

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 November, 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, concerns, events, updates, activities and all issues affecting people with disability in Lesotho. We therefore welcome contributions of any nature from all organizations and institutions working to improve the lives of people in Lesotho, including those with disability.

Since 2008, it's about 7 years Lesotho ratified the UNCRP but still people with disabilities waiting for the Disability Act. It is our hope that like the minister has said before the end of 2015 the Disability Act will be passed before the parliament. I think as disability is part of human diversity, we need to be treated like all taxpayers of this country. A person can ask when these will happen. We still want to give ourselves that hope to our government as promised.

There are so many barriers facing people with disabilities; children are not enrolling in schools, they

are denied to employment opportunities, no protection under law. People with disabilities are going through hell in this country, it is the responsibility of Lesotho government to change all those difficulties faced by People 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 you missed the previous editions 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



By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

This was the final messages presented before the foreign ministers meeting on the 28th November in which Lesotho was represented

Outcomes of the Policy Dialogue on Transformative Education and Sustainable Development in Small States: Building resilience through skills and livelihoods

Key Messages

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mandating global action towards a sustainable and resilient path, the role of education as a bold process intended to develop new perceptions, knowledge, values, critical and functional skills, attitudes, confidence, and happier livelihoods within that agenda has become imperative.

We are here to engage with the transformative process necessary for Sustainable Development in Small States in particular, as pertaining to the challenge of building resilience through knowledge, values, skills, attitudes, and livelihoods. Here, our mission is to bring about genuine transformative processes relevant to the challenges of the 21st Century that provide a vigorous educational approach to resilience concerns in respect to the local and national particular needs within a globalised community.

In acknowledgement of this, we as civil society commit to continue to make a case for transformative lifelong learning, to leverage the Commonwealth comparative advantage on small states and widen the entry points for engagement on education and sustainable development, and to self-organize and build capacity for greater advocacy on the issues, including the ask for a more enabling environment.

Going further, we therefore ask Commonwealth small states governments in general and Education Ministries in particular to consider the following policy NEEDS for a transformed future:

1. Reconceptualize education and lifelong learning for Sustainable Development (not limited to employment and economy), both individual and collective. This has implications for curricula not only for small states and small island developing states (SIDS) but also for developed countries many of which are in the North.
2. Provide spaces for critical literacy and higher order thinking skills through basic literacy and experiential learning within the context of existing curricula and national education frameworks while recognising the need for updating where relevant. This clear shift in policy could include:
 - A safe space for critical thinking without fear
 - Overcoming the fear of change
 - Emphasis on transformative learning for social and environmental justice, happier livelihoods, wellbeing & quality of life.
3. Timely responsiveness to the needs and demands of a host of marginalised populations. This includes:
 - Fully informed bottom-up and top-down approaches to policy formulation and practice that acknowledge the presence and voices of all social groups in addressing their needs fairly and equitably.
 - Enabling political processes that underpin educational development and social responsibility
 - Emphasising the right to livelihood as a prerequisite to inclusive and transformative education
 - Being aware of citizenship as a tool of exclusion
 - Embed necessary communication skills into education programmes and curricula to foster effective and meaningful communication, bridging the gap between non-disabled and disabled persons.

5. Policies that are informed by and draw inspiration from examples of better practices but always conscious of context. This includes policies that privilege connectedness with nature and interrelationships (such as with local knowledge systems), and policies that speed up and scale up both the process and existing positive initiatives.
6. Supporting schools to have ownership (within the established curriculum frameworks) – through communities of leaders, teachers, parents and students – that are facilitated to make decisions responding to their specific challenges and can define quality delivery and success through multiple means.

In recognition of the need for concrete steps to help build a sustainable future for the dignity and wellbeing of all, we ask Commonwealth small states to consider the following recommendations for adaptation and implementation at the Commonwealth, regional, and national levels:

1. A broad and balanced curriculum that innovatively incorporates sustainable development concepts – such as environmental protection, social cohesion and economic well-being – within the already existing national education frameworks;
2. A redefinition of the role of policy makers at the “top” to that of catalysts of change that can facilitate and engage the necessary support at the “bottom” thus ensuring that the multiple facets of the curriculum are addressed;
3. Building the capacity of school leaders and developing leadership roles that can respond quickly and efficiently to innovative initiatives at the community level;
4. Building the capacity of schools and educational institutions to harness the potential of ICTs to equitably provide greater access to open educational resources (OER);
5. Greater commitment to research funding to provide the necessary data for evidence-based education and sustainable development policy and programming;
6. Investment, support, and meaningful recognition of universities linking and engaging at the community level, thereby fostering community engagement as a two way process;
7. A policy for the protection of environmental refugees and to facilitate safe and legal migration for all that can serve as a guarantee for the right to a quality education for all;
8. Investment in a combination of local knowledge systems and new technologies to inform curricula (drawing from the experience of the UNESCO and University of Waikato (2011) Kiribati Climate Change Initiative);
9. More efficient harnessing of partnerships within the Commonwealth family on education, national frameworks, and small states issues at a multi-sector level, placing education at the heart of sustainable development dialogue in areas such as financing, environmental conservation, social well being, blue economy, ocean governance, and other areas where the Commonwealth is also working.
10. Providing further spaces where policy makers and civil society can explore the issues together in a transparent and reciprocal manner.

GENERAL NEWS

This year's celebrations take place right at heart of the Maseru City

By: Rabasotho Moeletsi

Hundreds of people with disability are set to take to the streets of Maseru to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities on the 03rd December 2015

This day is celebrated each year to draw attention to issues affecting people with disability and to influence policy initiatives aimed at bridging the gap between people with disability and the rest of society.

Last year's IDPD celebrations, which took place in Qacha'snek, attracted over 800 people. This year, the march will start at 7.00am at the Cathedral area down Main-north one road joining Rantšala road and will be followed by speeches, exhibitions and lots of entertainment at the Setsoto stadium

The march will be followed by a formal ceremony which comprised speeches by various stakeholders in the disability sector including the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Pakalitha Mosisili, Minister of Social Development, Hon. Molahlehi Letlotlo, Development Partners and Civil society Organisations and LNFOD Chairperson.

People with disabilities in the nearby districts wishing to join the celebrations in Maseru should contact the ministry of Social development offices and register their names for spaces in the buses. Registration is free as the buses are already paid by the ministry of Social Development. These offices are Butha – Buthe office, Berea Office in Teyateyaneng, Mafeteng office, Mohale'shoek office, Quthing office. For those in Semonkong, please contact Auxiliary Social Worker at the office located at the Makhoalipana community council to register.

Theme for the 2015 celebrations is: Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all disability

Persons with disabilities must be able to fulfill their role in society and participate on an equal basis with others. It is important to focus on the ability and not on the disability of an individual. By promoting empowerment, real opportunities for people are created. People who are empowered are better prepared to take advantage of opportunities; they become agents of change and can more readily embrace their civic responsibilities and contribute to the development of their country.

Mrs. Regina Lephoi, Chairperson of LNFOD said: "On this day each year people with disability gather together to promote action to raise awareness of the gap between people with disabilities and the rest of society. It is therefore to involve the leadership so that they could bring hope and make commitments which we all have to monitor whether they deliver to these promises in the subsequent year."

This is the 12th International Day of Persons with Disabilities observed in Lesotho. Next years' celebrations will be hosted in Mafeteng.



GENERAL NEWS

Public participation of People with disabilities – Mokhotlong

By: Pascalina Letsau

Mokhotlong – Thabang on the 6th November, people with disabilities participated in a public gathering. The participation was very good. The event was under the programme of The Public Participation & NSAs Capacity Building for Development Project. The programme is one of such noble gestures that enable communities to take part in all decisions.

The participation of people with disabilities was very of high-quality. Like always, the public gathering officially opened by the local authorities. LNFOD representatives as part of awareness raising elaborated more on definition of disability and its differentiation. There were many questions from the communities about disability. There were some challenges raised by the communities that people with disabilities are facing, they also wanted to know how they can be helped by LNFOD. The main challenge was that, children are not enrolling in schools.

This where Rabasotho clarified to them that; “as LNFOD came to the community just because we need the support from the communities. People with disabilities are our parents, children and relatives. It is our responsibility to support by giving their human rights. The local authorities, teachers, village health workers and many more should work together with parents of people with disabilities to solve all problems that they are facing.”

It is at this public gathering whereby people with disabilities raised their concern of having a difficult when using public transport. All wheelchair-users agreed that they are always

paying double bus-fare as they have to pay again for the wheelchair. That is where the communities showed that they are not aware of that, and after being sensitised tried to take action immediately. There came a suggestion of writing to all transport organisations around Mokhotlong to report that and encourage them to talk to their employees to stop that, as it affects lives of people with disabilities especially that they are not working.

The most people who understood the incident clearly were youth, they were very angry than anyone else. Thabang Mokhothu said; “if we cannot take action now, there will be nobody to help these people, after all we are the leaders of tomorrow, I think we have to start today to show the way to our elders. Why people with disabilities should be doubled when paying bus-fare? We are the ones who understand life more better than our parents, so we have to stop the discrimination that is now ruling our country.”



Rabasotho talking specifically towards people with disabilities

GENERAL NEWS

Access to information is a barrier in this country

By: 'Malebohang Malakane

Lesotho constitution is using two languages that are Sesotho and English official not other languages including sign language. With this it fails to recognize deaf people who are part of the society. Not recognizing sign language, the country negatively impact to deaf people as they cannot easily access information in a language that they understand and comfortable with.

Language is not only a means of identifying someone but also entering into labour market easily. These are putting people with disabilities into a huge risk as they do not access employment, education and all social spheres of life simply because of social created language barriers. In this regard most victims are deaf people because other communities took advantages that there are no sign language interpreters mostly in courts of law, healthcare centers and in schools. In most cases this is seen when they have gone to seek services, doors are being shut down as there is no communication between the deaf person and the service provider.

On the other hand it is still hard to people with visually impaired persons as information is presented in non-disability friendly or eligible writing. It is difficult to people with visually impaired to access information if it's not in Braille. Let me give an example of not accessing the information, Mafeteng at Makaung one woman with visually impaired by the name of 'Mamoliehi signed some documents of inheritance unaware and this was the plot. The person plotted this took all her properties and now belongs to him. This woman 'Mamoliehi died this year April due

to heart attack, which I thought the incident is the course of her death. 'Mamoliehi left her child who got married; this child is depending on the in-law family, as she has no home or anything from her birth family.

I think it is now high time that our country could review the constitution so that it could feature issues of disability clearly. The issue of denying someone information is discriminatory and must be taken care of. It is not good to have your right after making a lot of noise, a right is a right. Lesotho leaders should be warm hearted and make things inclusive and mainstream issues of disability into the plans and programmes of this country.



GENERAL NEWS

“A girl denied to marriage by the parent..... “

By: Malebohang malakane

Social stigmatization to people with disabilities turned them into social exclusion from aspect of life. Parents of children with disabilities get difficulties to allow their children to go around with their peers. They become ashamed as the community denies them to be part of the community. People still thought that it is stigma or a curse to have a child with disability.

Thabana – Morena Ha Konote a woman denied her daughter with physical disability to get married. This woman, the mother is a teacher by profession. She forced her daughter to be out of a relationship. Why is this happening? Where are the rights of this young lady? Do girls with disabilities have right to reproductive?

The girl liked by the family of the boy who pregnant the girl. They both attended school but the girl is out of school due to the pregnancy while her partner is still at school. In most cases girls with disabilities when coming to marriage are treated as sick people who deserve sympathy, shame and should be cared for. This issue results to double discrimination to women with disabilities namely; being a woman and disabled. This also led to cycle of poverty as the girl is now going to raise the child alone.

I think we still need to raise more awareness or do the counseling to parents of children with disabilities. They are over protective towards the children. It is not good to deny a child to be married, even if a parent is able to take care of her or his child, what is going to

happen if that ability goes off or such a person die? Every person is here for a reason; we all have been sent to do God's job, so if one denies it, that is a sin I think

As people with disabilities in this area worked hard to convince the parent that her child has right to choose what she wants but failed. We encouraged the girl to proceed with her studies, so next year she will be going to school. With this; the parent agreed as she believes that education is very important to her child than marriage.

I think Lesotho programmes on training and education is important to all women with disabilities, caregivers, legal guardians so that it can be easy for them share family responsibilities as it is stated within the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act; 2006

Opinion Piece

My new life as a deaf-blind person

By: Likopo Lesoetsa

"I grow up as a deaf person until April, 2015 when I became a deaf-blind, of which the doctor confirmed that my blindness is hereditary. Now I had an opportunity to be a trainee at Mohloli-oa-Bophelo which is a centre to train visually impaired persons. My aim to come to MBTC was to be trained on mobility and computers. Unfortunately computers have JAWS, so I can't hear and can't see, so I had to quit computer lessons.

I continued with mobility and Braille classes. I can now write Braille but cannot read it. It took me a long time before I could be able to understand it, to know Braille alphabets were very difficult. I hope to master reading Braille later because the centre is now closing for Christmas holidays.

Upon being blind life was not easy at all, because I was asking myself so many questions without answers, but thanks to the leadership of LNLVIP, MBTC staff and trainees to recuperate. I had to go for my medical check-ups the centre was supportive, providing transport for me and everything which I got here was for free, that is why I am saying thanks to the leadership of LNLVIP.

The major challenge I have here, is that I don't have an interpreter who knows the touch-to-touch sign language, that is what is making my life hard but tutors are trying their level best to help me to understand everything. Everyone is willing to help in whatever may help him / her to assist. Maybe I future I can be helped to have a tutor that will be able to communicate with me through touch-to-touch sign language.

If it happens that I am alone in the room, others have gone home, it is difficult as I won't see time, I can't hear even when the bell rings but care mothers use to send someone to look for me if they don't see me. The other challenge is that I miss my cooking, as I like to cook a lot and travelling as I have to look for someone to be my guide and interpreter; it is now not easy for me to travel alone. My hope is with God whom I think will help to pass through this.

As I am speaking I am a new person, I am ready to face the world with everything that I have. For the deaf-blind persons in Lesotho there has to be an organisation to be established because the needs of the deaf-blind person are very different from the blind only. I leave this sentence in a bracket, will see when it happens.

Lucky is that I have been calling a disabled person but for being deaf-blind was a shock to me. I hope to master lobbying Braille fully maybe next year.

The third part is that I cannot see the beautiful face of my daughter, I just feel or touch her but she is one of the people who make my life easy, she acts as a guide and she is not willing to see anyone holding my hand rather than her. She is a pillar of my strength.

However, my thanks to all the people who have been supporting me, I cannot name them, they are so many. May the Almighty God bless them all.

However, I am still a Disability Champion."



SPOTLIGHT

'Masenate Tau – the chairperson of a regional women's committee



Lesotho is proud to hold the position of chairmanship at the region in women issues. We real appreciate the hard work we are doing in advocacy, this came only because our work. During the campaign for election, people are listening on what we are doing so that can be elected.

On her return from Johannesburg, she was interviewed on how she is feeling about being elected at region level.

"I took a long journey to the top for the past 18 years I advocacy on disability issues, 15 years as women and children activist. It has never been an easy job as a parent member.

My advocacy and patience made me to be the first parent to be as decision making position at LNFOD board and also the first parent to represent Lesotho at DIWA and at SAFOD.

I would like to IDAL for empowering parent of children with disabilities, to thank again LNFOD for empowering its member and also to thank members of 9 countries of SADC which were represented as the southern Africa regional

inclusive education symposium which was held at holiday inn in Johannesburg. Once again I would like to thank them for voting for me as the chairperson of a regional women's committee. May god bless everyone." concluded 'Masenate

"We do hope that with your presence issues of children and women would not left behind. We still need to see children with disabilities on issues of empowering women. We are very proud of you have promoted Lesotho indeed." said LNFOD women's chairperson

UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENT

International Disability Day – 3rd December

The celebration will be held at Setsoto Stadium, there will be a procession from Cathedral area at 8:00 am

For more clarification please conduct LNFOD office; +266 22320345
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LNAPD congress to be held on the 11th December

For more information please conduct LNFOD office; +266 22320366

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LNFOD welcomes Advocacy and Human rights officer – Miss 'Masekara Sekoankoetla



To know more about her please conduct:
Tel: +266 22320345 / 58687539

Email: masekarasekoankoetla@gmail.com

Media campaign on education of children with disabilities

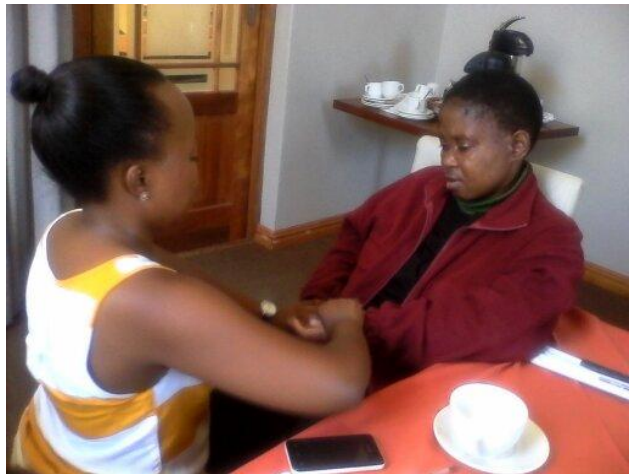
For more clarification please conduct LNFOD office; +266 22320345

Email; masekarasekoankoetla@gmail.com

NEWS IN PICTURE



Thapelo, young man in need of assistive device



Likopo with her personal assistant on touch-to-touch sign language



Congratulations Safod on your newly elected Board

DPO Executive committees are trained on finance management



Chairperson of Regional women committee Ntali Griffiths



This is the child who needs disability grant from the government



People with disabilities at the forum on sustainable marriage

ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work



Africa Disability Alliance

