

Stories From Lesotho

The source of my water is a borehole. There are six wells in my village of more than a thousand people. The women and children begin very early in the morning to get water for bathing and cooking. Most of the time the women carry it on their heads. The children bring wheelbarrows. The containers are 20-liter plastic jugs.

*MaryAnn Camp
Ha Rantubu, Lesotho*

The community has a water supply committee. Recently five of the six wells were broken through carelessness and vandalism. The local water committee went to the district water committee and it took three months to repair the wells. The women are the main caretakers of water used in the homes. The men and boys who herd the animals manage the water sources for the animals. Some of the men have told me that during the summer they must rotate the animals for water. There is much tension in the village when the animal water sources dry up.

*MaryAnn Camp
Ha Rantubu, Lesotho*

The chief is responsible for managing the water of the whole village. For the mission, the mother superior of the convent controls the water. The difference in the water supply for the mission (pumped through pipes) and the village (fetched from a protected spring) is striking. In families, women control the water because they are the ones fetching it. Most men have very little involvement in day-to-day running of the household. (Most able men work in the mines in South Africa or anywhere else they can find a job.) There is no field irrigation.

*Claire Hilger
Christ the King Mission, Qacha's Nek, Lesotho*

The village has an elected committee responsible for paying maintenance fees to Rural Water Supply and monitoring the systems in the village. In the families, it is the responsibility of the women and girls to supply the household with water.

Since there are no irrigation systems in my area of Lesotho, the farmers can do little with regard to their fields. Some do have water collection tanks to collect rainwater for their garden and domestic uses, however, this also is the responsibility of the women.

*Cynthia Holahan
Ha Nkoka, Thaba-Tseka District, Lesotho*

Collecting water is usually the responsibility of the children in the family. Many girls will carry buckets of water on their heads. They have such good balance that they can walk one or two miles and not splash any of it. Boys will also collect water if they are not herding the animals. But they don't carry the buckets on their heads. They will use a wheelbarrow. They will also sometimes give each other rides in the wheelbarrows for fun.

Using the water for cooking and washing is always the responsibility of the women and girls. On Saturdays the women and girls will gather at the river and help each other wash their clothes.

*Becki Krieg
Qacha's Nek, Lesotho*

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There is a village water committee. The committee is in charge of the well, and someone holds a key to our village well. That person opens and locks the well daily. It is important to lock it up because at night, people might steal the water. In families, *Bo'Me* (women) fetch water; sometimes children do, too. Men hardly ever get water.

*JeanMarie Mitchell
Ha Tebelo, Lesotho*

The farmers in Lesotho depend entirely on rain for their crops to grow. In my village there is one farmer who received foreign aid to set up some irrigation pipes. He is very lucky. However, he is only one farmer out of the many in this country who have no irrigation. Also, his farmland is very small.

This farmer has very little money to maintain his new irrigation system. If anything breaks, he does not have the money to repair it now. If that happens, he too will depend on nature, like everyone else.

Foreign aid is readily available in Lesotho. However, there is usually no plan for the maintenance of the new technology foreign countries install. Either the money is not available for repairs or there is no person skilled to do the work. Also it is difficult to get the parts that are needed to repair equipment

*Becki Krieg
Qacha's Nek, Lesotho*