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REPORT FOR INSTRAW

Gender and Remittances: Creating Gender-Responsive Local Development: The Case of Lesotho

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Research Team

The research was conducted by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) and led by Professor Jonathan Crush of the University of Cape Town and Queen's University in Canada. The national Lesotho migration and remittances survey (MARS) conducted by SAMP provided the quantitative data base for the study. MARS was implemented in Lesotho by a team from Sechaba Consultants led by Thuso Green. The gender analysis of the data base was conducted by Dr Belinda Dodson of the University of Western Ontario, with the assistance of Abel Chikanda. The qualitative interviews and focus groups for this study were conducted by a team from Sechaba Consultants led by David Hall. Key informant interviews were conducted by David Hall in Lesotho and Jonathan Crush in South Africa. This report also draws on a Desktop Review of Migration in Lesotho for INSTRAW written by Jonathan Crush and John Gay in 2007.

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PART ONE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Research

The number of international migrants passed 200 million in 2008, more than double the figure in 1965. As the number of migrants continues to grow, the character of international migration has been transformed. South-South migration, as it is now commonly referred to, is acquiring ever-greater significance in contemporary migration configurations. South-South movements of international migrants are highly gendered. In particular, the feminization of international migration has meant that the absolute numbers and proportion of women migrants is increasingly rapidly. More and more women are also migrating for work in other countries in their own right. The gender dynamics behind this new trend in South-South migration have not been sufficiently examined. In spite of the rapid increase in the volume and diversity of knowledge on the migration-development nexus, issues on gender and especially the changing role of women, continue to be lacking.

This study aims to contribute to the narrowing of this knowledge gap through an interlinked analysis of migration and development from a gendered perspective. It pays particular attention to the impact of remittances – financial, in-kind and social – on gendered development processes in countries of origin and amongst transnational households spanning the origin and destination countries. The study focuses on these dynamics in the context of Lesotho and the destination country of South Africa.

1.2 Objectives

The overall objective of the Project is to enhance gender-responsive local development by identifying and promoting options in the utilization of remittances for sustainable livelihoods and the building of social capital in poor rural and semi-urban communities. The strategic aims include:

- increasing awareness and improving access by women-headed, remittance-recipient households to productive resources while augmenting their assets and strengthening their capacities;
- providing relevant information and support to local and national governments to identify and formulate policies that will optimize the utilization of remittances for sustainable livelihoods and building social capital; and
- enhancing the capacities of key stakeholders to integrate gender into policies, programmes, projects and other initiatives linking remittances with sustainable livelihoods and building social

capital.

The Project has been implemented in six countries, which provide a global representation of UNDP's regional bureaus: Albania, Dominican Republic, Lesotho, Morocco, Phillipines and Senegal.

The Project's main hypothesis is that the optimized use of remittances enhances gender-responsive local development. By analyzing the actual use of remittances, opportunities and weaknesses will be diagnosed, thus identifying possibilities for intervention as well as identifying capacity building needs for enhancing gender-responsive local development. The developmental impacts of remittances can be analyzed at the macro, meso and micro levels.

1.3 Methodology

The research methodology used for the Lesotho case study involved several components:

Desktop Review

A review was undertaken to map local gender and migration issues within their national and regional contexts, and to identify specific options for interventions, through an in-depth analysis of existing data and information at the macro and meso level. The review provided the broad frame of reference for the analysis and interpretation of new data obtained at the micro level. A mapping exercise of key stakeholders involved in local development, gender and migration issues was included.

Quantitative Data

A nationally-representative household survey of migrant-sending households was conducted in Lesotho by SAMP in 2005. The survey collected data on the household composition and remittance practices of 1,023 Basotho households and 1,076 migrants, of whom 899 were male and 177 were female. The data set from the survey was analyzed for this Project using a gender lens.

Qualitative Data

In-depth case-study research was conducted in Lesotho in December 2008 and January 2009. All

interviews were conducted in Lesotho. Two villages in different parts of the Lesotho lowlands were chosen for the study: Ha Mafefoane and ‘Mahuu. Ha Mafefoane is in the Roma Valley near the small university town of Roma. ‘Mahuu is a more remote rural village. Both villages send male and female migrant workers to South Africa. The sample was stratified to ensure that the target number of respondents was obtained in each of six categories as follows:

Table 1: Location of Interviews			
	Ha Mafefoane	‘Mahuu	Total
Female Remitters	5	5	10
Male Remitters	5	5	10
Female Remittance Receivers	4	5	9
Male Remittance Receivers	3	4	7
Female Entrepreneurs	5	4	9
Male Entrepreneurs	5	2	7

Five focus groups were conducted (two with migrants, two with remittance receivers and one with remittance-based entrepreneurs). All interviews were transcribed and translated into English for analysis. Interviews were also conducted in South Africa and Lesotho with a selection of stakeholders and key informants.

2.0 Migration between Lesotho and South Africa

2.1 Background Information on Lesotho

Lesotho is one of the most-migration dependent countries in the world. Of a population of around two million people, over 240,000 were estimated to be outside the country in 2008 (World Bank 2008). Migrant remittances are the country’s major source of foreign exchange, accounting for 25% of GDP in 2006. Lesotho is also one of the poorer countries in the world with high domestic unemployment, declining agricultural production, falling life expectancy, rising child mortality and half the population living below the poverty line. In the 2007-8 UN Human Development Index, Lesotho ranked 138th out of 187. The majority of households and rural communities are dependent on remittances for their livelihood. Households without access to migrant remittances are significantly worse off than those that do have such access. According to the 2006 Lesotho National Human Development Report, “Migrant labourers’ remittances have played a critical role in providing household incomes over a long period of time.”

2.2 A Gendered History of Migration from Lesotho to South Africa

The long history of migration from Lesotho to South Africa is described as follows by Turner (2004: 9):

For generations, Basotho livelihood aspirations have focused on wage employment. For most of this time, the country's role as a regional labour reserve meant that most of this wage employment was across the border in South Africa. To have at least one wage earner in the family is seen as the foundation of livelihood security, both through current wage income and through future activities. These future activities (notably farming) can be built from the assets that wages may buy, and may continue long after wage earning has ceased. Poverty threatens households that are unable to break into wage employment, or that lose such employment permanently.

Migration from Lesotho was dominated by males. From the 1870s onwards, the young men of the Basotho household migrated to the South African mines and remitted their earnings home to buy guns (in the 19th century), pay colonial taxes and, as the country became more impoverished, to meet household livelihoods needs. The South African mining industry employed only male migrants and the British and South African governments barred women and children from accompanying migrant miners to the place of work. Colonial officials, chiefs and household patriarchs also tried to prevent female spouses and young women from leaving the country by imposing sanctions and through threats of violent punishment.

Female migrants did still cross the border to work, resisting these controls on their personal mobility (Bonner 1990; Maloka 1997; Coplan 2001a). They were usually from households without a male migrant and comprised young women or widows escaping poverty at home (Bonner 1990; Maloka 1997). The decision to migrate was often taken out of desperation: "despite the degrading conditions, social isolation and risk of arrest ... women go because they have no alternative" (Murray 1981: 154; see also Gay 1980a, 1980b). Migration was often an act of rebellion against patriarchal control, as the historian of gender relations in colonial Lesotho, Marc Epprecht (2000: 82), has written:

Such acts of rebellion came with serious risks and it is important to draw attention to the courage of the women who made them. Historians have rightfully emphasized the courage of male migrants who tramped hundreds of kilometers in harsh weather to face brutal overseers, dangerous working conditions, and murderous tsotsis (bandits). Women's migration is all the more remarkable in that they often faced equally or more dangerous and exploitative conditions. Life on the farms of the Orange Free State, for example, included near-starvation rations, squalid quarters, polluted water, and outright robbery by employers. Even when paid, and even when they performed exactly the

same tasks as men, women invariably earned less than men. Long days, squalor and police harassment were likely even more common features of life in the urban centres. Away from their families and husbands, women were also exposed to forms of men's sexual violence which had been rare in the village context – rape above all. The brutality of husbands and fathers who caught runaway women could be even more horrific.

In their efforts to restrict and control the mobility of women, the colonial government passed the Basutoland Native Women's Restriction Proclamation which aimed to "prohibit native women from leaving ... against the will of the husbands, fathers or natural guardians." Women now supposed to get the permission of the family patriarch and village chief in order to go to South Africa. Yet, such patriarchal controls were never completely successful as women continued to migrate. In apartheid South Africa, Basotho women were highly marginalized in the labour market, confined to domestic service or to farmwork or to illegal informal sector activity including brewing and sex work.

The policy of the British colonial government in Lesotho and the apartheid government in South Africa was that men should migrate without their dependents and women should remain in Lesotho, work in the rural agricultural sector and feed themselves and their families. The notorious male migrant labour system to the South African mines had a major impact on household gender relations in Lesotho, disempowering most women and forcing them to be completely dependent on male migrants for their livelihood (Gay 1980a, 1980b; Gordon 1981; Bonner 1990). Women were extremely vulnerable to poverty as they were dependent on what male household members decided to remit to them and how often. Women had no independent access to land, could not open bank accounts on their own and had few rights in a highly patriarchal society. The migration of married men was particularly hard on women in Lesotho and rates of abandonment, separation and divorce became high. In addition, the working conditions on the gold mines were so dangerous as to produce many "gold widows" as they were known. "Gold widows" and "abandoned" women had few independent livelihood opportunities within Lesotho and were generally marginalized and sunk to the poorest strata of Basotho society.

2.3 Existing Gender Characteristics of Migration Process

Since the collapse of apartheid in South Africa, the nature of migration between Lesotho and South Africa has changed dramatically, a process that has had considerable gender implications. These changes were summarized from a gender perspective in the 2004 Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) as

follows:

Historically the labour market has been very distorted from a gender perspective, with migrant labour to the mines being the exclusive domain of men. After the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 this started to change; by 2001 one fifth of those Basotho working in South Africa were women. Within the country a new distortion is emerging with the rapidly growing textile industries employing virtually only women. Poorly educated men now find themselves standing before two doors that are effectively shut: mine recruitment has virtually ended, and the textile manufacturing sector has no room for them (Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2005).

The “feminization” of migration from Lesotho involves (a) an increase in the absolute number of female migrants, (b) an increase in the proportion of migrants who are female and (c) a qualitative change in the character of female migration. Although still low relative to men, the SAMP survey showed that 16.4% of the total number of migrants are now female, a higher proportion of the total than in either Swaziland or Mozambique, the two migration-sending countries with which Lesotho is often compared (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Sex of Migrants		
Country	Male	Female
Lesotho	83.6	16.4
Mozambique	93.6	6.2
Swaziland	92.4	7.6
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

The recent nature of female migration from Lesotho is confirmed by the fact that nearly 60% of female migrants in the SAMP household survey had less than five years migratory experience (compared with 29% of men) (Table 3.2). Over 80% of women have been migrating for ten years or less. On the other hand, a quarter of male migrants have over 20 years migration experience (compared to only 6.8% of female migrants).

Table 3.2: Length of Migratory Experience		
Age	Male (%)	Female (%)
1-5 years	29.1	59.4
6-10 years	16.3	23.4

11-15 years	15.0	6.3
16-20 years	13.6	3.4
21-25 years	10.5	3.4
26-30 years	9.5	2.3
31 or more years	5.8	1.1
Don't know	0.1	0.6
Total	99.9	99.9
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

The survey also showed major gender differences in the marital status of migrants and in their relationship to the head of household. The typical male migrant is over 40 years of age, married and a household head. Eighty four percent of male migrants are married and 78% are household heads (Table 3.4).

In contrast, the female migratory stream is much more diverse. There are three main groups of migrants. First, there are younger unmarried or married members of male-headed households; either daughters, daughters-in-law or nieces (51% of all migrants). A second group of female migrants are spouses of male household heads who no longer work because of unemployment, disease (especially TB and HIV/AIDS) or disability (18% of all female migrants). The third group of female migrants are older women who are divorced/separated, abandoned or widowed (48% of female migrants). Some live in extended families but around half are heads of their own household.

Table 3.3: Marital Status of Migrants		
Marital Status	Males (%)	Females (%)
Unmarried	9.7	25.0
Married	84.2	26.5
Cohabiting	0.3	0.5
Divorced	0	4.6
Separated	1.7	15.3
Abandoned	0.2	3.6
Widowed	3.9	24.5
Total	100	100
N	934	196
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

Table 3.4: Relationship of Migrants to Household Head		
Relation	Males (%)	Females (%)
Head	76.5	24.0
Spouse/partner	0.1	18.4
Son/daughter	21.8	45.4
Father/mother	0.0	1.0
Brother/sister	0.5	1.5
Grandchild	0.4	1.5
Grandparent	0.0	0.0
Son/daughter-in-law	0.1	5.1
Nephew/niece	0.0	0.5
Other relative	0.6	2.6
Non-relative	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100
N	934	196
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

The SAMP survey therefore identified four main types of migrant-sending household all with different gender configurations and roles:

- Male-headed households in which the patriarch is also the primary migrant. The vast majority of these migrants have jobs in the South African mining industry and their spouses/partners remain in Lesotho to take care of the household and raise children. If they can find work, young men in the household may also migrate but are just as likely to be unemployed.
- Male-headed households with young female members who are old enough to migrate for work in Lesotho or South Africa. These female migrants are generally sent by their parents to find work and remit the proceeds to the household. The migrants are usually unmarried but some are also married.
- Male-headed households in which the patriarch no longer migrates. The female spouse or partner now migrates for work in place of their spouse.
- Households headed by older female migrants who are widowed or no longer with their spouse and who are forced to migrate for work or whose younger female household members (also) migrate.

Intra-household gender roles and dynamics and decision-making about who migrates and what happens to

remittances varies considerably between these four different types of migrant-sending household. The reasons for the emergence of these differently gendered households are discussed below.

2.4 Gender Patterns in Contemporary Migration from Lesotho

In the 1990s, a stagnant gold price led to a major period of declining production, mine closures and retrenchments in South Africa’s gold mines (Tshitereke 2004). In 1990, there were around 376,000 migrant miners in the industry. By 2004, there were only 230,000, a total job loss of 140,000. Of those who were left, around 50,000 were from Lesotho (Table 3.5). Between 1995 and 2006, the proportion of Basotho miners in the total workforce fell from 30% to 17%. The impact of retrenchments on migration-dependent households in Lesotho was devastating for women and children (Seidman 1995; Coplan and Thoalane 1995). When 50,000 Basotho miners lost their jobs, almost as many households lost their main source of income (as benefits were soon exhausted). The proportion of households in Lesotho with at least one household member working as a migrant on the South African mines declined from 50% in 1982 to only 12% in 2002 (Boehm 2003: 5). Young males entering the labour market could no longer rely on migration to the South African gold mines for employment. As Boehm (2003: 5) observes: “What used to be the absolute economic backbone of Basotho villages and rural economies has been degraded into the privilege of a few.”

After 2001, the increase in the gold price halted the dramatic decline of the South African gold industry and employment levels increased once again.¹ However, the number of migrant miners from Lesotho continued to fall (from 58,000 in 2000 to 46,000 in 2006). Under pressure from the South African government to employ more locals, the mining companies met their needs by hiring internal migrants from within South Africa.

Year	Basotho Workers	Total Workers	% Basotho
1990	99,707	376,473	26.5
1991	93,897	354,649	26.5
1992	93,519	339,485	27.5

¹ The gold price increased from USD\$260 per ounce in 2001 to USD\$420 in 2004. It is now over USD\$900

1993	89,940	317,456	28.3
1994	89,237	315,264	28.3
1995	87,935	291,902	30.1
1996	81,357	284,050	28.6
1997	76,361	262,748	29.1
1998	60,450	228,071	26.5
1999	52,188	213,832	24.4
2000	58,224	230,687	25.2
2001	49,483	207,547	23.8
2002	54,157	234,991	23.0
2003	54,479	234,027	23.3
2004	48,962	230,771	21.2
2005	46,049	236,459	19.5
2006	46,082	267,894	17.2
Source: TEBA			

Boehm (2004) notes that young men rarely get jobs on the mines any more. According to the National Union of Mineworkers, no new workers ('novices') have been recruited from Lesotho since 2002.²

The decline in legal contract mine employment for male migrants in South Africa has had four spin-off effects:

- Male ex-miners and new male workseekers now migrate irregularly to South Africa to work in lower-paying sectors such as construction and commercial agriculture;
- An increase in irregular and regular female migration to South Africa as female household members replace retrenched males and seek employment opportunities in economic sectors that prefer to hire female employees (such as domestic service and commercial farming) (Coplan and Thoahlane 1995; Sweetman 1995; Pule and Matlosa 2000; Magrath 2004);
- A major increase in internal migration of young women to Lesotho's new textile and garment factories which hire a predominantly female workforce and
- Older female households heads (widows and separated/divorced/abandoned women) have been forced to migrate to look for work to support their own households.

² Interview with Head of Lesotho Office: National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

There are three main reasons for the increase in female migration to South Africa. First, the collapse of apartheid has made it easier for women to migrate and to find work in South Africa without being constantly harassed and deported by the state. On the other hand, most are confined to low-paying, exploitative jobs by their irregular status. Second, households that used to have a male miner as the primary breadwinner are now increasingly impoverished. In order to make ends meet, female spouses and young women in the households are migrating in their stead and remitting money home. This redefinition of “traditional” gender roles within the household has led to considerable gender conflict between spouses and between unemployed patriarchs and their migrant daughters.

Third, as one Focus Group participant noted, wages in South Africa for women are better than in Lesotho (though still lower than for men):

More women are migrating to South Africa because of the difficulties they experience in life and also because the jobs in South Africa offer more money when compared to what we get in Lesotho for the same work we do in South Africa. For domestic work in Lesotho, a woman gets M250 per month whereas in South Africa the minimum they get would be M900.³

Other reasons given by respondents as reasons for migration (primarily from female-headed households or households without a mine migrant) included poverty, hunger, landlessness, unemployment, widowhood or abandonment, supporting AIDS orphans, no money for school fees or medical treatment or clothing.

Finally, some women are the primary or sole breadwinner for their families in impoverished, female-headed households. One widow described how her daughter’s separation had forced her to migrate:

My daughter was married, but is now separated. She had to migrate due to problems in her household. Her husband was not prepared to settle the dispute they had. Their children were dying of hunger and she asked me permission to leave. I see her migration as helping me because I no longer have means. She is really helping me. Things were getting tough for me. The going would be very tough without the money. Being that little, I can only use it for a few things.⁴

³ Participant in Focus Group No 4: Female Remittance Recipients

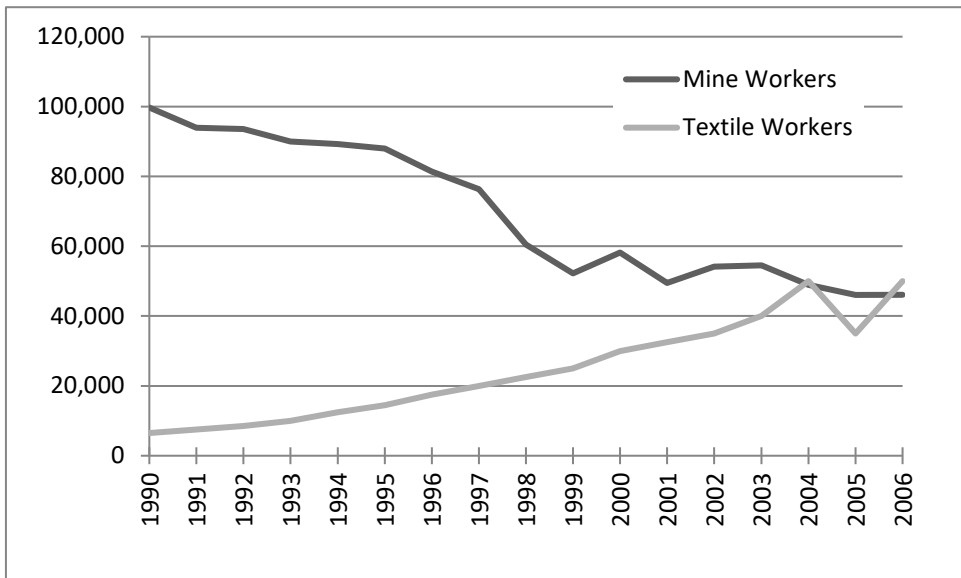
⁴ Interview No 38, 2 January 2009.

Her daughter has been working for three years as a domestic worker in South Africa, earning around R10,000 a year, remitting about R3,000 back to her mother and two children who stay with the mother.

Female migration to South Africa would undoubtedly have become even more voluminous if it were not for the dramatic growth in employment opportunities in Lesotho's domestic textile industry. The industry was stimulated after 2000 by Lesotho's privileged status as a duty-free exporter to the US under that country's Africa Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) (Lall 2005). The Act gave Lesotho-based textile producers privileged access to the US garment market. Between 2000 and 2004, textile exports more than doubled, the number of factories rose to 47 and the workforce to 50,000. Virtually all of the factories are foreign-owned, the majority by Taiwanese investors. Over 90% of exports go to the US.

The textile companies hire an almost exclusively young, female workforce as women are seen as hard-working, more compliant and more desperate for jobs than men (Baylies and Wright 1993; Wright 1993; Tanga and Manyeli 2007). Over 90% of Basotho employed in textile factories are young women, most of whom are internal migrants. Basotho female textile workers have been characterized by Boehm (2006: 156) as the 'new miners.' As he notes: "The emerging employment opportunities, which have come in the wake of the recent industrialization of Lesotho, have come to a group which is structurally different from that of men, the 'traditional' breadwinners and wage earners" (Boehm 2006: 156; Rosenberg 2007) (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Male Employment in South African Mines and Female Employment in Lesotho Garment Factories, 1990-2006



In many households young women have displaced young men as the primary wage-earners (Dyer 2001; Boehm 2006: 5). However, there is a radical difference in wage-earning potential between male migrants in the unionized South African mines and female garment workers in Lesotho. In 2002, for example, miners earned an average of M2,900 per month, while garment workers received only M650 per month. The situation was even worse in 2006, when miners were receiving a substantially higher wage of M4,500 a month, while the garment workers' salaries had not changed. The demand for employment in the textile factories far outstrips the supply, providing no incentive to employers to raise wages

Gender and racial discrimination in the South African labour market and in South African immigration policy play a major role in the lives of migrants. This is clearly evident in the different occupational niches that male and female migrants are able to access. The vast majority of male migrants are permitted to legally enter South Africa to work. Virtually all of the 80% of migrants who are miners are on legal contracts. Only a small number (probably around 10%) are irregular migrants. While male migrant miners are issued with one year residence and work permits, female migrants can only get 30 day visitor's permits and are in an irregular work situation. In the sectors in which women can get jobs, South African employers cannot generally get them permits. A few women are legally recruited by South African farmers but the majority have no option but to work as undocumented migrants.

The dominant employment sector for female migrants in South Africa is domestic service. Many internal

and international migrants are forced to work in this sector. Fully half of women migrants from Lesotho are forced to work in this sector.

Table 3.6: Migrant Occupations in South Africa			
Main occupation	% Males	% Females	Total %
Farmer	0.1	1.0	0.3
Agricultural worker	1.4	4.6	2.0
Service worker	0.7	3.1	1.1
Domestic worker	0.4	50.0	9.0
Managerial office worker	0.1	0.5	0.2
Office worker	0.2	0.5	0.3
Supervisor	0.1	0.0	0.1
Mine worker	79.8	0.2	68.4
Skilled manual worker	7.4	4.6	6.2
Unskilled manual worker	1.6	2.0	1.5
Informal sector producer	2.1	8.7	2.8
Trader/ hawker/ vendor	1.0	7.1	2.0
Security personnel	0.2	0.0	0.2
Business (self-employed)	0.4	5.6	1.2
Professional worker	2.8	4.6	2.9
Teacher	0.1	0.5	0.1
Health worker	0.0	1.5	0.3
Pensioner	0.1	0.0	0.1
Shepherd	0.6	0.0	0.5
Don't know	0.7	3.1	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SAMP Household Survey

The commercial farming sector of the neighbouring Free State province of South Africa began hiring regular and irregular Basotho migrants in large numbers in the 1990s (Johnston 1997, 2007; Ulicki and Crush 2000, 2007). Most of the migrants are drawn from the most marginalized and poorest segments of Basotho society and are hired on contract in Lesotho by farmers who come across the border to recruit. Some migrants come across the border and seek work on their own. As one female respondent, Mama Bokeng noted:

I work on the farms because there are no jobs in Lesotho and with the little that I get, I am able to attend to almost all the basic needs of my family (her spouse and one child). On the farm I work for 8 hours a day, seven days a week. When looking for farmwork, I go straight to the farms I have

worked on before and do not wait to be recruited in Lesotho although I know it is illegal to enter into South Africa with a purpose of working without a contract. The passports of all the farmworkers are kept by our supervisors so that they we do not leave the farm. Our movement is restricted for security purposes.

The majority of migrant farmworkers are women. Another SAMP study of migration to the farms found that there were significant differences between male and female migrants. Males were more recent additions to the farm workforce, averaging 2.4 seasons as opposed to 3.7 for women. Eighty-five percent of males had worked for 3 or less years compared with 66% of females. Female migrant workers were significantly older than the men. Most female farmworkers were older women (often widowed or divorced). About half of all farmworkers were married. However, many more men were single (31% compared to 7% of women), while many more women were widowed (26% compared to 3% of men). The majority of farmworkers (around 60%) are the only wage earners in their households, despite this income being low-wage and primarily seasonal. When not working as seasonal farm labourers, 31% (primarily male) are unemployed and engage in no income generating activity. Some women undertake supplementary informal sector activity such as selling vegetables (12.5%), beer brewing (5.3%), piece work (4.6%), herding (3.3%), carrying parcels (2.7%) and sewing (2%).

The majority of domestic workers are younger women who are relatively new entrants to the labour market. (Table 3.7). While 23% of miners have five or less years of migratory experience, the equivalent figure for domestic workers is 54%. Some 81% of domestic workers have 10 or less years of experience compared to only 39% of miners.

Years of Migration Experience	Domestic Workers (%)	Domestic Workers (Cumulative %)	Migrant Miners (%)	Migrant Miners (Cumulative %)
0-5	54.3	54.3	23.0	23.0
6-10	27.1	81.4	16.1	39.1
11-15	8.4	89.8	16.5	55.6
15-20	3.1	92.9	15.6	61.2
21-25	2.1	95.0	11.7	72.9
26-30	2.0	97.0	10.7	84.6
>30	3.0	100.0	15.4	100.0

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Twenty six percent of the domestic workers were unmarried while 43% were daughters of the household and 22% spouses of household heads. Most striking is that 47% of the domestic workers were widows, separated, divorced or abandoned. In other words, almost half of the migrants were women largely fending for themselves and their dependents. Like migrant miners, the domestic workers also spend the greater part of the year away from Lesotho (87% are away for 11 months at a time). Only 21% get home once a month, 36% only once every six months and 20% once a year.

Age Group	%
15-19	1.5
20-24	6.7
25-29	13.3
30-34	15.6
35-39	20.3
40-44	11.1
45-49	13.3
50-54	12.6
55-59	10.4
>60	8.1
Total	100.0
Source: SAMP Household Survey	

Although female migrants would much prefer to migrate and work legally in South Africa, not all can do so. Male migrants working in industries such as construction are also generally working irregularly. Irregularity exposes migrants to exploitation and abuse and gives them little recourse to the police or justice system. As the Director of Immigration in Lesotho observed about migrant construction workers:

They get employed as casual labourers. Because of 2010 (Soccer World Cup), there are a number of constructions going on. In the case of casual undocumented labourers, they are underpaid, work long hours for less pay and at times their employers inform the police about them when it is time to pay them and they have to run away leaving their wages behind.⁵

The Director of Consular Affairs in the Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed that this abuse of migrant worker's rights was a deliberate strategy by employers to avoid having to pay for work performed:

⁵ Interview with Director: Immigration, Lesotho.

There are a few types of these informal job opportunities, namely domestic service and construction. Seemingly, domestic workers do not have as many challenges as those in construction. Those who are not lucky face challenges such as not being paid. Most of the construction company owners are involved in many businesses, and to boost those that are lagging behind, they use the resources from those that are vibrant. These people are mostly respected in the townships (by black South Africans) and they use that influence to chase away the Basotho employees at the end of the month when they are supposed to be paid. They call locals to come and chase away Basotho or call the police to inform them that there are illegal immigrants in the area. Basotho are usually forced to leave without being paid.⁶

The Director of Immigration said that female domestic workers in South Africa face similar exploitation:

We are aware of the agencies such as Household Helpers that hire domestic servants to go and work in South Africa without following proper (legal) channels. This exposes Basotho nationals to exploitation such as the employer keeping their passport to prevent them from going home as they would like to, being underpaid and not enjoying similar benefits as South Africans doing the same jobs.

Irregular employment tends to depress the wages paid to Basotho migrants, leaving them with less to remit. Most women are paid below the minimum wage for domestic work and spend long hours (sometimes 7 days a week) working in isolated and isolating conditions on their employer's property. Others live in townships and informal settlements and have to spend a significant proportion of their wage on public transport to and from work. Migrant women are also vulnerable to gender-based violence in the townships, en route to work and at work. Women working on farms are constantly sexually harassed by male supervisors and the incidence of rape is high. As irregular migrants, women have little protection from the law. Indeed, the police are well-known for demanding bribes and sexual "favours" from undocumented women in exchange for turning a blind eye to their presence in the country.

2.5 HIV/AIDS and Migration

The first identified case of HIV infection in Lesotho was in 1986. Initially, growth in HIV prevalence was slow, only reaching 0.04% in 1990. For the next eight years, the rise was rapid, climbing from an estimated 1.0% in 1991 to 30.5% in 1998 and to 37% at the present time. Data from antenatal clinics show a rise in prevalence amongst pregnant women in the country's main city, Maseru, from 5.5% in 1991 to

⁶ Interview with Director of Consular Services: Department of Foreign Affairs.

42.2% in 2000 (Wilson 2001: 11).

There is a significant body of research in Southern Africa that identifies population mobility as one of the major reasons for the rapid transmission of the disease throughout the region (see Crush et al 2005; Banati 2007; Coffee et al 2007). Certainly, its spread in Lesotho in the 1990s cannot be explained without taking account of the extraordinary mobility of the population (Romero-Daza and Himmelgreen 1998). The spread of HIV and AIDS has not simply been fuelled by migration. Migration, by its very nature, facilitates high-risk behaviour and makes migrants more vulnerable to HIV infection.

The Lesotho Behavioral Surveillance Survey 2002 conducted interviews with miners, taxi-drivers and assistants, soldiers, low-income migrant women (working in Lesotho, mainly in the textile industry) and female sex workers (FHI et al 2002). Despite widespread knowledge of the causes and prognosis for those with HIV and AIDS, rates of non-regular and multi-partner sex were high amongst all groups, not just sex workers (FHI et al 2002; see also Makatjane 2002). Condom use was low and sporadic amongst all of these groups of internal and international migrants. A Family Health International Study of the environs of ten border posts between South Africa and Lesotho identified them as sites of “profound risk” where commercial sex is widely available (Wilson 2001: 5; see also Waterman 2004). As Wilson (2001: 2) concludes: “There is exceptional HIV vulnerability at each of the sites investigated, a sociocultural context of casual and commercial sex exacerbated by profound mobility (of) truckers, bus and taxi drivers, traders, soldiers, migrant laborers and transient workers.”

On the mines, a culture of macho male sexuality and the availability of commercial sex (often with female migrant sex workers) led to the rapid diffusion of HIV amongst the mine workforce in the 1990s (Campbell 1997; Meekers 2000). The introduction of HIV to Lesotho is widely attributed to returning migrant miners infected with the virus while at work. As Wilson (2001: 5) notes, migrant labour to the mines “readily transplants HIV risk from the mining camps to rural Lesotho.” Migration, which separates and divides couples for extended periods of time, and the accompanying poverty, play a complex but significant role in the sexual behaviour and preferences of migrants and their partners while apart (Kimane et al 2004). The death of either partner has profound consequences, as one of the Focus Group participants in this study observed:

Let us look at it this way. Some men do not come home when they are in South Africa. We may

not know the reasons but many die there and their spouses are forced to go and look for jobs in South Africa. While many women go to South Africa because of problems in their households the risk is, when they fail to get those jobs, they get into sexual relations with many men from the mines. They switch into prostitution and what then happens is that they contract HIV/AIDS. They would be looking for let us say R20 from each man and in this way, each woman would be looking for five or more men to get R100. The intention is to send money back home to the children and leaving something for herself to eat. The result of all this is the man dies and she is also going to die.⁷

The 2004 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey tested blood samples from throughout the country and found: (a) rates were higher in all age categories for women than men (b) the peak age range for infection was 30-34% for men and 35-39% for women; (c) after age 40 rates decline with age (GOL 2005). Although urban prevalence is higher than rural for both men and women, rural prevalence is still significant (33% versus 24% for women, 22% versus 18.5% for men) (Figure 2.3, Table 2.11). Remoteness offers some protection but not a great deal. In Lesotho's lowlands, where most of the population lives, prevalence rates are 24.9%. In the remote mountainous areas of the country they are still 21%.

Figure 2.3: HIV Prevalence Amongst Women at Ante-Natal Clinics (%)

⁷ Participant in Focus Group No 2: Female Migrants

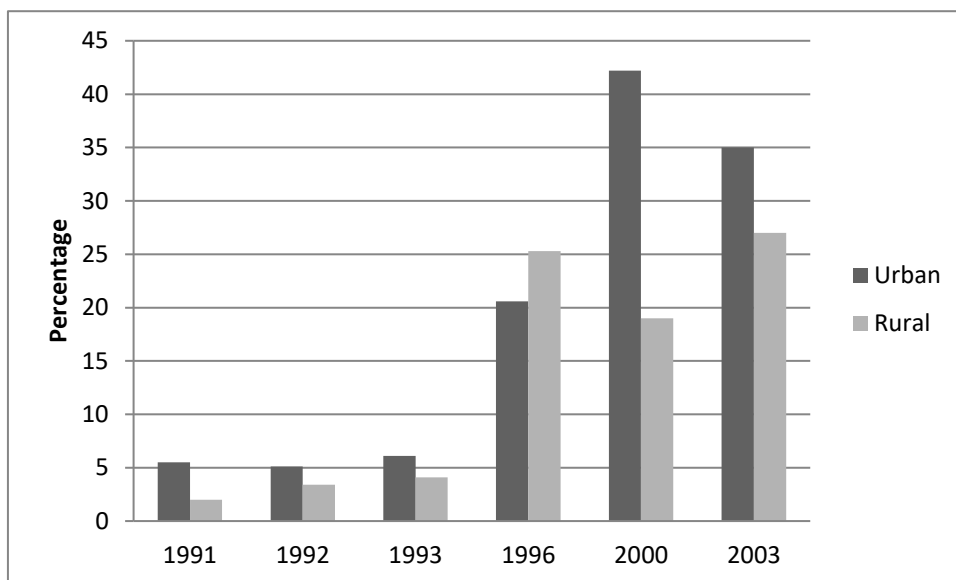


Table 2.11: National HIV/AIDS Prevalence by Gender, Age and Spatial Distribution

Age	Women	Men	Total
15-19	7.9	2.3	5.3
20-24	24.2	12.2	19.5
25-29	39.8	23.9	33.3
30-34	39.3	41.1	40.0
35-39	43.3	39.1	41.8
40-44	29.1	33.9	30.6
45-49	16.8	26.2	20.0
Urban	33.0	22.0	29.1
Rural	24.3	18.5	21.9
Lowlands	28.0	20.4	24.9
Foothills	24.2	16.9	21.2
Mountains	23.3	17.6	21.0

Source: GOL (2005: 29)

HIV/AIDS is decimating Lesotho's most economically-productive age cohort. It is also generating new forms of migration. There is evidence that once migrants become too sick to work, they return home permanently "to die" (Clark et al 2007). The loss of income for the family is often devastating when a migrant becomes too sick to earn and remit. The impact is exacerbated by the fact that the burden and cost

of care is also borne by the family. The other form of migration on the increase is children's migration as orphans are sent to live with extended family members in different parts of the country or in South Africa (Young and Ansell 2003, Ansell and van Blerk 2004a, 2004b, van Blerk and Ansell 2006). The HIV/AIDS epidemic is in many ways the crowning blow to agriculture, a crippling plague that has left many farmers unable to do the hard physical labour required to work the land and many migrants without the physical energy or resources to continue to migrate for work. Turner (2004) points out that "there is no doubt that the pandemic will exacerbate poverty as the nation's aggregate capacity to farm is reduced by sickness and death." Already HIV/AIDS is having a significant impact on food security in the rural and urban areas of Lesotho (Mphale 2003).

Magrath (2004: 18) describes the following impacts of HIV/AIDS on households in Lesotho:

- Increased household dependency ratios. Chronic illness and death in the working age population are increasing the ratio of dependent consumers to producers in the household.
- Changes in household headship. The death of male household heads is increasing the number of widows and female-headed households.
- Incomplete Households. One parent or one whole generation is missing.
- Households with Additional Orphans. Orphans are the responsibility of the next of kin.
- Orphan-Headed Households. These are apparently not as common in Lesotho as elsewhere but are likely to increase in number.
- Defunct Households. When both parents die, there are no resident adults and the children are dispersed to live with relatives.

All of these changes in household structure, division of labour and livelihood strategies are increasing the economic vulnerability of households. Households that experience the death of a migrant from HIV and AIDS generally experience increased

3.0 MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM

3.1 Changes in Household Composition

For much of the twentieth century, most migrants from Lesotho were the young sons of the household. A major shift began to take place in the 1980s when mine jobs became more scarce and a Basotho miner was no longer guaranteed that a younger, unmarried relative (a son or a grandson or a nephew) would take his place on the mines. As a result, migrant mining became more of a “career.” Miners began to work continuously in South Africa when, in earlier times, they might have stayed home for lengthy periods of time between contracts. The mine workforce from Lesotho began to age. By 1997, the average age of migrant miners was over 40 and 60% had more than 20 years mining experience (Sechaba Consultants 1997: 8-9). Since men continued to marry and start their own household at roughly the same age, the proportion of married men and household heads in the migrant workforce inevitably increased.

The net result of these changes was that migrant men spent less and less time at home and became more and more alienated from their own households and families. The proportion of divorced, separated and abandoned women has always been higher in Lesotho than in other Southern African countries as a result of the strains placed on relationships by migration. Now these strains were intensified as migrants worked away from home for eleven months of the year, year in and year out.

Things were no better for the many thousands of households affected by mine retrenchments. In many ways they got worse. Most miners had no alternate job skills, experience or opportunity. One study of household poverty compared the same households in 1993 and 2002, showing that there were 129 miners in 328 sampled households in 1993 (Wason and Hall 2004). By 2002, these same households had only 45 miners left (34 continuing and 11 new). The remainder were either farming, inactive or looking for work. Only one who had come home had found alternative regular paid employment (Wason and Hall 2004: 35).

The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) in Lesotho argues that retrenchments led to an increase in divorce rates and domestic violence:

There is a high divorce rate within families of migrant workers. Mine workers and their spouses have not had the chance to live together thus missing the important aspect of knowing one another and making necessary compromises. When the husband comes to stay home permanently, there is an air of mistrust and intolerance which leads to the marriage breaking up. Most men would

attribute this to lack of income. Frustration at being unable to provide for the family brings about domestic violence which manifests itself both physically and emotionally. It is very unfortunate that this country does not have any statutory laws to deal with situations such as this. The absence of law on domestic violence makes it very difficult for law enforcement agencies to control it.⁸

The retrenchment of Basotho miners also impacted severely on many households as the remittances dried up, driving them deeper into poverty (Coplan and Thoahlane 1995; Boehm 2003, 2005).

One household response to the “return” of the men was an increase in migration by female household members (Coplan and Thoahlane 1995; Gill-Wason 2004; Boehm 2006). This was confirmed in individual interviews and in the Focus Groups. One widow, now in her 60s, observed:

During the time when we grew up, there were no woman migrants, but nowadays we see women migrating and leaving men behind. Men have lost jobs and when this has happened it is useless to be sitting together looking one another in the face with nothing to eat.⁹

Another woman noted that the switch was relatively rapid:

More women seek and find domestic jobs in South Africa because more men have been retrenched and this is more than at any time. The problem in the households is that when men come back with the (retrenchment) packages, there is very poor cash management that within less than a year all the money is finished and it is only then that women find themselves with no alternative but to go.¹⁰

Much of this replacement migration was to low paid jobs in South Africa that provide far less remuneration than minework. There have always been women who needed to find wage work to survive. Now there are many more of them and more are being forced to migrate for work.

At the household level, the rate of formation of new marital homes is declining and the age at which people marry is increasing. Young men and women are remaining longer in their natal homes and the rate of household fission has declined (Boehm 2006). In 1980, more than 80% of women were married by the age of 30. One recent case study found that only 20% of women aged 18-30 were married (Boehm 2003). In another area, the percentage of adults who were married had dropped from 38% in 1977 to 24% in 2004

⁸ Interview with Federation of Women Lawyers, Maseru.

⁹ Interview No 36, 2 January 2009.

¹⁰ Interview No. 18, 21 December 2008.

(Turner 2004). The main reason, concludes Magrath (2004: 14), is that “men are struggling to find the resources to marry, while women, especially those with an independent income, are choosing to delay or avoid marriage, as they do not see it as being in their interests.”

The increase in the incidence of female household headship has been dramatic. The percentage of female-headed households jumped sharply from 25% of married women in 1993 to 40% a decade later. The pattern of female-headed households in each age group has also shifted dramatically. In 1993, female headship really only began in any significant manner after women reached the age of 50. By 2003, many younger women had become household heads. There has also been an increase in the proportion of male-headed households in which there is no spouse (Table 3.1). Women are dying earlier than in the past because of AIDS, leaving husbands to care for the family. Then male mortality begins to increase, leaving more women each year after the age 25 to care for the family. The shift had already begun by the year 1999. The change was even more pronounced by 2003, after more deaths had occurred, and the national population had begun to fall.

Table 3.1: Female Headed Households in Each Age Group			
Age Group:	1993(%)	1999(%)	2003(%)
20-24	26	9	19
25-29	7	11	20
30-34	9	15	24
35-39	9	16	29
40-44	7	22	34
45-49	22	24	30
50-54	23	30	39
55-59	40	32	42
60-64	41	36	43
65-69	31	40	56
70-74	49	50	55
75-79	54	53	69
80-84	58	55	66
85-89	71	51	57
Total	25	25	40
Source: Sechaba Consultants			

3.2 Migration and Transnational Relationships

Gender differences in migration from Lesotho are clearly shaped by household structure and roles. Overall, the household survey showed that male migrants are most likely to be in the ‘married’ category, while female migrants are for the most part without husbands, either because they have not yet or never married, or because their husbands have left them or died (Table 3.2). A much higher proportion of female migrants are unmarried compared to their male counterparts: 25% of female migrants compared to just below 10% of male migrants. This suggests that some women, whether by choice or necessity, are selecting migration over marriage as their primary means of economic support, or at least are delaying marriage until later in life (see also Boehm 2004). Among male migrants, 84% are married, whereas the equivalent figure for female migrants is only just above a quarter.

Marital Status	Males (%)	Females (%)
Unmarried	9.7	25.0
Married	84.2	26.5
Cohabiting	0.3	0.5
Divorced	0	4.6
Separated	1.7	15.3
Abandoned	0.2	3.6
Widowed	3.9	24.5
Total	100	100
N	934	196

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Another important finding is the high proportion of female migrants giving their position in the family as ‘daughter.’ Over 50% of female migrants are younger members of households; either daughters, daughters-in-law or nieces compared to only 22% who are sons, sons-in-law or nephews. This confirms the new post-1990 trend, where young women are engaging in economic migration practices once associated mainly with young men.

The differences between male and female migrants in levels of separation, divorce, abandonment and widowhood are also significant. Almost half of the female migrants from Lesotho fall into these categories, compared to only around 6% of the male migrants. This suggests that marital breakdown or loss of a

husband act as significant drivers of female migration. Whatever the circumstances leading to the loss of a male partner, these women are often the primary or sole breadwinner for their families in what have become female-headed households. One widow described how her daughter's separation had forced her to migrate:

My daughter was married, but is now separated. She had to migrate due to problems in her household. Her husband was not prepared to settle the dispute they had. Their children were dying of hunger and she asked me permission to leave. I see her migration as helping me because I no longer have means. She is really helping me. Things were getting tough for me. The going would be very tough without the money. Being that little, I can only use it for a few things.¹¹

Her daughter has been working for three years as a domestic worker in South Africa where she earns around R10,000 a year, remitting about R3,000 back to her mother and two children who stay with the mother.

The incidence of female widowhood, divorce and separation in the Lesotho sample was not only higher than for men, but also dramatically higher than the levels reported for female migrants in any of the other countries surveyed. The fact that the unmarried, married, widowed and divorced/separated/abandoned categories each contained roughly equivalent proportions of the total number of female migrants from Lesotho is of fundamental importance in understanding the nature and impact of female migrants' remittances, including who receives their remittances and how those remittances are spent.

The high incidence of widowhood and separation is further reflected in the proportion of women migrants (24%) who are heads of households (Table 3.3). This reinforces the suggestion that female migration and female household headship are causally linked. The absence of a male household head appears to encourage female migration, whether because of the lack of local livelihood or employment options for women, or due to the absence of patriarchal restriction on women's migration by a male spouse.

¹¹ Interview No 38, 2 January 2009.

Table 3.3: Relationship of Migrants to Household Head		
Relation	Males (%)	Females (%)
Head	76.5	24.0
Spouse/partner	0.1	18.4
Son/daughter	21.8	45.4
Father/mother	0.0	1.0
Brother/sister	0.5	1.5
Grandchild	0.4	1.5
Grandparent	0.0	0.0
Son/daughter-in-law	0.1	5.1
Nephew/niece	0.0	0.5
Other relative	0.6	2.6
Non-relative	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100
N	934	196
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

In the past, most male migrants were young single men (Sechaba Consultants 1998). As many as three-quarters of male migrants are now household heads compared to 25% of female migrants. While the female figure is much lower, it does indicate that a sizable group of women not only have the responsibility of being the head of their own household but have to migrate out of the country to ensure the survival of the household.

Lubkemann (2002: 41-63) has written in Mozambique of the phenomenon of transnational polygyny, the growing practice of marrying again in South Africa and maintaining households in both countries. No direct questions were asked about this phenomenon in the household survey. However, it emerged as a consistent theme (and concern) in all of the Focus Group discussions. Many participants observed that it was increasingly common for migrant men to establish second households in South Africa. Sometimes these were relationships with South African women (in which case the migrant could acquire South African identity documents through marriage) and sometimes they were with migrant women from Lesotho. The losers, from the perspective of people in Lesotho, were their households at home:

Most people we know, especially men, do have families in South Africa. In some cases they even leave with other women from Lesotho to live with in South Africa. The new family in South Africa puts a strain on the assistance the migrant brings to his original family in Lesotho. He

now hardly ever sends or brings enough money to his Lesotho family, if at all.¹²

A female participant put it more bluntly: “Households that do not have migrants really struggle to make ends meet. But some also struggle as the husbands hardly ever sent a cent home and this could be because they have families somewhere else.”¹³ Another felt that this phenomenon was causing more women to migrate:

Women migrate in large numbers because our husbands can no longer be relied upon. Many of us still have husbands while the same number does not. I say men are unreliable because when they get to South Africa, they enter into extra-marital affairs and remarry. A man may actually leave home in the company of a local woman but sometimes he marries a South African woman. This implies that some Basotho women really go to look for jobs while others do not.¹⁴

The growing practice of establishing a new relationship, family or household in South Africa also has a clear gender dimension, according to respondents. Female migrants also have relationships with men in South Africa. In the case of male migrants, the practice leads to a decreased flow of remittances to the household in Lesotho. However, in the case of female migrants, it can actually augment rather than reduce the flow of remittances to Lesotho:

Men often establish second families in South Africa so they have to share the money between two families. With women, on the other hand, even if they find boyfriends in South Africa they send the money the latter gives them home, together with the money they earn themselves.¹⁵

One woman noted cynically that most men in this position “forget about their original families” while women do not forget their families and children in Lesotho. A woman would rather take what her “men friends” give her and send it to her children.¹⁶

¹² Participant in Focus Group 3: Male Remittance Recipients.

¹³ Participant in Focus Group 4: Female Remittance Recipients.

¹⁴ Interview No 35, 9 January 2009.

¹⁵ Participant in Focus Group 2: Female Migrants.

¹⁶ Interview No 33, 1 January 2009.

3.3 Truncated Transnationalism

As noted in the previous chapter, cross-border movement between Lesotho and South Africa has increased exponentially since the end of apartheid. Apartheid-era immigration laws ensured that legal migration from Lesotho to South Africa was temporary, circulatory, and confined to certain categories of migrants such as mineworkers. Those caught illegally in South Africa were summarily deported. Even legal migrants could not take their families with them and they were forced to return home between contracts or if they lost their jobs or became disabled or when they retired from the workforce. When in South Africa, most male migrants were sequestered in mine hostels, isolated from everyday life around them and encouraged to maintain their Basotho cultural identity. Migrants retained a strong affinity and attachment to Lesotho. Even if they spent many years away over the course of their lifetime, Lesotho was seen as “home.” In a sense, transnationalism was enforced by apartheid laws and migrants had little choice but to assume a kind of truncated transnational identity: in South Africa but never fully of it; out of Lesotho but always forced to return and maintain economic, family and cultural ties there. In a word, they were to remain Basotho even when not physically there.

The question is whether this has changed with the collapse of apartheid. Migrants from Lesotho can now go legally (or illegally) to South Africa without fear of constant harassment, imprisonment and deportation. Most Basotho migrants have legal documentation to enter South Africa. A national survey in the late 1990s for example, showed that over 80% of adult Basotho have Lesotho passports (Gay 2000: 37). Of those employed in South Africa, 91% have passports. There is thus no real need for people from Lesotho to cross irregularly but many do simply because they live too far from an official border post. The border between the two countries is unpoliced and extremely porous. South Africa deports over 250,000 irregular migrants a year. Of these, only 5-10,000 are from Lesotho. In 2000, for example, the entry permits of 250,000 Basotho expired while they were in South Africa. However, only 6,180 people were deported to Lesotho during that year (Sechaba Consultants and Associates 2002: 15). Policing of irregular migration from Lesotho is lackluster at best, primarily because Basotho migrants ‘blend’ very easily into South Africa.

Legal entry from Lesotho into South Africa for non-employment purposes (on visitor’s permits) is very easy as apartheid-era restrictions have relaxed. How is freer movement between Lesotho and South Africa restructuring traditional forms of truncated transnationalism? Migrants prefer to move and live and work

legally in South Africa. However, outside the mining and commercial farming sectors, it is still hard for them to obtain work permits since these have to be motivated for by employers. As a result, many migrants (and women in particular) tend to enter South Africa legally and work in irregular fashion. This category also includes workers who have migrated legally to work in South Africa and then illegally switch employer or employment. Mine migrants are still employed on one-year contracts but they are no longer as isolated from urban communities as they were in the apartheid years. Relatives find it easier to visit and stay with their migrant spouses and parents at or near where they work.

In answer to the question “will the enclave empty?” Cobbe (2004) predicts that the process will proceed much further and that the residents of impoverished Lesotho will increasingly leave their country for good to settle in South Africa: “Given the large income differentials between the two countries, and Lesotho's substantial disadvantages as a location for economic activity within Southern Africa, it is a safe prediction that over the coming decades a substantial portion of Lesotho's population will move to South Africa, at least for much of their working lives.” If this were to happen, it would probably have a major impact on remittance flows to Lesotho. However, moving to South Africa is not the same thing as cutting all ties with Lesotho, so it is unlikely that remittances would dry up all together. There is even an argument that they might increase for as “new South Africans” they might have access to higher-paying and more secure employment. The remitting behaviour of migrants who have moved permanently to South Africa is clearly an issue for further research.

In the late 1990s, SAMP conducted a study of Basotho intentions and preferences vis-à-vis living in South Africa versus staying in Lesotho. Around a quarter of the representative national sample of adult respondents said they wished to live permanently in South Africa and thought it was likely they would do so (Table 3.4). However, a greater number (51%) said they wished to live temporarily in South Africa and 60% said it was likely they would do so. There is clearly a massive pool of people who would entertain moving to South Africa temporarily as migrants but retain strong ties with Lesotho. In other words, at least two thirds of the population neither wished nor said it was is likely they would leave Lesotho for good. As migrants, even with South African permanent residence or citizenship, they are likely to maintain strong transnational ties with home.

Table 3.4: Attitudes Towards Living in South Africa	
	%
Wish to live temporarily in SA	51
Wish to live permanently in SA	24
Likely to live temporarily in SA	60
Likely to live permanently in SA	25
Wish for SA permanent residence	35
Wish for SA citizenship	36
Wish to retire in SA	29
Wish to be buried in SA	19
Source: SAMP	

Around half of the total adult population said they wanted to migrate temporarily to South Africa and a half did not (Table 3.5). The desire was strongest for those in the 15-24 age group (59% with a strong or moderate desire) and weakest for those over 45 (45%). It was also stronger for males (57%) than females (45%) and stronger for household heads (49%) than their partners (43%).

Table 3.5: Level of Desire to Live in South Africa Temporarily				
	Not At All (%)	Not Much (%)	To Some Extent (%)	To A Great Extent (%)
15-24 years old	29	12	41	18
25-44 years old	39	12	35	14
>44 years old	49	6	30	15
Male	33	10	38	19
Female	45	10	33	12
Household head	41	10	35	14
Spouse	50	7	32	11
Other member	25	14	40	22
Source: SAMP				

One of the objectives of migrants from Lesotho is to obtain South African identity documents or IDs (permanent residence or citizenship status). In the survey, 35% wanted to obtain permanent residence status in South Africa and 36% wanted South African citizenship (Table 3.4). They are perfectly aware of the benefits that this confers. In 1996, for example, 34,000 long-serving migrant mineworkers from Lesotho acquired South African permanent residence in an immigration amnesty (Sechaba Consultants 1997). Most took up the offer in order to make migration between Lesotho and South Africa easier and to

be able to stay in South Africa and find other jobs when they were retrenched from the mines. In 1996, permanent residence was offered to all longstanding irregular migrants in South Africa. There were 15,167 applications by people from Lesotho and 8,193 residence permits were granted (Crush and Williams 1999).

A South African ID makes a great difference to employment prospects, as a female migrant from one Focus Group pointed out:

Getting to South Africa and staying and working there is not a problem. But it is not easy to access good work in South Africa as almost all migrants don't have South African IDs (Identity Documents). When you have a South African ID you are able to get better work than people who hold only Lesotho passports. If you are offered a good job you fail to secure it because you only have a Lesotho passport and end up having to do low-paying jobs such as domestic or shop work. This goes even for those people with high school education.¹⁷

The value of South African documentation was clearly recognized by migrants (see Case Study 4). Although fraudulent South African identity and citizenship documentation is always available at a price, some Basotho are able to acquire them through formal application. Basotho in South Africa and Lesotho are ethnically and linguistically homogenous (there are actually more Sesotho-speakers in South Africa than in Lesotho). It is therefore relatively easy for a direct or distant relative to vouchsafe for the migrant's South African 'roots.'

According to Cobbe (2004), 37% of people interviewed in a 2003 sample survey reported a family member working in South Africa, 26% reported a family member permanently settled there, and 18% 'admitted' to possessing South African identification documents. If he is correct, the proportion with family members 'permanently settled' in South Africa would have risen since, as would the proportion with South African IDs. Interestingly, the interviews for this study found a considerable appetite for acquiring South African documentation but little, if any desire to settle permanently in South Africa. This is consistent with a SAMP study in the late 1990s which found that across every social, cultural and economic indicator (with the exception of employment opportunities), a representative sample of adults preferred Lesotho as a place to live. One key informant did note that 'abandonment' of Lesotho seemed to

¹⁷ Participant in Focus Group 2: Female Migrants.

be less of an issue for the young, university-educated Mosotho who, after graduating from a South African university or college, simply stays on.

Case Study 4 : Becoming ‘South African’

The textile industry in Lesotho employs over 40,000 young women. Most of these internal migrants would probably go to South Africa as migrants if they were retrenched or the factories were to close, which is always a possibility. Some women started working in the textile industry and then decided to go to South Africa to look for better jobs. Molihi Letola is one of them.

Letola is a single mother with two sons aged 18 and 7 in Lesotho. Both of her parents are dead and she decided to go to work in South Africa to earn money to feed her sons and to put her children through school. She has been migrating to South Africa for nine years and spends eleven months away at a time. While she is away her two sons are left to fend for themselves: “It is not a good thing as my children remain here alone when I am at work and that I don’t like at all.” She earns R14,000 a year as a domestic worker. From these paltry wages, she is able to send her sons around R6,000 a year, primarily because her own costs at work are low: “I don’t pay transport, rent or buy food.” Still, she says, the money is better than it was in the textile factories and the working conditions are “good.” She does not trust informal remittance channels and sends the money home through a bank. Her older son accesses the money from the bank in Lesotho and the two boys use the money for food, rent, clothing and school fees (for the eldest).

Letola makes a little extra through her membership of a stokvel (money company). She contributes R150 a month. The stokvel loans out money to its members and to others. The capital and profits are divided between the members at the end of the year “to buy groceries for Christmas holidays.” That is the extent of her extra money-making activity.

Letola has managed to acquire a South African passport though she does not say how. This at least means that she does not need to return to Lesotho every 30 days to renew her permit. It also means that she is treated well “unlike how they treat other Africans from other countries.” In fact, she no longer even uses her Lesotho passport. She says that she will keep going to South Africa as long as there is work. However, she is also considering migrating to South Africa with her two children. She says there are more benefits available to her as a South African citizen and it would also be easier for her to have her own house.

Does this mean that the “enclave will empty” or that transnational forms of migration will continue or even become more extensive? The evidence suggests that the probability of migrants maintaining strong ties with Lesotho is very high. Nearly two thirds of the migrants (61%) identified in the household survey return to Lesotho from South Africa at least once a month (compared with a regional average of only 36.3%) (Table 3.6). A total of 85% return home at least once every three months and 93% at least once every six months. Again the frequency of personal home visits is much higher than the regional average of 45% every three months and 54% every six months.

Table 3.6: Frequency of Home Visits

How often does the migrant come home?	Lesotho (%)	Region (%)
Twice or more per month	1.5	6.2
Once a month	55.6	30.1
More than once in 3 months	9.2	9.0
Once every 3 months	15.2	12.5
Once every 6 months	8.1	9.7
Once a year	8.2	18.5
At end of the contract	0.2	2.6
Other	2.2	11.4
Total	100.0	100.0
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

One of the primary indicators of transnationalism – simultaneous embeddedness in two societies – is clearly a feature of modern migration between Lesotho and South Africa. Migrants return to Lesotho extremely frequently and households in Lesotho maintain very regular contact with their migrant members. Their remittance behavior (see Chapter 4.0) is the clearest indication of all of the transnational character of migration between the two countries.

3.4 Migrant Associations

The frequency of return home and the isolation of many migrants while at work means that there are few organized Basotho “immigrant associations and diaspora organizations” as traditionally conceived in developed countries. There are, however, various kinds of cultural organizations in which migrants participate when in South Africa, including churches, sports and entertainment.

There are also two types of Basotho migrant association in South Africa which make use of earnings, and both have a long history of modest success. One is the burial society, which takes in money and then distributes it when a member or a relative dies. The second is a stokvel (or money company), which obligates each of its members to contribute an amount each month to a common pool. The total sum is given each month in turn to one of the members. Members can also borrow money from the group at a modest rate of interest, so that the group can build up its resources. However, this money is rarely if ever used to start a business. Rather it is used for purposes of local consumption or is remitted to Lesotho as payment or school fees or purchases of large items to avoid having to buy them on monthly terms.

A third, and more socially ambiguous, form of migrant association amongst male Basotho migrants in and around mines and urban townships in South Africa is the Marashea (or Russians) (Kynoch 2005). These gangs of young migrants provide financial aid from group funds for members' medical, legal, burial and funeral costs, as well as promoting cultural activities. However, the Marashea have a notorious proclivity for violence and the production of a macho male identity through the control of women. The Marashea are recognizable in Lesotho by the red blankets that they wear and are believed to invest the proceeds of migrancy and criminality in business ventures in Lesotho, particularly in the taxi industry.

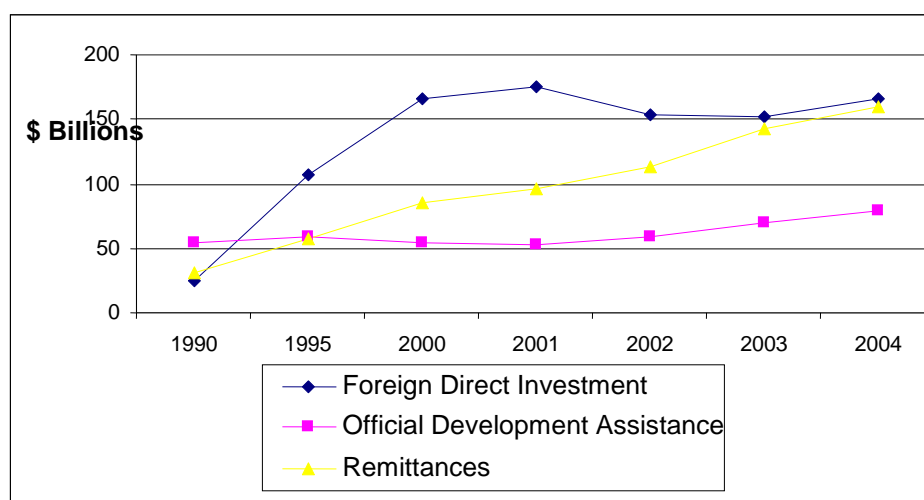
4.0 REMITTANCES TO LESOTHO: A GENDER ANALYSIS

4.1 Economic Significance

4.1.1 Macro-Significance of Remittances

Globally, remittances have grown to the point where they exceed Official Development Assistance (ODA) and are approaching the level of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Figure 4.1). In Africa as a whole, the picture is rather different with ODA now exceeding FDI (Figure 4.2). Remittance flows are significantly lower (although data deficiencies are such that the actual flows may be much higher). Lesotho presents a still different scenario with remittances being most important, followed by Customs Union Revenue, ODA and finally FDI (Figure 4.3)

Figure 4.1: Global Flows of FDI, ODA and Remittances to Developing Countries



Lesotho's major external sources of revenue include:

- Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Revenue: SACU governs trade for the member countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and South Africa. The Union has a common external tariff and guarantees free movement of goods amongst member countries. SACU's revenue-sharing formula has generated a growing proportion of public revenue in Lesotho, rising from M374 million in 1993 to M1,107 million in 2003;

Figure 4.2: Flows of FDI, ODA and Remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa

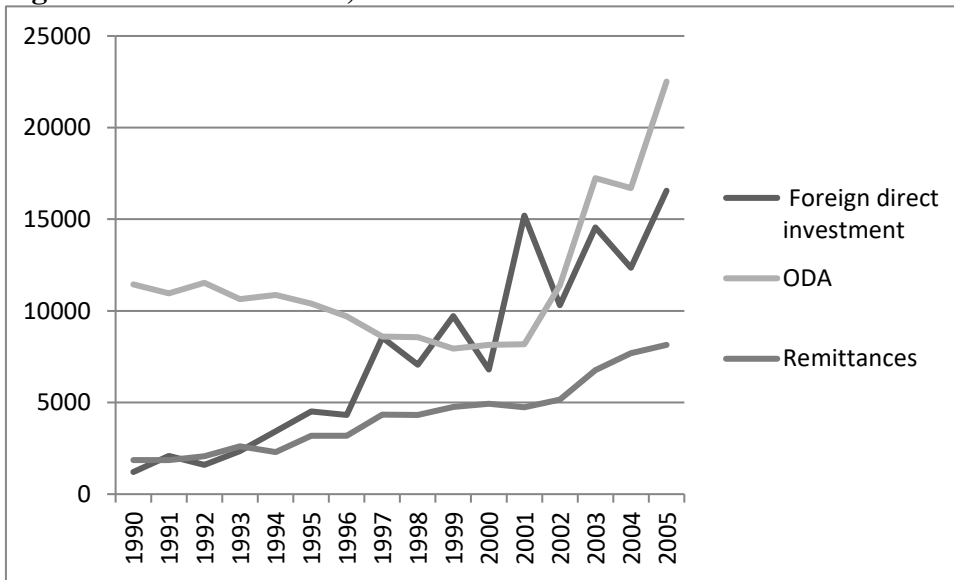
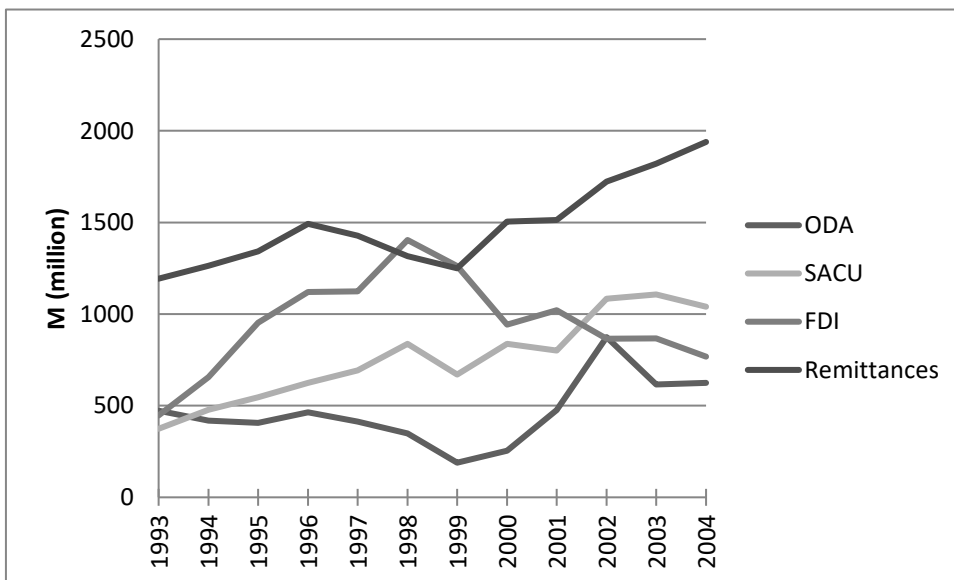


Figure 4.3: Flows of FDI, ODA, Remittances and SACU Revenue to Lesotho



- Official Development Assistance: Lesotho's ODA inflows fell dramatically after the end of apartheid from M472 million in 1993 to M189 million in 1999. After 1999, however, ODA to Lesotho picked up again primarily because of international attention on the impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic;
- Foreign Direct Investment: FDI increased throughout the 1990s with the growth of the textile industry (peaking in 1998 at M1,404 million when the textile industry was at the height of its expansion) but has fallen by 50% since; and
- Migrant Remittances: throughout this period, migrant remittances have remained the major revenue source for Lesotho, rising from an estimated M1,193 million in 1993 to M1,939 million in 2004.

4.1.2 Micro Significance of Remittances

Remittance flows from South Africa to Lesotho can be classified according to whether they are:

(a) compulsory or voluntary; (b) formal or informal (in terms of channels used); and (c) in cash or kind.

Remittances in cash and kind are the main source of income for the vast majority of migrant-sending households in Lesotho. The survey showed that some 95% of households receive regular cash remittances and 20% receive remittances-in-kind (Table 4.1). Only 9.5% of the households receive income from regular wage work and 6.3% from casual work in Lesotho. Additionally, only 8.8% receive income from a formal or informal business and just 2.7% from the sale of farm products.

Annualised average household income for migrant-sending households from all sources was M11,475. Mean household income from cash remittances was M8,400 for cash and M2,488 for goods. Income from other sources was relatively significant for the small number of households that had more diversified income. For example, the 2% of households with a formal business made an average of M6,708 from their business. Or again, the 3% of households selling farm produce made an average of M1,525 from those sales. The 7% of households participating in the informal sector made an average of M3,066 from those operations. In many cases, remittances are not a supplementary form of household income, they are virtually the only form of income.

Table 4.1: Sources of Income of Migrant-Sending Households

	%	Mean Annual Income (M)
Wage work	9.5	7,420.83
Casual work	6.3	2,618.28
Remittances – money	95.3	10,186.44
Remittances – value of goods	20.0	2,487.70
Income from farm products	2.7	1,525.93
Income from formal business	2.0	6,708.00
Income from informal business	6.8	3,066.41
Pension/disability	0.6	1,025.00
Gifts	2.2	1,178.86

Source: SAMP Household Survey

4.2 Volume and Type of Remittances

4.2.1 Mine Remittances

The only completely accurate and reliable data on remittance flows is for compulsory deferred pay (CDP) from the South African mining industry to Lesotho. These remittances are “formal” in that they are channeled through the formal banking system and are captured in official statistics.

In 1974, the government passed the Lesotho Deferred Pay Act (Act No. 18 of 1974) which established the legal terms and conditions of a compulsory remittance system for mineworkers (Sparreboom and Sparreboom-Burger 1995). A portion of the miner’s wage (initially between 60-90%) was compulsorily deferred and paid into a special account in the Lesotho National Development Bank. Miners received some interest on their deposits, the balance accruing to the government. The funds could only be drawn in Lesotho by the miner himself at the end of a contract. The CDP system ensured that the greater part of a migrant’s earnings returned as remittances to Lesotho.

The Deferred Pay Act has been amended several times. A 1979 revision stipulated that 60% of the basic wage would be deposited in Lesotho with the exception of earnings during the first 30 days of employment on a contract. In 1990, the percentage of compulsorily deferred pay was reduced to 30% (excluding the first and last month of the contract). Currently, miners are forced to defer 30% of their gross earnings for 10 months of every 12 month contract. Deferred wages can be accessed by the miner or their bona fide spouse. The recent failure of the Lesotho National Development Bank and widespread dissatisfaction amongst miners with the way the system operated prompted TEBA Bank to reach an agreement with the

government about taking over the system.¹⁸ TEBA Bank now operates an automated deferred pay system although there is still dissatisfaction amongst miners and their spouses about the way the system runs.

There is a common but misleading assumption that the decline in employment on the South African mines for Basotho migrants must have led to a serious decline in remittance flows to Lesotho (Hassan 2002; Makoae 2006; UNDP-Lesotho 2007). In fact, remittances actually increased over the time period as the total wages paid out to Basotho miners grew from M1,473 million in 1992 to M2,442 million in 2004. The average mine wage increased from M12,000 in 1992 to M53,000 in 2007 (Table 4.2). The CDP system ensured that Lesotho received a portion of this increase (from M276 million in 1992 to M610 million in 2004). However, the Central Bank of Lesotho estimates that voluntary remittances have also grown (from M1,103 million in 1992 to M1,795 million in 2004). In other words, the Lesotho economy as a whole has not suffered from retrenchments. Nor have those households who have members working on the mines.

The primary impact of retrenchments is that a growing overall mine remittance package is shared by a shrinking number of households. Households who do still have a mine worker migrant are clearly better off than those who do not, and constitute something of a “rural aristocracy” (see Case Study 5).

Year	Total Wages (M million)	Average Annual Wage (M)	Remittances (M million)	CDP (M million)
1992	1473.5	12,321	1103.8	275.9
1993	1551.4	13,359	1104.5	334.4
1994	1641.5	14,562	1170.5	320.0
1995	1743.0	16,801	1242.8	410.6
1996	1951.9	19,186	1391.7	488.0
1997	2032.7	21,193	1321.2	508.2
1998	1996.2	24,678	1217.7	499.1
1999	1897.4	27,657	1157.4	474.4
2000	1955.5	30,131	1394.3	488.9
2001	1966.6	32,030	1402.2	491.7
2002	2196.5	35,236	1594.8	549.1
2003	2364.8	38,513	1686.1	591.2
2004	2442.1	42,116	1795.0	610.5

Source: GOL

¹⁸ Interview with Regional Manager: TEBA

Case Study 5: The Rural Aristocracy

Migrant mineworkers are sometimes seen as the “rural elite.” In Lesotho, 50,000 men are employed on legal contract in the unionized South African mining industry. Mine jobs are difficult to secure but those who have them can count on wages that most unskilled and semi-skilled migrants can only dream of earning. Miners are always vulnerable to the looming threat of retrenchments and mine closures, but those who work on profitable mines and keep their jobs should, in theory, be in the best position to use their earnings to invest in other income-producing activities. Given also that 50% of the wage packet is compulsorily deferred to Lesotho, remittances are available for use at home.

Thuso Molapo is a 32 year old miner who has been working on the South African mines since he was 23: “I would never settle in South Africa. I am just there to earn a livelihood for my family.” Unable to find work in Lesotho (and with only a primary school education), his now-deceased father took him to South Africa and managed to find him a mine job. His father had been a mineworker when younger and still had contacts on the mines. Molapo is away in South Africa for 11 months each year and spends one month back in Lesotho in December-January. He tries to return home for a weekend visit at the end of every month but finds transportation to home difficult once he arrives in Lesotho.

Molapo’s earnings support eight other people. He is separated from his wife so his sick mother is the de facto household head and makes most of the decisions about how the remittances will be spent. There are five other adults and four children in the household. Two of the adults are his younger sisters. One works in a shop in South Africa but does not remit. The other looks after the four children. He has two young sons (aged 2 and 4) and he also has two nieces. One is the orphaned child of another sister and one is a child that his late father adopted. There are also two unrelated young men in the household, both of whom are unemployed.

Molapo earns R48,000 per year. R18,000 is remitted as compulsory deferred pay and he voluntarily remits a further R6,000 which he usually brings in person. He also buys goods in South Africa for his household, especially clothing for the children, and brings them home with him. Last year the bulk of his remittances went on food (approximately R4,000), clothing (R3,000), transport (R6,000), building a house (R6,000) and special events (R3,000). The rest was spent on medical expenses, fuel, alcohol and tobacco. Since his mother got sick, he also pays someone to hoe her field. Molapo paid for the funeral of a cousin and provided food for an uncle this year. He has no other source of income, does not have a business and has no plans in that regard. Once all of the household expenses are covered, there is very little discretionary income left.

In 1992-3, at the beginning of the period of retrenchments, the Central Bank of Lesotho conducted a survey of the remitting behaviour of migrant miners (Central Bank of Lesotho 1995). Key findings included:

- Basotho miners send home an average of 49% of their earned income as cash remittances (CDP plus other formal and informal cash transfers) and 25% as remittances-in-kind. Total monthly remittances as a percentage of earnings were therefore 71%. CDP at the time was 30% indicating a significant level of additional remittance flow.
- Cash remittances were positively correlated with job and skills level and with marital status. Single, separated, divorced or widowed mineworkers made smaller remittances than married miners.
- Amount of remittances was also impacted by the size of family. The larger the family and number of dependents, the larger the remittance. This correlation applied to both cash remittances and remittances-in-kind.
- Half of the miners did not have access to any fields in Lesotho. Landlessness was more prevalent among younger than older miners. Three quarters of miners had no livestock at home.
- Rates of investment in entrepreneurial activity were extremely low. Only 1% of miners had business enterprises. Over half of these were small cafes. Asked if they planned to start a business if they were retrenched, 55% had no plans. The rest planned to open cafes or shebeens (bars).

Perhaps the most controversial finding of the study was that the vast majority of miners preferred the CDP system. This finding was directly contradicted by a 1997 SAMP study of miner behaviour and preferences (Sechaba Consultants 1997: 22) which found that 64% wanted deferred pay to be made optional (compared to only 9.5% of miners' spouses). Most of those who found CDP a problem cited low interest rates and difficulty of access. Sixty five percent of those who preferred an optional system said they should have the right to manage their finances privately. The study found that miners were sending home 71% of their income in cash or kind in the late 1990s (Sechaba Consultants 1997: 37-8).

The household survey for this report showed some continuities and changes in remitting behaviour since the Central Bank Survey:

- Basotho miners now send home an average of 60% of their earned income as cash remittances (25% as CDP and 35% in voluntary remittances. This is an increase of 10% from the early 1990s.
- Remittances in cash and kind constitute an average of 80% of the income of mine migrant-sending households. The vast majority (96%) of miners send money home voluntarily at least once a month, in addition to CDP.

- Cash remittances are still positively correlated with job and skills level and with marital status. Single mineworkers make smaller remittances than married miners.
- The amount of remittances is correlated with the number of dependents. The larger the number of dependents, the larger the package. Households with children also tend to receive more in remittances than those without.

4.2.2 Other Cash Remittances

The household survey showed that female migrant domestic workers in South Africa remit much less than male miners, which is not surprising given the wage differentials between the two sectors. On average, female domestics remit an average of M3,632 per annum (one third of that of miners). Remittances are also less frequent than those of miners, most of whom remit once a month or more. Only 42.5% of domestic workers are able to remit that frequently. Another 20% remit once every 2-3 months and the rest even less often.

Most voluntary remittances flow through informal channels and go unrecorded. What is clear is that the vast majority of migrant-sending households do receive remittances in cash, kind or both. Some 95% of migrant-sending households in Lesotho receive cash remittances. Remittances are frequent and regular: 78% of households receive cash remittances at least once a month (Table 4.3). The average annual cash remittance receipt reported by households was M7,800.

There is a debate in the remittances literature about whether higher-paid skilled migrants remit more than those who are less-skilled and lower-paid. In the case of Lesotho, there are distinctive differences in remitting patterns by skill level. Miners remit an average of M10,677 per annum which is more than skilled workers and professionals (M6,260) who, in turn, remit more than other migrants (mainly unskilled women) who remit an average of M3,939 per annum.

Table 4.3: Frequency of Cash Remittances to Lesotho		
	N	%
Twice or more per month	12	1.2
Once a month	787	76.6
More than twice in 3 months	91	8.9
Once in three months	66	6.4
Once every 6 months	16	1.6
Once a year	51	5.0
At end of the contract	2	0.2
Other	0	0.0
Don't know	2	0.2
Total	1027	100.0
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

4.2.3 Remittances In Kind

The “remittance package” of migrants from Lesotho includes cash and in kind. Goods are purchased by migrants where they work and then sent or brought home to Lesotho. The proximity of the two countries makes this a feasible option, particularly since there is a greater range of consumer goods in South Africa and prices are generally lower. In addition, as members of a common customs union, there should be no duty to pay when migrants bring goods home. In practice, customs officials at official border posts do demand duty or are known to accept bribes for turning a blind eye. The survey showed that 20% of migrant-sending households had received remittances in kind in the month prior to the survey. The average annual value of goods remitted to Lesotho was R2,487 (compared to R10,186 in cash remittances).

4.4 Characteristics of Remittance-Receiving Households

Four basic types of migrant-sending and remittance-receiving households were identified by the national household survey (Table 4.5):

- Female-centred: No husband/male partner; may include relatives, children, friends;
- Male-centred: No wife/female partner; may include relatives, children, friends;
- Nuclear: Man and woman with or without children;
- Extended: Man and woman and children and other relatives and non-relatives

The vast majority of male Basotho migrants (nearly 90%) come from nuclear and extended family households. Only 55% of female migrants come from such households. A significant minority (43%)

come from female-centred households in which there is no husband or male partner (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Migrant-Sending Household Typology		
	Male Migrants	Female Migrants
Female Centered	7.0	42.9
Male Centered	3.8	0.7
Nuclear	43.3	18.6
Extended	45.9	37.8
Total	100	100
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

How do migrant-sending households compare with those that do not have migrant members? In another survey, SAMP collected data which compared income for migrant-sending households with a national sample of all households (Table 4.6) (Green 2006a). Over half of the national sample (52%) reported an annual cash income of less than M2,500 compared to only 12% of migrant-sending households. Again, 75% of the national sample have an income of less than M7,500 (compared to 55% of the migrant-sending-households). In other words, while the vast majority of all households have very low incomes, the migrant-sending households are clearly better off.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Household Income				
Household Income Group (M)	National Sample		Migrant-Sending Households	
	%	Cumulative %	%	Cumulative %
0-2499	51.8	51.8	12.2	12.2
2,500-4,999	14.8	66.6	10.4	22.6
5,000-7,499	7.9	74.5	16.7	39.3
7,500-9,999	6.3	80.9	15.6	54.9
10,000-12,499	5.6	86.4	15.1	70.0
12,500-14,999	3.3	89.8	9.2	79.2
15,000-17,499	1.6	91.3	4.9	84.1
17,500-19,999	2.2	93.5	4.9	89.0
20,000-22,499	0.8	94.4	2.1	91.1
22,500-24,999	1.1	95.5	2.7	93.8
25,000-27,499	0.3	95.8	1.3	95.1
27,500-29,999	0.3	96.2	0.6	95.7
30,000-32,499	0.3	96.5	0.7	96.4
32,500-34,999	0.2	96.7	0.4	96.8
35000 and up	3.3	100.0	3.2	100.0
Source: SAMP Data Base				

4.3 Remittance Channels

The CDP system linking Lesotho with the South African mines is the primary channel for remittance flows. Outside the system, the most popular ways of remitting are informal in nature. This is true for Lesotho and the region as a whole (Table 4.7). Migrants bring the money themselves (54%) or send it via a trusted friend or co-worker (33%). Very few use formal money transfer systems; for example, only 5.1% use the Post Office and only 1.8% use banks. Easily the most popular way of sending goods home is to bring them personally (82%). A smaller number entrust them to friends or co-workers (12%). But only 4% use official rail transport channels and less than 1% entrust their goods to the taxis that ply the routes between Lesotho and the South African towns where they work.

Table 4.7: Major Remittance Channels				
	Cash		Goods	
	Lesotho %	Region %	Lesotho %	Region %
Post Office	5.1	7.1	0.7	4.2
Wife's TEBA account	1.8	3.1	-	-
Bring personally	54.1	46.8	81.9	66.0
Via a friend/ co-worker	33.4	26.2	11.8	14.7
Via Bank in home country	1.8	6.1	-	-
Via TEBA own account	0.7	3.3	-	-
Bank in South Africa	0.9	0.8	-	-
Via Taxis	0.2	1.5	0.7	3.5
Bus	0.0	1.1	3.8	5.2
Rail	-	-	0.0	1.3
Other method	1.9	3.9	0.7	2.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Considerable attention is given in the remittance literature to the methods that migrants use to remit and the expense involved in remitting, through both formal and informal channels. The main policy recommendation is that governments and private sector institutions at both ends should lower the transaction costs of remitting, as well as make it easier for migrants to access and use formal channels through reform of banking and other financial regulations. In the case of Lesotho, hand-to-hand transfer of cash and goods is easily the most important channel (Case Study 6). It is hard to see how transaction costs

on personal transactions can be reduced unless the reason for return home is only to transfer remittances, in which case transportation costs make this a very costly means of remitting.

Using friends and co-workers to carry cash and goods home is also relatively popular and, once again, quite feasible given geographical proximity. Insofar as problems arise, these seem to pertain mainly to slowness and theft. Very few migrants cite either the cost of transactions or the lack of banking facilities as a problem for them. Basotho migrants do not generally see that there is a problem in need of a solution. This does not mean, of course, that if cost-effective financial services were available, migrants would not use them. Some certainly might. But for the moment, most seem happier to take remittances with them when they go home.

The survey confirms very low usage of formal institutions for money transfer between South Africa and Lesotho. The problem is not in moving money as both countries are members of the Rand Monetary Area (RMA). The Rand is legal tender in Lesotho (though not vice-versa). Many South African banks have branches in Lesotho but few migrants use the banks to remit. Generally, there is very low access to financial services in Lesotho (Genesis Analytics 2003b: 22). Most migrants do not have bank accounts with the main banks and the costs of transfer, even within the RMA, are prohibitive. Bank products cost around R150 per transaction because banks charge a SWIFT fee and commission on each transaction even when funds are transferred to subsidiaries of the same bank in Lesotho (Genesis Analytics 2003a: vi). A transfer to Maseru in Lesotho costs 700% more than a transfer to Ladybrand on the South African side of the border only kilometers away (Genesis Analytics 2003a: ix). Undocumented Basotho migrants cannot open bank accounts in South Africa as a work permit is required to open a resident or non-resident account (Genesis Analytics 2005: 12).

In late 2004, four major South African banks plus the Post Office launched a new product in South Africa – the Mzansi account – designed to improve access to financial services for the poor. Mzansi account transactions are priced significantly lower than normal bank accounts and make transacting easier. By mid-2005, over a million accounts had been opened (Genesis Analytics 2005: 46). The potential of Mzansi for remittance transfers (via inter-bank transfers) has yet to be realized although the scheme has been developing a Money Transfer System based on the Western Union model. Mzansi is not available, as yet, in Lesotho.

Case Study 6: Informal Remittance Channels

Matoebe Lehasa is 42 years old and has been a migrant for two years, ever since her husband became too sick to continue working on the South African mines. Until she was 40, she had stayed in Lesotho and looked after the household and children while her husband was away. They have four children: two boys aged 21 and 16 and two girls 8 and 4. Last year her oldest son, who has a secondary school education but could not find a job in Lesotho, also went to South Africa to work as an unskilled labourer. Lehasa actually believes that it is better for women to go to work in South Africa these days “because every time you hear stories from men that there is no money, no work, or the job they were doing is finished.”

Lehasa says she migrated because her husband was unable to work anymore and “sitting together at home without a breadwinner made us reach a decision for me to go and fend for the family.” However, she had an additional motive: “I wanted to earn some more money so that I could come back home and start some small business (a spaza shop).” She was told of an employment agency north of Pretoria that was placing Basotho domestic workers with South African employers. She went there and got a job. As a domestic worker, like many of her fellow female migrants from Lesotho, she earns R12,000 a year. She is able to remit R10,000 a year which last year went primarily on food (R7,000), clothing (R1,000), fuel (R1,500), hiring a tractor to plough their field (R500) and “a small packet of seed to sow in my field.” Around 60% of the household income therefore goes on food purchase. She has two “remittance channels”:

I post the money home or bring it myself after two months. This money is received by my husband. I do not make the decisions as to how the money I send is to be used. I send it to him because he is the one taking care of the children. I think this money makes a difference in providing food, for without it my children would die of hunger. One of my sons has to repeat Standard 7 (in high school). He only got a third class pass but I do not know if the money I send will be enough to send him to school.

Lehasa says she wants to save money but is unable to do so. And when she does, she anticipates that her savings will not go towards her planned business but on the victims of HIV and AIDS: “There are many deaths these days and the money saved would help in the burial of members of my household or me.”

She has a Lesotho passport and is working without a work permit. In order to remain legally in South Africa she needs to renew her visitor’s permit once a month back at the Lesotho-South Africa border. The alternative is to overstay and then have to pay a bribe of M150 to M200 demanded by officials at the border when she returns to Lesotho.

The Post Office is probably the most used formal channel (but only by 5% of migrants). The Post Office is empowered by South African law to remit outside the country via money order or postal order but transaction costs are high (R30.50 for a R300 money order and R51.75 for a telegraphic money order) (Genesis Analytics 2006: 6). Organizations such as Western Union and MoneyGram do not operate in Lesotho. Western Union began operating in South Africa in 1995 and expanded rapidly (and might have spread to Lesotho). However, it withdrew after new South African Reserve Bank regulations made it unprofitable to operate (Genesis Analytics 2005: 49-52). TEBA Bank (a bank established by the mining industry to encourage savings and provide a service in migrant source areas) operates in Lesotho. While its role could increase in the future, less than 1% of migrants surveyed use TEBA Bank as their main method for transferring remittances. Slightly more (2%) pay remittances into spousal TEBA Bank accounts.

4.4 Use of Remittances

Interviews with remittance senders and receivers suggest that the latter make most of the decisions about how remittances will be spent. When both are at home, decisions are taken jointly. Although there are disagreements, very few respondents indicated that there is any serious conflict about the use of remittances probably because such a small proportion is ever truly discretionary. Once school fees are paid, health costs met, and clothing and groceries bought, there is never a lot left over. Conflict arises when a spouse feels that the wage earner is wasting remittance money on non-essentials and/or is being less than honest. One woman was extremely critical of her spouse for just these reasons suggesting, at the very least, that there are normative expectations of remitters:

My husband is no use to our family at all and if things could be reversed it would be better if I went to work instead of him and maybe there would be some change in our lives. My husband does not send money and even when he brings it with him, he takes it to buy beer and entertain himself. He fights for it if I refuse to give him the money. When he comes home he does not even want to take a spade to dig the garden. He says he has come home to rest as he works hard in the mines. Him working in South Africa brings only negative impacts and he is no use at all to the family.¹⁹

Her spouse has been working for 20 years on the mines as a migrant. She has no idea how much he earns (but it is probably in excess of R30,000 a year). She claims she only gets R3,000, all of which she spends

¹⁹ Interview No 33, 1 January 2009.

on food and clothing, including for her niece and her husband’s mother. The family, she said, does not have enough to eat many times during the course of the year. She is happy about compulsory deferred pay because she would otherwise “never see a cent of it.” However, only her husband is able to withdraw the funds in Lesotho, which he often does “without my knowledge and eats alone.”

Both remitters and recipients are in agreement that remittances are essential to the livelihood of household members and that without them they would be “lost.” There are plenty of “lost” households in every village to drive home the point. The perceived importance of remittances proved to be extremely high in most areas (with the exception of access to public utilities such as clean water and electricity) (Table 4.8). Since many households do not have access to either, this simply means that a remittance income does not increase the chances of access. The perceived contribution of remittances to total household income shows that most households (89%) find it important or very important. What stands out, however, is that remittances are seen as key to having enough food in the household (with nearly 90% saying that it is important or very important). Remittances, in other words, are seen as crucial to the very survival of the household and its members.

Table 4.8: Perceived Importance of Remittances

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not Important at All	Don’t Know
In Having Enough to Eat	73.4	16.5	2.2	3.0	4.7	0.2
In Having Enough Clean Water	40.2	17.3	9.6	11.6	20.8	0.6
In Accessing Medical Treatment	62.6	25.0	3.8	3.2	5.3	0.2
In Having Electricity in Home	6.3	2.2	2.4	3.8	84.7	0.5
In Having Enough Cooking Fuel	58.7	28.5	3.9	2.2	6.5	0.2
In Having a Cash Income	63.1	25.7	2.9	2.5	5.6	0.1

N=1026

Source: SAMP Household Survey

How do migrant-sending households in Lesotho actually spend their remittance income? First, it is useful to look at household budgets. The relative importance of different types of expenditure may be seen by looking at the percentage of households incurring an expense in the month prior to the survey (Table 4.9). Food and groceries are by far the most important expenditure (by 93% of households), followed by fuel (76%), clothes (73%), transportation (52%) and medical expenses (24%). Only 9% saved any funds, 7% invested in farming and 5% spent on education. Over the course of a year, the proportion of households

spending money on school fees would probably be much higher as all secondary school children in Lesotho have to pay fees at the beginning of the school year.

The average household spent M490 on food and M678 on clothes in the month prior to the survey. Much less was spent on the two other items on which the majority of households incurred expenditures: fuel (M120) and transportation (M124). The households with medical expenses spent an average of M101. The 5% of households that did spend on education incurred significant costs of M662. While only a small proportion of households had funds to spend on building, special events and farming, the average amounts spent were quite significant (M3,073, M2,176 and M642 respectively). Almost half (47%) of households had no savings. Although less than 10% of households had saved any money in the previous month, those that did saved an average of M740. The greatest monthly expenditure of all of these households combined was on clothes (29%), followed by food and groceries (27%), special events (9.5%), building (6.4%), fuel (5.4%), entertainment (4.2%) and transportation (2.4%).

Table 4.9: Monthly Household Expenses by Category

	% of Households Incurring Expense	Average Amount Spent (M)	Total Amount Spent (M)	%
Food and groceries	92.5	490	462,560	26.9
Housing	0.9	150	1,350	0.0
Utilities	16.7	117	20,007	1.2
Clothes	72.7	673	499,366	29.0
Alcohol	12.0	209	25,707	1.5
Medical expenses	24.2	101	24,947	1.5
Transportation	52.3	124	71,556	2.4
Cigarettes, tobacco, snuff	10.5	84	8,968	0.5
Education	5.4	663	36,465	2.0
Entertainment	1.6	125	72,000	4.2
Savings	8.7	740	65,860	3.8
Fuel	76.3	120	93,480	5.4
Farming	7.1	642	46,224	2.7
Building	3.5	3,073	110,628	6.4
Special events	7.3	2,176	163,220	9.5
Gifts	3.6	119	4,403	0.3
Other expenses	1.2	1,060	12,720	0.7

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Table 4.10: Use of Remittances	
	% of Households Using Remittances
Food	89.3
Clothing	76.1
School fees	56.0
Fares	50.0
Funeral and burial policies	28.7
Seed	24.4
Savings	18.7
Fertiliser	18.5
Funeral	16.3
Tractor	12.5
Fuel	9.9
Feast	7.1
Cement	5.2
Labour	5.1
Bricks	4.5
Insurance policies	4.5
Doors and windows	3.8
Roofing	3.6
Dipping and veterinary costs	2.6
Oxen for ploughing	2.5
Other special events	2.2
Paint	2.0
Repay loans	1.9
Cattle purchase	1.4
Wood	1.3
Marriage	1.1
Purchase stock for sale	1.1
Small stock purchase	1.1
Poultry purchase	0.8
Vehicle purchase/maintenance	0.8
Vehicle and transport costs	0.6
Walls	0.7
Other farm input	0.4
Equipment	0.3
Labour costs	0.3
Machinery and equipment	0.1
Personal investment	0.0
Source: SAMP Household Survey	

The most common expenditure items for remittances are food (90% of households spent remittances on food), clothing (76%), school fees (56%) and fares (transportation) (34%) (Table 4.10). In terms of

agricultural inputs, a quarter of households spent remittances on seed, 18.5% on fertilizer, 12.5% on tractors and 3.9% on livestock. However, most of these agriculture-related expenditures were for subsistence food production. Nearly 19% of households put some remittance income into savings. Other expenditures such as funerals (incurred by 16% of households) and funeral and burial insurance policies (29%) reflect the impact of HIV/AIDS.

The importance of basic needs expenditure is further highlighted when the estimated percentage of remittance money is examined for the most important expenditures (Table 4.11). For all major expense items the proportion of the remittance contribution is 80% and higher.

	%
Food and groceries	90.3
Housing	91.1
Utilities	85.1
Clothes	92.1
Alcohol	89.9
Medical expenses	86.4
Transportation	89.6
Cigarettes, tobacco, snuff	86.1
Education	86.8
Entertainment	100.0
Savings	83.0
Fuel	88.7
Farming	88.5
Building	91.2
Special events	85.4
Gifts	71.2
Total contributions from remittances	88.7
Source: SAMP Household Survey	

Further dramatic proof of the importance of remittances to household food security and other basic needs is provided by a tabulation of the types of goods that migrants had sent home in the previous year. There is little evidence of luxury goods being remitted. Instead, clothing (29% of households) and food (7.6%) are clearly the items most frequently brought or sent. Migrant-sending households in Lesotho thus spend the greater proportion of total income on basic necessities. In other words, consumption-spending (for

necessities not luxuries) constitutes the pre-dominant usage of household income, a pattern observed in many other parts of the developing world.

Table 4.12: Proportion of Households Receiving Remitted Goods	
Type of Goods:	%
Clothing	28.6
Food	7.6
Consumption Goods	2.5
Fuel	0.7
Equipment	0.5
Seed	0.2
Poultry	0.2
Goods for Funeral	0.2
Goods for Feast	0.2
Roofing	0.1

To assume that only those households receiving remittances benefit from them would be a mistake. Within villages, there are formal and informal local relationships of obligation, reciprocity and charity with kin and neighbours by which remittances “spread” beyond the immediate beneficiary household. The interviews revealed that while in most cases remittances are spent only on immediate household members, remittances are passed on to other relatives, friends or poorer members of the community. One household in Ha Mafefoane, for example, consists of six people.²⁰ The de facto household head is a young male of 22, a university student. He looks after his younger brother (aged 18) and two younger sisters (aged 13 and 4). His two older sisters are both migrants to South Africa. One (aged 25) had been working in a shop in South Africa for 5 years. The other (aged 24) has just gone to South Africa for the first time. This household had four members in school yet receives no remittances at all direct from the two female migrant members in South Africa. Yet it still spent R4,000 on food, R1,700 on school fees and R1,500 on clothes over the previous year. The key to the puzzle is their widowed father. After their mother died, he moved in with a woman in another household. The two sisters send their remittances to their father “who

²⁰ Interview No 25, 3 January 2009.

decides how the money should be used.” The father splits the money between his new household and that of his children.

4.6 Gender Comparisons in Remittance Flows

Do patterns of remittance sending and usage vary with gender? In the next two sections of the report, comparisons are made between households sending male migrants and households sending female migrants, in order to compare male and female remittance behaviour and to assess any differential impact of remittances sent to male and female migrant-sending households. Household-level data is presented on:

- differences in the remitting behavior of male and female migrants;
- the importance of remittances to male and female migrant-sending households;
- differences in household expenditures in male and female migrant-sending households;
- whether male or female migrants send more in times of household crisis or need; and
- the perceived importance of remittances to the household.

What is perhaps most striking is the enormous significance of migrant remittances to household subsistence and basic material needs, regardless of migrant gender. The general importance of remittances is evident in the straightforward proportion of migrant-sending households that receive money from their migrant members (Table 4.13). At close to 90% in Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, this is an extremely high figure in international comparative terms. Male migrants from Lesotho are slightly more likely to remit than female migrants. Given that male migrant labour is mainly in the mining sector, where remittances are compulsory and that female migrant labour is in more precarious sectors of the labour market, it is surprising that this observed gender discrepancy in remittance behaviour is not higher.

Country	Male Migrant-Sending Households (%)	Female Migrant-Sending Households (%)
Lesotho	94.9	89.3
Mozambique	79.6	58.8
Swaziland	88.8	92.9
Zimbabwe	89.5	90.1
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

The household survey showed that the amounts of money remitted by female migrants overall are still significantly lower than those of male migrants (Table 4.14). Women’s employment and livelihood strategies – for example as informal sector traders or domestic workers compared to waged mine labour – mean lower earnings overall and less regular or reliable remuneration than their male counterparts. In addition, female migrants who are daughters rather than spouses or heads of household may remit a lower proportion of their earnings compared to male migrants, who are more likely to be heads of household and primary breadwinners.

Table 4.14: Average Annual Remittances Received from Male and Female Migrants

	Male Migrants	Female Migrants
Mean	M11,162.46	M4,825.32
Median	M9,600.00	M3,600.00
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

While the gender differences in the monetary value of remittances are stark, Lesotho’s female migrants remit significantly higher sums than their counterparts in Swaziland, Mozambique or Zimbabwe. This could reflect differences in their relative earnings. Alternatively, it could be because the need for remittance income is greater in Lesotho, with fewer alternative livelihood options available and migrant-sending households being more directly dependent on migrant remittances. This is likely to be especially true for the female-centred households which make up such a high proportion of Lesotho households sending female migrants.

Gender differences diminish considerably when remittances are considered in terms of their contribution to the household economy, rather than their absolute monetary value. Migrant remittances form an important, and in many cases the only, source of income for many migrant-sending households in Lesotho (Table 4.15). Of all the countries surveyed, Lesotho had the highest incidence of households reporting remittance earnings. Wage work, casual work and informal business were the only other significant sources of household income in the Lesotho sample, all falling well below remittances. Migration is thus not merely a supplementary livelihood strategy but the principal source of household income for over 90% of migrant-sending households, both male and female-migrant sending.

Table 4.15: Sources of Household Income in Male and Female Migrant-Sending Households

Source of Household Income	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Wage work	8.3	15.0
Casual work	5.0	12.1
Remittances – money	95.7	90.0
Remittances – goods	19.6	22.8
Farm product sales	2.4	2.8
Formal business	2.1	1.4
Informal business	6.5	6.4
Pension/ disability	0.2	2.1
Gifts	2.4	1.4
Other	0	0
Refused to answer	0	0
Don't know	0.5	2.1
N	841	140

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Note: Because many households had more than one source of income, percentages add up to more than 100%.

Over 95% of the households with male migrant members listed remittances as a source of household income. Fewer than 10% list income from the second-ranking income source, non-migrant wage labour. The equivalent proportions for female-sending households are around 90% and 15%. Households sending male migrants thus appear to be especially dependent on remittance earnings. This reflects both the higher proportion of male migrants who are household heads, and the higher earnings of male migrants, which make it more feasible to rely solely on remittances to meet basic household needs. Households sending female migrants are more likely to have to supplement remittance earnings with other sources of income, as female migrants remit lower sums. Female migrants are also less likely to be household heads, which means that they are often members of households with other working adult members, especially in cases where they come from extended families.

Taking these factors into consideration, it is again surprising that the gender discrepancies in remittance dependence were not found to be greater. As the country with the highest proportion of male and female migrants giving their status as head of household, making the migrants more likely to be their family's primary breadwinner, Lesotho's gender differences in household income sources were lower than for any

of the other countries surveyed, including even Zimbabwe. It should also be noted that the gender differences in dependence on monetary remittances are slightly offset by female migrants' higher levels of remittance of goods.

In sum, female migrant remittances are a demonstrably important source of both income and material goods for households sending female migrants. Whether they are household heads, spouses or daughters, women migrants are clearly sending significant sums of money and quantities of goods back to their families in Lesotho, contributing in no small way to those households' material welfare. This is confirmed by the more detailed exploration of the use and impact of remittances in the next section.

4.5 Gender Comparisons in Remittance Usage

Female migrants and recipients certainly feel that their priorities in using remittances differ from those of men. As one Focus Group participant observed:

Men and women spend money differently. Women often spend money inside the home while men on the other hand spend it outside the family. Men use the money to buy beer and other entertaining items while women would rather buy something that will benefit the whole family, such as buying food for the whole family. The man would take M100 of the money he brought home and use it to entertain himself alone but when he gets home he would demand food. The following day he takes another R100 and he would do that the whole holiday he is at home.²¹

The household data on use of remittances provides statistically-representative insights into the similarities and differences between male and female migrant-sending households in Lesotho. Household expenditure in particular categories (Tables 4.16 and 4.17) shows only small differences between male and female migrant-sending households, once again demonstrating the importance of both male and female migrants' remittances to their recipient households.

Table 4.16: Proportion of Migrant-Sending Households Incurring Particular Expense

Expense Incurred in Previous Month:	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Food/Groceries	93.3	90.0
Housing	0.7	1.4
Utilities	17.7	12.1

²¹ Focus Group 2: Female Migrants.

Clothes	73.7	68.6
Alcohol	13.0	5.7
Medical costs	26.5	12.9
Transport	54.8	39.3
Tobacco	10.9	8.6
Education	5.7	3.6
Entertainment	1.7	0.7
Savings	10.1	2.1
Fuel	77.9	69.3
Farming	7.7	4.3
Building	3.9	0.7
Special events	7.7	5.7
Gifts	3.9	2.1
Other	0.8	1.4
N	841	140
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

Table 4.17: Migrant-Sending Household Expenditures²²		
Median Amount Spent in Previous Month (M)		
Category	Male Migrant-Sending	Female Migrant-Sending
Food/Groceries	400	215
Utilities	60	75
Clothes	500	350
Medical expenses	50	33
Transport	70	40
Education	230	230
Domestic fuel	90	50
Farming	350	100
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

The main household purchases for both male and female migrant-sending households are the basic commodities of food, domestic fuel, and clothing, in addition to fundamental services such as transport and health care (Table 4.16). In terms of the number of households reporting expenditure in a particular

²² Table 4.17 shows the reported average amount of the previous month’s expenditure in various categories, using median rather than mean values to provide a more accurate reflection of average expenditure levels, as this reduces the influence of one or two respondent households with high expenditure. Note too that the values in Table 4.3 are only for those households reporting the particular expenditure (i.e. excluding the ‘zero-expenditure’ households in each category), and also represent expenditure in a particular single month rather than averaged over a year.

category in the previous month, the most common expenditures are, in rank order, food, domestic fuel (e.g. paraffin, wood, gas), clothing, and transport. Some gender differences emerge in the reported monetary expenditure in various categories (Table 4.17). Expenditure was found to be higher in almost every category for male compared to female migrant-sending households, and this was more consistently the case for Lesotho than for any of the other countries in the survey. This suggests that in Lesotho in particular, households with female migrant members (many of which, it should be recalled, were also female-headed) are indeed poorer and forced to ‘go without’ more often than households where the migrant members are men.

Given the weighting of overall household expenditures towards basic necessities, what is the role of remittances in enabling migrant-sending households to purchase certain goods and services? Are remittances spent on the same general basket of items? Or are they used for non-essential or luxury items, or perhaps directed towards savings or investment in business or other productive activities? Table 44, which ranks the categories of expenditure for remittance earnings specifically, shows both the ‘basic needs’ nature of remittance expenditure and the identical ranking of expenditure categories for male and female migrant-sending households. Food is the most common annual expenditure of remittance earnings in both male- and female-migrant households (Table 4.18). Second is clothing, followed by school fees. Transport fares rank fourth, with funeral policies the fifth-greatest expenditure of remittance income.

Table 4.18 Ranking of Most Important Uses of Cash Remittances Over Previous Year	
Male Migrant-Sending Households	Female Migrant-Sending Households
Food	Food
Clothes	Clothes
Schooling	Schooling
Fares	Fares
Funeral policies	Funeral policies

Remittance-receiving households confirmed the significance of remittances to food purchases (Table 4.19). The most consistent importance rating, for both migrant genders, is food, with school fees and clothes also rated highly by many. There are some gender differences, with men’s remittances seemingly more crucial to the purchase of basic livelihood items, such as food, than women’s. Given that men are older, more likely to be married, and more often the heads of households than female migrants, it is perhaps surprising that this gender difference was not greater.

Table 4.19: Importance of Remittances in Annual Household Expenditure

Category		Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Food	Very important	72.0	68.6
	Important	8.0	8.6
Clothes	Very important	53.0	50.1
	Important	21.3	12.1
Schooling	Very important	50.8	37.9
	Important	8.0	8.6
Fares	Very important	39.0	80.0
	Important	13.3	7.9
Seed	Very important	20.7	27.1
	Important	4.5	1.4
Savings	Very important	16.4	27.1
	Important	4.5	5.7
Funeral policies	Very important	19.6	59.3
	Important	9.9	5.7
Funerals	Very important	9.5	40.7
	Important	6.8	7.1
N		841	140
Source: SAMP Household Survey			

What stands out is the fundamental importance of remittances in enabling migrant-sending households to meet their basic needs, such as food and clothing, and basic services such as transport and schooling. Remittances are used to some extent to support agricultural production through seed purchases, but given the low reported income from farm product sales this must be largely for household subsistence production. Categories in which households sending female migrants expressed higher importance of remittance income in meeting expenditure included transport, funerals and funeral policies, but otherwise the broad rankings are similar for male and female migrant-sending households. Remittance earnings certainly do not appear to be ‘squandered’ on luxury consumer items, but rather are used, either directly or indirectly, to meet households’ subsistence needs. In general, the pattern for expenditure of remittances reflects the patterns for overall household expenditure, and the households of both male and female migrants stressed the importance of remittances in enabling them to meet those needs.

The ‘typical’ male or female migrant from Lesotho sends home money, which their households use to buy food and other basic goods and services, and brings home clothing, food and consumer goods (Table 4.20).

Consumer goods and ‘luxury’ items (e.g. electronic goods) are more readily available and also cheaper in South Africa, so it is not surprising to find them included here, but food and clothing still ranked well above consumer goods in stated importance. Again, there is a striking similarity between migrants of different gender.

Table 4.20: Most Important Goods Remitted by Migrants	
Male Migrant-Sending	Female Migrant-Sending
Clothes	Clothes
Food	Food
Consumer goods	Consumer goods

In addition to making regular remittances, migrants send money home in times of need, or to meet unexpected costs. Funeral costs are by far the most common, along with funds for weddings and other feasts. Lesotho, which had the highest overall dependence on migrant remittances among the countries surveyed, reported the lowest incidence of such ‘once-off’ or emergency remittances, although the levels were still considerable. Some gender differences are evident (Table 4.21), with a higher proportion of male migrants reported as sending money in times of need. This may reflect their role as heads of household, with primary responsibility for meeting such emergency needs.

Table 4.21: Proportion of Households Receiving Emergency Remittances		
	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Lesotho	44.0	37.1
Mozambique	59.3	35.3
Swaziland	51.9	61.9
Zimbabwe	54.8	54.2
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

Emergency remittances are clearly important to the households receiving them. They are seen as important or very important by 98% of migrant-sending households in Lesotho, with only very small differences on the basis of migrant gender (Table 4.22).

Table 4.22: Stated Importance of Emergency Remittances

	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Very important	73.9	70.6
Important	24.5	27.5

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Overall, in gender terms, it is the similarities in the expenditure of remittances from male and female migrants that are so strong and revealing. Two important conclusions follow. First, for both male and female migrants, migration is commonly undertaken in the role of primary breadwinner, rather than as a supplement to other sources of household income. Second, remittances are more important as means of securing basic household livelihoods, alleviating poverty, and meeting emergency costs than as drivers of broader economic development.

5.0 LINKS BETWEEN REMITTANCES AND DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Remittances and Poverty Reduction

Poverty continues to be the major driving force behind internal and cross-border migration in Lesotho. For most households (except the most skilled) migration remains a household survival strategy rather than a strategy for creating wealth and economic development opportunity. Several studies have mapped the pervasive nature of poverty in Lesotho, its causes and geographical distribution (Sechaba Consultants 1991, 1994, 1995, 2000; World Bank 1995; May et al 2002; Omole 2003). Two longitudinal studies of poverty in the 1990s showed that despite positive national economic growth (primarily from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and the textile industry), poverty remained a chronic problem in Lesotho. May et al (2002) compared data from National Household Budget Surveys in 1986-7 and 1994-5 and drew the following conclusion:

The data show that the incidence and severity of poverty is greater among a number of social groups, female headed households, people living in rural areas, especially in the mountainous parts of Lesotho, the elderly, children, those who rely upon agricultural production and agricultural assets (May et al 2002).

The proportion of households below the poverty line was 58% at both points in time.²³ However, the severity of poverty increased for both poor and ultra-poor households. Poor households tended to be larger and with higher age dependency ratios. Other significant variables were the gender and employment status of the household head. In 1986-7, 27% of poor households were headed by women who were single, divorced, widowed or abandoned, a figure that rose to 30% in 1994-5. The proportion of female-headed households that were poor was 65% in 1986-7 and 62% in 1994-5 – a slight decrease. However, male-headed households in the poor category decreased from 65% to 58%. De facto female-headed households (those with a male migrant spouse) experienced an increase in the incidence and depth of poverty (from 48% to 55%), a clear consequence of lay-offs in the South African mining industry.

Unemployment was a key determinant of household poverty: more than two-thirds of households with an unemployed household head were below the poverty line at both points in time. Between 1986-7 and 1994-5 there was also a substantial increase in unemployment amongst heads of poor households (from

²³ Poverty Line of M124 per person per month in 2001 prices (May et al 2002: 4).

18% to 31%). The proportion of female-headed households falling below the poverty line increased from 70% to 78% during this time period. The other significant change was more positive: a fall in the proportion of households with self-employed heads falling below the poverty line from 67% to 42%. Marked changes also occurred in the major source of income for all households. In 1986-7 cash remittances were the major source of income for 35% of households, a figure that had dropped to 23% in 1994-5. Amongst the poor, the fall was 31% to 23% and amongst the non-poor, even larger 40% to 24%. The proportion of households reporting local wages as the main source of income increased from 17% to 27% overall, from 23% to 42% for the non-poor and from only 13% to 16% for the poor. In other words, the relative importance of external versus internal wages as a source of household income shifted with mine retrenchments. And very few poor households were able to make that shift. The main fallback for poor households was agriculture (with 27% of households reporting it as the main source of income in 1986-7 and 42% in 1994-5).

Many of these trends are evident in another study that revisited 328 households in 2002, first interviewed in 1993 (Wason and Hall 2004; Gill-Wason 2004). The authors conclude that Lesotho's economic growth in the 1990s did not significantly reduce poverty. The proportion of poor households had risen to 68% by 2002. In 1993, 68% of the sample had no bank account or nothing in it; this had risen to 82% by 2002. Some 26% of the households were chronically poor (i.e. below the poverty line in 1993 and still there in 2002). Only 14% had risen above the poverty line while 28% had fallen below it (the "descending poor.") (Wason and Hall 2004: 23). A third of the descending poor households had experienced a change of head. Being chronically poor was also positively correlated with having a female head. Access to wage work (in Lesotho or in South Africa) was a critical determinant of whether households stayed above the poverty line. Those above or moving above had much more significant and consistent access than those that remained or fell below the poverty line. Some 34% of the households that had one or more wage workers in 1993 had none in 2002. Of these, 49% had declined into poverty.

The most recent snapshot of contemporary household poverty was provided by a SAMP poverty and migration survey of 1,224 households in all parts of Lesotho (Green 2006a). Of 3,197 household members over 18, only 22% were working full-time. Another 17% were working part-time, leaving 61%

unemployed. The study used the Afrobarometer Lived Poverty Index as a poverty measure.²⁴ The LPI shows that only 41% of households always have cash income and 29% always have sufficient food. As many as 23% said they never have enough food to eat (Green 2006a). Asked to compare household economic circumstances with 12 months previously, 43% said they were worse and 11% much worse. Comparing households with and without migrants, the study found that 39% of migrant households but only 28% of non-migrant households satisfied their basic needs. As Green (2006a) concludes, “There is a clear pattern from the data which suggests that households with migrant workers are more wealthy than those without and this clearly suggests that migration is a strong anti-poverty indicator.” What is equally clear is that even households with part or full-time wage earners still struggle to secure a livelihood.

Remittances are clearly essential to household subsistence and well-being. However, this still does not give a sense of the nature and intensity of the poverty and deprivation experienced by migrants’ households. To ascertain the links between migrant gender and poverty, data was collected on ‘lived poverty’. Households with migrant members were asked how often they had gone without particular basic needs in the previous year (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Frequency of Household Deprivation of Basic Needs in Previous Year		
	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Gone without: Food		
Never	48.3	32.9
Once or twice	15.3	15.7
Several times	15.2	18.6
Many times	19.6	32.1
Always	1.5	0.7
Gone without: Clean water		
Never	34.4	39.3
Once or twice	14.0	10.0
Several	17.8	17.9

²⁴ The LPI is based on answers to questions about how often the people in the household have had sufficient basic items in the previous year: food, water, medicine, cooking fuel and cash income. Answers are collected in five categories: never, just once or twice, several times, many times, always.

times		
Many times	27.1	29.3
Always	6.7	3.6
Gone without: Medicine or medical treatment		
Never	37.6	32.1
Once or twice	28.2	25.7
Several times	18.3	20.7
Many times	14.3	17.9
Always	1.7	3.6
Gone without: Electricity		
Never	4.8	3.6
Once or twice	2.1	0.7
Several times	0.6	0.0
Many times	0.7	0.0
Always	91.8	95.7
Gone without: Fuel for cooking		
Never	47.9	47.1
Once or twice	21.4	20.7
Several times	14.6	12.9
Many times	15.0	17.9
Always	1.1	1.4
Gone without: Cash income		
Never	26.3	19.3
Once or twice	28.1	17.9
Several times	17.6	22.9
Many times	25.6	33.6
Always	2.4	5.7
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

Female migrant-sending households in Lesotho are relatively more deprived than male migrant-sending households. Slightly over half of female migrant-sending households reported going without food ‘several times’ or more in the previous year, compared to only 36% of male migrant-sending households. A similar pattern was found for deprivation from cash income: 62% for female migrant-sending households, 46% for male migrant-sending households. Deprivation indices were more gender-equivalent for electricity, water

and fuel, but this is more a reflection of a general lack of service provision, especially in rural areas, than of poverty *per se*. Even for medicine and medical treatment, female migrant-sending households are worse off than male migrant-sending households.

Lesotho’s female migrants (most of whom go to South Africa to work in domestic service) evidently come from very poor, severely deprived households that would likely be considerably worse off if they did not have migrant remittances as a source of income. That ‘lived poverty’ is so intensely and materially experienced by household members of both male and female migrants reinforces the finding that migration from Lesotho to South Africa is important as a household survival strategy. Comparisons with non-migrant households would be necessary to ascertain whether households without any migrant members are relatively better or worse off than those with migrant members, but given the stated importance of remittances to meeting migrants’ households’ basic needs, migration is certainly the mainstay of those households’ livelihoods.

In order to determine how the role and significance of migration are perceived by sending households, respondents were asked to assess the overall impact of migration on a five-point scale from very positive to very negative. They were also asked questions about the most positive and most negative aspects of having household members working in another country. Respondents were broadly positive about the overall impact of migration, although more so for male than for female migration (Table 5.2). Close to 70% of the male migrant-sending household respondents in Lesotho regard migration as having positive or very positive impacts. The proportion for female migrant-sending households was lower, at 59%.

Table 5.2: Perceived Overall Impact of Migration on the Household		
	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Very positive	34.4	17.9
Positive	35.2	41.5
Neither	2.3	2.1
Negative	13.9	17.1
Very negative	12.7	20.7
Don't know	1.5	0.7
Total	100	100
N	841	140
Source: SAMP Household Survey		

A surprisingly large proportion of the female migrant-sending households from Lesotho regard the impact of migration as either negative or very negative, at 38% as compared to 27% of the male migrant-sending households. This is especially interesting given the high levels of poverty and deprivation in Lesotho's female migrant-sending households and the significant contribution made by female migrant remittances to household income and expenditure. Possible explanations are that the social costs of migration are felt to outweigh the economic gains; or alternatively that female migration is indeed a 'last resort', and thus a source of shame and embarrassment to the household, especially if it is related to marital breakdown or to perceived male failure to earn a living for the family. Female migration itself may be regarded by many in Lesotho as socially inappropriate or undesirable, even if it is recognized as economically necessary.

Perceptions of the positive impacts of working in another country reinforce the findings from income, expenditure and deprivation data, i.e. that migration primarily improves household living conditions (Table 5.3). Differences based on the gender of the migrant are small. This supports the finding that female migration is as economically important as male migration, at least to the migrant-sending households themselves.

	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
None	16.2	24.7
Supports household	6.9	5.6
Improved living conditions	63.2	58.6
Supports children's education	11.7	11.1
Job opportunities	<1	0.0
Migrant acquires skills	<1	0.0
N	841	140

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Most Basotho families are struggling simply to survive. Remittances are directed almost exclusively to the basic needs of household members. The bulk of remittances are spent on necessities such as food, clothing, school fees, medical supplies, cooking fuel and transportation. Very little is left over for investment in agricultural production or small business development. Savings are almost non-existent.

Yet, in some ways, the country's migrant-sending households are actually the fortunate few. They are not at the top of the economic ladder, but they are above the great majority at the bottom.

5.2 Remittances and Agriculture

Lesotho is still a predominantly rural society although urbanization is proceeding very rapidly. One reason, among many, is declining agricultural production and productivity. Cereal production reached a high of about 200 kg per person in the mid-1970s but is currently around the 50-60 kg level. The expected figure for the 2007 season reached its lowest point ever at 40 kg per person. The FAO standard for subsistence production of cereal crops is a minimum of 180 kg per person, so that at present Lesotho is producing less than a quarter of expected needs. Food insecurity is a constant for many households. Every year, large quantities of the primary staple, maize, are imported from South Africa (Forum for Food Security 2004: 11; Mphale et al 2003). Given the serious lack of employment, the World Food Programme declared a serious emergency, in 2007-8 with about 400,000 people facing severe food insecurity.

Much of the recent difficulty can be attributed to drought, with severe weather conditions prevailing over much of Southern Africa in the 2004-2007 period. But loss of soil fertility is another factor, since Lesotho's arable land has been over-cultivated for many years. A further reason is a slow reduction over the years in the number of fields which are cultivated. Boehm (2003) argues that the current disintegration of the mine migrant labour system has reinforced the marginal position of farming in Lesotho. Households without access to mine remittances no longer have the resources to invest in agriculture. Another factor of increasing importance is the loss of able-bodied agricultural labour through HIV/AIDS. Turner (2004: 11) acknowledges that many fields are still cultivated, but points out the difficulty: "Those affected households that struggle on, often headed by old people or orphans, typically suffer poverty because they are no longer able to farm as they did before, and/or because their capacity to generate off-farm income has dwindled or disappeared."

The household survey provided important insights into the relationship between agriculture and remittances (Table 5.4). Around a quarter of households bought seed and one in five bought fertilizer. Around 15 percent used remittances to assist with ploughing. Five percent used remittances to employ people in their field but less than 2% used remittances to purchase cattle. In other words, almost three-quarters of households do not spend any of their remittances on agriculture-related activity. The survey

also showed that less than 3% of households receive income from the sale of farm products. In other words, even when remittances are invested in agriculture this is largely to try to increase the food production of the household.

Table 5.4: Use of Remittances for Agriculture

	%
Seed	24.4
Fertiliser	18.5
Tractor Hire	12.5
Oxen for ploughing	2.5
Labour	5.1
Cattle purchase	1.4
Small stock purchase	1.1
Poultry purchase	0.8
Dipping and veterinary costs	2.6
Vehicle and transport costs	0.6
Equipment	0.3
Other farm input	0.4
Source: SAMP Household Survey	

The experience of one ex-migrant farmer, a man of 70, clearly illustrates the constraints that households face.²⁵ Many households have no land which means they are unable to farm at all. This particular man does have fields. His daughter and son are both migrants but he finds the former a far more reliable remitter perhaps, he says, because he is looking after her 13-year old son. However, she only remits R800 a year. He uses the money to hire casual workers from the village to help him plough and plant. He grows maize (corn) and wheat and sells his surplus produce and earns about R1,600 a year. However, most of this is spent on purchasing food and groceries so that he and his grand-daughter and another young man who lives with him can have a more varied diet.

His main challenges as a farmer are (a) “the weather conditions, the worst enemy being the droughts and hail, the other one is the attack of the plants by pests” and (b) lack of government support. He would like help with a threshing machine, a place to store grain and a place to buy seeds and insecticides. He has considered cash-cropping of vegetables, “but the problem is theft.” Another respondent said he receives the R3,000 remitted by his working spouse in a similar manner, although, he only grows sorghum which he

²⁵ Interview No 45, 8 January 2009.

either sells “as is” or turns into malt which he sells to beer-brewers in the area. His income from the sale of produce was R3,500 the previous year. What is interesting about these two cases is that they are both older men who view themselves as farmers and say they have been farming since their youth. Few of today’s young men and women would describe themselves that way.

5.3 Potential for Productive Use of Remittances

The proportion of migrant-sending households investing remittances in farming for sale and in formal business and informal business is extremely low in Lesotho. There is also no statistically significant difference between male and female migrant-sending households. This is an important point as households with male migrants receive more in remittances than households with female migrants. Yet, the overwhelming majority of households in both categories (over 90%) do not receive income from the sale of farm produce or from formal or informal business. And even the very small minority who do make extra income from these sources do not make large sums (an average of R6,708 p.a. in formal business, R3,066 p.a. in the informal sector and only R1,526 p.a. from the sale of farm produce).

Source of Household Income:	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)	Average Income (M)
Farm product sales	2.4	2.8	1,525.93
Formal business	2.1	1.4	6,708.00
Informal business	6.5	6.4	3,066.41
N	841	140	

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Remittances to Lesotho are largely a zero-sum game at present. The money comes in from South Africa and is spent mostly on South African or other foreign imports, especially foodstuffs and clothing. Efforts to create small businesses through sharing of resources have not been successful over the years. CARE attempted in the 1980s and 1990s to create mohair-spinning and seed-multiplication projects. They depended on foreign subsidies to keep going, and in the end only one made even a marginal impact on the economy of the village where it was located. IFAD developed credit associations in roughly the same time period, but they never succeeded. The Ministry of Agriculture’s credit union was useful only to provide seed to farmers, but it always lost money, mostly because of bad loans.

The in-depth interviews identified a few respondents who did use remittances for some form of entrepreneurial activity. Their experience is certainly of relevance since it (a) helps explain why so few households in Lesotho invest remittances in entrepreneurial activity; (b) identifies the obstacles which entrepreneurial individuals face and (c) permits recommendations on how the proportion of entrepreneurs might be expanded.

Tefo Khetang is a young skilled manual worker in the construction industry in Johannesburg where he has worked for a building contractor for two years.²⁶ He is an irregular migrant and earns R22,000 a year. He remits around R5,000 a year in cash and R7,000 worth of goods to his large household:

I am the main provider in the household of twelve people. All these people need food and clothing. The money I send meets only two basic needs i.e. food and soap. There are complaints about the amount of money I send because they are a large family. I normally send the money to my two older brothers who are in charge. We have one married sister working in South Africa as well. I send the money home through the bank. Owing to the size of the household, the money is just enough to buy food but little as it is, it makes some difference because without it, life would be difficult. When anybody falls ill at home, they just phone me and I send the money as they require.

The sheer size of the household places an extraordinary burden on Khetang. However, he believes that there are “business opportunities for citizens of Lesotho (in South Africa) but the problem is getting proper documentation and raising enough funds.” His aim is certainly “to open a business thus helping my family and community.” He has begun in a small way and made R800 in December: “When I am here at this time of year, I sell beer, soft drinks and some cigarettes. The business is doing well particularly at this time of year. When I go back to South Africa, I think it will die a natural death unless my other brothers who are still here give it a serious thought.”

Several female entrepreneurs had realized Khetang’s ‘dream’ of opening small shops though not without considerable obstacles. All are married to current or ex-miners and have successfully used mine remittances in their small business ventures. Perhaps the most successful respondent is Katleho Tsebo.²⁷ She is in her mid-40s and lives with her teenage daughter and 24 year old son. Her spouse has been

²⁶ Interview No 41, 24 December 2008.

²⁷ Interview No. 50, 30 December 2008.

working on the mines for 18 years and currently remits around R36,000 p.a. She started a grocery shop with remittances but did not generate much profit. In 2008, Tsebo switched to selling alcohol which she buys from a liquor store in another village. She hires someone to run the store and made a profit of R92,400 in 2008. Of this she saves R24,000 p.a. at a bank as a retirement fund for her and her husband. Her plans for further expansion are hampered only by her inability to get a substantial loan. Another successful entrepreneur is 25 year old Masa Mponeng.²⁸ She supports her elderly mother and four children. When her husband was retrenched from the mines, she started a small spaza shop brewing and selling traditional beer and buying and selling small items such as matches and candles. Her husband got another job in South Africa and continues to remit about R10,000 p.a. She travels to the capital Maseru to buy goods for her shop where she also sells vegetables she has grown at home. She makes about R3,000 a year from the shop and another R1,500 from beer sales. Her transport costs to and from Maseru are exorbitant (R2,500 a year). In the villages, there is also increasing competition from Chinese store-owners (See Case Study 7).

Individual entrepreneurial opportunities in the rural villages are not particularly abundant. Though not everyone can run or afford to run a spaza or a shebeen, many of these outlets throughout the country were started (and are sometimes sustained) by remittances. However, the start-up and running costs (even with low overheads) are such that these are run primarily by the spouses of migrant mineworkers, who are amongst the best paid migrants.

Focus Group participants spoke of current and ex-mineworkers who have also successfully entered the taxi business. One man in the village had started by running a shop and then bought a minibus taxi with the proceeds: “Now he has many.”²⁹ Another man got together with his friends from another village and started a taxi business. He first purchased a second hand taxi and then worked “very hard” until he was able to buy another. He now owns five and hires drivers and conductors. Public transport is poor in Lesotho and many people travel by minibus taxi within the country and when they go to South Africa. The routes are highly competitive and it is (sometimes literally) a cut-throat business. The capital outlay is considerable, however, and well beyond the means of most migrant workers, especially women.

²⁸ Interview No. 51, 8 January 2009.

²⁹ Focus Group 2

Case Study 7: Minding the Store

Most villages in Lesotho have one or two small shops known as spazas. These spazas sell common household items, including groceries, which the owners tend to purchase in the towns and bring back to the villages to sell. Spazas are often attached to the owner's house and are run by the owner. Occasionally they hire someone to look after the shop. Spazas perform an important function in many villages. They are not generally as lucrative as shebeens (bars or taverns) but are a useful source of supplementary income and savings for enterprising women. Many of these women are the spouses of miners and used remittances from their spouse as start-up capital.

One such woman is 48 year old Palesa Tumelo. Her spouse has worked for many years on the mines and although she does not know how much he earns, she receives around R17,000 p.a. in remittances (which is more than many migrant women from Lesotho earn in a whole year). Remittances are spent on food, transport, fuel, her mother-in-law's monthly hospital visits and paying school fees for her brother-in-law's three children who live in a different household. Remittances are also used to cover the household's farming activities including purchase of seed and fertilizer and paying for casual labour to help with ploughing, planting and harvesting. The household grows food primarily for own consumption. Without remittances, she says, "these activities (food, education, housing, farming and health) would not be possible. We would surely struggle to make ends meet."

Unlike so many others who simply rely on the monthly remittance payment, Tumelo has tried to use the funds to generate further income. She and her husband agreed that they start a business using remittance money. She chose to open a shop because "it is the only kind of business I can operate myself" although she sometimes hires someone to help out.

I am responsible for manning the shop, being a shop clerk. I draw lists of stocks that need replenishing and go to Maseru (the capital city) myself to buy the stocks. I also do the pricing of items and the cleaning of the premises. The business is now successful as it is self-sustaining and no longer depends on outside sources of money to survive. The worst problem I experienced was that I gave things to fellow villagers on credit and they delayed paying me, while some even failed paying at all. My business collapsed and my husband came to the rescue and injected remittance money. Now I no longer give credit.

She and her husband also purchased several minibus taxis with his remittance money. However, this business was not very successful with her husband away and now they are left with only one taxi, which they pay someone to operate.

Tumelo makes around R24,000 profit p.a. from her shop but the competition is closing in and it is non-Basotho. She is particularly angry about the advent of foreign business owners, especially the Chinese, who she says are renting shops even at the village level and undercutting her prices. As a result, she says, "no-one goes to Basotho-owned shops" any longer.

In the villages in Lesotho, burial societies and grocery associations effectively “pool” a portion of remittance receipts though not primarily for entrepreneurial reasons. Two Focus Group respondents described how these operate:

There are burial societies within the community and members have to pay monthly contributions towards the time when one of the members has a death in the family and the society has to pay what is due to them. There are also grocery associations whereby monthly payments are also made by members towards purchasing of Christmas groceries and food. The money is also available for borrowing by members, to be paid back with interest. The main problem is non-payment of borrowed money and interest. There are separate male and female associations within the community. The women have the grocery associations.³⁰

There are associations within the community. There are burial societies and an egg producer association known as Egg Circle, where members are given the privilege of having their eggs sold before everyone else. Burial societies differ but members commonly pay a monthly subscription of an agreed amount and when they have a death in the family the society gives them their agreed dues, whether money, a coffin or a cow. Problems occur when people do not pay their subscription for a long time in which case they would receive nothing if they had a death, unless they pay what they owe. The other problem is that more people are dying from AIDS these days and that puts strain on the coffers of the societies as sometimes the societies would have as many as three deaths in a week or month whereas before they would sometimes spend as long as six months without a death.³¹

Respondents in Ha Mafooane said there were a lot of “women’s organizations” in the area including food and grocery associations. As well as loaning out money to be paid back with interest at the end of the year, the associations buy food and groceries in bulk which they divide among themselves. There is also a men’s-only association but the women were “leaving them in the dust” as their associations are growing “in leaps and bounds.”³²

The household survey showed that 12% of households borrowed money from informal money lenders in the previous year. Some of the money lenders are actually migrants who use their earnings (in South Africa) and remittances (in Lesotho) to loan money to needy persons or households. This is a double-

³⁰ Focus Group 2

³¹ Focus Group 3

³² Focus Group 3.

edged sword. While it is a useful way for the benefits of remittances to be spread more broadly, most households only borrow to meet emergencies. Informal money lenders are known as bo-machonisa (loan sharks) in Lesotho and charge their clients “inhumane” interest.³³ They commonly take people’s passports as surety for loans and charge interest rates of 30-50%. One mineworker interviewed for this study, for example, joined with a group of friends and they all pay R2,000 into a common pool at the beginning of each year. They then make loans to those who need emergency funds and charge interest of 50%. At the end of the year, they receive their original investment back plus their share of the profits. According to the migrant, this helps him to cover the extra costs of the ‘festive season.’ Such enterprising activity is viewed with distaste by poorer households or those who are forced for lack of alternatives to avail themselves of the moneylending ‘service.’ This form of ‘entrepreneurship’ may be a profitable use of remittances but it clearly undermines social capital and deepens the poverty of other households.

The household surveys show that despite their poverty, 27% of migrant-sending households owned cellphones purchased with remittances. Although primarily communication devices (including with absent migrant members of the household), a recent small-scale pilot project by the Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Project (RHVP) in Lesotho suggests that the potential may be there for broader impacts. RHVP distributed ten phones pre-loaded with US\$50 of airtime (RHVP 2009). The idea was to “see how vulnerable people benefit from cellphones, to disprove arguments against the use of cellphones for cash transfers, and to prove that illiterate people are able to embrace technology.” Amongst the uses to which the phones were put was to generate income by selling airtime so that the enterprise would become self-sustaining.³⁴ They then used the money to purchase more phones. It is not clear whether the participants were from migrant-sending households but the fact that over a quarter of the households surveyed already own phones suggest that there is potential for the technology to impact positively as an income-generating tool and, in time, to facilitate remittance transfer.

5.4 Obstacles to Entrepreneurship

The main obstacle that confronts many migrants and remittance-receiving households is the small size of

³³ Focus Group 2

³⁴ In Kenya’s M-PESA scheme cellphones are used to send money. The service registered 111,000 users within the first three months and transferred US\$6 million.

the remittance package and the fact that most of it is consumed on basic needs. Most households find that by the time the remittance package has been spent on household needs (food, clothing, transport, fuel, school fees and hospital visits), there is very little left over for productive income-generating investment. Those who share remittances with other households have even less to spare. There is a clear gender dimension to this issue. As noted above, men (mainly migrant miners) can earn three or four times as much as women (mainly domestic and farm workers) and can remit more than women. Women's earnings and remittances are paltry and the researchers were able to find only one household where women's remittances were used (in this case by their father) to generate additional income through farming. However, the household was small and the expenditures on basic needs lower so there was a small surplus. Focus Group respondents were keen to explain how difficult it is in Lesotho to use remittances to establish a business. As one man noted:

It is not easy to establish some business. Let me explain it this way. I may send money home but it happens that it is not enough for a business because, first, when I left, I might already have had some debts....There is also too much sharing of money before it reaches the destination. It is TEBA this side, debts on the other and clothing for the children there, so it cannot be used for business. There is no migrant who has managed to establish a business here.³⁵

The female migrants concurred: "Money that we send home is not used for farming nor for business." The money is "all used for family needs and there is always none left to start a business."³⁶ The fact that so few households in the national survey invest in business activity certainly bears this out.

One woman stated quite categorically that "remittances are not used for business purposes, whether big or small. Money is often sent to cover certain needs. The money that is sent is little and after all is done, nothing remains to start a business."³⁷ In many cases, migrants remit whatever they can and there is little or any surplus at the end of the month to save, invest, or to establish a small enterprise. However, the proportion of the wage package that is remitted does vary considerably even amongst migrants making the same amount of money.

Part of this is because of the variable costs that migrants encounter in South Africa. Migrant miners and

³⁵ Focus Group 1.

³⁶ Focus Group 2.

³⁷ Focus Group 3.

most domestic workers usually get free board and lodging while at work. Others have to pay rent and for their own food. If the migrant is in another relationship or has a second household in South Africa, the remittance flow to Lesotho will be reduced accordingly. However, it is still likely that there is an element of discretion in voluntary remitting. In other words, it is possible that the amount remitted is actually determined by the livelihood needs of the household and that any surplus remains in South Africa and is spent there. Why, in other words, send more when there are so few opportunities for business development in Lesotho?

The second major obstacle is the lack of capital and loan financing for those who wish to develop a business. Some respondents blamed the government for not assisting more:

You come with the little you worked for with difficulty but you will be required to pay for so many things that what you had will get finished even before you start. When you establish a business your intention is to live and help other Basotho do so but our government does not help. There is a boulder blocking and we are not aware of it.”³⁸

Others complained about the lack of loan facilities: “Our banks which have our money cannot give us loans.”³⁹ Even micro-finance is difficult to obtain in Lesotho. During the research, the authors interviewed the CEO of an NGO micro-finance company which has been very successful in providing micro-finance in Zambia and has now entered the Lesotho market. The company only makes loans to civil servants and employees where wages can be garnished if repayment is not made. This effectively precludes the majority of poor migrant-sending households.

Most migrant-sending households are forced to borrow money during the course of the year, either because the remittance flow is insufficient or irregular (Table 5.6). The majority (46%) borrow from family and friends, presumably largely interest-free. Very few borrow to finance an entrepreneurial activity. Less than 1% had borrowed money from banks or formal money lenders. Less than 5% had obtained loans from micro-finance organizations. Apart from family and friends, the most common way of obtaining a loan was from informal money lenders (12% of households).

³⁸ Focus Group 1.

³⁹ Focus Group 3.

Table 5.6: Sources of Borrowed Funds

	%
Friends	28.0
Employer	0.5
Burial society	5.9
Family	18.3
Church	0.2
Bank	0.4
Savings group	3.4
Union	2.9
Money lenders (formal)	0.5
Money lenders (informal)	12.1
Micro-finance Organisations	4.3
Other source	0.1
Source: SAMP Household Survey	

Third, the net worth of remittance transfers is reduced in several ways. As noted, there are the transaction costs of money transfer. Very few migrants use formal money transfer channels so this is not as big an issue as it is in other countries. However, transaction costs are not absent even for informal channels. Net income, and therefore remitting potential, is also reduced by the fact that some migrants are double-taxed (in South Africa and again in Lesotho). Then there is the major problem of corruption. Some miners were particularly critical of their recruiting agency, TEBA, and its Lesotho operations:

We normally send money home through TEBA but the problem is our spouses have to stand in long queues and sometimes end up not receiving the money. There is much corruption at TEBA. Our spouses are forced to pay bribes to get the service. It is painful that you remit M1,000 and M20 is deducted for a bribe. The money now is already short to cover all that was supposed to be covered. TEBA does not care for us mineworkers.⁴⁰

No doubt this kind of corruption by TEBA employees is not condoned by management but they could do more to root it out. Also problematic for migrants is widespread corruption at the border. Sechaba Consultants (2002) argue that border posts between South Africa exist not to control the flow of people but to allow the personal enrichment of border officials. Again, this “business of the border” is not condoned by either government but they do seem powerless to prevent it. One of the major forms of corruption that emerged in this study was the practice of permit renewal forced on migrants by the fact that entry to South

⁴⁰ Focus Group 1

Africa is limited to 30 days. Migrants who have overstayed in South Africa have to pay bribes to border officials on return or, alternatively, pay for their passports to be taken to the border for stamping, when more money flows into official pockets.

Fourth, the surveys discussed in this report indicate that remitting from South Africa takes the following ‘form’: a migrant from a household goes to South Africa, works and remits small amounts at regular intervals to the individual household who spend the funds on basic needs such as food, clothing, education, health and transport. There is no evidence of what has been called in other contexts “collective remitting”; that is, groups of migrants pooling remittances and remitting to support a broader community development initiative. But migrants do form mutual help associations in South Africa (such as stokvels and burial societies) and in Lesotho itself there are mutual help associations in virtually every village and community (burial societies, grocery associations and egg circles). Further research is needed on the operation, organization and impact of these associations. They are quintessentially grassroots organizations amongst migrant-sending households and help to build social capital in migrant communities. Their potential as development agents has barely been examined but it seems that they do have considerable potential, if supported in the right way, to add development value to the efforts of individual migrants at the level of the community as a whole. A systematic research study on the relationship between migration and mutual self-help groups and associations in migrant communities is strongly recommended including how they operate and are organized, what benefits they provide to participants and communities and, even more important, what their potential is for improving the development benefits of migration through collective organization and action.

A fifth obstacle to improving the development impacts of migration and remittances is inherent to the regulatory framework governing movement between Lesotho and South Africa. Only miners and some skilled migrants can get residence and work permits in South Africa. Everyone else has to go on 30 day visitor’s permits. The moment they work in South Africa they are doing so irregularly. This makes migrants vulnerable to exploitation by employers, compromises their basic rights and means that they cannot do simple things like open a bank account in South Africa. Lesotho places no restrictions on the migration of its citizens to South Africa for work. The government’s only concern is that people do not move permanently to South Africa or cut their ties with home (Coplan 2000). This concern is founded on the fear that scarce skills will be lost and remittance flows will decline.

Finally, a major obstacle to realizing the development potential of remittances in Lesotho lies in what de Haas et al (2009: 1) call “structural development constraints”:

A critical reading of the empirical literature leads to the conclusion that it would be naïve to think that despite their often considerable benefits for individuals and communities, migration and remittances alone can remove more structural development constraints. Despite their development *potential*, migrants and remittances can neither be blamed for a lack of development nor be expected to trigger take-off development in generally unattractive investment environments. By increasing selectivity and suffering among migrants, current immigration restrictions have a negative impact on migrants’ wellbeing as well as the poverty and inequality.

There can be few peaceful developing countries where the “investment environment” is more unattractive than in Lesotho. In other words, bluntly put, even if receiving households had remittances to invest in entrepreneurial and other income-generating activities, what could they possibly invest in? This raises a key issue which requires further exploration. How feasible is it for migrant workers from Lesotho to engage in entrepreneurial activities in South Africa where the opportunities are much greater than in Lesotho? Can loans and micro-credit be obtained more easily in South Africa? These questions suggest, at least, that it is important to stop seeing Lesotho as the only site for entrepreneurship by migrants from Lesotho. South Africa should also be seen as a potential site and market for the migrant entrepreneur and his or her dependents. Certainly this is very true for cross-border traders who buy and sell in South African towns. It should also be true for other forms of business enterprise. This would require a change in public policy in South Africa.

5.5 Public Policies

Gay (2000: 25) calls for a ‘new immigration compact’ between South Africa and Lesotho and notes that: “If Lesotho and South Africa were truly distinct and separate, it would be natural to speak of migration or immigration” from one to the other. There is little doubt that South Africa would never have developed into a modern industrial state without cheap migrant labour from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho. If Lesotho were ever to claim reparations for the value of labour expended and lives lost and families wrecked by the South African mines, the claim would probably bankrupt the South African fiscus. We make this point only to indicate that the development of South Africa and Lesotho are inextricably linked, and always have been.

Lesotho is an impoverished, dependent and economically vulnerable state because of South Africa. Basotho migrants cannot be kept out of South Africa and they will come in ever greater numbers if the only employment and other economic opportunities are in South Africa itself. That much is certain. But why should South African employees be permitted to take advantage of their poverty and vulnerable status by paying them sub-minimum wages, abusing their basic labour and human rights and using them to undercut unions and undermine labour standards? Lesotho ratified the ICMW⁴¹ in the hope that South Africa would do likewise and begin to offer its migrants basic rights and protections, not a continuation of the situation under apartheid. So far, the South African government (like receiving states around the world) has studiously ignored the Convention.

Migration needs to be re-conceptualized in public policy discourse not as a threat to the interests of South Africans but as something that is (and could be even more) mutually beneficial to both countries. The only realistic way for this to happen is to open the border to free travel in both directions. This would involve allowing Basotho to own land and seek jobs in South Africa without losing their citizenship. Lesotho's government would continue to be responsible for social services within its own borders, but Basotho would have the chance to improve their material conditions within South Africa and to remit in much greater volumes to their dependents who remain at home (Gay 2000: 45). Lest this be dismissed as an idealistic pipedream, it is worth asking what has happened since Gay made his call for a new immigration compact.

First, the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement has been formally adopted at the Summit of the Heads of States and been signed by nine member states which now allows for the drafting of an implementation plan (Williams et al 2006). However, for the Protocol to come into effect, at least nine member states must have signed and ratified it. The ultimate objective of the protocol is "to develop policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the movement of persons of the Region generally into and within the territories of State Parties" by facilitating three types of movement:

- Entry, for a lawful purpose and without a visa, into the territory of another State for a maximum period of ninety (90) days per year for bona fide visits and in accordance with the laws of the State concerned. The person must enter through an official border post, possess valid travel documents and produce evidence of sufficient means of support for the duration of the visit. The Protocol is silent on what a

⁴¹ The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

migrant may or may not do during these three months.

- Movement for Residence defined as “permission or authority, to live in the territory of a State Party in accordance with the legislative and administrative provisions of that State Party.” The Protocol also encourages member states to facilitate the issuing of residence permits.
- Movement known as Establishment defined as "permission or authority granted by a State Party in terms of its national laws, to a citizen of another State Party, for: (a) exercise of economic activity and profession either as an employee or a self-employed person; and (b) establishing and managing a profession, trade, business or calling.

The Protocol makes it clear that entry for all three reasons will be governed by the national legislation of the SADC member state which they are entering.

Second, in 2001, the Departments of Home Affairs in both South Africa and Lesotho asked SAMP to conduct research on cross-border movement between the two countries and to make recommendations on how to facilitate movement between them. This resulted in an extensive report which questioned whether the considerable resources to manage border operations were being effectively utilized and recommended the downgrading of the current border regime (Sechaba Consultants, 2002). A Joint Bilateral Commission for Co-operation (JBCC) between the two countries was signed in 2001. The JBCC is used as a vehicle to drive forward areas of co-operation between the two countries and by mid-2007, 20 subsidiary cooperation agreements had been signed.

Since Lesotho and South Africa have both ratified the Protocol, they clearly have no fundamental objections. There is therefore every reason for them to move forward bilaterally to implement all three phases with immediate effect. In 2002, a bilateral Agreement on the Facilitation of Cross Border Movement of Citizens between South Africa and Lesotho was drafted. The Agreement was independently approved by the Cabinets of both countries in 2005-6 and finally signed in June 2007. This agreement calls primarily for an easing of border controls between the two countries. This is a start but it does not go nearly far enough and in late 2008 had still not been implemented. The aim of both states should be a broader agreement which is consistent with the SADC Protocol and which includes not only Entry but also Residence and, especially, Establishment. For co-development to be truly effective in the migration field this “new immigration pact” is as urgently needed as ever.

5.6 Recommendations and Good Practices

The research for this report has shown, at the national and household level, that migration from Lesotho is deeply and profoundly gendered. Feminization of migration is proceeding rapidly but this does not mean that a homogenous de-gendered “migrant” is emerging. There are major and entrenched differences between male and female migrants in terms of their socio-demographic profile, their occupations and opportunities in South Africa and their remitting behavior. Similarly, within Lesotho itself, there are significant differences between male-sending and female-sending households. The latter are worse off than the former and have even fewer opportunities for income-generating activity outside of migration. Our first recommendation is that the gendered nature of migration and its differential impact on men and women needs to be recognized and factored into all debates and policies for mainstreaming migration in development in Lesotho.

The migration and development debate has tended to be hampered by the fact that the main “players” are seen to be nation-states between which migrants move or circulate. This is particularly problematic in the case of South Africa and Lesotho because it foregrounds the role of regulatory frameworks and control policies in relation to migration between the two countries. As this report has argued, however, it is precisely this kind of thinking that has seriously hampered two states that are inextricably bound together in every way from moving forward to a ‘new immigration compact’ of free movement, unrestricted economic opportunity and heightened remittance flow. There are promising signs that the reality of co-development is being recognized but that much more needs to be done to ensure that the migration and remittance regime becomes truly co-developmental.

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