

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.

I would like to introduce another column which will be called the Director's Corner. The column is aimed at exploring the progress made by the ministry of Social Development towards the domestication of the UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD)

The corner will also highlight the delays caused in the domestication process and the need to protect the rights of persons with disabilities through enactment of disability specific legislation.

There has been so much rapes that has been done to people with disabilities this month, if there is no any move towards domesticating the convention on the of people with disabilities, this means there will be no protection that the state is it doing towards people with disabilities. We will work hard to see all perpetrators in jail as women with disabilities.

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,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Pletsau'.

The Editor

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Disability inclusion is long overdue

By: NkhasiSefuthi

In 2012, the government of Lesotho established the ministry of Social Development with the good reason of moving Lesotho from social welfare point of view to social development perspective. The ministry was not only established to address needs of people with disabilities as it is always stated by the policymakers. However, disability should be expected to be on the high agenda of the ministry for it has dedicated a directorate for people with disabilities.

The migration of the government of Lesotho from the social welfare model to the social development directly links to the spirit of the UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES in that, disability should be addressed as a social issue and not as medical concept like it was before. However, the model of social inclusion should be with appropriate social protection systems including provision of disability grant to people with severe disabilities. In fact, it is evident that, the social workers and people with disabilities do not fully agree on whether provision of disability grant should be seen as part of social protection or as perpetuation of the concept of socialwelfare system.

Most senior socialworkers in Lesotho conceptualise provision of disability grant as part of socialwelfare system. On the other hand, people with disabilities strongly believe that provision of disability grant with defined guidelines constitutes meaningful social protection that enable people with disabilities to cover the cost associated with their disability.

Lesotho ratified UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES on the 2ND December 2008. The main purpose of this convention is to establish specific promotion and protection of disability rights in the world. By then, disability focal point was the department of Health and Socialwelfare. Meaning that, the ministry of Social Development came into being four to five years down the line of ratification, as the huge step considered towards protecting the rights of people with disabilities in Lesotho.

Since 2008, (LNFOD) and its coalition members had been advocating for the enactment of disability

specific legislation and the adoption of national disability and rehabilitation policy as per the provisions of the Convention. Nevertheless, it was very difficult to break through because the policymakers were nowhere to be seen while the technocrats were clouded with attitudes towards issues of people with disabilities.

It was only in April in 2011, when the Cabinet of the government of Lesotho adopted the long waited National disability and Rehabilitation policy. The main purpose for which the policy was designed and adopted by the government was to facilitate the mainstreaming of disability in all government sectors. It was also meant to ensure that, people with disabilities can realise their potential for, the attitudinal and environmental barriers would have been reduced through the implementation of the policy. However, the guidelines for the implementation of this policy were not budgeted for and, there were not developed as such despite the noise made towards allocation of the budget to the policy by people with disabilities.

To cut the story short, the national disability policy has not been allocated budget for its implementation till to date.

In 2012 once again, things seemed to move faster because the government showed strong support to disability issues and the cabinet approved the domestication of the Disability convention to be headed by the Ministry of Social Development.

After the approval, domestication process started to move at the tortoise's pace without clear explanation why things were getting slower than ever before. At one point, it was agreed that, the disability specific legislation would be developed by the consultant.

When (LNFOD) put pressure on the need to speed up the domestication of this Convention, the ministry decided to abandon the consultancy and took the drafting instructions to the law office drafting section to make the disability equity bill.

The drafting instructions were submitted to the authority in charge in October 2013, till to date; (May 2014) there is no reasonable explanation

that could be advanced as to why the domestication process has not yet started. There is no action on the ground except series of meetings on this issue.

Meanwhile, people with disabilities in the community are suffering with no specific legal framework for the exercise of their disability rights.

We are six years down the ratification and almost three years after the establishment of the ministry of Social Development.

National disability and rehabilitation policy and the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities which Lesotho ratified with no reservations remain white elephants in the lives of people with disabilities.

Worst of all, Lesotho has not yet issued a report on the status of domestication of this Convention to the Committee on the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities as per article 34 and 35 of the (CRPD)

If Lesotho were to issue the report on the stage at which we are in terms of domesticating the Convention, other member states would know our challenges encountered in the domestication and then would have come to our rescue through the provision of international cooperation.

Based on the foregoing, it is evident that, disability issues are not given the seriousness they require regardless of advocacy meetings held by (LNFOD) in trying to bring disability on national development agenda.

We therefore ask the minister of Social Development to pass disability specific legislation that will promote and protect people with disabilities as soon as possible. We are also anticipating seeing the disability equity bill getting in Parliament by the end of 2014 as stated in LNFOD advocacy coalition meeting held in March 2014.

We also urge the Honourable minister to ensure the implementation of the National disability and rehabilitation policy by putting in place its guidelines.

Most importantly, we are calling upon the influential to advise the disability focal ministry accordingly pertaining to these issues.

We strongly urge the Ministry of Social Development to comply with the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities by producing a report highlighting the progress made on domestication so that other member states can cooperate with us in this regard.

We are calling upon the nation's leaders to help us influence the ministry of Social Development to speed up the domestication of this convention through enactment of disability specific legislation.

Disability as a social concept does not only require people with disabilities to promote it, but, it demands all of us to join hands for the full participation of the nation regardless of status.

New Advocacy Task Team members trained

By: Maja Matsoha



The outgoing Advocacy Task Team members after farewell at Maseru Sun

The LNFOD Advocacy Strategy 2011 to 2014 will come to an end this year. This year also signals the end of the three year term of the eight member Advocacy Task Team(ATT). LNFOD saw it befitting to hold a two day training workshop for the incoming task team members with an adjacent reflection and experience sharing session for the outgoing task team members. On the 16th and 17th May, 15 members of both teams met to for sessions on the legal framework for disability rights in Lesotho presented by Mr. Nkhasi Sefuthi which highlighted the international, continental and local laws and policies on disability rights. From this session one of the main concerns from participants was the lack of implementation of the continental plan of action on disability which Lesotho signed up to as well as the slow progress on the drafting of the Disability Act in Lesotho.

The second session presented by Mr. Moeletsi Rabasotho, the LNFOD Projects Coordinator, highlighted the model of disability adopted by Lesotho in relation to education. From the presentation participants learned about the human rights based approach to disability which emphasizes access and inclusion as opposed to the medical approach to disability which focuses on rehabilitation and care. One of the many concerns from the quorum was the lack of practical support services to implement inclusive education as well as the falsity in the call for 'Education for All', because in Lesotho, there is exclusion of persons with disability in education. For example, there is lack of supportive services like sign language interpreters and braille reading material. therefore education

braille reading material, therefore education remains in Lesotho "Education for Some".

The third session presented by Ms. Maja Matsoha, the Advocacy and Human Rights Officer, dealt with advocacy tools and tips. In this session, the outgoing ATT members also shared with the incoming members of the ATT tips which included remembering the role of gate keepers in accessing communities, the importance of timeliness, research and relevance when invited to speak on disability. Mr. Seabata Lengosane, an outgoing task team member, highlighted the importance of always having a plan, being ready for unexpected challenges as well as being innovative and relevant in responding to issues during speaking engagements. Mrs. Regina Lephohi highlighted communication skills and learning to control ones temper on confrontation.

The following session gave highlights of the current advocacy strategy and activities to be conducted this year, presented by Ms. Mamello Phekani. The incoming task team members then had an opportunity to collectively reflect on the skills and education they bring to the task team under the guidance of the outgoing task team members, and how such can be used to advance the advocacy goals. This session was conducted in two groups and a feedback session held. One of the incoming members, Miss Ernestina Ramathinyane, identified skills in mobilization, media relations (interviews and report writing) as some of her strong qualities which she brings to the incoming ATT.

The workshop session ended on the 17th with an experience sharing session, where the outgoing members of the task team shared some of the highlights and challenges of having been part of this team. Amongst recurring issues shared was the success of having contributed towards the National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy and the inclusion of disability issues in the National Disaster Management Plan. The greatest challenge remains the slow pace of domestication of the UNCRPD to which Lesotho is a signatory. The training ended with a well earned farewell ceremony for the outgoing ATT members, who were thanked by the Executive Director Mr. Nkhasi Sefuthi, for their contribution to the success of activities under the LNFOD Advocacy Strategy.

GENERAL NEWS

Disabled HIV and AIDS Peer Counselors in the Leribe District

By: Pascalina Letsau



LNFOOD and District Health Management Team (DHMT) Leribe held HIV testing and counseling (HTC) training course for peer counselors with disabilities in Leribe District from the 5th – 14th May, 2014.

It came to the realization of LNFOOD that there are some gaps in health sector towards people with disabilities. The living Conditions Study among Persons with Disabilities conducted in 2010 shows that; *the biggest gap between the need and awareness of services was found in medical rehabilitation, legal and welfare services with each represented over 30% gap. The least gap was shown by health services (11.6%).* So with this reason LNFOOD wanted to approach the issue by helping individuals with disabilities to epidemic disease.

The objective of the training workshop was to equip individuals of DPO members on counseling and being peer counselors. The participants were DPO members from councils in which LNFOOD is working namely; Khomokhoana, Menkhoaneng and Matsoku.

Counseling youth and children, counseling in PMTCT, HTC and TB, legal and ethical issues in counseling, counselor's self care also topics

covered in order to assist people with disabilities in their role of being peer councilors on issues of HIV and AIDS.

The participants were delighted as they mentioned that the training was the eye – opener to them as it's been a long time that just because they have been looking their peers suffering until they die just because were not able to get help. "I think we will have to work hard go house to house and talk about the epidemic deases to our peers." said Nt'seliseng from Matsoku.

On the other hand the trainers were very much impressed with the showing of the participants and talked them highly. "With the level of comminitment you showed in these two weeks here, I have no doubt you'll make competent counselors who will contribute positively in your communities," commented Ms. Lesaoana of DHMT during closing of the training.

Mr. Mohato, who works at the laboratory at the Motebang hospital reiterated the same sentiments saying he hopes 'to get positive feedback from clinics' when he carries evaluation of their work at the clinics before they complete their placements.

Having completed the course, the trainees will be undergoing a month long placements in health centers (cilinics) at their neighbouring villages on performing HIV tests in under close supervision of HTC counselors in those clinics. However, not all trainees will undergo placement as HIV testing equipment used at the health sector is not userfriendly to users with disabilities. This presents a challenge to the world health organisation (WHO) as there were some brilliant coouselors with visual disabilities who now cannot do HIV test just because the test kits are not accessible. The most unfortunate part is that these individuals come from the same area, Matsoku community council.

GENERAL NEWS

DPO branch formations as well as identification of Animators



People with disabilities in different groups during formation of branches

On the 12th May, LNFOD through the project of deepening decentralization held public gatherings in project areas in Butha – Buthe district to formulate DPO branches and identify of Animators. The public gathering was held at Tša – le – moleka Community Council. All Electoral Divisions in the council were covered and are composed of villages of Ha Pokane, Serutle, Qalo, Maloseng, Ha 'Makuini, Likhakeng, Selomo and Linakeng

National DPOs from headoffices send their members to facilitate the formation of these branches. National DPOs were as follows; Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho (IDAL), National Association of the Deaf Lesotho (NADL), Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD) and Lesotho National League of the Vissually Impaired Persons (LNLVIP).

The Project Coordinator introduced the project to all people gathered there. He highlighted that the project is going to help full participation of people with disabilities around the council, meaning that in all developmental committees in the council people with disabilities will be included and take decisions.

All four (4) National DPOs were then divided into groups according to type of disability. Each DPO was expected to highlight membership on their mandate and responsibilities as disability rights organisations. People with disabilities around that area will also need to know what are expected from

someone who would like to join the association, so the delegation from headoffices explained clearly the steps undertaken when one wants become a member of such an organisation.

After all these explanation, there selected people who will be the steering committee members within the council for each DPO. The appointed people will work closely with headoffice. They will also be able to convenethe meetings, taking up the needs of individuals with disabilities from their constituencies to the relavant offices. They will also monitor the whether the services in the community council are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

It will not be enough to elect the committee and then leave them like that, the next step will be the training that will be facilitated by the National DPO on leadership skills. This will help members to run their associations at community level. It will also help out the capacity when mixing with other people who are not disabled in the community development committees. Recruitment of new members will be their responsibility together with other members.

It will not be enough to elect the committee and then leave them like that, the next step will be the training that will be facilitated by the National DPOs on leadership skills. This will help members to run their associations at community level. It will also help out the capacity when mixing with other people who are not disabled in the community development committees.

It is the wish of LNFOD to see its member affiliates being capacitated even at the rural areas, so that they can be able to advocate or fight for their rights not expecting National Federation to do the job for them. "I'm happy for you, being elected in these committees. You are going to help LNFOD to touch down there where we couldn't reach and that's where more violations are happening and we bank on you to report those incidences.

We need disability voices be powerful and heard every where in this country, that is why we are expanding areas of work." Said the project coordinator Mr.Rabasotho Moeletsu.

GENERAL NEWS

Disability and Disaster

By: Ernestina Ramathinyane

Disaster Management Authority (DMA) held a 5 day training workshop starting from the 19th – 23rd May, 2014 for people with disabilities (PWDs), in which they were made aware of the disaster risks that may endanger their lives.

16 people representing 4 disabled people's organization had attended the training and were made aware of the terminology used in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as well as that used in disability. PWDs on the other hand expressed their views on the terminology they prefer being, "people with disabilities" not "people living with disabilities" as normally said. When seeing a person with disabilities should first see a human being not something else.

The participants were made aware of the factors that constitute to disasters as well as impact of these factors of people's lives. Those factors among others were development climate change and many more. It was pointed that development can lead to disaster as the use of heavy machines and dynamites to expose the rocks and lead to collapsing of the building to people, and those could also lead to disability.

In Lesotho there are floods, hurricanes, drought and heavy snowfall. There made an example where people got snow and then trapped there until they got to the situation where they were supposed to amputate their legs due to snow effects.

However the participants (PWDs) pointed out that they really appreciate the DMA's efforts in helping them to know about risks, it should also use picture messages so as to enable even illiterate people who cannot read and write, the example made there were of people who are deaf, some can read messages from the phone while others cannot. The picture messages if placed even at the streets can enable them see that there is something bad that will happen soon or later.

DMA emphasized that it really wishes to work hand in hand with people with disabilities in its campaigns in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), this means it seeks to promote inclusive DRR.

There were some lessons learned in this training workshop, they were like;

- I learned that there are some institutions that recognize and understand issues of disabilities like DMA as all training materials were accessible to everyone like; braille documents, personal assistants meaning guides and sign language interpreters were all catered.
- We also learned that if DMA is sending some messages or using all means of spreading the information to people about the climate change, then we as people decided to ignore the message then go and get any risk. If such a person trapped and then assisted by DMA, then after all those processes the person will have to face a charge by the law.

"We therefore appreciate the effort took by DMA and hope even other institutes could learn from DMA by mainstreaming disability in their plans and activities." said Ernestina Ramathinyane

OPINION PIECE

Why games are so difficult to youth and children with disabilities?

By: Pascalina Letsau

It is rare to children and youth with disabilities to participate in sports and recreation activities, why is this happening?

The living conditions study among persons with disabilities results shows that there are some certain problems of social exclusion which should not be overlooked in this country. It is about 16% of persons with disabilities reported that they had experienced the discrimination in public services. There are clear indications that many individuals with disability are sidelined in important daily life activities within their families and the community.

According to me it is very difficult for children and youth could be serve their interests. Looking at the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), article says; 'Every child has a right to play.' Lesotho has launched CRC and we all expecting that all those rights will not be refridged. These days we are talking sports all over the country. There are people who have volunteered to teach children from the early age how to participate in sport, the job starts at ECCDs, primary, secondary and tertiaries.

Why is it difficult to children, youth and women with disabilities to reach things? Is it because we have no representatives in decision making? is it because we need things that are special? Is it because the facilities to be used by people with disabilities are very expensive?

It is very amazing to look at the Lesotho National budget, every ministry has money to implement some activities. Ministry of Youth, Gender Sports and Recreation has budget for sports. I do not know how to access that money, as youth and women with disabilities are there and willing to play but not able to. There are many games for people with disabilities and wheelchair bound. There are inspiring list of sporting that paralympians can play. There are massive range of traditional dice, cards, table tennis and chess that are suitable for most categories of disability but nobody could think about them from the ministry in order to improve sporting to people with disabilities.

Table tennis is on of the official paralympic sport and are specifically designed to allow wheelchair – users to get close to the table and can be easily played. All these games can start at the early stage whild a child is at the Nursery school and these ECCDs should be supported by the government

If children and youth with disabilities cannot be supported from their families and communities there is no way the government can support. I am saying this because most youth with disabilities when interviewing them find that they are denied to play with their peers in the village.

The government through its ministries should now intervene by creating more sports arenas that will accommodate all people including children and youth with disabilities. There are no special things needed to include people with disabilities. What is needed is to design universal infrastructure and development. Ask about anything about disability in any forum, people are turned off as if you are going to change the whole budget of the Ministry.

I am very surprised as political people before elections were able to approach National DPO selling their manifestos but now they are all quite and have no interest any more. I had hope to the Minister of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation as he is younger but now it is not easy to see him. I was also thinking that the Ministry of Local Government will be easy to meet him but it seems all these people are busy.

How can we meet the Ministers easily like before? Disability like any other sectors must be helped by all these ministries, especially if the issue is related to it. But I am very concerned about sports to children and youth with disabilities, they end up having no interest of participating in any activity because they have nothing to do themselves.

I think it is high time that youth with disabilities stand up and fight for their rights, there is no way you can develop well without participating in community events like everyone.

People meet while they are at sports and or any event and that change the mind set of them, what about you? Stand up and claim what you deserve as youth in this country, network with existing groups and share experiences.

SPOTLIGHT



Mr. QalangJobo

Executive Director – Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho (IDAL)

1. What does your job involve?

- Overseer of all organizational programs and all finance and Admin facets.

2. What is the best or interesting part of your job?

- Pointing Strategic Direction for the wellbeing of persons with intellectual disability and providing life skills to youth with intellectual disability.

3. What do you think about Disabled People's Organisations so far?

- They still carry a relevant mandate but have a room for development in the light of programmatic integration for ease of resource mobilization, Publicity and speaking in One Voice for improved livelihoods of people with disabilities.

4. What inspires you working in disability sector?

- Being able to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities.

5. What involvements are you taking to help in the mainstream of disability and gender issues in the workplace?

- Making it a norm to always have gender balance in all work settings and averting preferential treatment informed by gender in all disability initiatives and/or programs

6. How do you think the government can do to make education be inclusive?

- By collaborating with DPOs to formulate awareness messages and actual dissemination of such messages in different sectors of the society through Public gatherings, Symposiums at all levels and introduce disability friendly environment and curricula for ease of functionality of created awareness in educational institutions.

7. What is the best advice you have ever given to parents of children with disabilities about health of their children?

- That they should always be vigilant, ensure safety of their children by maintaining hygienically clean surroundings and keeping out of reach harmful substances and timely take their children for medical attention immediately they see signs of ill health.

8. If you would be chosen a prime minister of Lesotho what would you do to improve lives of children with disabilities?

- I would abolish MoSD and establish Ministry of Disability and Social Services (MoDSS) and empower that ministry with Disability Technocrats.

9. If you had to date a celebrity whom would you date?

- I would date Nomthandaso Buthelezi from Muvhango.

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

Seminar on Employment of disabled persons hosted by the American Embassy

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Lnfod Planning meeting 18th and 19th June 2014

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Advocacy newsletter preps

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Community mobilisation through public gatherings in project areas

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Disability and Human rights manual Validation workshop

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Training of Trainers for the PWD representatives

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Radio advocacy on disability rights

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NEWS IN PICTURES



Ms. Maja Matsoha new LNFOD Advocacy and Human Rights Officer.



Outgoing Advocacy Task Team after farewell holding their presents and certificates of appreciation



Mr. Nkhasi Sefuthi, the Executive Director of LNFOD



Mr. Stephen Thoahlane, The National CBR Coordinator

MAY, 2014

ISSUE 24

ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work

