

DISABILITY LESOTHO



From the Editor

Welcome once again to the twenty fourth edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled which will be covering activities of May, 2014.

The Disability Lesotho e-newsletter is a platform whereby partners in the disability sector share the 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 organisations working to improve the lives of people in Lesotho, including those with disability.

It is high time that Disability Lesotho should strive to domestication of UNCRPD by Lesotho government and economic right empowerment. Its been a long way that people with disabilities are facing problems in the public institutions pertaining employment.

The 2006 Census report stated that persons with disabilities make up 3.7% of the total population and the majority of people with disabilities remain poor because of a lack of education and high unemployment rate amongst disabled people.

As I talked about the census which is the document of Lesotho, I wonder what the government is doing with all these reports especially census one? Is it meant for budgeting?

There are so many policies related to employment and many more but when it comes to issues of disability or how are they going to help people with disabilities enjoy the right of employment, they are quite and PWDs still continuing to suffer.

I think the time has come for Employment policies in both the public and private sector reflect the rights of persons with disability. People with disabilities are also taxpayers in this country and they have all rights like everyone. The Disability Lesotho has played their huge role to advocate for their rights in this country. My appeal to the government is now to think about Human Rights to PWDs and do what is best for them as the citizens of Lesotho. It is now enough about talking human rights thing, what we want now is the implementation and provision of services.

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.infod.org.ls

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

Best regards,

The Editor

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

'Voices of disability movement should become too loud to be ignored.'

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

Indeed, our voice should be too loud to be heard by the policymakers and technocrats of Lesotho. It is only when we become too noisy and some times confrontational about the need to domesticate the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities that we register a change and results on the progress towards the enactment of disability legislation by the duty bearers.

Honestly, LNFOD does not seem to get expected results on the disability legislation when invoking soft advocacy towards this issue. Our closed meetings with the ministry of Social Development hardly yield results that could change the lives of people with disabilities living in the community. For example; collapse of (CBR) and the absence of guidelines of the National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy since 2011 to date.

LNFOD considered the (CBR) disfunctional despite the recruitment of the five CBR Coordinators because there is no budget put aside by the government for the implementation of the program. In addition there is no plan to build the capacity of the recruited staff on the effective coordination of CBR.

On the 4th June, LNFOD representatives were called to a meeting by the drafting section of the ministry of law in which told that, the management of the Ministry of law has issued a directive ordering the drafting department to draw and present the first draft of Disability Equity Bill to the office which will then take it to the cabinet on or before the 18 June 2014.

It was for the first time in the life of LNFOD that, we had the authorities setting time at which the drafting process should be completed. Though; LNFOD could not confirm whether the first draft has been submitted to the higher office at the time of developing this article.

However, we are now rest assured that the process of making the disability legislation has started. The main challenge towards the disability issues is that, all policymakers recognise the need to take action to promote disability inclusion. Whilst at the same time no one seems to take action required to address the barriers.

People with disabilities are closely watching the government to see how it will give the Disability Equity Act the seriousness it requires. People with disabilities have seen that their constant advocacy noises bring out desired results for the benefit of people with disabilities. Thus, PWDs shout to the responsible authorities to make Lesotho a better place for people with disabilities by putting in place disability legislation that will ensure reasonable accommodation for them.

We sincerely hope that, in the next edition of our E-newsletter, we will report about the stage at which our disability act will be.

ADVOCACY ASPECT

The employment of people with disabilities in Lesotho

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

People with disabilities in Lesotho face various barriers such as isolation and exclusion from the society and extreme dependency on their families and the society at large. The barriers are two-fold; attitudinal and institutional. Attitudinal barriers are those imposed by the nondisabled which are often characterized by beliefs and sentiments held by the nondisabled. People with disabilities are often called mockery names and are often viewed as objects of charity and passive recipients of rehabilitation services.

The institutional barriers include physical barriers such as those caused by infrastructure, policies, practices and procedures adopted by various entities that constitute the society. As a result of attitudinal and environmental barriers faced by the pwds, the pwds experience serious inequalities in terms of access to employment opportunities and recruitment for example, accessibility issues by the wheelchair users and the visually impaired when trying to access job opportunities at various institutions.

The other major problem faced by the public institutions pertaining to the recruitment of pwds relates to the current database in that it does not disaggregate data by disability. Thus, making it difficult to know the number of pwds enrolled in the public and private sector.

According to the 2006 Census report disabled persons make up 3.7 of the total population. The majority of the disabled remain poor because of a lack of education and high unemployment rate amongst disabled people. Lesotho acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on December 2nd 2008 which in Article 4 calls on state parties to implement policies, laws and administrative measures aimed at securing the rights of people with disabilities and to abolish laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination towards people with disabilities.

In Employment:

- Both the Labor Code and Public Service Act do not specifically provide provisions for

support service needed for the persons with disabilities in both private and public sector to meaningfully access employment.

- Employment policies do not guide the private and public employers on how best persons with disabilities can be treated at work places so as to realize their full potential.
- There are no direct strategies employed for the employment of persons with disabilities,
- There are no provisions for affirmative action such as quotas adopted for the employment of people with disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities in the private and public sector work under unfavorable conditions due to lack of assistive technologies and devices.
- Employers are not sensitized on the need to provide reasonable accommodation for the persons with disabilities.
- There are no incentives for the private employers who employ people with disabilities at high percentages, e.g. tax rebates are also necessary.

In conclusion people with disabilities continue to face discrimination, ill-treatment and segregation in employment. It is therefore important that;

- A disability-specific legislation is enacted as a means of protecting the rights of people with disability and to ensure their integration in the mainstream society.
- Employment policies in both the public and private sector reflect the rights of persons with disability
- Government adopts specific strategies on the employment of persons with disability in the public service through affirmative action mechanisms such as quotas
- Government generates a database for persons with disability employed in government in order to assist with assistive technologies and devices
- Government adopts a code of good practices for the employment of persons with disabilities.

GENERAL NEWS

Disability and Human rights manual Validation workshop



The participants during the meeting watching sign language teaching through the video.

On the 26th June, 2014 LNFOD through the project of Deepening Decentralisation funded by European Union had a validation workshop on Disability and Human Rights manual. The project is focusing towards an inclusive community level development.

The suggestion made for the manual itself could be "*Khomo'eso mphe matla*". The manual will help even other service providers like teachers, village health workers and other people from different sectors that will be similar to what LNFOD would like issues of disability appear in front of people.

The participants of the meeting were from members of LNFOD affiliates, other CSOs like; Development for Peace Education, SACL, Lesotho Council of Non – governmental Organisations, Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association, National University of Lesotho, Lesotho Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS, and Christian Commission for Justice and Peace. The meeting was also covered by media houses namely Catholic Radio FM and Lesotho Television.

The project is mainly focusing community councils in four districts of Lesotho, the manual is going to help people with disabilities at the grassroots to know or understand their rights. It will not help these districts only but the whole country. The manual will be able to help activists of disability rights on how to tackle things.

The consultant of the manual was Mr. Sofoniea Shale who presented the manual. He stated that the manual will not help people with disabilities but also help them use their awareness to change their life and improve the lives of other people with disabilities.

The meeting divided into two groups to check whether the information inside is clear, correct or factual to be given to the public. making it readable? The idea is to ease things to the reader and improve the manual. Is the illustration relevant to the manual, is it going to be helpful to the user? The participants tried as much as possible to help for development of the manual.

"The document will be useful to the whole Lesotho. LNFOD is willing to work in collaboration with media houses as it is easy for them to pass the message to the public. There are some activities that we use to have as LNFOD that we could do them together with media especially when going to villages. Issues of disability are public matters that is why we are working with media." says Rabasotho Moeletsi

GENERAL NEWS

Youth with disabilities informed about LNDC Partial Credit Quarantee Scheme



Youth with disabilities during the PCQ scheme training

On the 10th June, LNFOD in partnership with Lesotho National Cooperation (LNDC) held a one day training on how to access the partial credit quarantine scheme (PCQ) under LNDC.

The initiative was from LNFOD youth forum, which has also approached LNFOD office and presented their concern that they have realized that it is hard for youth with disabilities (YWDs) to start or run their businesses. LNFOD office bought the idea that they should be trained on how to access the money from this scheme. The difficulties put down by youth forum were;

- No knowledge about business language
- Lack of information about how to access micro financing loans
- Lack of keeping books even though they have started businesses of their own.

The participants were from all member affiliates of LNFOD. The invitation to all these DPOs clearly stated that; it is open to people who are already running businesses or have interest of having their businesses. The DPOs complied with the terms and conditions from the Federation.

LNDC piloted the PCQ scheme in order to create a sustainable support structure of the development and growth of Basotho businesses that the majority owned by Basotho. Initially there were some rules and conditions had to be followed in order to access the fund from this scheme. Things has changed as now every Mosotho business no matter what kind of business is it will be assisted. The business can loan from the bank then PCQ can intervene where the bank is needing the security.

“The scheme can provide 50% of the total amount requested from the bank which will not be beyond M5 000 000 million, but that money is only meant for security purpose.” said Mr. Semethe. When continuing he said; “ the qualifying project must demonstrate ability to reach 60% debt to equity ratio within their first two years of operation. I would advise you to approach Bedco for development of business plans in order to make your applications be successful.”

The PCQ scheme developed the toolkit that will assist the facilitation of efficient implementation and monitoring of the scheme. There are more forms that will be filled before and during the process of the scheme and people should be made aware of them, they are as follows;

- **The Quarantee Notice** – this is an application by the bank to access the facility provided by the scheme, it is accompanied by the business plan, the bank's appraisal (the copy of the applicant's loan application) and the applicants' undertaking
- **The Credit Quarantee Certificate** – that will be the response to Quarantee Notice

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- **Applicant's Default Notice** – that will be the form filled by the bank by the time the client (applicant) is no longer able to pay the debt at the bank. This form is only meant to notify the PCQ scheme that the client has not paid the money for about three months. It will go together with the claim form.
- **Claim form** – the claim form will provide a full detailed analysis of the status. It is only meant to claim the money that PCQ scheme has put aside for security on behalf of the applicant. Immediately when the PCQ scheme got the form will take only 60 days before paying the money to the bank. That means there will be no credit left behind to be paid by the applicant.

The facilitator thanked LNFOD for the inviting LNDC as it is their role to inform all Basotho about the opportunities that are out there for them. "I would like to wish you all the best in the growth of your businesses." said Mr. Raleche

The closure was made by Mr. Rabasotho Moeletsi but before that, he wanted to hear from the participants how did they see the usefulness of the training and what are they going to do with the information.

Everyone had some views about the information and what they are going to do. When concluding Mr. Mohlomi said; "besides what I am doing now, which is candle – making business, I have a business idea but the problem was how to finance it. With my business of candle – making am targeting far places that are in the rural areas where people are still using candles.

The challenge that I am facing is transport, without transport my business can hardly succeed, so I think it will be easy for me to do business if PCQ scheme says there is no limit for accessing support, as long as we can do business plans. I will try to develop my business plan and sell it to the bank and PCQ scheme." said Mohlomi Tlali from LNLVIP.



Mr. Mohlomi Tlali a businessman who is visual impaired

GENERAL NEWS

‘Speech by the Prime Minister was a Turning Point for me’

By: Nqosa Morienyane

When LNFOD and the Ministry of health social welfare and the other partners organised international day of persons with disabilities on the 03rd December 2007, no one knew that the event would bring such an impact. The event was one of the most successful events in the history of IDPD celebrated in the land, where the event was graced by her majesty queen, Prime minister and his entire cabinet.

“That day was a turning points for me, the celebration inspired me in many ways,” said Morienyane, who has been disabled since 2004.

“The then Prime Minister (Dr. Pakalitha Mosisili) in his speech indicated we need to get organised in forming the groups if we were to get any support from government. From that day I started calling other individuals with disabilities around TY to form a group, and then later we decided that we form an Association of the disabled in Berea.”

As a founder of the Berea Association of the Disabled, I had one thing in mind; to see improvement of the lives of people with disabilities in Berea. I knew that for them to gain recognition there was a need to mobilize more people to join and speak in one voice. He says, “We approached the office of DA Berea for provision of transport to enable us to visit some other areas in the district; Mapoteng, Bela – Bela, Sebitia, Maqhaka. We were successful to in all these areas to get membership of persons with disabilities.”

Having met with the people with disabilities in these areas, results were already showing and people were hopeful that the association was a vehicle for improving lives of persons of disabilities.

“Already we have few individuals like me who are now getting the social grants from the government from all these areas, so for us this is positive step,” he proudly said.

They later on realized that there were some organised Disability People’s Organisations (DPOs) at national level and as an organised movement in Berea; they decided to join the national platform. They approached LNFOD who was quick to engage them in a one year pilot project, the Awareness Building Campaign Project. In this project they were introduced to the principles of advocacy by the LNFOD advocacy desk in 2011. “Coming from the training we wrote letters and held face to face lobbying meetings with the DA Berea, (who was Mr. Mofihli Phaqane) to voice our dissatisfaction about his inaccessible offices.

The man didn’t take two (2) months to break those stairs and constructed the ramp through which we are now able to enter the offices on while sitting on our wheelchairs. We did not stop there, we went on to influence Berea police station management to make it accessible which they did,” related Morienyane.

The ramps might not be to the required standards but they are very helpful and are best practices to the rest of the country managements who would like to make adaptations to their inaccessible public buildings.

These were some of the success stories that get Mr. Morienyane the recognition that he is getting lately. He has since been recognized as a speaker on many important occasions taking place in the Berea district. Late last year when LNFOD wanted people to serve as District coordinators for their Deepening Decentralisation Project, Mr. Morienyane was appointed a coordinator for the Berea district at the beginning of the year.

"For me this is the work I've dreaming of for some years now. I'm working with persons with disabilities (young and old) empowering them to exercise their right to fully participate at the community councils developments. I couldn't ask for more," he said with joy in his face.

The running up and down around the district on his wheelchair has brought more fortunes on the way of Mr. Morienyane. The Berea district has recently appointed him on the tender board. Asking him about his appointment to the role he had this say.

"I'm humbled to be in that high role for this district I love, I didn't expect it to come so soon but I have accepted it and will do all in my powers to serve the my district and my people," concluded Morienyane, who was modest.

Asked about appointment of an individual with disability in the board, Mrs. Tlali of the district management committee was upbeat about their decision and hoping that it will contribute in their district becoming universal designed.

"We have no doubt that ntate Nqosa will add value to the board, he has done very well for this district. As the district we are in the process of making Berea a place for everybody including those with disabilities. You'll see the developments starting from this fiscal year," said Mrs. Tlali of the district council Berea.

His colleagues at LNFOD were grateful to the Berea district council and hopeful that it will not be the end.

"We are happy for him as LNFOD and we see it as a nice challenge for us now to capacitate him even more to enable him to be more assertive on inclusion issues as he is in a strategic position. We hope more districts would copy what Berea doing - taking initial steps towards universal design in their service delivery," said Rabasotho Moeletsi, who is coordinating the Deepening Decentralisation Project at national level for LNFOD.



Mr. Nqosa Morienyane, District Disability Coordinator – Berea

GENERAL NEWS

Community mobilisation in project areas



Different DPO groups talking about their different rights to work on

LNFOOD member affiliates held series of public gatherings in the project areas under the the project of deepening decentralization working areas.

Project areas visited this time were Khoelenya community council in the district of Mhales' hoek, Mhlakeng and Manonyane in the Maseru and Phuthiatsana community council in the Berea district. The aim of these Pitsos were to raise awareness on disability rights and formation of DPO branches in the areas that have been listed.

In all these community councils the local authorities were available. It is very promising if people attend because they tend to understand issues of disability and how to work with them. the local authorities were very supportive and shared the information and seek clarity from DPO representatives. Some highlighted DPOs about the abuses made to people with disabilities around their areas. While some were saying about the difficulties of people with disabilities that needs to be addressed but do not know how.

All these working areas are new, DPO representatives had to listen to some stories from local authorities. Most of the stories were on abuses, poverty and difficulties of children with disabilities that are not attending school. Some are not accessing health care centres. Most advises were on how to refer them to the relevant offices in government for them to get assistance. The problem that was raised was the negativity of civil servants that are not ready to deal with issues of disabilities in the district, this has been stated by local councillors.

With all questions asked by local authorities showed that there is a lot to do by DPOs in collaboration with other service providers to help people with disabilities in the villages to change their lives to the better.

It is in these areas where we found people with disabilities that needs services these will includes school, assistive devices and disability grant to get daily basic needs. The ministries that are relevant to their needs should then take responsibility to provide service. The government of Lesotho is always talking about Education For All and compulsory education, but this does not say what are the measures to be taken if a parent does not taking his or her child to school. The ministry of social development should then show what is its role especially for people with disabilities. What people with disability needs is provision of services nothing else.

People with disabilities around these areas should work hard after forming the branches to see that everybody is not denied her/his right. They should be active and support each other especially sensitising service providers and do some referrals.



7 yrs old boy who need education



A youth without assistive devices

GENERAL NEWS

What can heal misery among people with disability?

By: Pitso Nchake

Ha Manganane is the village within the community council of Khoelenya. In this village there live 'Matebesi Ramokhabi. She is an intellectual disabled female who was born in 1990. Her disability has been realised at early stage. She did go to school and immediately when in grade 1, the teachers realised that she cannot cope like other children, she did not continue with schooling. "I know exactly everything about 'Matebesi as I am the aunt to her," said Nchake

Before the 'Matebesi's mother could die, it was a surprise to me and the family where my sister was expelled from where she was married. They told me that I will have to come and take my sister and her three children including 'Matebesi back home as the husband has already dead. It was a shock to me and the family but there was nothing we can do.

"I am very sad to realise that people with disabilities most of them born suffering and still in this country nobody is ready to change their lives." I am saying this because I have been taking care of 'Matebesi together with her siblings and my family as well. It was very tough as I am not working only dealing with planting which is not good enough to feed children and to take them to health care centres especially 'Matebesi as she have to see the doctor every month.

I took the initiative to go to Mhales'hoek in order to seek the provision of services to 'Matebesi. I approached the ministry of social development for assistance. I wanted to raise two issues that are; training institution, social grants and healthcare services.

When talking to the social worker, she told me that the office will work hard to look for a training centre so that she can do something but that will happen maybe next year.

The office did not promise anything about the social grant. It is very sad as 'Matebesi is always taking treatment every time and then. There are many basic needs she would like to have things like; cosmetics, food, clothing and money for transport to go to the healthcare centres but still no support from our government.

"I was thinking that the government will play a major role to change lives of people with disabilities in this country. People with disabilities need assistance just like the elderly and children who are getting grant. When are they going to smile like other people? This is the worry in me as I think that they have to be assisted as most do not work because they denied to due to barriers. We end up not knowing what to do even if they are dead, the caregivers are real stressful and need counselling. The only thing to heal these grieves among families of people with disabilities could be Disability Grant." concluded Pitso



'Matebesi Ramokhabi who real needs Disability Grant

OPINION PIECE

How responsive do people show to disability issues?

By: Likopo Lesoetsa

LNFOOD Women's Desk wishes the readers of Disability Lesotho a blessed season. As Women with Disabilities we wish to let you know that we really condone series of abuses against women and girls during the past months, and that we call upon the Authorities to ensure possible and effective protection for women and girls with Disabilities. We had a number of disturbing cases involving women and Girls with Disabilities and it was really a shock to learn that even the community leaders are unwilling to let justice prevail for the benefit of the victim, instead they protect the perpetrator!

We wish to sincerely thank the positive site of the community and the neighbors for the support rendered to one of our own, who is Deaf. Since the case is now in the courts of law we would distract smooth running of the case if we discuss it here. The point however is, we are thankful to the neighbors of the Deaf lady who persuaded the case to be reported to the police while some of the community leaders and Mahokela ignored the fact that something has to be done to protect the lady, instead they just punished the perpetrator by telling him to repairs village roads!! Remember that the house of the lady in question is broken and needs repairing!

We are really concerned to how many cases will be allowed to be reported before we enter into the 16 Days of Activism to end gender-based violence this year! All people are equal before the law, and in this regard we are talking about the National Constitution of Lesotho, despite the fact that there is no Disability-specific Law that protects the human rights of Persons with Disabilities in Lesotho.

We urge the powers being to ensure that possible actions are put in place to effect the long-awaited Disability Equity Bill so that all persons with disabilities will feel protected

should anything happen to them. We are really tired of being told that because we need to use Sign language interpreting services our cases cannot be worked through or the evidence given by the victim is not enough. Justice must be done, and in an accessible manner depending on the kind of disability of the victim, and reasonable accommodation be provided as a result.

As we near the 16 Days of Gender Based Violence we are calling to our Government, especially the Ministry of Gender to consider their messages and booklets to be inclusive in terms of accessibility.

SPOTLIGHT



Ms. Sebolelo Mabea (16 yrs)

Student – Morapeli Girls's Home for the Disabled

1. **In which class are you?**

I am in Form B (secondary school)

2. **How did you pass your grade 7?**

I got second class pass

3. **What do you want to be when finishing school?**

I want to work in the office as a secretary

4. **Which are your favourite subject at school?**

I do like English and computer very much

5. **How do other students treat you at school?**

We are happy together, I am saying this because to assist me in everything I need like getting me food from the school kitchen and even learn together.

6. **Would you like to get married when you grow up?**

No, I do not like to get married. I want to remain single and work for my mother as she is a widow and working hard for the family. I want to please her with my money.

7. **Do you have a cellphone?**

Yes, i have it as I have to communicate with my mother while in South Africa working as a domestic worker

8. **Who are the celebrities that you know?**

I do not know any as I am not always watching TV and listening to radios. I am always studying in a study room.

9. **If you had a dog what would you do with it?**

I won't use it for any reason as I won't have it. I hate dogs too much

UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

AfriNEAD **4th SYMPOSIUM**

Venue: Sun 'n' Sand Holiday Resort ,
MANGOCHI, MALAWI

3rd - 5th November 2014

THEME: "Intensifying disability research and practice to achieve the MDGs in Africa: our experience and aspirations for the future"

For more information please conduct:

Tel: (265) 1 524 800 Fax: (265) 1 524 578

Email: afrinead-conf@cc.ac.mw

Or

Register online at: www.sun.ac.za/afrinead

Training of Trainers for the PWD representatives

For more information please conduct: LNFOD
office Tel: +266 22320345 or Mr. Rabasotho
Moeletsi Cell: +266 58700925

Email: moeletsi@lnfod.org.ls
moeletsi911@gmail.com

DPO branch formations as well as identification of Animators

For more information please conduct LNFOD
office Tel: +266 22320345 or Mr. Rabasotho
Moeletsi Cell: +266 58700925

Email: moeletsi@lnfod.org.ls

Trainings to disability community on Disability and Human rights manual

For more information please conduct LNFOD
office Tel: +266 22320345 or Mr. Rabasotho
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Assessment to placed HIV/AIDS Peer Educators in Community Filter clinics namely; Khabo clinic, Menkhoaneng, Maputsoe Filter clinic, St. Monica's Health Clinic and also Laboratory Department at Motebang Hospital Hlotse.

For more information please conduct LNFOD
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NEWS IN PICTURES



Mr. Semethe Raleche from PCQ scheme from LND



Chief Seeiso Bereng Seeiso Maama, a chairperson at Manonyane LNAPD branch



IDAL member and Mhlakeng Community Councilors before public gathering



Lisbeth NAD representative and DPO members during LNFOD planning meeting at Maseru Sun



Seminar on Employment of disabled persons hosted by the American Embassy



Public gathering at Manonyane Community Council Maseru under Deepening Decentralization Project

JUNE, 2014

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ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work

