

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear valued Disability E-Newsletter subscribers,

As February ends, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for your continued support and engagement with our newsletter. It is our honor and privilege to be able to bring you important updates and information on various awareness days relevant to persons with disabilities.

Throughout this month, we covered topics such as HPV Awareness Day, World Hearing Day, Social Justice Day, and Epilepsy Day. These days are crucial in raising awareness about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and the need for more understanding and support in our communities.

As we look forward to the coming months, we will continue to provide you with the latest updates and information on disability-related news and events. We hope that our newsletter continues to serve as a source of inspiration, education, and empowerment for you and others in our community.

Thank you once again for your continued support and engagement with our newsletter. We are honored to have you as our subscribers.

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](mailto:molulam@lnfod.org.ls) or call +266 2233 0345

Best Regards  
The Editor



**EDITOR- MOLULA MOFOSI**



# LNFOD

## FEBRUARY! A MONTH OF CONDOM,HPV,STI'S AND CANCER AWARENESS

MOLULA MOFOSI

In focus on the five districts, namely; Leribe, Berea, Maseru, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing LNFOD has produced advocacy messages through accessible formats, these messages encourage persons with disabilities to get HPV Vaccines, Covid-19 vaccine as well as childhood vaccines. In relation to the Human papillomavirus (HPV) awareness day (2nd February) this ongoing program promotes awareness and prevention of HPV, which is a common sexually transmitted infection that affects millions of people worldwide. Although most cases of HPV clear up on their own, some can lead to serious health problems, including cervical cancer. This is why the HPV vaccine is so important, especially for girls with disabilities.

Parents and caretakers of girls with disabilities should be aware of the HPV vaccine and ensure their girls receive it. This is because girls with disabilities are often more vulnerable to HPV and its associated health problems, and may be at a higher risk of developing cervical cancer. Additionally, girls with disabilities may face additional barriers to accessing healthcare and may be less likely to receive routine health screenings, making the HPV vaccine all the more important.

HPV is a sexually transmitted infection that can be spread through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. While it is most commonly associated with cervical cancer, HPV can also cause other types of cancer, including anal, penile, and oropharyngeal cancer. Additionally, HPV can cause genital warts and other genital lesions.

Girls with disabilities may face additional challenges when it comes to preventing HPV and other sexually transmitted infections. For example, they may have difficulty accessing information about safe sex practices or may face barriers to using contraception, such as difficulty negotiating condom use with a partner. It is important for caretakers and healthcare providers to work together to ensure that girls with disabilities have access to the information and resources they need to protect themselves from HPV and other STIs.

One way that girls with disabilities can protect themselves from HPV is by using condoms. Although condoms do not offer complete protection against HPV, they can significantly reduce the risk of infection. Caretakers and healthcare providers can work with girls with disabilities to teach them about safe sex practices, including how to properly use condoms. In addition to preventing HPV and other STIs, it is also important for girls with disabilities to learn about preventing unnecessary pregnancy. This can be especially challenging for girls with disabilities, who may face additional barriers to accessing contraception or may not receive comprehensive sex education. It is important for caretakers and healthcare providers to work together to ensure that girls with disabilities have access to the information and resources they need to prevent unwanted pregnancy.



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Finally, it is important for girls with disabilities to receive routine health screenings, including cervical cancer screenings. Regular screenings can help detect HPV and other health problems early, when they are most treatable. Caretakers and healthcare providers should work together to ensure that girls with disabilities receive the care they need to stay healthy and protected.

In conclusion, the HPV vaccine is an important tool for protecting girls with disabilities from the serious health risks associated with HPV. Caretakers and healthcare providers should work together to ensure that girls with disabilities receive the vaccine and have access to the information and resources they need to protect themselves from HPV and other STIs. By working together, we can help ensure that all girls, regardless of ability, have access to the healthcare and information they need to stay healthy and protected.



## LNAPD CELEBRATES PERSONS WITH DISABILITY EQUITY ACT 2021

MOLULA MOFOSI

The Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD) and the Disabled and HIV/AIDS Organization Lesotho (DHAOL) have organized a gala dinner to celebrate the passing of the Person with Disability Equity Act 2021. The act aims to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life. This gala dinner is an important occasion for people with disabilities in Lesotho as it recognizes the efforts of those who have fought for their rights and celebrates the progress made towards creating a more inclusive society.

The LNAPD is a non-profit organization that works to improve the lives of people with physical disabilities in Lesotho. They provide various services and support to people with disabilities, including education and advocacy on disability rights, skills training and job placement, and accessibility audits of public spaces to ensure that they are accessible to people with disabilities. The LNAPD plays a vital role in ensuring that people with physical disabilities are included in society and have access to the same opportunities as everyone else.

On the other hand, the Disabled and HIV/AIDS Organization Lesotho (DHAOL) is a non-profit organization that focuses on improving the lives of people with disabilities who are also living with HIV/AIDS. The organization provides various services such as education on HIV/AIDS, prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections, and counseling and support services. The DHAOL aims to ensure that people with disabilities who are living with HIV/AIDS have access to the same opportunities as everyone else, including employment and education.

The Person with Disability Equity Act 2021 is a significant step towards creating a more inclusive society in Lesotho. The act recognizes the rights of people with disabilities and aims to ensure that they have equal access to opportunities and services. This includes education, healthcare, employment, and access to public spaces. The act also aims to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities and to promote their full participation in all aspects of life. The act is going to benefit people with disabilities in several ways. Firstly, it will ensure that people with disabilities have access to the same opportunities as everyone else



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This means that they will have equal access to education, healthcare, and employment, which will help to reduce poverty and increase their quality of life. The act will also promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in society, which will help to reduce the stigma and discrimination that they face.

Secondly, the act will promote accessibility in public spaces. This means that people with disabilities will have equal access to public buildings, transportation, and other facilities. This will help to promote their independence and mobility, and will enable them to participate fully in society.

Lastly, the act will promote the participation of people with disabilities in decision-making processes. This means that they will have a say in policies and programs that affect their lives. This will help to ensure that their needs and perspectives are considered, and will help to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

## IS EPILEPSY A MENTAL DISABILITY?

MOLULA MOFOSI

According to the latest WHO data published in 2018, epilepsy deaths in Lesotho reached 164, or 0.59 percent of total deaths, despite reports that there are approximately 10 million people living with epilepsy in Africa, where epilepsy is widely misunderstood and deeply stigmatized.

The age-adjusted death rate was estimated to be 9.67 per 100,000 people, with Lesotho ranking second(2) in the world in terms of epilepsy-related deaths. Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. It is characterized by recurrent seizures that are caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain. Although epilepsy can occur at any age, it most commonly affects young children and older adults. In many cases, the cause of epilepsy is unknown, but it can also be caused by head injury, brain tumors, genetic conditions, or other medical conditions.

Epilepsy is a condition that can significantly impact a person's life. It can affect their ability to work, drive, and perform other daily activities. Because of this, it is considered a disability by the Social Security Administration (SSA). This means that people with epilepsy may be eligible for disability benefits from the government.

To be considered disabled by the SSA, a person with epilepsy must meet certain criteria. They must have at least one seizure per month, despite taking anti-seizure medication, and the seizures must interfere with their ability to perform daily activities. They must also have medical evidence of the condition, including a detailed medical history.



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In addition to raising awareness about epilepsy, it is also important for Basotho to understand the importance of seeking medical treatment for the condition. Although there is no cure for epilepsy, it can be managed with medication and other treatments. People with epilepsy who receive proper treatment can often lead normal, productive lives.

However, many people with epilepsy in Lesotho may not have access to medical care or may be hesitant to seek treatment due to cultural beliefs or fear of discrimination. This can lead to uncontrolled seizures and a decreased quality of life.

To address these issues, it is important for the government and healthcare organizations in Lesotho to increase access to medical care for people with epilepsy. This includes providing medication, diagnostic tests, and support services to help people manage their condition.

In conclusion, epilepsy is a neurological condition that affects millions of people worldwide. It is considered a disability by the Social Security Administration because it can significantly impact a person's ability to perform daily activities. It is important for Basotho to be aware of epilepsy and its status as a disability so that they can better understand the challenges that people with epilepsy face. It is also important for Basotho to understand the importance of seeking medical treatment for the condition so that people with epilepsy can receive the care they need to manage their condition and lead normal, productive lives.



## WORLD HEARING DAY- PREVENTING HEARING LOSS

MOLULA MOFOSI

World hearing day

Leading towards the World Hearing Day, observed on March 3rd is ahead, LNFOD acknowledges how parents can take measure in preventing hearing loss for children under the age of 12 years, this is a time to raise awareness about the importance of hearing health and how we can prevent hearing loss.

One of the leading causes of hearing loss in children is meningitis. Meningitis is a rare but serious infection that affects the delicate membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. In commemoration of this awareness, LNFOD conducted interviews with individuals who were born hearing, or with no hearing impairments. It is important to be aware that there are people who were born completely deaf and there are people with progressive hearing loss and there are people who experience hearing loss as they grow, usually this is experienced in childhood, between the ages of one to twelve.

Three members of National Association of the Deaf (NADL) have shared their stories on how they became deaf, at what age and their adjustments. Reabetsoe Hlosi a 23-year-old man shared that while herding, he experienced a very painful headache and lost his consciousness, this according to his last diagnosis following a three months of hospitalization and three doctors later, was meningitis. Similarly, with two other interviewees, Thapelo Selibo had the same diagnosis at the age of 12.

When bacteria, viruses, or other pathogens enter the bloodstream and travel to the brain, they can cause inflammation and damage to the auditory nerve, leading to hearing loss. This can be particularly devastating in young children, as hearing loss can impact their speech development and overall quality of life. Fortunately, there are a number of ways that people can prevent meningitis and protect their hearing health. The most effective way to prevent meningitis is through vaccination.



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The meningococcal vaccine is recommended for all children and adolescents, as well as adults who may be at increased risk of infection.

In addition to vaccination, other precautions can help reduce the risk of meningitis and protect hearing health. Practicing good hygiene, such as frequent hand-washing, can help prevent the spread of infection. Avoiding close contact with people who are sick, especially in crowded settings, can also help reduce the risk of infection.

Conversely, exposure to loud noises can also damage hearing health. Reducing exposure to loud noises in the workplace or during leisure activities, such as music concerts or sporting events, can help prevent noise-induced hearing loss. Wearing properly fitted earplugs or earmuffs can also help protect the ears from loud noises. In conclusion, World Hearing Day is a crucial time to raise awareness about the importance of hearing health and how we can prevent hearing loss. By taking steps to prevent meningitis through vaccination and practicing good hygiene, as well as reducing exposure to loud noises, we can all take proactive measures to protect our hearing health and preserve our quality of life.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

MOLULA MOFOSI

The 20th of February marked world day of social justice day. In understanding what this widely used terms refers to, is generally an equal distribution of goods and service, that is, everyone deserves equal rights and opportunities despite gender, race, impairments and capabilities.

Social justice encompasses greatly socio-economic factors. In response to the present inequalities such as gender discrimination, racial discrimination, and discrimination of person with disabilities, United Nations has announced the 20th February as the day member countries promote social justice, which for this year's theme is "Equal rights and opportunities for all regardless their background, social status or ethnicity."

Proceeding the World summit for social development, which was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1995, The summit emphasized the global need for social justice and urged the promotion of social and economic development, social integration, and social justice.

The United Nation further establishes that "Social justice is only possible when all barriers that people face based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture or disability are addressed." United Nations Department of economic and Social Affairs DESA). Further, in 2023 February 17th United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, denotes that, "an explicit discussion is required on emphasizing what Justice is, that way, deliberative process at local, national, regional, and global levels in different sectors with different stakeholders so that a shared vision would allow for the creation of policies an institution need to overcome multiple crises humanity faces."

Social justice in the context of disability is an important issue facing many countries around the world, including Lesotho.

In Lesotho, like in many other countries, persons with disabilities face various forms of discrimination and social exclusion that prevent them from fully participating in everyday life.



WORLD DAY OF  
**SOCIAL  
JUSTICE**

## GENERAL NEWS

This article explores the challenges that persons with disabilities in Lesotho face and discusses potential solutions to promote social justice and equality for all. The challenges that persons with disabilities face in Lesotho are many and diverse. One of the primary challenges is the lack of access to quality education, which prevents them from acquiring the knowledge and skills required to participate in economic and social activities. Additionally, persons with disabilities often have limited access to health care services, which can lead to further health complications and impairments.

Additionally, there is a lack of accessible transportation or mobility for visually impaired persons as well as physically challenged persons, which makes it difficult for persons with disabilities to move around and access public and private spaces. In addition, there is also a lack of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, perpetuating the myth that persons with disabilities are not capable of contributing to the economy.

Furthermore, there is also a cultural and social stigma associated with persons with disabilities in Lesotho. This can lead to feelings of isolation, prejudice, and discrimination. The negative attitudes towards disability in society not only prevent persons with disabilities from accessing education, health care services, employment, and transport, but also stigmatize them in the community.



Despite the many challenges facing persons with disabilities in Lesotho, there are potential solutions to promote social justice and equality for all. One of these solutions is to develop and implement inclusive policies and laws that safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities. The Persons With Disability Equity Act 2021 as well as the inclusive policy 2018 is a step forward for the country however the implementation process for these is low which further prohibits as these imprints include assurance that persons with disabilities have equal access to education, health care services, employment, and transportation. Additionally, inclusive policies should promote social and cultural acceptance of persons with disabilities in society.

Another solution is to promote disability awareness campaigns and community development programs. Such programs and campaigns can promote inclusion and reduce negative attitudes towards disability. They can also provide persons with disabilities with a platform to share their stories and experiences. It is also important to for relevant stakeholders to collaborate both international and national stakeholders (Organisations authorities) to develop and implement sustainable solutions for persons with disabilities in Lesotho. This includes the establishment of comprehensive rehabilitation services that cater to the individual needs of persons with disabilities and promote their inclusion into society.



WORLD DAY OF  
**SOCIAL  
JUSTICE**

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## LNFOD budget note:

LNFOD notes with great appreciation of the increase of the disability grant from M400.00 to M600.00 as announced by the Honorable Minister of Finance, Dr Matlanyane in the budget speech tabled in parliament today. The disability grant is meant to address disability related costs and needs by persons with disabilities.

The disability grant is established by Persons with Disability Equity Act (2021) which requires persons with disabilities to undergo a means test before they can be awarded the disability grant.

LNFOD therefore calls upon the department of social development to roll out the disability grant to all ten districts of Lesotho and embrace clear communication messages which will enable persons with disabilities to access the grant.

LNFOD further believes that the department has budgeted for the inauguration of the Persons with Disability Advisory council whose role is to monitor the provision of the disability grant and advise the Minister accordingly.





## PARTNERS IN ADVOCACY

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