

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, 2019

The Disability Lesotho e-newsletter is trying to update or move the newsletter to the better. It happened that failed to submit the newsletter due to technical problems, apologizing for that.

It is our plea to request more input from interested people to make this important and interesting newsletter to the better, give updates, upcoming events, opinion pieces and news in general relating to disability sector in this country. We would like to thank all supporting partners to always listening to our cry and allowing us to lay our heads on the shoulders.

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

Second reading of Persons with disabilities Equity Bill in the Parliament of Lesotho

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho is a state party to the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities since the year 2008. However, she has not yet submitted the initial state report to the Committee on the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The initial report was due in 2011.

The purpose of this convention is to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities by addressing social, economic and political barriers which hinder people with disabilities to fully and effectively participate in the society.

Lesotho is a dualistic state in which the treaties can only be enforceable provided there is an enabling legislation which can be used to enforce the rights contained by the Convention in the country.

The Bill on the rights of persons with disabilities was subjected to the first reading in Parliament on the 31st August 2018.

Ever since the Bill has been sitting with the parliamentary portfolio committee in which they were mandated to get inputs from the various stakeholders interested in disability rights and make changes and improvements accordingly.

What is surprising is that, the committee has not been able to incorporate the views and inputs of the people with disabilities into the final Bill despite the consultative meetings which the committee held across the country with the aim of soliciting views of people with disabilities and the community at large.

It is difficult to imagine and understand what the committee has been doing on the Bill for the past 12 months. However, people with disabilities will discover on the 18 October what the Bill will be holding for people with disabilities.

Considering the tortoise's pace at which government is working on this Bill and the parliamentary challenges of these days in which a parliament only takes less than four months to operate within a period of 12 months, it is clear that, the Bill still have a long way to go before it is enacted into law.

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled has been informed by the Ministry of Social Development that the Bill has been completed and will be subjected to the second reading on the 18th October 2019.



Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities

By 'Makananelo Ramoholi

Lesotho National Federation of Organizations of the Disabled (LNFOD) has made significant strides in the implementation of the project on Securing Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities. The project which began earlier this year is still ongoing and will end in December this year. One of the primary objectives of the project is to increase the reporting of cases involving persons with disabilities to the police. In particular the project is targeting witnesses with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. In most cases people with intellectual disabilities become victims of sexual abuse without legal recourse. Whereas the situation prior to the decision in Koali Moshoeshe and Others v DPP and Others (Constitutional Case/14/2017) was that people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities could not testify as witnesses in court, the decision is celebrated for outlawing this discriminatory clause. The effect of the judgment is that people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities also have an equal standing before the law to testify as witnesses in cases concerning them.

LNFOD has therefore been working hard to sensitize the judiciary and all those involved in the administration of justice to ensure full implementation of the judgment. In particular earlier this year personnel from the police, director of public prosecutions, disabled persons organizations and court intermediaries were trained as justice intermediaries specifically to

assist the persons with intellectual disabilities to obtain justice on equal basis with others. Last week judges and magistrates were also specifically trained to enable these persons to testify. We also have success stories documented from the district of Mokhotlong and Leribe. In Mokhotlong, we have been able to secure a conviction in the case of Rex v Mphohla CR/63/19 where a young girl with intellectual disability was sexually abused. The prosecutor involved in this case was one of our trainees and through the skills he acquired he was able to provide accommodations. The case in Leribe is however still ongoing and it involved a girl with visual impairment who was sexually abused. LNFOD was able to intervene in her case after it came to our attention that there were efforts made to settle the matter out of court. The girl's family was promised two sheep to withdraw the case. LNFOD is pleading with Basotho to refrain from these kinds of settlements as they are not only contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 but are also a grave violation of the fundamental human rights of the disabled. The accused in this case is awaiting trial in detention in trial after he failed to pay bail of 500 Maluti. Further LNFOD has formed good working relations with the Ministry of Police and would like to commend the Commander of Police Holomo Molibeli for selecting a focal person to oversee the coordination of disability issues within the Ministry of Police. Next week we will conclude our trainings by holding a workshop for Lawyers and Prosecutors from the 17th to the 18th on access to justice for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities to further popularize the judgment in Koali's case.

GENERAL NEWS

Promoting Inclusive Education in Quthing

By: Puleng Mosili

Education is very crucial because it is central to development and improvement of the lives of young people worldwide [Including young people with disabilities]. The key factors to the full and effective participation of youth in the processes of social, economic and political development are knowledge and education. (Census report, 2016)

Quthing district is one the top district with poor performance in external examinations. It is one unique district with different tribes: the Basotho and Baphuthi tribes. LNFOD with the help of financial aid from UNICEF is promoting the Inclusive Education Policy in three community councils of Quthing. LNFOD in the past two months executed two activities in a mission to popularize the Lesotho Inclusive education policy. The visited councils were, Mjanyane, Qomo-Qomong and Urban councils.

In the first activity the community leaders (Councilors and chief's representatives) were sensitized on their role on Inclusive Education as per the Policy. The feedback was very positive in all the three councils more especially in the Mjanyane community council.

The community leaders acknowledged that there are numerous people with disabilities in their communities who never had opportunity to receive education due to disability. Most of them are now grown men and women while some are youth not accessing any education. They shared that for people with disabilities to get education they have to go to Maseru or Leribe. This was evident that there is so much work to do to ensure that the schools in the Quthing district are accessible and that learners with disabilities access education on equal basis with their non-disabled peers.

With the help of the councilors and chiefs representatives, people with disabilities were invited to the three community councils' offices to establish DPO branches which LNFOD may liaise with in supporting children with disabilities to enroll in regular schools. The gatherings were very successful with multitudes of people with disabilities though LNFOD requested only 3-4 representatives from each ED. This worked to the advantage of LNFOD as people could learn about the LIEP right from the horse's mouth.

Both community leader's sensitization and establishment of DPO branches activities were successfully executed by the four LNFOD member organizations.

GENERAL NEWS

LNFOOD counters discrimination of PWDs in labour market.

By Makatleho Molotsi

Lesotho acceded to the Convention on the Rights of People with disabilities 9 years ago. In Article 27(1) the conventions state ' States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.' However, this convention has not yet been domesticated. In addition, laws and policies regulating labour and employment and private. As a result of this, study on access to financial services by people with various forms of disabilities conducted by LNFOOD in 2016 reported that people with different types of disabilities comparatively face a lot of restrictions when trying to access employment. According to this study, recruitment policies and strategies of both public and private employers significantly deny people with disabilities an opportunity to be employed. For an example, recruitment form of advertisement states " for an applicant to be considered for this position, they must be physically and mentally fit. Informants of the study argued pointed out that in many cases disability is construed as illness, inability, incapacity hence unfitness by the employers. People with disabilities share that once they hear or see the similar statement, they are dissuaded to apply or to register for the job.

Moreover, these restriction are also reported in cases where people with disabilities are already employed. It is reported that in most cases, no adjustments either relating to work position or working environment to accommodate the needs of an employee with disability. Thus has brought disrepute to employees with disabilities as being incapable to work, unproductive hence unfit for the work. In some cases such employees have been dismissed from work.

To counter this practice, from 9th to 14th October, LNFOOD will hold meetings with private and public employers within its project area. In these meetings employers will be lobbied to recruit and employ people with disabilities who qualify for the job positions they offer. Employers will be sensitised of disability and people with disabilities. They will also be sensitised of international standards on employment of people with disabilities and their responsibilities as employers under such standards. These employers will further be encouraged to employ people with disabilities and the benefits of such.

GENERAL NEWS

Amazing and intelligent disabled boy

By: Phaila

Teboho is a boy who was born on the 20th October, 1995 at Maluti Adventist Hospital, he is staying at Maputsoe, a wheelchair-user, cannot walk speak properly and his hands are not handling well too. Teboho did not go to school at all. The mother was the one helping him to write and read at home. Teboho ended helping her sister to have passion to read and write always when not doing house chores.

In 2013 he did sit for STD. 7 examinations and passed with Top 10 and the whole country was on position 6. He used to choose for someone who will help him to write. In 2015 he wrote Sesotho, Science and Maths. In 2016 he sat for English, Business Education and Development Studies at the level of Form C and got 1st Class pass. In 2018 he sit for Form E examinations, he did not do well as failed Mathematics. He is now repeating Maths and Physical Science; he showed that he wants to get 1st Class pass.

He is always using internet to do his assignments and nobody introduced internet to him. He is using the phone to do his researches. The worse part of things affecting him is that the Ministry of Development is not helping him at all, tried many ways to help him find subsidies from the ministry but failed. I am taking a plea to anyone interested to help.

LNAPD is changing the leadership

By: Maisane Phafa

On the 5 – 6 October, 2019 Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD) held a congress which was supposed to be held in 2018. At this time it is whereby the association has to present process reports of Branches, the Association as the whole, Projects and financial report.

The meeting is the platform where all constitutional committees were supposed to be elected but only the Executive Committee was elected, where other structures will be elected early next year.

The committee is as follows;

The Chairperson – Pascalina Letsau
 Vice – Chairperson – Makotoko Matsolo
 Secretary General – Tsekela Khela
 Vice secretary General – Lipolelo Makhele
 Treasurer – Tanki Rabokako
 Publicity Secretary – Ernestina Ramathinyane
 Vice Publicity – Maisane Phafa
 Members – Mamolemohi Ramokotjo
 Lehlohonolo Molisana

LNAPD is now under the leadership of the above members, we would like to plea to all members to support the committee to take the association to the next step.

We also invite other DPOs to support with whatever they have to make this association to reach the next level. The new Executive Committee is open to be assisted.

NEWS IN PICTURES



Public gathering held in community councils of Lesotho about Inclusive education.



Deaf persons in Lesotho celebrate Sign Language day



Lerato Ramoholi Inclusive project officer presenting her project goals to People with disabilities



Some of the sensitization meetings done this month in Quthing district.

UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENT

**Disability day celebration –
3rd December, 2019**

Place in Berea District

For more information, please conduct
LNFOOD office on 22320345 or email:
nkhasi@lnfod.org.ls

**Inclusive Education
Competition.**

For more information, please conduct
LNFOOD office on 22320345 or email:
puleng@lnfod.org.ls

Lesotho National Association
of the Physically Disabled
(LNAPD) elected
New Executive Committee.

**Duration of the committee is
3 years.**

For more information, please conduct
LNAPD office on 22320366 or 58788864
email: pletsau@gmail.com

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ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work



Diakonie 
Katastrophenhilfe

Brot
für die Welt

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