

EDITOR'S NOTE

LNFOD is conducting public gatherings in 16 communities as part of the Gender Based Violence campaign the organization is committed to. The positive outcome so far with this campaign is that persons with disability are giving out feedback on the presented information. further it is quite visible that most persons with disability are still well informed about their rights and responsibility. As a journalist there are numerous human story's I come across relating to persons with disability, those who are thriving against all odds as well as those that are extremely affected by lack of awareness and this newsletter, I will be highlighting mostly gender based informative on the legal spectrum.



EDITOR- MOLULA MOFOSI

On that note, if you would like to contribute to the next issue or have received this newsletter from a third party and wish to be included on the mailing list, please contact Molula Mofosi at mofosidorcas@gmail.com or call +266 58020181

Best Regards
The Editor

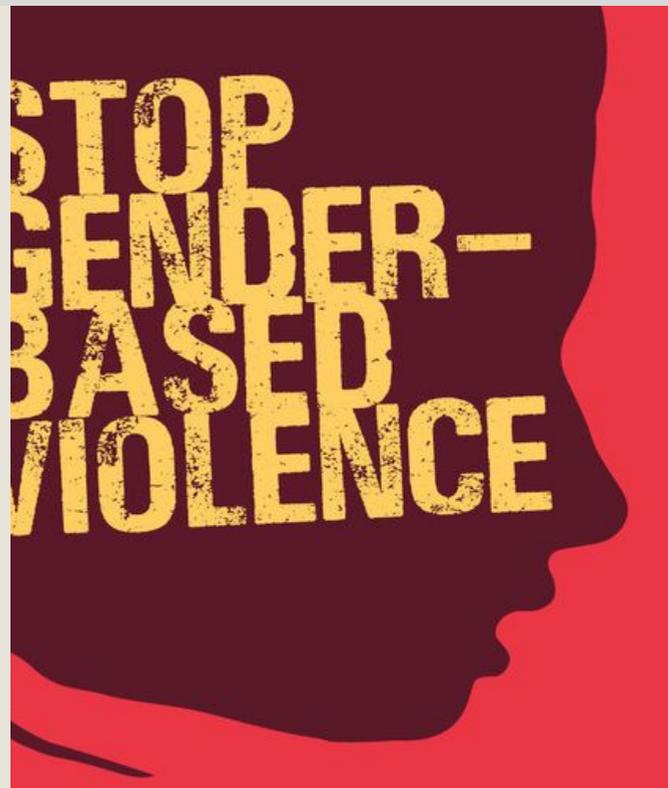
GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND DISABILITY #STOPGENDERBASEDVIO LENCE

MOLULA MO

It is not news that women with disabilities are more likely to be sexually abused or violated in some way. The public gatherings LNDFOD has been holding in 16 communities (ongoing) have raised awareness that most women with intellectual disabilities are abused.

When LNDFOD visited Tebe-tebe Ha lenkoane on September 23rd, a number of young women, all with intellectual disabilities, were able to share their stories of abuse for the first time. What these stories have in common is that women are afraid to report rape cases (or any form of GBV) to both their families and authorities. Gender-based survivors are likely to know who their abusers are, just as the ladies who shared their stories with LNDFOD did; they knew who their abuser was but were hesitant and scared to tell her family or the authorities.

Above lack of human rights education, this results in a great hesitation for persons with disability to report GBV cases, this is due to mere stigmatization of disability, basic social inequalities as well as dependence on people that become barriers for persons with disability to embody the confidence of speaking their minds, and over above, report the injustices they are facing. Until such barriers are delt with, GBV on persons with disability will remain a neglected public health and public security topic



ADVOCACY

The public gathering also primarily taught persons with disabilities and survivors of gender-based violence referral pathways, and most complaints were that, chiefs, who are the immediate authorities to be informed about any gender-based violence, are not aware of how to approach such cases, where a gender based case is reported to the chief, usually the chief does not pass on the case to police, for example, as they deal with this matters on their own, however, it is important for chiefs to attend public gatherings so that they, too, are aware of how gender-based violence cases are dealt with, and that they are more than just a theft case but rather a violation that deprive persons with disabilities fulfilment of their lives.

GBV, DISABILITY AND JUSTICE

MOLULA MOFOSI

A woman with disability is 3 times more likely to experience gender-based violence compared to a woman with no-disability. Lesotho is no exception in such reality. Despite the numerous policies, written political commitments and programs, gender-based violence still is an ongoing pandemic in Lesotho. It is even greater for persons with disability to access justice as the Disability Equity Act, 2021 does not have any specific clause that directly addresses GBV cases perpetuated against persons with disabilities which makes it even harder to prosecute such cases when they occur, it does not adequately and explicitly address the issue of access to justice where people with disabilities experience human rights violations.

Even though both men and women with disabilities experience GBV, women and girls with are at an increased risk. This is because people with disabilities may lack access to sexual education, which might otherwise help them identify and prevent abuse. In addition, women with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty and isolation than men with disabilities, or non-disabled persons thereby increasing their vulnerability, therefore, LNFOD will conduct public gatherings within sixteen (16) community councils to increase awareness on GBV and disability rights.



ADVOCACY

Lesotho is a signatory to a number of international treaties that explicitly prohibit any form of violence perpetuated against persons with disabilities. Article 16 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides that persons with disabilities have a right to be free from any form of violence and further addresses that State parties must respond effectively to GBV, taking appropriate measures to protect all persons with disabilities from violence, exploitation and abuse.

The convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women on the other hand urges state parties to exercise “due diligence” to address GBV committed by non-State actors and will be responsible if they fail to take appropriate measures to prevent as well as investigate, prosecute, punish and provide reparation for acts or commissions by non-State actors which result in gender-based violence yet there are no tangible measures undertaken by the government of Lesotho thus far to combat the prevalent GBV cases perpetuated against people with disabilities within communities.

VOTER'S EDUCATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY ON 2022 ELECTIONS

With the upcoming October general elections, LNFOD has been appointed by the Independent Electoral Commission Lesotho to offer voters education mainly to the persons with disability. The voters education was distributed in 5 districts which LNFOD already has projects, namely, Berea, Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Leribe and Butha-Buthe. The benefit of this voter's education project will assist LNFOD on intensifying the awareness of persons with disability on their human rights.

The voter's education is mainly to inform person with disability on their right to vote, how to vote as well as well encouraging independent voting as most persons with disability are influenced by their families who or what to vote. The leading point for this voter's education as well is to evoke the spirit of voting in the nation including persons with disability as most people had shown lack of interest in politics recently. It is important for persons with disability to take part in politics as politics affect every citizen despite their socio-economic class, abilities and level of education.



GENERAL NEWS

In order to supplement the educational gap amongst persons with disability, IEC in this year's voters' education has included brail material for inclusivity as well as sign language interpretation as to simplify the distribution of voter's education.

While still at it, the concerns of persons with disability were not slid aside the problems that have been faced for centuries still continue to prevail. Inaccessible infrastructure/ building, poor provision of services, stigmatization of disability and lack of representation in the parliament to mention a few. LNFOD as a mediator between persons with disability and non-disabled community (government, private sector, Organizations) the voters education project has enabled the organization to pursue it's mission, which is to advocate for, promote, and defend the rights of people with disabilities and their families through provision of training, material and emotional support, and by representing their needs to government, development partners and the wider community.

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DISABILITY
NEWSLETTER



PEOPLE YOU MAY KNOW

Meet - Mercia Viriato Lica, Mozambique's youngest elected Member of Parliament (MP), Lawyer and Disability Advocate. On 13 January 2020, at age 23, she became the youngest MP ever in the Republic of Mozambique's history, when she took the oath of office among other 249 parliamentarians. Because of a birth defect, she has no upper limbs. Typing on a phone, writing on paper, drinking water, using a computer — all this and a number of other activities that require hands and arms, she does with her feet. Hon. Lica obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) in Law from Maputo's Pedagogical University in 2019. In an interview, held on her inauguration day as a parliamentarian, Mercia discussed how she intends to inspire young Mozambicans:

"I hope to contribute to the development of the country in schooling and education. To encourage young people to never stop studying because education is the right path in life. I believe that by being here in the great chamber, I will encourage and inspire many people by the things I will do during my mandate. I believe that when people look at me and see that I am capable, they will also manage to take action," said Hon. Mercia Viriato Lica.

SOURCE WOMEN POWER AFRICA



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