

DISABILITY LESOTHO

From the editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome to the third edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled. This e-newsletter is a platform for all partners in the disability sector to share the good work they are doing and to learn from the work of others. It includes news of the key events and activities taking place within the world of disability in Lesotho and updates on the issues affecting people with disability. We welcome contributions of any nature from organizations working to improve the livelihood of people with disability or individuals who have an interest in the disability sector

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 May Ng mayng1@gmail.com or +226 639 220 40.

This is a new initiative and your feedback is very much appreciated. Please help us improve the quality of the content of this publication by letting us know what you would like to read about.

Best regards,
The Editor

News from LNFOD

After three months on leave I am very excited to be back at LNFOD and looking forward to continue with our advocacy work to improve the lives of people with disability. There have been a lot of changes since I left including the establishment of a new Ministry of Social Development and the appointment of the new Minister Hon. 'Matebatso Doti and we at LNFOD are eager to be part of this new beginning.

After a few days spent catching up with my team I was welcomed with a meeting with the Hon. Minister of Social Development in which we introduced LNFOD and the work that we are doing.



We used this meeting as an opportunity to share with the minister the challenges facing the disability movement and put forth our suggestions for the way forward.

We have in the past struggled to meet the minister responsible for disability issues and we're optimistic that this change in structure will mark a fresh start for the disability movement in Lesotho.

On the theme of new beginnings I'd also like to wish our brothers and sisters from NADL a warm welcome to their new offices. I wish you the best of luck settling into your new home. Similarly, we'd like to extend our best wishes to Mr Molise Foso, the new Administrator for Itjareng.

Best regards,

Mokome Monaheng (Mrs.)
Executive Director, Lesotho National
Federation of Organisations of the Disabled

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Ithuseng considers second round of trainee assessments

Ithuseng Vocational Rehabilitation Centre has recently completed assessments of 58 prospective trainees from across Lesotho for the 2013-2014 training period.

While the assessment process was undertaken over three weeks, the numbers expected to attend were lower than previous assessment periods.

It is likely that another assessment time will be offered later in the year or early next year. Dates will be confirmed.

The Ministry of Social Development would encourage Disabled Persons Organisations and members of the public to liaise with their Social Development District Officers if they have identified a community member with a disability that may benefit from vocational training.

For further information, please contact the Ministry of Social Development Head Office Ph: 2222 6000/2232 6013 and ask to speak to a social worker



Molise Foso, IVTC Administrator

New Management at Itjareng

On 15 June 2012 Itjareng Vocational Training Centre threw a farewell party for the departure of Mrs. 'Manapo Mokitimi as IVTC Administrator. Mrs. Mokitimi was the Administrator of Itjareng from May 2010 until May 2012.

Mrs. Mokitimi's tenure was historic as she was the first female Administrator in the history of Itjareng. LNAPD and the Itjareng staff want to thank her for the work she did in these two years.

On the same day LNAPD also welcomed the successor to Mrs. Mokitimi: Mr. Molise Foso. His appointment marks a new opportunity for Itjareng.

Mr. Foso is a young and qualified individual for the position of Administrator. He also has something in common with many of Itjareng's staff and trainees—he boasts a physical disability.

The staff and board of Itjareng look forward to working with Mr. Foso to achieve the objective of IVTC: providing vocational skills to people who are physically challenged, mentally challenged, or deaf.

With the work of Mr. Foso, many disabled persons in Lesotho will have the opportunity to create a successful future for themselves.

LSMHP holds lifeskills workshops in Mohale's Hoek

In June and July LSMHP held a number of life skills training workshops for orphans and vulnerable children from the Khoelenya and Lithipeng Councils in Mohale's Hoek.

Altogether, about 120 OVC, including those with intellectual disability, were trained on issues of effective communication, decision making, sexuality and body development and contraceptive use.

Through the workshop it was discovered that, despite the ready availability of free condoms, most OVC were too embarrassed to obtain them where they are given out or placed and as a result many did not use them. Some stated that they had never seen a condom.

These workshops are part of the OVC program funded by MSH which aims to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS.

“Despite the ready availability of free condoms, most OVC were too embarrassed to obtain them”

NADL moves to a new home

The National Association of the Deaf in Lesotho (NADL) is pleased to announce that it has moved offices to the LPPA Headquarters in Maseru.

Their new contact details are:

Ph: 2231 4621
Mob: 590 785 10 (SMS only)
E: kopi2003@webmail.co.za
Postal:
PO Box 13821, Maseru 100, Lesotho

Physical address:
LPPA Headquarters
Pope John Paul II Rd
Opposite Options Buildings
Maseru



Call to action for Wheelchair users

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and Motivation Africa have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish basic wheelchair services in three centres: Maseru (Queen Mamohato/lthuseng), Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek.

Motivation Africa will donate Worldmade wheelchairs as well as providing training in wheelchair assembly.

Assessments are carried out by qualified orthopaedic technicians, occupational therapists and physiotherapists for prescription and distribution of these. Only clients eligible for Social Welfare services will be able to be referred for wheelchairs from this project.

Families, community leaders, and general community members can refer clients to Social Development District Officers to determine eligibility.

We also urge Disabled Persons Organisations and the public to support clients to access this much needed service

For further information, please contact the Ministry of Social Development Head Office Ph: 2222 6000/2232 6013 and ask to speak to a social worker

Deputy Minister Pledges Support for LNLVIP Projects

The Deputy Minister of Education and Training, Honourable Apisi Ratšele said people with hearing disability deserve quality education as it is the Ministry's mandate to ensure that all Basotho pupils access education in all levels starting from the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) through tertiary level.

Honourable Ratšele made the remarks when officially opening a three week Braille training project targeted at Primary teachers and members of the Lesotho National League of the Impaired Persons (LNVIP) in Maseru earlier this month.

The Assistant Minister alluded that inclusive education was meant to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social and emotional or other conditions, showing that there was no doubt that the efforts made by AFUB and LNLVIP to complement efforts made by the Ministry to ensure that children access education.

Mr. Ratšele pointed that the Ministry is looking forward to ensure that St. Gerard Primary School in Mafateng, St. Cyprian Butha Buthe and St. Bernadette Primary School in Maseru admit learners with visual impairment starting from next year as they will be equipped with necessary skills.

The Chairperson of LNLVIP Mrs. 'Mabataung Khetsi mentioned that although there are limited teachers who could teach and read Braille, she was confident that the project would yield great successes as more schools would be built and teachers be equipped with skills.

Mrs. Khetsi said lack of resources is still a major challenge, as the equipment used by the blind pupils is expensive and it is imported from international countries.

At the same occasion, a teacher from St. Bernadette Primary School Mrs. 'Mateboho Mojela noted that the training would be beneficial to both teachers and pupils, as more time would be saved as they will no longer transcribe pupils work, since they will confidently read and write Braille.

The training workshop has been sponsored by the African Union for the Blind (AFUB) intended to equip teachers with requisite skills for imparting knowledge to learners with visual impairment, it would also contribute to long term education goals by raising socio-economic status of the visually impaired learners and their families in Lesotho.

US Embassy supports HIV awareness training for intellectually disabled youth

The US Embassy partnered with LSMHP to hold a HIV awareness and life skills training workshop for 33 intellectually disabled youths in Tanka, Mafateng. In addition to protection and sexuality issues, the workshop focused on HIV treatment and management with participants being given advice on the importance of regular consumption of ARVs and maintaining a healthy and balanced diet in order to rebuild the immune system.

Although the participants came from different backgrounds and had different levels of education and knowledge, many were victims of long term abuse. The parents/guardians in this community are working hard to fight the known cases of abuse in collaboration with the Chiefs and CGPU officers.

Intellectually Disabled man given a house

A house is being constructed for an intellectually disabled man whose parents passed away. After the death of his parents, Motlatsi Mats'a insisted on staying at the family home with his grandparents rather than following his siblings who chose to move out.

The house gradually grew delapidated and uninhabitable. Through the advocacy efforts made by LNFOD and DPOs, a service provider agreed to support people with disabilities by constructing houses for the most destitute. Motlatsi's new house is currently being constructed and will hopefully be completed by end of July 2012.

OVC lifeskills session in Mafateng

As part of its program with PACT which aims to reduce the vulnerability of OVC and youth with intellectual disability, LSMHP held a life skills training workshops in Makoabating and Lehlakeng community councils in Mafateng, and Berea Urban and Phuthiatsana community councils in Berea.

The workshops attracted an attendance of 80 OVC in Mafateng and 42 in Berea. The trainings took place from 25-30 June. Through the workshops it was discovered that 10 percent of participants were completely illiterate, having never attended primary school and 20% were already knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS issues. Many of the participants were already sexually active.

LNFOOD Magistrates Workshop Questions Representation of People with Disability in the Legal System

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOOD) yesterday held a training session for magistrates on the importance of equal representation of people with disability in the courts of law. The workshop, held at the Lehakoe Club, was attended by eleven magistrates from the Southern, Northern and Central regions of Lesotho, along with representatives from a number of Disabled Persons Organisations and members of the media.

"This training session was necessary as currently people with disability are not receiving equal representation before the law in many cases. Some of the issues faced by people with disability include lack of resources for translation and communication which deny them the opportunity to testify in court and play a role in the justice process," commented Nhkasi Sefuthi, Human Rights and Advocacy Officer, LNFOOD.

"Another issue is the general attitude towards cases involving victims with disability, particularly intellectual disability. These cases are often delayed or simply never make it to the courtroom as the testimony of an intellectually disabled victim is regarded as unreliable and hence the requirement for additional supporting evidence is higher.

Although the recent gang rape of an intellectually disabled teen in South Africa drew international media attention to the situation, most assaults against victims with a disability go unreported and the communities are forced to seek their own justice." concluded Nhkasi Sefuthi.

The workshop covered such issues as the need for court funded sign language translators to allow hearing impaired witnesses to take the stand, training for prosecutors and law enforcement officials to communicate with intellectually disabled people and the role of magistrates in ensuring that justice is met for victims with disability.

During the workshop, it was discovered that many magistrates were not aware of the difference between intellectual disability and mental illness which has prevented many intellectually disabled victims from taking the stand. According to the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act 1981, individuals with a mental illness are deemed incompetent and hence cannot appear before the court as a witness or complainant.

Said Prosecutor Mrs Pearl Letsoela: " Due to cultural attitudes and social attitudes, people with disabilities were not regarded as human beings, but after this training I have learnt a lot. I have completely changed my attitudes toward disabled people. Mrs Letsoela further indicated that, "LNFOOD did a great job for having organized this training workshop, as the magistrates are aware as to how to handle cases concerning people with disabilities".

Mrs Letsoela concluded by emphasizing that: "This awareness campaign should be carried out across the whole of Lesotho. And sign language training should be provided for Magistrates and Prosecutors".

Nothing about 1 Billion persons with disabilities without the International Disability Alliance!

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) is the voice of 1 billion persons with disabilities in the world: IDA represents global and regional disabled people organizations worldwide.

On the 1st of July 2012, the EDF President has become Chair of IDA, a position which he will have for the next two years; he will succeed Ms Diane Richler, former President of Inclusion International.

THE UNITED INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY MOVEMENT

IDA is the umbrella network of global and regional disabled people's organizations (DPOs). The aim of IDA is to promote the effective and full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) worldwide through the active involvement of representative organizations of persons with disabilities.

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the EDF and new Chair of IDA says: "Together with all member organizations around the world, IDA represents one billion people living with a disability. Thanks to its unique composition as a network of the foremost international disability rights organizations, IDA is now the unquestionable voice of persons with disabilities at the United Nations system and other international institutions."

"IDA is the voice of all those without voice, all those excluded from decision making, from political participation. We all need to feel that IDA represents them in the international political arena."

THE EMPOWERMENT WEAPON FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN CONVENTION

IDA is present in New York and Geneva to ensure the implementation of the CRPD and also brings the whole disability movement into the decision making process globally.

IDA develops important activities in the area of capacity building, support to national movements and political advocacy. This is done on the basis of full coordination and cooperation with all of its member organizations, represented in its Governing Body.

The strength of IDA is based on its wide and diverse membership, bringing together the different global disability constituencies, as well as regional organizations of people with disabilities.

The EDF President will bring the experience of the European movement to the global disability movement to represent all persons with disabilities and have a strong voice towards other global political, social and economic actors.

More information about IDA is available on its website:

www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org

<http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org>

Source: GPDD

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**MEET MAKHETHA MOSHABESHA,
CHAIRPERSON AUTISM LESOTHO, AGE
37**

What is Autism Lesotho?

It's a support group for parents and caregivers of Autistic children/people. Its also an advocacy group for Autistic people.

When and how did you become involved in Autism Lesotho?

I am one of the founding members of the association and also the current chairperson of the association. I got involved as a parent with an autistic child.

What does Autism Lesotho do?

Main activities include, meeting every month end to share stories, new information, developments and how to deal with our children. But mainly we sit around and console and heal each other on the challenges that we face and those that are faced by our children. We also conduct advocacy activities as well as awareness raising through media and communities.

What advice do you have to give to parents of children with autism?

Open your hearts to recognize the progress your child does even if it's small, and once you have opened your hearts, you will live a very fulfilled life which in turn creates a strong platform for your child to develop to their potential...OPEN YOUR HEART TO THE POSSIBILITIES THAT AWAIT HIM/HER...!!

And also please don't take yourself too seriously, sometimes looking at your child's condition with a light heart allows you not stress a lot about it but to take proper action to help him/her....Trust me, we spent a lot of time laughing about what they do or did and then discuss what we can do about it...



Maketha places his hand on the flag for Day of the African Child

What is your vision for people with disability in Lesotho?

I hope to see people with disability having the opportunity to CHOOSE what they want to do and how they want to do it....They are deprived of choice due to all sorts of constraints, and my dream is that they have that opportunity like anyone else who is fully able bodied.

What is the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you?

I think I read this somewhere, that "make it a point that everyone you meet, leaves with a piece of you in their hearts, that is where you will last longest...!!" So I try to live by that philosophy.....

If you had one day left on Earth how would you spend it?

I would go out and buy me a nice six pack of Maloti, go home with it, buy my wife her favourite drink, sit outside with a camp chair with her, and just watch my two boys play and get dirty, and fight among themselves, and hug me with their muddy hands, and insist on dipping the same hands in my food...just thinking about it brings tears in my eyes...so, just spending the day with my wife and kids would do it!!!

UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Disability Film Festival

To further promote the message that disability is not inability, LNFOD in cooperation with Sesotho Media will be arranging a social inclusion themed travelling film festival later this year which will reach various communities in Lesotho.

Keep your eyes on the LNFOD website for further information and for dates and locations of screenings.

Theme for International Day of Persons with Disability announced

It's official! The theme for this year's IDPD is

"Removing the Barriers to Create an Inclusive and Accessible Society for All"

IDPD takes place on 3 December every year and is the biggest event on the disability calendar in Lesotho. Last year, the disability awareness march in Quthing attracted over 1,600 able bodied and persons with disabilities.

This year's IDPD will take place in Mokhotlong and we're looking forward to an even better celebration this year.

Further details of the 2012 IDPD activities will be announced shortly.



Volunteer Position Wanted

Young Male Volunteer looking for placement at a disability organisation. No previous experience working with people with disabilities but wanting to be involved in the field.

Currently studying at NUL and living in Mafeteng. Keen to take up volunteer work in Mafeteng or anything further a field!

If interested please email
mikeymathai@gmail.com

Autism Lesotho Monthly Meeting

The Autism Lesotho Association meets every month end. The next meeting is **5 August, 3pm at Leseli Community Centre in Khubetsoana**. A growing number of parents are joining the movement which shows us that the problem is growing.

Communities, schools, churches and other social gatherings are welcome to invite members of the association to make presentations on autism and how to deal with it. We make efforts to attend gatherings anywhere in the country to which we're invited.

For further information please contact Makhetha Moshabesha on 5892 2732 or email mmoshabesha@unicef.org

FOCAL POINT

Motivation – Freedom Through Mobility

Motivation is an international development charity supporting people with mobility disabilities.

Their high-quality, low-cost wheelchairs are designed specifically for use in developing countries. Teamed with their innovative training programmes, their wheelchairs transform lives, giving disabled people independence, confidence and hope for the future

The Motivation story began in 1989 when David Constantine and Simon Gue, two students at the Royal College of the Arts, UK were tasked with designing a wheelchair for use in developing countries.

Robust enough to cope with potholes and uneven ground and made from affordable, locally available materials, David and Simon's design was very well received – and won them the Frye Memorial Prize.

The pair teamed up with their friend Richard Frost and used their prize money to travel to Bangladesh, where they built their wheelchair for a disability organisation in Dhaka. It went down so well that the organisation asked the team to help them start producing the wheelchairs on a larger scale. Recognising that people with disabilities were the poorest of the poor and that an appropriate wheelchair was the fastest route out of poverty, the team needed little convincing.

Twenty one years on, Motivation is internationally recognised as a leader in designing, producing and distributing high-quality, low-cost wheelchairs for developing countries. So far, our products and training programmes have reached over 135,000 people in 90 countries around the world, including Lesotho.

In 1991, David, Simon and Richard established Motivation, raised funds in the UK and returned to Dhaka to start their first wheelchair workshop. From there, they set up wheelchair workshops in Poland, Indonesia and Russia.

By providing much needed wheelchairs and training, Motivation operates in the four key areas of survival, mobility, empowerment and inclusion.

To find out more about Motivation, please visit www.motivation.org.uk

