

DISABILITY LESOTHO

From the editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome to the fourth edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled. This e-newsletter is a platform for all partners in the disability sector to share the good work they are doing and to learn from the work of others. It includes news of the key events and activities taking place within the world of disability in Lesotho and updates on the issues affecting people with disability. We welcome contributions of any nature from organizations working to improve the livelihood of people with disability or individuals who have an interest in the disability sector

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 5905 5406 or pletsau@gmail.com.

This is a new initiative and your feedback is very much appreciated. Please help us improve the quality of the content of this publication by letting us know what you would like to read about.

Best regards,
The Editor

News from LNFOD

People with disabilities have had one voice in the past decade in their quest for inclusive society. As a result Lesotho ratified the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in 2008 following active campaigning and advocacy efforts by LNFOD and other disabled person's organisations. The convention if domesticated and implemented will change the lives of not only people with disability but also the general population.

PWDs being members of society need to have a fair share in developing the country, from access to education, access to employment and creation of employment. The Living Conditions study compiled by SINTEF in 2010 showed that PWDs are among



Chomoko Chomoko IVTC graduate at his leatherworks workshop in Tebang Village

the poorest of the poor in communities and that many still cannot access basic services in comparison to their non-disabled counterparts although this was two years after ratification of CRPD.

The big question is who should change the current status? The answer is very simple, it is you and me, it is the community where people with disability live, it is the government, it is the media, it is our development partners.

We thank you, our partners in our efforts to achieve equal human rights for people with disability.

Best regards,

Marorisang Mafethe (Mrs.)
Executive Director, Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Australian Volunteers International donates Intel Reader to LNFOD

LNFOD would like to offer a sincere thank you to Australian Volunteers International for their gift of a much needed Intel Reader and Capture Station which allows visually impaired individuals to access non-brailled material by capturing an image of the text and converting it to speech. This technology was purchased through the small grants application under the Australian Volunteers for International Development Assignment Support Fund which is designed to support Australian Volunteers in the achievement of their assignment objectives.

This much needed technology has already been of great benefit to the organisation in general and in particular to Nkhasi Sefuthi, LNFOD's visually impaired Human Rights and Advocacy Officer.

Frequently when the advocacy team attends meetings they find that material for visually impaired advocates and members are not brailled, thus hindering significantly their capacity to contribute and participate fully and freely in discussions. The absence of accessible resources for visually impaired person's (VIP's), specifically in conference situations, dictates that VIP's must rely on other participants to read and translate materials for them. This technology will remove the barriers that previously existed in regard to access to communication and increase the independence of LNFOD members and advocates, leading to more advocacy and an increased ability to have their say on an equal footing with others!

Mr Nkhasi Sefuthi is excited to be taking the new Intel Reader to a conference in Japan next month. The device will ensure that he can participate in disability rights debates and training.



Nkhasi Sefuthi with his new Intel Reader courtesy of Australian Volunteers International

LSMHP and PACT continue program to increase child protection

Under their program sponsored by PACT, LSMHP has initiated a series of child protection forums which will be held in each district.

The objective of these forums is to mobilize the district child protection teams to report incidences of abuse involving OVC and youth with intellectual disability. The forums also aim to accelerate the issuance of birth certificates to OVC. Under the program, caregivers will be asked to identify OVC children in need of birth certificates to the local counselors. Counsellors will then submit a list to the birth and deaths registry office who will expedite the process by exempting them from the usual required documentation.

Lack of birth certificates is a major barrier for some OVC, preventing them from accessing essential services as they do not have the necessary paperwork to obtain their birth certificate.

Forums have so far been held in Thaba Tseka and Berea.

Appeal from Phoku Primary School

A group of charitable organisations contributed to build a two- classroom block at Phoku Primary School, in the rural areas of Botha Bothe. This project took a while to become a reality, but their efforts finally materialized and the community and the school children would like to say thank you to all those who contributed to this initiative on the 25th August 2012. This project will benefit the local children and others from the neighboring areas. The majority of the community lives in abject poverty, and a good number of the children are orphaned and vulnerable.

Construction of the classroom block was driven by the Principal of the school, backed by St Charles Hospital and supported by a local Mosotho woman, who reached out to her contacts and urged them to contribute whatever little they could, to put up the structures.

In the same way I am calling out to you to and your sense of compassion especially in the harsh weather conditions we are experiencing to contribute whatever little you have to help out these poor students in these desperate times. The majority of the funding for this project came from foreign donors, and it did not augur well with my conscience that foreigners were doing more than I was doing for my own brothers and sisters.

So with that in mind, members of 'For The People' (FTP) are going to set up collection sites at different points in Maseru and so that supporters of this idea can donate whatever they can e.g. canned food stuffs, books, clothes, blankets, and whatever else you feel will be of use. Your donations will be highly appreciated not only by us but also those who will directly benefit from your gifts.

Drop off points:
Contact: Mampe Mphana,
Pick'n Pay Clothing,
Pioneer Mall

Contact: Mothibeli Ramaili (63896954/58880098)
LNDC Center
STILL TO NEGOTIATE WITH MANAGEMENT

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE DROP OFF POINTS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE FTP FACEBOOK PAGE. PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD

Khotso, Pula, Nala!
Mothibeli Ramaili

LDTTC increases efforts to include visually impaired students

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) with the support from Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) has translated seventy seven (77) text books into Braille.

These books were handed over to the Lesotho Distant Teaching Centre (LDTTC) during a ceremony held at Lancers Inn on Friday 17th August. This occasion will mark the end of an 11-month project to produce learning materials for learners with visual disabilities. LDTTC enables adults and children who were previously unable to complete their secondary school education to learn in their own time outside of school premises.

The provision of braille materials to visually impaired students will allow them greater autonomy and independence in their studies as they were forced previously to rely on friends, family members to read to them.

According to the Living Conditions study conducted by SINTEF in conjunction with LNFOD, 23% of people with disability aged 11-20 were not enrolled in an educational institution, more than seven times the non-attendance rate for non-disabled peers. Over 25% of youth with disability not attending school cited health or disability as their barrier to education¹.

The translated text books are in the following subjects namely commerce, COSC English language, Junior Certificate English language and Development Studies.



LNFOD Executive Director hands over books to representative from LDTTC

Affirmative action employers honored at inaugural Inclusion Lesotho Awards ceremony

The first annual Inclusion Awards were presented at a gala ceremony held at Lancers Inn on 28th August. The inaugural awards were presented to Steven Walker and Lincoln 'Mokose for their efforts in providing employment for people with disability through affirmative action employment policy. The Inclusion Awards are a new initiative by the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) to acknowledge the efforts of individuals who have been particularly successful at fostering the inclusion of people with disability into the greater community.

"The Inclusion awards represent an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the disability movement and to shine the spotlight on the unsung heroes who work behind the scenes to improve the lives of people with disability. This year we would especially like to focus on two individuals who have played an important role in providing employment for PWDs and providing a positive example to other employers of the contribution PWDs are capable of making to the workplace and society as a whole," commented Nkhosi Sefuthi, Human Rights and Advocacy Officer, LNFOD.

Steven Walker, former General Manager of Philips Maseru, was responsible for introducing an employment quota for people with disability providing employment for dozens of individuals with disability. During his time as the Minister of Forestry and Land Reclamation, Lincoln 'Mokose successfully applied an affirmative action policy to promote the employment of people with disabilities in government forestry projects.

Mr. Walker and Mr. 'Mokose were originally due to receive their awards at a ceremony for International Day of Persons with Disability in December 2010. However, due to an unfortunate car accident they were unable to receive their awards.

Continued Nkhosi Sefuthi: "The fact that these awards are long overdue does not in any way diminish the achievements of these two inspiring men. Discrimination in employment is one of the biggest challenges faced by people with disability and these gentlemen have improved the lives of dozens of people with disability and their families by creating truly disability inclusive working environments."

LNFOD conducts training and discussion with Principal Secretaries

LNFOD conducted a meeting with PS' from various ministries of the Government of Lesotho on the 27th August at Lesotho Sun.

This meeting was necessitated by the fact that, the government of Lesotho has adopted National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy in April 2011 as a working document of the Government. The main purpose of this policy is to eliminate stigma and discrimination on the basis of disability as well as to equalize opportunities between the people with disabilities and their non-disabled counterparts, as people with disabilities have been left behind for quite a long time in development. It has also been realized that, this policy is going to be implemented by all ministries of the Government while Ministry of Social Development will just be coordinating and focal point of disability issue.

The primary purpose of this crucial meeting was to explore possible means through which the various government ministries can meaningfully include disability specific activities in the 2012/2013 year financial budget. In addition to that, the meeting assisted Principal Secretaries to identify practical and relevant ways in which ministries can include pwd's in their services and practice and apply these changes through the development and implementing of policy.

Attendees included representatives from the Ministry of Police and Public Safety, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Communication Science and Technology, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Meteorology, Energy and Water Affairs.



Mr Walker and Mr 'Mokose enjoy a toast at the Inclusion Awards

LNFOOD Seminar celebrates the spirit of female entrepreneurship

As part of the celebrations for women's month the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOOD) conducted an entrepreneurship seminar to strengthen the business management skills of female small business owners with disability.

The full-day seminar will take place on Monday 27 August at the Lehakoe Club.

The seminar was opened by the Hon. Minister Social Development and attended by over 20 female small business owners with disability.

The program included presentations by a number of business management experts including representatives from SMME Support Network Lesotho, Standard Lesotho Bank, LNDC and Smallholder Agriculture Development Project. Topics covered included sustainable business skills, business loan options, grant opportunities and turning small businesses into medium sized enterprises.

According to the Living Conditions of People with Disability study conducted by SINTEF in conjunction with LNFOOD last year, people with disability are three times less likely to be engaged in paid work and many women in particular choose to own their own business as a means of earning income.

Of the 315 women with disability surveyed, 3.1% were self-employed, slightly more than those with paid employment.

"This women's month, we wish to celebrate the female spirit of entrepreneurship. Vocational training centers for people with disability such as Itjareng and Ithuseng have long recognised the business potential of PWDs. This seminar aims to build the business acumen of women with disability and to help them take their business to the next level," commented Marorisang Mafethe, Executive Director of LNFOOD.

"I started my motor parts business two years ago with money borrowed from my sister. Business has been growing slowly but steadily. Our growth has been impeded by lack of stock and stiff competition in the area. I hope that this seminar will offer me the information and skills needed to expand my business as I've always dreamed." Commented Moselantja Florina Kalake, a physically disabled entrepreneur from Maputsoe



Disability Grant Essential to bridge the gap between disabled and non-disabled people

The introduction of a disability grant is not an act of charity; it is an essential step to bridging the gap between those with disability and those without. We call upon the Ministry of Social Development to reconsider their stance on disability grants and we invite them to engage in a dialogue with LNFOD and its partners in the disability movement.

According to the national census 2006, approximately 4 percent of the population in Lesotho have a disability. However, actual figures are thought to be much higher in line with the estimated global statistic of 10%¹.

According to the Living Conditions Study 2009 conducted by SINTEF in conjunction with LNFOD, people with disability are proportionally over-represented in the lower socio-economic groups in Lesotho.

The study, which involved 589 households with a family member with disability and 631 households without, showed that 24% of disabled households were in the lowest socio-economic category compared to 16% of control households.

They are put at a distinct economic advantage by both increased costs of living and lower household incomes. Meanwhile only 15% of disabled households were included in the highest socio-economic group compared to 25% of the average population.

The Living Conditions Study showed that unemployment rates among people with disability are more than twice as high as among the non-disabled population with only 5.7% of the 380 respondents with disability surveyed having paid employment with a further 2.3% claiming self-employment. 45% of PWDs surveyed cited health as the reason for their unemployment.

A safe assumption can then be made that household incomes for PWDs are substantially lower than the average population.

Several international studies have shown that the costs of living for people with disability tend to be substantially higher than for those without a disability. Some major additional areas of expenditure include assistive devices, transport and costs of personal assistance.

People with disability are often reliant on guides to assist them with day to day tasks and the cost of engaging a guide is prohibitive to most PWDs which affects their participation in society. For example the average daily rate for a sign-language interpreter is M350 whilst a guide for a visually impaired person costs M150 per day. Hence, many parents of children with disability are forced to forego paid employment to act as a full-time guide for their child.

Assistive devices are another necessary cost born by people with disability. Although the government does provide free assistive devices to those eligible for social welfare, the conditions for eligibility are so onerous that most PWDs do not meet the criteria despite their low socio-economic status. The average cost for a cane for the visually impaired is between M200-350 whilst a wheelchair costs around M2000 inclusive of tax.

Transport is another cost which acts as a barrier to access to healthcare and educational facilities. As public transport is not wheelchair accessible PWDs, particularly those living in rural areas, are forced to rely on the use of a private vehicle to access hospitals and clinics. The return cost for a private taxi for a wheelchair user from Berea to a hospital in Maseru could cost up to M200 for a return trip which prohibits many people with disability from accessing essential services.

People with disability tend to be amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society. Without access to appropriate maternal or pediatric healthcare they tend to have children with disabilities, causing a vicious cycle of disability and disadvantage.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



19 year old Visually Impaired runner goes for Gold at London Paralympic Games

Mary Letsoela, a 19-year old student from Mohale's Hoek has been selected to represent Lesotho at the London Paralympic Games, starting 29 August to 9 September.

Mary is categorised as a T12 partially sighted athlete and will be competing in the 100m and 200m sprint events against other visually impaired runners in her category.

Mary was born with full sight but gradually developed a visual impairment. Currently she has a visual field of less than 40 percent and is classified as being legally blind.

She has participated in competitive running since she was 13 years old and has competed in a number of international events including the Under 20's athletics competition in Swaziland and the All Africa Games. We wish Mary the best of luck in the games!



'Disability is not Inability' We real mean it.

Reitumetse Ts'iu a 20-year old woman with a physical impairment who refuses to let her disability slow her down.

Reitumetse is a trainee at Itjareng Vocational Training Centre. She is doing Sewing as her course for the duration of two years. Reitumetse is a hard worker. She is also able to design many traditional attires including Sesotho dress (Thethana).

Reitumetse dreams of one day owning her own business if she can somehow obtain the start-up capital.

Reitumetse has lost the full use of both arms and hands and is also unable to bend her back. To thread the machine Reitumetse has to climb a chair and use both her hands and feet to manipulate the machine and thread. She uses her feet to sew whilst standing. Her handiwork is widely recognised as some of the best work produced at Itjareng. This ambitious young woman is eager to pursue a career in fashion.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Theme for International Day of Persons with Disability announced

It's official! The theme for this year's IDPD is

"Removing the Barriers to Create an Inclusive and Accessible Society for All"

IDPD takes place on 3 December every year and is the biggest event on the disability calendar in Lesotho. Last year, the disability awareness march in Quthing attracted over 1,600 able bodied and persons with disabilities.

This year's IDPD will take place in Mokhotlong and we're looking forward to an even better celebration this year.

Further details of the 2012 IDPD activities will be announced shortly.

Psycho-Social Support workshop for parents

LSMHP and the Firelight Foundation will host a psycho-social support workshop for parents of children with severe disabilities in Maseru on 10-13 September.

Volunteer needed

The Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons (LSMHP) is seeking a young and energetic volunteer to assist with a number of projects as well as general office administrative tasks. The volunteer will be required to commit three mornings a week from 9am – 1pm and travel around Maseru may be required.

Interested individuals should contact Kgomoco Motsamai on 587 788 37 or lsmhp@lsmhp.org.ls.

LSMHP and MSH upcoming activities in Mohale's Hoek

As part of their program funded by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) to offer support to OVC with and without disability, LSMHP is holding a number of activities in Mohale's Hoek over the next few weeks. LSMHP will be visiting Litipeng community to offer a refresher course to remind potential beneficiaries about the activities of the program and how they can become involved.

In Khoelenya and Phamong, the organisation will be holding activities aimed at strengthening the Kids Club which has been highly successful in fostering peer to peer mentoring.



Itjareng Assessments

Itjareng Vocational Training Centre will be holding assessments for all people with disabilities. The assessments are only meant to assess their disability and help applicants and parents understand the importance of guiding their children to select the appropriate course that will suit their disability.

Assessments will be in October 2012. Interested people can come to Itjareng to pick up application forms to complete up until the last day before assessment.

Itjareng appeals to all parents, guardians and friends to take a major role to encourage PWDs at their villages to apply for these trainings as the centre is meant to equip them with life skills.

For more information related to assessments and recruitment at Itjareng please conduct:

Pascalina Letsau – Extension Officer
Tel; +266 28 350 279
Cell: +266 59 055 406

Email: Itjareng@gmail.com
pletsau@gmail.com



Graduation Ceremony

2012 is the second year for people with disabilities who have trained at Itjareng Vocational Training Centre. This year, 28 people will graduate from the school after completing their 2 year course. The graduation ceremony will be held on 30th November 2012

We appeal to any institutions or individuals to provide support of any kind for the ceremony or to help trainees to start their own businesses.



For more information conduct the office at
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