

# 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. This newsletter will cover news for January, 2015

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.

I would like to wish everybody a prosperous New Year. This season presents us with a once per annum opportunity to take stock of past actions in the previous year, review as different players both public and private; our thinking and actions with respect to persons with disabilities. We also should seek and act to building peaceful and developed societies inclusive of everyone especially this time of elections.

In this manner let everyone of us raise awareness on issues of disability and educate each other about elections for the betterment of free, fair and accessible elections.

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](mailto:pletsau@gmail.com)

If missed any edition please visit [www.infod.org.ls](http://www.infod.org.ls)

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

Best regards,



The Editor

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

### Disability Equity Bill in place

By Nkhasi Sefuthi

LNFOOD is gladly announcing that, people with disabilities long awaited Disability Equity Bill is now in place. The Bill is an attempt by the government of Lesotho to domesticate the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities through the disability specific legislation. The purpose of the disability specific legislation is an endeavor by the government of Lesotho to ensure promotion, protection and respect of disability rights in our society. Although, the bill is in its draft form,

LNFOOD considers this step as very significant towards the promotion and protection of People with Disabilities in Lesotho. Undoubtedly, the 9th Parliament of Lesotho which will come into being in March 2015, should pass the disability equity act in fulfillment of the international obligations set out by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The draft bill is to undergo several scrutinizes by both the government and the stakeholders including LNFOOD to make sure that, it responds to practical needs and rights of people with disabilities as outlined in the Convention before it is presented to the Parliament.

We sincerely hope that, the government will speed up the preliminary processes to enable the Parliament of Lesotho to deliberate upon the bill for adoption. The development of the regulations of the Disability Act also forms an integral part in the implementation of this act once it is adopted as such by the Parliament. After the passing of the act, our advocacy should turn into the design of the regulations that will crucially enable the implementation of the Act

The Bill once adopted as the Act will provide protection of the rights of people with disabilities ranging from employment, access to inclusive education, access to information in the accessible formats to mention a few.

We convey our gratitude to the Ministry of Social Development for the commitment they demonstrated during the design of the Bill and we hope that, they will support the speedy presentation of the Bill in the next parliament so that people with disabilities can claim their rights individually and collectively as the case maybe from the Courts of Law.

## GENERAL NEWS

### **LNFOD partners with Independent Electoral Commission to do elections education**



Lesotho coalition government had some difficulties, such that all those difficulties led the country to go for elections this year. LNFOD as the advocating body for people with disabilities approached Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) sensitizing about how people with disabilities are getting problems of not voting during National Assembly Elections.

LNFOD and IEC signed the agreement to do elections education together. This means LNFOD will have to approach its member affiliates to send members to be employed. Each DPO that is affiliated to LNFOD sent about 6 people; this will include personal assistants where necessary. All in all the employees to do elections education under LNFOD are 42. These people are going to work in the districts that LNFOD projects are existing. It will be 5 districts; meaning Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Berea, Mafeteng and Mophale'shoek. In these districts, the work will be done in many different constituencies.

In order to do the work properly, LNFOD had to conduct the training workshop. The training started on the 1st – 3rd January, 2015. The objective of the training was to remind those who worked the same job before and equip those who will be doing it for the first time. The target for this project is to reach more people with disabilities and their family members.

This is done because most of them are hardly reached as they care for their children or any family member who is disabled

The participants were highlighted with the National Assembly Elections Act; 2011. It is wise to train people about the Act, as many people are not complying with law, not intentionally but just because they have no knowledge about it.

The other reason that LNFOD has persuaded to train people with disabilities is that, most people with disabilities are not easily participating in the community activities. They are not able to move around their villages due to attitudinal and environmental barriers they are facing. Most people with disabilities in the villages do not understand things the way other people do unless there is someone who will understand the situation and the level of their understanding.

During the training there raised many challenges that people with disabilities are facing during the elections. The participants said the Polling stations are not accessible and this is where people with disabilities are losing interest of going for elections. The stations are too far and the terrain is difficult for them to reach. So, the participants are expected to go house to house to encourage and show them the importance of going for elections.



*Inaccessible routes to be crossed by PWDs to and from Polling stations*



## GENERAL NEWS

### Strengthening the principle of reasonable accommodation for PWDs in workplace

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) is running a project on promotion of employment of persons with disabilities under the democracy and human rights fund coordinated by Maseru US embassy.

In this project, the reasonable accommodation for workers with disabilities is emphasized so that employers can recruit people with disabilities through provision of reasonable accommodation so that the employers at workplaces can treat people with disabilities equally.

The project is also intended to increase the employment of people with disabilities in the private and public sector.

LNFOD organised the first meeting of employees with disabilities in order to deepen the understanding of the concept of reasonable accommodation among people with disabilities.



The meeting was held at Maseru Sun in which employees with disabilities from various companies and organisations gathered to share experience of reasonable accommodation at their workplaces and how they could interact with their employers in order to strengthen the application of the principle.

In this meeting, the workers with disabilities highlighted the need to educate the employers on the concept and application of reasonable accommodation to accommodate workers with disabilities in the informed manner.

The consultant developing the manual on reasonable accommodation attended the meeting so as to incorporate the practical rights of people with disabilities in the manual which will be later shared with all stakeholders in the effort to promote the understanding towards the employment of people with disabilities.



*Group of PWDs that are working to share their experiences*

## GENERAL NEWS

### Agreement promotes access to rights and justice to persons with disabilities

By: Rabasotho Moeletsi



*Dr. Mosito and Mrs. Regina Lephoi are shaking hands after signing the contract*

THE Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) and National University of Lesotho (NUL) signed a land-marking Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS) auditorium, NUL premises. Under the agreement, which was signed on January 2015, NUL, through their Faculty of Law Legal AID Clinic (NULLAC) will increase access to justice for persons with disabilities through provision of quality legal services, and to facilitate access to law rendered by NULLAC.

Signing on behalf of NUL was Ms. 'Masefinela Mphuthing, NUL Registrar while on the part of LNFOD the agreement was signed by Mrs. Regina Makananelo Lephoi, LNFOD chairperson. On the LNFOD Perspective of MoU, Mrs. Lephoi, said the MoU will assist both parties identify further areas of cooperation, while also enhancing their current partnership.

"This partnership will strengthen our rights advocacy at grassroots level because this is where people with disabilities experience serious discrimination in terms of access to justice," Mrs. Lephoi said. "I hope the two parties signing this agreement today will fulfil their mutual obligations

in line with the MoU. I also believe the signing of this agreement will present the university with an opportunity to introspect in terms of how far it can accommodate students with disabilities through other programs it offers.

"Most importantly, the signing of this MoU creates significant awareness about disability as a development and not medical issue as many of us perceive it to be." Mrs. Lephoi further noted the abuse of people with disabilities continues to increase, especially the deaf, and those with intellectual disabilities since the perpetrators know most of the cases are not easy to prosecute in court, hence the significance of the MoU.



*NUL and LNFOD banners stand parallel showing partnership*

Delivering her keynote address during the signing ceremony NUL Registrar, Ms. 'Masefinela Mphuthing, said as NUL they appreciate working together with LNFOD on behalf of persons with various types of disabilities.

"This is a very important agreement, as it also helps NUL to fulfill UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights which NUL subscribe to, therefore we endorse our participation, partnership working together with the umbrella body, LNFOD hence the culmination of what has been going on during discussions; goals and objectives that were articulated between the two parties, I'm honoured and privileged to be part of the signing," Ms. Mphuthing said.



"We still have a big challenge of making sure that justice is served regardless of the person's condition," Mrs. Lephoi further said.

On the NUL Perspective of MoU, Law Faculty Dean, Kananelo Mosito, said the university had introduced the Law Clinic to assist the most vulnerable members of society. Dr. Mosito (King's Counsel) further confirmed the Clinic would be representing LNFOD members in the courts of law, in line with the MoU.

"After the establishment of the Law Clinic, LNFOD officials approached us and that was when we realized we needed to have an agreement of working together with them. "We see this as one of the most important days in the history of NUL, particularly the Faculty of Law,

Now, that we are going to be providing such outreach programs." Dr. Mosito said



Mrs. Mphuthing is also signing on behalf of NUL

## 'The struggle is continuous for People with disabilities...

By: 'Malehlohonolo 'Matli



I am a Mosotho single woman who has been growing disabled. I can only walk if using crutches and cannot wear shoes on my feet. I am staying with my grandchildren. They are the ones that are helping me to bring everything next to me.

It is surprising to see people with disabilities suffering since 1966 when Lesotho got independence. I thought if things were on our hands as Basotho, everything would be better as we are brothers and sisters. It seems as if everyone is for her/himself.

I was granted with Social grant for some years. The money is very little as I am now getting M250 monthly but it was doing my life become well.

'Nqoe Community council comes what is called child

grant then my problems started. The Social Development officer told me that I would have to forfeit my grant from Ministry of Social Development and live with the child grant. The question is; 'Am I a child or my needs are going in line with the child?'

I have been asking for help of assistive devices since 4 years ago and did not get any help. They are now taking away the money that is helping me. I think both grants that is child grant and social grant have its own assessment and requirements to meet before one could qualify for. I am saying the **struggle continues for people with disabilities** because instead of their lives to change they are now going worse. I am very disappointed as the Minister of Social Development is praised to work her work properly yet she is not following what is going on outside especially in other districts.

I can understand we are told to go for elections but what is going to happen after that? Are we going to work with the same people who do not want to feel for people with disabilities? I think enough is enough. My heart is bleeding because I have my own needs besides those of the children that I am taking care of.

## OPINION

### Why should I cast my vote?

By: Tau Pasa



'It is election time again in Lesotho, and as person with physical disability, I understand that I have to get ready to go through a lot. I Lesotho people with disabilities always taken for granted let alone when it comes to elections or helping with the voting processes.

I have never had problems with voting all these years because I had no disability but have seen People with disabilities struggling until they return from the polling stations without voting.

I am now disabled. I have been amputated two legs due to sugar diabetes. I started having disabilities in 2006 while working in the mines of South Africa when imputing the first leg. The 2012 elections did not have any problem. Last year meaning 2014 in August, the second leg also cut off. I understand we have to exercise our right of voting but what for. I have seen many people with disabilities going without legs but using crutches.

My concern is who is responsible for taking care of people who cannot buy themselves artificial legs, crutches and many more? I think the government meaning the people we are going to elect next Month. Why do we have to vote for them as people with disabilities, because they are not doing for us? We do not have disability grant like the elderly as they are getting their grant. Now children are getting their own grant only people with disabilities but falling in the same Ministry.

I think will be wasting our time and energy.

I cannot go and vote because there is no means of mobility to me. I was at Queen Memorial Hospital and when discharged did not have even crutches or a wheelchair, you can just imagine when a grown up man like this growling like a baby. Then make a decision of going to vote.

I did ask for the wheelchair from social development, I have been told that I will have to be referred by the Community Councilor to Social Development. I have a problem because cannot be able to go and look for a councilor, even if I send someone nobody will be seen. This means unless I get the councilor will not get help.

I would like to vote but there is no use for me to go there. I think as a citizen has a right to vote but as I am not considering any change to our lives, I will stay here because cannot walk around. What am I going to do is to stay here and wait for my passing away. I do not see any future for my family, I cannot do anything like before, my wife also has gone out to South Africa because she realized that we are suffering.

This country supposed to do something for people with disabilities like creating jobs for those who can be able to work. But if not I would advice PWDs to be cleaver enough to do amazing thing that everyone would be surprised of. Those who can be able to go must go but must listen carefully to the manifestos and then make a decision.

I wonder who is going to have pity on us. I do not see the usefulness of elections in this country but anyway I wish Basotho luck to do what they think will be better to their lives.'

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Lobbying meetings for PDs participation at local councils**

For more information please conduct  
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Or

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Email; [moeletsi@Infod.org.ls](mailto:moeletsi@Infod.org.ls)

### **Conducting trainings on disability advocacy manual at community levels**

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### **Disability Awareness raising campaigns at community councils**

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## NEWS IN PICTURE



Fusi Sefuthi contestant for 2015 under LCD party at Likhoele # 63



The participants during the training workshop on reasonable accommodation



People with disabilities at 'Muela during group discussion on electoral education



Mr. Seabata from Radio presenter now to PR list of ABC Party



LNFOD and NAD during feasibility study on micro-finance for PWDs in the district of Leribe



Likila Community Council – Pitso on electoral education

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# ADVOCACY WORK



## LNFOOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work

