



Averting 'New Variant Famine'

Briefing Notes No 8

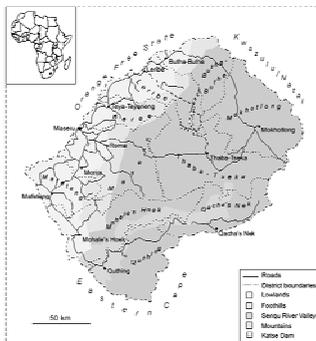
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The Lesotho Case Study: livelihoods in Ha Rantelali

This briefing presents some information about the field site in Ha Rantelali. Most of this information was gathered through community and household profiling exercises. The information is supplemented by the findings from a household survey conducted in the village in 1996/7.

Ha Rantelali

Map showing location of Ha Rantelali



Ha Rantelali is a village of 42 households, located in the Maluti Mountains, about 3 hours' drive from the capital, Maseru and two hours' walk from the rural service centre of Marakabei. It is 6 km on a very rough road from the main Thaba-Tseka road.

Brief facts about Ha Rantelali:

- the village was founded in 1897 and in the 1950s and '60s exported food to South Africa
- there are 42 households with 1-11 members
- a third of the households contain orphans
- many households are headed by elderly people



Aerial photograph of Ha Rantelali

- there is one sibling headed household
- there is no electricity
- water is drawn from protected springs
- many households have toilets

The community's concerns

Livelihood opportunities

Most households in Ha Rantelali have both livestock and fields, but around half had already consumed their grain stocks by January. More than half the households lost cattle in the 2007 drought, and several experienced a reduced harvest. However, in early 2008 food aid was delivered to the village on a regular basis. Other

threats to livelihoods include livestock theft and insects.

Villagers generate income in a variety of ways: selling joala (traditional beer); selling animals; shearing sheep and goats; selling crops (within the village); pensions; remittances from family members; herding; informal agricultural and domestic labour; stipendiary work for government; running a

nursery school; shop owner.

AIDS

AIDS was scarcely mentioned during the research, but the fact that over a third of 10-24 year olds in the village have lost a parent testifies to the problem. At the local primary school, the proportion of orphans rises from 22% in Standard 1 to 56% in Stan-

standard 7, and of double orphans from 5% to 12%. Terms for traditional ailments such as sejeso are employed as euphemisms for the disease. A small number of mainly elderly people are open about their HIV positive status, and serve as home-based care workers liaising with the clinic, but in general people are anxious to avoid any suspicion that they might be infected.

Key Points:

- Lesotho field site: Ha Rantelali is a village located in the Maluti Mountains and consists of 42 households.
- Main livelihoods: livestock rearing, subsistence farming of maize and wheat, labour migration, brewing and selling traditional beer.
- Change over time: over the past decade, miners have returned to the village. More crops are grown and most households are marginally better off.
- AIDS affects both individuals and the community in a range of ways.



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Changing livelihoods, 1996/7-2007/8



University of Malawi



National University of Lesotho

Employment

In 1996 a quarter of the households (11) received income from mine workers. By 2007 this had fallen to fewer than 10% of households (4). Partly as a consequence, the average number of resident members per household rose from 3.9 to 5.0.

Agriculture

Harvests vary substantially from year to year, but there appears to be a trend towards greater investment in agriculture, with relatively high yields in 2007, despite the food emergency that was declared. Difficult rainfall patterns resulted in a poor harvest in 2008.

There has been a broad shift from wheat growing to maize growing. Villagers attribute this in part to

the fact that maize provides more food, and is more practical for provisioning herdboys. It is also more laborious to harvest wheat than maize, and requires a working party for whom a party must be prepared.

The number of livestock has also risen, although less so than might be expected given the number of adult men now resident in the village.

Possessions

There has been a small increase in the number of households with access to latrines, radios and beds. A small number of households have mobile phones. Almost no households in the village are materially worse off than they were in 1996/7.



Ha Rantelali in summer

Property per household

	1996/7	2007/8
Residents	3.9	5.0
Cattle	4.3	4.6
Sheep	10.0	12.3
Goats	3.3	7.2
Pigs	0.1	1.4
Poultry	4.0	3.4
Horses	1.0	0.6
Donkeys	1.0	1.0
Fields	2.7	2.8
Rooms	2.4	2.5
Plough	0.4	0.5
Vehicle	0.0	0.0
Radio	0.6	0.8
Latrine	0.2	0.4
Beds	1.0	1.3

Harvests

	Sacks per household	
	Maize	Wheat
1997	3.2	1.6
2007	6.0	1.7
2008	3.5	1.6

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Project website: www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/sse/chg/projects/nvf

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