

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, 2020

Its been a long year, a difficult year that the world was attacked by COVID-19, the year that was not promising. The year where most people including persons with disabilities have been retrenched from their work due to the pandemic. Even though Disability Lesotho has been working hard to break all the barriers facing persons with disabilities. Let us all have hope that things will be better, lets still continue to take care of ourselves by washing hands regularly with water and soap, let us all celebrate the festive season with responsible, let us avoid crowd places.

I would like to wish everyone a very blessed International Disability Day and a very nice Christmas, let us all celebrate with respect, let us drive carefully, remember we should arrive alive.

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,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Letsau'.

The Editor

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

The passing of the Persons with Disabilities Equity Bill by Senate

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

On the 24th November 2020 Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled made a press statement on the passing of the Persons with Disabilities Equity Bill by Senate.

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) notes with great appreciation the passing of the Persons with Disability Equity Bill on the 18 November 2020 by the Senate. The Bill was first tabled in the Parliament of the Kingdom of Lesotho on the 31 August 2018 by Honourable Minister of Social Development, Honourable 'Matebatso Doti and was passed by the lower house of Parliament on the 27 November 2019 under the leadership of Minister of Social Development Honourable Motlohi Maliehe.

The passing of Persons with Disability Equity Bill by Senate marks a turning point for the Lesotho disability movement in which LNFOD and its allies will focus on developing the strategies and mechanisms of ensuring effective enforcements and implementation of this much awaited Act. The passing of this long awaited Bill by Senate represents a significant milestone achieved by both the government and persons with disabilities. if well implemented, the Persons with Disability Equity Act can be a game changer for persons with disabilities and can facilitate effective mainstreaming of

persons with disabilities in all aspects of development.

This achievement comes after a long struggle of persons with disabilities demanding the domestication of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities through an Act of Parliament since Lesotho is a dualistic state which needs to transform the international conventions and treaties into domestic law in order to be applicable in Lesotho.

This historic moment in the Lesotho Disability movement opens up new opportunities for persons with disabilities by creating legal framework through which the rights of persons with disabilities can be enforced by individuals with disabilities. In addition, the Act establishes the independent Disability Advisory Council which is charged with monitoring function of the Persons with Disabilities Equity Bill. the other advantage of this council is that 60% of the membership of the council is composed of the representatives of persons with disabilities who are already aware of the political, social, and economic barriers facing the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

They should therefore be quick to provide strategic direction which will help the council to effectively discharge its function for the Basotho nation.

LNFOD would like to convey its sincere gratitude's to its partners, Diakonie Act Austria, Bread for the World Germany, and various UN

agencies including UNICEF and the office of the UN Resident Coordinator for supporting advocacy towards the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in Lesotho over the past few years to date.

LNFOOD strongly believes that these above mentioned partners including others who are not mentioned will continue to support effective implementation of the Persons with Disability Equity Act so that persons with disabilities may enjoy their human rights on the basis of equality and nondiscrimination.

Following the passing of the Persons with Disability Equity Bill by the Senate on the 18 November 2020, the Bill will pass through the lower house once again for the consideration of the amendments proposed by the Senate to form part of the Bill. after which the Bill will be taken to the King for his royal assent. This means that the Bill will be regarded as part of the laws of Lesotho. Nevertheless, this does not automatically mean that the Act will be applicable in Lesotho. The minister of Social Development will be expected to issue a gazette which will notify the public of the date of commencement of the law. The date which will be published through the gazette will be the date on which the law will take effect.

However, all of these steps remaining are no longer difficult since they are just constituting a procedure for enforcement of the Act.



ADVOCACY ASPECT

MDC vows to take steps towards disability mainstreaming

By: Makatleho 'Molotsi

Maseru District Council (MDC) has heard and responds to the cries for disability mainstreaming made by the members of the disabled community in Lesotho. According to the Mr. Sefiri Phaila, when hearing about the need and the benefits of disability mainstreaming, he felt that MDC should take positives steps to see to it that people with different disabilities equally benefit from and contribute meaningfully to the work of MDC.



This council is built of 8 community councils from Maseru district. The Advocacy Task Team of LNFOD task team was invited to share with the Welfare Committee of the council as well as the representative community councilors on how best MDC can include and better serve people with different forms of disability in connection with fulfilling their rights as the citizens of Lesotho. The advocacy task team shared among others that representation of people with disabilities within the community council is key to effectively disability mainstreaming. This, the task team pointed that will advise on how the plans, activities, budget, services as well the physical environment can be improved to adequately respond to the needs of people with disabilities.

Welcoming the task team's advice, the welfare committee of the MDC, indicated its desire to establish the long-term strong partnership with LNFOD and its affiliates through which all partners shall work towards disability mainstream at the community level. Moreover, the Chairperson of the Welfare Committee Mrs Maseeiso indicated that the council is looking forward to having a capacity building on disability mainstreaming by LNFOD. She further pointed out that the council together with its member community councils shall with the support from LNFOD arrange to have the representatives of people with disabilities who shall advice on disability affairs from time to time.

GENERAL NEWS

MOBILITY SUPPORT PROJECT

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) together with its member organisations, including the Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD) have been implementing a project, 'Capacity development for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities' from January 2017 to December 2019 with the financial aid from Diakonie Act Austria, and Bread for the World Germany.

The project was implemented in selected community councils in the district of Mphahle's hoek, Mafeteng, Maseru rural, Berea and Leribe.

One of the objectives of this project was to improve access to health and provision of assistive devices for persons with disabilities in order to enable persons with disabilities to perform their daily functions.

LNFOD through its implementing partners, LNAPD, IDAL, NADL, and LNLVIP identified 28 persons with disabilities, particularly those with physical disabilities who did not have assistive devices which may enable them to perform their routines as individuals within their communities. These are 15 females and 13 males including 12 children with disabilities.

The Ministry of Health through their Orthopedic workshop assisted LNFOD with the assessment of persons with disabilities regarding the types of the assistive devices which they may need in order to participate fully in the community.



Upon completion of the assessment, LNFOD approached the Ministry of Social Development with the assessment list and requested the Ministry to provide the prescribed assistive devices to persons with disabilities. However, these people could not be provided with the wheelchairs and crutches as and when they need them as they had to join the long list of the Ministry of Social Development of people who are already assessed and could not be given the assistive devices to date. This is indicative of the fact that persons with disabilities are still struggling to enjoy the right to personal mobility due to limited provision of the assistive devices and the limited number of people who administer this kind of assessment in Lesotho.

As a result, LNFOD approached their partners, Arch Bishop Lerotholi, MIVA, and Diakonie Act Austria to support the procurement of the assistive devices which will be handed over to the people assessed by the Ministry of Health.

LNFOD extends its deepest gratitude's to the Arch Bishop Tladi Lerotholi for supporting LNFOD proposal to MIVA and Diakonie Act Austria including the Austrian Development Agency for their unfailing support to LNFOD which they started since the beginning of January 2017 to date.

The provision of these assistive devices have been procured under the project, 'Mobility support'.

The assistive devices include 20 wheelchairs, 1 standing frame, and 2 elbow crutches.

LNFOD has therefore organized a short handover ceremony of the assistive devices. The owners of the assistive devices living in the nearby places were invited to collect their assistive devices whilst the remaining ones will be transported to their different communities.

The key guests of this function were Honourable Minister of Social Development Mrs. Matebatso Doti, Arch. Bishop Tladi Lerotholi, LNFOD Chairperson Mrs. 'Mabataung Khetsi, and LNAPD Chairperson Ms. Pascalina Letsau.



GENERAL NEWS

Thank you words by LNAPD President

By: Pascalina Letsau

I would like to convey my sincerest gratitude to thank LNFOD, MIVA, DIAKONE and in particular Arch Bishop Gerard Tlali Lerotholi with this important day for provision of assistive devices to persons with physically disabled. Every day is important, but this day is particularly close to my heart, for many reasons. Look at the Physical disability audience, you may all know, they are of different places and belong to different generations. And still come together to celebrate a wonderful day of dignity, of happiness, and of hope; and of putting strengths together, to empower us. To achieve further goals, to better develop whatever is existing, and improve what needs to be improved.

I am honored, on behalf of LNAPD, to thank LNFOD, MIVA and DIAKONE's service to the local needy persons with Physical disabilities. I fully understand what the poor disabled persons need and hope (as a Person having a physical impairment myself), and I understand what the need for accessibility means for us.

We all know that we, persons with disabilities make up the world's largest marginalized group. We are disproportionately poor, and more likely to be unemployed. And we have higher rates of mortality than the general population. All too often, we do not enjoy the full spectrum of civil, political, social, cultural, and economic rights open to others. Some of us the physically disabled are born with weak or no limbs, some get impaired due to socio-economic happenings. We, as individuals and sometimes our family and friends support each other. Our efforts are through determination and support when we strive to achieve our individual and common goals.

LNFOD, MIVA and DIAKONE, through this and other actions show that at least at the minimum, that all persons with disabilities must enjoy equal respect and dignity and nothing less.

The international community (through the UN General Assembly leadership) has long reiterated the integration of disability into the international discourse regarding development, peace, and security, and human rights.

Our own Lesotho Government, although a countless of challenges; has followed the UN and other international community members' actions. This is through recognizing international law, and various efforts to domesticate the said law. The ensuing challenges can be because of so many reasons, mainly that, sometimes we wittingly or unwittingly forget in our endeavor to be engaged in working and building livelihoods. Sometimes we help each other. Sometimes, unfortunately, we create and/or obstacles to each other.

However, we the persons with physically disabled feel hard-done by government policy and actions. Most public places remain inaccessible for instance; hundreds of our members still can't access assistive devices and livelihood means is but a dream.

But the actions of LNFOD, MIVA and DIAKONE together remind us of one very important thing: we must Love to share. Through the activities of my organization LNAPD, our mother body LNFOD and her partner DIAKONE we commit to embrace the important steps like this one in developing PWDs lives. We continue to seek to participate in the significant progress in raising awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and in strengthening the international normative framework to realize those rights.

As one great influencer noted once – that Disability contains a crucial world: Ability. Through this partnership and the growing concerns from of well-wishing bodies, Let us reaffirm today our commitment to building inclusion and empowering communities that harness the abilities of all and guarantee equal rights, freedom, and dignity.

GENERAL NEWS

“Persons with disabilities can.....”

By: Malerato Sefali

In the village of Ha Lesaoana Tajane lives a man with physical disability by the name of Peete Lesaoana. Peete by nature supposed to be the chief of that village. After the death of his parents, his position was detained by the uncle. The uncle also passed away, then the chieftainship passed to uncle's wife as Peete was young.

It took so many years even after reaching the proper years to be on oath as the chief. Villagers seems to be worried about when and in what way will Peete be acting as the chief. Through so many visits by LNFOD and its member affiliates to Tajane, there comes a clock to make people aware of the rights of persons with disabilities and how individuals that are not disabled can help to raise up their voice together - “Breaking the silence.”

Communities ongoing talking about PWDs' rights everywhere they go, “for instance all people are conscious that persons with disabilities all can do better, they are talented of doing everything just like us.” Said Mme Mathabo.

“We have erudite more about in what way persons with disabilities can fix things better than us as non-disabled persons.” Said ntate Thabo Sarele

It did not take even three weeks after LNFOD's visit to Tajane, that Peete was presented before the communities as the following chief to be confirmed very soon by the Principal chief after all preparations have been completed.

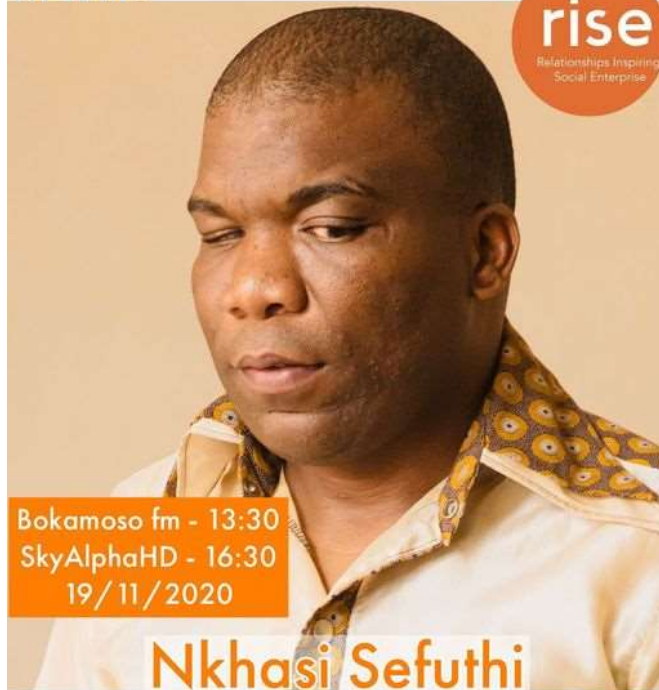
“Everybody was very delighted to see what have been expected for a long time happening. Peete is now in the office, he is performing all Chief's tasks for the communities. We are sure he will do his job well done, he can be assisted here and there just like anyone. Luckily he is also going to appoint people to do some other things on his behalf as chief.” Concluded Thabo Sarele



“We will be happier if can see more persons with disabilities on the coronation of Mr. Peete Lesaoana here at Ha Lesaoana. It will be a wonderful day for us all to attest that; yes persons with disabilities can. It will be a wake-up call to all Basotho that we do not have to judge people because of their disabilities but their abilities.”

NEWS IN PICTURES

rise radio



Bokamoso fm - 13:30
SkyAlphaHD - 16:30
19/11/2020

Nkhasi Sefuthi



Sedlak
Bauunternehmen

LNFOD in partnership with Bokamoso FM



Provision of assistive devices by Arch Bishop Lerotholi, MIVA, and Diakonie Act Austria to LNFOD



Masianokeng Lifestyle together with Itjareng had a fundraising walk.



Itjareng Trainees planted trees donated by the Ministry of Forestry & Letsema Child Rights to commemorate African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child



LNFOD held public gathering in the Khoelenya Community Council for PWDs on Inclusive education.

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Day of People with Disabilities 2020

Theme: “Building Back Better:
toward a disability-inclusive, accessible
and sustainable post COVID-19 World”

Venue: Thaba-Tseka

For more information please contact Infod office on this number +266 22320345
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ADVOCACY WORK



PARTNERS in Advocacy Work

**Brot
für die Welt**

With funding from

 **Austrian
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Cooperation**


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mille**
CHIESA VALDESE
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