

DISABILITY LESOTHO



From the Editor

Welcome again to the twenty eighth edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled which will be covering the Month of September 2014.

The Disability Lesotho e-newsletter is a platform whereby partners in the disability sector share the 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 organisations working to improve the lives of people in Lesotho, including those with disability.

Last month we talked more about issues of women and how they are being abused, their successes and difficulties. It was hectic in Lesotho for the month of September in Lesotho there was no peace at all, there were some attacks. There were some gun – shots along Maseru town. The question is; people with disabilities are living in isolation and confinement due to culture and tradition, so when there are wars among the security forces it is more difficult for them. People had to hide, some were not going to their workplaces. It was worse to people with disabilities that are selling at the marketplace. It was difficult even to their DPOs, as everybody has to think about their lives before anything. The political instability is real not

making life trouble-free to people with disabilities like I said before.

The general elections are coming very soon around February, 2015 after all those attacks, what is going to happen? Does Independent Electoral Commission(IEC) going to work together with people with disabilities, so that it is going to be easy for every citizen participate fully to exercise their right?

I would like to take the opportunity to plea to youth, women and men with disabilities to stand up and fight for their rights. Let us take this opportunity to voice aloud about our issues. Let us all go and cast our ballots and vote for the good government that will think about issues of disability. The government that will pass Disability Bill into an Act.

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 which may improve the quality and content of this free service.

Best regards,

The Editor

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Disability focal persons in Lesotho

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

The government of Lesotho in close collaboration with the LNFOD, DPOS have worked together to put in place one of the strategies recommended by the article 33 of the UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. This has been achieved after several advocacy meetings between the government and LNFOD in which LNFOD lobbied ministry of Social development to lobby other ministries to appoint disability focal persons that will facilitate the disability mainstreaming in their various ministries.

In June 2014, the ministry of Social development successfully lobbied other government to appoint senior government officials in each ministry to become the disability focal points. To date, ten out of twenty two ministries have already appointed focal points in their ministries.

After which, LNFOD in conjunction with the disability focal ministry, organised workshop on the introduction of disability mainstreaming so as to build the capacity of the appointed focal persons. In addition, it was anticipated that, the training will ensure that, the focal persons acquire knowledge on disability mainstreaming so that they will contribute meaningfully in the development of the National Disability Mainstreaming Plan

which its development commenced in August 2014.

The National Disability Mainstreaming Plan seeks to identify the roles and responsibilities of each ministry in the disability mainstreaming process under the guidance of the local consultancy. In addition,

The consultants are supported to understand the point of departure. That Federation, DPOs and the government are now working together to find ways in which disability could be effectively mainstreamed. So it should be clear from the plan what different ministries are going to do to ensure mainstreaming.

LNFOD understands that, this is a process which requires a lot of commitment from the government to support the capacity building of the focal points so that they will be in the position to become disability rights partners and deliver effectively. LNFOD also recognises the financial support offered to LNFOD by the development partners who are really making the voice of people with disabilities to be heard.

ADVOCACY ASPECT

Political turmoil and disability in Lesotho

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

Undoubtedly, the political turmoil which recently erupted in Lesotho does not only destabilises the conflicting parties, but, the whole nation including people with disabilities who are also devastated by the prevailing uncertainty of Maseru. It is also a well-known fact that, if the nations of the world are experiencing problems such as wars and conflicts, marginalised groups such as people with disabilities become extremely vulnerable due to the environmental barriers that face them every day. Basotho with disabilities are no exception as they always wonder about their safety and security in the state of conflict and in which we frequently experience gun shoots between the armed forces in the public places in Maseru.

I am one of the individual with disability who stays near the places where I frequently hear the exchange of gunshots between the armed forces of Lesotho.

It is threatening as you may not know what's next. It frustrates as we know that, should we have to evacuate, marginalised groups like people with disabilities will not be able to access evacuation services as the case may be.

Research has shown that, scarcity of resources makes it very difficult for people with disabilities to be catered for in the armed conflict.

Scarcity of resources and lack of accessible and inclusive humanitarian interventions compel people with disabilities to be at the most disadvantaged state of affairs.

The current state of affairs in Maseru has hampered LNFOD and its partners to achieve one of its advocacy milestone by the end of 2014, concerning the presentation of the disability bill in the Parliament.

Lesotho ratified the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities on the 2ND December 2008 and as such it is in the process of domesticating this Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities through the enactment of the disability specific legislation by the parliament. The bill was to be presented before the Parliament before the end of 2014, which created momentum among the members of the disability movement.

Unfortunately, the long awaited disability legislation processes have been overshadowed by the conflict among the coalition government partners that among others led to the suspension of the parliament in May 2014.

As we speak, the disability specific legislation will never be born in the eighth parliament of Lesotho as the SADC intervention dictates that, Lesotho should go for the general elections before the end of February 2015. As a result, the parliament of Lesotho will reopen on the 17 October with limited powers to discharge its ordinary functions before it is dissolved in December 2014. In this period, the parliament shall only work on the approval of the election budget and constitutional reforms that will facilitate the hosting of the general elections in early 2015. Meaning that disability legislation falls within the ordinary parliamentary proceedings which cannot be dealt with by now.

It is therefore goes without saying that, the efforts of putting the disability act in place might be seriously delayed by the political developments in Lesotho. General elections will produce the new government of the date of which the disability movement will have to introduce to the concept of disability as a social issue to be addressed by policy and legislation.

ADVOCACY ASPECT

Deaf People celebrating International Deaf Day

By: Malesaoana Mohale

National Association of the Deaf Lesotho celebrated the International Deaf Day. The Theme for this year was "**Strengthening Human Diversity**". The two dimensions of the theme include promotion of Deaf people as part of global human diversity as well as recognition of the diversity and richness of the global Deaf community itself.

Strengthening human diversity draws upon the basic principles of human rights and respect for all people and diversity with respect to language, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies. This theme is about recognizing differences as possibilities and assets instead of disabilities that should be changed. It is also about recognizing that each Deaf individual is unique with strengths that can make a positive effect on Deaf societies.

Society needs to be sensitized so that it can better enhance its capacity to take into account diversity and make needed changes for the Deaf.

This year, National Association of the Deaf Lesotho (NADL) took concrete steps to raise awareness among government officials, authorities, responsible persons at work place, medical professionals, and national education experts etc. On the issues of Sign Language, challenges faced by Deaf people, as well as their achievements and how organizations can include Deaf people in their programmes. Among others, advocacy was made in organizations such as Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI), Lesotho Red Cross, Lesotho Television and radios such as Catholic Radio (CRFM).

The Month was very busy indeed for NADL as the association also had an Annual General Meeting which was held this year in the same week, where NADL members elected their new board members. There was also some series of field work to raise awareness in the communities about issues of Deaf people.

GENERAL NEWS

Lives of people should transform to the better

By: Qalang Jobo

Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho (IDAL) invested in the parents of children with disabilities through Basic Business Management and assisted them start Village Savings and Loans groups with which the parents contribute monthly subscriptions and borrow from the collections, returning such with 10% interest. Beneficiaries of the initiative mostly reside in Khoelenya and Lithipeng Community Council in the Mohale'shoek district.

During September 2014 the groups were afforded an opportunity to provide meals with a charge so they raise funds and be able to support their families. Currently most of the trained parents have started their own small businesses which in many ways changed their lives as they now afford to cater for a number of basic needs at household level.

As the association have recognized that it is very difficult for family members who are caring for the intellectual disabled people and children to go out and look for jobs, as they have to be close to them. With the efforts that the organization has taken hope there will be more people who can assist these projects to grow up.

IDAL is real eager to raise more self – help groups among parents and family members that are caring for children with intellectual disability.

Children and youth with intellectual disabilities are able to do things on their own if can be supervised well at the beginning. It is the will of the organization to see them involved in these projects started at these communities.

The family members as they have been instructed how to deal with their children we are looking forward to see their support to youth, children and even the adults with intellectual disabilities.

Senekane Community Councilors vows to support people with disabilities



Councilors in Senekane from different Electoral Division in a meeting with Disability District Coordinator

Through the project of deepening decentralisation, members of DPOs visited Senekane Community Council. The councilors above were from different Electoral Divisions in the same community council.

The District Disability Coordinator, Mr. Nqosa had a brief meeting with them. The objective of the meeting was only to find from them how are they willing to work with people with disabilities in the council. He clearly stated that there are some funds that have been given to community councils in order to deepen services to the communities.

The meeting was the eye – opener to all these councilors as they were not aware that they have to plan together with people with disabilities not to plan for them. They also mentioned that they are planning to have big projects that will be meant to help people with disabilities. They have seen that people with disabilities always are not include in any activities, they did not even know that they are many as like they were gathered the same day.

“We are very delighted to know and see how people with disabilities are clever, some of these people are even clever than us, we were not aware. It is our pleasure from today to support people with disabilities in anyway.” concluded one of them.

GENERAL NEWS

Why did this occurred?..... “I think did not get a proper treatment from the hospital”



Mr. Kelepa outside his house, who cannot do anything

Masaleng Kelepa is a Mosotho man aged 86 from the village of Ha Ralejoe. He was discovered through the project of Deepening Decentralisation funded by European Union to LNFOD. He told his story saying; “I was employed at Railway station. I started having disability in 1983. I was going to see one of the family members at the prison whis is now called Lesotho correctional Service for women. I liked horse riding a lot.”

“I was riding one horse and the other was pulling it with a rope. I met one horse (male), the one that I was riding rise with the fore foot, that is where I feel down. I did not know what happened afterwards. I only found myself in a hospital. People who saw the incident told me that; the same horse that I was riding punched my leg with its foot.” said Mr. Kelepa

When asking what is wrong with my leg the doctor told me that knee joint has turned off. The doctor who was helping by the name of Dr. Cedec and then after that Dr.Makenete rapped the bandages for two weeks. Unfortunately the leg had changed the colour. I had to transferred

to Bloemfontein Hospital in order to be checked.

When getting to Bloemfontein the doctors were trying to check where I do not have problems so, we urged there until they told me that; I do not have to come back anymore.

The Railway which is the company I worked for, dismissed me from work as I was no longer able to do the work I was recruited for. The long service payment I got was too little btu there was nothing I can do. I only got M1,000.00 and the money was all finished because I had to use it for transport from and to hospital.

“I returned home where my family took me to another hospital. I was told that they will have to treat me once again and deal with the pelvic joint. I do not know what did they do to my body, that is where I got a huge damage to my body. The area that was treated which is the pelvic joint, there are some problems as I am now having wounds that are licking from the year 1993 until today.”

The problem is that; “I am staying alone as my wife has passed away and did not have my own child accept the child that I raised him. It is difficult for me to go, even the chrutches next to me are not good for me as I cannot use them unless there is someone to left me up. I need to wash my clothes daily because of the fluids that coming out from the wounds. I only get help from interested individuals to clean my house and the clothes. I ended looking for someone to care for me, I am paying such a person. We share the elderly grant with my supporter because I am paying her from that grant.”

“I think the treatment I got from the hospital was totally wrong and I cannot advise anyone to temper with a pelvic joint at all. The difficulty that we are facing is that; when in need of help doctors can do anything to your body even some experiments yet they know that they are not qualified to do the job.” concluded ntate Masaleng

OPINION PIECE

Women with disabilities face triple discrimination, Can anyone deny that?

By: Masenate Tau

Women with disabilities, however, face compound discrimination by being women, disabled and poor. Isolation and confinement based on culture and traditions in many countries, including Lesotho, are stronger and affect disabled women more in creating negative situations.

The isolation of women with disabilities, lack of appropriate support services and lack of adequate education not only leads to low self-esteem but also results in low economic status, which in turn create dependency on families or caregivers.

This negative self-image along with silencing of the victims increases the risk of sexual abuse and possible effect connected to HIV/AIDS.

I think women with disabilities should be informed of how to prevent the rate of violence, how to recognise when violence has occurred and how to report such acts.

Culture contributes immensely in reducing the role of women with disabilities in social, parental, economic, and other developmental activities. "It is everybody's responsibility to realise that the contribution of disabled women in society, in families, and in development is as important as that of other groups in society – society must not miss out on their contribution.

Lack of environmental adjustments and the absence of accessible buildings, Braille and sign language interpreters hinder women with disabilities from achieving full participation in society.

This is a 'silent crisis' that affects not only disabled persons themselves, but also the economic and social development of the entire society, since a significant reservoir of human potential is going untapped," and the legislation should be developed and enforced to deter the abuse of women with disabilities, thus helping to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The poverty cycle that women and girls with disabilities are living in, is making them not to have self – esteem. Most of them remain in house and then becoming someone who will be doing family chores while other family members have gone to school and to work. They remain dependent as they will not be educated, not having information of their bodies, rights, economy and legal instruments.

I do not think there will be anyone who can deny that women with disabilities in this regards are facing triple discrimination. No politicians, no lawyers, no ministers, no citizens and everyone because we all see that people with disabilities especially in this country are very vulnerable and nobody cares about them. There is no ministry caring about the welfare of people with disabilities. There is no disability grant, I wonder when will this come true to Basotho people who are disabled?

Women, girls with disabilities I plea to you all and do something on your own to change your lives. Let us come together sometime and discuss this problem that we are all facing

SPOTLIGHT



Lerato's Picture who has a growing eye from birth

Lerato Matlali aged 8 years old

1. Where do you live?

The name of my village is Ha Ralejoe at Nazareth

2. With whom are you staying with? Is anybody working in your family?

I am stays with my mum who is not working. We survive on through piece jobs. I am not attending school because my mother said I do not have to." said Lerato.

3. Are you attending school?

I am not attending school because my mother told me that my peers might make fun of me because I have a big eye.

4. Are you satisfied that you are not going to school?

I am not happu at all because it is boring at home as I am playing alone or with my younger sister.

5. When did you last go to the doctor?

I was taken to Roma at St. Joseph's Hospital in 2013, where my mother was told that the eye needs to be taken out. My mother has to take me to Queen Memorial Hospital, she also told that she must have at least M1,200.00 but she don't have it that is why I still have this eye."

6. What did you mother do in order to help you?

My mother asked many people to assist her with funds for transport but failed. She also need to go to social development but she cannot get any money.

7. What can you say? Anything?

I need help so that I can be able to interact with other children maybe next year at school.

8. What do you want to be when you grow up?

I want to be a Prime Minister of Lesotho

9. What do you like to play most?

I like to play 'Mantloane (Houses)

UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

AfriNEAD 4th SYMPOSIUM

Venue: Sun 'n' Sand Holiday Resort ,
MANGOCHI, MALAWI

3rd - 5th November 2014

THEME: "Intensifying disability research and practice to achieve the MDGs in Africa: our experience and aspirations for the future"

For more information please contact:

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Email: afrinead-conf@cc.ac.mw

Or

Register online at: www.sun.ac.za/afrinead

DISABILITY DAY CELEBRATION – 3RD DECEMBER

This year's celebration to be held at Qacha's
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ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

PARTNERS in Advocacy Work



of Persons with Disabilities

