

Action Lesotho Research Working Papers¹

AL Working Paper 1: The impact of Action Lesotho's projects on the lives of the staff, project participants and partners

JACQUI O'RIORDAN, OCTOBER 2014

This report is the first of a series of working papers arising from research undertaken in August 2014² with clients, staff and key stakeholders who have had different types of involvement with Action Lesotho. The aim of this series of thirteen in-depth interviews was to attempt to reach an understanding of the breadth and scope of people's experiences of involvement with Action Lesotho.

The actual interview schedule is attached in Appendix 1, with the omission of participants' names, although in some cases identities can be recognised because of the nature of people's involvement with Action Lesotho. Following the research protocol adopted during the course of the interviews, such is known and acceptable to participants. The interview protocol followed research and ethical guidelines promoted in following best research practice, as outlined in the Sociological Association of Ireland's *Ethical Guidelines* (2006). In particular these guidelines advise that

As far as possible, sociological research should be based on the freely given informed consent of those studied. This implies a responsibility on members to explain as fully as possible, and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken, and how it is to be promoted. In general, co-operation in fieldwork should be negotiated and not assumed. Where there is a possibility that data may be shared with other researchers, the potential uses to which the data might be put may need to be discussed with research participants (2006: Research Ethics)

At the outset of each interview, the purpose of the research was fully explained to participants, as were limitations to anonymity and confidentiality, pertaining to the

¹ A series of working papers is being developed by Action Lesotho that draw on qualitative research carried out in August 2014. This research comprised a small number of in-depth interviews with people who are/have been engaged with Action Lesotho and was concerned with eliciting their experiences of this engagement.

² The research was part-funded by Action Lesotho and the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, University College Cork. The research was undertaken by Jacqui O'Riordan.

particular context and person in question. Participants were requested to sign consent forms and where participants were under eighteen years of age, the consent of their parents/guardians was also requested and was received. A sample form is included in Appendix 2. Participants were made aware of how the knowledge gained through the interviews would be used, and the information they shared remained their information and that their consent could be withdrawn, if they chose to withdraw it.

As could be expected a broad range of issues arose during the course of the interviews due to the willingness of participants to share their views and experiences. In reviewing the material produced it was decided that the most effective manner to give voice to these issues was through the production of a series of working papers, each focusing on key thematic areas identified. The first of these is dealt with in this paper which is concerned with elucidating the impact / changes brought about in participants through their engagement with Action Lesotho. It is structured into three distinct but intersecting sections; the first of these focuses on the views and experiences of staff in this regard, the second focuses on the views and experiences of recipients of interventions and the final section turns its attention to views and experiences of representatives of partner, state and para-state organisations that are co-operating with Action Lesotho.

STAFF

Staff members, including full time and occasional staff, were overwhelmingly positive regarding their involvement with Action Lesotho, although it is also important to note that this is despite what they considered to be low salary/remuneration levels. It was also regardless of their motives for becoming involved in the first instance. Such motives generally were that they needed an income, became involved as a stop gap measure and/or wanted to remain in the locality, and viewed it as a continuation of their work in addressing issues facing their community/ies – very commonplace reasons that one would expect to find for people taking up any employment positions and being involved in community-focused work.

They reported being proud that they were working for an organisation that was concerned with helping vulnerable people in the community, and in being part of helping people to access better quality lives and livelihoods. Mention was made of seeing the difference that Action Lesotho is making ‘all around, everywhere in the

community'. Some staff reported that since they began working with Action Lesotho they had developed increased levels of knowledge and appreciation of the challenges some people in their communities faced. The following quotes give expression to these views: 'I didn't even know that people that we're helping in Action Lesotho, I was not aware that there are people who live under such conditions' [and] 'I'm just going to help, just for two weeks or three weeks. I will see. But when I get here I see that there are things that I can change'.

Some indicated they had come from poor families themselves, but through their work with Action Lesotho realised that there were families and households much worse off than their own; households where adults and children simply had no food. This was something that they had not previously considered and gives an indication of the levels of poverty present in the community. 'I thought my own family was poor, but I was wrong, even though we were poor, we had food'. They were proud to be part of addressing the difficulties such individuals, families and households faced, as this quote indicates – 'It feels great to be using resources to help people ... see people's lives change'.

This knowledge is something that they internalised. Once it was gained and once they had become involved in addressing challenges faced, they considered that it would always stay with them and be part of what they did and how they lived. Such sentiments reflect Hamington's arguments on the significance of 'doing' in developing a deepening concern for community/society (Hamington, 2010). It was spoken about in terms of not being satisfied any longer in limiting their concerns to those that impacted specifically on their own families and households. Now they extended their orientations to broader concerns within the community.

In this, staff considered that the organisation was different from other places they had worked, in that it sought to change people's lives for the better. 'Yes [it is] different – changing lives of people who have nothing'. Being part of this was something that they valued. This, they considered it to be a significant change in their perspectives, their thinking and general orientation.

Becoming aware of the situation of, what is sometimes theoretically referred to as the ‘distant other’³ led them into putting themselves in the place of others and in thinking about how such conditions impacted on how people experienced their lives. This is very well expressed in the following quote ‘how they felt, when people are not having food, how does he feel then you know?’ The posing of such questions indicates a discriminating engagement with the lived realities of poverty faced by others and a questioning of the conditions that facilitate it. Such engagement was also spoken about in emotional terms. Staff indicated that they were shocked to see the living conditions of some people, particularly some of those on the Malimpho programme⁴, and this exposure led them to think again about their position in the community. Such reflexivity and empathy has developed as a result of employment with Action Lesotho. Their emotional responses also contributed to their motivation to ensure the effectiveness of initiatives. Literature on care places significant value on importance on the ‘relational’ individual, draws attention to care motivators, discusses the importance and role of empathy and links the role of care to building strong bonds of solidarity across society. (see for instance, Held 2006; Lynch 2009; Robinson 2012). In general, they argue that without support for these foundational aspects of society, social connection and cohesion perish. In this context, the significance of changes identified by staff is all the more noteworthy.

Others indicated that the community-focused work in which they had been involved for some time was enhanced and extended through their involvement with Action Lesotho. They viewed their involvement with Action Lesotho as a powerful vehicle through which their long-term engagement in community service was sustained and reinforced. From this point of view, Action Lesotho was one of the means through which they were able to address issues arising for vulnerable groups within their community. In such instances, their community engagement was intricately bound up with people’s identities and belief systems. Often they spent considerable time, in and outside of their involvement with Action Lesotho, in helping others in their community. Those who spoke from this perspective also generally drew on their

³ See, for instance Maurice Hamington, (2010). ‘The Will to Care: Performance, Expectation, and Imagination’ *Hypatia*, 25(3): 675-695 for a discussion on the role of performing care in cultivating concern and advocacy for those outside immediate personal contacts.

⁴ This is a support programme operated by Action Lesotho that focuses on providing nutrition and nursing support for people living with HIV and AIDS. As participants on the programme become well enough they can then avail of a range of skills training supports to enable them to rebuild their independence.

experiences of living, mainly, in South Africa, of being exposed there to the norms and practices of other ways of living, as well as their work with Action Lesotho, as important in influencing their outlook and orientation. They tended to value cultural exchange and exposure to ideas and patterns of behaviour outside of the locality in contributing to informing change. Such had often been a starting point for them in questioning their own values and they considered that a broadening of people's perspectives and vision was important in imagining and instituting change.

Important points are being made here; the focus of Action Lesotho's work, in identifying issues pertaining to vulnerable members of the community and addressing them, changes both the perspective of staff working on associated initiatives and supports the work of those already engaged in addressing problems arising within their communities.

People considered the alternatives to not becoming/remaining involved with Action Lesotho, even though initially, and sometimes for some time, they might have been reluctant to become/remain involved. A point came when one staff member 'start[ed] saying, No. I cannot leave this, just for the sake of nothing. This is a good job'. This consideration was also linked also to a realisation that Action Lesotho as an employer was serious about its work and commitment, not just concerned with keeping people busy, and a belief that they were interested in the community's wellbeing in the longer term. It also led to reflection on how the community would not have benefitted had Action Lesotho not become engaged in the locality. Inherent in this idea, as also expressed by others, was that the job was one from which the community at large would benefit, not just the individual staff member/s.

Changes that staff considered necessary that would contribute towards achieving better lives for people in the community included changes in farming practices, '[Basotho] need to change way we deal with animals, crops, use, lands all those things'. It also includes exploring different ways of dealing with conflict and communicating with family, friends, parents and young people, as well as ways and patterns of communication between the board and staff of Action Lesotho. In achieving change, however, it was emphasised that Irish and Basotho have to meet half way and really try to understand one another, raising a key issue on levels and

limits of participation⁵. One staff member commented, ‘Irish come up with idea, [but Basotho staff] might not agree knowing how Basotho are – might cause a problem – we see things differently’. As is evident from this statement, it was pointed out that sometimes good ideas that originate with Board members in Ireland do not take into account the practicalities of customs, culture and normative practices in Lesotho. Sometimes, the thinking behind identifying the recipients of interventions is not fully considered. Where this is the case, it was stated that such interventions can be expected to fail. However, even knowing or, at the very least, expecting this outcome, staff indicated that, at times, they felt that they could only follow directions and look on, waiting for the inevitable. The clear message here is on recognising the importance of working with and valuing local knowledge and of working to find ways to ensure that local voices are aired, fully heard and acted upon.

It is obvious, then that working with Action Lesotho, in different capacities had significant impacts on people’s lives. It impacted on their knowledge and understanding of their communities. They were proud to be part of an organisation whose work was oriented towards helping others. This involvement motivated them to look outside their own immediate households and families and to engage actively in building common bonds across the community; those who had not thought about ‘the distant other’ previously, now did and indicated that this was an orientation that they now internalised. Those who had been more involved in community building previously perceived Action Lesotho to be a powerful vehicle for change in the community. For all, their levels of reflexivity and critical engagement grew and their words of caution regarding the importance of listening to grounded experiences is noteworthy, as are their views on the importance of working towards sustainable and effective intercultural communication.

CLIENTS AND RECIPIENTS OF INITIATIVES AND TRAINING

Likewise, those who have been involved as clients/trainees/recipients of Action Lesotho’s initiatives were also overwhelmingly positive about their engagement with Action Lesotho, although again, this was qualified with a keen focus on developing

⁵ While in NGO work in general, in national and international contexts, often places emphasis on participation and participatory methods/approaches, there is now a growing literature on the limits of participation. A recent article that offers a good account of these concerns is Glen Wright (2012). ‘NGOs and Western hegemony: causes for concern and ideas for change’, *Development in Practice*, 22(1): 123-134.

sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families, for those who had family responsibilities. Once people were well enough to engage in economic activity improving their material conditions was generally, and not unexpectedly, a priority. Participants included those who are/have been involved in craft enterprise initiatives; Ha Nynene Crafts, Lesotho Mountain Crafts (LMC); clients of the Malimpho programme and of the weekend support programme for vulnerable children, as well as trainees of skill-building initiatives such as the English language/computer classes and of LMC. Some had been involved in more than one programme, for instance moving from being a client on the Malimpho programme to becoming a participant in a skill-building initiative or perhaps supporting the weekend programme.

Those who were/had been clients of the Malimpho programme considered this to be life-saving for them. Not only did becoming involved in it mean that they had food to eat, and some predictability about that food, it also began for them a process of accepting and meeting the challenges they faced in living with HIV and AIDS⁶. Again, here attention is brought to the stark realities faced by some of the recipients of Action Lesotho's initiatives: becoming a recipient meant access to food to eat and a level of predictability about that food. Moreover, prior to their engagement with this programme, they indicated, generally, that they had been in denial about their illness, and were afraid and unwilling to address the associated problems they faced. Furthermore, because of their illness they were not in a position to work and said that they were then unable to do anything. Thus, becoming a client of the Malimpho programme was seen to be a great help at a particularly low point in their lives. It put food on the table, enabled them to access medical advice and to confront the challenges they faced because of their illness.

It is important to note here also that help they received from siblings was limited; either because they themselves were experiencing hardship and/or did not live nearby. Help from parents seemed to be more in evidence, although this could also be limited, again because of parents' own restricted economic opportunities as well as increased family responsibility, for instance, for children of those parents who had died. One participant commented that her mother's help was invaluable to her in a multiplicity of ways; in providing her with a place to stay, helping her when she was very weak

⁶ According to UN AIDS (2013), an estimated 360,000 people in Lesotho are living with HIV and AIDS, out of a population of over 2 million people.

and in paying school fees. Participants also reported that neighbours sometimes helped them in whatever ways they could, but again, their resources were also stretched. The picture painted here is one of a community so hard-pressed that little or no means of mutual support are available to those who cannot themselves engage in livelihood activities.

Support from Action Lesotho in the form of food meant an immediate and significant change in their ability to 'put food on the table'. It was also associated with the beginning of a process of accepting and meeting the challenges of living with HIV and AIDS, of no longer being in denial about their illness and also beginning to engage in advising others. Participants indicated that it is common for people to be in denial that they are HIV positive and are afraid of infection. It was commented that this continues to be a big problem generally. One participant indicated very powerfully that 'Action Lesotho helped me to counsel myself that I am ill ...[and in getting better] I feel happy and counsel other people, I tell them that you can live after HIV'.

Of note is that this interaction does not stop with engaging with adults. As well as being able to advise friends and peers, people spoke about being more able to speak to their children about living with HIV and AIDS because of their involvement with Action Lesotho. One participant in particular indicated that engagement with Action Lesotho's programme has led to greater engagement and communication with her children in explaining to them why she has to take medicines, how she feels about living with HIV and AIDS and generally communicating with them more openly about her illness and sexuality. She commented that now 'I counsel [my] children and tell them about my life, why I need to take medicine'. Given other comments made by research participants on a lack of communication between parents and children on issues related to sexuality, reproduction and so on, this is a very important departure. It can be viewed as challenging normative and customary practices that preclude talking to children about sex/sexuality as well as beliefs that associate those who talk about sex in any way to children, as being bad people, who ought to be shunned by the community (Khau 2012). In this way it does indicate the potential for the development of inter-generational relationships that are based on more open and discursive parameters than is/has been the norm in Basotho culture to date.

Furthermore, as people became more able to engage they found opportunities for skill development through Action Lesotho's initiatives. This could be through craft initiatives, language and computer training. One woman spoke about the role of Action Lesotho in helping her to improve her sewing skills and knowledge of colour mixing, leading to her ability now to make quality goods, which could be sold. She also valued the exposure she has had to other people's ideas and experiences and the opportunities she has to share ideas that she got through her involvement with LMC. Now, she says, she 'can put something on the table, can eat, can get food'. Of note here is the manner in which she recognises the value of learning from and through others and of sharing her knowledge and the skills she has gained.

However, it was also emphasised that people expect involvement in initiatives to make a difference to them, to their economic situation, and not just be a way to pass time. A problem identified by participants involved in craft initiatives was a delay in the making of craft work and in getting paid for it, as it might take some time for the item to be purchased. While the process was clearly understood, nevertheless, this delay remains an issue. Another issue that arose was that of certification of courses undertaken. People were of the opinion that certification of training was important in accessing employment and suggested that this is also a dominant concern within the community. Indeed, one participant commented that she withdrew from a programme having listened to friends and acquaintances who said that the course she was taking with Action Lesotho was not worth being on because it wasn't formally certified. She did, however, return to the programme again and completed the course, having re-evaluated her situation herself.

On positive note, in addressing problems they faced it was commented that 'people in Action Lesotho listen, [one can] can talk to them, and they respond, and ask questions'. One woman commented that she liked the open communicative way that Action Lesotho approached its work. This engagement with issues of concern was valued; people felt listened to and taken seriously, something that is considered to contribute towards a process of confidence building, and a precursor to critical and reflexive engagement in civil engagement.

To an extent this process was voiced in comments people made about feeling more in control of their lives since they had become engaged with Action Lesotho. As well as the substantive help in accessing food and skill development people referred to having

more power over their lives. One participant commented on how Action Lesotho ‘helped to improve myself and to get more power’ and also said that being involved with Action Lesotho was ‘helpful ... because since [being part of it] I have moved from one point to another [and] the ‘things [work] is different to what was I doing before, and better’. Being in a position to take care of themselves their concern then extended to vulnerable children in the community, similar to the process identified above regarding staff. The same participant commented that ‘[W]hat bothers me is the children who do not have anything to eat or someone to look after them’ again displaying a concern and empathy for the those outside of her family/household, as discussed in the previous section.

Changes identified by this group of participants are also far-reaching. Significantly, the need to access food on a regular basis was emphasised time and time again. Once people had some predictability around this, they turned their attention towards making a living for themselves and their families. Both women and men wanted to be involved in economic activities that would lead to a regular income for them and through which they could provide for their families. Gaining skills that enabled them to produce quality products was of paramount importance for those involved in craft production and ensuring certification was important to those attending courses. Through their experiences they valued the sharing of ideas with others and sometimes became change agents within their communities, as evidenced through women breaking taboos in talking to children about her illness, challenging normative practices in very significant ways. Living in hard-pressed communities where people are heavily stressed, their experiences highlight the importance of ensuring that interventions are well structured and geared towards their expressed needs. Seeing this in action facilitates agency and active community involvement.

REPRESENTATIVES OF PARTNER AND STATE ORGANISATIONS

The interview schedule included the perspectives of some representatives of state, district and para-state organisations as well as representatives drawn from partners involved in agricultural and community based activities. Generally, these representatives identified a great deal of potential in their engagement with Action Lesotho and were overwhelmingly positive.

A representative of landlords in the locality, on whose land Action Lesotho carries out its farming initiative, indicated satisfaction at the arrangement with Action Lesotho and hoped that it would continue. This landlord did not wish to farm his land himself and neither did he have the farming skill and knowledge to do so. Through the arrangement whereby Action Lesotho farms land and landowners receive a portion of the crop, his perception was that the land was being used well and the return to him meant a reliable contribution to household finances. Action Lesotho's initiative provides him with a regular income, from which he can feed his animals, provide for his family and gain an income. Through his involvement he is also satisfied that he is updated on developments and work processes in the fields and is more than happy to continue this involvement.

The work that has been carried out within the craft sector was commented upon as being particularly significant in supporting the sector and the people working at an official level to support it. One para-state representative commented, that on meeting with Action Lesotho: 'I was overwhelmed because that was one area [craft sector] that was neglected for quite a while'. More generally, in making reference to work being carried out in the craft sector and through seeing the manner in which capacity building was being approached by Action Lesotho, officials commented that the potential of the sector was opened up to them. One representative working at district level, indicated that without engagement with Action Lesotho the job that they were assigned to do would not have been possible for them. This representative went on to add that they, themselves, had learnt a considerable amount about the craft sector through attendance as a participant in workshops/training provided by Action Lesotho. This learning contributed significantly to the official's ability to meet work targets and understand the remit of the job, as the following comment illustrates: 'So it was a little bit frustrating when I first came here [to job]. I didn't know where to start, who to contact ... but just for now I'm beginning to love my job, especially after meeting M'me Pippa, Action Lesotho and LMC members ... a little bit now I know, I understand'. From this is clearly that engagement with and support from Action Lesotho has made a considerable and positive impact. The representative went on to say that her understanding of the sector, its potential was growing all the time and that she would now recommend younger people to train and become involved in it. This is something that she would previously not have considered doing, as she commented,

the craft sector was not generally viewed as not being a sector into which one would encourage young people with potential. Such sentiment was also reiterated by partners in a range of activities with which Action Lesotho is involved and was particularly commented upon with reference to facilitating communication between partner organisations and public officials.

Regarding the public sector more generally, there was a perception that officials might sometimes be placed in positions where they did not have knowledge/expertise necessary for them to execute their responsibilities, or a way of accessing it. It was suggested that this was considered to be a means whereby officials were given responsibilities, but in such a way that it would be most unlikely that they would succeed in their job. This was an observation and reasons why this might be a practice were not suggested, but the comment was made in different ways by a number of public officials. One participant questioned the interest District Councils in providing support as it seemed to him that officials were commonly appointed who had no interest in what was happening and no interest in supporting improvements in their designated areas. ‘...government policies and government processes, one would even question what kind of interest the people who are there have...If we appoint a government official who is not interested in what is happening she or he will not even make any initiative to anything to try and improve the level of output’.

The intervention, then of support from Action in terms of immersion skills associated with, for instance, craft training, organisation of networking events and learning visits as well as linking with higher education institutions to fill this knowledge and skill gap, meant that officials could and did access knowledge, skills and contacts that enabled them to carry out their work. As a result some indicated that they became enabled to carry out their responsibilities and were motivated to pursue further knowledge and skill acquisition. While this is significant, issues remain regarding organisational cultures that seem to be conducive to the development of apathetic working environments which could take some time to address more comprehensively and are part of a much larger problem. It must also be viewed in the context of an on-going lack of investment in the public sector generally in Lesotho, along with restricted rights of workers to organise, as very recently commented upon in the *BTI 2014 Lesotho Country Report*. Such plays no small part in demotivating a workforce

and in limiting their potential to voice a collective opinion (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2014).

These participants highlight the impact that can be made through creatively and systematically working to enhance skill acquisition, from the eyes of partners and state representatives. The regularity of income arises again, as does the satisfaction of knowing that land is being used productively. The manner in which challenges faced by official cultures, through support of individuals, is shown. Moreover, the impact this has on individuals is important, in the provision of practical support and as a motivator in itself. It has the potential influence others and this is displayed through enthusiasms voiced by participants.

REFERENCES

- Bertelsmann Stiftung, (2014) *BTI 2014 — Lesotho Country Report*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Maurice Hamingon, (2010). ‘The Will to Care: Performance, Expectation, and Imagination’ *Hypatia*, 25(3): 675–695.
- Held, Virginia, (2006). *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political and Global*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Khau, Mathabo 2012 Sexuality education in rural Lesotho schools: challenges and possibilities, *Sex Education*, 12(4): 411–423.
- Lynch, Kathleen, John Bake, Maureen Lyons, Saraa Cantillon, Judy Walsh, Maggie Feeley, Nially Hanlon, and Maeve O’Brien (2009). *Affective Equality*, Palgrave Macmillan: London
- Robinson, Fiona, (2011). *The Ethics of Care: A Feminist Approach to Human Security*, Temple University Press: Philadelphia.
- Sociological Association of Ireland, (2006) *Ethical Guidelines. Sociological Association of Ireland*. Available: http://www.sociology.ie/docstore/dls/pages_list/3_sai_ethical_guidelines.pdf
- [Accessed 7 July 2014]
- UN AIDS (2013). Lesotho: HIV and AIDS Estimates www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/lesotho/ [Accessed 8 August 2014]
- Wright Glen W., (2012) ‘NGOs and Western hegemony: causes for concern and ideas for change’, *Development in Practice*, 22(1): 123-134. DOI: 10.1080/09614524.2012.634230

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

No	Schedule	Rel to AL	Why
1	D1 am 4 th August D3 pm 6 th August	Farm Manager	Key changes in life evident
2	D2 am 5 th August D3 am 6 th August	General Manager	Involved in AL from beginning and key person
3	D4 am 7 th August	Was part of Lepoqong Carers/now doing w/e cooking	Investigation of experiences of long term engagement with AL
4	D4 pm	Staff member	Investigation of outlook as part of AL staff
5	D5 am 8 th August	Recipient of Malimpho Programme. Long term engagement with AL.	Changes in life/options evident (Has done computer course – a little; recovering patient; a tuck shop ?)
6	D5 pm 8 th August	Representative of Nyenye Crafts	Long term engagement with AL
7	D6 am 9 th August	Engagement with AL/recipient of weekend programme/ovc	Exploration of outlook and perspectives
8	D6 am 9 th August	Recipient of Training	Experience of course and impact of it on livelihood/options
9	D8 am 11 th August	Long term engagement and recipient of AL's initiatives	Recipients of AL and partner organisation interventions
10	D8 11 th August	Engagement with disability initiative	
11	D9 pm 12 th August	Landowner and Chief / farmer	Farmers forum; landowner
12	D9 pm 12 th August	District Cultural Officer	Attended LMC training/ engagement with Govt. offices
13	D11 pm 13 th August (Maseru)	BEDCO Repr	Engagement at Sector Level with AL

APPENDIX 2 - SAMPLE CONSENT FORMS

Socio Anthropological Interviews

AUGUST 2014 – MAPUTSOE, LESOTHO.

Consent Form

Name of Research Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. It is part of a small number of in-depth interviews with staff and people who have been involved with the work of Action Lesotho and is aimed at helping to understand the different experiences people have had, both in their work with and as clients of Action Lesotho.

So, the reason for this interview is to get an idea of your experiences of working and being involved with Action Lesotho – how your connections with Action Lesotho have had an influence on your life, in big or small ways. So in this nothing is unimportant – what might seem like the smallest and most obvious things can be really helpful in getting a good and real understanding of the good and the not so good ways you have experienced that projects you have been involved in.

Having a good idea of your experiences and those of the others will really help in finding what Action Lesotho is doing well and where the organisation needs to better to understand the ways and practices of people in and around Maputsoe and so, help to do its work better. This will also help in getting a better understanding of how international development projects and partnerships work well and not so well. In this way, it has a possibility of influencing how other organisations can learn from the work of Action Lesotho and your experiences within it.

As a trained researcher, I have worked on very many community research projects, in Ireland and in Africa, for twenty years now. I have a genuine interest in promoting equality and trying to develop more equal relations in the work that I'm doing. In all the research that I do, I am very careful to make sure that I represent the views of the people I speak with as best I can and am respectful of the information that people share with me.

Your interview will be recorded, with your consent, and then I will write up an account of it. This information will be kept confidentially and will be securely stored in a hard drive computer storage unit. It will be shared only with people who will be involved in any write up and analysis of the work and only for that purpose.

Following your interview this information might be used in different ways to give a clearer account of the work of Action Lesotho. This could be, for instance, in reports about Action Lesotho, in funding applications and in academic articles. This information will be treated in a way that will not be personalized to you so that as high a level of confidentiality as possible will be kept.

- Do you consent to having this information written in these ways after this interview ?

Yes No

Remember that the information that you share with me remains your information and you have the right to withdraw your consent if you wish. You can contact me at this mobile phone number: +353 87 6868264

Signatures:

Dr Jacqui O’Riordan

Date: _____