

DISABILITY LESOTHO



From the Editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome once again to the edition of Disability Lesotho. The edition will cover news for the Month of December, 2017

I would like take this opportunity to congratulate all of us for the hard work we did for this ending year, as Disability Peoples Organisations, Persons with Disabilities and our Development Partners. It was not easy like we all know that advocacy work has bottle-necks but we managed to overcome all those difficulties. We can point out our successes achieved in 2017. I would like again to encourage persons with disabilities to stand for their rights no matter how difficult it is, we don't have to fear but push our disability agenda even harder than before, aluta continua!!

I hope we will all work harder for this coming year 2018. I am glad that the parliamentary social cluster committee promised us that it will work hard to push the Disability Equity Bill before the parliament. I am looking forward to see that happening, I am looking to see persons with disabilities protected fully like other vulnerable groups.

Again I am glad as the Right Honorable Prime Minister pledged to table Disability Equity bill in the parliament immediately after parliamentary recess ends. He pointed this in his Christmas remarks on Radio Lesotho. We, as persons with disabilities we now have expectations that our voices have been heard by those in power.

those in power will allow full and effective participation of all the minority groups including persons with disabilities, so that Lesotho reforms could be inclusive. Let us all push to see that happening like we are doing in the Disability Equity Bill.

To you my colleagues, I will say keep it up!! The road is still long ahead of us. Let us unite and become one entity and claim what is rightly ours in this country. I would like to congratulate learners with disabilities who managed to pass their examinations. To those who did make it, I say its not the end of the World, just work more harder to achieve your dreams. Happy New Year to everyone!!!

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

Best regards,



The Editor

NOTE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

It is with great pleasure that the Lesotho National Federation of Organisation of the Disabled (LNFOD) present to the readers of all our newsletters which are Monthly e-newsletter Disability Lesotho and our printed newsletter known as Ntsoeleng, the activities and challenges faced by persons with disabilities in 2017

In 2017 few months ago I was elected into the chairmanship of LNFOD by the General Assembly on the 13th August, 2017

It is some weeks ago after the 2017 International commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities under the theme: "Transformation Towards the Sustainable and Resilient Society for All."

I wish all the people who contributed to the advancement of the rights of people with disabilities in 2017 particularly Diakonie Austria which entered into the new partnership with LNFOD in January 2017 with the humble intention of promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year 2018

I salute the Open Initiative Society for Southern African for extending its financial support to LNFOD in preparation of the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in the upcoming reforms.

CRS, DPOs and other stakeholders played a critical role in the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities worth mentioning.

I congratulate the Ministry of Education and Training for walking the talk by validating the Inclusive Education Policy on the 28 November 2017. This action represents a milestone in terms of strengthening access to education for learners with special educational needs. LNFOD is in full support of this milestone and will support the Ministry of Education in the development of the action for the effective implementation.

I call upon the parliamentarians and the government ministries to reconsider the state of addressing disability in Lesotho by allocating resources for the effective implementation of the National Disability Mainstreaming Plan and other disability related policies as a means of improving the lives of persons with disabilities living in Lesotho.

I urge the Ministry of Social Development to follow in the footsteps of the Ministry of Education and Training in terms of promotion and protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities by passing the Disability Equity Bill into law.

Best wishes,



'Mabataung Khetsi
LNFOD Chairperson

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

A VOTE OF THANKS TO ALL LNFOD PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled extends heartfelt thanks to all its partners who made it possible for Infod to implement its mission in 2017.

Your contribution is always meaningful to us in this challenging journey of making the duty bearers and other stakeholders recognize the role they can play in making Basotho society that is accessible and inclusive of all people including people with disabilities.

This work is quite tough taking into account the attitudinal and environmental barriers we face on daily basis including the fact that Lesotho is the least developing countries where the lack of resources is deemed as the justification for exclusion.

LNFOD wishes you a merry Christmas and a prosperous 2018.

In 2017, LNFOD has made significant strides in forging partnership with the Diakonie Austria and Jairos Jiri association through the financial support from the Austrian development Agency and Bread for the World which is aimed at building the capacity of Infod in the promotion of the rights of people with disabilities. It is through this partnership that LNFOD is able to produce this E-newsletter on a monthly basis for its readers.

Many people with disabilities and their organisations have benefited in the first year of implementation in various means.

LNFOD notes with appreciation the financial support from other partners such as Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho during the general and local elections, OSISA Bank Information Centre, CRS and Vodacom

Lesotho with the financial support they provide to LNFOD in order to fulfill its mission accordingly.

We salute the Norwegian Association of the Disabled for being the longest partner of LNFOD since 2003 until 2016.

Workshop on Building Capacity of African countries for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

By: Masekara Sekoankoetla

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs held a workshop on 'Building Capacity of African Countries for the implementation of the un Convention on th Rights of Persons with Disabilities' from the 12th to 15th December

The workshop was aimed at assisting African governments and Civil SocietyOrganisations (CSOs) including Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) to work together in implementing the CRPD. The participants were civil societyorganisations and governments from various African Countries who shared the best practises on the implementation of CRPD.

Speaking at the workshop Salvatotr Favazza (UNDESA) mentioned that with an enhanced implementationcapacity, African countries will be better ositioned to afford peoplewith disabilities in their territories a good lifeguaranteed to them by the UNCRPD. LNFOD had an opportunity to participate at this important workshop

GENERAL NEWS

SOCIAL CLUSTER COMMITTEE TO HOLD THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE TABLING OF DISABILITY

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi



Maseru, Lesotho Avani Hotel on the 11th December, The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) held a lobbying meeting with the social cluster committee with the aim of sensitizing the members on the situation of people with disabilities in terms of access to justice, social and human rights protection including the need to pass the Disability Equity Bill.

The standing order establishing the social cluster committee empowers the committee to hold the Ministry of Social Development accountable on social issues such as implementation of the social programs and service delivery for the nation including people with disabilities.

The Social cluster has the power to call upon the Minister of Social Development in this context to account on the progress towards the enactment of the Disability Equity Bill.

It is against this background that, LNFOD held the lobbying meeting with this committee on the 11 December in which it has been agreed that the Ministry of Social Development will be held accountable to present the Disability Equity Bill as soon as the Parliament reopens.

The Chairperson of the committee, Honourable Moshoeshoe Fako pledged in the presence of the self-representation of persons with disabilities that the government of Lesotho will table the Bill in parliament in collaboration with the Honourable Minister of Social Development as soon as the parliament reopens from Christmas break.

The committee pledged to investigate matters which are holding the presentation of the Bill back from the parliament and ensure its presentation in Parliament.

The Chairperson went on to apologies on behalf of the Parliament for taking so long in addressing the disability related issues including the Disability Equity Bill for so long thereby denying this marginalized group of people their rights.

LNFOD revealed to the committee that some of the key challenges in the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities are weak coordination of disability services, non-allocation of resources for the effective implementation of National rehabilitation policy 2011, National Disability Mainstreaming Plan 2015, Social Protection strategy 2017 and serious delays in passing of the Disability Equity Bill.

LNFOD and the committee jointly agree to hold a social dialogue on disability inclusion in February 2018 in which all the stakeholders will be invited to participate with the aim of addressing the root causes facing the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities in Lesotho.

The committee reiterated its support to working with people with disabilities in the advocacy on the domestication of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through an act of Parliament.

GENERAL NEWS

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES IN HONOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

By: Laura DuPriest

Welcome to World Disability Day! My name is Laura DuPriest and I have the privilege of working this year with Catholic Relief Services in Lesotho. CRS works in over 100 countries within a variety of programming areas and one of the aspects of our work that we are proud of is serving people with disabilities around the globe. Our approaches to working with people with disabilities span across our programming areas, from Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, food security and education.



At CRS, we want people with disabilities and their families to become part of the solution. We ensure that they are not just recipients of services, but active participants in designing and delivering them. CRS is currently working with people with disabilities in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Laos, Kenya, Vietnam, and here, in Lesotho.

In Lesotho, we are very happy to be expanding programming for children with disabilities this year. With funding from the USAID Child Blindness Program, we are working with Lesotho National League for the Visually Impaired, Vision Clinic, Spec Savers and government ministries to implement a program called Eye Can See. This spring, we trained over 100 teachers, auxiliary social workers and community health workers in Thaba Tseka district to screen primary-age children for eye issues. Our goal is to screen 10,000 children by next May and we have already screened over 2,000. As children are screened at schools or in their communities, we are able to identify children in need of eye glasses or more serious eye care for issues like cataracts or glaucoma.

While every project comes with a timeline and we cannot continue implementing forever, we are thankful that teachers, community health workers, and auxiliary social workers are now equipped with the skills to identify and look for eye issues in their classrooms and communities. This project builds on work we previously did with the St Bernadette's resource center for blind and primary school to improve reading among young children with visual impairment by providing small portable Brailers, called jot-a-dots, and equipping teachers with the tools to translate between print and Braille so that even teachers who cannot read Braille could create worksheets and grade assignments produced by visually impaired learners.

Within our education department, CRS is also working with local partners to implement a project called Whose Child is This. CRS promotes integrated early childhood care and development in local daycares and communities. We are working to empower caregivers with the skills needed to provide healthy nutrition, stimulating development activities, and access to medical services for children ages 1 to 5. The project has been successful largely due to our integrative well-being day model, in which caregivers can access vaccines, cooking demonstrations, developmental guidance and other health care services in one area throughout one day. Through this project we are working with parents, teachers and communities to better understand the types of disability and developmental delays that exist and how to build an inclusive and stimulating environment for all children. We hope that children with perceived disability will no longer miss out on educational opportunities. And, we believe that if children are able to have access to quality services that allow them to develop cognitively and physically in the healthiest ways during their formative years, then we will see less incidences of children with intellectual or physical disabilities later in life.

CRS is optimistic about the future for people with disabilities in Lesotho. We are looking forward to continuing our engagement with these types of programs in the years to come, and we hope to keep crossing paths with all of you who are here today. We commend all of you on your efforts thus and we are excited to celebrate the progress made with you today!

GENERAL NEWS

“My achievements.....”

By: Smanga Seko



I am a Mosotho man, middle aged. I was born in the village of Mashaleng, in the Mophale'shoek district. A visually impaired man, since 1993. My disability was caused by the explosion of rock busters.

I became a member of a disability movement named The Lesotho National League of the Visually Impaired Persons (LNLVIP), since 2000. I am now a board member in this organisation at the moment.

It was in 2015 when joining advocacy work with Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD). I was trained on how to do the good and effective advocacy.

I am now coordinating advocacy work in the area of Mashaleng community council in the Maphohloane Electoral Division under the constituency of Qhalasi, Mophale'shoek district. I use to approach all organisations, public service provider, private sectors and international organisations that are found in my area.

I managed to meet with World Food Programme(WFP), as it is employing people to construct dams and prevent soil erosion in this area. There was a problem of not finding ways of employing persons with disabilities. I arranged a meeting with local councillors, chiefs, identified people to recruit for the job, including persons with disabilities. We discussed the importance of employing persons with disabilities. It was very difficult but we managed to convince them.

Under this programme, we succeeded to give 5 PWDs job for the first round. The following persons were; Mr. Amohelang Matlali Itlhokomeleng Sekei, Mr. Sekese Malebanye Ms. Ntseliseng Ralienyane and Mr. Motlatsi Sechele.

The second round in the same programme, we give these people; Thato Thibalira, Moleboheng Thokoa, 'Matselane Mabula and Fusi Mahetlane.

Again under the Ministry of Forestry and Reclamation, the following persons with disabilities worked and earned money; Smanga Seko, Motlatsi Sechele, Mateboho Nathane and Mamanena Nthethe.

I looked again the right to education to persons with disabilities. I managed to referred the following persons to schools and institutions; they are; Moleboheng Thokoa, Piti Ramohanoe, Mamorena Makotje. They all attended at Mohloli-oa-Bophelo institute. The following; Nthathi Nthethe, Samputi Mojapela attended at St. Paul for the Deaf.

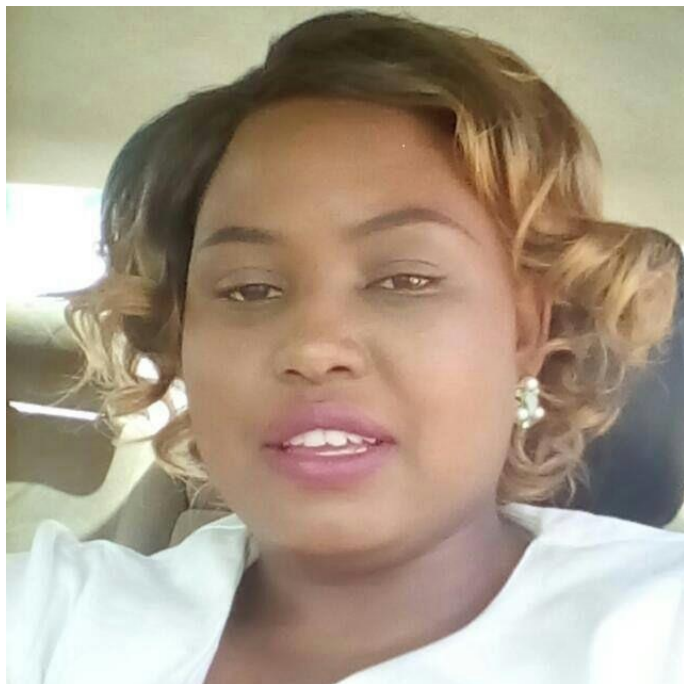
Under health right, facilitated to see that the following are accessing health service at the nearest clinic. The people are Itlhokomeleng Sekei who is physically disabled and Amohelang Matlai who is deaf. They both assisted properly.

The main challenge in the work I was doing is lack of knowledge to sign language. This is not only with health care offices but even to the deaf persons themselves. I would like to recommend to all people in charge to expand knowledge to deaf persons, parents and health care officers. I would like to see deaf people enhanced with their language and be considered. We all have to take effort to help deaf persons and their organisation to be at the level of other group of disabilities in the future.

GENERAL NEWS

People with disabilities demand rights.....

By: Limpho Sello



THE Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled (LNFOD) has appealed to the government to accelerate efforts that would lead to the enactment into law of the Disability Equity Bill to help address the growing needs of people with disabilities.

Speaking at the Commemoration of the International Day of People with Disability (IDPD) held in Leribe this week, LNFOD Chairperson Mabataung Khetsi said a law focusing on people with disability would help strengthen the protection of an estimated 64,000 people with disabilities in Lesotho.

The commemoration was attended by people with disability, the Minister of Social Development, Matebatso Doti, other government officials and development partners.

Ms Khetsi said government should invest more on addressing disability concerns as it affects all people in some way. All people, she said, are also vulnerable to disability as causes include trauma from accidents. Of the 64,000 people with disabilities, 36 percent are visually impaired.

"The number of people with disabilities is increasing due to various causes including high cases of accident-related trauma. An Act of parliament will therefore help in promoting programmes that seek to ensure the rights of people with disabilities are recognized, respected and protected," Ms Khetsi said. She said despite many challenges faced by this segment of the society, the presentation of the Disability Equity Bill before parliament has delayed for too long.

Ms Khetsi said an alternative route the government could pursue to promote the rights of people with disability, was to domesticate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) through an Act of Parliament.

"This Act would direct the establishment of an independent body to monitor whether rights are being respected, including monitoring the ministry of Social Development. This is because, while the government has adopted the Social Protection Strategy in 2014 to also among others, provide disability grants, this has not happened three years down the line." As a result, Lesotho is still struggling to meet the right to social protection as stipulated under article 28 of the UN Convention.

Ms Khetsi appealed to the Minister Doti to take action with regards to the implementation of the disability grant in the 2018-2019 financial year.

She also raised other issues of concern including ensuring that the country's education system was inclusive of people with disabilities, particularly students in pre and primary; secondary; and tertiary schools.

NEWS IN PICTURES



Members of Parliament Social Cluster Committee at the meeting organised by LNFOD



Persons with disabilities gathered in numbers at Hlotse, Leribe on the 4th December, commemorating International Disability Day



Queen Masenate Mohato Bereng Seeiso, LNFOD Patron giving a speech at International Disability Day Hlotse, Leribe



UN Representative – Coordination and Provision of Leadership Officer is giving the speech on behalf of UN Secretary



Candidate Forum conducted by Voter Educators (PWDs) for Local Government Election



Local Musician- Lebohang Letsohla entertaining PWDs on Disability Day

DEC, 2017

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ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work



Diakonie 
Katastrophenhilfe

Brot
für die Welt



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