

DISABILITY LESOTHO

From the Editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome once again to the edition of Disability Lesotho.

January 2021 has been a deadly month for Coronavirus (COVID-19) for persons with disabilities living in Lesotho. LNFOD has received approximately five deaths reports of persons with disabilities associated with COVID-19 making it one of the difficult months of the second wave of Coronavirus. Some people argue that Lesotho was hit hard by the second wave of Coronavirus because of the relaxation of the COVID-19 regulations during the festive season and the fact that Lesotho migrants from the Republic of South Africa which has passed a million mark of COVID-19 cases were allowed into Lesotho without making necessary arrangements at the borders to ensure that people coming into Lesotho are tested and quarantined if found to be infected.

Government of Lesotho therefore imposed the second total lockdown effective from the 15th January and later extended from the 27 January 2021 to the 3rd February so as to contain the spread of this deadly disease. This situation forced the LNFOD staff to work from home for a period of three weeks.

It should be noted at this juncture that persons with disabilities have not yet fully been included in the COVID-19 decision making process such as the National COVID-19 secretariat

(NACOSEC) despite the pledge made by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister during the commemoration of the 2020 international day of persons with disabilities in Thaba-tseka in which he said that he will ensure that; persons with disabilities are represented in the NACOSEC.

However, this pledge has not yet translated into concrete action. LNFOD therefore calls upon the Right Honourable the Prime Minister of Lesotho to fulfill his pledge to the Basotho with disabilities by ensuring self-representation of persons with disabilities in NACOSEC so as to ensure that the decisions including the public health regulations take into account the situation of persons with disabilities in a wholistic manner.

We call upon government to apply the principle of leaving no one behind in giving out food parcels to the vulnerable people such as the street vendors. We are calling upon government to consider persons with disabilities as vulnerable to this deadly disease and therefore worthy to get the social protection as well.

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.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

2021 LNFOD PRIORITIES

Background

According to (2016) housing census report, 2.5% of the Lesotho's total population lives with some form of disability. This percentage translates into forty five thousand people which seems to have significantly decreased from around 3.7% seventy (70000) persons with disabilities in the 2006 census report.

The 'Lesotho situational analysis report on persons with disabilities (2019) indicates that persons with disabilities in Lesotho are experiencing considerable barriers in terms of legal protection, access to education, employment, justice and decision making process due to the social, legal, economic and political framework which does not promote their full and effective participation. In addition, LNFOD 'Gender analysis report (2020) highlights that women and girls with disabilities are at a greater risk of being socially excluded because they are discriminated on the basis of gender and disability in social, economic and political spheres of life.

This section aims at outlining the priorities of the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) in 2021 in order to fulfill its mandate of advocating for, promoting and protecting the human rights of persons with disabilities and their families.

This will briefly state the successes of the organisations achieved over the past year and then outline the agenda of LNFOD in 2021.

The article concludes by making recommendations which should be upheld in order to foster inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstream society.

About LNFOD

LNFOD is an umbrella body of organisations of persons with disabilities founded in 1989 and was legally registered as a nongovernmental organisations with the government of Lesotho on the 22nd October 1991.

The mission of LNFOD is to advocate for, promote, and protect the human rights of persons with disabilities through training, emotional support and by representing their needs to government, private sector, development partners, and the wider community.

2020 achievements

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 to LNFOD advocacy in 2020, the organisations has been successful in pushing for the finalization of Persons with Disability Equity Bill; appointment of Ministerial Disability Focal Persons; and revision of the National Disability Mainstreaming Plan which was adopted by government in 2015. Persons with Disability Equity Bill has been passed by the Parliament by the end of 2020. The bill is awaiting royal assent by the King so that it may turn into law. It is highly expected that the Act will provide greater protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and lead to the establishment of the independent monitoring body

of the rights of persons with disabilities as enshrined in the Act.

With the financial aid from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), LNFOD working together with the Ministry of Social Development have successfully advocated for the appointment of the Ministerial Disability Focal Persons in various government ministries to ensure that disability related needs are catered for in all government ministries. Establishment of Ministerial Disability Focal Persons is in line with article 33)1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which requires the state parties to put in place monitoring and implementation mechanisms of the CRPD within the government. Establishment of the focal points is therefore considered as the implementation methods since government officials appointed as the focal points are charged with the responsibilities of implementing the CRPD through the implementation of the National Disability Mainstreaming Plan (NDMP) which has been successfully reviewed in 2020.

In terms of monitoring the rights of persons with disabilities, the National Disability Advisory council established by the Persons with Disability Act is charged with the responsibility of monitoring all government and other private public service providers, issuing advisory opinion to government, issuing adjustment orders and providing corrective measures where the rights of persons with disabilities are threatened or violated by any other person or company.

Lastly, LNFOD has been able to introduce its first ever project on gender and disability project in 14 local community councils in the districts of Berea, Maseru in the rural areas, Mafeteng and Leribe. This project seeks to promote gender equality within organisations of persons with disabilities at the national and community level and ensure disability inclusion within women's rights associations so they are capacitated issues relating to women with disabilities. the gender analysis study has been successfully completed in 2020 which clearly states the situation of women and girls with disabilities in terms of their gender and disabilities needs and rights.

LNFOD AGENDA IN 2021

In 2021, LNFOD has planned to build on the achieved results by pursuing the following agenda: Gender and disability, LNFOD will continue to highlight the intersectionalities between gender and disability including through implementing gender and disability based advocacy activities which promote gender equality within the organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDS) and disability inclusion within women's rights organisations so that such organisations can have the necessary capacity to deal with gender needs of women with disabilities.

LNFOD has published an innovation contest among organisations of persons with disabilities in which the call has been published on the 15 January 2021 calling upon organisations of persons with disabilities to innovate the means through which they can promote gender equality,

capacity building within their organisations. The plan is to fund two organisations with the best innovation for twelve thousand Euros with the generous support from Diakonie ACT Austria.

LNFOOD will continue to work with its key stakeholders including the Ministry of Social Development to trickle down the implementation of NDMP to the 10 districts of Lesotho by enrolling the disability mainstreaming for persons with disabilities.

LNFOOD will intensify its advocacy efforts in 2021 to ensure the operationalization of the Persons with Disability Equity Act.

LNFOOD will continue to advocate for the disability COVID-19 interventions by advocating for the self-representation of persons with disabilities in the decision making bodies and ensure that persons with disabilities get vaccinated as soon as COVID-19 vaccines are available in Lesotho taking into account vulnerability of persons with disabilities to this deadly disease.

LNFOOD is also introducing a new project on disability and climate change in which the intention is to demonstrate the intersection between disability and climate change and how persons with disabilities can be made to participate in the climate change action.

Recommendation

LNFOOD calls upon government of Lesotho to speed up the process of turning Disability Bill into law and operationalize it in 2021 in consultation with organisations of persons with disabilities

Most importantly government should set up and implement disability grant in accordance with the new social protection strategy.

Fund and allocate resources for the effective implementation of NDMP and continue to monitor and develop the capacitate of the ministerial disability focal persons.

Organisations of persons with disabilities should implement gender and disability sensitive project so as to eliminate social, economic and political inequalities between men and women with disabilities.

GENERAL NEWS

73 teachers are equipped with skills to include learners with disabilities in classrooms

By: Puleng Mosili

With the aid of funds from UNICEF Lesotho, the Lesotho national federation of organizations of the disabled (LNFOD) conducted a two-day workshop for both primary and post primary teachers in the districts of Quthing, Mohale's hoek, Mafeteng, Maseru, Berea and Leribe. The aim was to help teachers accommodate and effectively interact and teach learners with disabilities in their schools.

Teachers from 11 primary schools 16 post primary schools from the above mentioned districts were taken through issues of disability in November and December 2020 where they got an opportunity to get a clear distinction between Impairment and disability so that they may understand that their learners with disabilities are capable of learning if barriers are removed.

Teachers also learned among others the difference between inclusive education as opposed to special education. it was at this point that teachers were brought to an understanding that inclusive education is not only essential for learners with disabilities to gain education but for also building tolerant and inclusive societies. Further teachers were introduced to reasonable accommodation as an important concept in inclusive education whereby learners' needs are viewed through an individual lens.

The workshops helped teachers have an understanding of who learners with disabilities are and how they can interact with them with the help of 'A re amohelaneng booklet'. Also exploring variety of learning pathways provided them with strategies to teach different learners especially learners with disabilities.

From the previously mentioned districts teachers represented the following schools: **Quthing:** Sebapala High School, Tiping Secondary School, Mpapa Secondary school, St. Gabriel High School, Moorosi high school. **Mohale's hoek:** Mohale's hoek High School, Likuena High School, Qhalasi High School, Morifi High School, St.Patrick's High school, Naleli English Medium High school. **Leribe:** Mt. Royal Primary, St.

Paul, Leribe English medium, Leribe Methodist Primary and Hlotse High school. **Berea:** Lipohong High school and Assumption Primary. **Mafeteng:** Motsekuoa Primary, St. Johns Primary, St. Johns High school, Makintane High school and Phokoane Primary. **Maseru:** Ts'osane Primary, Methodist Primary, Maseru, East Primary, Moshoeshoe II Primary and Boitelo Primary.

The workshops were held in collaboration with LNFOD affiliates and the ministry of education (Special education unit officers at districts level)



GENERAL NEWS

Understand Disability, change attitude and participating in Building advisability Inclusive society!!!

By: Makatleho Molotsi

In 2008 the world has changed its perspective towards disability. This was basically shifting from the old medical perspective/ model of disability to a new social perspective/ model.

Medical perspective of disability mainly suggested that people are disabled by their unusual/ undesired visible and invisible features that were thought to confer to them great limitations when it comes to standard human performance. This understanding shaped societies' demeanor and attitude towards people with impairments. It therefore eventually found its way in societal practices, cultures, laws policies and budget both the community and the national level. Eventually everything meant for people was exclusive of people with impairments. This was the case despite both the international, and national initiatives that would boost inclusive development that leaves no one behind in terms of the current SDGs. Taking for an example here at home (Lesotho) Free Primary Education policy was meant to increase enrollment and retention of primary going students in school. However, the implementation strategy as well as the Monitoring and evaluation system of this policy did not take in to account leaners with impairments. Similarly, no preparations were then made to ensure that those with impairments benefit equally from this policy.

Pursuant to the disability movement which began in 1992 the international community was bound to rethink the ways in which people with impairments could benefit equally from the already existing developmental strategies. It then appeared that the medical model of disability is actually the main predicament which consequently exclude people with disability from the mainstream society. In 2008, through the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

(UNCRPD) the international community came up with a new perspective of disability that should influence all the societal practices, demeanor and attitude towards people with disability. This perspective also brings a change of approach to development. It should also find its way to the national laws, plans, policies and budgets. It requires that people with disabilities be sufficiently mainstreamed across all the sectors at both the national and community levels. This means that it should find its way to each and every household and community. This is social perspective/ model of disability.

According to this perspective, impairment is just a form of human diversity and not necessarily a real issue. In terms of this perspective, people with impairments have their own unique and diverse abilities that need societal support bas opposed to medical corrections to unleash one's potential to perform in society. Opposed to medical perspective, social model dictates people are not disabled by their unusual or undesired features rather by the environment that is impairment insensitive and non-responsive around them. The word in this context environment here refers to both the physical and non- physical surroundings that includes but not limited to negative demeanor and attitude of people towards impaired people, disability exclusive and non- responsive public services, laws, policies, plans and budgets. In terms of Article 1, of the disability rights founding law; UNCRPD, People are first impaired then become disabled by the unfriendly environment around them which usually put both visible and invisible limitations on how far impaired people can go, reach, interact and perform and contribute in society. The impairment barrier full environment has existed for quite a long time meaning that it will take even longer to eliminate all these

barriers this means that it will take long for people with impairment then to suffer disability. This is the reason why people with impairments are also people with disabilities. (because they are perpetually disabled).

Since 2008, the international community and the organizations of people with disabilities are calling the nations to adopt a new social model or perspective of disability in order to ensure that nations embark on a journey towards respect for human rights of all, democratization as well



as inclusive development in line with the **World Development Agenda 2030!** The nations are called to eliminate disability not through medical corrections through eliminating the disability barriers and paving a way for inclusion and equal participation of people with disabilities in both private and public spheres! Knowledge and change of attitude is central to this, LNFOD thus appeals to Basotho Nation to hear this call!

Let us all join hands in creating Basotho Nation that is barrier free thus disability inclusive

GENERAL NEWS

“Lose of my eyesight won't deny me to explore.....”

By: Pascalina Letsau

Morapeli Makhele lives at Nazareth in the village called Ha Ralejoe. Ntate Motsamai who is the father to Morapeli stated that Morapeli as his son is partially visually impaired. He said; “I was working at the mines, and my wife was the one who is talking full responsibility to take care of my son. When growing we did not realize that the boy has eye problems.”

“One day my sister visited me, she asked Motsamai which class he is in? Motsamai responded: Class 2 then my sister said; this is not the right time for you to be in that class. She took a paper and a pen and asked Motsamai to write his name. Then Motsamai place the paper nearby to the eyes, my sister said; “Brother this child do not see. That is when we realized that the boy is partially blind.”

Matsamai was engaged to almost 4 schools, there was no difference, he repeated one class for several times with different schools. He then attended school at Machache Primary School. The teacher who was teaching Morapeli realized that he unable to see clearly. So the teacher took a decision to take a brick and put in front of the whole class and tell Morapeli to sit there in order to see the chalkboard.

Mme Makarabo who is the step-mother to Morapeli said; “I was not happy because Morapeli

was sitting on a bare brick, he was not comfortable. When I see Morapeli sitting as I had to reach the school unannounced, I was angry and asked the teacher why did you tell me to bring the chair to the school for my son?

The teacher also was not happy too when asking about that. I worked hard such that I had to buy spectacles for Morapeli, Said Makarabo. Even those spectacles were regularly get broken as Morapeli was playing Boy games those are sometime being rough. We use to buy them several times from the age 12 – 15 years.

Morapeli also went to initiation school in order to have experience just like other boys and men of Lesotho. Many people did not like it hoping that was the abuse, but according to the father; Morapeli had his views or rights to perform regardless of the disability.

Morapeli completed class 7 and went to Secondary School at John Mount High School doing Grade 8

He was the referred to Mohloli -oa – Bophelo Vocational Training Centre to do Braille Classes. He completed, the he was taken to Life High School to continue with Formal Classes.

Talking to Morapeli, he said he is fine attending school at Life High School. He said he is learning just like any body in the class. He said, “ I leant Braille at Mohloli oa bophelo but I don't will continue using it. In my class I sit in front. I also use the voice recorder to listen to all teachings, so that I can listen it later when at home.”

He concluded by saying, “ I want to explore with everything that other people are doing, I am not sure if I will get some difficulties later.”





LNFOD

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With funding from

