

# DISABILITY LESOTHO



## From the Editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome once again to the twentieth edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled which is starting the year 2014.

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 congratulate all students who have passed their final examinations. Those who did not manage to pass, I would say, 'this is not the end of the world, there is more in front of you. What you have to do is to keep on trying.' I am very glad that our deaf student who was doing Junior Certificate at Mount Royal high school managed to get second class pass. There were no barriers facing education to him as sign language interpreter was there to help him during class periods.

This shows that if our country can break the barriers facing learners with disabilities at all levels, there raises talents and innovation from people with disabilities. With these words, I would like to take the opportunity to beg all DPOs and individuals with disabilities to work hard and advocate for education to children and youth with disabilities all over the 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](mailto:pletsau@gmail.com)

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

Best regards,  
The Editor

## ADVOCACY ASPECT

### **LNFOOD expectations in 2014:**

**By: Adv. Nkhasi Sefuthi**

I would like to extend my compliments for the new season to all readers of the E-newsletter for their unfailing support they have demonstrated to us in 2013. It was also encouraging to determine that, at least few policymakers of Lesotho read our monthly publications.

Lesotho has a long way to go in terms of mainstreaming people with disabilities in all aspects of development taking place in Lesotho. However, there are some leaders who slightly showcase their interest in disability. In fact, most policymakers and senior government officials are talking about disability, but, they are not implementing anything about or concerning disability. As a matter of fact, Lesotho is at the stage where the people with disabilities on the ground have not yet yielded good results from what the policymakers are pledging to do for them because, action has not yet taken off.

I strongly believe that, the gap between disability policy and practice is caused by the lack of expertise in disability issues within the government. In fact; that, this gap is also indirectly worsened by the medical approach on disability that is perpetuated by the social work professionals within the government. If you look closely at the Lesotho disability approach, you will realize that, only social work is seemed to have an association with disability, Hence why, everybody in the government pushes any disability related matter to the Ministry of Social Development. The problem with this perception is that, it cultivates into the minds of the senior officials and off course to the public at large that only social workers can deal with disability, while in fact it is not. It is inciting that, any disability related development programmes can only be handled by the social workers. Indeed, this perception is very destructive in recognizing a disability as part of human diversity that should be treated by laws and policy. I am not being emotional but, this is factual scenario which I personally encounter in my daily work.

The Ministry of Social Development seems to claim the same issue as we do on the above matter raised off. Nevertheless, the Ministry does not put strategies in place that will help other ministries realize their role and potential in disability sector. As a result, we are expecting to see the ministry of Social Development playing its coordinating role in terms of which other ministries can be guided through dialogues and trainings on meaningful disability inclusion.

We are also expecting the government to speed up the process of drafting disability legislation as it has rightly started to draw up this historic piece of legislation. In this regard, we anticipate more engagement and participation of people with disabilities in the construction of this law. We strongly believe that, at least by end of 2014, disability equity bill will have been tabled before the Parliament of Lesotho. In fact disability legislation is not just our expectation but, it is our main objective of which we'll strive to achieve through lobbying and advocacy campaigns we are to embark on beginning February 2014.

We anticipate the government to budget for the implementation of the national disability and rehabilitation policy. This policy has been adopted in 2011, but it has not been allocated any budget till to-date.

Most importantly, we are greatly expecting the government through the ministry of social development to take a lead in disability mainstreaming actions rather than well-intentioned speeches

We can be very happy if the Ministry of Social Development can widens its disability perspective by developing at one more disability specific programme geared toward uplifting lives of people with disabilities on the ground.

People with disabilities must be consulted on any issue that may affect their live.



## GENERAL NEWS

### The Project Long Overdue – Tebe-tebe D04 Community Council

By: Rabasotho Moeletsi



Tebe-tebe D04 community council in the Berea district welcomes a led by the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD). The project funded by European Union runs for three years. The main purpose of the project is to enhance accountability and service delivery of local government to persons with disabilities by increasing grassroots advocacy efforts amongst groups and individuals of persons with disabilities. LNFOD held a meeting to introduce project activities to the community councillors at the council offices on Friday.

“It is important to work hand in glove with you (councillors) to empower, educate & build capacities of male and female persons with disabilities (PWDs) of Tebe-tebe to claim, demand & negotiate their entitlements and rights in Local Government programmes,” said, project coordinator, Rabasotho Moeletsi when introducing the project to the councillors.

The project coordinator further said that explained that the project will also sensitize public officials or other community leaders on how to universally design their services and programmes to be accessed by everybody including persons with disabilities.

On the other hand, Community Councillors who seemed excited about the project did share their expectation on the project and the challenges they meet in their own villages. They found the project as an answer to their challenges as they have PWDs in the community but did not have skills on how to help them address their challenges.

One of the councillors, Mrs. ‘Mabatho Ts’osane said, “I have a sister of mine who uses Orthopaedic shoes; I pray that the project will help her to get the shoes at the reduced price as over the years she has been hit hard by escalating costs for her specialised shoes. I have tried to help her, moving from office to office but have not been successful till now.”

“We are very happy that this project has come our way. We are going not only going to help empower persons with disabilities but we too are going to learn from them. We therefore accept this project and will do all in our power to support it,” said Khafa Sefika, the Chairperson Tebe-tebe community council when closing the meeting.

“Already you have heard for yourselves the challenges in my council – the project is long overdue,” concluded the Chairperson, showing a word of appreciation to the LNFOD project coordinator.

## GENERAL NEWS

### Working hard for formal economy – Itjareng



*Nthabiseng Ramaqabe removing weed from butternut plot at Itjareng*

**By Pascalina Letsau**

It is clear and well known that in Lesotho people with disabilities are behind when talking about formal economy.

Itjareng is always working trying hard to change lives of people with disabilities through vocational skills. The year 2014 is the second year for all the trainees at Itjareng. The trainees have to be sure of what they are going to do after completing their course. While the staff is busy to convince potential employers about the recruitment of people with disabilities. It is very difficult to impress an employer during the negotiations or during interviews for a job, but to people with disabilities is worse. They must prove that they are qualified as they counterparts that is; non-disabled candidates. Even if they can prove the biggest barrier is still attitudinal.

So, Itjareng is the answers to people with disabilities that are not have an opportunity to attend mainstream schools. People with disabilities are trained on how to do things on their own.

At this time of the year, we use to eat what we planted. Learners with intellectual disabilities are able to take care of gardens and plants. Even in our villages we all know that they are hard workers.

Like I said; this is the last year of our course, we are no ready to send people to do their different jobs. We do repairs and produce new wallets, hand bags, sandals and many more in leatherworks.

In welding Itjareng trainees are also in a high position to do big gates for families and school. Carpentry workshop, we take orders and train them how to quote a product. It is high time that employers and communities can realize the availability and hard work done by people with disabilities.

### What does employment sector do?

**By: Marorisang Mafethe**

Employment stakeholders held workshop from 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014 to finalize the drafting of the National Employment Policy. These included Ministries of Labour and Employment as the responsible ministry, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Education and Training, Finance, Development Planning, FAWU, Lesotho Council of NGOs, LNFOD, LECODU and Lesotho National Development Co-operation (LNDC). Speaking on behalf of trade unions, Mr. Daniel Maraisane of Lesotho Labour Council raised concerns that the policy is long overdue as its drafting started in 1996. He further reiterated that the policy will promote decent work and enhance social dialogues and covers key issues of gender and HIV&AIDs.

The Minister of Labour and Employment Hon. Maloi Lebesa gave a background of why the policy was delayed and among others the political instability which moved the country in 1998 and promoted high unemployment as well as ILO that found the policy too broad with no clear strategies. The policy was furthermore not in line with PRSP and National Strategic Development plan and had left out key issues of gender and HIV&AIDs.

The draft policy has also put an emphasis on the previously marginalized groups of women, youth and persons with disabilities and has clear strategies to reduce unemployment and underemployment facing these groups.

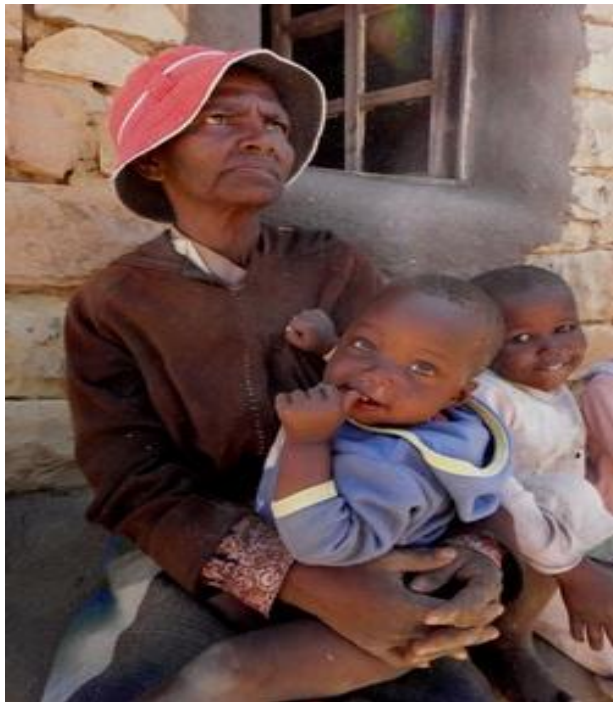
The policy will be coordinated by the Ministry of labour and employment although it will be implemented by multiple stakeholders.

The meeting requested the speedy adoption of the policy to prepare for a job summit to be held later this year in order to fund the policy implementation.



## GENERAL NEWS

### Some challenges parents with disabilities face



*Limpho's grandmother with her grand children*

Limpho is a 5 year old girl living in a remote village in Mapote, Berea. She lives with her grandmother, her mother and her 18 month old brother Lebohanga in a one roomed rondavel with no electricity or running water. Limpho's mother is intellectual disability and often disappears for days before returning home bruised and wounded unable to communicate what happened to her. Limpho's father is also intellectual disability and lives in the next village. He has never provided any support for her or her brother.

Limpho's grandmother is the primary caregiver for the family and she supports them by gathering and selling firewood from the surrounding areas. During the day, whilst her grandmother is working Limpho is responsible for taking care of her baby brother. She walks around the neighborhood carrying him on her back to beg for food and water from the well to bathe him as she is too small to collect water by herself and there is usually no food in the house.

Because both Limpho's parents are alive and her grandmother is below the pension age the family is not eligible to receive any financial support from the Ministry of Social Development. The children are being cared for by a community support group started by the IDAL volunteer caregiver.

The caregiver visits the family several times a week to ensure that Limpho and Lebohanga have been fed, often sharing his own family's food with them. He is currently in the process of helping them build a vegetable garden with seeds sourced from World Vision. He provides counseling and psycho-social support for Limpho's grandmother and mother and requests emergency assistance parcels from IDAL during winter and when no other assistance can be found. Limpho hopes she will be able to go to school next year.



*Limpho carrying his brother on her back*

## GENERAL NEWS

### Challenges and benefits of a person with mobility disability in the working environment



*Ms. Mokae Moepi in her office*

I started 2014 with a big smile after spending full 2 years and 6 months unemployed after graduating at NUL in 2011 as a Social Worker, I had been unemployed since then till last year December when there was a post of a Ward clerk at Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital which needed somebody with COSC and with any form of disability to work at the Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy department doing the work of the Ward clerk and Receptionist at the same time. I did not say I have a Degree and would not apply for that position but I did apply and was hired.

Being a person with mobility disability is a challenge as it is and having to start work was even more challenging as I live far away from the bus stop and the road is very bad I cannot push myself to the bus stop so I have to hire a cab to and from work and it is really expensive, mind you I am earning peanuts. Again, arriving at the work place whereby they had never hired a person with any kind of disability was a challenge because at the staff entrance there is a big step and no ramp for me to get in by myself however I did not keep quiet I told my line manager and she promised to make the management of the hospital aware of the situation as I would to get in and out on my own without depending on other people and hopeful it will be solved within no time.

Moreover, during heavy rain fall it is really challenging for me to hold an umbrella and push myself at the same time and every time it rains I become miserable of how am going to cope at work.

However, I still enjoy some benefits as an employee, being a ward clerk and a wheelchair user of a physiotherapy department is exciting as I am near to the facilities so I am able to go to the gym during lunch hours so I take that as an advantage, secondly, my work is to order staff and collect some documents for the department and it means lots of traveling so my colleagues helped me around and I end up doing 3\4 of my work and yes give me special treatment and I feel like a real princess.

However, I still believe that one day I will find work of my profession and buy my dream car and be a good social worker who will bring positive change in the country. To all people with disabilities that are educated and unemployed let us take and apply for whatever opportunity that will come our way so we could start breaking barriers for people with disabilities in the work places...



# GENERAL NEWS

## Inclusive education



By: Rev. Charles Phoofolo O.M.I

There is a varied opinion concerning the question of what could be best for Deaf education. Others think that it could be better if Deaf students study alone in their special school. That will supposedly provide them with a chance to access information from the original speaker, without the mediation of a sign language interpreter.

The proponents of this view believe that, this would give Deaf learners first class information. This also suggests that interpreted message ranks second. It further implies that interpretation prevents students from excellence.

However, the reality of the matter from the schools practicing inclusive education in Lesotho proves something different. There are subjects in which Deaf students perform far better than their hearing counterparts. How on earth would that be possible if they received second class information?

Secondly, I don't think it would be possible to provide all special things for the Deaf; special school, special university, special job, special church, special hospital and a special world and so on and so forth. All we can do is to make this same world more accommodating for them.

It all starts with education. When hearing students study with their fellow Deaf brothers and sisters, they learn about their capabilities and they learn to

change their attitudes and they will find it much easier to work with them in the future. In Mount royal for instance, hearing students have acquired signing skills so much that it would be difficult to detect who is Deaf and who is not, if you view them from a distance.

Furthermore it would not be easy for us to judge the role of interpreters in mainstream schools, if we do not have well trained interpreters and educational interpreters for that matter.

Even though experience is the best teacher, it is not the only teacher. We need trainings for sign language interpreters and for interpreting teachers.

The Lesotho education system accommodates Deaf students among others, thanks to the ministry of education. But the journey of inclusion continues, since it is not only about opening the doors for People with disabilities, but it involves creating a suitable environment where students' special educational needs are taken into consideration.

The question is; what are the special educational needs of deaf students in an inclusive educational setting?



*In a class of deaf students, a teacher and a sign language interpreter*

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT



**Mr. Moshoeshoe Nchapi aged 32 years**  
**A Nurse by Profession**

I am Interested in cooking, reading and working with people with disabilities

**1. What is the best thing to work with people with disabilities?**

Get to experience life in its diversity through people with outstanding capabilities and self appreciation

**2. When did you come across working with them?**

I started working with PWDs since 2005

**3. What can you say about education to People with disabilities in this country?**

The education system is not inclusive of disability,

**4. What can you say about disability in Lesotho?**

Issues of disability are not taken into consideration at all. There are no skilled teachers to deal with disability at all level of education. The curriculum is not designed to incorporate disability, so this I think is not put Lesotho in a map of protecting rights of disability.

**5. If you were the Minister of Social development what would be your first thing to do to improve lives of PWDs?**

As a minister I would organize monthly grants and modify all government offices infrastructure for easy access

**6. If you were to choose a disability types what would you choose and why?**

I would prefer being a deaf person because I would still be able to interact with lingual society through listening and it is easy to teach and learn sign language.

**7. What type of a pet do you like most and why?**

I adore dogs; they are sociable pets and protective of family and property.

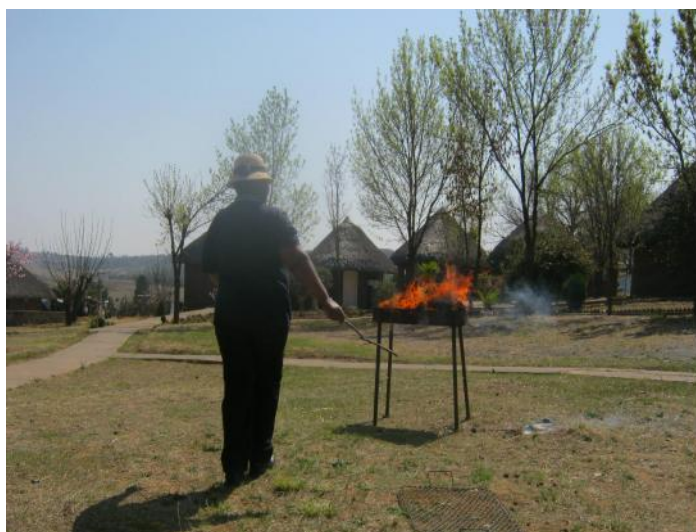
**8. Where would you like to stay besides Lesotho which is the accessible country to accommodate PWDs?**

I would prefer to stay in United States of America. It is highly developed with lots of open opportunities for growth and self development



## UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### Education Sector stakeholders validate SADC Inclusive Education Strategy.

The education sector stakeholders will validate SADC Inclusive Education Strategy to be presented to SADC ministers of education meeting to be held in Malawi in June 2014.

The draft strategy incorporates the comments made by the ministers during their meeting in September 2013. The strategy has been commissioned with funding support from the Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (SADPD), Open Society Initiative in Southern Africa (OSISA), Southern Africa Association for Learning and Educational Differences (SAALED) and MiET Africa.

The meeting will be held in Maseru from 13th to 14th February 2014.

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