

# DISABILITY LESOTHO



## Editor's note

I objectively need to congratulate people with disabilities, the way you handled issues of Persons with disabilities equity act; 2021. This shows a growth in advocating for your rights, it is true that laws have been enacted in this country but it is my first time to hear people who are talking about the law that affects them like you are doing.

In light of the above, I would like to motivate you all to do what is better for the benefit of people with disabilities in this country. Remember we are not doing these for us but for the generations to come.

It is now the time that we all push harder to the government through Ministry of Social Development to inaugurate the Disability Advisory Council as it has been established by the act.

Let us now advise and use all ways to do it so that can advise the Minister accordingly to avoid all mistakes that we have already got from different places or villages. Let us all work hard until we leave the stone unturned.

I think it will good for the Minister to do the right thing, establish the council and review the disability grant proposed.

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](mailto:pletsau@gmail.com)

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Editor

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

### DISABILITY GRANT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN LESOTHO

**By Nkhasi Sefuthi**

This paper assesses and analyses the progress made by government of Lesotho in providing Disability grant to persons with disabilities in Lesotho. It seeks to understand the model used by Lesotho in providing this grant in comparison with the United Nations standards.

The paper concludes with the recommendations advance to ensure proper assessment and allocation of the disability grant to persons with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria.

#### **Background**

In the budget speech of 2021-2022, government of Lesotho allocated more than ten million Maloti to the Ministry of Social Development to provide disability grant as a form of social protection to persons with disabilities who are in need of intensive support. Para 137 of the budget speech clearly indicates the intention of government to expand its social protection to persons with disabilities in an explicit manner to reduce vulnerabilities suffered by persons with disabilities in their interaction with others in society.

The mention of disability grant in the government policy and strategy could be traced back to 2011 when the first ever disability specific policy, National Disability and Rehabilitation policy (2011) was adopted by cabinet of government of Lesotho as a strategy through which disability issues will be approached and addressed. Some years later, the disability grant was contained by the Ministry of social development social protection strategy in which government expressed its commitment to

provide the grant to persons with disabilities as a means of reducing poverty and other vulnerabilities experienced by persons with disabilities.

However, this did not happen and government struggled to put the grant in place ever since until 2021 when Persons with Disability Equity Act was enacted with the provision of disability grant.

In July 2021, Honourable Minister of Social Development made a public announcement that the Ministry is was preparing to provide social grant specific to persons with disability, (disability grant). The announcement stated that this was to fulfil the requirements of section 44 of the Persons with Disability Equity Act which requires government to give disability grant to persons with disabilities outlined by the law.

However, organisations of persons with disabilities were disappointed by the medical approach which the Ministry of Social Development take in dealing with the provision of the grant as opposed to the Persons with Disability Equity Act.

It is important to mention that, the new Act of persons with disability no longer explains disability as something inherent in an individual, but as external social, economic and political factors which hinder effective participation of persons with disabilities in society. On the other hand medical model states that disability is within a person and considers disability as a deviation from the norm and therefore should only be addressed through medical interventions and medical do have all the authority to decide about a life of a person with

disability. This is confirmed by the understanding of the Ministry that disability can only be properly dealt with by the medical practitioners.

It is difficult to understand why government decided to adopt a medical approach in provision of the grant yet the definition of disability in the law embraces social model. The social model considers disability as external social factors which should be addressed through law and policy.

It is important to note that the public announcement for the provision of the grant was made three months after the beginning of fiscal year. Meaning the implementation of the grant was late already.

Later on in September organisations of persons with disabilities and the Ministry came together to clarify the process and procedure of awarding a disability grant since government was of the opinion that, organisations of persons with disabilities are not fully conversant with the disability grant, whilst organisations of persons with disabilities strongly believe that the medical approach and the social assessment tool used by the Ministry would not come out with the accurate results for a person with disability because they are not disability inclusive.

Ever since government pronounced its intention to provide disability grant, government officials have been working hard to design tools which they will use to do the assessment for eligibility. However, it is argued that this was already too late because the grant was to be provided from the beginning of fiscal year. Trainings have been conducted in five selected districts, and some persons with disabilities have been registered with the aim that they would undergo a medical assessment which will determine their eligibility. This is taking more than it was expected, and government might be also using the funds for the grant to cater for the logistics and administrative needs of this project.

This assumption is backed by the fact that, grant has not yet been provided to persons with disabilities despite several announcements made that, it would be provided from July, September 2021 and later it is being said that it will be provided from next year.

It is noteworthy to mention that Section 44 of Persons with Disability Equity Act on social grant derives its validity from article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (CRPD) which requires the state parties to provide social protection to persons with disabilities. The article requires the state parties to put minimal standards for the provision of cash transfer and other social protection strategies including by ensuring that the grants are meeting adequate standard of living. The Lesotho disability is M400.00 per month and an individual getting this grant, who is in need of care will get M150.00 more to cater for care services.

Organisations of persons with disabilities have already stated that, the grant does not meet the adequate standard of living considering the severity of the vulnerabilities and barriers Basotho with disabilities are encountering on daily basis.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that, the inputs of LNFOD on the social assessment tool be considered by the Ministry to ensure that the design and provision of the disability grant aligns with the disability data standards. Washington group questions can be used to design an appropriate tool for social assessment of disability.



## GENERAL NEWS

### FARMERS IN KHOELENYA GAINED NEW FARMING TECHNIQUES:

By Rabasotho Moeletsi

Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) is running a four (4) year program titled Gender and Disabilities in Practice - Lesotho with funding support from Diakonie Act Austria whose back-donor is the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). One of the specific objectives of this program is to improve economic living conditions of women and girls with disabilities in the programme region through entrepreneurship, products manufacturing and business management in order to enable them to be productive citizens in the Lesotho's economy.

In recent weeks LNFOD, with the technical support from Basotho Enterprise Development Cooperation (BEDCO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) Resource Centers have been equipping women with disabilities with then necessary skills they will use to support their businesses. The ultimate goal is to prepare them to run their small businesses effectively.

Women and girls with disabilities from the districts of Leribe, Berea, Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale'shoek in the councils where the programme works have been skilled on entrepreneurship of their choices. So far, a total of seventy-three (73) women and girls have been equipped with production skills in different agricultural sectors. Fifty-four (54) have been trained on poultry farming of which twenty-four (24) chose layers while thirty (30) are into broiler production. Ten (10) women from Mazenod community council in Maseru have chosen shaded net cropping while latest nine (9) women from Khoelenya community council in the Mohale'shoek district have been capacitated in piggery production. Preparations are in place for the last groups to be trained on cream and petroleum jelly production and dried fruit

production in the coming weeks to take a tally to ninety-three (93) women and girls who have won themselves a support under this programme to be funded to start their own small entrepreneurship. One of the trainees in the piggery production in Khoelenya community council hailed a training as an eyeopener. "We thank God who sent you LNFOD and our trainers (from Mekaling agricultural resource center) here to give us the important training for us. "Before we came here, we thought we knew everything about piggery production since we



have been rearing pigs before, we thought the training somehow would be a waste of time for us. We were all wrong, we knew nothing!" 'Matjotsane Moqeti said as post training remark.

We never knew about these many farming techniques. We learnt about so many things we didn't know about, different breeds of pigs, and qualities of each breed, breeding, importance of choosing a right boar and gilts for breeding, documenting important dates in breeding, common diseases and management. All in all, the training has been nothing but an eyeopener to us, and we must make sure we practice everything we learnt here if we are serious about turning this into viable business," 'Matjotsane Moqeti concluded "We are very pleased as the ministry to have added 9 new farmers to our list of

farmers in the area of Ha Makhabane in the Mekaling Agricultural Resource Center,” Ms. Florence Matela who extension officer commended.

Today we celebrate because we got a very unique group of farmers, so this is a special catch for us. We have other groups of farmers, the youth, the women and others but to train women with disabilities as farmers has a special feeling in my heart since this is the first group. We During these three days working with them they showed nothing but a commitment to become entrepreneurs in piggery farming, and we told them that it is possible if they put skills shared to them into practice,” she added. Another added advantage coming out of these trainings was the strengthened alliance that was bonded between LNFOD and ministry of Agriculture and food security. This was witnessed when the Agric resource center officers went beyond their scope to capacitate women with disability farmers and also made them beneficiaries among the farmers who were earmarked for seeds at the centers. It was the first time that disability was targeted for this provision.

“This strengthened alliance building between LNFOD and ministry of Agriculture and food security will go a long way into achieving not only the goals of this program but also the vision of LNFOD as a whole which seeks to see disability mainstreamed into government services and programing,” Moeletsi, Project Coordinator submitted.

“Hoping this collaboration keep on growing which means sustainability of the program is almost guaranteed as the government would always be there even beyond facing out the program,” he concluded.



## GENERAL NEWS

### Gender and Disability Innovation Contest: Congratulations to NADL and IDAL!

By: Mekananelo L. Ramoholi

LNFOOD is celebrating the National Association of the Deaf Lesotho (NADL) and the Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho (IDAL) for winning the innovation contest to design and implement projects on gender and disability within their organizations. This comes after LNFOOD intensively capacitated its staff and the disabled people's organizations staff on gender and disability mainstreaming under the ongoing Gender and Disability in Practice Project (GADIP) funded by Diakonne Act Austria. With the support of four disabled people's organizations gender and disability rights volunteers from the winning NADL and IDAL as well as those from the Lesotho National League of the Visually Impaired Persons (LNLVIP) and Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD), contested for an opportunity for funding to directly implement under their own organizations. The idea of the contest is for disabled people's organizations to put in practice gender sensitive initiatives within their programming. The main objective behind the contest was to financially facilitate gender equality measures and also to motivate member DPOs to take up gender and disability to develop ideas which might also be funded later on through other donors and partners during the implementation of GADIP.

The gender and disability projects implemented alongside GADIP will build synergy with the ongoing GADIP project to directly target specific gender and disability issues specific to IDAL and NADL. According to IDAL, the focus of their project will be to promote disability mainstreaming through promoting the inclusion of persons with intellectual disability especially in the justice system. As expressed by the gender and disability volunteer (gender and disability programme officer), Ms. Mafumane Makhele; the project will ensure that the stakeholders including

the courts understand intellectual disability and various ways in which they can include such persons to ensure that they are equally included in the justice system. She reiterated that persons with intellectual disabilities are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence yet they are unlikely to obtain justice as survivors than any other type of disability due to communication barriers. On the other hand, NADL implementing gender and disability rights volunteer, Ms. 'Matsepiso Mokhoromeng, stated that their project targets communication barriers in the justice system among others. There are no sign language interpreters in the system to accommodate those with speech and hearing disabilities who are witnesses in the justice system. NADL will therefore amongst others train the police on sign language interpretation so that it is easier to communicate with complainants. Under the GADIP, LNFOOD will follow-up cases involving persons with disabilities who are survivors of gender-based violence whose cases were stuck in the justice system due to lack of accommodations. With the support of the two projects, LNFOOD will go far towards ensuring gender and disability inclusive society.





## GENERAL NEWS

### **LNAPD informs the Public about the persons with disabilities equity act; 2021**

**By: Sempe Moshoeshoe**

Lesotho National Association of the Physically (LNAPD) is on an outing in informing the public about the disability Equity act of 2021.

LNAPD visited 9 different districts which are Butha-Bothe, Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka, Mafeteng, Mohale'shoek, Quthing, Berea, Qacha'snek and Leribe respectively. The aim of this outreach tours was to inform the Public about the act which came into law on the 12th of March 2021. On the list we started at Berea then followed other districts respectively until ended in Thaba-Tseka, where we were welcomed by the area chiefs, and people came in their numbers to hear what the act has in store for them.

The first speaker was the Chairperson of the Association Pascalina Letsau who gave a key note address and brief summary of why LNAPD has visited them and the aim of their visit to places like that. She told people who were gathered there that the association was formed by people with physically disabled themselves, because they saw a gape that people with disabilities different associations were formed.

The second speaker was a member of the association Mr. Motseko who gave a brief details about education barriers to people with physical disabilities, those leads to the association to establish a vocational school to cater for people with different disabilities except for the visually impaired once because the school does not offer brail lessons, he again mention subjects that are offered at the centre. The school is Itiarend vocational

centre it is situated in the Maseru district, Masianokeng and the institution only accommodate people with disabilities from the ages of 18 years upwards, subjects offered at the centre are carpentry, woodwork, welding, sawing and agriculture, literacy, numeracy and computer.

The third speakers elaborated on the Persons with disabilities equity act; 2021 where Lesotho signed the United Nations on the rights of persons with disabilities which Lesotho signed in 2008. He indicated that the act established the Disability Advisory Council but update it has not been inaugurated and it's not working. Mr. Molise Foso elaborated more about the rights of persons with disabilities and looked again what has been enshrined in the constitution of Lesotho by chapter 2, specifically on rights to education, employment and he expanded on the security reforms saying that people with disabilities are capable of being deployed in the security sector.

The last issue on the table was about disability grant for persons with disabilities where government where government through ministry of social development decided to offer people with disabilities a grant of M400.00 selective, because the grants categorized in three different types of the grant. Indicated that doctors have to examine and stated the severity of the disability of each applicant if is eligible for the grant or not, then government will give such a person the grant, when getting people's views on how much should one get they said M400.00 is too little at least if the start with M1, 000.00 to M2, 000 it will be enough for their needs.

# ADVOCACY ASPECT

## Disability Grant Blues

By: 'Makatleho 'Molotsi



The Ministry of Social Development has been applauded and celebrated much within the disability community in Lesotho. This was because of the two milestone the Ministry has ever achieved in the promotion of the rights of people with disabilities in Lesotho. In March this year the Ministry enacted Persons with Disabilities Equity Act which domesticates the United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with disabilities. This act sets a bedrock that strengthen the protection of the rights of people with disabilities in Lesotho. To further promote the rights of people with disabilities Ministry of Social Development budgeted for the first issuance of types of Disability grant which magnified the celebrations of the Ministry.

However, People with disabilities were not involved during the design of the grant which raised concerns from the disabled community that the grant might not empower people with disabilities as intended and that it may not even received by the severely disabled as it is the intention. This continued to be the DPOs concern after the design of the grant was presented to the, DPOs pointed that the design of the grant points to the fact that the recipients of the grant shall be the severely impaired as opposed to the severely disabled.

This is due to the fact that contrary to the letter and spirit of Persons with Disabilities Equity Act the design of the grant follows the old medical model of disability as opposed to the social model provided for by the law.

While assessment tools are currently being aligned with the social model of disability in order to assess the severity of disability by DPOs and the MSoD, registration for disability grant is continuing in some community councils. People with disability have reported that based on their appearance they are denied to apply for the grant on the basis that they are not severely disabled. They are told that they have to be on wheelchairs and on crutches at least. This means that an opportunity to apply for the grant is given to those who are visibly severely impaired as opposed to disabled. People with disability have also reported that the officials of the Ministry who are administering applications for the disability grant demand that they bring their severely impaired family members to the community councils so that the officials verify that those family members are indeed severely disabled.

From the reports it appears that no assessments are made except the visual assessments of whether someone is severely impaired. There is a cry within the disability community that the long awaited disability grant will not be received by the deserving severely disabled people as promised due to lack of transparency. It is indeed clear that disability grant has left the disabled community blue.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 11–14 training of women with disabilities on production of petroleum jelly and vaselin by SMARDT

For more information please contact LNFOD office on +266 22320345 or send an email; [moeletsi@Infod.org.ls](mailto:moeletsi@Infod.org.ls)

18 October policy brief for OPDS on gender and disability inclusion.

For more information please contact LNFOD office on +266 22320345 or send an email; [nkhasi@Infod.org.ls](mailto:nkhasi@Infod.org.ls)

26–27 October training of the new gender and disability advocacy task team

For more information please contact LNFOD office on +266 22320345 or send an email; [masekara@Infod.org.ls](mailto:masekara@Infod.org.ls)

Radpid assessment on teaching and learning materials for learners with disabilities ongoing.

For more information please contact LNFOD office on +266 22320345 or send an email; [nkhasi@Infod.org.ls](mailto:nkhasi@Infod.org.ls)

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