

DISABILITY LESOTHO



From the Editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome once again to the edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled. The edition will cover news for the Month of April, 2016

This e-newsletter is a platform whereby partners in the disability sector share the good work they do and learn from the work of others. This includes news, events, updates, activities and all issues affecting people with disability in Lesotho. We therefore welcome contributions of any nature from all organizations working to improve the lives of people in Lesotho, including those with disability.

It is with great sadness that Disability Lesotho learned of the passing of the disability rights activist Mr. Lehlohonolo Makhebesela, he is real gone soon. We were honoured to have had him. He served LNFOD board member and steered the organization to the greater heights. This young man has left a lasting legacy in greater awareness and work in advocating for the deaf rights in Lesotho and international spheres.

Disability Lesotho would like to offer its deepest condolences to the family, friends, staff and the National Association of the Deaf Lesotho (NADL).

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 Pascalina Letsau on (+266) 5905 5406 or pletsau@gmail.com

If missed any edition please visit www.lnfod.org.ls

We welcome any feedback that may improve the quality and content of this free service.

Best regards,



The Editor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of the editor.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Taking our outcry to the parliament

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

LNFOOD has lobbied the Parliament of Lesotho to foster the presentation of the Disability Equity Bill to the Parliament with the aim of domesticating the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. The challenges facing the finalisation of the Disability Equity Bill at the office of the Parliamentary Counsel and the Ministry of Social Development were shared with the Parliament so that the Parliament with its oversight function to the Executive may intervene in the process of making the law ready to be considered at the Parliament. All in all, the Parliament agreed to work on this matter by establishing a committee which may oversee the implementation of the recommendations of LNFOOD towards finding the solutions which may facilitate the inclusion of persons with disabilities in a meaningful manner.

LNFOOD invited the Parliament through its committees to exercise its oversight role to the Executive because the Parliament is legally bound to provide for the mechanisms which ensure that, all the executive organs of state in the national sphere of Government are accountable to it; to maintain oversight of the exercise of National Executive Authorities, including; the implementation of the legislation.

In the proceedings, LNFOOD asked the Parliament to undertake to implement the following issues for the promotion of the human rights of people with disabilities putting in the forefront the passing of the Disability Equity Bill;

The Parliament should exercise its oversight role to the Executive by influencing the Ministry of Social Development to present the Disability Equity Bill to the Parliament for its consideration. The passing of the Disability Equity Bill amounts to the domestication of the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities.

Currently the Disability Equity Bill is at the office of the Parliamentary office for more than three years.

LNFOOD is asking the Parliament to set up a small committee which will monitor the promotion of disability inclusion in the Ministerial programmes and speed up the process of presenting the Disability Equity Bill to the Parliament.

LNFOOD is asking the Parliament particularly the Budget Committee in consultation with the Minister of Finance to allocate budget for the implementation of the Government disability inclusive policies and programmes. For instance, National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy 2011, National Disability Mainstreaming Plan 2015, Social Protection strategy and the National Strategic Development Plan which mandates all government Ministries to mainstream disabilities in their programming.

The Budget committee may set up the condition that every Ministerial budget should specifically indicate how disability will be included in their annual programmes.

To consider and amend the laws which discriminate against people with disabilities on the basis of their disability. For instance, Section 57 of the Constitution read with section 40 of the National Assembly Amendment Electoral Act 2011 which excludes Deaf people from being eligible members of the National Assembly, Section 219 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act 1981 which prohibits people with intellectual disabilities from testifying in the Courts of law regardless of the degree of their intellectual capacity, and government employment forms which perceives disability as a ground for inability to do the work.

In this instance, the discriminatory laws and policies should be amended, reviewed and modified for the inclusion of people with disabilities

Consider self-representation of people with disabilities at the community level by incorporating the self-representation of people

with disabilities in the Local Government Election bill. Considering the exclusion of people with disabilities in the public affairs at the community level, LNFOD proposes that, the Local Government Election Bill should provide for the space of at least one person with disability per community/urban council who will be elected through proportional representation.

The current local government electoral system promoting the representation of women in the local

community councils could be employed to ensure participation of people with disabilities in the local government authorities.

Influence the budget of all Government Ministries to finance disability related activities by setting up the monitoring committee which will ensure the monitoring of



GENERAL NEWS

The emergency drought

On the 22 December, the Prime Minister of Lesotho Mr. Pakalitha Mosisili declared the state of drought emergency.

He indicated that, Lesotho is experiencing one of its worst droughts in recent history. "The Lesotho Meteorological Services informed us that the drought is expected to continue into the new year up until March and that the current El Nino will reach its peak between 20 December to 20 January, resulting in very hot and windy conditions."

"Will all recall that the country experienced predominantly dry conditions in February 2015 and this resulted in a 21% decline in the level of food production in 2014/15 as compared to 2013/14. Subsequently a deterioration in food security occurred for communities which depend on agriculture as a source of livelihood."

In actual facts, the affected people require humanitarian assistance from August 2015 to May 2016. Although the whole country is affected, the situation is worse in the lowlands and foothills where most of the arable land is located. Other effects of the prevailing drought include widespread water shortages which cause long queues and acute water rationing in many areas. The situation is even worse on animals which are dying in large numbers due to lack of drinking water while the poor and degraded rangelands have become susceptible to wild fire outbreaks.

It is also worth noting those women and children, people with disability and the elderly are the worst affected as they bear the brunt of travelling long distances to collect water for domestic use, as water sources continue to dry up. You will also bear witness to the fact that a majority of farmers have failed to cultivate any crops this summer due to inadequate soil moisture.

This prevailing situation is ample proof that we should once again expect a very poor harvest for the 2016/17 cropping season.

The drought caused by the El Nino threatened Lesotho as well, as in this country there are areas

that do not have enough water like Mafeteng and Mhaleshoek, these are the districts in the southern area of Lesotho.



Mathabang planting her seedlings, still have hope on her normal job

In the district of Mafeteng, the village of Tšakholo at Metsi-Maholo community council met 'Mathabang Koetje, a visually impaired woman. 'Mathabang is staying alone in her house as her daughters are married. "I am able to do all the family chores as I have been empowered after having the disability. I played a huge part together with other communities to facilitate bringing water to the village. We used one of the wells around our village to bring water home. I am very sorry of what happened to us this year. There is no water in the taps, no water from all the wells around this village. The only place that has water is the school nearby, but as the school is serving a huge number of pupils, water finishes even before could get the opportunity to have 10 litres of water." Said Mrs. Koetje



"I am always using water to cook, to wash my clothes, watering my plants, to take care of my chickens and pigs. Lately this does not happen at all as there is no water, no rain, the land is dry and then we are dying with thirsty and hunger. It is very difficult indeed as I use to plant vegetables to that extent that I can sell to people around my village but this year, I have seen something different. The money that I got when selling vegetables I use to buy maize meal, soaps and everything needed in the family, but now I have nothing in house. It is good to have a good hygiene as people, lately we do not bath well, as we only take a jug of water to bath with. I sometimes do not bath because of water shortage. It is not easy for me to get water from the well by myself. I always hire someone to get me water from the every 20 Litres, I have to pay LSL 5.00. If I don't find someone to help, to travel about 8km from home with a wheel-borrow, I went to bed with empty stomach. This person will be at the line there for more than 5 hours. I cannot be able to travel that long distance with 20Litres but can be able to take 5Litres."

"When I need to wash my blankets, I also look for someone who can take them to the river which is also far for me to reach. The person who will wash those blankets expected to be paid LSL 20.00 for a small blanket but it is a big blanket, I pay LSL 30.00. Truly, the situation of having o water is not good for me, because if as human beings would like to drink water but there is nowhere to find it is very difficult. We all know that if there is no water, there is no life as well. For good health, we need to bath but this year, I think I am in danger as all what I produce for my business, is not in a good market to help me after. I don't know what to do because even to buy water these days, I don't afford." Concluded 'Mathabang

Mrs Mamakhooa Kelello, a woman with physical disability living in the same community councils tells her story. "I am earning a living by sewing school uniforms and sell to the parents of the children attending schools nearby her village; I no longer make good profit due to the drought which hit my community because parents could not produce from their fields"

"This drought affected me a lot as there is no food, no water to drink, bath and do everything as water is part of life. I am unable to plant vegetables. There is no water from water taps and everywhere we trusted.



Mamakhooa in her business which is not functioning well

As a person who stays alone, I wake up at 12:00am mid night to go to the well where I will have to line up for water, I always return at 7:00am. We all lining up there, it doesn't matter whether have disability or no disability. I haven't heard any organisation of the government saying how could we be helped. As I am using two churches, I have to look for someone to help me take those containers to home. Such a person, I am paying him or her LSL 5.00 per 20Litres container, if not will not have water in house. If those containers could be left there, those containers will not be found with water, or find containers with no water, as everyone is in great shortage of water. This has affected my business more than ever, I am saying this because some people will volunteer to fetch water for me only to find that he or she wanted to bring a cloth to be sew in exchange of water crisis. I use to sew their clothes and then they get water for me no more money. This is very sad because by doing so I won't have money to but other family needs like soap, salt, maize meal and many more. I think I now becoming vulnerable and poor than ever. I think this is a crisis that needs to be addressed by the government, Concluded 'Mamakhooa with tears.

"We people with disabilities are struggling to fetch water from distant places." "I need to hire someone to get water from me from very distant place because my disability does not allow me to fetch water from far places; in addition, I don't have money to pay someone to get me water"

EU and other development partners have mobilized more than two million Euros to address the drought crisis in Lesotho. The local Red Cross and WFP are responsible for the implementation of the intervention regarding the drought.

GENERAL NEWS

LNFOOD takes it's grievance to the parliament

By: 'Masekara Sekoankoetla

On the 26th April LNFOOD had a lobbying meeting with the 9th parliament of Lesotho. The meeting was held in the premises of the parliament in Maseru. As stated in the press release that LNFOOD shared with the media houses on 25 April, the preparatory work of domesticating the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were begun and pioneered by the Ministry of Social Development in 2014 but however, the Disability Equity Act is not yet in place. LNFOOD continued to mention that this is a considerable delay which is detrimental to the rights and welfare of persons in the country as well as the development of the country as a whole. In consideration that protection and promotion of the disability rights vests on all governmental arms in collaboration, LNFOOD aimed this meeting at sensitizing the house about the presence of the UNCRPD and the substantive disability rights therein and the government responsibility. In this meeting, the Executive Director of LNFOOD presented the current status of the UNCRPD in Lesotho, and the consequential plight of the persons with disabilities.

Among others, LNFOOD brought it to the attention of the house that the unjust exclusion of persons with disabilities is caused by the absence of the legal and rights based approach to the disability rights in the country. It was emphasized that the delay in the enactment of the passing of the Disability Equity Bill into law is tantamount to the government sanctioning the disability injustices in the government. In addition, Mr. Sefuthi did on behalf of LNFOOD among others point out that the absence of budget for the implementation of the Disability inclusive and progressive policies is also one of the root causes

for the disability ordeal in Lesotho. Most importantly LNFOOD also put to the house that it also bears the responsibility within its powers to ensure the promotion and fulfillment of the disability rights and sincerely pleaded with the parliament to take action in that regard.

Responses from the house gave solace to LNFOOD and its affiliate DPOs. Members of the house expressed their gratitude about LNFOOD's visit and presentation. They indicated that they were very honoured that LNFOOD recognized the house as the key stake holder in promotion of disability rights and it is regarded as refuge for unjustly treated PWDs. Some of the members indeed expressed that they were not aware of the presence of the UNCRPD and the Lesotho's commitment therein. They pledged to actively participate in the transformation of the current disability situation through the rights based approach or response. Specifically, the MPS pledged to make follow-ups on the delay of the presentation of the Disability Equity Bill for enactment by the house. Moreover, the parliament pledged to further ruminates on how to adopt LNFOOD's recommendations within the respective and relevant parliamentary committees. LNFOOD was also asked to considerably support the house in ensuring that it fulfills its responsibility towards disability rights. The meeting between LNFOOD and the house was indeed fruitful and promising that disability shall be a developmental issue in which all the governmental departments will participate in.



OPINION PIECE

“My role model.....

By: Pascalina Kabi



I started interacting with people with disabilities way back when I was a learner at Masianokenng High School between 1998 and 2002. Because of a close proximity between the school and Itjareng Vocational Training Centre, the interactions were almost on daily basis.

I must mention that I also used to take my school shoes there for repairs. I met a lot of people with disabilities including the late Mr. Lehlohonolo Makhebesela, whom at first I never thought he has disability. Though I was mentally immature at the time, I learnt a lot from these loving creatures – they are emotional just like a person perceived not to be disabled; they can laugh, play football; tease you and even go as far as falling in love.

I may not call her my friend as such but I had the privilege to work with a loving, bubbly, beautiful Mosela “Zee” Masena who soon I became the person I admired

so much. She inspired me to strive to remain original. She never hide her disability, not because there was nothing she could do to hide it as it is physically but because she so much believed in herself and saw herself as a human being – no different from others. Zile, as she is affectionately known, worked closely with me when she interned at Public Eye, my former employer. She is a wonderful human being.

SPOTLIGHT



'Mannete 'Malethole Ramaili – Development and Management Specialist

1. When did you start interacting with people with disabilities?

- When I was about 7 years old. My aunt who had a speech and hearing disability brought me up, Nkhono Rahaba Kokoana

2. In your life or at work did you have an opportunity to assist a person with disability?

- I supported Nkhono Rahaba, to get intergrated into our extended family, our community, her church and other social organisations through facilitating communication with people around us. It would be remiss of me however not admit that she was very smart, tidy, hard working and a loving person. She brought me up to be who I am today and she was well known and a prominent member of St. Ann's mothers union at St, Paul's Catholic Church in Butha-Buthe.
- During my primary school holidays I used to visit my father's village in Menkhoaneng, Phoku ha Jobile. My best friend was Moqanuoaa was very independent and emotionally mature. Tough limping, this did not deter her from

playing all games with us. We used to be sent to "Ilealeng Ha Mashili" and to the shop at Ha Stein together. We had to cross a suspended logs bridge over the Caledon River to get to there. I was always very scared of crossing and would helps sly cry when we got to the crossing point; but Moqanuoaa had no fear, she would hold my hand say; "don't cry, let's go" she advised me not to look at the bridge and the water, but to focus on our final destination point. She was in many aspects a pillar of my strength.

- When doing my high school education in 1970 – 1975, I volunteered to knit and crochet apparels and blankets for people with disabilities who were under the care of Mrs. Coaker. This was a great programme because it honed my knitting and crocheting skills, and it also created space for me to contribute to the welfare of people with disabilities for about five years.

I again had an opportunity to work with people with disability at the time when I worked for UNICEF, I develop unity to work and facilitated implementation of a pilot Special Education Programme in 12 Schools with 'M'e Mariga and 'M'e Pachaka and we later rolled it out nationally. A major breakthrough at the time was getting a buy in from the Ministry of Education and the NTTC to train teachers in special education and initiate a support a programme for parents and care takers of people with disabilities. This was coupled with the support of the Ministry of Health in provision of free and preferential health services to children with disabilities at all public health facilities. Worth noting also, was my support for the formation LNFOD and co facilitating a Braille teacher training programme for St. Paul School of the Blind and deaf, St. Catherine's and related centers as well as acquisition and distribution of The rights of the Child written in Braille.

- While with Irish Aid, I was instrumental in advocating for allocation of funds for Lesotho's participation in Special Olympics in Ireland. I also facilitated procurement of a huge consignment of wheelchairs for people physical disabilities.
- Jointly with the former Irish Development Worker, 'm'e Unna who was at the one stage a teacher at Itjareng, we established the David Foundation in Ireland. The aim was to provide housing for people with disabilities in Lesotho. Unna had realized that adults with disabilities often had to stay with their parents in the same room even after marriage and the times they are never afforded privacy. I was an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. We collectively made an immense fundraising contribution for the project. LNFOD was charged with the responsibility of identifying and prioritizing those who were most in need and allocated the donated houses accordingly. This was an exciting programme run as a joint venture between the foundation, the Embassy of Lesotho in Ireland and LNFOD.

3. In your life or at your work did you have an opportunity to assist a person with disability?

- The legal protection of people with disabilities in the country is not comprehensive, universal, and all-inclusive and above all the laws we have are not sufficiently enforced.

4. In the country, what do you think can be done that can improve lives of people with disabilities?

- The ministry of health should be capacitated to detect disabilities at birth and act accordingly. There should be laws that enforce affirmative actions for

PWDs. In cases where there are no special schools for people who cannot be integrated in the education mainstream e.g. Autism; Manpower should allocate scholarships for such people up to tertiary level. Building permits should enforce provision of ramps and rails I households and public spaces. Roads construction standards should be revised for ever road to have a pavement to accommodate wheelchairs. Adults with disabilities including Alzheimer's and Dementia should be included in the national pension scheme and support for such in public services should be visible.

5. Is there any support that you know that was meant for people with disabilities earlier that does no longer exist?

- While with Irish Aid, I was instrumental in advocating for allocation of funds for Lesotho's participation in Special Olympics in Ireland. I also facilitated procurement of a huge consignment of wheelchairs for people physical disabilities.

- Jointly with the former Irish Development Worker, Mme Unna who was at one stage a teacher at Itjareng, we established The David Foundation in Ireland. The aim was to provide housing for people with disabilities in Lesotho. Mme Unna had realized that adults with disabilities often had to stay with their parents in the same room even after marriage and at times they are never afforded privacy. I was an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. We collectively made an immense fundraising contribution for the project. LNFOD was charged with the responsibility of identifying and prioritizing those who were most in need and allocated the donated houses accordingly. This was an exciting programme run as a joint venture between the Foundation, the Embassy of Lesotho in Ireland and LNFOD.

6. If you were to date a person with disability to which type of disability would you choose?

- Love is blind, and has no borders. So I would date anyone who I feel like he would be good company and make it tick.

7. Which pet do you like most?

- I have never had a pet in my life, but I love horses.

8. What would you like it to do for you?

- I would ask it to share its "power" to drive my projects forward and its senses to help me detect no go areas

Upcoming events/Announcements

From the 5-7 May, NAPCOL will be attending another tournament at Bloemfontein South Africa

For more information please contact;
Limphe Rakoto

Email: limphodrakoto@gmail.com

**The 2nd Global CBR Congress will be held in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur from 27th – 29th September 2016
Theme is; "Empowering & Enabling"**

For more information visit;
www.2ndcbrcongress.com

Lehlohonolo passed away after he was involved in a car accident in Qeme, Ha Mantšebo on Saturday evening, 16 April 2016. He will be laid to rest at his home, Malibamatšo, Leribe district on the 7th May, 2016

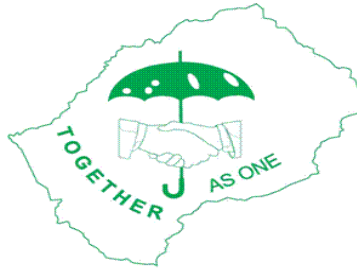
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ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work



*equal rights and
full participation*

