs such as seed, fertiliser, draught power and money to hire tractors, sharecropping is an essential strategy for poor households. Those who sharecrop with them are mainly those households who do not have fields, and those with animals for draught power. Those poor households who do not have the means for ploughing also rent out their fields in part or whole as a form of payment. In some households, children living outside the village are using the fields. Many poor households have their own garden plots on which

A very poor household in the lowlands

I am staying with my son who is mentally handicapped - he was born this way. He refused to go to school so he can not read or write. He is now 40 years of age. Myself I have been educated up to Standard 4, which is very important as I can read and write. However, I can not be employed anywhere due to such a low standard. I know how to make traditional brooms, but I am no longer using that skill due to illness caused by old age.

I own no assets except for one field on which I plant maize. This field is in poor condition due to its sandy soils and lack of fertiliser. As a result the production is poor. I do not own any farming implements and my eldest son planted for me. I do not practise sharecropping.

I use shrubs and dung for fuel and I get them from the donga just near my house. I also take shrubs from the government forest within my village – it is only five minutes from my house to the collection place. These sources are available in less quantity these years as many people are using them due to unemployment and retrenchment. People can no longer afford to pay for fuel.

We eat *papa* and *moroho* every day and twice daily – we sometimes have the opportunity to eat meat at feasts only.

I have high blood, which started a few years back, although I can't remember the year very well. I get free medication every month at the Ha Mokhorro Health Centre – it is a Catholic Centre. I slept for a whole year not able to do anything when I first started getting high blood. I have been told that if I stop taking my medication I will die.

I draw my water from the public standpipe and it is only two minutes from my house. Sometimes the tap runs dry for a day or two or for a few hours during the month of June so water has to be rationed. We use 20 litres of water daily between two people.

I receive support from my other son every month; he even helped to plant my field. He gives me M100.00 in cash every month – he is currently working in the mines in the RSA. He has no job security though and could be retrenched at any time. I use the money he gives me to buy things such as candles and soap. I am also a member of a Burial Society and this is very important as it will provide transport of the corpse from the mortuary to the village, as well as purchase a coffin and provide food and labour during the ceremony.

My sister in law left the household last year to work at the Minister's house in the village. This is a positive thing for she receives something every month.

I do not have any future opportunities/potentials for I am old and ill. I do believe that life has improved over the past six years, although compared to other people in the community life has not improved a lot.

For now my high blood is under control and the gifts I receive from my son help me a lot as I am able to buy the things that I need.

they plant some crops and vegetables. Maize and sorghum are common field crops. Grains harvested generally do not last more than six months of the year.

3.1.6.2. *Income sources*

Very poor households depend largely on assistance in the form of food, money and clothing ('gifts') from children, relatives, friends and neighbours. Very few of these households are actually in a position to work (aside from household work) due to ill health, old age or disability. Those who do work are engaged primarily in casual (or piece) work for their neighbours from the better off categories. Such work entails the weeding of agricultural land in exchange for grain, and domestic work. *Fato-fato* (when it is available), brewing of traditional beer (*joala*), and the sale of fruits, vegetables and snacks at the local market also provide a means of income.

A very poor household in the mountains

'Me 'Malibuseng lost her husband and one of her daughters last year, which she says was caused by 'bewitching'. Her husband had been ill for some time and was frequently in and out of the hospital, which put a tremendous financial strain on the household. He was also the main breadwinner and was previously working in the RSA as a miner. Since his death 'Malibuseng has not been able to plough her fields, as she used one of her three cows to pay for her husband's funeral and had to sell the other two to generate money needed for food and household necessities. This season 'Malibuseng sharecropped, which she believes will help her a great deal.

'Malibuseng has two other married daughters, both of whom have returned home with their small children. 'Malibuseng says she is affected negatively by their return as she cannot afford to look after them all. One of the daughters does possess sewing skills but does not have the money nor the connections to invest in a small business. The household eats *papa* and *moroho* all year round, and in winter cabbage. It is extremely rare that meat will be taken and only if one has the money to buy it.

'Malibuseng sold dagga in the past to generate income, but she has since stopped as she was almost caught. Since her husband's death she has been coping by selling off her livestock. 'Malibuseng has not received any money from her husband's benefits and has decided not to take any action in this regard. 'Malibuseng is a member of a Burial Society in the village and although she says it has helped her in the past she can no longer afford the subscription fee. She receives help from her neighbours in the form of small food stuffs such as salt and flour, but they do not lend her money.

For fuel 'Malibuseng resorts to stealing firewood from other people who have it or begs for it.

'Malibuseng is also not well and suffering from chest pain and high blood pressure. She spent more than M300.00 from late last year until now on medical expenses.

Of these activities, the brewing of traditional beer is engaged in throughout the year (although this depends on the household's ability to procure the inputs required), as are domestic work and the sale of fruits, vegetables, snacks and second hand clothes. Weeding and *fato-fato* are seasonal. Weeding, the brewing of *joala* and *fato-fato* are considered very important strategies for these households as they provide quick cash, though barely enough to cover the costs of basic household items. The sale of fruits, vegetables, snacks and second hand clothes were stated as economic activities taking place in the urban areas only. The sale of snuff in small quantities also contributes some money to households and involves mainly women. None of these activities contribute a significant amount of money to these very poor households, but will cover the costs of small household items such as soap, matches and candles. Of those households within this category that are considered the most desperate, "begging for food" was stated as a major livelihood strategy, particularly in the mountains.

In the **poor** category, too, most households are engaged in the brewing and selling of traditional beer, although it does not provide enough income to meet all of the household's basic needs. Piece work such as the weeding and harvesting of less poor households' fields and gardens, domestic work, and *fato-fato* are also common activities in which the poor are involved. For weeding and harvesting people are typically compensated in the form of money or grain. Other activities engaged in on a smaller scale include shoe repair, radio repair, making and selling traditional brooms, the sale of 'Sesotho chickens' and the sale of crops – both home garden and field. In the urban areas poor households are engaged in street vending of fruits, vegetables and snacks. Gifts in the form of food, money and clothing given by relatives, friends and neighbours are relied on heavily by most poor households.

3.1.6.3. *Skills, capabilities and education*

A large proportion of **very poor** households do not have any marketable skills. Of those who do, sewing, knitting, shoe repair, building, making of handicrafts (brooms and mats out of local grasses), and making bins were cited as the main marketable skills. However, many of those possessing these skills do not have

the means (or no longer have the means) to market themselves. This is due to inability to purchase equipment, tools and other material inputs, and/or due to ill health and generally lacking the physical ability to perform types of work they may have done formerly.

Education levels are low or non-existent for the adults in these households, i.e. up to primary level. Some of their children have attained secondary level and a few have reached high school level. But many have had to drop out due to insufficient funds for school fees and other school related costs. Some of the more elderly have never attended school at all and are illiterate.

Education levels are also low for **poor** households – up to Standard 7 at most - but more commonly the adults of poor households have not gone beyond primary level, and may not be educated at all. The children in these households, if attending school, may be educated up to Junior

Certificate (JC) or Cambridge Overseas Certificate (COSC), although a lower level was stated on average. It is not uncommon for children to drop out intermittently depending upon the household's ability to afford school fees, which largely depends on the time of year and the availability of resources. Most of the village participants stated that the skill level of poor households is either non-existent or very low, yet skills such as sewing and knitting, welding, building, shoe repair, traditional broom and mat making were cited as fairly common. Skills in radio, umbrella and paraffin stove repair and driving do exist, but are not as common. Adults from poor households are generally described as having limited capability to undertake strenuous tasks due to poor health, old age and disability.

3.1.6.4. Assets

As is shown in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 on pages 8 - 10, the majority of **very poor** households possess very few assets, particularly productive assets, although they all were stated to own the residential plots on which they have houses. In general, houses are in poor condition and some are described as 'falling down'. Very few of these households own livestock; those who do generally own a few small stock. None of the very poor households reviewed in Phase II of this study report owning farming implements. They depend on others for draught power if they have fields.

A poor household in the foothills

Ntate Thabo is living on his own, as his wife left him some years back and took with her their only child. Ntate Thabo has a low level of education and some minor skills such as building and stone cutting. However, these skills are not used to generate income.

For the past year he has been working for *fato-fato*, although he does not consider it reliable because it only comes once a year. Livestock were sold in the past and contributed to his livelihood, but now he no longer has animals to sell. He currently looks after some sheep and goats for someone else and these are sometimes sheared with the money going to Ntate Thabo. However, this can take a long time and he has no contract with the owner of the sheep to guarantee him any rights to the sheep. Ntate Thabo does not consider this reliable as the owner can take the animals back at any time.

Ntate Thabo does not own any fields or farm implements, nor does he own any basic equipment for household work. It is difficult to acquire land as he comes from another district. He does however own the residential site and a garden on which he produces some vegetables such as cabbage for consumption. Ntate Thabo assists other farmers in their fields and has received up to 20 kg. of grain in exchange for his labour.

Shrubs in the area are depleting and the wood Ntate Thabo uses for fuel is 'smoky and causes blindness'. He has to walk 9 kilometres to collect decent shrubs for fuel and also collects cow dung to make fires for cooking and heating. Ntate Thabo now has to fetch the water by himself since his wife is no longer living with him. The village springs do have water, but they are not protected. Someone in the village is suspected to have died from drinking this spring water and it is not considered clean.

Ntate Thabo was arrested some years ago for stealing livestock after the chief and some villagers investigated the crimes. As a result his wife left him to return to her home village and then divorced him. The loneliness he now faces is stressful and the fact that he can not secure a job only makes things worse.

One positive event Ntate Thabo cited was building his house, even though he was not employed at the time. Ntate Thabo sold all four of his sheep to raise the money for his house, and although it is complete he was never able to purchase more livestock and as a result life has become even more difficult.

Ntate Thabo is not a member of any CBOs (such as Burial Societies), and although he would like to be and sees their benefits, he can not afford the membership fees. Relatives and Ntate Thabo's mother visit him often and help with certain things that he can not do himself such as smearing the house and washing clothes. They also help him to gather wood and cook meals at times. Although it is not easy to accept that he has been divorced, Ntate Thabo believes that his wife will come back to him after some time. The only chance Ntate Thabo sees for improving his life is to secure employment. This would enable him 'to develop his life and purchase other assets'.

In general, **poor** households have a low asset base, although almost all these households have residential sites with houses. Some poor households own livestock - predominantly limited numbers of small stock, but also some donkeys or a few head of cattle. Farming implements are generally limited to hand hoes and yokes. Sharecropping is an important livelihood strategy for those who have fields. A few households reported owning sewing machines, but these are often not used due to lack of materials or because the machine is broken. Household furnishings are minimal, purely practical and in the rural areas often of a traditional nature, e.g. stools made from aloe. Fruit trees were also mentioned as an asset by poor households in a few of the Phase II survey communities.

3.1.6.5. Food security

Papa and *moroho* (vegetables – both wild and domestic), or *papa* and sour soft porridge twice a day, is the staple diet for **very poor** households. Meat, rice, eggs and other foods are eaten during ceremonies and feasts. Those who are dependants eat them if and when their children provide them. For those who sharecrop, the shares they receive are generally little and, as previously stated, do not last more than three months at most. ‘Gifts’ in the form of food from neighbours, friends and relatives are said to be very helpful, although these are not received every day and it is not uncommon for some of these households to go an entire day without food. Many of these households work for the food they receive and some even resort to begging. In general those who are dependent in their old age upon their children indicated that they eat more often and a greater variety of foods. For example beans, eggs, and even meat are eaten on weekends, especially when those children working outside the village come home or when there is a local feast that the household is able to attend.

Members of **poor** households typically eat twice a day (in the morning and evening). Their meals consist of *papa* and *moroho* (either wild or from home gardens). Some can also eat beans. Meat may be taken up to twice a month depending upon the number of feasts occurring either within or outside the village and on whether children living outside the village are coming to visit. Other varieties of food such as salads, rice and eggs are also eaten during feasts. For those households who are producing field crops on their own fields, grain stores can last up to four months – in a few cases cited, up to six months. It is common to be paid for casual work for other households in either grain or money, both of which contribute to the household’s food consumption. If households experience a severe food shortage, children are given priority and some adults may go more than one day without eating. Food in the form of a meal or grain may also be provided by friends, neighbours or relatives from time to time.

3.1.6.6. Health

Very poor and **poor** households cited ‘special illnesses’ such as kwashiorkor (a disease caused by protein deficiency) in children, paralysis, disability, poor vision, bad knees, high blood pressure and sugar diabetes for the elderly as their most significant health problems. Other ‘common illnesses’ mentioned were diarrhoea, stomach aches, TB, headaches and common colds. Due to insufficient money, households in this category are for the most part not able to seek medical attention. If and when they are able to do so, government hospitals are sought, presumably because they offer more affordable services. Traditional healers are also consulted when there are the means to pay. Poor health status is a significant constraint on these households’ ability to pursue productive livelihood strategies.

3.1.7. Migration

Basotho have been a mobile people for many generations. Four kinds of short and long term migration have been traditional:

- it has been common for women to move to another village at marriage, as they normally move to their husbands’ homes. As in most other societies, subsequent domestic disharmony can lead to further movement. Many divorced or separated women leave their husbands or partners to go back to their own family homes. Unmarried mothers often send children to live with their grandparents, imposing a great strain on poor old people’s livelihoods;

- education, particularly at higher levels, has commonly required young people to move away from their village homes. Some of them never live in their original villages again;
- oscillating labour migration has been a central livelihood strategy throughout the 20th century (section 4.9). These migration patterns have changed in the last decade. As South African mining opportunities shrank, some long term Basotho miners settled across the border, and more women migrated to other kinds of employment in South Africa;
- transhumance is another traditional form of movement, as herdboys take livestock to mountain pastures each spring and return each autumn. Many boys have traditionally lived away from home, and away from schooling opportunities, for several months each year. With fewer households practising livestock production, and with stock theft discouraging transhumance, this form of mobility is declining.

After the death of her husband, she found life very difficult and decided to move to another place with a better life.

- Urban household, livelihood quintile 3 [livelihood quintile 1 is poorest, 5 best off: see section 6.4]

My son had to go to RSA looking for a job. It is negative because we used to work together and advise each other.

- Urban household, livelihood quintile 4

My two daughters had to go to RSA to look for jobs or what they can do to get money to support their children. It is a positive thing for they are now able to support their children.

- Urban household, livelihood quintile 5

The husband is working in the RSA. The spouse believed that the work in RSA is the best because the more income in the family will help to improve the family. The negative impact of absence of the husband in the family is that nobody can solve disputes.

- Lowland/foothill household, livelihood quintile 5

Against this backdrop of almost habitual mobility, what is of central importance for this study is migration to work opportunities. These are the major choices that many households or household members have to take as part of their livelihood strategies. As is pointed out in section 4.2, major shifts are currently taking place in Lesotho's population distribution. As they cope with changing context and opportunities, many rural households are making the choice of migrating – either to towns or within the rural sector. In the latter case, many move to larger and more accessible rural settlements, such as Mphaki and Semonkong. Many others just move to new roadside locations where taxis are readily available and from which they can easily reach the retail and infrastructural services that they now view as livelihood necessities. Among those who migrate to towns, many face new hardships and a kind of poverty that has rarely been experienced in rural Lesotho in recent generations.

The decline in traditional male labour migration is placing many strains on family livelihoods. Most obvious is the need to survive without migrant income. But husbands and wives often find it difficult to live permanently together after many years of living semi-independent lives. In some cases, marriages break down after the husband's migrancy ends. The strain is exacerbated by the difficulties many men have in adjusting to retrenchment. Domestic disputes and violence are a common result.

3.1.8. Livelihood trajectories

As one sort of summary of how Basotho livelihoods work, we present three self-explanatory tables. For each of the main

My younger son is in South Africa job seeking and my daughter is in Maseru working at Chinese factories. This is positive in the case of my daughter's absence because she brings in income, unlike my son. I am really worried about him because he is far and I never know whether he is alive or not.

- Lowland/foothill household, livelihood quintile 2

Migration out is positive because I am now left with less mouths to feed. Migration in was a little bit tough because the number of people to feed increased. Migration out is also positive because my two daughters who are in RSA are working and sending money.

- Lowland/foothill household, livelihood quintile 5

Two more children joined the family four years ago. She feels they are a burden to her because she does not have any money or source of income. It is one problem over the other. Even if she expels them they refuse to go home to their father. The biggest problem is that their father does not provide for them in any way.

- Lowland/foothill household, livelihood quintile 1

The reason for migrating from highlands to lowlands is for seeking a job, as the head first got a job at Thaba-Khupa. That brought a positive impact within the household and on the other hand it brought a negative impact because the head spends more on transport, because he comes home at any time, that is weekly and monthly.

- Lowland/foothill household, livelihood quintile 4

regions of the country, they summarise what people told us were the main threats to livelihoods in different wellbeing categories; the ways they see that people in these different categories can maintain their livelihoods; and the ways in which they see people getting ahead. Issues in bold font were mentioned at more than one of the Phase II sites in the zone in question.

Table 8. Livelihood trajectories in the urban areas

Issues	Livelihood categories			
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Threatening Livelihoods	Large family to feed Long term illness in the household Deaths in the family Scarcity of piece jobs Retrenchment/loss of jobs Deserted by breadwinner/spouse	Long term illness Deaths Not able to secure jobs Retrenchment/job loss Not having either land or means to plough Increase in family size Poor market/competition Drought No remittances from working family members	Sell goods on credit and money not paid back on time Spend money on alcohol rather than families "Jealousy from those who do not have a means of generating income" Increase in family size Poor market/competition Retrenchment/job loss Long term illness Death in family	Cost of educating children Poor use of money coming into the household Cost of repairing taxis/vehicles when they break down Taxis or taxi parts are stolen People who are given credit do not pay back on time Stock theft Poor market/competition Retrenchment/job loss Long term illness Increasing family size
Maintaining livelihoods	Piece jobs Begging Assistance from relatives	<i>Fato-fato</i> Remittances Renting rooms IGAs, e.g. veg, fruit, food Assistance from relatives	Small IGAs , e.g. sale of veg, fruit Home gardens Brewing <i>joala</i> Renting rooms	Having many livelihood activities
Improving Livelihoods	Paid employment Remittances	Paid employment Good yields	Securing better paid jobs Wise use of retrenchment money Wise use of remittances Communal savings	Expanding businesses, e.g. taxi business Wise use of retrenchment money Wise use of remittances Communal savings

Source: Phase II data.

Table 9. Livelihood trajectories in the lowlands and foothills

Issues	Livelihood categories			
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Threatening Livelihoods	Chronic ill health Scarcity of piece jobs and permanent jobs Increase in family size Death in the household Desertion by spouse/breadwinner/children Paying bridewealth Old age No draught power People not repaying when they buy on credit Insufficient and infertile land Poor sharecropping arrangements Drought Loss of livestock from	Few piece jobs available Unable to utilise farm land effectively Poor markets due to few customers Increase in family size Deaths in household Long term illness Cost of health care Cost of funerals Family disputes Desertion by spouse/breadwinner/children Not able to produce sufficient food for family Cost of initiation for boys Paying bridewealth No draught power	Stock theft Increasing family size Death (esp. of breadwinner) Long term illness Paying bridewealth People delay in repaying debts Spend too much on alcohol Poor markets due to few customers/competition Retrenchment/job loss Drought Cost of initiation for boys Cost of educating children Cost of funerals Cost of health care	Death of breadwinner Long term illness Stock theft Low yields Poor market for business/competition People delay in repaying debts Paying bridewealth Retrenchment/job loss Drought Cost of repairing vehicles Cost of initiation for boys Livestock death from disease Poor market for wool/mohair Cost of educating children Alcoholism and wasting

Issues	Livelihood categories			
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
	disease Spending money on alcohol Cost of funerals	People not repaying when they buy on credit Drought Alcoholism/spending money on alcohol Poor sharecrop arrangements Loss of livestock from disease Stock theft Old age	People not repaying when they buy on credit Poor sharecrop arrangements/disputes/ having no one to sharecrop with Livestock death from disease Low crop prices Not having land to farm Increased inflation/low salaries Family disputes Poor crop prices	money on women Crop theft Low crop prices Insufficient land to farm Increase in inflation/low salaries Old age Family disputes
Maintaining livelihoods	Piece jobs Begging Help from neighbours/ relatives/friends Sale of joala Small IGAs Fato-fato Hire out boys as herd boys Sharecropping Home gardens	Help from relatives/ friends/neighbours Piece jobs Subsistence farming Sale of joala Small IGAs Sale of fruits/vegetables Fato-fato Sharecropping Renting out fields Sale of livestock Pensions	Subsistence farming Sale of livestock Home gardens Remittances Sale of fruit/vegetables Wages from employment Small IGAs Rent out fields Savings <i>Fato-fato</i> Sharecropping Sale of joala	Remittances Wage work Farming for own consumption Hiring out livestock/vehicles Sale of fruit/vegetables Sale of <i>joala</i> Sharecropping Sale of livestock in crisis Family cooperation Savings
Improving Livelihoods	Good yields Sharecropping Sale of dagga Receiving bridewealth Receiving cattle/sheep as herding payment Decrease in household size Household member finds paid employment	Availability of piece jobs Secured wage employment Good yields Sharecropping Receiving bridewealth Free Std. 1 education Livestock received as payment for herding Sale of dagga	Good yields Sale of surplus crops Brewing <i>joala</i> Sharecropping Access to more farm land Sale of dagga Decrease in household size Communal savings Commercial farming	Good yields Sale of surplus crops Sharecropping Wise use of money Sale of bottled beer Sale of dagga Increase in number of working members of the household

Source: Phase II data.

Table 10. Livelihood trajectories in the mountains

Issues	Livelihood categories			
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Threatening livelihoods	Cost of initiation ceremony for boys Long term illness (time and money cost) Death (cost of burial and loss of income) No inputs for farming Poor markets/competition Desertion by spouse/breadwinner Increase in family size/have to rent homes Drought Death/theft of livestock	Long term ill health Death Drought Death/theft of livestock Have to rent homes Not having land to farm or capacity to utilise farms due to infertility of land or lack of income to purchase inputs Scarcity of piece jobs Customers are reducing in numbers because many do not have jobs Increase in family size Divorced or abandoned by	Drought Late planting of crops/poor yields Increase in family size Stock theft Animal diseases Debts People do not repay credit on time Spend too much on alcohol Customers are reducing in numbers because many do not have jobs Retrenchment/loss of job Long term illness Death of breadwinner	Drought Long term ill health Death of breadwinner Low wages Retrenchment/ job loss Stock theft Poor yields Cost of educating children Increase in family size Cost of initiation ceremony for boys Paying off <i>bohali</i> Spending too much on alcohol Animal diseases Low price for wool/mohair

Issues	Livelihood categories			
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
		spouse/ children Cost of initiation ceremony for boys <i>Bohali</i> payments Debt Stock theft People do not pay back credit on time Poor sharecrop arrangements (no fair return) Burning of rangeland (grazing, thatch, wood is depleted)	<i>Bohali</i> payments Cost of initiation ceremony for boys Burning of rangeland (grazing, thatch, wood is depleted) Not having own fields Poor sharecropping arrangements Poor markets for wool/mohair, IGAs	Burning of rangeland (grazing, thatch, wood is depleted)
Maintaining livelihoods	Brewing <i>joala</i> Help from relatives Begging Faith in God/church fellowship Sale of livestock in crisis Sale of dagga (money from this activity very important)	Sale of <i>joala</i> Piece jobs e.g. weeding/ harvesting Shoe repair Radio repairs Small IGAs Sale of grass hats/ mats Help from children/ parents/ neighbours Remittances Crisis sale of livestock Sale of dagga (very important)	Piece jobs Sale of livestock Sale of <i>joala</i> Small IGAs e.g. selling fruits/vegs on the street Remittances Assistance from children/ parents <i>Fato-fato</i> Remittances Crisis sale of livestock Home gardens Sale of wool/mohair	Sale of livestock Sale of vegs Piece jobs Business ventures Sale of wool/mohair IGAs Remittances
Improving livelihoods	Receiving bohali Sharecropping Good yields Waged employment Consistency of piece jobs	Securing waged employment Able to farm and have good yields Receiving bohali Decrease in family size Increase scale of dagga sales Consistency of piece jobs Piece jobs offered by LHDA means people have more to spend on <i>joala</i> and IGAs of other hhs	Securing waged employment Having surplus crops to sell Good yields Sale of wool/mohair Good markets for their crops Receiving bohali More than 1 hh member working Decrease in family size Increase scale of dagga sales	Sale of surplus crops Good yields Good markets for their farm crops Receiving bohali Businesses More than 1 hh member working Sale of dagga Wise use of money

Source: Phase II data.

3.1.9. An organic overview

Preceding sections of this report have offered various overviews and perspectives on Basotho livelihood strategies. One thing that should have become clear from the presentation is the high degree of interdependence in all kinds of Basotho livelihoods (section 7.3 and Figure 13, page 79). Individuals depend on each other within and beyond households. Households depend on each other and on the institutions that link them within and beyond their broader communities. Basotho like to think that they depend heavily on government and that government is the answer to their problems (section 3.2), although this is not strictly true. Meanwhile, there is hardly a livelihood in the country that is composed of a single strategy. Bundles of interdependent strategies are the norm, and they in turn depend on interrelated contexts and resource bases in the local, national and international economies and in the natural environment.

Lesotho livelihoods thus form an organic whole that it is hard to depict or explain in a structured manner, and within which points of policy intervention are not easy to identify. In the report on Phase I of this study, a sterling effort was made to offer a structured, organic overview of the ‘web of life’ in Lesotho (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 152-172). During Phase I of the survey, a consolidated series of 52 common livelihood strategies, central to life in Lesotho, was identified in a series of discussions with informants. Some of these were economic in nature, like ‘fields’ or ‘brewing’. Others were more like ‘choices’ (section 8.4), such as ‘school’ and ‘doctor’. Some referred to infrastructure and services, like ‘water point’ and ‘government’. Some linked to political and social frameworks, such as ‘government’ and ‘politics’. Some mentioned strategies of dubious morality or legality, such as ‘prostitution’ and ‘theft’. In a series of sorting exercises around the country, groups of Basotho were then asked to group cards with these 52 strategies on them into clusters that they thought belonged together; to rank the groups so formed in order of importance; and to choose the four or five most important single strategies overall.

From these exercises the investigators were able to:

- identify a number of primary livelihood strategies, which were repeatedly mentioned as being most important (see box);
- identify a number of secondary or linking strategies (see box). These are the strategies that tie the ‘web of life’ together. Sometimes a primary strategy for one household is a linking strategy for another, which is why some strategies appear in both boxes. But some major economic activities like brewing appear only in the list of linking strategies;
- cluster the strategies on the basis of the correlations assigned between them by the sorting exercises (see below);
- develop a graphical representation of the relations, linkages and distances between clusters of livelihood strategies: the so-called ‘web of life’ (Figure 4).

The cluster diagram that was developed (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 156) comprises two primary groupings. One represents agricultural strategies, including livestock production. The second, much larger primary cluster represents all the livelihood activities and strategies that take place in the villages and towns. This includes four sub-clusters. The first, more strongly differentiated from the other three sub-clusters, concerns crop and livestock production that takes place in and around residential sites. The remaining three sub-clusters are more closely associated with each other. One represents activities and strategies that have to do with government, such as *fato-fato*. Another represents income generation of all kinds, including street trading, rentals and animal products. The last depicts ‘the

Primary livelihood strategies, in order of importance

(Phase I sorting and clustering exercise)

fields
gardens
societies
cattle
family
cereal crops
migrant workers
doctor
water point
good relations
democracy
vegetables
small stock
government
business
wage work
marijuana
roads

Sechaba Consultants, 2000, 154

Secondary or linking livelihood strategies

(Phase I sorting and clustering exercise)

brewing
manure
good relations
democracy
initiation school
hawkers
street traders
mafisa
sharecropping
cattle
range lands
marijuana
equines
politics
pension
fields
piece jobs
theft
prostitution
cereal crops
societies

Sechaba Consultants. 2000. 157

public face of society', including law, family, infrastructure and support mechanisms like gifts, loans and begging.

The graphical version of the 'web of life' (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 158; see Figure 4 below) shows five main clusters of livelihood themes – agriculture, horticulture and livestock; government and its activities; wage employment and education; the informal sector; and family and security issues. In this web, the font size represents the importance of the theme or strategy in the perceptions of the Basotho who contributed to Phase I of this survey. The thickness of the lines that join themes or strategies to each other represents the strength of the perceived linkage between them. Grey lines are used to show links within the five clusters. Between clusters, positive links are shown by green lines. Negative links are shown by red lines, which may also mean that people did not identify any correlation between these pairs of themes or strategies.

Figure 4 is mostly self explanatory, although there can certainly be debate about the way the themes and strategies are clustered, about their relative importance, or about the positive and negative linkages that are shown. The importance of agriculture and crop production is obvious from this graphical representation, as are its linkages to the strongest informal sector livelihood strategy – brewing. A number of the social pathologies currently afflicting Lesotho (section 4.5) can be seen in the red lines linking the informal sector with the family and 'good relations'. The lack of positive links from the 'government' cluster is striking, although there are two minor ones from 'democracy'. A more detailed discussion of the diagram is presented in the report on Phase I of this survey (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 158).

These sorting, clustering and correlating exercises did not reveal major differences between urban and rural Basotho's perceptions of livelihood structure and context. Nor did the investigators find significant differences between the world view of women and men, who in many cases were asked to undertake the exercises separately. The investigators concluded that

The strategies which people use to survive indeed form a tightly-knit system, with certain strategies at the core and others at the edges. Living the good life is not simply a matter of having a job and a good house. All these other elements must be present, including good relations with a benevolent government, enough food from agriculture, a livelihood which derives from the cash economy, and a family which lives and works together in a harmonious way.

The system fails at just these same points. The government cannot provide everyone with all the necessities and luxuries of life. Agriculture is failing to provide a living to more than a handful of Basotho, despite the strong cultural sentiments it arouses. Legitimate jobs and business are very scarce, with unemployment extremely high, and as a result people turn to illegitimate ways to get ahead. And finally, the resources of the families and societies to which people belong are sorely stretched in this time of serious poverty.

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 172.

Figure 4. The 'web of life'

3.2. What Basotho want

In defining wellbeing and discussing how to attain it, Basotho's strongest concern is with the material dimension of their livelihoods. They consider themselves poor. They refer often to hunger – sometimes more figuratively than literally. Their 20th century heritage of migrant labour and incorporation into the metropolitan commercial economy of southern Africa is reflected in the way they emphasise wage employment as the key to wellbeing. Hundreds of focus group discussions undertaken during both phases of this study found what many other studies have found. Basotho want jobs. Their discussions about poverty, livelihoods and enhancing their wellbeing all point to jobs as the way out of poverty. However active (and, by African standards, prosperous) they may be in unwaged activities like agriculture, Basotho consider themselves unfulfilled if there is not at least one wage earner in the family. While these priorities are more understandable among the growing proportion of the nation who live in and around the towns, they seem painfully unrealistic for rural Basotho, who still form the majority. Nevertheless, these are the views of a society that is intimately acquainted with the prosperous wage economy of South Africa it has helped to build, and that has been schooled to suppose that a salary is the only means to a successful, respectable, modern livelihood.

A survey of political opinion in Lesotho carried out by Sechaba Consultants in 2000 found that the principal expectations of government were that it should work to provide jobs (64%), control crime (29%) and overcome hunger (20%). Other answers were given by less than 10%, including improving roads and transport, eliminating poverty, providing better health facilities, and improving water supplies. 56% overall felt that the government is doing a good job in addressing educational needs, 50% in improving health services, 44% in reducing crime. 38% felt that it was doing well in creating jobs, 36% in managing the economy, 35% in delivering basic services, 32% in providing enough land for everyone, and only 20% in keeping prices stable. As expected, supporters of the opposition parties give government a much lower score on each item than those of the ruling party.

This survey also mirrors many others in finding that Basotho expect the government to create jobs for them. They know that the private sector employs many people, as well as government. But they believe that government has the lead responsibility to make jobs available for them – either by employing them itself, or by creating conditions in which private employers can hire them. Basotho thus have a very clear idea of what wellbeing is like; a stark belief that very few of them attain it; and a sadly passive view of how it is to be achieved – by government bringing it to them. Before we condemn this passivity, however, we must again recall that these are the views of a society repressed by more than a century of exploitation by the South African metropolitan economy (and its sometimes international owners). Generations of Basotho have been brought up to believe that their place is to earn wages for their labour, and that a livelihood without wages is incomplete and unfulfilled. The notion that they can create wealth and wellbeing for themselves is novel, although rapidly growing numbers of Basotho are doing exactly that as they move into the (peri) urban economy.

Basotho refer much less to social assets or cultural achievement when they talk about wellbeing and how to attain it. This is probably due to a combination of factors. On the one hand, people may find the economic imperatives of improving their livelihoods so overwhelmingly important that it seems less urgent to raise social or cultural concerns. On the other hand, and especially in the rural areas, people may still feel relatively confident about the social and cultural dimensions of their livelihoods. In rural Lesotho, social networks still function. Many of the cultural practices with which people have been familiar over the last century persist. Nevertheless, much is changing in the cultural and social framework, and this change is accelerating as Basotho livelihoods take on more and more of an urban character. Traditional networks and cultural values cannot function in the same way in town. Meanwhile, the catastrophic trauma of HIV/AIDS is appearing over the horizon. So far, although their outlines of life's problems are full of the social pathologies of the changing age (section 4.5), Basotho do not discuss these matters much with researchers like us when we ask them about their priorities for a better livelihood. One final reason for this may be the perceived nature of such discussions, which respondents assume to focus on the material things that government can do for them.

What Basotho do emphasise as a necessary component of wellbeing – in addition to the wage employment that they want government to bring them – is peace. Peace, as a leading component of wellbeing, entails the absence of the conflict that pervades Basotho livelihoods. The prevalence of (sometimes violent) conflict is nothing new in Lesotho (section 4.4), although the forms that conflict takes are changing as society changes. Some of it is the intra- and inter-household conflict that is to be found all over the world. Some of it is the conflict associated with crime. For decades, Lesotho has been divided by political conflict, and this took particularly violent form in 1998. Basotho have good reason to be disenchanted with the party political process. When discussing their aspirations to better livelihoods, they say much less about democracy than about peace. When they do speak of democracy, they do so in disparaging terms. For most Basotho, the reintroduction of democracy since 1993 has meant a resurgence of the divisive, conflict-ridden and often violent party political process. They have not been given the economic, social and political space to develop a deeper understanding of democracy as an opportunity for citizenship and peace. What most Basotho appear to want is peace and a benevolent (not necessarily democratic) government authority that will provide them with wage employment and the services they need for satisfactory livelihoods.

Not surprisingly, many of the Sesotho definitions of wellbeing outlined above contrast sharply with what development ‘experts’ think would be best for the country. As the Phase I report of this study explained, the common view of development planners and aid agency consultants is that the role of the state should contract, not expand. Far from creating jobs for all, these ‘experts’ believe that government should simply create an enabling environment in which people can build their own livelihoods and employment. The privatisation process to which the Government of Lesotho has committed itself is part of this contemporary vision of the state shedding assets and responsibilities (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 180-184). Far from protecting its citizens and giving them what they need, the experts would say that government should be exposing them to international competition and equipping them with the skills they need for survival in that harsh environment. In this contrasting vision, democracy connotes civic virtue and good governance, rather than the violent party political conflict with which Basotho associate it. The international, arguably naïve, view is that the citizens of countries like Lesotho have the space in which to act democratically, and that they should all commit themselves to the democratic project. These and other differences between Basotho’s concept of future wellbeing and that of the international development community are summed up in the following table from the Phase I report.

Table 11. Visions for a future Lesotho

	People’s visions	Bureaucrats’ visions
State – people	Proactive and strong state desired. Waiting for the government.	Reactive state, which creates the enabling environment. Waiting for the entrepreneurs among the people.
Responsibility	Responsibility placed mainly on government.	Responsibility placed mainly on the people / individuals themselves.
Employment	State has moral obligation to create jobs for the people.	State should refrain from creating jobs and privatise existing state owned factories and institutions.
Job type	Paid labour.	Self-initiated income generating activities.
Fato-fato	Perceived as necessary lifeline for the poorer households.	Perceived as unsustainable patchwork solution.
Social welfare	Should be free and extended heavily in order to address the growing needs of the population.	Should be limited to the extent possible and partly based on user contributions.
Privatisation	Either unknown or critically observed.	Perceived as absolute necessity for Lesotho’s future.
Local leadership	Strong and proactive local leadership desired. Many complaints about VDCs and/or chiefs.	Decentralisation and democratisation on local level. Redefinition of chiefs’ roles and responsibilities.
Democracy	Perceived as dysfunctional and responsible for many problems in Lesotho.	Perceived as indispensable part of the ‘conducive environment’ and necessary partner of economic liberalisation. Empowering!

	People's visions	Bureaucrats' visions
Cultural practices	Source of pride and means of redistribution of scarce resources.	Obstacle to the creation of the 'enabling environment'.
Development aid	More aid necessary to address needs.	Less aid in order to reduce dependency syndrome.
Regional integration	Migration has always been a central livelihood strategy.	New focus on regional integration as means of development.

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 184.

This dichotomy between what the people want for their future and what the planners think would be best has grave implications for policy and politics. It implies a fundamental mismatch between the aspirations of the people and what a mostly well meaning 'development' process is trying to do for them. The two sides of the process are not hearing each other. There are no easy ways out of this dilemma. The best hope is to pursue a course of benign realism. There is no escaping the inability of government to create wage employment for all the Basotho who expect it to do so. The only practical way forward is to try to create the technical and economic opportunities for Basotho to employ themselves profitably and sustainably in Lesotho and the region, and to equip them with the skills they need for the purpose. At the same time, there is no escaping the poverty and hardship that many Basotho suffer, and the obligation to do all in government's power to provide them with their basic human needs. Even if such a policy of benign realism is competently and honestly pursued, however, it cannot address the deeper, political dimension of the problem. Basotho do not seem to see themselves as part of the government, or as having influence over the government. The fundamental principles of democratic politics and of citizenship in a democracy have yet to take root. As in so many other countries, and as so clearly demonstrated by Lesotho's recent experience, this poses a grave threat to the stability of society. It is a political issue that only Basotho can address.

4. The policy context

4.1. Introduction

As we explained in section 1.3 above, the approach and presentation of this study are guided by two key imperatives. First, the livelihoods approach requires that we give prominence to the views of those who live these livelihoods, and that we distinguish clearly between the voices and views of these people and those of outside observers and analysts. We have therefore given prominence in Part I of this report to the views of Basotho about their livelihoods (section 3 above). Secondly, this study is meant to make a practical contribution, through policy and programmes of government, NGOs and outside agencies, to the enhancement of livelihoods in Lesotho. The remainder of Part I of this report therefore spells out the policy implications of our analysis, guided as it is by Basotho views of their livelihoods. To make our policy analysis accurate and focused, we must begin by outlining key aspects of the policy context for livelihood enhancement efforts in Lesotho.

4.2. Demographic context

Livelihood models, including the one developed by CARE, do not identify demography as a key part of livelihood context. But the numbers of (potentially competing) people among whom individuals and households must pursue their livelihoods, and other demographic features such as their age and gender structure and growth rates, are important influences. This outline of the current context of Lesotho livelihoods therefore begins with a summary of the current demographic situation.

The current estimate of Lesotho's population is 2,096,000, of whom females make up 51.5% and children under 16 constitute 39.6%. Until recently, the commonly quoted annual population growth rate was about 2.3%. Table 17 on page 50 shows growth during the 20th century. It can be seen that the population has more than doubled since independence 34 years ago.

But when adjusted for AIDS, population growth is now estimated to be 0.92% p.a. (with a crude birth rate in 1996 of 36.9 per thousand). Statistical tracking of HIV in Lesotho has been inadequate over recent years. Current expert opinion is that the 1999 UNAIDS estimate of 23.6% of the population being HIV positive is low. For 1999, UNAIDS estimated that 240,000 Basotho were living with HIV/AIDS. This number is expected to rise to about 650,000 by 2015. Only a small fraction of those infected have so far died. The enormity of this demographic, social and economic catastrophe for Lesotho will only be felt in the coming decades. Life expectancy will drop to about 35 by 2010 – a fall of almost half the projected life expectancy in the absence of the pandemic. By 2015 it is estimated that there will be almost 300,000 maternal or double AIDS orphans in Lesotho (POLICY project, 2000, 4). It is possible that population growth in Lesotho will be replaced by overall shrinkage. But the implications for Lesotho livelihoods are obviously much broader. Families will collapse. Many government services are threatened with extinction. Economic growth is gravely threatened. As so many die, livelihood opportunities may expand for some of those able to remain uninfected, if they are able to obtain skills from what remains of the education sector.

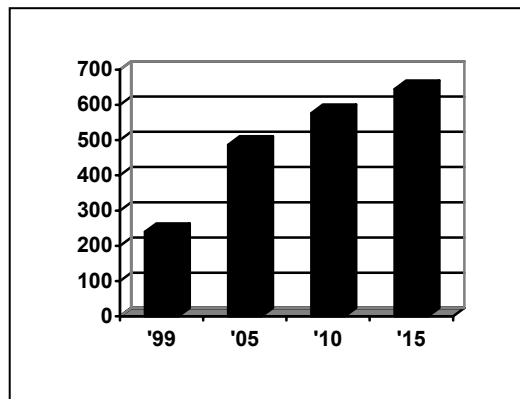


Figure 5. Thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS, 1999-2015

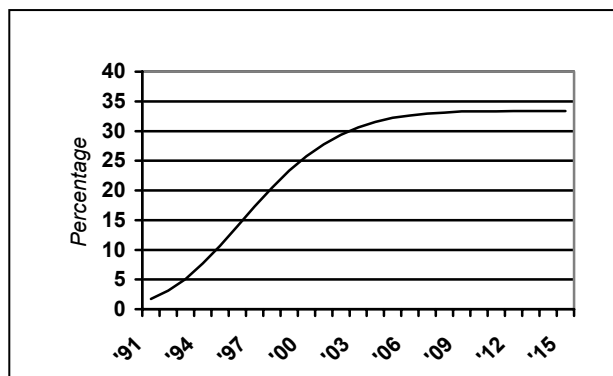


Figure 6. National HIV prevalence, 1999-2015

A second, less catastrophic demographic trend also constitutes a major change in Lesotho livelihoods and the opportunities for their enhancement. People are moving to more accessible locations; from the mountains to the foothills and lowlands; and into urban or peri-urban settlements. The 1995 TAMS study, defining ‘urban’ settlements as those where households have no rural fields, estimated that 34.3% of the Lesotho population was urban, and that this proportion will rise to 58.9% by 2025. Most of these people are, and will be, in the northern and western lowlands, in a band of increasingly urban settlement from Butha-Butha to Quthing. This has obvious consequences for livelihood opportunities and aspirations, as more and more Basotho turn their backs on rural agriculture (section 4.8), exploit real or imagined economic opportunities in other sectors, develop different social structures and pathologies (section 4.5), and place new demands on government services.

4.3. Political context

The evolving context of Lesotho livelihoods makes it increasingly difficult for them to be pursued sustainably. The political context is largely unfavourable. In 1986, an increasingly intolerant one party state was replaced by a phase of military rule that grew less and less stable. The return to democratic elections and parliamentary government in 1993 should have opened up new potential for participatory governance and livelihood development. In fact, the political process has become increasingly dysfunctional over the last seven years. The framework that the machinery of state should provide for Basotho livelihoods is unstable. Partly because of politicians' failure to agree on a workable dispensation, and partly because of increasingly common allegations of corruption, the perceived legitimacy of public institutions has dwindled. Basotho can no longer rely on the political framework for meaningful national debate or direction.

Due partly to deteriorating national political conditions, and also because of the advent of democracy in South Africa, Lesotho no longer attracts the massive donor support that it used to enjoy. While this may not be an entirely bad thing, it creates another kind of isolation for Basotho who are struggling to secure or enhance their livelihoods. There was a period after the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 when closer links with Lesotho's powerful neighbour were widely debated as a way of assuring the future. Since South African troops crossed the border in 1998 to quell (or exacerbate?) severe political unrest in Lesotho, many Basotho have seen that country in an intolerant policing role. They do not see the regional political context as conducive to their livelihoods. Opinions remain divided as to how Lesotho's links to South Africa could best assure future Basotho livelihoods. Many Basotho, especially in the rural areas, still see unification with their neighbour as the best hope for the future. But urban people tend to be strongly opposed to the idea. Their strongest recent image of South Africa links directly to the devastation of September 1998. Most rural people still associate South Africa more strongly with the comparative prosperity that migrant labour used to offer, and are well aware that many long serving Basotho miners were allowed to settle across the border by the new democratic South African government.

Phase I of this study found that Basotho see local and national peace and unity as crucial for the future of livelihoods and the country as a whole. This is not surprising, given the way in which local lives and village projects have been disrupted by party politics since the 1960s, and the steady decline in urban and rural security conditions. They expect the government to provide a wide range of development services and to play a central role in the development of their livelihoods, but they have seen democracy in Lesotho and South Africa achieve little of direct benefit to them. Overall, they remain deeply dissatisfied with their current political context.

Despite the overarching importance of the political context to their livelihoods, Basotho did not readily volunteer views about politics in the case study discussions with households that were undertaken during Phase II of this survey. As with all commentary on these case study discussions, we must keep in mind that the predominance or insignificance of certain topics within these discussions were undoubtedly influenced by the way the discussions were facilitated, and by participants' perceptions of what they thought the investigators' main interests were likely to be. In the case of politics, we should also keep in mind the likely reluctance of many people to discuss a potentially sensitive issue with outsiders. In any event, only about 1.6% of the total volume of case study discussion was devoted to 'political' issues. (We searched our case study transcripts for 'party politics', 'disciplined forces', 'government', 'tradition', 'opposition' and 'law'.) This compares with, for example, some 20% of case study discussion being on economic issues. Politics did not feature at all in the Phase II discussions about the shocks and stresses that threaten livelihoods (see also section 3.1.4).

In the second quarter of 2000, Sechaba Consultants undertook a survey among 1,177 adults randomly chosen from households across Lesotho. The survey was also conducted in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa between late 1999 and mid 2000. Lesotho differs substantially from the other countries in terms of the demand for and understanding of democracy. A high degree of indifference and apathy prevail in Lesotho, much more so than in the other countries, which identify democracy strongly with government by the people, with civil liberties and with personal freedoms. 42% of Basotho respondents could not answer the question as to the meaning of democracy, compared with 27% and less in the other countries.

Only 39% of Basotho respondents felt that democracy is always preferable to any other form of government, while none of the other countries fell below 58%, including even Zimbabwe, where 71% felt that democracy is preferable. The basic features of democracy identified by Basotho were social needs, including jobs for all (64%), satisfaction of basic needs (60%), and equal schooling for all (56%). The political features of democracy were all mentioned less often: majority rule (41%), freedom to criticise government (39%), at least two political parties (35%), and regular elections (32%).

On the other hand, there were strong feelings against most alternatives. 70% were against rule by the army, 69% opposed rule by the Prime Minister alone, 65% return to colonial rule, 59% rule by chiefs and elders, and 51% rule by one party.

Only about half the Basotho who were interviewed feel that the present government was elected through acceptable procedures and exercises power acceptably. This was less than all the surveyed countries but Zimbabwe, which scored lowest on the acceptability of its government. Not surprisingly, those who support the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy have a much more positive view of the present government than members of the opposition parties.

In particular, there was a strong split between ruling and opposition parties concerning the 1998 protests and the subsequent SADC intervention. Only 22% of the LCD supporters felt that the protests were necessary, while 60% of both BNP and BCP supporters argued in favour of the protests. Similarly, 78% of LCD supporters felt that the SADC intervention was necessary, while only 56% of BCP supporters and a low 42% of BNP supporters supported the intervention.

Attitudes toward eventual union with South Africa were severely affected by the September 1998 protests and subsequent intervention. In early 1998 a survey showed that 43% of Basotho wished Lesotho to join South Africa, while the figure dropped to 29% in 2000.

4.4. Economic context

Lesotho's economic context is problematic, and the outlook is poor. Measured according to human development indicators, Lesotho is better off than most African countries. For many years, its fiscal position has been comparatively sound, due to revenues from the Southern African Customs Union and from migrant labour. Substantial growth was achieved in some manufacturing sectors, such as textiles, during the 1990s. However, migrant earnings from South Africa have now started to fall significantly (section 4.10), and have been only partially replaced by revenue from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. Meanwhile, agricultural production and real revenues have been declining steadily since the 1950s. The riots and destruction of September 1998 further accelerated an already substantial downturn in gross national disposable income.

Retrenchment or the fear that a family breadwinner will lose his or her job was a recurrent theme in our Phase II discussions with people across Lesotho. It was repeatedly mentioned as a serious threat to livelihoods, and a reason why households might slip from one category of wellbeing to a lower one. Retrenchment packages from the South African mines have been a significant feature of many Basotho household budgets during the 1990s. Not surprisingly, some have been used more wisely than others. We also encountered families whose retrenched breadwinner had received no package at all (see box).

Over the last 20 years, both Lesotho's gross domestic product (GDP) and gross national income (GNP, which includes migrant earnings) have fluctuated from year to year, up to about 13% from the long term average (Figure 7, page 39). There was a period of good growth and stability from the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s. 1987 was when a structural adjustment programme was introduced and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) began construction. Between 1987 and 1997, the average annual growth rate was 6.2%. But there was a major fall in 1998, due to reduced migrant labour earnings, fewer imports for construction of the LHWP and the major economic disruption caused by the September riots. GNP dropped by 7.7% that year.

The man was working in the mines a long time ago and was retrenched. They became poorer and poorer because even the little amount of money he gets from piece jobs does not answer the needs of the family.

- Mountain household, wellbeing quintile 1 (poorest)

After being retrenched, the household head went to look for contract jobs but he was never successful. The daughter went out to look for a job in Maseru but was never successful. What we really have in mind is to improve our livelihood, and we still believe it will happen if we get jobs though they are really very hard to get.

- Mountain household, wellbeing quintile 2

His retrenchment did not bother him much as he thought he was old enough, at 46, to stop working, after all he had worked for 20 years for that mining company. The only thing that hurts him is that when he left he was given only his salary and no long service benefits. He feels that the Government of Lesotho is not doing enough to protect its nationals who work in South African mines.

- Mountain household, wellbeing quintile 5

He has been looking for a job and the brother has taken his passport to bribe people to give him a job in South Africa. But that was all in vain. They have always taken the money but have done nothing.

- Lowland/foothill household, wellbeing quintile 2

The respondent is threatened by the high rate of retrenchment, which makes her say that they have to look for a business that can enable them to survive.

- Lowland/foothill household, wellbeing quintile 4

He went to the mines in 1994 but in five months' time he was back home because of a strike they held in the mine where he worked. He has since been home and has never had another job, not even a casual one.

-Lowland/foothill household, wellbeing quintile 3

The household head was working in the mines and volunteered to retire in 1999. But there haven't been any changes since he left work. He says he hasn't seen any difficulties since he arrived. He says he retired because he was tired of working as he started working in 1970. During the days he was working he used to bring income every month and since retiring he doesn't see any change because he still lived the same life. After retiring he got a package of M50,000 which is still at the bank. The reason he has still not used it is because he uses money from the sale of vegetables and profit from the shop.

Lowland/foothill family, wellbeing quintile 5

Gross national disposable income (GNDI) is GDP minus income accruing to companies owned outside the country. Phase I of this study assesses this as the most meaningful economic measure from a poverty perspective (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 36). Between 1995 and 1997, GNDI grew at the impressive average rate of about 5% per year. The mid 1990s were a period of strong domestic economic growth for Lesotho. But the crisis of 1998 led to an annual change of -2.6% in GNDI for that year, reversing much of the progress that the economy had made during the decade and darkening the economic outlook for the years to come.

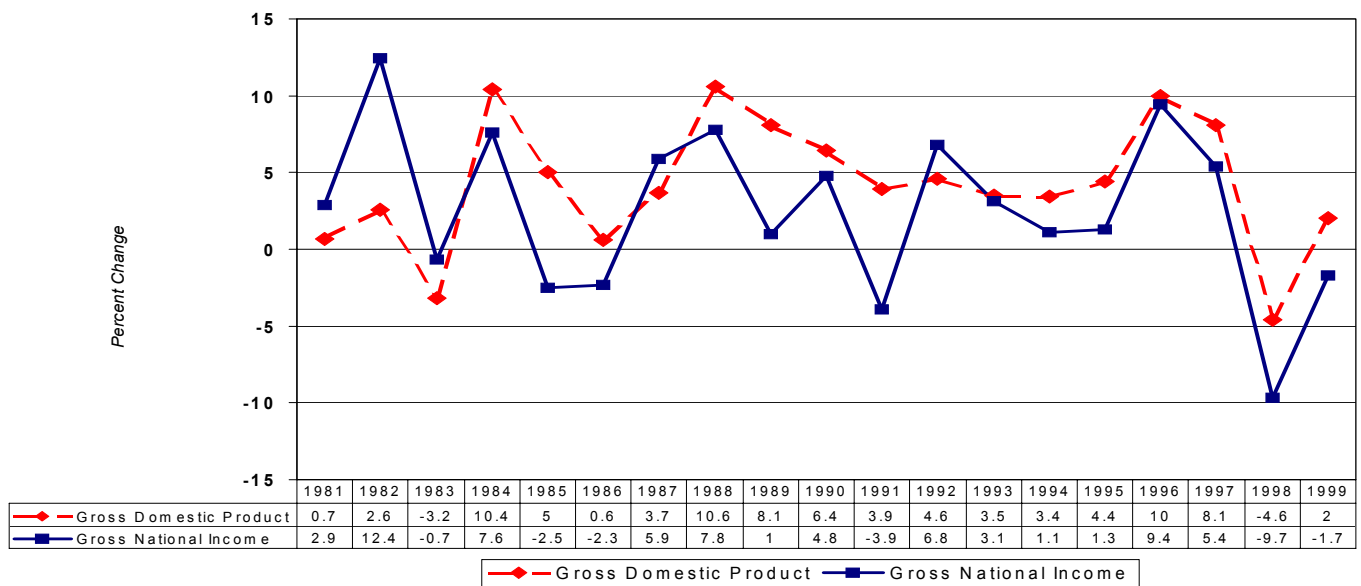


Figure 7. Changes in gross domestic product and gross national income, 1981-1999

Bureau of Statistics, 2000.

After many years of modest surplus, Lesotho must now prepare for a period of deepening deficits in its public accounts. Meanwhile, the elite capture a disproportionate amount of national resources, and the poor are still often excluded from those public services that the state does provide. National fiscal and economic policies remain hostile to the interests of the poor. Phase I of this study collected data on the performance of economic sectors directly relevant to the poor in the mid 1990s (Table 12). Only agriculture and manufacturing apparently grew during this period of comparative prosperity for the nation as a whole, and the agricultural ‘growth’ is probably just an increase in the theoretical value of the country’s livestock (an asset many households are now losing to rampant stock theft). Even before the shock of 1998, and despite national statistics that looked better than those of most African countries, the economic context for the livelihoods of the poor in Lesotho was discouraging.

Table 12. Average performance of economic sectors directly relevant to the poor, 1994-1997

Sector of the economy	Average real income growth (% per year)	Average per capita income growth (% per year)
Agricultural sector	4.5	2.2
Remittances from mineworkers	1.0	-1.4
Manufacturing	8.6	6.2
Community, social and personal services	0.5	-1.9
Health sector	0.0	-2.4
Education sector	3.3	0.9

Some people living in poverty derive their livelihood from informal sector activities. However, data on these activities are not captured in the information published by the Bureau of Statistics, on which this table is based.

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 38.

Lesotho’s economy evolved as that of a labour reserve. By the standards of rural Africa, the revenues it earned from South African mines and industries were substantial. With those revenues, Basotho served as a useful market for South African commerce, which extended its retail services deep into their country. What

they could not buy locally, Basotho went to South Africa to procure. Again by African standards, the structure of these economic relationships assured comparative prosperity for Basotho towards the end of the 20th century. But it also meant that Basotho livelihoods lacked the autonomy and economic vigour of some of their poorer African counterparts. Lesotho's heritage of local business enterprise and non-farm production is weak. As the changing economic context forces them to build more self-reliant, locally based livelihoods, Basotho are poorly equipped for the task.

4.5. Social and cultural context

Lesotho's social and cultural context retains certain strengths on which livelihoods can draw. Basotho remain proud of their culture and heritage. Despite the political humiliations and costly strife of recent years, there have been national events – such as the coronation and wedding of King Letsie III, and the Morija Festivals – that have asserted the nation's cultural identity and social coherence. At the local level in the rural areas, important elements of indigenous governance persist. Networks of kinship and allegiance continue to permeate and support rural livelihoods, and to a lesser extent urban ones. Destitution remains rare in Lesotho. Social networks help the very poor to survive (section 7.3).

Overall, however, Lesotho society is fragmenting. Its culture, like most in the third world, is under siege. Traditional moral structures are decaying, and a host of social pathologies are taking their place. Basotho have never lived in the bucolic harmony that some outsiders supposed - witness the multiple *liretlo* murders of the late 1940s. But

violence is less and less contained in rural and urban life. Stock theft within and across the nation's borders has become a major social and economic disease, wiping out many rural livelihoods overnight and diminishing the cultural strengths traditionally associated with livestock keeping. It affects not only stock owners, but also the herd boys who can lose their jobs or their lives to it, with grave consequences for the households from which they come. It was repeatedly mentioned in Phase II of this survey when discussions were held about threats to livelihoods – especially in the mountains. People often quoted it as a reason why livelihoods could slip down the scale of wellbeing. Rape and other forms of violence against women are intensifying. Traditional gender discrimination has not significantly abated in these supposedly more liberal times.

Youth suffer most from, and in their turn exacerbate, this social decay. Sexually permissive and ignorant behaviour often leads to HIV and AIDS. It is estimated that 35% of Basotho aged 15-49 are now HIV positive, but the AIDS deaths suffered so far are insignificant compared with the catastrophe that is to come.

Since 1993, the people of Ha Mokhothu had a conflict, which resulted in the killing of three people in the same night. The reason behind these conflicts was within the relatives... Secondly after those deaths his wife died, the chief had been arrested, suspected that he might be involved in the killings of those three people. All those deaths and his arrest shocked him badly. He had been arrested by the police unlawfully, suspecting him as one of those involved in the killings of the three people.

- Lowland/foothill household, wellbeing quintile 5 (highest)

...This has really affected me because we are never at peace due to high rate of stock theft. When I find my animals stolen I feel so bad and I just report but nothing seriously is done. But there was a time when report was made at the police station and they made investigations and found them.

- Lowland/foothill household, wellbeing quintile 5

...Death of our father in 1996. He was a night watchman at a café and the robbers shot him to death. Since he was working he was very important in the family because with his salary and the crops sale and animal sales life was much better. We were affected both financially and emotionally because we really loved him and he was a family security too.

- Mountain household, wellbeing quintile 5

There is a 16 year old boy, who is now in prison, he is said to have been involved in theft and dagga smoking. He has now completed a year in prison. His absence in the house has contributed a lot as he was of no importance to the household. He used to help people transport their luggage in town, but could not bring anything home. He was also a problem in the house.

Urban household, wellbeing quintile 3

In the meantime, the rising number of people with HIV and associated illnesses is related to an increase in witchcraft allegations, which cause personal trauma and deep rifts in the social fabric. Alcohol abuse and crime are rampant among young people, many of whom move to urban or peri-urban areas in an often unsuccessful attempt to find employment. Economic change excludes them from most conventional livelihood strategies. As they drift out of traditional social frameworks, they exacerbate the decay of those frameworks. In turn, the overall social context becomes less supportive of sustainable livelihoods for Basotho. Many of these social problems are prominent in the vulnerability context that Basotho identify (section 3.1.4).

Ladies and gentlemen another thing that causes us poverty is this one. Most of the time parents cause this because even if the husband can earn money he does not care about the welfare of his family. He spends his money on beer. This is a serious problem, this man does not care about his children's education. Sometimes he registers them but does not care to pay the fees and spends his money only on beer. The children end up drinking beer themselves following on the example of their father. After they have been expelled from schools for unpaid fees they even end up stealing, the father is still working. The girls also follow the example and just lead promiscuous lives. Unfortunately the girl falls pregnant adding to the feeding burden. The boys also impregnate the girls. What I am saying is, we parents sometimes lose our responsibility and in turn cause poverty.

...Because as a parent I cannot afford to pay tuition fee for the child he or she is forced to stay at home. The child then ends up drinking and stealing and that is a cause of poverty also. Men also cause poverty because they woo them with money. Men only regard their biological children as children and abuse those who are not theirs using money to lure them into being their sex partners. The poor child loses sense and identity of who she actually is. She ends up going up and down not really sure what is happening to her and this also leads to poverty all because of a man. Men abuse children and cause poverty and I request that the government intervenes.

... We are the people who cause this theft. We are the people who steal. It is good if someone from a different household steals not one from your household. When I am rich and I drive your animal into my flock, you should not come looking for it otherwise you will be killed or hated. As a result we fear for our safety. We are encouraged to start anti stock theft yet they are useless because the people who steal are the members of these associations. No outsider would know how to enter the village if the association members do not tip them off. The association maybe works hard and catches the thief. Unfortunately in the process the thief is killed. Such a thing does happen under tough circumstances, when people are fighting for their own lives. Kill a thief before he kills you. Now no one knows the measure of how hard a person should be hit without killing him. So somehow one hits hard and a person is killed as result. We live with these thieves, in essence we are the people who steal. If one looks closely the chiefs play a role in these thefts. Well not all chiefs are involved. My chief for one does not like such things. But in some villages when you try to enter following up on stolen livestock, the women will shout at you, cry and insult you together with the men of the village.

There is a village near mine, which I will not name. You will hear that a woman has been raped, a woman has been beaten or an old man has been killed. The villagers would know very well who committed the crime but they will never say. [If] there has been theft they will never say anything.

Speakers at Phase I Poverty Hearings, 2000

Many of these problems in Basotho households' social context are summed up in Table 13, which shows the percentages of the households interviewed in Phase I of this survey who reported them in the previous 12 months. A review of the incidence of these problems among households in different wellbeing quintiles shows little significant variation across the spectrum of wellbeing. It can be assumed that a number of the more sensitive social pathologies are under reported.

Table 13. Incidence of problems among households in Phase I survey, 1999-2000

Problem experienced	Sex of household head			Total
	Male	Female <i>de facto</i>	Female <i>de jure</i>	
Rape	0.2%	0.9%	0.9%	0.5%
Violence	3.4%	2.6%	4.0%	3.5%
Robbery	8.6%	6.4%	6.0%	7.4%
Murder	1.0%	0.4%	4.3%	1.9%
Witchcraft	4.2%	6.6%	4.1%	4.6%
Stock theft	12.3%	11.0%	7.8%	10.7%

Source: Phase I data.

4.6. Infrastructure

The infrastructural context for Basotho livelihoods varies significantly from one part of the country to another. Overall, there have been steady improvements in access to basic infrastructure. The national percentage of households without access to clean water has gone down from 48% to 27% between 1990 and 1999, and that of households without a latrine from 69% to 51%. The availability of housing has also improved somewhat, despite the increase in population. Steady progress has been made with the provision of school facilities and service infrastructure such as roads, clinics and post offices.

However, there are still major differences in access to these facilities. The infrastructural context for livelihoods remains much less adequate in the mountains (with the exception of LHDA impacted areas). As communications improve and peri-urban sprawl increases, the difference in levels of infrastructure between urban areas and the rest of the lowlands and foothills is becoming less significant. Most lowland and

Recently, this very month of March, there was a lady who tried to cross the river thinking it was not so full. She was carrying a baby on her back and the food from the fields like fresh mealies and pumpkins. The water was so strong that it ripped the baby off and all she carried but she managed to cross but the baby drowned. She shouted for people to help. The baby was searched for and found dead, of course.

Honestly, Kuebunyane is one place, which has the most serious problem concerning roads. This is like the real centre of Lesotho because if we look at Ha Sekake, there are roads, Lesobeng has roads and Semonkong also has roads. Only this one, right in the centre of mountains has no roads. When we travel to a place like TY, we walk very long distances and we even have to put up somewhere on the way for the night before we reach our destination. It is difficult to travel and to transport the sick or corpses as we use horses. Sometimes people have to carry the coffin all the way and even sleep on the way with the corpse and arrive home the following day. We really need a road. If the government were to agree to our request, we would ask it to start with the road, as it is very important to us. We also need bridges, even if it is footbridges somewhere. We have five rivers surrounding us.

Speakers at Phase I Poverty Hearings, 2000

foothill residents can reach an urban centre and its facilities by public transport within an hour, or reach a more local facility on foot within a similar time. In many parts of the mountains, reaching a clinic or a post office can take at least half a day on foot or on horseback.

Despite the improvements that have been achieved, Basotho continue to highlight lack of infrastructure when they are asked about their development problems. Lack of roads, bridges, clinics, post offices, schools and other facilities was a recurrent theme during the Poverty Hearings organised at the end of Phase I of this survey. Not surprisingly, this is one of the areas of livelihood improvement for which Basotho unequivocally ascribe lead responsibility to government (section 3.2).

Figure 8 is an incomplete attempt from Phase I of this study to develop an index of households' access to infrastructure (based on the factors and scoring system shown in Table 14) by livelihood quintile (section 6.4) and zone. The better off livelihood quintiles, not surprisingly, enjoy better access to infrastructure than the poorest households. In part, this is likely to be a circular relationship: those in more accessible locations enjoy higher incomes. The desire for better access to infrastructure is one of the prime motives for the two

kinds of internal migration that are going on in Lesotho: from one rural place to another, and from the rural to the (peri-) urban areas (section 3.1.7).

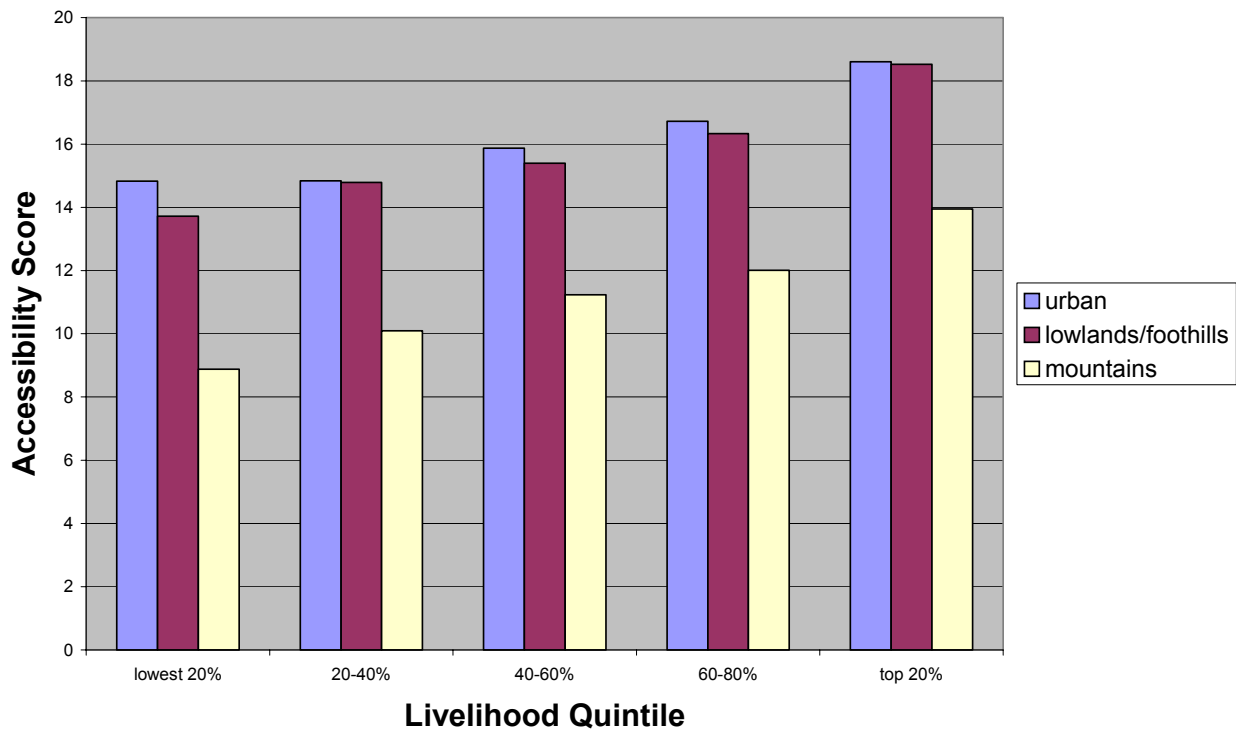


Figure 8. Accessibility by area and livelihood quintile

Source: Phase I data.

Table 14. Definition of accessibility factors

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points
Road quality	no road	poor dirt road	good dirt road	tar road
Transport in household	None	horse only	cart	motor vehicle
Transport available	None	once daily	twice daily	within an hour
Time to school	> 2 hours	1-2 hours	20 minutes-1 hour	<20 minutes
Time to clinic	> 2 hours	1-2 hours	20 minutes-1 hour	<20 minutes
Time to post office	> 2 hours	1-2 hours	20 minutes-1 hour	<20 minutes
Radio and television	None	radio, no TV	TV, 0-1 radios	TV, >1 radios
Members away	None	one	two	more than two
Group memberships	None	one	two	more than two
Loans and gifts	None	gift only	loan only	gifts and loans

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 132.

While the presence and condition of physical infrastructure vary widely between communities, there are some general trends. For the most part, communities throughout the country reported dissatisfaction with government **health services**, and have a very low opinion of the police and the judiciary. Private health

services were thought to provide better services, but are also more expensive and are not usually used by poorer households.

Poor and very poor households tend to rely on home based remedies for even the more serious illnesses, e.g. high blood pressure and tuberculosis. The distance to health centres, coupled with the cost, has rendered the health services beyond the reach of most households in these categories. However, when the illness becomes ‘too serious’ or beyond the ability of these households to manage, neighbours (usually the wealthier households) may chip in to assist the family with transport to hospital and/or money to pay the service fees.

When people are ill, they are carried on horseback or on our backs, to the roadside which is an hour's walk away, to wait for transport. Even the dead are carried this way.

- Residents of Ha Sebotha, at
Poverty Hearings

The inability of the poorer households to access health care in a timely fashion has a negative impact on their livelihoods. Other household members are drawn into nursing the patient, often over a prolonged period. This disturbs their own livelihood activities. If the patient is an adult whose activities were contributing to the household's livelihood, there is a double loss of capacity.

A number of men are returning from the mines in South Africa with TB and other long term illnesses, and the toll of nursing them has proved too much for some wives. Many such men have been abandoned at their weakest and left at the mercy of neighbours and other relatives.

Surprisingly, **water infrastructure** is generally perceived to be better in the mountains than in the lowlands or foothills. This might have to do with greater community cooperation and management of communal resources in the mountains than in the other two regions, or simply with the fact that water supply systems in the mountains are on average newer and have had less time to break down. The standard of peri-urban water supplies has been deteriorating recently.

Taxis service all urban and many lowland and foothill communities, although those in the mountains without **roads** clearly do not enjoy this service. The taxis are used more by the wealthier households, usually to reach the nearest point offering them jobs and services such as shops, post offices, hospitals, clinics and schools. As a result, these households are able to access goods and services that the poorer households cannot. They are able to save money on the purchase of groceries, which cost more in the village, and many of them buy small grocery items for resale in their villages.

Schools are available within many villages, while in other places children have to walk quite far to reach school. While Phase II field work encountered relatively few complaints about primary school in this regard, this was not so with high schools. The cost of high school education was said to be a major factor in children dropping out of school after primary level, but this was compounded by the fact that often these high schools are located far from the villages and usually in or nearer the towns. This presents a huge problem for parents, as they must provide their children with money not only for transport but also for accommodation.

Children from poorer households almost automatically drop out of school even before they complete primary school, unless they have a relative assisting them with school fees. The availability of such support is likely to decline due to widespread retrenchments. Apart from the cost, there is pressure for the children to contribute to the livelihood activities of the household. For example, many young boys in the poor and very poor households are hired out as herd boys, thus putting an effective end to their education.

It was found, however, that even in the wealthier households parents struggle to pay school fees, especially if they have many children. The high cost of educating children was cited as a common factor contributing to a downward trend in livelihoods of the average and better off households.

Apart from this, many parents felt that it was pointless to educate children when there are no jobs available. At a community meeting in Sheeshe, people commented “in our country, it is pointless to educate children. There are no jobs for them.”

For the most part, countrywide, infrastructure that is ‘managed’ by the government, but ‘maintained’ by the community, is in poor condition. This suggests that genuine community ‘ownership’ of physical infrastructure resources (as with other resources) is an important factor in maintaining its quality.

4.7. The natural environment

Section 4.8 below shows that, although agriculture is not the ‘backbone of Lesotho’ that earlier analysis used to suppose, it does still play an important role in Basotho livelihoods – especially the livelihoods of the poor. This means that the natural environment, as the provider of resources for agriculture, is a key part of livelihoods context, and that this part of the context for life in Lesotho must be reviewed with particular care if we seek to understand the prospects of the poor. Agriculture is not the only part of Basotho livelihoods sustained by the natural environment. Basotho continue to draw much of their energy supply from natural resources, in the form of firewood from shrubs and as recycled grass that is collected as dung and burned after drying. Other building materials – stone, thatch, mud and poles – also come from nature, as does the river sand used to make the building blocks that are now often preferred to stone. Water resources are the most fundamental of all the contributions that the natural environment makes to livelihoods.

In terms of the model presented in Figure 2, the natural environment and resources can be viewed as part of the context for livelihoods, and also as part of the economic capital on which people draw in pursuing their livelihoods. The overall condition and livelihoods potential of the resource base, and trends in that regard, constitute the context. Individual natural resources to which a particular household has access – a field, a grazing area, a sand bank in a river or an area of shrubs on a mountainside, for example – form part of the household’s livelihood assets. Many of these assets are accessed through, and mediated by, systems of common property resource ownership and management.

Overall, the natural environmental context for rural

Lesotho livelihoods is deteriorating. In rural Lesotho, as we saw in section 3.1.4, livelihoods are often and increasingly threatened by drought or irregular rainfall; by other climatic hazards; by deterioration in range lands; by soil erosion and declining soil fertility; by unreliable water supplies; and by dwindling tree, shrub, medicinal plant and thatch grass resources. It is worth bearing in mind that the Basotho do not have an ancient environmental heritage as mountain people. They were only forced to move into the mountains (exterminating most of the Bushmen they found there) in the 19th century, due to colonialist pressures from the west. It is also significant that some of the human agency behind some of Lesotho’s worst environmental problems may be of colonial origin. Colonial soil conservation programmes did much to preserve the country’s rapidly eroding soil resources. But some analysts also blame them for exacerbating erosion when terraces and drainage systems were poorly designed. Wool production has made a major contribution to Basotho livelihoods during the 20th century, especially in the mountains. Yet it can be argued that the British colonial authorities’ introduction of sheep and goats to the country was responsible for the serious land degradation that can be seen throughout the mountains today.

At all the Phase II survey sites in the foothills, apart from Ha Rakhoboli, **range lands** were stated to have declined in both quantity (area) and quality. Grazing land is under pressure from resettlement with its corresponding allocation of both residential and fields sites; higher numbers of livestock (as a result of both resettlement and general stock growth); and decline in grazing grasses as a result of overgrazing, drought and burning. At Ha Makhalanyane (a central peri-urban site), residents stated that a stage has been reached where rotational grazing can no longer be practised, due mainly to land allocation – “there is no where else left for the animals to graze”. This has considerable implications for livelihoods depending upon animal husbandry as a major livelihood strategy, as the present grazing area cannot support the current levels of livestock in the area and the numbers were stated to be increasing.

Trees – both indigenous and exotics - are declining in number across all the Phase II lowland survey sites. This is attributed to over utilisation coupled with little or no replanting, particularly in the designated community wood lots. Although both the communities of Sheeshe and Ha Sepelemane have planted trees to prevent soil erosion, they are generally not cared for. Also in Ha Sepelemane, because fuelwood is so scarce, people are resorting to stealing it from across the border in South Africa. If caught they can be imprisoned for up to three months. In the village of Sheeshe the decline of fuelwood and shrubs has been attributed to the high number of deaths. Fuelwood required for funerals is in heavy demand. Interestingly, Ha Ramaboella residents indicated that fuelwood supply is sufficient and regrowth of cut down trees plentiful.

An aggregate index of environmental conditions shows that they are best in the urban areas and worst in the mountains, and that those with stronger or wealthier livelihoods typically enjoy a somewhat better environmental context. The ‘environment score’ in Figure 9 is a composite of household respondents’ views in Phase I of this study with rainfall data from government sources. Table 15 shows how each household’s ‘environment score’ was calculated.

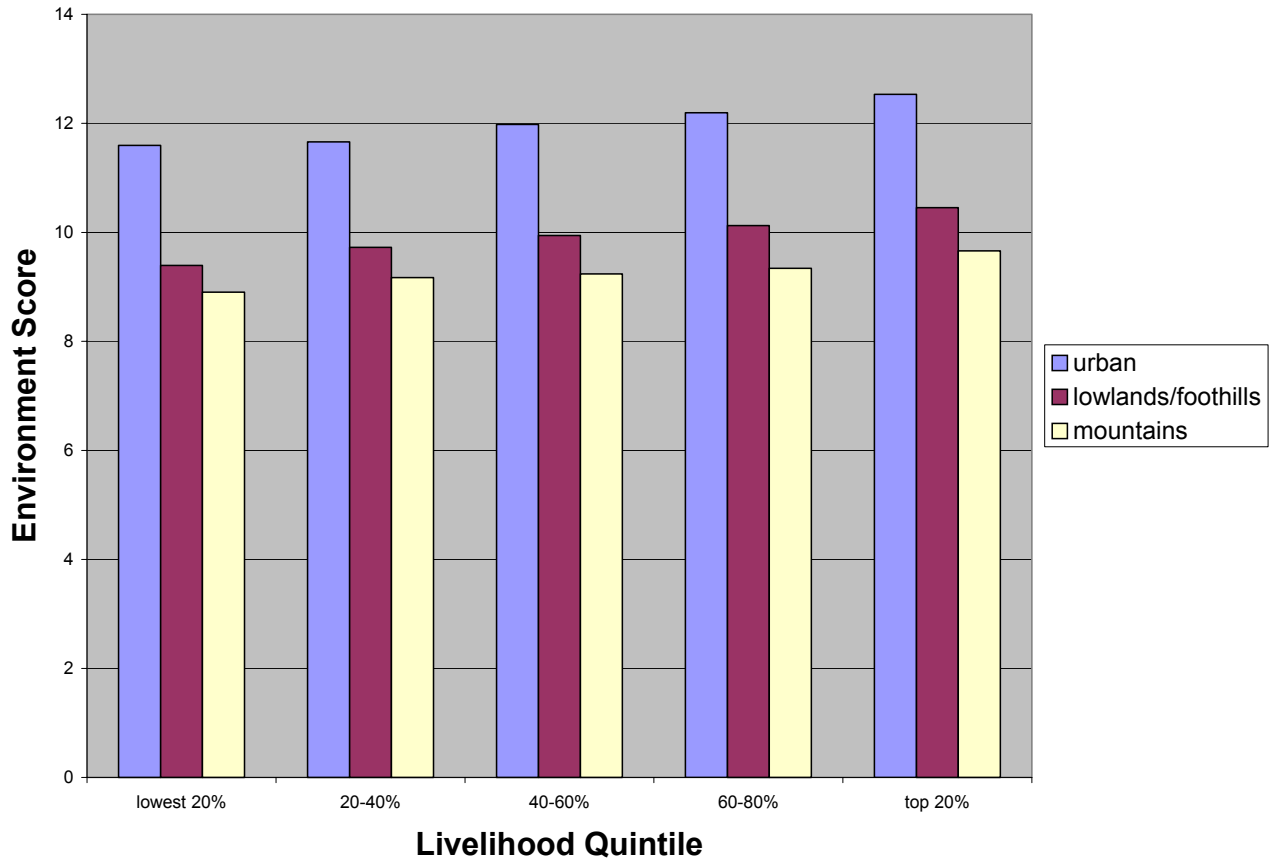


Figure 9. Environmental conditions by livelihood quintile

Source: Phase I data.

Table 15. Definition of environmental factors

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points
Range condition	non-existent	over-grazed, poor	Grazed but useful	well-preserved
Field condition	None	poor	Average	good
Rain	Low	fair	good	very good
Water	Unsafe	covered	communal	private
Fuel type	Traditional	wood	paraffin	modern
Conflict	range, stock theft	range only	stock theft only	neither

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 132.

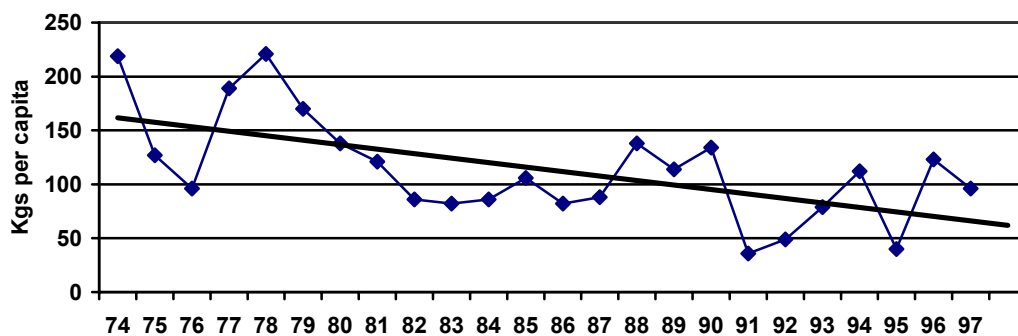
As Figure 9 shows, the picture is less entirely negative for the urban areas. There, comparatively low housing densities mean that there is scope for people to develop and tend productive micro-environments in their yards and make a substantial contribution to household nutrition. The pollution and other health hazards inherent in urban and peri-urban livelihoods are countered to some extent by higher incomes and better access to water, health and sanitation services.

Nor is the natural environmental outlook universally gloomy in the rural areas. In fact, international observers have often commented that people from the Sahel would consider Lesotho a land of milk and honey compared with the harsh environment in which they have to survive. It can be argued that Basotho livelihoods have not yet had to depend so totally on scarce natural resources that people have felt compelled to invest time and labour in the conservation of those resources. But some Basotho are already motivated in that direction, particularly around their homes or on other land to which they have secure private property rights – including the erosion gullies to which some entrepreneurs have been able to gain title. The micro context of the natural environment around the house or in a neighbouring donga can be rehabilitated to provide a steadily stronger asset base for its owners’ livelihoods. Further afield, there is a bitter irony in the fact that stock theft has so devastated some grazing areas that people are afraid to send their herds there any more. As a result, the natural environment in some of these remote mountain areas is recovering from decades of heavy use, while its former users lapse into poverty without the animals on which they used to depend.

4.8. Agriculture as ‘the backbone of Lesotho’

Because of its mainly rural character, Lesotho has often been wrongly described as a predominantly agricultural country. Especially in the early decades after independence, it was still common for development planning literature to refer to agriculture as ‘the backbone of Lesotho’. In fact, it has been more than half a century since most Basotho could ensure household livelihood security through farming. The forces of colonialism and apartheid made it necessary for Basotho to resort to multiple livelihood strategies throughout the 20th century, with agriculture playing a dwindling role for most households.

Figure 10. Kilogrammes of cereal per capita, 1974-1997



Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 25.

FAO defines self-sufficiency in cereal crops as a production level of 180 kg. per capita per year. Lesotho has not achieved this level of production since the 1970s (Figure 10), and has been a net importer of food for most years since the 1930s. Fewer and fewer households are able to produce enough to feed themselves throughout the year. A CARE study in three villages in Mohale’s Hoek and Quthing districts in 1998 found 29% of households claiming that they could feed themselves from their farming all year round. But two thirds of these households were in a village that is noted for its highly productive soils. The average number of months per year over which households in the three places said they could feed themselves from their own farming was six (Mohasi and Turner, 1999, 37). The national average is much lower. In 1990, 80% of households produced less than the FAO standard amount of 180 kg. of cereal crops per capita per year. In 1993, this figure had risen to 92%, and in 1999 to 97% (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 81). Meanwhile,

according to calculations made in Phase I of this study, 'agricultural activities, including sale of animals, crops, vegetables, animal products and wool and mohair, contribute altogether only 5.2% of the total national income' (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 78). The average number of fields held per household is only 1.21 in the rural lowlands and foothills, and 1.49 in the mountains – compared with the traditional standard of three.

Livestock holdings per household are dwindling (Table 16). Total stock numbers are roughly static, while the human population increases. Again, family livestock holdings are higher in the mountains than they are elsewhere. Although tractor ploughing has become common in the lowlands and foothills, livestock remain an essential means of many households' agricultural production, pulling ploughs and other implements. It can therefore be a double devastation when the household herd disappears overnight. Stock theft is becoming a major threat to Basotho livelihoods, especially in the mountains, and has drastically reduced the ability of some villages to cultivate their land. The government has now recognised the problem and is planning measures to try and tackle this rampant social and economic blight. Although they may appear to be of negligible economic importance, the handful of small stock and the pig or few chickens that even the poorest households may own play a real role in such households' livelihoods. Men may patronisingly dismiss pigs as 'the cattle of women', but pigs and poultry are important livelihood assets for poor, female headed households. Even these livestock are now the target of stock thieves. The results for the poor can be no less devastating than the theft of 50 sheep from a wealthier household.

Table 16. Percentage owning livestock by ecological zone

		Urban	Lowland/foothill	Mountain/Senqu	Total
Cattle	1993	16.3	51.0	59.1	47.8
	1999	10.4	42.4	48.8	38.8
Small stock	1993	9.7	30.2	50.3	32.1
	1999	7.5	25.7	40.4	26.3
Equines	1993	4.8	36.4	53.9	36.0
	1999	2.8	30.6	49.3	30.6
Pigs	1993	9.5	19.7	17.6	17.3
	1999	15.8	32.5	20.1	26.8
Fowls	1993	26.3	59.2	67.5	56.3
	1999	18.6	41.2	64.5	43.2
Any type of livestock	1993	37.2	81.0	90.2	76.7
	1999	35.3	74.8	83.2	70.4

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 104.

Despite what seems to analysts to be the minimal economic importance and the nutritional inadequacy of agriculture in Lesotho, farming remains highly significant in the livelihoods of Basotho. When asked in both phases of this study about the role of farming in their livelihoods, they gave it an apparently disproportionate emphasis. Partly this was a nostalgic assertion of the way they think rural life ought to be. Partly it reflected rural respondents' instinct that answers about agriculture were what the interviewers from town really wanted to hear. Partly it was in recognition of the social capital that livestock and crop farming activities reinforce. Partly it was because the land remains the ultimate fall back resource for so many. In the Phase I exercise that sorted and ranked livelihood elements, 'fields' received the highest aggregate priority (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 154). In the 1998 CARE study in southern Lesotho, 36% of respondent households

ranked independent crop production from their own fields (i.e., excluding sharecropping) as their most important livelihood strategy, and 72% included it as one of their strategies (Mohasi and Turner, 1999, 34).

Finally, it is important to recall that, despite its minor importance in Lesotho's total national income, agriculture is disproportionately important to the poor, who receive only a small part of that income despite their large numbers. In fact, the aggregate definitions and calculations of poverty in Phase I of this study show a correlation between poverty and the ownership of livestock and fields (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 122). The poorer a household is on all wealth measures combined, the greater its exposure to the agricultural sector is likely to be. Despite the fact that agriculture is far from being the backbone of Lesotho, farming and the land remain the bottom line in Lesotho livelihoods.

Brewing is a leading livelihood strategy for the poor, especially for female headed households. It has a strong redistributive function, transferring assets from the less poor to those who are worse off. Although the raw materials for brewing can be bought in stores, most are still produced from Basotho's fields. This reinforces the importance of agriculture in many people's livelihood perspective, and its role in sustaining the poor. At the same time, however, brewing and alcohol consumption lie at the heart of the multiple social pathologies that currently afflict Basotho livelihoods, as violence, abuse of women and children, and sexually transmitted diseases diminish and fragment the nation (section 4.5). As this report will repeatedly show, livelihood strategies that help sustain the poor are intimately linked to the forces that are tearing the nation and its livelihoods apart.

If in any sense agriculture is the backbone of some Lesotho livelihoods, it is a backbone whose infirmities threaten the whole body. The economic weaknesses of farming in Lesotho are highlighted by analysis of the costs and benefits of crop production (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 85). These show that the only way not to lose money on farming is to farm as the very poor must do, with minimal external inputs – or preferably none at all. In Lesotho, the more one spends on farm inputs, the more likely one is to make a loss. Agriculture can help sustain the very poor, but only if they remain too poor to afford farm inputs. Put more positively, this means that the low external input agriculture increasingly advocated by development agencies remains the standard practice for many Basotho. The challenge is to make this kind of farming more productive.

4.9. Multiple livelihood strategies and the household cycle

As we noted in section 2.4, it became increasingly common from the 1970s to acknowledge the multiple character of Basotho livelihood strategies, and to emphasise the role that off-farm income played in household survival and development. Throughout the 20th century, the dominant component in that off-farm income has been earned from migrant labour on the South African mines. This led to the emergence of a model of generational development and decay in rural Basotho livelihoods, and in the livelihoods of comparable societies in southern Africa that had been forced into dependence on migrant mine labour. In this model, young men work on the mines to build up the resources needed to marry and start households. During further years on the mines, men build more assets at home and establish a household farming enterprise as their children grow. Ultimately the father must retire from the mines, but may then have a mature set of farming activities and the family labour to operate them. One or more of his sons may then go to the mines and augment family income before marrying and breaking away into their own households. Gradually, the prosperity of the ageing household dwindles; the old man dies; the widow remains, probably still holding the family's fields and perhaps some of the livestock, but often unable to farm autonomously. Her last years are likely to be more impoverished than the prime decades in the household cycle.

4.10. Change in the 1990s

While incorporating dynamic elements and taking a more holistic view of multiple livelihood strategies, these perspectives on Lesotho livelihoods have become less accurate in recent years. This is largely because of the dwindling opportunities for Basotho men to work on South African mines. According to Central Bank figures, 116,129 Basotho worked there in 1993; but in 1999 there were only 68,827 Basotho mineworkers. Phase I of this study estimated a mid-1999 figure of 56,000. The percentage of Basotho aged 21-25 in wage

employment shrank from 29.2% in a 1986-87 survey to 17.1% in 1997 data (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 45).

Table 17. Basotho men in South African mines, 1904 - 2000

Year	<i>De jure</i> population	Total males	Males 16-64	Miners	Miners as % of males 16-64
1904	384,000	180,000	93,000	14,000	15.1
1911	444,000	202,000	104,000	23,000	22.1
1921	549,000	246,000	127,000	23,000	18.1
1936	618,000	264,000	136,000	40,000	29.4
1946	620,000	273,000	141,000	36,000	25.5
1956	706,000	299,000	154,000	38,000	24.7
1966	969,000	466,000	240,000	57,000	23.8
1976	1,216,000	587,000	303,000	83,000	27.4
1986	1,597,000	785,000	405,000	100,000	24.7
1988	1,673,000	811,000	418,000	120,000	28.7
1990	1,753,000	850,000	438,000	127,000	29.0
1992	1,837,000	891,000	459,000	120,000	26.1
1994	1,971,000	956,000	493,000	103,000	20.9
1996	2,010,000	975,000	503,000	97,000	19.3
1998	2,054,000	996,000	513,000	69,000	13.5
2000	2,096,000	1,017,000	524,000	64,000	12.2

The earlier population figures are obtained from the Bureau of Statistics census reports for 1966, 1976 and 1986. Subsequent figures are obtained from TAMS (1995) and from the current Health Reform study being conducted by Sechaba Consultants. The census figures prior to 1966 were all listed as *de facto* populations, so we have multiplied them by a standard figure (obtained from the relation between *de facto* and *de jure* populations for 1966) to obtain presumed *de jure* populations. We have also applied that factor to the male populations prior to 1966. The proportion of males within the age group 16-64 was obtained by taking a proportion based on population breakdowns by gender and age for all years.

As was noted in section 2.4, many Basotho are responding to the breakdown of earlier livelihood models by looking away from the rural and into the urban sector for their future. The mid 1990s saw rapid growth in urban and peri-urban livelihood opportunities (section 4.4). After the dramatic collapse induced by the 1998 riots, employment in the textile industry has started to grow again. Livelihoods based on the textile industry may be far from satisfactory, however. Working conditions are typically poor, both in terms of wages and with regard to the environmental hazards that textile workers face. Meanwhile, in this and other (peri-) urban activities, more and more women are becoming household breadwinners. This generates intra-household tensions and often spills over into the social pathologies typically associated with the combination of alcohol and unemployed, socially threatened men. Also clustered with the migration of young women to limited, low paying urban employment opportunities are the rise in both casual and professional sex work and the HIV/AIDS pandemic that now gravely threatens Basotho livelihoods across the nation (section 4.2).

Table 18. Income status of adults in Lesotho, 1999-2000

Income status		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Wage income this year	% within income status	64.2	35.8	100.0
	% within sex	26.3	13.5	19.6
Own income this year	% within income status	43.2	56.8	100.0
	% within sex	14.2	17.3	15.8
Wage income only last year	% within income status	71.2	28.8	100.0
	% within sex	2.4	0.9	1.6
Own income only last year	% within income status	51.1	48.9	100.0
	% within sex	1.6	1.4	1.5

Income status		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
No income either year	% within income status	43.4	56.6	100.0
	% within sex	55.5	66.9	61.4
Total	% within income status	48.0	52.0	100.0
	% within sex	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Phase I data.

Basotho livelihoods have thus had to incorporate an ever wider range of strategies in an increasingly risky effort to achieve household survival (let alone sustainability). This means that it is no longer possible to assume uniformity in Basotho livelihoods, as the earlier models did. Not only can rural households no longer pursue a standard set of strategies, with migrant mine labour and local farming at their core. A growing proportion of Basotho now live urban or peri-urban lives. In earlier decades, development analysis of Lesotho assumed that its problems were rural ones. To understand how Basotho live today, we need a broader livelihood perspective, spanning urban and rural strategies and the ways they link together. On the basis of such a perspective, we can build a strategic view of how policy and programmes can help Basotho enhance their livelihoods.

5. Policy implications and recommendations

5.1. HIV/AIDS

It is beyond the scope of this study to make recommendations about how HIV/AIDS should be combated in Lesotho. But there is little point in making recommendations about supporting and facilitating livelihoods in this country if we do not acknowledge the overarching threat that the pandemic presents, and the overarching need to make tackling that threat the nation's priority. Talk of livelihoods starts to seem academic when life expectancy appears likely to fall by almost half (section 4.2) and when the remaining adults will have so many orphans to care for. The nation's highest social and development priority must therefore be achieving a coordinated and effective response to HIV/AIDS. All the recommendations we make below must assume that this highest priority is being addressed.

5.2. Livelihoods: a strategic view

Livelihoods in Lesotho are subtle, complex and dynamic. Identifying points for effective intervention by policy and programmes is hard. That is why so few development efforts in Lesotho over the 35 years since independence have been successful. The nation has certainly made progress, and Basotho livelihoods are in many ways stronger now than they were in 1966. Development programmes have contributed to that progress, notably through the upgrading of infrastructure and social services. But most of the progress has been made by Basotho themselves, applying their own ingenuity, resources and effort to enhance their livelihoods in whatever ways they can.

Reflecting on the multifaceted character of Basotho livelihoods, it is tempting to propose recommendations that are equally multifaceted, covering virtually all known sectors as well as the broader macro-economic and political issues that shape the context in which people live. The report on Phase I of this study took such an approach, putting forward 80 wide-ranging recommendations aimed at both Government and NGOs. The recommendations in that report cover both the broader context or macro-environment as well more detailed issues dealing with particular sectors and areas.

It is likely that, if implemented, many of those recommendations would impact positively on people's livelihoods. Rather than repeating the arguments made in the Phase I report - as valid as they may be - we choose in this synthesis report to take a more strategic view. We suggest that the sets of recommendations in the Phase I report and in this report be treated as complementary.

The recommendations are based partly on the suggestions made by people in the research areas as well as during the subsequent Poverty Hearings. They are not based completely on those views because, if the suggestions had been incorporated in their entirety, this section would propose something akin to a socialist utopia, with the state providing jobs as well as free basic services for all. Clearly this is not practical, and it would be foolish to base recommendations on a utopian vision that will never be realised. At the same time it is recognised that if the state were to withdraw from critical areas to leave nothing but an ‘enabling environment’, many would suffer. A balance has to be struck between a state that provides all and one that holds back, and we have attempted to strike that balance.

It would be reductionist in the extreme to suggest that the complex and interwoven hardships experienced by so many Basotho can be traced back to one or two causes. Clearly this is not the case: environmental, cultural, political and economic factors all conspire to make life in Lesotho difficult for the majority of the population. In addition, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is now hitting the country with catastrophic force, leaving a swathe of illness and eventual death as at least a quarter of the sexually active population succumb to the virus.

Such is the combined weight of negative forces that it is hard to be optimistic, and many observers from both Lesotho and abroad have reached the conclusion that livelihoods in the country are not sustainable under the current set of circumstances confronting the population. Indeed there are those who see a ‘disaster waiting to happen’ unless fundamental issues can be addressed. As one experienced analyst put it:

I see a disaster coming, because of the inequity, because of AIDS, the dwindling support structures at community level, because of the loss of relatives who keep households going. I see a Sierra Leone, or worse, waiting to happen as the ratio of aid-givers to aid-receivers tips and the rich are seen to be isolating themselves in fortresses. What happened in September 1998 was a tremor. The earthquake is still coming.

Many of those bearing the brunt of the hardship appear to have reached a similar conclusion. Some have succumbed to depression, fatalism, alcoholism, crime and violence. Optimism and ‘positive action’ are hard to maintain, and some people miss opportunities to make the best of limited resources. It is not uncommon to hear people say (only half in jest): ‘*lefatse lea fela*’ (the world is ending). For those whose land has been washed away, whose cattle have been stolen, whose jobs are lost or whose children have died of AIDS, such statements do not seem unreasonable. Their disaster has already happened.

Identifying core problems within this cobweb of difficulties presents challenges. The field research showed that people have a complex view of causes and effects, and it would be a disservice to them to suggest otherwise. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that, from a livelihoods perspective, there are central issues which are clearly dominant and which lie at the centre of the complex livelihoods web, with the myriad of related problems leading to and from the centre. Averting disaster will depend, to a very large extent, on the success or failure of addressing these most fundamental issues that sustain livelihoods in rural and urban parts of Lesotho.

Figure 11 below is a schematic attempt at a strategic view. It seeks to identify the main areas of policy intervention suggested by this study. At the top of the diagram, we recognise the enormous importance of good governance in providing the enabling framework for Basotho to build their livelihoods. Basotho want peace (section 3.2). Linked to good governance are the functioning of democracy and the ability of Basotho to exercise their human rights. As a number of external agencies have recognised in their work with government and NGOs, this whole sphere of governance, democracy and rights has the potential for useful and positive contributions from the outside world to Lesotho. An arrow points down the diagram from the sphere of governance to indicate how effective change in this field of life can positively influence – or may be a prerequisite for – change in other aspects of Basotho livelihoods.

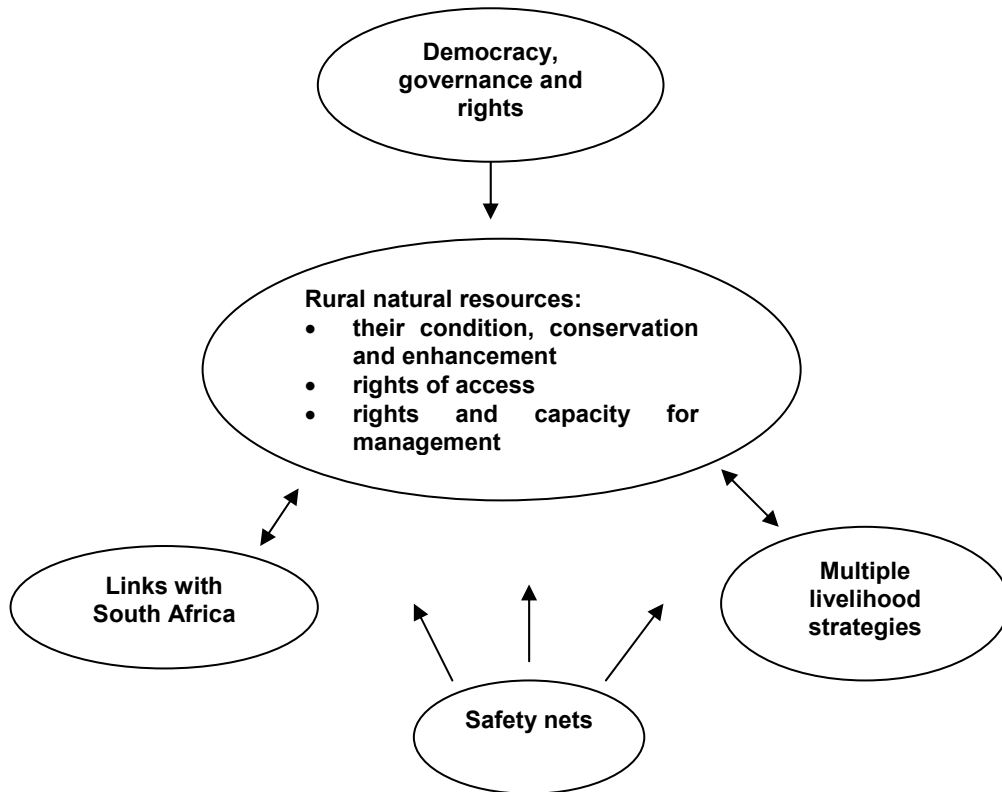


Figure 11. Main areas of policy intervention

At the centre of our diagram is the rural natural resource base. Again, this reflects the views of Basotho as reported in this study. While the economic numbers may not suggest that farming can be a profitable exercise, or indeed a very significant one for the national accounts, rural Basotho continue to emphasise the central role of the land and of farming in their livelihoods. Moreover, as we have pointed out, the natural resource base is particularly important in the livelihoods of the rural poor. The condition of rural natural resources, and measures to conserve and enhance them through sustainable production practices, remain centrally important to life and development for the Basotho nation. For the natural resource base to continue playing its vital role, it is important that access rights to it be maintained. The equitable system of land tenure in Lesotho has often been praised, but it would be wrong to expect that it will or should never change. A related social dynamic concerns the management of rural natural resources: the social structures that enable Basotho to participate in this essential governance function, and the capacity that they and their local institutions have for this purpose.

This central group of concerns has been the focus of innumerable policy studies and externally funded projects over the decades. Policy fatigue and stale ideas are widespread in the agriculture and natural resources sector in Lesotho. Nevertheless, we are driven by this analysis of Basotho livelihoods to emphasise that these concerns must remain a central focus of development effort.

Another arrow links the agriculture and natural resources sector with a further key theme in this analysis: the multiple, diverse character of Basotho’s livelihood strategies. These strategies are dynamic. To succeed, they must be flexible. What are the implications of this from a strategic policy perspective? Development interventions need to identify ways in which they can help Basotho optimise the flexibility, creativity and responsiveness of their livelihood strategies. In these strategies, there are typically many interactions with the agriculture and natural resources sector.

For generations, too, Basotho livelihood strategies have interacted with South African economy and society. Our diagram therefore identifies this as another key field for policy attention. Especially since 1998, the

question of relations with South Africa is a sensitive one (section 4.3). But few would deny that Basotho livelihoods cannot be sustained without multiple links to that country. A softening of the border and easier migration between the countries would enhance livelihood opportunities for Basotho. Again, the challenge for policy is to identify and achieve ways of facilitating these links.

The bottom of the diagram proposes a different kind of policy imperative. In its work with vulnerable groups and the poor around the world, CARE identifies three kinds of support that can be given to livelihoods. In the case of the most vulnerable – such as those suffering from war or famine – the urgent need is for **livelihood provisioning**. This is the provision of basic necessities – such as food, shelter and clean water - to people who cannot fend for themselves. In less dire circumstances, poor people may be able to produce much of what they need through a range of livelihood strategies, but these strategies may remain vulnerable to a range of threats. In this second case, policy should focus on **livelihood protection**. In more promising situations, livelihoods may be less threatened and people may be able to see various ways of getting ahead. What they may need then is various small injections of support to help them cross thresholds and remove specific obstacles to their progress. CARE calls this kind of support **livelihood promotion**.

As this study emphasises, many Basotho have made good progress in their livelihoods over recent decades. The national stock of ingenuity and resourcefulness is high. But poverty remains a grave hardship for a significant proportion of the population (sections 3.1.5, 3.1.6). For a range of reasons, many households have no prospect of getting ahead. In fact, their livelihoods may be deteriorating. For this important part of the nation, livelihood protection is a necessary strategy. Few are so destitute that livelihood provisioning would be appropriate (although HIV/AIDS will increase their numbers). But many need safety nets to prevent them from falling further. Many of these safety nets are provided by Basotho themselves, through the multiple sharing mechanisms and socio-economic linkages they operate among themselves (section 7.3). But there is an important strategic role for the state, NGOs and external agencies to play in this regard too.

5.3. Livelihoods: a strategic vision

Based on the strategic view of livelihoods offered above, we can now propose a strategic vision to guide the design of development policy in Lesotho. As our discussion of Figure 11 suggests, this vision combines two forms of support. For much of the nation, the best mode of support is facilitation of Basotho's own efforts to enhance their livelihoods in a number of spheres (section 5.3.1). Secondly, it remains important to provide safety nets as more direct livelihood protection for those who are afflicted by deep poverty, whose vulnerability context is overwhelming, or whose broader livelihood context is predominantly hostile (section 5.3.3). Transcending most of the areas of development facilitation that we identify is a primary strategic thrust: helping Basotho to redefine 'work' and successful livelihoods (section 5.3.2).

Again treating the detailed recommendations of the Phase I report and the strategic view and vision of this report as complementary, we invite policy makers to consider where each of the 80 Phase I recommendations fits into this broader picture. Some have more to do with facilitation and with enabling frameworks. Some focus on safety net interventions. Some speak directly to the need to redefine 'work'.

5.3.1. Facilitation

For the most part, the role of development policy and programmes should be facilitation. Decades of development experience in Lesotho clearly show that the externally designed and delivered development efforts that the country has had in such abundance fail more often than they succeed. Put another way, the cost per unit of sustainable development actually achieved is unacceptably high, particularly in today's more sceptical development funding climate. Basotho, meanwhile, have been getting ahead in whatever way they could. They will continue to do so. But there are many ways in which their path can be made smoother, by the removal of obstacles and constraints and the development of human resources. The strategic view shown in Figure 11 suggests key areas in which such targeted facilitation is needed: in the fields of governance; agriculture and natural resources; enhanced interaction with South Africa; and the overall promotion of capability and flexibility in the pursuit of multiple livelihood strategies. In the lowlands of Lesotho, and in the urban and peri-urban areas that are so rapidly spreading across them, Basotho do not need much

conventional development help from outside. Instead, they need facilitation, to enhance the legal, economic, social and institutional frameworks within which they try to better their lives.

5.3.2. Redefining work

These facilitation approaches are the ones that should be applied to most of the areas of intervention identified in our strategic view (Figure 11). But there is a broader facilitation task that needs to be prominent in a strategic vision of sustainable development for Lesotho. It does not fit neatly into our diagram in Figure 11 because it applies to the agriculture and natural resources sector, to the ways people appraise and pursue their multiple livelihood strategies, and to the ways in which they might profit more from links with South Africa.

5.3.2.1. Problem analysis

Ultimately, sustainable livelihoods depend on work. If individuals are - for whatever reasons - unable to work, the quality of their lives falls into a downward spiral, where it becomes very difficult to break the ties that bind their households to poverty. Those not working have less income, and as a direct consequence are far more likely to be malnourished, in ill health and poorly educated. These factors prevent them and their children working effectively, which means that their descendants remain bound by the same chains of cause and effect. While the standard of living of those with work rises, that of the 'workless' steadily declines. The lack of work has consequences not only for individuals but for the wider society. As the proportion of those working in a particular community declines in relation to those not working, a dangerous disequilibrium is created, with potentially hazardous consequences for the community and the broader society. Although the events of September 1998 may have had immediate political causes, it is clear from the contextual analysis that the underlying fury that fed the fires of destruction was an outcome of the disequilibrium and alienation caused largely by worklessness.

The term work - as opposed to jobs - is used intentionally. In the past Basotho men were able to access the latter with relative ease, as migrant workers on the South African mines. The arrangement suited the South African mining houses and the apartheid government as they were able to obtain cheap labour without taking on long term responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of Basotho miners. It suited the Basotho men who were able to use cash to build up household assets (and esteem) in communities where few other opportunities existed. Much of the 'household worth' described in section 6.4 is an outcome of three generations of men obtaining jobs on the mines.

While Basotho men may have benefited financially from the jobs created by the South African mining industry, there were significant costs to pay. Physical hardships, injuries and mine-related illnesses (such as silicosis) were the most visible cost. At a psychological level, women and men clearly paid a high price for the long term division (and sometimes complete disintegration) of families, particularly in the days when it was only possible to return home once or twice a year. A less commonly recognised cost is the damage that migrant labour has done to the national psyche: over the years Basotho have become conditioned to associate work with the provision of jobs created by others rather than as something created by themselves.

In the absence of job opportunities on the mines and of any large scale industries in Lesotho, Basotho have placed great expectations on government as the biggest employer in the country. The field research in all its forms, as well as the Poverty Hearings and numerous needs assessments conducted in recent years, all point in the same direction. Basotho see the 'lack of jobs' as the main cause of poverty and expect the government to do something about it. The expectation that something will be done is so high that a 'waiting for government' attitude prevails in many people's minds, and they are severely disappointed when nothing concrete materialises in their area.

Since independence different governments have responded to the call for jobs. In rural areas the late Leabua Jonathan is frequently remembered with affection, not because of his political views but because he successfully created temporary jobs through massive food-for-work programmes. The more recent public works programmes were totally oversubscribed as people competed for the limited number of jobs, with little attention being paid to the long-term outcome of the activities implemented (hence the derisory nickname *fato-fato*, scratch scratch). While the number of short term jobs created by public works programmes has

never been nearly enough to satisfy demand, the number of schemes has been sufficient to fuel the expectation that government can (and should) create jobs for people in rural areas.

The confusion between jobs and work is one of the key features that makes Lesotho different from other African countries further north where migrant labour has not been a viable option. Because such countries have not usually had the same opportunities to access waged employment, there is far more entrepreneurial activity as people create work - albeit not necessarily with lucrative results. The difference is most apparent when one compares Maseru with cities like Kampala, Dar es Salaam or Kigali. In Maseru there is a mass evacuation of the central business district daily, starting at 4.30 as jobs end for the day. This leaves the city lifeless by early evening. While other cities also experience an end-of-day rush, they remain vibrant late into the night as street traders, markets, small shops and artisans continue their work. In the rural areas of Lesotho the lack of much visible trading either in markets or along road sides is another sign of an economy long dominated by waged employment and goods purchased primarily through the formal sector.

There are signs of change in Lesotho. This livelihoods study has shown how resourceful Basotho can be. In the absence of jobs, there are many people who have given up waiting for government - or anyone else - to provide for them. They are using their own assets to combine social, human and natural capital to support their households in diverse ways. There is also the growing recognition that while jobs on the mines of South African or in the Thetsane factories may be the ideal way of securing steady income, these are also the livelihood options that one is least likely to secure. The emphasis given to fields, livestock and natural resources during the field research is a clear sign that people recognise that, in the absence of more lucrative alternatives (i.e. jobs), these resources represent the only alternatives for survival.

While the signs of change may be there, the problem stated above remains: by and large, people hope and expect that outside agencies will provide jobs. Self-created work remains a rare commodity, with only a very small proportion of households putting together the available land, labour and water resources in a productive manner. The majority of jobless young people are essentially idle, while the country is desperately short of people with a vision and a willingness to take existing assets - meagre as they might be - in hand to create work for themselves and their communities.

5.3.2.2. Areas of facilitation

The issue of work cannot be seen in isolation. From the policy point of view it is vital to determine what factors can be changed in the broader context to promote work. The key elements that are most immediately linked to work in the complex web of interwoven factors appear to be education, credit, land, essential services and markets.

Each one of these broad headings can be broken up into many sub-components. In the space available it is not possible to do justice to any one of these key issues, although an attempt is made to offer enough detail to sustain the arguments being put forward. We begin with education, which lies closer to the core problem than any other issue.

Education

Lesotho can be proud of its schooling record. Thanks to the combined (although not always harmonious) efforts of both church and state, the country has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa, notably for girls. Parents recognise the role that education can play in breaking the poverty cycle, and go to extraordinary lengths to get their children through school. In the absence of support from the state, schooling has been a matter of survival of the fittest, with the proportion fighting their way to the top being a fraction - usually a well-off fraction - of the large number who began in year one.

In countries where the cause and effect chains of poverty have effectively broken, it has taken massive intervention from the state, usually in the form of free education, to provide similar livelihood opportunities to all. In the absence of adequate resources, most developing countries have shied away from this awesome challenge, leaving the burden almost entirely on the shoulders of parents and guardians. Again Lesotho is to be congratulated in taking the first tentative steps towards providing free education for primary students, which has already had an impact by increasing year one enrolment by about one third.

Schooling, however, is not the same as education. Essentially schools operate on the basic assumption that most of the learners will, one day, be able to 'get a job'. Nothing could be further from the truth. Unless there is a dramatic shift in the trends that have been identified in this report, the vast majority - over 70% - of school leavers will not find a job in Lesotho in the next decade. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, schools continue to provide primarily the sort of information that white collar workers will require. Not surprisingly, students coming out of the upper end of the schooling system tend to despise jobs which require manual work, while those who drop out lower down are not equipped with the sort of life skills that will enable them to survive in the jobless environment that shapes their reality.

To equip young people with the attitudes and skills that will enable them to create work in what is becoming a virtually jobless environment, a radically new approach to education will have to be adopted on an unprecedented scale. The basic assumption of schooling for jobs will have to be set aside and replaced with an acceptance of the basic fact that most school goers need to be prepared for life outside the formal job market. In short they need to be equipped with the knowledge to survive and develop their own livelihood strategies, using whatever human, natural and social assets they can. What is needed in the place of schooling for jobs is training for livelihoods.

Training for livelihoods would entail components of the technical and vocational skills that are usually taught to the relatively small number of school leavers who reach trade schools. The approach would differ in that primary school children would learn their basic literacy and numeracy through practical work, covering subjects such as donga reclamation, water harvesting, intensive horticulture, micro-irrigation, livestock production and management, use of medicinal plants, food preservation, brick making and laying, brewing, leather work, dress making, carpentry, wood work, basic mechanical skills and craft work. Interwoven into this would be training in basic business skills, covering concepts and topics such as credit, profit and loss, record keeping and management. Schools would become centres of doing, rather than talking. A reoriented system of reward would recognise children who did well in understanding and implementing skills that would enable them to survive without a job after leaving school. Inter-school competitions would start to look like a mix of a football match and a farmers' show. The heroes would be those with the biggest cabbages, not the highest grades in English grammar.

The school system would not ignore those children whose academic skills positioned them well for the formal job market. They would need to be identified and supported (possibly by being placed in special streams) in ways that would enable them to excel and to move through their school careers in an efficient way. (The current system is remarkably inefficient, with 207 pupil years needed to produce one high school graduate (Sechaba Consultants, 2000b, 72).) Ideally, students from impoverished households with academic promise would be identified and government support would be focused on them. Overall the proportion of those moving through the more academic streams would be roughly in proportion to the number of young people able to obtain jobs in the formal market, currently about 30%.

South Africa has recently re-examined its school system with a view to clearly defining the key values that it wishes to impart to all school leavers, regardless of their exit points or pass rates. Lesotho needs to conduct a similar exercise. Schooling can help to shape the character of the next generation, but conscious decisions need to be made about what that character should be. The extent to which people value work and self-reliance will depend, in part, on the values imparted by the school system.

The magnitude of the above recommendation is fully appreciated. Such a fundamental shift will take decades, not years, to accomplish. Reworking primary school curricula, retraining teachers and equipping schools can only happen in the long term. However, in the short term a start can be made. Knowledge gained from NGOs working in the areas of small-scale farming, appropriate technology, income generation and small business skills training can be used to fast track the reorientation of pilot schools. Over the last five to ten years these NGOs have identified specific projects that are economically viable at household level and have the potential to improve rural and urban livelihoods. However, the demonstrable successes that these individual projects have had will only begin to have a national impact once the lessons learned are transferred to the national school system.

So far the discussion on education has focused on a reorientation of the school system. Education is, however, something that should be life long, with adults being able to benefit at critical points in their lives. The immediate need in Lesotho is to reorient retrenched mine workers. Many return with financial capital but without real business management skills and, not surprisingly, stories abound of money being spent far faster than it was earned until the household finds itself virtually destitute a few months later. Where appropriate training and adequate resources have been made available, miners have demonstrated a real ability to develop new livelihood strategies. Again, the experience gained from the projects mentioned above could be channelled fairly quickly into retraining programmes designed specifically for miners. Mining companies and unions may well be prepared to contribute to the costs of such a programme.

There is considerable evidence internationally demonstrating the impact of school feeding on educational achievements. Simply put, hungry children do not learn as well as children who have had a midday meal. Lesotho has a long history of school feeding programmes. Recently admirable efforts have been made to create self-sufficiency in lowland schools. Unfortunately, very few have succeeded in producing adequate food to feed the children properly on a daily basis. Clearly the whole approach needs to be revisited as, despite its dependence on external support, this remains an effective redistributive mechanism with a demonstrable impact on the minds of the future.

Credit

Next to education, credit is probably the most critical issue linked directly to people creating work. During this survey, inability to access financial capital was repeatedly mentioned as a major constraint, not least by participants in a workshop for small scale enterprises. Projects offering credit in the past have had a poor record of debt recovery, which has resulted in high levels of non-repayment. Commercial banks have not been much more successful. Micro-financing of small businesses through the formal banking sector is virtually impossible. Banks are understandably cautious given the very high levels of defaulting and push up their interest rates to unreasonable levels to cover the costs of unrecoverable loans (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 41-42). The business sector - notably the furniture shops - have had some success, but only through the use of large down payments (which cover their basic costs) and the ruthless recovery of goods if not all payments are made.

Results from the study show that what really matters when it comes to obtaining credit is social capital. Most people who were able to borrow money did so from people they know, being either family and friends or the CBOs they belong to. However, the amounts obtained in this way are often very small and are most frequently used for school fees, medical expenses and other emergencies rather than investing in work related projects.

A new approach is needed that will somehow make it possible for those keen to work to access the necessary financial capital that makes it possible to develop existing assets. The approach would have to ensure security for lenders, while at the same time being affordable and accessible to users. Various good suggestions are made in the Phase I report. Further ideas are put forward below.

Link credit to training. Some NGO training centres (such as Itjareng) put aside a proportion of the students' fees during the training period and then release this as a lump sum once students have been trained and are ready to start income generating projects. This has the advantage of putting finance into the hands of people who should now have the necessary tools to implement projects. The amounts in question are very small, but if the government were to match parents' contributions the graduates would have a more viable start up amount. To up-scale the practice the country's main vocational schools would have to become involved. The reoriented pilot schools mentioned earlier should take a similar approach. As the amounts given would actually be grants, not loans, recovery would not be an issue.

Credit in kind. A major constraint for young entrepreneurs is getting the necessary equipment they need to start their trade, whether for welding, photography, carpentry, sewing or hairdressing. Their inexperience makes cash loans risky, and they struggle to get started. An alternative would be to provide them with the equipment directly. Non-repayment would result in repossession of the equipment, as is done so effectively by the furniture shops. Undamaged equipment could then be used to assist others who may be more successful. Government could offer support by providing low cost rental units of the BEDCO type. The

criteria for beneficiaries should include an age restriction (it should be youth focused) and adequate marks at vocational school.

Livestock and seed banks. For those involved in agriculture projects, credit could also be provided in kind, with repayment consisting of like-with-like. Heifer Project International (HPI), which operates in over 70 countries world-wide, uses this approach with farmers' groups. A person who is given an in-calf heifer (or some other form of livestock) has to repay the loan in kind. He or she has to raise the first female calf and give this to another member of the group, who in turn passes one of the offspring to another member. In this way the original credit first given keeps growing as an increasing number of group members benefit. Group training in livestock management and business skills form an important part of the package. Seed banks, where farmers return their loans in kind, can be equally successful if the right types of seeds are used.

Provide credit to individuals. Virtually all donors who have offered credit in the past have done so through groups. It is not unfair to say that Basotho have often been forced into group situations, as this has been the only way from them to access credit. For people who are keen to work on their own this is unfortunate, as the group format often discourages individual initiative and success. The new Lesotho Fund for Community Development (LFCD), which will control access to a significant proportion of the country's resources directed at poverty alleviation, makes no room for individuals. All projects to be funded are to be formulated and managed at community level. While this may be understandable at many levels, it closes another door to individuals who may have real potential to create work if only they could access credit. On a pilot basis the LFCD should consider allocating a proportion of its funds for credit (not grant) to individuals who are able to submit viable business plans. The same monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems being put in place by LFCD could be used to follow the progress (or lack thereof) of the small scale businesses. Within a few years it should be possible to compare the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the two approaches.

Target successful CBOs. At community level small-scale savings and credit groups are functioning and making it possible for members to access financial capital at times of need. Unfortunately the credit is often focused more on death than life, with the most common type of CBO being burial societies. Although it is more common for the savings to be used to cover costs than as an investment for future income generation, the CBOs have certain strengths that need to be recognised. First, they represent truly local initiative and participation, unlike many NGOs, which are often influenced by outsiders. Secondly, many have years of experience and a good track record of managing finances and recovering loans from members. The key issue is how to upscale their operations and direct these towards enterprises that will create work and improve the livelihoods of their members, without undermining the very self-reliance which has ensured their success to date. It would seem that, once again, it would be wise to pilot a project that seeks to

- identify experienced burial societies and other savings/credit groups;
- explore a range of income-generating opportunities tailored to each group's situation and capacity;
- provide technical support and/or training in selected areas;
- provide credit on the basis of business plans developed by the groups;
- monitor progress; and
- propose how best to up-scale successful projects.

Such a programme would probably be best suited to an NGO that already has experience in this area.

Banking for the people. There is one recommendation regarding credit made in the Phase I report that is well worth repeating: ensure accessible banking services in the districts. With the collapse of the Agricultural Bank and the sale of Lesotho Bank it has become virtually impossible for individuals and community groups in rural areas to maintain bank accounts. Not surprisingly the percentage of households with a bank account dropped sharply between 1993 and 1999. The starting point of obtaining credit through the formal banking system is to be an account holder. Unless the banks are made more accessible, this becomes an impossible precondition for most rural people. As the population is scattered, it does not make economic sense for banks

to maintain full-time branches in all small towns. The sensible option is to reinstate the mobile banking services that once existed in the country. If the commercial banks cannot be persuaded to do this, Government should examine ways of promoting post office savings accounts, and should ensure an equitable spread of post offices.

Essential services

There are cases where individuals who want to work are unable to do so, not because they lack education, land or capital, but because they are unable to access the essential services that would make their particular livelihood activities feasible and more viable. The field research and the Poverty Hearings show that in peri-urban areas the most frequently mentioned constraints are lack of electricity and telephones, while in rural areas road access (including bridges), clinics and water supply are prime concerns. Lack of postal services and communications were also frequently mentioned. The absence of telephones was often linked to problems of security and the difficulties experienced in contacting police.

Looking ahead 20 to 30 years the majority of the population will be living in peri-urban type settlements, primarily concentrated around lowland growth points and roadside developments (section 4.2). If peri-urbanisation takes place at the projected speed, significant improvements will be required in the coverage rates to meet the demand for different services. Recent moves towards privatisation may result in the required improvements although this, in itself, may not always be enough. For example, in the case of water it is likely that it will be necessary to change from spring-fed technology to the use of bulk water supply from surface water. The need for essential services is self-evident, so this discussion is limited to key points of impact on livelihoods in general and work creation in particular. The focus is on two key areas, electricity and water.

Electricity. There is a huge backlog of applicants in peri-urban areas. Inefficiency of the service provider (Lesotho Electricity Corporation) and the high costs of connection fees have resulted in the number of new connections falling far below demand. South Africa has taken a very different approach by electrifying entire neighbourhoods with no connection fee. With Lesotho having an adequate supply from 'Muela Power Station, electricity subsidies could be used to promote particular target groups, such as young people starting businesses or farmers wishing to irrigate. Currently the per unit charges for business are significantly higher than for domestic customers. Where enterprises are creating employment, incentives should be given in the form of reduced tariffs.

It is not practical to provide grid electricity to the bulk of the rural areas. Solar electricity, by contrast, has the potential to provide lighting and limited power for domestic and commercial purposes. Again this is an area where credit or targeted subsidies (for micro-irrigation, workshop lighting, etc.) have the potential to encourage development in areas which are unlikely to attract external investment. Efforts in the late 1990s to provide credit for households wishing to invest in solar power failed, leaving the average household that uses candles for lighting paying approximately ten times the cost of solar power. There is an urgent need to revisit this possibility of providing credit for solar power, at both domestic and small business level.

Water supply. The Government recognises the right of all citizens to potable water and has incorporated this into its national policy on water resources management. In peri-urban areas service remains poor, with most people depending on old systems installed by the Department of Rural Water Supply (DRWS) or private individuals. Consumption in these areas is well below the recommended 30 litres per capita per day, and much lower than in reticulated parts of town. The Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) has not expanded the reticulated network at the anticipated rate and it is not always clear which institution (WASA or DRWS) is responsible for the operation and maintenance of systems that currently fall within the urban boundaries. Poor people pay far more for their water than the rich and are unlikely to be able to access an adequate supply at reasonable cost for non-domestic purposes that would have the potential to generate income.

Four approaches need to be taken concerning water supply in peri-urban areas. First, the institutional uncertainty that results in confusion over roles and responsibilities needs to be urgently addressed through a process of stakeholder consultation that should result in the reworking of the draft Water Bill. Second, work on expanding the reticulated network needs to be fast-tracked. This may entail an increase in tariffs for existing customers, as the cost of water has dropped steadily in real terms since 1996 when the last increase

was made. Third, young entrepreneurs need to be encouraged (and if necessary supported) to establish ferro-cement water tank construction businesses. Most households in the peri-urban areas have tin roofs that provide excellent water catchments if guttering is installed. The water quality from such tanks is usually good enough to be used for domestic purposes. Fourth, households need to be encouraged to establish small earth dams (with child-proof fencing) that could be used for domestic animals and gardening.

The Department of Rural Water Supply has made steady progress providing water to rural areas, although it has been unable to meet its coverage targets as it only receives approximately one third of the funds it requires (M10 million out of M30 million). Donor funding continues to focus on construction with Government being responsible for maintenance. There is a significant backlog of systems requiring repair as many systems, notably hand pumps, cannot be repaired at village level.

New strategies have been in place since 1997 that provide for the use of private sector engineers, contract masons and paid village labour. The latter is a sensible way to use funds allocated for public works as the outcome is a valuable community asset. DRWS is in the process of introducing more flexible design standards that should make it possible for those who can afford to pay to have private connections, where there is sufficient water.

Although DRWS only focuses on providing potable water, there are villages where the spring yields are exceptional and the surplus could be used for irrigation, block making, duck ponds or other income-generating purposes. It would not make sense for DRWS to move away from its core business of providing potable water into the difficult terrain of micro-enterprises. However, it could assist others with an interest in this area by compiling a list of such villages and by encouraging villages to put forward proposals to LFCD on how they would like to develop their exceptional water sources.

One of the most problematic areas of rural water supply is the operation and maintenance of large, pumped systems. Many of these are not functioning as the pumps (diesel or solar) are broken or have been stolen. In other cases the collection of community contributions for fuel has been problematic and there is simply no fuel to run the pumps. An opportunity exists to train ex-miners or other technically skilled individuals to run the pumps as small businesses. When the engine is not pumping water it could be set up to power a hammer mill in an adjacent building, which would make the operation more economically viable. DRWS has already identified another opportunity for work creation in the form of area-based maintenance and repairmen (and women?). They would be trained and equipped to directly serve their areas, and would charge the community directly for their services. The piloting of this concept urgently needs to be accelerated.

Markets

We have argued that work lies at the heart of sustainable livelihoods. The outcome of productive work is usually a surplus that extends beyond individual or household needs. If this surplus is to generate the income that is needed to improve livelihood outcomes (better health, nutrition, education) it has to be sold. One reason why people with adequate skills, land and water do not produce more is because of the uncertainties surrounding the sale of surplus. In many villages people expressed their frustrations surrounding the 'lack of markets', particularly for agricultural produce, and cited this as a reason for not producing more. The failure of particular initiatives in irrigation has been closely related to the produce not being sold.

There are a number of reasons why Basotho producers face problems marketing produce, either locally or abroad. Analysis of these suggests that the real problem may not be a lack of markets, but rather a lack of marketing.

Basotho are not accustomed to marketing their produce proactively, and this is not only due to lack of training in this area. Basotho are used primarily to waged labour (jobs) where they have not had any reason to be concerned with marketing. Quite understandably, migrant workers employed full-time on the mines, or as seasonal labourers on South African farms, have had no reason to be concerned about what happens to the products of their labour. The main concern has been wages and how to spend them. Lesotho's economy has been dominated by the formal commercial sector with South African goods penetrating into the remotest areas. The scale of production, the diversity of goods and the prices offered are such that historically it has been impossible for Basotho to compete. The sale of goods has remained locked into the chain of wholesale

and retail outlets. Although the amount of street trading has increased in recent years it remains small compared to other African countries and there are virtually no markets in rural areas or trading towns.

Historical evidence indicates that Basotho - as producers - will respond very quickly to marketing opportunities. In the 19th century Basotho farmers switched rapidly to a new cash crop - wheat - to produce a surplus for sale on the South African diamond and gold mines. In the 20th they quickly adopted new forms of livestock, as they were certain of selling the produce - wool and mohair - to traders. In the 1940s through to the 1960s the Coaker's factory in Ladybrand prospered by buying rose hip from Basotho who gathered it from wild plants. In the mid 1980s, when asparagus seemed to offer a guarantee of cash income, people started growing it for the cannery, even though none would eat it themselves. Currently there does not appear to be any clear opportunity to which Basotho can respond on a mass scale.

Studies conducted over the years indicate the Lesotho has an ideal climate for producing a wide range of valuable products, including trout, honey, cherries, walnuts, almonds, saffron and wide range of herbs and vegetables. Ongoing trials suggest that there may be real potential for garlic and paprika. Some products already grow wild and would be valuable if properly processed. Common plants such as African wormwood (*lengana*) could provide a valuable essential oil. Others - such as the spiral aloe - are unique to the country and could be propagated commercially (as is being done by an ex-Peace Corps volunteer in California). The range and commercial value of medicinal plants is just beginning to be explored. However, for reasons that appear to be directly related to marketing, these promising products are not promoted. Instead, the country remains a vast field of mono-cropped maize that is consumed at home and usually grown at a loss to the producer.

It is vital that the missing link between markets and produce be found if Basotho are to respond to market opportunities. The biggest challenge, as has been mentioned a number of times in this chapter, is how to upscale. Buyers for large chain stores insist on having large quantities of quality goods. This makes it impossible for the few pioneers who are prepared to experiment with a new crop or product to make any progress. As they fail, others are unlikely to follow suit. The production of mohair spread fast because traders around the country were prepared to buy the wool for resale. Those who started on a small scale were soon joined by others, especially as there was no price to pay for the communal land being used.

Intensive efforts and pilot projects are required in a range of new products that appear to have potential but are not available in adequate quantities to be commercially viable. There is no doubt that this will require support and subsidy from government in the initial phases. Virtually all productive agricultural economies - including those of South Africa, Europe and North America - have developed with such support. Lesotho is unlikely to be an exception.

Marketing need not be focused exclusively on high value crops for export. Lesotho continues to import massive amounts of commonly used goods - such as chicken meat - even though producers often claim they cannot find a market. The government, through the relevant ministries dealing with agriculture and commerce, needs to put far more resources into proactively negotiating markets on behalf of producers, and then advertising these opportunities for them to respond to.

At a local level there are opportunities for producers to sell to consumers. Unfortunately, due to the dominance of South African goods, local markets have never really developed. One way forward is to kick-start a system of rotating or periodic markets through the provision of occasional services such as mobile banking, post offices, health care and so on. The idea of promoting periodic markets has been widely debated in southern Africa over at least the last two decades. Instances of such systems actually coming into operation remain rare. Although the concept should not be adopted uncritically, it deserves to be more thoroughly investigated in Lesotho, with a view to a pilot project (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 204).

5.3.3. Safety nets

Our strategic vision for sustainable development in Lesotho is based on the belief that in a growing proportion of the country - the lowlands, foothills and the urban and peri-urban areas - most Basotho are proving more effective in developing their livelihoods than externally designed and delivered programmes could hope to be. But poverty remains deep and widespread, as the Phase I report on this study - and section

3.1.5 above - make plain. There are many people whose circumstances preclude the sort of self-advancement that is increasingly common among Basotho. For these households, the provision of more direct support remains an appropriate development strategy. Safety net interventions should include the following (more are listed in the Phase I report):

- the targeted pension scheme recommended in the Phase I report;
- the urgent design and execution of programmes to support those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS;
- support for NGOs working with the destitute;
- programmes to address the energy needs of the poor;
- facilitation of sharecropping;
- focused efforts to bring infrastructure and services in the most impoverished areas up to adequate standards;
- renewed attention to the basics of sustainable and profitable crop and livestock production, linked to natural resource management and conservation initiatives and including greater emphasis on horticulture;
- although direct livelihood provisioning is not generally necessary, school feeding programmes still have an important role to play in those areas where poverty is concentrated (section 5.3.2.2). It is also essential to maintain and upgrade health and nutritional surveillance systems and the appropriate response capacity.

5.4. Land, agriculture and natural resources

A key policy implication of this study is that, however degraded and unproductive Lesotho's natural resources and agriculture may seem, they remain central in the majority of the nation's livelihoods, as perceived by those who live them. Both the basic types of intervention that we have identified – facilitation and safety net support – need to address this sector. Success with the redefinition of work and of good livelihoods, as recommended in section 5.3.2 above, would be a major boost to sustainable agriculture in Lesotho. As we explained in section 5.1, we choose in this report to offer strategic policy recommendations rather than the sort of detailed proposals that were presented in the report on Phase I of this study. The ideas below on land, agriculture and natural resources are therefore pitched at this strategic level.

5.4.1. Land

Land competes with credit as one of the most important elements determining people's ability to maintain sustainable livelihoods and create work for themselves. Despite the declining levels of crop production and the lack of growth in livestock numbers, participants in this survey systematically mentioned land as being absolutely critical to their livelihoods. It is important to recognise the reasons for this and to consider how valuable features of Lesotho's land tenure system can either be preserved or developed in ways that will promote livelihoods.

The basic entitlement of every rural household to three forms of land ownership or use has acted as an essential safety net for the poor and a valuable resource for the more entrepreneurial. The three forms are residential land for building purposes, fields for crop production, and access to communal land for grazing animals and the gathering of building materials and fuel. Although it has become increasingly difficult to provide new fields, the available land has generally been equitably distributed and ample opportunities exist for those who have the resources but no land to enter into sharecropping agreements with poorer field owners. Inequities do exist, especially as it is really only the livestock owners who benefit from grazing on communal lands. Attempts to address this through the introduction of a grazing fee failed as no political

party was prepared to accept grazing fees as part of their manifesto. Gender has also been an impediment to access to residential land, until this was recently addressed in new legislation.

There are those who have argued that abolishing the traditional tenure system and commercialising land would provide a stimulus to growth in rural areas. Findings from this study do not support this contention in any way. On the contrary, there is no evidence to suggest that rural people feel insecure about the current land tenure system. The issue was not mentioned during the Poverty Hearings or any of the field exercises as a constraint to progress. Clearly there are other factors influencing the development of land which have nothing to do with the land tenure system, some of which are addressed in this section of the report (education, access to credit, attitude to work, etc.). With the exception of a few very carefully selected 'special development areas', it makes sense to preserve the current land tenure system in rural Lesotho. If any changes are made, utmost care must be taken to preserve the equity of access which households currently enjoy. Where it is not possible to provide land for crop production, efforts should concentrate on stimulating or facilitating sharecropping arrangements that are beneficial to the poor.

Efforts to make access to grazing lands more equitable need to be revisited. The current system that allows a small minority to use (and often destroy) land that theoretically belongs to all (under the nominal ownership of the King) is unfair and unsustainable. If future generations are to benefit from the land, new ways of controlling access and distributing benefits have to be found.

The development of peri-urban land has been strongly influenced by the traditional land allocation practices. Essentially all of today's peri-urban areas were rural villages ten to 30 years ago. The extension of the urban boundaries has generally occurred some time after settlement has taken place. As urbanisation occurred land was commercialised, and the 1979 Land Act made provision for this. By and large most provisions in the Act have been ignored as field owners and chiefs continue to play the key role in land allocation. From a planning point of view the results were a disaster, as houses sprang up in an *ad hoc* manner, making it almost impossible to plan for services in a rational way. From a livelihoods point of view, however, nothing could have been better, as the chiefs continued to allocate generous plot sizes (akin to those in many rural areas) which allowed ample space for gardens, fruit trees, livestock, brewing, block making, rental units, metal work and a host of other income-generating activities.

The maintenance of traditional plot sizes has given peri-urban Lesotho a unique character, quite unlike anything seen in urban parts of neighbouring South Africa. The benefits of the large plots have been quantified in past studies and are indisputable. However, against this one has to consider the costs of providing services to a population that is (a) relatively sparse by urban standards and (b) settled in an unplanned manner. Clearly a balance needs to be found, bearing in mind the costs to society of not providing households adequate space to be productive.

One reason why settlement takes place in an *ad hoc* fashion is because the existing plans, procedures and standards are too complex and too costly for most people to understand or follow. There is an urgent need for these to be reviewed and reformulated in ways which will make it possible for low income households to have access to relatively inexpensive land that is large enough for them to engage in multiple livelihood strategies. A three-year study sponsored by DFID is under way to explore exactly how this can be done. It is hoped that this will result in the establishment of a pilot project that will allow a new peri-urban area to develop under a specially modified regulatory framework affordable by the poor. If this is successful the next step will be to upscale to larger areas.

5.4.2. Agriculture and livestock

This study shows that Basotho are not ready, willing or able to abandon agriculture as a mainstay of livelihoods. But it is well known that most attempts to enhance field, garden and livestock production in Lesotho have been ineffective. The facilitation of sustainable agricultural development efforts by Basotho must remain central to development strategies in this country. Support for basic food production, in particular in home gardens, has an important role to play in safety net strategies too.

There can be no quick fix for agriculture in this country, but a number of technical ideas would reward more committed attention in government and donor programmes. Some work has already been done on all of

them. They include the integration of soil and water conservation with enhanced crop production; the reclamation of limited areas of degraded land, such as dongas, for intensive food production; zero grazing systems; and mixed and low external input cropping practices, in particular the indigenous Machobane farming system.

Overarching these technical ideas are three strategic considerations. The first is that things are likely to get worse in Lesotho before they get better. Basotho know this, which is why they hold on to the land and agriculture as fall back strategies for harder times ahead. The comparatively lacklustre performance of Lesotho agriculture over recent decades is due in part to the availability over that period of more attractive livelihood opportunities. If those opportunities diminish over the coming decades, Basotho will invest more of their resourcefulness in farming and horticulture. (It is important to remember that, in Lesotho at least, urban and peri-urban livelihoods and crop production can often be integrated.) It is therefore essential that the nation maintain the advisory services and infrastructure necessary to support this likely revival of interest in agriculture; and that it facilitate the creative agricultural experimentation already being undertaken by some Basotho. Although much of the future of Lesotho is urban and peri-urban, Basotho will need all the agricultural and horticultural ideas they can get in the years to come.

The second strategic consideration concerns another kind of redefining. We have spoken of the need to redefine work. Linked to this, as we have pointed out, is the need to redefine learning. In agriculture, CARE has been promoting this for some years through alternative approaches to agricultural extension. In these experiential learning approaches, participants are helped to explore and learn about enhanced farming practice on their own terms. Extension workers are facilitators of this internalised learning process, and no longer function as handers down of privileged technical knowledge from the outside world. This profound change in agricultural extension approach takes time. The results so far are preliminary, but encouraging. As efforts to support agriculture within livelihoods are refocused, it is important that Lesotho does not fall back on outmoded and discredited formal approaches to extension. Instead, more resources should be committed to participatory, experiential learning as a way of transferring agricultural ideas.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need to assess the likely impacts of HIV/AIDS on Lesotho agriculture. How far will current or alternative production practices remain feasible as people are incapacitated and die? A number of the promising low external input practices that are now widely advocated – including the Machobane system – are labour intensive. Basotho may be right to consider agriculture and natural resources as the last resort for livelihoods. What neither they nor the analysts appear to have considered carefully enough is whether this last resort will remain viable with the changed demography that HIV/AIDS will bring about.

5.4.3. Natural resources

Natural resource management is another development sector with which Lesotho has plenty of mostly unsuccessful experience. Nevertheless, Basotho's continuing ability to manage their land, soil and forests is impressive when compared with the administrative and institutional breakdown in many of neighbouring South Africa's communal areas (Ntshona, 2000). While there is no denying the massive environmental degradation that Lesotho suffers (section 4.7), it is also important to recognise the substantial social capital that the nation can still invest in natural resource management.

Whether this investment will continue, and whether current standards of natural resource management can be maintained or enhanced, is a question of governance that links to the broader political and institutional health of the nation. We outlined the current poor state of that health in section 4.3, referring mainly to the national situation. In section 5.1 (Figure 11), we identified democracy, governance and rights as the key to our strategic view of supporting livelihoods in Lesotho. We recommended the provision of facilitation and support in this field as a valuable and fruitful way for NGOs and external agencies to express their commitment to the country.

These arguments hold at the local level too. Although many Basotho chiefs have failed to provide the intended leadership and administrative services for their areas, many are still respected in this role. Although Lesotho's history with Village Development Councils and innumerable other village committees leaves much to be desired, many of these bodies do provide some sort of local administrative machinery. Both these

types of institution serve development planning, development management and natural resource management purposes too. As with agriculture, there is considerable policy and donor fatigue with regard to local government in Lesotho. But effective local government – and thus effective natural resource management – remain critically important for sustainable and stronger livelihoods in this country. Our strategic recommendation is that government, NGOs and external agencies all commit themselves afresh to providing the capacity building and logistical support that local institutions need to perform effectively.

Only if local institutions are reinforced and developed in this way will there be a prospect of sustainable, community-based natural resource management in Lesotho. We recommend an integrated effort by the Ministries of Agriculture and Local Government to empower Village Development Councils (or the Community Councils that may succeed them in terms of the Local Government Act, 1997) for their central role in coordinating range management, forest management, land administration and local land use planning.

To be effective, such measures must be linked to the enhancement of rural security. Overall, respect for local law and institutions is weakening in Lesotho, and the countryside is becoming a more dangerous place. Stock theft, with its catastrophic impact on many livelihoods, is one instance of a trend that is making all forms of natural resource management more difficult. Once again, our recommendations for natural resource management link back to the central imperative of reinforcing democracy, governance and rights in the nation as a whole. Part of this process is to make local security services and structures more effective, within a democratic framework.

5.5. Strategy for the rural sector

The development strategy we recommend for the rural sector mirrors the overall strategic vision that we have built from Basotho's views of their livelihoods. It combines the two key thrusts that we identify for the nation's development: facilitation for the many whose livelihood structure enables them to make progress, and safety net support for the still large numbers who cannot:

- as we have just urged (section 5.4.3), concerted efforts are needed to reinforce democracy, governance and rights in rural Lesotho. This is the necessary foundation for any other livelihood enhancement;
- we have explained (section 5.4.2) that Basotho still view the land and agriculture as the necessary long term foundation of their livelihoods. Strategy for the rural sector must therefore renew and refresh policy commitments to agriculture, livestock production and natural resource management. But they must abandon conventional extension methodologies and embrace more facilitative approaches that help rural people learn what will make them more effective and sustainable resource users;
- there is substantial internal migration taking place within rural Lesotho, as enterprising people move to more economically favourable locations (section 3.1.7). Rural policy should focus on facilitation for these mostly young livelihoods, by the provision of adequate social and commercial infrastructure in rural growth sectors. The Phase I report of this study makes a number of recommendations in this regard;
- the Phase I report also emphasises how much deep poverty remains in rural Lesotho, primarily in the mountains. This is where much of the nation's safety net effort needs to be made (section 5.3.3). While poverty in the mountains has received focused attention from a number of government and other agencies over recent years, our strategic vision suggests closer coordination of these efforts in future – with dedicated monitoring and reporting capacity for this purpose in government and/or an NGO.

5.6. Strategy for the urban sector

There has been substantial development investment over the years in urban infrastructure for Lesotho, and much has been done to try and attract external investment into urban industrial zones. But strategic

development thinking has tended to focus on the rural sector. The assumption has been that the nation's development challenge was a rural one. Our strategic vision for the enhancement of livelihoods in Lesotho places much stronger emphasis on the urban sector. Again, it mirrors our overall vision for the country:

- Lesotho's urban and peri-urban areas are growing so fast because Basotho see that it makes sense for them to build their livelihoods there. Moreover, they have many enterprising ways in which to do this (although many certainly fail along the way). This is where the facilitation part of our strategic vision needs to be most vigorously pursued. Not only is continuing heavy investment in urban infrastructure needed. A range of proactive investments in the enabling economic and social frameworks for economic growth is needed – in such sectors as credit, environmental protection, subsidies, tariffs and labour legislation. Most critically, development support is needed for human capacity building;
- at many points in this report (e.g. sections 3.1.4, 8.2, 9.9), we show the deteriorating condition of Lesotho's growing number of urban poor. On some measures these are the poorest Basotho. The size and gravity of this problem is likely to grow. Although Maseru, in particular, may seem to be booming, it is also the place where some of the most impoverished livelihoods in the country are now to be found. As the livelihoods concept implies, this impoverishment spans social aspects of the quality of life, as well as material ones. Although urban Lesotho remains a much easier place than the towns of many African and Asian countries, it is time to recognise that the livelihoods of the urban poor in this country are a matter of special concern. They need special safety net measures. At this point, too little is known about the nature and dimensions of urban poverty. The first step must be institutional arrangements in and between government and NGOs to recognise the issue and arrange a coordinated response. The first part of that response should be more detailed investigations into the livelihoods of the urban poor. This should lead to greater clarity on measures that can be taken. They are likely to combine some livelihood provisioning and protection with facilitation measures to help more urban newcomers into sustainable livelihoods. They are also likely to involve institutional development. Current urban administrations are clearly unable to cope with the swelling poverty under their jurisdiction.

5.7. Regional policy

The geography of Lesotho livelihoods is evolving fast. The two studies of poverty in Lesotho that preceded this survey during the 1990s pointed to the depth of poverty in the remoter mountain areas and called for development support to be focused on these most needy parts of the country. The present study shows:

- the increasingly urban or peri-urban character of many Lesotho livelihoods. People are migrating from the rural sector in increasing numbers, or are migrating within the rural sector to locations where the towns are more easily accessible;
- the continuing gravity of poverty in the remoter mountain areas;
- a new kind of poverty that is emerging in the (peri) urban areas. On many indicators used in this study, the poorest livelihood category in these areas is worse off than any other group in the country. This poses new challenges for welfare support and development policy;
- the decreasing relevance of the conventional division of Lesotho into four agro-ecological zones. The reports on both phases of this study have chosen to merge the lowland and foothill zones and to combine the mountain and Senqu valley zones. The third major zone of the country is now the urban and peri-urban sector.

It has been many years since Lesotho could claim to have a regional development policy. The only spatial component of development policy during the 1990s has resulted from the previous poverty studies. These led to the welcome recognition of the special needs of remote mountain areas. The strategic vision proposed in this study builds on this recognition, but proposes a slightly more differentiated spatial view of development challenges and strategies:

- much of the safety net work that the nation needs should continue to be focused in the remote mountains;
- a new kind of safety net provision also needs to be designed and delivered in the urban areas, particularly Maseru;
- broadly speaking, facilitation strategies (including those for land, agriculture and natural resources identified in section 5.4) should focus on the western and northern lowlands and foothills, from Quthing to Butha-Buthe;
- however nodes and regions of growth should also be identified and promoted in mountain areas. These include zones affected by the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (which ironically also need some specialised safety net provision) and mountain growth points like Semonkong, Mapholaneng and Mphaki. These nodes and regions should be the targets of the rural livelihood facilitation initiatives recommended in section 5.5 above.

Part II. Understanding livelihoods in Lesotho

6. Paradigms, frameworks and methods

6.1. Blending two paradigms

As explained in section 1.2, this study uses material from both phases of the 1999-2000 survey of poverty and livelihoods in Lesotho, carried out by CARE and Sechaba Consultants. Blending material from the two phases has posed substantial conceptual and methodological challenges, on which it might be useful to expand in another publication. In summary, the two phases of the survey can be contrasted as follows:

- the Phase I work, like its predecessors earlier in the decade, is centred on a household questionnaire survey, administered to large numbers of randomly selected families across the country. This is tried and tested methodology, yielding a wealth of quantifiable data about attitudes and opinions as well as the objective facts of poverty and livelihoods. It can easily be applied at national scale, and – if comparable questions are asked from one survey to the next – can be used to build up time series data. The investigators supplemented the questionnaire work with a wide range of other, more participatory methods, including over 500 focus group discussions (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 3-4). Applying their long analytical experience in Lesotho to this range of data sets, they have generated a highly useable and insightful discussion of the condition and prospects of the nation. At the heart of this analysis lies detailed, computerised analysis of quantified data;
- Phase II of the survey draws on the shorter but by now wide ranging international heritage of participatory livelihoods analysis. These methods focus on facilitating self survey and self expression by the subjects of the investigation, with the investigators facilitating the process rather than asking their own questions or setting the parameters for analysis. They have typically been applied at the micro scale, as the foundation for processes of development change that are meant to reflect local priorities rather than those of external agencies. Far too often, these principles of participatory livelihoods analysis are honoured more in the breach than in the observance. But the core of the approach is that local people frame and express the material that is generated. The exercise is meant to be part of development action, and is not normally part of a stand alone survey. Although material generated by participatory means can certainly be quantified (Mohasi and Turner, 1999), it is harder to standardise variables and categories from one participatory data set to the next because of the flexibility and freedom that are built into their generation. Generating common meaning from a series of participatory village exercises is a significant intellectual challenge, even if the same framework and process have been facilitated in each of them.

The approach of this study is to blend these two paradigms. The contrasts between them make this a difficult exercise. We have tried to integrate the two approaches to data generation and analysis into a single discussion. Our central dilemma is how to retain the voice of the people in what this report says. The natural tendency for people like us is to smother that voice with statistics, and to standardise the vagaries of participatory work with generalisations to which the outside world can relate. The reader can judge how far we have resisted these temptations.

6.2. Following a framework

In blending the two paradigms, our central approach has been to follow the conceptual framework of household livelihoods shown in Figure 2 on page 4. There are many versions of the livelihoods framework, and a range of elegant diagrams in the literature from which to choose. Furthermore, the concept is far from static, and the livelihoods literature is constantly generating enhanced perspectives and diagrams. Nevertheless, it is necessary for the purposes of this study to focus on one version of the framework, and the CARE version that is illustrated seems an appropriate one for our purposes.

The discussion in this report therefore makes its way through the various elements of this framework. We have presented some of these elements in Part I of this report: the context of Lesotho livelihoods (section 4), and threats to wellbeing (section 3.1.4) as a disruptive element in that context. Part I is structured to give prominence to the views of livelihoods that Basotho expressed during this survey, and then to move directly to policy concerns. Part II focuses more systematically on the three core aspects of livelihoods: the assets on which they are based (section 7); the activities that people undertake with those assets within their livelihood context (section 8); and the livelihood outcomes that they achieve (section 9).

6.3. A national study using local methods

The outline in section 6.1 indicated that the methods of participatory livelihoods analysis, on which Phase II of this survey is based, are normally aimed at action rather than report writing. It also showed that these methods are essentially local in character. We are not aware of much experience with applying these methods at the national scale, to a national survey. The approach of this national survey is therefore at best challenging, at worst problematic.

The biggest problem we have had in this regard concerns the definition of wellbeing, and the categorisation and ranking of households according to their wellbeing. It is standard practice in participatory livelihoods analysis to facilitate a discussion of what makes people's lives better or worse – often more crudely put as richer or poorer. This, after all, is the central theme of the development process in whose name such exercises are undertaken. Exploring and explaining the dimensions of wellbeing, and then saying who in the village falls into which level or category of wellbeing, is meant to unlock thought and discussion among the participants about the character of their livelihoods and their development problems. In turn, this can educate the development workers who facilitate the process – although these workers often operate as if the process is meant mainly for their benefit.

In any event, two issues arise for this review.

Although the definition and categorisation of wellbeing are the common currency of participatory livelihoods analysis and absorb much of the effort in the field process, this dimension of the analysis finds no place in diagrammatic models like the one followed here (Figure 2). A discussion of Basotho livelihoods that just followed the elements of the model without analysing them in the context of wellbeing definitions and categories would lack much of the insight and meaning that a review of wellbeing can impart. In the sequence of this discussion, it seems best to add the dimension of wellbeing analysis immediately after outlining the context of Lesotho livelihoods. It is therefore introduced in section 3.1. As we walk through the livelihoods model later in the report, much of the material presented is differentiated by the categories of wellbeing into which households fall.

There lies the second issue, which links to many of the broader challenges outlined above. Phase II of the survey generated many village-level definitions of categories of wellbeing. At each of the 15 sites, all the

households surveyed were placed by participants into one or other of the locally defined categories, according to their perceived degree of wellbeing. Particularly in defining and explaining poverty, we could add much to this analysis by generalising nationwide (or within zones like the mountains or urban areas) about the livelihoods of people in different wellbeing categories. But each category has been locally defined. Village A's definition of what makes a household poor or well off may be significantly different from Village B's definition – particularly if they are in different parts of the country with different livelihood contexts and opportunities. Whatever its merits, this local participatory method is difficult to apply at the national scale.

If insight and experience tell us that livelihood conditions are broadly homogenous across a certain area – perhaps the remote mountains, or peri-urban Maseru – we could offer valid generalisations across that area on the basis of locally defined wellbeing categories. We could take a much larger, more quantified data set – such as that generated by Phase I of this survey – and look for all households matching the locally generated definitions of the very poor, the average and so on. We could look in the bigger, deeper, more empirical data set for other characteristics of households in each category, and enhance our understanding of each category's livelihoods. But that would only be possible if the original local categorisation exercises had generated completely empirical definitions of each category: that the very poor never have more than one large stock unit, two houses, one field or whatever. That degree of empirical definition would be very hard to coax out of a participatory exercise – particularly since it would violate the fundamental principle of the approach by imposing the researchers' needs on the way the local participants express themselves. Phase II of this survey certainly did not produce any such empirical calibration of the local definitions of wellbeing categories that it generated.

Stepping across into the other paradigm, however, it is certainly possible to construct synthetic definitions of typical categories of wellbeing, based on the available quantified data and the ways in which those data have been broken down into variables that the computer can manipulate. These definitions can be quite accurately and usefully built on the basis of experienced researchers' local knowledge and their reading of the less quantified data generated by more participatory methods (such as Phase II of this survey). They can be built either at the national scale or with reference to particular areas of the country. The wealth of the Phase I data set gives ample opportunity to do this, and we have taken that opportunity. Details of how it was done are given in section 6.4.

At the same time, it is possible to collate the largely qualitative definitions of categories of wellbeing that the Phase II participatory exercises generated, and come up with broader tabulations of typical categories and their characteristics (section 3.1.1.) What is not possible in this study – or perhaps in any such study – is to apply such categorisations to quantified analysis of larger data sets.

In this regard, it is therefore impossible for our two paradigms to be completely blended. So we have chosen to work with both. We explain in some detail how Basotho define wellbeing (section 3.1.1), drawing mainly on the locally generated definitions from Phase II of the survey. These can be generalised into four broad categories: the very poor, the poor, the average and the better off. We also offer an empirical, synthetic definition of wellbeing categories, based on variables built from the much larger Phase I data set and in turn applied to that data set at various points in the report. For that purpose we have used five 'categories' or quintiles, not the four developed from the Phase II data. That may seem perverse. But it is essential to emphasise that, whereas the 'categories' from the Phase I data are equal slices of the survey population across the spectrum from lowest to highest wellbeing, the Phase II categories represent sub-groups of different sizes. For example, the very poor are certainly more numerous than the well off. Generating four synthetic categories – quartiles – from the Phase I survey population and presenting analysis of those categories alongside the discussion of the four Phase II categories would create the false impression that the latter categories each represent the same number of Basotho households. We therefore prefer to stay with five categories – quintiles – in analysing wellbeing among the large Phase I survey population. Quintiles are also the approach used in many other quantified analyses of poverty in southern Africa.

Blending paradigms and cobbling together an accurate understanding of Basotho livelihoods and wellbeing is therefore a complex challenge. The reader needs to keep these complexities, and the way we have tried to tackle them, in mind.

6.4. Determinants and categories of wellbeing: methodological issues

In section 3.1 above, we presented a series of profiles of livelihood categories in different parts of the country, built from information provided by Basotho during Phase II of this survey. These profiles, based as they are on livelihood differentiation exercises carried out by Basotho themselves, are a rich source of understanding about what they think distinguishes a stronger or better livelihood from a weaker or poorer one. They also help us to see the livelihood strategies that enable the poor to survive and the better off to build and maintain their status. But, as was explained in section 6.3, it has not been possible – would probably never be possible - to calibrate a nationally or regionally applicable set of livelihood categories. On the basis of categorisations developed in participatory exercises, like those above, we cannot go on to cross tabulate or correlate livelihood status ('poor', 'average' etc.) with other socio economic variables (such as access to infrastructure, exposure to social pathologies, or involvement in CBOs) across the country. In other words, we cannot combine such categorisations with a rich and representative national data set such as the one created in Phase I of this survey.

Another problem with categorisations like the one above is that they do not adequately accommodate variance. They require that a household be in one category or another. In real Lesotho life, many households have most of the characteristics of one livelihood category, but one or two of the characteristics of another. For example, a household may be strong on assets, education, food security etc. – thus to all intents and purposes 'better off' - but have nobody in wage employment – supposedly a feature of the poor. Such a scheme cannot accurately place such livelihoods. On the other hand, a composite livelihood index would offer a continuous range of possible scores, weighing up the stronger and weaker elements in each household's livelihood. We therefore decided to use such a synthetic, composite index alongside the four livelihood categories, which are derived directly from participatory field work.

For the composite livelihood index, we had to choose which variables to use and how to weight them when computing them together. For this purpose, we have built on what was done in analysis of data from Phase I of this survey (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 144). We chose the following variables as components of the composite index:

- **household worth:** a sum of house value, possessions value, livestock value, most recent crop production value, total income, value of fruit trees, savings, and value of fields (*ibid.*, 128-130);
- **capabilities:** a composite of household scores for wage earning members, schooling of children aged 6-15, ownership of a business, the numbers of economically active and disabled members, and the ability to hire workers;
- **access:** a score calculated as shown in Table 14 on page 43;
- **shocks:** a score illustrated in Figure 3 (page 16), based on occurrence of the shocks listed in section 3.1.4;
- **'choices'** (*ibid.*, 133-134): a score built on the extent of household involvement in a range of livelihood activities such as use of health and education services, involvement in farming, seeking work, and selling crops and livestock.

To build the composite index, we normalise each household's score on each of these variables by using z-scores, i.e. a calculation of the number of standard variations by which each value deviates from the mean for that variable. We then add each household's set of z-scores together, but subtract half of the z-score for shocks because these are a negative influence. (As explained in the Phase I report, subtracting the whole of the z-score for shocks seems intuitively to be excessive.) At various points in this report, we use this composite, synthetic livelihood index to add meaning to the analysis, while also using the composite livelihood profiles presented above. This enables us to use the large, rich national data set from Phase I of the survey, from which it is statistically valid to extrapolate to the whole national population. We divide the nation's range of livelihood scores into quintiles. As explained in section 6.3, use of quintiles helps us avoid creating the false impression that the composite livelihood scores are directly comparable with which of the four locally generated livelihood categories a household falls into.

6.5. ‘Communities’ and households

This is an issue to which we have not yet explicitly drawn attention in this study, but which it is important to appreciate when investigating livelihoods in Lesotho. First, we can state what should be obvious: that the word ‘community’ is usually a misnomer in this country, as it is elsewhere. It implies a degree of unity and cohesion that is generally absent in rural and urban Lesotho society, however strong the mechanisms for sharing and equity may be. Indeed, to use the word ‘community’ in an analysis of livelihoods is to set off on the wrong foot. ‘Community’ implies homogeneity, and livelihoods are about diversity. This study has amply demonstrated that there are major livelihood differences within any Lesotho ‘community’, and that to expect uniformity of livelihood intentions or actions would be gravely misguided.

It is perhaps more interesting to point out that livelihoods in Lesotho – again, as elsewhere – have household dimensions and broader, group (some would say ‘community’) dimensions. What one learns about livelihoods depends upon the level at which one investigates, or the framework in which the investigations take place. Discussions within the household focus more on the economic business of survival, and on the livelihood strategies that can build or sustain household assets and incomes. Discussions at the group level take a very different tone, and can lead the unwary investigator to gain a wholly different impression of what matters to Basotho. At this level, the focus is more on infrastructural issues and public affairs. The widespread assertions that government must resolve people’s livelihood crisis are most commonly heard in these more public discussions. Our challenge in seeking to understand Lesotho livelihoods is to appreciate both these perspectives and the ways in which they are integrated in people’s lives and world views.

Having addressed some of the conceptual and methodological issues that faced us in applying the livelihoods framework to a national study, we devote the remainder of this report to a more detailed discussion of three key elements in the framework: assets, strategies and outcomes.

7. Livelihood assets

7.1. Introduction

In CARE’s livelihood model (Figure 2, page 4), assets comprise the human capital or livelihood capabilities of household members; their social capital or ability to claim support or resources through local social structures and networks; and the household’s economic capital, i.e. the tangible assets that can be used in production and consumption. We review each of these types of livelihood asset in turn, drawing on data from both phases of the national poverty and livelihoods survey.

7.2. Human capital

One way to measure human capital is to derive indices from Basotho’s criteria for wellbeing. This has been done with the wellbeing criteria identified in the 1999 IFAD study (section 3.1.1 above). Not surprisingly, when a total capability score is calculated on this basis for the households surveyed in Phase I of this study (Table 19), human capital is found to be higher in urban areas than in the rural sector. Perhaps less expected, given what we know about the distribution of poverty, is the minimal difference between the rural lowland/foothill areas and the mountains. We also find that households with stronger livelihoods and higher incomes show higher capability scores. Once again, as with the incidence of diseases, we see that the lot of the poorest groups in urban areas is even worse than that of their counterparts in the rural sector. They are the group with the lowest capability scores in the country.

Table 19. Definitions of capability factors

	0=poor	1=moderate	2=wealthy
Wage earners	0	1	>=2
Schooling of children 6-15	none in school	some in school	all in school
Ownership of formal business	no formal business	formal business income>0&<5000	formal business income>M5000
Active household members	none from 16-65	some from 16-65 but head >65	some from 16-65 and head <= 65
Disabled members	>=2	1	0
Ability to hire workers	income/member/month <250	income/member/month >=250 and <500	income/member/month >500

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 130.

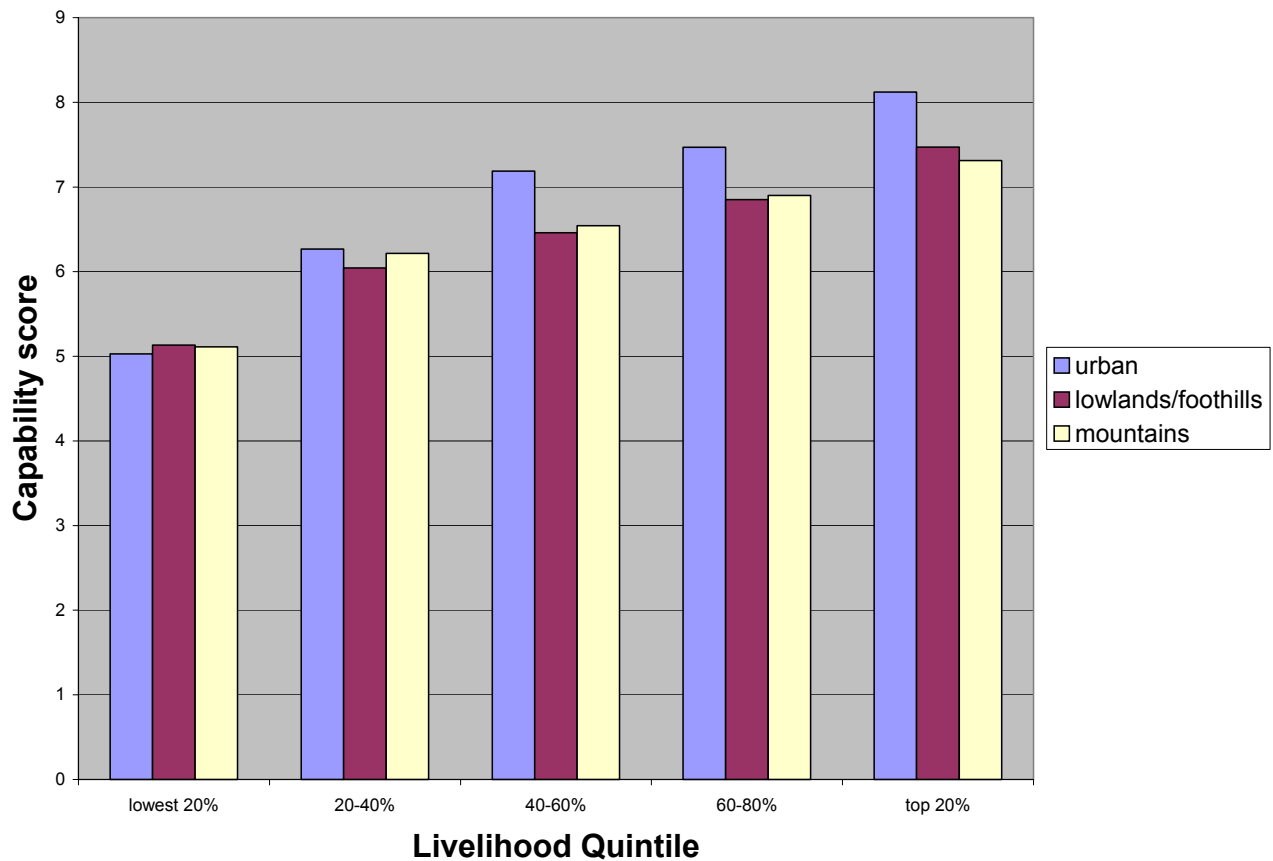


Figure 12. Capability by area and livelihood quintile

Source: Phase I data.

Another way of looking at human capital is to consider the amount of education that household members have received. From Phase I of this survey, and from the previous national poverty study in 1993, we can see how the mean number of years in school that adults (over 16) have received varies by livelihood quintile and by sex of household head. Table 20 shows this information, and enables us to see what changed between 1993 and 1999/2000, when our Phase I data were collected.

Overall, the amount of educational exposure people have received has increased during this period. In both years, male headed households scored lowest, and households with *de facto* female heads scored highest. In all three types of household, it was those in the lowest livelihood quintile that achieved the smallest increase in educational exposure during this period. Indeed, the figure actually went down for poor *de facto* female headed households. As ever, it was given to those who had. Households in the top quintile of each group achieved a substantially greater increase in their adult members' mean number of school years between 1993 and 1999/2000.

Similarly (looking at the right two columns of Table 20), we can see that the percentage of adults who have had some schooling has increased somewhat between 1993 and 1999/2000. Again, those in the higher livelihood quintiles have achieved a greater increase than those in the poorer groups. In fact, the poorest *de facto* female headed households now have fewer adults who have been to school than they did in 1993.

Table 20. Exposure of adults to schooling in different livelihood quintiles, by sex of household head

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	Mean no. of years schooling per adult		Percentage of adults with schooling	
		1993	1999/2000	1993	1999/2000
Male	Lowest 20%	4.2	4.2	65.5	68.4
	20-40%	4.9	5.4	74.8	77.4
	40-60%	5.6	6.0	79.7	85.4
	60-80%	6.3	7.0	86.5	87.5
	Top 20%	7.8	7.8	91.6	90.9
	Total		5.7	6.2	77.6
Female <i>de facto</i>	Lowest 20%	4.3	4.2	79.3	75.4
	20-40%	5.5	5.4	83.1	81.4
	40-60%	5.8	5.9	83.2	83.4
	60-80%	6.0	6.7	84.3	89.5
	Top 20%	6.8	7.4	88.1	90.1
	Total		6.2	6.8	85.2
Female <i>de jure</i>	Lowest 20%	4.6	4.8	73.4	78.2
	20-40%	5.1	5.8	82.2	84.9
	40-60%	6.5	6.5	87.0	87.8
	60-80%	6.6	7.3	91.4	89.8
	Top 20%	7.7	8.2	91.8	96.1
	Total		5.8	6.4	82.6
Total	Lowest 20%	4.3	4.4	69.0	72.6

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	Mean no. of years schooling per adult		Percentage of adults with schooling	
		1993	1999/2000	1993	1999/2000
	20-40%	5.0	5.5	78.3	80.3
	40-60%	5.9	6.2	82.5	85.9
	60-80%	6.2	7.0	86.4	88.6
	Top 20%	7.3	7.7	89.7	91.5
	Total	5.9	6.4	81.1	83.8

Source: Phase I data and 1993 national poverty study.

7.3. Social capital

Social capital comprises the status that individuals and households have in local society: the rights they can assert, and the claims they can make on other people or on local social structures for support. In some interpretations, land rights are thus a form of social capital. So are the sharecropping and less formal sharing arrangements that help many people to farm even though they do not own all the means of production themselves. Traditionally, the *mafisa* system of livestock loans between richer and poorer households has played a major role in making this key means of agricultural production more available.

Many kinds of support mechanism function in rural society. They include outright charity and the preferential employment of kin or other favoured people in local farm or other enterprises, often for payment in kind rather than cash and often at very low levels of productivity. Many of these ‘employment’ arrangements are of marginal economic necessity, but constitute an effective way of distributing some resources to the households that need them the most. *Matsema*, or work parties, are another way in which households gain

access to additional labour for major tasks through their social networks, which are lubricated by the beer provided in the course of the work. Older generations typically receive at least some livelihood support from their children. Worryingly, a recent CARE study in southern Lesotho showed some young households

We give each other as neighbours things which we run short of like groceries and some farm equipment. When we experience deaths they come to help us with their labour and utensils. When they are in need we lend them the cattle to carry firewood with and give them the firewood when they have funerals.

- Lowland/foothill household, livelihood quintile 4

There is moroho [green vegetables] in the garden and they are also given milk by the neighbours. This household gets support from other households because it also helps them with other things that are found in this household. Meat is eaten only when they are given by neighbours.

- Lowland/foothill household, livelihood quintile 2

He eats twice a day i.e. papa [maize porridge] and moroho and sometimes he eats papa mixed with water for seven days, as sometimes he has no means of getting moroho. Sometimes the villagers do help with bread, very seldom some help with moroho and papa. As compared to last year this year is much worse, because last year he had one bag of maize meal and it lasted for three months, but his sister came and bought maize meal. The bag of maize he got was from his relatives, but this year the relatives did not help, because there was a dispute between them.

- Lowland/foothill household, livelihood quintile 1

They used to help each other in the market place by what is called mochaellano: they rotate money from one person to another. She said that helps them since they manage to fulfil their necessities such as buying clothes and mealie meal.

- Urban household, livelihood quintile 4

The household does not receive any support from outside except the support from the children. The children who assist the family are a son and a daughter and both of them are working outside the country.

- Urban household, livelihood quintile 5

describing support from parents as a key element in their survival (Mohasi and Turner, 1999). As is shown by the case studies quoted above, the ability to secure loans through local networks is an important part of Lesotho’s social capital. It is particularly significant because of the poor coverage and extremely conservative lending policies of the formal banking sector. In this way, social capital and economic capital are woven closely together in Lesotho’s social fabric. Strains on that fabric impose a correspondingly severe economic strain on the many livelihoods that depend partly on credit.

An important part of social capital is Basotho’s membership of various local groups. The most significant feature of Table 21 is that it shows involvement in such local groups increasing with households’ scores on the composite index of livelihoods (represented in the table by the quintiles). Those who are better off are more likely to be involved in various CBOs, including burial societies – typically thought of as the institutional bastion of the poor. The table also shows, however, that the very poorest are slightly more active in burial societies than the next quintile up.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of **burial society**:

- contributions are in the range of M1 – M2 per month. When a member household suffers a death, other members are asked to make donations of M1 – M2. The money is used to assist the bereaved family by purchasing small grocery items such as candles, rice and cooking oil for them;
- contributions are in the range of M5 – M20 per month. When a member household suffers a death, a coffin is supplied as well as cooking utensils, food and plates. In addition, a tent is made available and the mortuary fees are also met on behalf of the family.

Table 21. Membership of groups by sex of household head and livelihood quintiles, 1999-2000

Livelihood quintiles	Sex of household head			Total %		
	Male <i>de jure</i> %	Female <i>de facto</i> %	Female <i>de jure</i> %			
Lowest 20%	Group member	None	77.7	90.7	79.6	78.7
		Church	1.0		2.7	1.6
		Burial society	19.1	9.3	15.1	17.4
		Stokvel	0.4		0.1	0.3
		Farming group			0.1	0.1
		Sports group	0.4		1.1	0.6
		Youth group	0.3		0.5	0.3
		Choir	0.3		0.2	0.3
		VDC	0.1			0.1
		Land allocation	0.1			
		Women’s group			0.4	0.2
		Cooperative			0.1	
		Other	0.6		0.1	0.4
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
20 – 40%	Group member	None	74.3	74.6	82.0	76.8
		Church	2.1		0.9	1.6
		Burial society	20.0	21.3	13.4	17.9
		Stokvel	0.4		0.1	0.3
		Farming group	0.2		0.2	0.2
		Sports group	1.2	1.9	1.3	1.3
		Youth group	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.5
		Choir	0.6	0.6	1.2	0.8
		VDC	0.1			0.1
		Women’s group	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.2
		Communal saving	0.1		0.2	0.1
		Cooperative		0.4	0.1	0.1
		Other	0.2		0.2	0.2

Livelihoods in Lesotho

Livelihood quintiles	Sex of household head			Total %		
	Male de jure %	Female de facto %	Female de jure %			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		
40-60%	Group member	None	71.4	73.1	73.2	72.2
		Church	1.1	1.2	2.7	1.6
		Burial society	23.6	21.5	18.4	21.7
		Stokvel	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.4
		Farming group	0.4		0.3	0.3
		Sports group	1.5	1.3	2.9	1.9
		Youth group	0.2	1.1	0.5	0.4
		Choir	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.8
		VDC			0.2	0.1
		Women's group	0.2		0.6	0.3
		Communal saving	0.1		0.3	0.1
		Cooperative	0.2		0.1	0.1
		Other	0.2	0.2		0.1
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
60 – 80%	Group member	None	70.6	67.0	75.5	70.6
		Church	1.7	1.6	2.0	1.7
		Burial society	23.3	25.6	17.0	22.6
		Stokvel	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.3
		Farming group	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.4
		Sports group	1.3	2.4	1.5	1.7
		Youth group	0.5	1.0	0.6	0.7
		Choir	1.1	0.5	1.5	1.0
		VDC				
		Women's group	0.1	0.5	0.6	0.3
		Communal saving	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
		Cooperative	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
		Other	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Top 20%	Group member	None	65.7	60.5	67.9	64.2
		Church	3.6	2.9	4.5	3.5
		Burial society	24.3	28.1	22.1	25.3
		Stokvel	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.4
		Farming group	0.5	0.3		0.3
		Sports group	2.1	3.4	2.3	2.6
		Youth group	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.2
		Choir	0.6	1.2	0.3	0.8
		VDC			0.2	0.1
		Women's group	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.4
		Communal saving	0.7	0.2		0.4
		Cooperative	0.1	0.1		0.1
		Other	0.5	1.5	0.6	0.9
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	Group member	None	71.7	66.1	76.2	71.8
		Church	2.0	1.9	2.4	2.1
		Burial society	22.2	25.5	16.9	21.4
		Stokvel	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
		Farming group	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3
		Sports group	1.3	2.6	1.8	1.7
		Youth group	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.7
		Choir	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.7
		VDC	0.1		0.1	0.1
		Women's group	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3
		Communal saving	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
		Cooperative	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
		Other	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.4
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Phase I data.

In some places, the burial societies have collapsed as more and more community members lose their jobs, and are no longer able to maintain their membership.

Nevertheless, households in all livelihood categories endeavour to be members of these CBOs. The cost of burying a family member can be high. Most households are hard pressed to meet these costs without the assistance of such burial organisations and stokvels. Poorer households, particularly, struggle to keep up their subscription payments, while the average and better off households are able to do so with relative ease.

Stokvels and **grocery associations** are forms of savings association, where members each contribute an agreed sum of money throughout the year. The stokvels lend out money to both members and non-members at an interest rate of, for example, 10%. At the end of the year, the members share the profits. Some grocery associations buy groceries for the members, while others simply give out cash. Membership has a significant impact on the livelihoods of participating households. Many reported that they rely on this money to buy food for their Christmas celebrations as well as to pay school fees for their children at the start of the new school year.

I am not sure if I am still considered a member of the association any more as I have not been able to meet my subscription payments for the past two years.

Female household head in the very poor category, Phase II survey

One kind of map of any Lesotho village – though not a kind drawn during the current study – would thus show a myriad lines of social connection, representing claims, obligations and support flows. What this map would hardly show – in marked contrast to a village map in South Africa – is claims and support flows involving the state. A slightly stronger flow of support comes from the South African private sector – principally the mines – in the form of retirement, death and disability pensions.

One schematic map we can draw shows the types of dependence and support relationship that exist between the four broad livelihood categories identified in Phase II of this study – although we find little to distinguish poor and very poor households in this regard, and have treated them as one unit in Figure 13 below. This diagram outlines the relationships in rural society. The flows of dependence and support are much weaker and less structured in urban Lesotho, and may often cross back into the countryside.

Lesotho's social capital remains high. But it is difficult to measure at the household level, and neither phase of this study investigated it directly. The predecessor of Phase I (Sechaba Consultants' 1994 national poverty mapping exercise) did this. The structure and nature of the support flows are unlikely to have changed significantly since then. But the proportions of the supporters and the supported are likely to be shifting, with potentially dangerous consequences. Based on admittedly rough estimates, the report on Phase I of this study suggests that, in 1999, about 610,000 Basotho needed economic support from their relatives and neighbours (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 152). About 490,000 could survive with what they had, but were not in a position to extend this support to those who needed it. Another 900,000 people had the means to support either one or two of the needy, giving an estimated overall ratio of 1.79 helpers for each poor person. The report estimates on the same basis that in 1993, the ratio was 1.84 to 1. This confirms that, for the time being, Basotho have the economic capital to prevent destitution in their society, assuming that their social capital continues to provide the networks and the will for the necessary redistribution to occur. But, the report concludes, if 35% of Basotho were to shift one category lower on this scale of ability to give and need to receive, their society would no longer have this capacity to provide internal support. That is when it could implode.

Phase II investigated the livelihood strategies of households in all categories and regions. Across Lesotho, assistance from kin and neighbours is quoted as a major means of survival for the very poor. Religion and ritual form another important part of the social fabric. Weddings, funerals and feasts for the ancestors are an important means for the very poor to get meat and drink. Even when close to destitution, Basotho usually retain the social capital to survive. However, the central role of funerals in the social fabric will be sorely tested in the coming years. AIDS deaths will cause an enormous increase in the numbers of funerals taking place (section 4.2). People will be unable to help each other with funerals in the way they do now, and funerals will no longer provide the nutritional benefits to the very poor that they currently do.

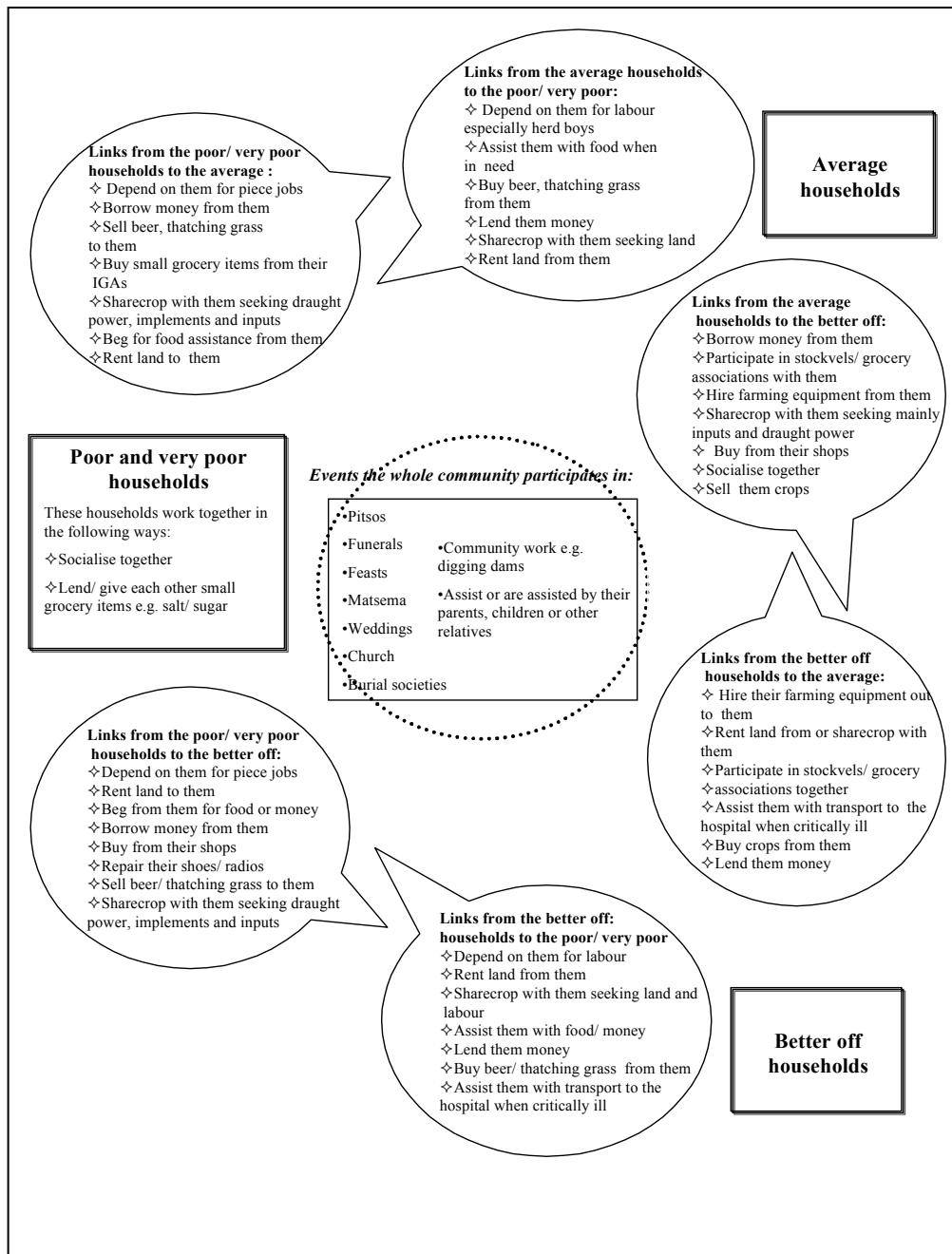


Figure 13. Relationships of dependence and support in rural Lesotho society

Source: Phase II data.

What sustained Lesotho livelihoods through the hardships and oppression of the 20th century were the mechanisms for equity and sharing that were built into them. The result has been that – at least in the rural areas – even the poorest households have at least some economic assets, and destitution is rare. A strong base of social capital has meant that Basotho share and redistribute what little wealth they have through a variety of mechanisms that combine the economic with the social and cultural. The distribution of land among the nation is only one aspect of the comparative equity of Lesotho life to date.

However, there must now be a real concern about the future of these mechanisms for equity and sharing, on three grounds:

- the livelihood strategies that have traditionally generated much of the wealth to lubricate these mechanisms are now in jeopardy, as wage employment becomes harder to find. There is a real risk that the balance between those who can give and those who need to receive will tilt too far into deficit, threatening the sort of social catastrophe that some other African nations have suffered in recent decades;
- the economic, social, cultural and spatial contexts for these mechanisms are changing fast as Basotho build new livelihoods in the urban and peri-urban areas. It seems unlikely that similar arrangements for equity and sharing will persist in this new setting;
- the balance between givers and receivers is also gravely threatened by the current AIDS crisis, whose future dimensions are only starting to be appreciated. The need for welfare support within Lesotho society is going to rise sharply, and the numbers of those able to provide it will dwindle.

7.4. Economic capital

Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 on pages 8 - 10 show the types and levels of asset ownership that Basotho typically ascribe to very poor, poor, average and better off households. Agricultural assets are prominent in those tables. But it is worth bearing in mind that the percentage of all Basotho households owning no livestock has increased from 23 in 1993 to 30 in 1999, and the percentage with no fields has risen from 23 to 41 over the same period (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 100). It is also important to recognise that ownership of fields and livestock is negatively correlated with all other wealth indicators. The poverty mapping exercises in Phase I of this study, and their predecessors earlier in the last decade, consistently show that those remote mountain areas that are poorest on all other indicators turn out to be among the wealthiest in terms of these 'traditional' Lesotho livelihood assets. This has been one of the economic strengths in the national livelihood framework to date. Those who are poorest in most ways still have significant assets in one sector. This is one of the ways in which Basotho have so far been able to minimise destitution in their society. It is uncertain how long these now deteriorating assets will be able to continue playing this role (section 4.7).

For a more systematic assessment of levels of economic capital in different livelihood categories, we must turn to our composite livelihood index and the quintiles into which it is divided. As we have explained, analysis in Phase I of this study included calculation of 'household worth' for each household surveyed (section 6.4). This is the sum of the monetary value that can be ascribed to all the assets recorded in the Phase I survey. It is used in turn as one of the components of the composite livelihood index. Table 22 shows how the total household worth of different types of household in the five livelihood quintiles has shifted in real terms from 1993 to 1999/2000. (The amounts are adjusted for inflation.)

This table underscores the point made above: even the poorest households have substantial household worth. This is partly because of the quality of rural Lesotho's housing stock. Almost all rural Basotho have one reasonably substantial house, even if it is only a rondavel built of stone, mud and thatch. However, the table also shows that the poorest households, be they headed by women or by men, have suffered a decline in their material worth during the decade. Conversely, the richest households – in particular, those headed by women – have enjoyed significant increases. Overall, as is shown by most other indicators, it is the *de jure* female headed households that are worst off nation wide. This category is dominated by small households headed by widows who, in the nature of the Lesotho household generational cycle (section 4.9), have suffered shrinkage of their assets as they near the end of their lives. On this measure, the richest households by far are the male headed ones in the top livelihood quintile. In 1999/2000, their material worth is almost half as much again as that of female headed households.

Table 22. Total worth of household possessions by livelihood quintile, 1993 and 1999/2000

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	Total worth of household possessions (M)	
		1993	1999/2000
Male	Lowest 20%	16,478	13,860
	20-40%	20,593	17,488
	40-60%	24,943	24,233
	60-80%	32,762	31,577
	Top 20%	60,876	63,824
	Total		28,559
Female de facto	Lowest 20%	13,715	8,630
	20-40%	15,565	16,920
	40-60%	18,609	18,486
	60-80%	23,369	24,835
	Top 20%	37,947	45,849
	Total		26,621
Female de jure	Lowest 20%	14,676	12,162
	20-40%	18,960	16,040
	40-60%	22,430	19,863
	60-80%	30,016	29,228
	Top 20%	32,762	43,567
	Total		21,160
Total	Lowest 20%	15,694	13,039
	20-40%	19,345	16,941
	40-60%	22,405	21,871
	60-80%	27,558	29,171
	Top 20%	45,881	54,190
	Total		26,165

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

8. Livelihood strategies

8.1. Introduction

Basotho use their assets (section 7) within the context of contemporary Lesotho (section 4) to counter and cope with the threats to their wellbeing (section 3.1.4) and work towards the livelihood outcomes they desire (sections 3.1.2, 9). They practise a very wide range of livelihood strategies to this end. In theory, it may be helpful to divide these strategies into:

- income generation;
- household reproductive and strengthening activities, including the basic tasks of child care, fuel and water collection, cooking, house maintenance etc. (which mostly fall to women); essential but not always attainable activities like education and health care; and more radical strategies such as migration to what is hoped will be a better life;
- coping strategies, with which households respond to shocks and stresses;
- social strategies that exploit or build social capital (section 7.3) through claiming, networking and the receiving and giving of charity.

In practice, however, it is not feasible to disaggregate Basotho's livelihood activities neatly into categories like these. These activities constitute an organic whole, addressing many of the above needs and purposes in an integrated manner. So we cannot offer a neatly tabulated outline of the various types of livelihood activity. Instead, we must present the whole picture, taken from different angles, and comment on its component parts as best we can. The angles on livelihood strategies presented in this section complement those already presented on the livelihood strategies of the poor (section 3.1.6); on migration (section 3.1.7); on livelihood trajectories (section 3.1.8); and the organic overview presented in section 3.1.9.

8.2. A geographic overview

Table 23 presents a summary of the livelihood strategies that Basotho identified as typical of the four livelihood categories that were developed during Phase II of this survey. The table presents the analysis of all of the mountain and urban people who took part in Phase II, and that of a sample of four of the lowland/foothill sites, which were more numerous in that phase. Strategies printed in bold font are those that were mentioned at more than one site in the zone in question.

There is much to be learned from this table, which can largely speak for itself. In all zones, we can see the increasing prominence of wage work as a livelihood strategy as we move from the poorer households to the better off. For the poorest households, the only sort of wage work that can usually be procured is piece jobs or the government's *fato-fato* short term labour intensive public works programme. Work in South Africa is still mentioned frequently. But – in marked contrast to the situation a couple of decades ago – it is now a strategy more common among the average to better off households. Another big change towards the end of the 20th century has been the increasing availability of wage employment in Lesotho (in factories and elsewhere). Not surprisingly, income generating activities dominate the livelihood strategies of all types of urban household. Many of these reflect the rapidly growing business enterprise of urban Basotho, who are engaging in all kinds of self-employment – selling beer, setting up small *spaza* shops, street vending and so on. But these activities are increasingly common among lowland and foothill households too. In those areas, many of them are natural resource based.

In the rural areas, agriculture remains a prominent livelihood strategy across all economic strata. But the strategies of the very poor reflect their inadequate means of agricultural production, so that many of them must engage in sharecropping their own or others' land, or (typically in the case of old widows) rent out their land to economically stronger households. At the other end of the scale, we find the better off households commonly involved in the sale of crops, wool and mohair. Some are also able to make money by renting out

their agricultural equipment. The most lucrative cash crop of all, dagga (marijuana) shows up in the livelihood strategies of the whole spectrum of rural households. Legalisation of the herb in South Africa could be catastrophic for Lesotho livelihoods.

The plight of the urban poor, also revealed by other data from this survey, is clearly shown in this table. Those who participated in urban areas seemed to be able to name very few livelihood strategies for the very poor. By contrast, the very poor in rural areas can engage in a number of livelihood strategies that will usually preserve them from complete destitution. As the table shows, many of these strategies exploit the social capital and networks that still reinforce Lesotho society (section 7.3). Their sustainability depends on the continuing integrity of Lesotho's social fabric – which, as we have seen, is far from assured.

As in most societies, alcohol remains an essential lubricant of life in Lesotho. It is an important component of many livelihood strategies, from the very poor to the better off in both the rural and the urban areas. In the rural areas, even the very poor can be seen to depend heavily on *joala* (beer) brewing, which is a prominent mechanism for the circulation of money through the village economy. At the other end of the livelihoods scale, many better off households retail bottled beer, although some also brew Sesotho beer.

Table 23. Livelihood strategies by region

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Urban	<i>Fato-fato</i> Begging Piece jobs, e.g. weeding Sale of brooms	<i>Fato-fato</i> Begging from neighbours and friends Help from relatives Sale of snuff Piece jobs, e.g. weeding/ transporting luggage Sale of brooms Brewing <i>joala</i> Sale of vegetables/fruit/ cooked food Home gardens for sale and consumption Rent out rooms	Brewing <i>joala</i> Sewing and knitting Working in factories Piece jobs Building houses Street vending Work in RSA Rent out rooms Work in local shops, civil service	Traditional healer Draw on savings Remittances Taxi drivers Shops Factory work Work in RSA Brick making Work in civil service, police force

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Lowlands/ foothills	Sell/rent out land Beg for food from neighbours Assistance from relatives <i>Fato-fato</i> Brew <i>joala</i> Piece jobs , e.g. gardening/weeding/ herding/washing clothes/harvesting/drawing water Small IGAs , e.g. sell veg/ make and sell grass hats/sell chickens/ shoe repair/snuff Sharecropping	Rent out land Sharecropping Brew <i>joala</i> Small IGAs , e.g. sell fruit and veg/ gardening/herding/ washing clothes/making and selling grass hats, brooms, mats/collection and sale of crop residue/street vending Pensions <i>Fato-fato</i> Domestic work Sale of snuff Help from relatives Begging Piece jobs , e.g. weeding/ harvesting/herding/smearing others' houses Sale of dagga Hire out oxen Collect and sell wood Sell livestock (in crisis), chickens, meat, and livestock products Hire out farming implements	Sharecropping Sale of livestock and small stock Sell wool and mohair Rent out agricultural equipment and livestock Teaching, building, traditional healer Brew <i>joala</i> IGAs, e.g. sell fruit/veg/meat/paraffin/ brooms and hats/ knitting and sewing Grow crops to eat and sell Remittances Work in RSA and Lesotho in mines, as domestics, taxi drivers, factories Piece jobs, e.g. weeding/harvesting/ building Sale of dagga <i>Fato-fato</i> Rear goats for sale Pensions Rent out shop Sell wood from woodlots	Commercial farming Businesses , e.g. shops/ cafes/ food stalls/taxis/transport Sharecropping Paid employment , e.g. bank clerk/teacher/nurse/mine worker/civil service/factories Rent out agricultural equipment, vehicles, carts Remittances Pensions Brewing <i>joala</i> Sell bottled beer Charging people to watch football matches on television (!) Sale of surplus crops, fruit and veg Sale of wool/mohair Breed and sell small stock Buy and sell meat/meat products Sewing clothes for sale Traditional healers Selling second hand clothes

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
			Rent out fields Sell bottled beer	

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Better off
Mountains	<i>Fato-fato</i> Brewing joala (also hired as beer brewers by others) Begging Renting out houses Piece jobs , e.g. weeding/washing/harvesting/smearing houses Help from relatives/ reliance on gifts Subsistence farming Sharecropping Begging Sale of dagga Hiring out donkeys Sale of firewood	Brewing joala Piece jobs , e.g. weeding/harvesting/LHDA Shoe and radio repair Small-scale wool/mohair sale Sale of wood/shrubs/ fruits/ veg Begging for food Catch and sell fish locally Wave and sell grass mats/hats/ tables Sell own chickens/small stock (esp. in crisis) Sell dagga Hire out horses/donkeys/carts <i>Fato-fato</i> Renting out houses Renting land in or out Remittances Sharecropping Subsistence farming Sewing clothes for sale Reliance on gifts	Brewing joala Sale of wool/mohair Sale of pigs, chickens, and livestock and livestock products (in crisis) Spazas Selling tobacco/snuff/matches/ second hand clothes Grow and sell vegetables Piece jobs , e.g. weeding/harvesting/ LHDA Paid employment, e.g. mines Remittances Sale of crops Sharecropping Rent land in or out Catching and selling fish Hire out livestock and farm implements (incl. horses, donkeys, carts) Work for livestock owners in return for having land ploughed Sale of dagga Sale of wood from wood lots Sale of commercial beer Building <i>Fato-fato</i> Traditional healers Farming Teaching and civil service Renting out rooms Sewing clothes for sale Gifts	Sale of commercial beer Wage work in Lesotho and RSA Sewing clothes for sale Sale of surplus crops Sharecropping Sale of wool/mohair Brewing joala Sale of dagga Hire out draught power and implements (donkeys, horses, carts) Sale of crops Sale of vegetables Sale of livestock and livestock products Remittances Shops Milling machine Sharecropping Sale of meat Block making

Source: Phase II data.

8.3. Occupations

To get a more detailed picture of the livelihood strategies that Basotho pursue, we can look at the occupations that were reported in Phase I of this study and in its 1993 predecessor. Once again, Table 24 is largely self-explanatory. It provides important comparative information about occupations in the different livelihood quintiles, and about how the distribution of occupations shifted during the 1990s. We see, for example, that the proportion of Basotho for whom no occupation is recorded decreases as one moves up the quintiles from the poorest households to the better off. We see also that Basotho have intensified their livelihood activities over the past decade. Fewer were recorded as having no occupation in 1999/2000 than had been seven years earlier. As our understanding of trends in the economy would lead us to expect (section 4.4), the proportion of Basotho working in South African mines halved during this period. The proportion recorded as being farmers also fell somewhat, which can be explained by the declining economic and environmental status of Lesotho agriculture. We see that self employment has been growing significantly, and that although the poorest households are involved in such activities, they are a stronger component of more prosperous livelihoods. The better off are also able to show a higher proportion of their population as scholars, although there has been a heartening increase in the school going proportion of the poorest livelihood quintile over this period. There has been a corresponding drop in the proportion of the population

working as shepherds – most notably among the poorest households. It is to be hoped that this is because more boys are now in school, although the declining role of livestock production is probably a factor too.

Table 24. Percentages of Basotho in different occupations, 1993 and 1999/2000

Occupation	Livelihood quintiles										Total	
	Lowest 20%		20-40%		40-60%		60-80%		Top 20%		93	99/00
	93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00		
None	33.9	33.5	29.0	24.5	22.9	20.0	21.5	17.0	20.0	13.5	24.8	20.8
Farmer	6.2	4.3	4.4	4.0	3.7	3.4	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.5	3.8	3.5
Household work	21.2	23.8	19.1	21.1	18.3	19.4	16.9	17.5	16.7	15.4	18.2	19.0
RSA mines	0.6	0.3	2.4	0.7	5.1	2.2	7.7	4.5	8.0	5.2	5.1	2.9
RSA farms	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1		0.4		0.1		0.1		0.1
Other RSA wages		0.4	0.1	0.3		0.8	0.1	0.7		1.0		0.7
Other RSA	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.3
Construction	0.6	0.4	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.8
Civil servant	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.5	0.7	0.6
Lesotho wages	0.6	0.6	2.4	1.4	2.7	3.2	2.1	3.4	2.0	3.3	2.0	2.5
Teacher	0.1		0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	1.4	1.1	0.5	0.5
Health worker	0.1		0.1		0.1	0.2	0.2		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Shop worker	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.4	1.0	0.4	0.7
Scholar	9.8	15.2	19.0	22.9	27.1	26.2	31.7	30.6	34.1	33.1	25.5	26.5
On pension		0.1	0.1	0.1		0.1	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
Casual labour	3.9	4.1	2.8	4.3	1.3	3.4	1.4	2.4	0.8	1.6	1.9	3.0
Shepherd	11.2	7.1	8.0	5.8	6.1	4.7	5.8	4.6	3.8	4.2	6.6	5.2
Job seeker	4.3	3.1	5.1	4.8	5.4	5.2	3.7	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.4
Self employed	4.6	4.4	3.6	5.5	2.8	5.5	2.4	5.2	2.1	5.9	3.0	5.4
Other	2.4	2.3	1.5	2.7	1.8	2.6	1.2	3.0	0.9	3.2	1.5	2.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

As this study has shown, Lesotho livelihoods are dominated by the money economy, and the formal wage sector is the preferred arena for a prosperous livelihood among most Basotho households. It is therefore useful to look more closely at the distribution of wage earners across the livelihood quintiles, and to see what changed between 1993 and 1999/2000. Table 25 shows that, overall, the large majority of Basotho households have at least one wage worker. But the proportion has fallen slightly since 1993 – as might be expected, given the growth in population (section 4.2) and the slump in the formal sector since the riots of 1998 (section 4.4). *De facto* female headed households most commonly have a wage worker, as these are the households headed by a woman in the absence of her husband at work. Conversely, *de jure* female headed households – typically headed by old widows – are the least likely to have a wage worker. We can also see from the table that the presence of wage workers increases up the livelihood quintiles, since it is the availability of wage income that makes Basotho livelihoods more prosperous.

Table 25. Percentage of households with and without wage earners, 1993 and 1999/2000

Livelihood quintiles	Wage earners in hh	Sex of household head						Total	
		Male		Female <i>de facto</i>		Female <i>de jure</i>		93	99/00
		93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00		
Lowest 20%	Some	76.0	70.3	90.9	81.8	58.4	57.1	69.9	65.0
	None	24.0	29.7	9.1	18.2	41.6	42.9	30.1	35.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
20-40%	Some	76.8	80.1	93.8	94.3	79.0	70.4	80.0	77.3
	None	23.2	19.9	6.2	5.7	21.0	29.6	20.0	22.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
40-60%	Some	83.6	92.1	98.8	95.3	80.7	77.5	87.6	87.4
	None	16.4	7.9	1.2	4.7	19.3	22.5	12.4	12.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
60-80%	Some	88.2	91.3	98.6	97.6	89.0	83.5	93.5	91.2
	None	11.8	8.7	1.4	2.4	11.0	16.5	6.5	8.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Livelihood quintiles	Wage earners in hh	Sex of household head						Total	
		Male		Female <i>de facto</i>		Female <i>de jure</i>			
		93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Top 20%	Some	89.7	92.7	100.0	100.0	73.2	92.3	93.8	95.1
	None	10.3	7.3			26.8	7.7	6.2	4.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	Some	82.1	85.3	98.4	97.6	74.5	73.5	85.1	83.8
	None	17.9	14.7	1.6	2.4	25.5	26.5	14.9	16.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

8.4. Choices

Looking at the activities that go to make up livelihood strategies, the report on Phase I of this study preferred the term ‘choices’. It applied this term to a number of initiatives or activities that households might consciously (and subject to their capabilities and resources) decide to undertake. All of them represent a proactive step towards improving livelihood condition. We could think of many other ‘choices’ in people’s lives, and doubtless reformulate the ones that were used in this study, but the 16 used in this study are appropriate surrogates for a range of livelihood-enhancing activities or strategies that Basotho households can undertake. They are shown in Table 26 below. On the basis of this table and people’s responses to a range of Phase I questions about their livelihood activities and strategies, it was possible to compute a choices score for each household.

Figure 14 shows how many livelihood choices were reported in different livelihood quintiles in the three main zones of Lesotho. Not surprisingly, we find that more prosperous livelihoods are linked to a higher number of livelihood choices. It is also clear that the urban households make fewer of the livelihood choices included in this index. This is because so many of the components of the index relate to agriculture, and are not choices that would be relevant in urban livelihoods. As throughout southern Africa, a better livelihood often requires splitting the household, with one or more members migrating away to work or educational opportunities (section 3.1.7). Three of the choices included in the index used here refer to migration strategies.

Phase I analysis found that 13 of the 16 choices included in the index correlate significantly with household membership in local groups and institutions (Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 144). This suggests that a more prosperous and successful livelihood is promoted by active involvement in local CBOs and community affairs. Another correlation is between the choice to invest in house building and households’ annual income. This indicates Basotho’s continuing commitment to the strong housing stock that is an important part of the national livelihood framework (section 7.4).

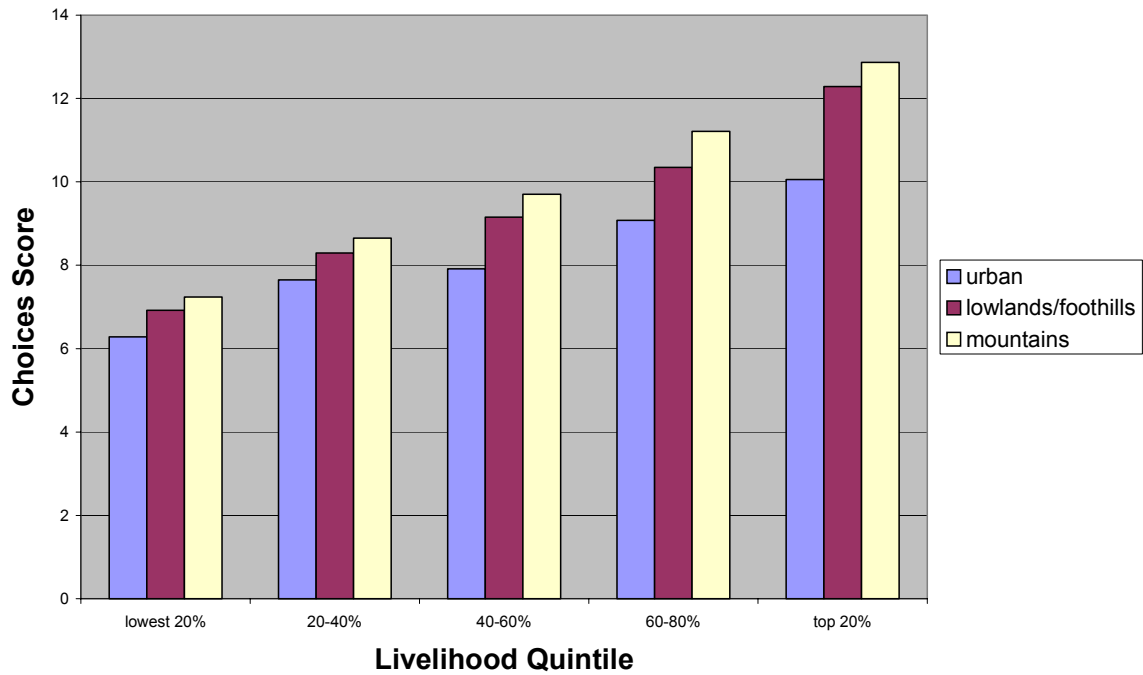


Figure 14. Livelihood choices by livelihood quintile

Source: Phase I data.

Table 26. Initiatives and activities included in choices index

Choice	0 points	1 point	2 points
Goes to ante-natal clinic	no	partly or no data	All
Takes children to post-natal clinic	no	partly or no data	All
Immunises children	no	partly or no data	All
Sends 6-15 children to school	no	partly or no data	All
Seeks treatment for disease	no	partly or no data	all
Sends children out of Lesotho to school	no	1 child	>1 child
Has members living away from home	no	1 person	>1 person
Has members seeking work	no	1 person	>1 person
Seeks loans	no	unsuccessfully	successfully
Spends money on farming	no	<M300 in year	>=M300 in year
Does farming	no	field or garden	Field and garden
Sells crops	no	<M300 in year	>=M300 in year
Spends money on house building	no	<M5000 in year	>=M5000 in year
Buys sewing machine	no	1 machine	2 machines
Buys livestock	no	<M800 in year	>=M800 in year
Sells livestock	no	<M1200 in year	>=M1200 in year

Sechaba Consultants, 2000a, 134.

9. Livelihood outcomes

9.1. Introduction

So far, this report has painted the picture of Basotho livelihoods from various angles, outlining the perspective of these livelihoods, the threats they must counter, the assets they can deploy and the activities and strategies that they comprise. We saw in section 3 how Basotho define and categorise the degree of wellbeing they are able to achieve in their livelihoods. Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 on pages 8 - 10 summarised the ways people live and the quality of life they enjoy in each of the identified livelihood categories in each zone of the country. We now assess various aspects of Lesotho livelihood outcomes in more detail.

9.2. Food security

Sections 3.1.2.5 and 3.1.6.5 above commented on the food security that the poor and the better off are able to achieve. Overall, Basotho are now able to assure little of their household food security from their own agricultural production. Table 27 shows the cereal stocks that surveyed households held at the time they were visited in Phase I of this survey and during its 1993 predecessor. It also shows the months out of the previous 12 that the households surveyed in 1999/2000 said they had been short of food. (These data are not available from the previous survey.) It is always risky to compare data from two specific years like this, because of the possibility that drought or good rains may distort the comparison. The situation certainly seems to have been significantly worse in 1999/2000. We are on safer ground in observing that, not surprisingly, cereal stocks increase and periods of food shortage decrease as one moves up the livelihood quintiles. Female headed households are less assured of food security than male headed ones, but the differences between them are not enormous, particularly as some *de jure* female headed households have comparatively strong cereal stocks.

We surmise that grain crop production still acts as something of a leveller in rural society. But Table 28 shows how totally inadequate this production now is for Basotho's nutritional needs. 180 kg. per person per year is the Food and Agriculture Organisation's standard for self sufficiency in cereal crops. Very few Basotho households attain this standard. Here the contrast across the livelihood quintiles is somewhat stronger, with poorer *de facto* female headed households in an especially weak position. Basotho livelihood strategies clearly have to look beyond their own crop production to assure food security.

Table 27. Cereal stocks and food shortages, 1993 and 1999/2000

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	1993	1999	Months last year that hh had food shortage (1999)
Male	Lowest 20%	105.5	61.5	2.9
	20-40%	101.0	50.9	2.4
	40-60%	196.0	81.7	1.6
	60-80%	193.9	94.7	1.3
	Top 20%	478.4	119.4	1.0
	Total	195.2	80.8	1.8
Female de facto	Lowest 20%	27.7	13.3	2.2
	20-40%	49.9	31.6	1.8
	40-60%	57.4	89.9	1.3

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	1993	1999	Months last year that hh had food shortage (1999)
	60-80%	74.6	34.4	0.9
	Top 20%	276.0	122.2	0.8
	Total	139.3	78.9	1.0
Female de jure	Lowest 20%	66.9	26.9	3.4
	20-40%	120.2	36.8	2.5
	40-60%	108.4	69.2	2.2
	60-80%	199.1	94.5	1.3
	Top 20%	600.3	83.2	1.3
	Total	149.9	57.0	2.3
Total	Lowest 20%	88.0	46.0	3.1
	20-40%	99.3	44.9	2.4
	40-60%	132.8	78.4	1.8
	60-80%	136.1	78.0	1.2
	Top 20%	379.5	114.1	0.9
	Total	167.1	73.3	1.8

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

Table 28. Whether households produce 180 kg. cereals per capita per year, 1993 and 1999/2000

Livelihood quintiles	Meets 180 kg standard	Sex of household head						Total	
		Male		Female de facto		Female de jure		93	99/00
		93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00		
Lowest 20%	Yes	5.1	0.9	6.9		7.3	1.7	6.0	1.2
	No	94.9	99.1	93.1	100.0	92.7	98.3	94.0	98.8
20-40%	Yes	0.5	1.1			9.8	2.4	3.3	1.5
	No	99.5	98.9	100.0	100.0	90.2	97.6	96.7	98.5
40-60%	Yes	5.1	2.9		1.1	7.2	3.0	4.0	2.7
	No	94.9	97.1	100.0	98.9	92.8	97.0	96.0	97.3
60-80%	Yes	12.1	3.7	0.6		9.7	4.8	5.9	2.9
	No	87.9	96.3	99.4	100.0	90.3	95.2	94.1	97.1
Top 20%	Yes	24.8	7.9	17.5	1.7	39.8	6.6	33.3	5.6
	No	75.2	92.1	82.5	98.3	60.2	93.4	77.8	94.4
Total	Yes	7.9	3.2	6.5	0.9	10.0	3.2	8.0	2.8
	No	92.1	96.8	93.5	99.1	90.0	96.8	92.0	97.2

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

9.3. Health

Poor health is one of the principal stresses on the livelihoods of the poor (section 3.1.4). Table 29 and Table 30 below show how the occurrence of diseases varies across the ecological zones of Lesotho, by sex of the household head and according to the household's position on the livelihood spectrum from poorest to best off (here presented by quintiles, as explained in section 6.4).

Table 29. Occurrence of diseases per household member by ecological zone, 1999-2000

Ecological zone	Disease group	Livelihood quintiles					Total
		Lowest 20%	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	Top 20%	
Urban	Tuberculosis	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2
	other respiratory	6.5	6.4	2.4	2.4	1.5	3.0
	Intestinal	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.5
	heart & blood problems	1.1	6.1	1.6	0.3	1.9	1.9
	other disease	1.9	2.0	0.7	1.9	2.8	1.8
	external trauma	4.4	1.7	1.3	0.9	0.7	1.3
	disability & old age	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	birth and delivery	0.0	0.9	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.2
	psycho-spiritual	0.0	1.3	0.5	1.2	0.5	0.8
	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total		14.7	19.7	7.4	7.4	7.8
Lowlands/ foothills	Tuberculosis	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3
	other respiratory	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.9	2.8
	Intestinal	1.5	0.9	0.5	0.8	1.3	1.0
	heart & blood problems	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.1
	other disease	2.1	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.5	2.1
	external trauma	2.0	1.5	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.3
	disability & old age	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4
	birth and delivery	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
	psycho-spiritual	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.8	0.7
	Other	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total		10.9	10.0	9.2	8.5	10.5
Mountains	tuberculosis	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2
	other respiratory	3.1	3.5	3.2	2.7	3.1	3.1
	intestinal	2.0	1.4	1.8	2.0	1.4	1.8
	heart & blood problems	1.2	1.6	0.5	0.9	0.9	1.1
	other disease	3.1	1.9	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.2
	external trauma	1.4	0.9	1.3	0.9	1.0	1.1
	disability & old age	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.4
	birth and delivery	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	psycho-spiritual	1.1	1.0	0.5	1.6	1.0	1.1
	other	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Total		13.2	11.2	9.7	10.5	10.0
Total	tuberculosis	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
	other respiratory	3.2	3.3	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.9
	intestinal	1.6	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.1
	heart & blood problems	1.0	1.8	1.2	0.8	1.2	1.2
	other disease	2.4	1.9	1.8	2.0	2.4	2.1
	external trauma	1.9	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.2
	disability & old age	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
	birth and delivery	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
	psycho-spiritual	1.0	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8
	Other	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total		12.0	11.5	8.9	8.7	9.9

Source: Phase I data.

Table 30. Occurrence of diseases per household member by sex of household head, 1999-2000

Sex of household head	Disease group	Livelihood quintiles					Total
		Lowest 20%	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	Top 20%	
Male	tuberculosis	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3
	other respiratory	2.5	3.8	3.3	2.6	2.8	3.0
	intestinal	2.0	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.2
	heart & blood problems	0.7	1.9	1.0	0.7	1.1	1.1
	other disease	2.2	2.2	1.5	1.9	2.2	2.0
	external trauma	1.9	1.4	1.3	0.8	0.9	1.2
	disability & old age	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3
	birth and delivery	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
	psycho-spiritual	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8
	other	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	11.2	12.5	9.5	8.5	9.4	10.2
Female de facto	tuberculosis	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	other respiratory	3.1	2.6	2.8	2.0	2.5	2.4
	intestinal	1.2	2.4	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.0
	heart & blood problems	0.0	1.3	0.3	0.5	1.1	0.8
	other disease	3.4	0.5	0.8	2.1	2.4	2.0
	external trauma	0.0	1.0	0.2	1.3	1.2	1.0
	disability & old age	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.2
	birth and delivery	0.0	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
	psycho-spiritual	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.7
	other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
	Total	7.6	8.8	6.0	7.7	10.0	8.5
Female de jure	tuberculosis	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.2
	other respiratory	4.4	2.4	2.1	3.6	2.9	3.1
	intestinal	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.9
	heart & blood problems	1.5	1.9	1.9	1.4	1.7	1.7
	other disease	2.8	1.6	2.7	2.2	3.5	2.5
	external trauma	2.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.4
	disability & old age	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.4
	birth and delivery	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1
	psycho-spiritual	1.0	1.3	0.3	0.9	0.6	0.8
	other	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	13.9	10.0	9.5	10.6	11.8	11.1
Total	tuberculosis	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
	other respiratory	3.2	3.3	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.9
	intestinal	1.6	1.1	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.1
	heart & blood problems	1.0	1.9	1.2	0.8	1.2	1.2
	other disease	2.4	1.9	1.8	2.0	2.4	2.1
	external trauma	1.9	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.2
	disability & old age	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
	birth and delivery	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
	psycho-spiritual	1.0	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8
	other	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	12.1	11.5	8.9	8.7	10.0	10.1

Source: Phase I data.

These tables show that the reported incidence of disease is the same in the lowlands and foothills as it is in urban areas, but that it is somewhat higher in the mountains. Across all zones, the number of diseases reported per household member decreases as one moves up the livelihood scale from the poorest households to the better off. This gradient is most marked in the urban areas – one indicator among many that the quality of life of the urban poor is, if anything, worse than that of the rural poor. Interestingly, households with

female *de facto* heads report a lower occurrence of disease than those with male or female *de jure* heads. Female *de facto* headed households are also interesting in that they report increasing disease occurrence with higher composite livelihood scores (i.e. in the higher livelihood quintiles). The other two groups follow the more intuitive pattern, with the highest incidence of disease among the poorer groups.

Looking at mortality (Table 31) we can see that *de jure* female headed households, which are usually among the poorest, experience substantially more deaths per household member than other households. Those headed *de facto* by women, which are commonly younger households whose male heads are absent at work, enjoy lower death rates. Not surprisingly, death rates decrease in the higher livelihood quintiles. But the decrease is not dramatic. Greater prosperity brings new disease risks. In the case of Basotho, high blood pressure and diabetes are notorious.

Table 31. Deaths per household member, 1995-1999

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	Deaths per member
Male	Lowest 20%	.05
	20-40%	.04
	40-60%	.05
	60-80%	.04
	Top 20%	.06
	Total	.05
Female <i>de facto</i>	Lowest 20%	.05
	20-40%	.02
	40-60%	.04
	60-80%	.04
	Top 20%	.03
	Total	.03
Female <i>de jure</i>	Lowest 20%	.09
	20-40%	.09
	40-60%	.08
	60-80%	.09
	Top 20%	.08
	Total	.09
Total	Lowest 20%	.06
	20-40%	.06
	40-60%	.06
	60-80%	.05
	Top 20%	.05
	Total	.05

Source: Phase I data.

9.4. Water and sanitation

Healthy water supply and adequate sanitation are livelihood outcomes to which people everywhere aspire. Major development efforts have been made to this end in Lesotho since the 1970s, and people's views on water infrastructure reflect this (section 4.6). But, as Table 32 and Table 33 show, much remains to be done with regard to these livelihood outcomes. The proportion of Basotho households using unsafe water supplies has decreased across the board during the 1990s, but remains at one fifth of the total. The poorest *de facto* female headed households actually recorded a substantial increase in usage of unsafe water supplies over this period. As with water supplies, programmes to improve latrine provision are reflected in Table 33. More than three times as many households have Ventilated Improved Pit latrines in 1999/2000 as did in 1993, but they are still less than one fifth of the total, with just over half all Basotho households still having no kind of toilet at all. Almost 80% of households in the lowest livelihood quintile still have no toilet or latrine of any sort. *De jure* female headed households, typically impoverished and headed by widows, are the worst provided with sanitation facilities.

Table 32. Type of water supply by sex of household head and livelihood quintile, 1993 and 1999-2000

Livelihood quintile	Type of water supply	Sex of household head						Total	
		Male		Female <i>de facto</i>		Female <i>de jure</i>		93 (%)	99/00 (%)
		93 (%)	99/00 (%)	93 (%)	99/00 (%)	93 (%)	99/00 (%)		
Lowest 20%	Unsafe water	47.9	30.6	41.9	60.9	33.0	30.9	42.0	30.6
	Covered spring	9.9	8.6	10.6		15.6	7.8	12.1	8.1
	Communal	36.4	57.1	47.4	39.1	45.8	57.2	40.4	56.8
	Private	5.8	4.1			5.6	4.3	5.5	4.1
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
20-40%	Unsafe water	32.2	19.8	36.9	16.4	30.5	28.5	32.3	22.7
	Covered spring	9.2	7.4	10.5	11.5	13.3	6.1	10.7	7.1
	Communal	45.3	65.9	47.9	69.1	43.0	57.3	45.0	62.9
	Private	13.3	6.9	4.7	3.1	13.2	8.6	12.0	7.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
40-60%	Unsafe water	27.5	21.0	37.6	24.1	22.3	13.3	29.4	18.9
	Covered spring	10.9	6.1	6.6	11.2	10.6	6.0	9.5	6.8
	Communal	47.0	62.3	47.0	59.1	57.1	73.2	49.3	65.7
	Private	14.7	10.6	8.8	4.7	10.0	7.4	11.8	8.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
60-80%	Unsafe water	33.8	17.7	25.3	19.2	38.2	13.9	30.5	17.3
	Covered spring	8.4	5.3	9.9	8.2	8.3	3.2	9.1	5.6
	Communal	46.1	62.5	51.4	64.8	47.7	64.8	49.1	63.7
	Private	11.7	14.5	13.3	7.4	5.8	18.1	11.3	13.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Top 20%	Unsafe water	23.5	13.9	27.5	17.8	32.4	11.3	26.5	14.8
	Covered spring	6.2	5.1	8.4	5.6		4.8	6.8	5.2
	Communal	51.7	63.5	53.2	70.3	49.4	60.3	52.3	65.7
	Private	18.6	17.2	10.8	6.4	18.2	21.6	14.3	14.1
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	Unsafe water	32.6	20.6	29.2	20.4	30.1	21.2	31.0	20.7
	Covered spring	8.9	6.5	8.6	7.7	10.9	5.9	9.3	6.5
	Communal	45.6	62.3	50.8	65.8	48.1	62.8	47.8	63.1
	Private	12.9	10.6	11.4	6.1	10.9	10.1	11.9	9.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The 1999/2000 data on water supply are more detailed than those for 1993. 1999/2000 water supply categories have therefore been collapsed to match those for 1993. The 'unsafe water' category is taken to mean 'other spring', 'river' and 'dam', as coded in 1999/2000. 'Communal' is taken to include the 1999/2000 categories 'communal piped' and 'communal hand pump'. 'Private' is assumed to include the 1999/2000 categories 'piped on site', 'private borehole', 'purchased' (which is as much as 5% of all water supply for some classes of household) and 'rainwater tank'.

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

Table 33. Type of latrine used by sex of household head and livelihood quintile, 1993 and 1999-2000

Livelihood quintile	Type of toilet used	Sex of household head						Total	
		Male		Female <i>de facto</i>		Female <i>de jure</i>		93 (%)	99/00 (%)
		93 (%)	99/00 (%)	93 (%)	99/00 (%)	93 (%)	99/00 (%)		
Lowest 20%	Flush		4.1		7.7	1.2	4.8	0.4	4.4
	VIP	15.7	17.3	9.1		18.0	16.6	16.3	16.7
	Other latrine	84.3	78.6	90.9	92.3	80.9	78.5	83.3	78.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
20-40%	Flush	1.2	0.4					0.7	0.3
	VIP	4.7	12.2		10.1	4.2	6.0	3.8	9.9
	Other latrine	23.7	26.1	22.6	16.9	20.2	25.5	22.5	25.4
	None	70.3	61.1	77.4	73.1	75.7	68.6	73.0	64.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
40-60%	Flush	0.4				1.1	0.4	0.5	0.1
	VIP	5.8	14.3	4.6	14.6	9.1	12.4	6.2	13.7
	Other latrine	32.4	36.6	20.9	21.8	40.0	35.6	30.6	34.1
	None	61.3	49.0	74.6	63.5	49.7	51.6	62.7	52.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
60-80%	Flush						2.0		0.5
	VIP	4.7	22.0	7.8	22.2	0.9	22.4	5.4	22.2
	Other latrine	41.9	38.0	37.7	30.0	35.8	37.3	38.6	35.6
	None	53.4	40.1	54.6	47.8	63.3	38.3	56.0	41.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Top 20%	Flush	3.0	3.2		0.4	5.7	1.5	1.6	2.0
	VIP	11.8	32.9	6.8	34.7	4.2	32.6	8.4	33.5
	Other latrine	53.2	42.3	50.3	38.9	60.7	39.3	52.3	40.6
	None	32.0	21.6	42.9	25.9	29.4	26.7	37.7	23.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Total	Flush	0.9	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.6
	VIP	4.9	16.9	6.6	24.9	4.1	12.9	5.2	17.1
	Other latrine	32.4	32.0	37.0	30.8	30.6	29.2	33.4	31.0
	None	61.7	50.4	56.2	44.1	64.5	57.3	60.7	51.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

9.5. Shelter

This study has emphasised the quality of Basotho's housing stock, the contribution it makes to household worth, and the commitment of those who have the resources to continue investing in house construction (sections 7.4, 8.4). Table 34 tracks what has happened to the type and amount of shelter that Basotho have had since 1993. 'Flats' refers to rectangular structures with an (almost) flat, corrugated iron roof, often built in lines but sometimes standing as single or two-room structures (*polata*). *Heisi* is a rectangular building with a ridged roof, built of traditional materials such as stone and thatch. *Optaka* is the modern equivalent, sometimes built of brick and often having a corrugated iron roof.

As one might expect, the number of traditional rondavels in the nation's housing stock has been decreasing in the 1990s as Basotho turn to more modern (but usually less well insulated) designs. The most important feature of the table, however, is the decline in the total number of rooms available to both male and female headed households in the poorer livelihood quintiles. These poorer households are failing to expand their accommodation to match population increase. However, this may become less of a concern over the coming decade as AIDS slows or even reverses population growth.

Table 34. Housing stock by sex of household head and livelihood quintile, 1993 and 1999-2000

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	No. of rondavels		No. of flats		No. of heisi		No. of optak		Total rooms	
		93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00	93	99/00
Male	Lowest 20%	1.23	1.03	0.51	0.58	0.12	0.09	0.03	0.02	2.09	1.94
	20-40%	1.12	0.84	0.67	0.80	0.18	0.12	0.05	0.03	2.31	2.30
	40-60%	1.05	0.71	0.81	0.97	0.21	0.18	0.06	0.07	2.77	2.84
	60-80%	1.00	0.72	0.92	1.07	0.20	0.18	0.09	0.11	3.12	3.40
	Top 20%	0.81	0.72	1.19	1.29	0.35	0.24	0.17	0.29	4.37	4.42
	Total		1.07	0.80	0.77	0.94	0.20	0.16	0.07	0.10	2.79
Female <i>de facto</i>	Lowest 20%	0.84	0.71	0.35	0.52	0.19		0.09		1.56	1.23
	20-40%	0.89	0.69	0.59	0.59	0.07	0.09	0.08	0.11	2.01	1.99
	40-60%	0.74	0.78	0.87	0.65	0.04	0.09	0.05	0.05	2.29	2.17
	60-80%	0.52	0.52	1.01	0.98	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.09	2.80	2.78
	Top 20%	0.83	0.52	1.09	1.05	0.16	0.20	0.19	0.24	3.88	3.77
	Total		0.72	0.58	0.95	0.92	0.11	0.14	0.12	0.14	2.98
Female <i>de jure</i>	Lowest 20%	1.08	1.01	0.56	0.60	0.25	0.09	0.02		2.05	2.06
	20-40%	1.16	0.89	0.65	0.85	0.32	0.11	0.02	0.02	2.42	2.30
	40-60%	0.91	0.71	0.81	0.98	0.23	0.19	0.04	0.03	2.66	2.76
	60-80%	1.11	0.64	0.85	1.11	0.42	0.35	0.10	0.10	3.03	3.36
	Top 20%	1.36	0.67	0.90	1.29	0.22	0.23	0.08	0.27	3.28	3.79
	Total		1.09	0.81	0.70	0.91	0.29	0.18	0.04	0.06	2.52
Total	Lowest 20%	1.16	1.02	0.52	0.58	0.17	0.09	0.03	0.02	2.05	1.98
	20-40%	1.10	0.85	0.65	0.81	0.21	0.12	0.05	0.03	2.30	2.28
	40-60%	0.92	0.72	0.83	0.93	0.16	0.17	0.05	0.05	2.60	2.72
	60-80%	0.78	0.65	0.95	1.05	0.20	0.20	0.10	0.10	2.94	3.22
	Top 20%	0.87	0.64	1.11	1.21	0.23	0.23	0.17	0.27	4.01	4.09
	Total		0.97	0.77	0.81	0.93	0.19	0.16	0.08	0.10	2.78

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

9.6. Education

The discussion of human capital earlier in this report presented a summary of the educational outcomes that Basotho have been able to achieve in recent years (section 7.2 and Table 20 on page 74). It was shown that Basotho have generally been able to increase their exposure to education during the 1990s. But it is not possible to comment here on changes in the quality of the schooling received, and it was pointed out that the poorest households have achieved the smallest increase in their levels of educational contact. One other statistic can be quoted here. Again it suggests that the nation is making progress in getting its children to school. Table 35 shows the percentage of children aged between 6 and 15 who are not in school. As one would hope, this figure has fallen significantly between 1993 and 1999/2000. But male headed households have been considerably more successful in getting their children to school than female headed households, particularly those with *de facto* female heads.

Table 35. Percentage of children aged 6-15 not in school, 1993 and 1999-2000

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	% of children aged 6-15 not in school	
		1993	1999/2000
Male	Lowest 20%	74.0	60.9
	20-40%	37.2	31.5
	40-60%	27.6	20.1
	60-80%	20.3	13.6
	Top 20%	11.9	7.9
	Total		35.2
Female de facto	Lowest 20%	100.0	86.5
	20-40%	55.0	53.7
	40-60%	31.4	29.7
	60-80%	11.3	13.8
	Top 20%	6.3	6.2
	Total		17.9
Female de jure	Lowest 20%	63.6	57.4
	20-40%	29.8	25.4
	40-60%	18.2	16.7
	60-80%	9.9	9.6
	Top 20%	8.0	6.5
	Total		30.4
Total	Lowest 20%	71.1	60.2
	20-40%	37.6	30.6
	40-60%	26.4	20.4
	60-80%	13.6	12.8
	Top 20%	8.5	7.1
	Total		28.3

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

9.7. Income, savings and debt

As section 2 made clear, the quality of livelihoods is far more than a matter of financial wealth. Nevertheless, cash incomes and access to financial resources are as important in Basotho livelihoods as they are in those of most other people around the world. Lesotho is also quite typical in that these are variables that are difficult to research in large scale field surveys. People typically under report their financial status. The data

presented below must therefore be viewed with caution and are presented for their comparative value across the 1990s rather than for their absolute accuracy. For data processing reasons, the income figures for 1999/2000 are intentionally an understatement. The recent survey was more thorough than the 1993 one, specifically asking about a larger range of potential cash income sources. Direct comparison of the total cash income from the two surveys would therefore be misleading. So we have excluded income from some 1999/2000 sources that the investigators did not ask about in 1993, and have adjusted the recent data for inflation, in order to make the two sets of income figures directly comparable. The total incomes actually recorded in 1999/2000 were in the order of 1.3 times larger than the amounts shown in Table 36 below.

Overall, the data appear to show a significant increase in household income between 1993 and 1999/2000. However, our adjustment for inflation assumes that all the second set of data were collected in 1999, whereas a number of interviews took place in 2000. If each figure had been individually adjusted according to the exact date of the interview, the gap between incomes in 1993 and 1999/2000 would not appear quite so big. But the most important thing about Table 36 is its indication of stagnant or declining cash earnings for the poorer groups. Overall, the lowest livelihood quintile has stayed at exactly the same level, whereas the second poorest group has actually suffered a shrinkage. Once again we see that the richer households are, on average, increasing their real income more than those in the middle of the livelihood spectrum.

Table 36. Household income and savings, 1993 and 1999-2000

Sex of household head	Livelihood quintile	Income per household member per month (M)		Household savings (M)	
		1993	1999/2000 (adjusted)	1993	1999/2000
Male	Lowest 20%	15	16	37	17
	20-40%	45	31	198	95
	40-60%	51	72	213	206
	60-80%	86	100	523	985
	Top 20%	151	175	1,483	1,609
	Total		61	77	408
Female de facto	Lowest 20%	17	38	14	0
	20-40%	51	48	99	58
	40-60%	88	76	336	424
	60-80%	107	122	537	603
	Top 20%	106	162	744	1,372
	Total		95	124	515
Female de jure	Lowest 20%	21	17	47	14
	20-40%	34	42	51	11
	40-60%	71	66	101	100
	60-80%	70	90	282	129
	Top 20%	200	168	293	1,165
	Total		55	64	116
Total	Lowest 20%	17	17	40	15
	20-40%	42	36	132	63
	40-60%	67	71	225	199
	60-80%	93	104	480	682
	Top 20%	131	170	974	1,451
	Total		70	81	370

Source: Phase I data and 1993 poverty study.

9.8. Personal safety

Moving from the financial arena to a very different aspect of the quality of life, we can return to Table 13 on page 42 for a reminder of the sort of livelihood outcomes that Basotho are currently able to achieve with regard to personal safety. As that table showed, the situation in this regard leaves no room for complacency. Although we are not able to present time series data here, the overwhelming impression gained from Basotho during this survey has been that the situation is deteriorating. So far this is less an issue of safety from bodily violence and abuse – although those problems are also believed to be increasing, particularly in (peri) urban

areas. Basotho’s main concern at this stage is with stock theft, which has devastated many livelihoods overnight in recent years and – despite the creation of anti stock theft associations in many villages – continues to be a grave threat to many people.

9.9. A composite index of outcomes

The report on Phase I of this survey combined a number of livelihood outcomes into a single index, which we reproduce here as a useful summary of what Basotho are achieving with their current capabilities in the contemporary context. The index that the Phase I investigators were able to calculate was based on the eight variables shown in Table 37, based on data collected during the Phase I survey. Not surprisingly, and partly because of the relationship between the composition of the two measures, we find in Figure 15 that the composite outcomes score increases with livelihood quintile. It is more useful to note, as we have done several times in this study, that the crisis in very poor urban livelihoods is perhaps the worst in Lesotho. They score significantly lower on this index than mountain households in the poorest quintile.

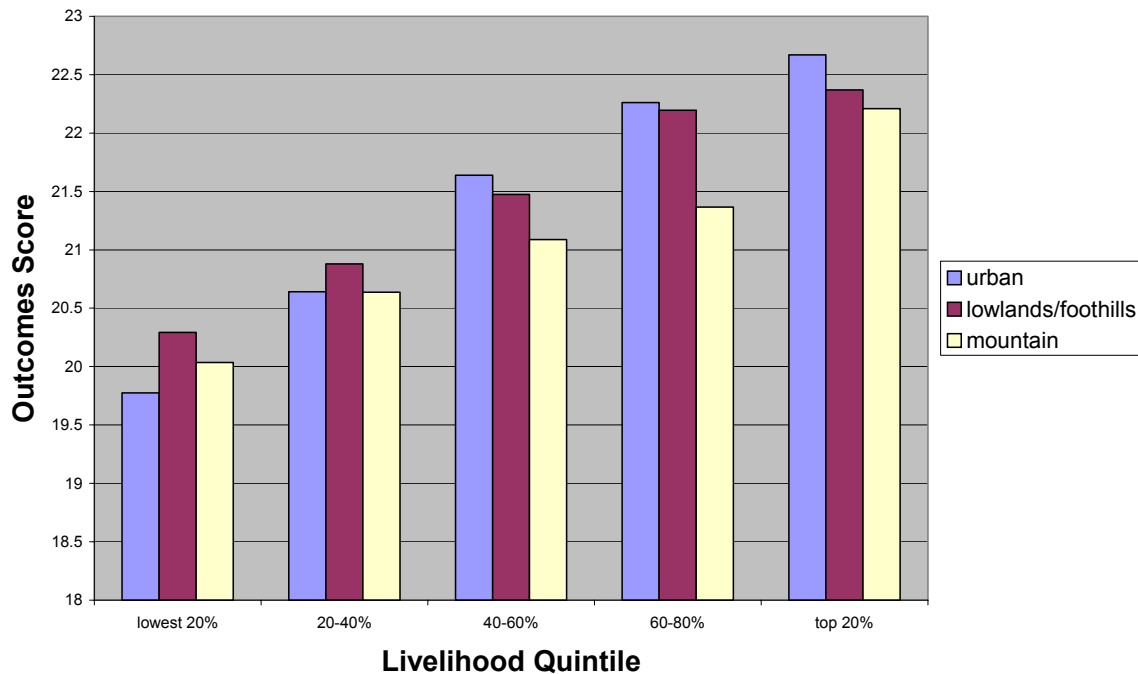


Figure 15. A composite index of livelihood outcomes, by area and livelihood quintile

Source: Phase I data.

Table 37. Factors making up the composite outcomes index

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Weight-for-age mean z-score	<-2	-2 to -1	-1 to -.5 or no data	-.5 to 0	>=0
Height-for-age mean z-score	<-3	-3 to -2	-2 to -1 or no data	-1 to 0	>=0
Quality of diet yesterday	no meals	meals eaten, only starch, no cereals in hh	meals eaten, only starch, cereal stocks in hh	meals eaten, starches plus vitamins or protein food,	complete balanced diet

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
				not both	
Months food short in year	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3	0
% live births	<40%	40-<60%	60-<80%	80-<100%, or no data	100%
Illness/member in 2 weeks	>.6	>.4-<=.6	>.2-<=.4	>0-<=.2	0
Debt situation	serious, money-related	serious, but not money-related	Somewhat, money-related	somewhat, but not money-related	not at all
Economic prospects	much worse	Worse	Same	better	much better

10. Conclusion

This report has tried to do many things – so many, in fact, that it becomes important to consider whether it is really feasible to blend so many perspectives and concerns into a single analysis. We have not dwelt too much on methodology, fearing that it would be a distraction to most readers. Nevertheless, we do assess some of our procedural and analytical difficulties in section 6. As we close, it is worth reminding ourselves in broader terms of what the report has aimed to do, why, and what the implications are.

First and foremost, we have aimed to communicate the views of Basotho about their livelihoods. This is not meant to be an entirely conventional survey report. During the two phases of this survey, CARE Lesotho and Sechaba Consultants emphasised the use of participatory methods. This report therefore gives pride of place, particularly in section 3, to what Basotho said during the study.

Secondly, we have aimed to make practical recommendations for policy. Three challenges faced us in this regard. First, we had to bridge the gap between the daily and pressing concerns of people's lives, and the special formats and procedures of the development process. Secondly, we had to avoid duplicating the 80 detailed policy recommendations already made in the report on Phase I of the survey. Thirdly, therefore, we tasked ourselves with offering a strategic view and a strategic vision for sustainable development in Lesotho: a conceptual and strategic framework within which more detailed initiatives can fit.

This report and the study of which it is part aimed to apply the insights and methods of the livelihoods approach. As we pointed out in section 2.2, this approach has many strengths. The concept of livelihoods therefore guides the strategic view and vision that this report develops. As we have repeatedly emphasised, this is an affirmative and empowering concept. Lesotho has long been treated as a rapidly eroding, overcrowded patch of poverty and dependency. It is therefore particularly pertinent here to affirm the resourcefulness and ingenuity with which ordinary people continue to survive. The concept helps us to understand the complexity and interdependence of the many resources and strategies that Basotho combine – often succeeding, against the odds and with little help from the development process, in making better lives for themselves. The livelihoods concept is also a cogent reminder of the non-material dimensions of life and development everywhere. A conducive, democratic political and institutional framework is one key instance of the broader dimensions of livelihoods that Basotho must get right if they are to move forward. Good health - and above almost everything else in national priorities, coping with HIV/AIDS - is another prominent part of national livelihood concerns.

The report recognises the dire poverty that many Basotho continue to suffer, despite the advances of recent decades. It identifies a new and severe kind of poverty that is emerging in the urban and peri-urban areas. We urge intensified efforts to provide safety net support to the poor, wherever they are. But, in keeping with the affirmative stance of the livelihoods approach, we urge development planners and government authorities to recast their view of the country as a whole. They should recognise how much Basotho are doing for themselves, and how ineffective many of government's and donors' efforts have been. They should therefore commit themselves to facilitation, enablement and empowerment, and stop attempting the direct delivery of development to Basotho. But Basotho, too, need to adjust their view of the development process. They should be encouraged to redefine 'work' as involving much more than just wage employment. They, too, should start to view government as a facilitator and provider of frameworks, not as an omnipotent authority that should bring development to them.

Of course, it is debatable how real that latter view really is. There can be less argument about how much Basotho are already doing for themselves. What development policy needs to do is to optimise its facilitation of these innumerable livelihood initiatives, while giving as much support as it can to those with the least prospect of escaping poverty.

Applying the livelihoods approach in a national survey of Lesotho has thus produced a complex analysis in which many ideas and concerns compete for the reader's attention. National livelihood surveys like this one remain rare endeavours. The livelihoods approach grew out of experience and experimentation at the household and local scales. As this study has shown, applying it at the national scale – even in so small and comparatively homogenous a nation as Lesotho – can be problematic. We have found no clear answer to the question of generalising categories derived from local participatory analysis across national data sets, for example. Our pragmatic solution to the problem of blending the largely qualitative, participatory paradigm with the largely quantitative, questionnaire data set approach has been to use both. Despite these methodological difficulties, we hope this study will be a useful input to other national and regional livelihoods work in southern Africa and beyond. Much more remains to be done to unlock the full potential of household and local livelihoods analysis at the national and regional scales.

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