

**IMPACT OF THE LESOTHO HIGHLANDS WATER PROJECT IN POVERTY  
ALLEVIATION IN LESOTHO**

By

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## DECLARATION

I, The undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

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Date: .....30-01-06.....

## SUMMARY

Poverty in Lesotho is more prevalent in the rural areas that depend on subsistence agriculture as the main source of livelihood, with a limited potential in natural resources. Poverty has social, economic and political connotations that necessitate a multi-disciplinary approach in any approach towards its alleviation.

This study set out to define poverty, establish a comprehensive way of alleviating poverty and examine whether the approach adopted by GOL through the LHDA and other sectors benefits the communities affected by the LHWP and brings about development in the long run. Therefore it was informed by a review of the documented literature, including policy documents, research reports, journal articles and books. This were supplemented by direct personal interviews with 35 respondents consisting of 25 household heads from both the resettled and host communities, and 10 other officers from the institutions that are affecting development in the Phase 1B project area.

The survey highlighted that the LHWP is characterised by a mixture of scenarios. However, the positive effects of the project far outweigh its negative implications. The affected communities have incurred loss of arable and grazing land, houses, graves, forests and fruit trees, medicinal and other indigenous plants, cultural roots, functions and values, and control of their natural resources to the project. This necessitated compensation in either cash and/or food over the project's lifetime period of 50 years, but the communities have not been fully satisfied with the compensation packages that they received and the manner in which these were distributed. A majority of them argued that their loss could never be made up for by the compensation that they received from the LHDA.

The rural development projects that have been implemented in the project area under the umbrella of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) were perceived as long-term compensation for the disruption of people's livelihoods. These are categorised into three broad groups, including production, education and infrastructure development and are

supervised by specialised extension workers. The study showed that these programmes have been widely accepted by their beneficiaries and it established that a majority of challenges that face the implementing agencies relate to the inability of the programme cooperatives to prove their financial stability and independence, as well as to a lack of commitment and laziness on the part of the beneficiaries of the programmes. This has created a condition of dependence on compensation and assistance from the LHDA. Therefore, the study questions the potential for the programmes' sustainability after they have been handed over to the Government with the winding down of the LHWP.

The study confirmed that the GOL and the LHDA had adopted measures to restore the lives of the affected communities after the implementation of the LHWP, as stipulated by the LHWP Treaty. The involvement of other stakeholders has proved that successful poverty alleviation depends on cooperation between the different sectors of the economy. Therefore the study made recommendations that the capacity of the affected communities need further strengthening through a variety of training programmes to assist them to devise other survival strategies beyond subsistence agriculture, while equipping them with necessary skills to manage and sustain the rural development programmes and reduce dependence.

## OPSOMMING

Armoede in Lesotho kom meer voor in die landelike gebiede, waar staatgemaak word op selfversorgende landbou as die hoof bron vir oorlewing, terwyl natuurlike hulpbronne beperk is. Armoede het sosiale, ekonomiese en politieke konnotasies. Armoedeverligting vereis dus 'n multi-dissiplinêre benadering.

Hierdie studie het ten doel om armoede te definieer, om 'n omvattende plan daar te stel om armoede te verlig, om te bepaal of die benadering wat GOL deur die LHDA en ander sektore volg, die gemeenskappe, wat deur die LHWP beïnvloed word, bevoordeel en ontwikkeling op die lang termyn tot gevolg het. Hierdie studie is dus toegelig deur die nagaan van beide gedokumenteerde literatuur, insluitende beleidsdokumente, navorsingsverslae, joernaalartikels, asook boeke. Die studie is aangevul deur persoonlike onderhoude met 35 respondente, bestaande uit 25 hoofde van huishoudings van beide die hervestigde- en gasheergemeenskappe, asook 10 beamptes van die inrigtings wat invloed uitoefen op die ontwikkeling in die Fase 1B projek-area.

Die oorsig het getoon dat die LHWP 'n mengsel van scenarios tot gevolg het. Die positiewe effekte van die projek oortref egter by verre die negatiewe implikasies. Die gemeenskappe wat deur die projek geraak is, het bewerkbare veld en weiveld verloor, asook huise, grante, woude en vrugtebome, medisinale en ander inheemse plante, kulturele wortels, funksies en waardes, en beheer van hul natuurlike hulpbronne. Dit het kompensasie in die vorm van kontant en/of kos genoodsaak vir die duurte van die projek se 50-jaar leeftyd. Die gemeenskappe is egter nie ten volle tevrede met die kompensasiepakette wat hulle ontvang het, of die manier waarop dit versprei is nie. Die meerderheid redeneer dat hulle verlies nie gelykgestel kan word aan die vergoeding wat hulle van die LHDA ontvang het nie.

Die Landelike Ontwikkelingsprogramme wat in die projek-area geïmplimenteer is, is gesien as die lang-termyn kompensasie vir die versteuring van die mense se bestaan. Dit kan verdeel word in 3 breë kategorieë naamlik produksie, onderwys en infrastruktuur

ontwikkeling, en staan onder toesig van gespesialiseerde uitbreidingswerkers. Die studie dui aan dat hierdie programme oor die algemeen aanvaar is deur die persone wat daaruit voordeel trek. Dit het verder vasgestel dat die meeste uitdagings wat die uitvoerende agentskappe in die sig staan, te make het met die onvermoë van die program se medewerkers om hul finansiële stabiliteit en onafhanklikheid te bewys, gebrek aan toewyding, en luiheid aan die kant van die program se begunstigdes. Dit het afhanklikheid geskep van die program se kompensasie en hulp van die LHDA. Dus word die potensiaal van die programme se volhoubaarheid bevraagteken wanneer dit aan die regering oorhandig gaan word aan die einde van die LHWP.

Die studie bevestig dat die GOL en die LHDA maatreëls in plek gestel het vir die herstel van die lewens van die gemeenskappe wat beïnvloed is deur die implementering van die LHWP, soos uiteengesit in die LHWP verdrag. Die betrokkenheid van ander belanghebbendes bewys dat suksesvolle armoedeverligting afhang van die samewerking tussen die verskillende sektore van die ekonomie. Daarom beveel die studie aan dat die vermoë van die bevoordeelde gemeenskappe verder versterk moet word deur middel van 'n verskeidenheid opleidingsprogramme om hulle te help om ander oorlewingstrategieë te ontwerp wat verder strek as selfversorgende landbou, terwyl hulle toegerus moet word met die nodige vaardighede om die Landelike Ontwikkelingsprogramme te bestuur en minder afhanklik te wees.

## DEDICATION

In loving memory of my late great-grandmother, Malekhoanyana Lisemelo Philomena Matobo (1890s-1999), for being our pillar of strength and beacon of light, for keeping us grounded and for always being there for us, to listen and give us advice. We shall always hold you dear in our hearts.

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## ACRONYMS

CBOs	Community-based organizations
EAP	Environmental Action Plan
FOB	Field Operations Branch
GOL	Government of Lesotho
JPTC	Joint Permanent Technical Commission
LFCD	Lesotho Fund for Community Development
LHDA	Lesotho Highlands Development Authority
LHWC	Lesotho Highlands Water Commission
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
LHWRF	Lesotho Highlands Water Revenue Fund
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
RDP	Rural Development Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TCTA	Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## CHAPTER ONE:

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 General Introduction

Lesotho has been plagued by a whole host of physical, environmental, political, social and economic problems that have rendered sustainable development in many respects difficult and sometimes almost impossible over the years. These include, among others, inadequate and inefficient management of resources, lack of infrastructure, environmental degradation, agricultural deterioration and the pervasive power struggle that has been characteristic of the political environment since independence. In the light of great socio-economic disparities between the rich and the poor, and the rural and urban areas, it is imperative to take cognisance of the fact that rural development is lagging behind to a greater extent. It is a combination of these factors, and others, which has resulted in Lesotho's welfare being almost wholly dependent on foreign aid, especially from South Africa and the South African economy.

Geographically, Lesotho is a small landlocked country in the middle of South Africa. South Africa's three poorest provinces of Free State, Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal surround Lesotho. It remains a complex example of a larger Southern African phenomenon, a poor country that is by no means wholly economically and socially independent, nor sovereign (in the real sense of the term), nor autonomous (the researcher's assertion). With its peculiar internal complexities and dynamics, Lesotho is dominated by South Africa economically, socially and politically.

The emergence of Lesotho as an important exporter of labour to South Africa has gained the country a reputation of being a labour pool for the South African mines and farms. South Africa employs a large majority of Lesotho male labour force, whose remittances have contributed to a large extent to the country's gross national product (GNP). The potential workforce in Lesotho is estimated to be 800,000, of whom about 225,000 are in formal employment, while approximately 100,000 are working in the South African

mines (UNDP, 1998:11). This accounts to 12, 5% of the total potential workforce in Lesotho.

This situation has rendered Lesotho so dependent that it has lagged behind in creating employment opportunities for Basotho in the event of South Africa changing its labour recruitment policies regarding non-South Africans. According to GOL (1996:4), "During the twentieth century, Lesotho's dependence on the South African economy... exposed it to long-term consequences of South African economic policies". In recent years unemployment in Lesotho has become a prominent feature of everyday life and, as such, a challenge to the Government of Lesotho, which at the present moment is failing to absorb new and upcoming labour market entrants.

This massive unemployment is a result of retrenchments of the migrant labourers, and non-recruitment of new mine workers due to the decline in the price of gold and the increasing attraction of mining for South African citizens (UNDP, 1998:11). A majority of the unemployed job seekers cannot be absorbed in formal employment as they lack basic educational training and, thus, there is a challenge imposed on all stakeholders in development to devise employment opportunities in the tertiary and industrial sector.

Today Lesotho is experiencing massive drainage of its valuable human resources as qualified people of different kinds of expertise migrate to seek better living standards and job opportunities elsewhere, especially in South Africa. According to Matlosa (2000:12&13), "Brain drain to South Africa has undoubtedly experienced an upward spiral following the end of apartheid in 1994.... There has also been a growing concern over the phenomenal rate of no-return rate by Basotho students abroad". Matlosa (2000:12) further asserts that, "Over the years Lesotho committed a lot of resources in the development of education, which is seen as key in the process of building the country's human resources capability". South Africa, thus, benefits a great deal from the educational investment that Lesotho is making in its human resources and this is posing a threat to the socio-economic development of Lesotho as a whole.

The transition to democratic rule in South Africa, Lesotho's immediate and only neighbour, has been an important political development which has brought about complete transformation to the Southern African region (GOL, 1996:1). While Southern Africa sees South Africa as a locomotive for economic development, it is imperative to take cognisance of the fact that South Africa has its crucial internal problems, especially that of containing massive rural and urban poverty. Steward (1994:2) states, "South Africa is increasingly being hailed as a locomotive which will pull the region out of the quagmire of economic stagnation. There is certainly scope for cautious optimism in this connection, since South Africa will be able to contribute to the development of the sub-continent. South Africa, however, has pressing problems of its own and reliance on that country to serve as an engine of growth for the region should not be too heavy". However, the region is now faced with challenging economic and political relations, as it has had to accommodate South Africa into the regional fraternity as a result of the democratisation process.

One cannot, however, ignore the fact that South Africa has a massive influence on Lesotho's socio-economic developments. GOL (1996:4) further states, "Not surprisingly, Lesotho's economy is highly vulnerable to changes in South Africa". Lesotho's Minister of Finance, Honourable Kelebone Maope (in GOL 1997:3) agrees, "Lesotho's young democracy, in common with the rest of the region was on course because of global political changes, and, most particularly, the end of apartheid in South Africa". This socio-economic relationship thus brings Lesotho opportunities as well as risks. It is therefore vital that Lesotho adopts sound economic and political pathways aimed at utilising these opportunities to the maximum benefit of its citizens. However, the challenge of consolidating the young and fragile democracy attained in 1993, after 23 years of non-democratic rule, remains pertinent.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) has been one of the biggest socio-economic undertakings of the twenty-first century that Lesotho has been involved in towards attaining development. Smith (1999:141) states, "The LHWP is one of the most comprehensive projects of its kind in the world, and is an example of cross-border



regional co-operation between two independent countries for mutual benefits of the inhabitants of both.” This joint venture between Lesotho and South Africa aims at supplying water to the thirsty industrial areas of Gauteng and Mpumalanga and also generating hydroelectric power for Lesotho and, hence, ensuring Lesotho’s independence from its neighbouring countries with respect to electricity.

It is evident that both Lesotho and South Africa are bound to reap great rewards from the LHWP in one way or the other. The project, on the one hand, serves as security for harmonious relations between the two countries. On the other hand, the availability of water, an important precondition for greater industrial development, helps South Africa attain and develop further industrial power within the region. Also, Lesotho benefits from the royalties received through the LHWP agreement, which it could use to enhance sustainable development and poverty eradication in the country. Smith (1999:142) further argues “Lesotho... one of the poorest countries in the world, desperately needs to augment its dwindling income with the royalties derived from the sale of water as a result of this joint undertaking.” Some important questions that one could pose at this juncture are thus “What is the Government of Lesotho doing with the LHWP royalties to alleviate poverty in the country?” and “How do the highlands communities in particular benefit from this undertaking?”

Amidst the socio-economic challenges facing Lesotho, poverty has become a prominent feature of life in rural and urban Lesotho. Over many years the Government’s attempt to achieve economic growth and salvage development has not sufficiently manifested in sustainable welfare of the Basotho nation. The country’s economic profiles show the characteristics of a poor country with a great potential for economic development, given the high level of literacy among the Basotho. However, although some people experience welfare levels compared to those experienced in the rich and developed world, a large proportion of the population live in dire poverty. Children are constantly hungry, especially in the rural areas, for most parts of the year and suffer from diseases and conditions that are a result of malnutrition and underfeeding.

However, it is important to note that poverty has become the number one priority on the part of the Government of Lesotho, the NGOs and donor agencies, the business sector, academicians, entrepreneurs and the local people. This is evident in various attempts by different sectors of the economy to assist the Government of Lesotho develop pathways out of poverty. These include studies taken by Sechaba Consultants, the Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), among others, to ascertain the causes, extent and magnitude of poverty among the Basotho so as to help the Government devise strategies to eradicate it. According to Lesotho's Prime Minister, Pakalitha Mosisili (*Daily News*, November 2000), "the country is beginning to take the lead in curbing unemployment and poverty among developing countries by having the capacity to attract foreign investors who come to Lesotho from as far as the Far East to open industrial units to provide employment to Basotho". This, however, further strengthens the contention that Lesotho's economic development relies heavily on foreign investment as opposed to local initiatives. One can pose a question here as to whether these are viable and feasible in the long term. Can they sustain long-term development?

GOL, through the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), has developed the Rural Development Programme (RDP), as outlined in the Environmental Action Plan, aimed at poverty alleviation in the LHWP area. GOL faces a mammoth challenge of effective and efficient delivery of this policy commitment. There is room for scepticism as reality has shown that, although policy making at the national level to address this issue of poverty has been active over the years, implementation has been poor and the outcome is thus almost non-existent in many instances.

## **1.2 Aims of the study**

It is important at this juncture to note that the researcher must clearly understand the aims and objectives in conducting research. Smith (1995:23) states, "The formulation of the research objective is a precise documentation of what the researcher hopes to achieve with the research concerned". The general aim of this study is therefore two-fold. Firstly, the study seeks to create a better understanding of poverty in Lesotho and establish the

impact of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project in alleviating poverty in Lesotho. Secondly, on the basis of this descriptive analysis, the study will determine whether or not poverty alleviation is a possible reality in the light of the attempts made by the GOL to address the problem.

The specific aims of the study are three-fold. The first specific objective is to establish a sound and comprehensive theoretical perspective on the issue of poverty and the means and ways of addressing it. The issue of poverty alleviation in this regard will be examined within the context of rural development. On the basis of this theoretical orientation, the study will determine whether community participation and the involvement of civil society at large could serve as an engine for sustainable development.

Secondly, the study aims at conceiving a more practical approach, which is that of outlining and discussing various programmes and projects under the bigger umbrella of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) that have been put in place by GOL in Phase 1B project area to eradicate poverty. It will, in the process, try to assess whether or not these programmes actually benefit the highlands communities and bring about sustainable development in one way or the other and also look at the implications of these for Lesotho as a whole. The role of various stakeholders in development in this regard will also be examined.

Thirdly, emanating from the abovementioned practical aim of the study, the final objective is to draw up a summary and possible policy recommendations and proposals on the issue in question. These could be used as guidelines for future phases of the Project and also future development initiatives undertaken by the Government towards further poverty alleviation in Lesotho. It is, however, assumed that a combination of proper and adequate planning, sound, well-designed and logical policy-making on the part of the Government of Lesotho, involvement of local communities, the speeding up of the empowerment of the local government process, involvement of civil society and the private sector in vital issues of national importance are fundamental prerequisites for attaining comprehensive and practical poverty alleviation in Lesotho.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

The study is of political, social, economic and academic importance for a number of reasons. Firstly, as previously mentioned, the issue of poverty alleviation is of immense importance, as it is currently a high priority issue on the international policy agenda, thus Lesotho is no exception. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Lesotho is a member, also stresses that poverty reduction is a top priority in its integration policy (SADC, 2001). As such, the issue of poverty alleviation is worth investigating in order to gain more exposure and insight. Furthermore, with the contemporary talk on globalisation and regional integration, it is also vital that Lesotho addresses its internal socio-economic challenges that pose a threat to development at large, so that it will be able to join the international economic fraternity.

Secondly, the study builds upon existing studies by adding complementary dimensions to be considered in projects and programmes targeted at poverty alleviation and rural development by all stakeholders in development. Thirdly, it is hoped that the study will also assist policy makers to make informed developments in policy initiatives geared towards poverty eradication in Lesotho. Also, the LHDA could learn from its mistakes in the implementation of the rural development component of its Environmental and Action Plan from this initiative. Furthermore, it will also contribute to the body of knowledge in policy design, implementation and evaluation, as other researchers will use it as a reference. Finally, it could also be used as a foundation for expansion into a bigger project by government, NGOs, the private sector, LHDA and funding agencies.

### **1.4 Research problem**

Swemmer (1997:4) states, "The formulation of the research problem involves the specification of the problem area which is to be researched." Bless & Higson-Smith (2000:15) agrees: "Although social reality provides innumerable questions, selecting a research problem is a delicate task." The research problem is formulated with specific reference to the research question that the researcher is attempting to answer, including the primary and secondary aims and objectives of the study. The research problem was therefore not selected in a vacuum, but has been a result of the researcher's motivation by

other studies on the issue of poverty in Lesotho, including the researcher's direct observations, values and logic amidst the unfolding socio-economic manifestations of poverty in Lesotho.

Poverty has become so entrenched in Lesotho that a vast majority of communities, especially in the rural areas, endure hard lives, as they cannot afford basic requirements for a good quality of life. The World Bank (1995a: IV) supports this view by indicating that "poverty is greater in rural than in urban Lesotho. About 82 percent of Basotho households are rural". Gustafsson & Makonnen (1993:55) further state; "Poverty in Lesotho is dominantly a rural phenomenon." The problem of unequal development has culminated in what could be labelled as the urban bias, which has further exacerbated the disparity between the rural highlands and the semi-urban and urban foothills and lowlands.

It is an inarguable fact that the highlands communities within the project works area are seriously poverty-stricken. They depend largely on subsistence agriculture as the main means of survival and income from a few able-bodied and young men and women, who work in the mines and factories in South Africa, and also those who are employed in the textile firms in Maseru, Mafeteng and Maputsoe. For many decades this area, though endowed with numerous valuable natural resources including water, was inaccessible and largely cut-off from the modern world and communication with the outside world. It is thus a fact that the LHWP was bound to have negative impacts. But the important issue that must be taken into consideration is whether or not these costs outweigh the positive impact of the project on the beautiful highlands.

The inception of the project indeed brought about mixed feelings on the part of the illiterate and semi-illiterate highlands communities that were to be affected in one way or the other by the project. On the one hand, there was a lot of scepticism in that the project was bound to destroy and erode the ecological fabric of the Lesotho highlands. Hence it was highly criticised by environmentalists and academics. On the other hand, Basotho citizens were excited and hopeful that the project, due to its huge nature, would create

employment opportunities for years to come. These hopes have to a certain extent been realized.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What efforts has GOL made towards poverty alleviation in the Lesotho highlands affected directly and indirectly by LHWP?
2. To what extent has GOL/LHDA delivered on its commitment towards poverty alleviation as spelled out in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP)?
3. Has the rural development component of the EAP attained what it was intended for? If not, what are the factors limiting successful implementation and progress?

In attempting to answer these questions the study will attempt to find out remedies towards addressing the problem of increased poverty in Lesotho, determine the role played by the Lesotho Government in poverty-reduction strategies of this nature and answer the question of whether institutionalised cooperation can enhance development. Finally, lessons learnt and prospects for the future in Lesotho will be determined. In this regard the advantages and limitation of various programmes in place as an institutional framework will be looked at and recommendations made regarding initiatives taken by the institution to achieve its objective in the new democratic dispensation.

The study adopts Phase 1B of the LHWP as the case study. This is the project area in the highlands of Lesotho, which is predominantly rural in character and where poverty is inevitable and intense. To mitigate the effects of the LHWP on the communities in the Phase 1B area, the LHDA/GOL has adopted the Rural Development Programme (RDP) towards poverty alleviation. Hence, an overview of poverty alleviation in Lesotho will be based primarily on the aforesaid initiative

Key concepts in the study are **poverty alleviation and rural development**. It is important to devise a working definition of poverty in order to understand what poverty alleviation entails. The fundamental principle is that poverty bears a negative connotation, denoting absence or lack of material wealth. There are many meanings

attributed to the issue of poverty, hence there is no universal agreement as to what the term really means. This is indicative of the fact that poverty is defined according to the perceptions of the society or communities that experience it directly or indirectly.

However, several measures such as lack of education or high illiteracy rates, poor health, unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, inadequate and low-quality housing, poor nutrition, low and non-existent levels of income and gender discrimination have been accepted as indicators of poverty in an attempt to find common ground. Ligthelm (1993:3) states, "The rationale for considering a variety of indicators originates from the multidimensional nature of the poverty phenomenon". In the context of this study poverty refers to poor living standards or conditions of the state of being poor.

Poverty alleviation thus means easing the severity of the poor quality of life and thus enhancing the quality of social and economic needs. Therefore, to create a better understanding of the term, the paper also adopts these poverty indicators. The main concern of GOL's poverty alleviation strategy on the basis of the given definition of poverty is to ensure sustenance of absolute and relative standards of living of the rural highlands' communities affected by LHWP-related works.

Rural development refers to the development of rural communities. Various programmes have been put in place by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), a parastatal established to oversee the day-to-day running of the Lesotho Highland Water Project (LHWP) towards the enhancement of development and poverty alleviation in communities affected by the project works. The basic aim of these programmes is to assist communities affected by project-related works to help themselves attain better and improved living standards. They place massive emphasis on community participation and involvement in development as an engine towards successful economic development in the long run.



## 1.5 Literature Review

According to Leedy & Ormrod (2000:70) a literature review “describes theoretical perspectives and previous research findings related to the problem at hand. Its function is to ‘look again’ (*re + view*) at what others have done in areas that are similar, though not necessarily identical, to one’s own area of investigation.” A comprehensive identification, overview and study of relevant literature are vital in providing the researcher with a better insight into the problem under investigation.

Allen & Thomas (1992:2) state that “the question of the appalling poverty of large numbers of the world's people, with continuing enormous inequities, between rich and poor, and the apparent inability of national governments and international agencies to mount a concerted and successful development effort to remedy the situation, remains as potent as ever”. In this regard, given the increasing inequalities and the escalating social problems that have arisen as a result of poverty in developing countries, it has become absolutely urgent for national governments to tackle the issue of poverty. Thus, the democratically elected Government of Lesotho, as a member of the global fraternity through its membership in international organisations, also assigns a high priority to poverty alleviation (GOL, 1996:1).

The main consideration in undertaking this policy inquiry is ascertaining the availability of sources to meet the needs and requirements of this specific topic. Reference material that addresses the issue under investigation has been sourced from different agencies, consisting of official documentation and policy papers from the Lesotho Development Authority (LHDA) and the Government of Lesotho’s (GOL) and other development agencies. Different primary sources that have been consulted include Sechaba Consultants’ **Poverty and livelihoods in Lesotho: More than a mapping exercise** (2000), United Nation’s Development Programme’s **Human Development Report: Lesotho** (1998), LHDA’s **Environmental Action Plan: Resettlement and Development Action Plan** (1997), Government of Lesotho’s **Pathway out of poverty** (1996) and the World Bank’s **Lesotho Poverty Assessment** (1995a).



**Sechaba Consultants (2000)** is based on a study carried out in 1999 and 2000 by the Sechaba Consultants on behalf of the Government of Lesotho and funded by international funding agencies such as Ireland Aid, the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Report provides detailed maps indicating areas that are mostly deprived of essential social services. It also postulates that, although poverty is prevalent in the urban areas, it is more of a rural phenomenon. It gives a greater insight into the political and macro-economic environments that directly impact on the lives of the poor in Lesotho. The Report further outlines various survival strategies adopted by both rural and urban households in an increasingly difficult socio-economic environment.

**UNDP (1998)** sheds extensive light on the concept of human development as a strategy towards achieving greater development in Lesotho, by taking into consideration its advantages and disadvantages, and peculiarities, challenges and special needs of Lesotho and its people amidst its physical location and environmental challenges. The Report seeks to show whether or not the social, economic and political choices and opportunities of the local people are expanding, stagnating or shrinking. It is on the basis of measuring human development through a composite index that the Report sets out a policy agenda to expand and meet people's needs and choices to be considered by development practitioners, including policy makers and academics. Greater emphasis is placed on human security, with a focus on economic security, food security, health security, personal security, community security and political security in the context of Lesotho.

**LHDA (1997)** gives a detailed account of various components of the Resettlement and Development Action Plan. It shows that due to construction works associated with the project, the lives of the communities in the scheme area are bound to be directly or indirectly affected seriously in one way or another. This impact includes, among other things, loss of arable and grazing land, frustration and increased pressure on the part of resettled households and the host communities, and restriction of movement within the project area. Hence, the main objectives of the plan are outlined as maintaining and improving the welfare of households affected by the LHWP works and providing adequately for host communities affected by resettlement. Various issues discussed

include rural development, community participation in development, compensation and resettlement with special reference to the project.

**Government of Lesotho (1996)** is a result of a collaborative effort between the Lesotho Government; the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) and donor agencies to propose a strategy and action plan for poverty eradication in Lesotho. It reports that Lesotho is facing a multitude of developmental problems, but the major challenge is that of containing poverty, especially in the rural areas with a high dependence on family farming and mine workers' remittances as major sources of income. Various issues proposed in the Report as means of fostering development include fostering labour-intensive growth, investing in human resources, strengthening the social safety net and strengthening the institutional capacity of Lesotho. It stresses that these could only be attained through a transparent and inclusive democratic process.

**World Bank (1995a)** provides a detailed poverty profile for Lesotho. It reports that poverty is a major threat to the socio-economic fabric of the nation. It also highlights a number of policies which can help Lesotho minimize its internal challenges by seizing and effectively utilizing specific opportunities towards ensuring sustainable growth, such as a well-educated and productive labour force, an agrarian structure based on family farming, a small but growing export base and an inflow of revenues emanating from the sale of water to South Africa through the LHWP. It also argues that a stronger safety net based on reducing the costs of food, shelter, water, fuel, health care and education to the poor will aid in poverty reduction. The plan aims at assisting Lesotho develop a strategy for efficient and sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

The main sources used in this regard include a variety of books, journals and newspaper articles that address poverty as a theoretical and practical problem. Numerous poverty reports from the **Government**, **LHDA** and research institutes, such as **Sechaba Consultants**, the **Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS)** and the **Transformation Resources Centre** were also used as sources of general information on the topic. A majority of these have illustrated the importance of poverty alleviation and

ensuring long-term development. Secondary sources that have been utilized deal mainly with the theoretical ramifications of the issue of poverty and poverty alleviation in the context of sustainable rural development.

Some writers make reference to Lesotho as though it were a single homogeneous entity. This tendency therefore obscures the fact that there are different regions in Lesotho, namely the highlands, foothills and lowland, which are homogeneous neither in geographic scope nor in problems experienced. In all these regions there are rural areas, which are not of the same nature and, therefore, experience different magnitudes of poverty. Clearly, poverty in the highlands is more extreme due to the region's mountainous physical structure and thus lack of productive resources such as arable land. One can regard it a blessing that at least the Lesotho highlands will benefit from the LHWP, not ignoring the negative consequences that it may also bring to the region.

### **1.6 Methodological aspects**

Stating the research methodology reveals how the research is going to be done, including strategies and methods that are going to be employed. The study describes and evaluates the strategy adopted by the Lesotho Government (GOL) and the LHDA to alleviate poverty among the highlands communities affected directly and indirectly by the LHWP. Evaluation research is a method of social science used to assess the design, implementation and usefulness of any attempt to change the ways and conditions under which people live (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:49). Thus this study is an evaluation research exercise that assesses the effectiveness of the policy initiative.

The main methodology used in this study is review of documented literature to compare the findings of previous research on poverty alleviation and, thus, inform the study about recent trends. These sources include books, newspaper articles, journal articles, research papers and official documents and reports, mainly from LHDA and GOL. UNDP and the World Bank reports provide substantial input as these two agencies are the main pioneers of poverty alleviation in Lesotho and worldwide.

Also, the study used direct personal or face-to-face interviews as a source of supplementary data. This method proved to be both useful and effective as the researcher was able to probe responses and clarify some issues that may have been misunderstood or misinterpreted by the respondents. Finally, the researcher gained a better insight into the plight of rural people as the interviews were conducted at the respondents' households, and thus drew useful and informed conclusions about the needs, feelings and aspirations of the poor.

Questionnaires with open ended or semi-structured questions were administered to allow respondents the freedom to express their views and opinions. These helped the researcher solicit some of the information that would not otherwise have been obtained with close-ended questions in which respondents are given answers to choose from. The beneficiaries of the rural development programme in the Mohale area (being the rural highlands communities affected by LHWP), the LHDA staff involved with the RDP, the officials of the World Vision Lesotho (an NGO working directly with the agricultural development programmes) and GOL's ministries of Local Government, Agriculture, and Health formed the sample of respondents.

The sample size for this study was 35, including 25 families, with the household head as the main respondent to obtain more reliable information about the household and its involvement in developmental initiatives. The sample was selected purposely from the five villages of Nazareth, Ha Koporale, Ha Ts'iu, Ha Mohale, and Likalaneng, surrounding the Mohale reservoir. This group meets the criteria of the portion of the population that is affected by the LHWP. Also, two high-ranking officials from LHDA were interviewed, including the LHDA Public Relations Officer and the Mohale Field Operations Branch Manager; an additional person from the Ministry of Finance was interviewed, and a further two from World Vision Lesotho, the NGO involved in the aforementioned rural development programme. The other five respondents were operations officers based at the Mohale dam from the Ministries of Local Government, Health and Agriculture, who are operating under the bigger umbrella of the rural development coordinating office.

### **1.7 The structure of the study**

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter One provides the introduction to the study. Here the research theme and research problem are identified and demarcated. This includes the practical and theoretical aspects of the research question, definition of key concepts and their application in the context of Lesotho, and the explanation of the significance of the study. Furthermore, the aims and objectives of the study are outlined. Also, it defines the research methods and approaches that the study employs. The aims and objectives of the study are outlined as well. Finally, both primary and secondary sources of the study are described.

Chapter Two analyses the concept of poverty with its theoretical ramifications in a broader perspective. This includes looking into the definition, types and causes of poverty and, therefore, its perceived consequences, and the international perspective on the issue, especially those of the UNDP and The World Bank. This is needed in order to comprehend precisely what is meant by poverty, how the issue is perceived in the international arena and, also, how it poses great socio-economic stress to the world order.

Chapter Three forms the core of the study. It describes the incidence and manifestations of poverty in Lesotho. It also outlines the dynamics of the LHWP as an undertaking that upholds rural development in Lesotho.

Chapter Four presents a discussion of the findings of the research conducted in order to ascertain the impact of the LHWP in poverty alleviation in Lesotho and assesses whether or not the rural development programme is achieving what it was intended for. It looks into its limitations and successes as a basis for further progress in the development of Lesotho in general. This will enable the making of proposals towards the improvement of the identified initiatives. Finally, Chapter Five summarises the debated issues and research findings, and then makes recommendations towards improving the adopted framework for the better.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

In this introductory chapter the research theme and research problem have been identified and delineated, and the research aims also formulated. Secondly, the relevance of the study has been indicated. Also, key concepts in the study have been defined in order to provide an understanding of their usage and relevance in the context of this study. Furthermore, the research methods employed for obtaining data and the relevant literature consulted on the subject have been described. Finally, the structure of the study has also been provided.

It is important at this juncture to indicate that poverty is and has been one of the important issues that hold a great potential threat to economic, social and political stability in the world. Hence, it is today in the interests of all sectors of society to understand and deal with this phenomenon in a logical and courageous manner to ensure better lives for all citizens. As a result of this general interest, it is thus vital that the next chapter (Chapter Two) of the study addresses this issue in its theoretical context to provide an understanding of what poverty encompasses and what it entails.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

The importance of literature review in providing a better insight into the problem under investigation, stimulating new ideas and identifying theories that address the problem cannot be overlooked. According to Barbie (1998:42), “theories organize our observations and make sense of them”. Bailey (1994:4) also suggests that “Theories attempt to answer the why and how questions. Theorizing can be defined as the process of providing explanations and predictions of social phenomena”. A literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates, that one learns from and build on what others have done (Neuman, 1994:37). The main reason in reviewing literature is thus to identify facts, establish new ideas and suggest new explanations on the issue under review.

Poverty is a high-priority issue in the international arena, hence international development agencies and all countries including the G-8 have sworn to reduce world poverty by half by the year 2015 (ADB, 2000; UNDP, 2003; World Bank, 2001). The World Bank and the UNDP, among others, are playing a major role in assisting developing countries and the world at large to put into perspective national strategies and initiatives for poverty reduction. According to UNDP (2004), the goal of the UNDP is “to get to the multi-dimensional roots of poverty, through the creation of economic opportunity; the empowerment of women; participatory approaches to government budgeting; and better delivery of social services”. The World Bank (2001:2) also states that it “is a development institution whose goal is to reduce poverty by promoting sustainable economic growth in its client countries.” This thus calls for political will on the part of national governments to create national poverty-alleviation strategies on the basis of local needs and priorities, including the voices of the poor to make the world a better place for all.



This chapter reviews literature in the broad area of poverty and its multi-dimensional nature, and the possibility of its alleviation. This is required in order to find out what precisely is meant by poverty and how other scholars, as well as the international community, perceive the issue. The theoretical perspective on poverty in the context of this study begins with the definition of poverty, causes of poverty, the types of poverty prevalent in society and the various indicators used to measure poverty.

## **2.2 Defining poverty**

Poverty is an old concept in modern-day language. It is universally agreed that no single meaning can be attributed to the concept. Herrick & Hudson (1981:90) state, "Clearly no single definition or characterization of such a complex phenomenon will satisfy every purpose." Gustafsson and Makonnen (1993:51) postulate, "How to conceptualize 'poverty' is subject to much debate." Hence, the contention is that poverty largely remains a multi-dimensional phenomenon cutting across various disciplines and walks of life.

Poverty affects different people in different ways and to varying degrees. The World Bank (2001:1) states, "Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways." The world today faces poverty at different angles, and the major difference lies with the degree of its impact. This in itself is indicative of the fact that perceptions of poverty in society vary with individuals, families, communal and even national conventions and perceptions. This is a result of the differences in the magnitude and extent of poverty, the prevalent types of poverty and the differences in people's views, opinions and needs because of their different lifestyles, and cultural and historical backgrounds.

Some attempts to define poverty have assisted in the understanding of the phenomenon. According to May (1998:3), poverty is defined as "the inability to attain a minimal standard of living measured in terms of basic consumption needs or the income required to satisfy them." Bloem (2001:23) maintains, "In this instance deprivation is conceived of as inadequate fulfilment of basic needs relating to education, nutrition, sanitation,



shelter, water, etc.” Gay *et al.* (1994: i) define poverty as “a condition under which a person or a household lacks the means to satisfy basic needs”. Basic goods are defined in this context as goods and services that an individual requires for living at a particular point in time (Andreß 1998:1). This implies that people have control and choice over their preferences. However, it does not consider the fact that a number of varying factors – such as time, the environment and physical location, the availability of resources, and societal values that may be a result of historical and contemporary orientation and cultural socialisation – influence basic needs. Thus, this definition alone cannot be held to apply universally, as it does not satisfy the basic understanding of what poverty really is, because what is regarded as a basic need is subject to a lot of interpretations.

Ideally basic needs should be extended to include choices enabling the wellbeing of human life and human development. Destremau (2001:131) outlines these social needs as “longevity, health, creativity, and the ability to have decent conditions of life, freedom, self-respect, dignity and respect for others.” Hence, the contention is that in attempting to understand poverty, it is important to look at the socio-economic factors that directly and indirectly impede development, resulting in either relative or absolute poverty. Gay *et al.* (1994: iii) further clarify this: “Absolute poverty means insufficient food and shelter to stay alive. Relative poverty means a lack of food and shelter in relation to others in the same or a neighbouring community, even though there is enough for survival.” These two conditions of poverty in general terms relate to socio-economic inadequacy or the absolute inability to acquire the most necessary requirements for an improved quality of living.

Many scholars and researchers on the issue of poverty denote the term as insufficiency or inadequacy of material wealth and economic wellbeing. According to Herrick & Hudson (1981:90), “Its perceived nature varies according to levels of subsistence and consumption, influenced by methods of measurement, and guided by basic assumptions about human nature, social justice, and the possibility of basic change.” However, in the contemporary democratic dispensation it has become evident that the real problem does not only lie with economic wealth, but also incorporates the social and political aspects of

everyday life as well. Banda (1999:103) states that “By and large, poverty presupposes the deprivation of certain members of society of the basic requirements of an average human life...at various dimensions, be they political, socio-economic or the physical environment.” This then shows poverty involves real people living in real circumstances.

In this regard, defining poverty only as an economic phenomenon overshadows the real meaning of the concept and ignores other vital societal and human preferences. Poverty does not merely apply to economic welfare, but is also a reflection of lack of access to power and self-satisfaction and self-determination (Chiluba 1999:7). The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1934:284) agrees that “Acceptance of insufficient flow of income as the essential aspect of poverty merely shifts the difficulties of definition, since this concept predicates the assumption of standards, physiological, psychological or social.” This, therefore, further strengthens the fact that poverty is a multifaceted occurrence with related meanings. Poverty bears social, economic and political connotations.

### **2.3 Causes of poverty**

Poverty has many intertwined roots as a result of shocks and crises that affect livelihoods and food security, and long-term environmental and socio-economic trends cutting across many facets of society; to a greater extent, poverty is a result of low capabilities and social exclusion in either a purely social dimension or an economic dimension (May, 1998:3). In identifying the causes of poverty the African Development Bank (2000) in its Global Poverty Report (2000) shows that such causes may differ regionally, locally and even internationally, and that they have socio-economic, geographical and environmental dimensions. An overview of the determinants of poverty is given below.

- **Unemployment:** This is exacerbated by limited education or literacy rates that limit the poor from accessing the job market, hence income and other basic requirements to improve their lives. In Africa, as is the case in other developing countries, the decline in the agricultural sector, which provides employment opportunities, thereby ensuring food security and a large contribution to the

developing countries' gross domestic product (GDP), poses a great threat to better welfare and socio-economic stability.

- Inadequate health services and poor nutrition result in poor health: The poor people are limited from realising their mental and physical capabilities and hence feel insecure.
- High population growth rates (large families) in the developing world: This makes it difficult for households to cope in modern society, as national governments cannot adequately provide social services and infrastructure for all citizens.
- Lack of connections, information and skills: The informal job market which is temporary or short-term most of the time mostly absorbs the poor with shortage of skills, making it difficult for them to accumulate savings and investments, and hence gain access to credit. As a result, in times of crises the situation renders them unable to devise long-term sustainable strategies to manage economic challenges.
- Political instability and conflict, especially in Africa: These are major sources of lack of justice, and increased crime and violence, as governments incur large expenditure to assist and rescue citizens from such calamities. This spending normally falls outside of the governments' normal annual budgetary allocations.
- Frequent natural disasters: They destroy the natural resources on which the poor depend for their livelihoods and hence limit their productivity.
- Unequal gender relations in accessing productive assets and social services: This contributes towards slow economic growth and hence increased poverty.

- Exclusion of the poor or sometimes limited participation in important decision-making in issues that largely affect their livelihoods.
- Excessive dependence on a narrow range of commodities for exports earnings: This contributes to sluggish economic growth.
- Ineffective and corrupt government institutions: Rural development in the developing world has been driven from the top (top-down approach), hence is not owned by its recipients. Governments sideline the poor, while the rich have a voice and a bigger share in socio-economic affairs. Also, the misappropriation of funds by those in top management often means that the rural poor become victimised and marginalised (ADB, 2000; May, 1998).

#### **2.4 The multi-dimensional nature of poverty**

ADB (2000:1) states that “Poverty goes beyond lack of income. It is multidimensional, encompassing economic, social, and governance perspectives. Economically, the poor are not only deprived of income and resources, but of opportunities”. Generally, poverty has two intertwined and interlinked aspects, i.e. material and non-material poverty due to a variety of causes and effects. According to the World Bank (2003:15), “the different aspects of poverty interact and reinforce one another in important ways.” Wilson & Ramphela (1989:14) also state that “Not only are there several different dimensions of material and non-material poverty but there is also a complex interaction between cause and effect, which makes it difficult to describe a state of poverty, that causes further misery”. However complementary these aspects may be, it is clear that it is not necessarily correct to conclude that a certain kind of deprivation will have a specific effect.

Material poverty is defined as the inability to attain a minimum amount of material wealth required for a minimal standard of living, including physiological health and efficiency. Non-material poverty, on the other hand, refers to a lack of non-material wealth and incorporates, among other things, aspects such as limited access to education

and jobs, subordination of people's rights, political disenfranchisement of the masses, exploitation and insufficient privileges conferred on the poor, especially by the society of which they are part. These forms of deprivation limit people's freedom and ability to live in their desired ways.

Women and children experience more deprivation, which means that they are more at a risk of poverty than their male counterparts. The World Bank (2001:43) argues, "While patterns of gender inequity vary across societies, in almost all countries a majority of women and girls are disadvantaged in terms of their relative power and control over material resources...and they often face more insecurities." Women are also burdened with reproductive and laborious care work and form a large part of unpaid labour (UNDP, 2005). Children are thus vulnerable as they depend on parents, mostly on their mothers, for the provision of basic needs. Chiluba (1999:7) also adds that women "perform most back-breaking work but are not rewarded adequately...they have little access to resources such as land, credit and recognition unless guaranteed by a man." Therefore, poverty for women is not only an economic grade, but is largely a reflection of lack of access to power and opportunities. The status conferred on females is a result of societal values and norms that further exacerbate unequal gender relations.

The incidence of poverty varies significantly in the developed world and the developing world, and even between the developing countries themselves. According to Andreß (1998:167), "Poverty in the industrialized world means that a person's ability to function in society is restricted because of insufficient economic resources...that he or she is unable to live in a way that is customary in his or her environment." Poverty here is portrayed as a matter of choice while in the developing world the reality is that the poor are vulnerable to adverse conditions beyond their control. This shows that poverty in other countries, especially of the developing world like those of sub-Saharan Africa, may not necessarily be socially and morally accepted as poverty in the countries of the developed world such as the USA and Britain. Poverty is thus not only a socio-economic phenomenon, but is also physical and demographic. Three types of poverty may be outlined:

- a) Income poverty
- b) Social/human poverty
- c) Moral poverty/social exclusion.

#### **2.4.1 Income poverty**

Income poverty is a numerical approach expressed by means of a ratio of declared poor to the total population (Destremau, 2001:130). It denotes the inability of a person or household to meet basic needs due to low monetary earnings and consumption. Thus, a person is considered poor if he or she does not earn enough income that is necessary to ensure a minimum standard of living (Andreß, 1998:6). According to the World Bank (2003:16), "Using monetary income or consumption to identify and measure poverty has a long tradition." The traditional view of income as a measure of poverty can be traced back to Rowntree, who arrived at a minimum level of income and spending to maintain "physical efficiency" after conducting a household survey on income earnings and the level of consumption of every working class household in the city of York in 1899.

Proponents of income poverty have argued that income has a direct relationship with obtaining adequately minimum necessities such as food, shelter and other amenities. Andreß (1998:6) states that "the restriction to financial resources in general and to current incomes in particular has certain plausibility in market economies since many goods included in the minimum needs (nutrition, housing, health, etc.) can be bought for money on the market". Chiluba (1999:1) also argues that "Many people are poor because they are not in a position to sustain themselves, they lack adequate food, shelter and clothing – all of which are dependent on financial ability or purchasing power." Thus, lack of money to access products on the market means poverty in this regard. However, the availability of such vital goods and services on the market remains important.

Income poverty is measured on the basis of a set poverty line which reflects the monetary value of consumption below which an individual or household can be regarded as poor. According to Nyirongo (1999:93), "The poverty line is presented on the basis of fixed expenditure/consumption or income levels and may cover food and other basic needs

such as housing and sanitation.” The poverty lines of the developing and the developed worlds differ as a result of the margin in the prevalent socio-economic environments and the needs of the people at large, and hence cannot be applied universally.

In the developing world it represents the income equivalent of a minimum basket of consumer goods and services for a better living, while in the developed world it is expressed as a percentage of average income (Destremau, 2001:130). Income poverty also has relative and absolute dimensions. Income inequality is characteristic of the developing world, where wealth is unevenly distributed. ADB (2000:2) shows that “The average income of the richest 20 countries is now 30 times that of the 20 poorest countries, as compared to 15 times 40 years ago.” Table 1 below presents the incidence of income poverty in the developing world by region.

The income poverty approach is not without problems. May (1998:4) argues, “Poor households are characterized by a lack of wage income, either as a result of unemployment or of low-paying jobs, and typically rely on multiple sources of income, which helps reduce the risk.” Thus this approach ignores the fact that household earnings may change as influenced by a number of factors, including the type of employment held by individuals and the number of people earning an income within the household at different points in time and especially at the time of the household income survey. According to Andreß (1998:6), “Incomes are subject to seasonal and cyclical variations so that a temporary income position of a person ascertained at one point in time can deviate considerably from one permanent income that applies to a larger time period.” As such, what constitutes the minimum basket of goods and services and their prices is also subject to change. Also, as world economies are evolving, poverty remains unevenly distributed and hence it is not static condition.

**Table1. Income poverty by region (1987-1998)**

Region	Population covered by at least one survey (Percent)	Population living below \$1 a day (Millions)				
		1987	1990	1993	1996	1998 <sup>a</sup>
East Asia and Pacific Excluding China	90.8	417.5	452.4	431.9	265.1	278.3
Europe and Central Asia	81.7	1.1	7.1	18.3	23.8	24.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	88.0	63.7	73.8	70.8	76.0	78.2
Middle East and North Africa	52.5	9.3	5.7	5.0	5.0	5.5
South Asia	97.9	474.4	495.1	505.1	531.7	522.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	72.9	217.2	242.3	273.3	289.0	290.9
Total	88.1	1,183.2	1,276.4	1,304.3	1,190.6	1,198.9
Excluding China	84.2	879.8	915.9	955.9	980.5	985.7

<sup>a</sup>. Preliminary.

Source: World Bank 2003.

This income poverty measure shows large variations between all regions of the developing world, with significantly large increases in income poverty in South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa. In South Asia the number of the poor increased by 424 million from 97.9 million in 1987 to 522.0 million in 1998. The Global Poverty Report (2000) shows that the world's poorest people are in Asia, which is significantly marked by magnitude and diversity, and where approximately 900 million people, who make up 75 percent of the poor people of the world, live (ADB 2000:6). Sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, saw an increase of 98 million from 1987 to 1998; this leaves room for optimism, especially for a region endowed with limited resources, civil conflict and drought. This then indicates that the situation is worsening, mostly as a



result of the poor economic performance of most Sub-Saharan countries, combined with high rates of population growth (Brownbridge, 1999: 108). This makes the prospects for sustainable economic development and poverty alleviation bleak.

May (1998:4) argues, "Poor households are characterized by a lack of wage income, either as a result of unemployment or of low-paying jobs, and typically rely on multiple sources of income, which helps reduce the risk." Thus this approach ignores the fact that household earnings may change as influenced by a number of factors including the type of employment held by individuals and the number of people earning income within the household at different points in time and especially at the time of the household income survey. According to Andreß (1998:6) "Incomes are subject to seasonal and cyclical variations so that a temporary income position of a person ascertained at one point in time can deviate considerably from one permanent income that applies to a larger time period." As such what constitutes the minimum basket of goods and services and their prices are also subject to change. Also, as world economies are evolving, poverty remains unevenly distributed hence it is not static condition.

Also, it does not show the importance of other financial assets that could be a source of additional income other than employment, as other households may be financially poor but own certain capital resources. Destremau (2001:130) argues that "It remains that the unspecified nature of an income expression implies that the individuals are supposed to have access to a basket of goods at a price expressed in monetary units", and yet they may also exchange their assets to access such necessities. This situation may also influence the households' level of consumption. In this regard the specification of a minimum income adequate to make ends meet remains difficult in today's ever changing and evolving economies.

#### **2.4.2 Social poverty**

This category implies a social classification of people according to their perceived living standards and incorporates economic inequalities in terms of income, property and

economic wealth in general, and also includes inequalities regarding the social status of the people within the socio-economic environment. The human poverty approach sees a close correlation between poverty and basic capabilities such as nutrition, health, education and access to basic services such as electricity, sanitation and water (May, 1998:4). Bloem (2001:30) sees human poverty as “the lack of the necessities of material well-being as well as the denial of opportunities to live a tolerable life.” The poor feel more alienated and dependent, while the rich are superior and are economically and politically independent. This kind of context creates and reproduces strong feelings around relative deprivation, including resentment, envy and guilt (Swart *et al.* 2002:17). People living in poverty are those who face serious difficulties in attaining a minimum level of living and in today’s political and economic dispensation this is normally attributed to people living in the developing world.

Destremau (2001:131) argues that the social or human poverty approach is “focusing primarily on the satisfaction of the basic needs and includes not only food and shelter, but health, education, sanitation”, adding a complementary element of basic needs as goods and services satisfied at the level of their accessibility or existence and the impact on the lives of the people as measured not only by the level of revenue or income potentiality but also by longevity, mortality and schooling (Destremau, 2001:131). Also, there is a strong correlation between poverty and the socio-economic environment within which poor people live. This relationship may, however, be positive or detrimental to the welfare of the masses either directly or indirectly.

The major driving force behind social poverty, especially in developing world, is the fact that policies that are directed at enhancing economic growth and development have proved to be sidelining and silencing the poor and hence disempowering them socially, politically and economically. In the developing world the trend has been that the poor have had no access to, or a fair share of, national resources wealth (Thomas, 1985: xviii). This has in turn increased the margin between the haves and the have-nots at such an alarming rate that, while some people experience welfare, the masses still live in absolute poverty.

### 2.4.3 Moral poverty

This category cannot be separated from the previous two as the line between them is blurred and thus they can be seen to co-exist in society. Destremau (2001:133) states that “Notions and analyses of social exclusion are built on the hypothesis that social exclusion and economic well-being constitute rights”. Poverty involves moral obligations and the realisation and integration of people’s rights. However, questions associated with the ethics of poverty remain largely unanswered. Both the rich and the poor seem to be too scared to touch on the subject as it raises a lot of fundamental ethical issues. The ADB (2000:1) argues, “Poverty is an unacceptable condition which does not have to be inevitable.” Poverty, to a large extent, is perceived to be unfounded, as it is seen, especially by those who experience it, as a condition that should not happen as it impinges on the rights of the poor people.

Moral poverty therefore places poverty within the societal value system and considers the discredit it brings to the poor masses. Moral poverty defines whether poverty is morally acceptable and what status it confers or prevents the poor from enjoying. Poverty also involves constant emotional stress, which has a profound impact on the lives of the poor (May, 1998). Poverty, therefore, creates continuous suffering on the part of the poor and exacerbates bitterness and a feeling of unworthiness and a susceptibility to crime and other related social problems.

The contemporary era has stratified society into a variety of categories, such as the privileged and the underprivileged, or the poor and the rich. This global societal stratification and fragmentation also forms a true reflection of the way people perceive each other and it remains a characteristic of today’s human relations. It is thus evident that the policy-makers, though more vocal now than ever before on the importance of poverty alleviation and good governance, are less inclined towards bridging the existing gap between moral societal values and the social and economic crises prevalent in society.

Robinson in Vandersluis and Yeros (2000:35) states that “Moral and political philosophers point out that many of the makers of social policy are not trained to think about moral questions of social justice, and are thus encouraged to think in terms of efficiency without heed to moral questions. Economists and development policy-makers accuse moral philosophers of profound ignorance of economic realities, and of wasting time on elaborate, abstract moral justification which bears little, if any, relationship to the hard facts of a highly stratified, power-ridden global political economy”. This thus confirms the idea held by many that politicians are more inclined towards satisfying their own agendas and those of the privileged minority as opposed to addressing the interests of the masses. The researcher's contention is that Lesotho, like any other developing country, falls within this category. This moral debate, however justified it may sound, has little benefit, if at all any, for the people who endure difficult lives on a daily basis.

Vandersluis and Yeros (2000:1) also argues, “Poverty is not an empirical problem to be merely measured and explained in nomological terms, which are then to be offered as ‘advice to the prince’”. As such, poverty is but a socio-economic problem posing a challenge to the entire global community. Also, arguing from a rights-based perspective, one could also agree that all human beings possess the basic right to be treated equally, fairly and with dignity, and the right to be free from suffering and from the state of being poor. However, poor people have no power to determine what shape their livelihoods should take and thus influence change in their poverty-stricken world. This is supported by May (1998:4), who asserts that “The absence of power is virtually a defining characteristic of being poor and is worsened for women by unequal gender relations”. In essence this reiterates the contention that society plays a vital role in shaping and defining people’s livelihoods and perceptions of each other and reality itself.

The moral implications of Vandersluis and Yeros’s statement are that it remains the duty of all governments, including the international community, to ensure that the basic rights and principles of humanity are realised towards ensuring improvement in the welfare of all citizens. According to Destremau (2001:135), “It is important to focus on various social institutions in which rules governing exclusionary and inclusionary practices are

negotiated.” However, governments must take cognizance of the fact that lip service alone cannot bring about sustainable change, but rather transparency, positive action and strong commitment will ensure far more positive results in the form of transformation, sustainable democracy, good quality service, efficiency and effectiveness.

## **2.5 Measuring poverty**

### **2.5.1 Poverty indicators**

As has been mentioned, the multi-faceted character of poverty necessitates the adoption of different indicators to address the different facets of the phenomenon. The global consensus to adopt poverty indicators as a means of definition has proved rational enough to eliminate differences in perceptions and misunderstandings. It is these poverty indicators that assist national governments to determine the needs of the people and then reset and re-focus on the national policies and strategic actions to address developmental problems at large. According to the World Bank (2003:15), “This deeper understanding brings to the fore more areas of action and policy on the poverty reduction agenda.” Marres & Van Der Wiel (1975: 2) adds that, “In order to indicate whether an individual lives in poverty, two elements in the poverty concept have to be clarified. First, which needs are considered as basic and secondly, below what level is a need inadequately satisfied.” The attempt to utilise these adopted poverty indicators also as poverty measures has resulted in the adoption of specific measuring tools that incorporate all socio-economic aspects.

Poverty indicators incorporate different dimensions of poverty, including demographic aspects, education and literacy, head of household indicators, labour market, household income and expenditure, household amenities and health issues (World Bank, 2004a; World Bank, 2003; UNDP, 2003; ADB 2000; Sechaba Consultants, 2000). The key social poverty indicators in the developing world – including Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Latin America, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Asia, Middle East and North Africa as regions with high indices of poverty, especially in the rural areas – include:

- Income and employment opportunities. Any forms of economic activity, whether formal or informal are crucial as they help the poor attain basic requirements and establish sustainable livelihoods as they produce goods and services and generate opportunities for others. Economic growth is therefore crucial as it generates employment opportunities, hence income. According to the British Government (2000:29), “Without growth – with stagnant or even declining incomes – the poor will only be able to make insignificant improvements in their livelihoods at the expense of other poor people.” This situation worsens economic inequality.

The international standard industrial classification categorises economic activities into five broad categories; agriculture and fishing, manufacture/mining/construction, commerce, civil servant/army, and other sectors when indicating the labour market status of the household head and the total household income derived from any one sector. However, in the case where the source of income is more than one sector, the sector from which the largest income share is derived is regarded as the most important (World Bank 2004a). In Sub-Saharan Africa agriculture forms the backbone of most economies, with this sector employing more than 50% of the citizens.

- Education and literacy. According to the British Government (2000:25), “Education is seen as an essential foundation for the process of enabling individuals and countries to realize their potential and make the most of their resources.” Hence education equips people with the necessary skills, information and knowledge to enable them to devise survival strategies to cope with different challenges in life, including adverse poverty. The importance of education is reiterated by the declaration made by the international community as part of the international development goals that it would achieve universal primary education by the year 2015 (UNDP, 2005 online).

Access to education is thus an important measure of poverty, where the net primary enrolment rate shows the number of children of primary school age (ages 6 to 13) enrolled as a proportion of the total number of children of primary school age, while

the literacy rate signifies the proportion of the population above 15 years of age that can read and write (World Bank 2004b). Although Sub-Saharan Africa saw an improvement in net primary school enrolments from 78 percent in 1980 to 84 percent in 1998, with adult literacy increasing by 21 percent from 53 percent in 1970 to 74 percent in 1998 (ADB 2000), today there are still huge numbers of adults and children who cannot read and write. This trend is bound to remain cyclical as today's illiterate children are tomorrow's illiterate adults. The overall net primary enrolment rate of 60 percent in Africa (ADB 2000) remains the lowest when compared to other regions of the developing world.

- Gender inequality. Eliminating unequal enrolment in primary and secondary education for both boys and girls by the year 2005 is also one of the millennium goals (World Bank 2004b). For a long time women have been powerless and excluded by their male counterparts from vital decision-making that affects them and this situation has always left them subject to injustice. This includes domestic violence, crime and civil conflict.
- Life expectancy. The life span of people is attributed to different natural and unnatural factors. Even though life expectancy in the developing world rose from 55 years in 1970 to 65 years in 1998, it falls far below that of the developed world by 13 percent (ADB 2000). Life expectancy, especially in Africa, has been seriously affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has manifested itself so seriously throughout the region. It is predicted that at least 40 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa will lose their parents to AIDS in the next decade and that life expectancy will decline by an average of 17 years in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (UNDP, 2000:100). This situation is creating a new poverty pattern of a considerably increasing number of AIDS orphans, while at the same time exacerbating the already existing problem.
- Health care. The provision of primary health care is of pivotal importance in ensuring sustainable livelihoods in any society, as ill-health affects poor people's ability to



escape from poverty and utilise their capabilities and realise opportunities to fare better in life. Most parts of the developing world lack health-care services and the few that are available are either in a bad state or have inadequate resources, whether financial, human or physical. This therefore confirms the fact that poverty is a result of inadequate infrastructure. According to Chipete (2002:29), “basic health care provision is lacking for over 50 percent of people in Sub-Sahara Africa.” Incidences of poverty-related diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, pneumonia and now HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are high and, hence, pose a great challenge to national development.

- Infant and maternal mortality rates. Reducing mortality rates for children less than 5 years of age by two thirds and the maternal mortality rate by three-fourths are some of the goals for social development set by the global community. High mortality rates can be attributed to lack of resources and knowledge, including immunisation and supplementary nutrition, inadequate public education on family planning and health education in general, unchecked and unmonitored pregnancies and childbirths. The Global Poverty Report (2000) shows that infant mortality rates declined from 107 per 1000 births in 1970 to 59 per 1000 live births in 1998. However, Sub-Saharan Africa has not made significant progress in this regard.
- Access to clean water and sanitation. Clean water and improved sanitation facilities are social and economic goods, crucial for the development and wellbeing of any society. According to the British Government (2000:24), “Over 1.3 billion people do not have access to safe water.” Lack of these resources also adversely affects the environment on which the poor rely to sustain their livelihoods, sometimes even causing diseases and death.
- Food security. Poor people are the most hungry and vulnerable to diseases that are a result of malnutrition. They lack access to productive assets such as arable land, services and knowledge to make the best use of the little that they have to sustain food security. For the commitment to reduce world hunger by half by 2015



undertaken at the World Food Summit in 1996 (British Government 2000:24) to succeed, there has to be a greater commitment on the part of national governments to devise strategies for managing land resources and managing the environment, thus increasing food security.

### **2.5.2 The poverty line**

Material poverty is measured through a pre-determined poverty line, which is a minimal level below which an individual or a household may be considered poor, as it is not able to meet the minimum requirements for a good quality of life. Andreß (1998:2) defines the poverty line as “a subsistence minimum in each society beyond which the physical survival of a person is no longer guaranteed.” The respective governments or similar institutions define the poverty line in terms of consumption through income distribution and expenditure. This would mean that the poverty lines of different countries differ significantly.

Despite the fact that the idea of basic needs is universally recognised, these basic needs vary significantly geographically and, hence, no single poverty line can be established that applies universally. The national poverty lines adopted by various national governments and development agencies vary according to the definition of poverty held by the respective country or agency, and the priorities and needs of specific communities. The establishment of a poverty line takes into consideration the size of the household and the ages that compose it, thus making it easier to determine the proportion of the population that falls below the adopted poverty line. As such, a household that earns income that is below the adopted poverty line is regarded as poverty-stricken, despite its level of development. In South Africa, for example, the poverty line for an urban household with two adults and three children was approximately R840.00 per month, and R740.00 for rural households with two adults and three children at the beginning of 1994 (Whiteford *et al.* 1995:2).

The World Bank adopts the international poverty line to measure income poverty globally, using \$1 and \$2 a day standard, measured in 1985 international prices and adjusted to local currencies using purchasing power parities (PPPs) (World Bank, 2004c: 57). Table 2 presents a distribution of people living on less than \$1 a day by region between 1987 and 1998.

**Table 2: Distribution of people living on less than \$1 a day (1987-1998)**

Region	1987 (Percent)	1998 (Percent)
Sub-Saharan Africa	18.4	24.3
East Asia and Pacific	35.3	23.2
Europe and Central Asia	0.1	2.0
Middle East and North Africa	0.8	0.5
South Asia	40.1	43.5
Latin America	5.4	6.5

**Source: Chen and Ravallion, 2000 in World Bank 2003.**

Table 2 complements Table 1 by showing the consistent poverty increase in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with other regions reducing their numbers dramatically. In Sub-Saharan Africa the number of income-poor people rose from 217.2 million to 290.9 million in a period of 11 years between 1987 and 1998 with 72.9 percent of the population covered in the survey. This then indicates that the economies of sub-Saharan Africa are still lagging behind, as more than 50 percent of the people in the region live in dire poverty.

### **2.5.3 Human development**

Poverty encompasses not only lack of income, but also human deprivation with regard to the freedom and ability of the citizens to do what they want to do. UNDP (2000:22) asserts that human poverty “is a deprivation in the most essential capabilities of life, including a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable, having adequate economic

provisioning and participating fully in the life of the community.” As a result of the various dimensions encompassed by the issue of poverty, the UNDP has adopted the human development index (HDI) to rank the world’s rich and poor countries according to the prevalence of poverty of life as measured by the percentage of people not expected to survive beyond the age of 40, poverty of knowledge, which is measured by adult literacy and deprivation in economic provisioning, from private to public income, which is measured by the percentage of people without access to safe water, and health services and the percentage of children under the age of five who are moderately or severely underweight (UNDP, 2000: 22).

The most recent available data are outlined by the UNDP in the Human Development Report (HDR) of 2003. The HDR shows that Sub-Saharan Africa fares badly as it is ranked low on the HDI. According to UNDP (2005: online) “Almost all of the ‘low human development’ countries at the bottom of the index are in Sub-Saharan Africa: 30 out of the total of 34.” This also supports the fact that other dimensions of poverty are intertwined with poverty of income, as income poverty is also high in the regions of the developing world, including sub-Saharan Africa. Table 3 below shows some characteristics of human development in nine African countries of the SADC.

The table illustrates that there is a huge disparity between countries falling within the same region. Mauritius has the highest HDI, thus is considered middle HDI with Zambia ranked the lowest HDI. Thus, this shows how diverse the developing world can be and confirms the fact that large proportions of people in Sub-Saharan Africa still live in dire poverty, with large populations yet low levels of human development. With the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases in Africa, life expectancy is bound to drop further, thus lowering the productivity of the poor and leaving orphaned children as household heads and unable to attend school, and decreasing food security, malnutrition and good health. The World Bank (2000: 26) states that “Because HIV hits people in their prime productive years, it will raise Africa’s already high dependency ratio and erode traditional mechanisms of social protection. With the high direct costs – caring for 1 AIDS patient costs as much as educating 10 primary school students - will

come a catastrophic impact on productivity, earnings and savings.” The global community therefore, still faces massive challenges towards attaining its target of reducing world poverty by half by 2015.

**Table 3: Human development characteristics in nine selected SADC countries**

Country	Adult illiteracy rate: Age 15 years and older. 1997 (%)	Female illiteracy rate: Age 15-24 years. 1990-1998 (%)	Under 5 underweight children. 1997 (%)	People expected to survive to age 15. 1997 (%)	People expected to survive to age 40. 1997 (%)	HDI Rank 2003
Botswana	27	17	9	12	35	125
Lesotho	18	16	2	15	25	137
South Africa	16	9	10	10	23	111
Zambia	25	24	18	19	43	163
Zimbabwe	9	15	2	15	40	145
Malawi	42	30	42	29	48	162
Tanzania	28	27	15	18	35	160
Mauritius	62	23	62	19	29	62
Namibia	20	26	8	15	30	124

Sources: UNDP (2000), UNDP (2003)

The Human Development Index (HDI), therefore, has also been utilised to measure both non-material and material poverty. According to UNDP (2005: online), “The Index is a composite measure of life-expectancy, education and income per person.” Whiteford *et al.* (1995:1) argues, “The only attempt to go beyond income as a measure of poverty is in the use of the Human Development Index which, in addition to income, also incorporates literacy and life expectancy.” May (1998:3) further indicates that the Human

Development Index (HDI) is “an indicator constructed to determine the extent to which people live long, informed and comfortable lives and combines measures of life expectancy at birth, education levels and standard of living.” Furthermore, the UNDP (1998:2) maintains that “The concept of human development is a holistic one, putting people at the centre of all aspects of the development process...” This then is indicative of the fact that people are a central dimension in a sustainable development initiative, hence active participation and involvement is mandatory.

The need for advocating human development is unarguably an international phenomenon. Even the President of South Africa, then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki in UNDP (1999:20) also stresses the importance of the HDI by stating that “The Human Development Report has become an important instrument of policy and the concept of the human development index is a fundamental tool in formulation of policy by government... Growth and advancement must be measured by the extent to which it impacts positively on people, but the starting point must be human development. We need to focus particularly on the sectors of society that are more disadvantaged- women, youth, children, the elderly and the disabled.” It is therefore imperative to address the factors that directly and indirectly hamper human development so as to eliminate the socio-economic deprivation of humanity and thus attain a fairly acceptable standard of living for all.

## **2.6 Poverty alleviation**

The persistence of rural poverty poses a great developmental challenge facing the world today, since previous initiatives have attained little in this respect, especially in Africa. As Riley (2002:16) argues, “There is a widely perceived need to improve the lives and livelihoods of large sections of humanity”. GOL (1997:2) further states, “To successfully address poverty is to lay one of the cornerstones for a broad-based national economic growth and development.” Thus to alleviate poverty is to grant the poor equal access to quality goods and services, to allow equal participation for all groups in fundamental decision-making and to free vulnerable people from control and isolation by others, thus enhancing human development.

Poverty alleviation is closely tied to the holistic notion of economic development. Logically increased economic growth would result in people having a share in the economy. Broad-based economic growth can increase the chances of an income for the poor as it enables them to participate productively in the economy. It relies on the poor's most abundant resource, which is cheap and unskilled labour, and thus generates a chance of employment (World Bank, 1995b: 2). The ultimate effect of sustained growth is thus securing better lives for the poor by reducing hunger and malnutrition, diseases and mortality.

However, developing countries cannot sustain economic growth effectively without investing in the people, many of whom lack education, good health and other related resources and inputs to contribute to high growth (World Bank, 2000:2). Therefore, poverty alleviation policies must target interventions that impact on human development. Clearly, economic development alone cannot sufficiently address poverty alleviation if it is not supplemented with specific attempts to eradicate poverty. The World Bank (1998:4) argues that "The most effective strategy for development remains one which balances accelerated growth with measures to enhance the poor's access to productive activities and human resources development." Therefore, successful poverty alleviation depends on dynamic equitable and pro-poor economic growth that supports programmes and strategies that aim at improving the standard of living for the rural poor, in support of rural development.

## **2.7 Rural development**

The concept of "development", as has been mentioned in previous parts of the study, implies some form of positive change in the direction of improvement or growth. However, it remains a complex phenomenon to define as it encapsulates a broad dimension of socio-economic issues. Buller & Wright (1990:2) argues, "No agreement exists as to what development as a process, a goal or as a perceived achievement actually is. The ambiguity and generality of the term has deprived it of a specific meaning." Therefore, a consensus has to be reached that it describes a wide variety of processes associated with economic and social improvement and betterment.

As a process development involves different components and stages that complement one another as both causes and effects, because they do not exist in isolation from each other. According to Ball in Buller & Wright (1990:3), "Development is a process involving a number of components which, taken together individually, may not in themselves constitute development." Development is therefore an evolving process that does not have a specific breaking line. Its continuity must not only bring about economic and social betterment, but it must also equip its recipients with the ability to sustain and control it in the long-term.

In the context of poverty alleviation, therefore, development involves a complex process of diversifying the structure of the economy to produce opportunities, especially jobs and income, and other basic life-sustaining goods and services such as food, shelter, water, sanitation and education, thereby enhancing social relations. It also expands the socio-economic chances of the poor so that they are freed from vulnerability to poverty (De Lange, 2001). In essence, development increases economic activity and thus improves the welfare of people, especially the poor. However, this is clearly not an easy task.

As a process of social and economic improvement, development targets a specific category in society with somewhat similar characteristics, shared interests and social cohesion (Buller & Wright, 1990:4). In this sense, development has a spatial or a geographical connotation. Rural development, therefore, is about improving the living standards of the rural poor, despite the lack of homogeneity in their social, political, geographical and cultural characteristics. Buller & Wright (1990) further clarify that "Rural development is defined in terms of overall improvement in welfare of rural residents and in the contribution which the resource base makes more generally to the welfare of the population as a whole." The lives and livelihoods of rural residents often depend on their natural surroundings, including both arable land and the countryside as immediate sources of sustenance for medicines, herbs, fuel, building materials and other resources that are crucial to the poor (Riley, 2002:19). Thus, to develop rural people successfully and efficiently, the natural resources of the rural areas have to be harnessed in accordance with the needs of rural people.

De Lange (2001:14) adds important dimensions by defining rural development as “encompassing improved provision of services, enhanced opportunities of income generation and local economic development, improved physical infrastructure, social cohesion and physical security within rural communities, active representation in local political processes and effective provision for the vulnerable.” Rural development is thus multidimensional and hence, on the basis of the above definitions, it can be deduced that rural development precipitates poverty alleviation as it allows rural citizens to seize livelihood opportunities that release them from the poverty trap. In this sense, it is not only a means to an end, but a goal in itself.

Rural development programmes and projects are normally seen as strategies for rural development in the developing world as they target specific problem areas or issues. But there is also a widespread tendency to rely on disjointed projects that are not coherent with national objectives, disintegrating the different dimensions of poverty and also ignoring the source of the problem (UNDP, 2000:10). Also, a majority of these projects have been imposed on the developing countries under the auspices of ‘aid’ by the rich world, thus weakening the national governments by creating a political economy based on begging and a legacy of indebtedness (Kolavalli, 2002). This renders the impact of such programmes in the long run minimal as they trap both the governments and poor people in an increased burden of poverty.

Developing rural areas and rural people is also defined in policy terms, in which any institutional rural development policies define what rural development must entail and what its role must be in society (Buller & Wright, 1990:6). Due to the multi-dimensional nature of the forces necessitating rural development, it must be conceived as a multi-sectoral approach. Thus, it becomes a policy issue that must be specified in order to be effectively and efficiently managed in order to address the various facets.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, where the main assets of the poor are labour and land, policies ought to support the agricultural sector that sustains livelihoods. According to Brownbridge, (1999:121), “A strong policy focus on agriculture should include increased



public investment in agricultural research and extension services, and in rural infrastructure, alongside pricing policies which provide farmers with adequate incentives to expand production and innovation.” However, this does not justify other sectors of the economy that benefit the rural poor being ignored.

Hence, the establishment of appropriate and transparent institutions as principal mechanisms for rural poverty alleviation and rural development by national governments is required to strengthen their capacity to benefit from the global economy (UNDP, 2000:18). Governance thus plays a critical part in sustainable rural development and poverty alleviation in that regard. An important question that can be posed at this juncture is: “Governance by whom”

### **2.8 Governance: The critical tie between development and poverty alleviation**

Good governance is globally regarded as a vital link between development and poverty alleviation in the contemporary era as it signifies the manner in which society is organised and power is shared in resource management for social development. According to Wooldridge & Cranko (in Mahlangu, 2000:29), “Governance is a means to maintain social stability and well-being through deepening democracy, structuring social relationships and conflict and ensuring responsive delivery.” Democracy and governance therefore advocate for political change that generates economic gains, political rights and civil liberties. UNDP (2000:54) supports this view by adding, “When people’s interests, needs and human rights - not the pressure for greater economic efficiency - are at the centre of governance institutions and practices, there can be real progress in combating poverty.” The focal point of good governance, therefore, is to create institutions that are capable of building an environment that is compliant with the rule of law, transparent and accountable to the masses and that allow them equal participation in the economy and access to opportunities.

Governance denotes interaction between different social groups and government in the process of policy-making without any player necessarily taking centre stage. Daemen (2000:57) argues, “Where governments may have the authority to decide, it may lack the

financial means or expertise to do so in a meaningful way. Actors need each other because resources like authority, expertise, finances and political support are not usually in one source.” Therefore, poverty alleviation and rural development will not be effectively realised without the involvement of all developmental stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), making up what is normally referred to as civil society, with government and the private sector complementing one another in the policy-guided development initiatives. On the basis of the given definition of governance, it can be concluded that it advocates for participation and devolution of power to the lower levels of governance or decentralisation in decision-making to benefit the people, especially the poor.

The critical task, however, remains with the governments to create an appropriate environment for public-private partnerships to prevail. The role of these players therefore needs some emphasis. As the people put democratic governance into place, it needs to be answerable and accountable to their needs. However, democracy would not automatically bring about poverty alleviation unless institutions of governance root out corruption and mismanagement and allocate public resources equally and for the public purpose (UNDP, 2000:54). It is also the responsibility of governance to consolidate poverty-alleviation funds, distribute them equitably and account for such spending. This requires strong political will and commitment on the part of the democratically elected government and the empowerment of the masses to organise and create mechanisms that can hold government accountable.

For a large part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century most of African countries were stifled by dysfunctional economies, conflict and social disintegration that made them more susceptible to poverty and hunger. According to the World Bank (2001:21), “In a number of states governance has disintegrated into protracted civil wars and lawlessness. About 20% of Africans live in countries severely disrupted by conflicts and 90% of the casualties are civilians. The regions contain 20 million landmines, 16 million displaced persons and more than 3 million refugees.” With the non-existence of a political environment conducive to social integration, and with ineffective institutional

mechanisms in place and minimal or even sometimes non-adherence to the rule of law, poverty alleviation has remained a distant reality.

In the wake of the new democratic era, therefore, Africa has also had to align itself with the trend towards globalisation in order to limit the risk of economic instability by adopting international standards that advocate for ownership, good governance and accountability to stakeholders (World Bank, 2000:20). Evidence to this is the dismantling of authoritarian regimes and the holding of multi-party elections in the developing world. Political reforms clearly still have a huge task to ensuring the consolidation of the young and fragile African democracy.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has defined the concept of 'poverty' with its different manifestations to create a better understanding of what it encompasses. The types and causes of poverty have thus been discussed. Also, poverty measures have been described, giving examples from the developing regions of the world, including Sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty is intense and inevitable. Furthermore, the importance of rural development as a strategy for economic improvement, hence poverty alleviation, has been outlined. Finally, the chapter has indicated that governance is the vital precondition for sound socio-economic development and poverty alleviation through the establishment of democratic and accountable institutions.

The general understanding at this point is thus that poverty has many facets and dimensions that make a definition elusive. Therefore, the contention that it means different things to different people could therefore be held true. Its alleviation thus necessitates a multifaceted approach, cutting across different governmental departments and institutions, including civil society and the private sector. Emanating from this broad theoretical background, it is important at this point to describe the situation of poverty in Lesotho and elaborate on the role played by the LHWP in poverty alleviation.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### A DESCRIPTION OF POVERTY IN LESOTHO: THE LESOTHO HIGHLANDS WATER PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE

#### 3.1 Introduction

As has been noted above, development and especially rural development remains a multifaceted phenomenon that changes the quality of life of its recipients in a positive direction. Poverty alleviation, therefore, has direct implications for the manner in which economic and social resources are managed and distributed for development. In the case of Lesotho the different manifestations of development justify the need to describe the extent and nature of poverty in Lesotho and the importance of the LHWP in poverty alleviation towards enhancing the social development of Lesotho in general and the Basotho people in particular.

This chapter therefore reviews the scope of poverty in Lesotho and the measures undertaken by the Government of Lesotho in partnership to mitigate the effects of poverty. It also examines the significance of the LHWP in developing the highlands area with direct implications for development in Lesotho at large. This is achieved, firstly, by outlining the general situation of poverty in Lesotho, especially in the rural areas of which the Lesotho highlands form the greater part, thereby providing a broad perspective on the economy of Lesotho. Thus it provides an overview of how poverty has manifested itself to pose a great challenge to development, thus necessitating enhanced institutional cooperation for easing the severity of its impact on the citizens.

Secondly, it describes what the Lesotho Highlands Water Project as a whole entails. Thirdly and most importantly, it adopts the Phase 1B (Mohale Dam and Matsoku Weir) of the project as the case study to examine the position of the Government of Lesotho through the LHDA towards poverty alleviation in Lesotho. In essence the Rural Development Programme (RDP) of the LHWP as it applies to the Mohale dam phase is mapped into the scenario of poverty alleviation.

### **3.2 An overview of poverty in Lesotho**

The multidimensional nature of poverty necessitates a definition in order to reach a fairly common understanding and draw a clear picture of the situation of poor living conditions. Lalthapersad-Pillay (2002:38) supports this view by arguing that it is imperative “to know who the poor are, where they live, the size of their households, what they do for a living, what they own and buy, what risks they face and how they fit into society around them”. Thus this knowledge acts as a basis for further action by all development players, including the national government.

To categorise the country as poor necessitates the establishment of a specific set of principles and guidelines that will help identify underlying social, economic and political factors. According to Lalthapersad-Pillay (2002:41), “The constituents of a basic minimal standard of living include access to primary health, legal aid, potable water, sanitation facilities, primary and secondary education and income sufficient for essential food and clothing”. Thus, to create a better understanding in that regard, the extent to which Lesotho is affected by poverty must be analysed in terms of its many dimensions and indicators. The seriousness of poverty in the world has been extensively discussed and the important issue that needs to be addressed is how it impacts on the local people, given the local conditions, needs and available resources.

#### **3.2.1 Defining poverty in Lesotho**

The definition of poverty in Lesotho has been deduced from the results of surveys conducted by Sechaba Consultants on poverty profiles in Lesotho in 1990 (Poverty in Lesotho: A mapping exercise), 1994 (Poverty in Lesotho: A mapping exercise) and 2000 (Poverty and livelihoods in Lesotho, 2000: More than a mapping exercise). These surveys have answered the ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘why’ and ‘what’ questions, thus assisting development initiatives to target and focus resource.

Poverty in Lesotho is unequivocally a relative term denoting lack of basic resources to attain a minimal quality of life in relation to local standards that are applicable only in

Lesotho (Gay *et al.*, 1994). Lack of money is widely regarded as a major indicator of poverty in Lesotho. Sechaba Consultants (2000: xiv) agree: "Poverty is not just lack of money. But in a monetized economy such as that in Lesotho money speaks very loudly". As such money has led to the commercialisation of many aspects of everyday life, to the extent that those that the poor who lack money cannot afford even the most basic of all needs, especially food.

### 3.2.2 Measuring poverty

Lesotho is ranked number 137 on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2003). Table 4 below outlines the performance of Lesotho with regard to selected important poverty indicators.

**Table 4: Human poverty indicators in Lesotho**

	<b>Lesotho</b>	<b>Botswana</b>	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>Swaziland</b>
Life expectancy Male/Female	32.3/37.7	38.9/40.5	45.1/50.7	33.3/35.4
HIV prevalence Male/Female	25.4/32.4	31.7/43.1	18.1/23.5	35.7/41.7
% Rural access to safe water	78	95	86	-
Births per 1000 women aged 15-19	53	91	66	45
Contraceptive prevalence (Any/modern method)	30/30	40/39	56/55	28/26
% Births with skilled attendants	60	94	84	70
Infant mortality total per 1000 live births	92	57	48	78
Maternal mortality ratio (number of deaths per 1000,000 live births)	550	100	230	370
% Illiterate (>15 years) Male/Female	26/10	24/18	13/15	18/20
Proportion reaching	60/74	87/92	65/64	69/79

Grade 5, Male/Female				
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	16.4			
% (Land area) permanent cropland	0.1			

**Source: World Bank 2004, UNDP 2003, and UNFPA 2005**

The statistics show that Lesotho still lags behind in human development aspects. Firstly, Lesotho has the third highest rate of HIV/IDS prevalence, probably because it has the lowest prevalence of either modern or any other method of contraception. HIV/AIDS is more prevalent among women than men. However, it has the second lowest number of births per 1000 women, totalling 53 after Swaziland with 45. Furthermore, it has the highest maternal deaths of 550 per 100,000 live births and infant mortality rate of 92 per 1000 live births, due to the fact that a large number of birth are attended by unskilled people. Also, only 78 percent of the population has access to safe water as compared to 96 percent in Botswana and 86 percent in South Africa. All these factors pose a threat to the health and welfare of the Basotho people, so it is not surprising that their life expectancy is the lowest of all the four countries.

Moreover, adult illiteracy is also a challenge in Lesotho, where 26 percent of males are illiterate compared to 10 percent of their female counterparts. Lesotho's male illiteracy is higher than that of all the other countries, with only 60 percent of the male proportion reaching Grade 5, while the female illiteracy rate is the lowest of all. However, only 74 percent of the female population reaches Grade 5 compared to 92 percent in Botswana and 79 percent in Swaziland. South Africa has the second lowest proportion of males reaching Grade 5 after Lesotho, and the lowest proportion of female reaching Grade 5. Finally, with only 0.1 percent of the land area arable, agriculture contributes only 16.4 percent to the Country's GDP. These challenges thus place Lesotho at a high risk of poverty.

### **3.3 The nature of poverty in Lesotho**

In Lesotho poverty bears both geographical and occupational dimensions that continuously complement one another. It affects the shepherds who are unable to attend

school because they have the responsibility to look after the livestock; the women are culturally and mostly legally subjected to unequal relations with their male counterparts and cannot access certain privileges without the consent of the males; and the subsistence farmers who cannot depend on the weak agricultural sector that is vulnerable to natural shocks. Lastly, poverty is prevalent among child-headed household and those that are headed by the elderly grandparents due to HIV/AIDS. Kolavalli (2002:5) argues, "There may be a life-cycle component to poverty. Elderly persons, usually grandmothers who are taking care of the orphaned or abandoned, typically head the poorest households. These households may also have no other resources except land. The proportion of household *de jure* headed by women at 25% is higher than in many African countries." This situation poses a great challenge to the Government of Lesotho.

The migration of the bulk of able-bodied men to work in the mines in South Africa necessitated that women stay home to take care of the families. This has had a negative impact on young boys, who had to look after their families' livestock in the absence of their fathers until they were old enough to take up jobs in the mines, while the girls had the opportunity to attend school. A huge literacy imbalance was thus created between boys and girls, and even in the way society in general viewed them.

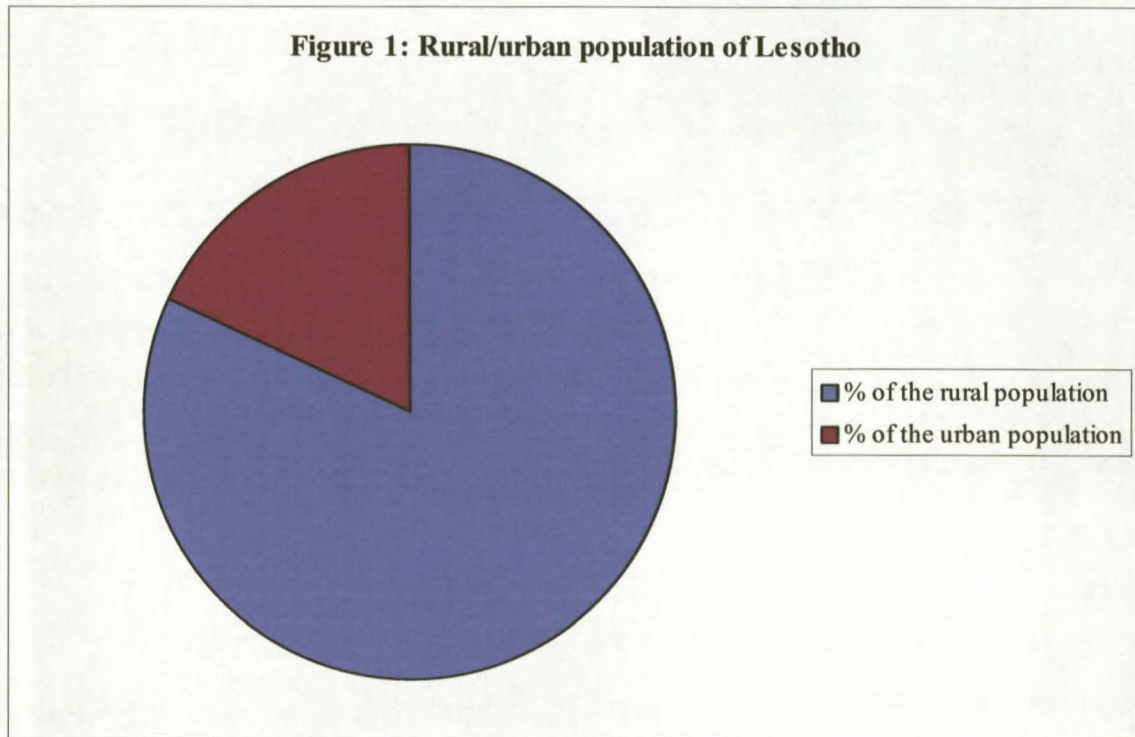
The positive outcome, however, was that the migration of men also conferred upon women some status as they could perform some otherwise male duties. Epprecht (1999) in Kolavalli (2002:6) states that "Women enjoy significant areas of relative autonomy from male control because men are physically absent for extended periods, their assertion of legal and moral rights over women has also been undermined and women have assumed *de facto* responsibility for many customarily masculine tasks." Basotho women have thus had to take up minor and low-paying jobs in the domestic, informal or subsistence agricultural sectors to earn a living, while awaiting some income from the miners who come home after a long time.

Geographically Lesotho is divided into five ecological zones, namely urban, lowlands, foothills, mountains and the Senqu River Valley (SRV) (Sechaba Consultants, 2000).



Lesotho lacks mineral resources but is richly endowed with water, which is normally referred to as the “white gold of Lesotho”. The mountains are scenic, especially in the eyes of the outside world, but the harsh realities of the everyday life of the ordinary people in the rural areas far outweigh the beauty of the countryside. Poverty is mainly concentrated in the mountains and the SRV, which form the core of the Lesotho highlands and rural areas. For many people in this part of the Country it is normal not to have a toilet, and to drink water from a river, to gather wood or cow dung for fuel, and to have many cattle and sheep and engage in the sale of livestock, wool and mohair without putting money into a bank account. Most developmental decisions are imposed from the top, the central government, and the rural residents are only content to work in such programmes as long as they get remuneration in the form of food or money, regardless of the long-term benefits that they are bound to reap from such initiatives.

This, therefore, emphasises the fact that poverty remains a rural phenomenon. More people reside in the rural areas than in the urban areas, as shown in Figure 1 below. With a total population estimated at million, 82 percent (which is equivalent to 1 640 000 people) live in rural Lesotho, while only 18 percent (360 000 people) reside in urban areas. GOL (2001) estimates that “At least one half of the country’s population is poor, and the incidence of poverty may be as high as 70 percent in rural areas.” However, the reality is that most rural residents would prefer to live in the rural areas, where life is slower and cheaper, than to live anywhere else.

**Figure 1: Rural/urban population of Lesotho**

The majority of the rural people depend on agriculture as the primary source of their livelihood, even though they cannot adequately produce their own dietary requirements. Thus Turner (2001) in Kolavalli (2002:1) states, "Although a majority of the population is in rural areas and is engaged in agriculture in some form or the other, some would suggest that rural Basotho could hardly be called farmers". Lesotho still relies heavily on food imports, especially from South Africa.

The decline in the mining industry has also led to the retrenchment of Basotho migrant labourers, thus contributing to a substantial rise in rural unemployment in Lesotho. Therefore a majority of people rely on informal economic activities, the Government's food or money for work programmes, other wage employment, especially construction, security work, domestic work and manufacturing work in the Chinese textile industries in Maseru and Maputsoe, and also on help from other people. This has increased the phenomenon of rural to urban migration and urban poverty as people seek job opportunities in the urban centres of Lesotho, especially Maseru, Maputsoe and Mafeteng, and in South Africa.

The rural and mountainous parts of Lesotho have an inadequate road and communications infrastructure and this means that rural people do not have the opportunity to access the outside world with ease. According to Kolavalli (2002:6), “Although the access to basic services such as water, sanitation, health and education has improved significantly in the past two decades, the poor living in remote hilly areas have more limited access to public services than others”. Also, the majority of the people who migrate to the more accessible areas either to seek employment or residence there, leaving the old, frail and illiterate behind, never to return home to promote development.

#### **3.4 Basotho perceptions of poverty**

Recent surveys have indicated that the Basotho perceive poverty in different ways. The causes of poverty are many and varied. The following have been identified as the most mentioned causes of poverty in Lesotho:

- Unemployment. Employment opportunities, especially for the uneducated masses of the population, are extremely scarce in Lesotho. Therefore, acquiring a wage income is in most instances difficult. With more than one quarter of the rural population in Lesotho unemployed, subsistence agriculture has become their main source of income, hence the main livelihood strategy complemented by other informal activities. However, the contribution of the agricultural sector to the country’s economy saw a decline of 8 percent from 24 percent to 16 percent between 1999 and 2001, with the number of agricultural households totalling 1.3 million (GOL 2001). Also, those who are employed in the informal sector also earn low wages and this then makes it almost impossible for the poor to make a decent living and to access basic services and credit.
- Alcoholism is largely a result of frustration due to an accumulation of factors, but most importantly unemployment as the unemployed masses are idle and resort to drinking as a hobby as a means to help them divert their attention from the challenges of everyday life. A majority of Basotho women, especially in the rural areas, resort to

either brewing traditional beer or selling other alcohol to earn a living and so alcohol is always abundantly available in the villages. There are no formal mechanisms put in place to regulate these kinds of informal activities, except the responsibility endowed on the local chiefs for maintaining law and order in their areas of jurisdiction. However, alcoholism remains a serious problem, as even the chiefs regard home-brewed beer as food that is fit for their everyday consumption.

- Environmental disasters such as drought, floods, hailstorms leading to soil infertility and loss of productive pasture land; in the most recent years poor rains and climatic conditions in Lesotho have not been favourable for productive agriculture, even for those with agricultural land. As such, a majority of subsistence farmers have not been able to produce adequate food even for their own consumption, thus rendering Lesotho's poor vulnerable to hunger. Also, poor land management practices have led to loss of arable land, further exacerbating landlessness for many rural dwellers. This has necessitated Lesotho's dependence on international food aid over the years.
- Lack of adequate agricultural inputs and land; this results from lack of income, as those who do not have money do not have direct access to resources and general information, despite the size and availability of land. A majority of subsistence Basotho farmers still rely on the use of traditional farming methods; hence their level of production is low. On the other hand, landlessness is also a problem for the many who may have money to access information and resources, but for one reason or the other do not have land. In this regard, neither the landowners nor the landless are better off.
- Personal failings such as laziness; as a result of natural disasters, and especially drought, Basotho have been recipients of food aid in the form of food rations for the most vulnerable households, food parcels for children under the age of 5 to counter malnutrition, food for work for the able-bodied men and women, and maize seed and fertilisers for Basotho farmers. However, as this aid is donor funded, its sustainability is not guaranteed. Also, the trend has been that seeds and fertilisers arrive late, after

the ploughing season, making people more susceptible to hunger. This has exacerbated their reliance on food aid, thus perpetuating further dependence, as most people do not seek other avenues of making a living.

- Ill health or disability; Lesotho has experienced an improvement in the provision of water and sanitation facilities, thus getting under control related communicable diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea. Access to primary health care and health-care services in general has improved substantially with the greater availability of a number of clinics, hospitals and health posts around the Country; however, a lot of rural dwellers still have to walk long distances to reach the nearest health facilities. The Government of Lesotho still faces a grave challenge in improving Lesotho's rural roads infrastructure in order to enhance the means of public transport so that access to resources and facilities would be easier.
- Lack of access to resources and information about good nutrition for the poor has also exacerbated poor health. Due to an accumulation of factors, including unemployment, low income, low agricultural production, and thus inadequate access to good food, among others, the nutritional value of what is consumed has also declined, leaving poor people unhealthy. The scourging AIDS pandemic has also crippled the health status of many Basotho, despite the Government's efforts to create public awareness. AIDS largely affects the most productive groups in society and thus makes it extremely difficult for families to survive and meet basic needs after the death of the sole income-earner and breadwinner.
- Political factors such as injustice, oppression and corruption, especially in local government; although decentralisation has been on the policy agenda for some time, local governance has been weak in Lesotho and this has created a scenario of limited community development and poverty alleviation at the local level. The marginalisation of the rural areas has also given Basotho at the grassroots level little opportunity to influence decision-making and hence Government policies.

Traditionally, the chiefs and local headmen were endowed with the power to spearhead, control and manage community affairs, which in many instances resulted in injustice, oppression and corruption as they misused their power. GOL (2000:25) states that “The laws of Lerotholi, a codification of the customs and traditions, were the basis for land allocation in which gazetted chiefs or headmen were responsible for ‘fairly and responsibly’ allocating land to their land subjects, but many chiefs did not distribute land fairly”.

After much conflict between the chiefs and the village development councils, which were as much prone to corruption as the chiefs were, the Government of Lesotho abolished the local government system and amended local government for the establishment of the new local government structures in Lesotho in 2005. The importance of local government in development cannot be overemphasised, as this is the level of governance closest to the people. Thus, there is room for optimism in the newly elected local councils in Lesotho.

- Social issues such as conflict, hatred and witchcraft; as today’s society is characterised by commercialisation and competitive behaviour, people even compete for the most minor material possessions. In the rural areas where access to resources, especially modernised resources, is limited, there is a strong belief that failure for others to attain possessions that their counterparts may have normally leads to jealousy? Logic of this not clear, hence hatred and the desire to bewitch and curse others. On the other hand, a majority of people fail to come to terms with AIDS as they associate AIDS-related illnesses with witchcraft and so they still fail to take preventative measures. These never-ending accusations of witchcraft have also largely contributed to the erosion of the social fabric of the Basotho nation and the mechanisms for family and community support, which are those of solidarity and dependence on one another.



### 3.5 Government intervention

The Government of Lesotho attaches importance to poverty alleviation. Therefore it recognises that improving the lives and livelihoods of the Basotho requires transparent and open government (GOL 1997). However, the imperatives of good governance are not yet fully recognised, as decentralisation processes are still in their infancy. The newly elected local government structures still require training in order to be able to strategise on how to cooperate with different structures of communities and other organisations, so that they could respond to the needs of the local people effectively and efficiently. Evidently Lesotho still has a long way to go in that regard.

The Country's commitment to eradicate poverty has been evident in the number of important policy interventions since the 1990s. These include:

- 1999/1994/1999 Poverty Mapping exercises by Sechaba Consultants;
- Pathway Out of Poverty: An action plan for Lesotho, which was a collaborative effort of the GOL, the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Union to propose a strategy on poverty alleviation in Lesotho. This led to the formation of the Poverty Task Force coordinated by the Ministry of Planning;
- Poverty Reduction Within the context of Good Governance document drafted by the Poverty Task Team that also formed the theme for the Lesotho's Eighth Round Table Conference "Poverty Reduction within the context of Good Governance" in Geneva in November 1997;
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy document (PRS) initiated by the World Bank to allow countries to devise strategies towards poverty alleviation in the context of local environment;
- The Free Primary Education policy to assist the Government attain its target of providing free primary education for all by 2006;
- The HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan to help mitigate the effects of the pandemic by providing anti-retroviral therapy and counselling to those infected, while also continuously promoting awareness.

These are all geared towards meeting the targets of the Country's National Vision 2020 to create a stable democracy, a united and prosperous nation at peace with itself and its neighbours; a nation that is healthy and has a well developed human resource base; and a nation that will have a strong economy with a well managed environment and established technology (GOL, 2005). This is also to complement the international Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed to in Mexico in 2000, and whose priorities remain a challenge to Lesotho and the international community at large. The Poverty Reduction Strategy serves as a guideline for the ministerial allocations in Lesotho with the following priorities:

- Employment creation and income generation;
- Agricultural development and food security;
- Infrastructure development;
- Democracy, governance, safety and security;
- Health care and social welfare;
- Increasing quality and access to education;
- Managing and conserving the environment;
- Improving public service delivery (GOL, 2005/2006).

However, it is imperative to note that over the years there has been more talk than concrete action. Sechaba Consultants (2000:33) thus states, "Despite the government's commitment to poverty reduction, it is still difficult to clearly see how this is reflected in the resource allocations in the actual budget, as many important social indicators, such as health, have less to spend than they had five years ago. Indeed in the 2000/2001 budget presented in March 2000, the amount allocated to defence is virtually the same as that allocated to health." Thus to break through this rhetoric, the Government of Lesotho is making slow but steady progress in adopting some corrective measures.

Lesotho's 2005/2006 national budget also reflects the commitment to poverty alleviation, as there is an increment in budgetary allocations to the most critical sectors such as health, agriculture, education, tourism and public service development as compared to spending on them ten years ago. The Government of Lesotho places poverty eradication

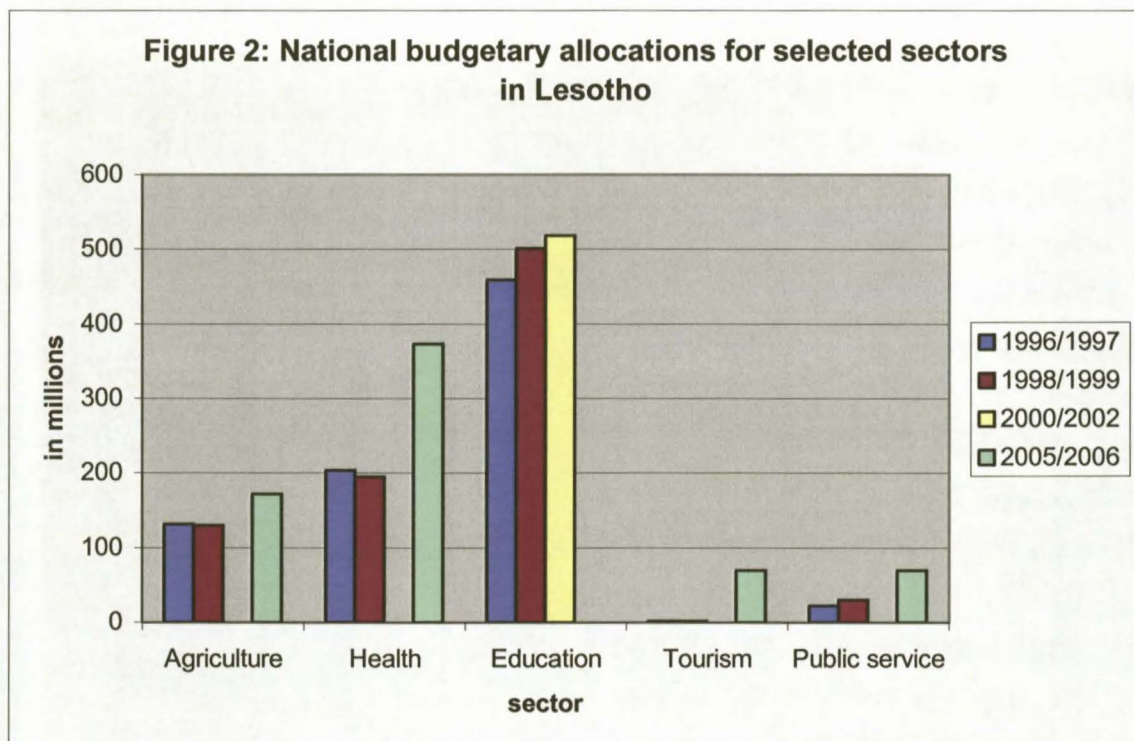


and wealth creation, employment creation, access to improved quality education and health services for all Basotho and the fight against HIV and AIDS at the centre of all its development initiatives - hence the national budget (GOL, 2005). Table 5 and Figure 2 present a comparison of budgetary allocations in the health, agriculture and education sectors.

**Table 5: National budgetary allocation for health, agriculture, education, tourism and public service development sectors (in millions)**

Sector	1996/1997	1998/1999	2000/2002	2005/2006
Agriculture	131.6	129.9		171.6
Health	204	195.4		372.7
Education	459.4	500.8	518.2	
Tourism	1.5	2.1		69.4
Public service	22.4	30.2		69.4

Source: GOL 2005, Sechaba Consultants 2000



Source: GOL 2005, Sechaba Consultants 2000

From this statistic it can be deduced that Lesotho has over the years invested heavily in the education of its people. However, the difference between 1998/1999 and 2000/2002 is minimal. The health sector has also seen a steady increase as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, while the agricultural sector is evidently not making significant progress. As such, this further shows that the poor and marginalised areas of rural Lesotho are not developing in the agricultural sector, which is important for the survival of the rural people.

The tourism sector plays an important role in creating employment by attracting foreign tourists into the Country, hence income generation. In the past this sector was neglected, but with the advent of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project more tourists have been pouring into Lesotho to see these majestic dams. This thus requires a more coordinated effort and an inclusion of the local communities, who are the direct beneficiaries of a more developed tourism sector. The budget allocated to the public service has seen a significant increase of 39.2 million from 30.2 million in 1998/1999 to 69.4 in 2005/2006. The strengthening of the public service is also vital in order to build better capacity among public servants who manage and implement Government's policies, programmes and projects.

### **3.6 The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP)**

The rugged Drakensberg and Maloti mountains form the Lesotho Highlands, an area situated in the northeastern part of the Country and covering one third of Lesotho. With an average elevation of 2500 metres above sea level (LHDA, 2005), this region is endowed with steep valleys and peaks, grasslands and shrubs, and a large range of endangered plants and bird species, and indigenous and exotic vegetation. The highlands are characterised by a network of dirt and gravel roads accessed mainly by motor vehicles with a high ground clearance, and hence horse back riding is still the main means of transport. Thus the nature of this region has presented the Government of Lesotho with a great challenge for development.

However, the physical nature of the Lesotho Highlands does not have only negative implications, but its mountainous scenery, gorges and natural rivers have presented a potential for developing the Country. The highlands are endowed with high annual rainfall and are the source of the Senqu River, the largest and longest river in Lesotho and South Africa, with large tributaries including the Malibamats'o, Senqunyane and Matsoku Rivers, which are the locations for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project's structures. The main resource of Lesotho, i.e. water, is being harnessed and developed to bring in foreign income through the LHWP, a multi-million initiative involving the Governments of Lesotho and South Africa. According to Smith (1999:144), "The LHWP is one of the most comprehensive projects of its kind in the world, and is an example of cross-border cooperation between two independent countries for the mutual benefit of the inhabitants of both." The benefits accruing to Lesotho are large and would have direct implications on developing the entire Country and the Basotho.

### **3.6.1 Objectives of the LHWP**

The primary aims of the LHWP include:

- To transfer water, a strategic resource to sustain socio-economic development, to the thirsty industrial and populated centres in South Africa from the catchments of the Senqu river through the Vaal Basin and thus create revenue for Lesotho;
- To generate hydroelectric power for Lesotho,
- To promote general development in the Lesotho highlands region and in Lesotho at large.

Historically the LHWP can be traced back to the early 1950s, before Lesotho gained its independence from the British Empire, and deliberations for this project continued well into the era of post-independent Lesotho under the Basutoland National Party (BNP). The development of the LHWP came as a result of the requirement for water in the Gauteng Province, where a majority of South Africans reside, and where a huge bulk of the industrial and mining output is generated. As a result of these activities, there was more need for water to supplement the Vaal River. The South African Government therefore

looked into the possibility of harnessing Lesotho's abundant water resources for socio-economic use. After a series of feasibility studies, a detailed project layout was developed and the two Governments of Lesotho, under its military regime, and South Africa signed the Lesotho Highlands Water Treaty on 24 October 1986.

The LHWP Treaty embodies all the agreements and arrangements for the implementation of the project and commits both countries to the implementation of Phase 1 of the Project and allowing further review of the implementation of further phases (LHWP, 2001). In terms of the treaty South Africa is responsible for paying for all the water-related costs, including the construction of dams, tunnels, main bridges and roads. On the other hand, Lesotho is charged with the responsibility for costs relating to hydroelectric power and ancillary development projects within Lesotho relating to:

- Providing products and services locally;
- Optimising local employment opportunities;
- Developing a skills base through appropriate training (LHDA 2005: online).

### **3.6.2 The Development Fund**

South Africa pays out royalties as the net benefit to Lesotho on the basis of the stipulated annual demand, thereby generating a steady flow of income to Lesotho's economy. At the inception of the Project the total royalties accruing to Lesotho over the economic life of the project was estimated at R1, 300 million or US\$750 million based on 1985 prices (LHDA, 1990). The Government of Lesotho thus established a development fund, the Lesotho Highlands Water Revenue Fund (LHWRF), in terms of Legal Notice No. 91 of 1992 under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to save and manage royalties from the sale of water.

The main aim of the Fund was to finance rural development and poverty alleviation initiatives in Lesotho, under the auspices of the Lesotho Government. However, the fund was misused and mismanaged for political gain by Members of Parliament (MPs), who controlled the funds allocated to development projects in their constituencies. According to Mashinini (2002:32), "Some monies even disappeared in the hands of the MPs...the

communities failed to shoulder responsibility and accountability for managing the activities initiated by the LHWRP". The fund was thus suspended officially in 1997, and a further assessment for its need led to the birth of the Lesotho Fund for Community Development in 1999.

The objectives of the LFCD include:

- Reducing poverty in Lesotho with particular emphasis on poverty-stricken areas and people;
- Supporting local initiatives for sustainable employment creation and income generation;
- Empowering communities through building capacities to manage local development projects;
- Improving basic services managed and sustained by communities.

In essence, the LFCD fights poverty by promoting and financing people-centred development in the form of community-based projects proposed by the community at large. One of the main requirements for the eligibility of the funded programmes is that they must be environmental friendly and benefit the participants. This therefore mandates the LFCD to cooperate with the Government's critical line Ministries, the NGOs, and business and community structures at the lowest level.

### **3.6.3 Layout of the project**

The LHWP was envisaged as a four-phase project, involving an interdependent network of dams and tunnels transferring water through the highlands of Lesotho to South Africa. The first phase of the project, Phase 1A and 1B, has been completed. The need to proceed with the remaining phases still has to be assessed, as South Africa has to re-assess its further need for Lesotho's water. The following phases that make up the LHWP indicate the vastness of the project:

- Phase 1A includes Katse Dam, an 185-metre-high concrete arch with a 1950 million cubic metres capacity, 'Muela dam, 'Muela hydropower station, a 5-kilometre-long



Delivery Tunnel South that transfers water to the Lesotho/South Africa border, a 22-kilometre Delivery Tunnel North that transfers water to the Ash River Outfall in South Africa, from which the water flows through the Liebenbergsvlei and Wilge Rivers to the Vaal Dam in Gauteng (Smith, 1999).

- Phase 1B is comprised of the 145-metres-high rockfill with a 950 million cubic metre capacity, Mohale Dam, a 31-kilometre Mohale Tunnel linking Mohale Dam to Katse Dam, a 20-metre-high Matsoku Weir and a 60-kilometre Matsoku Tunnel joining Matsoku Weir to Katse Dam.
- Phase II will include the 170-metre-high Mashai Dam, an underground pumping station with a capacity of 50 million cubic metres and a 19-kilometre pumping tunnel that will transfer water to the Katse Dam.
- Phase III will comprise the Tsoelike Dam, a pumping station and a 4.4-kilometre tunnel transferring water to the Mashai dam.
- Phase IV will include the 125-metre-high Ntoahae Dam, a pumping station and a 3-kilometre water tunnel transferring water to the Tsoelike Dam (Nthako & Griffiths, 1998).

#### **3.6.4 Governance of the LHWP**

The LHWP Treaty sets out the management structure of the Project between the two Governments. In Lesotho the Project is authorised by the Ministry of Natural Resources, while the designated authority in South Africa is the Department of Water Affairs. These two authorities have formed the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission (LHWC), formerly referred to as the Joint Permanent Technical Commission (JPTC). The LHWC is a joint body comprised of three delegates from each country. Its responsibility is to monitor progress and ensure that decisions are implemented as approved and to advise on matters relating to technical acceptability, tender procedures and documents, cash-flow forecasts, allocation of costs and financing agreements (LHWP, 2000: online). The

LHWC also arbitrates in disputes between the two parties and ensures that socio-economic decisions are implemented (Smith 1999).

In South Africa the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) is responsible for the delivery tunnel transporting water to South Africa and other related structures that integrate and control the flow of water on the South African side. In Lesotho the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) is a statutory and autonomous body set up by GOL under Order No. 23 of 1996 to manage that part of the project that falls within the borders of Lesotho, including the construction, operation and maintenance of dams, tunnels, power stations and other infrastructure (LHDA, 2005:online). The treaty stipulates therefore that the LHDA reports to the LHWC on all matters relating to the project, under the watchful eye of GOL.

Due to the massive nature of the project and its related works in Lesotho, the LHDA is the largest of all the institutions. The mandate of the LHDA is clearly articulated by Article 7 paragraph 18 of the Treaty: "The LHDA shall effect all measures to ensure that members of local communities in the Kingdom of Lesotho, who will be affected by flooding, construction works and other similar project-related works, will be enabled to maintain a standard of living not inferior to that obtaining at the time of first disturbance; provided that such Authority shall effect compensation for any loss to such member as a result of such project related causes, not adequately met by such measures". The multifaceted nature of the role of the LHDA therefore necessitated coordination of functions and services with other governmental departments and service providers such as the Telecommunications Lesotho (TCL), then known as Lesotho Telecommunications Corporation (LTC), and the Lesotho Electricity Corporation (LEC).

In order to enable it to carry out its mandate the LHDA is divided into different interdependent departments that implement the established agreements and hence develop programmes and plans accordingly. These include Engineering and Construction, Operations, Finance and Administration, and Environment and Public Relations divisions. The nature of the LHWP inevitably creates a negative impact on the

people and the natural environment of Lesotho, and from the inception of the LHWP this necessitated major steps to address the problem. Thus to mitigate the project's effects, the Environment Division undertook a series of environmental studies on social and environmental impacts, leading to the production of the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) in 1991.

### **3.6.5 The Environmental Action Plan (EAP)**

The EAP was an endeavour to correct the adverse impact of the Project on the environment, the people, communities and their plant and animal, particularly to ensure that sustainable development is advanced. This responsibility is articulated by the LHWP Treaty Article 15 to the effect that "The parties agree to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the implementation, operation and maintenance of the project are compatible with the protection of the existing quality of the environment, and in particular, shall pay due regard to the maintenance of the welfare of the people and communities immediately affected by the project". The EAP consists of the following components:

- Compensation, Resettlement and Development Plan for communities both directly and indirectly affected by the Project; this involves the Compensation Programme for reimbursing either in kind or in cash the affected households for their loss of arable and residential land, assets and other possessions inundated by the dam or other infrastructure, the Resettlement Programme for the households that have been moved to other host communities, and the Rural Development Programme for assisting the affected households to restore their livelihoods and alleviate poverty.
- Public Health Plan; this is comprised of programmes geared towards reducing the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS as a result of a large influx of the migrant project's labour force, to reduce substance abuse, to mitigate the prevalence and spread of malnutrition, to reduce the incidence of other communicable and non-communicable diseases, to curb all types of substance abuse, to provide counselling and minimise the level of injuries and accidents during construction and



other works, and to improve access to and the quality of drinking water, sanitation and refuse disposal.

- Natural Environment and Heritage Plan; this is designed to ensure that the natural environment and cultural heritage of Lesotho are not diminished as a result of the Project (Smith 1999). It involves a multifaceted programme for the conservation of biodiversity and habitat, including the protection of endangered plant species found mainly in the Lesotho Highlands, such as the spiral aloe and other medicinal plants, bird species such as the bearded vulture and animal species such as the Maloti Minnow. The LHWP has established the Bokong, Ts'ehlanyane and 'Muela nature reserves and the Katse Botanical Gardens in that regard, also as a means of generating income through their attraction to tourism.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of poverty in Lesotho and a description of the LHWP. The level of poverty in Lesotho is high in the rural areas, especially those of the mountains and Senqu River Valley regions, and more prevalent among women, as is the case with the phenomenon in the developing world. Thus the nature of poverty in Lesotho indicates that poverty bears many dimensions. Although lack of income is a good indicator of poverty, the situation in Lesotho is that lack of income is largely a consequence of other factors such as geography, unemployment, illiteracy, poor health that disables the poor from devising livelihood mechanisms and hence perpetuates the poverty cycle.

On the other hand, the LHWP is a huge undertaking that is bound to bring rewards to Lesotho's weak economy, though allowance must be made for its negative impact as well. Therefore, it is important to measure the extent to which the LHDA's Rural Development Programme benefits the Lesotho Highlands region and hence Lesotho at large, this will be done in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### IMPACT OF THE LHWP ON COMMUNITIES

#### 4.1 Introduction

The inauguration of Phase 1B in 2003 signified that Phase I of the LHWP had come to an end. There have, however, inevitably been major biological, physical, social, economic and environmental benefits and negative implications as a result of the LHWP. This chapter presents some research findings of the research undertaken in the Mohale region, Phase 1B of the LHWP, to determine the effects of the project on the communities and the measures undertaken by GOL and LHDA in addressing socio-economic development and poverty alleviation.

The Phase 1B project area consists of thousands of hectares of mountainous land in the middle of Lesotho, with altitudes ranging between 2000 and 2500 metres above sea level (LHDA 1997). This scheme area is under the custodianship of two chieftainships of Thaba-Bosiu and Matsieng, and straddles the three districts of Berea, Maseru and Thaba-Tseka. However, the Mohale Dam, the main infrastructure of this phase, is situated in the Maseru and Thaba-Tseka area.

#### 4.2 Discussion of the research findings at the institutional level

In this study the researcher has solicited the perceptions and views of the institutions that are affecting development programmes in the scheme area. The findings of this study, therefore, show the extent to which development has been advanced in the case study, how it benefits the highlands communities, and the problems that the LHDA and other development players face in advancing rural development and alleviating poverty.

At the institutional level the researcher interviewed ten (10) officials in 2004 at the Mohale Field Operations Branch, LHDA headquarters in Maseru and the World Vision Lesotho's headquarters in Maseru: crops technical officer, horticulture technical officer, agricultural crops irrigation officer, intensive livestock officer, income generation

technical officer, public health nurse, Nazareth and Nthabiseng Food Security Project coordinator, World Vision Lesotho marketing officer, LHDA Public Relations Officer and the Mohale Field Operations Branch manager. They gave an account of the different programmes that have been put in place in the LHWP Phase 1B area towards poverty alleviation and rural development.

It is apparent that the LHWP has brought about both negative and positive developments in the Phase 1B project area. The LHDA, however, believed that the positive socio-economic impact of the project far outweighs the negative implications. Thus a number of opportunities created by the implementation of the LHWP in the case study were well received by the beneficiaries.

It was outlined that as a result of labour-intensive engineering and construction activities the Project created job opportunities for Basotho. An estimated 9000 jobs were created between 1998 and 2004, with the labour value totalling R630 million (LHWP 2005). The LHDA policy that the local people must be given first preference in project-related works in their respective areas enabled at least 40 percent of the labour force to come from the highlands region. The pre-construction training programme initiated by the LHDA through its RDP provided local people with basic artisan skills that would eventually assist them get employment in either the future phases of the project or in other big or even smaller projects.

Also, a number of Basotho private companies were either contracted or sub-contracted into both construction and non-construction activities, earning the substantial income and experience in their respective areas of expertise. However, there was a serious concern among the local contractors that the LHDA favoured international companies whom they deemed as more exposed and experienced in projects of the LHWP's nature (LHWP 2005). Hence, many small Basotho contractors collaborated to form joint ventures with big multinational to have their stake in the LHWP.

Moreover, the construction activities resulted in an increase in other economic activities. The influx of foreign people into the project area in the form of employment seekers, small-scale entrepreneurs and other opportunity seekers resulted in serious social disruptions. For instance, slums developed at Ha Mohale and Likalaneng as people migrated to Mohale in search of a variety of opportunities, liquor restaurants and taverns cropped up with alcohol becoming easily available even to the youngsters, prostitution was introduced as young girls and women became prostitutes to construction workers and especially foreign experts (LHDA 2001). This exposed the local dwellers to sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV and AIDS. From this perspective it was noted that the ways of life of the local people in the project area was literally affected, as they had to accommodate the foreign migrants and share their resources with them. This was bound to create massive frustration and disturbance in the social order.

From another perspective, the study showed that the influx brought about socio-economic development in the sense that business boomed at the peak of construction; hence more income was generated for local entrepreneurs. Also, as goods and services became more accessible it was no longer necessary to travel long distances to faraway places to conduct any form of business. A combination of these factors indicates that, although development is vital for a proper functioning of society, it also has a variety of weaknesses and negative implications for its recipients. Against this backdrop there was inevitably a need to assist the communities improve their livelihoods beyond the construction activities of the Project. The study has therefore discovered that it is a combination of these factors that has necessitated the establishment of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) to ease the effects of these inevitable changes on the communities.

#### **4.2.1 The Rural Development Programmes and their objectives**

The study found out that different programmes have been implemented to cater for the different needs and aspirations of the effected communities. These have different objectives, although they are geared towards the same ultimate goal of improving the standard of living of the people affected by the LHWP. The Rural Development

Programme (RDP) is seen as a vital component of the Compensation, Resettlement and Development Plan under the bigger umbrella of the Environmental Plan (EAP), designed to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the LHWP.

To realise the goal of the LHWP that the standard of living of all the affected people should not be compromised and where possible improved, the RDP generally aims to maximise opportunities created by the implementation of the LHWP for sustainable development of the highlands area. The specific objectives of the RDP are outlined as follows:

- To enable families directly and indirectly affected to recover their ability to earn an income;
- To provide facilities and infrastructure for the villages and communities in the project area;
- To provide training and advice to affected communities to enable them to augment income through both farming and non-farming activities;
- To improve the nutritional status of the poor.

The RDP is, therefore, a long-term compensation strategy to ensure economic productivity and sustainability. However, the LHDA aims to hand over the programmes to the communities after enough capacity had been built. The RDP is categorised into three broad categories including:

- Production;
- Education;
- Infrastructure development.

#### **4.2.1.1 Production**

As agriculture is the main source of livelihood in the LHWP area and the Lesotho highlands in general, its development is perceived to be the main tool towards enhancing the lives of the people. Production-oriented programmes are therefore geared towards improving agricultural production through the provision of extension services and the

introduction of agricultural inputs, technology and modern farming methods. These programmes include:

- a) Range management;
- b) Mountain horticulture and crop production;
- c) Livestock production.

#### **a) Range management**

The LHDA deemed it necessary to improve the quality of livestock, while decreasing their numbers to ease the pressure that they exert on the environment and to assist the rural Basotho, who generally perceive possession of a large number of livestock – especially cattle, horses, donkeys, sheep and goats – as an indicator of wealth. A majority of young boys and men in the highlands grow up as shepherds and miss out on formal education as they are groomed to be livestock farmers.

The range management programme has therefore been put in place to:

- Protect the environment of the Mohale project area from overgrazing, degradation and soil erosion;
- Improve the quality and quantity of range fodder through fodder production and range rehabilitation;
- Improve local capability and capacity to produce quality livestock with the main focus on cattle, sheep and goats;
- Assist the livestock farmers sustain their income through the sale of good-quality livestock.

Livestock owners, through the established grazing associations in the respective development zones, manage the range management programme at Mohale, the Mohale range management area. The Range Management Technical Officer based at the Mohale Field Operations Branch (FOB) acts as an adviser to the grazing associations.

### **Achievements and limitations of the programme**

The range management programme has helped integrate the resettled communities into the host communities with whom they share rangeland, and through this cooperation the LHDA has enhanced cooperation as grazing land is communally owned, and has addressed animosities and conflicts within the communities. However, the Range Management technical officer admitted that a majority of the aims of the programme such as improving the quality of livestock, improving the capacity of farmers to produce quality livestock and assisting farmers to produce quality livestock are still yet to be realised. Also, there are still instances where the host communities still fight with the resettled communities over grazing land for their livestock. Therefore the success of the programme is still limited to a great extent.

### **b) Mountain horticulture and crop production**

As a result of the Mohale dam, a large area of fertile agricultural land was impounded. As such the Mohale community lost their main source of livelihood. Mountain horticulture and crop production are perceived to make use of the little remaining arable land aiming:

- To enhance food security and improve the quality of dietary needs;
- To provide possibilities of income generation;
- To deter subsistence farmers from ploughing new fields on steep slopes and thus curb soil erosion;
- To increase the productivity of the remaining arable land through the introduction of irrigation and modern cultivation methods;
- To assist farmers cultivate high-yield crops to reduce poverty and hunger, and to create employment and enhance cooperation.

The main crops in the highlands region are maize, wheat and sorghum, which have always been grown mainly for subsistence. The topography of the region and the depths of its soils constrained the success of the agricultural sector beyond subsistence levels. Therefore, the importance of introducing commercial agriculture was seen as a vital strategy to assist the people, so that they could sustain themselves in the long run.

### **Achievements and limitations of the programme**

This programme in Phase 1B has introduced approximately 1000 farmers to new cash crops, which are also used as diet supplements, such as high-altitude maize, the disease-free mountain potato, cabbage (especially the winter breed), exotic vegetables such as paprika and garlic, fruit trees and grain legumes such as peas and beans. While at least 133 households benefit from dry-land vegetables, four irrigation schemes have also been developed to assist farmers enhance their produce. 670 households have obtained and planted fruit trees in excess of 14 000 trees including peaches, pears, apricots, nectars, grapes and apple, which they sell both locally at the Mohale town and Likalaneng, along the main Thaba-Tseka Maseru main road and in other parts of the Country (LHDA, 2004). The FOB also showed that in the villages of Ha Ts'iu, Mohale and Qoaling (all in the scheme area), there are three independent farmers who have set up huge successful orchards with the assistance of the programme. During the pruning season the off-cuts from the fruit trees provide a good source of energy in the form of firewood.

It was also discovered that the mountain potato seed and ware are the main cash crops that are being produced at the moment as they have proved to be successful. At least 7 seed and ware potato cooperatives have been set up comprised of 430 members working on 59 hectares of land. The produce is sold to farmers and other consumers in the region and the rest of the Country, with the off cuts being used by farmers and the local communities for consumption purposes. A 400-ton storage facility at Mohale serves as a reservoir for seed potato harvest from the surrounding participating villages and is managed by the seed potato cooperative under the supervision of the Technical Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture based at the Mohale Field Operations Branch.

As the LHDA strongly maintains that development should follow the resettled and relocated communities to the host villages, the LHDA has also implemented a crop and fruit production programme at Nazareth area, in the foothills of Maseru, where many of the resettled households have been hosted. The World Vision International, a Lesotho-based international NGO, under the name Nazareth Food Security Project, is managing this programme. The study ascertained that the objectives of this project are in line with



those of the LHDA's crop production programme, though it is geared more towards improving soil fertility through the use of organic manure, kraal manure and ash.

However, this Programme does not only cater for the resettled and relocated communities only, but also incorporates the host community of Nazareth at large, which largely owns the arable land in the form of fields and gardens. The LHDA and the World Vision liaise on an on-going basis to avoid the duplication of duties and ensure that the resettled and relocated people do not feel abandoned by the LHDA, and that their needs and aspirations are addresses like those of all the other affected communities.

The study observed that the project has benefited the community of Nazareth to a great extent. According to the project coordinator, the programme has a membership of about 1080 people, 60% of whom are women. The involved farmers have received training and sensitisation in organic farming through workshops, on-farm demonstrations and community meetings.

Crop production in the project area, as is the case in the rest of the rural Lesotho, plays a significant role both at the household and community levels as it provides a means of consumption, income and employment. The households' involvement in the crop production programme is influenced by their access to arable land and ownership of fields. As most of the arable land has been lost to the reservoir, a lot of people do not have fields and thus depend on compensation from the LHDA. This therefore necessitates that a majority of the landless mainly participate in this programme as workers on other people's fields, especially during the harvest period. This also helps them supplement their income and access food easily and readily. However, there have also been reports of vandalism and theft, especially in those fields that are far away from the respective villages.

#### **c) Intensive livestock production**

This programme aims to:

- Improve household income;

- Improve household and community nutrition through intensive livestock production including the production of broilers, layers, pigs and dairy animals.

The LHDA has facilitated training of farmers in this programme and encourages communities through a variety of media to rear these animals.

#### **Achievements and limitations of the programme**

According to the FOB intensive livestock officer, at least 10 farmers are involved in chicken layers production, while 4 groups of farmers participate in broiler production, with 200 farmers performing both functions. The office reiterated that this is not enough, especially given the magnitude of the Mohale area and the general demand for these products both at the local, national and even international levels. Local communities, business enterprises, schools and health centres are a ready market for the products. This has generated employment opportunities for the local people, while also enhancing food security, especially for the school children that benefit through the schools feeding programme.

#### **4.2.1.2 Education**

The education programme integrates training and skills development. The main objectives of this programme are:

- To assist the affected communities identify, plan and implement suitable projects that would help them sustain their rural livelihoods beyond the construction activities;
- To provide training and skills that would assist communities and households devise other means of income generation and thus reduce dependence on traditional farming and mine remittances.

#### **Achievements and limitations of the programme**

The magnitude of the special techniques needed for the construction of the LHWP necessitated pre-construction training and skills development. The Thaba-Tseka Skills

Training Centre was thus established to impart artisan and construction training to workers from 1990 to 1992. Thereafter the facility was converted into a Rural Development Centre to impart new skills and develop existing skills of individuals from the affected communities free of charge. A total number of 1400 people received training in skills ranging from welding, basic leather works, carpentry, dressmaking, handicrafts, plumbing, and brick laying and block making (LHWP, 2005). After a lengthy series of impact assessments it was decided that the skills acquired at the centre did not necessarily generate large income opportunities for the beneficiaries, hence the centre was closed down in 2002.

However, the training and the exposure that some of the beneficiaries gained from this endeavour has helped them tremendously as some of them have established small businesses such as coffin-making and dress-making in the project area, while some have migrated to towns to seek better business and employment opportunities. Some artisans sell their traditional handicrafts and dresses to both local and international tourists at the Arts and Crafts market at Mohale.

Also, the LHDA provides training in business promotion and entrepreneurial development, especially to those people that operate their businesses within their villages in the project area. Finally, the LHDA insists that the contractors employ artisans from the project area, such as plumbers and bricklayers, on a part-time basis from time to time when it is necessary. This strategy thus helps generate employment opportunities for the local people, including the majority of the unemployed males who have been retrenched in the South African mines.

#### **4.2.1.3 Infrastructure development**

The infrastructure programme aims to develop the provision of service in the project area through the construction and upgrading of the entire necessary infrastructure. This is so to ensure that the local infrastructure is of a high standard to enable local people and visitors to access resources, goods and services that would raise their standard of living. The

infrastructure development programme is implemented through contractors and LHDA in-house teams.

### **Achievements and limitations of the programme**

The construction and upgrading of access roads to the project area, rural roads and bridges which connect the Mohale Dam to the neighbouring communities, whose maintenance would be handed over to the Government of Lesotho after 2005, have made a difference in the lives of the Highlands dwellers. The LHWP has improved means of access to the Highlands of Lesotho through a network of feeder roads and footbridges to access villages affected by the Project, a reservoir crossing at Ha Mohale, and three mountain passes. The construction of the Thaba-Tseka Maseru road, a 72-kilometer tarred road, as well as the feeder roads connected to it, has also facilitated travelling in the scheme area and the central highlands region by reducing the amount of time spent on a journey.

Also, the Maseru by-pass road has helped relieve traffic congestion in the Maseru city centre. On the whole, the construction of the road network has increased and enhanced the availability of public transport in the highlands and has extended the area of travel through the previously undiscovered areas. This has also enabled both local and international tourists to explore the natural scenery of the untouched Lesotho Highlands, thus increasing the tourism potential of the region.

The upgrading of existing schools and construction of new schools for the resettled relocated and host communities has provided schooling facilities for the affected communities. It was noted that most of the affected communities were resettled into already existing host villages, while some of them were relocated to newly established villages; hence there was need for construction and upgrading of schools to replace those that were inundated by the dam and to take care of the influx. As such, 10 schools in the foothills and 7 schools in the highlands have been upgraded with the construction of additional classrooms and offices, while 2 new schools were constructed in partial

compensation for the relocated communities. All the schools have been provided with improved toilets and water supplies (LHWP, 2005).

The affected communities have also benefited from the Government of Lesotho's (GOL) free primary education policy that has enabled even the previously disadvantaged communities to afford sending their children to primary schools that have been equipped with the necessary infrastructure and resources. There is therefore hope that the rate of youth illiteracy and future adult illiteracy will improve in the scheme area and in Lesotho in general as a result of this strategy.

The study revealed that the project has provided social facilities such as community centres and clinics in the scheme area. The community centre at Mohale serves as a facility where community development meetings and workshops are held for all stakeholders to discuss and address developmental issues and other problems that the communities face with in the implementation of the LHWP. Also, the hospital at Mohale that was initially provided to attend to health-related problems and accidents of the construction workers and the clinic at Likalaneng now serves as a health centre for the entire community. This has eased the people's long-distance travelling to access health services in Thaba-Tseka, Mants'onyane, Roma or Maseru. There are also outreach clinics to assist communities at Ha Koporale, Ha Sekolopata and Ha Ratau (LHDA, 2004).

The study noted that the availability of these health centres has improved the health status of the people considerably. According to the public health nurse at Mohale, even though many people still believe in witchcraft as a cause of illness and even death, a majority of the adult population are aware of the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and seem to understand its implications. Hence, more people have learned to adopt contraceptive and preventative measures. Furthermore, it has improved access of pregnant mothers to antenatal attendance and reduced the number of children born at home under unsafe conditions, thereby further reducing maternal and infant mortality rates. Moreover, postnatal attendance and immunisation coverage have improved, resulting in a generally better health status of the people.

The study also revealed that the project facilitated the provision of water and sanitation infrastructure to all villages in the scheme area. Traditional sources of water such as springs, wells and riverbeds have been affected by the construction of the dam and other related infrastructure. As such, the LHDA has had to provide water supplies to the affected communities, including schools, in compensation for their loss. The Mohale Water Supply, Sanitation and Refuse Disposal Programme therefore provides ventilated pit latrines (VIP), clean potable water, solid waste and sullage management systems to improve the health of the affected communities and generally enhance development to all the households and schools in the Phase 1B area. Building materials are provided for by the LHDA whose in-house team implements and supervise the programme.

It was revealed that the communities themselves, who get paid for the construction activities, construct water supply systems. They are trained in pipe laying, operations and maintenance. Water connections have been provided for the resettled communities both in the highlands and the foothills, where a total number of 56 water supply systems had been put in place as at March 2005 out of a proposed total of 106 (LHDA 2005). The LHDA, on the other hand, assists the communities to organise into committees that would ensure proper use of the water, maintain the facilities and instil a sense of ownership among the people, especially herd boys, to avoid misuse and vandalism.

The LHDA also undertakes on-going quality tests to ensure that the communities still enjoy the best quality water from the rivers in the Lesotho Highlands (LHDA 2004). The Lesotho Highlands water is known for its high quality and clarity, and this is what the LHDA wants to maintain and sustain. The interviewees have shown their support for these facilities, as they no longer have to travel long distances to fetch water from unprotected water sources, which they normally shared with their livestock. Also, the accessibility of clean water has made household chores even easier and more enjoyable. The health status of the affected communities has in this regard been enhanced.

The sanitation programme has also been extended to communities that were not directly affected by the project works, but who are residing within the circumference of the dam, to minimise pollution from the catchment areas entering the dam (LHDA 2004). Communities have been trained in building and using the latrines safely to ensure that they are adequately equipped with skills to maintain the facilities in the future and participate in the construction of new ones whenever need arises. Due to the fact that the toilets directly benefit the households, they are not awarded any payment for construction of the pit latrines. However, the masons and carpenters receive payment for construction of the structures (LHWP 2005). The communities have shown appreciation of the facilities, largely because they ensure their right to privacy.

Also, community members are engaged in cleaning campaigns, where they are encouraged to deposit waste into the refuse pits provided and domestic waste water into the soak-away pits. Every household upstream is provided with these facilities to ensure that the dam is free of run-off wastewater, litter and other polluting agents (LHDA 2004). According to the LHDA, during the period up to March 2005, 1862 VIP latrines have been constructed out of a target of 2505, while 1719 soak-away pits out of a total of 2505 have been provided, and 1048 refuse disposal pits have been constructed out of a target of 2501. This therefore signifies successful implementation of the programme, as it has achieved more than half the initial target or output.

The LHWP policy has been that the construction of the entire RDP infrastructure has to be widely labour intensive. Hence all the gravel roads and access bridges around the reservoir, schools and other facilities have been built using local manual labour. As with the other programmes, this has created employment for the local residents, who also earned some income from these endeavours. They also developed the skills of the villagers, which may be used in similar projects elsewhere in Lesotho and even locally in the future.

Although electricity and telecommunications infrastructures are now available in the scheme area, the communities have not yet been connected to these facilities as this has



proved to be an expensive exercise. According to LHWP (2005), “There is generally no electricity in the highlands – the very low population density, remote location and rugged topography make it prohibitively expensive”. It is mainly the business enterprises and the Mohale residential village and business centre that have benefited from the availability of these services. On the other hand, the extension of cellular coverage to the Lesotho highlands by the telecommunications industry has made it easier for those that can afford cellular phones to communicate with their counterparts in other parts of the world. This, however, leaves the majority of the people unable to access telecommunications. This indicates that a lot of work remains to be done to extend these facilities to the local communities.

#### **4.2.2 Promoting community awareness**

The study notes that the community can fully participate in development issues only if it is aware of such issues. All ten respondents (100%) at the institutional level indicated during the research that the community is aware of the developmental initiatives in the scheme area as they even participate in their implementation. They showed that LHDA through its field operations, the community-based organizations, the NGOs, and the area chiefs sensitise the communities on an on-going basis and whenever necessary to ensure that they understand the plans and programmes, and to solicit their input in the different strategies. Community awareness is promoted through a variety of media including:

- Public gatherings (Pitso) and community meetings on an ongoing basis and when there are critical issues that need to be conveyed to the community as a whole, and also to solicit the people’s input and views;
- The media such as radio, newspapers and pamphlets;
- Workshops for community representatives and stakeholders to improve communication between the LHDA, the NGOs and the communities;
- Visits by the stakeholders to community-based organisations to discuss various issues affecting the community and encourage them to publicly discuss issues with other members of the community and disseminate information.



The majority of the people interviewed in the project area, including those who are not directly involved, were aware of the existence of the development programmes. This then shows that community awareness is extremely vital in the success of the programmes to enable the beneficiaries to make an input about their own plight.

#### **4.2.3 Community involvement in programme formulation and implementation**

The study has established that community awareness regarding development initiatives is important. The study also asserts that the community's involvement in the formulation and implementation of the RDP is also vital. It has been noted that the LHDA developed a community participation strategy that involves the Operations Field Branch located at Mohale as the liaison between the affected communities and the headquarters in Maseru. The rationale behind involving the affected communities in the implementation of the LHWP and the RDP is to:

- Ensure that the views of the people are included in decision-making;
- Ensure that different views and aspirations of a wide range of geographical areas represented, as the impact of the project differs across different geographical locations;
- Ensure collective participation of the people in their own development, so that they are not only on the receiving end but are drivers of their own destiny (LHDA 1997).

At the lowest level of community participation is the Area Liaison Committees (ALC), which are made up of the village headmen or village chiefs and two elected members from each village in the designated development zones with a constellation of villages. There are seven Area Liaison Committees, located at Ha Mohale, Ponto'seng, Ha Ts'iu, Ha Mokhathi, Ha Tsapane, and Kokolia, in the Mohale of highlands region, and two others in the host communities of Machache in the foothills and Ha Matala in the Maseru urban settlement area. The objective of the ALC is generally to ensure that the LHWP addresses the needs and aspirations of the communities with regard to the existing local dynamics and preferences. More specifically the ALCs:

- Meditate in addressing grievances and facilitate communication between village dwellers and the Combined Area Liaison Committee;
- Facilitate community involvement in planning and implementing the programmes;
- Represent the village on the project.

The Combined Area Liaison Committee (CALC), on the other hand, represents the villages in the project area as a whole and interacts with the Operations Field Branch directly in issues affecting the local people. The CALC consists of representatives from each ALC, including area chiefs, whom the laws of Lesotho recognise as minders and spear-headers of community development issues (LHDA, 2004; LHWP 2005).

On the other hand, it was observed that the different Rural Development Programmes that are being implemented in respective villages have established programme cooperatives that are run by management committees, which are elected by all the people involved. The FOB asserted that the cooperatives are given leverage to devise their own rules and regulations that would guide them in their operations, with the guidance of the involved FOB technical officers. As most of these programmes are agriculturally oriented, the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension workers who have been deployed at the LHDA Field Operations branch at Mohale work in close cooperation with the established farmers' cooperatives. However, they still involve the ALC in planning developmental issues. This leaves the established community structures weak and ineffective as their roles are taken over by the cooperatives, while on the other hand it limits bureaucratic red tape and eliminates conflict of interest and unnecessary duplication of duties.

Interestingly, it was observed that the communities also have various community-based organisations (CBO) that are socially oriented, such as burial societies and savings groups (referred to as *stokvels*), and these help in promoting awareness of the developments taking place in the project area. Various non-governmental organisations have also been instrumental in the implementation and monitoring of the Rural Development Plan and the LHWP in general. The LHDA and the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1998 to give the NGO

community a mandate to participate in the development processes of the scheme area (Phase 1B) to ensure that the interests of the affected communities are served. The involvement of the NGOs in the implementation aspects of the RDP is summarised in Table 6.

**Table 6: The role of the NGOs in facilitating the RDP**

NGO	ROLE
Blue cross	Alcohol and drug abuse
Plenty Lesotho	Agro Forestry
Rural Self Help Development	Eco Agricultural Project
Lesotho Manufactures Association	Small Scale Business ventures and income generation training
Red Cross	First Aid Training Project
NGO Credit Centre	Credit Scheme
Lesotho-Durham Link	Water Safety Project
Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association (LPPA)	Sexual and reproductive health and AIDS awareness and training
Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN)	Capacity building, community participation, monitoring and evaluation
World Vision International	Agricultural development and food security project

#### 4.2.4 Organisational involvement

The study established that the different projects under the bigger umbrella of the RDP are implemented in various ways under the supervision of different institutions, including the LHDA in-house teams, the Field Operations Branch based at Mophale consisting of Extension workers employed under Lesotho Government's Ministries of Agriculture, Local Government and Health, and seconded to the Mophale FOB, LHDA staff, and contractors. World Vision Lesotho also takes part in the Nazareth area through the Nthabiseng and Nazareth Food Security Project.

The major role of the institutions is to provide financial resources and expertise to formulate, implement, monitor projects that are deemed viable for helping the affected communities escape poverty and evaluate progress to report and assess whether there is a need for the continuation of the programme and hence for further funding. Furthermore, the LHDA provides subsidies for the running costs of the agricultural programmes by granting the farmers a portion of funds as a loan that is repayable after production. The other portion is supposed to come from the farmer's savings from the previous production. The farmers are therefore encouraged to form cooperatives that will enable them to save money and access more funding from donor agencies to ensure sustainable supply to the markets. Presently the LHDA provides two thirds (2/3) of the running costs, while the cooperatives have to pay one third (1/3) from their savings. The aim is to assist them to reach a stage of financial independence where they will be able to fully run the programmes themselves.

Moreover, the institutions provide improved seedlings and extension services for the programmes to ensure that there is a steady and reliable source of seeds and manure. The farmers are therefore advised to keep the seeds for the next production, as normally the source of seeds cannot be guaranteed. The FOB also sources markets for the products, with the prices of the units determined by the input and agreed upon by the technical officers and the respective committees.

Additionally, the organisations liaise with community-based organisations to promote public awareness and ensure that there is local buying-in. This is also vital to solicit support for the initiatives and to earn local people's confidence and respect. The organisations are also involved in settling and addressing people's grievances and resolving conflicts that may arise as a result of the project and the programmes in any manner.

Also, the study revealed that the organizations are involved in building capacity of the affected communities, including those that are directly and indirectly involved in the RDP, through a variety of training programmes in different areas by offering technical

assistance and training in bookkeeping, stores management and investment opportunities to boost the income. The people who have received cash compensation for the loss of their assets as a result of the LHWP are also enlightened with regard to investment opportunities, various ways to save and make proper use of their money, and skills for starting and managing small businesses. Many of them have opted to build flats (referred to as *malaene*) to generate income, while others have started small business enterprises such as cafes, taverns and taxi operations locally.

As the project has affected the landscape of the highlands area, the LHDA is mandated to develop infrastructure in the scheme area. All the infrastructure material is supplied by the organisation, while the local people are trained for construction. The local constructors are only paid for the construction of those facilities that benefit the whole community, such as roads and water supplies, and not for facilities like the improved ventilated pit latrines and sewerage pits, which benefit mainly the households. Finally, the study noted that the organisations liaise with each other and other community-based organisations to address people's needs and ensure that their lives are improved in the long run by providing the necessary services.

#### **4.2.5 Challenges facing the institutions in poverty alleviation**

The respondents indicated that they meet with a number of challenges in discharging development initiatives in the programme area. The study noted that a majority of these crises are related to the people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the development programmes. There tends to be general dissatisfaction on the part of the people, who largely expect more from the LHDA. The LHDA hence strongly stressed that, while some people have shown appreciation of the developmental initiatives in place, others have shown dissatisfaction and that the Basotho seem to be generally lazy people. This thus denotes that the people mainly want to be on the receiving end of benefits.

It was also noted that despite the measures undertaken by GOL and the LHDA to involve all the people in the programmes, including those who do not own fields or big garden

land, there are continually incidents of theft and vandalism. The LHDA reiterated that it has been established that the perpetrators of such acts are people within the communities who are too lazy to till the soil for agricultural production to feed their families.

The topography of the highlands region also presents a challenge, as it is a rocky area, with mostly shallow soils. Most of the good arable land was impounded by the reservoir, and the LHDA has endeavoured to make maximum use of the little remaining arable land despite the setbacks. This has proved to be expensive because in some cases certain measures have to be employed to make the soil richer to enhance output. Due to lack of infrastructure, the intensive livestock farmers have to improvise and rear livestock such as chickens in buildings that are not equipped well enough for the business. For example, lack of electricity makes it difficult to provide enough lighting and heating.

Another major challenge relates to non-payment on the part of the cooperatives. Failure by most people to repay loans and save money, as they spend the funds that are supposed to go into the accounts of the LHDA and the respective cooperative, results in lack of financial capacity and sustainability. In the light of this weakness, the sustainability of the programmes remains questionable. The study also revealed that, although the involved organisations undertake measures to train and enhance the capacity of the beneficiaries to enable them to take charge of their own development after the handing over, there is still a lack of capacity to sustain the programmes beyond the LHWP.

The process of integrating the resettled communities into the host communities has also been slow. The study discovered that conflicts arise between the two communities as in some cases they do not even attend each other's funerals and still refer to facilities such as land and newly constructed schools as "ours or theirs". The LHDA has therefore had to intervene in such instances to ensure as far as possible a peaceful integration and resettlement, and to alleviate people's fears by assuring them that all must share in the development. This indeed shows that the traditional social fabric of the Basotho society, which entailed assisting each other in times of need and accepting each other as part of the larger society, has been eroded.

### 4.3 Discussion of the research findings at the community level

The study has also explored the perceptions and views of the communities affected by the LHWP, by using the household heads as respondents in the research. In 2004 twenty-five (25) households were interviewed in the five villages of Nazareth (which forms the host community), Likalaneng (which makes up the resettled community), Ha Koporale, Ha Ts'iu and Ha Mohale, whose communities lost assets as a result of the Project, though they were never relocated or resettled. The findings of this study therefore, show the extent to which those for whom development was intended have received it, and how the LHWP and the RDP have impacted on their lives.

Out of the total of 25 respondents 12 (48%) were males, while 13 (52%) were females. The study revealed that a majority of the households in the highlands are female-headed. This is probably the case due to the fact that the Basotho culture mandates that men be the bread-winners, so therefore men are obliged to migrate seasonally to seek opportunities elsewhere, while the women stay behind to take care of the families. 4 of the 12 men interviewed had worked in the mines at one point in time, but are now at home because they are unemployed.

The study revealed that inevitably the LHWP brings mixed feelings and a mixture of both negative and positive benefits to the project area. A majority of the respondents felt that the LHWP has brought them substantive development, especially with the massive infrastructure that has been created by the Project. They reiterated that the construction of feeder roads and reservoir crossing has eased the travelling and communication in the area, while the main Thaba-Tseka Maseru road has made access to other services and other parts of the Country easier and more convenient.

Also, all the respondents maintained that they had benefited in one way or the other from employment opportunities created by the Project, as they or their children or other relatives were employed during the different stages of the project. However, some of the respondents showed their dissatisfaction with the LHDA's policy of giving preference to local labour within the vicinity of the project area in the construction of different



facilities, especially roads, schools and clinics, before considering other people from other parts of the Highlands region or the Country. They argued that the contractors contravened this policy as they brought other people with whom they worked before in other areas and whom they trusted could do the work better.

The study also noted that the construction of Phase 1B of the LHWP has led to the resettlement and relocation of 14 villages and 317 households consisting of 1900 people in two stages: Stage 1 - pre-construction stage and Stage 2 - Pre-inundation stage, as a result of the reservoir and other infrastructure, including LHDA village and camps at Mohale (LHWP 2001). An additional 155 people lost assets, including land, but were never resettled (LHWP 2005). As a result of the project, therefore, communities have lost:

- Arable land;
- Grazing land;
- Houses and other valuable assets such as graves, forests and fruit trees;
- Medicinal plants and other indigenous plant species.

It is important to note that, before the advent of the LHWP, settlements in this region consisted of scattered small villages with household sizes ranging from one to seventeen, which were mainly established as a result of seasonal migration in search of pasture land and cattle posts by Basotho livestock farmers. Other villages came as a result of changes in the chieftainship structures, hence the reorganisation of chiefdoms, while others were originally sleeping posts on long journeys through the Lesotho Highlands (LHDA 1997). Communities lived in thatched mostly round-shaped houses (rondavels) constructed with mud, which they used for various purposes. The number of units per household differed depending on the household's level of affordability and size. These ranged from 1 to 4. The communities regarded the minority of the people who had brick houses as rich. Dependence on agriculture as the main source of the rural livelihood meant that everyone strove for ownership of land, while the majority of the people inherited land from their ancestors. Also, the highlands region was endowed with a lot of natural resources such as



wild vegetables and indigenous plants that were used for firewood and medicinal plants, which the rural people had easy access to.

The study discovered that a majority of the respondents had lost assets either in the form of their own land, communal land, houses, kraals, and generally their livelihoods had been disturbed; it showed that loss of these assets had left the affected communities vulnerable to hunger and poverty. Hence the LHDA in conjunction with GOL and the affected people devised a compensation and resettlement policy, which outlined the terms and conditions for compensation and resettlement. It was discovered that compensation for agricultural land is based on the level of production from land lost to the project and this can be in the form of either cash or grain and pulses, depending on the choice of the beneficiary. Loss of fields is also compensated for by allocation of gardens and, in cases where there is not enough arable land available, cash payouts are made (LHDA 2001). The arrangement of having a choice between cash and kind compensation can be changed annually over the project's anticipated lifetime of 50 years from the inception date of the compensation.

The study also noted that all the households and communities that were resettled or relocated were either residing too close to the dam or were in the way of the project's planned infrastructure. All the respondents at Likalaneng and Nazareth were resettled households from the villages that had been impounded by the dam and other related infrastructure. The respondents indicated that they were given a choice with regard to their new houses from among a number of plans presented to them by the LHDA.

All of them were happy with their new locations, as they had chosen to be resettled to the locations where they had relatives in the community or in other neighbouring communities. However, one of the respondents at Nazareth showed that he regretted agreeing to move to the foothills, because he can no longer plant marijuana, an illegal cash crop among many Basotho highlands dwellers, as he used to while residing in the highlands and as such his household income has been reduced significantly by more than 50%. The study learned that this crop is not included in the compensation policy,

because it is illegal in Lesotho. Also, the respondents showed their concern that, since they had moved to areas without many of the natural resources that they had in the highlands, they had to have money to buy their necessities as they could no longer just pick up wild berries and vegetables for a meal nor collect cow dung for fuel.

It was noted that the compensation for affected houses had not satisfied the beneficiaries equally. Out of the 10 respondents at Nazareth and Likalaneng 8 (80%) showed that they were happy with the new houses as their quality far exceeded that which they had before, while 2 (20%) argued that they disliked the houses because they are too modern and roofed with corrugated iron and fitted with ceilings; this means that they are unable to make a fire inside the houses as they could do in their traditional thatched houses. In this regard it is safe to conclude that the affected households benefited from the resettlement as it gave them modernised housing structures. The majority of the respondents who were never resettled indicated that the current villages had always been their homes and they have a sentimental attachment to their locations where they would rather opt to be buried.

The study also learned that cash compensation was only awarded to the male heads of the households. Female households' heads that received cash compensation indicated that they were bound to find male elders to act as heads of their households on their behalf for them to access their cash compensation, arguing that most of these male counterparts do not take care of them and their children. They raised strong objections to the control of cash compensation on a paternal basis, as this furthered the sidelining of women in decisions affecting them directly.

All the respondents (100%) were aware of the RDP, but a majority of them knew more about the specific programmes that involved households residing in their respective communities. The agricultural production programmes superseded all the other programmes in this regard. However, the seed and ware potato programme appeared to be popular, as all the respondents knew about it and supported it unequivocally. It was sad to note that the communities still disagree to a great extent with regard to the use of communal grazing land, especially by those livestock farmers whose cattle posts were

moved and the resettled communities which are not yet fully integrated into the host communities. The resettled households indicated that they had been promised fodder as compensation for the loss of grazing land, but the LHDA later resorted to assisting them to develop grazing areas. They maintained that, while they welcomed this decision, progress has been slow in the implementation of this programme. As such their animals are often hungry and poor.

All the respondents applauded the LHDA for the infrastructure development programme, which they affirmed had changed their lives considerably. The respondents showed appreciation of the water supplies, which they argued made household chores easier, and the improved latrines that gave them a sense of self-respect as they no longer used dongas and forests to relieve themselves. The study noted that all the households in the project area had been provided with water and sewerage facilities to curb pollution and waste material from entering the reservoir and the respondents agreed that this was an important development for them, as they even learned to construct and care for these facilities.

A majority of the interviewees also reiterated the importance of having health facilities closer and more accessible to them, and have indicated that they now use the professional medical centres more than they consult traditional doctors and spiritual healers. However, this does not mean that they have absolutely abandoned their traditional beliefs and values, as many people still use home-brewed herbs for minor illnesses.

All (100%) of the respondents at Ha Ts'iu participated in the seed and ware potato programme, while 1 participant also had 150 fruit trees. All 5 households at Nazareth were part of the Nazareth food security project, as they had backyard gardens producing mostly paprika, garlic, green pepper and cabbage, using ash and kraal manure, although this was on a small scale. One of the female respondents also reared pigs, while a further 2 had chickens. Most of the respondents at Ha Mohale and Ha Koporale were engaged in the production of highlands maize, beans and peas (pulses), while a majority of them at Ha Mohale were also involved in seed and ware potato production. Two interviewees at Ha Mohale had chicken layers and broilers, while 1 also had fruit trees. The study also

learned that some of the farmers (especially those that did not own land) were engaged in sharecropping with the field owners on a contractual basis.

They also all affirmed that they benefit mostly from the income generated from the sale of their products and the availability of food to feed their families and the community. The respondents argued that the little income generated from these undertakings enabled them to take care of the different needs of their households. This study revealed a mixed picture, as a majority of the respondents showed that their household's economies were worse at the time of the study than they were the previous year. They reiterated that they were still struggling to make ends meet and applauded the assistance they received from the GOL by providing free primary education to all by showing that, if this was not the case, it would have been extremely difficult for them to pay the school fees. It was also noted that most families cannot afford high fees at the secondary and high school levels, as these are not yet part of the free education policy, hence there is a high drop-out rate of school children and some of them end up in marriages at a young age.

Furthermore, most respondents indicated that the communities did not actively participate in the projects that did not have monetary or food returns. They argued that the people are hungry and poor and therefore would want to benefit from any undertaking, despite the fact that development may be implemented for their own good. However, some people voiced their concern regarding the attribute of laziness that Basotho have shown in recent times, especially the youth. The contention was that today people put money before everything else and therefore anything that does not bring money is not acceptable.

Finally, the majority of the respondents wanted to see more changes and development in their communities. They affirmed that they wanted to see more advanced services brought closer to them and more jobs created, so that they do not only rely on agriculture, especially in the light of the fact the weather patterns have changed and crops do not do as well as they used to in the past. The majority of the people wanted the Government to bring textile industries, which were concentrated in the big urban areas, into the highlands region.



The respondents also stated that LHDA should assist them to develop programmes that empower the youth to stop them from being idle and loitering. They also reiterated that the politicians make a lot of promises prior to the elections in an attempt to attract votes, but as soon as the elections are over they forget about them. This has created political apathy on the part of the electorate, and has generally led to people not believing anything that they are told until they see implementation and progress. Generally, all the respondents (100%) showed that their lives had in one way or the other been affected by the LHWP.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined and discussed the findings of the different research initiatives that were undertaken in the Mohale project area to solicit information about the impact of the LHWP on the affected communities and to examine how the Rural Development Programmes in Phase 1B have helped restore livelihoods and alleviate poverty. Also, the perceptions of the affected communities about the RDP and the LHWP and the views of the LHDA and other stakeholders were investigated. A literature review was undertaken to support the arguments advanced by the respondents.

The study therefore recognized that with the advent of the LHWP new villages have emerged to accommodate the resettled communities whose dwellings have been inundated by the dam or been lost through other infrastructures. On the other hand, other households have been relocated to host villages of their choice as a result of the Project. As such, the Project has had an impact on the pattern of settlements across the highlands region and the Country at large as other communities were resettled in both the foothills and the lowlands of Lesotho. The Mohale Dam and its related infrastructure has also become a permanent feature of the landscape, with direct implications for social settlement patterns, limiting easy movement of the people and their livestock within the Project area, thereby disrupting communication across the valleys and rivers of the Mohale area and the highlands at large.

The study found that, although some people expressed some dissatisfaction with regard to development initiatives in the Region, the RDP has indeed benefited the communities in the project area in that they have gained access to better and improved facilities, their food security has been strengthened, job opportunities have been created, skills have been developed and income has been generated. This is a long-term development that needs to be sustained to ensure that the livelihoods of the affected communities are enhanced. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that people's dependence on compensation, especially in the form of cash and subsidies from the LHDA's RDP, is minimised. In this regard the communities would need further strengthening to ensure their independence, even after the handing over of the programmes' implementation and management to the communities themselves.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusion

This study has attempted to describe the nature and extent of poverty in Lesotho, and outlined the impact of the Government of Lesotho and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project on poverty alleviation in the Highlands area of Lesotho. On the basis of the discussion, it is concluded that poverty is complex in nature, cutting across social, political and economic spheres. Poverty bears social, economic and moral connotations; however, lack of income overrides all aspects of poverty as in most cases access to income dictates the wellbeing of the people and their potential to access other resources that would enhance their livelihoods. Evidently poverty is not a matter of choice, but is a result of the manifestations of a combination of factors prevailing in the world as prescribed by the forces of nature and complemented by those who have more power over others. Poverty is immoral as it impinges on the moral values of society and inhibits the socialisation of the poor into the society of which they are a larger part. Its alleviation would therefore necessitate a multidisciplinary approach.

The geographic position or location of Lesotho (being landlocked and totally surrounded by South Africa) places it at a great disadvantage, as it is almost impossible for the Country to make strategic decisions without South Africa intervening. Also, decisions made by South Africa always have direct implications for Lesotho. Therefore, a critical question that needs to be addressed by GOL in this regard is “How can Lesotho escape South Africa’s influence and ensure its autonomy in crucial developmental issues that benefit the Basotho?”

Poverty is inherent of the rural areas of Lesotho due to their limited potential to utilise natural resources, and the mountainous landscape of the Lesotho highlands, which makes it difficult and expensive to affect developmental. However, the Government of Lesotho has embarked on a number of policy interventions for poverty alleviation, in alliance with

the international community's commitment to world development. This therefore bears witness to the Government's commitment towards ensuring a better life for the Basotho.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project has had both positive and negative implications for the affected communities and the Country at large. However, the impact of the LHWP and its associated developmental programmes differs substantially between households and communities, as the project has not affected them in the same manner. The affected people have lost their assets, cultural roots, functions and values, and control of their natural resources, which a majority of them argue can never be equal to the compensation that they are receiving from the LHDA. Most dissatisfaction on the part of the people arises from the issue of compensation; people argue that they are and have been treated unfairly by the LHDA, which does not fulfil its promises as stipulated in the compensation policy, and in some cases by the hostile host communities, which do not accommodate them happily. A majority of the compensated people depend on compensation in either cash or kind to complement other survival strategies.

Also, the project has opened the scheme area to urbanisation, thus bringing urban-related problems such as crime and conflicts that were never heard of before the implementation of the LHWP. The residents maintain that the HIV/AIDS pandemic was never a problem in the Project area before the advent of the LHWP, and this is seriously threatening the lives of the poor rural people. Most people seem to believe that the migrant construction workers introduced this virus to the project area.

The establishment of community participation structures and the involvement of civil society in the planning and implementation of the project and the programmes have been effective in ensuring that people understand and receive what is due to them. However, various programme committees have overtaken these community structures in many respects, thus rendering rendered local governance ineffective.

Generally, the project has developed alternative means of income generation, guaranteed households' food security, developed a good network of roads, provided improved water



supplies, sanitation and health facilities, and created employment opportunities for the local people and other people from other parts of Lesotho. These facilities will be handed over to the GOL after the winding down of the Project.

A majority of the affected communities have gained access to knowledge and resources that have enhanced their capability to help themselves in the modern world. It is therefore imperative to note that the majority of the rural highlands communities are content with the RDP, as it has improved their lives to a significant extent, despite a few setbacks here and there. It can thus be deduced that the aim of the LHDA to leave the affected communities of the Phase 1B with a more equitable socio-economic development has to some extent been realised. However, more work still needs to be done to mitigate the effects of poverty in the Project area and in Lesotho in general.

Lesotho has also benefited to a great extent in the sense that it has gained a good reputation in the international arena because of the project of the magnitude of the LHWP. While the Basotho have earned substantial amounts of money and gained experience and exposure from this undertaking, GOL has reaped revenue in the form of royalties for the LHWP. This revenue has assisted in financing rural development and hence poverty alleviation. It is evident, therefore, that if Lesotho continues to meet the expectations of its client well by delivering the expected volume of water to South Africa, the Lesotho Fund for Community Development will also grow as more revenue will be generated and poverty alleviation in Lesotho will be increasingly realised.

The study therefore concludes that cooperation between the different sectors of the economy is a force towards poverty alleviation in Lesotho, although there is enough evidence to suggest that it has not reduced the dependency syndrome of the Basotho on either the Government or the LHDA. Finally, the study realises that development is a long-term compensation to all the affected communities and therefore it cannot be separated from compensation and resettlement. The aim of the LHDA in this regard is seen as to compensate households and communities for assets and livelihoods lost to the project, to resettle or relocate those that have been inundated or are too close to the dam,

and develop them by providing assistance in devising alternative strategies to restore their livelihoods. This also assists them to escape the poverty trap.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

There is evidence that GOL has invested huge financial and human resources in alleviating poverty in Lesotho and, especially in the Lesotho Highlands, through the LHWP. It is important to ensure that these are utilised for a good cause and for the betterment of the Country and its people. Due to the Country's limited potential in mineral and other precious resources, it is evident that developing agriculture is an important and effective way of addressing poverty. The policy framework must be targeted towards improving this crucial sector, as the majority of Basotho and especially the rural poor depend on it for their livelihood. This will, therefore, necessitate the sound and effective management of land and other natural resources so that they are not misused, to ensure their sustainability and curb the possibility of further environmental degradation.

As the Mohale dam and other related infrastructure in the Project area have led to the impounding of most of the arable land, it is evident that the remaining land may not be enough to fully ensure successful agricultural production. Therefore, GOL needs to improve irrigation schemes and provide improved technology to the areas where they are needed. Also, to complement this strategy the RDP must invest in rural off-farm and micro-business enterprises that would assist the communities to generate more income and employment opportunities. Training needs to be enhanced to assist people venture into new business opportunities. In this regard the involvement of the private sector would be crucial.

The Rural Development Programmes do not make any specific reference to the development of women, who have been largely sidelined in all aspects of life by societal beliefs and values. The study showed that women play an important role in the communities, as most of the families are female-headed; therefore they must be accorded some status. GOL needs to adopt sound macro- and micro-economic strategies to

counteract social poverty and uplift women and girls, without sidelining other disadvantaged groups such as the elderly and the shepherds.

As large sums of revenue are collected from the LHWP, pro-poor social safety nets should be established to ensure that the aged, the young and the disabled who cannot participate in works funded through the Lesotho Fund for Community Development also benefit from the royalties. Furthermore, these resources need to be directed to the poor communities where they are mostly needed to assist them to help themselves rather than relying solely on the GOL and the LHDA for their survival. This could also eradicate the wide margin between the urban and rural areas, as is the case in the contemporary Lesotho.

There must be strong capacity building to equip the communities with programme and project management skills to manage the programmes that ensure their means of survival. The rural poor must not only be seen as recipients of development, but must be engaged in development planning and implementation. This will ensure the sustainability of the development programmes as a sense of ownership will be instilled and support will be guaranteed from all angles. An undue dependency on GOL and LHDA for handouts should also be addressed. There is a strong need to assist communities to find other social interests to curb laziness and loitering, especially on the part of the youth, who are the future of the Project area and Lesotho in general. Participation therefore remains a strategic tool in poverty alleviation.

Successful poverty alleviation depends on the favourable attributes that the Country's economy presents to development stakeholders and even to the people at the lowest level of society, so that they are able to devise livelihood strategies under the given circumstances. The economic environment must be conducive to effective development. GOL needs to strive to attain economic growth as a prerequisite for prosperity as it creates a better environment for the establishment of better mechanisms for poverty alleviation.

Poverty alleviation needs to be in line with the GOL's goals and targets in a more decentralized manner. There is therefore a need for further strengthening of the local government structures to enable them to effectively and efficiently take charge of the needs and aspirations of the poor, and to manage and maintain the programmes' sustainability after they have been fully handed over to GOL. Local government should not only be seen to win the trust and support of the electorate, but must also be result-oriented in shaping rural livelihoods. Poverty alleviation requires a more coordinated effort.

The GOL needs to adopt and strengthen a development-oriented approach that incorporates the involvement and active participation of all sectors of the economy in a multi-disciplinary manner. This means that to eradicate poverty the Government must cooperate with NGOs and other sectors of civil society through its developmental institutions and agents to effectively source financial and technical support.

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## 7. Appendices

### 7.1 Institutional Questionnaire

My name is Lisema Gladys Ramaili. I am a student at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, undertaking research towards the fulfilment of a Masters degree (MA) in Public and Development Management. I am inquiring about the efforts of the Lesotho Government in conjunction with the LHDA and other stakeholders in poverty alleviation using the Phase 1B of the Lesotho Highlands Project as a case study. Kindly assist me by answering the following questions. You do not need to write your name. The information that you provide will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Institution:

Position:

Date:

1. What programmes have you put in place towards poverty alleviation in the highlands region affected by the Mohale dam? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Are these programmes achieving what they were intended for? \_\_\_\_\_

Give reasons for your answer above \_\_\_\_\_

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3. To what extent are the target communities aware of these programmes? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What measures do you take to ensure public awareness regarding these programmes? \_

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5. Are the beneficiaries of these programmes involved at all in formulating and implementing the strategies aimed at uplifting their standard of living? \_\_\_\_\_

6. If so, how do they participate? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. If your answer to question 5 above is no, what are the challenges that you face as a result of non-participation? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Do you feel that your organization is doing enough towards alleviating poverty in this area? \_\_\_\_\_

Give reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 7.2 Household Questionnaire

1. Name of village:

2. Gender of household head:

3. The impact of the LHWP

a) Do you feel that the LHWP benefits your community and your household? \_\_\_\_\_

Give reasons for your response \_\_\_\_\_

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b) Which development programmes have been established in your community by GOL/LHDA? \_\_\_\_\_

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c) Which community development programmes are you involved in? \_\_\_\_\_

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d) What has been their impact on your community?

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e) Would you describe your household's economy as better, same or worse as compared to last year? \_\_\_\_\_ Give reasons for your answer \_\_\_\_\_

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f) Do you feel that the community participates adequately in community development initiatives? \_\_\_\_\_ Provide reasons \_\_\_\_\_

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g) In your view is the LHD/GOL doing enough to promote public awareness regarding the rural development initiatives taking place? \_\_\_\_\_

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h) What would you like to see happening in your community to enhance rural development? \_\_\_\_\_

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