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Factors influencing access and retention in secondary schooling for orphaned and vulnerable children and young people: Case studies from high HIV and AIDS prevalence contexts in Lesotho

Thabiso Nyabanyaba

Institute of Education, National University of Lesotho



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SOFIE is a three year Research Project supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC). Its purpose is to strengthen open, distance and flexible learning (ODFL) systems and structures to increase access to education for young people living in high HIV prevalence areas in Malawi and Lesotho. It seeks to achieve this through developing a new, more flexible model of education that uses ODFL to complement and enrich conventional schooling. It also seeks to encourage application of the new knowledge generated through effective communication to development agencies, governments, development professionals, non-governmental organisations and other interested stakeholders.

Access to education and learning is being viewed as a 'social vaccine' for HIV but in high prevalence areas orphans and other vulnerable children are frequently unable to go to school regularly and are thus being deprived of the very thing they need to help protect themselves from infection. In this context sustained access is critical to long term improvements in risk and vulnerability and it requires new models of education to be developed and tested.

The partners

The research team is led from the Department of Education and International Development, Institute of Education, University of London and the research is being developed collaboratively with partners in sub-Saharan Africa.

Lead partner

The Department of Education and International Development, Institute of Education, University of London:
Dr. Pat Pridmore and Mr. Chris Yates

Collaborating partners

The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE): Ms. Tessa Welch and Mr. Ephraim Mhlanga
The Institute of Education, National University of Lesotho: Dr. Thabiso Nyabanyaba.
Centre for Education Research and Training (CERT), University of Malawi: Ms. Catherine Moleni

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SOFIE
Department of Education and
International Development
Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way
London
WC1H 0AL
United Kingdom

Tel: + 44 (0) 20 7612 6152
Website: <http://sofie.ioe.ac.uk>
Email: m.harri@ioe.ac.uk

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Abbreviations and local usage

ACL	Anglican Church of Lesotho
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CHH	Child Headed Household
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOL	Examinations Council of Lesotho
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FPE	Free Primary Education
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IE	Institute of Education (Lesotho)
LEC	Lesotho Evangelical Church
LSEN	Learners with Special Educational Needs
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
Moet	Ministry of Education and Training
Moved	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
NACC	National Aids Coordination Committee
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
ODFL	Open, Distance and Flexible Learning
OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
SACMEQ	The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SGB	School Governing Body
SMC	School Management Committee
SRV	Senqu River Valley
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

Bohali	Bride price
Chobeliso	Practice of hijacking a girl and forcing her into marriage
Khutsana-khulu	Complete orphan
Lebollo	Initiation school
Nkhono	Grandmother
Phephesela	The business of selling a local traditional brew noted by raising a flag when available

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1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to identify factors influencing access and retention in secondary schooling for orphans and other vulnerable children living in high HIV prevalence areas of Lesotho. A case study approach was used to address this aim.

The findings from this study have been used to inform an intervention that seeks to increase access to learning and thereby reduce drop-out and repetition rates in secondary schools. This study and the intervention are part of a larger programme of research known as the SOFIE Project (see www.sofie.ioe.ac.uk).

1.2 Rationale

Lesotho is party to a number of international commitments to increase access to education, including the EFA goals. Some progress has been made in increasing access, particularly for previously marginalised groups such as rural herdboys (Hua, 2007; Nyabanyaba, 2008). However, there have been some concerns expressed about the quality of education provided in Lesotho and several developing countries (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; Peters, Johnstone & Ferguson, 2005; Lewin, 2007). Lewin has been one of the most audible voices in the calls for a more nuanced consideration of access to education. He argues that measurement of enrolments is insufficient for indicating more than initial access (Lewin, 2007). In particular, issues of attendance and performance are not adequately captured by the simple measure of access by means of enrolments. Pridmore (2008) has also highlighted how the spread of HIV and AIDS has had a negative impact on the participation of children from affected families in school.

In recent years, Lesotho has introduced a number of initiatives aimed at improving access to basic education and in response to its commitment to international declarations. The most significant initiative in Lesotho's education system in recent years is the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE). This initiative which was phased in from 2000 has seen a larger than usual pool of learners reach secondary education since 2007, seriously straining the already constrained educational access to secondary education in the country. Moreover, this huge flow of learners into secondary education comes even as Lesotho continues to struggle with poor access and high inefficiency rates at secondary education. Although Lesotho spends higher than most countries on education, relative to countries in similar socio-economic contexts, it does not get anywhere near the same benefits as other countries in terms of educational returns. As was indicated in an earlier report, Lesotho's education system is extremely wasteful in terms of children who finally reach the end of school and attain meaningful competencies (Nyabanyaba, 2008)¹. Moreover, secondary schooling in Lesotho is rated as one of the most inaccessible systems in the world (Lerotholi, 2001; Ministry of Education and Training, 2004). Now, in the face of growing poverty and HIV and AIDS, it has been demonstrated that those who are excluded are children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (Pridmore & Yates, 2006). The situation arising from the impact of HIV and AIDS calls for a more nuanced consideration of accessibility, one that takes account of a wide range of social and psychosocial issues that impact on children's participation in school.

Although the Demographic Health Survey notes that equity has been achieved for primary school age specific orphans in Lesotho (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2005), the most overwhelming finding regarding secondary education in Lesotho is that it lags primary access by a notable margin (Ministry of Education and Training, 2004). The study forecasts that while HIV will negatively affect demand for education and aggravate the already poor efficiency rates in Lesotho's education system, the distinguishing feature of secondary education will continue to be restricted access. The constraints in supply at secondary

¹ <http://sofie.ioe.ac.uk/publications/NyabanyabaReviewPaper.pdf>

education in Lesotho have also been confirmed by a large scale quantitative study that indicated that 44% of primary students have access to a school within 30 minutes' walk compared to only 23% of secondary students (Bureau of Statistics, 2002). It is interesting to note that in the same study, while only 44% percent of students find accessible primary schools to attend, a high number (84%) were enrolled in school. In contrast, the enrolment rates into secondary education were found to be 26%. This implies that other factors besides unavailability of places prevent secondary students from attending school. Lerotholi (2001) has suggested that the high cost of secondary education in Lesotho is a major threat to access. Although the Lesotho Demographic Health Survey indicated that poverty is a main determinant of non-attendance in education, orphanhood alone is not a strong determinant of whether a child is or is not enrolled in school. Other studies have reported on higher dropout rates among orphans than non-orphans in Lesotho's education system (Kimane, 2005). In Lesotho, while the impact of HIV on attendance can be expected to worsen attendance rates, a much wide range of socio-economic factors, including frequent droughts and declining employment opportunities in Lesotho and South Africa, are negatively affecting educational access. A much less studied occurrence that is being reported lately is that of parents going for even poorer-paying jobs in South Africa farms and wine estate (termed the 'Ceres effect') where they have to stay away from families for very long periods in order to make a living. Often such jobs do not allow them to visit their families and the eventually get lost to their families.

It is evident that even more needs to be learnt about the wide spectrum of factors that impact on educational access for orphaned and vulnerable children in Lesotho and what can be done to support such children. Bearing in mind that at the heart of schooling is the child, the rights of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) to schooling and quality education should be protected. Intervention in Lesotho has so far focused on financial support to OVCs without psychosocial support and a more flexible educational provision that reaches out to affected children is needed. Lessons from the non-formal education system indicate that there is potential to reach out to more children in difficult circumstances through a more open and flexible education model. There is some evidence of pockets of innovations in assisting orphaned and vulnerable children in Lesotho, but a more systematic study needs to be undertaken in order to investigate how children facing difficult circumstances (in the context of high HIV prevalence rates) can be assisted to overcome barriers to educational access. This is why a study coordinated by the Department of Education and International Development, Institute of Education was set up to explore the potential role of open, distance and flexible learning (ODFL) in Lesotho and Malawi in improving access to education in a context of high HIV prevalence rates.

1.3 Background and context

With an area of just over 30,000 square kilometres, Lesotho is completely landlocked by the Republic of South Africa. It is a very mountainous country with much of the population concentrated in low-lying areas close to the border with South Africa. Its territory is usually divided into four regions: lowlands, foothills, Senqu River Valley and mountains, with the latter two definitely rural while the other two regions are largely urban. The majority population are Basotho and the official languages are Sesotho and English.

Over 70% of the population is rural and life expectancy has dropped from 61 years in 1990 to 42 in 2006 as per the World Health Statistics. The statistics also show that the main cause of death is AIDS (WHO, 2008).

Since independence from Britain in 1966, Lesotho has experienced a great deal of instability including sixteen years of autocratic rule by its first Prime Minister, Leabua Jonathan and eight years of military rule. A number of reports have noted that Lesotho ranks above average for sub-Saharan African countries on governance and that the country has shown an economic growth, at least until 1998 when there were widespread political riots (Wason &

Hall, 2004). Growth in the textile industry under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) initially gave Lesotho some improved employment opportunities and the introduction of Free Primary Education have improved access to education for the general population, particularly those who could not afford to pay fees and feed their children while in school. However, Lesotho faces a number of challenges that could reverse recent gains made in terms of socio-economic development.

1.4 Organisation

This report is divided into five further sections. Section 2 presents a brief synthesis of the findings from the background literature review prepared in the first phase of the Project. Section 3 describes the methodology for the case study research including the research questions and design. This section includes a presentation of the research sites and the sampling of participants. It continues with a description of the data collection methods and examines some of the ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Sections 4 and 5 present the case study findings giving details of the context of the case studies and a cross-case analysis and a discussion of the findings². In section 6 the report concludes with a summary of the key findings and implications for the design of an appropriate open and flexible educational model for intervention.

2. Education, Children and AIDS in Lesotho

Lesotho is facing major challenges that include high unemployment rates, increasing poverty and a rampant HIV and AIDS pandemic with more than half the population dependent on food assistance (Nyabanyaba, 2008). The humanitarian situation in Lesotho as a result of the impact of HIV is reportedly very acute with the number of vulnerable people in need of food aid rising from 448,000 in 2002 to nearly 700,000 in 2004. The impact of the pandemic on young people is most evident in the growing number of orphans according to the UNICEF Humanitarian Report (UNICEF, 2007). The situation for orphans is reported to have reached crisis proportions, with reports of high rates of abuse of orphans in foster care in Lesotho (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2001; Kimane, 2004, 2005). These studies add useful insights on abusive social practices affecting OVCs in Lesotho. Regarding an educational perspective to such social practices, a situational analysis noted that besides abusive practices, there existed subtle social and cultural practices that continue to compete with schooling (Nyabanyaba, 2008). These include the growing poverty and cultural practices emphasising the need for young male children to help support the family. Indeed there have been very few studies that look closely at the education provision in Lesotho and how it might be presenting barriers to the OVCs' access to schooling. A situational analysis on the provision of flexible education opportunities for the growing numbers of OVCs in Lesotho notes that while there are some initiatives offered by non-formal education systems in Lesotho, conventional schooling has done very little to change and adapt to the changing circumstances of many children who come to school (Nyabanyaba, 2008). It is noted in that study that, education in Lesotho has normally been beset with gross inefficiencies, and the growing vulnerability among children is going to make it even more necessary to increase the focus on more flexible modes of educational delivery even within conventional education.

The challenges brought about by unemployment, poverty and HIV have had an impact on both demand and supply issues within education in Lesotho. On the demand side, the socio-economic challenges were making it extremely difficult for parents to keep their children in school. Declining enrolments were only reversed to some extent when Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in 2000. However, challenges remain on the supply side

² In the report, names of the case study schools and those of the participants have been changed in order to protect their identities.

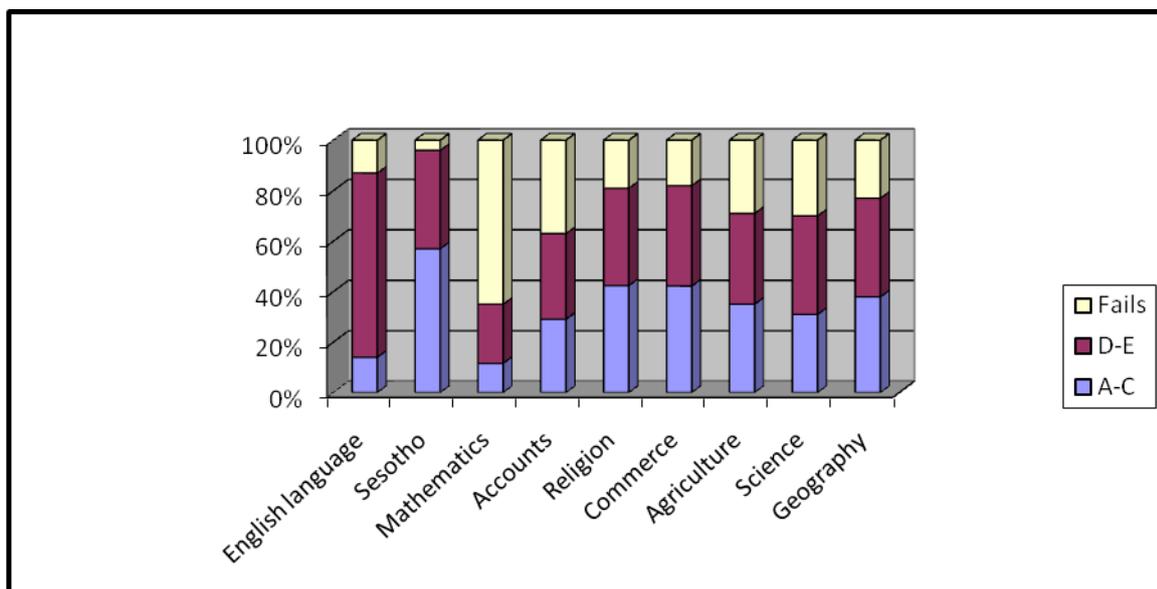
because while FPE has increased the demand for education, there is much more urgency to produce teachers to replace those lost due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Ministry of Education and Training, 2004).

While literacy rates are generally high in Lesotho compared to other African countries, there are serious concerns about the quality and efficiency of the education system in the country. In an earlier report, the high inefficiency rates, particularly at primary level, were thoroughly described (Nyabanyaba, 2008). It has been reported that young boys in Lesotho not only suffer most from malnutrition, but their enrolment rates are much lower than that of girls (Nyabanyaba et al., 2008). The plight of the 'boy child' in Lesotho and the tendency to keep boys out of school in order to attend to economic activities such as herding has been expressed in Kimane and Mturi (2001) and Mturi (2003) work.

The removal of fees has increased net enrolment rates (NER) from 60% in 1999 to 84% in 2006, and the gross enrolment rates (GER) from 107% in 1999 to 127% in 2006. The enrolment rates at secondary education have barely changed, with NER increasing from 22% in 1999 to 26% in 2006 while the GER moved from 35% in 1999 to 40% in 2006. Lesotho's secondary education enrolment rates (GER of 35% and NER of 23%) lag behind those of most of its neighbours that have achieved more than 50% GER (The World Bank, 2005) and fees and supply of school infrastructure are said to constitute the largest constraint to access to secondary schools (Lerotholi, 2001; Ministry of Education and Training, 2004). It is anticipated that access to secondary school will suffer even further as result of inadequate spaces for learners coming out of the now expanded primary school (HIV impact assessment report). Currently there are about 300 registered secondary, enrolling a total of about 100000 students schools compared to about 1500 primary schools enrolling over 400000 students. The retention situation at secondary level is the direct opposite of that of primary with over thirty percent more girls than boys starting form A, but by the time the cohort reaches Form E, the two groups are usually almost equal.

In addition to the massive wastage, the challenge on quality is also apparent. For example, the school leaving examinations indicate a very modest performance by Basotho students at the end of secondary schooling. For example, the results of the 2005 school-leaving examination in Figure 2 below indicate that pass rates for all but the local language (Sesotho) were quite modest with generally very few very good passes (A-C) and mostly mediocre passes (D-E).

Figure 1: Lesotho's 2005 School-leaving examination results



The performance in English Language is dominated by mediocrity (with mostly D – E and very few A – C passes) while the performance in mathematics, with almost 60% of the students failing the subject, can only be described as a national crisis. In spite of the debates surrounding summative assessment, with many opponents of the system pointing out that it is an inaccurate measure of competencies and an unreliable indicator of educational functionality, the poor performance does raise questions about the quality of education in Lesotho. Unfortunately these results are not disaggregated to enable one to make an analysis of who suffers most in the face of this very poor performance. However, other studies have suggested that in the context of this very poor performance, there are some students who still do quite well, and such students tend to come from families with high socio-economic statuses (Nyabanyaba, 2002). In addition, data from the National University of Lesotho (NUL) indicate that of the very few students who earn credits (A-C) in mathematics, girls form a notable minority (32% in 2007) in the enrolments in the highly valued science programmes³. Therefore, one can safely deduce that in the contexts of this poor performance, the greatest victims are girls and children from poor backgrounds.

A more detailed historical, geographical and economic background to Lesotho has been provided in an earlier SOFIE series paper (Nyabanyaba, 2008) available on the website <http://sofie.ioe.ac.uk/publications/NyabanyabaReviewPaper.pdf>

The NGO, World Vision rates Lesotho as the third toughest place, after Sierra Leone and Chad, for a child, particularly a boy-child, to be brought up in⁴. World Vision confirms a phenomenon described in an earlier paper (Nyabanyaba, 2008), where boys as young as seven are expected to drop out of school to look after cattle, leaving home for months at a time and sometimes having to face exposure to isolation in remote cattle posts, extreme weather conditions including snow, as well as physical and sexual abuse by older herd boys. Both Sierra Leone and Chad are emerging from recent civil wars that promote such practices as explicit child trafficking, prostitution and drug abuse. Ansell (2002) has pointed out that the tradition of boys being withdrawn from school is more entrenched and more nuanced than mere malpractice in Lesotho. Historically, employment opportunities have favoured uneducated males in the mines of South Africa, ironically working in favour of women receiving more education than men in Lesotho. In addition to these gendered labour market factors, it has been part of inducting boys into manhood to train them to take care of families by looking after animals early on. It can therefore be deduced that part of the reason why children stay out of school in rural areas in particular, is the apparent irrelevance of education to immediate social reality. Anecdotal evidence point out the practice being widespread in Lesotho and widely accepted as part of the rite of passage of young men into manhood. Admittedly, as poverty increases in recent times, the practice has come to be more as a result of families having to make the tough choice between keeping children in school and hiring them out as either herd boys or domestic servants, in the case of girls (Kimane & Mturi, 2001).

The Reuters Website (2007)⁵, commenting on the security of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs), points out that OVCs are forced to survive on their own or depend on elderly relatives and that in such context OVCs are particularly vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation. Broadly referring to risks that young girls face, UNICEF (2005) reports that in a situation where young girls share a bed with a relative of an opposite sex, there are risks of sexual abuse. UNICEF (2005) concludes that this situation is particularly possible in a situation where young girls share bedrooms with older male siblings or relative especially in Lesotho where “fathers and other relatives are the major sexual abusers of little girls” (2005: 4). Practices that endanger and even harm children persist in the country and reports are both ample and poignant on the issue of Worst Forms of Child Labour in the country. The

³ A Credit in mathematics is a requirement for enrolment in science programmes at NUL.

⁴ www.worldvision.ca/ContentArchives/content-stories/Pages/5-tough-places-for-boys-to-grow-up.aspx

⁵ <http://www.irinnews.org/ReportId=71111> accessed at first draft 12/11/08

most prevalent practice is in agriculture where children are involved in food production, particularly in rural areas where such practices are entrenched in the tradition of inducting young people into adulthood. However, with the growing incidences of poverty and orphanhood, the practice of hiring our children to herd animals for long periods and sometimes having to deal with the cold winters in cattle posts has become a distinctive form of exploitative practice. Also common is the practice of hiring out young girls to serve as domestic workers in more affluent families, especially in urban areas.

There are some initiatives both in government and in the NGO sector which aim to address the safety and welfare of women and children. These include the Children and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU) of the Lesotho Mounted Police Services (LMPS) and the Women in Law in Southern Africa (WILSA). Two other offices working on issues of child protection and safety are the Office of the First Lady and Her Majesty's Office. Other organisations working in the area are the World Vision office in Lesotho and the Non-Governmental Organisations Coalition. Of course, these are generally initiatives and offices set up with the intentions of looking after the safety and welfare of children and the effectiveness of programmes meant to carry out this important task have not been assessed.

Text box 1

Understanding orphanhood and vulnerability of children in Lesotho

It is estimated that orphaned children account for 17% of the total population and half of the orphans are as a result of AIDS (UNAIDS, 2002; UNGASS, 2007). Endemic poverty, large scale job losses from the mining and textile industries, HIV/AIDS and persistent droughts are recognised as some of the factors leading to increasing vulnerability in Lesotho (Makoe, 2006). Makoe (2006) further identifies high reliance on farming, herding and informal business, household headed by widows, children and older individuals (60+ years) as some of the most common characteristics of families facing food insecurity in Lesotho. Lesotho's operational definition for orphans and vulnerable children is as follows: 'An orphan is any person who is below the age of 18, who has lost one or both parents due to death. A vulnerable child is any person who is below the age of 18, who has one or both parents who have deserted or neglected him/her to the extent that he/she has no means of survival and as such is exposed to dangers of abuse, exploitation and/or criminalisation and is, therefore, in need of care and protection'. Since the introduction of the Free Primary Education program in 2000, Lesotho has made some major achievement at primary level improving net enrolment rates (NER) from 60% in 1999 to 84% in 2006 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2005). In 2004 primary net attendance rates were estimated at 85% for urban and 84.5% for rural children and equitable access had been achieved for orphans aged 10 – 14, with the attendance ratios of orphans to non-orphans estimated at 1:1 in 2004 (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2005). However, access to secondary schooling remains highly inaccessible and grossly skewed. For example, net attendance rates for secondary schooling were estimated to be 42.1% for urban children and a mere 16.6% for rural children (with extreme rural or mountain areas recording a mere 8.8% attendance rates (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2005). Although data is unavailable for children attending secondary education, attendance rates among OVCs would be expected to be much lower than those of the rest because of the high cost of secondary schooling in Lesotho (Lerotholi, 2001). Although some measures have been taken to alleviate the plight of orphaned and vulnerable secondary school children through scholarships for double orphans, this misses out on many needy single orphans and extremely poor children. Therefore, the operating definition of OVCs in this study included children and young people affected by HIV and AIDS, as well as extremely poor children, many of whom were generally single orphans, or had unemployed parents or were simply neglected. The term was not explicitly restricted to children whose parents were HIV+ or had died of AIDS, but it emerged during the study that many of these children had parents who had either died or were chronically ill through ailments that appeared to be HIV-related.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study design

A case study design was developed in order to gain insights into not only what was happening to children's access to schooling and to attainment in high HIV prevalence areas, but also why events might be happening in that way. As Yin (2003) has argued case studies are particularly useful for studying pertinent issues within their natural context:

In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" and "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (2003:1)

Therefore, case studies are valuable for illuminating complex social phenomena such as the impact of HIV and AIDS on schooling.

Case study, in its most rigorous form, requires more than finding an interesting 'case'. Yet images normally attached to case studies are not always of studies that can inform practice, let alone policy. As Yin (2003) notes, case study research has come to be stereotyped as the weakest and most imprecise of the social science methods. He argues, however, that case study research provides an opportunity to investigate phenomena within their real-life context and that they can be quite rigorous in design, often involving single and multiple case studies, and also including quantitative evidence. In the SOFIE Project the case study approach has been used as part of a formative research strategy to gain a sharpened understanding of what should be included in the forthcoming intervention package. In doing so, this case study research aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the factors at school and community level that influence access to learning and retention in conventional schools for children affected by HIV and AIDS?
- To what extent do schools support access to learning and retention of children affected by HIV and AIDS?
- What open and flexible educational strategies can be used to support and complement conventional schooling to improve access to learning and retention of these children?

As has already been alluded to, secondary education in Lesotho is extremely inaccessible and highly inefficient. However, not much has been done to study factors that influence access to learning and retention in conventional secondary high school. In this context of considerable uncertainty about the phenomenon under study, an exploratory case study approach was selected in order to provide an, in-depth description of factors at work within schools and communities that can either support or raise barriers to the access and retention of children affected by HIV and AIDS. Since case study research involves the study of a particular phenomenon or concern within a real-life setting, it lends itself well to situations where it may not be possible, or desirable, to distinguish the issue under investigation from its context (Yin, 2003). This has important advantages for gaining insight into issues of access and participation in education, where a multiplicity of factors is likely to influence any particular child's schooling. The aim was to give insights into the complex social phenomena being studied, in context and as much as possible from the perspectives of those being studied (Merriam, 1988).

As case study research works within 'bounded systems', it is important to establish the unit of analysis for the research (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). In this study the unit of analysis is the secondary school and its surrounding community, identified as varying numbers of discrete clusters of villages around the school. Within this, the sample of children and young people that participated in the research can be considered a subunit of analysis, embedded within the case (Yin, 2003).

A multiple case study design was adopted to explore how issues of access and retention play out across several contexts. As Creswell (2003) explains, one common concern or phenomenon is addressed, but multiple cases are used to illustrate that concern. The multiple cases are thus instrumental in addressing a particular concern, rather than of solely intrinsic value (Stake, 2000). As Yin notes (2003), the use of more than one case anticipates and addresses possible criticism of the validity of the findings from a single-case design. He argues (2003:53), “the contexts of two [or more] cases are likely to differ to some extent. If under these varied circumstances you still arrive at common conclusions...they will have immeasurably expanded the external generalisability of your findings.”

The choice of cases was informed, in part, by the suggestion in the literature that increasing poverty and vulnerability caused by orphanhood and HIV and AIDS impacts on the well-being of children living in high altitude societies in a different way from those living in low altitude societies.

Within each ecological zone, cases were selected in areas that had higher than average HIV and AIDS prevalence rates (all ranging from 23.2 to 29.7 and above the 22.14 mean and 21.15 median). Contrasting socio-economic contexts were also used, including common economic practices, in order to illuminate different situations and experiences of participants. However, all cases were located in semi-urban to deeply rural areas.

3.2 Sampling

Selection of Locations and schools

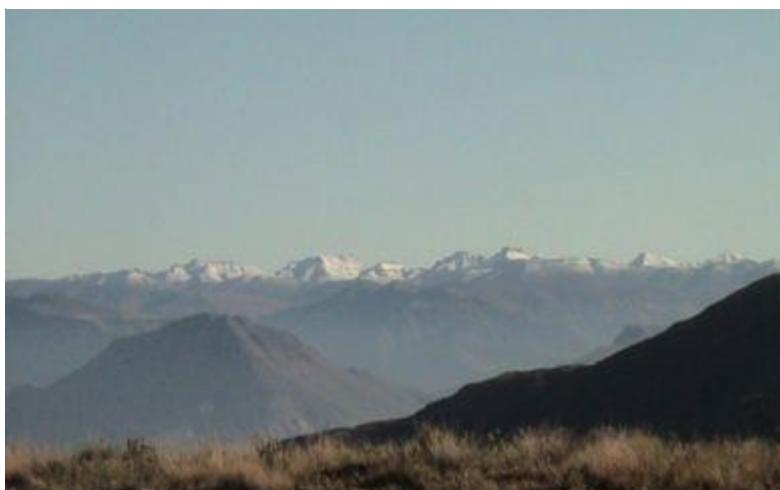
Lesotho has ten administrative districts, four of which – Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong, Qacha’s Nek and Quthing – are predominantly high altitude districts and three of which - Maseru, Berea and Mafeteng - are predominantly low altitude districts. The rest of the districts are mixtures of high and low altitudes. It is very common in studies conducted in Lesotho to divide the country into either the ten administrative districts, or to use what are called ecological zones (also referred to as topographical regions) - Mountains, Foothills, Senqu River Valley (SRV) and Lowlands. The mountain zone covers 59 per cent of the east of the country and is characterised by steep slopes with thin soil, a harsh climate and limited access to regular services. The majority of the country’s population (60 per cent) occupies the low lying regions which not only has a more developed infrastructure and service delivery system, but also has more arable land. The other three topographical regions share only 40 per cent of the country’s population. Apart from these two groupings some studies also use school proprietors, with the majority of schools owned by different churches (RCM, LEC and ACL) and a small percentage owned by Government and other proprietors.

The two locations for the case study were selected according to criteria agreed by the SOFIE project team. These included: high HIV prevalence rates, high dropout rates in secondary schools and contrasting socio-cultural contexts (see above). Another concern was that the project should not enter districts where there was already a high level of donor intervention. It was agreed that the research should focus on rural districts, as enrolment is lower and dropout higher than in urban centres. The original expectation was that at least one school would be from Thaba-Tseka (mountain district) but the weather made it impossible to cover Thaba-Tseka because the snow was so thick that the schools did not operate for over a week. As a result, another mountain district (Quthing), was selected for two cases, one in the mountain areas near Qacha’s Nek and another in the Senqu River Valley.

The 2006 education statistics puts secondary enrolment rates at 67.5% in the Lowlands, five times higher than all the other regions. The Foothills are said to have enrolments of 14.0%, followed by the Senqu River Valley (12.7%) and Mountains (5.7%). The administrative district of Quthing at 5.8% is one of the lowest and Berea at 9.6% and 11.7% are close to the national average of 9.7%. Clearly enrolments are extremely low in Lesotho in general, and

even Leribe, one of the highest at 20.4% is still quite low compared to primary enrolment rates of 85%. Although no disaggregated data is available, the wide gap between the secondary Gross Enrolment Ratio of 39.8 and the Net Enrolment Ratio of 25.7 indicates that not only is Lesotho's secondary schooling highly inaccessible, but it is also grossly inefficient.

Figure 2: The SRV region with a view to the snow-capped South Mountains



The selection of cases was informed by common practice in research in Lesotho where the four geo-ecological zones – Mountain, Senqu River Valley, Foothills and Lowlands - are used for representative sampling. Although the selection was

not intended to be statistically representative, it attempted to include a wide variety of socio-cultural background features often found in the different locations. In particular, the Eastern part of Lesotho, which is mountainous, has a predominance of herding practices. The Western part of Lesotho has slightly more arable land and larger scale farming practices than the east. Three of the cases were in deeply rural areas where traditional practices such as initiation school persisted. One case was selected for its location in a semi-urban (lowland) area, noted for its low access rates and high prevalence rates.

Table 1: Summary of characteristics of the selected cases

Cases	Senqu	Moorosi	Masupha	Molapo
Altitude	High altitude Senqu-River Valley	High altitude Mountain area	Low altitude Lowlands	High altitude Foothills
Location	Rural southern region	Rural and extreme Southern region	Semi-rural central region	Rural northern region
Main economic pattern	Herding and subsistence farming	Herding and subsistence farming	Factory work and regular employment	Factory work, herding, and large-scale farming
Net secondary attendance rates⁶	Male 13.3%, female 26.5%	Male 5.7%, female 12.4%	Male 21.2%, female 34.8%	Male 10.4%, female 17.0%
HIV adult prevalence (15 – 49 yrs)⁷	Male 17.6%, female 25.1%	Male 17.7%, female 23.3%	Male 20.4%, female 28%	Male 16.9%, female 24.2%
Secondary repetition rates⁸	Male 14.53%, female 13.50%	Male 14.99%, female 13.44%	Male 11.76%, female 12.24%	Male 14.25%, female 13.45%

⁶ Data from Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (BoS, 2004)

⁷ Data from Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (BoS, 2004)

⁸ From EMIS data (MoET, 2006)

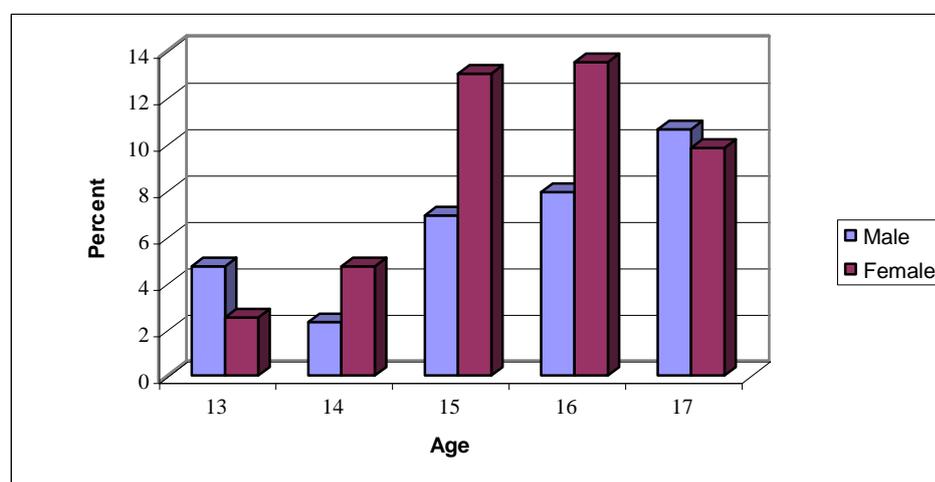
HIV prevalence rates are highest in the lowlands and among women. The repetition rates are generally higher for boys than for girls, except in the lowlands. It is likely that the high number of girls who repeat and dropout in the lowlands is as a result of the availability of domestic work. The complex situation of dropout rates in Lesotho is such that while more boys than girls drop out of school in general, data from the Core Welfare Indicator Survey (see figure 3 below) support the findings from this study that indicate girl dropout rates increases dramatically in junior secondary (see table 2 below). For example, data from the four cases indicates that more boys than girls drop out at both the first year (Form A) and second year (Form B) of secondary schooling.

Table 2: Dropout rates in the four cases

School	Form A		Form B		Form C		Average
	F	M	F	M	F	M	
Senqu	11%	17%	9%	16%	3%	11%	11%
Moorosi	10%	7%	17%	20%	13%	12%	13%
Masupha	2%	3%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Molapo	2%	3%	1%	2%	4%	0%	2%

The dropout rates are evidently highest in the first two years of secondary schooling, particularly among boys. In the third year of secondary schooling, drop out rates for girls appear to catch up with those of boys. Although from only a limited cases, the observation that dropout rates increases among girls as they progress in secondary school is partly supported by figures from another national survey. The Core Welfare Indicator Survey reports that dropout rates were highest at ages 15 and 16, particularly among girls (Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

Figure 3: Secondary school drop out rates by age and sex



Therefore, although dropout rates are high among boys in general, girls' dropout rates increase quite rapidly after the appropriate ages for the second year of secondary schooling (Form B), making the first two years of secondary schooling possibly the most critical age to intervene at⁹.

⁹ It is important to acknowledge that because of the high repetition rates throughout the early stages of schooling as well, that these children might still be in earlier stages of schooling than Form B, but it is more likely still that the fifteen and sixteen year olds are in the early stages of secondary schooling.

Sampling of participants

Purposive non-random sampling was used to obtain samples of participants within each case that would be 'information-rich' (Patton, 1990) and would be able to inform the research questions. Therefore, the participants were not selected in order to be representative of any wider demographic trends in a specific population. Children from households affected by HIV and AIDS were sampled as a sub-group of a wider sample of orphans and other vulnerable children. In school, the principal or deputy principal acted as our key entry point and they usually directed us to Form B (Grade 9) students who were generally considered as needy and at risk of dropping out of school.

At each school visited an out-of-school research assistant, who was also a member of a community based organisation (CBO) in the area, made contact with a key informant within the community through either the Chief or a welfare organisation. The research assistants were generally mature married CBO members who had experience in collecting data on sensitive matters such as health and HIV and AIDS. In the initial contacts we generally used male research assistants to make contacts with Chiefs but for the household visits we exclusively used female research assistants who could persuade participants to respond to even some of the sensitive questions. The key informant then helped the research assistant identify children who had dropped out of school, including those who were double orphans (*likhutsana-khulu* in the local language, Sesotho). In most cases, the key informants were female community members as most males were not generally available for long interviews about children and family matters.

The final sample of respondents is summarised in Table 3 below. Further details of the individual children and young people and their household circumstances will be presented later. The age of students who were interviewed ranged from 15 to 18 years for in-school and 15-24 years for out-of-school. As Table 3 shows, more than half of all children/youth interviewed were double orphans, a situation which reflects the high HIV prevalence in the area. All but one of the single orphans had lost a father. Of the single orphans, four were not living with the surviving parent and in three of the households the mother was in poor health, with symptoms associated with HIV and AIDS. Five of the children/youth interviewed lived in child headed households (CHH)¹⁰; three (all out-of-school) were heading the households themselves. The vast majority of children/youth interviewed lived in households supported by subsistence farming, *pastoral* activities and small-scale sale of crops and farm produce. Several relied on remittance from relatives working elsewhere and a small minority had a small, informal business.

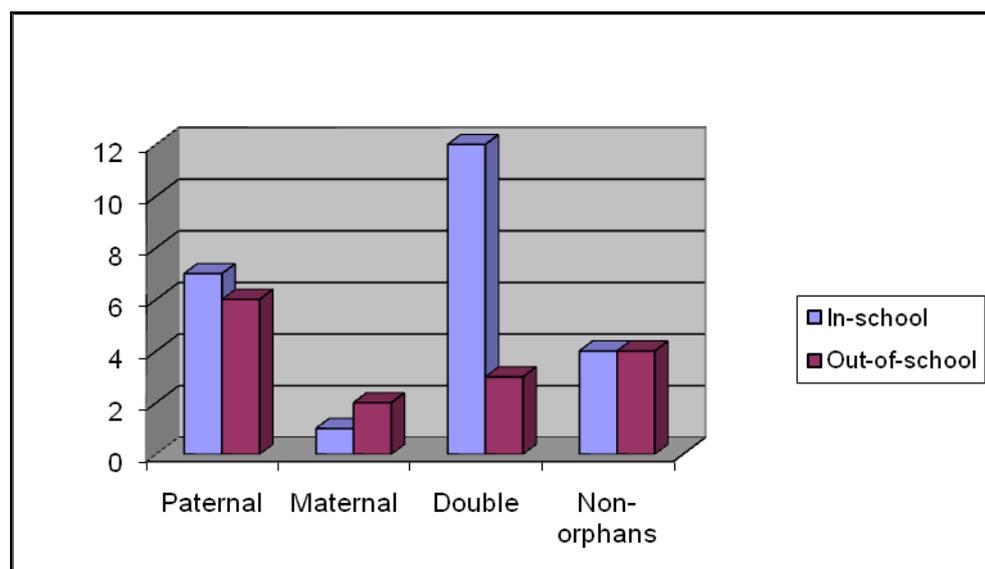
Table 3: Characteristics of children/youth interviewed

School	Gender		Orphanhood/vulnerability				Schooling status	
	M	F	Paternal	Maternal	Double	Neglected	In-school	Out-of-school
Senqu	3	3	2	0	4	0	6	3
Moorosi	3	3	3	0	2	1	6	3
Masupha	3	3	1	0	3	2	6	4
Molapo	3	3	1	1	3	1	6	4
Total								

It is not surprising that the majority of children who were identified as a result of our request for children in difficult circumstances and at the risk of dropping out of school were either double orphans or paternal orphans.

¹⁰ Although, officially the term CHH refers to young people under the age of 18, the term is used somewhat more loosely here to include those who grew up in CHH at the time they dropped out of school, which included those young people currently heading households, but are now over 18 years in age.

Figure 4: Interviewed children's orphanhood



It is rather telling, however, that a greater proportion of school children interviewed were double orphans and that paternal orphans constituted 42% of all out-of-school youth, compared to 29% within the in-school children. This can be explained by the way in which the current scholarship system, which is meant to look after the school needs of orphans, only caters only for double orphans. It is quite possible then that many paternal orphans, who are likely to be just as needy as double orphans, simply drop out of school because most would have lost a 'breadwinner'.

Sampling of other participants

In addition to the children and young people in the sample, several other groups of people participated in the research: guardians of interviewed children, teachers, members of the School Management Committees (SMC's) or School Governing Bodies (SGB's), parents and several key informants living and/or working in the schools' community areas (see Table 4). Parents and guardians of the children interviewed were sampled on a largely opportunistic basis – i.e. those who would be available and willing to be interviewed during a household visit. As the case is in Lesotho most of the guardians are female. A number of individuals had been identified as possible key informants prior to arrival at the case study schools: school heads, village heads and support group members.

Teachers and SMC member were invited to join Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The SMC chairs often assisted in the selection of approximately equal numbers of male and female members.

Table 4: Adults interviewed by gender

Participants	Senqu		Moorosi		Masupha		Molapo		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Key informants	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	3	8	9
SMC members	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	6	6
Teachers	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	13	11
Guardians	2	2	3	2	2	6	3	4	10	15

In each case, the key informants included the Chief and/or his right-hand man, an officer of the welfare office and/or a member of the local community based organisation. The School Management Committee (sometimes also the School Governing Board) included the

principal and his/her deputy as well as a member of the SGB. The teachers were all volunteers contacted through the principal or the deputy principal. The Chief or his right hand man then suggested the guardians who would be most valuable to get hold of, usually parents of some in-school or out-of-school children.

3.3 Methods of data collection

Several methods and multiple sources of data were used, including interviews, focus group discussions, document collection, informal observation and participatory tools used during mini-workshops. The use of interviews in this study was to provide more depth to issues that had already emerged and to the context in which they had done so. But as with the questionnaire, interviews depended to a large extent on 'rapport,' as well as the sincerity and motivation of the respondent (Cohen & Manion, 1984). Describing the attributes of ethnographers as interviewers, Cohen and Manion (1984: 275) define 'rapport' or 'trust' as 'a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee that transcends the research that promotes a bond of friendship, a feeling of togetherness and joint pursuit of a common mission rising above personal egos.' The rapport that I established with the teachers and the students was built on shared values and a common interest to assist the students in passing their examination. I therefore made it a point that I did not only take information from the schools but also gave information by assisting the students and the teachers.

Participatory tools used during mini-workshops

Separate half-day mini-workshops were held with in-school and out-of-school children and youth. The objectives of the mini-workshops were two-fold: to provide space for young people to explore and discuss the barriers to schooling faced by orphans and other vulnerable children; and to aid selection of several young people for follow-up interviews. A series of drawing and writing activities techniques took place, drawn from a wider 'toolkit' of participatory research techniques. These techniques are listed in Table 5 below. Plenary sessions were used to discuss emerging issues and make recommendations.

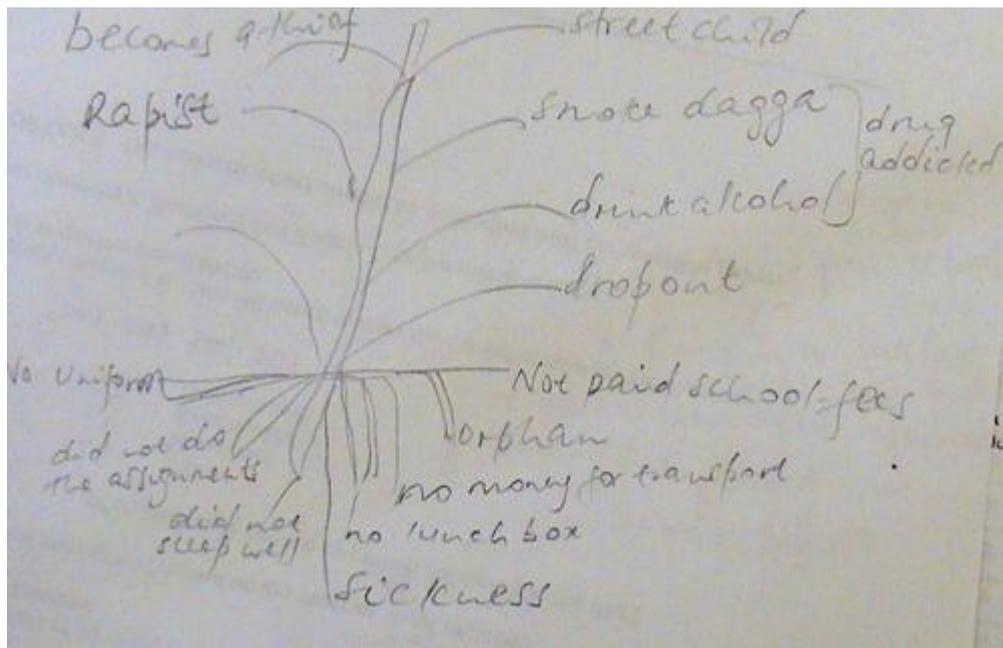
Table 5: List of participatory techniques during mini-workshops

Activity	Description	Information produced
Problem trees	Participants draw a 'tree', with the roots representing causes of the problem under discussion; the branches representing the consequences	Causes and consequences of absenteeism & drop out.
Ranking	Listing in order of priority several identified issues, each issue is and participants chose which they feel is the more important...	Ranking of causes of absenteeism & dropout, by gender.
River of Life	Participants draw a 'river', and as the river winds up and down it represents visually the high and low points in their lives.	Depiction of major events in participants' lives. Also indication of points when their schooling was affected

Examples of research methods

Below is a figure representing a problem tree drawn by an in-school girl in Molapo, illustrating some of the common causes of absenteeism and drop out, and their possible consequences.

Figure 5: Example of problem tree



In the diagram above, as in many problem trees drawn by participants, the most common causes include school fees, orphanage, and lack of school uniform. Consequences often illustrated included drop-outs becoming delinquents (e.g. street children) and even criminals (e.g. rapist). Many other children also noted consequences such as falling victims to crime (e.g. falling pregnant).

In terms of the ranking exercise, participants would use focus group discussion to come out with some of the main causes of absenteeism and drop out and then would rank them like the following list from Masupha.

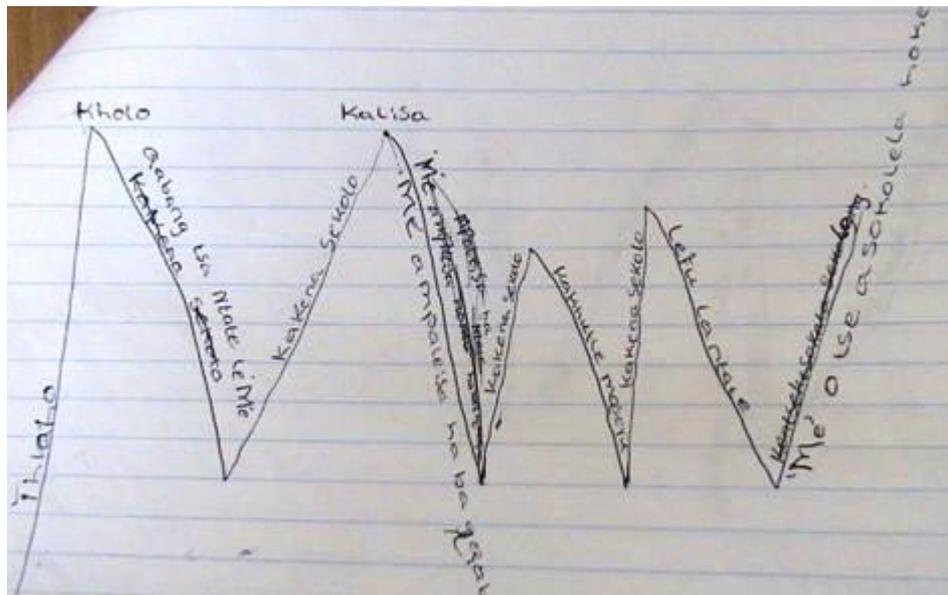
Figure 6: Example of a ranking exercise output

- (1) chelete ea sekolo fees haete sieo
 - (2) Ha ho sena ntho e je eany hae
 - (3) ha u na le bothata ba mahlo
 - (4) ha u sena libuka tse e ngollang
 - (5) ha u sena bophelo bo botle
 - (6) ha u sena uniform ea sekolo
 - (7) ha u na le bothata ka hose e utloisisi ka sekolong
- Teacher

Top of the list is again the absence of money for school fees (*sekolo fees*); lack of food to eat (*ntho e je eany*); visual impediment (*bothata ba mahlo*); lack of stationery (*libuka tse ngollang*); poor health (*bophelo bo botle*); lack of school uniform (*uniform ea sekolo*); learning disabilities (*hose utloisisi ka sekolong*).

An example of river-of-life drawn by a boy in Senqu is given below.

Figure 7: Example of a River-of-Life output



The picture represents the positive experiences of growing up with love (*kholo*) from birth (*thlaho*). Then the child had a negative experience when the parents started fighting (*qabang tsa ntate le 'me*) but again experienced a positive experience going to school (*ka kena sekolo*) until he was forced to look after animals (*ka lisa*). And so the ups and downs continue until the death of the father (*lefu la ntate*) after which the mother had to struggle to keep the child in school. The experiences were quite similar in many instances with children describing the excitement of growing up and of attending school, and the sadness of loss of a parent.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with key informants living and/or working in the schools' community areas. Questions focused on issues of educational access and retention, the impact of HIV and AIDS on schooling, school and community links and support for children affected by HIV and AIDS.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were held with selected three girls and three boys in each of the four schools and young drop-outs from the communities in which the schools were based (See Appendices – Children's Workshop). The number and sex of the young drop-outs were purely a matter of availability and in some cases we were lucky to have an equal number of both sexes, but generally girls were more available for our interview (see Table above) who were known or suspected to have come from households affected by HIV and AIDS. The interviews were held at the child/young person's home and conducted by trained research assistants. All interviews were conducted with research assistants of the same sex, all of whom were mature and active members of the communities. The interview focused on several broad themes (life events, relationships and values, school experiences, stigma and discrimination, reasons for absenteeism and dropout and future expectations) and whilst assistants had available a protocol of possible questions, they were encouraged to keep the interviews open and flexible. Drawings produced by the children during mini-workshops were used to stimulate discussion during the interviews. In particular, children were asked to take the interviewer through their 'river of life' drawings, describing the key events that had been highlighting and discussing to what extent these events had affected their schooling.

During visits to households, a second research assistant interviewed the guardian or parent separately. As indicated in the methodology section, these research assistants for the four cases reported on here were mature married ladies who were able to explore sensitive matters. When the parent or guardian was not available, alternative arrangements were made to meet them at a time suitable for them. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule to verify information on the child's circumstances and life events and to gather parent/guardian's perspectives on education, the case study school and support available within the community (see Appendices – Household Protocol). Researchers worked in pairs and while one led the discussion, the other researcher or research assistant facilitated and took notes. Short summary reports were written up by research assistants following the interviews

Household roster and observation sheet

During household visits, a short, structured household roster and observation schedule was completed, with information provided by the parent/guardian. Information was gathered on household composition, deaths in the household and the socio-economic status of household members (see Appendices – Household Roster).

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were held with SMC members and teachers. In adaptation of a method used by Brinkman et. al (2007) in their study into the competencies of rural development professionals in tackling issues of HIV and AIDS, two short case stories were read out at the start of the FGD session to provide a real-life scenario and stimulate discussion (see Appendices – Focus Group Discussions). Ensuing discussions focused on difficulties faced by orphans and other vulnerable children in their communities in relation to accessing learning, the specific disadvantages faced by children affected by HIV and AIDS and issues of social cohesion and support for orphans and children affected by HIV and AIDS. The FGD session with teachers explored additional issues related to the inclusion of children affected by HIV and AIDS in their schools and was preceded by a participatory activities also used during the mini-workshops – the drawing of 'problem trees'.

School checklist

A short, structured school checklist was used to gather quantitative data on the individual schools (enrolment, numbers of drop outs etc.) and collect information on the school environment (see Appendices – School Checklist).

Observation

During the week's activities, informal observation of school events (assembly, break time, club activities) and unstructured field notes were used to record observations of interactions between students and lesson delivery to look for examples of exclusionary practices.

3.4 Data analysis

Transcripts and other texts

Full reports were written up by the research assistants from detailed notes taken during the interviews and translated by lead researcher. The interviews were generally conducted in the local language of Sesotho. A few teachers and principals are non-locals and in such cases interviews were conducted mainly or exclusively in English language. No tape recorder was available, but the research assistants worked in groups of two to three members, allowing one member to take detailed notes. The practice was to expand the detailed notes into narratives as soon as possible after the interviews. Short mini-workshop reports were also written up. These included English translations of materials written by participants' materials

(e.g. problem-tree responses included in the methodology chapter) and write-up notes taken during plenary sessions. A workshop was held during which the transcripts and the translations were validated. The transcripts were kept in manual form and analysis undertaken on the hard copies.

Preliminary analysis and coding

As a first step, written and visual data from problem trees and ranking of causes and consequences of absenteeism were analysed by school and by group (students, out-of-school, teachers), and then categorised and recorded in tabular form. In order to analyse data meaningfully while keeping the relations between the parts intact, *a priori* codes were used to assign units of meaning to the descriptive and inferential information compiled during the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interview transcripts were first categorised in terms of whether the respondents were in-school participants or community informants. Thus responses were clustered and then resorted in relation to these major categories. Miles and Huberman (1994) specify three classes of code – descriptive, interpretive and pattern – for the analysis of text such as interview transcripts. Because the initial analyses were undertaken with the help of the research assistants, the codes used in that exercise were largely descriptive, with only minimal interpretation undertaken with the assistance of the lead researcher.

It was observed in the consideration of Lesotho's background and the literature review conducted during the situational analysis that there were a number of factors that could be expected to emerge as impacting on access to learning and retention as well as initiatives meant to support access to schooling for children affected by HIV and AIDS. Keeping this central question in mind and reflecting back on the factors and initiatives, we came up with the following sets of possible issues:

- Whether (or not) there were reports of school being valued and stakeholders showing a commitment to and responsibility about keeping children in school and learning;
- Whether education was seen to be of relevance to the lives of the respondents and whether the products of school were perceived to be able to play a meaningful role in the community;
- Whether it was reported that stakeholders and the psychosocial skills to support affected children and young adults;
- Whether the reigning environment was supportive and accepting of OVCs and whether there were reports of stigmatisation and discrimination;
- The extent to which HIV and orphanhood prevailed and the extent to which it had an impact on learning and retention;
- The reported prevalence of extreme poverty and unemployment and the extent to which it was reportedly contributing to learning and retention;
- Whether there were reports of initiatives meant to make OVCs feel more wanted and the extent to which these initiatives promoted inclusive education among OVCs.

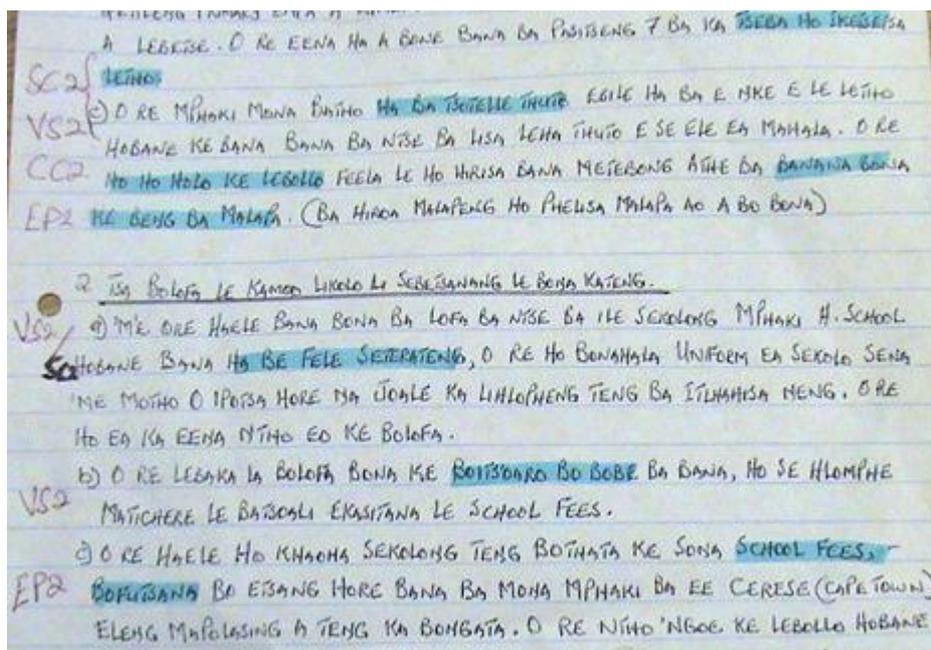
These main factors were used as codes and were divided into in-school and community level categories. In addition, two brought codes relating to national responses to HIV & AIDS as well as reported national initiatives on guidance and psychosocial support were added. The categories and sub-categories emerging from the research questions and literature review were used as *a priori* list of codes as described in Miles and Huberman (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The table below illustrates the list of codes that were used to initially classify and analyse the data.

Table 6: Coding Guide

Category	Description	Code
In-school	Value attached to schooling & responsibility	SV1
	Perceived relevance of curriculum	SC1
	Knowledge of psychosocial and counselling issues	PK1
	Environment and acceptance of vulnerability	EA1
	HIV & orphanhood prevalence	HO1
	Inclusive initiatives	II1
	Extreme poverty & unemployment	EU1
Household & Community	Value attached to schooling & responsibility	SV2
	Perceived relevance of curriculum	SC2
	Knowledge of psychosocial and counselling issues	PK2
	Environment and acceptance of vulnerability	EA2
	HIV & orphanhood prevalence	HO2
	Inclusive initiatives	II2
	Extreme poverty & unemployment	EU2
National support	Responses to school needs	SN3
	Guidance & counselling initiatives	GC3

It is important to note that this list of codes underwent some refinement as we progressed with the classification and even as we analysed the data. The distinctions at the initial stage were tentative and were successively refined throughout the process of coding and analysing (Weston et al., 2001). Close reading of the texts was used in order to yield additional issues and themes that were incorporated into the coding frame during an ongoing process of refining and up-dating. In this way, inductive coding was used in order to avoid confining or limiting the reading and analysis of the transcripts (Creswell, 2007) and allowing for a more emic approach to addressing the research questions. For example, we did not anticipate that community informants would have the capacity to discuss the issue of 'curricular relevance', but were pleasantly surprised to see some strong community informants discuss this issue and other broader issues extensively. Captured below is a transcript with the coding of the responses she made:

Figure 8: Coded transcript of community informant responses



For example, she talks (*O re ...*) about the following issues poor product of the current schooling system 'who cannot do anything for themselves' (*ha a bone ba ka tseba ho iketsetsa letho*); the community does not value education (*ha ba tsotelle thuto*) later on elaborated on by describing how children are all over the street during school time (*ha ba fele seterateng*) and all they care about is initiation school (*ho ho hole ke lebollo*).

As captured in the tables of school characteristics (tables 8 to 10), both quantitative and qualitative data were used to provide brief descriptions of the context of each case study. Data from multiple sources (child interviews, guardian interviews, river of life drawings and household rosters) were used to write up detailed cases, providing an interpretation of the 'life stories' (Silverstein 1988, in Miles & Huberman, 1994) and also used to provide a basis for further analysis across cases.

3.5 Ethical issues and concerns

Researchers (and research assistants) carried with them copies of a letter from the Ministry of Education and Training's Chief Education Officer (Non-Formal Education) which introduced the project and the researcher. The strength of the approach was in the readiness to support the project both at ministerial level and within the communities. However, there were critical ethical concerns, particularly relating to identifying children and households to participate in the research. During initial community meetings care was taken to ensure that the focus of research was described broadly as issues of access of vulnerable and orphaned children, while HIV and AIDS was described as a general context which affected most children in Lesotho. Later, the selection was refined to include specifically children affected by HIV and AIDS and such children were identified with the help of local structures including the local authorities and community based organisations in the areas, welfare organisations such as the Children and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU) of the Lesotho Mounted Police Services (LMPS) and/or school management teams.

Children themselves were told simply that they were to be selected to represent children of their age in order to participate in a workshop meant to inform issues of vulnerability and access to schooling. Consent of parents/guardians was sought through school, in the case of in-school youth, and through local structures, in the case of out-of-school youth. Although the children would have realised that they generally fell within the OVC status they appeared comfortable and happy with the opportunity to articulate the concerns of orphaned and vulnerable children. At no point during mini-workshops were issues of HIV and AIDS discussed unless raised by the children themselves. Initial community meetings were a key entry point into the communities. Trained CBO representatives familiar with the study were able to ensure that proper protocol was followed and permission to enter villages negotiated.

A key ethical issue concerned out-of-school youth whose expectations would have been raised by the researchers' visits to their homes. Frank and transparent explanation was provided during the meetings and again the children appeared happy to be heard, though not without some challenges. Many of these out-of-school children had become extremely reticent and it took all the tact of researchers with the support of community members to get them to open up at times. The researchers and the CBO representative's skills were able to break through the children's reticence in all instances. Because of the nature of the situation being investigated, there were some very difficult moments during the data collection period. For example, as one out-of-school child related her life-story, describing how her father died and then how she was left in the 'care' of her grandmother who unfortunately ill-treated her, the other out-of-school children broke down. The researcher had to be sensitive not to push on.

3.6 Limitations and challenges

One limitation of the use of a case study approach is that, with emphasis on an in-depth examination of one or a few instances of a particular phenomenon, it is inherently difficult to generalise up from case studies to a wider population. However, as this research was designed to first and foremost inform innovation in and through schools in order to increase access to learning- schools located in similar settings to the case studies - it could be argued that such generalisability beyond the immediate sample of intervention schools is not a primary objective of this research. However, as noted above, the selection of multiple cases does address such a limitation by strengthening confidence in the external validity of the findings (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, to use the more qualitative notion of 'transferability', the production of 'thick descriptions' of context (Merriam, 1988) will allow readers to assess findings *within their context* and relate them to other schools or communities with similarities in context.

In terms of challenges faced during the fieldwork, the lack of up-to-date records at schools presented specific constraints. In particular, schools did not have up-to-date data on dropouts and attendance. Another challenge faced was the difficulty in reaching out-of-school youth who had dropped from school within the last year. Most school heads were male, as were the executive members of the SMC in most schools. Where attempts were made to seek out female community leaders, few were found. The exercises took too long to introduce due to the level of understanding of the issues involved and the function of the stories were sometimes not well understood in terms of its purpose to prompt them about their situation. In addition, identifying research assistants of the same degree of capability for uniformity was a huge challenge. This introduced high costs of closer supervision in order to standardise the research approach and attend to inter-rater reliability.

Changes to the timetable in school were quite frequent and it required the researcher to be quite flexible, but introduced some financial burdens as the researcher was at times forced to shift an appointment. For example, an interview with teachers was postponed and the researcher was lucky to be able to replace it with a students' workshop. Some principals were quite unreceptive at first while others simply took a long time to finally attend to requests such as completing the school checklist. Again the cost of frequently calling on the deputy principal to plead with him was a major constraint. On the positive side, the cooperation of the local structures with the researcher and the CBO representative, the links made with the Ministry of Education that held some authority as well as the influence of the lead researcher assisted in finally getting the project completed.

The interviews took much longer than some principals were prepared to take and some being rather passionate on the subject of OVCs, they tended to drag the conversation on and on and then got bored when it did not end in less than the hour we had suggested it would take. The challenges of operating in contexts of extreme poverty were that there was an expectation that the information would be given in exchange for some assistance. It was rather sad to see just how deflated many became when we were unable to offer assistance at once. Then the nature of the subject, the fact that society remains rather discreet about discussing HIV and AIDS, meant that many children were reserved.

3.7 Research team and timetable of main activities

Three male and five female research assistants (RAs) were then recruited for the case study research from community based organisations working with vulnerable children and the RAs were introduced to the purpose of the Project in an initial meeting held in January 2008. The meeting was followed by the drafting and translation of research instruments during February and March 2008. A research training workshop was held in March 2008, during which the instruments and their translation were validated. A three day workshop was

followed by pilot studies held in each of the two regions (low and high altitude) in April 2008, and further adjustments were then made to the instruments.

The RAs were recruited from a pool of mature married members of CBOs, all with experience in collecting data through surveys and in-depth interviews. The training firmed up the RAs' knowledge of the range of research instruments including focus group interviews which some of the RAs were not fully familiar with. All RAs had good command of English language and the local language (Sesotho). Even more importantly, the RAs were experienced and mature CBOs who had worked with vulnerable children and needy families. Two of the RAs had extensive experience in the area of HIV testing and psychosocial support.

One RA was unable to continue with the actual data collection but we were able to pair up the RAs and the coordinator was able to supervise the data collection across sites. Initial contacts were made in each of the four identified regions through the Chiefs and/or social welfare officers. The RAs worked in groups of twos or threes such that there was at least one RA with very close knowledge of the local area, at least one very experienced researcher, at least one female and one male RA. The main data collection was undertaken in April to May 2008.

4. Findings: from each case study school

4.1 The situation of HIV affected children

As would be expected from the sampling frame the great majority of the children were orphaned and vulnerable. These children were generally affected by extreme poverty or the death of their parents. As can be seen in the graph below, either the main breadwinner (including grandparents) had no employment or only had irregular income (usually what they described as 'piece-jobs').

Table 7: Circumstances of interviewed children

Status	Circumstances	Number
Double orphan	Child-headed-household	6
	Granny-headed-household	8
	Headed by other relatives	1
Single orphans	Unemployed parent	12
	Ailing parent	1
	Poor family	2
Both parents alive	Neglected	4
	Poor family	4
Total		38

As has become quite common practice in Lesotho, double orphans are left in the care of grandparents, either when the parents die or when the parent(s) goes looking for work. Many of these grandparents do look after their grandchildren, quite often through meagre sources of income including through an old age pension scheme (Nyanguru, 2007). For example, one child reported that she had to drop out of school because she had a *single mother, [who was] a bartender, with two children*. Most single orphans in Lesotho have lost their fathers, who usually also are breadwinners. It was therefore not surprising that the majority of single orphans cited the unemployment of their parents as the main source of their difficulties. As has been noted earlier, a higher proportion of those in school (46% or 12/26) than those out of school (25% or 3/12) were double orphans because the scholarship programme targets

double orphans only. It appears that the national scholarship is possibly missing many other children in difficult circumstances such as extreme poverty and parental neglect.

4.2 The case study schools

This section first provides a brief description of the four case study schools and their surrounding communities, including participants' perspectives on the impact of HIV and AIDS at their schools and whether children affected by HIV and AIDS face additional disadvantage in accessing learning. It then presents an overview of participants' perspectives on student attendance and retention at the respective schools. It draws on findings from preliminary activities with orphans and other vulnerable young people during mini-workshops, as well as interviews with key informants.

4.2.1 Senqu

Senqu is a rural school in the southern part of Lesotho in the Senqu River Valley. It is located 30 kilometres from the administrative town of Quthing, one of the poorest towns in Lesotho. Although primary schools have become more accessible because of the massive building campaign by the government since it introduced free primary education in 2000, we still found hordes of children, including 6 year-olds walking more than 10 kilometres to school on the day of our visit to the school. Upon questioning the students on why they were still walking such long distances when the government had just built schools all over Lesotho under the Free Primary Education programme it became evident that infrastructure and orientation were competing regarding choice of school. As we were able to make out from the students, some were indeed walking the long distances because they were attracted by the infrastructure in the newly built school, which was superior to that in the old church schools. But then we also learnt, as we passed some students walking in the opposite direction, that other students preferred to remain in and even walk some distance to schools of their religious denomination even if a better resourced school was built within easy access.

One of the biggest schools in the country, Senqu has a total of 20 classrooms that accommodate an enrolment of over a thousand students and forty teachers (including three teachers on internship) as indicated in the table below.

Table 8: Characteristics of Senqu School

Location	Proprietor	Enrolment		Teachers		Number of Classrooms
		Female	Male	Female	Male	
Mountain	RCC	622	396	20	20	20

What is noticeable from the table above, and very much a feature of these rural areas, is the low enrolment of boys compared to that of girls. However, the school itself has a relatively high proportion (70% or 28) of teachers holding university degrees compared with the other selected school in the high altitude area.

A largely mountainous area with very little arable land, this is a very poor area with the second lowest employment rates in the country (20.6 compared to national average of 32.1 for men and 31.8 for men compared to national average of 38.4 for women). It became apparent even as we drove along to the school that not only was schooling competing with poverty, but there was also very low value for education. On our way to the school we met a woman had taken her child out of school in order for him to help her drive a donkey to the mill. On a daily basis we came across boys herding cattle during school hours and upon interrogation they would innocently report that they had been told to skip school in order to take the sheep to be sheared that day or worse still, that they had withdrawn from school because there was no one to look after the animals.

An initial meeting was held between the Chief and some of his advisors. The meeting was composed of the Chief, a middle aged male, three of his advisors - one female male and two males, including an old businessman in his late fifties who was also a founding member of the School Management Committee (SMC). The head of the SMC was put forward as our key informant but had very little to say about vulnerability and HIV and AIDS, which at first gave us the impression that he was reserved until we discovered that it was largely because he had very little knowledge on the matter. The principal was a fifty-four year old man originally from South Africa who was now a naturalised citizen of Lesotho. He reportedly had 22 years of teaching experience in Lesotho in addition to the five years he initially taught for in his birth country of South Africa. He was a compassionate professional and an individual with a deep commitment for children affected by poverty and HIV, both which he described as prevalent in the area.

One of the main findings regarding the role of the school in the community as elaborated by the informant in this area was the importance of the school to the community. As the key informant put it:

The school is very important as it has brought business to the community in the form of flats for hire by students and teachers of the school. As a result the school has warm relations with the community.

Male informant (right-hand man), Senqu

This was also confirmed by the principal who described how the expanding school had provided opportunities for the community and the school to collaborate and share resources:

There is a high level of collaboration between the school and the community with the school having purchased houses in the community to add onto the 25 houses the school built inside the school. The school also provides free water to the community.

Male Principal, Senqu

Poverty and need were listed as the main reasons for children dropping out of school. In the meeting organised by the Chief the reasons that most often lead to children dropping out were discussed and in particular the following general issues relating to poverty were raised:

- Poverty
- Shelter
- Lack of food
- Lack of clothes

The principal, while confirming poverty as one of the main reasons why children dropped out of school, also included some other socio-cultural practices as competing with schooling:

- Poor academic activity: Children not academically prepared from primary schools
- Poor family background – although many poor children are sponsored in terms of fees, books and even uniform and shoes, other needs such as food remain a problem
- Early marriage
- Teenage pregnancy

He elaborated about poor academic activity as the poor preparation children in this area suffered from as a result of the poor primary output:

Secondary schools in urban areas receive students who are more prepared because of the environment that exposes them to some opportunity to read and hear English spoken and because there are many stronger pre-schools and primary schools that urban secondary schools draw from.

Male principal, Senqu

About poor family background he described how despite the fact that poor children, especially orphans, are sponsored in terms of fees and books, and sometimes even uniform and shoes, many still miss schools and even drop out because such assistance does not cover basic needs, particularly food after school.

About the impact of HIV and AIDS, the key informant claimed that children affected by HIV and AIDS are treated like other children and they reportedly play together without any overt discrimination. However, the male key informant, despite being the head of the SMC, was highly reserved and no amount of probing was able to respond with any authority, much less how HIV and AIDS affect schooling. It is the experience of the researchers here that there is still a lot of refusal to acknowledge the impact of HIV in Lesotho much of it due to lack of information about the disease. He did acknowledge, however, that they needed some training regarding many social issues, including the impact of HIV and AIDS:

We need a lot of training in order to value education and know more about HIV and AIDS. Many parents do not see how important education is today and take their children out of school to look after animals or go to initiation schools.

Male informant (right-hand man), Senqu

However, when probed how widespread these practices of taking children out of school were, the key informant argued that the main causes for children dropping out of school were early pregnancies and inability of families to afford school fees rather than low value for education as he had earlier indicated. The key informant interviewed had very little to say about the vulnerability of children in the area although it was very so evident from observation and home visits that many children were vulnerable. On the contrary, teachers noted that the low value attached to education in the community, together with poor knowledge of HIV and AIDS were the main causes of children dropping out of school. During the Focus Group Interview with teachers in Senqu, they described some of the reasons why parents keep children out of school:

Facilitator:	What are some of the reasons why children drop out of school here?
Male teacher:	Many parents are keeping their children out of school because of difficult circumstances such as AIDS and poverty.
Female teacher1:	But also activities such as herding of animals are valued more than education here...
Male teacher:	Yes, for the boys ...
Female teacher 2:	...and many girls drop out of school to get married ... they ... what do you call this <i>ho shobela</i> ?
Female teacher 1:	To elope
Female teacher 2:	Oh, to elope! Yes, they elope sometimes a month before they write their final exams.

The exchange above confirms the observed low value attached to education in rural areas such as this one. Although this form of eloping often happens without the female partner's consent, there is a cultural view that once a girl has eloped she must go ahead with the 'marriage' as no other man will ever marry her. In addition, poverty has forced some parents not to claim their children back in the hope of receiving *bohali* – bride-price.

Although the principal had done his utmost to help vulnerable children by seeking scholarships to pay their fees, many children related sad stories about how their parents had died or deserted them. Many of these children were in the care of grandparents. In fact, one of our key contacts in the community when we were looking for out of school children was 'Mantoetse, an old lady who was taking care of three grandchildren whose mother (her daughter) had left them to look for work. Two of these children were clearly registered as orphans as she reported that their fees were being paid for by the Government of Lesotho. 'Mantoetse indicated that she has had to pay for the fees for the third child with help from

some of her children. Unfortunately, 'Mantoetse was not old enough to benefit from the Government pension fund which was given to all citizens over seventy years old.

One child related a story of how, first her father died, and then her mother took her to her mother. It was found to be quite common for grandparents to take care of their grandchildren once such children had lost both parents. But for this child it was sad as her grandmother and her grandmother's family ill-treated her.

From the interview data it is evident that the traditional extended family is breaking down as a result of the pressures of poverty and HIV and AIDS and that the children most affected were those who had been abandoned by their parents, especially the mother, who seem to play a more critical role in upbringing and supporting learning. The story of Mots'abi, a female girl attending school at Senqu confirms this.

Vignette 1: Mots'abi's life story

Mots'abi is a 17 year old living with her maternal grandmother. Her father left the family to 'look for work' when she was very young (she doesn't remember when exactly) and he has never been heard of thereafter. After a few years, Mots'abi's mother also left to find means of supporting her family, leaving Mots'abi to live with her aunt, her mother's younger sister. After a few years of warm stay, Mots'abi's aunt got married and the little girl was taken in by her maternal grandmother in order to 'fetch water' for the grandmother. She stayed there and did her Standard 1 until she did her Form A (First year of secondary schooling). It was a difficult stay with both grandmother and aunt (grandmother's daughter-in-law) constantly verbally abusing her. When they bought her clothes they would jeer at her regarding her neediness and her family's poverty. During our interview with Mots'abi she openly regretted that she had to endure her grandmother's abuse even though her parents were still alive. She also talked about how, more than anything else, she missed her mother terribly.

Mots'abi's story illustrates just how much families have been affected by poverty and unemployment in this region and many parts of Lesotho. Traditionally, relatives would take on orphans and abandoned children without any hesitation and take care of them like they would their own. Being tossed from one family to another would have affected Mots'abi very much, but she clearly still remembers her mother's love and describes her departure as the saddest moment of her life. This is a common story in the area and Polao, a 19 year old boy, also described how after his father's death, his mother left him in the care of his paternal grandmother when he was about 8 years old.

I had to work hard; looking after animals; tending fields and even washing my own clothes. In 2005 I was transferred to my maternal grandmother's. To date my mother and my older brother are still away looking for work and to date I stay with maternal grandmother and continuing with schooling. *Male in-school interviewee*

Therefore, grandparents continue to play an important role looking after their grandchildren in these times when poverty and HIV and AIDS are putting an immense pressure on family cohesion.

4.2.2 Moorosi

Moorosi is situated between the administration towns of Quthing and Qacha's Nek in the extreme south of Lesotho and is more than seventy kilometres to either town. The school is located in an area that is quite poor. Here arable and grazing area gets noticeably sparse as grey mountains roll imposingly as far as the eye can reach. Communities here are distinctly traditional with initiation school competing vigorously with schooling.

- Female key informant: Here at Moorosi, people don't care for education and they think it's nothing...
- Interviewer: Why do you say that?
- Female key informant: Because here are children still out of school looking after animals although [primary] education is free.
- Interviewer: What are family priorities here?
- Female key informant: What is most esteemed among them is initiation school only ... and hiring out children to go to animal outposts as herd boys. As for girls, they are owners of families.

The term 'owners of families' is used to indicate how young girls were now taking care of their own families from early ages by also being hiring out as domestic servants in order for their own families to survive. The low value for education, according to the key informant, was largely because the current primary education was particularly irrelevant. She said she 'can point to many people, apart from those who received education of the English people, who have completed primary but they can't even remember their names'. Her argument is a common one made in Lesotho and many African countries that graduates of the education of the English people (colonial education) were few but extremely eloquent. Whatever the accuracy of her views about the low significance of the current education system, her comment about the low value attached to education in the area was confirmed by the many out-of-school children, especially boys, driving animals on the school day noticed by researchers while in the area.

Poverty and HIV were also evident in the widespread orphanhood. What all interviewees in the area agreed on was the high incidence of young parents abandoning children to go to Ceres (Cape Town) to work in the wine farms. Again the female key informant was highly critical and revealing about the way in which the growing impact of HIV was being handled in the area:

HIV has a hand in the growing vulnerability of young children resulting in increasing number of *likhutsana* (Single orphans) and *likhutsana-khulu* (double orphans) and this impacts on them psychologically and their school work ends up declining and they end up falling pregnant and drinking alcohol.

Female informant, Moorosi

Teachers at the school admitted that both educators and community members had inadequate knowledge about HIV and AIDS and that they were not skilled at counselling the people affected.

Poor counselling skills are not only evident among educators. One community informant related a story of how health workers in the area did not keep confidential information about infected members of the community. HIV had become an opportunity for unscrupulous local leaders who keep items donated to affected families to themselves. It was during this process that the key researcher was also made us aware that there was an issue over the support of OVCs as the community council was reportedly diverting donations for these children from agencies and sharing the donations amongst themselves:

Children affected by HIV are particularly disadvantaged in their education because *support groups* and the local council are supposed to help them, but they don't even have the list of affected children nor proper plans for putting the program into operation. They don't know that it is their responsibility to find financial support for such children.

Female teacher, Moorosi

Again the principal of the school brought us into contact with teachers whom he felt would not only be cooperative, but would also have a much deeper sense of emerging issues such as gender, HIV and AIDS and vulnerability in general. Although very keen to help, the teachers at this school were noticeably reticent in the interviews we had with them when asked about their understanding and views regarding vulnerability among school children in their school. However, they were more forthcoming when discussing causes of poor attendance and the causes and consequences of students' absenteeism and drop-out, emerging with the following list:

- *The cold weather prevents them from going to school as many do not have shoes*
- *School fee requirements*
- *Parents do not take the responsibility to address the children's needs and as a result they stop going to school*
- *Early pregnancy regarding girls*
- *The initiation schools also contributes*
- *Elopement is also high on the list*

The area is extremely poor and the circumstances of the children identified as vulnerable was perhaps the worst in all the cases visited. There are no programmes initiated by communities to deal with their situation of vulnerability and HIV and AIDS challenges. Although this did not emerge explicitly from interviews, it became evident that this apathy leaves children isolated from support and susceptible to activities such as initiation (boys) and teenage pregnancy (girls) that take them away from schooling.

Many of the children interviewed appeared quite affected by HIV and poverty and many talked about the fact that they felt out of place in school because they sometimes would not have any clothing or food. We were able to locate three out-of-school girls whose ages ranged from 17 to 25 who related their sad stories:

Vignette 2: The life stories of 3 out-of-school children

We were able to locate three out-of-school girls: Faneloa, who was 25 years old, Nteboheleng, who was 22, and Liepollo, who was 17. Faneloa related the story of how her uncle tried to assist her with her schooling after her parents died. Unfortunately, her uncle could not always afford her school needs. She eventually fell pregnant and had to leave school in the second year of secondary school, Form B. Nteboheleng kept on talking about how her 'parents' were poor and struggled to keep her in school. We only learned very late in her story that she was an orphan and her 'parents' were actually her grandparents. When she was in Standard 5 (Fifth Grade) she had to repeat the class. She had been out of school for a long time during that winter on 1994 as she was without shoes. In addition she was always very late with her school fees and missed school for long periods while her grandparents tried to sell some of their farm produce. When she got to secondary school things got worse. 'Not only was I always late with school fees', she said, 'but I would have to watch as other children – one-by-one- receive school books and there would be nothing for me!' She has two younger siblings – one in a nearby primary school and another only six years old. Nteboheleng eventually dropped out of school during her final year of junior secondary (Form C) and now looks after her siblings from piece-jobs or odd jobs. Liepollo talked fondly of her aunt [mother's younger sister], 'the closest person to her '... and we understand each other very well', she added. Her aunt, she said, had taken very good care of her since Liepollo's mother left her and infrequently sent some money back home. Sadly Liepollo was in her final year of high school (Form E) when her aunt could no longer afford her fees and those of her own children who were now much older and in school.

The three girls argued that, particularly for girls, it is a very embarrassing thing to have to go to school in torn shoes or uniform. But their story is typical of many young girls who have to leave schooling to become parents or in the language used here 'become owners of their own parents' families'.

The stories of these out-of-school children confirm the breakdown of traditional support structures in the face of the growing vulnerability. Children are left in the care of relatives as families are torn apart by poverty and HIV and AIDS. But relatives themselves then find it hard to support these orphans and these children are the first to be sacrificed as resources diminish. Children here elope at an early age and we gave a lift to a couple of teenage girls carrying babies to a clinic or to look for means of support. One such young mother got a lift from us as a severe storm was approaching. She claimed that she was 21 and had left school just over a year before after repeating Form B because of her parents' inability to raise school fees. But she looked more 16 than 21 and was clearly struggling to take care of the baby which cried all the way until they alighted some 10 kilometres away.

In our interview with the community key informant she told us of young girls eloping to escape poverty; of parents pushing their children into early marriage to get bride-price; and of children being hired out by parents. And in our interviews with this community informant and the head of the school management committee they reported the following reasons for dropping out:

- Inability to raise fees due to poverty
- Initiation school
- Drug & alcohol abuse
- Early marriage and eloping

Added, the community key informant:

Boys rush to initiation school because they hate being referred to as *bashanyana*. When they return from initiation school they are no longer interested in schooling.

Female key informant, Moorosi

Indeed the term *bashanyane* (literally 'boys') is a term used to refer to young men who have not (yet) attended initiation school. In communities where the practice is valued, it is indeed as source of much shame not to have attended initiation school. Many boys drop out of school to attend initiation school and even if they return to school, they feel too old to attend with *bashanyana*. However, harsh weather conditions also aggravate access to schools, with children often having to cross rivers to get to schools and sometimes brave the snow in order to reach schools that are far away. It is for that reason that the immediate community of Moorosi felt so appreciative of the fact that a school had been built quite close to them. Evidently communities much farther away from schools suffered worse circumstances and lost more appreciation for schooling.

4.2.3 Masupha

Masupha is situated in the lowlands of Berea district in a highly populated village not very far from the capital town of Maseru. This is a humble catholic school with aging furniture and school records are still kept in manual files as the school does not have even a single computer. The school is located in a poor semi-rural area and is of medium size (about 800 students). The school keeps a very strict catholic discipline regime as was evidenced by the number of children sent out of class to go and cut their hair short. Judging also by the number of parents coming into school to plead for their children to be kept in school while they sought means to meet the school fees, many of the children attending the school are quite poor. However, it was reassuring to note that there was some degree of openness to negotiate the fee settlement deadlines by the school management. The school had a high number (11/18) of teachers with university degrees, but quite a high proportion (12/18) of the teachers had no education training.

Table 10: Characteristics of Masupha School

Location	Proprietor	Enrolment		Teachers		Number of Classrooms
		Female	Male	Female	Male	
Lowlands	Catholic	362	326	7	15	15

An old male Chief of serving the village of Masupha together with one unemployed old lady, Likeleli served as our key contact in this case. Both key informants noted that, whilst attendance at the school was good, many households struggle to send their children to school as a result of HIV and AIDS deaths in families and children being left destitute. The Chief, who was also a member of the SMC, confirmed that the school had good attendance but that many children were reportedly not concentrating well on their studies:

- Interviewer: How would you describe student attendance at Masupha?
- Chief: Very good! Attendance here is very good.
- Interviewer: But are there any children who miss school and why?
- Chief: Teachers report that some children miss school while looking after sick parents and many of these children appear very distracted even when they are in school
- Interviewer: What do you mean they are distracted?
- Chief: These children can hardly smile and have that far away look in their eyes.

Our female key informant also confirmed that the village had experienced high rates of children losing both parents and neither the community members nor the teachers knew how to deal with this phenomenon. The Chief further reported that orphans face high levels of stigmatisation and discrimination in the community and noted that there is much to be done to change attitudes and educate members of the community about HIV and AIDS.

Other children do not mix well with these [orphans] children. Even teachers need support on how to handle these children. The school is not currently used as a centre for reaching out to vulnerable children including those affected by HIV and AIDS.
Chief and SMC head, Masupha

From both informants it appeared that a critical need in the school and the community would be training on HIV and AIDS. A member of the school committee, the Chief confirmed that 'the capacity of teachers and school management to address the needs of children affected by HIV and AIDS is moderate'. The school head explained that some children withdraw as a result of their parents being unable to pay fees. The research assistant had just found funding for a number of children in the school and her role and that of her support groups. The Chief reported that this support was highly appreciated by the community: 'support groups and church groups are doing a good job, because they hold trainings for children who have lost both parents'.

The school, with participation from the community, had a number of projects and the piggery was thriving at the time of our visit. The students look after the pigs during the school days and the community elect a member to fill in when the school is not in sessions. In this urban area, both students and teachers cited child abuse and school fees are some of the most common reasons for children having difficulties attending school and even dropping out of school. Teachers in a focus group interview reported the difficulties faced by poor children and orphans:

- Male participant 1: It is very difficult for these children for poor children and orphans in school because they often cannot afford some necessities.
- Female participant 1: ...and especially girls who take responsibility of the younger ones doing domestic work –
- Female participant 2: ...and they are sexually abused.
- Male participant 2: The other problem is that many of these children are staying with their grandparents and relatives, and as a result they drop out due to lack of necessities such as clothes, food and money.

A story confirming how teachers were also finding it difficult to deal with the impact of the growing vulnerability was related by one teacher during a focus group interview:

I had a bright child who suddenly started dozing in class and we only learned later that she had lost both her parents and was now staying with her aunt a longer distance away from school. You see as soon as both parents die, relatives start fighting over property and children are left stranded. This poor girl eventually dropped out of school.

Female teacher, Masupha

The teachers reported during the focus group interview that they now have the practice of contributing some money and some worn clothes for needy children or those noticeably neglected. However, this is often not adequate as such children have nothing else to eat at home. Also quite high up, although not as high up as in the mountain areas, were family problems such death of a parent or separation of mother and father. Again not as common as in the mountain areas, were reasons such as herding, but often here it was not just choice. It was usually because the father had lost his job and was no longer able to keep the child in school.

Situated in a densely populated but poor area, participants from the surrounding communities showed a high degree of awareness of issues of HIV and AIDS and vulnerability. Our community informant, Likeleli, acknowledged that stigma and discrimination are the biggest barriers facing AIDS orphans, over and above those faced by other OVCs. She said “children whose parents are suspected or known to have died of AIDS face discriminated against by other children. Eventually they then realise that they must be different and withdraw, no longer playing with the others”. The Chief of the village where Masupha is situated, who was also a member of the School management Committee (SMC), talked openly about the impact of HIV and AIDS on students and their attendance.

The community needs to get workshops on stigma and discrimination. Then they can teach their children that those affected by HIV and AIDS are their fellow human beings and give them the chance to play with them.

Chief and SMC member, Masupha

Although, he had no numbers on the drop-outs he observed that the impact of HIV, particularly the loss of a parent, had resulted in high absenteeism and drop-outs among students in the village. This, he argued was largely because children were being forced by AIDS to look after sick parents. Teachers described how they were increasingly being called upon by the impact of HIV and AIDS to assist particularly needy children. They expressed the need for training in psycho-social support and for children to be trained in setting up small educational and survival clubs such as garden clubs so that pupils can eat and sell excess vegetables to meet their non-educational needs.

The school takes measures to find out which children come from needy families and try to seek scholarships and some food for them. But often this is inadequate because, for

example, the food is given once in a while. The community also needs to raise its own funds and donate clothes.

In the teachers' group discussions, reasons advanced for children missing school or dropping out were again generally about poverty:

- orphanhood
- household heading
- poverty
- vulnerability
- looking after sick parents
- distance from school

The loss of a parent was a particularly traumatic event in terms of the loss of parental love and care. For example, Lemohang, a sixteen year old drop out from Masupha village described how after her father's death she and her mother went to live with the paternal grandparents. But after her mother's death the family chased her away and she now lived with her aunt. Poverty generally affected the children's ability to meet school requirements such as school uniform and fees. A number of children then had to take up the role of heading households and resulting in withdrawal from school. But the loss of parental love and care was described as the saddest moment in the children's lives. The following vignette comes from a group interview with three out-of-school girls and one out-of-school boy in the village near Masupha School

Vignette 3: Out-of-schools at Masupha

Lemohang was a double orphan who was now staying with her maternal aunt after she was rejected by her maternal grandparents. In her own words, when her mother died 'life came to a standstill'. Palesa was a fifteen year old girl who lived in the same village and had lost her mother. Members of the community helped us trace her after the Chief related her sad story. It became evident that the father was no longer mentally fit and the uncle had smuggled her from his brother after the community had reported to him that they suspected that the father was sexually abusing the girl. Now the child was living with the uncle where she served as a domestic servant to her uncle's family in return for fees, at least for some time. She said she was not attending school because her mother was late 'and I'm not feeling good because my classmates have left me behind'. All she had now was a brother whom she looked up to because of what she said were his 'sober habits'. The third girl was twenty years old Lits'oanelo whose father, we learned, died after she obtained a very good pass (a first class pass) in her primary school final examinations. Her mother struggled with school fees and she repeated three grades (Form A, B and C) in secondary school until she made up her mind to leave school in 2007. She said she was motivated by her cousin at the University of Lesotho whom she said also had 'sober habits'. Sehapi, the twenty-year-old boy, also described the death of his father in 2003 as having 'halted his life'! Although the mother, teachers and friends encouraged him to continue his studies after the death of his father, he eventually dropped out in 2008. His mother, he said, was trying to let out her small shop, which she could no longer run because of lack of capital, in order to raise fees for him. He said he would also like to make metal gas stoves to sell and raise money for his fees and go to university 'like my older sister, 'Mapheko, who is in her second year at NUL.'

All children described the loss of their parent(s) with touching sadness but remained quite positive and humble about their wishes. They all wished they could finish school and all had ambitions to go on with life and achieve. For example, Lits'oanelo wanted was to be a caterer while Sehapi wanted to learn through correspondence while making his steel gas stoves.

4.2.4 Molapo

Molapo is another deeply Catholic school at the foothills of Leribe in the north of Lesotho. With more arable land the communities are less poor but initiation school and animal herding are very predominant activities here. The area is also devastated by HIV and AIDS and growing unemployment. The school is rather isolated, far away from the main road, and lacks some equipment. Although there are a few computers for administrative purposes, there is notable lack of key facilities such as a library. The school does not offer lunch and sometimes the children come to school without having had a meal and often lose concentration. In addition to the circumstances they face outside school, lack of reading materials is promoting to poor attitudes towards school. The majority of teachers in the school (16/18) had university degrees with only three of the teachers having no education training.

Table 11: Characteristics of Molapo School

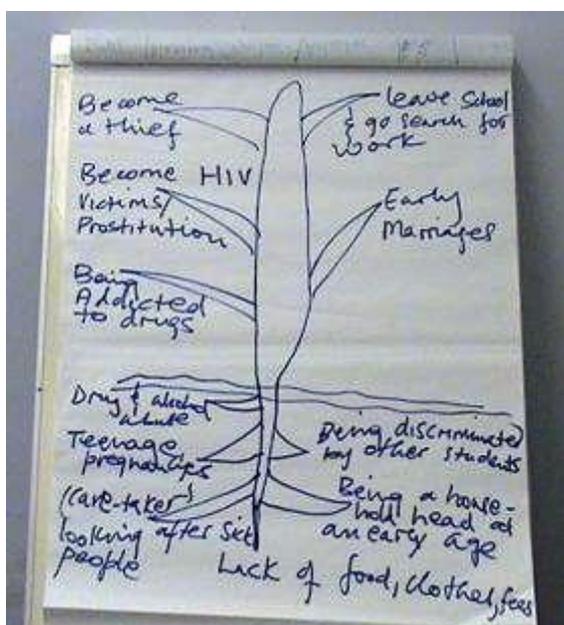
Location	Proprietor	Enrolment		Teachers		Number of Classrooms
		Female	Male	Female	Male	
Foothills	Catholic	388	174	11	7	16

However, the principal indicated that they needed more government paid posts (grants) for teachers of commerce and computer science. Again it is notable that, like the two other schools located in the high altitude regions, there was a very low enrolment of boys, compared to girls in this school.

In this case we had interviews with the principal, a middle-aged Catholic nun, and she later included two other teachers (a male and a female) who are in the school management committee. We also had a focus group interview with four teachers (one male and three females) on vulnerable children. Later in the week we moved on to the village, where the Chief provided us with his right hand man to help us identify relevant families and out-of-school children. According to the principal the school plays an important role in the community, 'many students attending this school are from the nearby villages, and some of the students stay at hostels owned by community people, it means the community gets money from these students'. She also reported that the community use school facilities such as the playgrounds.

In a teacher's workshop, a group of four teachers were asked to draw a causes and consequences tree and they came up with the following:

Figure 10: Problem tree drawn by Masupha teachers



The table below captures the teachers' diagram above.

Table 12: Drop out causes and consequences identified in Masupha

Causes of poor attendance	Consequences of poor attendance
Lack of food, clothes, fees	Leave school and go search for work
Caretaker – looking after sick people	Become a thief
Being a household head at an early age	Become HIV victim/prostitution
Teenage pregnancies	Being addicted to drugs
Being discriminated by other students	

Unlike in the mountain areas where eloping featured high, here teachers talked about teenage pregnancy and family problems as some of the main causes of poor attendance. Elaborating on their diagram one male teacher talked about his experiences about children in their area:

Because of lack of food a child ends up selling herself in order to get money, and being infected with HIV and other STDs. They end up leaving school and some of them then become thieves.

The principal confirmed that 'lack of food, teenage pregnancies and poverty' were the main reasons for student absenteeism. She further claimed that the 'percentage of students dropping out permanently has declined recently because the school sees to it that we help students who are at risk of dropping out permanently'. She mentioned some initiatives by teachers such as contributing some money for some needy children:

Teachers contribute certain amounts of money, bring along their clothes, and distribute them to children affected by HIV and AIDS; also the SMC members contribute some money and they buy soaps, Vaseline and give them to these students. Apart from that groups like Help Lesotho, Sisters-of-Charity and Social Welfare help such children.

The death of a parent was the most commonly cited form of family problems. However, initiation school was also quite common and once boys came back from initiation school, they were no longer prepared to go back to school, choosing instead to herd animals.

We also had a focus group interview with three girls and three boys. At first the boys were more related but eventually the girls also caught on, especially as they related their life stories through the river of life activity. Responding to the stories of Mary and Khoali, used as a scenario for the group discussions, the children said they related very closely with Mary and Khoali's stories. According to one boys 'Those children who live alone without parents suffer a lot since there is no one who provides food and clothes for them'. Another boy added that especially 'the eldest child is the one who will make the decision on how his/her younger brothers and sisters will be supported'. The young boy, Teboho, was talking from experience as we later learned. He was now household head living with his younger sisters and brothers in a small house. He was an enterprising young man and actually kept a small vegetable garden from which he was able to provide food and even sell for some basic needs.

The children all agreed that a basic problem with the practice of taking double orphans into other families, including relatives', is that 'sometimes the person taking care of the children may tell them that he is not their father or their mother'. Later on the girls joined in and one of them described how after her parents deserted her she struggled to keep up in school. The following exchange during a children's workshop at Molapo School illustrates the role that parents play in their children's retention or withdrawal from school. One girl was describing her experience after her parents died and her sister had to look after them:

I had nothing to eat, and this was a very serious problem since I had to go to school fresh in mind, so it was hard for me to concentrate on my studies. Again there was nobody who encourages me to go to school even though I seemed to suffer.

Female student, Molapo

One boy argued that they often suffer a lot because 'parents here do not prioritise education because when their children run away from school, they leave them. Others want them to sit down and work ...' he said. 'And get married too ...'

Vignette 4: Resilient and resourceful 15-year-old Thabang

One of the in-school interviewees was a 15 year old boy, Thabang, a second born in a family of three girls and seven boys that no longer had a parent. Thabang's older brother is completing his high school this year, 2009, and would be regarded as the household head. However, Thabang was far stronger than his older brother according to the Chief who kept an eye on the orphans. Indeed on our way back from an interview with the Chief and another community member we passed by Thabang's home while he was watering vegetables in patches of gardens he kept at his home (see picture below).

Talking about parents, the girls, became more involved and started talking about the loss of their parents as having affected them very much as 'there is nobody who will struggle to see that we get education'. They also talked of the stigma that often follows AIDS orphans as 'everyone will think that they have it too, and find it useless to find education for affected children'. The children were talking about the stigma and misconception that any affected children are necessarily infected and will be dying soon anyway and therefore no education should be wasted on such children. One girl used Mary's story to describe how traumatising it is for orphans to hear other children talk about their parents.

With the help of the Chief and his right hand man, we visited two families where there were double orphans being looked after by relatives. In one of the two families, the identified teenage girl was a daughter of the household head, 'Manthabiseng, who had lost her husband in 1996. Nthabiseng, 'Manthabiseng's only daughter was born in 1989 but after the death of her father, Nthabiseng had a difficult up-brining eventually dropping out of school in 2006 while repeating the second year of secondary, Form B. She fell pregnant in 2007 and then eloped with another school drop-out but family disagreement resulted in Nthabiseng being separated with her husband. All of the four girls that we eventually interviewed, including Nthabiseng, had dropped out of school. The Chief described this as a prevalent and a result of HIV and AIDS. It was evident from the number of children left as double orphans in the community that HIV and AIDS has had a serious impact on the children, many of whom were either caring for sick family members or heading households. Stigma and discrimination posed a huge challenge to these children's being fully integrated into the community and performing well at school as Thabo's story below illustrates. The Chief's wife, who was listening in, suddenly took the direction of the discussion in the direction of whether AIDS really exists.

Chief's wife:	There are too many people with AIDS here that I know
Right-hand man:	You remember, my grandson, Thabo, who died two years ago?
Chief:	Yes, I do. He was ill for a long time
Chief's wife:	Had TB, did he?
Right-hand man:	Doctors said he had AIDS.
Chief's wife:	What do say? Really?

Relating the story was evidently very draining for Khotso, and especially as the Chief's wife could not hide her shock. Khotso confessed that he had never been able to confide in any one because of the stigma, preferring instead to suffer silently and alone.

The rest of the participants were identified through the Chief and the school management committee members. While the Chief, one of our key informants here, was well-informed about vulnerability in the village, he did not appear to be informed about the impact of HIV and other forms of vulnerability on children's attendance rates in school. Having talked so eloquently and openly about 'orphans left by parents who die one after another', his evident shock at the death from AIDS of Thabo, the grandson of a person so close to him, indicated that he had not considered the relationship between the growing number of orphans in the village and AIDS. After Khotso's story about the death of his grandson above, the Chief was notably shaken and uncomfortable. It became evident that he was not as comfortable talking about HIV and AIDS as he had been talking about needy children and orphanage. The following is the list of reasons given by the Chief, his right hand man and the Chief's wife for children's absenteeism and dropout:

- poverty
- orphanage
- early teenage pregnancy
- household heading
- looking after sick parents
- misbehaviour

Top of their list was generally poverty but the group still did not explicitly mention HIV and AIDS as a cause of the growing orphanage and children becoming household heads. It is really the absence of someone who monitors the children's attendance that is the greatest impact. In addition, these children often face distractions such as care-giving and obstacles such as discrimination and stigma, preventing them from mixing fully with other children, one of the keys to successful school attendance. On the question of whether children affected by HIV and AIDS face more serious barriers one teacher had this to say during a focus group interview:

Other students do not mix with orphans whose parents are known to have died of AIDS. They think they themselves have contracted the disease because they often take care of the parents when they are sick.

Female teacher, Molapo

Knowledge about the disease was still seriously lacking here and the teachers confessed that they themselves feel in need of training on how to handle children affected by HIV and AIDS. In discussing their list of causes of dropout, teachers added drug and alcohol abuse:

Of course, there are many poor families. Many of them sacrifice a lot to keep their children in school. But there are also many cases of negligence – some parents prefer to drink all day and not look after their children.

Male teacher, Molapo

Therefore, there were also some self-induced problems which might need communities to come together and support each other.

5. Comparing major findings across the case study schools

5.1 Household and community related factors affecting educational access

5.1.2 Value of school

One key finding related to the value of schooling in the communities. The most common educational value mentioned by members of the community was about increased **access** to schooling. This increased access brought about by the establishment of a *high school* in the area was explicitly appreciated in rural areas where access to secondary and high school was particularly limited. Particularly in rural communities such as mountain areas and the Senqu River Valley, key informants talked about the establishment of a high school nearer to the community as having brought some dignity to the community. For example, the chairman of the SMC in Moorosi suggested the establishment of 'a high school has transformed the area and brought ... dignity in this mountain area'. Secondary schools being so rare, particularly in rural areas, much 'dignity' is attached to having one.

Often along with secondary schools would come other socio-economic developments such as constructions and job-opportunities created through the school. In a rural area in a foothill community a member of the school management community indicated that one of the non-educational services given by the school was to 'hire members of the community for security' services. In a community in the Senqu River Valley, the female key informant maintained that the school had "brought developments in this mountain area, especially in relation to education'. In the same school community members further described how hiring out rooms to students had become a profitable activity in their community. The principal of Senqu School pointed out that he regarded developments such as 'the purchase of houses for teachers in the community' and the construction of the school and staff housing as contribution of the school to the community. This was confirmed by members of the community, including the key informant who said that at least some members of the community benefited from the purchase of the houses by the school.

Evidence of the value of education was the extent to which families still sacrifice their sometimes meagre income by supporting their children's and grandchildren's education. At least one in-school child talked fondly of his grandmother keeping him in school after he was transferred from one relative to another following his father's death. A study into how pensioners spend their pensions reported that the greatest expenditure was on their grandchildren's education. Less frequent were stories of relatives such as Liepollo's, where the aunt tried her best to assist and was only overwhelmed by the financial cost of keeping Liepollo in school while also attending to her own children's increasing needs. Therefore, despite good will and high value for education, the challenges are immense for parents and guardians to keep children in school. And unfortunately the perceived irrelevance of the curriculum added to the burden of school costs, further pushing some students out of school. This perceived low value of the school products appears to have failed to persuade some parents and guardians to sacrifice their 'animals and agricultural produce such as beans as payment' for the school costs of the children according to a female key informant at Moorosi. She further noted that because of the poor performance of some schools, particularly those in the rural areas, some parents did not feel compelled to make schooling their first choice:

Many families in this community do not take education as their first priority rather they are interested in reckless things like they go to initiation schools and in return they misbehave. Apart from that, their parents do not prefer this school because of its poor performance. Those who are here are here because they have no choice and get out at the earliest opportunity.

Female informant, Moorosi

This comment was reiterated in Molapo where we actually came across a group of initiates and the key informant talked about how arrogant and violent they were behaving in the

community. While initiation schools continue to be part of Basotho culture, many informants argued that they no longer contribute anything to our culture, many initiates returning only to misbehave rather than contribute to society. Therefore, that schools continue to compete with initiation school was really a serious indictment on the quality of their services. However, the comment by the Moorosi female informant is actually a double indictment: on parents for not taking their educational responsibility seriously and on the educational community for not getting their act together in making schools more efficient and the curriculum more relevant.

5.1.2 Poverty and unemployment

While there were contrasting reports about the value of education held by community members, poverty and unemployment appear to have indisputable negative impacts on education. Confirming the impact of poverty, most of the out-of-school children described themselves as coming from poor families of suffering as a result of 'a breadwinner losing his job'. Out of the 14 out-of-school children, four said they came from very poor families and six said their household head was unemployed. This makes family circumstances the most common reason cited for dropping out of school. In three of the four cases here, teachers described poverty as the main reason for children dropping out of school. One teacher in Masupha School described the impact of poverty thus:

Poverty generally affected the children's ability to meet school requirements such as school uniform and fees. A number of children then have to take up the role of heading households and resulting in withdrawal from school.

Female teacher, Masupha

A number of community informants also noted that poverty was playing a major role in the increasing dropout rates among secondary children in Lesotho. The head of the school governing body in Moorosi School noted that:

Poverty is a major barrier to attendance here; children lack many things like food, clothing and other personal necessities, then they start searching for jobs.

Male SMC head, Moorosi

As noted in the interview with the teachers at Moorosi School, the most remote school, one of the most common reasons for children missing school and eventually dropping out of school is lack of clothing. The weather here at Moorosi is harsh and even in summer some warm clothing is often required. It is not surprising therefore than one of the out-of-school children interviewed here also confirmed that he missed school when he could not afford to buy school shoes and eventually dropped out of school. Beside the cold weather, worn-out uniform was cited as one of the reasons that children, particularly girls, felt that they could not continue with schooling. One of the three out-of-school girls in Moorosi described how poverty for teenage girls can have a particularly devastating effect on their schooling, perhaps explaining why dropout rates among girls catch up and even overtake those of boys in secondary school:

It is not easy for a girl to go to school with a torn uniform or shoes. Boys can go but for girls it's too embarrassing. You cannot concentrate in class and feel others are looking at you and laughing at you.

Out-of-school girl, Moorosi

Therefore, children do choose to drop out of school at times because they feel stigmatised by their very situation. Structures that used to deal with vulnerability amongst children can no longer cope and cases of stigmatisation and even abuse are growing (Lefoka, Nyabanyaba, & Sebatane, forthcoming; Kimane & Chipoyera, 2006). For example, Kimane and Chipoyera (2006) report an escalation of child labour practices, including herding amongst boys and domestic work amongst girls in Lesotho. Beside the exploitation, children like Mots'abi reported psychological abuse, where relatives would jeer at poor children and orphans about their situations.

5.3 HIV and AIDS and growing orphanhood

Impact of HIV and AIDS

Some community members remained rather reserved about HIV and AIDS and were unprepared to link the disease directly to high dropout rates. However, most participants related the growing incident of double orphanhood to HIV and AIDS and described its negative impact on attendance and retention in school. The loss of both parents was described as leading to high levels of distraction for affected children. More directly the continuing stigmatisation and discrimination of children regarded as HIV affected impacted negatively on school attendance and retention and put such children at a specific disadvantage over other vulnerable children.

Participants cited growing incidents of children staying at home to take care of their younger siblings and ailing parents which they associated with the pandemic. SMC members described how children have 'to take their parents to the clinic'. This was particularly the case in rural areas where poverty was also quite high. Community members also described how the situation regarding HIV and AIDS is a double-edged sword. The absence of someone who monitors the children's attendance was described as having a significant impact on attendance and retention. Children who are affected are more likely to drop out of school and children who drop out of school are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour.

In school, the impact of HIV and AIDS was reported to have had a huge impact on the morale of teachers and school management, with many teachers unable to cope. More than other disadvantaged children, it was pointed out that students coming from household affected by HIV/AIDS do not get so many chances to learn and participate in school activities because most of the times, they come to school without food. For example, a female teacher at Moorosi School noted that some of the orphans 'become inactive because of hunger'. This was confirmed by the Chief of Masupha who described such children as having 'that far-away look'. A World Bank report also confirms that orphans in Lesotho were much more disadvantaged in repetition and dropout measures than non-orphans (World Bank, 2005).

More than just affecting the concentration of children in school, the death of one or both parents was often described as directly linked to high dropout rates. The impact of the death of either or both parents appears to be quite complex, requiring a more comprehensive response than is presently available in Lesotho. Many double orphans appear to be in school because of the scholarship programme that prioritises such children. However, the loss of parents appears to increase the vulnerability of children in general. In the case of the loss of fathers, often the breadwinner, families appear to experience increased poverty. Although there are very few reported cases of maternal orphans, it does appear that in spite of the increased poverty mothers are slightly more able to keep their children in school than fathers who have lost their wives. The cases here may be far too few to generalise across the population, but the observation is supported by the Core Welfare Indicator Survey which also notes that paternal orphans are more likely to stay in school than maternal orphans even though the former are likely to experience worse financial difficulties (Bureau of Statistics, 2002). Unfortunately, in some instances the financial difficulties single mothers often force them to leave the children in the care of relatives, or even abandon them altogether.

The loss of both parents is reported in some of these cases as resulting in discriminations and stigmatisations, particularly if such losses are known or thought to have been as a result of AIDS. As one girl in Masupha said: 'if it is known that your parent has died of AIDS other children do not play with such children thinking they also have it'. The Chief had also noted such children do not mix well with others, often looking sad. One Moorosi community informant reported that even communities were diverting support meant for such needy families and children, 'sharing then amongst themselves'.

Findings from other studies note that orphans are often abused, ending up as herding animals or being hired out (Kimane, 2004), confirming what was also found across the cases in this study. In the two extremely rural and mountainous cases, boys were particularly susceptible to such practices. For example, in Moorosi, teachers described how young boys are often exposed to harsh treatment in order to raise income for families they have moved into:

Young boys who have lost their parents not only herd animals but are sent out to cattle posts deep into the mountains where they face the harsh weather conditions and are completely removed from opportunity to re-enter school.

Male teacher, Moorosi

In semi-rural areas, and possibly in urban areas where opportunities for domestic work are available, incidents of girls being hired out, even to more able relatives, were reported. For example, one needy girl in Masupha revealed that after the death of her parents she was taken over by her uncle's family where she served as a domestic servant in return for school fees and other necessities. However, even then such relatives would sacrifice the orphans at the very first sign of some financial difficulties as in the case of Palesa, an orphan in Masupha. Early marriage or chobeliso was reportedly the only way out for rural girls.

Also quite common as a reason advanced for poor attendance in these schools was the situation of child-headed households. But even more notable was the growing incident of children being left in the care of relatives, particularly grandparents. The trauma of losing contact with a parent, or of being abandoned by their parents in the face of growing economic difficulties or worse still having to go through the ordeal of seeing one's parent die, was clearly too much for many of the children attending the workshop. In one out-of-school workshop, a child described how she never regarded herself as a normal child after her mother - the only parent she had ever known - deserted her, leaving her in the care of her ailing grandmother. Thereafter, she was always late paying school fees as her grandmother was rarely able to raise the money in time. In Standard 5, she did not have school shoes and could only go to school after a long interruption and only after winter was over. Then in the first two years of secondary school things got worse as she did not have books and school fees and had no one else apart from her grandmother to turn to. She eventually had no choice but to discontinue schooling.

In the care of relatives, many of these children are often victims of the choices such families have to make in order to keep their own children in school. It was with a great deal of gratitude and understanding that one out-of-school youth described how her aunt assisted in keeping her in school. She, however, had to leave school as her aunt's children started school and her aunt needed to devote all her resources to them. Less appreciative was another out-of-school youth who described how she was tossed from one family to another. One *River-of-life* narrative was from a child whose father left to look for work, and was never heard of again and whose mother then followed suite. The child, was left in the care of an aunt and a grandmother and subjected to much abuse and neglect. Many of these abandoned children have very hard times and, much less than the orphans, are unable to appreciate why they have to go through such hard times when their parents are still alive, at least as far as far as they know.

5.4 Support provided to children affected

Schools were more positive about the support they sought out for affected children than community members. Indeed support to double orphans is available from the government and some support groups were assisting in seeking support from international and national organisations. However, in spite of the efforts of schools, government and some support groups, it appears that the scale of the pandemic is such that communities feel overwhelmed. As described earlier, relatives and particularly grandparents, were making an effort to assist orphaned and affected children with their schooling. Key informants described

incidents where community members contributed to financially assist orphans and how support group members took in such children and looked after them. In school, there were also descriptions of how teachers contributed in order to keep affected children in school and took them to counsellors when they needed to.

However, it is evident that the ability of these benevolent people could not overcome the scale of the need for assistance. In addition, lack of training for dealing with infected members of the community and affected children was acknowledged by both community members and teachers. The example of a community member who reported that counsellors were revealing the HIV statuses of some infected members is perhaps the most glaring evidence of poor training. However, allegations such as the one made by the Senqu principal that the scholarships office meant for OVCs was often left unattended when he went to seek assistance.

5.2 School-related factors affecting educational access

More functionally for such communities, it was argued that it meant that children no longer had to go very far. A similar appreciation for the nearness of a high school was also expressed in other rural schools including this one in the foothills of Leribe where the principal argued that many students are from the surrounding communities and they do not have to waste transport money because they are near the school. In the school in Molapo, the key community informant confirmed that the school admitted children regardless of their families' background. For example, the Chief was generally positive about the role and value of the school in their community:

The school is a Catholic school but it admits children whether they are Catholic, LEC or whatever. It also tries to assist poor children to remain in school but many parents here are poor and still cannot afford the fees. This is a rural area and schools are very far and so this school is very, very helpful and children here do not have to walk very far as the school gets children from the surrounding communities.

Chief and SMC head, Molapo

The value attached to increased access, particularly in rural areas in Lesotho, mentioned by the interviewees would be expected given the limited access to high school education described in the background section.

In one school in a semi-urban area, the community members expressed gratitude for the fact that the school intervened in social problems. The Chief of the area described with appreciation how the school helped 'whenever crisis occurs concerning some of the students' by finding funding for needy children. Clearly a school can be seen as more than just a place to learn but also a centre for social support for the surrounding communities.

Many students attending school at Molapo are from the surrounding communities and SMC is formed by Molapo people. As the principal noted, the proximity of the school saved this poor community money that would otherwise have been spent on transport going to school:

The school gets children from the villages around and the children can walk to school. It saves them money and makes it very easy for us to call parents to school when we need them. That is why we are so close to the children and try to help them when they are in trouble because we know them and their families.

Female Principal, Molapo

In one mountain area, the school supports 30 needy children by assisting the children to link up with government funding agencies and international agencies including one based in Switzerland.

It is also evident from the descriptions of the community members that there is also a non-tangible value to schooling. The rarity of high school establishment compared to primary

schools means that those communities that are blessed with the establishment of a high school feel a sense of importance.

Schools in Lesotho are valued in terms of their national examinations results. The schools in the mountain areas have poor resources and failure rates in the national examinations are high. Therefore, schools like Moorosi, in spite of being the only school in the area have very low student enrolments. In addition, such rural communities have very poor regard for education and the skills it provides. For example, as one principal of a rural school reflected, the irrelevance of education was partly to blame for the poor regard for schooling:

Education does not succeed in skilling children because one realises that children are taught to read and write in that level, but after that they are unable to put the skills in practice as there are no job opportunities for school leavers such that most of them do not appear to have benefited from education. The result is that the boys return to herding animals and girls get married.

Female Principal, Moorosi

A member of the school management committee in a mountain school maintained that although parents are taking their children to school in high numbers, education remained highly irrelevant in providing skills. He said that Lesotho's 'education does not respond to needs of children, as school leavers are not employable because they lack skills'. In two rural areas, members of the SMT regretted the irrelevance of education, arguing that it 'does not respond to needs of children, as school leavers are not employable because they lack skills'.

In addition to the continuing irrelevance of education in Lesotho according some of the informants, schools had not sufficiently transformed to address emerging issues such as HIV and AIDS. As we learned in another study, teachers lack the skills to make schools friendly for children and linkages with communities are generally poor. In particular, teachers in this study noted that they do not have the skills to adequately address the growing impact of poverty and HIV and AIDS. For example, one teacher in Molapo reported that they sometimes are confronted with situations that they cannot attend to:

We try to help children and collect money to help them with their needs. But many children face problems that we cannot deal with. For example ... there is a case of a girl who dropped out of school because she had lost her parents and was being abused by her aunt. We can't deal with such cases ... besides, we're too busy and underpaid.

Male teacher, Molapo

As many teachers elsewhere noted, there is need to train teachers in guidance and counselling. The need has grown for such skills as the extent of poverty and the impact of HIV and AIDS simply overwhelm teachers and communities. As vulnerability increases among children, both teachers and community members need skills in identifying children in need of assistance and training in children's rights and emerging issues. These issues will be discussed further in the concluding chapter, but they appear quite important.

5.2.1 Patterns of attendance, repetition and dropout

Lesotho continues to suffer one of the poorest access rates in secondary education in the region. Lower secondary schooling forms part of basic education which falls under the commitment for Education for All. However, repetition and drop-out rates in the first two years of secondary are quite high in Lesotho. With the ravages of HIV and AIDS and growing poverty, communities are finding it increasingly difficult to access secondary schools with their high school fees. In addition, the need to assist with economic activities has meant that the inflexible and irrelevant formal curriculum is even more unattractive for many communities. Whilst the extent and reasons for poor attendance and withdrawal from school differed amongst the four case study schools key informants in several of these schools believed that changing attitudes of parents and children towards education and was a key to improving access and that interventions could help to improve pupil attendance especially for children affected by HIV and AIDS.

There is a significant difference in the drop out rates in mountain schools compared to the foothills and lowland schools. This suggests a possible scenario where students in these schools have more opportunities to remain within the schooling system, whilst those in the rural schools are quicker to leave permanently. In both of the case study mountain schools the dropout was said to be strongly associated with household poverty and the ability to afford school fees. Key informants from all four schools agreed that teachers and communities need a lot of training on psycho-social support and on how to provide support to students trying to survive in the face of growing poverty.

5.2.2 Attendance, promotion and retention

As noted in the previous report, although Lesotho spends more than most countries in the region, it has one of the poorest promotion and retention rates amongst countries (Lee & Barro, 1977)¹¹. Part of the background to these poor figures has to do with the declining socio-economic context in the country. A common cause of poor attendance across schools in the study was described as poverty and the inability by many parents to raise fees for their children. Poverty had a gendered impact on attendance. For example, in rural schools members of management teams described how it had become common for children to take turns to attend school in order to earn income for the family. In addition to boys who have often been called upon to take turns going to school in order to look after animals, growing poverty has resulted in an increase in the incidence of girls also being forced to take turns attending school in order to look after younger siblings or ailing family members, or being withdrawn in order to be hired out as domestic workers. While girls are still less likely to be withdrawn from school as a result of poverty they tend to feel the impact of poverty more acutely than their male counterparts. As a female student in one semi-urban school pointed out 'poverty [is] the main cause of absenteeism [amongst] girls because they cannot just go to school like boys, for example without uniform, shoes and cosmetics'.

Girls from poor families or from HIV/AIDS affected families are also often forced to take care of younger siblings or ailing members of the family. Misconceptions about HIV and AIDS also contribute greatly to poor attendance according to informants in the study. For example, many children are exposed to stigma and discrimination among their peers with many children reluctant to mix with them assuming that they might have become infected while caring for their sick parents.

Intricately linked to poverty were two other phenomena that featured high up in the list of reasons for poor attendance and withdrawal. One of the most common reasons for poor attendance was described as orphan-hood. The head of the School Governing Board in Quthing pointed out that 'since many of these students are orphans, they have no one to care for them, and they come to school without eating food'. Indeed more than just leading to poor attendance, orphanhood was commonly quoted as the reason why children ultimately drop out of school. Many of these children do not have anyone to look after them and guide them. Also related to poverty and orphanhood was the growing incidence of leaving children on their own, with no supervision. For example, the Chief of Molapo noted that: 'Some parents are working, when they leave to work, the kids lose their responsibility and they end up not going to school'.

Many children in such areas have to walk long distances to school and in some schools children who arrive late are subjected to corporal punishment which has led to an increase in poor attendance among students. The head of the School Governing Board in one rural school described the practice regarding children who arrive late at school: 'Normally at this school, if the child arrives late in school, they are whipped; many of them do not attend school when they notice that it is already late'. He further described how this practice leads

¹¹ See also the previous SOFIE Opening Up Access Series no 4 at http://sofie.ioe.ac.uk/review_papers.html

to temporary withdrawal and poor performance and eventually to children dropping out of school.

5.3 Support provided to OVCs

This section looks at specific initiatives aimed at supporting children with their school needs, particularly orphaned and vulnerable children. The section outlines some of the national and local initiatives described by participants in the study. Therefore, it is not a comprehensive study of the extent of support provided to children and does not look at exclusively at children affected by HIV and AIDS although these children have been found to form the bulk of needy children in Lesotho.

Regarding access to schooling in Lesotho, school fees have been described as the greatest barrier to secondary schooling. The table below illustrates the cost of keeping a child in Lesotho, as presented by the four schools.

Table 13: Costs of keeping a child in secondary school

	Senqu	Moorosi	Masupha	Molapo
Registration	50	30	0	15
Tuition government	25	25	25	25
Other tuition	825	1000	975	745
Textbook Rental Scheme	220	220	235	220
<i>Uniform</i>	300	300	300	300
Maintenance		50		80
<i>Building fund</i>		100		20
Sports	60	40		25
Library				5
Practical subjects	40	60	50	
Computer		100		
Boarding		400		
Total	1520	2325	1585	1435

Although school uniform is often paid once in Form A, children may still be forced to buy it again in Form B if the previous one is torn or stolen. The costs above do include lunch but not stationery (estimated at about M200 per year) and transport which may cost as much as M1400 if the child is commuting daily. What is evident, though, is that it costs a parent no less than M1135 (US\$110.88¹²) per year to keep a child in school, and two to three times that amount in some cases. It is important to bear in mind that this amount of more than US\$100, as public expenditure on a secondary student was estimated to be more than 50% of Lesotho GDP in 2005. Keeping a secondary student in school in Botswana was estimated to be 40.2% of the GDP in 2005 and in Swaziland to be 30.9% in 2004.¹³

Key informants reported the following national and local initiatives aimed at supporting children, particularly orphaned and vulnerable children listed below.

¹² Exchange rates as of 17/02/09 on <http://www.xe.com>

¹³ Data obtained on 17/02/09 from the following UNICEF website <https://www.childinfo.org/>

School	Programme	Targeting
Senqu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Manpower Development Secretariat Red Cross Society World Vision (Lesotho) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double orphans Double orphans Double orphans
Moorosi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Manpower Development Secretariat Red Cross Society Swiss-based NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double orphans Double orphans OVCs
Masupha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Manpower Development Secretariat Red Cross Society Tsosane Support Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double orphans Double orphans OVCs
Molapo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Manpower Development Secretariat Help Lesotho Sisters of Charity Phela-o-philise Support Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double orphans Double orphans OVCs OVCs

Nationally, double orphans are identified through social welfare officers in the area and their school fees, uniform and stationery needs are paid for. These programmes do not cover additional costs such as transport and other meals. The majority of the programmes identified catered for double orphans and those that catered for other vulnerable children were reported to only cover the basic school fees. Therefore, while there were a number of programmes that attempted to assist double orphans, many vulnerable children were either minimally assisted or left out altogether.

In Molapo we also found that New Start Lesotho was providing services such as HIV testing and counselling. Children infected were referred to health centres where drugs are supposed to be provided.

6. Discussion and implications for intervention

This final section summarises the key issue emerging from the study of the four cases. It then examines the implications of the findings for the school-based intervention package that would most effectively help retain children at risk of dropping out of school. Education has been suggested as the window of hope. But education in development is under serious threat and gains made towards Education for All are being reversed by major socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment and HIV and AIDS. Major organisations including UNICEF, the World Health Organisation and the World Bank are all prioritising education, seen as the most cost-effective initiative for reversing the devastation being caused by HIV and AIDS (The World Bank, 2002).

Children in this study (aged 14 to 24 years) represent what the World Bank considers the second window of hope, representing a high risk stage with extremely high infection rates in many countries and dangerously high ignorance levels. It raises the stakes even higher than just economic independence and social enlightenment. These youth are at a critical stage of their development and education could play a vital role in ensuring that they are enlightened about HIV and AIDS and gain sustainable skills. But while it is clear that education is not just an ideal in these circumstances, there are serious extrinsic and intrinsic barriers to secondary education in Lesotho as illuminated by the case studies.

6.1 Emerging issues

Poverty: There are major socio-economic challenges facing children in Lesotho and it is no wonder that it has been rated as one of the worst places for children to grow up in¹⁴. It is quite apparent from the data collected in this study that many children are struggling to remain in school as a result of a variety of socio-economic challenges and cultural practices, but particularly the impact of HIV and AIDS and extreme poverty. The great majority of the students in school are either double orphans or paternal orphans, circumstances that usually imply reduced financial means for staying in school or attending regularly. Although there are a number of programmes that assist double orphans with their school needs, there are very few programmes aimed at assisting other vulnerable children and such programmes only minimally help these children. In fact, the effects of HIV and poverty are complex and cumulative and do not only impact on the child's attendance at the point where a child loses both parents. Many children, particularly boys in the rural areas, are forced to drop out of school because of poverty or the loss of one or both parents. Girls were reportedly forced to interrupt their schooling to look after younger siblings or ailing members of their families or eventually opt out of school into early marriage to escape extreme poverty. Early marriage - often by young girls to much older men - has been reported as increasing the vulnerability of these young girls to contracting HIV (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2005). In general, children affected by HIV and AIDS as well as extreme poverty are reportedly exposed to sexual and physical abuse.

Many orphans usually end up in the care of relatives, particularly grandparents. It was not surprising therefore that many talked of reduced support both in terms of following up on their school work and particularly in terms of financial support. Worse still, some of the children eventually become heads of households and have to push schooling lower down their lists of priorities. The situation of some of these children is truly tragic. What was most stark in terms of orphaned and vulnerable children was the extent to which they prioritised poverty as the reason why they drop out of school and the source of their misery.

These are all extrinsic challenges to schooling which are extremely difficult to overcome. Education is important if only to break this vicious circle that many of these children are caught up in. Lesotho has made major strides in providing basic education in a way that has begun to open up doors for many previously excluded children as a result of their family circumstances.

Geographical location: But secondary education in its current form in Lesotho is not benign. Certainly secondary education is inaccessible, inequitable and even irrelevant for many poor families. It is evident from this study that the situation regarding children's access to secondary school is extremely serious and particularly so for rural, mountain areas. The fact that the difference in access rates between urban and rural areas was 68% and 7% points to the extent of barriers in the mountain areas. Again these access rates are highly gendered with particularly the boy-child being victims of the circumstances of poverty and the effects of HIV.

Low value given to education: Another key finding is the apparent low value accorded to education in the mountain areas. It was evident that such cultural practices as initiation schools and early marriages for girls were competing with schooling. In the face of increasing poverty, *chobeliso* a very cruel practice of forcing, sometimes very young girls into marriage is being retained merely in the hope by poor families that *bohali* will alleviate their desperate situation. And given how expensive secondary schooling is in Lesotho, many children are forced out of school by the sheer cost. Girls, in particular, related how they were unable to go to school if they had no shoes and school uniform. Children related stories of the loss of parents and the movement between relatives who had their own priorities. Particularly for the children whose parent(s) were still alive, there was a great degree of

¹⁴ www.worldvision.ca/ContentArchives/content-stories/Pages/5-tough-places-for-boys-to-grow-up.aspx

bitterness as to why they were being tossed from aunt to grandmother when their parents, as far as they knew, were still alive.

Efforts to increase educational access: There are some innovations and interventions currently in place in order to try to keep OVCs in school. Individual schools are reported to have established cooperation with communities and children in order to seek support for OVCs. Schools have in many instances become centres of support for OVCs and principals are playing a critical role in seeking support for these children. These include the scholarship meant only for double orphans, which unfortunately appears to be missing out on many children in extremely desperate circumstances. But clearly schools could play an even more meaningful role in alleviating the impact of poverty and HIV and AIDS in fairly affordable ways. One such area for improvement is the level of knowledge, both in the school and in the nearby communities. There is simply poor knowledge about the pandemic and stigma and discrimination persist. But the need for psychosocial support goes beyond just counselling children on the consequences of infections. It has the potential to reduce increasing teenage pregnancies and early marriages noted in some communities.

In the face of mounting challenges presented by poverty and HIV and AIDS, it means no longer business as usual for the teacher and for the parent. For some time now, with the advent of technology, it has become clear that education does not only happen in schools and that learning is not only for classrooms. As the children of the rich have long surfed the internet for more knowledge after school and undertaken projects with their parents after school, the poor have had to make do with a clearly inadequate education confined only to the dilapidated walls of classrooms and the torn fences of school yards. But then came the scourge of HIV and AIDS, the ravages of poverty: a debilitating combination for many in the developing world; but at the time bringing with it a window of opportunity for the education community to look again at the way in which education is delivered!

6.2 Implications for the school-based intervention

The findings from the case studies suggest that although poverty is an important driver of school drop out and repetition – it is not the only factor that influences access. Teachers, it appears, are still regarding learners who do not turn up in school as beyond their remit given their already overloaded schedule. However, data from the case studies suggest that these exclusive trends resulting from growing poverty and HIV and AIDS in Lesotho are not the fault of the children, but that children are at the heart of the suffering brought about by the combination of these socio-economic challenges. At one level, mere knowledge of the children's rights to inclusive education would evidently make a difference for them to carry on the message that they are not the source nor should they be the victim of the situations they find themselves in. But they certainly can be the source of the solution by knowing and carrying the message that they have the right to be included in schools, no matter the extent of adversity. A poster depicting the rights of these children and possible recourse is proposed as one part of the solution at a policy level.

In a more child friendly approach to schooling children are no longer just numbers, but they are real people. Some schools and teachers are already taking a more pastoral approach to children. A simple change of the feel and activities of schools in this model would be for attendance registers not to be mere return forms, but to get teachers pursuing the absence of children with more rigour. Therefore, an attendance register could be kept, where the school gathers information on not just how many children are not coming to school, but also what the reasons might be for the child missing school and when a child is considered to be at risk of dropping out or grade repetition. In addition, teachers could be supported to become skilled at identifying and supporting learners at risk of dropping out of school with the provision of psycho-social support. Again this is already happening in some schools, though at a less uniformly and sometimes not effectively.

Many of the children at risk indicated just how much they miss the support and care of someone outside school. Extending the support to these children and linking the efforts in school with those outside school is one way of tackling the problem. Youth clubs in which children support each other and help each other to keep up with their school work and discuss issues of concern would be one way of creating critical circles of support for these vulnerable children. With the assistance of community based organisation members closely linked with schools, such buddies a careful record of the group dynamics and individual progress could be kept so that a more intimate system is in place. The youth clubs could also link with a member of school management committee who can assist in monitoring the attendance of learners and follow up on problems where necessary.

Central to the model would be not just extending schools outside the fences of schools, but providing means for a more flexible curriculum delivery for vulnerable children. Material and training support could be provided to such clubs so that study groups would be part of the circles and the youth would be encouraged to pair up in buddies who would follow up on each other's progress and difficulties. A 'school in a box' containing textbooks in mathematics and English Language and possibly some life skills would be provided to each club for it to use after school. It is important to acknowledge that for many of these children, the model may not address their most pressing need: the need for a parent and provider. But it would allow for even those who temporarily fall out of school to keep the possibility of keeping in touch and perhaps re-entering schools whenever possible.

In this way a new more open and flexible model of schooling could be developed to help meet the needs of vulnerable children living in high HIV prevalence areas of Lesotho who are at risk of dropping out or grade repetition. In the next year the SOFIE Project will develop such a model and it will be trialled and evaluated using an experimental design.

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Appendices

School checklist

Date _____ Day _____

School Name	
District	
Ecological Zone	Mountains Lowlands Senqu River Valley Foothills
Proprietor	1 Government
	2 Religious Agency: _____
	3 Other: _____ _____
School Shift	1. One shift only
	2. School also used for afternoon Shift
	3. Night school
Enumerator	
Checked by:	

1. Pupil Attendance

Standard	2007 Enrolment* Month _____			2008 Enrolment* Month _____			Current Attendance Date ___/___/___		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
A									
B									
C									
D									
E									
Total									

*Number of pupils enrolled end -January. If not available, indicate month.

2. Pupil transfers 2007

Standard	IN			OUT		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
A						
B						
C						
Total						

3. Pupil Drop out

Standard	2007		
	Boys	Girls	Total
A			
B			
C			
Total			

4. Pupil Performance (JC)

No. of Pupils	2007		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Merits			
First classes			
Second classes			
Third classes			
Fail			
Number who sat (%)			

5. Pupil Repetition (No. of pupils repeating a standard in 2008)

Standard	2008		
	Boys	Girls	Total
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
Total			

7. Comment on teachers' opportunities for INSET activities

--

8. Teacher Long-term Absence

No. of Teachers	Male	Female	Total
Number of teachers on maternity leave	NA		
Number of Teachers on frequent/long-term sick leave			
Number of teachers on study leave/sabbatical			
Number of teachers on residential training			
Sub-Total			
TOTAL			

9. Teacher Attendance: *(record attendance for each day of school visit)*

Start Date __/__/__	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			

10. School Records

Documents/records Available	Available (Y=1, N= 2)	Comment on status (up-to-date
Log Book or school inventory		
Time book		
Teacher Attendance Register		
Pupil attendance register		
Cohort tracking		
Pupil Progress Book		
EMIS statistical returns		
SMC minutes		
School Action or Development Plan		
Financial statement		
Other.....		

(a) Do school records indicate number of orphans enrolled? _____ (Y=1, N= 2):

(b) Do school records list reasons for

Pupil Absenteeism? _____ (Y=1, N= 2):

Pupil Drop out? _____ (Y=1, N= 2):

(b) If YES, comment on reasons recorded:

--

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

12. Infrastructure (*Record no. of buildings present*)

11. School Buildings

Buildings	Quality		
	Permanent ¹⁸	Other ¹⁹	Total
Classrooms			
Head teacher office			
Teachers' houses			
Store room			
Library			
Laboratories/workshops			
Hall			
Staff room			
Kitchen			

12. School Sanitation (*Record no. of facilities present*)

Sanitation	Flush (working)	Flush (not working)	VIP ²⁰			
				Perm	Temp	Other
Staff Toilets						
Girls Toilets						
Boys Toilets						
Comment on condition of toilets and other hygienic facilities:						

13. Extra curricular activities

Extracurricular clubs	Active?	Approx. enrolment	
		Male	Female
HIV/AIDS (e.g. AIDS Toto)			
Life Skills			
Human/ Child Rights			
Health Club			
Sports clubs			
Others: (<i>list</i>)			

14. Community education committees

School/ Community committees	ELECTED		ACTIVE	
	1 YES	2 NO	1 YES	2 NO
School Management Committee				
Parental committee				
Children's clubs				
Projects Committee				

¹⁸ Permanent= iron sheets, cement floors, doors and windows

¹⁹ Other = temporary shelters, borrowed buildings etc.

²⁰ VIP = incl. fly trap, raised cement cover.

Human/ Child Rights				
Subject clubs				
Others (list)				

15 Does the school provide lunch 1 YES___ 2 NO _____

16. How is the lunch funded?

17. Annual School Fees (Cost per head)

Fee Type	Form A	Form B	Form C	Form D	Form E	Total
Registration						
Tuition - Government						
Other Tuition						
Textbook rental (TRS)						
Other Textbooks						
Uniform						
Maintenance						
Building fund						
Agriculture						
Science						
Home Economic						
Woodwork						
Metal work						
Sports						
Library						
Lunch						
Other:						
Other:						
Other:						
Other:						
Other:						

18. General comments on school layout (playing fields, proximity to road etc.)

School Management Committee

A. PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Gender (interviewer to observe and circle)

Female

Male

2. Occupation _____

3. Role at school/in community _____

A. ROLE OF SCHOOL

4. How important is the role of the school in this community?

5. Is the education received at primary school seen as relevant to the needs of children and their families? Explain.

6. (a) Is education seen as a priority for families in this community?

(i) If No, what are families' priorities?

(ii) If Yes, do priorities change in times of hardship? Explain.

B. ISSUES OF ATTENDANCE, PROMOTION & RETENTION

6. (a) How would you describe pupil attendance at this school?

(b) What are the main reasons for pupil absenteeism?

7. (a) Is drop out amongst pupils a problem at this school? Explain.

(b) What circumstances might lead to pupils dropping out permanently from school?

8. (a) From your observations, which groups of children are most likely to:

(i) experience poor attendance,

(ii) perform poorly and repeat,

(iii) drop out permanently?

9. What follow-up takes place when a pupil has been absent for some time or is believed to have dropped out? Who is responsible for this?

10. What characteristics or behaviour might help you identify when a specific child is at risk of dropping out permanently?

C. IMPACT OF HIV & AIDS

11. (a) In what ways is HIV& AIDS contributing to the problems of:

(i) pupil absenteeism and

(ii) drop out, at your school?

(b) From your observations, do pupils coming from households directly affected by HIV& AIDS get the same chances to learn and participate in school activities as others? Explain.

(c) If NO, what specific barriers do they face?

(i) in the household/community?

(ii) in the school/classroom?

D. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY HIV & AIDS

12. (a) What support do children affected by HIV & AIDS receive:
- (i) From teachers?
 - (ii) From the School Management Committee?
 - (iii) From other community groups? [Specify which ones]
 - (iv) Other organisations/government departments. [Specify which ones]
- (b) How are such children identified and monitored?
- (c) To what extent are these children consulted about the support they need?
- (d) What further support would you to like see available?

E. SCHOOL LINKAGES

- 13 (a) How would you describe the relationship between your school and the surrounding communities?
- (b) Are teachers generally well respected?
14. How active is the current SMC?
- (a) What are its main activities?
 - (b) To what extent is the SMC involved in decision-making at the school?
 - (c) What challenges does the SMC face in carrying out its responsibilities?

F. CAPACITY AND TRAINING

13. How would you describe the capacity of teachers and school management to address the needs of children affected by HIV& AIDS? What challenges are faced?
14. (a) What training has SMC members received to assist them in dealing with vulnerable children, including those affected by HIV& AIDS.
- (b) In your opinion, how relevant is such training been to the situation in your school?
 - (c) If further training was available, what issues would you like to see covered?

G. WAY FORWARD

15. In your opinion, what are the key supporting factors that can:
- (a) promote regular attendance and reduce drop out amongst children affected by HIV& AIDS? [probe: at school level/at community level]
 - (b) encourage the participation and learning of children affected by HIV& AIDS? [probe: at school level/at community level]
16. With the resources that the school has, what alternative teaching & learning strategies could be put in place to reach out to children affected by HIV& AIDS, in order to improve their access to learning?

Key informant interview: community level

A. PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Gender (interviewer to observe and circle)

Female	Male
--------	------
2. Occupation _____
3. Role at school/in community _____

A. ROLE OF SCHOOL

4. How important is the role of the school in this community?
5. Is the education received at primary school seen as relevant to the needs of children and their families? Explain.
6. (a) Is education seen as a priority for families in this community?
 - (i) If No, what are families' priorities?
 - (ii) If Yes, does this priority change in times of hardship? Explain.

B. ISSUES OF ATTENDANCE & RETENTION

7. (a) How would you describe pupil attendance at [name of school]?
(b) What are the main reasons for pupil absenteeism?
8. (a) Is drop out amongst pupils a problem at [name of school]? Explain.
(b) What circumstances might lead to pupils dropping out permanently from school?
9. (a) From your observations, which groups of children are most likely to:
 - (i) experience poor attendance,
 - (ii) perform poorly and repeat,
 - (iii) drop out permanently?

C. IMPACT OF HIV & AIDS

- 10(a) In what ways is HIV& AIDS contributing to the problems of:
 - (i) pupil absenteeism,
 - (ii) poor performance and repetition
 - (iii) drop out?
- (b) From your observations, do pupils coming from households directly affected by HIV& AIDS get the same chances to learn as other disadvantaged children, such as those coming from poor families? If NO, what specific barriers do they face?

D. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY HIV & AIDS

- 11(a) In this community, what support do children affected by HIV & AIDS receive:
 - (i) your organisation/department?*
 - (ii) the school?
 - (iii) from community groups? [Specify which ones]
 - (iv) other organisations/government departments. [Specify which ones]

[* Ask as appropriate]
- (e) How are such children identified and monitored?
- (f) What further support would you to like see available?

E. SCHOOL LINKAGES

12 (a) Is the school used by any organisations, groups or government programmes as a centre for reaching out to vulnerable children, including those affected by HIV& AIDS? [probe: e.g. distribution centre, health programmes, civic education]

- (i) Describe such activities.
- (ii) How effective is this arrangement?
[*ask as appropriate]

13 (a). How would you describe the relationship between [name of school] and the surrounding communities?

(b) Are teachers generally well respected?

F. CAPACITY

14. How would you describe the capacity of teachers and school management to address the needs of children affected by HIV& AIDS? What challenges are faced?

G. WAY FORWARD

15. In your opinion, what are the key supporting factors that can:

- (a) promote regular attendance and reduce drop out amongst children affected by HIV& AIDS?
[probe: at school level/at community level]
- (b) encourage the participation and learning of children affected by HIV& AIDS? [probe: at school level/at community level]

16. With the resources that the school has, what alternative teaching & learning strategies could be put in place to reach out to children affected by HIV& AIDS, in order to improve their access to learning?

Teachers' Protocol

ACTIVITY ONE:

Brainstorming exercise: "What is meant by the term 'vulnerable children'?"

- (i) Ask participants what they think of when they hear the term 'vulnerable children'. What do they associate with 'vulnerability'?
- (ii) Ask them to write down/call out all their responses (words/terms) on and list on flipchart paper.
- (iii) Ask them re-arrange these words to show which 'vulnerabilities' impact on children's access to learning.

ACTIVITY TWO:

'Causes & consequences' tree: Pupil absenteeism & dropout

- (i) Split participants into 1 or 2 groups.
- (ii) Ask them to draw a 'causes & consequences' tree describing either the causes & consequences of erratic attendance and/or drop out. The roots represent the causes; the branches, the consequences.

ACTIVITY THREE:

Pair activity: Views on access to education for children affected by HIV& AIDS

- (i) Split participants into pairs, or single participants, preferably by gender.
- (ii) Provide each pair with Activity Sheet with 'case stories' and associated questions.
- (iii) Ask each pair to read through the 'case stories', discuss and write down answers to the associated questions.

ACTIVITY FOUR:

Plenary: Supporting access to learning for children affected by HIV& AIDS

- (i) Ask participants to suggest possible strategies to improve access to learning and reduce dropout amongst children affected by HIV& AIDS at their school.
- (ii) List suggestions on flipchart paper.

Teachers' Workshop

Children affected by HIV & AIDS

Mary's story²¹:

I am a 15 year old orphan. My father died, then my mother. I now stay with my grandmother. The biggest problem of being an orphan has been to get enough money to buy clothes, soap and other necessities. Last year I did not have proper clothes to wear to school and I felt shy, so I dropped out.

Khoali's story:

This is an ordinary day for Khoali, 16. He has walked the 10-kilometres from school to his home: an empty, single-room house with no running water or electricity, no mother or father. Khoali hasn't eaten all day and cooks himself a bowl of plain white maize meal. He will eat some beans later as they take longer to cook. The fire helps warm the house for although it is spring now, it gets cold here even before the sun sets.

Khoali and his twin brother Khoalinyane live alone and have had to fend for themselves since their father died of AIDS-related tuberculosis in 1998 and their mother died of the same cause last year. Of their two sisters, one lives in another village working as a household servant and helps out when she can; and their 19-year old sister spends her days away from home, somewhere.

The brothers are part of a growing category of young people in Lesotho - children orphaned by AIDS. For now, Khoali and his twin brother still have a future. They both attend school because their school fees are being paid for by a local organisation. Khoali is in Form B. His favourite subject is English and he dreams of finishing secondary school and one day becoming a doctor someday.

As the sun begins to set over Ha Raphiri, Khoali and his brother are getting ready to eat dinner. The day ends very much like it began: with no father, no mother, and none of their sisters at home.²²

Questions:

1. Do you think the above stories are similar to those of children in the communities surrounding *this* school?

(a) How are they similar?

(b) How do they differ?

2. (a) In Mary's story, what was given as the main reason for her dropping out?

(b) Do you think there were other factors contributing to her drop out? What might they have been?

²¹ Mary's stories is adapted from Bryceson, D., Fonesca, J. & Kazandira J. (2004) Social Pathways from the HIV/AIDS Deadlock of Disease, Denial and Desperation in Rural Malawi, CARE Malawi, Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi.

²² Khoali's story is adapted from an article featured on the UNICEF website: <http://www.unicef.org.nz/school-room/hivaids/childreninlesotho.html>

3. Do you think Khoali will succeed in finishing secondary school? What barriers might he face?

4. Do you think that children coming from households affected by HIV& AIDS face *more* difficulties in getting an education compared to other disadvantaged children, such as those coming from poor families? Explain.

5. Are you aware of any children in your class that have been affected by HIV& AIDS?
(a) If Yes, how were you able to identify them?

(b) How do such children behave in class?

(c) Is it disruptive having them in class? Explain.

6. How would you feel if you knew such children were also HIV positive? How would this change the way you interact with them in class?

7. In what ways do teachers and school management currently support the needs of children affected by HIV& AIDS?

8. What support do children affected by HIV & AIDS receive from their communities?

Children's workshop

ACTIVITY ONE:

Introducing the study

ACTIVITY TWO:

'Causes & consequences' tree: Pupil absenteeism & dropout

- (i) Split participants into 2 groups (boys and girls).
- (ii) Ask them to draw a 'causes & consequences' trees describing either the causes & consequences of **poor attendance** and **drop out**. The roots represent the causes; the branches, the consequences.

ACTIVITY THREE:

Pair Ranking exercise: Reasons for pupil absenteeism & dropout

- (i) In a plenary session, take children through pair-ranking exercise using matrix constructed on flip chart paper
- (ii) As each participant to score which reasons for absence/drop out are most relevant/important to them
- (iii) Calculate final ranking (with children) and ask for their comments.

ACTIVITY FOUR

River of Life:

- (i) Ask participants to work individually
- (ii) Demonstrate an example of how to draw a 'river of life'.
- (iii) Ask each participant to construct their own annotated 'river of life'.
- (iv) On completion, distribute coloured stickers and ask participants to indicate at which points they were frequently absent/withdrew temporarily/dropped out.

ACTIVITY FOUR:

Plenary Discussion: Improving access to learning

- (i) Ask participants to suggest possible strategies to improve access to learning and reduce dropout amongst children at their school.
- (ii) List suggestions on flipchart paper.

Children's Protocol

CURRENT SITUATION

General details

- village
- personal details (age/sex etc.)
- attending school
- household composition

Relationships & values

- family & friends (who close to/who admire)
- what is important in their lives/makes them happy
- social networks (clubs, church etc.)

Household responsibilities

- chores
- provision of care (siblings/sick relatives)
- income generation

LIFE HISTORY

Tracing life history (using river of life)

- major events in life (expand on those listed during river of life exercise)
- mobility
- impact on welfare
- impact on attendance/learning/retention

Support

- assistance with school costs & other needs over time (inc NGOs/CBOs)
- encouragement/discouragement to attend school (home/community/school)

EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL

School engagement

- likes/dislikes
- relationship with teachers & fellow pupils
- participation in class/homework
- relevance

Experiences of stigma & discrimination

- differential treatment (home/school)
- uncomfortable/shy to go to school/attend class

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- books/magazines/radio
- experience of peer education
- involvement with other forms of education (vocational/madras/civic education/initiation)

EXPECTATIONS

Future plans & expectations

- continuation with schooling
- income generation/work
- marriage

DEMOGRAPHICS

Personal demographics & orphan status (if not captured)

School demographics

- age started
- mobility between schools
- repetition & withdrawal

Household Informant (Parent/Guardian) protocol

1. Household structure and relationships (see separate demographics sheet)

2. Guiding discussion points & probes for informal discussion:

Instructions: Start with general questions, possibly amplifying on household demographics sheet. Thereafter, allow the flow of the interview to be flexible, allowing the interviewee to lead the discussion. Remember, the discussion points and questions below are a guide only. The exact wording or order of the questions is not as important as ensuring that the main issues are covered.

Households may be in one of several situations according to how it has been affected by HIV & AIDS – be sensitive to these differences and word questions accordingly.

- single-headed households (following bereavement)
- blended households absorbing new members (following bereavement)
- child-headed households
- new households (teenage marriages of school dropouts)
- households with one or more adults with long-term sickness.

(a) General family background of HH

- home area/tribe/Chief
- length of time in current location (childhood village/settled on marriage?)
- relationship to child interviewee

If HH is not biological parent:

- when child [name of child] joined household
- circumstances surrounding child joining household (who decided to take him/her in and why)

(b) What have been the household's major times of happiness in recent years?

(c) Can you tell us something about the major problems faced by the household/times of sorrow in recent years?

(d) How is the household supported? Has this changed in recent years? Explain.

- subsistence farming (land)
- income generation/salaried work (who?)
- support from relatives/friends staying outside the household
- additional support (NGO/church/CBO)

(e) What responsibilities does [child's name] have in the household?

(chores/caring for siblings/vending?)

(f) Schooling & school costs:

- Who makes decisions about schooling of children in the household?
- What are school costs faced by household? Are costs manageable?
- Who generally provides for school costs for [child's name].

(g) Relevance of schooling

- In your household's current circumstances, do you see education for children in your household as important?
- Are you happy with what children are learning at school? Explain.
- What benefits have you seen from [child name]'s time at school?

(h) Access to schooling

- Who in the household makes sure that [child's name] is attending school?
- Has the household's recent difficulties [sickness/bereavement] affected [child's name]'s schooling? In what ways? (attendance, performance). How do you feel about this?

- [drop out households] What were the circumstances that led to [child's name] leaving school? How did you feel about this?

(i) Relationship with school

- Does the school follow-up if [child name] is absent regularly? What support is offered by the school for children like [child name]?
- Do you believe that teachers at [child name]'s school are doing a good job?
- Can you describe the relationship between the school and the surrounding community?

3. Household resources (observation sheet)

This can be completed at any time during the household visit and should be based on your observations rather than with householder, unless such information is forthcoming during discussions.

Household Rooster

CASE STUDIES

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Name of Child interviewee _____ ID _____		
Name of Household interviewee _____ ID _____		
Name of village _____ ID _____		
Location of interview _____		
Date ___ / ___ / ___		
District		
Village		
Zone		
Enumerator:		
Checked by:		Date:
Data Entry Clerk:		Date:

Line #	FULL NAME	SEX	AGE	RELATION	ORPHANHOOD [AGES 18 AND UNDER]		Time in HH	SCHOOLING [AGES 5 AND OLDER ONLY]		HEALTH	MARITAL STATUS	
					Is mother alive? NO=1 YES=2 DK = 88	Is father alive? NO = 1 YES=2 DK = 88		Level of education No School=0 Some Primary=1 Finished Primary=2 Some Secondary=3 Finished Secondary=4 Tertiary = 5 DK =88	Still in school? NO=1 YES=2 DK = 88		a. Marital status of member? SEE CODEBOX [IF CODE = 22, ASK:] b. married to another household resident? If Yes, write line number of spouse in b. DK = 88	
	List names of all members of household, starting with the head of the household. <i>Circle line number of interviewee</i>	F = 1 M =2	Use estimate if uncertain	Relationship to [name of child] use CODES below. DK = 88			When joined HH? List No. of years Since birth = 0 DK= 88			General health status Long-term ill = 1 Poor = 2 Occasional sickness = 3 Good = 4 DK = 88		
H01	Head of household										a.	b.
H02											a.	b.
H03											a.	b.
H04											a.	b.
H05											a.	b.
H06											a.	b.
H07											a.	b.
H08											a.	b.
H09											a.	b.
H10											a.	b.
01 = son/daughter 06 = half sister/half brother 13 = father/mother-in-law 18 = paternal aunt/uncle 02 = husband/wife 07 = maternal cousin 14 = brother/sister-in-law 17 = Other relative 03 = mother 08 = paternal cousin 15 = husband's other wife 18 = Other person/not related 04 = father 09 = maternal grandparent 16 = step mother/father 19 = live-in servant 05 = sister/brother 10 = paternal grandparent 17= maternal aunt/uncle 88 = Don't know relationship												
CODEBOX: 11 = never married; 22 = married to resident ; 33 = married to nonresident ; 44 = separated; 55 = divorced; 66 = widowed; 88=DK												

Line #	FULL NAME	SEX	AGE	RELATION	ORPHANHOOD [AGES 18 AND UNDER]		Time in HH	SCHOOLING [AGES 5 AND OLDER ONLY]		HEALTH	MARITAL STATUS	
Line #	FULL NAME	SEX	AGE	RELATION	ORPHANHOOD [AGES 18 AND UNDER]		Time in HH	SCHOOLING [AGES 5 AND OLDER ONLY]		HEALTH	MARITAL STATUS	
	List names of all members of household, starting with the head of the household. <i>Circle line number of interviewee</i>	F = 1 M =2	Use estimate if uncertain	Relationship to [name of child] use CODES below. DK = 88	Is mother alive? NO=1 YES=2 DK = 88	Is father alive? NO = 1 YES=2 DK = 88	When joined HH? No of years ago Since birth = 0 DK= 88	Level of education No School=0 Some Primary=1 Finished Primary=2 Some Secondary=3 Finished Secondary=4 Tertiary = 5 DK =88	Still in school? NO=1 YES=2 DK = 88	General health status Long-term ill = 1 Poor = 2 Occasional sickness = 3 Good = 4 DK = 88	a. Marital status of member? SEE CODEBOX [IF CODE = 22, ASK:] b. married to another household resident? <i>If Yes, write line number of spouse in b.</i> DK = 88	
H11	Head of household										a.	b.
H12											a.	b.
H13											a.	b.
H14											a.	b.
H15											a.	b.
H16											a.	b.
H17											a.	b.
H18											a.	b.
H19											a.	b.
H20											a.	b.
01 = son/daughter 02 = husband/wife 03 = mother 04 = father 05 = sister/brother		06 = half sister/half brother 07 = maternal cousin 08 = paternal cousin 09 = maternal grandparent 10 = paternal grandparent		13 = father/mother-in-law 14 = brother/sister-in-law 15 = husband's other wife 16 = step mother/father 17= maternal aunt/uncle		18 = paternal aunt/uncle 17 = Other relative 18 = Other person/not related 19 = live-in servant 88 = Don't know relationship						
CODEBOX: 11 = never married; 22 = married to resident ; 33 = married to nonresident ; 44 = separated; 55 = divorced; 66 = widowed; 88=DK												

HOUSEHOLD DEATHS IN PAST FIVE YEARS

#	Sex F= 1 M= 2	Relationship to named child (Use codes above)	Age at death	Recently arrived in household (< 1 year) Y = 1 N = 2
D01				
D02				
D03				
D04				
D05				
D06				
D07				
D08				
D09				
D10				

NB: Verify with respondent that person who died in the last 3 years is NOT listed in household roster above.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS NOT LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD

Line #	FULL NAME	SEX	AGE	RELATION	ORPHANHOOD [AGES 18 AND UNDER]		Time in HH	SCHOOLING [AGES 5 AND OLDER ONLY]		HEALTH	MARITAL STATUS	
					Is mother alive? NO=1 YES=2 DK = 88	Is father alive? NO = 1 YES=2 DK = 88		Level of education No School=0 Some Primary=1 Finished Primary=2 Some Secondary=3 Finished Secondary=4 Tertiary = 5 DK =88	Still in school? NO=1 YES=2 DK = 88		General health status Long-term ill = 1 Poor = 2 Occasional sickness = 3 Good = 4 DK = 88	a. Marital status of member? SEE CODEBOX [IF CODE = 22, ASK:] b. married to another household resident? If Yes, write line number of spouse in b. DK = 88
	List names of all members of household, starting with the head of the household. <i>Circle line number of interviewee</i>	F = 1 M =2	Use estimate if uncertain	Relationship to [name of child] use CODES below. DK = 88	Is mother alive? NO=1 YES=2 DK = 88	Is father alive? NO = 1 YES=2 DK = 88	When joined HH? No of years ago Since birth = 0 DK= 88	Level of education No School=0 Some Primary=1 Finished Primary=2 Some Secondary=3 Finished Secondary=4 Tertiary = 5 DK =88	Still in school? NO=1 YES=2 DK = 88	General health status Long-term ill = 1 Poor = 2 Occasional sickness = 3 Good = 4 DK = 88	a. Marital status of member? SEE CODEBOX [IF CODE = 22, ASK:] b. married to another household resident? If Yes, write line number of spouse in b. DK = 88	
HA1	Head of household										a.	b.
HA2											a.	b.
HA3											a.	b.
HA4											a.	b.
HA5											a.	b.
HA6											a.	b.
HA7											a.	b.
HA8											a.	b.
HA9											a.	b.
HA10											a.	b.
01 = son/daughter 02 = husband/wife 03 = mother 04 = father 05 = sister/brother		06 = half sister/half brother 07 = maternal cousin 08 = paternal cousin 09 = maternal grandparent 10 = paternal grandparent		13 = father/mother-in-law 14 = brother/sister-in-law 15 = husband's other wife 16 = step mother/father 17 = maternal aunt/uncle		18 = paternal aunt/uncle 17 = Other relative 18 = Other person/not related 19 = live-in servant 88 = Don't know relationship						
CODEBOX: 11 = never married; 22 = married to resident ; 33 = married to nonresident ; 44 = separated; 55 = divorced; 66 = widowed; 88=DK												

Household Observation Checklist

Instructions: As much as possible, collect data from your own observations of the household dwelling place during discussions with household members. Confirm if you feel it is appropriate. Information on crops, livestock and main source of income can be obtained during informal discussions.

NO. 1	OBSERVATION	CODING CATEGORIES
1.1	What is the floor of the house made of?	NATURAL FLOOR (EARTH/MUD)..... 1 RUDIMENTARY FLOOR (WOOD/BROKEN BRICK)2 FINISHED FLOOR (POLISHED WOOD/CEMENT/TILE)..... 3 OTHER _____ 96 (SPECIFY)
1.2.	What is the roof of the house mostly made of?	CARDBOARD/PLASTIC/CANVAS.....1 GRASS THATCH.....2 IRON SHEETS/ASBESTOS.....3 TILES.....4 OTHER _____ 96 (SPECIFY)
1.3	What is the main source of drinking water around the house/village?	PIPED WATER INTO DWELLING..... 1 PIPED WATER INTO YARD OR PLOT.. 2 COMMUNITY STANDPIPE 3 PROTECTED WELL 4 UNPROTECTED WELL..... 5 BOREHOLE..... 6 SURFACE WATER (RIVER/LAKE/DAM)7 RAIN WATER..... 8 OTHER _____ 96 (SPECIFY)
1.4	What type of toilet facilities are present at the house?	FLUSH TOILET..... 1 VENTILATED IMPROVED PIT (VIP) LATRINE 2 PIT LATRINE (CEMENT/IRON SHEETS) 3 TRADITIONAL PIT LATRINE 4 FLUSH TOILET + ADDITIONAL LATRINE5 NONE 6 OTHER _____ 96 (SPECIFY)

NO.	OBSERVATION	CODES
2	Do any members of the participating household have the following items/ <i>animals</i> ?	YES = 1 NO = 2
2.1	Granary	
2.2	Table	
2.3	Chairs/Sofa	
2.4	Paraffin Lamp	
2.5	Electricity	
2.6	Solar panel	
2.7	Bicycle	
2.8	Motorcycle	
2.9	Oxcart	
2.10	Tractor	
2.11	Car	
2.12	Radio/cassette/CD player	
2.13	Television	
2.14	Cell phone	
2.15	Books or other reading materials	

3	What livestock does the household possess?	Approx number
3.1	Poultry	
3.2	Goats/Sheep	
3.3	Cattle	
3.4	Pigs	
3.5	<i>Donkeys</i>	
3.6	<i>Horses</i>	
3.7	Other:	

4	<p>What crops does the household cultivate?</p> <p><i>Circle all main crops produced</i></p>	<p>MAIZE1</p> <p><i>Wheat</i>..... 2</p> <p><i>Sorghum</i>..... 3</p> <p><i>Pease</i> 4</p> <p>BEANS5</p> <p><i>Tomatoes</i> 6</p> <p>POTATOES.....7</p> <p>OTHER _____ 96 (SPECIFY)</p>
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5	<p>Main source of household income?</p> <p><i>Circle all mentioned during discussions</i></p>	<p>SUBSISTENCE FARMING 1</p> <p>COMMERCIAL FARMING..... 2</p> <p>ANIMAL HUSBANDRY 3</p> <p>SALARIED EMPLOYMENT 4</p> <p>PIECE WORK5</p> <p>FISHING..... 6</p> <p>SKILLED ARTISAN/CONSTRUCTION.7</p> <p>MARKER VENDER.....8</p> <p>RELIES ON OTHER RELATIVES.....9</p> <p>OTHER _____ 96</p> <p>(SPECIFY)</p>
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Focus Group Discussions

Children affected by HIV & AIDS

Mary's story²³:

I am a 15 year old orphan. My father died, then my mother. I now stay with my grandmother. The biggest problem of being an orphan has been to get enough money to buy clothes, soap and other necessities. Last year I did not have proper clothes to wear to school and I felt shy, so I dropped out.

Khaoli's story:

This is an ordinary day for Khaoli, 16. He has walked the 10-kilometres from school to his home: an empty, single-room house with no running water or electricity, no mother or father. Khaoli hasn't eaten all day and cooks himself a bowl of plain white maize meal. He will eat some beans later as they take longer to cook. The fire helps warm the house for although it is spring now, it gets cold here even before the sun sets.

Khaoli and his twin brother Khoalinyane live alone and have had to fend for themselves since their father died of AIDS-related tuberculosis in 1998 and their mother died of the same cause last year. Of their two sisters, one lives in another village working as a household servant and helps out when she can; and their 19-year old sister spends her days away from home, somewhere.

The brothers are part of a growing category of young people in Lesotho - children orphaned by AIDS. For now, Khaoli and his twin brother still have a future. They both attend school because their school fees are being paid for by a local organisation. Khaoli is in Form B. His favourite subject is English and he dreams of finishing secondary school and one day becoming a doctor someday.

As the sun begins to set over Ha Raphiri, Khaoli and his brother are getting ready to eat dinner. The day ends very much like it began: with no father, no mother, and none of their sisters at home.²⁴

Questions:

1. Do you think the above stories are similar to those of children in communities in this area? Discuss
Probe: How are they similar?
Probe: How do they differ?
2. In this community, if a family is bereaved what arrangements are generally made to support the children?
Probe: Who makes that decision?
Probe: are such decisions always to the advantage of the children?
3. What support do households affected by HIV& AIDS receive from the community?
Probe: Is this sufficient?
Probe: What more could be done?
4. In Mary's story, she said that her main reason for her dropping out of school was a lack of clothes. Do you think that was the only reason, or might there have been other factors? Discuss
5. Do you think that children coming from households affected by HIV& AIDS face *more* difficulties in getting an education compared to other disadvantaged children, such as those coming from poor families? Discuss.
Probe: If YES, what specific barriers do they face?
Probe: Is it different for girls and boys?

²³ Mary's stories is adapted from Bryceson, D., Fonesca, J. & Kazandira J. (2004) Social Pathways from the HIV/AIDS Deadlock of Disease, Denial and Desperation in Rural Malawi, CARE Malawi, Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi.

²⁴ Khaoli's story is adapted from an article featured on the UNICEF website: <http://www.unicef.org/nz/school-room/hivaids/childreninlesotho.html>

6. (a) Is education seen as a priority for families in this community? Explain
- (i) If No, what are families' priorities?
 - (ii) If Yes, does this priority change in times of hardship and bereavement? How?
7. What more could be done to assist children from households affected by HIV & AIDS to succeed at school?
- Probe: what could the school do?
 - Probe: what could the community do?

