World Vision

World Vision, Inc.
Lesotho Emergency Agricultural Project (LEAP)
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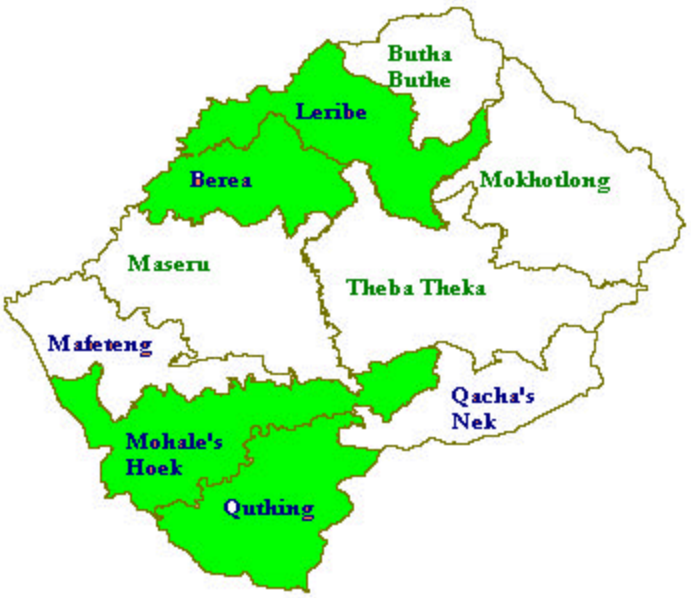

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Project Title:	Lesotho Emergency Agriculture Project
OFDA Grant Number	DFD–G–00-04-00026-00
Country/Region(s):	Lesotho / Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Berea and Leribe in South and Northern Lesotho
Disaster/Hazard:	Complex Emergency
Period of Activity:	January 2004 - April 2005

Introduction

The information contained in this document expresses all the key project activities undertaken during the period under review, which stretches from January 2004 to April 2005. This period will include the project's original contract highlights together with the no – cost extension contract. It gives a comprehensive glimpse into the project's performance, achievement, challenges and constraints.

Country Overview

Situated in the southern region of Africa, Lesotho is a small mountainous country covering a land area of approximately 30,000 sq. km. Landlocked and completely encircled by South Africa, it stands at an altitude of 3500m above sea level. According to the Bureau of Statistics about 80% of the country's 2.14 million inhabitants live in the rural areas while the remaining 20% live in the urban areas.

Most of the country's population is engaged in subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry. However, the production of Lesotho's major crops continues to decline, a trend, which started in the 1970s due to erratic rainfalls, extensive environmental degradation deepened by overgrazing and other factors. Household income, once supplemented by remittances from Basotho employed in South African mines, is falling due to the retrenchment of mine workers. Unemployment remains high, 45% (2003 BOS estimates) and is one of the most serous problems facing Lesotho. Poverty and malnutrition are particularly pronounced in the country's rural areas and 16.3 percent of children under the age of five are estimated to be underweight nationwide (WFP: 2003).

Of all the challenges facing the country, none is more urgent than the HIV/AIDS pandemic which, with an estimated adult prevalence of 28.9% (2004 report on the global AIDS epidemic, UNAIDS), has a devastating impact on individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. The report further estimates that the prevalence rate among women and men in the most active age group (15 – 49 years) is 51% and 28% respectively. HIV and AIDS related deaths have affected the production of the economy and led to increased household poverty. The problem of orphanhood is also on the increase due to HIV/AIDS epidemic, and 100,000 children between the ages of 0-17 years have lost one or both parents (2004 report on the global AIDS epidemic, UNAIDS).

Lesotho has a temperate climate that is marked by four distinct seasons. The country normally receives rain in the seven months from October to April. In the past three years it has experienced severe drought occurrences. Rainfall is often marked by heavy torrents, which in turn cause soil erosion. Snowfall is understandably most common in the mountain areas, which are the coldest in the country. A combination of rapidly increasing food prices in the region and reduced agricultural production, as a result of adverse weather conditions and environmental degradation has led to a vicious circle of bad weather and serious food shortages. According to the Vulnerability Assessment Committee, 548,000 people will have "a significant food deficit between June 2005 and March 2006", and will require about 20,200 MT of food aid.

The FAO/WFP rapid Assessment of Current Seasonal Agricultural Production in Lesotho (March 15 to 30, 2005) also reveals that this year's drought was almost exclusively an early-season drought patterns that did not allow many farmers to prepare and sow their land until well after their optimal planting dates. However, the rains started at the second week of January, which is late compared to summer farming season that starts in October. According to the assessment report, 2004/05 agricultural season is the latest in a string of years that has seen far below optimal rainfall patterns in much of the country.

Project Overview and Performance.
The Lesotho Emergency Agricultural Project was proposed in October 2003 as a response to the crippling 2002/03 droughts that resulted in total crop failures and loss of planting seed. Funded by the Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA/USAID), the project commenced in January 2004 with the aim of ending in July, however due to the rise in the need and remaining project funds, the project received approval for a no - cost extension that extended activities to April 2005 when it was officially closed. The project was operating in four districts, namely Leribe, Quthing, Berea, and Mohale's Hoek. The main thrust of the project was to conduct seed fairs in each of the four districts in order to increase vulnerable farmers' access to seeds of best-performing varieties. The project had one goal: to increase crop production of vulnerable farm families in Lesotho.

Areas of activity
The activities that were completed in order to achieve the expected results included:

- Baseline Survey.
- World vision staff trained in seed fair and seed vouchers approach.
- Seed sellers and seed companies identified, sensitised and registered for seed fairs.
- 1,640 farmers identified, and registered as recipients of seed vouchers.
- Seed vouchers distributed to registered farmers.
- Seed fairs organized.
- Farmer field days.
- Dissemination of agricultural technical messages.
- Post harvest survey

Description of project activities

Baseline Survey
Prior to the survey, the relief team undertook a training of enumerators on the questionnaire.

The training was held from 22nd – 23rd March 2004, while the survey took place from 29th March - 2nd April 2005 The purpose was to equip the enumerators with data collection skills and train them on the designed questionnaire. Agriculture Program Manager and Program Officer facilitated the training with the assistance of the Relief Manager and LEAP Agric. Officers (Southern and Northern regions).

The objective of the baseline was to collate detailed information on socio – economic characteristics and coping mechanisms of households in the four districts of Leribe, Berea, Quthing and Mohales' Hoek. The detailed objectives were (i) to generate an information base to identify certain impact indicators for future program monitoring and evaluation. (ii) To identify and quantify as much as possible current crop husbandry practices for betterment of program planning and finally (iii) to identify target groups and their detailed socio – economic characteristics.

In each district, villages within the respective district agriculture resource centers were randomly selected to represent four agro – ecological zones namely, highlands, foothills, Senqu Valley River and Lowlands. The highland zone is made up of areas above 2.5km above sea level. The area is mainly used for summer grazing. Foothills areas are located on altitudes of between 1.7 and 2.5km above sea level. The areas are characterized by plateaus or protected valleys that lead to high mountains and are used for summer grazing. The Senqu River Valley is made of areas along the Senqu River. The zone is characterized by mainly dry conditions due to the shadows

imposed by the central mountain range. Lowland areas are located close to town centers. In each district 75 households were interviewed.

The questionnaire was studied and discussed thoroughly. Loopholes were discovered and corrected. On the second day the questionnaire was pre – tested by interviewing some of the farmers in the Berea district. The purpose of pre – testing was to identify if there were any shortcomings or omissions on the questionnaire, which were later, incorporated to reproduce the final questionnaire. The survey report is attached as ***Annex A*** of this report (which was produced by an external consultant).

World Vision staff trained in seed fair and seed vouchers approach

The Agricultural Project Manager was trained by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) on seed fair and seed vouchers approach. The idea was disseminated to the Project Agronomists who put it into practice.

Seed sellers and seed companies identified, sensitized and registered for seed fairs

Seed sellers around the country were invited for meetings to introduce the concept of seed fairs. In total four suppliers (namely, the Lesotho Development Center, Mofoneso Agricultural Inputs supplies, Med Suppliers, and Champ PTY LTD.) participated in both the winter and summer seasons seed fairs.

The following was agreed upon at the meeting:

- Only registered seed suppliers would participate at the fairs;
- Seed sellers whose stock met the specific requirements and conditions of the seed fairs would only take part;
- World Vision will produce the list of beneficiaries and will have it ready during the seed fairs;
- World Vision will produce and submit schedule to the seed suppliers a week in advance before the fairs;
- World Vision will order and provide vouchers to the beneficiaries at the seed fairs;
- The sellers would allow World Vision Lesotho agronomists to check that seed varieties were certified (produced by the professional and legalized seed grower), were viable and not contaminated;
- At least have one fifth of the required quantity of crops of different varieties to be distributed to the beneficiaries; and
- Submit Seed Grower certificate.

1,640 farmers identified, and registered as recipients of seed vouchers.

The Disaster Management Authority district offices (which are the coordinating departments for disaster mitigation mandated to work with WFP and NGOs in disaster mitigation in the districts) assisted in identification of beneficiaries. The district offices consulted with the local communities and their leaders in compiling lists of all vulnerable people. This process was done through community targeting approach. The selection of each beneficiary used the established structures of Disaster Management, Ministry of agriculture and the established community committees in determining the most needy households. At community level, village disaster management committees were established that were composed of a chief, women, village health worker, children representative, representatives of orphans and the sick. These are the structures that call community gatherings “Pitso” so that everyone is there from each household when these selections are made. The total number of beneficiaries selected was 1,640 with 1,000 shared equally in Berea and Leribe districts while Quthing and Mohales’ hoek shared the 640 with 320 beneficiaries each.

In selecting suitable beneficiaries, the criterion stipulated in the proposal was followed. An additional criterion was added to qualify the proposal one which was "capacity of the beneficiary to tender and take care of the crop, such as weeding and also ensuring insecticides do not infest the crop". This had to be coupled with availability of the field and also prepared land as it was difficult to mobilize the people to set aside land for this purpose prior to getting assurance from the donors that the project would be funded. Lesotho is a unique country in that land is very scarce. However, it was made clear that selected households should be able to plant and look after the crops. Each should be given seeds only if he/she has prepared the land and collected kraal manure and ashes. The locations, where the seeds were to be distributed, were to be based on the suitability of the areas. Suitability would refer to soil type, soil condition, environmental condition etc. The District Agricultural Offices in collaboration with World Vision Lesotho were the key offices to decide on areas to be selected.

A total of 3,280 beneficiaries were identified during the entire duration of the project. (1,640 for winter cropping and the same number for summer cropping).

In each district, the areas and beneficiaries were identified as follows:

Region	District	Resource Center	Community Center	# Of beneficiaries
North	Leribe	Hlotse	Linotsing	71
		Tale	Koenaneng	71
		Peka	Kolonyama	71
		Maputsoe	Ha Matsoete	71
		Ha Khabo	Ha Khabo	71
		Mahobong	Ha Lesiamo	74
		Pelaneng	Lejone	71
	Sub - Total			**500**
	Berea	Teyateyaneng	Ha Mphele	85
		Pilot	Ha Matjotjo	83
		Maqhaka	Maqhaka	83
		Sefikeng	Ha Moshati	83
		Mapoteng	Ha Maloela	83
		Corn Exchange	Bela Bela	83
	Sub - Total			**500**
South	Mohales Hoek	Taung	Ha Khitsane	80
		Makhaleng	Mokhele	80
		Mpharane	Liphofung	80
		Mekaling	Ha Soro	80
	Sub - Total			**320**
	Quthing	Mphaki	Mphaki	80
		Ha koali	Ha Koali	40
		Qomoqomong	Ha Mokhameleli	80
		Tele	Ha Mosuoe	80
		Dilli Dilli	Mathole	40
	Sub- Total			**320**
	Grand Total			**1,640**

Seed vouchers distributed to registered farmers.

Vouchers amounting to **$80,738 and $81,538** for both winter and summer season, respectively, were purchased and distributed to the identified farmers in the four operational areas. Each beneficiary was given vouchers to purchase 10kg of seed of each type (wheat and peas for winter cropping and maize and beans seeds for summer). Vendors collected the vouchers as beneficiaries purchased and made their claims based on the total amount of vouchers collected from each seed fair. During each seed fair, the first activity was on-farm demonstration followed by the seed voucher reception. Each beneficiary was provided with vouchers amounting to the value of $49.00.

Seed fairs organized.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security district officers played a major role in the organization of the seed fairs. Their office grounds were also used to facilitate the fairs. Taking into consideration that LEAP beneficiaries are vulnerable and one indicator of their vulnerability is that they do not earn living, the four (4) planned seed fairs (one per district) were increased to

eighteen (18) in winter and twenty-two (22) in summer, that is, one in each resource centre to ensure that farmers do not incur any transport costs.

Registration of beneficiaries by project staff, assisted by government official from Ministry of Agriculture

Seed suppliers displaying their products during seed fairs and the beneficiary selecting the varieties he prefers.

Farmers' Field days.

This activity failed to take place. The aim was to take beneficiaries on study tours so that they interact with each in order to establish a learning space environment. Interactions took place during trainings and on – farm demonstrations but were however limited to beneficiaries from the same district.

Dissemination of agricultural technical messages.

During the seed fairs, technical circulars were provided that carried agriculture and HIV/AIDS oriented messages. District Agric Office (DAO) staff from the Ministry of Agriculture were also provided a platform to talk with the beneficiaries about sustainable agric practices with a focus on minimum tillage practices that can conserve soil moisture in the fields, e.g., the use of tractor- or oxen-drawn ripper. Seed suppliers were given a chance to explain their seeds performance to revolving groups of beneficiaries before the seed fairs began.

During both winter and summer cropping seed fairs, DAO staff demonstrated manure, wood ash and lime application demonstrations on nearby fields. The main emphasis of the demonstrations was to improve the water retention capacities of the soils, improve fertility and correct the acidic conditions in the Lesotho soils. Use of lime that was offered for free by the Ministry Of Agriculture to the farmers was also emphasized, thus this was a strategic demonstration to show farmers how to achieve those three goals using locally available resources.

Post harvest survey

Before the end of project an evaluation was carried out in February 2005 by WVL Relief team to assess the impact of this project and document critical lessons learned.

A total of 106 households were randomly selected to answer a designed questionnaire. The purpose of this evaluation was to find out from the direct beneficiaries how the project is affecting their livelihoods and more importantly whether the seed fair approach is the right methodology for seed distribution. Out of the 106 interviewed beneficiaries, 48% came from the lowlands while 52% were from the foothills; 41% were women and 59% men. Within these households, 43% have less than 5 members whereas 57% have more than 5 members per household. The literacy rates were based on all categories covered by the literacy concept i.e. ranging from illiteracy 19%, primary level 56% and beyond primary 25%.

Additionally, this also covered varying age groups ranging between ages 18 to 98, recording the following rates respectively, 18 – 38 (20%), 39 – 58 (45%), 59 – 78 (29) and 79 – 98 (6%). This clearly indicated that the 39 – 58 age group, which under normal circumstances is considered to be the most effective economic group, has become even more vulnerable due to high levels of retrenchments from the mining sector coupled with high prevalence of HIV/ADIS.

In cases where farmers relied on organic farming method (use of kraal manure and ashes), substantial higher yields were realized. The attractiveness of the manure application component was its ready availability within the communities themselves.

Given the current scenario indicating that an appreciably high number of beneficiaries were able to share some of their produce with their vulnerable neighbors without pressure from the office as a voluntary gesture was encouraging. In the project impact assessment interviews, an overwhelming majority of beneficiaries were unanimous that the project had a positive impact on households' livelihoods. Prior to the implementation of LEAP, these beneficiaries had stopped planting their fields due to lack of purchasing power to buy the farm inputs and had depended highly on hand outs. With the yields received from the project they claim they will be able to survive for a certain period without any external assistance. The newly acquired skills through training at the time of implementation will also maximize chances of sustainability in the long term.

The transparent seed fair approach initiated by the office to facilitate the acquisition of preferred seeds by individual farmers enjoyed massive support from the farmers, and the office is being urged to continue with the same system in any future interactions.

A comprehensive Post harvest survey was done at the end of the project in April. This was done with the help of an external consultant. The final report is attached as ***Annex 2*** of this report.

Demographic profile of the targeted and reached population

The project's target is 1,640 most vulnerable subsistence households farming families (8,200 beneficiaries): this included HIV/AIDS affected families (families looking after orphans), families with chronically ill family members (HIV/AIDS, TB, etc), families headed by the elderly, and malnourished children under five in the 4 districts of Mohales Hoek, Quthing, Berea, and Leribe.

Statistical Data per district:

District	Geographical Area (,ooo hectares)	Population	Arable Land (Km^2)
Maseru	4279	477,599	707
Mafeteng	2119	238,946	703
Mohale's Hoek	**3530**	**206,842**	**520**
Botha - Bothe	1767	126,948	165
Leribe	**2828**	**362,339**	**635**
Berea	**2222**	**300,557**	**573**
Thaba - Tseka	4270	133,680	289
Mokhotlong	4075	89,705	154
Qacha's Nek	2349	80,323	126
Quthing	**2916**	**140,641**	**211**

Source: FAO/WFP rapid crop assessment (2004)

Household numbers were broken down as follows:

Districts	# of households
North- Leribe	1000
Berea	1000
South- Mohale's Hoek	640
Quthing	640

The number of targeted households differed region by region. This was based on the fact that the northern region districts have more population and their arable land is bigger than those in the southern districts.

Total number of targeted and reached beneficiaries for the overall project

At inception the project target was 1,640, but the number grew to 3,280 when OFDA extended the project at no cost. This allowed the project to provide both winter and summer season crop seeds. The number of beneficiaries however differed by per region. The northern region had 2,000 beneficiaries while the southern had 1,280. The project had a total of 16,400 indirect beneficiaries.

Quantitative and qualitative data

Winter Seed Fairs

The project made available to beneficiaries seeds of wheat and peas, which are the main winter crops

Source and varieties of wheat and pea seeds made available to beneficiaries at winter seed fairs.

SOURCE OF SEED	WHEAT VARIETIES	PEAS VARIETIES
Pannar	**Puseletso**	**Susan Black Eyed**
"	**PAN 364**	**Solara**
"	**PAN 3191**	**Green Feast**
"	**Betta**	
"	**Eland**	
"	**Tugela Dn**	

Each household was given 10 kg each of wheat and pea seeds. Although the local suppliers supplied the seeds, almost 100% of the seed purchased originated from the Republic of South

Africa because there are no seed producing companies in Lesotho except those subcontracted by South African seed companies such as PANNAR.

Summer Seed Fairs

Varieties of seeds distributed

Maize	Beans
Kalahari Early Pearl	Red Speckled Sugar Beans (PAN 159)
Sahara	Red Speckled Sugar Beans
Border King	Pinto
Maputo	

The tabulated varieties of maize were all open pollinated varieties that are more drought, disease and cold tolerant. Beneficiaries were expected to utilize lime provided by Ministry Of Agriculture together with kraal manure and ash, since Lesotho soils are acidic and have poor structure. Each beneficiary received 10 kg of maize and beans seeds.

Success achieved, constraints encountered

1. Achievements

Community Interaction and Capacity Building

In each of the four-targeted districts, relief committees had already been formed before the implementation of the project. These committees are made up of a wide spectrum of the local community, including vulnerable families. In order to achieve a long-term commitment to the communities, lead farmers were identified from these groups to pass information from the agronomists and extension agents to other farmers after the trainings.

Lead farmers received training on other factors affecting the performance of the crop such as weeding, pest control and intercropping. The goal of this training was to improve knowledge and skills of farmers on proper harvesting procedures and storage of the crops. A total of 73 farmers participated in this training (17 women and 56 men).

Trainings

- The program conducted 3 trainings per district (2 classroom and 1 on–farm demonstration) for farmers residing in its targeted areas. The first training was conducted in July – August 2004 with 86 participants (48 women and 38 men). The second training took place in April 2005 with 72 participants (40 females and 32 males). The on – farm demonstrations stretched from November 2004 to February 2005. These demonstrations were mostly attended by Lead farmers and attracted some of non – beneficiaries. The facilitation was drawn from LEAP agronomists, LEAP agronomists' assistants, Ministry of Agric Extension Officers as well as officers from the Ministry of Trade and Industry through its Marketing Department. These trainings covered best farming practices from land preparation to post-harvesting, soil fertility, storage, marketing, communication skills, HIV/AIDS in the context of agriculture, block farming and integrated pest management. The importance of organic products was highly emphasized during these trainings as opposed to the use of synthetic products.
- One of the agronomists attended training on conservation farming. This training was organized by FAO – Lesotho office and was facilitated by the Zambian National Farmers Union.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Recruitment of four assistant agronomists during the 2nd phase of the project (one for each of the four district) made the monitoring process easier as they were able to make follow-ups with the beneficiaries. Thus through their reports, the project was better able to evaluate the progress being made by the beneficiaries.

Two assistants working in the north districts had the responsibility of following up 500 beneficiaries each while those in the south were responsible for 320 beneficiaries each. Their main work was to assist the Agric Officers in registration of the beneficiaries, registering the varieties farmers received at seed fairs, distribution of vouchers for the seed fairs and verification of payments after the seed fairs.

Visitors

A joint review mission visited USAID funded programs from 09th –12th August 2004. Mr. David Chikodzore represented OFDA. He visited Mapoteng area in the Berea district. Mr. Chikodzore was impressed with the program implementation, however, he anticipated low crop yield due to severe prevailing drought. During the exit meeting on the 12th, he was more concerned about the apparent perpetuation of starvation in Lesotho attributed to erratic weather conditions. He further encouraged more focus be put on long term projects geared towards water harvesting and tolerant seed varieties.

One of the projects' beneficiaries with Nancy Egbert – OFDA Technical Advisor for Health and Humanitarian Response.

2. Success stories

Mr Tseliso Mochekoane of Tele resource centre in Quthing district in the southern region is a retrenched migrant laborer from South Africa. He stated that he owns three fields that were fallowed for the last two summer cropping seasons due to lack of purchasing power. He even added that "through the assistance of World Vision by providing us with both maize and beans seeds, we have grown crops that would sustain us for some months. We would even save seeds for the following planting season".

"Prior to this prevailing drought, our yields were lower. This is because, I am comparing the cob sizes: even though World Vision maize seeds are said to be open pollinated, they have produced maize as big as elbow length size, while the open pollinated varieties we usually grow are cup size", he explained. He confessed that the open pollinated varieties received through World Vision produce higher yields and are more drought tolerant than the locally available ones.

Mr. Mochekoane further indicated that, despite the favourable weather conditions in the past, they were not getting good yields due to their poor soils. However since they were advised and encouraged to add manure and ash to improve their soil structure, their yields are better. "I will stick to organic production", he promised

3. Constraints

- **Inadequate winter rainfall.** Lack of rain led to insufficient soil moisture at the early stage of the seed fairs. The result was that most farmers especially in the southern part of Lesotho found it difficult to turn the soil in order to sow their seeds. However this problem improved slightly when the country received some showers and snow in early June and July.

- **Unavailability of seeds.** Seed fairs are an excellent approach in a country that has huge potential for agriculture and hence more companies should be involved in seed manufacture. For Lesotho unavailability of seeds posed lot of problems however they were excited that they can make their own choices, the challenge came when the choice was limited.

- **Difficulty in recruiting experienced agronomists for short-term project.** The project operated with two agronomists for quite sometime because short projects do not attract experienced and qualified staff. The minimum duration that a professional can opt for is at least one year. As such, each agronomist covered two districts.

- **Limited Funding to carry out some of the activities:** This refers to farmer's field days, which received little attention due to limited funding. The plan for this activity was to have beneficiaries from different areas interact with each other and share experiences, opinions and ideas.

Overall performance of the project

Apart from the constraints mentioned above, the general performance of the project was successful due to smooth relationships with vendors and warm welcome by the government, community, and the farmers. Furthermore, the project recruited experienced staff with well-developed ideas and approaches. Additionally, the World Vision Lesotho Management and World Vision International (both the regional and the Partnership) has provided tremendous support that has helped map out and give direction to staff implementing the project.

Summary of cost effectiveness.

Refer to the attached Financial Report.

Annex A

WORLD VISION LESOTHO EMERGENCY AGRICULTURAL PROJECT (LEAP): SURVEY REPORT

PREPARED

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1. Introduction

Lesotho is one of the world's smallest countries with unique geographical locations. It is an "economic enclave", completely surrounded by the region's largest economy (South Africa). The country has only a few discovered natural resources and a very weak agricultural base. It is one of the countries in Southern Africa that have been greatly battered by the latest food crisis (beginning of 2002). Although the food crisis is attributable to a number of factors, the most significant are: severe drought; population (adult)'s ill-health due to HIV/AIDS related diseases; problems related to the land tenure system and the absence of effective precautionary measures to deal with problems of this nature.

As a result of the crisis, food prices have skyrocketed, making it virtually impossible for the venerable groups (the unemployed, women and children, HIV/AIDS infected and affected etc) to have accesses to basic necessities (food and shelter). The country has experienced steady growth in the size of vulnerable population since the beginning of the crisis. Initially, the donor community and other agencies believed that the winter (2002) harvest would boost food levels, and that the summer harvest (2003) would increase significantly due to sufficient rainfall. This would then decrease the price of maize, and food would become more affordable. However, none of these assumptions proved to be accurate.

The agricultural production (Winter, 2002) was exceptionally low. The factors that led to the low output are late rainfall and early frost. The southern part of the country was the most seriously affected (by drought, hence poor harvest). The subsequent winter seasons (April- July 2003, 2004) proved to be worse than previous ones, suggesting that the country is heading for a more catastrophic situation.

2. 0 The Rationale and the Objectives of the Survey

2.1 The Rationale of the Study

It is in the light of the problems highlighted above, that it is believed the Lesotho Emergency Agriculture Project (LEAP) has a central role to play in mitigating the effects of food shortage problem. By providing assistance in the form of seeds and training, LEAP can improve household food security for a significant number of vulnerable subsistence farmers. It is envisaged that the project will benefit about 8,200 vulnerable people, HIV/AIDS affected families (families looking after orphans and families with chronically ill members), families headed by the elderly, and malnourished children under five. The targeted beneficiaries will be the most needy individuals in four districts of Lesotho (Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Berea and Leribe).

It is noteworthy, however, that LEAP cannot effectively address this problem without adequate knowledge of socio-economic characteristics and coping mechanisms of the households in the targeted areas. It is in this sense that the present survey becomes very crucial.

2.2. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are: to gather relevant information to be used in the identification of impact indicators that will, in turn, facilitate future program monitoring and evaluation; to identify and quantify (where possible) current crop husbandry practices for future program planning; and to identify target groups and their socio-economic characteristics. It is strongly believed that this information is essential for effective project planning and implementation.

It is noteworthy, however, that achievement of the expected results (improved household food security) depends on a number of other factors. These include: timely distribution of inputs and other forms of assistance; enabling government policies and local authorities' co-operation; absence of serious natural disasters (including pest plagues, epidemics etc); conducive climatic conditions; adequate rainfall and timely planting.

3. 0. Methodology

3. 1 Types and Sources of Data

The present survey uses primary data sourced from the four districts of Lesotho (Leribe, Berea, Quthing and Mohale's Hoek).

3. 2. Data Collection Technique(s)

There are several ways of collecting primary data, namely, observation, interviews and written questionnaire. The present survey employs the written questionnaire technique. In respect of semi-literate and illiterate respondents, the enumerators (trained by WV Lesotho) assisted in both interpretation and filling-up of the questionnaire. A team of four enumerators (one per district) was employed. The team was assisted by two agronomists (from Relief Department) whose role was, by and large, supervisory.

3. 3 Sampling Procedures

Due to financial and time constraints, it was impossible to cover the entire population of interest. Consequently, only a fraction (sample) of the population was considered. Every possible attempt was made to ensure that the sample chosen was reasonably representative of the population of interest. A sampling technique used in the present survey is probability sampling. In particular, a cluster sampling procedure was employed. A list of villages was complied per district (this list constituted the sample frame) and the samples: 77, 71, 82 and 75 villages (sample sizes) were randomly selected for Leribe, Berea, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing, respectively. Individual households were, in turn, selected randomly (for purposes of filling-up the questionnaire) within each selected village.[1] One important advantage for using cluster sampling (over simple sampling) is that, logistically, the survey becomes easier to carry because the individuals in the sample are together in groups (not scattered all over the place). However, compared to the simple random sampling, there is a risk that the final sample may not be reasonably representative of the total population, especially, if the number of clusters selected in the first stage is too small.

3. 4 Data Management

Data management involves sorting, coding and summarising data from its original form. The rationale is to shape up the data for analysis and reportage. Data management techniques used in this survey are coding, selection and summary (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1997).

Codes are usually numbers that are used to identify specific responses or types of responses in data collection tools (questionnaires etc). They facilitate organization, quantifications and analysis of data. For instance, a response to a question about the respondent 's employment status could be coded as "1" if employed and "O" otherwise. The numbers are, by and large, arbitrary providing that there is consistency in the treatment of responses to a given question in a questionnaire.

Selection is a process through which interesting, significant or representative items (one member of group, one answer to a survey, or a particular quotation etc) are selected to illustrate one's argument. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, (1997) regard this as a key process in data management.

> Summary is a process that simplifies many individual responses by classifying them into manageable groups (each having responses that are similar in context). This facilitates simple description of data and allows for statistical analysis

[1]Since the sampling procedure involves more than one stage in which units are selected, then it is multi-stage sampling.

3. 5 Data Analysis

The software used in the analyses is the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This program has statistical routines that do numerical calculations that provide tabulations and summary measures of different kinds.

The present study employs an influential modern technique to quantitative analysis that is commonly referred to as Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA). EDA is, by and large, a pictorial approach that summarizes data in the form of pie charts, histograms and bar charts. Such pictures do not only present the data in the compact form, but may also serve both descriptive and inferential purposes. The descriptive statistics used in this study include proportions, percentages and ratios.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Baseline Typology

A total of three hundred and six (306) questionnaires were administered in the four districts of Lesotho, namely, Leribe, Berea, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing. A total of 77 classified respondents came from Leribe, 71 from Berea, 82 from Mohale's Hoek and 75 from Quthing[2]. The information is further classified in terms of ecological zones as can be observed from Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample Size(s) per Ecological zone per District

District	Ecological Zone				TOTAL
	Highlands	Foothills	Sengu River Valley	Lowlands	
Leribe	5	17		55	77
Berea		24		47	71
Mohale's Hoek		42	14	26	82
Quthing	3	39	33		75
TOTAL	8	122	47	128	305

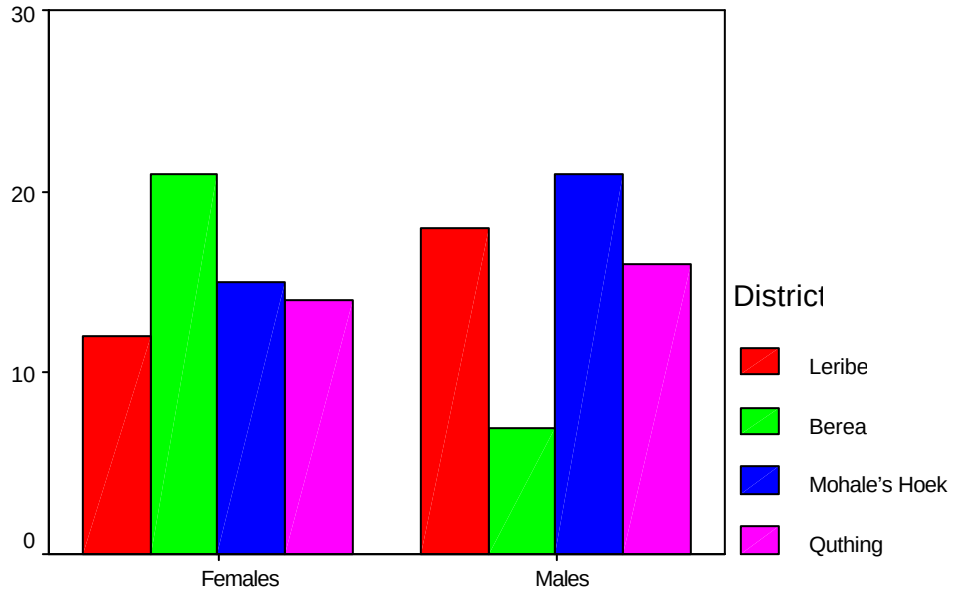
4.2 Socio Economic Characteristics of Households

4.2.1 Household Head

The overall findings show that 50 per cent of the households are female headed. It became apparent that a distinction should be made between households headed by the elderly people and those headed by children. The national benchmarks are used in this case. People with age greater than 55 are considered to be old and those with the age below 18 are considered to be children. Apparently, there are no cases of households headed by children, the minimum age was 20. But the results show that 44.77 per cent of households is headed by the elderly. This number is evenly distributed between the districts. The breakdown by gender, as shown on figure 1 below, shows that Berea has the highest percentage of females (16.9%) among the elderly household heads.

[2] There is one case that was not classified i.e. the information was not entered.

Figure 1: The Elderly Household Heads by Gender and by District



4.2.2 Literacy Level of the Household Head

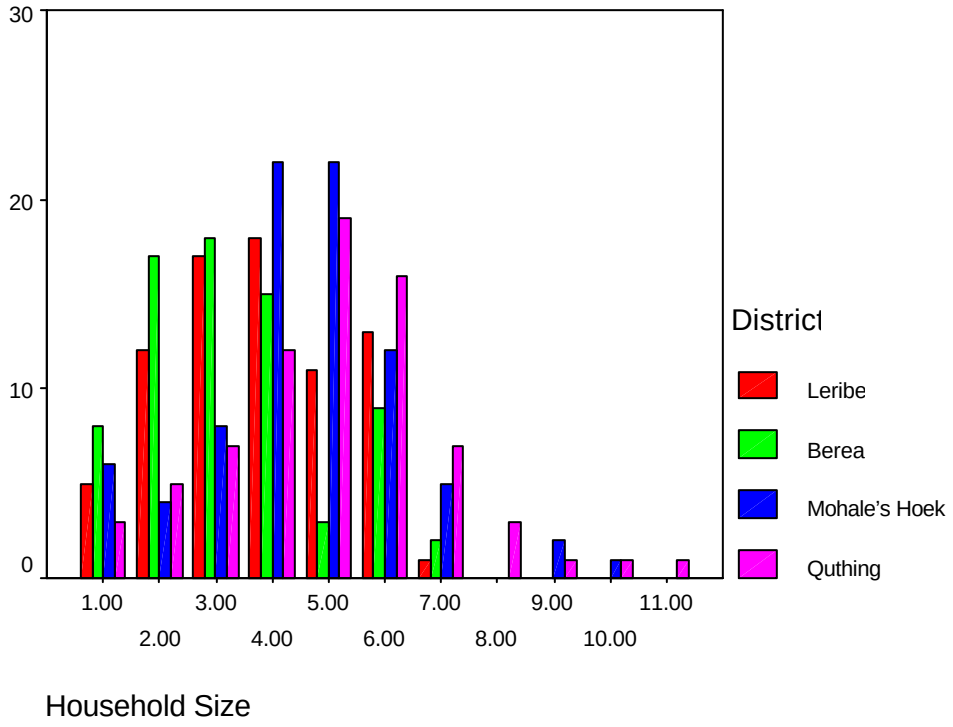
The literacy rate varies across districts. It appears that 19.1 per cent of the household heads are illiterate. Within the illiterate household heads, only 32.69 per cent is females, which is not surprising given the traditional setting of Basotho households. Mohale's Hoek has the greatest number of illiterate household heads (32.69%) followed by Quthing with 26.92 per cent, and Berea with 23.08 per cent. Overall, 61.4 per cent of household heads has primary education, 9.5 per cent has secondary education, whilst 9.8 per cent has higher education.

4.2.3 Household Size and Its Composition

On the average, there are four people per household. This is the modal household size constituting 21.9 per cent, followed by the household size of five (18%), three and six (16.3% each). Quthing has the highest percentage (9.48) of large families[3] as can be observed from figure 2 below. Mohale's Hoek comes second with 6.54 per cent and Leribe comes third with 4.58 per cent. The majority of the household members are found to be the spouses and children of the household heads. However, there is a significant number of children (142 in total) staying with their grandparents. The majority of these are from Quthing, Mohale's Hoek and Leribe . These trends, partly, explain why there are big family sizes in Quthing and Mohale's Hoek. However, it cannot be said with certainty whether these children are orphans or they are merely staying with their parents and grand parents in extended family setting.

[3] Household size greater than five

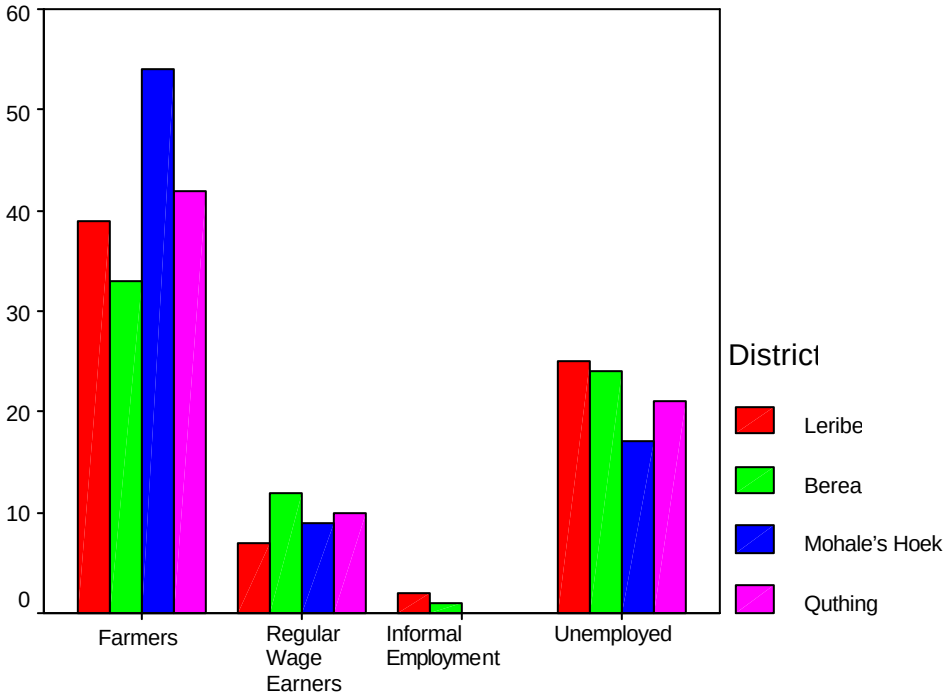
Figure 2: Household Size by District



4.2.4 Household Income Status

Owing to the nature of the study and the targeted households' demographics, the household members' occupations are classified into farming, formal employment (including those with regular wage), informal employment and other (which consists of the unemployed and students). The majority of household heads are not in any wage employment and therefore do not contribute regularly to household income. A total of 56.8 per cent is engaged in farming. It is only 12.8 per cent that has regular wage or salary. These include factory workers, teachers, construction workers and civil servants. The average earning for the regular earners is M1229 per month, however, the income distribution is highly skewed. The breakdown of the income on figure 3 below shows that the majority of farmers are based in Quthing and Mohale's Hoek. This is surprising given that Berea and Leribe are areas with relatively more arable land. A possible explanation is that the arable land is being turned into residential areas or industrial sites in these districts as some respondents have indicated.

Figure 3: Occupation of Household Heads



In general, the findings show an average household income of M302 per month. There is a significant variation in the four districts, with household income being lowest in Mohale's Hoek (M145) and highest in Berea (M647). Leribe recorded M191 per month while Quthing recorded M268 per month.

4.2.5 Household Assets

About 64 per cent (of households) does own cattle. This is not, entirely, surprising given the recent cases of high rates of stock theft in the country. Among households that own cattle, only 56.76 per cent owns more than two cattle. The implication is that only a few families can avoid high agricultural costs through the use of cattle. Mohale's Hoek appears to have relatively high rates of cattle ownership (34.23%), Leribe comes second (at 24.32 %), Berea comes third (at 21.62%) and Quthing comes last (at 19.83%).

The overall livestock ownership is very low. Sheep, goats, donkeys, horses and other small stock like pigs and rabbits are owned by a very small percentage of households, and in very small numbers. It is only the chickens that are owned by a greater proportion of the households. Among the people who own the chicken, only a few actually keep them in large numbers. The spatial analysis shows that livestock ownership is highest in Mohale's Hoek, followed by Quthing and Berea.

The overall ownership of assets is very low as can be observed from table 2 below. Only 38.89 per cent (of families) has shelter. The small farm implements refer to harrows, wheelbarrows, digging forks and spades. The large farm implements on the other hand refer to ploughs, sledges, planters and scotch carts. Generally, the analysis shows that the majority of households are not only "cash-poor" but also "asset-poor".

Table 2: Percentage of Households with Assets

Assets	Overall (%)	Leribe (%)	Berea (%)	Mohale's Hoek (%)	Quthing (%)
Savings	32.68	31.17	30.56	30.49	38.67
Shelter	38.89	1.30	0.00	73.17	77.33
Small Farm Implements	59.48	63.64	51.39	58.54	64.00
Large Farm Implements	24.51	25.97	20.83	28.05	22.67

4.3 Crop Husbandry Practises

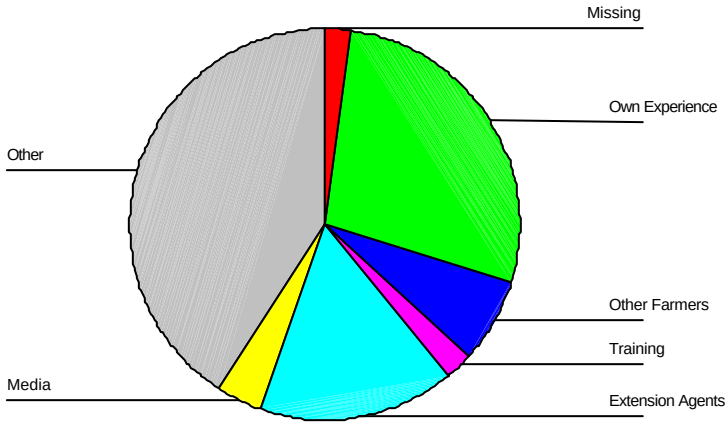
Out of the 306 respondents, 128 households do not own fields. The average land holding among the farm owners is 4.72 acres. On a spatial note, Mohale's Hoek shows the greatest percentage of farm ownership (68.42%), Quthing is second at 60.27 per cent, Berea comes third at 55.22 per cent and Leribe comes last at 53.33 per cent. This tallies well with the occupation of household heads (majority of farmers came from Quthing and Mohale's Hoek). Out of the total arable land of 839.6 acres, 720.58 acres were planted and only 665.98 acres were harvested. The total combined output is 72550 kilograms, which amounts to 100.68 kilograms of food per acre planted.

About 71.86 per cent were planted maize, 16.45 per cent were planted sorghum, 5.19 per cent were planted beans and the rest were planted wheat. There was also a significant number of multiple-cropping cases, especially maize with beans. Among the maize producers, only 9.5 per cent indicated that the maize would sustain them for eleven to twelve months. About 21.4 per cent indicated that the maize could hardly last four months. In respect of sorghum farmers, a total of 73.6 per cent said that the sorghum could hardly last for more than six months, while 76.4 per cent indicated that the beans could hardly take them more than six months. The poor harvest is attributable to, among others, unfavourable weather conditions, land tenure system and poor farming practises.

Hybrid seeds were used in about 45.89 per cent of the planted area, while the rest was planted indigenous seeds. Approximately 25.54 per cent of the planted area was applied fertilizer, 10.39 per cent was applied animal manure while 27.27 per cent applied both. Surprisingly, only 27.71 per cent was treated with pesticides, most of which was treated only once. Casual labour was employed in the preparation of land in 100 of the cases. Moreover, casual labour was employed for weeding and harvesting in 94 and 78 of the cases, respectively. These are the traditional farming practises, especially, in the lowlands and foothills of the country.

Figure 4 below depicts sources of agricultural information for farmers. It appears that farmers rely heavily on own experience, information provided by "Extension agents", and other sources (not mentioned). Training and media seem to play a very limited role.

Figure 4: Information Acquisition



4.4 Historical Trends of Emergency Aid

Within the total sample, the results show that 11.1 per cent of the respondents received seed (and sometimes fertilizer) assistance, 19.9 per cent received food assistance and 9.2 per cent received both seeds and food assistance. Several organizations have provided assistance in the form of seeds or food. The FAO, the Red Cross and the Government of Lesotho were cited as having provided the seeds (and fertilizer). The WFP and World Vision Lesotho were cited as having provided the food, mainly targeted at the elderly and the disabled. In respect of the quantities provided, there is no reliable data. It is, probably advisable to seek such information from the organizations involved in the distribution of the emergency aid.

It appears that there has been a balance in the provision of emergency aid to the households headed by both males and females. However, there seems to be some bias in relation to the ecological zones. Very few households living in the highlands benefited from the emergency aid (seeds and food). However, it is not clear as to whether they did not benefit at all or the problem is in the sample selected for the study. Among the recipients of seed aid, 53 per cent indicated that there was no impact mainly because the seeds were distributed late. Some even mentioned that they still had the seeds with them. About 26.7 per cent of the seed recipients indicated that the poor harvest is a result of bad weather and the poor quality of seeds (the plants were growing taller and taller without bearing fruits). The majority of the food aid recipients were very thankful and claimed great impact on their lives though the food lasted just a few months.

4.5 The Feelings and Opinions Concerning Emergency Aid

The results show that the majority of the people are in need of emergency aid. Approximately, 58.2 per cent of the respondents indicated that they are in dire need of emergency aid. The responses also indicate that a great number of the respondents (33.7%) would like to see emergency aid provided on a regular basis. Some (27.8%) are of the opinion that it should be directed to the needy. The issue of management failures was also highlighted. About 19.9 per cent are of the opinion that the distribution of emergency aid is being mismanaged and misdirected. A significant percentage (23.2%) of the households indicated that they would be grateful if emergency aid could be provided in the form of farm inputs, farm implements and long-term agricultural projects.

In respect of feelings and opinions about emergency aid, the responses were rather mixed as highlighted above. But what comes out loud and clear is that the emergency aid should be directed to the needy in the society, orphans, the elderly and the disabled. Some respondents believe that emergency aid can create dependency and promote laziness in society if provided indiscriminately. Others, however, are of the opinion that the emergency aid should be provided to every body. The main reason being that, normally, it brews conflict between community members if provided discriminately. This brings up the issue of mismanagement in the distribution of aid, an issue that has been highlighted by most respondents. It seems favouritism (political or otherwise) plays a major role in determining who gets help, hence a suggestion that village chiefs be involved in the identification of the vulnerable people and in the distribution of emergency aid. In general, the respondents have indicated a need for aid in the form of seeds, pesticides, food for work programmes, irrigation dams, and poultry. Their requests range from vegetable seeds, pesticides, food for work programmes, irrigation dams, piggeries and poultry. There is also a strong suggestion that the quantity of farm inputs given to individual households be based on the sizes of the fields they own.

4.6 Conclusion

The present study has made an attempt to: gather information that can be used in the identification of impact indicators for future program monitoring and evaluation; identify and quantify current crop husbandry practises; and to identify target groups and their socio-economic characteristics. The questionnaire was administered in the four districts of Lesotho, namely, Leribe, Berea, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing. The results show that the elderly, most of whom are illiterate, head a significant percentage of households. Unemployment is very high, with just a few of the household members in wage employment. Most of the households are either without farmland or livestock. The farm implements are owned by a very small percentage of the households. In the light of these, therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of households are both income-poor and asset-poor. Farming is a dominant occupation among the households (more farmers are in Mohale's Hoek and Quthing). Harvest has been very poor due to unfavourable weather conditions and poor crop and animal husbandry practises.

3.7 Recommendations

On the basis of the results, it would be advisable to target emergency aid to the most vulnerable groups in society, these include households headed by old people or children and families taking care of orphans. In the short run, the timely provision of seeds and other farm inputs would make a significant impact in boosting production and alleviating hunger. But the general feeling is that agriculture should at least divert away from the traditional maize, sorghum and beans production to the production of vegetables and animal husbandry. The building of irrigation dams coupled with the provision of seeds can make a great impact in the long run. Promotion of animal husbandry, especially, pigs, rabbits and poultry can empower a significant number of women who are already in this type of farming.

Annex B

WORLD VISION LESOTHO EMERGENCY AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT

PREPARED BY

S.L. RALITŠOELE (DR.)

MAY, 2005

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 World Vision Lesotho launched the Lesotho Emergency Agricultural Project (LEAP) as a response to the food crisis that hit Lesotho in recent years. The crisis was brought about by the drought, alternatively late rains and early frost during the years from 2002 to 2003. In his address on Lesotho Television on February 10, 2004 the Honorable Prime Minister Mr. Pakalitha Mosisili observed that some 600'000 Basotho were faced with starvation unless they were given food aid. In 2002 the figure of people in the same plight was estimated at 500'000. This suggests a steady increase in numbers of people in need of assistance. Agricultural production (winter, 2002) was exceptionally low. The southern part of the country was most seriously affected by drought hence the poor harvest. The subsequent winter seasons (April-June, 2003, 2004) proved to be worse than previous ones, suggesting that the country is heading for a more catastrophic situation[4]. In the 1960's Lesotho became a net importer of food as a result of declining agricultural yield. At the same time population growth has been moving in the opposite direction. Between 1986 and 1994 production of the five main crops has ranged from a high of 147kg per capita per annum (73% of the requirement) to low of 39kg per capita per annum (19% of the requirement), with a mean production of just below 50% of minimum requirement. Agriculture represents an average of 14% of GDP down from 21% in 1980, 31% in 1970 and 60% at independence (1966). Grain requirements are expected to increase from around 320'000 tons per annum to 570'000 against an average production of only 170'000[5]. Incomes have dropped, roughly half of the population is blow the poverty line (US$470), and one fourth are ultra poor (per capita income <US$235). The upper 20% of the population account for 62% of total household expenditure whereas the lower 40% of the population account for only 8%[6].

The Project targeted 8'200 most vulnerable people in the districts of Leribe, Berea, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing for food and seed aid in collaboration with the Catholic Relief Services and Food and Agriculture Organization. The seed and associated training were intended to kick starting a process where affected people would be capacitated to produce food from their own agricultural efforts on a sustainable basis, while the food aid aimed at meeting household requirements in the interim.

2. RATIONAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

2.1.1 The Rational of the Study

Following the implementation of the project it became important to take stock and assess its impact on the livelihoods of the targeted people particularly in terms increased crop production as contemplated in the write up. The approach of the project sought the participation of its beneficiaries such that they do not just become recipients of aid. Rather, they should be adequately trained to continue with the process beyond the project phase in order to increase crop production and minimize the need for food aid in future. The project also provided for the formation of mutually beneficial partnerships between, for example, seed vendors and farmers, farmers themselves etc.

Regular reports did capture the activities undertaken, and lessons that emerged during project implementation. However the envisaged impact of the project was not

[4] World Vision , Makhetha and Ramolise, Lesotho Emergency Agricultural Project: Survey Report, p1
[5] Draft Strategy for National Agricultural Development, p2
[6] World Bank, Lesotho Poverty Assessment 1995, p12

comprehensively covered in these reports. It is World Vision's policy to conduct regular or annual evaluations, to determine the impact and sustainability of project outputs.

2.1.2 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to gather and use relevant data to:

- Determine if in fact the seed and food aid resulted in farmers attaining improved crop production using higher yielding seed varieties; and
- Establish whether following the initial distribution of seed and dissemination of technical messages through LEAP beneficiaries of the project have become better farmers who can sustain good practices into the future.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1.1 The consultant reviewed the original project proposal, baseline study report and the interim report prepared by WV Lesotho as prescribed in the terms of reference. In addition he reviewed the Draft Strategy for National Agricultural Development and the World Bank Lesotho assessment of 1995

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 Types and Sources of Data

Data was collected from selected resource centers of the four districts (Leribe, Berea, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing. The study used the data collected during the current exercise against data collected during the baseline survey to determine the extent to which LEAP had in fact attained its aim of capacitating target households to improve their crop production.

4.1.2 Data Collection

The study administered a structured questionnaire to source data from groupings of respondents from the listed resource centers.

4.1.3 Sample of the Study

A list of resource centers for consideration was predetermined by World Vision Lesotho and given to the consultant. A team comprising the consultant and the Project Manager conducted interviews. The consultant and the Project Manager encouraged the interviewees to be open and frank with their responses. The consultant noted that interviews conducted in group sessions are at risk of producing biased data because some members of the group might find themselves obliged to give similar answers to ones given by one or some of the other respondents in order to retain cordial relations among group members. In all twenty two (22) interviews were conducted. Because of limited time not the entire population of interest was covered. However a reasonably representative sample from the four districts was considered. Prudence also dictated that the sample should feature respondents who were targeted during the baseline survey so that a sound comparison could be made.

In addition to the people who had previously received seed more people attended interview sessions. This was because they had seen the positive results of the contribution made by LEAP to improved crop yield. They felt that they wanted to join so that they could also attain household food security.

The tables below indicate attendance figures by district, resource center, village and ecological zone. The number of women who attended interview sessions represents 59.3% of all attendees.

BEREA DISTRICT

Resource Centre	Village	Eco-zone	Attendance		
			No.women	No. men	Total
1. Maqhaka	Maqhaka/Berea	Lowlands	11	4	15
2. Teyateyaneng	Ha-Mphele	Lowlands	15	6	21
3. Pilot	Ha-Motjotjo	Foothill	24	20	44
4. Mapoteng	Ha-'Maloela	Foothill	12	6	18
5. Corner Exchange	Belabela	Lowlands	9	4	13
6. Sefikeng	Ha-Moshati	Lowlands	14	3	17
	GRAND TOTAL		**85**	**42**	**128**

LERIBE DISTRICT

Resource Centre	Village	Eco-zone	Attendance		
			No.women	No. men	Total
7. Peka	Kolonyama Ha-Nyenye	Lowlands	15	10	25
8. Maputsoe	Ha-Matsoete	Lowlands	20	16	36
9. Hlotse	Linots'ing	Lowlands	7	6	13
10. Mahobong	Lesiamo	Lowlands	28	19	4
11. Khabo	Moreneng	Lowlands	13	7	20
12. Tale	Koenaneng	Lowlands	4	7	11
13. Pelaneng	Phorosane	Highlands	3	11	14
	GRAND TOTAL		**90**	**76**	**166**

MOHALE'S HOEK DISTRICT

Resource Centre	Village	Eco-zone	Attendance		
			No.women	No. men	Total
14. Taung	Ha-Khits'ane	Lowlands	8	7	15
15. Mpharane	Liphofung	Foothill	16	9	25
16. Mekaling	Mekaling	Foothill	10	11	21
17. Makhaleng	Mokhele	Lowlands	17	9	26

GRAND TOTAL	**51**	**36**	**87**

QUTHING DISTRICT

Resource Centre	Village	Eco-zone	Attendance		
			No.women	No. men	Total
18. Ha-Koali	Ha-Koali	Senqu River Valley	18	12	30
19. Mphaki	Mphaki	Highlands	9	8	17
20. Qomoqomomg	Ha-Mokhameleli	Foothill	21	15	36
21. Tele	Mathole	Senqu River Valley	9	9	18
22. Tele	Ha-Mosuoe	Senqu River Valley	14	5	19
	GRAND TOTAL		**71**	**47**	**120**

4.1.4 Data Management

The data collected was sorted out from its original form according to the coding shown in the questionnaire. The codes were used to identify types of specific responses to the questions posed during the interviews so that the data can be organized to reflect its quality. This made it possible to summarize the data for purposes of making inferences from it. The questions were fashioned such that the responses received bring out information that relates directly to the objectives and expected results from the implementation of the project.

4.1.5 Data Analysis

Because the respondents were treated as groups in their respective resource centers the number of questionnaires administered was limited to the number of selected resource centers. It was necessary to adopt this approach because of the urgency with which the client wanted the report, and the limited time allocated for the exercise. This therefore means that in total only twenty two (22) responses were recorded. For this reason the use of sophisticated methods of analyzing the data was obviated. Rather the analysis was done manually by the consultant. It should be noted, though, that the selected sample was deemed representative enough of the four districts and ecological zones covered by the project.

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 Seed Distribution

The project targeted 8'200 most vulnerable people initially. Actual recipients of LEAP seed assistance numbered 1'640. It is estimated that an average size of a household has ± five members. On that assumption the project attained its intended coverage.

The voucher system and seed fair arrangement was highly appreciated and accepted by all those who were interviewed, in all the four districts. The farmers unanimously agree that this is the best way of receiving seeds as it also involves them in the choice of the seed they prefer. While the seed fair arrangement is very good in some places the farmers feel they should have been notified in good time as some of them did not make

it to the seed fair and therefore were not able to choose when they arrived at their respective resource centres. They were given ready seed packages. In short, the openness of the seed fair approach and the manner with which the beneficiaries were encouraged to choose the seed they preferred, and the fact that they did not incur transport costs left a favourable impression in their minds and they requested that this should continue.

Regarding complaints from some farmers who were supplied with contaminated seed, the management of WV (Agricultural Project Manager) responded swiftly to address the problem. The vendor who had supplied the seed in Mahobong resource center (Leribe) and Qomoqomong resource center (Quthng) was identified and reprimanded. Thereafter there was no recurrence of the problem. Fortunately the incidence of contaminated seed was so insignificant that it did not affect the overall outcome of the project.

Initially the vendors became so aggressive in touting farmers for their seed that they confused them. LEAP staff reacted by introducing controls that enabled the farmers to choose their seed more freely. LEAP staff warned the vendors that they would be disqualified if they continued to harass the farmers.

5.1.2 Training

The majority of the farmers who received training from the project feel that the training they received was quite suitable for the prevailing drought and poverty situation in their respective areas. The use of ash and kraal manure helps a lot in reviving their soil as ash and kraal manure are locally available. In this regard the training has inspired them to look for locally available material for the improvement of their soil. They were also trained in using local herbs in controlling plant pests and diseases. Those who attended the training sessions feel that they are now better equipped to deal with their day to day farming problems more effectively. When asked whether they shared the knowledge they received from the training to fellow farmers they all responded positively, saying this was part of their training to impart information to others. As part of their training the farmers find farmer field days quite useful because at this time they are able to exchange information with other farmers on matters of common interest and this has also brought them together as a result they are now able to visit each other more often to share experiences.

Special mention has to be made of the LEAP target group in Mphaki, Quthing district. This group was trained by LEAP staff in block farming. They did so well that when the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security Dr. Phororo past by he was highly impressed by the maize block farms in that area. The Minister had to stop his entourage for some time to examine the block farms as a token of approval. Further testimony of the success attained by the Mphaki farmers is that they received the second prize after Qomoqomong, also in Quthing, in block farming in the entire country.

Training was also conducted on HIV/AIDS as indicated by the beneficiaries. This has led to more awareness of the pandemic among the rural populace and has removed some of the taboo to talk about HIV/AIDS. They were also trained on good nutrition and behavioral aspects of dealing with HIV/AIDS. The beneficiaries did not receive any training on simple record keeping from the project.

5.1.3 Food Distribution

The beneficiaries of the food aid projectme expressed their gratitude to the project for this assistance as it came at the time when they had absolutely no food in their households due to the continued drought. Because of the food they received they were able to attend to their small fields to plough and sow a few seeds as they had gained some strength. The food aid definitely made a positive contribution to their livelihoods otherwise some of them might have died of hunger. It should be noted that food aid was not part of LEAP per se. Rather there was a coincidence in that people who benefited from it also received seed from LEAP. The positive aspect of this is that the food they received made them sufficiently strong to make good use of the seed.

6. ADDITIONAL FARMERS' VIEWS

6.1.1 The overwhelming majority of the beneficiaries in all the four districts covered by LEAP expressed their sincere gratitude to WV Relief Projectme for the aid they received. They unanimously feel they have received much needed help at a time when they were in dire need of external assistance. With the help they received from LEAP, the interaction they had with WV LEAP staff and the warm attitude towards them displayed by WV in general have all inspired them (beneficiaries) to work together.

Concerning the training the beneficiaries feel it has improved their farming skills a lot but they feel that after training there should be more frequent follow-ups by trainers to see if they are doing the right thing, besides this encourages them to do better.
The seed fair arrangement and voucher system is liked and accepted by all beneficiaries. They however pointed out that in some cases both in the Northern and Southern districts some of the maize and beans seed was found to be contaminated and not viable when planted. This resulted in uneven germination of maize (mostly in the northern districts) and beans (especially in the southern districts beans were infested with weevils). The beneficiaries feel that this discrepancy emanates from the suppliers who have to be examined by WV technical support and agronomists that the seed they bring is the right kind of seed and that it has not been tampered with. The beneficiaries also complain that during the time of the seed fair when they were to choose the seed they preferred they were rather confused by the suppliers who were quite aggressive in inviting the beneficiaries to their respective seed stands (suppliers' seed stands) in this way the beneficiaries felt uneasy and were not able to freely choose the seed they preferred.

The open-pollinated seed varieties are highly appreciated by the beneficiaries. The use of such varieties will enable them to save a lot in terms of costs as the seed of such varieties if well stored and selected can be used from growing season to growing season. The hybrid seed varieties and their related fertilizer and pesticide requirements can not be afforded by these resource poor farmers.

The general feeling of the seed beneficiaries is that the seed quota of 10 kg of maize seed and 10 kg of beans seed is not enough. This feeling is expressed in all the districts by the beneficiaries. The majority of the farmers say they have big fields, which can accommodate at least 20 kg each of maize and bean varieties. They are confident that with 20 kg of either variety in the field and favourable weather conditions they will be able to get an appreciable yield from their fields and most importantly, they will be able to help those of their fellow farmers who still need external help to acquire seed.

The beneficiaries request that the seed fairs should take place earlier than they did this time around, because as resource poor farmers in this way they will be able to look for assistance on time in terms of preparing their land. If preparation of their fields takes place at same time as other farmers who have draught animals or tractors the resource

poor farmers tend to wait for others to prepare their fields first and as a result they usually miss the right planting time.

One other aspect of the beneficiaries' views is the high cost of hiring tractors during planting time, which as resource poor farmers they cannot afford. A few have draught animals but the animals are so emaciated that they have no power to pull the ploughs especially under current drought conditions which make the soil to be hard, dry and Soddy. The beneficiaries are therefore requesting the project to help them overcome this problem by buying a tractor or acquiring (hiring) one, which will be community owned/based. They want to till their soil on time, to enable them to collect ash and kraal manure for early application on their fields before planting time. In this way they feel they will (do much better) improve their performance in the field and receive higher yield from seed offered to them by WV Project.

An overwhelming majority of the beneficiaries believe that if more of them undergo the same kind of training from WV trainers and other organizations which cooperate with WV e.g. Care, Red Cross, CRS and Government Ministries and if more of them are offered seed, this will lead to more cooperation, more contact among the beneficiaries and more friendliness which will contribute towards curbing the rampant theft that is found in their respective villages. And most importantly if more of them are trained and more of them received seed in the manner in which LEAP helped them – they (beneficiaries) will boldly face their future with greater determination to further improve their lot. Therefore LEAP beneficiaries in all the four districts of Leribe, Berea, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing humbly request that LEAP should not stop to help them now as they have just got the impetus to improve their household livelihoods. Despite the unfavorable weather conditions in Lesotho in general and in their respective villages in particular the beneficiaries feel the help they received from LEAP be it in the form of training, be it in the form of food aid and be it in the form of the kind of seed varieties they received has contributed to the improvement of their household livelihoods.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1.1 From the data analyzed above a trend develops across the board. The conclusion that the consultant draws is therefore thus:

7.1.2 Distribution of seed using the seed fair mode proved to be effective as long as some controls are introduced including proper inspection to verify seed quality, conduct of seed vendors etc.;

7.1.3 Overall the majority of target households feel that they have benefited from the project to the extent that despite continuing difficulties they are better equipped to deal with their farming problems than they were before the advent of LEAP. Of additional significance is the training in biological pest control because of its positive environmental impact.

7.1.4 They feel that they will be less dependant on food aid provided additional seed and training can be given. They also feel that if more households were to benefit from such aid in future it would help curb the current rate of theft from the fields.

7.1.5 An unforeseen benefit LEAP afforded the target communities is that it brought about more cohesiveness and improved relations among them through regular contact facilitated by field days and seed fairs.

7.1.6 Through contact with LEAP some forgotten social values such as communal approach to solving common problems have been revived.

7.1.7 There is confirmation that although this was not part of LEAP, it was noted that food aid was indeed desperately required by the target people as recorded in the Baseline Survey, and that it made a positive contribution to their food situation at least in the short run.

But, identification of affected households was not properly done to the extent that some households benefited unfairly.

8. RECOMMENDATONS

8.1.1 The conclusions drawn above suggest that the good that was derived from LEAP must be applauded. Further the lessons learnt must necessarily form the basis on which similar interventions are fashioned in future. Specifically the consultant recommends the following:

8.1.2 Efforts of making seed more readily available in the required varieties during the different planting seasons must be encouraged. Also the quota system must not limit the performance of individual farmers as they possess differing sizes of fields. But caution must be exercised to ensure that proper standards are maintained in terms of seed quality and farmer vendor relations.

8.1.3 Farmer training projects should be improved to become more frequent, and to cover an increased number of people as this will capacitate more resource poor farmers and make them less dependant on outside assistance.

8.1.4 Facilitating agencies need to pool their resources for more efficiency and effectiveness rather than duplicate efforts. The collaboration of Government with WV, FAO and CRS is testimony of the benefit of such collaboration. For purposes of easy communication at village level the offices of the local chiefs must necessarily be brought into the picture.

8.1.5 In addition to the pronouncements made by the respondents themselves it is the consultants considered opinion that an extension of the project would do a lot of good in terms of sustaining the momentum activated by LEAP. While it is evident that respondents have gained from the training administered under LEAP, it is equally clear that more is needed in order to inspire more confidence in them.