

# DISABILITY LESOTHO



## 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 March, 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, 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 Lesotho for having new government. It is our wish to see improvements, provision of services and protection for people with disabilities in this country. Some of you participated in observing elections, others in elections educations while some became contestants in the Lesotho 2015 elections. This real shows development in disability movements in Lesotho. In this regard communication is like lifeblood in every state, organization and private companies, I think it is high time that Lesotho approaches its stakeholders.

In this manner disability movements and other NGOs are stakeholders of this country.

There is nothing to be passed before NGOs could be consulted by ministries relevant. Disability Movements are highly expecting to see enactment of the CRPD compliant Disability Bill and then the cassette from the government be passing it into Disability Act.

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)

If missed any edition please visit [www.lnfod.org.ls](http://www.lnfod.org.ls)

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

Best regards,



The Editor

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

### Lesotho new government

By Nkhasi Sefuthi

We strongly anticipate that, the new government has the sufficient capacity to address the rights and needs of ordinary people with disabilities living in Lesotho. Hence, LESOTHO NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANISATIONS OF THE DISABLED (LNFOD) will support the new government to advance the rights of people with disabilities. We will continue to advise the government of Lesotho on disability related development issues as contained in the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities. Nevertheless, we will not shy away from informing the government especially the Minister of Social Development of the gaps and challenges facing disabled males and females in Lesotho.

We strongly believe that, the starting point in addressing the rights of people with disabilities should be the passing of the disability specific legislation by the 9th Parliament. In doing so, the government will be fulfilling its international obligations of domesticating the disability Convention which Lesotho became a signatory to in 2008. Currently, Lesotho has the draft bill on disability which should be finalized and presented to the Parliament as soon as it is ready.

The second priority on disability should be the implementation of the Social protection strategy which proclaims the intention of the government of Lesotho to provide disability specific grant to deserving people with disabilities. The vast majority of people with disabilities live under extreme poverty which perpetuates their vulnerability in society. The new government should therefore put in place the provision of disability grant as one of the means through which it is addressing the vulnerability among the people with disabilities. In fact the government of Lesotho through its policies is in agreement with the DPOS that, people with disabilities are the most marginalized and therefore the specific interventions need to be employed so as to level the playing field between people with disabilities and their counterparts. However, the government does not seem to consider the existing inequalities in the manner that could change the game any time soon.

We therefore urge the incoming Minister of Social Development to address the inequalities facing people with disabilities in consultation with the representative DPOs as DPOs are the most qualified to know the appropriate measures to be taken in order to address the challenges.

One major setback is disability programming within the government, currently; the government does not standardized disability programming. This shortcoming trickles down to poor disability service provision and coordination. The government needs to build its capacity on disability programming. This simply means that, Lesotho does not have well designed inclusive and specific disability programmes meant to address the situation of vulnerable people with disabilities. In dealing with the programming, Lesotho could ask countries advanced in disability like Japan to place technical resource person at the disability department whose role would be to strengthen the capacity of the department.

Apart from that, the budget allocation to disability is very limited because our governments do not consider disability as a priority. As a result, people with disabilities remain economically inactive thereby causing poverty in the society. The new government should think about disability as a development issue which should be addressed through allocation of equitable budget. We therefore urge the incoming Minister of Social Development to finance disability adequately so that the barriers facing people with disabilities may be reduced.

# GENERAL NEWS

## Commemorating

## International

## Women's day

By: Pascalina Letsau



This is the special day for women all over the world where they commemorate their successes and powers as women. The day is celebrated on the 8th March every year. The ministry of Gender, Sports and Recreation arranged the day to be celebrated on the 6th March. The reason for this was to pray for the country as Lesotho was immediately after the National General Elections. The theme for this year was; 'Make it happen' and all women were wearing colour purple.

**Why colour purple?** This colour represents Dignity and Justice. What is dignity and what is Justice?

"Justice is the quality of just fairness; in the interest of justice we should treat everyone the same. While dignity is the way a person is appearing or behaving seriousness and self-control, the quality of being worthy of honour.

We all have dignity and the shade of God is within us as human beings. We are proud to be women because we are caring mothers to our husbands and our children. Let us all treat each other fairly; we have to fight hard to see Lesotho growing. It is our role as women to pray for peace in this country. We are commemorating this day because it is by this time that Lesotho is about to end the election process for the new government" it happens that leaders of this country are men. We have to make sure that we help these men that will lead the country.

### What is it that should happen?

1. Encouraging effective action for advancing and recognizing women
2. Be treated fairly and with dignity as basic human right
3. Make a difference in our business operations
4. Let not allow Gender Based Violence among girls and women
5. Advocate for full participation in politics
6. Equal opportunities to everyone like accessing loans from banks

In all these things listed above women with disabilities are not accessing them. There are many challenges that women with disabilities are facing;

PWDs have difficulties in gaining access to education, employment, information and technology, healthcare, protection under law and political right.

- Looking in education; most girls with disabilities quit from schools due to inaccessible infrastructures this includes toilets. It is a major problem and not healthy not to use a toilet for a day, so they ended quitting school.
- Women With Disability's are parents, caring for family members, but hardly got employment, due to in access to education.
- We are victims of gender based violence in a high rate. The highest violence that target WWDs is sexual and emotional abuses but there are no cases laid court of laws are not continuing with our cases saying there are no enough evidence.

Women with disabilities also celebrated the day AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF). AHF is actively drives excellence by developing members to advocate and connect the leaders in the work industry and in schools.

It also provides clients with access to the additional services they need to be as healthy as possible. AHF is also providing knowledge, facts about HIV including how it spreads, how to protect against it.

To celebrate with this Foundation was very pleasant to girls and women with disabilities as we tried to state the challenges that girls and women with disabilities are facing when it comes to health services.

## GENERAL NEWS

### Service providers express themselves to people with disabilities



On the 19th – 20th March, LNFOD through its project of Deepening Decentralisation funded by European Union held advocacy campaign activity in Butha-Buthe Ngoajane, Berea Phuthiatsana and Mohale'shoek Khoelenya Community Councils.

Service Providers that were invited were; Ministries of Education, Forestry, Social Development, Health, Police (CGPU), Master of High Court, Local Authorities and People with disabilities themselves. The objective was to open a platform whereby people with disabilities will be able to present their views that are still challenges towards service provision in their areas. Services providers also will be able to present thoroughly about their services that can benefit people with disabilities.

People with disabilities firstly presented their concerns about deprivation when seeking services in their areas. The first issue was of education where they showed that it's been a long time that their children are not enrolling in schools. There is a policy that says; "Education for All" and the Education Act; 2010 but this is surprising as children with disabilities are seen within the villages not in classes.

"The ministry of education is taking education as the most effective ways of breaking the cycle of discrimination and poverty that children with disabilities and their families are facing," said Mrs. Nkoebe. She continued saying; "Even though education is important and binding, children with disabilities are still vulnerable to education and remain invisible and marginalized from classrooms". The ministry is trying hard to see to it that education is accessed by every child in this country including those with disabilities that is why there is a unit which is looking only on issues of children with special needs within the Ministry of Education and Training.

All the invited ministries got flow of questions from PWDs on why are the not accessing services or their rights. The ministry of

eradicate poverty within the communities is the one People with disabilities wanted to hear more from it. This came after realizing that people with disabilities are not given opportunities to participate in these activities especially in the Butha – Buthe district. When asking the officer in charge, he explained that they had to stop employing people with disabilities for the period of 2014 – 2015 financial year, this was the result of family members and friends that are working on behalf of PWDs and not giving them the money. He further said for that reason the Ministry is still working on the policy, so that can see how issues of PWDs can be worked in future.

The surprising matter about the same ministry is that the information got from Butha-Buthe is far different from other districts like Mohale'shoek and Berea. Mr. Liphapang Tjaoane, the District officer Forestry said; "It comes from the discretion from the people within the community what they want. It is true we are doing our working inline with the ministry policy but we are all Basotho and don't have to forget that. PWDs are also citizens of this country, they pay tax like everyone. If we buy food they also do that, we buy clothes, they also need clothes. At Berea we do employ people with disabilities and if our local councilors could understand that and register at least 4-5 PWDs in their list, cannot hesitate to employ them and that is our promise." concluded Tjaoane

"It is still a challenge to communicate with deaf people, as we do not know the language they are using. We always have people with disability at police station and can help them but when it comes to deaf, we are trying but it is difficult. We communicate by writing down when we need to ask a question, so that is taking a long time. We still have a rape case at Ha Mohlaetsoa, whereby a deaf girl has been raped by his father. The case is still pending due to lack of communication skills to deaf persons. We would like to be helped in order to finalize this case." said Mr. Katiso Mongali.

It was nice that during this campaign a multiple disabled youth was promised to get equipment from Social Development to start the work with. Ms. Lialo Halahala, the Rehabilitation officer got all the details of this young man. Mr. Horoto said; "We are not aware that there are so many people with disabilities in Phuthiatsana not getting services from our ministry. Social Development is giving out assistive devices to people with disabilities who are in need. We also need people to form some groups so that can be assisted to start their own projects within their communities. I am pleased that I am talking here today already have a new officer that is going to work directly at Phuthiatsana. Please use her and bring all your needs to her and deal with the situation."

## GENERAL NEWS

### A girl denied to education due to disability

By: Limpho Sello

A 12 year old Khubetsoana girl has been stuck at home for the past four years, with school in the neighborhood allegedly refusing to accommodate her due to her disability

According to the girl's mother Mapulane Makatisi none of the schools are willing to take the child because she is wheelchair-bound.

"The excuse at one of the schools was that because my daughter is wheelchair-bound, she would not be able to move around because classes are held on different floors," Ms Makatisi said.

At another I was told she could not be accommodated because the road leading to the school was in a terrible state so she would not be able to maneuver her wheelchair.

"I am a single parent and unemployed, my husband left when he realizes that the child is disabled. These past four years have not been easy for me because my child was supposed to have been at school but due to her disability, this has not been possible.

I can't take her to a special school because I don't have the required funds for her fees, so I am appealing for help from well-wishers to make sure this innocent child is not denied her right to education.

Each time she sees the other kids going to school and can't join them, she is reminded of her disability. I can't bear to watch the suffering on her face; it breaks my heart."

According to Ms Makatisi her daughter was only able to attend a special pre-school, and dropped out six months into class one as she owed school fees for one year.

"I was then lucky to have my daughter admitted at a government school where I didn't have to pay anything but my mother-in-law had a fight with one

Of the teachers over how the child was being treated.

"I was told not to bring my daughter to the school and she has been at home since," says Ms Makatisi, adding when she sought help from the Dept of Social Development. She was referred to the ministry of Education And Training.

An Education officer told me that there was no reason why my child could not go to a normal school. But when I started looking for stuck with excuse after excuse about why she could not be admitted.

"It can't be my fault that my daughter was born like this, and I don't know why people would want to increase the pain by denying her the chance to be with her age-mates at school.

According to the Lesotho National Federation of Organisation of the Disabled (LNFOD) project Coordinator Mr. Rabasotho Moeletsi, what this child has been through is unacceptable as the country's constitution guarantees the rights of every single citizen.

"We have the Education Act of 2011 which states that every child should have access to education.

"I wish the relevant government departments could help Mrs. Makatisi as she has been through a lot as she tries to get the best of her child." Mr. Moeletsi said

Meanwhile, the Lesotho Times visited two of the schools which allegedly refused to accept Mapulane's child.

At one of the schools, the principal said she was not aware of such a case, while there was no one authorized to speak to the newspaper mentioned.

There was also no immediate comment from Ministries of Education and Social Development.

## OPINION PIECE

### “My desire, my appeal.....

By: Pascalina Letsau

Lesotho is now having a new government after the snap elections. It is my wish to see improvements in service delivery in order to protect people with disabilities in this country. People with disabilities have participated full in the 2015 National Assembly Elections. This is a growth in the disability sector, they now aware of the issues that affect them. It is with this regard that the government should communicate or approach its stakeholders, meaning both private companies and NGOs including Disabled People's Organisations

The rights-based model requires Governments and service providers to remove or change the perspectives, strategies, policies, systems, processes, procedures and practices which prevent people with disabilities from taking part fully in everything that goes on in a society, on a basis of equality with others. This is a big job, as most people with disabilities in this country currently have poor access to education, infrastructure, decent work, training, health and social supports, transport, shelter, cultural life and much more, and this holds back their development in ways which are both obvious and subtle. For example, as a woman with mobility impairment has to pay someone to fetch water from a well and hire one to help when from shopping and that reduces my disposal income, or reducing my capacity to pursue my business.

Lesotho has two houses to oversee the run of the government that is parliament and senate. It is true that it's been a long run that people with disabilities not contesting for Local and National Assembly Elections. Lately in the disability sector people with disabilities are now contesting like their counterparts that are not disabled. The shock is; there are political parties that in their manifestos have talked about disability issues but how reality is that? I am saying this because in their roll of parties cannot think of listing PWDs.

I was thinking that in the Senate house, the State council is also looking at different sector to select in. As a person, I was not aware that the Prime Minister is the one in charge for selecting people too. Though I like to pass my gratitude to Mr. Mosisili

who made Mr. Masemene and Mr. Maholela,

“May their souls rest in peace,” to be in the Senate house. Mr. Masemene ended being the minister in the cabinet of Lesotho. I also like to thank Mr. Thabane for remembering people with disabilities by listing Mr. Seabata Lengosane in his political party ABC even though he failed to enter the parliament. In this new government, do not see expert people from different sectors like youth, disability and women. The worse part is that the percentage that Lesotho had on participation of women in a parliament has now decreased compared to the former government.

I am highly expecting to see enactment of the CRPD accommodating Disability Bill and then the cassette from the government passed it into Disability Act. Lesotho had a partnership with Norwegian Association of the Disabled (NAD) to implement the programme of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR). The programme did not continue in order to benefit people with disabilities in Lesotho. It is true that where the programme ran has impact to the lives of PWDs. People with disabilities are now able to stand up for their rights but still in danger and cycled by poverty. Lesotho is still not budgeting for disability issues but expecting everything from other countries when it comes to disability needs. If there was one person with disability in the ministry in charge with disability issues to coordinate the programme, I think there could be an improvement.

People with disabilities are only invited when the country needs to do plan but their ideas will be taken out if there are clear issues of disability, saying that they are expensive. I am very worried about disability in this country. In Lesotho to be part of the society if disabled is something far, I can see political leaders being unfair to people with disabilities.

## SPOTLIGHT



**Mr. Thabo Maieane – 52 years old man**

"I am deaf person but did not born deaf only have the disability in 2008. I was just like everyone and doing everything without any hardness. Since I got disability, I am now not able to do anything on my own. I am not a person who wants to depend on someone but the environment and the situation I am living in is forcing me to do so.

I remember one day, I had to go to the police station seeking for help. It was difficult to communicate with the police officer I found there. This officer did not understand when saying I am deaf, he said to me; "please sir I am not here for fun please say what you want me to help with. I don't have time to read everything here, just talk." I worked hard to explain to him that I do not hear at all. He ended understanding and then allowed me to write everything down, that was when I got help." said Mr. Maieane

My life has changed and this is very sad as many people think that I am the opportunist, who thinks that I can benefit from what I am imitating.

The lucky thing is that I joined movements of people with disabilities immediately when introduced to my community. I remember, I attended two meetings not knowing what we should do as people with disabilities and whether will be able to understand each other. I was elected deputy chairperson of deaf people. After the training held for us for advocacy, I then understood our role.

I did not wait as there was one girl child with mobility impairment on a wheelchair that was not enrolling in school. I approached the mother and ask her to allow me to help find the child a school. The mother agreed and then took initiative to go to the nearby schools by the name of Phoofolo Primary School. When getting there was not easy to convince the teachers about the child, but at the end they did understand and told me to bring the child to school.

There comes out the problem, sometimes parents are impossible. When returning to her telling her that the child has been admitted to school, she started to raise her voice saying;"my child is not going anywhere. I won't allow you to take my child to that school, as I do not know what is going to happen to her during my absence at school." "I was very disappointed because I wanted to help the child as tasked to do so." said Mr. Thabo

"We are very grateful as people with disabilities in Berea; we would like to thank LNFOD for the great job do to us especially with its trainings and awareness raising campaigns. I think service providers and communities will know better about people with disabilities than before." concluded Mr. Maieane

## Announcements/Upcoming Events

**The International Disability Alliance (IDA)** has launched a social Media Campaign calling on women and girls with disabilities (and allies, including men) worldwide to express what they want from the International community in terms of respect of their rights.

To have an overview of the campaign, see below and at;

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/weWwdwant?src=hash>

join us and share your views on IDA online media

### INTRODUCTION TO SELF-HELP GROUPS FORMATIONS

For more information please conduct LNFOD office; +266 22320345

Or

Mr. Rabasotho Moeletsi; +266 58700925

Email; [moeletsi@Infod.org.ls](mailto:moeletsi@Infod.org.ls)

### ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN IN PROJECT AREAS

For more information please conduct LNFOD office; +266 22320345

Or

Mr. Rabasotho moeletsi; +266 58700925

Email; [moeletsi@Infod.org.ls](mailto:moeletsi@Infod.org.ls)

## NEWS IN PICTURE



This is a group of service providers at Khoelenya Community Council Mophale'shoek during Advocacy Campaign on disability



Police- CGPU Officer 'Makalana presenting about reporting abuses



Rabasotho presenting the objective of the gathering at Ngoajane Community Council Butha-Buthe



Women with disabilities commemorating the International Women's day



Likopo Lesoetsa holding her message on International women's day



LNFOD during the meeting of Budget review at Maseru Sun Hotel

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# ADVOCACY WORK



## LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work

