



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. The edition will cover news for the Month of July, 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, concerns, events, updates, activities and all issues affecting people with disability in Lesotho. We therefore welcome contributions of any nature from all organizations and institutions working to improve the lives of people in Lesotho, including those with disability.

I think if the Disability specific legislation could be passed and accepted by the parliament, people with disabilities could live a better life. The Disability Lesotho took a huge initiative to advocate for this law for a long time, even today still pushing harder. I think Lesotho government would then advise itself to try by all means to respect, protect, fulfill and promote the

rights of people with disabilities in this country. I think it is the obligation of this country to provide training to people who are giving services to people with disabilities, again to abolish all laws that are discriminating them. There are so many barriers that inhibit persons with disabilities to access justice, so I am pleading to people in charge to act on this issue.

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 you missed the previous editions please visit 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 and statistics in Lesotho

By: Sefuthi Nkhasi

Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) is happy to welcome the Bureau of Statistics in disability advocacy and mainstreaming. In 2013, LNFOD through the communities of practice for disability advocacy and mainstreaming held an advocacy meeting with the Bureau of Statistics in which LNFOD proposed disability data disaggregation in all the demographic surveys, research and census undertaken by the Bureau so that data on disability may be available to inform the interventions of the government and civil society organisations towards the promotion and protection of disability rights.

The bureau of Statistics adopted the Washington group model of disability on census and for other statistical purposes. The Washington group is already adopted and it is going to determine the number of people with disabilities in the upcoming 2016 census. LNFOD considers the adoption and use of the Washington group model in the upcoming census 2016 as the significant milestone achieved because Lesotho is turning away from the traditional model of capturing data on disability.

The Bureau of Statistics is implementing article 31 of the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities by collecting data on disability. 3.7% of the total population census report in 2006 was indicated to live with some form of disability. The representative organisations of people with disabilities outcried that the estimation was from the medical point of view and therefore did not reflect the true picture about the prevalence of disability.

LNFOD cannot wait to receive the results of the population of people with disabilities in the upcoming 2016 as they will be using the correct tool for disability determination. Hence, UNICEF is developing the child model to be used in census which will be completed very soon.

The bureau of Statistics realised that, most surveys undertaken by the government are not disability inclusive. Hence, data on disability remains highly compromised.

As a consequence, the Bureau of statistics in partnership with LNFOD shall ensure that, the 2017 labour force survey, 2019 demographic health survey, and others mainstream disability from the social model perspective from now onwards.



Advocacy Aspect

Review of existing laws and policies to determine harmony with UNCRPD

By: Hlompho Letsie

LNFOOD held a validation workshop at Lehakoe on the 10th July, to present the study which was undertaken by a consultant on their behalf, the findings of the study were presented at the workshop. The attendees were different stakeholders, who had special interests in issues of people with disabilities such as media houses, organizations for PWDs as well as other government ministries.

The objective of the study was to review the existing laws and policies to determine harmony with article 4 of the UNCRPD, the outcome of which will be used to advocate for the enactment of new laws and the amendments to existing laws for adherence to the UNCRPD. In undertaking the review, LNFOOD emphasised that the review should be directed to laws and policies that impact on access to justice for persons with disabilities.

Finding were presented and it was evident that several acts are not in line with the article 4 of the Discussed laws, they do not give equal legal access to justice for persons with disabilities, and are in most instances not in harmony with Article 4 UNCRPD.

It is therefore recommended that:

- There should be an advocacy towards the review of the existing laws and policies so that there are in harmony with international standards more specifically Article 4 UNCRPD.
- LNFOOD should take an opportunity to add explicit wording on (access to justice) Section 12 of Disability Equity Bill before it is passed.
- The disability specific law should be enacted, which will respond to legal challenges that are faced by persons with disabilities when accessing justice in Lesotho.
- The specific law must protect and promote human rights in the context disability and prohibit all forms of discrimination on the basis of disability status.
- Protection from disability related discrimination should be included within Disability Equity Bill alternatively consideration should be given to the enactment of general anti-discrimination legislation which includes disability as a prohibited ground of discrimination.
- Existing human rights and constitutional guarantees should be enforced.
- Lesotho may also wish to consider an amendment to the Constitution to explicitly include disability as a prohibited ground of discrimination.
- The law enforcement agencies must be sensitized on how to handle persons with disabilities when accessing justice because they end up scaring them to access justice.
- Programmes should be put in place to provide legal literacy and legal services to persons with disabilities so that they know their rights and applicable laws, and can be supported to access the justice system when aggrieved.
- Law enforcement officials, parliamentarians, judiciary, police, health and social care providers need to be trained to recognize and uphold the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Finally, the study concluded that, policy and legal frameworks should be reviewed to respond to challenges that are faced by persons with disabilities and thus be in harmony with UNCRPD which Lesotho is a party to.

Recommendations from the participants:

- Disability issues should be institutionalized.
- There should be an openness of the government to the people, because it is difficult for individuals or affected parties to comment on the bill, as it is not open for discussion until it is a law.
- It was recommended that, there is a need for cord arrangement to meet the needs of PWDs.

GENERAL NEWS

IDAL revolutionize Leadership

By: Pascalina Letsau



On the 18th – 19th July, Maseru at Lesotho Mine Workers, members of Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho (IDAL) held a Congress. IDAL's first congress was in 1994.

The Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho (IDAL), formerly named LSMHP, was founded in 1992 by parents of children with Intellectual disabilities. It aims to represent and protect the rights of children with disabilities including severe or multiple disability and individuals of all ages with intellectual disability through the empowerment of parents and youth. IDAL operates in 21 branches in 8 districts of the country with a membership of 2000 individuals, Lesotho.

All these branches established by IDAL were represented in this congress. As most people with intellectual disability are represented by their parents, they did come from all over the country. The current committee of IDAL had to present before the members of the organisation, both the narrative report and the financial report. The committee has to be represented by members that will include parents and youth with intellectual disability. Youth members are included in the IDAL board to ensure that youth with intellectual disability are included in decisions about the organisation.

Unfortunately youth from other districts did not manage to attend; only Leribe and Maseru districts were represented. With this reason; the organisation did not manage to fill all positions of the committee. Only six (6) positions will be filled while others will be filled after calling youth from all districts, so that they can choose among themselves people that can represent them in the committee.

There were people selected to be observers and as Elections officers. All members who are willing to be elected in the committee were shown to the members; all people were sent out in order to allow election officers to draw ways on how to elect.

Election officers designed 6 types of ballot papers, with different colours in order to identify the position elected. The polling station was divided into two (2) sections. This means; the officers took about a certain number in a room, and then proceed with the election. After that group then took the last group and do the same. These officers made sure that the invited people are not exceeding the number of invited participants during the elections.

The newly elected IDAL committee is as follows;

1. Chairperson – Mrs. 'Marelebohile Paneng
2. Vice Chairperson – Mrs. 'Mamohlomi Sehapi
3. Secretary General – Mrs. 'Mafumane Makhele
4. Treasurer – Mr. Ramaloti Fobo
5. Publicity Secretary – Mrs. 'Mathabiso Pitso
6. Member – Mrs. 'Mahlompho Senatsi

The committee will be left with 3 youth members to be filled later.

The elections officers then announced and allowed the newly elected committee to stand before the members then handed over to the new Chairperson. When giving out the official speech to the members Mrs. Paneng said; "I was not expecting to see people like me to this committee.

I have been in IDAL committee since the beginning of this association. I was expecting new faces to fill all these positions, while people like me should be the guiding bodies for the development of this organisation but you have made your choice. We, as the elected committee will need your support. Please let us not point fingers to each other, if I have made a mistake please come to me and show where I did go wrong. Some of us here are bound to be members of this organisation as we have children with intellectual disabled while others are caring for them, so we have to support each other in order to empower people with intellectual disability. It has been tough and difficult to be in this organisation

as we faced many issues affecting our children or family members.

This last term I took in the IDAL committee was very difficult than all the previous terms I have been in. IDAL members let us help each other so that we can help even our staff members to do the job they are hired for, every decision you suggest to us as the committee we will do as you are decision-makers of this organisation. I am very proud of you all as we managed to amend our constitution and then proceeded well with our elections. Let us all go home and work for the benefit of the intellectual disability in Lesotho." concluded Mrs. Paneng



These are members of IDAL during its 8th Congress at Lesotho Mine Workers Association premises

GENERAL NEWS



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By: Pascalina Letsau

On the 30th November 2011, Lerato Ranthako a woman aged 24 who has intellectual disabled, from Ha Mpao Nazareth was raped. Lerato due to her disability she was still attending a primary school at Mohalenyane where she was in grade 5. This young lady is a double orphan who stays with her grandmother, she does all the house chaos to help her grandmother. It was on this day when a terrible thing happened to her, which frustrated her up until now.

Lerato went to the forest to gather wood for cooking purpose. On her way to the forest, a man called Rankoletsi Phatsoane followed her, whom she thought was going somewhere. Immediately when they were both in the forest where no one could see them, the man approached her and started talking to her but she did not respond as she was minding her own business.

Lerato with explained that the man approached her and said to her "I need...." But he did not finish what he was saying but he was already undressing her and eventually forced himself on to her.

"It was very painful and I started to cry immediately. It was very difficult for me to walk

back home after this action. I immediacy went back home because of the pain I would not gather the wood anymore. On my way, back I met a woman called Nthabiseng whom I told everything in tears. She accompanied me home, as we were approaching other children followed us until we got home. When we got home, she explained everything to my grandmother as I was still crying. Immediately my angry grandmother went to the chief to report", Said Lerato.

The chief who was very furious about what happened, referred them to Roma police for medical aid purposes; from there Lerato was taken to the clinic, where she was tested and given medication, eventually after the entire necessary step the case was opened.

The following day the chief and the communities held a public gathering where the perpetrated was expected to confess but he denied it. Later in the day, Rankoletsi came to Lerato's home trying to ask for forgiveness.

The case was transferred to Matela police station, the court case was to be held at Mohale magistrate court, but on the day of the trial the police vehicle which usually takes us there, could not this time around, but there were no valid reasons, it did not proceed.

Lerato's grandmother concluded that, "This is hurting as my grand-daughter is now not feeling well since she got raped. She was the active child but now she is always lying down. She is always trying to find out when the case will proceed by going to the police station to ask. She takes almost some hours from home to the police station, but there are no clear answers to her."

GENERAL NEWS

Communities of Maliba-Matso, Semonkong and Tsakholo support the enactment of a disability specific law in Lesotho

By: Hlompho Letsie



As part of a nationwide campaign, LNFOD undertook three-day outreach activities on the 13-15 July 2015 in Maliba Matso, Semonkong and Ts'akholo. This campaign is aimed at providing participants with educational information about the disability law that if enacted will promote and protect the basic human rights of people with disability.

The community participated, asked questions, and supported the initiative by signing their names on a banner, which was presented to them by LNFOD team as a sign of supporting the enactment of a disability specific law. At the heart of this campaign was the issue of equal access to services for person with disability.

Mr. Ietima, Mr. Jobo and Mr. Tele as the representatives from different organizations of people with disability introduced LNFOD to the communities. The Lesotho National Federation of Organizations of the Disabled (LNFOD) is an umbrella body of organizations dealing with disability in Lesotho. Its mission is to promote, protect, and ensure the respect of the rights of persons with disability. This is achieved through the provision of support to disabled peoples organizations, empowerment of members with life skills, financial and material resources and representation of the needs of persons with disability to the government, development partners and wider society.

They also explained that the purpose of the visit to the public was to ask for the support from the community in calling upon government of Lesotho to enact a disability specific law. They explained that there is a draft Bill that needs to be passed into law by parliament. LNFOD is lobbying for community support of this initiative that is evidenced by the appending of signatures on the banner.

In support of previous statements, Ms. Maja Matsoha the LNFOD human rights officer further elaborated on the importance of the Bill. She explain that, Lesotho has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the 2nd December 2008, which reaffirms that persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. As the Bill protects the rights of people with disabilities it would if enacted into law bring to reality, what government vowed to uphold in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).



She continued that, LNFOD undertook a study on discriminatory laws in Lesotho and among the findings it revealed that there are existing laws and policies which are not in harmony with the UNCRPD. The outcome of the study will be used to advocate for the enactment of new laws and the amendments to existing laws for adherence to the UNCRPD. The United Nations has adopted the UNCRPD in 2006 with the overall goal of promoting, protecting and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities

Participating as a keynote speaker Mrs. Mathabang who is an advocate for disability rights in Ts'akholo said that, disabled children are hidden in villages and some girl are raped and while others are denied education. This is despite the Convention on the Rights of the Children and one on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women has been signed by Lesotho. She continued to say that it is high time that a law specific to persons with disabilities is enacted so that we as persons with disabilities will benefit.

A community member who has physical disability commented that, "the government forgets that we

exist and have special needs. We are invisible, to the rest of the society. It is high time they take us seriously, when they come for their political campaigns they promise us so many thing and that it, only promise, I support this law 100%".

People were given chance to ask question and to pass their comments. It was clear that most people understood the main message of the campaign, which is that persons with disabilities need a law to protect their rights, people flogged in great numbers to sign their names on the banner as their sign of support to the drafted bill.



OPINION PIECE

Corruption in disability sports of Lesotho

By: Thabiso Masenyetse

As I have been indicated earlier in the first piece of my article, the Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC) had recommended that NAPCOL should start preparing for its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on a clean slate in order to settle concerns from some of its member affiliates. However, this recommendation seemed to have no sound to the National Executive Committee (NEC) for it and continued preparing for AGM without addressing our grievances: such as denying our clubs the right to participate in general elections of the NEC, and going for such a huge meeting with membership of clubs and committee known only to NEC and not its affiliates.

Consequently, this called for us the concerned clubs or members to push for the second meeting with the commission. It is worth noting that we pushed until the meeting was held on a very last day before elections, the final resolutions from this meeting had been:

- Elections must be held on the already said date.
- All concerned members should be given chance to participate in the upcoming AGM, with or without subscription and then settled remaining grievances thereafter.
- Membership / voters' roll should be availed to all members in order to enable all those who are interested to campaign for elections on equal basis.

Immediately after the meeting such resolutions were slightly followed and obeyed. Voters' list was pasted on the commission notice board. But the challenge was still that only list of names and clubs were provided but not their contacts for as members we

Do not know one another due to lack of meetings and selective sports activities coordinated by the NEC. As a result the issue of voter's list was still not solved but good enough for the NEC, it was already too late for us to protest that since it was already around half past five in the evening and nobody was at the commission offices.

Moreover, the AGM proceeded on the following day which was the 25th July, 2015. It is in this very case That we as some of the members strongly felt the reports presented were too malicious and fallacious as well, however time for questions and clarifications was unfairly too limited.

The worst part is the whole NEC did not have financial report and it was not ashamed to inform the whole AGM by the Treasurer's voice that they are sorry they did not have report for finances. However, elections continued and the same people won.

They have just restructured their positions such that the initial President is now the Secretary General. They just co-opted two new members. What is surprising about this committee is that it is consists of about families; both vice president and the treasurer are from Liau family while both representatives for coaches and the representative for classifiers are from Ratsoane family.

To conclude, one wonders how come that the AGM was convinced to elect this kind of committee; I can personally sense a smell of corruption. As disabled Basotho who are interested in sports still need advices from individuals or sports organisations.

SPOTLIGHT

LNFOOD welcomes the Minister of Social Development

BY: Hlompho Letsie



Minister of Social Development Mr. Molahlehi Letlotlo

The new Minister of Social Development actively took part at a sign Language graduation ceremony, which took place at, LANFE few weeks ago; this to LNFOOD shows a positive start. On this occasion, he delivered a very powerful speech that shows determination and positive promises towards the issues of PWDs.

LNFOOD has no doubt that they will work hand in hand with the Minister towards the enactment of the drafted law, which protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities.

On an interview with Pascalina Letsau, the Minister explained that his first interaction with people with Disabilities was a way back in 1999 when he assumed duty in the office of District Secretary Mafeteng, in that office one gets to interact with different kind of people.

He further explained that, It is a challenge to interact with PWDs because they have special needs, in order to appreciate their need one has to understand their disability, then one can be able to assistance them.

“My vision as the Minister regarding people with disability is that they understand that they are not a curse to the society, they have rights to live.” Said the Minister of Social development.



UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENT



LNFOOD introduce its new staff member, a Communication Officer - Mrs. Hlompho Cynthia Letsie

Cell; +266 63086825

Email; hlompho@Infod.org.ls

Public gatherings on the rights of PWDs

For more information please conduct LNFOOD office; +266 22320345

Or

Mrs. Maja Matsoha +266 58700925

Email; maja@Infod.org.ls

Monthly meetings to District Disability Coordinators

For more information please conduct LNFOOD office; +266 22320345

Or

Mrs. Maja Matsoha +266 58700925

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Radio campaign on the Disability Equity Bill

For more information please conduct LNFOOD office; +266 22320345

Or

Mrs. Maja Matsoha +266 58700925

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Women's Forum to follow –up on their previous activities at;

1. Rasetimela Primary School – 11/08/2015
2. Phuthiatsana Primary School – 13/08/2015
3. St. Emile Roman Church – 16/08/2015

For more information please conduct LNFOOD office; +266 22320345

Or

Mrs. Hlompho Letsie +266 63086825

Email; hlompho@Infod.org.ls

Sensitization workshop for employers

For more information please conduct LNFOOD office; +266 22320345

Or

Mrs. Maja Matsoha +266 58700925

Email; maja@Infod.org.ls

NEWS IN PICTURE



Judge Sakoane and other participants during sensitization workshop on access to justice to PWDs – Lesotho



Hon. Dr. Monyamane minister of Health and Mr. Thabiso Masenyetse Commissioner of Health and Social Development during CSOs Health Advocacy Forum



Basotho are signing a banner in support of the passing of Disability specific legislation by the parliament



The Validation workshop on existing laws and policies to determine harmony with UNCRPD



Youth with visually impaired are empowered on life skills at Mohloli – oa -Bophelo



Public gatherings on the rights of PWDs at Metsi –Maholo Community Council

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ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work



Africa Disability Alliance

