

# Social cash transfers, generational relations and youth poverty trajectories in rural Lesotho and Malawi

Research highlight 1 (Lesotho): Household change 1996-2016

Preliminary findings from an ESRC-DFID-funded research project April 2017



All 44 households belonging to the village were profiled in 2016 and the details compared with profiles from 2008 and 1996.

## Demographic structure

- \* The number and structure of households in the village have responded to shifts in the external environment: declining opportunities for mine work in South Africa; climate stress including drought; the introduction of social cash transfers.
- \* Overall the resident population has declined, particularly since 2008, attributable to a fall in the number of households as well as diminishing household size.
- \* The number of children per household has declined more steeply than other age groups.
- \* More men are now resident in the village, but a growing number of households are headed by women.
- \* Household members are less clear than in the past as to which non-resident relatives 'belong' to their households.

## Changing assets

- \* The number of livestock per household rose between 1996 and 2008 and has since diminished, but this might reflect the impact of recent drought.
- \* The decline in the total number of fields is more surprising; this might suggest that households now depend less on subsistence crop production or that field size has increased.
- \* The only striking change in household possessions is that two thirds of households now have mobile phones.

## Changing livelihoods

- \* Of 43 households, 27 claimed to be worse off in 2016 than 2008, while only 7 said they were better off.
- \* Most attributed the deterioration to the recent drought.
- \* Asked what they did when their harvested crops ran out, several mentioned relying on a pension or child grant. Others referred to piecework, brewing or begging. Relatively few had access to remittances.

## Moving between villages

- \* A number of households had transferred from other villages. Some of these were dependent on social cash transfers and thus did not require fields to be sustainable.

### Do the right households receive cash transfers?

- Six of the seven households receiving child grants have very few assets (jobs, fields and livestock), but some very poor households do not receive any cash transfers.
- Criteria for selection to the child grant scheme are unclear to community members.
- Of the fourteen households with children identified as the most vulnerable using the **National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) Proxy Means Test**, six receive child grants—but not the two with the lowest scores.
- In 2016 10 households had a **Multidimensional Poverty Index** exceeding 0.5.
- Of these, 7 households included children but only one was in receipt of a child grant.
- 1 of the 8 households receiving child grants and 3 of the 8 households receiving a pension had a MPI above 0.5.





		1996		2008		2016	
		total	per household	total	per household	total	per household
<b>Population</b>							
	Number of households	*41		47		44	
	Number of adults resident	91	2.2	112	2.4	99	2.3
	Number of children resident	77	1.9	89	1.9	66	1.5
	Number of 18-32-year-olds resident	36	0.9	42	0.9	38	0.9
	Resident population	168	4.0	203	4.3	168	3.8
<b>Head of household</b>							
	Resident male	21	51%	25	53%	28	64%
	Absent male	12	29%	5	11%	2	5%
	Female de jure	7	17%	16	34%	14	32%
	Child	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
<b>Livestock</b>							
	Cattle	175	4.3	217	4.6	161	3.7
	Sheep	398	9.7	578	12.3	426	9.7
	Goats	132	3.2	339	7.2	240	5.5
	Pigs	3	0.1	64	1.4	11	0.3
	Horses	41	1.0	31	0.7	28	0.6
	Donkeys	42	1.0	53	1.1	45	1.0
	Poultry	160	3.9	158	3.4	93	2.1
<b>Fields</b>							
	Owned	81	2.0	89	1.9	62	1.4
	Share-cropped own	17	0.4	6	0.1	20	0.5
	Share-cropped other	10	0.2	35	0.7	37	0.8
<b>Houses</b>							
	Rondavel	64	1.6	73	1.6	71	1.6
	Heisi	8	0.2	3	0.1	5	0.1
	Polata	20	0.5	25	0.5	22	0.5
	Optak	2	0.0	4	0.1	2	0.0
	Total rooms	97	2.4	118	2.5	120	2.7
<b>Other assets</b>							
	Plough	17	0.4	22	0.5	21	0.5
	Radio	25	0.6	37	0.8	32	0.7
	Motor vehicle	1	0.0	2	0.0	2	0.0
	Beds	41	1.0	57	1.2	53	1.2
	Latrine	9	0.2	18	0.4	19	0.4
	Cell phone	0	0.0	11	0.2	50	1.1
	Refrigerator	n/k		2	0.0	1	0.0

\* Six households belonging to the village are located in another village an hour's walk away. These were not profiled in 1996.

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