

DISABILITY LESOTHO



Editor's note

This year persons with disabilities have motivation to work hard to see that issues of disabilities are taken into consideration by this country. Persons with disabilities have hope that they will one time get information that affects all people, so that can participate fully to all decisions affecting them.

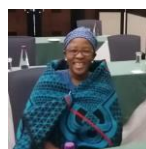
I would like to take this opportunity to elaborate more on the pandemic of Covid – 19 that has affected the whole world. The pandemic seems to affect persons with disabilities more heavily than their non-disabled counterparts as they have no information on how they can take care of themselves. COVID-19 response is a dynamic process. People are getting vaccinated to boost their immunity and where are persons with disabilities who are at the worst position. Does any ministry of health through the bodies established have any deliberate means include persons with disabilities anywhere in this process. Vulnerability of persons with disabilities to this pandemic alone is enough to place persons with disabilities in heart of the response

action. I think the door – to – door campaign that targets persons with disabilities households would be the best approach.

The campaign can bring fruitful situation to many Basotho, including the elderly who are unable to move around. I strongly believe this universal approach to COVID-19 response will yield a disability-inclusive, accessible, and sustainable post COVID-19 world.

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

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Editor

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

COVID-19 national COVID-19 response and recovery plan in six southern African countries – STRATEGY FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) is implementing a strategy for equitable access and response to COVID-19 pandemic (SEAR). The strategy advocates for the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the response to COVID-19 pandemic.

The project objectives are to challenge governments in six southern African countries to review national COVID-19 response and recovery plans to ensure inclusion of disability and gender sensitivity which specifically addresses the needs of women and girls with disabilities; to advocate for zero budget cut in programmes of persons with disabilities, including for women and girls with disabilities; and to document incidences of COVID-19 related to persons with disabilities.

To date SEAR project, has enabled LNFOD to generate information about the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of persons with disabilities by way of a research.



LNFOD is using the research to inform their advocacy interventions aimed at advocating for the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities the response to COVID-19 pandemic and post COVID-19 social and economic policies and strategy.

LNFOD has designed advocacy messages for COVID-19 aimed at promoting participation of persons with disabilities and published the implications for the exclusion of persons with



disabilities in the COVID-19 decision making processes.

During the 2021 commemoration of the International Day of Persons with disabilities (IDPD), the Right Honourable the Prime Minister allowed participation of persons with disabilities in the ministerial COVID-19 cabinet subcommittee through the participation of the executive director of LNFOD.

Organisations of persons with disabilities OPDS) have been trying hard to ensure that they advise persons with disabilities on how they could protect their lives from COVID-19.

OPDS have reproduced the Ministry of Health COVID-19 protocols in accessible formats including in easy to read, Braille, sign language and other formats.

LNAPD has been mainstreaming COVID-19 preventative education in their community work. LNLVIP participated in the development of school guidelines for reopening off schools to ensure the safety of the visually impaired community in schools. They have been disseminating public health COVID-19 information in audio formats, Braille, large print and handing out radio to the visually impaired people in the districts alongside memory sticks which can be plucked into the radios.

NADL produced transparent face masks and encourage the health workers and other service providers to use transparent face masks so that deaf community can be able to communicate to the service providers during the hard lock downs.

ADVOCACY ASPECT

A cry for justice for the Disabled!!

By: Makatleho 'Molotsi

For the longest time, the concept of universality of human rights seemed to be ironical. Looking at the injustices perpetrated against people with different types of disabilities, one would conclude that human rights are exclusive of people with disabilities. When perusing the municipal substantive and procedural human rights laws, it was clear that they do not cover people with disabilities. Could this have been because Lesotho had no intention to protect and give liberty to people with disabilities? However, in 12th March 2021, Lesotho had made clear intention to recognize and protect people with disabilities on equal basis with their non-disabled counterparts. This was through the enactment of Persons with Disabilities Equity Act No 24 of 2021. This is the Act that provides for the rights of people with disabilities and provides penalties in case of contravention of such. This Act further clearly assign different responsibilities to both private and public stakeholders in relation to the implementation of this Act.



People with disabilities in this country have suffered for the longest time. This has misled a number of people to believe that this kind of life suits this group. The study done by LNFOD in 2020 reports that due to the existing gender disparities in this country women with disabilities suffer twice more as compared to their male counterparts. (They suffer first because they are females and secondly because they have disabilities. The study further reports that women with mental disabilities are mostly the victims of sexual violence which is



perpetrated against them with great impunity. These findings are reiterated by the sway of media reports about women with mental disabilities are repeatedly abused sexually.

All these indicate that there is a need for deliberate measures to be taken in order to comply with persons with disabilities Equity Act in order to protect people with disabilities. Women especially those with mental disabilities are in grave danger. This is an appeal to the Ministry of Law, Justice, Human Rights and Constitutional Affairs, The Ministry of Social Development, The Minister of Police and all other relevant stakeholders to priorities implementing their responsibilities stipulated in Persons with Disabilities Equity Act to rescue and restore the dignity of people with disabilities particularly those with mental disabilities!!

GENERAL NEWS

World Vision donate 10 Mobility Freedom Carts

By: Pascalina Letsau



World Vision donate 10 Mobility Freedom Carts to Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD). The event took place at the Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD) head office at Moshoeshoe II in Maseru Friday the 22nd January, 2022

The introduction on the partnership of World Vision and LNFOD was done by the Executive Director Mr. Nkhasi Sefuthi. When welcome people at the event, he said when talking about LNFOD, we are talking about the umbrella body of the 4 DPOs namely; Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD), Lesotho National League of the Virtually Impaired Persons (LNLVIP), National Association of the Deaf Lesotho (NADL) and Intellectual Disability of Lesotho (IDAL) all these organisations are forming what we call LNFOD today.

When World Vision provides these mobility freedom carts to LNFOD, was giving it to LNAPD as the assistive device used by persons with physically disabled. LNFOD would like to thank World Vision management for offering these carts to persons with disabilities. There is a very high demand of assistive devices to support persons with physical disability in this country.

On behalf of World Vision Mrs. `Maseisa Ntlama elaborated on the background of World Vision and its work. It is focusing more on the welfare of the child. Mrs. Ntlama said World Vision is working

all over the country. In all areas that world vision is working realized that there are many persons with physically disabled having physical challenges to travel around and do their daily chores due to lack of assistive devices, that is why decided to provide these carts. It is the role of World Vision to help children at all ways, so that can have bright future.

On behalf of the beneficiaries Mr. Lejone Semoli said he is happy as will be to travel long distance even if do not have the personal assistance. As persons with disabilities will be able to do the daily errands and help families to get money for the family.

On behalf of the organization, the President thanked the partnership of World Vision and LNFOD, because if it was not about it LNAPD would not have an opportunity to receive these mobility carts. These mobility carts that are being provided today are going to help persons with physical disabilities all over the country. The organization has the long list of persons with physical disabilities that are in need of assistive devices including different types of wheelchairs. We would like to plea to all those have powers to help Basotho with physical disabilities with assistive devices, as they cannot be able to go to schools, workplaces, health centres and many services to help them.



GENERAL NEWS

Open sessions an eye opener

By: Motheba Makara-Mpota

Public participation in issues surrounding their lives is vital and an eye opener. This has been discovered following a host of PISA/ LNFOD open session discussions in Khanyane Hlotse urban council in Leribe and Ha Mahlekefane, Nqoe community council in Botha-Bothe. The open sessions were meant to introduce PISA/LNFOD collaboration to the people residing in the identified community council where PISA project through LNFOD has kicked off and they are Hlotse Urban, Botha-Bothe Urban and Nqoe community councils.



The open sessions have made people aware that their grievances, challenges and service delivery problems as communities can be aired at a platform created by PISA. It is at the latter sessions where it was discovered that people with severe disabilities have not received their vaccinations against covid-19. Experts which were invited to the sessions from Jhpiego informed those who attended the sessions about the importance of affording people with disabilities the opportunity to get vaccinated. They even mentioned that there are three types of injections Johnson and Johnson, Pfizer and AstraZeneca. The experts further taught the public of the critical duration of being cautious after being injected and other pertinent issues cropped up at the sessions, discussions were held to do away with the myths surrounding the vaccination. These myths scare people from vaccinating.

Other people even came out to give their testimonies of the effects of the injection. Some claim their arms have developed wards, other claim their arms are numb and that they are no longer able to use their arms. They however were not aware or could not remember the names of the injections they received which may have caused the problems but were asked to report to the nearest health centres.

Councillors and Chiefs from the areas where the open sessions were held have hailed the sessions as important and that more consultations with the public and traditional leaders will help promote inclusiveness of all citizens including those with disabilities in all spheres of life, especially in the rural communities. Open sessions on various topics are continuing.



NEWS IN PICTURE



Sensitization meeting to public and private sector on inauguration of Disability Advisory Council in Mafeteng district



This is the situation people with physical disabilities are living without having assistive devices.



PISA/LNFOD held Public gathering at Makeoana Community Council in Berea District



Open session discussions at Khanyane Hlotse urban council in Leribe and Ha Mahlekefane



These are the Freedom carts provided to Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled members



LNFOOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work

With funding from

