



SOUTH AFRICA

Migration, Remittances and Gender-Responsive Local Development

The case of Lesotho



The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) promotes applied research on gender issues, facilitates knowledge management, and supports capacity-building through networking mechanisms and multi-stakeholder partnerships with UN agencies, governments, academia and civil society.

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Migration, remittances and gender-responsive local development: The case of Lesotho

Lead researchers and report authors: Jonathan Crush, Belinda Dodson, John Gay and Clement Leduka, Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP)

Report edited by: Allison J. Petrozziello (UN-INSTRAW)

Design: Sughey Abreu (UN-INSTRAW)

Layout: Juan Rodríguez

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UN-INSTRAW

César Nicolás Penson 102-A
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Tel: +1-809-685-2111
Fax: +1-809-685-2117
Email: info@un-instraw.org
Website: www.un-instraw.org

UNDP

One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017 USA
Tel: 212-906-5000
Fax: 212-906-5364
E-mail: publications.queries@undp.org
Website: www.undp.org

UNDP Lesotho

3rd Floor UN House,
P.O. Box 301
Maseru
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 22 313790
Fax: (+266) 22 310042
E-mail: mpho.sesoane@undp.org
Website: www.undp.org.ls

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CONTENTS

	PREFACE	i
	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1.	INTRODUCTION	7
1.1	Methodology.....	8
2.	MIGRATION FLOWS AND REMITTANCES BETWEEN LESOTHO AND SOUTH AFRICA	10
2.1	Background Information on Lesotho.....	10
2.1.1	<i>Gender in Lesotho</i>	11
2.1.2	<i>Description of Specific Region of Origin</i>	12
2.2	Characteristics of Migration from Lesotho to South Africa.....	13
2.2.1	<i>History of Migration</i>	13
2.2.2	<i>Contemporary Migration</i>	15
2.2.3	<i>Principal South African Destinations</i>	16
2.3	Description of the Migratory Process.....	16
2.3.1	<i>Gender Characteristics of the Flow and Profiles</i>	16
2.3.2	<i>Characteristics and Typologies of Households</i>	20
2.3.3	<i>HIV/AIDS and Migration</i>	23
2.4	Remittances to Lesotho.....	24
2.4.1	<i>Characteristics of Monetary Remittances</i>	24
2.4.2	<i>Profiles of Remitters and Recipients</i>	29
2.4.3	<i>Principal Uses of Remittances</i>	31
2.4.4	<i>Mine Remittances</i>	36
3.	IMPACT OF REMITTANCES ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT	38
3.1	Gender Equality: Use and Control of Remittances.....	38
3.2	Remittances and Entrepreneurship.....	40
3.2.1	<i>Remittances and Agriculture</i>	40
3.2.2	<i>Potential for Use of Remittances in Income Generation</i>	43
3.2.3	<i>Obstacles to Entrepreneurship</i>	47
3.3	Impact of Remittances on Poverty Reduction.....	51
4.	MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT LINKS	53
4.1	Migrant Associations.....	53
4.2	Mapping of Key Actors.....	54
4.3	Public Policies.....	57
5.	GOOD PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY DIALOGUE	60
5.1	Final Considerations.....	61
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	63

List of Tables

Table 1. Location of Interviews.....	9
Table 2. Length of Migratory Experience.....	17
Table 3. Comparative Length of Migratory Experience of Domestic Workers and Miners.....	18
Table 4. Marital Status of Migrants.....	20
Table 5. Relationship of Migrants to Household Head.....	20
Table 6. Sources of Income of Remittance Recipient Households.....	25
Table 7. Average Annual Remittances Received from Male and Female Migrants.....	26
Table 8. Major Remittance Channels (outside CDP) by % of Remittance-receiving Households.....	28
Table 9. Household Form of Migrant-Sending Households.....	30
Table 10. Monthly Household Expenses by Category in Remittance-Receiving Households.....	32
Table 11. Use of Remittances in Migrant-Sending Households.....	32
Table 12. Proportion of Migrant-Sending Households Receiving Remitted Goods.....	33
Table 13. Proportion of Migrant-Sending Households Incurring Particular Expense.....	34
Table 14. Migrant-Sending Household Expenditures.....	34
Table 15. Proportion of Households Receiving Emergency Remittances.....	36
Table 16. Sources of Household Income in Male and Female Migrant Sending Households.....	43

PREFACE

The feminization of migration is a phenomenon that stresses not only the moderate increase in the numbers of women migrating, but also the ways in which women participate in migratory processes. In the past, most female migrants moved as dependants of husbands or families, whereas today a greater variety of women are leaving autonomously to work and live abroad as primary income earners. Growing interest in the study of the feminization of migration has created a knowledge base of experience and tools that lend themselves to the integration of gender equality into migration-related interventions.

Meanwhile, remittances – another significant feature of migration – are gaining international attention. The monies sent from migrants in destination countries to families and communities in countries of origin are an important motivator for working abroad. Although individual migrants generally send relatively small sums of money, the accrual of remittances amounts to considerable financial flows.

Recognizing remittances' impact on national economies and the global financial world, governments and international organizations have taken interest in their potential to affect development. However, this potential to support and enhance human and local development has yet to be fully understood. A gendered approach to studying this phenomenon highlights how gender affects migrants' experiences and how migrant women in particular can contribute to dialogues, policy planning and interventions for sustainable development.

The study of remittances is an important aspect of the United Nations Development Programme's work on human development and poverty reduction, as well as its work in assisting governments to seek novel ways to harness remittances' development potential in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Remittances are the only means of survival for millions of poor households worldwide; remittances allow them to afford not only the basic necessities that are otherwise lacking or inaccessible, but also a degree of economic empowerment. Building on this topic, UNDP dedicated its 2009 Human Development Report, *Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development*, to applying a human development approach to the study of migration. While not a substitute for broader development efforts, migration can be a vital strategy for households and families seeking to diversify and improve their livelihoods.

Since 2004, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) has sought to understand the gender dimensions of migration, remittances and their potential for development. The Institute utilizes a gender perspective to analyze how factors such as gender inequalities in access to work and divisions of labour determine the relationship between migration and development. Within this framework, remittances serve as a key component to comprehending and facilitating sustainable solutions.

This series of studies, 'Migration, Remittances and Gender-Responsive Local Development', focuses on the sending, transfer, receipt and utilization of remittances, and affirms that gender influences and shapes the movement and experiences of migrants and their communities in both origin and destination countries. The mapping of key actors and the discussion of historical and current migratory patterns and remittance practices in each country provided a useful background that allowed for an analysis of collective and social remittances. Utilizing a gender perspective and an emphasis on human development, this project adds another layer of necessary investigation that builds on the migration-development nexus.

With this publication, UN-INSTRAW and UNDP are committed to producing applied research that promotes the facilitation of gender-responsive policies and practices related to migration and development. The recommendations generated from the research serve as key guides for national level policy dialogues attended by key stakeholders, including migrant organizations, government agencies, financial intermediaries and NGOs. These dialogues are important platforms where research results can be translated into action plans that highlight co-development. Over time, the inclusion of gender analysis into the formulation of effective and sustainable migration and development strategies will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

UN-INSTRAW and UNDP present this global series on gender, remittances and development in order to facilitate the development of policies and practices that incorporate the needs and contributions of migrant women, their households and communities into development agendas, thus bringing about gender responsive local development and sustainable livelihoods and futures.

Amaia Pérez

Social Affairs Officer / Officer-in-Charge
UN-INSTRAW

Winnie Byanyima

Gender Team Director
UNDP Gender Team



Executive Summary

LESOTHO

The complex links between globalization and development have made contemporary migration a key area of investigation. It is estimated that over 200 million women and men have left their countries of origin to live and work abroad. Occurring simultaneously are equally intensive internal movements, primarily from rural to urban areas. Demographically, many country-specific flows have changed, both in terms of numbers and composition by sex. Studies on the feminization of migration¹ have revealed women's significant role and impact as actors in the migration process. Despite the rapid increase in the volume and diversity of knowledge on the migration-development nexus, research and debate on the gender dimensions of this issue, including the role of women within migratory flows, continues to be scarce.

In 2007, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) began a joint project entitled "Gender and Remittances: Building Gender-Responsive Local Development." The project has sought to enhance gender-responsive local development by identifying and promoting options for utilizing remittances for sustainable livelihoods and for building social capital in poor rural and semi-urban communities. The research phase of the project has been implemented in six countries: Albania, the Dominican Republic, Lesotho, Morocco, the Philippines and Senegal.

The strategic aim of the project is to generate action-oriented research that will be used to:

1. Increase awareness and improve access of women-headed, remittance-recipient households to productive resources, while augmenting their assets and strengthening their capacities;
2. Provide relevant information to local and national governments to identify and formulate policies that will optimize remittance utilization for sustainable livelihoods and for building social capital; and
3. Contribute to enhancing key stakeholders' capacities to integrate gender into policies, programmes, projects, and other initiatives linking remittances with sustainable livelihoods and building social capital.

1. "In addition to the net increase in the proportion of women among migratory flows, primarily to highly-developed countries in the North – the term feminization denotes an important qualitative change in the composition of these flows, that is the sustained increase in the proportion of women migrating independently in search of employment, instead of as "family dependents" that travel with their spouses or reunite with them abroad. In other words, over the last two decades, a significant amount of women – who now migrate independently, assuming the role of economic provider – have joined the migratory flows that were previously dominated by men" (Perez et al 2008).

The six case studies aim to narrow the knowledge gap on the gender dimensions of migration and remittances through an interlinked analysis of migration and development. Particular attention is paid to the impact of remittances (financial, in-kind and social) on gendered development processes in countries of origin and amongst transnational households spanning the origin and destination countries.

This case study research examines the gender dimensions of migration and remittances in the context of Lesotho and the destination country of South Africa. The research methodology for this report involved several components: a desk review, analysis of quantitative data, collection of qualitative data (focus groups and interviews), and a mapping of key stakeholders. The quantitative data was drawn from a nationally representative household survey of migrant-sending households that the South African Migration Project conducted in Lesotho in 2005. In-depth case-study research was conducted in villages of the Lesotho lowlands in the areas of Ha Mafefoane and 'Mahuu in December 2008 and January 2009. Five focus groups were conducted during this time, as well as interviews with a selection of stakeholders and key informants in South Africa and Lesotho.

Lesotho is one of the most migration-dependent countries in the world. Out of a population of around two million people, over 240,000 are estimated to be outside the country. Migrants' remittances are the country's major source of foreign exchange, accounting for 25 percent of GDP in 2006. They have risen from an estimated R1,193 million (US\$156.5 million) in 1993 to R1,939 million (US\$254.5 million) in 2004.³ Lesotho is also one of the poorer countries in the world, with high domestic unemployment, declining agricultural production, falling life expectancy, rising child mortality and half the population living below the poverty line. Poverty continues to be the major driving force behind internal and cross-border migration in Lesotho. South Africa completely surrounds Lesotho and is the primary destination for the Basotho people, who comprise the dominant ethnic group of Lesotho. Thus the development of South Africa and Lesotho are inextricably linked, and co-development of these two countries, albeit in highly unequal form, describes a long-standing reality. The South African economy has benefited from Lesotho's migrant labour, while the Lesotho economy is highly dependent on remittances from South Africa.

In Lesotho, interregional mobility has been both a cause and a consequence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic: currently, 24 percent of the population is infected. The spread of HIV/AIDS has not simply been fuelled by migration. Migration, by its very nature, facilitates high-risk behaviour and makes migrants more vulnerable to infection. As increased economic vulnerability shifts patterns of employment and migration, the epidemic has affected household structure, division of labour and livelihood strategies.

Lesotho is a highly patriarchal society, in which women have lower socio-economic status, experience significant gender-based discrimination and lack equal rights. There is a striking contradiction between women's growing significance as economic actors, including as labour migrants, and their continued second-class social, political and legal status.

Historically, young men of Basotho households have migrated across the border to work in the South African gold mines; women and children were barred from accompanying migrant miners to the place of work. Some female migrants did still migrate to work, but they were few in number. These women generally came from households without a male migrant wage-earner and were typically younger women or widows escaping poverty at home. Migration for men is thus an entrenched and accepted social norm, while for women it remains controversial, considered by many in Lesotho to be a departure from what is regarded as proper behaviour.

2. As of 27 January 2010, the exchange rate was US\$1=R7.62.

Since 1990, migration patterns between Lesotho and South Africa have changed dramatically. First, cross-border movement between Lesotho and South Africa (legal and irregular) has increased substantially, with legal border crossings rising from 240,000 in 1991 to nearly 2 million in 2008. Second, mine labour, while still the dominant employment sector for male migrants from Lesotho, has been considerably reduced in scale, replaced by employment in other sectors such as construction for male migrants and domestic service by the increasing number of female migrants.

A third significant trend is the feminization of international migration from Lesotho. This involves an increase in the absolute number of female migrants, an increase in the proportion of migrants who are female, and a qualitative change in the character of female migration. Several factors explain the increase in female migration to South Africa. First, women's migration is partly a compensatory flow for the reduction in male migrant employment in South African mines. Second, the collapse of apartheid lessened the threat of harassment and deportation by the state, making it easier for women to migrate and to find work. However, most women are confined to low-paying, exploitative jobs by their irregular migrant status. Third, women's wages in South Africa are better than in Lesotho, though still lower than those of men. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there has been a rise in the number of female-headed households — both by delaying or avoiding marriage and by rising levels of widowhood, divorce, and abandonment — from which women migrate as the primary or only income-earner.

Male migrants, who constitute 80 percent of migratory flows, are mainly older married men whereas female migrants are, for the most part, without husbands. Women who migrate to work in South Africa fall into three broad categories: the daughters or nieces, some of them widowed, divorced, or single mothers, from households where a parent, uncle or aunt is the household head (51 percent); the wives of unemployed men, many whose husbands are former mineworkers or who no longer work due to disease (especially tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS) or disability (18 percent); and women who are themselves the head of households without an adult male member, many of them widows or divorcees but including women who are simply unmarried (24 percent). The gender dynamics and power relations within individual households reflect this variety and complexity of migrant household forms.

In 2005, the average annual cash remittance receipt reported by households was M7,800 (US\$1023). The average amount of money remitted by female migrants overall (M4,825 or US\$633) is significantly lower than that of male migrants (M11,162 or US\$1,465). Women's employment and livelihood strategies (e.g., as informal sector traders or domestic workers) compared to waged mine labour mean lower earnings overall and less regular or reliable remuneration than their male counterparts. Women, however, generally remit a larger portion of their earnings.

The primary formal channel of remittance flows is the compulsory deferred pay system of the South African mining industry. Outside this system, the most popular ways of remitting are informal in nature. Migrants bring the money themselves (54 percent) or send it via a trusted friend or co-worker (33 percent). Without access to the formal banking mechanisms of the mines, the majority of migrant women use informal means to remit. On their frequent return visits to Lesotho, migrant women generally bring money and goods home themselves.

Migrant-sending households in Lesotho spend the greatest portion of total income on basic necessities. Food and groceries are by far the most important expenditure, followed by fuel, clothes, transportation and medical expenses. Less than 10 percent of households saved any funds, invested in farming, or spent on education.

3. As of 27 January 2010, the exchange rate was US\$1 = M7.62, meaning that the average annual remittance reported by households in 2005 amounted to approximately US\$1023.

Analysed from a gender perspective, what is most striking is the enormous significance of migrant remittances to household subsistence and basic material needs, irrespective of migrant gender. Nevertheless, significant gender differences did emerge in the reported monetary expenditure in various categories. Expenditure was found to be higher in almost every category for male compared to female migrant-sending households, including essentials such as medical costs and luxuries such as alcohol. Households with male migrants were also more likely to be able to save. Male migrants' higher remittances translate into more money to spend, so that even when such expenditure is on basic goods such as food and clothing, the quantity and quality of purchases is greater for households with male migrant members. These gender differences suggest that households with female migrant members (many of which are also female-headed) are indeed poorer and forced to 'go without' more often than households where the migrant members are men.

Irrespective of the sex of the remittance sender, it was generally the remittance recipient who decided how the money would be spent. For male remitters, in most cases this was the female spouse. For female remitters, it was either a parent, spouse, child or other relative. At times when both sender and recipient are at home, decisions are usually taken jointly. Control of remittance expenditure by the remittance recipient is unsurprising given the basic needs nature of remittance usage. However, some disagreements were reported, particularly in cases where a spouse felt that her husband was wasting remittance money on non-essentials and/or being less than honest.

Being the *de facto* heads of household in the absence of their husbands gives women greater power in the domestic sphere than they would wield if their husbands lived at home; but this power and the economic advantages of remittances come with additional burdens of responsibility and labour. Caution must also be exercised in assuming that migration is inherently empowering for female migrant workers. Their positions as head of household or principal wage-earner are often not by choice but by necessity or emergency, and their migration is itself a strategy to avoid their own and their children's destitution. It also comes with associated stigma and disapproval from family and community members. Women's empowerment through migration and related earning is thus an ambiguous gain.

The proportion of migrant-sending households investing remittances in income-generating activities in Lesotho (e.g., farming or in formal and informal businesses), is extremely low. However, the research identified a few respondents who use remittances for entrepreneurial activities. Several female entrepreneurs had opened small shops or other enterprises, while some men had established a local taxi business. Migrants' remittances also go to employ agricultural labour or to hire shop assistants and are thus an important, if small, source of local employment.

Pooling, lending and borrowing money are other important aspects of remittance use and the local circulation of capital. In Lesotho villages, burial societies and grocery associations effectively pool a portion of remittance receipts (though not primarily for entrepreneurial reasons) to meet additional expenses such as funeral costs. These associations comprise an important forum in which women exercise control over resources, and could serve as a mechanism to spread the benefits of remittances beyond the immediate household. However, more research is needed as to their operations, benefits, and potential for improving the development benefits of migration through collective organization and action.

As for remittance usage in general, gender combines with age, generation, household size and household type to influence the relationship between migrant remittances and income generation. The most successful households are those with a male migrant mineworker and a female spouse running a small business at home in Lesotho, and where the size of the household does not mean that the entire remittance package is spent on basic needs.

Female migrants' remittances can support local business and farming activities, but mainly in cases where a male spouse (or parent) is at home to provide the skills and labour required. Migrant women's lower earnings, and thus lesser remittances, limit their potential for income generation or investment. Least likely of all to generate business or agricultural investment in Lesotho are remittances from female heads of household without a male partner or adult family member to operate a business activity at home. Such women may, however, be entrepreneurs in their own right, for example as informal cross-border traders. It is probably fair to characterize male migrants' remittances as more 'developmental', in the economic sense of promoting growth and investment, than female migrants' remittances, which are more survivalist in their character and impact. This should not be understood as a simple gender dichotomy, but rather as an illustration of the feminization of poverty and women's adoption of migration as a rational response to the threat of destitution.

Seven obstacles to entrepreneurship were identified in this research:

1. The small size of the remittance package and the fact that most of it is consumed on basic needs;
2. The lack of capital and loan financing for those who wish to develop a business;
3. The considerable reduction in net worth of remittances through transaction costs, double taxation, and corruption;
4. The absence of the type of diaspora associations that are emerging in other international contexts and that are used to support community-scale projects rather than simply household-scale activities;
5. An inhospitable regulatory framework governing movement between Lesotho and South Africa;
6. The structural development constraints inherent to Lesotho; and
7. Gender discrimination and gendered patterns of poverty and deprivation, which present further structural constraints impeding the development of potential remittances.

Migration needs to be reconceptualised in public policy discourse, not as a threat to the interests of South Africans but as something that is (and could be even more) mutually beneficial to both countries. Evidence from this research indicates that the facilitation of legal residence and labour documentation to Lesotho citizens in South Africa would in all likelihood encourage not permanent relocation but reduction in the length of time that people would have to spend working in South Africa before being able to return home to Lesotho. This has important implications for their ability to return and contribute to development initiatives in Lesotho.

Mobilizing remittances in order to achieve gender-inclusive, sustainable development requires both strategic and practical interventions. At the strategic level, there needs to be reform of policies, laws and employment practices in both Lesotho and South Africa in order to eliminate gender discrimination in migration and employment. Protection of women's and workers' rights, especially migrant workers' rights, is an essential first step. National-level policy interventions to reduce gender discrimination include: facilitating cross-border movement for men and women; regularizing Basotho women's employment in South Africa; protecting the rights of all migrant workers; and allowing male and female citizens of Lesotho to open bank accounts, own property and freely invest in businesses in South Africa.

Changes are also required in Lesotho if women's migration and remittance contributions are to be optimized in terms of their development potential. The 2006 act that aimed to remove gender discrimination must be enforced and areas where it conflicts with customary law must be clarified, so that women are no longer regarded as minors and can exercise greater control over their lives and secure more equitable access to property and resources. Counselling, support and skills training for retrenched mineworkers and their families would reduce retrenchment's negative development implications. Providing health care and support services for individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS also has to be part of this wider strategy and should specifically target migrant women and men and their sexual part-

ners. Broader socio-economic development in Lesotho, including expansion of employment and livelihood opportunities, would lessen the burden on migrants, both male and female, whose remittances are thinly stretched among many family members. This would include support for agriculture, access to micro-credit, and skills training and assistance with small business start-ups, each incorporating sensitivity to gendered needs and capacities.

1 INTRODUCTION

The complex links between globalization and development have made contemporary migration a key area of investigation. It is estimated that over 200 million women and men have left their countries of origin to live and work abroad. Occurring simultaneously are equally intensive internal movements, primarily from rural to urban areas. Demographically, many country-specific flows have changed, both in terms of numbers and composition by sex. Studies on the feminization of migration have revealed women's significant role and impact as actors in the migration process. Despite the rapid increase in the volume and diversity of knowledge on the migration-development nexus, research and debate on the gender dimensions of this issue, including the role of women within migratory flows, continues to be scarce.

In 2007, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) began a joint project entitled "Gender and Remittances: Building Gender-Responsive Local Development." The project has sought to enhance gender-responsive local development by identifying and promoting options for utilizing remittances for sustainable livelihoods and for building social capital in poor rural and semi-urban communities. The research phase of the project has been implemented in six countries: Albania, the Dominican Republic, Lesotho, Morocco, the Philippines and Senegal.

The **strategic aim** of the project is to generate action-oriented research that will be used to:

1. Increase awareness and improve access of women-headed, remittance-recipient households to productive resources while augmenting their assets and strengthening their capacities;
2. Provide relevant information to local and national governments to identify and formulate policies that will optimize remittance utilization for sustainable livelihoods and for building social capital; and
3. Contribute to enhancing key stakeholders' capacities to integrate gender into policies, programmes, projects, and other initiatives linking remittances with sustainable livelihoods and building social capital.

This study aims to narrow the knowledge gap on the gender dimensions of migration and remittances through an interlinked analysis of migration and development. Particular attention is paid to the impact of remittances (financial, in-kind and social) on gendered development processes in countries of origin and amongst transnational households spanning the origin and destination

countries. This case study research examines these dynamics in the context of Lesotho and the destination country of South Africa, by which Lesotho is entirely surrounded.

Migration from Lesotho to South Africa is long-established, but the flow has historically been dominated by male labour migration to the South African gold mines. Increasing feminization of migration from Lesotho to South Africa warrants both academic attention and gender-sensitive policy responses if the socio-economic benefits of migration are to be fully realized and the human rights of migrants, especially migrant women, are to be given adequate protection.

This report is structured into four substantive sections. Section two examines migration flows and remittances between Lesotho and South Africa. It begins with contextual information on Lesotho, as well as information on gender equality and the specific regions of origin examined in the study. A sub-section on the gender characteristics of historic and contemporary migration between the two countries follows. The presentation and analysis of primary data begin in sub-section 2.3. Description of the Migratory Process, which discusses the factors driving the feminization of this migratory flow, primary labour sectors for male and female migrants, and gender differences in migrants' ability to acquire South African documentation. Transnational household typologies and changes in household composition due to mine retrenchments and demographic shifts are discussed in 2.3.2, followed by analysis of the relationship between HIV/AIDS and migration in the Lesotho-South African context in 2.3.3. Sub-section 2.4 presents information on remittances to Lesotho, moving from national- to household-level significance. This sub-section also includes profiles of remitters and recipients, and information on the principal uses of remittances – including gender differences in reported monetary expenditure – and the mine remittance system.

Section three builds on this information by analysing it in terms of its impact on local development. Sub-section 3.1 looks at gender equality in relation to the use and control of remittances, while sub-section 3.2 explores remittances, agriculture, and potential for entrepreneurship, as well as the many obstacles that exist. The section ends by emphasising the importance of remittances for poverty reduction in Lesotho.

Section four focuses on the links between migration and development, and includes a description of migrants' associations, a mapping of key actors and a review of relevant public policies. The report concludes with good practices and recommendations for policy dialogue (section 5), including strategic and practical interventions that are necessary to achieve gender-inclusive, sustainable development.

1.1 Methodology

The research methodology used for the Lesotho case study involved several components: desk review, analysis of quantitative data, and collection of qualitative data (focus groups and interviews). The desk review was undertaken to map local gender and migration issues within their national and regional contexts, and to identify specific options for interventions, through an in-depth analysis of existing data and information at the macro and meso level. The review provided

the broad frame of reference for the analysis and interpretation of new data obtained at the micro level, which included quantitative survey data as well as focus groups and interviews. A mapping exercise of key stakeholders involved in local development, gender and migration issues was included.

The quantitative data analysed from a gender perspective for purposes of this report was drawn from a nationally-representative household survey of migrant-sending households that was conducted in Lesotho by the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) in 2005. The survey collected data on the household composition and remittance practices of 1,023 Basotho households and 1,076 individual migrants, of whom 899 were male and 177 were female.

In-depth case-study research was conducted in Lesotho in December 2008 and January 2009. All interviews were conducted in Lesotho in two areas of the Lesotho lowlands: Ha Mafefoane and 'Mahuu. Ha Mafefoane is in the Roma Valley near the small university town of Roma. 'Mahuu is a more remote rural area. Both send male and female migrant workers to South Africa. The sample was stratified to ensure that the target number of respondents was obtained in each of six categories as follows:

Table 1: Location of Interviews

	Ha Mafefoane	'Mahuu	Total
Female Remitters	5	5	10
Male Remitters	5	5	10
Female Remittance Recipients	4	5	9
Male Remittance Recipients	3	4	7
Female Entrepreneurs	5	4	9
Male Entrepreneurs	5	2	7

Source: SAMP Household Survey

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

2

MIGRATION FLOWS AND REMITTANCES BETWEEN LESOTHO AND SOUTH AFRICA

Lesotho is one of the most migration-dependent countries in the world. Of a population of around two million people, over 240,000 were estimated to be outside the country in 2008 (World Bank 2008). Lesotho's population is comprised mostly of descendants of the Basotho people, who have lived in southern Africa since around the fifth century. Of the approximately 4.3 million Basotho, 1.8 million live in Lesotho and approximately 3.5 million in South Africa, creating a contiguous geographic area of linguistic and cultural affinity within which cross-border migration often takes place. Migrant remittances are the country's major source of foreign exchange, accounting for 25% of GDP in 2006.

2.1 Background Information on Lesotho

Lesotho has high domestic unemployment, declining agricultural production, falling life expectancy, rising child mortality and half the population living below the poverty line. In the 2007-8 UN Human Development Index, Lesotho ranked 138th in the world. Principal economic activities in Lesotho include agriculture, livestock production, construction, and manufacturing, especially textiles, clothing and footwear.

Poverty continues to be the major driving force behind internal and cross-border migration in Lesotho. For most households (except the most skilled), migration remains a household survival strategy rather than a strategy for creating wealth and economic development. Despite positive national economic growth (primarily from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and the textile industry), poverty remains a chronic problem in Lesotho. Data from National Household Budget Surveys in 1986-7 and 1994-5 show that "the incidence and severity of poverty is greater among a number of social groups: female headed households, people living in rural areas, especially in the mountainous parts of Lesotho, the elderly, children, those who rely upon agricultural production and agricultural assets" (May et al 2002).

The most recent snapshot of contemporary household poverty was provided by a SAMP poverty and migration survey of 1,224 households in all parts of Lesotho (Green 2006a). Comparing households with and without migrants, the study found that 39% of migrant households and only 28% of non-migrant households satisfied their basic needs. As Green (2006a) concludes, "There is a clear pattern from the data which suggests that households with migrant workers are

more wealthy than those without and this clearly suggests that migration is a strong anti-poverty indicator.” What is equally clear is that even households with part or full-time wage earners still struggle to secure a livelihood.

As acknowledged in the 2006 Lesotho National Human Development Report, “Migrant labourers’ remittances have played a critical role in providing household incomes over a long period of time.” For the most part, these transnational migrants have historically been male, a reflection of both gendered labour market demand, which has been dominated by the mining sector, and legal, social and cultural constraints on women’s mobility and independence.

2.1.1 Gender in Lesotho

Lesotho is a highly patriarchal society, in which women have lower socio-economic status, experience significant gender-based discrimination and lack equal rights. There is a striking contradiction between women’s growing significance as economic actors, including as labour migrants, and their continued second-class social, political and legal status. This contradiction is captured in a 2007 UNDP report on Lesotho’s progress in attaining the Millennium Development Goal on gender equality:

Basotho society is patrilineal and patriarchal, with the man as head of the family and the sole decision maker. However, in the past, women were de facto heads of households due to excessive male labour migration to South Africa. As a result, they were responsible for agricultural production, which was the backbone of Lesotho’s economy. Women now contribute significantly to the economy of the country, and dominate the SMMEs and the garment sectors. However, discrimination against women is still a problem and is based on Customary and Common Laws enshrined in the Constitution, under which women are considered perpetual minors under guardianship of their spouses and male relatives. Nevertheless, the Government is committed to promoting gender equality as a fundamental human right.⁵

The Constitution itself is contradictory in gender terms, upholding women’s rights to non-discrimination while simultaneously enshrining customary law. According to Lesotho’s customary law, women remain legal minors throughout their lives, dependants of their fathers, husbands or brothers.⁶ Although a law was passed in 2006 that aimed to eliminate the discrimination currently imposed upon married women through customary law, it seems that the new law has had little effect in practice. Along with customary law, social norms dictate that men are regarded as the head of the family, placing women in a weak and disadvantaged position. While it is difficult to obtain reliable statistics, violence against women, notably domestic violence, is also acknowledged to be widespread.

Significantly for understanding the gendered composition of migration, “[w]omen’s civil liberties in Lesotho are highly restricted by tradition, particularly in relation to their freedom of movement.”⁷ Despite these multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, girls have rates of pri-

5. UNDP Millennium Development Goals in Lesotho. <<<http://www.undp.org/ls/millennium/default.php#MDG%20Goal%20Four>, Accessed September 25, 2009>>

6. OECD Development Centre. “Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Lesotho.” Social Institutions and Gender Index. <<<http://genderindex.org/country/lesotho>. Accessed September 25, 2009>>

7. Ibid.

mary school enrolment equivalent to or even higher than those for boys. This is explained by the “tradition” that “boys from young ages tend to herd livestock and later in life migrate to take up work in the South African mining industry.”⁸ Migration for men is thus an entrenched and accepted social norm, even an expectation, while for women it remains controversial, considered by many in Lesotho to be a departure from what is regarded as appropriate or “proper” behaviour. Gendered patterns of migration, and the nature of women’s migration and remittance behaviours, reflect these legal and socio-cultural constraints.

2.1.2 Description of Specific Region of Origin

Qualitative data was collected in two areas – Mafefooane and ‘Mahuu. In the first area, interviews were conducted in Ha Mafefooane and two neighbouring villages, Mafikeng and Tloutle, situated in the Roma valley of Lesotho. The valley is located some 35 km south east of the capital, Maseru and is easily accessible by tar road. The Roma valley is a wide valley with relatively fertile, but frail, loam soils surrounded by sandstone cliffs, topped to the east by basalt mountains rising to over 3,000 m above sea level. Catholic missionaries established the nearby town of Roma in 1862. It is home to three seminaries, three high schools, the National University of Lesotho (with over 10,000 students) and St. Joseph’s Hospital. The hospital, which includes a College of Nursing, provides services through various health centres to about 114,000 inhabitants, equal to 6% of Lesotho’s population.

Since the 1970s there has been a steady decline in the productivity of crop and livestock farming in the Roma valley, and increasingly the inhabitants have sought ways to diversify their livelihoods through local employment and migration to South Africa. The proximity of the town of Roma to the villages of Ha Mafefooane, Mafikeng and Tloutle (populations of 4000, 6000 and 2000, respectively) presents some livelihood opportunities for the residents. Some households have found employment at the University or one of the other institutions, while others are involved in informal businesses, selling fruit, vegetables, clothing and other items near the gates of the University. Mine work in South Africa is not as important as it once was, although it remains a much sought after option due to the relatively high wages on offer. In recent years, women have also begun to seek work in South Africa. Young people tend to shy away from farming, having seen their parents struggle to make ends meet in the fields.

In the second area, ‘Mahuu, data was gathered in three villages with walking distance to one another: ‘Mahuu, Ha Nkhokho, and Ha Tlali. Despite differing in population size and some other characteristics, they share a common background in that they are rural and migration and agriculture play an important role in their economic life. The area is located in the western lowlands of Lesotho, at about 1500 m above sea level. It is semi-arid, wind-swept and generally overgrazed and eroded. A duplex soil, consisting of a layer of clay covered by frail loam, dominates. An all-weather road connects the area to the capital, Maseru, some 49 km to the north. There are no major shops or public services in the area, other than primary schools. Residents use public transport to travel to Maseru. The population in the study area is estimated at 500 households. The changing

8. UNDP Millennium Development Goals in Lesotho. <<<http://www.undp.org.ls/millennium/default.php#MDG%20Goal%20Four>>>, Accessed September 25, 2009.

climatic conditions, expensive agricultural inputs and worsening poverty situation force able-bodied young men and women to migrate to neighbouring South Africa in search of jobs.

'Mahuu is a village with two churches, a primary school, and a high number of professionals who have not migrated. Like the other two villages, it is accessible and enjoys a reliable public transport. Licensed businesses closed down due to the high retrenchment of mine workers, whose wages used to fuel the buying power of the local community. Agriculture, which is the main economic activity, has dropped significantly as the economic situation worsens. Even high producers have been affected as input prices rise at an alarming rate. Many households in 'Mahuu, like most other villages, remain highly dependent on migrant remittances. In terms of education, most migrants have completed primary school, with only a few completing secondary level.

By contrast, most inhabitants of Ha Nkhokho have not been to school; only three have reached high school and one college. This is because historically young men went to traditional initiation school and then on to the mines in South Africa, while young women aimed to marry and improve the household economic situation through the payment of lobola (bride price). However, the worsening economic situation has led both young men and women to seek jobs in other sectors in South Africa. Nevertheless, agricultural production in this village is comparatively better despite the high costs involved. Farmers have resorted to use of natural manure because the other types of fertilizers are not affordable. They also have an agricultural association through which they procure seeds and insecticides.

The third village, Ha Tlali, has a church and a primary school. Although the village enjoys a high rate of school attendance, few students manage to continue beyond primary level. The reason for this could be that primary schooling is free and parents cannot manage to send their children to higher levels due to poverty. Only one student managed to complete university. This village still has a high number of mine workers compared to the other two, including an increasing number of novices migrating to South Africa. This village has fewer female migrants, but the number of orphans is still as high as in the other villages. Despite the poor climatic conditions being experienced by every farmer, those still working in the mines use their remittances to improve their agricultural production.

2.2 Characteristics of Migration from Lesotho to South Africa

2.2.1 History of Migration

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

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

earning has ceased. Poverty threatens households that are unable to break into wage employment, or that lose such employment permanently.

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

Female migrants did still cross the border to work, resisting these controls on their personal mobility (Bonner 1990; Maloka 1997; Coplan 2001a). They were usually from households without a male migrant wage-earner and comprised young women or widows escaping poverty at home (Bonner 1990; Maloka 1997). The decision to migrate was often taken out of desperation: “despite the degrading conditions, social isolation and risk of arrest...women go because they have no alternative” (Murray 1981: 154; see also Gay 1980a, 1980b).

In their efforts to restrict and control the mobility of women, in 1915 the colonial government passed the Basutoland Native Women’s Restriction Proclamation which aimed to “prohibit native women from leaving ... against the will of the husbands, fathers or natural guardians.” Women were supposed to get the permission of the family patriarch and village chief in order to go to South Africa. Yet such patriarchal controls were never completely successful, as women continued to migrate. In apartheid South Africa, restrictive immigration and labour laws meant that Basotho women were highly marginalized in the labour market, confined to domestic service or to farm work or to illegal informal sector activity including brewing and sex work.

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

2.2.2 Contemporary Migration

In the 1990s, a stagnant gold price led to a major period of declining production, mine closures and retrenchments in South Africa's gold mines (Tshitereke 2004). In 1990, there were around 376,000 migrant miners in the industry. By 2004, there were only 230,000, a total job loss of more than 140,000. Of those who were left, around 50,000 were from Lesotho. The impact of retrenchments on migration-dependent households in Lesotho was devastating for women and children (Seidman 1995; Coplan and Thoalane 1995). When 50,000 Basotho miners lost their jobs, almost as many households lost their main source of income and retrenchment packages were soon exhausted. Young males entering the labour market could no longer rely on migration to the South African gold mines for employment. As Boehm (2003: 5) observes: "What used to be the absolute economic backbone of Basotho villages and rural economies has been degraded into the privilege of a few."

After 2001, the increase in the gold price halted the dramatic decline of the South African gold industry and employment levels increased once again.⁹ However, the number of migrant miners from Lesotho continued to fall (from 58,000 in 2000 to 46,000 in 2006). The decline in legal contract mine employment for male migrants in South Africa, together with the end of apartheid, has had four spin-off effects on gendered patterns of migration and employment:

- Many male ex-miners and new male work-seekers now migrate irregularly to South Africa to work in lower-paying sectors such as construction and commercial agriculture;
- There has been an increase in irregular and regular female migration to South Africa as female household members replace retrenched males and seek employment opportunities in economic sectors that prefer to hire female employees (such as domestic service and commercial farming) (Coplan and Thoahlane 1995; Sweetman 1995; Pule and Matlosa 2000; Magrath 2004);
- There has been a major increase in internal migration by young women to Lesotho's new textile and garment factories which hire a predominantly female workforce;
- There has been an increase in female-centred households, in which female household heads look for work to support their own households rather than depending on marriage to a male wage-earner for their livelihood.

These gendered changes in migration in Lesotho were summarized from a gender perspective in the 2004 Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) as follows:

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

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

Households that used to have a male miner as the primary breadwinner are now increasingly impoverished. In order to make ends meet, female spouses and young women in these households are migrating instead and remitting money home. Reasons given by respondents as motives for migration (primarily from female-headed households or households without a mine migrant) include poverty, hunger, landlessness, unemployment, widowhood or abandonment, supporting AIDS orphans, and having no money for school fees, medical treatment or clothing.

2.2.3 Principal South African Destinations

Why people go to South Africa from Lesotho has a very clear influence on where they go. For example, the majority of people crossing from Lesotho to South Africa to purchase goods for own-consumption (shopping) or trade (own business) go to the South African border towns of Ladybrand, Ficksburg, Bethlehem/Kestel and Thaba Nchu/Botsabelo. Bloemfontein, the nearest large South African city is also a popular destination for shopping and trading, as is Johannesburg for trading. The primary destinations for those going to work are the mining towns of Welkom and Virginia in the neighbouring Free State Province (24% of all Basotho going to these towns go there to work). These two towns are where the majority of male migrants go. Female migrants travel greater distances to work to Johannesburg (16%) and other smaller towns scattered around Gauteng Province. Most of the migrants listed as “other Free State” for work are farm workers who cross the border to work on vegetable farms in close proximity to Lesotho.

2.3 Description of the Migratory Process

2.3.1 Gender Characteristics of the Flow and Profiles

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

The newness of extensive female migration from Lesotho is confirmed by the fact that nearly 60% of female migrants in the SAMP household survey had less than five years migratory experience (compared with 29% of men) (Table 2). Over 80% of women have been migrating for ten years or less. By comparison, a quarter of male migrants have over 20 years migration experience (compared to only 6.8% of female migrants).

Table 2: Length of Migratory Experience

Age	Male (%)	Female (%)
1-5 years	29.1	59.4
6-10 years	16.3	23.4
11-15 years	15.0	6.3
16-20 years	13.6	3.4
21-25 years	10.5	3.4
26-30 years	9.5	2.3
31 or more years	5.8	1.1
Don't know	0.1	0.6
Total	99.9	99.9

Source: SAMP Household Survey

There are three principal factors behind the increase in female migration to South Africa. First, the collapse of apartheid has made it easier for women to migrate and to find work in South Africa without being constantly harassed and deported by the state. On the other hand, most are confined to low-paying, exploitative jobs by their irregular migrant status. Second, as one focus group participant noted, wages in South Africa for women are better than in Lesotho (though still lower than for men):

More women are migrating to South Africa because of the difficulties they experience in life and also because the jobs in South Africa offer more money when compared to what we get in Lesotho for the same work we do in South Africa. For domestic work in Lesotho, a woman gets M250 per month whereas in South Africa the minimum they get would be M900 [Maloti].¹⁰

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, more women are becoming the primary or sole breadwinner for their families (see section 2.3.2).

Female migration to South Africa would undoubtedly have become even more voluminous if it were not for the dramatic growth in employment opportunities in Lesotho's domestic textile industry. The industry was stimulated after 2000 by Lesotho's privileged status as a duty-free exporter to the US under that country's Africa Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) (Lall 2005). Between 2000 and 2004, textile exports more than doubled, the number of factories rose to 47 and the workforce to 50,000.

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

10. Participant in focus group No 4: Female Remittance Recipients. The unit of currency in Lesotho is the Maloti, which is pegged on a 1:1 basis with the South African Rand.

The dominant employment sector for female migrants in South Africa is domestic service, while for men it is overwhelmingly mining. Fully half of migrant women from Lesotho to South Africa work in domestic service. The majority of domestic workers are women who are relatively new entrants to the labour market (Table 3). While 23% of miners have five or less years of migratory experience, the equivalent figure for domestic workers is 54%. Some 81% of domestic workers have 10 or less years of migration experience compared to only 39% of miners.

Table 3: Comparative Length of Migratory Experience of Female Domestic Workers

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

Source: SAMP Household Surve

The other significant occupations of female migrants from Lesotho are as agricultural labour and in informal sector production and trade. The commercial farming sector of the neighbouring Free State province of South Africa began hiring regular and irregular Basotho migrants in large numbers in the 1990s (Johnston 1997, 2007; Ulicki and Crush 2000, 2007). Most of the migrants are drawn from the most marginalized and poorest segments of Basotho society and are hired on contract in Lesotho by farmers who come across the border to recruit. Some migrants come across the border and seek work on their own. As one female respondent, interviewed by SAMP in a survey conducted prior to this research, noted:

I work on the farms because there are no jobs in Lesotho and with the little that I get, I am able to attend to almost all the basic needs of my family (her spouse and one child). On the farm I work for 8 hours a day, seven days a week. When looking for farm work, I go straight to the farms I have worked on before and do not wait to be recruited in Lesotho although I know it is illegal to enter into South Africa with a purpose of working without a contract. The passports of all the farm workers are kept by our supervisors so that we do not leave the farm. Our movement is restricted for security purposes.

The majority of migrant farm workers are women. Another SAMP study of migration to the farms found that there were significant differences between male and female migrants. Males were more recent additions to the farm workforce, averaging 2.4 seasons as opposed to 3.7 for women. When not working as seasonal farm labourers, 31% (primarily male) are unemployed and engage in no income generating activity. Some women undertake supplementary informal sector activity such as selling vegetables (12.5%), beer brewing (5.3%), piece work (4.6%), herding (3.3%), carrying parcels (2.7%) and sewing (2%).

Male and female migrants prefer to move, live and work legally in South Africa. Legal entry from Lesotho into South Africa for non-employment purposes (on visitor's permits) is very easy, for both men and women, as apartheid-era restrictions have been relaxed. However, outside the mining and commercial farming sectors, it is still hard for female migrants to obtain work permits, since these have to be applied for by employers and justified in terms of there not being a South African who could fill the position. As a result, many women are forced to enter South Africa legally but work in an irregular, or illegal fashion. This category also includes workers who have migrated legally to work in South Africa and then illegally switch employer or employment, violating the terms of a work permit. Given that legal employment channels favour the male-dominated sectors like mining, women's opportunities for legal employment in South Africa are extremely limited. The visitors' permits on which many people enter South Africa are also of limited duration, requiring frequent return to Lesotho in order not to become an overstayer. This, too, limits the employment options available to women, including in terms of geographical location, which for women is more likely to be close to the Lesotho border in order to facilitate more frequent return.

Despite the wide preference for only temporary (if long-term) residence in South Africa, one of the objectives of migrants from Lesotho is nevertheless to obtain South African identity documents or IDs (permanent residence or citizenship status). A South African ID makes a great difference to employment prospects, as a female migrant from one focus group pointed out:

Getting to South Africa and staying and working there is not a problem. But it is not easy to access good work in South Africa as almost all migrants don't have South African IDs (Identity Documents). When you have a South African ID you are able to get better work than people who hold only Lesotho passports. If you are offered a good job you fail to secure it because you only have a Lesotho passport and end up having to do low-paying jobs such as domestic or shop work. This goes even for those people with high school education.¹¹

The value of South African documentation was clearly recognized by migrants. Although fraudulent South African identity and citizenship documentation is always available at a price, some Basotho are able to acquire them through formal application. Basotho in South Africa and Lesotho are ethnically and linguistically homogenous (there are actually more Sesotho-speakers in South Africa than in Lesotho). It is therefore relatively easy for a direct or distant relative to vouchsafe for the migrant's South African 'roots.' Marriage (genuine or fake) to a South African permanent resident or citizen is another means by which resident status can be obtained. Although labour permits are more easily obtained by men, given the favouring of sectors such as mining, there is little to suggest that women have any greater difficulty in acquiring South African ID documents than men, although the irregular channels through which some might obtain ID documents make it impossible to ascertain the true picture.

Evidence from our interviews and surveys suggests that there is not an "emptying of the enclave", but rather that new forms of migration, including by women, are perpetuating established trans-

11. Participant in focus group 2: Female Migrants.

12. For the purposes of the survey, designation of the head of household was left to respondents, and hence largely defined in terms of local custom. This holds that the head of the household is either the male spouse or, in the absence of a spouse, a father, uncle or brother, regardless of who is the primary breadwinner. Households, it should be noted, included both nuclear and extended family forms.

national family forms and financial flows. In fact, women’s intention of return and their maintenance of family ties in Lesotho appear as strong as those of men.

2.3.2 Characteristics and Typologies of Households

There are major gender differences in the marital status of migrants and in their relationship to the head of household (Tables 4 and 5).¹² The typical male migrant is over 40 years of age, married and a household head. Eighty-four percent of male migrants are married and 78% are household heads. In contrast, the female migratory stream is much more diverse. There are three main groups of female migrants. First, there are younger unmarried, married or divorced female members of male- or female-headed households: the daughters, daughters-in-law or nieces of the head of the household (51% of female migrants). A second group of female migrants (18%) is comprised of the spouses of male household heads – including men who no longer work because of unemployment (often resulting from mine retrenchments), disease (especially TB and HIV/AIDS) or disability. The third group of female migrants is made up of women who are themselves heads of their households (24%). Significantly, almost half (48%) of female migrants are divorced/separated, abandoned or widowed. Some of these women live in multi-generational extended-family households, usually with their parents, but around half of them are heads of their household, with their own migrant labour being the primary or even the only source of household income.

Table 4: Marital Status of Migrants

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

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Table 5: Relationship of Migrants to Household Head

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

Source: SAMP Household Survey

The survey identified four main types of migrant-sending households, each with different gender configurations and roles:

- Male-headed households in which the patriarch is also the primary migrant and breadwinner. The vast majority of these migrants have jobs in the South African mining industry and their female spouses/partners remain in Lesotho to take care of the household, including any farming activities, maintain family and social networks, and raise children. Young male members of these households may also migrate if they can find work, but are just as likely to be unemployed.
- Male-headed households with daughters or sons who migrate for work in Lesotho or South Africa. These migrants are commonly sent by their parents to find work and remit the proceeds to the household. The migrants are usually unmarried, including some who are divorced or widowed, but some are married members of multi-generational, extended-family households.
- Male-headed households in which the patriarch does not, or no longer migrates. The female spouse or partner migrates for work in place of their spouse and is often the primary breadwinner despite not being considered head of the household. Younger male and female members may also migrate.
- Households headed by women who are widowed or no longer with their spouse and who themselves migrate for work. Younger household members such as sons or daughters may also migrate.

Intra-household gender roles and decision-making about who migrates and what happens to remittances vary considerably amongst these four different types of migrant-sending household. The types of household sending female migrants are themselves an indication of persisting patriarchal social relations, with migration flows remaining male-dominated and many women migrating only in response either to their male partners' unemployment or to the loss of a male partner through death or divorce. The reasons for the emergence of these differently gendered migrant-sending households also relate to changes in the labour market, which, as discussed elsewhere, has seen a decline in male-dominated mine labour and an increase in employment opportunities for women, especially in Lesotho's clothing and textile sector.

Changes in Household Composition

As detailed above, for much of the twentieth century, most migrants from Lesotho were the young adult sons of the household, which traditionally were made up of patrilocal, multi-generational, extended families. Men's migration, especially to the mines in South Africa, was regarded as a male rite of passage as well as the primary means by which young men could secure money to pay bohali or bridewealth in order to get married. A major shift began to take place in the 1980s when mine jobs became more scarce. As a result, migrant mining became more of a long-term "career," and migrant men spent less and less time at home and became more and more alienated from their own households and families. The proportion of divorced, separated and abandoned women has always been higher in Lesotho than in other Southern African countries as a result of the strains placed on relationships by migration. These strains intensified as migrants worked away from home for eleven months of the year, year in and year out.

Things were no better for the many thousands of households affected by mine retrenchments. The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) in Lesotho argues that male retrenchments have also led to an increase in divorce rates and domestic violence. As in other social and geographical contexts, the causes of marital discord and breakdown are complex and multi-factorial. Several studies, however, point to an increase in domestic violence in contexts of male loss of employment, as men suffer damage to their sense of identity, masculinity and self-esteem (e.g. as described for Jamaica by Moser and Holland, 1997, but also recorded in numerous other countries around the world). This can be exacerbated when women take over the role of family breadwinner, leading to feelings of envy, resentment and failure on the part of their male partners. Poverty, too, is associated with high levels of domestic violence.

At the household level, the rate of formation of new marital homes is declining and the age at which people marry is increasing (Boehm 2006). In 1980, more than 80% of women were married by the age of 30. One recent case study found that only 20% of women aged 18-30 were married (Boehm 2003). In another area, the percentage of adults who were married had dropped from 38% in 1977 to 24% in 2004 (Turner 2004). It appears that reduced male employment on the mines and increased opportunities for female employment, such as in Lesotho's textile and garment sector, are diminishing both women's economic motive and men's means to marry. Formerly, marriage to an employed man was the main way in which women could gain access, albeit indirect, to monetary income. Today, not only do women have greater income-earning opportunities than they did before, but employed young men are few in number. Young men are finding it harder to save money to pay bridewealth or to establish their own independent households.

The increase in the incidence of female household headship, including by non-marriage as well as by marriage failure or widowhood, has been dramatic. The percentage of female-headed households jumped sharply from 25% in 1993 to 40% a decade later. There has also been an increase in the proportion of male-headed households in which there is no spouse). Some of this increase is related to deaths from HIV/AIDS. Because of AIDS, women and men are dying earlier than in the past, leaving their partners or parents to care for the family. Also contributing to the rise in female-headed households are women who have never married or who have left – or been left by – their husbands.

The social consequences of these demographic changes, and their implications for development, are significant. Studies by Boehm (2003 and 2006), Turner (2005), and Wason and Hall (2004) suggest that "incomplete" households, where either one spouse or an entire generation is missing, fare less well economically, are more vulnerable to external shocks and thus more likely to fall into severe poverty. They experience higher dependency ratios and have fewer livelihood options. Entrenched gender discrimination against women, including through customary tenure and inheritance practices, means that female-headed households are especially vulnerable. As noted by Magrath (2004: 20), "[r]ising female employment, delayed marriage and more varied household formations are reducing some women's economic dependence on men, although some of these 'liberated' women may still be living in poverty, struggling to survive and support their children". Increasingly, too, such "liberated" women are likely to be migrants, either to urban areas in Lesotho or across the border to South Africa.

2.3.3 HIV/AIDS and Migration

Neither the causes nor the consequences of migration in Lesotho can be considered without taking into account the HIV/AIDS epidemic affecting not just the country but the entire southern African subcontinent. In the 1990s the number of documented cases grew rapidly, climbing from an estimated 1.0% in 1991 to 30.5% in 1998 and to 37% at the present time. As of 2007-2008, the national incidence of HIV infection in Lesotho stood at 23.6% of the population.

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

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

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

HIV/AIDS is decimating Lesotho’s most economically-productive age cohort. It is also generating new forms of migration. There is evidence that once migrants become too sick to work, they return home permanently “to die” (Clark et al 2007). The loss of income for the family is often devastating when a migrant becomes too sick to earn and remit. The impact is exacerbated by the fact that the burden and cost of care is also borne by the family. The other form of migration on the increase is children’s migration as orphans are sent to live with extended family members in different parts of the country or in South Africa (Young and Ansell 2003, Ansell and van Blerk 2004a, 2004b, van Blerk and Ansell 2006). The HIV/AIDS epidemic is in many ways the crowning blow to agriculture, a crippling plague that has left many farmers unable to do the hard physical labour required to work the land or herd livestock.

HIV/AIDS has had the following impacts on households in Lesotho (Magrath 2004:18): increased household dependency ratios; increasing the number of widows and female-headed households; incomplete households (missing one parent or entire generation); households with additional orphan in the care of next of kin (often elderly women); orphan-headed households; defunct households (when both parents die, the children are dispersed to live with relatives).

All of these changes in household structure, division of labour and livelihood strategies are increasing the economic vulnerability of households as well as changing patterns of employment and migration. The resulting labour shortages in rural areas make agriculture unviable or too onerous, pushing women (and indeed men) into labour migration as an alternative source of livelihood. Households that experience the death of a male or female migrant from AIDS-related illness generally experience dramatically increased poverty and deprivation through the loss of remittance income. This can push other household members to seek waged employment, often necessitating migration either within Lesotho or to South Africa. Many of the widows who make up a large part of female migrant flows from Lesotho to South Africa are likely to have lost their partners to AIDS-related illness. The added costs of caring for sick household members or taking in orphaned relatives create a further incentive for migration to seek waged employment or other income-earning opportunities. In a deadly vicious cycle, migration fuels the HIV/AIDS epidemic and HIV/AIDS fuels further migration.

2.4 Remittances to Lesotho

2.4.1 Characteristics of Monetary Remittances

Globally, remittances have grown to the point where they exceed Official Development Assistance (ODA) and are approaching the level of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In Africa as a whole, the picture is rather different with ODA now exceeding FDI. Remittance flows are significantly lower (although data deficiencies are such that the actual flows may be much higher).

National Significance of Remittances

Lesotho presents a still different scenario with remittances being most important, followed by Customs Union Revenue, ODA and finally FDI.

Lesotho's major external sources of revenue include:

- Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Revenue: SACU governs trade for the member countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and South Africa. The Union has a common external tariff and guarantees free movement of goods amongst member countries. SACU's revenue-sharing formula has generated a growing proportion of public revenue in Lesotho, rising from M374 million in 1993 to M1,107 million in 2003;
- Official Development Assistance: Lesotho's ODA inflows fell dramatically after the end of apartheid from M472 million in 1993 to M189 million in 1999. After 1999, however, ODA to Lesotho picked up again primarily because of international attention on the impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic;

- Foreign Direct Investment: FDI increased throughout the 1990s with the growth of the textile industry (peaking in 1998 at M1,404 million when the textile industry was at the height of its expansion) but has fallen by 50% since; and
- Migrant Remittances: throughout this period, migrant remittances have remained the major revenue source for Lesotho, rising from an estimated M1,193 million in 1993 to M1,939 million in 2004. The fact that remittances have not declined, despite massive reductions in male mine labour migration, is in part a reflection of the rise in women’s migration to work in South Africa, but also of increased wages in the mining sector and the move of men into alternative occupations such as construction labour.

Household-Level Significance of Remittances

Remittances in cash and kind are the main source of income for the vast majority of migrant-sending households in Lesotho. Remittances make such households considerably better off than households without migrant members. Overall, the SAMP household survey showed that some 95% of migrant-sending households receive regular cash remittances and 20% receive remittances in kind (Table 6). Only 9.5% of these households receive additional income from regular wage work and 6.3% from casual work in Lesotho. Additionally, only 8.8% receive income from a formal or informal business and just 2.7% from the sale of farm products. Annualized average household income for migrant-sending households from all sources was M11,475. Mean household income from remittances was M8,400 for cash and M2,488 for goods. Income from other sources was relatively significant for the small number of households that had more diversified income. For example, the 2% of households with a formal business made an average of M6,708 from their business. Or again, the 3% of households selling farm produce made an average of M1,525 from those sales. The 7% of households participating in the informal sector made an average of M3,066 from those operations. In many cases, remittances are not a supplementary form of household income, they are virtually the only form of income.

Table 6: Sources of Income of Remittance Recipient Households

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

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Male migrants from Lesotho are slightly more likely to remit than female migrants, although this difference is mainly the result of a highly gendered labour market. Given that male migrant labour is predominantly in the mining sector, where remittances are compulsory, and that female migrant labour is in more precarious and lower-paid sectors of the labour market, such as domestic service, it is surprising that this observed gender discrepancy in tendency to remit is not even higher. Studies in other countries have found that women make more reliable remitters than men, but in the Lesotho case both male and female migrants send money home to their families.

SAMP's household survey showed that the amounts of money remitted by female migrants overall are still significantly lower than those of male migrants (Table 7). Women's employment and livelihood strategies – for example as informal sector traders or domestic workers compared to waged mine labour – mean lower earnings overall and less regular or reliable remuneration than their male counterparts. In addition, female migrants who are daughters rather than spouses or heads of household remit a lower proportion of their earnings compared to male or female migrants who are heads of their household and thus more likely to be primary breadwinners with greater obligations to direct family dependants (see section 2.4.2 Profiles of remitters and recipients).

Table 7: Average Annual Remittances Received from Male and Female Migrants

	Male Migrants	Female Migrants
Mean	M11,162.46	M4,825.32
Median	M9,600.00	M3,600.00

Source: SAMP Household Survey

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

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

Data from surveys and interviews, however, show that remittances are frequent and regular: 78% of households receive cash remittances at least once a month. The average annual cash remittance receipt reported by households was M7,800.

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

Both senders and recipients are in agreement that remittances are essential to the livelihood of household members and that without them they would be “lost.” There are plenty of “lost” households in every village that affirm this reality. The perceived importance of remittances proved to be extremely high in most areas. The perceived contribution of remittances to total household income shows that most households (89%) consider remittance income to be important or very important. What stands out, however, is that remittances are seen as key to having enough food in the household (with nearly 90% saying that it is important or very important). Remittances, in other words, are seen as crucial to the very survival of the household and its members and are key to the alleviation of poverty – especially, as discussed in more detail below, for female-centred households.

Remittance Channels

One of the changes brought about by the decline in mine labour and rise of less formalized migrant employment patterns, including the increase in women migrating to work in South Africa, has been increasing informal remittances transfer channels. The compulsory deferred pay (CDP) system linking Lesotho with the South African mines is the primary channel for remittance flows (see Section 2.4.4 Mine Remittances for more information on this system). Outside the CDP system, the most popular ways of remitting are informal in nature. This is true for Lesotho and the region as a whole (Table 8). Migrants bring the money themselves (54%) or send it via a trusted friend or co-worker (33%). Very few use formal money transfer systems; for example, only 5.1% use the Post Office and only 1.8% use banks. Easily the most popular way of sending goods home is to bring them personally (82%). A smaller number entrust them to friends or co-workers (12%). But only 4% use official rail transport channels and less than 1% entrust their goods to the taxis that ply the routes between Lesotho and the South African towns where they work.

Table 8 : Major Remittance Channels (outside CDP) by % of remittance-receiving households)

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

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Without access to the formal banking mechanisms of the mines (e.g. TEBA Bank), the majority of migrant women use informal means to remit. They generally bring money and goods home themselves on their frequent return visits to Lesotho. This means that their contributions are not officially monitored or recorded, and official accounts of remittance sending are thus likely to be underestimated.

Considerable attention is given in the remittance literature to the formal and informal methods and costs related to sending remittances. The main policy recommendation of the remittance literature is that governments and private sector institutions at both ends should lower the transaction costs of remitting, as well as make it easier for migrants to access and use formal channels through reform of banking and other financial regulations. In the case of Lesotho, hand-to-hand transfer of cash and goods is easily the most important channel. Reasons for returning home of course go well beyond the need to transfer remittances, including spending time with children and other family members as well as maintaining wider social networks. Thus, it is impossible to put a financial cost on such modes of hand-to-hand remittance, which have the added advantage of being direct, reasonably secure and not requiring payment of any commission, fees or tax.

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

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

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

Thus, while improvements in formal remittance transfers, such as reduction in costs, might increase their use, the informal channels used by migrants outside of the CDP scheme appear to function efficiently and to the general satisfaction of senders and recipients, whether men or women. This is largely the outcome of the particular geography of this migration flow, which is between adjacent countries where proximity enables frequent home visits by migrants. More formal channels would allow closer monitoring of remittance flows, but this might well be resisted by remittance senders, who may not wish their income to be declared or taxed. In policy terms it would be more desirable to make changes to labour regulations and banking regulations so as to facilitate the legal employment of migrants from Lesotho, ensure that migrant workers' rights are protected, and allow citizens of Lesotho to open bank accounts in South Africa, regardless of their work permit status. Each of these steps would bring considerable benefit to migrant women.

2.4.2 Profiles of Remitters and Recipients

The four main categories of migrant-sending households outlined in section 2.3.2 constitute different household types, each with its own distinctive geographical and social configurations and related transnational flows of people and remittances. As demonstrated by the survey data, male migrants are mainly older married men while female migrants are for the most part without

husbands, either because they have not yet or never married, or because their husbands have left them or are deceased. Amongst male migrants, almost all of the men who were not themselves the head of household were the sons, either married or unmarried, of the household head. Female migrants fell into four almost equal-sized groups: widows; divorced, separated or abandoned women; married women; and unmarried women. Over 40% of households sending female migrants were female-centred, with no husband or male partner, while only 4% of households with male migrant members were male-centred, without a wife or female partner (Table 9).

Table 9: Sources of Income of Remittance Recipient Households

Household Type	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Female Centred	7.0	42.8
Male Centred	3.8	0.7
Nuclear	43.3	18.6
Extended	45.9	37.9
Other	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100
N	841	140

Source: SAMP Household Survey

The fact that the unmarried, married, widowed and divorced/separated/abandoned categories each contained roughly equivalent proportions of female migrants from Lesotho is of fundamental importance in understanding the nature and impact of female migrants' remittances, including who receives their remittances and how those remittances are spent. Whatever the circumstances leading to the loss of a male partner, be it through death or divorce, these women are often the primary or sole breadwinner in what have become female-headed households. These women's primary motive for migrating is to secure a basic livelihood for their families, especially their children. The same motives apply in the case of unmarried women, especially those who are single mothers. Children of female migrants may be left in the care of other relatives, such as a brother, sister or grandmother, and remittances are often sent to those relatives or, if the children are old enough, to a young adult son or daughter.

Single mothers, widows and divorced women also constituted the majority of the female interviewees in the qualitative component of the study, as captured in extracts like the following:

I was widowed and I heard jobs are available in South Africa and so I decided to go and look there to raise my children.¹⁵

[I] used to work in a textile factory in Lesotho, and became ill with a cough until I decided to go to South Africa and work there. . . I just told my siblings, as both my parents have died, that I was going to South Africa. . . I am the main provider for the household, [as] I am a single parent.¹⁶

15. Interview No. 15, 28 December 2008.

16. Interview No. 11, 23 December 2008.

Another important finding is the high proportion of female migrants giving their position in the family as 'daughter.' Over 50% of female migrants are younger members of households, either daughters, daughters-in-law or nieces, compared to only 22% who are sons, sons-in-law or nephews among the male migrant sample. It seems that daughters are now engaging in migration practices formerly associated with young men, migrating in order to support their parents and other family members, including children and siblings. As one male remittance recipient, whose son and daughter both migrated, noted:

[My] daughter went to work in South Africa because there were no jobs in Lesotho and we had difficulties. Their migrating...benefits the household as they assist me in seeing that I eat and have clothes to wear, especially my daughter as compared to my son. He does assist but not as much as the girl.¹⁷

While female migration has increased, the dominant migrant "type" is still the male household head, and over 80% of migrants are male. As many as three-quarters of those male migrants are household heads, compared to just 25% of female migrants. Female migrant heads of households come almost entirely from female-centred households, without a male partner present. Migrant male heads of households, by contrast, are usually the patriarch of a conventional nuclear or extended family. Such men migrate as the primary family breadwinner, and commonly remit earnings to a female partner. Married women who migrate are often the spouses of men who used to migrate, many of whom have lost their jobs through mine labour force reductions. Just as married male heads of households remit to their female partners, married female migrants, although not themselves recognized as household heads, usually remit their earnings to their male partners at home, and have often embarked on migrant labour precisely in order to take over the role of primary breadwinner.

2.4.3 Principal Uses of Remittances

How do migrant-sending households in Lesotho actually spend their remittance income? First, it is useful to look at household budgets. The relative importance of different types of expenditure may be seen by looking at the percentage of households incurring an expense in the month prior to the survey (Table 10). Food and groceries are by far the most important expenditure (by 93% of households), followed by fuel (76%), clothes (73%), transportation (52%) and medical expenses (24%). Only 9% saved any funds, 7% invested in farming and 5% spent on education. Over the course of a year, the proportion of households spending money on school fees would probably be much higher as all secondary school children in Lesotho have to pay fees at the beginning of the school year. No evidence was found of differential expenditure on the education of boys or girls, and in fact national enrolment figures suggest that girls are more likely to be enrolled.

While only a small proportion of households had funds to spend on building, special events and farming, the average amounts spent were quite significant (M3,073, M2,176 and M642 respectively). Almost half (47%) of households had no savings. Although less than 10% of households had saved any money in the previous month, those that did saved an average of M740.

17. Interview No. 45, 8 January 2009.

Table 10: Monthly Household Expenses by Category in Remittance-Receiving Households

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

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Table 11: Use of Remittances in Migrant-Sending Households

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

Source: SAMP Household Survey

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

Further dramatic proof of the importance of remittances to household food security and other basic needs is provided by a tabulation of the types of goods that migrants had sent home in the previous year (Table 12). There is little evidence of luxury goods being remitted. Instead, clothing (29% of households) and food (7.6%) are clearly the items most frequently brought or sent. Migrant-sending households in Lesotho thus spend the greater proportion of total income on basic necessities. In other words, consumption spending (for necessities not luxuries) constitutes the predominant usage of household income.

Table 12: Proportion of Migrant-Sending Households Receiving Remitted Goods

Type of Goods:	%
Clothing	28.6
Food	7.6
Consumption Goods	2.5
Fuel	0.7
Equipment	0.5
Seed	0.2
Poultry	0.2
Goods for Funeral	0.2
Goods for Feast	0.2
Roofing	0.1

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Analysed from a gender perspective, what is most striking from both survey and interview findings is the enormous significance of migrant remittances to household subsistence and basic material needs, regardless of migrant gender.

Household expenditure in particular categories (Tables 13 and 14) also shows the same broad patterns in male and female migrant-sending households, once again demonstrating the importance of both male and female migrants' remittances to their recipient households.

Table 13: Proportion of Migrant-Sending Households Incurring Particular Expense

Expense Incurred in Previous Month:	Male Migrant-Sending	Female Migrant-Sending
Food/Groceries	93.3	90.0
Housing	0.7	1.4
Utilities	17.7	12.1
Clothes	73.7	68.6
Alcohol	13.0	5.7
Medical costs	26.5	12.9
Transport	54.8	39.3
Tobacco	10.9	8.6
Education	5.7	3.6
Entertainment	1.7	0.7
Savings	10.1	2.1
Fuel	77.9	69.3
Farming	7.7	4.3
Building	3.9	0.7
Special events	7.7	5.7
Gifts	3.9	2.1
Other	0.8	1.4
N	841	140

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Table 14: Migrant-Sending Household Expenditures ¹⁸

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

Source: SAMP Household Survey

18. Table 14 shows the reported average amount of the previous month's expenditure in various categories, using median rather than mean values to provide a more accurate reflection of average expenditure levels, as this reduces the influence of one or two respondent households with high expenditure. Note too that the values are only for those households reporting the particular expenditure (i.e. excluding the 'zero-expenditure' households in each category), and also represent expenditure in a particular single month rather than averaged over a year.

Relative to those with female migrant members, households sending male migrants more frequently reported expenditure in a number of categories, including essentials such as medical costs as well as luxuries such as alcohol. Households with male migrants were also more likely to be able to put aside some of their remittance earnings as savings. Again, this reflects the relatively higher earnings of male migrants and thus their ability to afford expenditure on items beyond basic household necessities.

More significant gender differences emerge in the reported monetary expenditure in various categories (Table 14). Expenditure was found to be higher in almost every category for male compared to female migrant-sending households, and this was more consistently the case for Lesotho than for any of the other countries in the survey. Male migrants' higher remittances translate into more money to spend, so that even when such expenditure is on basic goods such as food and clothing, the quantity and quality of purchases is greater for households with male migrant members. Higher expenditure of male migrants' remittances on farming is an interesting finding, as it demonstrates the pattern of male migrants remitting money to their female spouses or other adult household members who are able to engage in such activities in Lesotho. For migrants from single-adult, female-centred households, investment of remittances in local economic activity at home is simply not feasible.

These gender differences also suggest that in Lesotho in particular, households with female migrant members (many of which, it should be recalled, were also female-headed) are indeed poorer and forced to 'go without' more often than households where the migrant members are men. Migration is clearly a strategy adopted by women in the face of poverty and in the absence of alternative livelihood strategies at home, especially when widowhood or divorce have led to the loss of a male migrant wage-earner.

Remittance of goods is also important. The 'typical' male or female migrant from Lesotho brings home clothing, food and consumer goods. Consumer goods and 'luxury' items (e.g. electronic goods) are more readily available and also cheaper in South Africa, so it is not surprising to find them included here, but food and clothing still ranked well above consumer goods in stated importance. Again, there is a striking similarity between migrants of different gender.

In addition to making regular remittances, migrants send money home in times of need, or to meet unexpected costs. Funeral costs are by far the most common, along with funds for weddings and other feasts. Some gender differences are evident (Table 15), with a higher proportion of male migrants reported as sending money in times of need. This may reflect their role as heads of household, with primary responsibility for meeting such emergency needs. It is also likely to be an indicator of their higher earnings and thus greater ability to send money home in response to family emergencies.

Table 15: Proportion of Households Receiving Emergency Remittances

Category	Male Migrant-Sending (%)	Female Migrant-Sending (%)
Lesotho	44.0	37.1
Mozambique	59.3	35.3
Swaziland	51.9	61.9
Zimbabwe	54.8	54.2

Source: SAMP Household Survey

Overall, in gender terms, the similarities in the categories of expenditure of remittances from male and female migrants are strong and revealing, with the clear dominance of basic household necessities. Two important conclusions follow. First, for both male and female migrants, migration is commonly undertaken in the role of primary breadwinner, rather than as a supplement to other sources of household income, even when the female migrants on whom their households depend are not regarded as the head of the household. Second, remittances are more important as means of securing basic household livelihoods, alleviating poverty, and meeting emergency costs than as drivers of broader economic development through investment in productive economic activities. Differences in remittance usage between male and female migrant-sending households are more evident in terms of the levels, rather than the categories, of expenditure. Migrant-sending households are considerably better off than households without migrants. Yet amongst migrant-sending households, those with male migrant members are better off than those with female migrant members. Not only do male migrants earn more than female migrants, but female migrants are usually from households without another adult provider, placing them at considerable economic disadvantage – but making their remittances even more essential to their families' survival.

2.4.4 Mine Remittances

Given that the dominant form of migration, despite reductions in the migrant mine workforce, remains male labour migration to the South African mines, it is important to consider mineworkers' remittances in particular. Furthermore, the only completely accurate and reliable data on remittance flows is for compulsory deferred pay (CDP) from the South African mining industry to Lesotho. These remittances are "formal" in that they are channeled through the formal banking system and are captured in official statistics. This allows more detailed analysis than for the informal, voluntary remittances sent by female migrants, as well as by men in sectors other than mining.

In 1974, the Lesotho government passed the Deferred Pay Act (Act No. 18 of 1974) which established the legal terms and conditions of a compulsory remittance system for mineworkers (Sparreboom and Sparreboom-Burger 1995). A portion of the miner's wage (initially between 60-90%) was compulsorily deferred and paid into a special account in the Lesotho National Development Bank. Miners received some interest on their deposits, the balance accruing to the government. The funds could only be drawn in Lesotho by the miner himself at the end of a contract. The CDP system ensured that the greater part of a migrant's earnings returned as remittances to Lesotho. The Deferred Pay Act has been amended several times. Currently, miners are forced to defer 30% of their gross earnings for 10 months of every 12 month contract. Deferred wages can be ac-

cessed only by the miner or their bona fide spouse. The recent failure of the Lesotho National Development Bank and widespread dissatisfaction amongst miners with the way the system operated prompted TEBA Bank to reach an agreement with the government about taking over the system.¹⁹ TEBA Bank now operates an automated deferred pay system although there is still dissatisfaction amongst miners and their spouses about the way the system runs.

There is a common but misleading assumption that the decline in employment on the South African mines for Basotho migrants must have led to a serious decline in remittance flows to Lesotho (Hassan 2002; Makoa 2006; UNDP-Lesotho 2007). In fact, remittances actually increased over the time period as the total wages paid out to Basotho miners grew from M1,473 million in 1992 to M2,442 million in 2004. The Central Bank of Lesotho estimates that voluntary remittances have also grown (from M1,103 million in 1992 to M1,795 million in 2004). This includes significantly increased remittances from women, who have been migrating in larger numbers, as well as men who have found alternative employment to mining. In terms of national income, the Lesotho economy as a whole has not suffered from retrenchments. Nor have those households who have members working on the mines. However, as evident in the discussion above regarding male and female migrants' differential remittances, the distribution of remittance monies has become increasingly unequal, with an "elite" but shrinking group of male mineworkers and growing numbers of less well remunerated migrants, both women and men working in less secure or formal employment sectors. The primary impact of retrenchments is that a growing overall mine remittance package is shared by a shrinking number of households. Households who do still have a mine worker migrant are clearly better off than those who do not, and constitute something of a "rural aristocracy".

The household survey for this report identified the following characteristics of miners' remitting behaviour:

- Basotho miners send home an average of 60% of their earned income as cash remittances (25% as CDP and 35% in voluntary remittances).
- Remittances in cash and kind constitute an average of 80% of the income of mine migrant-sending households. The vast majority (96%) of miners send money home voluntarily at least once a month, in addition to CDP.
- Cash remittances are positively correlated with job and skills level and with marital status. Single mineworkers make smaller remittances than married miners.
- The amount of remittances is correlated with the number of dependants. The larger the number of dependants, the larger the remittance package. Households with children also tend to receive more in remittances than those without.

19. Interview with Regional Manager: TEBA

3 | IMPACT OF REMITTANCES ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Gender Equality: Use and Control of Remittances

Survey and interview findings showed that regardless of the gender of the remittance sender, it was generally the remittance recipient, male or female, who decided how the remittance money would be spent. For male remitters, in most cases this was the female spouse. For female remitters, it was either a parent, spouse, child or other relative. At times when both sender and recipient are at home, decisions are usually taken jointly. Control of remittance expenditure by the remittance recipient is unsurprising given the “basic needs” nature of remittance usage, with the vast bulk of the money received being used to meet day-to-day expenses. Although there are disagreements, very few respondents indicated that there is any serious conflict about the use of remittances, again probably because such a small proportion is ever truly discretionary and the bulk of the money is used to meet immediate needs. Given the absence of the migrant household member, such everyday purchases are necessarily the responsibility of the remittance recipient. Once school fees are paid, health costs met, and clothing and groceries bought, there is never a lot of money left over. Being de facto heads of household in the absence of their husbands does give women greater power in the domestic sphere than they would wield if their husbands were not migrants and lived at home; but this power and the economic advantages of remittances come with an added burden of responsibility and labour.

Conflict arises when a recipient, especially a spouse, feels that the wage earner is wasting remittance money on non-essentials and/or is being less than honest. Such criticisms were more commonly applied to male rather than female remitters. One woman was extremely critical of her spouse for just these reasons, suggesting, at the very least, that there are gendered normative expectations of remitters:

My husband is no use to our family at all and if things could be reversed it would be better if I went to work instead of him and maybe there would be some change in our lives. My husband does not send money and even when he brings it with him, he takes it to buy beer and entertain himself. He fights for it if I refuse to give him the money. When he comes home he does not even want to take a spade to dig the garden. He says he has come home to rest as he works hard in the mines. Him working in South Africa brings only negative impacts and he is no use at all to the family.²⁰

Her spouse has been working for 20 years in the mines as a migrant. She has no idea how much he earns (but it is probably in excess of R30,000 a year). She claims she only gets R3,000, all of which she spends on food and clothing, including for her niece and her husband's mother. The family, she said, does not have enough to eat many times during the course of the year. She is happy about compulsory deferred pay because she would otherwise "never see a cent of it." However, only her husband is able to withdraw the funds in Lesotho, which he often does "without my knowledge and eats alone."

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

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

Such negative perceptions of male remitters are far from universal, however, as many of the interviews with female remittance recipients from male remittance senders elicited positive comments about the decision-making process and generally easy resolution of any differences about how remittance money should be spent. Those few interviews with women receiving remittances from men other than their spouse, such as a father or brother, all suggested that the recipients had considerable discretion over remittance expenditure. Nor did the survey findings suggest any significant gender-based difference in the allocation of remittances to particular categories of expenditure, with money from both male and female remitters going largely to basic needs, with little wastage on luxury goods or unnecessary consumption.

Men who remitted money to their female spouses gave similar accounts about who controlled remittance expenditure. Typical responses were statements like: "My wife is the one who decides how the money will be spent" or "I never tell my wife what to do with the money, she uses it as she sees fit". Another respondent noted that "There are no disputes about the money I bring but it is so little that it is only [spent] on food and soap and small items". Along with wives, elderly or widowed parents, uncles or aunts and siblings were common beneficiaries of male migrants' remittances. Again, it was generally the remittance recipient who was reported as being responsible for deciding about remittance expenditure and there was little reported disagreement over how the money should be spent – almost always going towards basic household needs.

Female remitters sent money (and goods) to an equally wide range of different household members, although given that many female migrants were without a male partner, their remittances

20. Interview No 33, 1 January 2009.

21. Focus group 2: Female Migrants.

went less frequently to a spouse and more frequently to other relatives – parents, children, siblings, uncles or aunts. Often, it was those relatives who were caring for the migrant’s own children while she was away working in South Africa, representing a significant burden of care being borne by extended family members in order to enable and support women’s labour migration. As with male migrants, it was almost always the remittance recipient who exercised control over the allocation of remittance expenditure, especially when remittances were sent to a mother or father. Typical comments from female remitters were the following: “My mother makes all the decisions on how the money is to be used... She tells me when she needs to have money for something and then I send it to her” or “I do not make decisions as to use of the money sent... I send the money to my husband because he is the one taking care of the children”. Female remitters who did report complete control of their own remittances were those from households where they were either the widowed or divorced mothers of children old enough to be left in Lesotho on their own (i.e. late teens) and they were therefore the only adult member of the household.

Some male remittance recipients were clearly ambivalent about female household members’ migration, acknowledging the importance of their remittances while expressing distaste for the fact that women had been “forced” to migrate. Many male remittance recipients were the fathers of divorced or widowed female migrants, or were men who had lost their own jobs through retrenchment or ill health and felt a sense of failure in their wives becoming the primary breadwinner. A number of the male remittance recipients interviewed were ill. As one noted, “My spouse and daughter migrated because I came back ill from the mines, and we ran short of many things in the household. It was even difficult to see a doctor”. Caution must therefore be exercised in assuming that migration is inherently empowering for women. Their positions as head of household or principal wage-earner are often not by choice but by necessity or emergency, and their migration is itself a strategy to avoid their own and their children’s destitution. It also comes with associated stigma and disapproval from family and community members, Women’s empowerment through migration and related earning is thus an ambiguous gain.

The gender dynamics and power relations within individual households reflect this variety and complexity of migrant household forms. There is no simple male/female distinction to be drawn on the basis of the gender of either the sender or the recipient. Rather, family size and composition, including generational, marital and age profiles, together with the particular household position of the person who migrates along with the nature of their employment and remuneration, are all important determinants of remittance behaviour and impacts.

3.2 Remittances and Entrepreneurship

3.2.1 Remittances and Agriculture

Lesotho is still a predominantly rural society although urbanization is proceeding very rapidly. One reason, among many, is declining agricultural production and productivity. Livestock ownership, including cattle, is also declining (Lethola 2005). Food insecurity is a constant for many households. Every year, large quantities of the primary staple, maize, are imported from South Africa (Forum for Food Security 2004: 11; Mphale et al 2003). Given the serious lack of employ-

ment, the World Food Programme declared an emergency in 2007-8, with about 400,000 people facing severe food insecurity.

In addition to drought and over-cultivation, migration and retrenchments have also contributed to the decline in agricultural production. Boehm (2003) argues that the disintegration of the mine migrant labour system has reinforced the marginal position of farming in Lesotho. Households without access to mine remittances, for example when a mineworker has lost his job or died, no longer have the resources to invest in agriculture. In the formerly "typical" migrant mineworker's family, the miner's wife and other family members would have provided most of the agricultural labour. Remittances would be used to purchase livestock (particularly cattle) and inputs of seed and fertilizer, or to pay for additional, hired labour at particular times in the agricultural season, such as plowing, planting and harvesting. Because of the associated loss of income, increased male unemployment on the mines has not translated into a straightforward return to agro-pastoral sources of livelihood. Where loss of male employment has been through illness or injury, the returning former migrant is also often physically unable to work the land or take care of livestock.

In addition to work on the fields cultivating crops like maize and sorghum, women's labour is especially significant in cultivating homestead gardens and fruit orchards, tending small livestock such as poultry, and in food processing such as grinding, storing and cooking. Women thus play a central role in maintaining household food supply and food security. When women turn to migration as a survival strategy, or when they have to spend more time caring for sick family members, their ability to continue to perform the multiple production of food, such as processing and preparation is either dramatically reduced or altogether terminated. A factor of increasing importance is the loss of able-bodied agricultural labour, both male and female, through HIV/AIDS. When a female spouse dies, a male migrant loses his primary source of agricultural and household reproductive labour and the household its primary source of food provisioning. When a male migrant dies, the household loses its main source of income with which to support agricultural activity. Mine retrenchments, HIV/AIDS, women's migration, agricultural decline, and rising food insecurity are thus all causally interconnected.

Gender-inequitable land tenure and inheritance customs further complicate the picture. The awkward combination of legal systems, in which customary law exists alongside Roman-Dutch law, makes women legally entitled to own land in their own right, yet restricts their access to land allocated under the traditional tenure system, in which chiefs grant usufruct rights to married males. While widows can "inherit" land under customary law, this can happen only in families where there is no son to inherit property, and often comes with obligations to fulfill other customary expectations, such as levirate marriage to a brother-in-law or other male relative. Women who lose their husbands may thus also lose their access to land, and many therefore return to their own parental home or migrate either within Lesotho or to South Africa.

The significance of remittances to agriculture was evident in the survey results. Almost three-quarters of households do not spend any of their remittances on agriculture-related activity, but around a quarter of households bought seed and one in five bought fertilizer. What this suggests is that even when remittances are invested in agriculture, this is largely to try to increase food production for household consumption.

The experience of one ex-migrant farmer, a man of 70, clearly illustrates the constraints that households face.²² Many households have no land, which means they are unable to farm at all. This particular man does have fields. His daughter and son are both migrants but he finds the former a far more reliable remitter – perhaps, he says, because he is looking after her 13-year old son. However, she only remits R800 a year. He uses the money to hire casual workers from the village to help him plow and plant. He grows maize and wheat, sells his surplus produce and earns about R1,600 a year. However, most of this is spent on purchasing food and groceries so that he and his grand-daughter and another young man who lives with him can have a more varied diet. His main challenges as a farmer are (a) “the weather conditions, the worst enemy being the droughts and hail, the other one is the attack of the plants by pests” and (b) lack of government support. He would like help with a threshing machine, a place to store grain and a place to buy seeds and insecticides. He has considered cash-cropping of vegetables, “but the problem is theft.” Another respondent said he receives the R3,000 remitted by his working spouse in a similar manner, although, he only grows sorghum which he either sells “as is” or turns into malt which he sells to beer-brewers in the area. His income from the sale of produce was R3,500 the previous year.

What is interesting about these two cases is that they are both older men who view themselves as farmers and say they have been farming since their youth. Few of today’s young men and women would describe themselves that way, nor do they see a future for themselves in farming, unlike the young male migrants of earlier generations for whom part of the motive to migrate was precisely to later establish themselves in agriculture. Many male heads of household today are remaining in migrant labour as a long-term career, rather than returning to Lesotho to farm. Some female interviewees practice farming using remittance income from a migrant spouse, a long-established, even normative pattern that is now likely to continue for an even longer span of such a couple’s lives. Increasing female migration can serve to perpetuate this pattern of remittance income supporting agricultural activity, but with a reversal of gender roles as the female spouse (or daughter) engages in migration for employment with the male spouse (or father) stays home to cultivate the land. In other cases, such as widowed or abandoned women, female migration is a response to abandonment of agricultural livelihoods through loss of the land, labour or income required to sustain farming activity. Thus although a minority of remittance-receiving households reported expenditure of that income on farming, remittance income remains vital for households who do combine migrant labour with agriculture as a dual livelihood strategy, whether in the traditional male-migrant or emerging female-migrant form. The lower wages and less secure employment status of female migrants, especially relative to male mine migrants, thus diminish an important prop of Lesotho’s semi-subsistence agricultural sector.

The re-gendering of migration is an important finding, as it suggests the beginnings of a shift in gender relations in response to changed economic circumstances. In 1995, in a study of the impact of mine retrenchments in Lesotho, Caroline Sweetman noted that gender ideologies were resistant to people’s changed circumstances, and that the “patriarchal bargain”, in which wives receive money from their husbands rather than earning their own income, persisted after male mineworkers’ retrenchment, despite the economic rationale having disappeared. Today, not only

22. Interview No 45, 8 January 2009.

are more women migrating, but this means that remittance income is less likely to go toward agriculture than household necessities. Ferguson (1992) observed that male migrants preferred their remittance earnings to be spent on agriculture, such as investment in cattle, rather than meeting daily household needs. This often led to conflicts between migrant husbands and their wives in Lesotho about how remittance money should be spent. Such conflicts have become a luxury, as the continued reduction in mine employment has led to erosion of the patriarchal bargain, with women forced by economic circumstances to migrate, and their lower earnings, mainly as domestic workers, being spent on everyday household necessities. Mine retrenchments and agricultural decline thus go hand on hand, and together are leading to fundamental reworking of gender relations and ideologies, including changes to normative expectations of the gendering of migration flows.

3.2.2 Potential for Use of Remittances in Income Generation

The proportion of migrant-sending households investing remittances in income-generating activities in Lesotho, such as farming for sale or in formal business and informal business, is extremely low. There is also no statistically significant difference between male and female migrant-sending households. This is an important point as households with male migrants receive more in remittances than households with female migrants. Yet, the overwhelming majority of households in both categories (over 90%) do not receive income from the sale of farm produce or from formal or informal business. Even the very small minority who do make extra income from these sources do not make large sums (Table 16).

Table 16: Sources of Household Income in Male and Female Migrant Sending Households

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

Source: SAMP Household Survey

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

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

Tefo Khetang is a young male skilled manual worker in the construction industry in Johannesburg where he has worked for a building contractor for two years.²³ He is an irregular migrant and earns R22,000 a year. He remits around R5,000 a year in cash and R7,000 worth of goods to his large household:

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

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

Several female entrepreneurs had realized Khetang’s ‘dream’ of opening small shops or other enterprises, although not without considerable obstacles. Significantly, all are married to current or ex-miners and have successfully used mine remittances to start and sustain their small business ventures, which include spaza shops, liquor stores and taxi businesses. Perhaps the most successful respondent is Katileho Tsebo.²⁴ She is in her mid-40s and lives with her teenage daughter and 24 year old son. Her spouse has been working on the mines for 18 years and currently remits around R36,000 p.a. She started a grocery shop with remittances but did not generate much profit. In 2008, Tsebo switched to selling alcohol which she buys from a liquor store in another village. She hires someone to run the store and made a profit of R92,400 in 2008. Of this she saves R24,000 p.a. at a bank as a retirement fund for her and her husband. Her plans for further expansion are hampered only by her inability to get a substantial loan. Another successful entrepreneur is 25 year old Masa Mponeng.²⁵ She supports her elderly mother and four children. When her husband was retrenched from the mines, she started a small spaza shop brewing and selling traditional beer and buying and selling small items such as matches and candles. Her husband got another job in South Africa and

23. Interview No 41, 24 December 2008.

24. Interview No. 50, 30 December 2008.

25. Interview No. 51, 8 January 2009.

continues to remit about R10,000 p.a. She travels to the capital, Maseru, to buy goods for her shop where she also sells vegetables she has grown at home. She makes about R3,000 a year from the shop and another R1,500 from beer sales. Her transport costs to and from Maseru are exorbitant (R2,500 a year). In the villages, there is also increasing competition from Chinese store-owners.

Men also engage in small business activity of various forms. Focus group participants spoke of current and ex-mineworkers who have successfully entered the taxi business. One man in the village had started by running a shop and then bought a minibus taxi with the proceeds. Another man got together with his friends from another village and started a taxi business. He first purchased a second hand taxi and then worked "very hard" until he was able to buy another. He now owns five and hires drivers and conductors. Public transport is poor in Lesotho and many people travel by minibus taxi within the country and when they go to South Africa. The routes are highly competitive and it is (sometimes literally) a cut-throat business. The capital outlay is considerable, however, and well beyond the means of most migrant workers, especially women. Migrants who do start taxi businesses employ other people to operate their taxis, and thus generate local employment. Migrants' remittances also go to employ agricultural labour or to hire shop assistants and are thus an important, if small, source of local employment.

For women, individual entrepreneurial opportunities in rural villages are not particularly abundant, as potential markets are limited in size and buying power. Not everyone can run or afford to run a spaza or a shebeen, and many of these outlets throughout the country were started (and are sometimes sustained) by remittances. However, the start-up and running costs (even with low overheads) are such that these are run primarily by the spouses of migrant mineworkers, who are amongst the best paid migrants. A mineworker's remittances provide start-up and operating capital for a small business, and profits from the business are sometimes also channeled into agriculture. Male mineworkers' families thus represent a rural elite, and serve to widen inequality in rural areas, with their households having a surplus to save and invest. Such households also comprise at least two adult members, whether spouses, siblings of parents and children, who have the skills and capacity to engage in such businesses. Preferably, in narrow economic terms, the migrant should also be a man. Where the migrant is a woman, lower earnings restrict the potential for savings or investment, thus reducing the likelihood of supporting additional income-earning activity. Feminization of migration thus reduces the potential of remittances to generate significant income-generating activities, whether in agriculture, food processing, retail or transportation. In households without additional adult members, or where such members are either ill or too busy caring for other family members to have time for entrepreneurial activity, the capacity to engage in any form of income generation is significantly diminished. Thus although often characterized as making women dependent on their male partners' earnings in the so-called "patriarchal bargain", remittances actually empower and enable the wives of migrant mineworkers to engage in economic activity outside the domestic sphere without themselves having to migrate. Women without access to mineworkers' or other remittances do not have the means to start their own businesses and have no resort but to engage in migrant labour themselves, however poorly remunerated.

Another form of income-earning activity with potential for expansion is the cell phone business. The household surveys show that despite their poverty, 27% of migrant-sending households owned cell phones purchased with remittances. Although primarily communication devices (including with absent migrant members of the household), a recent small-scale pilot project by the

Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Project (RHVP) in Lesotho suggests that the potential may be there for broader income generation and development impacts. RHVP distributed ten phones pre-loaded with US\$50 of airtime (RHVP 2009). The idea was to “see how vulnerable people benefit from cell phones, to disprove arguments against the use of cell phones for cash transfers, and to prove that illiterate people are able to embrace technology.” Amongst the uses to which the phones were put was to generate income by selling airtime so that the enterprise would become self-sustaining.²⁶ They then used the money to purchase more phones. It is not clear whether the participants were from migrant-sending households but the fact that over a quarter of the households surveyed already own phones suggest that there is potential for the technology to have a positive impact as an income-generating tool and, in time, to facilitate remittance transfer.

Pooling, lending and borrowing money are an important aspect of remittance use and the local circulation of capital. In the villages in Lesotho, burial societies and grocery associations effectively “pool” a portion of remittance receipts, though primarily not for entrepreneurial reasons but to meet additional expenses such as funeral costs. One focus group respondent describes how these operate:

There are associations within the community. There are burial societies and an egg producer association known as Egg Circle, where members are given the privilege of having their eggs sold before everyone else. Burial societies differ but members commonly pay a monthly subscription of an agreed amount and when they have a death in the family the society gives them their agreed dues, whether money, a coffin or a cow. Problems occur when people do not pay their subscription for a long time in which case they would receive nothing if they had a death, unless they pay what they owe. The other problem is that more people are dying from AIDS these days and that puts strain on the coffers of the societies as sometimes the societies would have as many as three deaths in a week or month whereas before they would sometimes spend as long as six months without a death.²⁷

Respondents in Ha Mafefoane said there were a lot of “women’s organizations” in the area including food and grocery associations. As well as loaning out money to be paid back with interest at the end of the year, the associations buy food and groceries in bulk which they divide among themselves. There is also a men’s-only association but the women were “leaving them in the dust” as their associations are growing “in leaps and bounds.”²⁸ Such associations provide important safety nets for vulnerable households, especially those headed by women.

The household survey showed that 12% of households borrowed money from informal moneylenders in the previous year. Some of the moneylenders are actually migrants who use their earnings (in South Africa) and remittances (in Lesotho) to loan money to needy persons or households. This is a double-edged sword. While it is a useful way for the benefits of remittances to be spread more broadly, most households borrow only to meet emergencies, rather than to invest in income-generating activities. Informal money lenders are known as bo-machonisa (loan sharks)

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

27. Focus group 3

28. Focus group 3.

29. Focus group 2

in Lesotho and charge their clients “inhumane” interest.²⁹ They commonly take people’s passports as surety for loans and charge interest rates of 30-50%. One mineworker interviewed for this study, for example, joined with a group of friends and they all pay R2,000 into a common pool at the beginning of each year. They then make loans to those who need emergency funds and charge interest of 50%. At the end of the year, they receive their original investment back plus their share of the profits. According to the migrant, this helps him to cover the extra costs of the ‘festive season.’ Such enterprising activity is viewed with distaste by poorer households or those who are forced for lack of alternatives to avail themselves of the moneylending ‘service.’ This form of ‘entrepreneurship’ may be a profitable use of remittances but it clearly undermines social capital and deepens the poverty of other households. It also appears to be an activity predominantly practiced by men, although the evidence for this is largely anecdotal.

As for remittance usage in general, gender combines with age, generation and household size and type to influence the relationship between migrant remittances and income generation. The most successful households are those with a male migrant mineworker and a female spouse running a small business at home in Lesotho, and where the size of the household does not mean that the entire remittance package is spent on basic needs. Female migrants’ remittances can also support local business and farming activity, but mainly in cases where a male spouse (or parent) is at home to provide the skills and labour required. Migrant women’s lower earnings, and thus lesser remittances, limit their potential for income generation or investment, going to an even greater extent on meeting household daily needs. Least likely of all to generate business or agricultural investment in Lesotho are remittances from women who are heads of household, without a male partner or adult family member to operate any business activity at home. Such women may, however, be entrepreneurs in their own right, for example as informal cross-border traders. It is probably fair to characterize male migrants’ remittances as more “developmental”, in the economic sense of promoting growth and investment, than female migrants’ remittances, which are more survivalist in their character and impact. Yet this should not be understood as a simple gender dichotomy, but rather as an illustration of the feminization of poverty and women’s adoption of migration as a rational response to the threat of destitution.

3.2.3 Obstacles to Entrepreneurship

The main obstacle that confronts many migrants and remittance-receiving households is the small size of the remittance package and the fact that most of it is consumed on basic needs. Most households find that by the time the remittance package has been spent on household needs (food, clothing, transport, fuel, school fees and hospital visits), there is very little left over for income-generating investment. There is a clear gender dimension to this issue, as households where the migrant is a woman earn considerably less than those where the migrant is a man. Women’s earnings and remittances as domestic and farmworkers are paltry and the researchers were able to find only one household where women’s remittances were used (in this case by their father) to generate additional income through farming. However, the household was small and the expenditures on basic needs lower so there was a small surplus. In female-headed households with no other members contributing to household income or livelihood, remittances are even more likely to be absorbed entirely in meeting everyday necessities.

Focus group respondents were keen to explain how difficult it is in Lesotho to use remittances to establish a business. As one man noted:

It is not easy to establish some business. Let me explain it this way. I may send money home but it happens that it is not enough for a business because, first, when I left, I might already have had some debts....There is also too much sharing of money before it reaches the destination. It is TEBA this side, debts on the other and clothing for the children there, so it cannot be used for business. There is no migrant who has managed to establish a business here.³⁰

The female migrants concurred: "Money that we send home is not used for farming nor for business."

³¹ The money is "all used for family needs and there is always none left to start a business." The fact that so few households in the national survey invest in business activity certainly bears this out.

The second major obstacle is the lack of capital and loan financing for those who wish to develop a business. Respondents in one of the focus groups blamed the government for not assisting more:

You come with the little you worked for with difficulty but you will be required to pay for so many things that what you had will get finished even before you start. When you establish a business your intention is to live and help other Basotho do so but our government does not help. There is a boulder blocking and we are not aware of it."³²

Others complained about the lack of loan facilities: "Our banks which have our money cannot give us loans."³³ Even micro-finance is difficult to obtain in Lesotho. During the research, the authors interviewed the CEO of an NGO micro-finance company which has been very successful in providing micro-finance in Zambia and has now entered the Lesotho market. The company only makes loans to civil servants and employees where wages can be docked if repayment is not made. This effectively precludes the majority of poor migrant-sending households, especially those headed by women. Given the criteria for lending by most banks and other formal financial institutions, women without regular earnings or assets to use as collateral are unable to borrow money. They may therefore be forced to borrow from informal moneylenders at exorbitant rates of interest.

Female migrants who participated in focus group 2 all agreed that they are able to borrow money from loan sharks in South Africa and not at the formal institutions. They were not sure if they would be able to borrow money from the banks in Lesotho. They were however of the opinion that borrowing money would enable them to accomplish big projects such as building residential houses. The bo-machonisa (loan sharks) on the other hand charge inhumane rates of interest and one could only go to them for very small amounts.

A third obstacle is that the net worth of remittance transfers is reduced in several ways. As noted, there are transaction costs for money transfers. Very few migrants use formal money transfer channels so this is not as big an issue as it is in other countries. However, transaction costs are not absent even for informal channels. Net income, and therefore remitting potential, is also reduced by the fact that some migrants are double-taxed (in South Africa and again in Lesotho). Then there is

30. Focus group 1.

31. Focus group 2.

32. Focus group 1.

33. Focus group 3.

the major problem of corruption. Some miners were particularly critical of their recruiting agency, TEBA, and its Lesotho operations:

We normally send money home through TEBA but the problem is our spouses have to stand in long queues and sometimes end up not receiving the money. There is much corruption at TEBA. Our spouses are forced to pay bribes to get the service. It is painful that you remit M1,000 and M20 is deducted for a bribe. The money now is already short to cover all that was supposed to be covered. TEBA does not care for us mineworkers.³⁴

Also problematic for migrants is widespread corruption at the border. Sechaba Consultants (2002) argue that border posts between South Africa exist not to control the flow of people but to allow the personal enrichment of border officials. This “business of the border” is not condoned by either government but they do seem powerless to prevent it. One of the major forms of corruption that emerged in this study was the practice of permit renewal forced on migrants by the fact that entry to South Africa is limited to 30 days. Migrants who have overstayed in South Africa have to pay bribes to border officials on return or, alternatively, pay for their passports to be taken to the border for stamping, where more money flows into official pockets. While it is mainly male migrants who experience the problems associated with formal remittance channels and official taxation, it is mainly migrant women, many of whom are employed illegally in South Africa, who bear the costs of bribery and corruption by border officials. Women commonly enter South Africa legally but overstay their 30-day visitors’ permits in order to be able to work, as do men in irregular employment and without work permits. Female participants in focus group 2 expounded on this at length:

They explained that the border officials at the South African border gate allocate them only 30 days when they go into South Africa and they are not able to come back home after every 30 days as they work far away from home and the salary, though more than what they would get in Lesotho, would not allow them to come home every month end. They therefore end up overspending their allocated time in South Africa, and when they visit their homes the officials demand that they pay bribes of up to R1,500, money which would otherwise have been used for other things at home.

A fourth obstacle to mobilizing remittances for development is the absence of the type of diaspora associations that are emerging in other international contexts and which are used to support community-scale projects rather than simple household-scale activities. The surveys discussed in this report provide no evidence of what has been called in other contexts “collective remitting”; that is, groups of migrants pooling remittances and remitting to support a community development initiative. But migrants do form mutual help associations in South Africa (such as stokvels and burial societies) and in Lesotho itself there are mutual help associations in virtually every village and community (burial societies, grocery associations and egg circles). These groups are especially common amongst women, both in South Africa comprising female migrants from Lesotho and in Lesotho itself, and as such are a key mechanism for spreading the benefits of remittances beyond the immediate remittance-recipient household.

34. Focus group 1

Further research is needed on the operation, organization and impact of these associations. Their potential as development agents has barely been examined but it seems that they do have considerable potential, if supported in the right way, to add development value to the efforts of individual migrants at the level of the community as a whole, as well as to encourage more gender-aware and gender-equitable development strategies. A systematic research study on the relationship between migration and mutual self-help groups and associations in migrant communities is strongly recommended, including how they operate and are organized, what benefits they provide to participants and communities and, even more important, what their potential is for improving the development benefits of migration through collective organization and action. The gender composition and dynamics of such groups in both source and host country locations is crucial to understanding their operation and impact, and it might reasonably be hypothesised that women's associations have a particularly important role to play in poverty reduction and income generation. Unlike the conventional households, such groups are an important forum in which women can exercise control over resources without male interference or appropriation.

A fifth obstacle to improving the development impacts of migration and remittances is inherent to the regulatory framework governing movement between Lesotho and South Africa. Lesotho places no restrictions on the migration of its citizens to South Africa for work. The government's only concern is that people do not move permanently to South Africa or cut their ties with home (Coplan 2000). This concern is founded on the fear that scarce skills will be lost and remittance flows will decline. South Africa, however, does place constraints on who is allowed to be employed in the country. Only miners and some skilled migrants can get residence and work permits in South Africa. Everyone else has to go on 30 day visitor's permits. The moment they work in South Africa they are doing so irregularly. This makes migrants vulnerable to exploitation by employers, compromises their basic rights and means that they cannot do simple things like open a bank account in South Africa. Given that skills training and formal employment are inequitably distributed in favour of men, this automatically places most female migrants in a position of considerable disadvantage. Women's irregular official status as employees in South Africa means that their employers can flout labour regulations and threaten them with deportation if they complain about their working conditions or treatment. Their irregular status is one of the primary reasons that women working in South Africa are paid not only less than men, but often also than South African women working in the same occupations under the protection of South African labour legislation. For female migrants, this is perhaps the single greatest impediment to optimal mobilization of remittances for either household poverty alleviation or any entrepreneurial activity.

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

A critical reading of the empirical literature leads to the conclusion that it would be naïve to think that despite their often considerable benefits for individuals and communities, migration and remittances alone can remove more structural development constraints. Despite their development *potential*, migrants and remittances can neither be blamed for a lack of development nor be expected to trigger take-off development in generally unattractive investment environments.

There can be few peaceful developing countries where the "investment environment" is more unattractive than in Lesotho. Bluntly put, even if receiving households had remittances to invest in

entrepreneurial and other income-generating activities, what could they possibly invest in? Agriculture and pastoralism in Lesotho will always be marginal, given the nature of the physical environment. The limited domestic market restricts opportunities for retail, manufacturing or service activities. This raises a key issue which requires further exploration. How feasible is it for migrant workers from Lesotho to engage in entrepreneurial activities in South Africa where the opportunities and markets are much greater than in Lesotho? Can loans and micro-credit be obtained more easily in South Africa? These questions suggest, at least, that it is important to stop seeing Lesotho as the only site for entrepreneurship by migrants from Lesotho. South Africa should also be seen as a potential site and market for the migrant entrepreneur and his or her dependants. Certainly this is very true for cross-border traders, the majority of whom are women, who already buy and sell goods in South African towns. It should also be true for other forms of business enterprise. This would, however, require a change in public policy in South Africa. Realistically, the majority of migrants from Lesotho practice migration as a livelihood strategy, a means of poverty alleviation at the scale of the immediate household. Any "investment" of remittances, whether in South Africa or Lesotho, is a pipedream, accessible only to a very small – and mostly male - elite.

Finally, gender discrimination, and gendered patterns of poverty and deprivation, can be seen as further structural constraints impeding the development potential of remittances. Devaluation of women's labour and their restriction, through various means, to sectors such as domestic service and informal sector trade serves to reduce their earning power relative to that of men and thus the sums that they are able to remit. This has negative economic implications for migrant women themselves, for the households who depend on migrant working women, and for the national economy of Lesotho. South African immigration and employment legislation traps women from Lesotho in irregular and insecure employment and limits their options to seek better paid employment or to access opportunities for training and skills acquisition. This keeps them in a low-level employment trap from which it is difficult if not impossible to escape. Within families, power relations based on gender, marital status and generation can act to limit the independence and decision-making power of women, inhibiting their capacity to exercise control over the money that they earn. In particular, customary law still restricts women to the status of minors and combines with widespread social attitudes to limit women's access to credit, resources and property. Women's "power" as the primary decision-maker in the family often comes only through tragic or adverse circumstances such as widowhood or divorce, often the same contingency that pushes women into migrant labour in the first place. Also, while they are showing signs of change in the face of incontrovertible socio-economic realities, social attitudes in Lesotho remain broadly critical of women's migration, seeing some women as migrating purely for selfish purposes or to engage in immoral practices such as prostitution. Maximizing the development potential of remittances therefore demands changes in employment practices, immigration and employment legislation, credit systems, intra-household gender relations, customary law and wider social attitudes.

3.3 Impact of Remittances on Poverty Reduction

Remittances from male and female migrants are clearly essential to household subsistence and well-being in Lesotho. However, this still does not give a sense of the nature and intensity of the poverty and deprivation experienced by migrants' households, or the role of migrants' remittances

in alleviating poverty. To ascertain the links between migration, gender and poverty, survey data was collected on 'lived poverty' in terms of deprivation from particular basic needs. Questions in interviews and focus groups asked about the positive (and negative) impacts of migration, again eliciting information on the significance of migrant remittances to poverty alleviation.

Female migrant-sending households in Lesotho are relatively more deprived than male migrant-sending households. Slightly over half (51%) of female migrant-sending households reported going without food 'several times' or more in the previous year, compared to only 36% of male migrant-sending households. A similar pattern was found for deprivation from cash income: 62% for female migrant-sending households, 46% for male migrant-sending households. Deprivation indices were more gender-equivalent for electricity, water and fuel, but this is more a reflection of a general lack of service provision, especially in rural areas, than of poverty per se. Even for medicine and medical treatment, female migrant-sending households are worse off than male migrant-sending households. This reflects the already-noted differences between the types of household sending male or female migrants, with migrant women more likely to be the sole income-earner in families without any additional source of livelihood. It also demonstrates the effect of female migrants' lower-paid and less secure employment.

Remittance recipients' own assessments of the role and significance of migration add further weight to these conclusions. Survey respondents were asked to assess the overall impact of migration on a five-point scale from very positive to very negative. They were also asked questions about the most positive and most negative aspects of having household members working in another country. Respondents were broadly positive about the overall impact of migration, although interestingly more so for male than for female migration. Close to 70% of the male migrant-sending household respondents in Lesotho regard migration as having positive or very positive impacts. The proportion for female migrant-sending households was lower, at 59%.

A surprisingly large proportion of the female migrant-sending households from Lesotho regard the impact of migration as either negative or very negative, at 38% as compared to 27% of the male migrant-sending households. This is especially interesting given the high levels of poverty and deprivation in Lesotho's female migrant-sending households and the significant contribution made by female migrant remittances to household income and expenditure. However, given that male migration is generally better remunerated, as well as being a long-established practice receiving social approval, even normative expectation, the positive associations with male migration are to be expected. Women's migration brings lower economic benefits and still carries a degree of social stigma, despite being the sole means of livelihood for many of the families sending female migrants. In many cases, as articulated in interviews and focus groups, female migration is a 'last resort', and thus a source of shame and embarrassment to the household, especially if it is related to marital breakdown or to perceived male failure to earn a living for the family. Female migration itself is regarded by many in Lesotho as socially inappropriate or undesirable, even when it is recognized as economically necessary.

Perceptions of the specific positive effects of working in another country reinforce the findings from income, expenditure and deprivation data, i.e. that migration primarily improves household living conditions. Barely any respondents recognized any social benefits of migration, instead mentioning social costs such as loneliness and separation of spouses or parents from children.

4

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT LINKS

4.1 Migrant Associations

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

There are also two types of Basotho migrant association in South Africa which make use of earnings, and both have a long history of modest success. One is the burial society, which takes in money and then distributes it when a member or a relative dies in order to pay for funeral and related travel costs. The second is a *stokvel* (or money company), which obligates each of its members to contribute an amount each month to a common pool. The total sum is given each month in turn to one of the members. Members can also borrow money from the group at a modest rate of interest, so that the group can build up its resources. Money is generally used for purposes of local consumption or is remitted to Lesotho as payment of school fees or purchases of large items to avoid having to buy them on monthly terms. Both men and women belong to such societies, but individual *stokvels* or burial societies are commonly made up of members of a single sex. Not all of them are ethnically homogeneous, and they include groups based on neighbourhood ties, often from a number of different migrant source countries. Some are based at home in Lesotho rather than South Africa. *Stokvels* and burial associations are an effective form of utilizing and developing social capital, which is then converted to financial capital used to support either the migrant in South Africa or their family members in Lesotho.

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

Positive forms of social capital amongst Basotho migrants in South Africa have the potential to facilitate the flow of remittances and enhance the effectiveness and impact of such remittances in alleviating poverty in Lesotho. They also provide an important safety net, especially for migrant women who occupy such a precarious social, economic and political position in their lives in South Africa.

4.2 Mapping of Key Actors

Government

- In South Africa, there are three government departments whose functions relate to issues of gender, migration, remittances and development: the Department of Home Affairs is responsible for immigration and refugee policy; the Department of Labour, responsible for labour law and protection; and the Department of Social Development, responsible for social protection and social welfare policy.
- Two Lesotho institutions also operate in South Africa to monitor rights of Lesotho migrants in South Africa: Lesotho High Commission in South Africa and Lesotho Labour Department.
- Relevant government departments in Lesotho include:
 - Bureau of Statistics (under the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning), which occasionally conducts household and labour force surveys, most recently in 2008;
 - Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation, responsible for gender mainstreaming across government, among other functions.
 - Ministry of Industry and Trade, Cooperatives and Marketing, responsible for assisting local entrepreneurs, among other functions.
 - Ministry of Labour and Employment works on labour legislation and employment policies.
 - Ministry of Home Affairs and Public Safety, responsible for issuing of travel documents.
- The Central Bank of Lesotho, a statutory organisation fully owned by the government of Lesotho, formulates and implements monetary policy and, as stipulated in the Central Bank of Lesotho Act of 2000, seeks to achieve and maintain price stability.

Finance and Business Institutions

- Two major banks in South Africa dealing with remittances are Absa Bank and TEBA Bank.
 - In 2008, Absa, which is majority-owned by Barclays, entered into agreement with Western Union to make their money transfer services available in Southern Africa through Absa branches.
 - TEBA Bank is a niche bank that provides basic financial and micro-financial services to mineworkers on gold and platinum mines and other under-banked populations in non-metropolitan South Africa. Initially it operated as a voluntary deferred pay system through TEBA Branches in Lesotho, and later introduced savings account facilities, which allowed for the voluntary depositing of earnings at savings outlets on the mines. All mineworkers can withdraw cash at TEBA Bank offices on the mines or at TEBA offices in Lesotho.
- The Mzansi Initiative is a private sector banking initiative begun in 2004 by four major banks and the South African Post Office. In order to improve access to financial services for the poor, its account transactions are priced significantly lower than normal bank accounts. According to the Council, there are now over 2 million account holders (56% women). The potential of Mzansi for remittance transfers (via inter-bank transfers) has yet to be realized although the scheme has been developing a Money Transfer System based on the Western Union model. Mzansi is not yet available in Lesotho.
- An independent trust established by DFID (UK) called FinMark Trust aims to make financial markets work for the poor by promoting and supporting policy and institutional development

aimed at increasing access to financial services by the un- and under-banked in Africa. FinMark has funded research on remittance flows in the SADC.

- The Rand Mutual Assurance Ltd is a mining-related insurance company offering workers compensation benefits to migrant mineworkers and their dependents.
- Lesotho Post Bank, which is government-owned, has partnered with the Millennium Challenge Account-Lesotho, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and others, to offer services to the unbanked and underbanked.

Unions, Employers' Associations, Recruiting Agencies

Major players defending the interests of migrant workers and/or their employers in South Africa are the following. Note that none specifically addresses the interests of migrant women workers.

- The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) is a union representing mineworkers with a strong presence amongst Basotho migrants. In 1987 it formed a development and job creation wing called the Mineworkers Development Agency; this later became a stand-alone Section 21 Company in 1997. This agency delivers job creation services to communities affected by mine down-scaling through a network of development centres.
- The Chamber of Mines is an umbrella private sector organization that works to advance the collective interests of South African mining companies, and conducts annual wage negotiations with the National Union of Mineworkers on behalf of companies.
- The Congress of South African Trade Unions is the largest trade union federation in South Africa, of which NUM is a major affiliate.
- The South African Agricultural Union is a national employers' organization responsible for interests of commercial farmers.
- The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) is a major recruiting agency for migrant mineworkers that is headquartered in South Africa but has a major office in Lesotho.

In Lesotho, there are several unions, such as the Lesotho Clothing and Allied Workers Union or the Construction and Allied Workers Union of Lesotho, but none has taken up the rights of migrants (including migrant women) working abroad. The Association of Lesotho Employers, whose members employ more than 70% of the local workforce, handles relations with workers' representatives, including negotiations, collective bargaining, mediation, and arbitration. The Lesotho Chamber of Commerce is also a key stakeholder.

Research Institutes

Research institutes in South Africa with experience in migration and/or remittance-related research include the following:

- The Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP), which conducted the research for this report, is a migration research and policy network with partners in 8 SADC countries. It has conducted extensive research on migration, poverty and remittances in SADC, including Lesotho.
- Finscope was set up by FinMark trust to conduct national household surveys focused on the financial needs and usage of the poor across the South and Southern African population. They conducted a pilot survey in Lesotho in 2003.
- The Forced Migration Studies Programme is a research program based at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg that focuses on the treatment of migrants in South African cities.
- Genesis Analytics is a private-sector research consultancy firm specializing in research on the banking sector. They have written two reports on remittances in the SADC.
- The Human Sciences Research Council is a state-funded research and policy organization with a history of conducting – sometimes methodologically problematical – research on migration dynamics to South Africa.
- The Institute of Development and Labour Law at the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Law has several projects on labour law in the SADC, including Lesotho. Their main projects include Indicators for Conditions of Work Project (development of indicators to measure progress in

compliance with ILO and other labour standards relating to conditions of work in three main areas: minimum wages; occupational health and safety and working time in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa). The Institute has also undertaken an ILO/ILSSA project on labour law reform in Lesotho.

- The South African Institute of International Affairs is a non-governmental research institute based at the University of the Witwatersrand that focuses on South Africa's and Africa's international relations. It recently completed a regional study of gender, migration and remittances in SADC for UN-INSTRAW based on secondary sources.

Two research institutes from Lesotho are included in this mapping:

- The Institute of Southern African Studies at the National University of Lesotho conducts applied and participatory research with particular emphasis on national development needs. In the past it has focused on agriculture, human rights, regional security, environment, social development, health, gender and urban studies.
- Sechaba Consultants is a private sector consultancy firm and research partner of SAMP in Lesotho.

NGO Sector

- The South African Human Rights Commission is a national institution in South Africa established to promote and protect human rights. It has conducted several investigations into rights and treatment of migrants in South Africa.
- TEBA Development is a not-for-profit NGO established as part of a rural development initiative of TEBA in 2001. It receives financing from diverse donors, including many mining companies, government agencies, and international development agencies, to implement rural development projects and improve living conditions and livelihoods of the communities that have provided labour to the mining industry for decades. Projects include agricultural support, educational infrastructure, HIV/AIDS home-based care programme, water and sanitation provision, and skills development and training.
- In Lesotho, there are many NGOs but none that is working specifically in the area of migration or remittances. However, the focus areas of many NGOs do (or could potentially) relate closely to migration and remittances, such as livelihoods/entrepreneurship (e.g. Women in Business Association Lesotho), sustainable agriculture and food security (e.g. Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resource Commission; Bana ba Khoale; or Taemane ea Sechaba).
- There are several organizations working for women's empowerment in Lesotho, which can roughly be divided into those working for women's economic rights and those working on social, legal and other rights:
 - Women's economic rights (self-help) NGOs include: Basali Itekeng Women's Society, Boiteko Women's Association, Lesotho Women's Institute, Mabote Women and Empowerment, Mot-imoso Women's Movement/Association
 - Women's social, legal and other rights organizations include: Democracy and Human Rights Commission, Federation of Women Lawyers, Help Lesotho, Lesotho National Council of Women (and self-help as well), Women and Law in Southern Africa.

International Organizations

- The IOM Regional Office for Southern Africa (based in Pretoria) has undertaken a range of migration-related policy, training and research interventions. Recent reports include studies on xenophobic violence and human trafficking. The IOM has a Programme on HIV and AIDS among Mobile Populations in Southern Africa, in which SAMP has contributed studies on HIV vulnerability in agricultural, construction, informal and mining sectors.
- CARE Lesotho implements poverty-reduction programmes in areas such as food security and HIV and AIDS. It has also commissioned important research on poverty, migration and gender in Lesotho.
- Caritas Lesotho conducts programmes aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in staple foodstuffs throughout the country.

4.3 Public Policies

Gay (2000: 25) called for a “new immigration compact” between South Africa and Lesotho and notes that: “If Lesotho and South Africa were truly distinct and separate, it would be natural to speak of migration or immigration” from one to the other. There is little doubt that South Africa would never have developed into a modern industrial state without cheap male migrant labour from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho. The development of South Africa and Lesotho are inextricably linked. Cross-border migration is nothing new, and co-development of these two countries, albeit in highly unequal form, describes a long-standing reality. The South African economy has benefited from Lesotho’s migrant labour, while the Lesotho economy depends to a significant extent on remittances from South Africa. What is new is that mine labour, while still the dominant employment sector for male migrants from Lesotho, has been considerably reduced in scale, replaced by employment in other sectors such as construction for male migrants and domestic service by the increasing number of female migrants.

Lesotho is an impoverished, dependent and economically vulnerable state, surrounded completely by the separate state of South Africa. Given this history and geography, Basotho men and women cannot be kept out of South Africa and they will come in ever greater numbers if the only employment and other economic opportunities are in South Africa itself. Lesotho ratified the ICMW in the hope that South Africa would do likewise and begin to offer its migrants basic rights and protections, not a continuation of the situation under apartheid. So far, the South African government (like receiving states around the world) has studiously ignored the Convention. Even if South Africa were to ratify the Convention, the fact that many women from Lesotho are employed in South Africa without official permission would mean that protection of those rights for migrant women would be difficult to monitor or enforce. Furthermore, given their tenuous legal position in South Africa, many migrants are reluctant to lobby or protest against abuses of their existing rights, whether as workers, women or individual human beings. Nor are they likely to find much solidarity from South African citizens, who express strong anti-immigrant views and consider foreigners to be “stealing our jobs” and not deserving of even basic protection of life and property by the South African state. Indeed any policy recommendations on remittances and development have to start by addressing widespread xenophobia in South Africa, which has not excluded citizens of Lesotho despite the cultural continuities and similarities across the international border.

Migration needs to be reconceptualised in public policy discourse not as a threat to the interests of South Africans but as something that is (and could be even more) mutually beneficial to both countries. True at the national level, this also applies at local, household and individual scales. The only realistic way for this to happen is to open the border to free travel in both directions. This would involve allowing Basotho to own land and seek jobs in South Africa without losing their Lesotho citizenship. Lesotho’s government would continue to be responsible for social services within its own borders, but Basotho people would have the chance to improve their material conditions within South Africa and to remit in much greater volumes to their dependants who chose, rather than were forced, to remain at home (Gay 2000: 45).

First, the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement has been formally adopted at the Summit of the Heads of States and been signed by nine member states which now allows for the drafting

of an implementation plan (Williams et al 2006). However, for the Protocol to come into effect, at least nine member states must have signed and ratified it. The ultimate objective of the protocol is “to develop policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the movement of persons of the Region generally into and within the territories of State Parties” by facilitating three types of movement:

- Entry, for a lawful purpose and without a visa, into the territory of another State for a maximum period of ninety (90) days per year for bona fide visits and in accordance with the laws of the State concerned. The person must enter through an official border post, possess valid travel documents and produce evidence of sufficient means of support for the duration of the visit. The Protocol is silent on what a migrant may or may not do during these three months, such as whether they may or may not work.
- Movement for Residence defined as “permission or authority, to live in the territory of a State Party in accordance with the legislative and administrative provisions of that State Party.” The Protocol also encourages member states to facilitate the issuing of residence permits.
- Movement known as Establishment defined as “permission or authority granted by a State Party in terms of its national laws, to a citizen of another State Party, for: (a) exercise of economic activity and profession either as an employee or a self-employed person; and (b) establishing and managing a profession, trade, business or calling.”

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

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

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

Despite greater economic opportunities in South Africa, Basotho people’s personal, social, cultural and political ties to home remain strong. While many of them already do or potentially

would migrate to South Africa temporarily to take advantage of jobs and markets, evidence suggests that most Basotho still wish to be considered citizens of Lesotho and to regard Lesotho as “home”. Relaxation of border controls and facilitation of residence and establishment in South Africa might well lead to some increase in permanent migration from Lesotho to South Africa, but all the evidence points to the perpetuation of transnational lives and a preference for men and women to live and work in South Africa only temporarily, maintaining transnational households and returning to live in Lesotho once they have earned enough money to retire, establish a business or practice agriculture “at home”. Counter-intuitively, therefore, granting citizens of Lesotho the residence rights that would enable them to live and work in South Africa, such as South African ID documentation, would in all likelihood encourage not permanent relocation but reduction in the length of time that people would have to spend working in South Africa before being able to “go home” to Lesotho. This finding has important policy implications and lends urgency to the need for a new immigration compact.

Socio-cultural integration of Basotho men and women into South African society is not an issue of particular concern, given the aforementioned ethnic and linguistic contiguity and continuity and the existence of family and social ties across the Lesotho-South Africa border. However, by legally marking them as foreigners, without full rights of residence or employment, the South African state serves to exacerbate anti-immigrant attitudes on the part of South African nationals and to deny citizens of Lesotho the right to integrate fully into South African society and economy. Voluntary return, likewise, does not require any particular official intervention in this context, as voluntary return is the emphatically stated preference of most Basotho migrants and the proximity of Lesotho to South Africa means that this does not require significant capital outlay. Any policy intervention should thus focus on regularizing the residence and employment of Lesotho citizens in South Africa, protecting their labour and other basic human rights, including gender rights, and facilitating free movement across the border.

5

GOOD PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY DIALOGUE

Mobilizing remittances in order to achieve gender-inclusive, sustainable development requires both strategic and practical interventions. At the strategic level, there needs to be reform of policies, laws and employment practices in both Lesotho and South Africa to eliminate, or at least reduce, gender discrimination in migration and employment. Current policies on migration and remittances are essentially those that have existed for decades to facilitate the flow of male migrant labour to the South African mines, and to a lesser extent male and female labour to the country's farms. The legislated policy of Compulsory Deferred Pay and the bilateral labour agreement between Lesotho and South Africa are designed within the normative framework of a migrant male breadwinner with a stay-at-home family to whom money is remitted. South African migration policy overall is implicitly gender-biased, being based primarily on skills shortages in designated labour sectors, most of which favour traditionally male occupations requiring formal education and training. Policies on gender, migration and development are essentially non-existent, and the supposedly gender-blind policies that do exist are in reality not merely biased in favour of men but actively discriminatory against women. Protection of women's rights and workers' rights, especially migrant workers' rights, is an essential first step. The legal right to work in South Africa and the right to fair pay would significantly improve the lives of Lesotho's migrant women. Similar biases exist in remittance transfer channels, with male mineworkers having their TEBA accounts while women have to carry cash with them back to Lesotho, being denied access even to bank accounts in South Africa. National-level policy interventions to reduce gender discrimination include facilitating cross-border movement for men and women; regularizing Basotho women's employment in South Africa; protecting the rights of all migrant workers; and allowing male and female citizens of Lesotho to open bank accounts, own property and freely invest in businesses in South Africa.

Moving beyond policies on migration, remittances and investment on the South African side, changes are also required in Lesotho if women's migration and remittance contributions are to be optimized in terms of their development potential for individuals, families, communities and the country as a whole. This requires both legislative and attitudinal change. In terms of law, the 2006 Act that aimed to remove gender discrimination must be enforced, including clarifying areas where it conflicts with customary law, so that women are no longer regarded as minors and can exercise greater control over their lives and secure more equitable access to property and resources. Public education campaigns are needed to make women aware of the law and of their rights under the law. Attitudes, both official and popular, need to change in order to acknowledge migrant women's economic contribution and to remove the lingering social stigma still associated

with women who leave Lesotho to seek employment in South Africa. Strengthening the law on domestic violence would also do much to improve the lives of migrant women. Counselling, support and skills training for retrenched mineworkers and their families would reduce the negative development implications of retrenchment. Providing health care and support services for individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS also has to be part of this wider strategy, including advice, counselling and treatment targeted specifically at migrant men and women and their sexual partners. Broader socio-economic development in Lesotho, including expansion of employment and livelihood opportunities, would also lessen the burden on migrants, both male and female, whose remittances have to support so many family members and are so thinly stretched. This would include support for agriculture, access to micro-credit, and skills training and assistance with small business start-ups, each incorporating sensitivity to gendered needs and capacities.

In any intervention, caution must be taken to avoid perceiving gender as a simple male/female dichotomy. Women who migrate are the spouses, siblings and parents of men and boys; male migrants are the spouses, siblings and parents of women and girls. Household-level characteristics in terms of household size along with the gender, marital status, age and generation of household members must be taken into account, as it is the positioning of individual migrants within their households that defines the gendered power relations that underlie migration and remittance practices. For individual women (and men), their migration may be either empowering or disempowering, valorised or undervalued, essential or supplementary to the household livelihood. What is clear is that macro-economic changes are leading to profound shifts in the gendering of migration and remittance practices in Lesotho, a reality with which social attitudes and public policies on both sides of the border have yet to catch up.

5.1 Final Considerations

The research for this report has shown, at the national and household level, that migration from Lesotho is deeply and profoundly gendered. Feminization of migration is proceeding rapidly but this does not mean that a homogenous de-gendered “migrant” is emerging. There are major and entrenched differences between male and female migrants in terms of their socio-demographic profile, the types of household from which they come, their occupations and opportunities in South Africa, and their remitting behavior. Similarly, within Lesotho itself, there are significant differences between male-sending and female-sending households that receive remittances. In aggregate, the latter are considerably worse off than the former and have even fewer opportunities for income-generating activity outside of migration. Cutting across any simple gender divide, important differences also exist on the basis of the size and composition of the remittance-receiving household, with large families that have few adult working members being the poorest and most vulnerable. Our first recommendation is that this gendered nature of migration and its differential impact on men and women, as well as on different household forms, needs to be recognized and factored into all debates and policies for mainstreaming migration in development in Lesotho.

The migration and development debate has tended to be hampered by the fact that the main “players” are seen to be nation-states between which migrants move or circulate. This is particularly problematic in the case of South Africa and Lesotho because it foregrounds the role of

regulatory frameworks and control policies in relation to migration between the two countries. As this report has argued, however, it is precisely this kind of thinking that has seriously hampered two states that are inextricably bound together in every way from moving forward to a 'new immigration compact' of free movement, unrestricted economic opportunity and heightened remittance flow. There are promising signs that the potential of co-development is being recognized. Yet much more needs to be done to ensure that the migration and remittance regime becomes truly co-developmental, and that such co-development occurs in a gender-equitable fashion rather than simply compounding existing gender and class inequalities.

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