

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 May, 2020

It is with the countless honour for Disability Lesotho to thank all people or companies that have aided people with disabilities during the hard time of lockdown due to COVID-19 with food packages. This killing disease has severely impacted the lives of persons with disabilities three times compared to other groups.

Disability Lesotho is fortunately like to express thanks to all who facilitated their generous to its member in a way or the other. We hope even in future will still give out the hand.

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

Best regards,



The Editor

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Children with intellectual disabilities remain excluded in the Lesotho general education system

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

Historically, children with disabilities have been denied the right to education on the basis of equality and non discrimination thereby hindering them from realizing their full potential in life.

Of all groups of children with disabilities, children with intellectual disabilities, autism, and deafblind remain at the margins of primary inclusive education despite the adoption of the Lesotho inclusive education policy by the Ministry of Education in 2018.

From the foregoing, I am arguing that the Lesotho general education system excludes children with intellectual disabilities from learning and benefiting out of the education system thereby perpetuating inequality and discrimination in education.

This will be achieved through evaluation of the education legal and policy framework including practice at the international, regional and national level to assess the extent to which Lesotho complies with the international and regional human rights instruments on education for children with intellectual disabilities.

The considerable barriers facing inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities will be highlighted.

Ultimately, I recommend the actions which can be put in place by the Ministry of Education and Training to ensure access to inclusive primary education for children with intellectual disabilities.

Lesotho became a state party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 2nd December 2008, and article 24 of this

make the general education system accessible and inclusive of all diverse learners including all learners with disabilities on the basis of equality and nondiscrimination .

At the regional level, article 16 of the African Disability Protocol obliges the states to adopt multi-disciplinary assessment methods to accommodate children with intellectual disabilities in the education system.

The Lesotho Constitution provides the right to education in the form of a principle of a state policy, which means that the right to education is not enforceable as a constitutional right in the courts of Lesotho.

In 2010, the Education Act was enacted which legalized compulsory primary education and regulates the administration of education without necessarily creating educational rights for all learners including children with intellectual disabilities.¹ This Education Act adopts medical approach to children with disabilities by making reference to them as handicap children and by also stating that physically and mentally disabled children shall be given special treatment, care in order to realise their educational opportunities.

Children with intellectual disabilities still face barriers in accessing education because government has not included them in the national curriculum and therefore wants to develop a special curriculum for them; children with intellectual disabilities in the mainstream schools are not learning and teachers do not have the capacity to support the learning of children with

intellectual disabilities.

Additionally, children with intellectual disabilities are classified as non educable who cannot effectively participate in education just like others and therefore their education is considered less important.

In conclusion, I recommended that children with intellectual disabilities, just like any other child deserve the right to learn on an equal basis with others and without discrimination and therefore Lesotho should provide inclusive primary education which takes into account the needs of children with intellectual disabilities in accordance with the international standards.

I further recommend that the Ministry of Education and training working together with the teacher training institutions and representative organisations of persons with disabilities should design inclusive education action plan with concrete timelines and budget allocation, outlining the activities which should be done to incorporate children with intellectual disabilities in the general education system and indicate clearly the role of special schools in the inclusive education settings.



GENERAL NEWS

A call for humanitarian relief of people with disability from the impacts of Covid-19

By: Makatleho Molotsi

It is reported worldwide that when compared to other minority groups, people with disabilities are twice vulnerable to the negative impacts of the corona virus disease. This is more the case in Lesotho where the government has not implemented any deliberate humanitarian relief measures for people with disabilities. People with disabilities in Lesotho are as twice in a dangerous situation during this period of COVID-19 as compared to other minority groups in the country.

Owing to the a myriad barriers , people with various forms of disabilities are not able to effectively participate in labour markets or even to run any income generating activities under normal circumstance. This has put them and their families in very desperate situations in which they cannot afford the daily necessities such as food, clothing and medical expenses. During this time of corona virus disease in which most businesses are closed and other income generating activities slowed, the condition of people with disabilities and their families is worse. During this time, most of the private people and companies of good will are offering humanitarian relief in the form of good packages. This handouts need to be complemented by the government as they do not necessarily target people with disabilities.

This calls for the deliberate government humanitarian relief initiatives for people with disabilities. It is important that the new government speed up the enactment of the

disability equity Bill that shall mandate and guide all the relevant Ministries to mainstream the disability in to their plans and budgets. It is also important for the government to put in place the disability grant as per the already existing National Social Protection Strategy. To complement the efforts of the government in this regard, the current situation also calls for the speedy establishment of the Disability fund which will assist the government to run the programs that will among others relief people with disability from the negative impact of COVID-19.



GENERAL NEWS

The two Sign Language Interpreters are released in the Ministry of Education and training.

By Makananelo Ramoholi

The Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy articulates variety of roles for different departments that are identified as key to achieve inclusive education. Among these key departments, the National Curriculum Development Centre is assigned to provide technical support to Inclusive education department and to ensure that all curricula and instructional material are accessible to learners with disabilities. It was in this regard that the department was supported with two Sign Language interpreters.

It was around May 2019 when Ministry of education took a significant step to engage two Sign language interpreters and place them in the National Curriculum Development Centre. This was after the then Minister of education and training professor Ntoi Rapapa made a pledge that he will ensure inclusion of people with disabilities in every activity the ministry holds, by engaging Sign Language interpreters. As thus the two interpreters were appointed on contractual basis.

Their role was to ensure that the curriculum was inclusive by reviewing non-inclusive parts of the document. They also contributed in other subdivisions of the ministry such as the Special Education unit. It was in that collaboration that the two interpreters also participated in some of the Special education unit activities even though they were contracted under the curriculum center.

At this time of the pandemic the Ministry of Education and training require extensive help to reach out to all children with disabilities. Unfortunately, it was at the end of March 2020 that the Sign Language interpreters were released with the fact that their contracts cannot be renewed more than three times. However, they were not even considered for the positions even though they were advertised in September 2019.

On other news, engagement of Sign language interpreters on the national television on educational programs to engage deaf learners at this time that schools are closed, marks the beginning of a new venture of acknowledgement and accommodation of learners with disabilities during the covid- 19 pandemic response.

GENERAL NEWS

LNFOD: AN UMBRELLA BODY FOR ORGANIZATIONS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BY: Lerato Pitso



This article aims to give a brief about LNFOD and the impact it has in changing the people's understanding about disability. LNFOD is an umbrella body for organisations of people with disabilities such organisations includes, National Association of the deaf Lesotho, Lesotho National League of the visually impaired persons, Lesotho National Association of physically disabled and Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho. LNFOD advocates and protects the rights people with disabilities, ensures quality life and accessibility to various opportunities available in the country as well as encouraging skill utilization and sharing through the implementation of various projects. Such projects include, inclusive education (conducive learning environment), access to justice and gender and disability project amongst other things as to ensure better living of people with disabilities.

There are different believes and theories evolving around the concept of disability. 'We' as people without disability have a feeling that people with disabilities cannot be dependent, rather they can only be provided with every single need for their living. In some villages and institutions, great care is not given to people with disabilities, sometimes are discriminated,

not respected, abused either physically or emotionally and in some cases given some harassing names. These challenges negatively affect their way of living and thinking.

Interacting with people with disabilities in everyday life has brought a greater and better knowledge and understanding of different disabilities. I have learnt that people with disabilities need to be respected, given a chance for learning, protected against any harm, have a word and take part in growing the economy of the country as they have great and better skills and knowledge. As a learner at Limkokwing University of Technology, I can say that this institution is trying the best to accommodate people with disabilities as some were provided with wheelchairs to do their daily activities even though some of their needs are not met and this is a great challenge.

All in all, LNFOD is doing well in protecting and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. The newsletter is published every year and international day of persons with disability is celebrated to ensure that their voice is heard everywhere and are

taken care off. I have learnt that their disability does not mean they are unable to do daily routine tasks and provide with better skill and knowledge that are useful to the growth of this country. Working with people with different disabilities has brought a great change in the way of thinking and a different understanding about disability and I really enjoyed being part of the family.

GENERAL NEWS

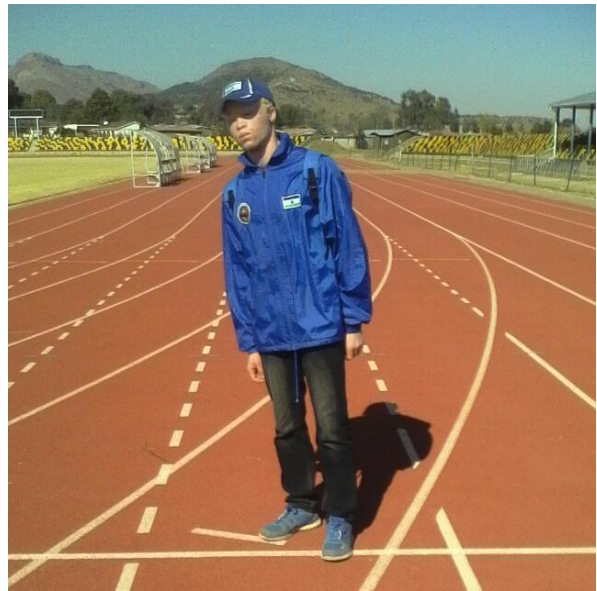
My journey in sports

By: Bolae Lekoetje

This marvelous journey started 10 years back from now, actually in 2010. I observed that there is a pace for me in sports fraternity by the time I was competing at Primary school competitions so I was then encouraged and motivated by friends to go out and claim my place. In 2012 things did workout for me or I better say it was when I started to see improvement. I call it improvement or achievement because I was selected as one of the students who made it to the athletics team which was to represent St. Bernadette Primary School. It was achievement hence the tight competition amongs the athletes not only that a tight competition but also a high number of athletes battling for few spots. They say opportunity comes but once in a lifetime so I was able to grab that opportunity with two hands needless to say I used it in a best way possible.

Later on the same year, I received a call to represent Lesotho at the youth games that were to be held at Zambia. The call came as the result of my heroics performance displayed during the primary schools' athletics completion. One would understand the joy and happiness that were preoccupying me at that particular athlete I was able to mingle with the peers as well as making friends not to leave out the fact that I exposed my talent and from then I made it clear from that time I was doing 100 and 200 metres and they were very interesting – let me make the mention that I got a red card in 100 metres and that time till now I do not run it anymore! It was an embarrassing moment ever.

As the time goes on I received some call ups for the other youth games thereafter. In 2014 we went to Bulawayo in Zimbabwe where by then I was one of the medallist and a bronze Medallist for that matter such bronze medal was obtained from the 200 metres event where I was position three. I regard it as the historic event because that was the foundation or basement of my medal cabinet and



more importantly something that was gained after the hard work away from home. It was the greatest monument that I shall happily look back to as the time goes on.

In 2016, we went to Luanda in Angola where I was also one of the medallist bringing home silver medal from 400 metres event. It was a great journey indeed because it was my first time to fly. From there on I took flights to compete in countries like Malawi in 2018, in 2019, I went to United Arab Emirates for my first championships. So in 2017 I won my first sponsorship of the year with disability, it is one of the awards that one would be happy to win in his or her athletics carrier.

Despite providing this rosy picture of my journey I would like to make it known that it Was not smooth sailing as one may assume. There will still challenges and great ones for that matter. So, I decided to dwell too much on successes because I wanted this article to serve the purpose of motivation to the young athletes.

I would like to say that as far as one does not lose hope or she is destined to great things.

General NEWS

People from Hlotse urban council

On the 20/05/2010 Disability Lesotho visited Hlotse Community council. The main purpose was to find out from people with disabilities in this council how do they understand by Gender. This was influenced by the available programme in LNFOD known as Gender and Disability.



One of the participants Mrs. Regina Lephoi indicated that Gender is not dealing with Women only but both men and women. "I am one of the people who is very sensitive about issues of women, I don't like to see a woman being discriminated just because is a woman." It is my expectation to see both men and women being treated equally. In every committee that is going to be elected both men and women should be elected equally. She made an example of COVID-19 which is the newly killing disease, you may find that people with disabilities do not have fully information like counterparts who are not disabled.

Mr. Mokena said "I have been in a training on issues of Gender in Kenya sometimes ago, so I think it is a good thing to for us as people with disabilities to allow LNFOD to come and work in this council as people will be able to make people aware of issues disabilities. It is also good as the council itself will learn more so that they can be able to included issues of disabilities in the community development activities plan.



Mr. Habi added that people with disabilities are always left behind in every development in the society. We also worried because even their security is not good, it is very important to teach people with disabilities about everything that is affecting them.

Matsepiso showed a very interest in economic and livelihood programmes to be implemented in the area. We need to have a huge company to be owned by people with disabilities who are living Hlotse District. We cannot rely on food packages provided by big companies like nstate Nthane did to Maseru people with disabilities. We are very excited to have such a big programme in Hlotse. I think it will help women with disabilities not to fear anything and to participate in many activities within the society.

"We would like to be empowered in a way that can be able to advocate to have a representative in a council to raise issues affecting people with disabilities in this district. As we have the name of a council member at the moment as Mme Sekhotseng Mofubelu within us, would like to raise the issue to make the office be accessible to accommodate persons with disabilities. We would like to see women with disabilities contesting in local and national elections subjective to Gender and Disability Programme." Said Mokena

"We are happily to welcome the programme and awaiting to see it being implemented. Said People with disabilities and applauded their hands.

MAY, 2020

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ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work



Diakonie 
Katastrophenhilfe

Brot
für die Welt



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