

DISABILITY LESOTHO



From the Editor

Dear Partner,

It is sad that the whole World is experiencing the hardship time due to COVID-19, Disability Lesotho would like to express their deep condolences to all countries which lost their beloved ones because of this pandemic.

I hope men and women with disabilities are at risk for life-threatening infections by COVID-19, I think the response to this pandemic is not yet covering everyone of us especially persons with disabilities.

I think our country should have a clear approach to the pandemic including persons with disabilities. As our slogan says; "Nothing about Us, without Us" there is no way governments would be able to include issue of disability to their programmes to fight the spread of COVID-19

There are many things that we as persons with

disabilities have realized to be taken into considerations when training people on how to take care against the pandemic. I plea to all people who are given task to make people of COVID-19 to approach our organisations to work together as PWDs are at high risk to be infected.

If you 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 that may improve the quality and content of this free service.

Best regards,



The Editor

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Trying times of Coronavirus

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

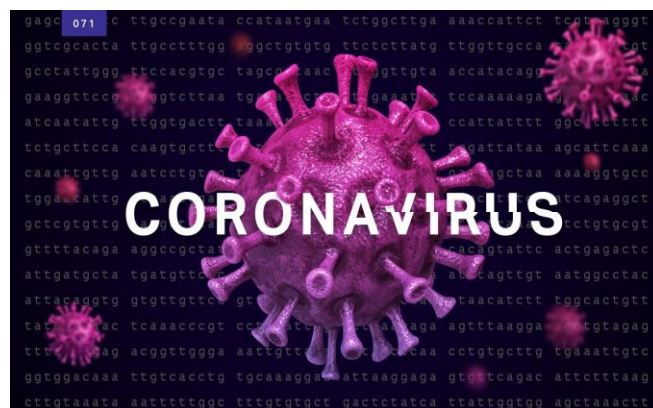
The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) has complied with the 21 days' lock down announced by the Prime Minister of Lesotho on 26 March 2020 by working from home. This is one of the measures undertaken by LNFOD to protect its staff from contracting COVID-19.

The 21 days lock down starts on the 29 March until the 20th April 2020 in order to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 across the country.

Lesotho is taking proactive measures so as to ensure that no one is at the risk of contracting Coronavirus as the number of people who have contracted COVID-19 in South Africa is increasing from day to day thereby posing a danger to spread across Lesotho.

LNFOD takes this moment to wish all our readers a safe and healthy homestay and appeals to the

government structures working on Coronavirus pandemic to consider full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in the national efforts aimed at reducing the spread across the country.



Advocacy Aspect

LNFOOD calls for disability inclusive response to pandemic of COVID-19

By: Makatleho Molotsi

LNFOOD Calls for disability Inclusive response to pandemic COVID – 19

LNFOOD supports the government of Lesotho's and other stakeholders in fighting the dreadful pandemic COVID – 19. It is also willing to support in every possible manner in shaping a disability inclusive response to the COVID – 19. It believes that a response that leaves no one behind is foundational to saving the entire nation from being swept away by this dreadful disease. LNFOOD observed however that the current protective measures pronounced by the Prime-Minister and Ministry of health are to some extent not disability inclusive. For an example, people are advised to cough inside their elbows yet this is the position where the guide of the visually impaired people are held when walking. In addition, it is similarly not clear how social distancing should apply to people with severe disabilities and their personal assistants. It is also not mentioned whether there is support for persons with disability and their personal assistants. From the forgoing LNFOOD has observed that people with disabilities and their families or personal assistants are at more risk of sustaining COVOD – 19. There is a potential that people with disabilities will be abandoned by their assistants in fear of COVID 19. LNFOOD therefore recommend as follows;

1. Messages about COVID – 19 be availed formats accessible to people of all types of disabilities. These include Braille, Sign Language, Audios and messages in pictures (simplified messages. the messages should also be spread across the country.

2. There should be additional protective measures for people with certain types of disabilities. Eg deaf blind, their family members and their tactile sign language people must cover their hands with clean tissue or toilet roll and immediately through in the trash bin and clean their hands.

3. Family members and or care givers of persons with disabilities must be trained on how to avoid the infection and spread of COVID – 19

4. There should be additional support in the form of training, hand sanitisers, protective clothes, and face masks for those support people with disabilities

5. Health professional for COVID – 19 should be capacitated on how to handle people with various forms of disability who may need healthcare services in relation to COVID – 19.

6. All preparedness and responsive plans must be made win consultation with the representatives of people with disabilities, so that they are inclusive of and accessible to people with disabilities

7. During quarantine, support services, personal assistance, physical and communication accessibility must be ensured

8. Measures of public restrictions must consider persons with disabilities on an equal basis with other.

LNFOOD is willing to support the government of Lesotho and its other stakeholders in shaping a disability inclusive response to COVID – 19, for the protection of the whole Basotho Nation. To defeat this an inclusive approach is vital

For more information, please contact

Makatleho Molotsi (Adv) at +266 58687539

Nkhasi sefuthi (Adv) at +266 632017 83

Makananelo Ramoholi +266 58009262 and

Rabasotho Moeletsi (Mr) +266 58700925 or visit our website at www.lnfo.org.ls

GENERAL NEWS

Masculinities from a Disability Lens

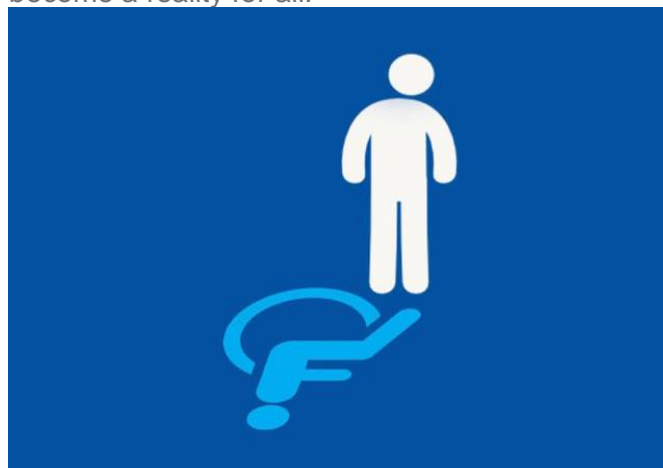
By Makananelo L. Ramoholi

The journey towards the achievement of gender equality must take into account the experiences and roles of men and women and or boys and girls in our society. Above all if true equality is to be achieved interlocking factors such as disability cannot be ignored.

Exploring how gender equality affects different classes of men and boys is equally essential as like women and girls, men and boys are not a homogeneous group. What then does gender equality mean for a disabled man? As much as females with disabilities are usually worse off in comparison with their non-disabled female counterparts, males with disabilities are also worse off in comparison with their non-disabled counterparts. For example; although sexual gender based violence is generally regarded to be higher amongst women without disabilities, studies indicate that women with disabilities are sexually assaulted at a rate at least twice that of the general population of women and also that there is a higher rate of violence against women with disabilities than against men with disabilities.

However, this situation does not mean that we should overlook the power indifferences between men without disabilities and men with disabilities. The traditional gender stereotypes depict men as masculine and therefore as strong and virile. What then does this mean for men who are regarded to be outside this box? The social construction of disabled men is that they are comparatively

weak and this makes them susceptible to gender based violence especially physical and sexual violence. This means that although they are still much better than the females with disabilities, they are still however vulnerable and in need of protection. One of the findings in the Access to justice Project which LNFOD implemented last year was that amongst the cases of sexual abuse involving those with mental disabilities identified, cases involving men with disabilities who were victims of sexual abuse were also recorded. Unfortunately, such cases are stigmatized and driven underground just as in a typical case where a man is sexually abused by another man. The intersection of gender and disability from a masculinities lens indicates that disability and masculinity are in conflict with each other. The former is associated with dependency and helplessness while the latter is associated with being powerful and autonomous. The gaps in disabled masculinity must therefore be identified and bridged through research and societal change of attitudes and perceptions if gender equality is to become a reality for all.



GENERAL NEWS

Lesotho Inclusive Education Progress in Lesotho

By: Puleng Mosili



The Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy was launched on the 14 August 2019. Since the launch of the policy, it has been disseminated by the Special Education Unit to various stakeholder such as MOET officials, Primary and Post primary schools' principal's country wide not leaving out some of the community councilors, in as well as public gatherings.

In various meetings with different stakeholders, varied opinions were expressed depending on how diverse people perceived issues of disability and what they believe Inclusion meant. Intentions of the policy were shared in held various meeting where audience was informed about the Lesotho inclusive education policy and it was discussed at length.

Their views were as follows:

At the end of almost the meetings, participants realized that they have for a very long time been ill-treating persons with disability whether intentionally or not. This was realized whereby they as members of the society would not be taking be admitted or in some cases would be expelled from school on the basis of disability. Participants acknowledged that maybe due to their negative an action when they notice a child with disability not being granted their right to access education or in an instance where a child with disability would not attitudes and cultural perceptions pinned to issues of disability they never

view persons with disability with human lens but as rather as non-productive people who deserve to be pitied.

On a different note, some of the participants thought inclusive education meant there were new school structures to be established in regular schools that would be used for education of learners with disabilities, who would be taught by special teachers who are trained to meet their various needs. This perception revealed that there is limited understanding regarding the concept of inclusion so much that others believe inclusion has to do with infrastructure only. For instance, getting rid of the stairs and having a ramp is enough and inclusive. It was at that point that barriers denying children access education were discussed, including the major barrier: negative attitude towards persons with disabilities.

In addition to the dissemination activity, 3 combined schools have been selected to pilot the inclusive education. Teachers of those schools and principals have engaged on an introductory module on inclusive education through a training funded by the World Bank.

Inclusive Education in the Lesotho context means disabled learners and non-disabled peers share both academic and social experiences in one environment conducive for all. This process entails removing barriers to ensure conducive environment for all learners with disabilities.

GENERAL NEWS

Mashaleng community council lounds LNFOD conduct during GADIP Program Introduction

By: Rabasotho Moeletsi

This month (March 2020) Lesotho National Federation of organisations of Disabled (LNFOD) put their efforts on introducing their new program, Gender and Disability in Practice - Lesotho (GADIP) to the Councils leadership as a gateway to the councils. This four (4) year program is focusing on Promoting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Gender Sensitive Inclusive Education, Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls with Disabilities and Eliminating GBV against Women and Girls with Disabilities.

LNFOD introduced the program with its four (4) thematic areas to the council and explained the kind of support and role expected to be played by the councils as individuals in their own electoral divisions and as a collective.

General observation from all the thirteen councillors was impressive where they warmly welcomed the project. One of the councillors did not hide his excitement following the presentation by LNFOD.

"We are very pleased to learn about this program which is going benefit persons with disabilities in our council. For me the project is not only benefiting persons with disabilities but also everyone in the council benefit," said Mr. Mohale who is councillor representing Ha Maphohloane electoral division.

"We have known LNFOD and its programs for quite some time now and your (programs have benefited the whole community ere. If you look at the entrance behind you, you'll know agree with that the ramp was constructed due to the influence and guidance from LNFOD previous programs and today that ramps used by everyone and not only persons with disabilities.

"Nna, in my electoral division last year I hosted officials from district education office for the first

time in many, many years. Those officials were invited by one disabled leaders (*Mr. Semanka Seko, the disability focal person in the past program*). People, those with disabilities and the ones without disabilities in my area were happy that were provided an opportunity to submit their concerns about education of their children at their door steps," commended Mr. Mohale.

These were examples he point out on LNFOD previous programs have gone beyond helping only persons with disabilities.

Mr. Thabo who represented the Chiefs heading different villages in the council registered his happiness that LNFOD has decided to work in Mashaleng again. He said what he loves more LNFOD is that the fact that LNFOD principled and does not derailed by certain politicians. He further commended LNFOD for being transparent and realistic.



"We have worked with you for years now and what like most about you, LNFOD, you don't promise a lot but a few that you promised you fulfilled unlike other NGOs who will promise heavens and leave our people with empty promises," commended Chief Thabo.

“However, I have question on economic empowerment, how are we going to explain to men that they are not going to benefit to the program,” asked Chief Thabo.

LNFOOD responded that the emphasis was put on women because they were left behind especially in means of living unlike men. Men have access to various job opportunities and different ways of generating income which seemed difficult to be accessed by women and the decision was to close that economic gap and male persons with disabilities would be taught and encouraged to support livelihood projects by their female counterparts.

Concluding the program, the council chairperson welcome LNFOOD program and pledged his council support in the next four years. He pleaded with LNFOOD to comeback and train his council on the gender and disability so as they understood it as the leadership which LNFOOD delegate agreed.

Apart from Mashaleng community council, the program was introduced to Siloe, Khoelenya Community Councils in Mohale'shoek; Ramoetsana and Makoabating community councils in Mafeteng; Qiloane, Ratau, Mazenod community councils in Maseru; as well as Maoamafubelu community council in Leribe. Introduction meetings in other five (5) councils, Senekane, Tebe-tebe, and Thaba-Mokhele

community councils as well as Maputsoe and Hlotse Urban Councils were suspended due to the adverse of the COVID-19 Pandemic as a precautionary measure to conform to social distancing. New dates for the meetings will be arranged the councils' offices when the situation permits. This was followed by the gazetted state of emergency lockdown by Prime minister. LNFOOD management and leadership has decided that the office be closed and staff be supported to work from home.

LNFOOD is implementing this four (4) year program in collaboration with other partners; Diakonie Austria (DA) and National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU). The program is funded by the Austrian Development Agency.



SPOTLIGHT



Name: Mosela Mabitle

1. Where do you currently live?

- I am now staying at Mazenod in the village called Paki

2. How many children do you have?

- I have two children, they are both boys.

3. How do your household gain income?

- I am always ploughing vegetables and working as a street vender.

4. How would you rate the housing in which you live?

- My family is just a family, not rich not that poor because I am working hard to see that I have everything I needed.

5. Have you ever attended any training on issues of Gender?

- Yes, I once attended a training on gender issues facilitated by LNFOD women's wing.

6. What do you think should be done to improve issues of Gender and Disability in Lesotho?

- I think people with disabilities should have empowered in all aspects of life.

7. What if Gender and Disability programme comes to Mazenod and be the one trained on it, how would you feel?

- I would be happy if the programme can be in Mazenod, because can also participate fully to see that persons with disabilities that are staying in Mazenod are empowered so that can help the community and their families.

8. If LNFOD, is introducing the programme to the council, how would you advice Mazenod community council to act on that?

- I would talk hardly to council members to accept the proposal from LNFOD.

9. What are your expectations if the programme is working at Mazenod

- That would be interesting as would be able to encourage to have a representative as PWDs in the council, to work our issues in a proper way.

UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENT

LNFOOD will host partners from Austria and Uganda attending the first knowledge management workshop of the framework program from the 20-24th April 2020.

For more information, please contact LNFOOD office on 22320345 or email: nkhasi@lnfod.org.ls

Due to lockdown in many countries including Lesotho for Coronavirus pandemic, many activities have been cancelled.

Announcements will be done immediately when things are back to normal.

For more information, please contact LNFOOD office on 22320345 or email: nkhasi@lnfod.org.ls

ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work

Diakonie 
Katastrophenhilfe

Brot
für die Welt

WITH FUNDING FROM



AUSTRIAN
DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

tto
8^{per}
mille
CHIESA VALDESE
UNIONE DELLE CHIESE METODISTE E VALDESI



OSISA

Open Society Initiative
for Southern Africa

