

Migration in Lesotho

A COUNTRY PROFILE 2023



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Publisher: International Organization for Migration
17 route des Morillons
P.O. Box 171211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 717 9111
Fax: +41 22 798 6150
Email: hq@iom.int
Website: www.iom.int

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Prepared for IOM by

**Naomi Netsayi Wekwete, Kudzaishe Mangombe
and Lazarus Zanamwe**



FOREWORD

The Government of Lesotho, with support from IOM, is pleased to release the country's first migration profile: *Migration in Lesotho: A Country Profile 2023*, prepared by the Migration Data Working Group. Given the increased globalization of the world economic system, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has noted an increase in the number of people who now live outside the country of their birth. The DESA noted an increase of 41 per cent in the number of people living outside the country of birth in 2015 as compared to the year 2000. However, besides this noted increase, the DESA notes that there is a dearth of reliable statistics on migration to guide policy by governments and development agencies. The Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 highlighted the need for countries to collect more and reliable data to monitor progress on how migration affects the development of their economies as well as other social indicators. As a result, governments are increasingly realizing the importance of reliable migration statistics to address the challenges and maximize the benefits of human mobility for development.

Lesotho is an enclave entirely surrounded by South Africa, thus its internal and external migration is historically linked to the country. The most concern given the nature of migration in Lesotho is that there are no reliable statistics on migration to enable proper planning for development. This is despite the fact that Lesotho has a dynamic and complex migration pattern. This lack of statistics has hindered the capacity of Lesotho and its development agencies to fully enhance and manage the development potential embedded in the migration streams.

As a consequence of these observed deficiencies in the migration statistics and their utilization, the Government of Lesotho, with support from IOM Lesotho, embarked on the development of the Migration Profile to enhance the effective management of migration in order to maximize its benefits and minimize the negative impacts.

In response to growing calls for better data on migration, the Government of Lesotho has solicited support from IOM to strengthen the coordination role of the Bureau of Statistics and establish data management practices that will enable production and sharing of reliable data.

The Migration Profile will be integrated in government policy development processes to be used for effective policymaking and as a planning tool. The Government will put in place mechanisms to ensure that the profile is updated every three years to make it relevant to the planning process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Kingdom of Lesotho developed its first Lesotho Migration Profile, with the support of IOM Lesotho. The development of the Lesotho Migration Profile involved the collaborative efforts of many organizations, institutions and individuals.

Our gratitude goes to the IOM Regional Office for Southern Africa and IOM Lesotho for their strategic and financial support, as well as identification of the key stakeholders who made the production of the Lesotho Migration Profile possible. Special thanks go to the IOM Lesotho team, led by the Programme Support Officer Dennis Masoai, as well as the Migration Data Working Group for driving the whole process. We also appreciate the National Consultative Committee on Migration and Development comprising government ministries, departments and agencies, members of the academia and other stakeholders for their timely provision of data and other information to the development of the Migration Profile.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AFI	Alliance for Financial Inclusion
CBL	Central Bank of Lesotho
CGPU	Child and Gender Protection Unit
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBV	gender-based violence
GDP	gross domestic product
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IDP	internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LSL	Lesotho loti
MOPSLE	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Employment
NCC	National Consultative Committee
NCD	non-communicable disease
NGO	non-governmental organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PHC	Population and Housing Census
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRH	sexual and reproductive health
SRHR	sexual and reproductive health rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization
ZAR	South African rand

GLOSSARY

Unless otherwise specified, all definitions are sourced from the *Glossary of Migration* by IOM (IOM, 2019a).

Asylum

The grant, by a State, of protection on its territory to persons outside their country of nationality or habitual residence, who are fleeing persecution or serious harm or for other reasons. Asylum encompasses a variety of elements, including non-refoulement, permission to remain on the territory of the asylum country, humane standards of treatment and eventually a durable solution.

Asylum-seeker

An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which they have submitted it. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum-seeker.

Border checks

Checks carried out at border crossing points to ensure that persons, their means of transport and the objects in their possession may be authorized to enter or leave the territory of States.

Border management

The administration of measures related to authorized movement of persons (regular migration) and goods, while preventing unauthorized movement of persons (irregular migration) and goods, detecting those responsible for smuggling, trafficking and related crimes and identifying the victims of such crimes or any other person in need of immediate or longer-term assistance and/or (international) protection.

Brain drain

Depletion of human capital in a specific occupation or economic sector resulting from the emigration of skilled workers engaged in this occupation or sector from the country of origin to another country (or from one region of a country to another – internal migration).

Brain gain

From the perspective of a country of destination, immigration of skilled workers into the country resulting in the acquisition of human capital. From the perspective of a country of origin, the positive spill-over effects of the emigration of highly skilled workers such as brain circulation, or the motivational effects of migration that spur aspiring migrants to acquire further skills. Brain gain also occurs when migrants return back to their country or communities of origin and bring back with them new skills and knowledge acquired in migration.

Citizenship/nationality

The legal bond between an individual and a State.

Country of destination

In the migration context, a country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Country of origin

In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Diaspora

Migrants or descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. They maintain links with their homelands, and to each other, based on a shared sense of history, identity or mutual experiences in the destination country.

Economic migrant

While not a category in international law, the term is sometimes used to refer to any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State, solely or primarily motivated by economic opportunities.

Emigrant

From the perspective of the country of departure, a person who moves from the country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes the new country of usual residence.

Emigration

From the perspective of the country of departure, the act of moving from one's country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes the new country of usual residence.

Entry

In the migration context, any crossing of an international border by a non-national to enter into a country, whether such a crossing is voluntary or involuntary, authorized or unauthorized.

Environmental migration

The movement of persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their places of habitual residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within or outside their country of origin or habitual residence.

Forced migration

A migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion or coercion.

Foreign students

Persons admitted by a country other than their own for the specific purpose of following a particular programme of study in an accredited institution of the receiving country (DESA, 1998).

Immigrant

From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of their nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes the new country of usual residence.

Immigrant stock

The total number of international migrants present in a country at a particular time (DESA, 2017a).

Immigration

From the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one's country of nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes the new country of usual residence.

Internal migrant

Any person who is moving or has moved within a State for the purpose of establishing a new temporary or permanent residence or because of displacement.

Internally displaced persons

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

International migrant

Any person who is outside a State of which one is a citizen or national, or, in the case of a stateless person, the State of birth or habitual residence. The term includes migrants who intend to move permanently or temporarily, and those who move in a regular or documented manner as well as migrants in irregular situations.

International migration

The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence and across an international border to a country of which they are not nationals.

Irregular migration

Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination.

Labour migration

Movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment.

Migrant

An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from their place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.

Migrant in an irregular situation

A person who moves or has moved across an international border and is not authorized to enter or to stay in a State pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party.

Migrant flow (international)

The number of international migrants arriving in a country (immigrants) or the number of international migrants departing from a country (emigrants) over the course of a specific period.

Migrant stock (international)

For statistical purposes, the total number of international migrants present in a given country at a particular point in time who have ever changed their country of usual residence.

Migration

The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State.

Migration governance

The combined frameworks of legal norms, laws and regulations, policies and traditions as well as organizational structures (subnational, national, regional and international) and the relevant processes that shape and regulate States' approaches with regard to migration in all its forms, addressing rights and responsibilities and promoting international cooperation.

Migration profile

An analysis of available accurate and disaggregated data on some or all migration-relevant aspects of a country's national context, prepared in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, which can be used to enhance policy coherence, evidence-based policymaking on migration and the mainstreaming of migration into development plans.

Net migration

Net number of migrants in a given period, that is, the number of immigrants minus the number of emigrants.

Refugee (1951 Convention)

A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of their former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

Regular migration

Migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination.

Remittances (migrant)

Personal monetary transfers, cross border or within the same country, made by migrants to individuals or communities with whom the migrant has links.

Return migration

In the context of international migration, the movement of persons returning to their country of origin after having moved away from their place of habitual residence and crossed an international border. In the context of internal migration, the movement of persons returning to their place of habitual residence after having moved away from it.

Seasonal migrant worker

A migrant worker whose work, or migration for employment is by its character dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed only during part of the year.

Smuggled migrant

A migrant who is or has been the object of the crime of smuggling, regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted.

Smuggling of migrants

The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.

Social remittances

The transfer of ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital from migrants to their communities of origin.

Stateless person

A person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law.

Statelessness

The condition of not being considered as a national by any State under the operations of its law.

Trafficking in persons

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Visa

An endorsement by the competent authorities of a State in a passport or a certificate of identity of a non-national who wishes to enter, leave or transit through the territory of the State that indicates that the authority, at the time of issuance, considers the holder to fall within a category of non-nationals who can enter, leave or transit the State under the State's laws. A visa establishes the criteria of admission into, transit through or exit from a State.

Xenophobia

At the international level, no universally accepted definition of xenophobia exists, though it can be described as attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kingdom of Lesotho, in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and with technical support from IOM, developed the *Migration in Lesotho: A Country Profile 2023*. Lesotho has had a long history of internal and external migration and has an exceptional and extended migration history linked to its position of being surrounded by South Africa. Remittances make up a significant proportion of Lesotho's GDP, contributing about 23 per cent in 2022 (World Bank, n.d.a). However, remittances have declined in the past two decades, and consequently a decline in GDP (Rocchi and Sette, 2016). Despite the decline, the remittances continue to significantly contribute to the country's GDP and thus maintain an important indicator of economic and human development. Even though remittances contribute significantly to GDP, there is a lack of reliable statistics on migration to enable proper planning for development. The lack of reliable statistics has hindered the capacity of Lesotho and its development agencies to fully enhance and manage the development potential embedded in the migration streams. Thus, the Migration Profile is a relevant tool for evidence-based decision-making, policy development and capacity-building framework to enhance the collection and analysis of migration data in Lesotho. The reference period for data is from 2016 to 2020. The Migration Profile provides an overview of levels, trends, patterns, impact and governance of migration in Lesotho. The data used in the analysis was collected from various migration data sources ranging from the national population census and national surveys to administrative records, other relevant data, national and international organizations.

Immigration: The PHC is the major source of stock migration data. The 2016 PHC, which is the most recent census, reported a total number of immigrants in Lesotho of 9,700, with 81.4 per cent of the immigrants originating within Africa, in particular, South Africa with 52 per cent. Most of the immigrants were from South Africa because of its proximity to Lesotho.

Immigration flows captured through administrative records show that the number of entries in Lesotho was 2,020,926, lower than the number of exits. The number of entries decreased over the period from 672,108 in 2016, declining to 88,886 in 2020. The entries were lowest in 2020 largely due to the travel restrictions imposed to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Less than 5,000 work permits were issued during the same period (2016–2020). Most of the foreign population employed in Lesotho was from South Africa, followed by China, Zimbabwe, India and Pakistan. The sharp decline in the number

of work permits issued in 2020 was due to COVID-19 restrictions. A total of 11 study permits were issued during the period (2016–2020).

In terms of involuntary immigration, the number of asylum applications launched was 497, while 316 refugee applications were launched. All seeking refugee status were granted. The number of asylum and refugee seekers increased during the period 2016–2020, mainly from countries experiencing war and conflicts, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda.

Emigration: The PHC is the main source of flow migration data. The PHC reported that a total of 179,579 people emigrated from Lesotho. Most emigrants were aged 20–39 years, with males being more migratory than females. The major destination of emigrants was Southern Africa, with South Africa being the main destination for the Basotho (99.5%).

Emigration flows captured through administrative records show that the number of exits by the Basotho was 2,702,465 during the period 2016–2020, higher than the number of entries (2,020,926). The number of emigrants in 2016 was 885,076, declining to 111,670 in 2020. The decline in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A higher proportion of males (43,040) emigrated for employment purposes than females (22,168).

Study permits were 2,613 between 2016 and 2019, with a record high in 2018 (1,083) for both males (549) and females (532). The number of South African study permits increased for both sexes from 265 in 2016 to 1,083 in 2019, females (from 124 in 2016 to 447 in 2019) and males (from 136 in 2016 to 549 in 2019). The decline in study permits was registered in 2019 to 859 for both females and males (447 and 412, respectively). However, in 2019, the number of study permits were higher among females than males.

Emigration for study purposes is split into two: one that is specifically for South Africa, and the other for other countries excluding South Africa. A total of 2,613 South African study permits were issued during the period 2016–2019, increasing from 265 in 2016 to 1,083 in 2018, declining to 859 in 2019. A total of 777 Basotho emigrated for study outside the country in 2020, excluding those emigrating to South Africa. Most of the students emigrating for study purpose to other countries excluding South Africa preferred destinations outside Africa, India (39.6%) and China (30.4%).

Irregular migration: Lesotho rarely deports migrants. No persons were returned to their country of origin.

In terms of Basotho sent back to their country of origin, a total of 4,451 Basotho were deported from South Africa during the period 2016–2020. The deportees were passing through the Maseru Bridge. The least number of Basotho deportees (287) were recorded in 2020 due to the travel ban because of COVID-19.

Internal migration: The PHC shows that female migrants are more likely to migrate to urban areas than their male counterparts. Younger ages tend to migrate to urban areas more than older ages. Most internal migrants migrated to Maseru (39.7%), Berea (17.8%) and Leribe (15.4%). Urbanization in Lesotho increased from 34.2 per cent in 2016 to 38.7 per cent in 2020. Reasons for migration to urban areas were employment, climate change and environmental degradation.

Impact of migration: Migration impacts on urbanization. For example, urbanization increased from 34.2 per cent in 2016 to 38.7 per cent in 2020.

Migration can bring positive or negative development. Lesotho experienced brain drain due to the massive emigration of the Basotho to mainly South Africa and other countries. However, it experienced a positive economic gain for the country, as emigration to a richer country provides income and alleviates poverty to the migrants as well as the family members left behind.

Migration is the mainstay of economic development; for instance, 21 per cent of Lesotho's GDP in 2020 was generated from remittances. A decline in remittances was experienced during the COVID-19 in 2020 as countries closed borders and industries. This negatively impacted many households that were solely dependent on remittances and were driven into deep poverty. The rural–urban movement of the Basotho negatively impacted on agricultural production in the rural areas. The young economically active people are more migratory, thus negatively contributing to rural depopulation and stifling development in the rural areas, on the other hand, causing overpopulation in urban areas.

Most of the immigrants were employed in professional and managerial occupations, thereby stimulating brain gain in the country. Most of the emigrants, particularly those who migrated to South Africa, were mostly employed in unskilled work including domestic and construction (often casual) work, waste management, vendors, farmworkers and mineworkers.

Remittances received have improved the standard of living of many households in Lesotho. The remittances were also used to pay school fees, agricultural inputs and business start-ups. However, excessive reliance on remittances can negatively affect development by creating the overdependency syndrome to remittances within households and communities.

The emerging communicable disease (COVID-19) has affected the mobility of migrants and the flow of remittances. International migrants faced challenges in accessing SRHR-HIV services, and irregular supply of condoms and medication.

Lesotho experienced environment-induced internal migration, mainly because of the construction of large-scale projects (LHWP) and extreme weather-induced migration because of increased occurrence of heavy rainfall, drought and water scarcity.

Migration governance: Good and effective governance of migration needs to be supported by robust policy and legal frameworks. Lesotho developed several key national policies, legislative frameworks and institutional arrangements that concern migration and its governance to enhance the well-being of individuals and the country. The main relevant national legal and policy frameworks include the following:

- The National Migration and Development Policy provides actionable measures to address the challenges and opportunities associated with migration, serving as a reference for the government and stakeholders.
- The Labour Migration Policy facilitates legal and regulated labour migration channels, protects the rights and welfare of migrant workers, and promotes skills development and knowledge transfer for the country's benefit.
- The Framework for Managing Migration Data in Lesotho of 2014 establishes a comprehensive approach to collecting, analysing and managing migration-related data.
- The National Diaspora Policy of Lesotho 2020–2024 aims to strengthen migrants' connection to their home country and encourage their active participation in socioeconomic and cultural activities.
- The Anti-trafficking in Persons Act (no. 1 of 2011), last updated in 2021, aims to combat exploitation and human trafficking in persons. The Anti-trafficking in Persons (Amendment) Act, 2021 addresses the limitations of the 2011 Act and criminalizes all forms of sex trafficking, removing the option of a fine in lieu of imprisonment for trafficking offences.

- The National Anti-trafficking Persons Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2021–2026 addresses trafficking in persons by implementing measures to raise awareness, educate vulnerable populations and address the root causes of trafficking.
- The Immigration and Citizenship Policy of 2019 provides guidelines and procedures for managing immigration and citizenship matters in Lesotho.

Recommendations concerning mainstreaming migration into development policies: Remittances contribute to Lesotho’s GDP as well as alleviate household and community poverty. Greater policy and programming efforts facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants to enable them to put their diverse skills and capital to the best use.

There is a need to support those working abroad so that they continue remitting back home. Bilateral and multilateral agreements should be considered between Lesotho and key countries of origin and destination that would contribute to the reduction in remittance transaction costs and, in turn, maximize the benefits of migration.

Recommendations regarding the migration governance: Lesotho has various laws and legislations. Implementation is key to achieving good migration governance. Strengthen the role and functioning of the NCC, which has been set up to deal with a range of migration-related matters in Lesotho, including the development of a strategic plan, by providing necessary resources, engaging all relevant stakeholders, and promoting collaborative efforts to effectively carry out its responsibilities in coordinating migration and development efforts.

Recommendations concerning improvements to migration statistics and the overall evidence base: Continuously improve the implementation of the Framework for Managing Migration Data in Lesotho to enhance data collection systems, build analytical capacities, and ensure the regular exchange of migration-related data among relevant stakeholders. Regular updates to the Lesotho Migration Profile, under the leadership of the NCC, will ensure that policymakers have access to relevant and up-to-date migration data and analysis to inform their decision-making. Good practices from other countries, such as making legal provisions for updating the Migration Profile, should be explored. The Government of Lesotho to invest in an LMIS utilizing a standardized template for in-migration and outmigration and implement the envisaged national identification and registration system.

INTRODUCTION

Lesotho is one of the most migration-dependent countries in the world. Despite the fact that Lesotho has a dynamic and complex migration pattern, there are observed deficiencies in the migration statistics and their utilization. The limited statistics has hindered the capacity of Lesotho and its development agencies to fully enhance and manage the development potential embedded in the migration streams. Given this background, Lesotho developed a Migration Profile to assist the country to better enhance the positive benefits of migration while minimizing the negative ones. The Migration Profile will provide current existing migration data to government and other stakeholders and assist the government in evidence-based policy decision-making and mainstreaming of migration into the policy planning process.

Lesotho is a country of origin and destination for mixed migration flows. Most of the migrants in Lesotho originate within Africa, largely South Africa. Remittance contribution to GDP was 23.1 per cent in 2022. The major country of destination for Basotho is South Africa mainly for employment purposes. Major destinations for Basotho leaving for study purposes are India, South Africa and China. A larger proportion of involuntary migrants originate from countries experiencing war and conflict, mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected mobility as well as the amount and flow of remittances due to the travel restrictions.

Migration has had an impact on the country's economy through remittances, as they play a crucial role in the survival of many households in Lesotho. Climate change and environmental shocks have forced the Basotho to migrate to border communities in South Africa and within the country to seek employment.

Acknowledging the importance of migration as a human development issue, the Government of Lesotho has taken several steps to enhance migration governance. To underscore the importance of migration in Lesotho, the Government developed the National Migration and Development Policy that provides actionable measures to address the challenges and opportunities associated with migration, serving as a reference for the Government and stakeholders. The Anti-trafficking in Persons Act (no. 1 of 2011), last updated in 2021, was adopted to combat exploitation and human trafficking in persons. Since Lesotho relies on remittances for the economy and households, the National Diaspora Policy of Lesotho strengthens diasporas' connection to the home country and encourages their active participation in socioeconomic and cultural

activities. The aforementioned legislations show the Government's commitment to achieving migration-related SDGs and specifically, SDG Target 10.7 to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies". The development of a Migration Profile is thus critical for Lesotho in assisting the Government in evidence-based decision-making processes and planning, as well as implementing the laws and regulations for effective migration management. Table 1 presents the key statistics of Lesotho.

Table 1. Lesotho statistics

Lesotho – Key statistics					
Geography:					
Total area (km) ^a	30 350				
Population: ^b					
Total	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	2 007 201	2 023 723	2 036 917	2 050 424	2 063 972
Male	982 133	990 990	998 775	1 006 166	1 013 481
Female	1 025 068	1 032 733	1 038 142	1 044 258	1 050 491
Urban	685 938	714 562	742 348	770 551	799 076
Rural	1 321 263	1 309 161	1 294 569	1 279 873	1 264 896
Urban, percentage of total population	34.2	35.3	36.4	37.6	38.7
International migration: ^b					
Net international migration rate, per 1,000 population	15.3				
International migrant stock, thousands	9 700				
Human and social development: ^b					
Life expectancy at birth, years, annual	56.04				54
Life expectancy at birth, male, years	51.7	51	52	50	51
Life expectancy at birth, female, years	59.5	56	56	56	58
Adult literacy rate, percentage aged 15 and above					86.3
GDP per capita, purchasing power parity in thousands USD (World Bank) ^b	986.3	1 062.7	1 161.7	1 102.6	989.8
GDP (million USD) World Bank's macroeconomic and fiscal model database ^c	2 223.2	2 353.7	2 581.1	2 407.9	2 180.3
Human Development Index ^c	167	167	167	168	168
Remittance inflows, millions, Maloti ^d	4 777.79	5 027.72	4 958.43	4 967.58	4 723.15
Remittance inflows, percentage of GDP ^d	23.8	22.8	22.2	21.0	20.0

Sources: (a) FAO, 2005; (b) Data based on information from the Lesotho Population and Housing Census in 2016; (c) World Bank, n.d.b; (d) Data based on information by the CBL in 2023.

A. MIGRATION TRENDS AND MIGRATION CHARACTERISTICS

What is migration?

The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State (IOM, 2019a).

This section of the Migration Profile presents key statistics and information on migration in Lesotho. This includes information on key migration trends, immigrant and emigrant stocks and flows, labour migration, asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless persons, the diaspora, return migration, internal migration and displacement, irregular migration, human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, migrant deaths and disappearances, and student mobility. The data on migration is limited and thus other sources of information from subregional, regional and international data sources were used.

The main sources of migration data used in this section are population censuses, household surveys and administrative records. Major national providers of migration data in Lesotho include the following: Bureau of Statistics; Immigration Department and National ID and Civil Registry under the Ministry of Home Affairs; MOPSLE; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations; Ministry of Education and Training; Ministry of Social Development; and CBL. Data not available was sought from international organizations including DESA, UNHCR and IOM. Many of these data sources were quite helpful, as they offer data that are comparable across countries and years. Migration flow data captures the number of migrants entering (inflows) and leaving (outflows) a country over a specific period, such as one year (DESA, 2017b).

A.1. Immigration flows

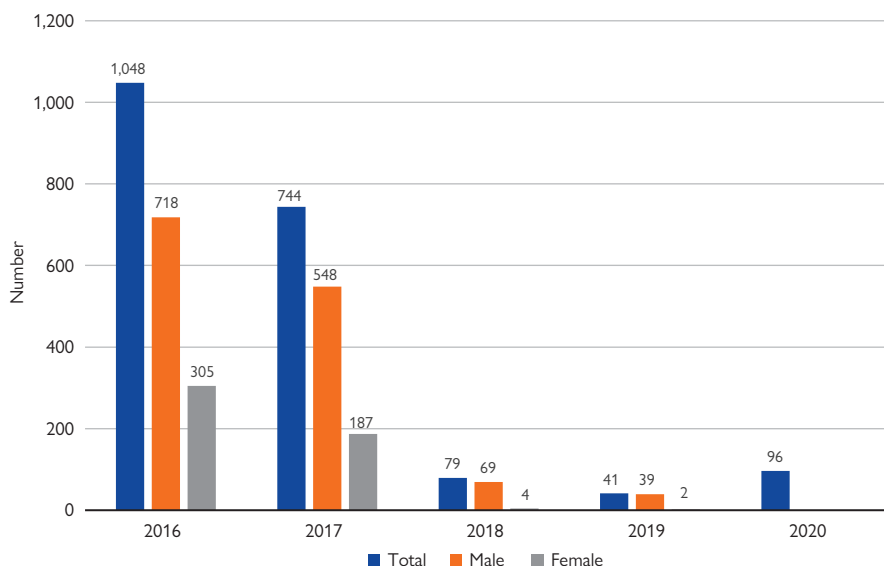
This section presents migration flows. *Migrant flow* refers to the number of migrants arriving in a country (immigrants) or the number of international migrants departing from a country (emigrants) over the course of a specific period (IOM, 2019a). In Lesotho, most of the data on migrant flows comes from administrative records (such as issued visas, permits, entries and exits), largely from the Department of Immigration.

A.1.1. Visas issued

Visas issued record information on foreigners who are given permission to enter the country for a particular reason. However, the data may not give a true reflection of the number of entries and thus is not a good approximation of movements in countries with large numbers of visa-free movements (IOM, 2011).

Figure 1 shows the visas issued by sex during the period 2016–2020. The number of visas issued was highest in 2016 (1,048), followed by the year 2017 (744) and the least recorded in 2019 (41). The visas issued were higher among males than females in 2016 (718 and 305, respectively) and in 2017 (548 and 187, respectively). This is consistent with the global patterns, which report that males tend to migrate more often than their female counterparts. For example, a total of 281 million international migrants were reported in 2020, 135 million females and 146 million males (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou (eds.), 2021). According to a government official, the decline in the number of visas issued in 2018 and 2019 pertains to a data-capturing issue. The introduction of online registration saw many people submitting online applications, which were not being captured in the numbers presented, and also restrictions by the Government of Lesotho (such as non-issuance of labour and work permits, unconducive environment and economic decline). The manual applications were mostly from workers of NGOs and residents from SADC countries.

Figure 1. Number of visas issued by sex, 2016–2020

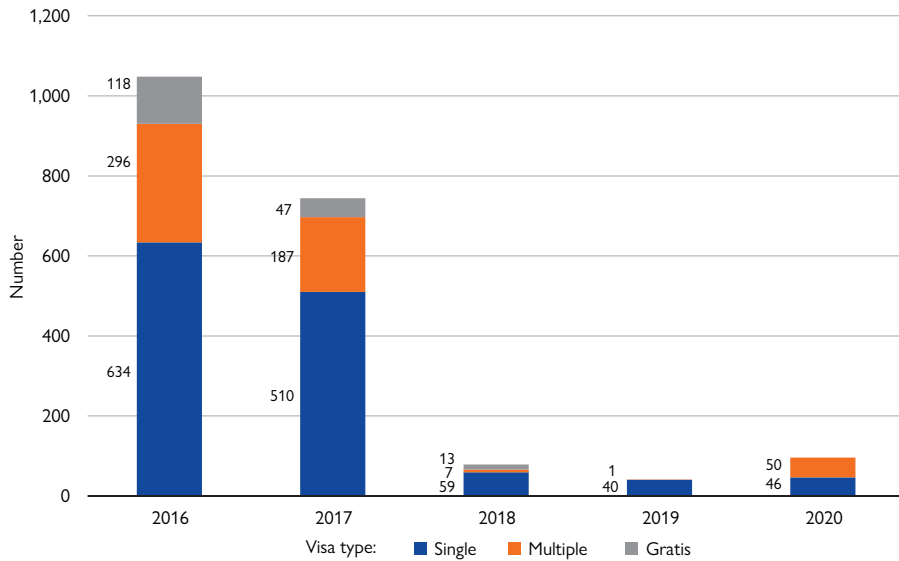


Source: Data sourced from the Department of Immigration in 2023.

Note: The visas issued in 2018 to 2020 refer to manual applications only. Online applications were introduced in 2018, and these are not captured here.

Single visas were the most issued in all the years under review (see Figure 2). The single visas were highest in 2016 and 2017 (634 and 510, respectively), thereafter declining to low levels. The reason of few visas issued is the same as mentioned earlier where visa applications refer to manual applications, excluding the online applications.

Figure 2. Types of visas issued, 2016–2020



Source: Data sourced from the Department of Immigration in 2023.

The top five countries/territories with immigrants issued with visas in 2016 and 2017 are shown in Table 2. The data shows that four of the top five countries/territories with visas issued were from Asia, with China being issued the largest number of visas (340), followed by those from Pakistan (139). In 2017, India, Pakistan and China remained the top three countries with the highest number of visas issued, but all registering a decline. Nigeria and overtook from Taiwan Province of the People’s Republic of China and Ghana. In 2018, 2019 and 2020, the top five countries/territories were all African countries, except in 2020 where China had the highest number of visas issued. Countries from within Southern Africa are not included on the visas issued as most of them are visa-free.

Table 2. Top five countries/territories with number of visas issued, 2016–2020

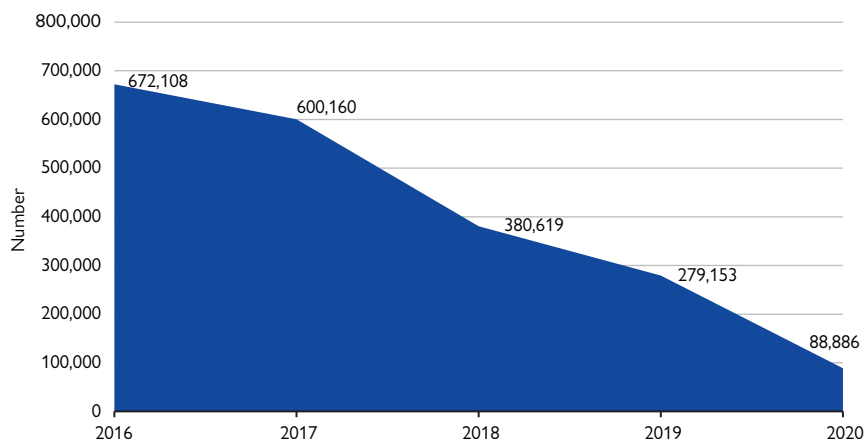
2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Country	Number of visas	Country	Number of visas	Country	Number of visas	Country	Number of visas	Country	Number of visas
China	340	China	293	Democratic Republic of the Congo	33	Angola	33	China	21
Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China	79	Nigeria	33	Comoros	6	Madagascar	4	Libya	5
Pakistan	139	Pakistan	124	Angola	20	Nigeria	23	Benin	21
India	83	India	59	Ghana	9	Ghana	7	Angola	7
Ghana	76	Democratic Republic of the Congo	26	Burundi	4	Rwanda	2	Côte d'Ivoire	2

Source: Data sourced from the Department of Immigration in 2023.

A.1.2. Entries

Figure 3 shows the number of entries into Lesotho. The data shows that the number of entries were 2,020,926, declined over the period from 672,108 entries in 2016 to 88,886 in 2020. The number of entries was lowest in 2020 largely due to the travel restrictions imposed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Lesotho, like all countries around the world, responded by closing all its borders to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The decline of entries was also due to several restrictions by the Government of Lesotho (such as non-issuance of labour and work permits, an unconducive environment and economic decline). Data on the intended duration of stay was not available.

Figure 3. Number of entries, 2016–2020

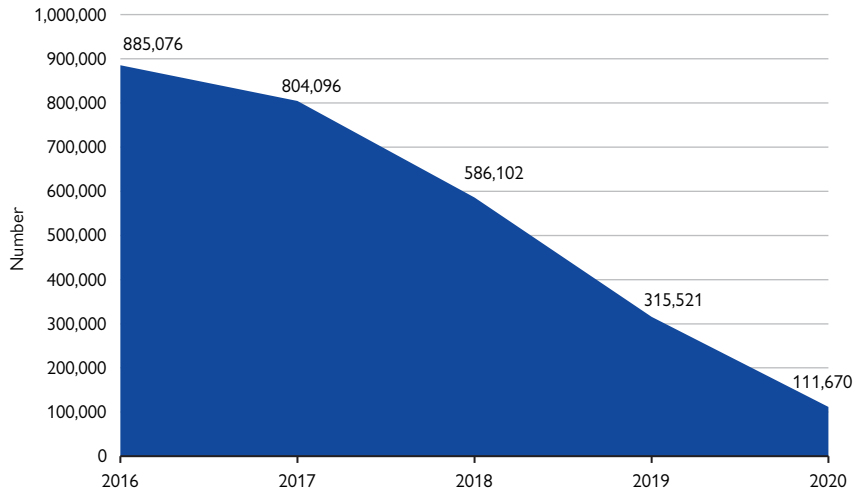


Source: Data sourced from the Department of Immigration in 2023.

A.1.3. Exits

Figure 4 shows the number of exits. The number of people leaving Lesotho was 2,702,465, declining from 885,076 in 2016 to 315,521 in 2019 and 111,670 in 2020. COVID-19 also had an impact on the number of exits in 2020, registering the least number of exits from Lesotho.

Figure 4. Number of exits, 2016–2020



Source: Data sourced from the Department of Immigration in 2023.

Reasons for leaving the country

The major reasons for leaving the country were mainly economic, that is, for employment in order to care for the family left behind, as well as for study purposes.

Intended duration

Data on the intended duration of absence for the Basotho people who would have left the country was not available.

A.2. Immigration

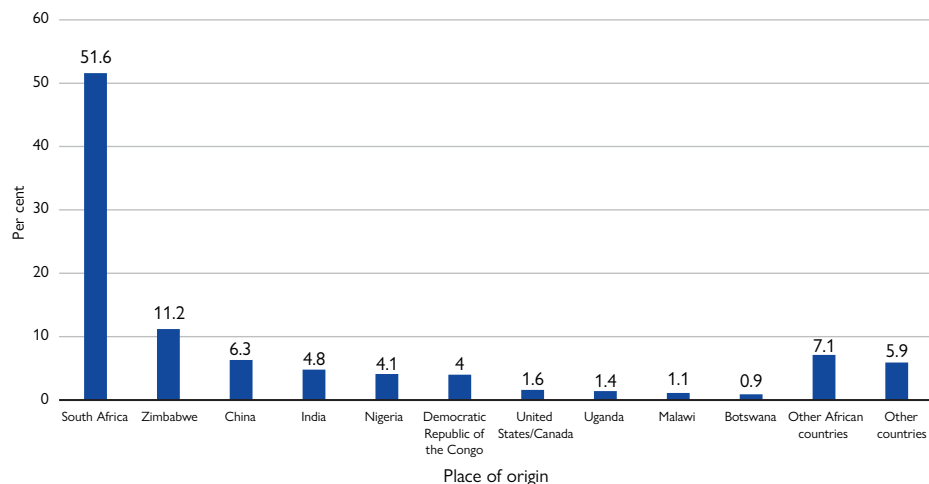
This section concerns foreigners only, as returning citizens are covered under return migration.

A.2.1. Immigration stocks

Non-citizen population by citizenship

Figure 5 shows the percentage non-citizen population in Lesotho at the time of the 2016 PHC. There were 9,700 non-citizens in Lesotho during the 2016 PHC (Bureau of Statistics, 2018). The top ten countries of origin of immigrants were South Africa, Zimbabwe, China, India, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, United States/Canada, Uganda, Malawi and Botswana. A large proportion of non-citizens (81.4%) originated from Africa. The highest percentage of immigrants originated from South Africa (51.6%), followed by Zimbabwe (11.2%) and China (6.3%).

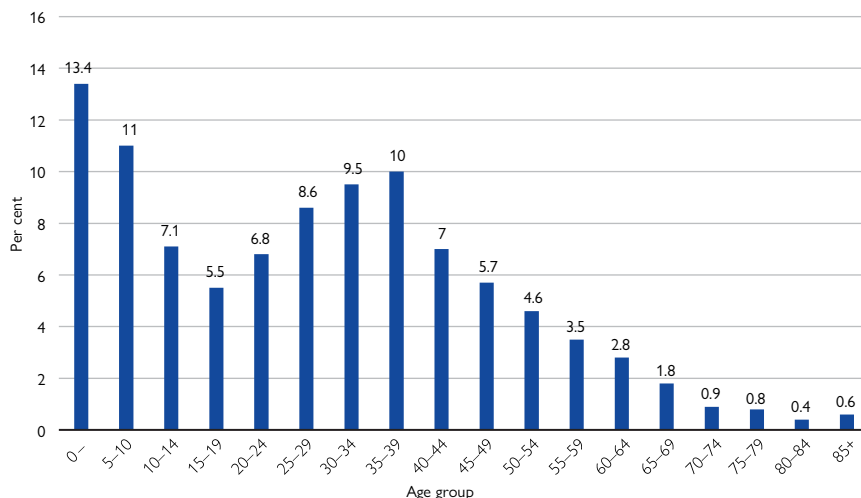
Figure 5. Non-citizen population by citizenship



Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:161.

Figure 6 shows the non-citizen population by age and sex. Children aged 0–4 and 5–10 had the highest proportion of immigrants (13.4% and 11%, respectively). Correspondingly, the largest share (15.2%) of female immigrants was in the same age group. From 40 years and above, immigration tended to decline with age. This is in line with the global patterns where young people are more likely to migrate than older people.

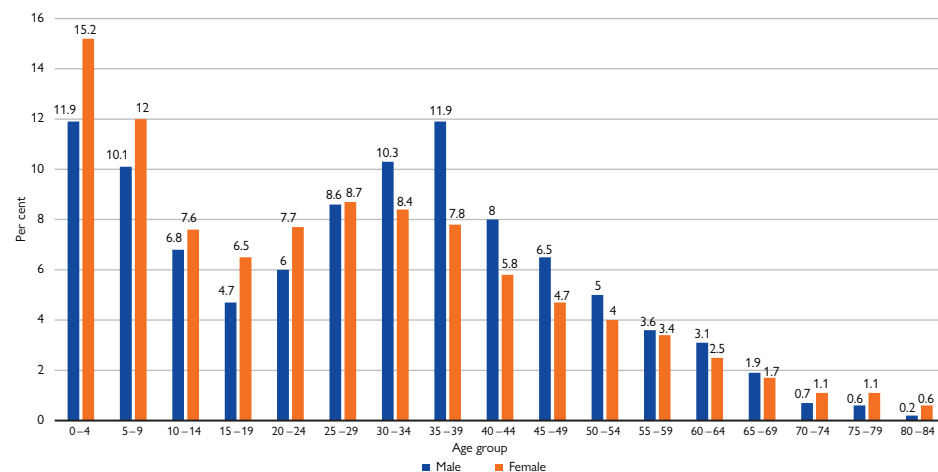
Figure 6. Non-citizen population by age



Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:161.

Figure 7 shows the non-citizen population by age and sex. The largest share of female non-citizens was in the ages 0–4 years (15.2%). Generally, immigration peaked at ages 0–4 years and 35–39 years. Immigration peaked around the age groups 0–4 years and 5–9 years for females (15.2% and 12%, respectively) and 35–39 years for males (11.9%). The percentage of male non-citizens in Lesotho decline with age from 11.9 per cent at ages 35–39 years to 0.2 per cent in the age group 80–84 years. The proportion of female non-citizens starts to decline from earlier ages, 8.7 per cent at ages 25–29 years to 0.6 per cent at ages 80–84.

Figure 7. Non-citizen population by age and sex

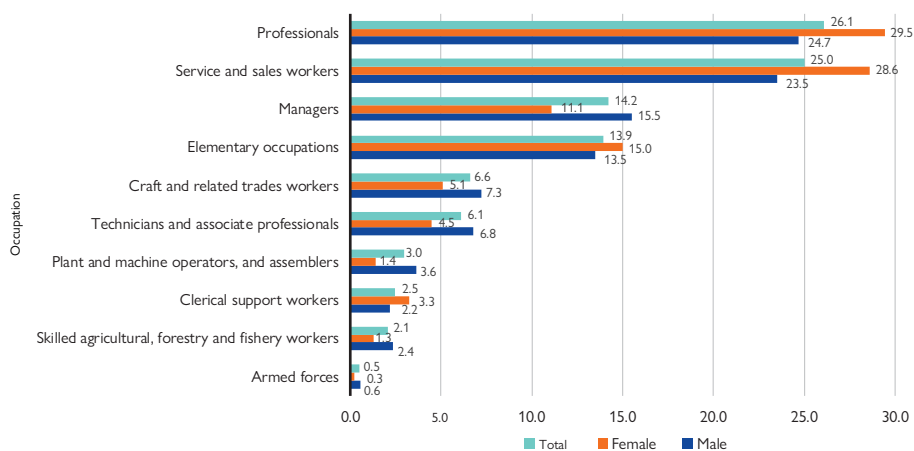


Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:161.

Occupation of immigrants

Overall, the largest proportion of immigrants were professionals (26.1%), followed by service and sales workers (25%). Professionals include the following: (a) health professionals, such as physicians, nurses and veterinarians; (b) teaching professionals, such as schoolteachers, college professors and lecturers; and (c) engineering professionals, such as aeronautic engineers, mechanical engineers and chemical engineers. Figure 8 shows the distribution of immigrants by occupation and sex. Comparison of immigrants by sex showed that the proportion of female professionals (29.5%) was higher than that recorded for males (24.7%). Similarly, the proportion of female service and sales workers (28.6%) was greater than that reported for male counterparts (23.5%). There were more males employed as managers (15.5%) compared to their female counterparts (11.1%).

Figure 8. Distribution of immigrants by occupation and sex



Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:164.

A.2.2. Immigration for employment

The major sources of data on immigration for employment were the MOPSLE (2016–2020), PHC (stock data) and the Department of Immigration, which collects flow data on immigrants entering the country and applying for work-related permits.

Work permit applications

Table 3 presents the work permit applications by the top ten nationalities during the period 2016–2020. Overall, there were a total of 4,490 work permit applications over the period. The top ten places of origin with work permit applications in Lesotho were from Africa and Asia. The highest work permit

applications were from South Africa (1,809), followed by China (872) and Zimbabwe (293).

Table 3. Work permit applications by top ten nationalities by year of application

Nationality	Year					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Total*	630*	1 001*	757*	1 230*	872*	4 490*
South Africa	294	382	268	498	367	1 809
China	123	226	160	223	140	872
Zimbabwe	30	78	62	66	57	293
India	43	59	45	61	52	260
Pakistan	25	30	34	74	48	211
Congo	17	32	36	23	31	139
Bangladesh	15	21	21	44	15	116
Nigeria	9	19	14	27	16	85
Sri Lanka	1	10	21	16	29	77
Philippines	10	18	8	16	19	71

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 WorkPermits Index data by the MOPSLE in 2023.

Note: * These numbers are not the actual total of the items below.

Table 4 presents the number of work permit applications by occupation and year of application. The majority of the work permit applications were for occupations of managers (1,864) and professionals (1,481), with the highest applications received in 2019 for both occupations.

Table 4. Number of work permit applications by occupation and year of application

Occupation	Year					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Armed forces occupations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Managers	259	420	327	491	367	1 864
Professionals	179	350	273	391	288	1 481
Technicians and associate professionals	55	85	56	87	83	366
Clerical support workers	5	3	2	5	3	18
Service and sales workers	7	17	7	5	13	49
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	0	2	2	6	2	12
Craft and related trades workers	116	107	69	202	86	580
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	7	16	21	37	29	110
Elementary occupations	2	1	0	6	1	10
Total	630	1 001	757	1 230	872	4 490

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 WorkPermits Index data by the MOPSLE in 2023.

Note: Occupations are based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 by the ILO.

Table 5 shows the number of work permit applications by industry and year of application. A third of the work permit applications were for the construction industry (1,480), followed by the wholesale and retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (1,220), which is 27 per cent. This shows that there is a lot of construction going on in Lesotho.

Table 5. Number of work permit applications by industry and year of application

Industry	Year					Total
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3	6	14	17	8	48
Mining and quarrying	24	52	31	39	35	181
Manufacturing	18	44	14	39	37	152
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	7	2	1	0	1	11
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	5	28	3	26	4	66
Construction	213	255	227	493	292	1 480
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	181	250	221	318	250	1 220
Transportation and storage	6	13	10	11	4	44
Accommodation and food service activities	7	14	8	19	10	58
Information and communication	15	16	9	16	5	61
Financial and insurance activities	25	38	13	25	20	121
Real estate activities	5	9	3	6	5	28
Professional, scientific and technical activities	32	74	41	63	47	257
Administrative and support service activities	3	3	3	4	2	15
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	19	24	35	20	39	137
Education	25	61	35	51	39	211
Human health and social work activities	29	69	56	57	44	255
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0	1	10	3	3	17
Other service activities	3	3	1	7	8	22
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	10	38	22	16	20	106
Total	630	1 000	757	1 230	873	4 490

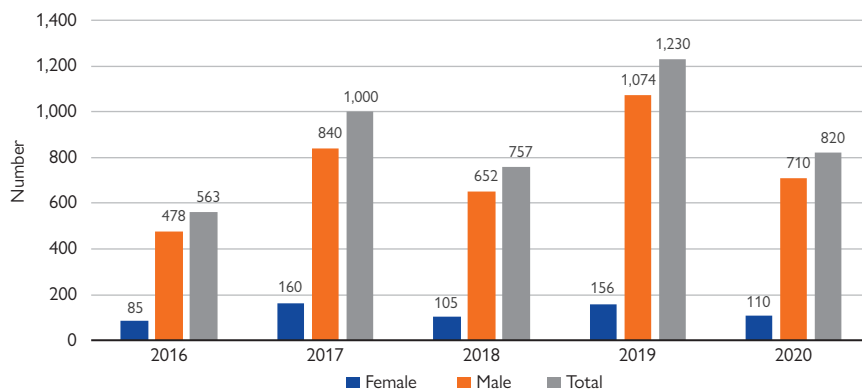
Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 WorkPermits Index data by the MOPSLE in 2023.

Note: Industries are based on the fourth revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities by the United Nations Statistics Division.

Employed foreign population

Employed foreign population was derived from the work permits approved. A total of 4,370 work permits were approved during the period 2016–2020. Figure 9 shows the number of work permits approved during the period 2016–2020. The number of approved work permits increased from 563 in 2016 to 1,230 in 2019, declining to 820 in 2020. The decline in approved work permits in 2020 could be due to COVID-19, as some services were closed during the lockdown period, which led to travel bans and the closure of borders. Most of the permits were for males compared to their female counterparts.

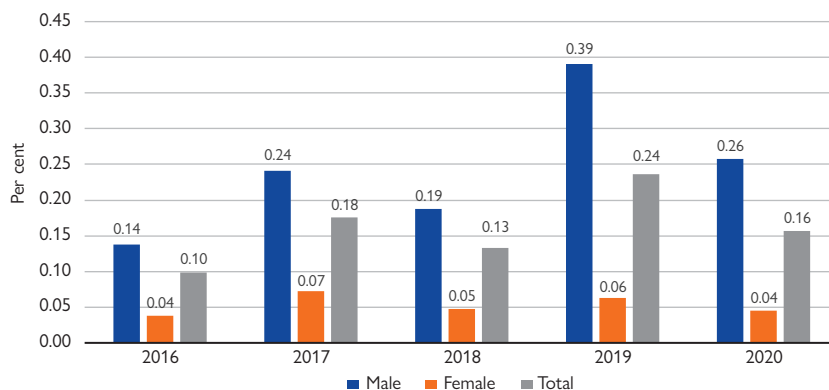
Figure 9. Approved work permits by sex, 2016–2020



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the MOPSLE in 2023.

The percentage of the foreign employed population to the total employed population in Lesotho was very negligible – less than 1 per cent throughout the reporting period (see Figure 10). The percentage is higher for males than females.

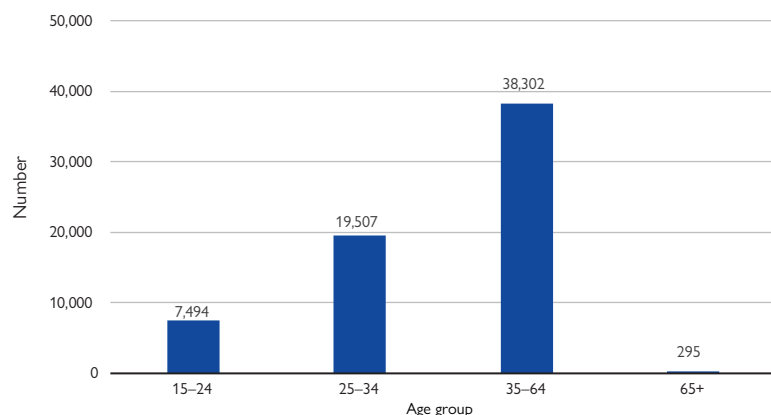
Figure 10. per cent of foreign employed population to the total employed population by sex, 2016–2020



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the MOPSLE in 2023.

A total of 65,598 immigrants were employed in Lesotho. The majority of the foreign-employed population was aged 35–64 years (58.4%), followed by those aged 25–34 years (29.7%). The youth (25–34 years) have a higher percentage considering that the age group consists of two age groups compared to the 35–64 age group, which consists of six age groups. The pattern of youthful immigrants is consistent with the global statistics, which indicate that young adults are more likely to migrate than anyone else. Employers usually prefer employing these age groups as they are more productive and active (see Figure 11).

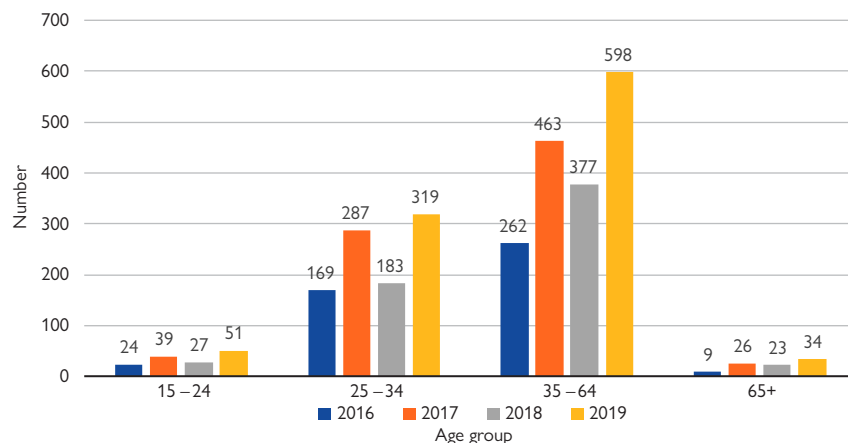
Figure 11. Number of immigrants employed by age



Source: Authors' elaboration based on data by the MOPSLE in 2023.

Figure 12 shows the number of foreign employed population by age. Most of the foreign population who were employed were aged 35–64, followed by those aged 25–34. Very few of those aged 15–24 and 65 and above were employed.

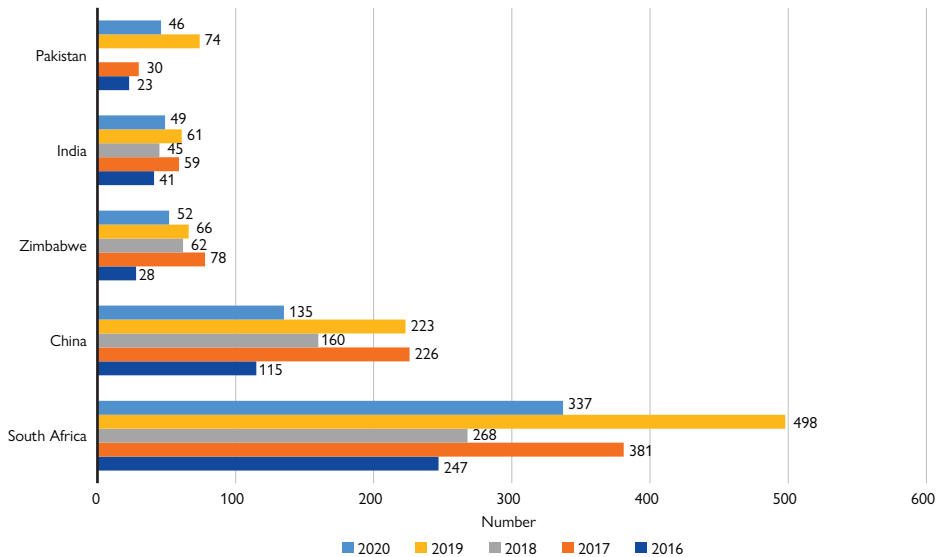
Figure 12. Foreign employed population by age, 2016–2020



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2019 data by the MOPSLE in 2023.

Figure 13 shows the number of foreign employed population in Lesotho by country of origin. Most of the foreign-employed population in Lesotho is from South Africa, followed by China, Zimbabwe, India and Pakistan. Besides South Africa, most of the employed foreigners originate from Asian countries.

Figure 13. Foreign employed population by country of origin, 2016–2020



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the MOPSLE in 2023.

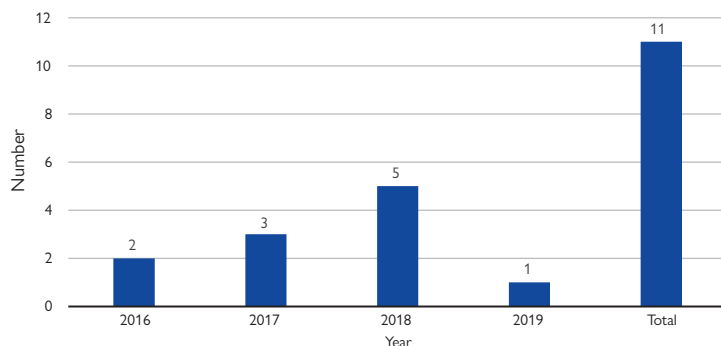
Immigration for study purposes

People leave their countries to study outside their country. Lesotho is no exception in receiving such migrants for study purposes.

Number of study permits

Very few people migrate to Lesotho for study purposes. Figure 14 shows the number of study permits issued. However, there were very few foreigners who migrate to Lesotho for educational purposes. A total of 11 study permits were issued over the period 2016–2019. Almost half of the study permits were issued in 2018. The numbers are too few for further analysis.

Figure 14. Number of study permits, 2016–2019



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2019 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

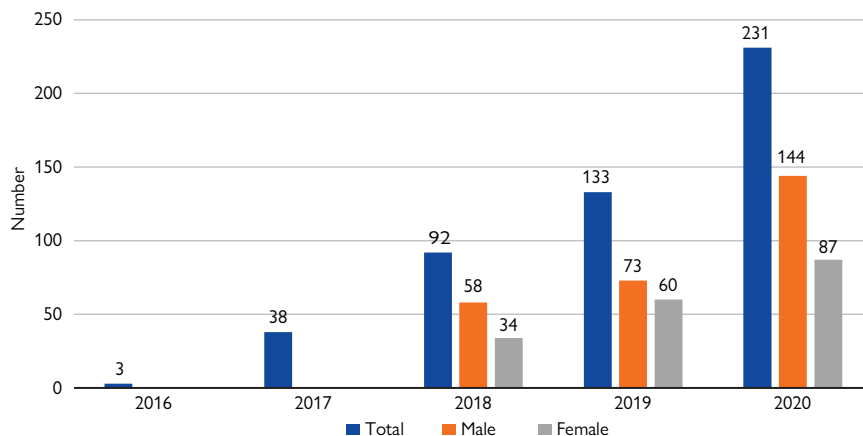
A.2.3. Involuntary immigration

Involuntary immigration includes asylum-seekers and refugees.

New asylum applications launched

Figure 15 shows the new applications launched between 2016 and 2020. The number of new asylum applications launched in 2016–2020 were 497, which increased from just 3 in 2016 to 231 in 2020. There were very few new asylum applications in 2016 and 2017 (3 and 38 applications, respectively). However, the number increased to 92 and 133 in 2018 and 2019, respectively. The available information by sex shows that there were more male asylum applicants compared to female applicants.

Figure 15. New asylum applications launched (flows), 2016–2020



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Table 6 shows the number of asylum applications by country of origin. The Democratic Republic of Congo had the number highest number of asylum applications during the period 2016 to 2020, with the highest registered in 2020 (169). The number of applications for the Democratic Republic of the Congo have increased over the years, from 2 in 2016 to 169 in 2020. Eritrea was second in terms of the overall number of applications, with the highest observed in 2019 (32) and Ethiopia third, with the higher number of applications in 2020 (18). Thus, most of the people seeking asylum came from countries that were experiencing war and conflicts.

Table 6. New asylum applications launched (flows) by country of origin, 2016–2020

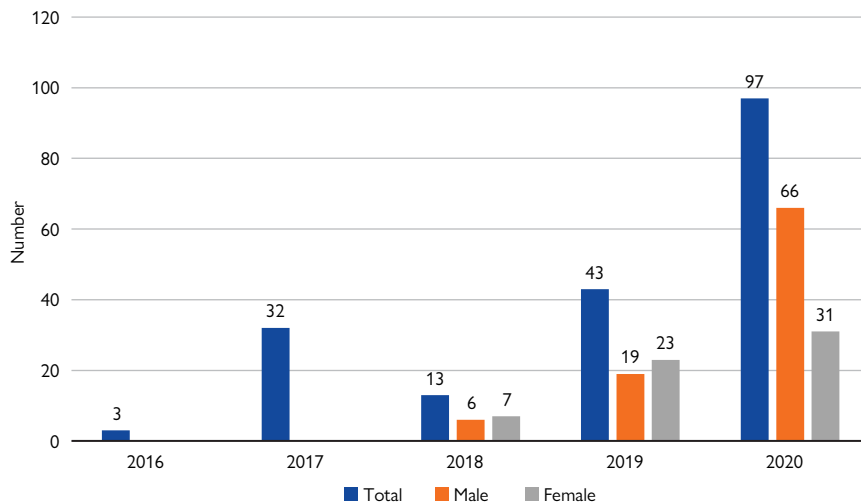
2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2	Democratic Republic of the Congo	33	Democratic Republic of the Congo	74	Democratic Republic of the Congo	78	Democratic Republic of the Congo	169
Uganda	1	Uganda	3	Ethiopia	10	Eritrea	32	Eritrea	29
		Burundi	1	Eritrea	4	Uganda	7	Ethiopia	18
		Eritrea	1	Uganda	2	Zimbabwe	5	Somalia	7
				Zambia	2	Ethiopia	4	Nigeria	3
						Nigeria	3	Pakistan	1
						Algeria	1	South Sudan	1
						Cameroon	1	Guinea	1
						Eswatini	1	Zambia	1
						Pakistan	1		

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Pending asylum applications (stocks)

Figure 16 shows the pending asylum applications. A total of 97 asylum applications were pending, an increase from 3 in 2016 to 31 in 2017, followed by a decline to 13 in 2018. Since 2018, the number of pending applications has been on the increase to 43 in 2019 and 97 in 2020. There were more pending asylum applications for females in 2018 and 2019 (7 and 23 applications, respectively) compared to male applications (6 and 19 applications, respectively).

Figure 16. Pending asylum applications (stocks) by sex, 2016–2020



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Table 7 presents the number of pending asylum applications by country of origin. The majority of the pending asylum applications were from Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Between 2016 and 2018, the highest number of pending asylum applications were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while in 2019 and 2020, the highest were from Cameroon.

Table 7. Pending asylum applications(stocks) by country of origin, 2016–2020

2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2	Democratic Republic of the Congo	28	Democratic Republic of the Congo	13	Cameroon	35	Cameroon	22
Uganda	1	Burundi	1			Democratic Republic of the Congo	6	Democratic Republic of the Congo	9
		Eritrea	1			Algeria	1	Ethiopia	1
		Uganda	1			Eritrea	1		

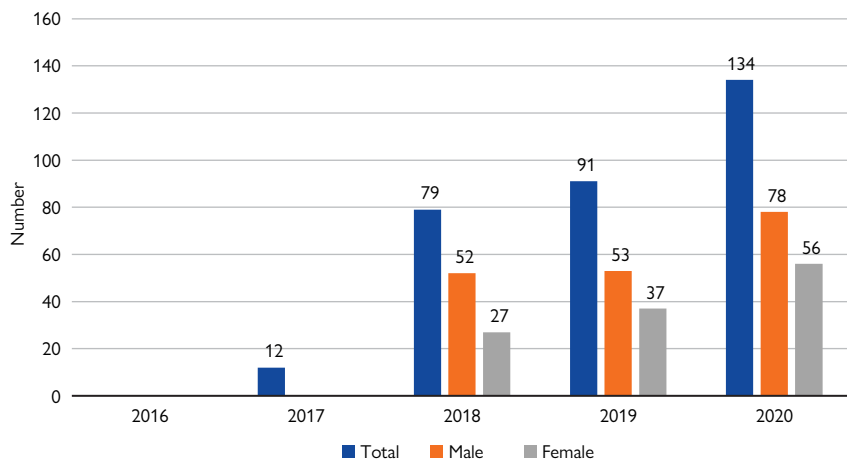
Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2019 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Refugee status determination

Statistics on refugees are provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs and UNHCR. Figure 17a shows the refugee status given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations. There was a total of 316 applicants seeking refugee status, 134 applicants in 2020, an increase from 12 in 2017, 79 in 2018,

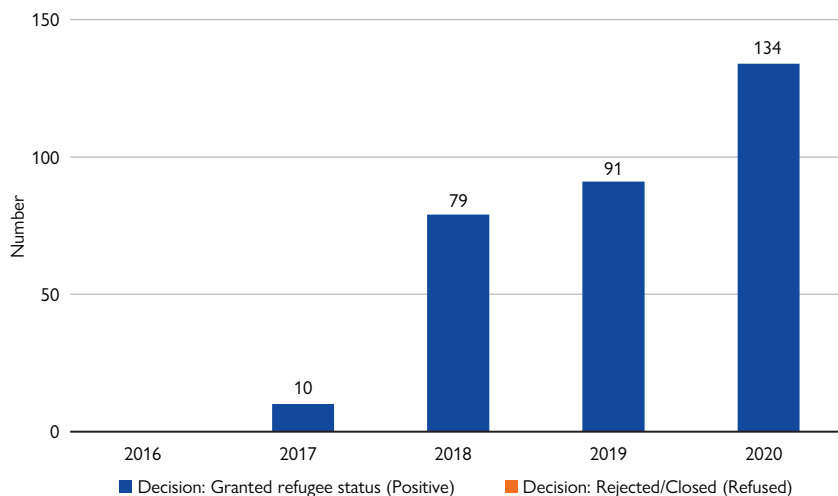
and 91 in 2019. Figure 17b shows that all the decisions were positive, as they were all granted refugee status.

Figure 17a. Refugee status determination by sex, 2016–2020



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2019 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Figure 17b. Decision of refugee status, 2016–2020



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Table 8 shows the migrants granted refugee status by country of origin. Most of the applications granted refugee status were again from the Democratic Republic of the Congo since they had the highest number of applications for refugee status, followed by Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda. Most of those granted were mainly from the Horn of Africa, Central Africa and East Africa. Southern

African countries with their citizens granted refugee status are Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Table 8. Decisions: Granted refugee status by country of origin, 2016–2020

2017		2018		2019		2020	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	7	Democratic Republic of the Congo	61	Democratic Republic of the Congo	43	Democratic Republic of the Congo	111
Uganda	3	Ethiopia	10	Eritrea	26	Ethiopia	9
		Eritrea	4	Uganda	7	Eritrea	7
		Uganda	2	Zimbabwe	5	Nigeria	3
		Zambia	2	Ethiopia	4	Cameroon	1
				Nigeria	3	Guinea	1
				Algeria	1	Somalia	1
				Eswatini	1	South Sudan	1
				Pakistan	1	Zambia	1

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

The UNHCR reported that as of February 2019, there were 106 refugees and asylum-seekers in Lesotho (UNHCR, 2019). The majority of them come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (approximately 80%), followed by Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda (ibid.). Close to 40 per cent of the refugees and asylum-seekers are children.

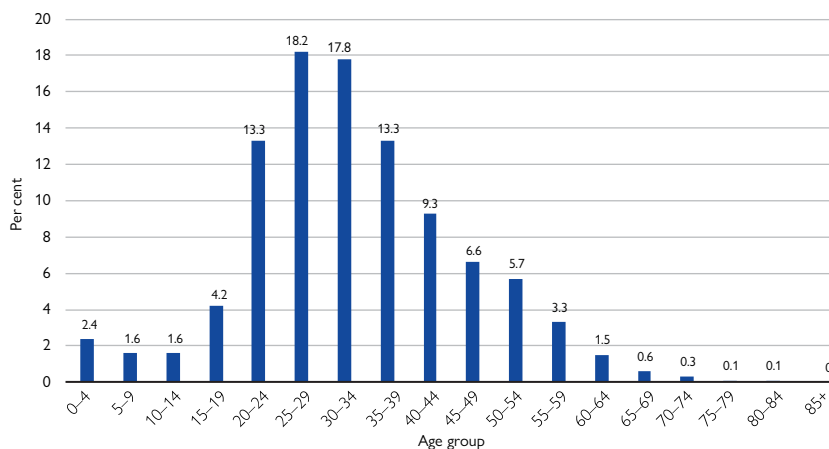
A.3. Emigration

People leave their country of origin to live in another country for different reasons. The major reasons for leaving the country were for employment and study. These are presented in this section.

A.3.1. Lesotho emigrants by age and sex

Lesotho citizens living outside the country in 2016 were estimated at 179,579 (Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Figure 18 shows the per cent distribution of Lesotho citizens outside the country by age. The proportion of emigrants was highest among those aged 25–29 (18.2%) and second were those aged 30–34 (17.8%). Over two thirds of Lesotho emigrants were aged between 20 and 39 (62.6%). This is in tangent with the global pattern where young people are more likely to migrate than older people.

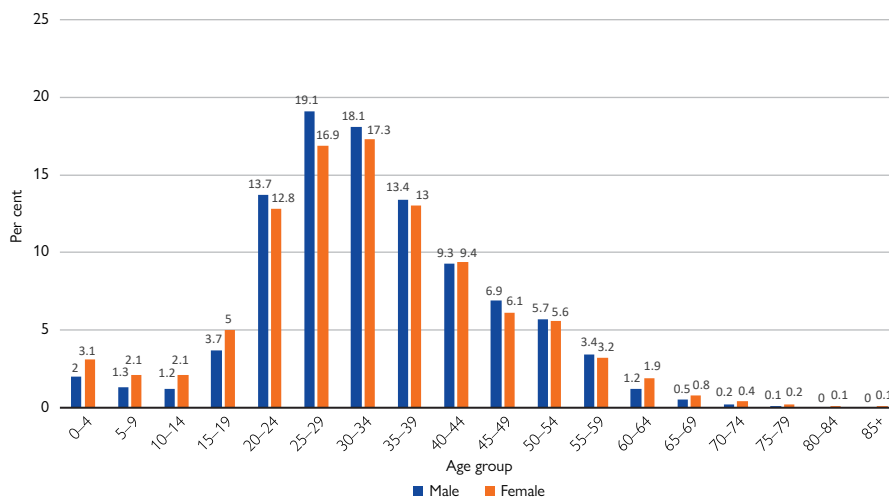
Figure 18. Distribution of emigrants by age



Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:154.

Figure 19 shows the per cent distribution of Lesotho citizens outside the country by age and sex in 2016. Generally, there were more male emigrants than female emigrants. Male emigrants aged 25–29 and 30–34 represented the largest share (19.1% and 18.1%, respectively) of emigrants. However, the proportion of female emigrants aged 0–19 years was higher than their male counterparts.

Figure 19. Distribution of emigrants by age and sex, 2016



Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:154.

A.3.2. Emigrants by country of destination

Table 9 shows the distribution of Lesotho citizens outside the country by country of destination. The major destination for Lesotho emigrants was South Africa (99.5%) (Bureau of Statistics, 2018). The other countries in the top 10 destinations were China, India, United Kingdom, Eswatini, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Australia. Lesotho is surrounded by South Africa and the citizens have migrated to South Africa to work mostly in mines.

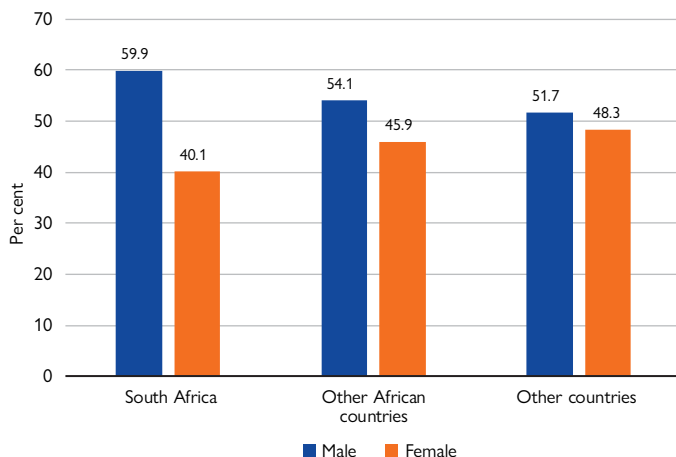
Table 9. Lesotho citizens outside the country by country of residence

Country of residence	Number	Per cent
South Africa	178 647	99.5
Botswana	220	0.1
North America (United States, Canada)	96	0.1
China	78	0.0
India	76	0.0
United Kingdom	60	0.0
Eswatini	62	0.0
United Republic of Tanzania	39	0.0
Zimbabwe	38	0.0
Australia	18	0.0

Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:153.

Emigrants were further classified by country of destination and sex. Figure 20 presents the percentage distribution of Lesotho citizens outside the country by country of destination and sex. There were more Basotho males migrating to South Africa (59.9%) compared to their female counterparts who constituted 40.1 per cent of emigrants. It was also observed that more males (59.9%) had migrated to South Africa than in other countries. The same pattern was observed with the other African countries and other countries that are outside Africa. However, for other countries, there were more females (48.3%).

Figure 20. Distribution of Lesotho citizens emigrants by destination and sex

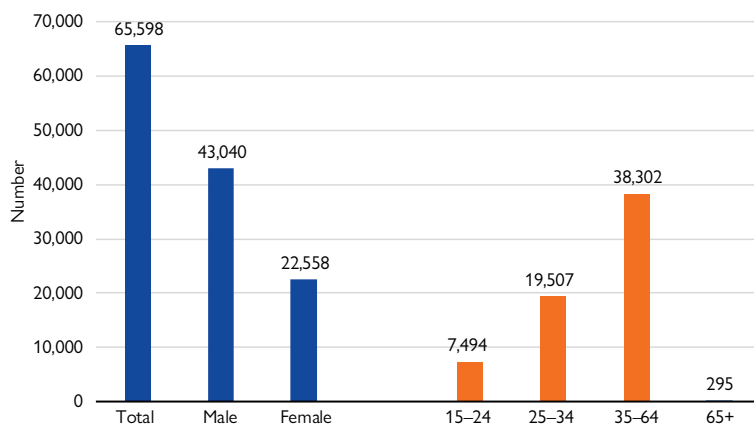


Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:154.

A.3.3. Emigration for employment

According to the Immigration Department, a total of 65,598 Basotho citizens left the country in 2019 to work abroad. The desire to emigrate is more pronounced among males (43,040) than females (22,558) and also among those aged 35–64 (38,302) (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Number of citizens departing for employment abroad



Source: Authors' elaboration based on data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

People leave their country of origin to live in another country for employment reasons. Table 10 shows the number of citizens departing for employment abroad. A total of 182,367 citizens emigrated for employment to other countries in 2016. The most popular country of destination was South Africa. Out of the 182,367 citizens who emigrated, nearly all moved to South Africa (108,391). This is in line with other research that has reported movement, mostly of males, to South Africa where they would work in mines.

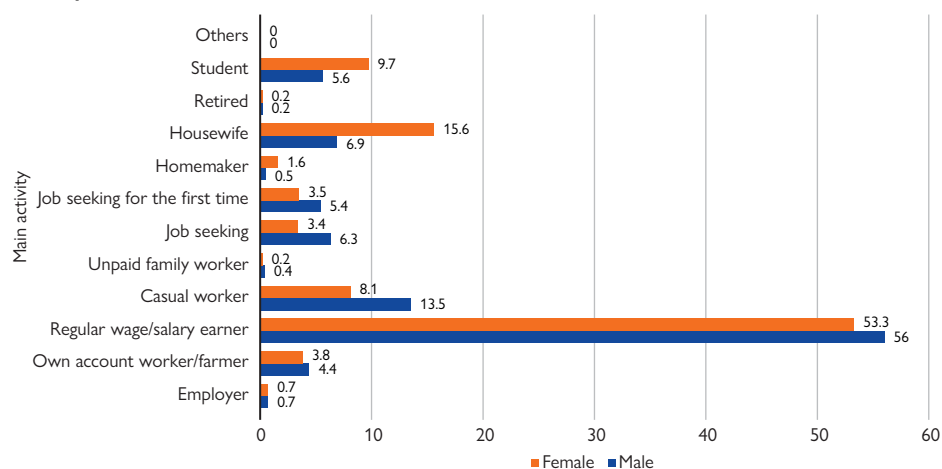
Table 10. Citizens departing for employment abroad by country

	South Africa	Other countries	Total
Male	108 391	539	108 930
Female	72 898	539	73 437
Total	181 289	1 078	182 367

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Migration may be economically motivated to improve and diversify earnings sources to reduce risks faced by households. Figure 22 shows the distribution of Lesotho citizens outside the country by main activity and sex. It can be observed that the proportions of males and females who were regular wage or salary earners were higher (56% and 53.3%, respectively) than those of other main activities. The second highest proportions were for those who were casual workers, where male emigrants represented 13.5 per cent of the total male emigrants, and female emigrants constituted 8.1 per cent of the total female emigrants. On the contrary, there were more female homemakers (15.6%) than their male counterparts (6.9%).

Figure 22. Percentage distribution of Lesotho citizens outside the country by main activity and sex



Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:155.

Note: The occupation "homemaker" is inclusive of men accompanying their wives.

Basotho leaving the country were employed mostly in elementary occupations (61.3). These occupations consist of simple and routine tasks that mainly require the use of handheld tools and often some physical effort. According to the International Standard Classification of Occupations, the tasks usually include the following: (a) selling goods in street and public places, or from door-to-door; (b) providing various street services; (c) cleaning, washing, pressing; (d) taking care of apartment houses, hotels, offices and other buildings; and (e) washing windows and other surfaces of buildings, among others. However, few were employed as professionals and managers (see Table 11).

Table 11. Percentage of Lesotho citizens outside the country by occupation and sex

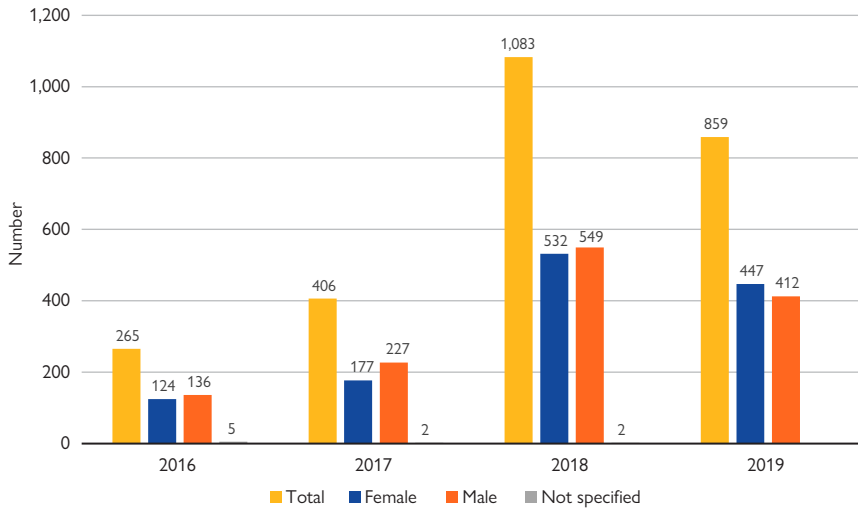
Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Elementary occupations	55.9	70.4	61.3
Service and sales workers	5.6	18.3	10.3
Craft and related trades workers	12.0	2.5	8.5
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	12.0	1.4	8.1
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	5.9	2.6	4.7
Technicians and associate professionals	3.3	0.8	2.4
Professionals	2.1	1.7	2.0
Managers	2.1	0.8	1.6
Clerical support workers	0.7	1.5	1.0
Armed forces occupations	0.4	0.1	0.3
Total in numbers	78 539	46 195	124 734

Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:156.

A.3.4. Emigration for study

Emigration is split into, that specifically for South Africa and the other one from other countries. Figure 23 shows the South Africa study permits by sex. Study permits were high in 2018 (1,083) for both males (549) and females (532). The number of South African study permits increased for both sexes from 265 in 2016 to 1,083 in 2019, females (from 124 in 2016 to 532 in 2018) and males (from 136 in 2016 to 549 in 2018). The decline in study permits was registered in 2019 to 859 for both females and males (447 and 412, respectively). However, in 2019, the number of study permits was higher among females than males.

Figure 23. Number of South African study permits by sex, 2016–2019



Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2016–2020 data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Table 12 shows the number of students who emigrated for study by country in 2020, excluding South Africa. A total of 777 Basotho emigrated for study outside the country, excluding those emigrating to South Africa, which is less than the South African study permits in 2019 (859) as shown in Figure 23. This shows that most of the citizens of Lesotho migrate to South Africa for study. Other than to South Africa, most of the students emigrated to India (39.6%) and China (30.4%), while others emigrated to Algeria (8.1%), Botswana (7.5%), United States (4%), Cuba (3.5%), Malaysia (1.5%) and Japan (1%). The rest of the remaining countries had less than 1 per cent of the students.

Table 12. Emigration for study by country, 2020

Country	Number	Per cent
India	308	39.6
China	236	30.4
Algeria	63	8.1
Botswana	58	7.5
United States	31	4.0
Cuba	27	3.5
Malaysia	12	1.5
Japan	8	1.0
Türkiye	5	0.6
Germany	4	0.5
Ireland	4	0.5
Italy	4	0.5
Philippines	4	0.5
Rwanda	4	0.5
Ukraine	4	0.5
Belgium	2	0.3
Poland	2	0.3
Ethiopia	1	0.1

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data by Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

Note: Data excluding South Africa.

A.4. Irregular migration

There are several reasons why migrants cross borders irregularly. Narrow boundaries of lawful migration and overly strict classification of migrant and visa categories lead to exclusion of those migrants who do not meet the stipulated criteria, in addition to the fact that unaffordable residence visas, work permits and passports may render would-be migrants similarly unable to migrate lawfully. Whatever the rationale or the context, irregular migrants are exposed to vulnerability in the form of maltreatment, exploitation, abuse and corruption.

A.4.1. Foreigners refused entry at border (flows)

No foreigners have been refused entry at borders.

A.4.2. Foreigners returned following and order to leave the country (flows)

According to the Department of Immigration under the Ministry of Home Affairs, only one person, a Malawian, was returned back to Malawi.

A.4.3. Citizens deported (flow)

A total of 4,451 Basotho were deported by the South Immigration Department during the period 2016–2020. Table 13 presents the number of Basotho deportees by port of entry. In 2016, a total of 1,035 Basotho were deported, the number deported declining to 975 in 2017 and later increasing to 1,116 in 2018. The least number of Basotho deportees (287) were recorded in 2020 due to the travel ban during the COVID-19 era. Most of the deportees came through the Maseru Bridge. It should be noted that there were no deportees at the international airport in Maseru.

Table 13. Number of Basotho deportees by port of entry, 2016–2020

Port of entry	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Maseru Bridge	929	770	627	363	168
Ficksburg Bridge	86	142	384	539	–
Caledon Bridge	0	0	0	0	0
Van Royeen's Gate	17	55	77	103	113
Makhaleng Bridge	2	1	2	–	–
Tele Bridge	1	7	26	33	6
Total	1 035	975	1 116	1 038	287

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data by the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023.

A.4.4. Victims of trafficking

The CGPU within the Lesotho Mounted Police Service identified 18 potential trafficking victims in 2016 (US Department of State, 2016). Out of these, CGPU referred 6 potential victims to an NGO that provided counselling and assistance to trafficking victims. In 2017, 9 potential trafficking victims were identified, and one of them was referred to an NGO that offered counselling and support to trafficking victims (US Department of State, 2017:251). In 2018, CGPU identified 12 trafficking victims, and all of them were referred to an NGO that provided counselling and assistance (US Department of State, 2018:273). In 2019, CGPU identified 7 victims of labour trafficking, while 5 other victims either self-identified or were identified by their family members (US Department of State, 2019). The

CGPU referred the 7 victims they identified to an NGO that offered counselling and assistance. The victims who self-identified sought help from the same NGO independently. In 2020, CGPU identified 2 trafficking victims (US Department of State, 2020). In addition, South African law enforcement officers identified 9 Basotho victims in Welkom, South Africa, and an NGO reported identifying 3 victims, making a total of 14 Basotho trafficking victims identified by all parties in 2020. Despite the identification, the Government did not provide assistance to any of the trafficking victims. However, the Government did refer 3 victims to an NGO that offered comprehensive care and support.

A.4.5. Persons convicted of human trafficking (flows)

The data on persons convicted of human trafficking was obtained from the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Department of State, United States of America reports for the periods 2016 to 2020. Only one person, a Chinese national, was convicted for the sex trafficking of a Chinese woman in 2016 (US Department of State, 2016). The trafficker who was convicted in 2016 received a 15-year imprisonment sentence, with 10 years suspended. In 2017, the Government investigated four cases of labour trafficking and one case of sex trafficking. There were a total of six prosecutions in 2017, two of which were sex trafficking cases and four were labour trafficking cases (US Department of State, 2017:251). All six cases were tried under the Anti-trafficking Act. However, the Government did not secure any convictions for the traffickers involved in these cases. In 2018, the Government investigated one case involving both sex and labour trafficking, which affected ten victims. In response, Government initiated ten prosecutions, consisting of four sex trafficking cases (two of which were tried under the anti-trafficking act) and six labour trafficking cases (all tried under the Anti-trafficking Act) (US Department of State, 2018:273). For the years 2019 and 2020, the Government did not report any investigations, prosecutions or convictions related to human trafficking.

A.4.6. Persons convicted of smuggling of migrants (flows)

The Government did not convict any smugglers for the reporting period.

A.4.7. Unaccompanied minor children

The Immigration and Citizenship Act, 2018 states that any unaccompanied children shall not be detained. Thus, unaccompanied minor children are not detained.

A.4.8. Stateless persons

Statelessness refers to the condition of not being considered as a national by any State under the operations of its law (IOM, 2019a). Universal birth registration is critical for preventing statelessness because a birth certificate is a crucial form of proof to confirm or acquire citizenship under a State's domestic legislation (Forsingdal et al., 2022). Statelessness occurs for a variety of reasons, which include gender discrimination and discrimination against minority groups in nationality legislation and practice, failure to include all habitual residents in the body of citizens when a State becomes independent (the provisions on State succession), deprivation of nationality and conflicts of laws between States (Manby, 2011). Explicit registration processes, drafted in conjunction with citizenship laws, can reduce the risk of statelessness for the most vulnerable children. As of 1 November 2011, Lesotho was one of the ten African countries that are party to the United Nations' 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (ibid.). Lesotho is party to the United Nations' 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

The Lesotho Citizenship Order no. 16 of 1971 makes provision for citizenship of Lesotho, for the acquisition, deprivation and renunciation of citizenship, and for related and connected matters. The immigration framework of Lesotho provides permanent residence to foreigners and stateless persons as per the Aliens Control Act of 1966 (IOM, 2021a). Any stateless person in Lesotho shall become a citizen of Lesotho (Lesotho, Government of, 1971).

A.5. Return migration

A.5.1. Voluntary returns (flows)

Data on citizens returning voluntarily to the country is not available.

A.5.2. Assisted involuntary returns (Flows)

Data on assisted involuntary returns is not available.

A.6. Internal migration

A.6.1. Persons who have changed their residence within the country (stock)

Internal migration is defined as “the movement of people within a State involving the establishment of a new temporary or permanent residence” (IOM, 2019a). Table 14 presents the percentage distribution of Lesotho citizens that were migrants by district of enumeration, settlement type and sex. Female internal migrants outnumbered their male counterparts in all the urban areas. On the overall, female urban migrants represented 53.6 per cent of the total urban migrants, while male urban migrants constituted 46.4 per cent. The same pattern was observed in the peri-urban and rural areas. Overall, the percentages of female migrants were higher than those of males in all the districts. Botha-Bothe did not have the classification of peri-urban settlement during the 2016 PHC, that is why it has zeros under the peri-urban area.

Table 14. Lesotho citizens that were migrants by district of enumeration, settlement and sex

District of enumeration	Urban			Peri-urban			Rural		
	Per cent		Total number	Per cent		Total number	Per cent		Total number
	Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female	
Botha-Bothe	46.1	53.9	26 294	0	0	0	47.6	52.4	78 633
Leribe	45.3	54.7	102 908	47.5	52.5	17 572	48.4	51.6	181 005
Berea	46.5	53.5	83 383	48.5	51.5	23 774	49.2	50.8	134 374
Maseru	46.7	53.3	279 472	47.6	52.4	50 658	49.5	50.5	163 391
Mafeteng	47.1	52.9	39 750	48.6	51.4	18 579	48.8	51.2	99 673
Mohale's Hoek	45.9	54.1	40 037	46.5	53.5	3 552	48.1	51.9	102 015
Quthing	47.0	53.0	27 314	48.5	51.5	7 459	47.7	52.3	61 208
Qacha's Nek	46.7	53.3	15 913	47.8	52.2	3 616	47.4	52.6	42 871
Mokhotlong	45.7	54.3	12 938	49.3	50.7	3 579	49.6	50.4	76 771
Thaba-Tseka	47.0	53.0	15 248	48.1	51.9	10 281	49.3	50.7	102 612
Total	46.4	53.6	643 257	48	52	139 070	48.7	51.3	1 042 553

Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:126.

Note: Data for male and female citizens are in per cent. The total for males and female citizens are numbers and set in boldface.

Table 15 shows the per cent of Lesotho migrants by age and settlement type. In all settlements, the highest percentages of both male and female migrants were in the age groups 0–39 years. Concerning the disparities of urban population by age groups, more than three quarters of migrants in all urban areas (79.1%) were in the age groups 0–39 years. Nearly a quarter of the migrants were aged 0–9 years (24.4%) and 10–19 years (24.1%). Thus, almost half of the migrants were 0–19 years while those aged 20–29 and 30–39 years represented 16 per cent and 10.9 per cent, respectively, of the Lesotho migrants. This shows that younger ages are more likely to migrate compared to older ages.

Table 15. Lesotho citizens that were migrants by age, sex and settlement, per cent

Age	Per cent urban		Total	Per cent peri-urban		Total	Per cent rural		Total
	Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female	
0–9	21.6	19.0	20.2	21.9	20.1	21.0	25.1	23.8	24.4
10–19	20.7	19.9	20.3	24.9	22.9	23.9	25.7	22.7	24.1
20–29	20.4	22.3	21.4	19.8	18.9	19.3	16.7	15.2	16.0
30–39	17.8	16.7	17.2	13.1	11.8	12.4	11.6	10.3	10.9
40–49	9.2	9.1	9.1	7.5	7.7	7.6	6.9	7.1	7.0
50–59	5.5	6.4	6.0	5.6	7.1	6.4	5.4	7.3	6.4
60–69	3.0	3.6	3.3	4.1	5.5	4.8	4.5	6.0	5.2
70–79	1.3	2.0	1.7	2.2	3.7	3.0	2.9	4.6	3.8
80–89	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.9	1.4	1.1	2.6	1.8
90+	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.3
Total numbers	298 634	344 623	643 257	66 721	72 349	139 070	507 848	534 705	1 042 553

Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:126.

Note: The total for male and female citizens are presented as the per cent of the total population in the particular settlement. For example, 24.4 per cent of male and female citizens aged 0–9 reside in the rural areas. Statistics for total are set in boldface.

Table 16 shows the percentage distribution of interdistrict lifetime migrants by district of birth and district of enumeration. It shows that the highest proportion of outmigration was of Maseru, where 9.4 per cent of population born in Maseru migrated to Berea, followed by 4.1 per cent of the population born in Leribe migrated to Botha-Bothe.

Table 16. Interdistrict lifetime migrants by district of birth and district of enumeration

District of birth	Botha-Bothe	Leribe	Berea	Maseru	Mafeteng	Mohale's Hoek	Quthing	Qacha's Nek	Mokhotlong	Thaba-Tseka	Total
Botha-Bothe	88.1	2.5	1	1.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.3	6
Leribe	4.1	83.5	4.1	2.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	1.1	1.3	15.6
Berea	1.3	5.5	76.3	3.6	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.6	12.3
Maseru	1.5	2	9.4	74.1	5	2.7	2.1	1.9	1.3	2.4	22.8
Mafeteng	0.3	0.6	2.1	6	86.6	2.4	0.8	0.7	0.2	0.3	9.8
Mohale's Hoek	0.2	0.4	1.5	3.5	3.6	88.2	2.7	2.9	0.1	0.4	8.8
Quthing	0.1	0.3	0.8	1.5	0.7	2	89.2	1.6	0.1	0.2	5.6
Qacha's Nek	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.9	0.2	0.7	1.1	86.1	0.1	0.7	3.5
Mokhotlong	2.1	1.8	1	1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	93.2	1.5	5.8
Thaba-Tseka	0.5	1.6	1.7	3.7	0.4	0.5	0.3	2.1	1.5	91.6	8.2
South Africa	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.6	2.3	2.8	0.9	0.6	1.4
Other countries	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Total number	104 927	301 485	241 531	493 521	158 002	145 604	95 981	62 400	93 288	128 141	1 824 880

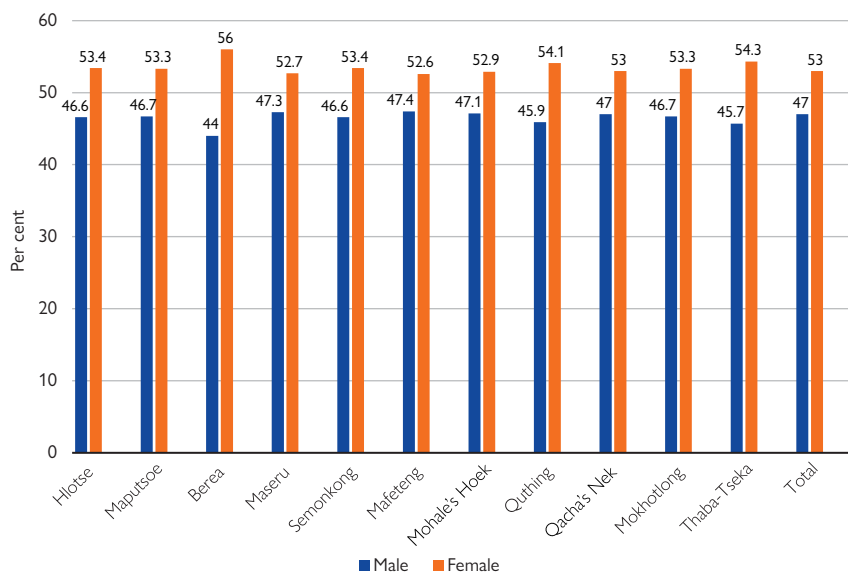
Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:132.

Note: The total in the last column are the per cent of the total population in the particular settlement.

A.6.2. Persons who change their residence within the country from rural to urban areas

Urbanization is about a relative increase in the proportion of people residing in rural or urban areas in a given area such as a region, country or continent (Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Figure 24 presents the percentage of Lesotho citizens that were migrants in urban areas by sex. Overall, the percentages of female migrants in the urban areas were higher than those of their male counterparts, with female migrants constituting 53.6 per cent of the total migrants in urban areas and male migrants constituting 46.4 per cent. Figure 26 also shows that the percentage of citizens that were migrants in all urban areas was higher among females, above 50 per cent of the total urban migrants, compared to their male counterparts (around 40%). A similar pattern was observed from peri-urban and rural areas settlements, where the proportions of female migrants exceeded those of male migrants with 52 per cent and 51.3 per cent, respectively.

Figure 24. Lesotho citizens that were migrants in urban centres by sex



Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:146.

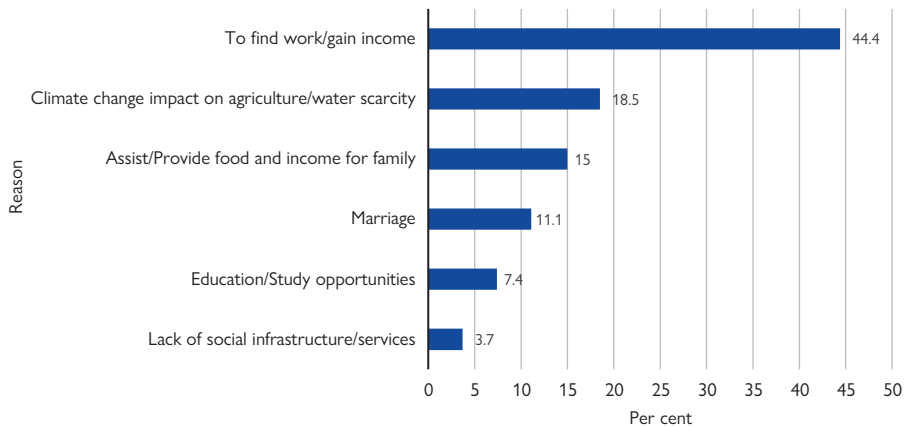
Reasons for internal migration

People migrate for different reasons, mainly for employment, study, economic and environmental reasons. Much of the rural–urban migration is a result of hardship, as the rural and landless poor make their way to cities and towns with the hope of getting employment and the likelihood of earning a higher

income. The urban population may also be thought of as more non-agricultural than rural in the way those in industrialized countries would naturally perceive it (Haub, 2009).

A study to explore the underlying motivations driving migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation across the rural communities in Lesotho, reported that 71 per cent of the participants indicated having some migration experience (Adaawen et al., 2023). The major places of destination included cities such as Bloemfontein and Cape Town in South Africa and internally, to other districts and rural communities in Lesotho (ibid.). Figure 25 presents the underlying reasons for migration among the rural communities. The major driving force was economic, that is, to find work or gain income (44.4%), followed by the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on agricultural livelihoods and water scarcity (18.5%), assist/provide food and income for family (15%), and marriage (11.1%) (ibid.). Other reasons for migration were for educational and study opportunities, as well as lack of infrastructure or services in the rural areas. Overall, poverty and high unemployment rates were cited as driving factors of high mobility among the Basotho (TK Research Consulting, 2023).

Figure 25. Underlying reasons for migration



Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Adaawen et al., 2023:68.

Net migration

According to the United Nations definition of concepts, a *lifetime migrant* is defined as a person whose area of residence at the time of census or survey date differs from the area of birth (DESA, 1970). The number of such persons in a population is commonly referred to as “lifetime migration”. Table 17 shows interdistrict lifetime migration during the PHC. Most lifetime migrants had migrated to Maseru (39.7%), followed by Berea (17.8%), and Leribe (15.4%). Mafeteng had the highest number of outmigrants (14.6%), followed by Berea (13.7%), Mohale’s Hoek and Leribe (11.3%) each. These tend to be the popular and bigger cities, with Maseru the capital city of Lesotho. The least proportion of population in-migrated in Mokhotlong (2%). Seven out of the ten districts had negative net migration, meaning that more people left the district than those coming into the district. Mafeteng and Thaba-Tseka had the largest negative net migration (-8 and -7.8, respectively).

Table 17. Interdistrict lifetime migration, per cent

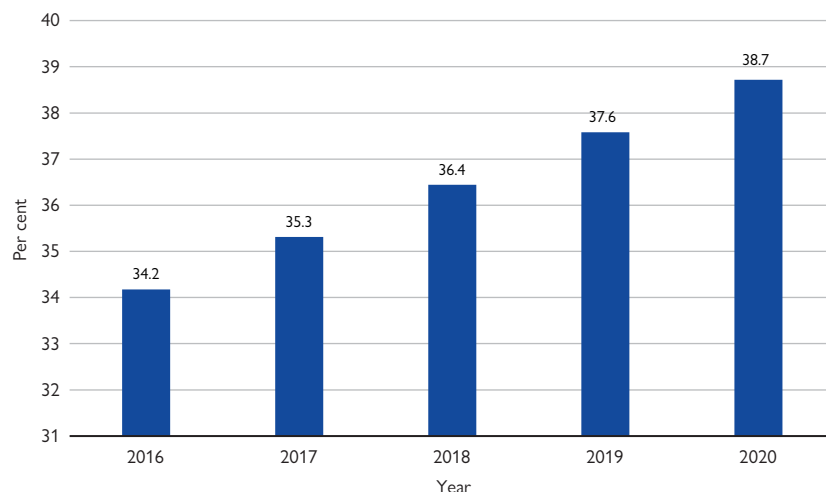
District of birth	In-migration	Outmigration	Net migration
Botha-Bothe	3.9	6	-2.1
Leribe	15.4	11.3	4.2
Berea	17.8	13.7	4.1
Maseru	39.7	17	22.7
Mafeteng	6.6	14.6	-8
Mohale’s Hoek	5.3	11.3	-6
Quthing	3.2	5.4	-2.2
Qacha’s Nek	2.7	3.4	-0.7
Mokhotlong	2	6.2	-4.2
Thaba-Tseka	3.4	11.1	-7.8

Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2018:133.

Urbanization rate

Figure 26 shows the urbanization rate in Lesotho between 2016 and 2020. Urbanization has been on the increase. Lesotho experienced an increase in the percentage of urban population from 34.2 per cent in 2016 to 38.7 per cent in 2020. The movement of citizens to the urban areas means that they are moving to non-agricultural areas, which may have a negative impact on development in the rural areas.

Figure 26. per cent urban population, 2016–2020



Source: Data based on information by the Bureau of Statistics in 2023.

A.6.4. Citizens who changed their residence involuntarily within the country (stocks)

Migration also occurs involuntarily in Lesotho. The Basotho were internally displaced mainly due to national projects and natural disasters. For example, in 2018, a total of 1,400 IDPs were reported as being displaced due to natural disasters (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019). These disasters included flash floods, hailstorms and heavy rains. The assessment on mainstreaming migration, environment and climate change into (re)integration initiatives in Lesotho also reported IDPs due to development in Thaba-Tseka project (Adaawen et al., 2023).

B. IMPACT OF MIGRATION

This part looks at impact of migration on development on various aspects of the socioeconomic development of Lesotho and the receiving countries, as well as its population and the environment. Migration or spatial mobility is a key livelihood and survival strategy for many households in Southern Africa (IOM, 2020a). Migration can have demographic, social, cultural and economic effects. For example, migration can have an effect of transfer of skills and know-how, finance in the form of remittances and the transfer of people from one area to another (IOM, 2011). The impact of migration on human, social, economic, employment and labour market, health and environment will be presented in this section.

B.1. Migration and human development

Lesotho has experienced an increase in the percentage of urban population from 34.2 per cent in 2016 to 38.7 per cent in 2020 (Bureau of Statistics, 2018). There are more females in urban areas than males (53.6% and 46.4%, respectively). The increase in rural–urban migration in Lesotho has resulted in rapid urbanization, which resulted in high pressure on urban infrastructure. Most of the migrants in all urban areas were youthful, with the groups 0–39 years consisting of 79.1 per cent of the migrant urban population (*ibid.*). Given this situation, the rural areas tend to have an elderly population, which is less economically active. Rural–urban migration affects the development of both the sending and receiving areas. The movement to urban areas means people are moving to areas that are non-agricultural, hence affecting agriculture in the rural areas and the country's food security is affected at large. This may result in less development in the rural areas as the young people move to urban areas. The majority of the lifetime migrants had migrated to Maseru (39.7%), followed by Berea (17.8%) and Leribe (15.4%), which are the popular cities in Lesotho (*ibid.*). The movement of people from the rural areas into the urban areas may affect development of the rural areas negatively as the rural areas become depopulated. On the other hand, the receiving areas, which are urban areas, experience population growth, thus exerting pressure on the available infrastructure. Seven out of the ten districts had negative net migration, meaning that more people left the district than those coming into the district. Mafeteng and Thaba-Tseka had the largest negative net migration (-8 and -7.8, respectively) (*ibid.*). These two districts had more people migrating to other districts than those coming in. Mafeteng and Thaba-Tseka were identified as areas that were most vulnerable and affected by ongoing climate change and related natural hazards (Adaawen et al., 2023). This may explain why the districts have negative net migration.

B.2. Migration and economic development

This part examines the nexus between migration and economic development. Economic development is a driver of migration. Lack of economic development in the country drives away economically active population, and these seek employment opportunities outside Lesotho. Economic development in Lesotho continues to be stimulated through international migration. Remittance inflows from diaspora contribute to household income, and the households tend to spend more on consumption, health and education as compared to remittance for non-receiving households (Adaawen et al., 2023; Thapa and Acharya, 2017). A further trickle-down effect to local investments can be realized if remittances are properly managed. The contribution of immigrants working in Lesotho should not be underscored as these are taxed, and some bring much-needed skills that are in short supply.

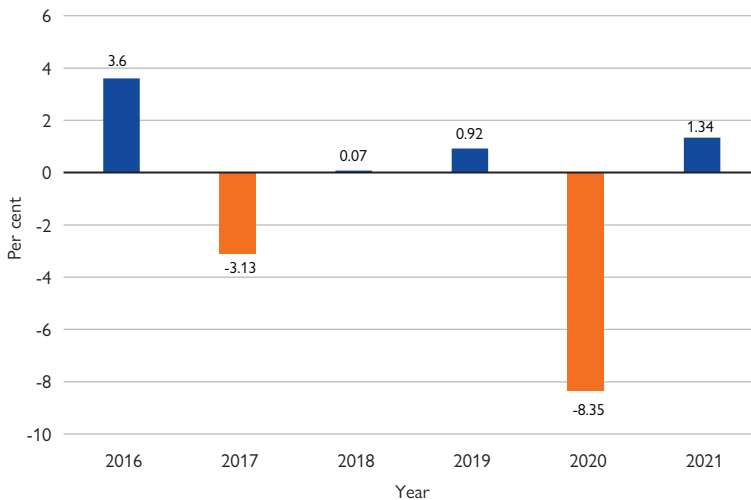
According to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, sustained economic growth will continue to be a fundamental objective in developing countries, especially where extreme poverty is prevalent and income per capita is low. SDG 8 explicitly calls to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. The link between employment and the concept of development implies the need to assess the impact of migration and remittances. Migration to a richer country provides income and alleviates poverty to the migrant as well as the family members left behind. Remittances are used to buy household food and goods, housing, and pay fees for children and excess income is used for business investment (Ratha, 2013). Over time, migrants facilitate imports and exports between countries. The remittances have effects on broader microeconomic indicators such as the balance of payments and GDP.

B.2.1. Lesotho’s economic outlook (2016–2020)

In 2016, Lesotho’s real GDP growth continued to be positive at 3.6 per cent. This was higher than the 3.1 per cent growth recorded in 2015, and the real growth rate negatively declined in 2017 (World Bank, 2023). In 2017, Lesotho suffered a recession. However, the annual GDP growth rate increased by less than 1 per cent between 2018 and 2019 (ibid.). A major setback was witnessed in 2020, a negative annual per cent growth (-8.35%) was recorded while in 2021 the growth rate marginally increased to 1.34 per cent (ibid.) (see Figure 27). The economy experienced turbulence over the five-year period. Lesotho has been affected by multiple shocks that contributed to constrained growth. The GDP was affected by several factors, such as the challenging global environment, rising

global geopolitical tensions, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as internal political instability in Lesotho (ibid.). Since Lesotho's economy largely depends on South Africa, its inflation is heavily influenced by South Africa even though the country's monetary policy is independently run. The performance of the South African economy impacts Lesotho's economic growth, for instance, the performance of the construction and manufacturing sectors are directly affected, as well as other sectors that directly rely on infrastructure investment (UNICEF, 2017). The negative growth in these sectors affects the overall economy; hence, the decline in the GDP. In 2017, the country's economy was projected to grow at an average of just under 3 per cent over the next few years (World Bank, 2017), whereas the IMF projected growth at approximately 3.5 per cent between 2018 and 2022 (IMF, 2017). However, the economy took a downturn as shown in Figure 27.

Figure 27. Change in per cent in Lesotho's gross domestic product growth rate, 2016–2021



Source: World Bank, n.d.c.

B.2.2. Remittances and development

Remittances play an important role in the survival of many households in Lesotho. Remittances not only comprise the largest contributor to the household budget of migrant-sending households; in several cases they are actually the only source of income for households (Nalane et al., 2012). Indeed, without remittances, a large proportion of the households would have fallen deeper into poverty. Remittances have a positive and significant effect on economic growth and financial development facilitates such growth, especially in less developed financial

systems, but tends to have a negative impact in countries with the more developed financial sector. Some participants in the assessment of migration and environment emphasized the positive meaning of remittances for individual households to cope with economic hardship, and also for Lesotho's GDP (Adaawen et al., 2023). Remittances serve to provide the income for household provisioning, including paying school fees and other related expenditure and thereby contributing to general poverty reduction in Lesotho. However, the total remittances as a percentage of GDP declined gradually from the period of 2016–2020, fell from a peak of 23.8 per cent in 2016 to a trough of 20 per cent in 2020 (IMF, 2023).

Table 18 presents remittances received between 2016 and 2020. A total of LSL 6,372.67 million were received as remittances in 2016.¹ The remittances received increased over the years to LSL 6,775.48 million in 2019, but declined in 2020 to LSL 6,583.38 million. The decline in remittances received in 2020 could be due to the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in loss of jobs and livelihoods in South Africa and other countries of destination.

Table 18. Remittances received, 2016–2020, in million Maloti

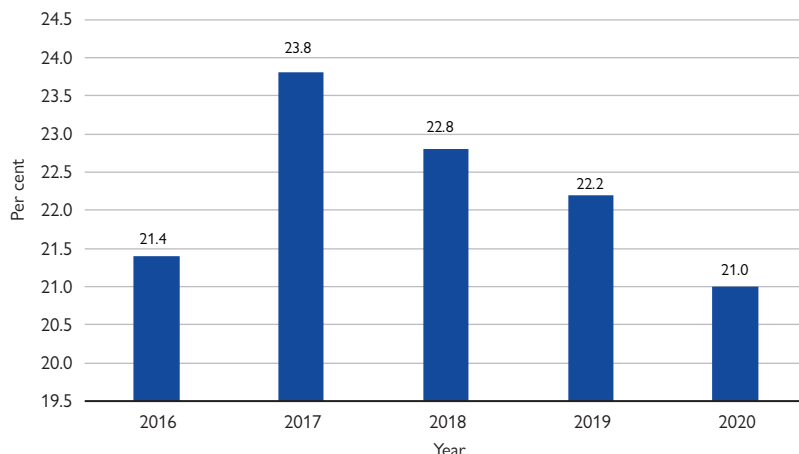
Remittance	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Gifts	5.24	5.24	5.24	5.24	5.24
Charitable transfers	114.40	114.40	114.40	114.40	114.40
Sum of compensation of employees, net	3 090.70	3 254.04	3 111.42	3 054.18	2 755.69
Sum of other current transfers	1 594.88	1 673.06	1 742.97	1 807.90	1 860.24
Sum of personal transfers	92.22	100.61	104.04	105.50	107.22
Sum of social benefits	1 475.24	1 553.42	1 623.33	1 688.26	1 740.60
Total remittances	6 372.67	6 700.78	6 701.39	6 775.48	6 583.39

Source: Data based on 2023 information by the CBL.

The well-being of migrants largely depends on the availability of work generating a decent income, a clear and secure legal status, access to social services, access to social and health protection, and their participation in society. Together with a decent job and a decent income, a clear and secure legal status is a critical component of the social condition and well-being of migrants. A temporary residence permit or work contract is normally sufficient to provide legal security to short-term migrants (DESA, 2004). The World Bank staff estimates are based on IMF balance of payments data, and World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's GDP estimates. Individual remittances as a percentage of the GDP has declined from 23.8 per cent in 2016 to 20 per cent in 2020 (World Bank, n.d.a) (see Figure 28).

¹ USD 1 = LSL 18.7126 on 30 November 2023 (Central Bank of Lesotho).

Figure 28. Remittances as percentage of the gross domestic product



Source: World Bank, n.d.a.

As seen on Figure 28, remittances have been declining in Lesotho during the period 2016 to 2020. Before COVID-19, a migrant would send an average of ZAR 2,044² per month as remittance to their family back home. There is a big difference in the amount of remittances sent home between female and male. While both male and female returnees would send 60 per cent of their income as remittance to their home, the male returnee would send on average remittance of ZAR 2,426, which is more than sent by the female returnee at ZAR 1,456. Female returnees' remittance was lower than that of male returnees as they earned less – a monthly average of ZAR 2,463 – compared to the male returnees with an average income of ZAR 4,041 (IOM and Skillshare Lesotho, 2020) (see Table 19). During COVID-19, returnees were thus no longer able to send remittances due to loss of jobs and livelihoods caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby leading to a household economic crisis among families that depended on remittances.

² USD 1 = ZAR 18.591 on 18 December 2023 (Central Bank of Lesotho).

Table 19. Monthly income and remittance of migrant returnees before the COVID-19 pandemic by sex

	Average monthly income (in ZAR)	Average monthly remittance (in ZAR)	Per cent of monthly remittance of monthly income
Female	2 463	1 456	59
Male	4 041	2 426	60
Total	3 240	2 044	63

Source: IOM and Skillshare Lesotho, 2020:23.

The country is a landlocked small country with very limited scope of growth drivers. A clear understanding of the nexus between remittance and financial development could help the country in policy formulation for sustainable development. Prior to the health crisis, remittance inflows were growing steadily in sub-Saharan Africa, reaching USD 47 billion in 2019. Within the region, South Africa and Cameroon are the largest senders and contribute 5 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively of the remittance inflows. Relative to the size of the recipient economy, Cabo Verde, Comoros, the Gambia, Lesotho and South Sudan all received remittance inflows of over 10 per cent of GDP in 2019 (IMF, 2021). According to the World Bank estimates, the Basotho migrants remitted around USD 320 million in 2016; however, outflows were quite negligible (World Bank, 2017). For instance, in 2016, inbound transactions amounted to USD 764,454.92 compared to outbound transactions (USD 1.01 million) from international money transfer operators transactions (AFI, 2018). In general, if inbound transactions are greater than outbound transactions, this trend has a potential positive impact on the economic activities of the country. This trend is potentially beneficial for the domestic economy, as positive net remittance inflows can positively contribute to increasing the foreign exchange in the country.

Inward and outward remittance transactions are generally between Lesotho and the rest of the countries in the world, including the United States, the United Kingdom, China, South Africa and other countries in Africa and Asia. Remittances declined from 2006 to 2016 due to fewer men being employed in South African mines as a result of decrease in gold prices, stricter immigration policies and a growing preference for South African workers. A decline in remittance is more likely to increase the volatility of the national output. Loss of income from remittances has the likelihood to hit the poorest households and limit their purchasing power of goods and services.

However, only a small portion of the remittance is channelled through formal remittance services, with the majority going through informal channels such as taxis, trucks and buses, and these are considered unsafe as well as inefficient (AFI, 2018). The cost of sending money through the formal channels is unreasonably

expensive in Lesotho. For example, for the South Africa–Lesotho corridor, the average total cost of sending USD 200 was estimated at USD 32.06 (or 16.03% of the amount sent) in the fourth quarter of 2017, higher than the sub-Saharan Africa average (9.27%), and double the global average (7.09%) during the same period (ibid.).

Such prohibitive cost of sending money might contribute to under- or over-reporting of the exact amount being remitted in and out of Lesotho. Only a sizeable amount of USD 75 million is estimated to have been remitted through regulated channels, including commercial banks, mobile network operators such as M-Pesa and EcoCash, cross-border money transfer services and international money transfer operators (World Bank, 2017). Approximately USD 375 million was channelled through informal channels, and these continue to be the most commonly used remittance channels for inward remittances in Lesotho, especially from South Africa. The key drivers of informal channels of remittance in Lesotho are the high cost of remittance due to currency conversion and lack of proper documentation by migrant workers (Sekantsi, 2018; TechnoServe, 2016).

The introduction of mobile money in 2013 through Econet Telecom Lesotho's EcoCash in 2012 and Vodacom Lesotho's M-Pesa in July 2013 witnessed an upsurge of mobile money subscriptions in the country. By the end of 2017, approximately 1.35 million (67% of Lesotho's total population) mobile money customers were registered (AFI, 2018). Consequently, rural remote communities were reached and connected to money transfer channels, which were formerly hard-to-reach unbanked communities that would benefit most from remittances. The volume of transactions through mobile money increased from 11,806 in 2016 (USD 514,813.16) to 51,088 (USD 2.21 million) in 2017, thus a +333 per cent increase (AFI, 2018). The introduction of several mobile money transfers encourages competition among mobile money transfer companies and lowers the cost of sending and receiving remittances.

B.3. Migration and employment and labour market

The welfare of migrants depends on the employability of the jobseeker, access to health protection, job permit and migrant's income in the country of destination. Work-related permits are either temporary or permanent permits. According to the MOPSLE, Lesotho's immigration department issued most work permits for migrants from Africa and Asia, with most immigrants coming from South Africa (1,809), China (872) and Zimbabwe (293). Most of the work permit applications were for occupations of managers (1,864) and professionals (1,481),

with highest applications in 2019 for both occupations. In the issuance of work permits for immigrants to have a decent job and a decent income, a clear and secure legal status is a critical component of the social condition and well-being of migrants. The first kind of interaction consists of the various direct and indirect impacts.

The accurate impact of immigration on Lesotho's labour market and employment position can be assessed by examining the educational levels and skill sets of migrant labourers. Given the small proportion of professional migrants who were granted work permits in Lesotho, one can claim that there is no unemployment caused by employing foreigners. In fact, foreigners bring the diverse expertise needed in the country. Immigrants stimulate technology transfer, skills and knowledge transfer, and innovation, and contribute to economic diversification and development. In the long run, foreigners are taxed, contribute to the GDP and ultimately contribute to human capital development.

A number of Basotho who migrate to South Africa have limited educational qualifications, and as a result end up accepting any form of employment (TK Research Consulting, 2023). The respondents reported that although their type of work in the South African informal sector was not satisfactory, they were able to sustain themselves compared to when they are back home (ibid.). The type of work done by Basotho was reported to be domestic work, construction work (often casual work), waste management (recycling), vendors, farmworkers and mineworkers. Those working as part-time domestic workers reported little remuneration, while those in construction reported low wages and unsafe and poor working conditions (ibid.). Of the Ha Seshote villagers of Thaba-Tseka district in Northern Lesotho, 60 per cent are irregular workers, work as seasonal workers in the Orange Free State of South Africa, work on fruit and vegetable farms, aged 15–36 years and leave their children with elderly, relatives, neighbours and friends (IOM, 2021b). Of these seasonal migrants, 80 per cent lack proper permits to work in South Africa (ibid.), while permanent workers engaged in farms and mines have legal papers for work permits and can afford to pay the cost of processing permits. Conflicts and rivalry are existent among illegal miners, known as *ama zama zama*. Women and adolescent girls who migrate to Rustenburg are usually engaged as domestic workers and supplement their income through sex work. With regards to internal migration, large projects such as the Mapholaneng–Mokhotlong District impacted on the education of female students, seasonal mining workers impregnating girls and high school dropouts were evident (ibid.).

B.4. Migration and social development

Social development is about improving the well-being of every individual in society so that they reach their full potential. *Human development* is defined as the process of enlarging people's freedoms and opportunities and improving their well-being (UNDP, 2016). An interaction exists between social development and human development issues, for example, an individual's right to lead a healthy life, access to education and enjoyment of decent standard of living cannot be attained without social development (Browne and Millington, 2015). The issues of individual access to resources (issues of what, where and how) depend on whether human development is inclusive and equitable or perpetuates inequalities and exclusion.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes migration as a powerful driver for sustainable development. Migration and development are closely linked to one another: development shapes migration, and migration, in turn, influences development. The contribution of international and internal migration to social development can be significant and multifaceted. Of the households in Lesotho, 43 per cent have at least one of its members not residing at home (Botea et al., 2018). Around 50 per cent (49.7%) of Lesotho's population is living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2021). In most cases, remittances are the only reliable source of income for most households. The Human Development Index in 2019 was 0.527, placing the country in the 165th place out of 189 nations, indicating that human development in Lesotho is very low. In 2020, remittances were 20 per cent of its GDP, which meant that Lesotho was one of the top five remittance-receiving countries of the year (ibid.). Several studies have established the positive correlation between remittances and microeconomics at household level, such as social protection, risk mitigation, poverty alleviation and household consumption. A Lesotho study found that household size, transfers and remittances increase household food consumption expenditure significantly and positively (Tingum and Kuponyi, 2020). Such remittances were expended on agricultural inputs, household assets and housing. Through supporting household consumption and educational expenditures, remittances support better human capital outcomes in recipient households. In addition, recipient households in Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Malawi have access to formal markets, access accumulation of both human capital and physical asset, and used to buying fertilizers thus improving agricultural output (Truen et al., 2016). There is no doubt that remittances generate a multiplier effect. However, remittances have declined steadily over the past years, and mineworkers repatriated from South Africa to Lesotho and some engage in farming. In Lesotho, agriculture has been on the decline in recent years, despite being the major source of the rural people's livelihood (Tingum and Kuponyi, 2020).

In as much as remittances are associated with positive development, inequality is created among those households that receive and those that do not receive any. Non-receiving households may not experience the same benefits. This can lead to income inequality within communities and households. For instance, an earlier study explored the impact of migrant remittances on health and education outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa (Amakom and Iheoma, 2014). Findings reveal that remittances impact positively and significantly on health and education outcomes of selected countries. For every 10 per cent increase in remittances, primary education outcomes increase on average by 4.2 per cent, secondary education outcomes by 8.8 per cent, and health outcomes by 1.2 per cent (ibid.). Lesotho and Togo, during that period under study, had received the largest remittances as percentage of GDP in 2009, receiving 24.8 per cent and 10.3 per cent, respectively (ibid.). However, excessive reliance on remittance can create dependency syndrome within households and communities and potentially lead to lack of diversification and resilience in the local economy.

It is necessary to emphasize the downside of remittance that a considerable gain to the economy also creates some negative shocks to the economy. Emigrants contribute to brain drain in Southern Africa; for example, in 2021, Lesotho obtained 7.5 index points, which is above the world average of 5.25 based on 173 countries. The total emigration stock for Lesotho was last recorded in 2019 and stood at 16.07 per cent, with a total of 341,580 Basotho emigrants. The main reason for emigration was employment opportunities.

The rapid assessment revealed that a number of Basotho who migrate to South Africa have limited educational qualifications, which results in accepting any form of employment (TK Research Consulting, 2023). As a result, the conditions in which they live are poor. Places where some of these migrants live in South Africa have been reported to be overcrowded and water was a challenge, and sometimes they go without water for days in their community (ibid.). The downsizing of most Basotho labour migrants mainly as part of economic reforms and the impact of COVID-19 resulted in the drastic decline in remittances and household income, further impoverishing households and increasing the propensity to migrate to rural communities (Adaawen et al., 2023).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes refugees, IDPs and migrants as vulnerable people who must be empowered, and whose needs should be addressed (IOM, 2018a). Aside from the existing (im)migration legislations, institutional and governance frameworks, the Lesotho Migration and Development Policy of 2021 serves to provide the framework in addressing challenges and identifying opportunities related to migration and socioeconomic development in the country (Lerotholi, n.d.). As part of its 16 thematic areas, the

policy identifies inter alia, labour migration, internal migration and access to social security benefits for migrants and their dependants as key elements to promoting resilience and improving socioeconomic well-being.

B.5. Migration and health

Health is a fundamental human right indispensable for the exercise of other human rights. The WHO Constitution of 1946 envisages the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition. Globalization aids the flow of information, goods, capital and people across geopolitical boundaries and fuels the spread of communicable diseases rapidly around the world (Shrestha et al., 2019). The relationship between mobility, border management and health control is of great importance. The management of health risks, especially disease transmission by new arrivals, is controlled by border health officials in order to screen new arrivals so that they should not be a threat to public health. The onset of COVID-19 in 2020 led to restricted screening of arrivals at points of entry in Lesotho. The migrant had to undergo COVID-19 testing and if found positive, was quarantined. Later, with the onset of vaccination, one had to produce a valid vaccination certificate for one to be allowed to enter Lesotho.

The WHO Global Action Plan on promoting the health of refugees and migrants 2019–2023, WHA 70|2017: Resolution 70.15 advocates for the “framework of priorities and guiding principles to promote the health of refugees and migrants and request WHO to promote the framework, develop a GAP [Global Action Plan] and collaborate with IO [international organizations] and partners” (WHO, 2022). According to the IOM *Southern Africa Regional Strategy 2020–2024*, migration and health are among the ten focus areas that have been identified for the work of IOM in Southern Africa (IOM, 2020b). Focus area 7 aims to “improve standards of physical, mental and social health and well-being of migrants and migration-affected populations (in line with SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16 and 17)” (ibid.).

B.5.1. Communicable diseases

Communicable diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis remain a risk to refugees and migrants, hence to achieve the aim of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on universal health coverage, it is imperative that health needs of refugees and migrants are addressed (IOM, 2020b). HIV treatment and care for

migrants is affected by their mobility and interaction with HIV, tuberculosis and COVID-19 treatment programmes and health-care systems in different countries. Southern Africa has the highest HIV prevalence rate. Many countries are now grappling with the severe impact of the mature HIV and tuberculosis epidemics (ibid.). South African mines have attracted thousands of migrant workers from Lesotho who cross the border in search of jobs. These mines are associated with the spread of HIV and tuberculosis. The impact of migration on both communicable and non-communicable diseases is discussed in this section, including SRH.

HIV and AIDS

In Lesotho, there is a high level of known circular migration as both men and women travel for employment to work within the country's agriculture sector and the textile industry, while others travel between Lesotho and South Africa for employment as domestic workers and mineworkers. Migrant labour has been identified as the major key driver behind the HIV and AIDS pandemic (IOM, 2006). The SADC region has the highest levels of HIV prevalence globally, such as Lesotho with an HIV prevalence rate of 22.7 per cent in 2020 (Ministry of Health, 2022). According to the Lesotho Population-based HIV Impact Assessment 2016–2017, HIV prevalence among adults ages 15 to 59 years was 25.6 per cent: 30.4 per cent among females and 20.8 per cent among males (Ministry of Health, Lesotho, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and ICAP at Columbia, 2019). One of the greatest challenges facing SADC countries as they move towards greater integration is the adverse effects of the HIV and AIDS epidemic on social, political and economic development (IOM, 2020b). Lesotho had made great strides in reducing the prevalence rate of HIV among adults in Lesotho in 2020 (22.7%): 27.4 per cent females and 17.8 per cent males (Ministry of Health, 2022). Previous research geo-referenced data on mobility and HIV infection from the 2009 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey reported an association between mobility and sexual behaviour. Particularly, mobility was only associated with an increased risk of HIV infection for men who travelled frequently (Palk and Blower, 2015). Migrants maintain their health profiles, sociocultural beliefs and disease prevalence of their communities of origin. Intermixing of sociocultural beliefs with regard to disease management may occur between the destination communities and the migrants.

However, HIV-positive patients on antiretroviral therapy who are migrant workers or are in need of accessing health-care services abroad for other reasons might find it difficult and have a higher risk of poor adherence, treatment interruption, loss to follow-up and treatment failure. Studies have shown a disharmony with regard to the legal and regulatory of medication between South

Africa and Lesotho. For instance, the South African regulation seems to allow up to three-month supplies of antiretroviral drugs to be carried across the border customs without being declared while Lesotho's Ministry of Health requires an export permit to allow patients to carry medications from Lesotho to South Africa and these are issued for two-months supplies (Faturiyele et al., 2018). The second barrier faced by migrants are other pre-request conditions demanded by the Government of South Africa for migrants to access HIV care services. Migrants are required to be in possession of a transfer letter from a health institution in Lesotho, a valid work permit or other relevant documentation explaining the reason for their presence in the country apart from a valid passport. Migrants are highly mobile, and it means each time they change their place of residence, a new documentation or a transfer letter is needed for them to access health services while abroad.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes refugees, IDPs and migrants as vulnerable people who must be empowered, and whose needs should be addressed (IOM, 2018b). Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda recognizes migration as a powerful driver for sustainable development. Previously, governments and States from Africa made a commitment to protect the migrants' human rights, including the right to health (African Union, 1981). Each member of the State of the region prohibits discrimination and states that every individual has the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health. In Lesotho, there is a high level of known circular migration as both men and women travel for employment to work within the country's agriculture sector and the textile industry, while others travel between Lesotho and South Africa for employment as domestic workers and mineworkers. Migrant labour has been identified as the major key driver behind the HIV and AIDS pandemic (IOM, 2006).

Tuberculosis

Globally, tuberculosis remains a leading infectious cause of death. Human mobility patterns influence the dispersal of new or existing strains of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Brown et al., 2022). International and internal migration were recognized as risk factors for tuberculosis; travel for work, education or personal reasons may contribute to the transmission of tuberculosis (Robsky et al., 2020). Lesotho has one of the highest prevalence of tuberculosis in the world. In a study conducted in 2019, an estimated incidence of 581 per 100,000 population (95% CI³ 406-959) among those aged 15 years and above and was comparative to the 2018 tuberculosis incidence rate of 611 per 100,000 (95% CI⁴ 395-872) reported

³ CI denotes confidence interval.

⁴ CI denotes confidence interval.

by the WHO (Matji et al., 2023). Previous reports from Lesotho and South Africa suggest that miners pose transmission risks to other household or community members as they travel home undetected or inadequately treated, particularly with drug-resistant forms of tuberculosis (Basu et al., 2009). Mines have also been associated with high incidence of tuberculosis and thus have become a source of infection. Each migrant worker who returns home with tuberculosis spreads the disease to an estimated 10 to 15 people in their community, according to the Stop TB Partnership (TK Research Consulting, 2023). The circular migratory nature of the mining industry means that diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV are spread to origin communities. The SADC member States (including Lesotho) have demonstrated efforts to address tuberculosis due to the nature of circular migration patterns of migrants in Southern Africa. In 2012, 15 Southern African countries pledged to improve treatment and care for current and former miners with tuberculosis and their families (SADC, 2012). Lesotho was part of the signatory to the declaration, with an estimated 33,000 Basotho from Lesotho said to be working in South African mines and 30 per cent of multidrug-resistant and extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis cases detected in Lesotho are ex-miners from South Africa. Mobile people tend to delay or may face barriers to accessing tuberculosis testing and initiating treatment. Continuity of care is questionable as people crossing international borders can also be a challenge, resulting in some defaulting treatment altogether.

COVID-19

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Lesotho was part of the ongoing worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019. The outbreak of COVID-19 saw its rapid spread across countries, regions and continents, pointing to the effect of increasing the role of migration as a major determinant of health. In response to the outbreak, countries closed their borders as well as industries. COVID-19 outbreaks left most Basotho labour migrants stranded, evicted from South Africa, and returnees to Lesotho out of desperation (Adaawen et al., 2023; IOM, 2021b). Most of the returnees were predominantly youth aged 26–35 years (40%) followed by 36–45 years old (24%), and lastly those aged below 25 years (19%). The majority of returnees (81.4%) indicated that their return to Lesotho was purely due to the COVID-19 outbreak in South Africa, with two fifths of the returnees reported to have lost their jobs in South Africa due to the direct impact of COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown measures. For those who have lost their livelihoods and inability to cope in South Africa, many were also often confronted with deportations back to Lesotho, with sometimes nothing to show for migrating or leaving home to seek economic opportunities. With respect to the employment of Lesotho migrants in South Africa, 19.8 per cent worked as domestic workers, construction (19%),

commercial activities (16.3%), mining (15.3%), and agricultural farms (11.2%). The outbreak of COVID-19 was devastating to the livelihood of the Basotho. Before COVID-19, most respondents (89%) used to send remittances to their families on a monthly basis (LSL 2,426 among male migrants and LSL 1,456 among female migrants) (IOM, 2021b). Households that solely were dependent on monthly remittances were pushed into deep poverty and put family pressure to feed an added mouth. In addition, the returnees continued to face various life challenges (lack of food 90%, lack of work 70%, lack of PPEs 41%, destructed education 39%, lack of water and sanitation 38%, lack of COVID-19 information 33%, future uncertainty 30%, and poor health condition 28%) (ibid.). Although many returnees had lost their jobs, one in eight of the returnees is still hoping to return to South Africa to search for jobs/income.

Another perceived impact also was that those who migrate tend to spread infectious diseases, including COVID-19 (IOM, 2021b; Adaawen et al., 2023). In this instance, the migrants might come back and infest the communities with diseases or even spread diseases in the host or local community of destination. The lockdown and travel restrictions imposed during the several waves of COVID-19 meant that most migrants in South Africa living with other comorbidities like HIV and tuberculosis who were enrolled in their countries of origin could not have access to medication and had low access to COVID-19 vaccines (Mushomi et al., 2022).

B.5.2. Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are chronic diseases resulting from genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioural factors, and are the leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of global mortality rates (IOM, 2018b). The burden continues to rise disproportionately in low- and lower-middle-income countries; in 2015, 47 per cent of premature deaths were from NCDs, equating to 7 million deaths (ibid.). NCDs cause a large and growing burden of morbidity and mortality in sub-Saharan Africa. Fewer people are dying from HIV in Southern Africa while the number of NCDs increases. Lesotho, like any other sub-Saharan country, grapples with a health burden of NCDs. As of 2016, NCDs accounted for 32 per cent of all deaths in Lesotho, of which cardiovascular diseases constituted 14 per cent, while cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes make up 4 per cent each (WHO, 2018). Migrants originating from countries with increased NCD rates and the conditions surrounding the migration process may increase exposure and vulnerability to NCD risk factors (IOM, 2018b). For example, limited access to health care due to legal status and poor living conditions affect continuity of treatment, which is crucial for many NCDs. Upon arrival in

higher-income countries, migrants may then be further exposed to lifestyle risk factors and behaviour change that favour the development of NCDs (ibid.).

Intraregional labour migration is well established in the Southern African region and large numbers of people migrate from countries, such as Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe to work in South Africa (Integral Human Development, 2020). Despite an increased acknowledgement of intraregional labour migration, the data on NCDs and migration remains scarce in Southern Africa. A study conducted in South Africa noted that as migrants do transit across these different environments for various reasons, including settlement, they are bound to have peculiar experiences of diseases, which could be traced to lifestyle, gender, adaptation and reactions to specific social, economic, psychological and climatic conditions (Ajaero et al., 2021). Prevalence of NCDs between migrants and non-migrants in the study area was 19.8 per cent and 16.7 per cent, respectively (ibid.). The factors that significantly increased odds of NCDs among the migrants and the non-migrants were older populations and those with higher education levels (ibid.). Similarly, migrants who suffer from NCDs might also face the same challenges in accessing health services like those with communicable diseases (Faturiyele et al., 2018).

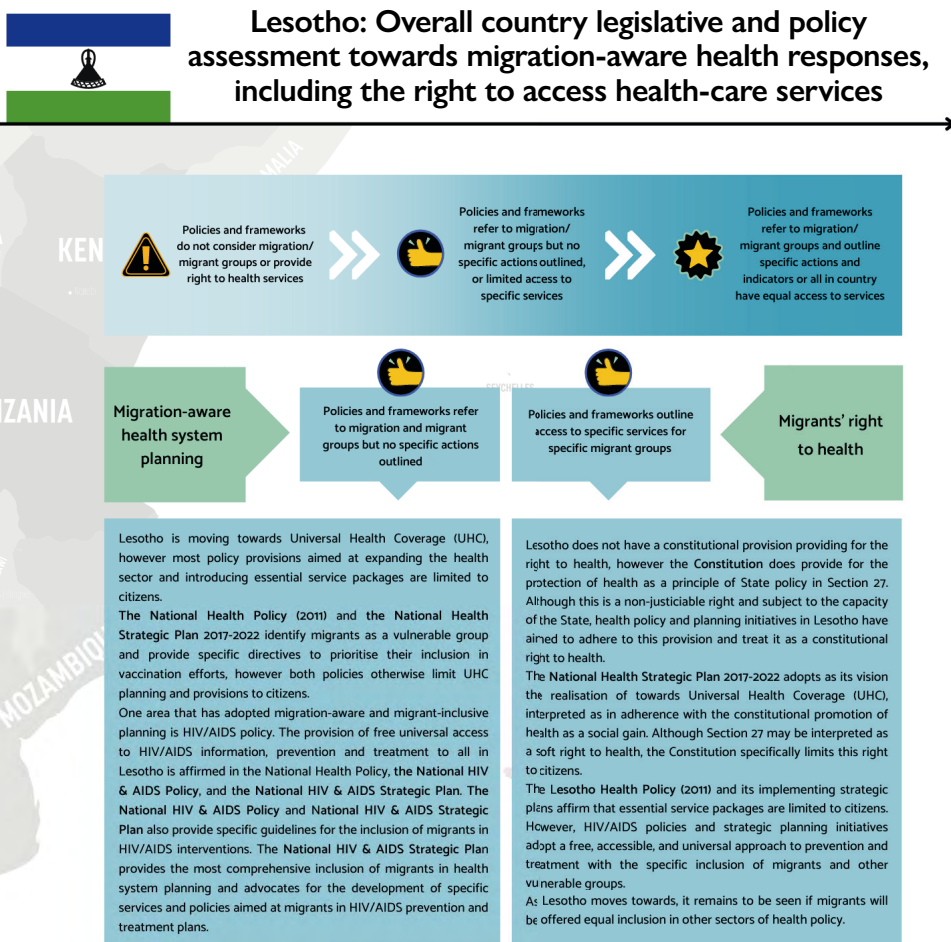
B.5.3. Access to health care

There is evidence that Lesotho ratified several various international and regional human rights treaties relevant to migrants' right to health. The following conventions were signed: (a) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and (b) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Both conventions have been ratified by most SADC member States and prohibit discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. In addition, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights agreed that all SADC member States prohibit discrimination on the basis of various grounds, including race, ethnic origin, language, social status and other status. Of significant importance, the Charter provides that every individual has the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health and that State parties shall take the necessary measures to protect the health of their people and ensure that they receive medical attention when they are sick.

Immigrants have equal access to health care as citizens of Lesotho. These include involuntary immigrants such as refugees, victims of trafficking and even irregular immigrants, as health centres do not require immigrants to present specific documentation to gain access to services. However, for certain procedures

requiring payment, immigrants may have to pay higher fees than nationals (IOM, 2018b). See Figure 29 for the migrant health policy assessment.

Figure 29. Legal policy assessment towards migration awareness health responses



Source: IOM, 2022:36.

Most of the Basotho participants in South Africa reported accessing their health services from local clinics and hospitals. However, they felt service provision by the health-care workers to non-migrants and migrants was different, with migrants being discriminated against and experiencing humiliation and negative attitude compared to non-migrants (TK Research Consulting, 2023). In addition, they reported being turned away whenever they sought health services, which include HIV, tuberculosis and COVID-19, because they did not possess the required documents. Participants highlighted that HIV, tuberculosis and COVID-19 services are provided free of charge to everyone; however, maternal health and child

delivery attracts a higher fee for migrants, especially when they do not possess the legal migration documents. The assessment also reported challenges faced in accessing and utilizing HIV, tuberculosis and COVID-19 services.

B.5.4. Sexual and reproductive health

Lesotho, like most sub-Saharan African countries, has some of the worst SRH outcomes globally, including high rates of unplanned pregnancies, maternal morbidity and mortality, unmet family planning needs, high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections, HIV, cervical cancer and unsafe abortions (IOM, 2020a). Poor SRH outcomes are highest among migrant girls and women, as most of them are pressured into risky decisions for their survival while having limited choices and often limited information available to them regarding their sexuality and SRHR (ibid.). The average adolescent (between ages 15 and 19 years) pregnancy rate was 18 per cent across the six countries.

Communicable diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis share common drivers in the form of extreme poverty and income inequalities, high mobility, gender inequality and GBV, stigma, discrimination, alcohol abuse, conflict and social instability (IOM, 2020a). The SRHR Knows No Border project in Lesotho explicitly envisages an enabling environment in which SRHR and needs of migrants, sex workers, adolescents and young people are institutionalized at local, national and regional levels. The SRHR-HIV Knows No Borders project needs assessment and baseline survey assessment conducted in six SADC countries (Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia) revealed that HIV prevalence rate is high among adolescents and young people in Lesotho and South Africa (IOM, 2020c). The findings also confirmed the following: (a) consistently higher HIV prevalence rates among women than men; (b) low levels of comprehensive knowledge about SRH among target populations; and (c) varying degrees of access to and quality of SRH services provided (IOM, 2020a).

For many, irregular migratory status also means marginalization or exclusion from national SRHR initiatives, with lasting impact on human development, not just for migrants, but for host communities and countries as well (ibid.). The baseline assessment also reported challenges faced in relation to accessing and using SRHR-HIV services, irregular supply of commodities, for example condoms, and the continuing criminalization of sex work (ibid.).

Comprehensive knowledge about SRH is generally low among the studied six countries. Comprehensive knowledge about HIV is higher among males, compared to female adolescents and young people in Lesotho and Mozambique

(IOM, 2020c). This puts women (whether migrants or non-migrants) at greater risk of HIV infection. The new environments in which migrants find themselves can be violent, stressful, unfamiliar and unhealthy places. As they transit to adulthood, threats to young people's health shift from communicable diseases (that could easily be prevented or treated through vaccinations, improved hygiene and access to antibiotics) to illnesses and injuries that are grounded in their behaviours. Unsafe SRH behaviours in youth (such as early sexual debut and low rates of condom and contraceptive use) can result in high rates of unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Young people who are displaced from their homes and communities may suddenly experience a lack of social support from families, friends and mentors, as well as increased exposure to violence, coercion and new sources of pressure. These factors can affect their ability to practise safe SRH behaviours and create risky situations that may lead to unhealthy and potentially fatal choices (Israel et al., 2008).

GBV is experienced among migrants and local people. The most typical disputes reported were between local men and migrant workers who were vying for females (IOM, 2021b). The study reported that construction workers who are migrants may carry their customers to their homes at night; however, there is minimal evidence of sex employment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, residents and households in Mapholaneng were reported to be increasingly vulnerable; particularly those whose household heads had lost their jobs and businesses. As a result, women in these households resorted to extramarital affairs with construction workers and migrants from neighbouring districts in order to procure food, and consequently GBV increased (ibid.).

B.6. Migration and environment

According to the 2016 PHC, 66 per cent of Lesotho's 2 million population lives in rural areas where agriculture plays a major role in livelihoods (Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Lesotho experiences episodes of adverse weather events like heavy rains, hailstorms, flash floods and droughts (Adaawen et al., 2023). Thus, rapid climate change and environmental shocks in Lesotho have forced Basotho to migrate to border communities in South Africa to seek employment as farmworkers (TK Research Consulting, 2023). In a study assessing the impact of the environment on migration, research participants reported the increasing occurrence of heavy rainfall (20%), drought (18%) and water scarcity (14%) as being triggered by the ongoing climatic changes (Adaawen et al., 2023). The occurrence of such environmental changes and processes contributes to increasing levels of population movement between countries. Four types of environmental migration are identified: (a) migration induced by environmental disasters; (b) migration

caused by environmental degradation; (c) migration and climate change; and (d) movement forced by environmental change caused by large-scale projects. Environmentally induced migration can take different forms, including rural-to-urban migration, short-term migration, irregular migration and displacement.

The major underlying drivers of migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation across the rural communities in Lesotho identified were the urge to migrate in search of job opportunities to gain waged income (44.4%) and the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on agricultural livelihoods and water scarcity (18.5%) (Adaawen et al., 2023). As a result, climate change has had an impact on livelihoods of Basotho, leading to displacement/relocation of some communities as well as food insecurity.

The link between climate change and migration in Lesotho is reflected in the corresponding impact on agriculture and related activities. The rural areas in Lesotho are largely dependent on subsistence farming. The importance of agriculture to rural communities was waning because of the adverse impact on harvests due to climate change (Adaawen et al., 2023). In addition, livestock herders were forced to cross into South Africa in search of greener pastures, resulting in cross-border resource conflicts and loss of livestock.

Most of the farming in the southern districts of Lesotho has been negatively affected, resulting in acute food insecurity as a result of land degradation caused by prolonged droughts and soil erosion, exacerbated by the lack or insufficient environmental conservation activities/practices (IOM, 2021b). There has been an increase in feminization of migration due to climate change. The trend of increasing female migration was further compounded by the related return migration of male migrant labourers from traditional migrant destinations and sectors such as in the mining sector of South Africa. Previously, earlier patterns of migration in Lesotho were mostly dominated by male breadwinners of the family, moving to work in the mines and plantations in South Africa. The different migration patterns have had varying impacts on households, communities and livelihoods, which can be interpreted as being both negative and positive. See Table 20 for the impact of climate-related migration on households and livelihoods.

Table 20. Impact of climate-related migration

Household	Per cent	Livelihoods	Per cent
Children/Orphans left behind – unable to work to feed	33.3	Loss of livelihoods/deportation	44.4
Changing household structure – breadwinners/economically active leave (families struggle to feed/survive)	28.6	Human trafficking/overcrowding and poor water sanitation	33.3
Able to take care of families – job opportunities/remittances	19.0	No market/decrease in demand for goods	22.2
Death of family members	14.3		
Conflict over scarce resources (water) and food	4.8		

Source: Adaawen et al., 2023:71.

Another major environmentally induced migration recorded was when the LHWP was constructed, which is a combined project between Lesotho and South Africa. Water resources are drawn from the highlands of Lesotho. Project construction has contributed significantly to environmental change, particularly resettlement of the communities (internal migration), loss of homes and agricultural and grazing land (Mwangi, 2008). Many farming households in Lesotho's rural areas deal with seasonal food shortages due to impacts of droughts or extreme weather conditions and are forced to devise coping mechanisms. Furthermore, recurring droughts in the Southern African region immensely contributed to a decline and alteration in the rainfall pattern with adverse consequences for agricultural production and water accessibility in Lesotho. Some smallholder farmers who failed to integrate irrigation systems abandoned their farms and relocated to South Africa. In dry places in southern districts, many families have entirely left their farmlands and relocated to peri-urban areas in pursuit of alternative livelihood opportunities (FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF, World Food Programme and WHO, 2022). Relocating to peri-urban and low-lying areas induces environmental degradation due to population increase.

B.6.1. Government initiatives in mitigating climate and environmental changes

Several overlapping measures for the different climate events or related disasters have been proposed for immediate and long-term climate change adaptation. Table 21 presents proposed measures to enhance climate change adaptation. With regards to heavy rainfall, there is the proposition of construction of dams and reservoirs to allow for water harvesting (in both the immediate and long term). Awareness-raising on climate and environmental changes, design of furrows or building trenches to control run-off water are some of the proposed measures.

Table 21. Proposed measures to enhance climate change adaptation

Event	Measure	Per cent	Measure	Per cent
Heavy rainfall	Immediate term		Long-term	
	Construction of dams for irrigation	20	Construction of wells/reservoirs	45.5
	Water harvesting/design furrows	30	Construction of trenches and diversion furrows to control flooding	36.4
	Awareness-raising on climate/ environmental change and water scarcity/tree planting	50	Rotational grazing/soil conservation (silt traps)	18.2
Drought	Construction of dams/tanks for water storage	25	Construction of dams/tanks/ boreholes for irrigation and use in communities	62.5
	Rotational planting/soil conservation/avoid overgrazing	25	Conservation agriculture/planting of grass	25
	Skills training/alternative livelihoods	12.5		12.5
	Government support to find water/construct tanks/awareness on water conservation	37.5	Building greenhouses	
Storms/ Strong winds/ Snow	Build wall fencing around houses	50	Build hedges around houses and plant more trees in communities	33.3
	Government support to help better roofing of houses	50	Build strong housing that can withstand harsh climatic conditions	66.7
Land degradation/ biodiversity/ water conservation	Avoid deforestation/Encourage organic subsistence farming	40	Plant more trees/Conservation agriculture for climate change adaptation	40
	Stop killing wild birds	20	Apprehend and arrest people who kill wild animals	20
	Government/ministries provide tanks for water storage	40	Construct boreholes in villages/ Water Sewerage Company tend water supply to villages	40

Source: Adaawen et al., 2023.

To this end, the Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021–2030 of IOM outlines its vision to “support States in their efforts to achieve orderly, safe, responsible, and regular international migration and to ensure that all people on the move and those internally displaced by the adverse impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters due to natural hazards, are assisted and protected” (IOM, 2021c). In addition, there is a need for policy instruments that must address the issue of (re)integration of migrants into the Lesotho community when they return. Reintegration of migrants can be seen as a vehicle for addressing environmental and structural factors which are the drivers that propel people to leave their communities and facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees (IOM, 2020b).

C. MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

This part provides an overview of Lesotho's key national policies, legislative frameworks and institutional arrangements that concern migration and its governance, as well as engagement with actors and processes originating both within and outside the country. IOM defines *migration governance* as “the combined frameworks of legal norms, laws and regulations, policies and traditions as well as organizational structures (subnational, national, regional and international) and the relevant processes that shape and regulate States’ approaches with regard to migration in all its forms, addressing rights and responsibilities and promoting international cooperation” (IOM, 2019a). This is in line with the African Union's Migration Policy Framework for Africa definition of migration governance as the traditions and institutions by which authority on migration, mobility and nationality in a country are exercised, including the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies in these areas (African Union, 2018). The legal framework comprises domestic laws, international and regional instruments and standards.

C.1. National policy framework

Legislation is one of the most important instruments of government in organizing society and protecting citizens. It determines, among others, the rights and responsibilities of individuals and authorities to whom the legislation applies. The policies are indicators relating to national policy frameworks, regional protocols and frameworks, national migration legislations, international conventions and national institutional frameworks. The migration-related main policy frameworks for Lesotho include the following:

C.1.1. The Constitution Act of 2018

The policy recognizes the importance of attracting the Basotho diaspora back to Lesotho and facilitating skills transfers. The Eighth Amendment to the Constitution Act of 2018 allows for dual citizenship to encourage the Basotho diaspora to retain and restore their citizenship of Lesotho while exploring the benefits of living in their destination countries (Lesotho, Government of, 2018). Prior to 2018, any citizen of Lesotho who had taken citizenship of another country had to choose between the two. Section 18(1) of the Constitution of Lesotho of 1993 states that no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory in itself or its effect. Section 18(2) also indicates that “no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the

performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority” (IOM, 2021a). The enactment of the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of Lesotho also states that naturalized citizens are eligible for social benefits after 10 years of naturalization.

C.1.2. Immigration and Citizenship Policy of 2019

The Immigration and Citizenship Policy of 2019 provides a framework for managing immigration and citizenship matters in Lesotho. The Policy was developed to establish clear guidelines and procedures for the management of immigration processes in Lesotho, which include entry requirements, visa regulations, work permits and border control measures to ensure orderly and controlled immigration. The Eighth Amendment to the Constitution Act allows for dual citizenship and the equal acquisition of citizenship through marriage for both men and women if the spouse is a citizen of Lesotho (IOM, 2021a). It complements the Immigration and Citizenship Bill of 2018, which relaxes citizenship procedures for those intending to establish a business, if they meet minimum capital requirements or possess high-demand labour skills. The Policy aims to strengthen border security measures for managing the movement of people and goods across Lesotho’s borders. This includes enhancing surveillance, border control infrastructure and coordination between relevant agencies to prevent irregular migration and address security concerns.

The immigration framework of Lesotho provides permanent residency to foreigners and stateless persons based on an immigration permit or a long-term visa granted by the Ministry of Home Affairs, as per the Aliens Control Act of 1966 (IOM, 2021a). It establishes several visa categories aimed at attracting skilled labour, including the business/investment visa, highly skilled visa, corporate work visa, general work visa, trader visa and low-skilled seasonal residence visa. To apply for citizenship of Lesotho, foreign nationals must have been residing in the country for more than five years or have been married to a citizen of Lesotho for at least five years (*ibid.*). The Policy outlines the criteria, requirements and procedures for acquiring citizenship in Lesotho.

C.1.3. The Immigration and Citizenship Bill of 2019

The Immigration and Citizenship Bill of 2019 retained provisions for family reunification. Lesotho further supports family reunification by allowing the entry of family members of persons recognized as refugees, people in need of additional protection or those granted temporary protection under the Refugee Act of 1983.

C.1.4. Lesotho National Migration and Development Policy

The National Migration and Development Policy provides guidance for the strategic and effective utilization of migration to foster development. The Policy aims to provide both a basis and direction for the coherent and effective harnessing of migration for development (IOM, 2021a). Its objective is to bridge the policy gap between migration and development by offering a framework of actionable measures at the national level. The Policy aims to address the migration and development policy gap by providing guidance for the strategic and effective utilization of migration to foster development of action at the national level. The Policy serves as a fundamental reference and guiding document for the Government of Lesotho and all relevant stakeholders in effectively addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with migration and development (Rocchi and Sette, 2016). The Policy represents a significant paradigm shift towards harnessing migration for human and economic development.

C.1.5. National Labour Migration Policy of 2018

The Labour Migration Policy addresses issues related to returning migrants. The Policy addresses the reintegration of Basotho nationals into the labour force and local communities (IOM, 2021a). The Policy aims to contribute to Lesotho's economic growth by leveraging labour migration to harness remittances, promote skills development and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise back to the country. The Policy seeks to enhance employment opportunities for Lesotho's workforce by facilitating legal and regulated labour migration channels. It also aims to match the skills and qualifications of the country's citizens with available job opportunities abroad. The Policy intends to establish a framework that protects the rights and welfare of Lesotho's migrant workers. It may include provisions to prevent exploitation, human trafficking and other forms of abuse, as well as mechanisms to ensure fair wages, decent working conditions and access to essential services. The Policy prioritizes programmes and initiatives that enhance the skills and competencies of Lesotho's workforce, allowing them to acquire specialized knowledge and expertise abroad and bring it back to contribute to the country's development.

C.1.6. National Diaspora Policy of Lesotho, 2020–2024

The National Diaspora Policy seeks to engage and empower the Lesotho diaspora, which refers to Basotho living abroad, by recognizing their importance as valuable stakeholders in the development of Lesotho. It aims to strengthen their

connection to their country of origin and encourage their active participation in socioeconomic and cultural activities. The Policy aims to mobilize the resources, skills and expertise of the Lesotho diaspora for the development of the country. This includes leveraging diaspora networks for investments, entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer and technology exchange to stimulate economic growth and job creation (IOM, 2021a). The Policy emphasizes the transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise from the diaspora to support capacity-building efforts in Lesotho. This involves initiatives such as training programmes, mentorship opportunities and partnerships between diaspora professionals and local institutions to enhance human capital and promote sustainable development.

C.1.7. Framework for Managing Migration Data in Lesotho of 2014

The Framework for Managing Migration Data in Lesotho, developed in 2014, aims to establish a comprehensive and systematic approach to collect, analyse and manage migration-related data in the country. The Framework aims to establish mechanisms for collecting accurate and reliable migration data in Lesotho. This includes setting up standardized data collection methods, tools and instruments to capture relevant information on various aspects of migration, such as migration flows, demographic characteristics of migrants, employment patterns and remittances. The Framework aims to develop analytical capacities to interpret and disseminate migration data to relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers and development practitioners. The Framework underscores the need to foster partnerships to ensure the exchange of data, methodologies and best practices in managing migration data among different government departments, agencies and organizations involved in migration-related activities.

C.1.8. National Anti-trafficking in Persons Strategic Framework and Action Plan, 2021–2026

The National Anti-trafficking in Persons Strategic Framework and Action Plan of Lesotho, developed in 2011 and reviewed, is a comprehensive document that outlines Lesotho's strategic approach to combating trafficking in persons. The Framework aims to prevent trafficking in persons by implementing measures to raise awareness, educate vulnerable populations and address the root causes of trafficking. The Framework prioritizes the protection of victims of trafficking by establishing comprehensive victim-centred mechanisms. This includes providing immediate and long-term support services, such as shelter, counselling, health

care and legal assistance. The Framework also aims to strengthen collaboration between relevant stakeholders to ensure victim identification, referral and assistance. The Framework aims to strengthen partnerships and collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations and international partners involved in combating trafficking in persons.

C.1.9. The Anti-trafficking in Persons Act of 2011

Lesotho adopted the Anti-trafficking in Act (no. 1 of 2011) to combat exploitation and human trafficking in persons. The Act was enacted by the Parliament of Lesotho “to provide for the prohibition, prevention, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of the offence of trafficking in persons and other related offences; measures for protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking in person; and for related matters” (Lesotho, Government of, 2011a). The Anti-Trafficking in Persons (Amendment) Act, 2021, which was last updated in 2021, together with the Refugee Act of 1983, provide for the repatriation of victims of trafficking in persons and refugees from Lesotho. The Act guarantees safety considerations during repatriation. Additionally, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons (Amendment) Act, 2021 addresses the limitations of the 2011 Act and criminalizes all forms of sex trafficking, removing the option of a fine in lieu of imprisonment for trafficking offences. The Act also addresses legislative gaps identified in the 2011 Act, such as the option of paying a fine for perpetrators found guilty of trafficking.

C.1.10. The Children’s Protection and Welfare Act of 2011

The Children’s Protection and Welfare Act of 2021 was enacted by the Parliament of Lesotho to consolidate and reform the laws relating to the protection and welfare of children and to provide for incidental matters (Lesotho, Government of, 2011b). The Act also prohibits trafficking and abduction, as well as exploitative child labour practice in all its forms. The objectives of this Act are to extend, promote and protect the rights of children as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1990 and other international instruments, protocols, standards and rules on the protection and welfare of children to which Lesotho is a signatory (ibid.). The Act points to education and health as rights and maintains that primary education is free and compulsory between the ages of 6 and 13 years (IOM, 2021a).

C.1.11. Decent Work Country Programme, 2019–2023

The DWCP for the period of 2019–2023 is a comprehensive framework developed by the ILO, in collaboration with the Government of Lesotho and other key stakeholders. The DWCP focuses on the right to social protection and employment opportunities and reducing unemployment in Lesotho. It includes strategies to stimulate economic growth, encourage investment in job-rich sectors and support entrepreneurship and the creation of decent jobs. The Programme is geared towards promoting and protecting workers' rights in Lesotho. It aims to strengthen labour laws and regulations, improve compliance with international labour standards, and address issues such as child labour, forced labour and discrimination in the workplace. The Programme aims to enhance dialogue mechanisms, facilitate collective bargaining processes and encourage effective cooperation between the different stakeholders to address labour market challenges.

C.1.12. Lesotho Labour Code Order of 1992

The Labour Code Order of 1992 provides for the recruitment of foreign nationals and prohibits forced labour. The Code applies to any employment in the private sector and to any employment by or under the Government, or by or under any public authority. Section 5(1) of the Labour Code Order of 1992 further states: “The application by any person of any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, marital status, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation, is incompatible with the provisions of the Code” (IOM, 2021a).

C.2. Southern African Development Community regional-level frameworks, protocols and policies

Being a member of SADC, the Government of Lesotho is a signatory to the following regional frameworks, protocols and policies:

C.2.1. International Labour Organization-Southern African Development Community Decent Work Programme (2013–2019)

The ILO-SADC Decent Work Programme for the period of 2013–2019 aimed to promote decent work and sustainable development in the member

States of the SADC region. The Programme provides a conceptual statistical basis for the comprehensive LMIS. The importance of LMIS is enshrined in the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (no. 160) and Labour Statistics Recommendation, 1985 (no. 170) of ILO. The motivation for setting up the LMIS in the SADC region is evident in that various stakeholders confirmed the need to have information on labour market dynamics in the region so that they could be informed of the investment intentions (in case of multinational companies and conglomerates), labour market policies regarding national education and training needs, labour migration, minimum wages legislative and regulatory reforms (in case of decision makers), available job opportunities (in case of jobseekers), and sensitization on the actions taken to modify the demand for labour; thus ultimately shaping public policies and programmes in the SADC region. In the SADC region, the LMIS needs assessment studies have been carried out in some of the Southern African countries, including Lesotho, sponsored by ILO/Southern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (SADC, 2013a). Also, this would complement earlier efforts by ILO/Southern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team to establish a regional LMIS in Southern Africa in the 1990s. The Programme focuses on promoting job creation and reducing unemployment in the SADC region through strategies to stimulate economic growth, enhance labour market policies, support entrepreneurship and the development of labour-intensive sectors. The Programme aimed to promote and protect workers' rights in SADC member States by strengthening labour laws and regulations, promoting compliance with international labour standards, and addressing issues such as child labour, forced labour and discrimination in the workplace.

C.2.2. Southern African Development Community Action Plan on Labour Migration (2020–2025)

The SADC adopted the new Labour Migration Action Plan (2020–2025) as part of efforts to promote skills transfer and match labour supply and demand for regional development and integration. The Action Plan, which was adopted through the employment and labour sector in the region, is in line with Article 19 of the SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour. It seeks to protect and safeguard the rights and welfare of migrant workers, to give them better opportunities to contribute to countries of origin and destination. The Action Plan is an integral part of measures aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and services, and of the people of the region generally, in line with Article 5 of the SADC Treaty.

C.2.3. Southern African Development Community Labour Migration Policy

The SADC Labour Migration Policy was drafted within the spirit of the overall SADC Treaty whose main objectives include inter alia, “to achieve development, peace and security, and economic growth, to alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration, built on democratic principles and equitable and sustainable development” (SADC, 2013b:2). The Policy aims to contribute to the protection of labour migrants’ rights and give them an opportunity to make a greater developmental impact on both countries of origin and destination (SADC, 2013b). The SADC Treaty calls for the development of policies aimed at “the progressive elimination of obstacles to free movement of capital and labour, goods and services, and of the people of the region generally, among Member States” (ibid.). This Policy has been developed to reflect, contribute to and refine existing legal frameworks at regional, bilateral and national levels, and international and regional legal instruments and obligations relating to migration and labour (ibid.).

C.2.4. Southern African Development Community Protocol on Employment and Labour, 2014

The SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour was adopted in 2014 with the objective of promoting harmonization and coordination of employment and labour policies among member States. The Protocol aims to facilitate the free movement of workers within the SADC region through implementing measures to remove barriers to labour mobility, such as visa requirements and work permit regulations, and promoting the recognition of qualifications and skills across member States. The Protocol underscores the promotion and protection of labour rights and standards within the SADC region. This includes commitments to uphold fundamental principles and rights at work, such as freedom of association, collective bargaining and the elimination of forced labour and child labour. The Protocol aims to address social security and social protection issues, which include provisions for the coordination of social security schemes, ensuring access to social protection for workers across borders, and promoting the portability of social security benefits.

C.2.5. Southern African Development Community Labour Migration Policy Framework, 2014

The Framework aims to establish legal frameworks and mechanisms that facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration within the SADC region. This includes developing standardized procedures for entry, stay and exit of migrants, as well as ensuring their protection and human rights. The Framework underscores the challenges posed by irregular migration and human trafficking. It includes measures to prevent and combat human trafficking, improve border management and enhance cooperation among member States in addressing irregular migration. The Framework is expected to promote cooperation and partnerships among SADC member States, as well as with relevant international organizations and stakeholders. This includes sharing best practices, exchanging information and coordinating efforts to enhance policy coherence and maximize the benefits of migration for both sending and receiving countries.

C.2.6. Southern African Development Community Free Movement Protocol

The Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, drafted in 2005, currently provides a regional legal framework on migration in the SADC. The SADC Free Movement Protocol aims to enable the free movement of citizens within the SADC region, allowing them to travel, work and reside in member States without unnecessary restrictions or barriers. The Protocol aims to deepen regional integration within the SADC region, fostering closer cooperation and collaboration among member States. This includes aligning policies, harmonizing regulations and coordinating efforts to achieve shared development objectives. The Protocol is expected to facilitate the movement of goods and services across member States, promoting regional trade and investment. This includes reducing trade barriers, customs procedures and other regulatory obstacles that impede the flow of goods and services.

Although the Protocol has a legal binding mechanism, it has not yet come into force as too few member States have ratified it to date. One of the main objectives of the SADC Treaty is the promotion of policies that aim to eliminate obstacles to the free movement of persons in the region. A draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons within SADC was introduced in 1996 but was replaced by the more restrictive Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons in 1997. The restriction was due to the income disparities that create imbalances in migration flows between member States. The 1997 Protocol was further revised and adopted in 2005, which ensures granting visa-free entry, with lawful purpose,

to citizens from other member States for a maximum of 90 days. The Protocol is however not operational due to inadequate ratifications by member States. So far, only Botswana, Eswatini, Mozambique and South Africa have signed and ratified the Protocol. Although the Protocol is not operational, it makes provision for member States to conclude bilateral agreements for visa exemptions. Most member States have exempted each other from visa requirements. However, citizens of SADC member States require visas for entering Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar. Moreover, there have been talks on a proposed single SADC passport initiative in the coming future.

C.2.7. Southern African Development Community Regional Migration Policy Framework

The SADC Regional Migration Policy Framework, once implemented, is expected to address various aspects of migration within the region and establish legal frameworks and mechanisms that facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration within the SADC region. This includes developing standardized procedures for entry, stay and exit of migrants, as well as ensuring their protection and human rights. The Framework underscores the promotion of labour mobility within the SADC region. It includes measures to facilitate the movement of workers, promote the recognition of skills and qualifications, and create opportunities for employment and skills development. The Framework is expected to address the challenges posed by irregular migration and human trafficking. It includes measures to prevent and combat human trafficking, improve border management and enhance cooperation among member States in addressing irregular migration.

C.2.8. Southern African Development Community Revised Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2020–2030

This Plan sets out the strategic priorities and goals for regional development and integration within the SADC region. The Plan aims to promote industrialization and economic diversification within the SADC region. This includes efforts to enhance manufacturing capabilities, develop value chains and promote regional trade and investment. The Plan underscores the development of critical infrastructure to support regional integration and connectivity. This includes transportation infrastructure (roads, railways, ports and airports), energy infrastructure (generation, transmission and distribution) and information and communication technology infrastructure. The Plan seeks to deepen market integration within the SADC region and facilitate trade among member States. This includes the

implementation of trade facilitation measures, harmonization of trade policies and regulations and promotion of cross-border trade and investment.

The Plan emphasizes the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources within the SADC region. This includes promoting environmentally friendly practices, conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable development of agriculture, water resources and minerals. The Plan focuses on improving social and human development outcomes within the SADC region. This includes initiatives to enhance access to quality education, health care and social services, as well as efforts to address poverty, inequality and gender disparities. The Plan underscores the importance of good governance, democracy and effective institutions in driving regional development. This includes promoting transparency, accountability and the rule of law, as well as strengthening regional institutions and mechanisms for coordination and cooperation. The Plan recognizes the significance of peace, stability and security for sustainable development in the SADC region. It includes efforts to promote peace-building, conflict prevention and regional cooperation in addressing security challenges.

C.2.9. Southern African Development Community Regional Strategic Framework on Combating Trafficking in Persons

The crime of trafficking in persons is a public security concern not only to the world, but to the SADC as well. The SADC Regional Strategic Framework on Combating Trafficking in Persons, once implemented, would likely provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach to combating trafficking in persons within the region. Women and girls are the most vulnerable gender groups to human trafficking in the region where they are largely subjected to sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and forced labour (SADC, 2016). Women and children are mainly vulnerable as a result of their low social and economic status, as well as lack of investment in the girl child (Shelley, 2010:16). The Framework focuses on prevention strategies, including awareness-raising campaigns, education programmes and community engagement. This involves efforts to address the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty, lack of opportunities and gender inequality. The Framework emphasizes the protection and assistance of victims of trafficking. This includes provisions for victim identification, support services, safe and specialized shelters, access to justice, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims. The Framework underscores the need for strong law enforcement and effective criminal justice responses to combat trafficking in persons. This includes measures to strengthen legislation, enhance law enforcement capacity,

improve cross-border cooperation and promote the prosecution of traffickers. The Framework promotes partnership and cooperation among SADC member States, as well as with relevant international organizations and stakeholders.

C.3. International cooperation and domestication of international frameworks

C.3.1. Global processes

International treaties and multilateral agreements

Status of ratification by Lesotho to the following international instruments on migration, among others, are examined:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, articulates the rights and freedoms to which every human being is equally and inalienably entitled (OHCHR, 2013). The OHCHR is the lead United Nations entity mandated to promote and protect human rights for all. The OHCHR works with and assists governments in fulfilling their human rights obligations, speaks out objectively in the face of human rights violations worldwide and provides a forum for identifying, highlighting and developing responses to today's human rights challenges. It also acts as the principal focal point of human rights research, education, public information and advocacy activities, and works with a wide range of partners in order to widen the constituency for human rights worldwide (ibid.).

Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951, 1967)

The Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (hereinafter, the 1951 Convention) is an international treaty that defines the rights and protections of refugees. The Convention was adopted in 1951 and later supplemented by the 1967 Protocol. The main objective of the Convention is to provide legal protection and assistance to individuals who are forced to flee their home countries due to well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Lesotho ratified the 1951 Convention and became a party to the 1951 Convention in 1998 and has committed to upholding the rights and protections outlined in the treaty for refugees.

Lesotho is a State party to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol having acceded to these instruments in May 1981. The 1985 Refugee Act regulates refugee status and lays out the protection framework for asylum-seekers and refugees. The Interministerial Refugee Status Determination Committee is the institution responsible for refugee status determination in Lesotho (UNHCR, 2019). The Interministerial Refugee Status Determination Committee has limited capacity to process the current number of asylum applications. Refugees in Lesotho enjoy access to basic health care and receive assistance to access basic education. Refugees also have the right to work, provided that they obtain work permits; unemployed refugees receive a grant from the Government amounting to 400 Maloti per month (approximately USD 28) (UNHCR, 2019). The Government has taken a number of measures to provide housing for refugees; water and electricity are ensured free of costs. Regarding integration opportunities, the Government has waived the naturalization fee in favour of refugees. Nonetheless, access to education for refugee children and the provision of travel documentation to enable refugees to travel to neighbouring countries such as South Africa remain problematic. A number of refugees made allegations of suffering discriminatory treatment compared to Lesotho nationals when crossing the border into South Africa.

Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised), 1949 (no. 97)

The ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised), 1949, also known as Convention no. 97, is an international labour standard that addresses the conditions and rights of migrant workers. The Convention aims to ensure the protection of the rights of migrant workers who are employed in countries other than their own. It applies to both regular and irregular migrant workers. Lesotho has not yet ratified this Convention.

Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions), 1975 Convention (no. 143)

The ILO Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers supplements ILO Convention no. 97 and provides additional measures for the protection of migrant workers, including equality of treatment in relation to wages, social security and other employment conditions. The Convention addresses the issue of migration in abusive conditions and seeks to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for migrant workers. Lesotho has not ratified Convention no. 143.

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990

The United Nations' International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families is an international human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. The Convention aims to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers and their families, recognizing the specific vulnerabilities they face. It is applicable to all migrant workers and members of their families without distinction of any kind, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic position, property, marital status, birth or other status (OHCHR, 1990:2). This Convention applies during the entire migration process of migrant workers and members of their families, which comprises preparation for migration, departure, transit and the entire period of stay and remunerated activity in the State of employment as well as return to the State of origin or the State of habitual residence (ibid.). Lesotho ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families of 1990 in September 2005.

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, is an international legal instrument adopted by the United Nations in 2000 (United Nations, 2000). This Protocol is the first global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition on trafficking in persons. It is commonly referred to as the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and is an important component of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Trafficking in Persons Protocol aims to address the issue of trafficking in persons, particularly women and children, by preventing and combating this crime, protecting and assisting victims, and promoting international cooperation among States. The Protocol aims to facilitate convergence in national approaches about the establishment of domestic criminal offences that would support efficient international cooperation in investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons cases (ibid.). An additional objective of the Protocol is to protect and assist the victims of trafficking in persons with full respect for their human rights. Lesotho ratified the protocol in 2002 and has committed to taking measures to prevent and combat human trafficking, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators of this crime.

Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, 2000

The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air is an international agreement adopted by the United Nations to address the issue of migrant smuggling. The Protocol was adopted in the year 2000 and is commonly referred to as the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol. It supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Smuggling of Migrants Protocol aims to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants, protect the rights of smuggled migrants and promote international cooperation in addressing this issue. The Protocol calls for the criminalization of the smuggling of migrants as a serious criminal offence. It encourages States to adopt legislative measures to effectively criminalize and prosecute individuals or organized groups involved in the smuggling of migrants. Lesotho ratified the Protocol in 2002 and has committed to taking measures to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants, particularly through organized criminal networks. Recalling its resolution 53/111 of 9 December 1998, in which it decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee for the purpose of elaborating a comprehensive international convention against transnational organized crime and of discussing the elaboration, as appropriate, of international instruments addressing trafficking in women and children, combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and illegal trafficking in and transporting of migrants, including by sea (United Nations, 1999). Lesotho ratified the Protocol in September 2004.

C.3.2. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (also called Global Compact for Migration), adopted at an intergovernmental conference on migration in Morocco in December 2018, is the first intergovernmental agreement to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner (United Nations, 2018). The Global Compact for Migration offers a vision of international migration and recognizes that a comprehensive approach is needed to optimize the overall benefits of migration, while addressing risks and challenges for individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination (ibid.). The Global Compact for Migration is based on international human rights law and upholds the principles of non-regression and non-discrimination to ensure effective respect for and protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, across all stages of the migration

cycle (ibid.). The Global Compact for Migration comprises 23 objectives for better management of migration at local, national, regional and global levels. The Global Compact for Migration is rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and is anchored on the SDG target 10.7 on which member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well managed migration policies (ibid.). The Global Compact for Migration presents a significant opportunity to mitigate the adverse drivers and structural factors that hinder people from building and maintaining livelihoods in their countries of origin. The Global Compact for Migration aims to leverage the potential of migration for the achievement of all SDGs, as well as the impact this achievement will have on migration in the future.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 on 25 September 2015. The 2030 Agenda was adopted in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030, all people enjoy peace and prosperity (United Nations, 2015). It comprises 17 SDGs, which are further broken down into targets. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that migration is a powerful driver of sustainable development, for migrants themselves and their communities in countries of origin, transit and destination (IOM, 2018a). The relationship between migration and development is much more complex: the political, social and economic processes of potential destination countries will also determine how, where and when migration occurs (ibid.). If migration is poorly governed, it can also negatively impact on development. Migrants can be put at risk and communities can come under strain. As outlined in the Global Compact for Migration, migration is a multidimensional reality that cannot be addressed by one government policy sector alone. IOM therefore applies a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to migration governance, striving to ensure that migration and migrants' needs are considered across all policy areas, laws and regulations from health to education and from fiscal policies to trade (ibid.).

The SDGs, 17 goals in total, are integrated as they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs contain several targets that directly reference migration (IOM, 2018a). The 2030 Agenda is relevant to all mobile populations and recognizes migrant women, men and children as a vulnerable group to be protected and as agents of development (ibid.). SDG Target 10.7 (Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration

and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies), under SDG 10 (Reduce inequality in and among countries), is central reference to migration. The 2030 Agenda thus calls for countries, Lesotho included, to report on these indicators to monitor the progress of the country's development.

Lesotho is signatory to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Lesotho has mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda, among other international commitments, into the National Strategic Development Plan, 2018/19–2022/23 (Ministry of Development Planning, 2019). It has established SDG implementation coordination structures as mechanisms to facilitate the implementation, monitoring and reporting.

C.4. Institutional framework

In 2010, Lesotho established a forum called NCC on Migration and Development, a migration coordinating forum that plays a key role in addressing migration issues in the country. The NCC consists of government ministries/agencies, non-governmental stakeholders, academia and partners dealing with migration issues in Lesotho. Non-governmental stakeholders include academia, labour unions and migrants' associations. The NCC is chaired by the Ministry of Home Affairs and co-chaired by IOM.

C.5. International cooperation

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 is to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. Target 17.16 addresses the importance of global partnership for sustainable development complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries. This section addresses the global partnerships Lesotho is a member.

C.5.1. International Organization for Migration

Lesotho was admitted as an IOM Member State on 29 November 2010, and it comes under the purview of the IOM Regional Office for Southern Africa in Pretoria. IOM is committed to the principle of safe, humane and orderly

migration for the benefit of all (IOM, 2020b). IOM supports the Government of Lesotho by working with partners, government and civil society to promote international cooperation in addressing operational challenges of migration and mobility, assisting in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people. IOM develops evidence-based and whole-of-government approaches through the NCC, which consists of various ministries, migrant support organizations, private sector and NGOs. IOM addresses the migratory phenomenon from an integral and holistic perspective, including links to development, to maximize its benefits and minimize its negative effects.

IOM supports the Government on its migration programmes including human trafficking, programmes to ensure that the rights of Basotho migrant workers are upheld by employers and host governments through the regularization of labour movements; and in the implementation of potential bilateral labour agreements in order to bring a developmental impact from the regular migration. IOM continues to support the annual review for Migration Governance Index to enhance evidence-based approach and is also supporting the administration of the migration profile for Lesotho. Support is also given to the Government of Lesotho to enhance border and migration management through capacity-building for immigration and border officials, as well as provision of equipment to strengthen security of the borders/airport and travellers' complaints/feedback mechanism (IOM, 2019b). During the COVID-19 era, IOM supported the Government in the project titled Socio-economic Reintegration of Returnees and other vulnerable households in migration affected areas severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project aimed to respond to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of Basotho returnees and other vulnerable migrants and communities in which they live (IOM, 2021b).

C.5.2. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. UNHCR leads international action to protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. The South Africa Multi-Country Office of UNHCR serves nine SADC countries, including Lesotho. Lesotho hosts people of concern to UNHCR. Countries of origin of refugees and asylum-seekers include Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia and Zimbabwe. UNHCR support to Lesotho include ending statelessness, enhancing the protection to the environment and strengthening partnerships are priorities in the region.

C.5.3. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime contributes to global peace and security, human rights and development by making the world safer from drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism by working for and with member States to promote justice and the rule of law and build resilient societies.

C.5.4. United Nations Children's Fund

The Government of Lesotho formed a Multisectoral Committee on Trafficking in July 2009, and it comprised several government ministries, departments and agencies and development partners (UNDP and UNICEF). UNICEF helped to distribute educational materials on human trafficking.

C.5.5. International Labour Organization

The ILO works with the Government of Lesotho and other partners to implement various initiatives and projects that directly impact on the welfare of migrants. These may include assisting in the rights of various vulnerable groups in the workplace for instance, including migrant workers such as migration domestic workers through the Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and their Families. ILO organized a training on migration instrument and general survey report and labour migration information-sharing session in 2016 where over 60 participants from a range of ministries, international organizations (IOM, UNDP) social partners (National Advisory Committee on Labour) were trained on how to respond to an ILO general survey and the areas covered by ILO migration instrument.

C.5.6. European Union

The European Union is involved in several developments in Lesotho. The European Union supports Lesotho's government and society in achieving the SDGs, creating sustainable access to energy, water and sanitation, contributing to social protection programmes, and mitigating the impact of natural disaster as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. It has supported and promoted rule of law, democracy and human rights.

The relations between the European Union and Lesotho are as follows:

- (a) Political relations – Over the years, their relationship has involved into a multifaceted partnership encompassing political relations, trade and investment, academic as well as diplomatic missions and international organizations housed in Lesotho;
- (b) International cooperation – The European Union provides development assistance through the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021–2027. Its sole mandate is to transform the mountain kingdom into a green and resilient economy and promoting good governance and building a peaceful and just economy;
- (c) Trade and economic relations – European Union supports economic growth, job creation and sustainable development in Lesotho. It is supporting the country to integrate to the world trading system so that it benefits from the global economy;
- (d) Humanitarian assistance – In Lesotho, the European Union has provided emergency relief responses, such as food, education in emergency and disaster preparedness. In 2020, the World Food Programme and European Union contributed emergency drought assistance to drought-affected households in Lesotho;
- (e) European Union response to COVID-19 in Lesotho and the global funds – It provided support to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Lesotho. Through COVAX, vaccines have been delivered to all countries around the world, including Lesotho. Some additional funds were availed for Lesotho to help mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on most vulnerable households. Additionally, through its contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, essential services are provided in hospitals, health centres and medical personnel.

D. KEY FINDINGS, POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Migration has proven to be an important part of Lesotho's development and is increasingly being recognized as part of its development strategy. Lesotho is a source, transit and destination country for migrants including irregular migrants, which is a concern to the country. The main destination for Basotho migrants is South Africa and mostly migrate to work in South Africa. In the past, migration was often regarded as having a consistently negative impact on development, that is, on all aspects of Basotho economic, social and cultural life, dividing families, weakening domestic social structures and organization, undermining agricultural production and productivity, compromising health, exacerbating rural poverty and intensifying gender inequality (IOM, 2021b). There has been a steady flow of immigrants to Lesotho in recent years. However, given the porous borders and the non-automated nature of border control, steps needed to be taken to ensure that the Government had a clear sense of who the migrants were, also from the perspective of the country of origin.

Lesotho has adopted laws to deal with migration issues, including human trafficking and people smuggling and the issuance of passports and travel documents. It has further entered bilateral arrangements with South Africa in a number of key areas, including a bilateral agreement on the facilitation of cross-border movement of citizens. Lesotho is signatory to several conventions and protocols on migration at the regional and international levels. However, a concerning issue with the nature of migration in Lesotho is that there is a lack of reliable statistics on migration to enable proper planning for development, even though Lesotho has a dynamic and complex migration pattern. This lack of reliable statistics has hindered the capacity of Lesotho and its development agencies to fully enhance and manage the development potential embedded in the migration streams. The development of the Migration Profile will help Lesotho to monitor the progress of the SDGs and the Global Compact for Migration objectives and to effectively manage migration data analysis to maximize its positive impacts for all concerned.

D.1. Main findings on current trends, migration policies and the impact of migration

This subsection summarizes the indicators on migration trends, migration policies and the impact of migration.

D.1.1. Migration trends

Immigration

Immigration flows

A total of 1,048 visas were issued in 2016 but declined over the years to 96 in 2020. The visas issued during the five-year period were higher among males than females. The decline in the number of visas issued in 2018 and 2019 was due to the introduction of online registration that saw many people using the online application. Three of the top five countries with the visas issued were from Asian countries: China, Pakistan and India. A total of 672,108 people entered Lesotho in 2016, the number declining to 88,886 in 2020. The number of entries was lowest in 2020 largely due to the travel restrictions imposed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. On exit, the number of people leaving Lesotho declined from 885,076 in 2016 to 111,670 in 2020. COVID-19 also had an impact on the number of exits from Lesotho in 2020.

Non-citizens: A total of 10,090 foreigners were recorded in Lesotho during the period 2016–2020. The year 2016 had the highest number of non-citizens (1,048), followed by the year 2017 (744). The number of non-citizens has been declining since 2016 to 79 and 41 in 2018 and 2019, respectively. The number of non-citizens increased to 96 in 2020. It can be noted that the number of immigrants in Lesotho is very low compared to other countries, such as neighbouring South Africa.

Immigration stocks

There were 9,700 immigrants at the time of the 2016 PHC. The immigration stocks reported by the PHC are higher than the flows reported by the Immigration Department. A large proportion of immigrants (81.4%) originated from Africa. More than half of the immigrants (51.6%) were South African citizens, and Zimbabwe recorded the second highest percentage of immigrants (11.2%).

Immigration for employment

A total of 4,490 work permit applications were submitted during the period 2016–2020. The highest work permit applications were from South Africa (1,809), followed by China (872) and Zimbabwe (293). Most of the work permit applications were for occupations of managers (1,864) and professionals (1,481). A

third of the work permit applications were for the construction industry (1,480). A total of 4,370 work permits were approved during the period 2016–2020. The number of work permits approved in 2020 were 820, declining from 1,230 work permits in 2019. The decline in approved work permits in 2020 was largely due to COVID-19, as some services were closed during the lockdown period. Most of the permits were among males rather than females. Almost a third of the foreign employed population was aged 25–34 (29.7%). Most of the foreign population employed in Lesotho were from South Africa, followed by China, Zimbabwe, India and Pakistan.

On stocks, the largest proportion of immigrants was professionals (26.1%), followed by service and sales workers (25%). The proportion of female professionals was higher (29.5%) than that recorded for males (24.7%). Similarly, the proportion of female service and sales workers was greater than that reported for male immigrants (23.5%).

Immigration for study

A total of 11 study permits were issued during the period 2016–2020. Almost half of the study permits were issued in 2018. No study permits were issued in 2020, again largely due to travel restrictions and closure of borders because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Involuntary migration

New asylum-seekers: There were 231 new asylum applications in 2020, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo having the highest number of asylum applications. Most of the people seeking asylum came from countries that were experiencing war and conflicts.

Refugees: There were 134 applicants seeking refugee status, an increase from 12 in 2017, 79 in 2018 and 91 in 2019. Most of the applications granted refugee status were again from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda.

Emigration

Emigration stocks

Lesotho citizens living outside the country were estimated at 179,579 in 2016 (Bureau of Statistics, 2018). The proportion of emigrants was highest among those aged 25–29 years (18.2%) and second were those aged 30–34 years (17.8%). Over two thirds of Lesotho emigrants were aged between 20 and 39 years (62.9%). This is in tangent with the global pattern where young people are more likely to migrate than older people. This is in tangent with the global pattern where young people are more likely to migrate than older people. Generally, male emigrants were more than female migrants. The major destination for Basotho migrants was South Africa (99.5%). Initially, the majority of migrants from Lesotho were young men working on South African mines. However, since 1990, the patterns of migration have changed substantially. Due to a variety of reasons, including a general decline in mine employment in South Africa and the preference for employing South Africans, minework as the main vehicle for Basotho men has reduced rapidly. The decline in mine employment in South Africa for Basotho from Lesotho has given rise to new forms of migration: diversification and an increase in female migration.

Emigration flows

According to the Immigration Department, a total of 65,598 Basotho citizens left the country in 2019 to work abroad, which is lower than the one reported by the PHC. The desire to emigrate is more pronounced among males (43,040) than females (22,168) and among those aged 35–64 years (38,302).

Emigration for employment

A total of 142,811 citizens emigrated for employment to other countries in 2016. The most popular country of destination was South Africa. Out of the 142,811 citizens who emigrated, nearly all moved to South Africa (108,391). This is in line with other research that has reported movement, mostly of males, to South Africa where they would work in mines. Percentages of males and females who were regular wage or salary earners were higher (56% and 53.3%, respectively) than those of other occupations.

Emigration for study

A total of 777 Basotho emigrated for study outside the country in 2019, excluding those emigrating to South Africa, which is less than the South Africa

study permits of 859. The majority of the students, excluding South Africa, emigrated to India (39.6%) and China (30.4%).

Irregular migration: No foreigners were refused entry at the borders. A total of 4,451 Basotho were deported by the South Immigration Department during the period 2016–2020. The number of Basotho deportees declined from 1,035 Basotho in 2016, to 975 in 2017, thereafter increasing to 1,116 in 2018. The least number of Basotho deportees (287) were recorded in 2020 due to the travel ban during the COVID-19 era.

A total of 27 potential trafficking victims were identified in 2016 and 2017 while 21 were identified as trafficking victims during the period 2018–2020. In 2018, CGPU identified 12 trafficking victims. In addition, on the South African side, a total of 14 Basotho trafficking victims were reported. One person was convicted for sex trafficking in 2016, while six prosecutions (two for sex trafficking and four for labour trafficking) were identified in 2017. In 2018, one person was prosecuted for four sex trafficking and six for labour trafficking cases. In 2019 and 2020, there were no reports of prosecutions or convictions related to human trafficking.

Return migration: A total of 4,451 Basotho were deported during the period 2016–2020. In 2016, a total of 1,035 Basotho were deported, the number deported declining to 975 in 2017 and later increasing to 1,116 in 2018. The least number of Basotho deportees (287) were recorded in 2020 due to the travel ban during the COVID-19 era. Most of the deportees came through the Maseru Bridge.

Internal migration: The percentages of female migrants in the urban areas were higher than those of their male counterparts (53.6% and 46.4%, respectively). Most of the migrants in all urban areas were in the age groups 0–39 years (79.1%). This shows that younger ages are more likely to migrate to urban areas compared to older ages. A similar pattern was observed from peri-urban and rural areas settlements, where the proportions of female migrants exceeded those of male migrants with 52 per cent and 51.3 per cent, respectively. The majority of the lifetime migrants had migrated to Maseru (39.7%), followed by Berea (17.8%) and Leribe (15.4%), which are the popular cities. Lesotho experienced an increase in urbanization, with the percentage of urban population increasing from 34.2 per cent in 2016 to 38.7 per cent in 2020. Seven out of the ten districts had negative net migration, meaning that more people left the district than those coming into the district. Mafeteng and Thaba-Tseka had the largest negative net migration (-8 and -7.8, respectively). People migrate for different reasons, mainly for employment, study, economic and environmental reasons. Much rural–urban

migration is a result of hardship, as the rural and landless poor make their way to cities and towns with the hope of getting employment and the likelihood of earning a higher income.

Reasons for migration

Overall, the major reasons for emigration among the Basotho were for employment and study purposes, as well as poverty. The major reasons for immigration were for employment and running away from conflict and wars in countries of origin. The major underlying reasons for migration among the rural communities of Lesotho were to find work or gain income (44.4%), the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on agricultural livelihoods and water scarcity (18.5%), assist/provide food and income for family (15%) and marriage (11.1%) (Adaawen et al., 2023).

Internally displaced

The Basotho were internally displaced mainly due to national projects and natural disasters. In 2018, a total of 1,400 IDPs were reported as being displaced due to natural disasters, which include flash floods, hailstorms and heavy rains. The assessment on mainstreaming migration, environment and climate change into (re)integration initiatives also reported IDPs due to development in Thaba-Tseka project.

D.1.2. Impact of migration

It has been proven beyond reasonable doubt that migration stimulates development to a larger extent, as evident by the decline in remittances during the COVID-19 epidemic as countries closed borders as well as closing their industries. Remittances significantly declined in Lesotho; many households, which were solely dependent on remittances, were driven into deep poverty. Migration to a richer country provides income and alleviates poverty to the migrant as well as the family members left behind. The movement of citizens to urban areas means that they are moving to non-agricultural areas, which may have a negative impact on development in the rural areas. Communicable diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis remain a risk to refugees and migrants. HIV treatment and care for migrants is affected by their mobility. Migrants faced challenges in relation to accessing and using SRHR-HIV services, as well as irregular supply of commodities such as condoms. To date, Lesotho experienced two types of environment-induced migration: for instance, movement forced by environmental change was

caused by large-scale projects (LHWP) and extreme weather-induced migration, which contributed to internal migration.

Migration and human development

Lesotho has experienced an increase in the percentage of urban population from 34.2 per cent in 2016 to 38.7 per cent in 2020. Increase in rural–urban migration has resulted in rapid urbanization, leading to high pressure on urban infrastructure. Young people are more migratory and are moving to areas that are non-agricultural, negatively affecting rural development.

Migration and economic development

Remittances are a major contribution to the country's GDP, contributing 21 per cent of its GDP in 2020. A net migration has been recorded in some of the districts and Basotho moves to urban areas and outside the country. The rural areas were depopulated and the urban areas experienced some population growth, affecting development in the rural areas, as well as food security for the country.

Migration and employment and labour market

Most of the immigrants were employed in professional and managerial occupations, thereby stimulating brain gain in the country. A number of Basotho who migrate to South Africa have limited educational qualifications. The type of work done by Basotho migrants were more of the unskilled work, which include domestic work, construction work (often casual work), waste management (recycling), vendors, farmworkers and mineworkers.

Migration and social development

Remittances received have benefited many households in Lesotho by providing income for households, payment of school fees and other related expenditure, thereby contributing to general poverty reduction. However, excessive reliance on remittance can create dependency syndrome within households and communities, and potentially lead to lack of diversification and resilience in the local economy.

Migration and health

The border health officials screen migrants entering Lesotho to minimize the spread of diseases into Lesotho. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, migrants underwent testing and screening at points of entry in Lesotho, and those found positive were quarantined. Later, with the onset of vaccination, one had to produce a valid vaccination certificate for one to be allowed to enter Lesotho. Communicable diseases, such as HIV, tuberculosis and COVID-19, remain a risk to refugees and migrants. Migrants originating from countries with increased NCD rates and people living with chronic diseases exert pressure on the Lesotho poor health system.

Sexual and reproductive health

Lesotho, like most sub-Saharan African countries, has poor SRH outcomes and are highest among migrant girls and women, as most of them are pressured into risky decisions for their survival while having limited choices and often limited information available to them regarding their sexuality and SRHR. GBV and conflicts reported were between local men and migrant workers who were vying for females. Some of the women, whose husbands lost their jobs due to COVID-19, resorted to extramarital affairs with construction workers and migrants from neighbouring districts in order to procure food. Migrants reported challenges they faced in relation to accessing and using SRHR-HIV services, irregular supply of commodities and the continuing criminalization of sex work.

Migration and environment

Rapid climate change and environmental shocks in Lesotho have forced the Basotho to migrate. In one study on the impact of the environment on migration, research participants reported the increasing occurrence of heavy rainfall (20%), drought (18%) and water scarcity (14%) as being triggered by the ongoing climatic changes. The major underlying drivers of migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation across the rural communities in Lesotho identified were in search of job opportunities to gain waged income (44.4%), and the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on agricultural livelihoods and water scarcity (18.5%). Thus, climate and environmental changes have had an impact on livelihoods of Basotho, leading to displacement/relocation and food insecurity for some communities.

D.1.3. Migration governance

Lesotho's national policies and legal frameworks provide a strategic approach to migration, aiming to leverage its potential for development and enhance the well-being of individuals and the country. In line with this, the NCC on Migration and Development was established in 2010 as a coordinating forum. The NCC consists of government ministries/agencies, non-governmental stakeholders, academia and partners, playing a crucial role in shaping migration-related policies and decision-making processes. Effective migration governance can be achieved by ensuring the presence of appropriate policy and legal frameworks. Lesotho has implemented various policies and legislation to govern migration; some of them are discussed here.

National policy framework

National migration and development policy sets the ground for bridging the policy gap between migration and development and provides actionable measures for addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with migration.

Labour migration policy facilitates legal and regulated labour migration channels, protects the rights and welfare of migrant workers, and promotes skills development and knowledge transfer for the country's benefit.

The Immigration and Citizenship Policy of 2019 provides guidelines and procedures for managing immigration and citizenship matters in Lesotho. It establishes entry requirements, visa regulations, work permits and border control measures to ensure orderly immigration and security.

DWCP 2019–2023 focuses on the right to social protection and employment opportunities in Lesotho. It addresses labour rights, child labour, forced labour and discrimination in the workplace while fostering dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders.

The Framework for Managing Migration Data in Lesotho of 2014 establishes a comprehensive approach to collecting, analysing and managing migration-related data. It sets standardized data collection methods, builds analytical capacities and promotes data exchange and collaboration among relevant stakeholders.

The National Anti-trafficking Persons Strategic Framework and Action Plan of 2011 addresses trafficking in persons by implementing preventive measures, protecting victims and strengthening collaboration between stakeholders.

In 2010, Lesotho established a forum called the NCC on Migration and Development, a migration coordinating forum that plays a key role in addressing migration issues in the country.

National legislation

The Immigration and Citizenship Bill of 2019 provides more flexible requirements for citizenship and naturalization for immigrants with scarce or critical skills. The Bill aims to update and modernize existing immigration laws to align with international standards and changing migration trends.

The Trafficking in Persons Act of 2011 is a law aimed at combating human trafficking. It defines offences related to human trafficking and imposes penalties for individuals or entities involved in these activities, such as recruitment, transportation and exploitation of people.

The Lesotho Labour Code Order of 1992 establishes a specialized court to handle labour-related matters and disputes. It adjudicates cases related to employment contracts, unfair dismissals, wages and working conditions.

The National Identity Act of 2011 governs the issuance and management of national identity cards in Lesotho. It defines the process for issuing these cards, including their format, design, security features and validity period.

The Refugees Act of 1983 provides legal guidelines for the treatment, rights and protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in Lesotho. It aligns with the internationally accepted definition of a refugee and establishes procedures for determining refugee status and the rights afforded to recognized refugees.

The Refugees Regulations of 1986 complements the Refugees Act by providing detailed guidelines and procedures for implementing its provisions.

Regional frameworks, protocols and policies

Lesotho subscribes to various regional frameworks, protocols and policies that include, among others, ILO-SADC Decent Work Programme (2013–2019); SADC Action Plan on Labour Migration of 2013, SADC Employment and Labour Protocol of 2014; SADC Labour Migration Policy Framework of 2014 and SADC Revised Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2020–2030.

International instruments

In the pursuit of effective migration governance, it is essential to maintain compliance with international standards. Lesotho has ratified several international agreements and treaties, which play a significant role in this regard. These include, among others: Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951, 1967); ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised 1949) (no. 97); Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions), 1975 Convention (no. 143); International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families of 1990; Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children of 2000; and Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air of 2000.

D.2. Recommendations concerning mainstreaming migration into development policies

In order to maximize the potential positive impact of migration, the following recommendations can be adopted:

- Recommendations concerning mainstreaming migration into development policies.
- Remittances contribute to Lesotho's GDP as well as alleviate household and community poverty. There is a need to support those working abroad so that they continue remitting back home.
- Greater policy and programming efforts facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants to enable them to put their diverse skills and capital to the best use.
- Bilateral and multilateral agreements should be considered between Lesotho and key countries of origin and destination that would contribute to the reduction in remittance transaction costs and, in turn, maximize the benefits of migration.
- Construction of dams to mitigate against climate change to reduce rural-urban migration as well as international migration.
- Harness skilled immigrants for development in Lesotho by incorporating visa/work permit conditions that require immigrant professionals to provide training and imparting of skills, so as to improve the skills base and employability of Lesotho workers.

D.3. Recommendations regarding the migration governance framework

The successful design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of migration-related policies and programmes hinges on a coherent plan by all relevant stakeholders in Lesotho. By establishing appropriate policy and legal frameworks, Lesotho can create an enabling environment for effective migration governance, ensuring the protection of migrants' rights, promoting socioeconomic development and maximizing the benefits of migration for both migrants and host communities. This report recommends the following:

- Strengthen the role and functioning of the NCC, which has been set up to deal with a range of migration-related matters in Lesotho, including the development of a strategic plan, by providing necessary resources, engaging all relevant stakeholders and promoting collaborative efforts to effectively carry out its responsibilities in coordinating migration and development efforts.
- Align the Lesotho migration legal, policy and implementation framework with international and regional obligations and standards and remove non-compliant provisions and practices, in relation to discrimination based on nationality.
- Adopt a framework for managing irregular migration via domestic and cross-border arrangements to facilitate safe and legal migration and curb irregular migration.
- Ensure compliance with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families of 1990 as regards the position of irregular migrants in Lesotho, with reference to labour rights/protection, social security benefits, the transfer of earnings and savings to the country of origin upon leaving Lesotho and basic minimum protection foreseen in Article 17 of the Code on Social Security in SADC.

D.4. Recommendations concerning improvements to migration statistics and the overall evidence base

Lesotho has various ministries, departments and agencies that produce data. However, there is lack of reliable statistics on migration to enable proper planning for development, even though Lesotho has a dynamic and complex migration pattern. This lack of reliable statistics has hindered the capacity of Lesotho and its development agencies to fully enhance and manage the development potential embedded in the migration streams. The report recommends the following:

- Continuously improve the implementation of the framework for managing migration data in Lesotho to enhance data collection systems, build analytical capacities and ensure the regular exchange of migration-related data among relevant stakeholders.
- Regular updates to the Lesotho Migration Profile, under the leadership of the NCC, will ensure that policymakers have access to relevant and up-to-date migration data and analysis to inform their decision-making. Good practices from other countries, such as making legal provisions for updating the Migration Profile, should be explored.
- The Government of Lesotho to invest in an LMIS utilizing a standardized template for in-migration and outmigration and implement the envisaged national identification and registration system.
- Strengthen the cross-border institutional collaboration with South Africa to capture all the exits and departures.
- Conduct analysis and produce research on various topics on migration, particularly on certain aspects of the migration–development nexus, research on mixed migration, keeping the migrant at the centre of the analysis.

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International Organization for Migration
17 route des Morillons, P.O. Box 17, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 717 9111 • Fax: +41 22 798 6150
Email: hq@iom.int • Website: www.iom.int