

EDITOR'S NOTE

it is Graduation season and this month's newsletter focuses on inclusive education. Despite the government's slow progress in implementing the inclusive education policy, the involved stakeholders, from teachers to non-governmental organizations, are deeply involved in accommodating inclusivity in schools and how education is approached.

The featured articles share the success of institutions implementing inclusive education. Enjoy!

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 molulam@lnfod.org.ls or call +266 2233 0345

Best Regards
The Editor



EDITOR- MOLULA MOFOSI



LNFOOD

LIFE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AFTER GRADUATION.

MOLULA MOFOSI

Colleges and universities continue to be more inclusive for all kinds of disabilities. with Lerotholi Polytechnique recently signing a memorandum of understanding with National Association of the Deaf Lesotho on an initiate of accepting deaf students for the first time, inclusive education is gradually taking place. From the primary schools to colleges like the Institution of Extra Mural Studies as well as the National University of Lesotho, it is quite a visible adaptation to the inclusive education.

While implementation differs from school to school, disability to disability and curriculum to curriculum, implementation of inclusive education is moving quite slowly as lack of resources such as assistive devices, trained teachers to use assistive devices and further the government not engaging much in the provision of such resources. It is estimated that cost of providing educational and other resources to pupils with special needs could be 2 or 3 times greater than the cost of providing for students without special needs. Research has indicated that the financial provision for educational and other needs of individuals with disability is undertaken largely by non-government organizations. With schools like Mamello school and special needs centers located in Berea in Naleli village do not cater for severe disability not necessarily by choice but with lack of resources, some disabilities such as visual impairment cannot be catered for. With further challenges like accessibility and suitability of infrastructure in existing colleges and universities, inclusive education implementation is slow despite the increasing enrollment of students with disabilities.

With the graduation season still in full swing, more students with disabilities are graduating, and the ultimate youth unemployment outbreak does not exclude individuals with disabilities. The question of whether our education generally prepares students for the current labor market remains unanswered. From one of the recent graduates with hearing impairment 'MamoteteMokorosi who just graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Special Education however encouraged persons with disability to opt for vocational training over academic as the labour market is still not inclusive enough for academics with disabilities. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) as well as Organisations for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD) presented in 2018 that available statistics indicate that persons with disabilities are less likely to be employed compared to persons with non-disabilities.



ADVOCACY

Where available, statistics show that among persons with disabilities in employment, a larger proportion is in self-employment. One of the most significant barriers of inclusive employment relates to education, in many countries, persons with disabilities are still not included effectively in mainstream education, and further the mainstream national education on vocational training are often not well adapted. It therefore recommended through the Lesotho National Disability Mainstream Plan 2021-2025 more teachers be trained to handle learners with intellectual disabilities and all other disabilities as a way of incorporating inclusive education in teaching styles. Further affirmative employment of persons with disability in all sectors and levels will not only increase employment of person with disability but also schools will highly be forced to implement the inclusive education effectively as the education sector and labour market work hand in hand.

INCLUSIVE WITHOUT ASSISTANCE: ST.LYDIA PRIMARY

MOLULA MOFOSI

Without a doubt, assistive devices are associated with inclusive education; however, they are not the sole promoter of inclusive education. In the case of Saint Lydia Primary School, located in the heart of Berea district Pitsaneng, Ha-Mofoka, this primary school is a good example of inclusive education implementation aside from reliance on assistive devices.

Principal Pheello Francis Samuel is in charge. A Bachelor of Education holder told LNFOD that inclusive education piqued his interest while he was studying at the University of Free State. "As part of my Bachelor's degree, I studied modules on inclusive education." I was able to witness the university's continued implementation of the inclusive education policy by accommodating students with disabilities, restructuring their facilities, and excreta."

With his understanding of inclusive education, Principal Samuel assured that teachers understand what inclusive education is and what teaching styles are beneficial to children with disabilities. "At the heart of our principles is inclusive education. When I conduct an interview, one of the main thoughts I look for in a potential teacher is how deep do the understand inclusive education".

In line with a unique teaching style that accommodates all learners with and without disabilities, a grade 5 teacher expressed how she enjoys her job, "My teaching style is more engaging and playful, in order to accommodate my three students with learning difficulties," said 'Marapelang Matela.

Another teacher, Manko 'Mota shared her observation towards children with disabilities and their learning styles "Majority of them are good at physically engaging lessons such as agriculture." 'Mota continued "we have one learner with hearing and speech disability who has a photographic memory and does not forget what he is taught".



GENERAL NEWS

The school has in total 253 students and has accommodated six children with disabilities, mainly children with learning disciplines, physically challenged as well as hearing and speech impairment. the principal expressed that, it is the school's wish to accommodate children with disabilities of any kind, from minor to severe disabilities. Most children with disabilities were brought to school by teachers. " it is our mission to ensure every child in this area gets education as it is their right. Every teacher from St. Lydia knows that it is their duty to identify children with disabilities in their areas and encourage parents to bring them to school." Mentioned principal Pheello Samuel. "Our inclusion of children with disabilities has encouraged more parents to bring their children to school and break the stigma of hiding children." Principal Samuel concluded.

NADL BREAKS RECORD

MOLULA MOFOSI

On November 26th, NADL held its 12th annual graduation ceremony, breaking the record with 125 graduates. Graduates included both employed and unemployed individuals, the majority of whom were young.

Sign Language was formally introduced into the educational system in the 1700s after Abbe Charles Michel de l'Epee of Paris demonstrated that deaf people can learn. He demonstrated that through a system of conventional gestures, hand signs, and fingerspelling, deaf people could develop communication with themselves and the hearing world. On this day, NADL Chairman Let'ekha Ntlale honored this historic figure known as the "Father of the Deaf." Contextually, the human mind has a capacity for language and the ability to adapt to it, so learning a language without hearing is usually a function of the eyes.

Lesotho sign language is still not recognized in the education system, as the majority of speakers stated in their speeches. Maloka Phamotse of the National University of Lesotho's Department of African Languages stated that the national university intends to offer sign language at the postgraduate level as well as in short courses as a way of changing this reality. The Minister of Gender, Youth, Sports, Arts, Culture, and Social Development representative Mr Lefula Pakela, stated that the global number of people with disabilities is increasing, and that according to the 2016 population and census, 2.5 percent of the population in Lesotho was reported to be disabled. "NADL's effort to train citizens in sign language cannot go unnoticed. Because sign language is the primary mode of communication for deaf people, training them makes life easier for everyone." Said Lefula Pakela.



GENERAL NEWS

The ministry's representative also stated that sign language has the potential to break down barriers between the deaf and hearing communities by changing attitudes that prevent people with disabilities from accessing employment, services, and amenities, as well as equal participation in socioeconomic activities and decision making, additionally language potentially removes barriers between the deaf community and the hearing community, changes attitudes that prevent persons with disabilities access to employment, services and amenities, equal participation in socio-economic activities and decision making, and further promotes the practice of encouraging both private and public secrecy.

Conversations with the graduates, most of whom are professionals from various career paths such as social workers, nurses, teachers, and police, revealed that their motivation for learning sign language was to advance and improve their service delivery in their respective fields. One of the graduates, a police constable Ntlaba Ntlaba, expressed his gratitude to NADL for granting Lesotho Mounted Police Services (LMPS) the platform to finally serve the deaf community while on duty. "I see myself as a change agent in the justice system because deaf people will be served with dignity and justice, I witnessed a case where a deaf person was delayed in receiving services due to a communication barrier". Sign language is not only a means of breaking down communication barriers between the deaf and hearing during service delivery, but it is also a means for some graduates to find work. 'Mankelletso Khiba, a 20-year-old woman who has been looking for work for some time, expressed how sign language has provided her with a clear career path as she is now a certified interpreter.

Additionally, The director of NADL, Bongiwe Buzi, stated that sign language benefits not only deaf people but also non-hearing people by providing them with a new skill. In some cases, children with hearing impairments struggle to get an education, and the National Association of the Deaf provides free lessons to such individuals in order to empower them. "Educating more deaf people benefits the community because the language will become popular not only in urban areas but also in rural areas." Bongiwe Buzi stated.



PEOPLE YOU MAY KNOW

Meet - Jessikah Inaba, at age 23, she became UK's first blind black Barrister, after qualifying for the Bar on 13 October 2022. She completed a tough 5 year course using Braille to read legal texts and at one point ended up in hospital after working herself to breaking point to achieve her dream.

Jessikah is completely blind due to the eye condition bilateral microphthalmia, which results in babies being born with smaller than usual eyes. She holds a Bachelor of Law (LLB), a Master of Law (LLM) and a Bar Practice Course (BPC) from The University of Law, London.

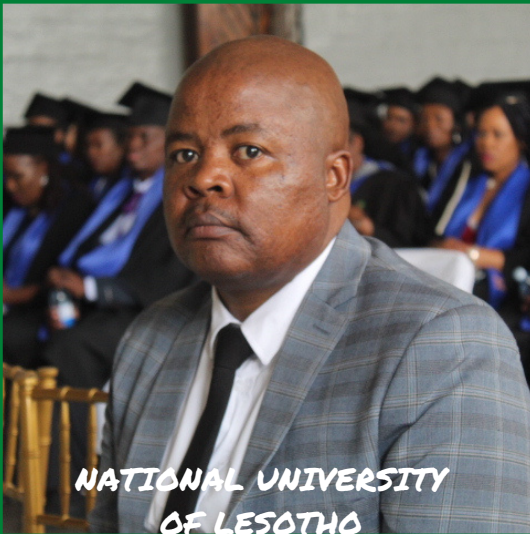
"I always believed in myself from the start - there's nothing about me which means this isn't possible. I know I can do this job really well, and the more people like me who go through training the easier it will become. It's a really good feeling, I know I'm giving hope to others in similar situations to mine. There's a triple glazed glass ceiling. I'm not the most common gender or colour, and I have a disability, but by pushing through I'm easing the burden on the next person like me," said Barrister Jessikah Inaba.



DIRECTOR OF NADL



SIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR



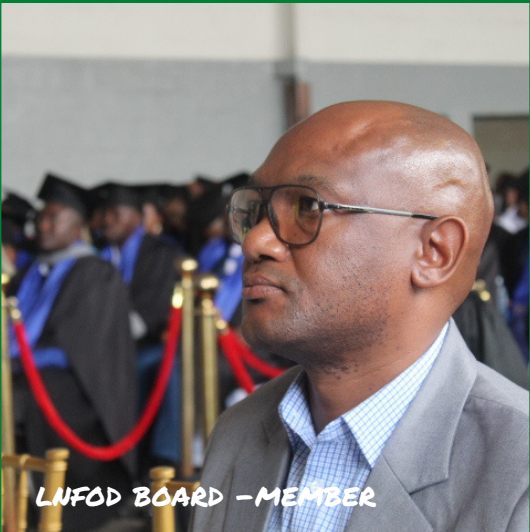
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
OF LESOTHO



SIGN LANGUAGE
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