

# DISABILITY LESOTHO

## From the Editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome to the sixth edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled. This newsletter will cover news from October and November. From next month onwards we will return to our regular schedule of one newsletter per month. This e-newsletter is a platform whereby partners in disability sector share the good work they do and learn from the work of others. This includes news, events, updates, activities and all issues affecting people with disability taking place within the world of disability in Lesotho. We therefore welcome contributions of any nature from organizations working to improve the livelihood of people with disability or individuals who have an interest in the disability.

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 5905 5406 or [pletsau@gmail.com](mailto:pletsau@gmail.com).

We welcome any feedback which may improve the quality and content of this free service.

Best regards,  
The Editor

## News from LNFOD

We are pleased to announce that the international Day of Persons with Disabilities will be celebrated on 3rd December 2012 in Mokhotlong District. The theme for this year's IDPD is "Removing the barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society for all: barriers to education affecting children with disability".

Although the celebrations themselves are an annual high point for the disability movement of Lesotho, it is necessary for all Basotho to look beyond the pomp and fanfare of the day and deeply think about how each one of us can play our part to ensure that the theme is lived by the Basotho nation. The country is a member of the United Nations and as such we have committed to the Millennium Development Goals and free primary education for all children in Lesotho. However the statistics in 2010 have showed that there is still a huge gap between the non disabled and the disabled towards reaching education. It is estimated that 40% of children with disability aged 5-10 are not enrolled in school. Let us work together in ensuring that our children with disabilities access free and compulsory primary education.

As part of the build up to IDPD we have partnered with Lesotho National Broadcasting Services and the Ministry of Education and Training to produce an advert on Lesotho Television, Radio Lesotho and Ultimate Radio which is a call to help children with disabilities to reach their potential. To every parent of a child with disability please make preparations for them to go to school next year. The gift of education is the best Christmas present you can give.

Mokome                      'Marorisang                      Mafethe

Executive Director - LNFOD



## Goodbye LSMHP... Hello IDAL

The Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons celebrated its 20th anniversary in style with two events taking place on 1st and 3rd November. The focal body for intellectual disability in Lesotho turned 20 with a bang, unveiling a new name, website ([www.idal.org.ls](http://www.idal.org.ls)) and ambitious plans to build a state-of-the-art multipurpose center for people with disability. In line with internationally accepted terminology, LSMHP shall now be known as the Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho (IDAL).

20 years ago, a group of frustrated parents started LSMHP to support each other and change the system on behalf of our children. Back then, we knew very little about issues of advocacy, psycho-social support or running nationwide programs for vulnerable children. Many things have changed since then and we thought it fitting to celebrate 20 years of achievement by unveiling our new identity and our visions for the future," commented Palesa Mphohle, Chairperson and founding member of IDAL.

These changes were announced at a gala dinner event held at the Lehakoe Club on 1st November. The event was attended by over 50 representatives from government, private sector, civil society and international organizations including the guest of honor, the Hon. Minister of Social Development.

The event was designed to celebrate IDAL achievements over the past 20 years and to solicit support for the building of its new multipurpose center in Maqhaka. The center will include accommodation, kitchen, leisure and conference facilities which will provide respite care for parents of children with severe disabilities, vocational and skills based training for disabled and non-disabled individuals and lodging/venue facility rental for third party organizations. The project is estimated to be worth M33 million. We were very pleasantly surprised by the amount of support we have received for this center so far. There is a gaping need in our society for a facility such as this. Looking after a child with severe disability is a full-time job and one with little acknowledgement or reward.

There is a gaping need in our society for a facility such as this. Looking after a child with severe disability is a full-time job and one with little acknowledgement or reward. This center will allow parents and grandparents to leave their children in the hands of experienced caregivers for periods ranging from a few hours to a few days so that they may take care of their own personal needs. It will also be a hub of learning, activity and leisure for people with and without disability and will contribute to the long term financial sustainability of our organisation," commented Palesa Mphohle, Chairperson and founding member of IDAL.

The gala dinner elicited pledges of support from individuals and organizations, including skills, monetary support and building materials.

The euphoria of the 20th anniversary continued after the gala dinner with a public "Family Fun Day" celebration which took place on 3 November at the Lehakoe Club. The event was attended by over 100 people, mainly children with disabilities and their families. The guests were treated to hip hop and modern dance performances, a jumping castle, tunes from DJ Flames and a picnic lunch.

We received an overwhelming amount of support from local businesses, without which we would not have been able to put on these two events. We would like to thank our supporters including Square One Computers, Bensons Butchery, Spur, Scooters Pizza, Sun International, Ocean Basket, Lesotho Durham Link, Wholesale Meat Supplies, Malebo Transport, Living & Loving English Medium School, ITM Transport, Moon & Sun Transport, Station Off-Sales and Mr. Matete," concluded Ms. Mphohle.



## Disability Awareness Sports Day

On 10<sup>th</sup> November over 100 people with disability were invited to show off their sporting prowess for the Disability Awareness Sports Day, held at 'Mabathoana High School. The event was organized by Chabeli Mohatlana, the owner of CTM Orthopedic Workshops and aimed to create sports awareness amongst people with disabilities in Lesotho.

The event was attended students from Itjareng, Ithuseng, St Angela as well as individuals with and without disability and representatives from Motivation Africa. Participants were assessed by experienced sporting assessors who worked to identify each individual's sporting capacities in order to encourage them to participate in sports to the fullest.

Sports played included table tennis, soccer, basket ball, javelin, cycling, darts, handball and shotput. After the event, gifts such as sporting equipment and clothing were presented to the participants. Mr Ketlareng Majara kept the crowd entertained with music throughout the day.

The event was officially opened and closed by the Minister of Social Development Mrs. 'Matebatso Doti. The event was sponsored by Harvest FM, the House of Exotic Cuisines, Presta Pty Ltd, CTM Orthopedics Lesotho, J.M. Matete Tent Hire.

## People with mobility disabilities certified in Lesotho

Seven people with physical disabilities were awarded certification as wheelchair mobility trainers from Motivation Africa on 16 November at Itjareng. The certificates were awarded upon completion of a two week training session focusing on teaching their peers on appropriate use of wheelchairs and general health for wheelchair users.

These seven graduates will be deployed to various communities for peer to peer training. They will also be involved in training patients from Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital who have recently been prescribed wheelchairs.

At the end of the training, all facilitators and participants were treated to a trip to the cinemas at Pioneer Mall which they all enjoyed immensely.



## Hundreds set to march in Mokhotlong to celebrate equal rights for people with disability

Hundreds of people with disability are set to take to the streets of Mokhotlong to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disability on 3 December 2012. IDPD is celebrated each year to draw attention to issues affecting people with disability and to influence policy initiatives aimed at closing the gap between people with disability and the rest of society.

Last year's IDPD celebrations, which took place in Quthing attracted over 1000 people. This year, the march will start at 7.00am at the Mokhotlong Pitso Grounds and will be followed by speeches and lunch. As the patron of the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD), the peak bodies for disability, Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso, is expected to open the event.

Last year was the largest disability day yet. This year, we are set to raise the bar even higher. This is not just a celebration for people with disability. We invite our brothers and sisters without disability to join in the march in solidarity for our cause." States Nkhasi Sefuthi, Human Rights and Advocacy Officer, LNFOD.

The theme for this year's IDPD is: Removing the Barriers to Create an Inclusive and Accessible Society for all. LNFOD and the Ministry of Social Development, the organizers of IDPD celebrations in Lesotho, have chosen to focus specifically on the barriers facing children in education.

According to a study conducted by SINTEF in conjunction with LNFOD in 2009, 40% of children with disability aged 5-10 are not enrolled in school. Illiteracy and unemployment rates amongst adults with disability are twice as high as the general population, placing people with disability amongst the most disadvantaged in the country. Many parents of children with disability are not aware that their children are also eligible for free primary education which is available to all children in Lesotho. Others may believe that their child cannot excel academically due to their disability.

What they fail to see is that school is one of the primary socialization agents for children aged 6-12 and it is incredibly important for them to develop a peer group so that they may grow up to be well-balanced and independent," commented Marorisang Mafethe, Executive Director of LNFOD.

To tackle this issue, LNFOD has partnered with Lesotho National Broadcasting Services and the Ministry of Education and Training to facilitate a public awareness campaign aimed at encouraging parents of children with disability to enroll them in school. The public awareness messages will be broadcast on TV and radio until Christmas.

As the Minister for Education and Training in Lesotho, I implore parents of children with disability to enroll their children in school. They also have the right to reach their full potential. This is the best possible Christmas present a parent can give," commented 'Makabelo Mosothoane, the Hon. Minister Education and Training.

In an effort to raise money to enhance education for children with disability, LNFOD has produced a series of awareness T-shirts for sale. The T-shirts have been funded by Australian Volunteers International so 100% of the proceeds will go towards purchasing educational equipment for children attending St Bernadette's Resource Centre for the Blind, Phelisanong Village and Thuso e Tla Tsoa Kae.

People are encouraged to wear their t-shirts on 3 December in a show of support for equal rights for people with disability.

T-shirts retail for M100 and are available at the LNFOD office in Old Europa, Maseru. Special arrangements can be made to deliver T-shirts outside of Maseru.

People with disability wishing to join the celebrations in Mokhotlong should purchase their tickets at the LNFOD office in Old Europa. Tickets are available for M20, including return bus transfer, basic accommodation and some meals.

Buses will depart from 10.00am on 2nd December from the Catholic Church in Maseru.

## 2nd 2012 Advocacy Coalition meeting examines Deaf rights

On 13 November, the LNFOD Advocacy Coalition held its last bi-annual meeting for 2012. The event was attended by over 20 organisations involved in the protection of human rights for people with disability.

This meeting took on the theme of Communication Challenges of PWDs in Lesotho. The specific focus was communication challenges faced by Lesotho's deaf community. The event, attended by a representative from the Ministry of Communications, looked at access to information on HIV/AIDS and current affairs by the deaf community.

The next coalition meeting is scheduled for July 2013. The theme will be confirmed at a later date.

## Appreciation packs

This festive season, the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled would like to honor the achievements of four individuals who have played a particularly important role in the fight for equal opportunity for PWDs.

Moses Masemene, former Minister of Labour and Trade, Palesa Mphohle, founding member of the Intellectual Disability of Lesotho, Likopo Lesoetsa, prominent Deaf rights advocate and Motlatsi Bolofo, one of the original founders of the national disability movement, were all awarded trophies and certificates of appreciation for their dedication and service to the disability sector.

Many of the achievements gained by the disability movement in Lesotho can be attributed to the hard work, commitment and personal sacrifice of individuals such as these.

## Help them Reach their Full Potential

To emphasize the theme of this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities, "Removing barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society for all: Barriers to Education", LNFOD has partnered with the Ministry of Education and Training and Lesotho National Broadcasting Services to produce an awareness campaign to boost enrollment of children with disability in school. The campaign, which incorporates a series of television, radio and billboard promotions, is aimed at parents of children with disability imploring them to help their child reach their full potential by giving them an education.

The Hon. Minister of Education and Training, 'm'e 'Makabelo Mosothoane, has taken to the airwaves herself, featuring in some of the radio promotions playing on Ultimate Radio and Radio Lesotho. The television promotion, running on TV Lesotho, features international celebrities with disability alongside high achieving Basotho with disability such as Moses Masemene, 'Mannana Sethobane and Stephen Thoahlane.



*Likopo (centre) enjoys her early Xmas present*

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### **Motlatsi Bolofo, 48 year old, Founding member of the Disability Movement**

#### **When did you get involved with the disability movement?**

I first joined the movement in 1984, when the movement began. As someone who was born with a disability I felt I had no choice but to be a part of the struggle and the fight for equal rights for people with disability

#### **If you were given three wishes what would they be?**

To continue to struggle for the rights of people with disability and make sure they can enjoy equal rights with everybody else  
That people with disabilities were not perceived as charity cases but seen as human beings  
That all people with disability might be treated with human dignity

#### **What is the best piece of advice you've ever been given? Did you follow it?**

Be focused and stand on my own feet; to know right from wrong and to stand up for my principles and rights. I have tried to live up to these sentiments in all that I do.

#### **Do you have any advice for young people with disability?**

Be assertive and to stand up for their rights. Don't wait for handouts – they must be proactive in all that they do. It is also most important that they focus and enjoy their education.

#### **How would you spend your last day on Earth?**

Exactly where I am

#### **What are your hobbies?**

I enjoy music and reading. Musically, I like pop music and fusion music. My favourite books are those about the disability rights movement and leadership. Some of my favourite authors include Peter Oakley, Michael Edwards and Steven Covey.



*Bolofo with his awards of appreciation*

## OTHER NEWS

### Meet the Sefuthi's!

We would like to offer special congratulations to Nkhasi Sefuthi, the Human Rights and Advocacy Officer of LNFOD and his new bride Palesa Litšeho. The happy couple tied the knot at St Michael's Anglican Church on 24 November. We wish you both the best of luck in your new life together!

### 2013 Disability Awareness Calendar

In keeping with the education theme, LNFOD has selected the theme "Help Them Reach their Full Potential" for their 2013 disability awareness calendar. A group of youth and children from St Angela Home for Children with Disability, St Bernadette Resource Center for the Blind, Kananelo School for the Deaf and the Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho youth group were invited to participate in the calendar.

The children were photographed in a studio holding a chalkboard with their dreams and ambitions written on them. The calendar aims to put a human face to the inequalities caused by disability and to encourage viewers to do their part in helping these children reach their full potential. The calendar will be distributed to various LNFOD partners and public venues for display on their premises.



*Nkhasi and Palesa on their wedding day*

### Launch of Disability Service Provision booklet

The LNFOD advocacy team is pleased to announce the launch of a Disability Healthcare Service User booklet. The booklet covers three objectives in providing healthcare information to parents, families and individuals with a disability who are currently accessing or would like to access medical and rehabilitation services. The booklet includes:

- The Roles of Core Healthcare Professionals - so that health care service users are informed of what professional services and allied health services are available to them to suit their individual needs.
- Service Referral Map - outlining some of the paths that a service user can encounter when utilizing the healthcare system in Lesotho (with specific reference to disability)
- Key Contact Information - on Allied Health professionals, hospitals, specialty clinics (both government and private practice) categorized by district.

Will be available at key healthcare access points (such as district hospitals and specialist healthcare centres and Social Development offices). Alternately you may be provided with the booklet on request at Infod offices following print release in Mid -December.

### LNFOD bi-annual newsletter

The second bi-annual LNFOD newsletter *Ntsoe Leng* will be released shortly after International Day of Persons with Disability. This newsletter will contain a selection of articles and opinion pieces reflecting news relevant to the disability movement over the past 6 months.

English and Sesotho versions of the newsletter will be available through the LNFOD office or through Social Welfare offices, hospitals and various special education schools.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Graduation ceremony for Thuso E Tla Tsoa Kae

On the 29th November this year Thuso – E – Tla – Tsoa Kae will have a graduation ceremony at the centre which is based at Butha – Buthe district. There will be 13 youth with disabilities who will be graduating.

Thuso – E – Tla – Tsoa Kae is a community school meant for children with disabilities from the age of six (6). These kids are of different disabilities more especially intellectual disability from all over the country. Children with disabilities are learning many things like caring, agriculture and sewing.

### Time has come to Itjareng

The time has come that the trainees of Itjareng will be certified. There will be 28 trainees who will be awarded with vocational skills certificate. These vocational skills will be on basic Agriculture, Leatherwork, Metalwork, Sewing and Carpentry.

The ceremony will be held at Itjareng on the 30<sup>th</sup> November. The event will begin at 0900 hrs in the morning.

Ministers who confirmed to attend this important event are; Minister of Education and Training and the Minister of Social Development.

There will be display of goods done by these trainees and entertainments by the trainees and Lesotho Correctional Services.

### LNAPD Executive will account to its members

On the 7th December at Itjareng Vocational Training Centre, Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD) will have a congress. There will be both Financial and Progress Reports. The congress will also elect the Executive Committee, Youth committee and Women's Committee.

More than 150 people with physical disability are expected to attend this congress. The duration of the congress will be three (3) days.

### Workshop for girls and women with disabilities in Southern African Region

Two Women and a girl with disabilities from Disabled People's Organisations in Lesotho will be attending a Capacity Development workshop in Malawi Lilongwe from the 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December. This conference will be hosted by Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) and Southern African Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD)

The aims of the workshop are: To share experiences and lessons of good and bad practices on education and training for disabled women by DPOs and to learn from other DPOs on their lobbying structures, disability frameworks and policies and what structures are available for promoting disability mainstreaming. The participants are expected to be advocates for the human rights of disabled girls to education as a tool to achieve gender equality in the respective countries.

### Ithuseng graduation ceremony

Ithuseng Vocational Training Centre for people with disabilities is proud to announce that it will be hosting a graduation ceremony for its students on 14th December from 9am on the centre grounds.