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**An Analysis of Community Participation in Handicraft Projects
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Lesotho***KEYWORDS** Participation. Community Project. Handicraft. Vulnerable Groups. Poverty Alleviation

ABSTRACT The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which communities in Lesotho participate in income generating projects as a means of poverty alleviation. A case study of a handicraft project at Malealea community was examined with respect to the involvement of the participants in all project stages and the role of vulnerable members of the community (women, elderly and disabled). The study is anchored on Golden Munyaka's Grassroots Community Development Theory (GCD). Using in-depth interviews with 26 interviewees: 20 project members and six key informants, the findings show that even though the project was initiated by an outsider in 1998, an American Peace Corps volunteer, the participants were actively involved in all the stages of the project. The project succeeded to an extent in alleviating poverty among its members but not to the satisfaction of everyone. Also, the project embraced the following categories of community members: the elderly, disabled and women, though the latter dominated the project. The domination of the project by women is an indication that Lesotho still holds firmly to the traditional stereotype gender roles where women are very visible in home related chores. Nonetheless, the findings are consistent with the grassroots theory that people at that level should use their indigenous knowledge in projects' initiation and implementation.