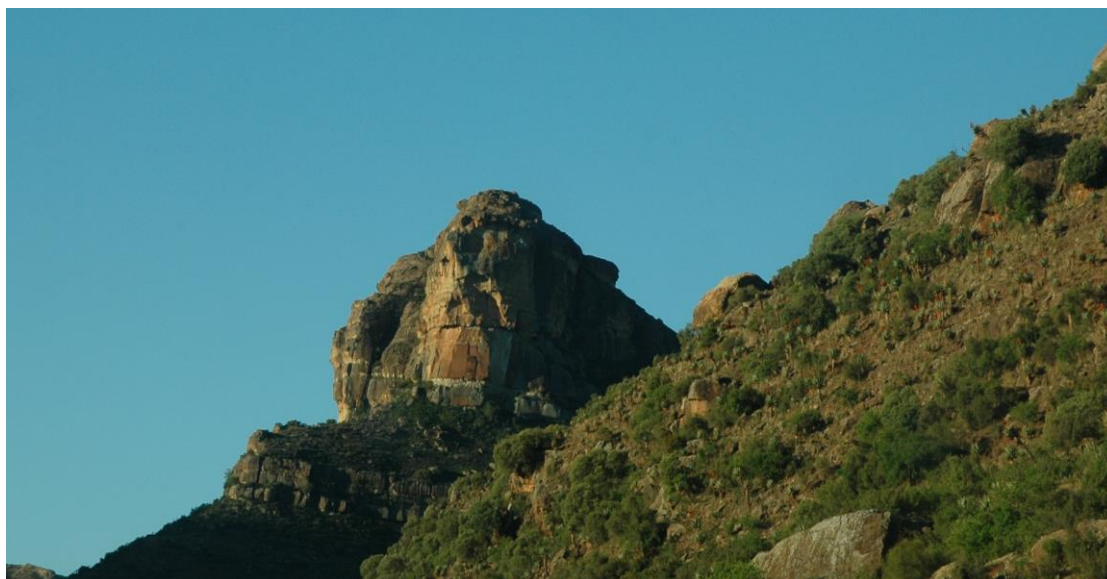


DISABILITY LESOTHO



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 September, 2016

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

I am very concerned about the government of Lesotho is doing things. The Disability Equity Bill has been drafted for a long time but not passed in parliament. If the government has interest in something, immediately the bill is drafted and then passed before the parliament. I always wonder how our parliament is working or looking when looking issues that affect Basotho. Issues of disabilities in

this country are placed lowly in development agenda. It is saddening to see one of the few good development frameworks National Development Strategic Plan of 2012 (which was meant to implement, Lesotho Vision 2020) go to waste without being implemented.

I would like to encourage all women especially with disabilities to work harder wherever they are, they can also volunteer as working hard always pay.

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

Empowering rural persons with disabilities for seeking their entitlement; supported by the EU delegation to Lesotho through its Decentralisation program non state actors

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (Infod) has been funded by the EU to implement a project on Decentralisation for persons with disabilities since October 2013 till October 2016. It was for the first time EU funded the organisation of persons with disabilities in Lesotho. The overall objective of the project was to increase grassroots advocacy for service delivery among persons with disabilities in 20 local community councils situated in the districts of Butha-butha, Berea, Maseru rural, and Mohale'shoek.

The project strengthened the capacity of LNFOD to monitor the inclusion of people with disabilities in the development work undertaken by the local community councils and empowered more than 100 people with disabilities to become disability rights advocates within the 20 local community councils in which this project was implemented. In addition more than 200 community leaders including chiefs and community councilors have acquired necessary skills on how to include people with disabilities in the local community

councils programs, and decision making processes in order to ensure that, the local community development is accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities, who have been left out of development for a long time.

20 people with disabilities have been able to participate in the monthly community councils' proceedings in which they advised the community councils on how best they could provide for the rights of people with disabilities through the decision they take for the community. In this way, the representatives of people with disabilities held the local government accountable to respond effectively to the rights of people with disabilities living in the 20 identified local community councils. Around 5000 males and females with disabilities were taught on how they can claim their human rights and defend them in the local communities in which they live. This initiative resulted in a number of people with disabilities starting to access temporary job opportunities, children with disabilities being admitted at nearest schools, disability assessment for the people with disabilities being carried out by the officials of

the Ministry of Social Development in which people with disabilities were given assistive devices. Indeed, this project has contributed immensely towards the achievement of the vision and mission of LNFOD.

As a result, LNFOD sincerely thanks the EU delegation to Lesotho for considering the inclusion of people with disabilities by funding LNFOD program for the period of three years. EU is a party to the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities (CRPD) and as such, it has the obligation to support government and civil society organisations initiatives to support the inclusive development in Lesotho.

LNFOD is the representative umbrella body of all organisations of people with disabilities in

Lesotho taking a lead in terms of how national plans can best address the rights of people with disabilities.

It requires financial support to implement disability inclusive development aiming at influencing the national development agenda to be inclusive of and accessible to people with disabilities.

LNFOD is therefore appealing to the development partners like EU and others to consider funding organisations of persons with disabilities so that they could become stronger to advocate for the human rights of people with disabilities and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in the decision making structures of Lesotho.



ADVOCACY ASPECT



By: LNFOOD Advocacy Task Team

Maseru - On the 01st November 2016 LNFOOD Advocacy Task Team released a press statement regarding the delay to take the disability rights legislation namely, Disability Equity Bill to the Parliament by the Ministry of Social Development

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOOD) notes with great concern the slow pace at which the Ministry of Social Development facilitates the presentation of the Disability Equity Bill to the office of the Attorney General, Cabinet and the Parliament respectively.

The Disability Equity Bill has been drafted by the Ministry of Social Development since 2012 till to date the Ministry has not yet completed the Bill. The answers provided by the Ministry of Social Development as to why the bill has taken so long relates to the consultations and validation workshops which were to be undertaken before the bill could be presented to the Attorney General, Cabinet and the Parliament. However, it appears the consultations and validation workshop serves as the hindrance towards the protection of the human rights of people with disabilities because it seems the Bill will not be presented to the next step before they can be conducted. Worst of all people with disabilities should suffer the consequences resulting from the delay to turn the Bill into law yet they are not responsible for organising those pre meetings which will qualify the Bill to the next step.

LNFOOD notes the passing of several legislations by the Parliament such as the Amendment of the Public inquiries' Act, presentation of the Decentralisation bill and amendment of the Local Government election, Human rights commission Act to mention a few leaving the Disability Equity Bill behind.

Even though the Honourable Minister is rightly demonstrating the political will to pass the Disability Equity Bill into law as soon as 2016, the pace of the officials on the ground speaks otherwise.

LNFOOD notes with appreciation the intention of the Honourable Minister to have presented the Bill to the Parliament few months back if the validation workshop was conducted in time.

We are now approaching the 2016 international day of persons with disabilities without the enactment of this Bill into an Act of Parliament despite the pledges advanced by the Minister of Social Development during the course of the year.

LNFOOD is humbly asking the Honourable Minister of Social Development to reconsider the current strategies employed to finalise the Disability Equity Bills and put the fixed date on which the Bill should be taken to the next step. This Bill has been on the same stage for the last five years without any significant progress towards its finalisation. People with disabilities continue to experience serious inequalities in terms of access to their human rights, employment, education, and other basic social services as a result of the lack of specific legislation which protect their rights. The disability grant for people with severe disabilities is not yet implemented despite the fact that, it is contained by the social protection strategy of Lesotho. In this instance LNFOOD witnesses specific exclusion of the most vulnerable persons with disabilities because the elderly and the children grant are functional yet the disability grant is not.

Secondly, LNFOOD would like to inform the Honourable Minister of the need to review the National Disability and rehabilitation policy as its five years period has expired. It is important to review this policy to determine the reasons why it was not implemented so that we may not repeat the same mistakes in the next five years of its implementation. LNFOOD is also asking the Ministry of Social Development to continue to build the capacity of the Disability Focal Persons from the 12 Ministries who demonstrated their intention to support the disability mainstreaming in their Ministries by appointing the Focal points. The Focal points have not yet been active since the beginning of 2016 due to the absence of the capacity development initiatives.

LNFOOD is appealing to the Honourable Minister to advise other ministries to budget for the implementation of the National Disability Mainstreaming Plan 2015 as the government is engaging on the budget preparation cycle for the 2017-2018. The advice of the Honourable Minister on this issue will enable other ministries to allocate a certain budget for the effective implementation of the National Disability Mainstreaming Plan designed to assist the government on disability inclusion.

If you are willing to seek more information about the content of this press release, please do not hesitate to contact LNFOOD advocacy team at 2230345.

Email admin@lnfod.org.ls

GENERAL NEWS

LNFOOD builds the capacity of LMPS on access to justice by PWDs

By: Masekara Sekoankoetla

The right to access to justice is a means through which rights holders enforce and protect their other human rights. By virtue of this characteristic, it is the most fundamental human right, the enjoyment of which should be availed to everyone equally and equitably. Although this is the case, the study on access to justice by PWDs indicated the greater equality gaps in administration of justice within the police as a result of which people with disabilities suffer greater inequalities due to the barriers they face when trying to access justice within this service.

LNFOOD therefore held a capacity building workshop on access to justice for police officers in the district of Leribe, Berea, Mafeteng and Mohale'shoek on 24th to 27th October. The workshop was aimed at sensitising the police officers of disability and disability issues in access to justice at the preliminary stage of the judicial justice. It was also aimed at sharing with the participants the laws and policies applicable in the service prescribed regarding access to justice by PWDs and sharing the challenges and opportunities drawn from the experiences of both PWDs and police officers.

Speaking on behalf of LNFOOD, Ms. Morongoe Thatho pointed out that advocacy for protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights by LNFOOD does not necessarily mean that LNFOOD only comes with a red pen to identify or point out gaps. She emphasized that LNFOOD also identified the root causes of the gaps in the administration of justice to PWDs within the Police Service and to build the capacity of the Police Service in this regard. Members of the Police Service commonly shared that they also face a myriad of challenges which prevents them

from administering justice to PWDs on equal basis with others. They welcomed the workshop expressed that the principle of reasonable accommodation shared with them will make it easier to administer justice equitably to diverse groups of people in Lesotho.

GENERAL NEWS

Light at the end of the tunnel?

By: Pascalina Letsau



Maseru – Ha Mofoka lives ntate Mothepu Keketsi who is physically disabled. Mothepu is 55 years old man and a father of 5 children in his family, among these children there is one girl who is intellectually disabled.

Source of his disability is car accident which occurred in 1995. The car caused this accident were 2 whitemen, they did not even stop after the incident. I was taken to the nearby hospital and amputate 1 leg while the other was screwed up.

By that time I worked at the Lorein mine for 17 years. I stayed at the mine for 5 months for treatment. After that they released me saying that I am no longer an employee to the mine especially that the accident did not happen within the working place.

Arriving home, the situation changed in the family. My wife did not accept or want to support me. She ended leaving me to Republic of South Africa, saying she is now going to look for a job as the husband is no longer able to bring food in the family. She spent some years not sending money that she claimed to look for it.

One time she visited home but did not spend even 2 hours in the family, she said she wanted to see her mother. The following day, she called the girl who is intellectually disabled. They took around 2 hours talking outside the gate.

"I was told by one of my neighbours that there is a case pledged before chief that my wife is claiming that I am always having sexual activity with my daughter who is intellectually disabled. I was very shocked as that did not happen or think about it even once. I told myself that I will wait for the chief to call me. It took about 2 days before the chief could call me. Luckily, I found innocent and caring for my family." said Keketsi

"I managed to help my family from hunger as I was doing piece jobs like digging the toilet pit or building cattle kraals for other villagers. When having no jobs, I was getting the support from my relatives. They used to give me maize meal if they don't have money. It was a very difficult situation as for having other toiletries for the family." concluded Mothepu

Mothepu showed that he is now in a bad situation as now people are all having toilets, so there is nothing that he is doing except growing crops.

"Meeting with my organisation, I am happy as I was empowered to do things for my own. I am now going to take care of my chickens and want to see that project growing, so that it could teach my children." concluded Keketsi with a smile

GENERAL NEWS

Who does our law favour: victims or perpetrators?

By: Malehlohonolo Molelengoane

The last two weeks of data collection has revealed an alarming statistics of criminal cases involving people with intellectual disabilities. Following the direction to write a proposal for amendment from the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services through its Legal Affairs director, LNFOD collected data on the cases involving people with disabilities.

It is through this data collection that it was found out that people with intellectual disabilities form an overwhelming 95% of victims of sexual offences while the 5% is formed of other types of disabilities. One would wonder as to why this overwhelming number. Is it because there are no laws which protect the rights of people with disabilities?

Lesotho has laws that govern the procedure in criminal cases but this law is framed in a way that does not in any way cater for people with disabilities. The Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act of 1981 in its section 219 provide that; people of unsound mind are neither competent nor compellable to give evidence in the Courts of law. This means that people with intellectual disabilities are not allowed to testify in court and yet when they are helped by their guardians or parents to narrate their part; the evidence is rejected as hearsay. Our laws shut people with disabilities

from accessing justice.

This is no surprise to the rise in criminal offences, mainly sexual offences against people with intellectual disabilities because perpetrators know that their victims will never take stand in the courts of law. This is a wakeup call to the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services to promptly amend section 219 of the CP&E to accommodate people with disabilities.

GENERAL NEWS

When will he go to school?

By: Mafusi Setoromo



In the village of Setleketseng lives 'M'e Mamafube and her son Mofube Lethibelane who is now 9 years old, who has a disability. The mother is working at the factories of Lesotho. She is now separated with her husband. "We tried as the family to fight for maintainance for the children but we failed due to knowledge of how to further the process," she said.

"Mofube is our second child. After he was born he showed signs of disabilities when his head was growing to bigger and bigger which was very suspicious. The boy was taken to health care centers including Queen Elizabeth II hospital. He was later transferred to Bloemfontein but he did not get help. The doctors mentioned is that the child had a lot of water, which was leading to the problem," she

concluded. She became worried when she realized that the boy was taken to Bloemfontein for several times without any help. She then accepted the fate that the boy could not walk - that the boy has a disability and accepted that life has to go on. She was then advised to get a wheelchair for the boy so that he could join his peers and play and go to school. The family approached the ministry of social development but until today did not get any help, as they were told that the officer who handled that case was no longer working in the Maseru district. She said the boy carries more weight due to this big head and has to lie down in order to move back and forth (**see picture below**). That is why he doesn't have hair on other side of the head.

"I would like to see Mafube being using the wheelchair and go to school like other children are doing. I know that he can be educated if he can be given the opportunity to do so. I just want to take a plea to anyone who can help to help us," Mamafube concluded.



Mafube trying to walk by himself

GENERAL NEWS

Increasing access by marginalised groups to health and health services in the context of HIV.

By: Tlhokomelo Sabole

Maseru at Phomolo Guest House, Matala from 25th - 28th October 2016. Women with disabilities were invited to participate in the workshop organized by Coalition African Lesbian (CAL). Women with disabilities were represented by Ms. Tlhokomelo Sabole



The KP REACH Project (Key Populations - Representation, Evidence and Advocacy for Change in Health) is a three year Project and works to strengthen four networks (African Men for Sexual Health and Rights – AMSHeR; Association of Sex Workers in Africa – ASWA; Coalition of African Lesbians – CAL and Southern Africa Trans Forum - SATF) in Southern Africa so that we are able to individually and collectively make our best contributions to increasing access by marginalised groups to health and health services in the context of HIV.

Within the Consortium, CAL leads on the KP REACH Learning component which is establishing and implementing a learning mechanism for KPs and others in the region.

The vision is to build with others a culture where critical thinking and questioning ourselves and our work and activism becomes an integral part of our organising and can contribute to creating more powerful learning cultures in the sub-region.

According to me, CAL is a feminist, Pan Africanist membership based network working for transformation in power relations. The other role for this coalition is to create a world where everyone can live in dignity and freedom. The main programming areas of CAL are Advocacy, Learning and Development.

The workshop was conducted in order to address the challenges facing the key population such as the LGBTI community, women with disabilities and Women with HIV/AIDS, meaning all the vulnerable groups.

What we did as the group was to analyse how context impacts on our access related advocacy through processes, methodologies and tools that address power and oppression. We also identified and analysed our access related advocacy in successes and challenges to generate new and further develop existing ideas and conceptual frameworks.

We talked more about poor service delivery in health care centers in regard to the prevalence of HUB AIDS. Why is HIV and AIDS still growing among our the vulnerable groups though we are still doing our advocacy for the past years, we thought of changing the strategies that we are doing.

Women with disabilities in this workshop shared challenges faced by women with disabilities and other groups also shared their challenges as well in accessing health services.

NEWS IN PICTURES



Manonyane community council is receiving chickens



Mofube is trying to hold a pen to write his name



Qiloane happily receiving their chickens for the project



Programs coordinator addresses PWDs on caring for chickens



WWDs participating on a workshop training on accessing health services

UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENT

International Disability Day 2016 celebration to be held at Mafeteng

For more information please conduct:
LNFOD office or Rabasotho
Moeletsi: +266 22320345
Email: moeletsi@Infod.org.ls
moeletsi911@gmail.com

SAFOD Team visit to ECDE/CBR Project in Maoamafubelu on Wednesday and Thursday

For more information please conduct:
LNFOD office or Advocacy and Human
Rights Officer Ms. Sekoankoetla
+266 22320345

Email: masekarasekoankoetla@gmail.com

Lobbying meeting with development partners to encourage the government to enact disability Equity Act on the 24th November

For more information please conduct:
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Closing Ceremony EU project

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Lobbying meeting with Ministry of law, human rights and constitutional affairs

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OCT, 2016

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ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work



NAD - The Norwegian
Association of Disabled



OSISA

Open Society Initiative
for Southern Africa



European Union



CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES