

DISABILITY LESOTHO



From the Editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome once again to the edition of Disability Lesotho. The edition will cover news for the Month of September, 2017

In Lesotho assistive devices and technologies for Persons persons with disabilities (PWDs) are low and often of limited quality. PWDs are still grieving for assistive devices. The Lesotho government has ratified the UNCRPD articles 20 where States parties agreed to take effective measures to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for PWDs.

Going around villages of this country one may find how hard PWDs are suffering. They are still in need of all wheelchairs, crutches and artificial legs and all stuff. I always do not understanding roles of staff members employed by the Ministry of Social Development particularly Auxilliary Social workers. My understanding is that they have to look around villages of Lesotho and find out what are the needs of PWDs but they even do not know nearby PWDs that needs assistance. People are being assessed for some couple of months before they could be given their devices yet the strategy was employed to bring at their door stem by introducing this concept of Auxilliary social workers.

When coming to rights of PWDs, Lesotho needs a person who has a big heart and deep passion on her

work to change lives of other people for the better. It is sad to see how people are suffering yet the nation is doing nothing about their situation as if they are not taxpayers like others. I think it will be nice to see real changes Lesotho. If the Disability Equity Bill could be passed by the parliament things could be much better. I plea to everyone who is incharge to play his or her role perfectly to make that happen, so that Basotho persons with disabilities could enjoy their fundermental human rights like others.

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

MAKING DISABILITY EQUITY BILL WORK FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) is implementing a three year program "Capacity development for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities" with the financial aid from Austrian development agency through Diakonie Austria.

One of the key objectives of the program is to ensure domestication of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD) through the enactment of the Disability Equity Bill by the parliament of Lesotho within the given period. As a result, LNFOD has conducted several advocacy activities targeting the government of Lesotho to fulfil its obligation of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities through the act of parliament including by lobbying the Minister of Social Development to speed up the passing of this much awaited Disability Act for persons with disabilities. In addition, the Prime Minister of Lesotho has demonstrated a political will to do all what is in his power to pass the Disability Equity Bill in collaboration with the Honourable Minister of Social Development. In fact the Minister of Social Development pledged to present the Disability Equity Bill for the deliberations in the parliament before the end of 2017.

This simply means that, persons with disabilities will expect the parliament to deal with this piece of draft legislation as soon as they come back from the long vacation in October 2017.

If the pledge may materialise as it stands, the international day of persons with disabilities will take place on the 3 December with the concrete progress for Basotho nation with disabilities.

Taking into consideration the role of the Attorney General to provide certification for all bills before they can be dealt with by the Cabinet, LNFOD approached the Attorney General asking her office to speed up the finalisation of the drafting so that the law may be taken to the next step.

It is through this interaction that the Acting Attorney General advised LNFOD that the Honourable Minister will need to approve the Law before it can be presented to the Cabinet of which has not happened yet.

On the other hand, the version of the Bill incorporating the disability rights commission and articulation of other rights of people with disabilities has been availed to LNFOD with the aim of checking whether all what has been agreed upon is in order. LNFOD has already reviewed the Bill and submitted its comments in which it is expected that the Bill can move to the next steps once the comments are addressed.

LNFOD is of the view that the current version of the Bill substantially comply with the standards set by the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and should therefore be presented to the Cabinet and the Parliament respectively.

LNFOD appeals to the management of the Ministry of Social Development to act as soon as possible to take the Disability Equity Bill to the Cabinet so that persons with disabilities may start enjoying their human rights on an equal basis with others.

GENERAL NEWS

ST. ANGELA CHESHIRE HOME CHILDREN SET TO RECEIVE WHEELCHAIRS FROM SHONAQUIP

By: Justice Kalebe

On 15 September 2017, at St. Angela Cheshire Home children were set to receive wheelchairs from Shonaquip, a Cape Town based manufacturers of custom made wheelchairs. The handing over of Wheelchair took place at St. Angela Cheshire Home on Monday 18th September 2017 with the ceremony starting at 09:30. There was a demonstration of the fitting of the wheelchair and training of parents on positioning.

A total of 12 children who were assessed last year by Shonaquip received a wheelchair that was set up for each user by a trained person to see that each child is well supported comfortable, able to move efficiently, feeling safe and able to function in it. The funding for the wheelchairs was made possible by a UK based donor who visited the centre via Sentebale.

One of the beneficiaries, 18 – year old Lehlohonolo Mahobe, whose wheelchair was old and badly damaged due to bad roads around the centre said; "I am very happy for this wheelchair as I will have a better mobility to go to school and church but if the government doesn't support the fixing the roads in this area we will continue needing new wheelchairs every three months."

St. Angela Cheshire Home Chair in Lseotho, Mrs 'Mabakoena Cheoane said; "We are pleased that our children are finally received the type of wheelchairs that are suitable for their posture and better mobility. I wish to request our government, local companies and individuals to join forces with us to transform the lives and opportunities for persons with disabilities. This noble course comes from outside Lesotho and humbly request all Basotho to support us."

The Home depends on network of partners both local and internationally to support and complement their services. The newly appointed CEO Ms. Puseletso Thite who has been facilitating the project says; "We are pleased as the management of St. Angela Cheshire Home

with this gift as we recognize the real value of working in partnership to deliver services that break down the barriers experienced by people with disabilities in Lesotho and communities surrounding St. Angela. I appeal to our government, local business and supporters to support us in our vision to expand our services surrounding us."

The handling over ceremony were attended by representatives from His Majesty's office who is also a Patron of St. Angela, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Local Chief, LNFOD and school Principals around St. Angela.

The handing over ceremony followed by 'hands on', needs-based training for caregivers at the centre, parents and community workers. The training was on seating awareness and building skills of all who need to use mobility devices, whether at home, in a centre or school.



GENERAL NEWS

TOWARDS IMPROVING ACCESS TO SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE AND HEALTH RIGHTS BY YOUNG PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

By: Masekara Sekoankoetla

In Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg from 19th to 21st September, The Eastern and Southern African region (ESA) held a meeting. ESA have initiated a journey towards achieving better access to Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights (SRHR) for Young Persons with Disabilities (YPWDs).



Lesotho was represented by Community Based Rehabilitation Manager from the Ministry of Social Development, Advocacy and Human Rights Officer of the Lesotho National Federation of the Organizations of the Disabled and one person with disability from the Lesotho National League of the Visually Impaired. The strategy shall be adopted by and guide the states parties in improving access to SRHR by YPWDs.

ESA has developed a **Draft Regional Strategy on Access to Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights for Young Persons with Disabilities**. Development of this regional strategy draft followed the broad research and situational analysis on access to Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights (SRHR) by Persons with Disabilities in the states parties to draft regional strategy. It is therefore an intervention to the challenges faced by YPWDs in the region.

The content of the strategy is highly informed by its beneficiaries: YPWDs, individually and through their representative organisations who meaningfully participated throughout its drafting process. In addition, the regional strategy draft was validated by stakeholders who included YPWDs from Eastern and Southern Region on the day.

GENERAL NEWS

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

By: Malehlohonolo Molelengoane

LNFOOD has received funding from Bank Information Centre to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the World Bank funded project; Lesotho Quality Education for Equality. This project is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Training.

LNFOOD found out some discrepancies in the design of the project and also implementation. The project is solely focused on learners with visual disabilities. Although these learners have disabilities, but the project excludes learners with other types of disabilities who face a lot of challenges in accessing education.

Also the curriculum is not as inclusive as it should be, however in a meeting with the CEO of curriculum she vowed to involve LNFOOD in the curriculum audit meetings to ensure meaningful inclusion of learners with disabilities.

The design of the School Improvement Plan that has to be developed by the schools covered by this project does not expressly

mention learners with disabilities as children at risk of leaving school prematurely due to lack of reasonable accommodation. On the brighter side, the Ministry of Education and Training promised to rectify that oversight.

At the design level the project seemed to be inclusive yet it is actually exclusive of other learners with different types of disabilities.

GENERAL NEWS

“.....we all encounter hardships in our lives”

By: Mahlomola Tjama



I, Mahlomola Simon Tjama, was born in Qacha'snek in the village of Ha Mankata Seforong in 1972

I started having the disability in 1988. I was working in Matatiele by that time. I got an injury under my left foot, something like a pimple. It was itching like hell. I used a stone to scratch it, I wasn't aware that I am damaging myself. I only ended knowing that when I visited the nearest healthcare center when the doctor told me. I was told that there is nothing that can be done except to cut the leg as had been damaged. I hardly move around to do all my chores. I was using the ordinary stick to walk with.

In 2014 the second leg also was amputated. This one was very hot like burning, I had to use the wheelchair as I needed to have some artificial legs before I could use the crutches.

It was not easy to find any help from anyone including the government. I struggled to have social grant but at the end I got it. I thought that the grant can

help me do things for me and my child who was at school. The problem with the money I am getting is that it comes once after 3 months. When this money comes out, I am always in many debts as I have to see the doctor, so I use it for transport. I am paying rent as I had to move from my home so that I can be near services. I also have a child who is looking to me to have things for school and other necessities. I think someone will have to think more when it comes to disburse the money to needy people.

I use the money to buy stock as I am now selling at the market street to earn the living. I am selling airtime, sweets, zimbas and apples. I am real living the life that I don't like, I am hoping if our government could have mercy on us things could be much better. I need to work hard much that I can have my own big business but I don't know how that can happen. I need a shelter for my family but things are not going according my plan, I would like to encourage the government to do better things for people like me, that can change the country and will be honoured by other countries. Persons with disabilities can do more for themselves if they can be assisted financially.

“I know we all encounter hardships in our lives, but when someone with a disability is able to overcome all of them, disability brings to not only survive but to find mega success that is an amazing thing to behold.” concluded Mahlomola

NEWS IN PICTURES



Pascalina and Tlalane during voter education street bash



St. Angela Cheshire Home children were set to receive wheelchairs from Shonaquip



Pascalina and Lipolelo ready to go for Voter Education Pitiki (Women activity)



LNFOOD trained health care officers at leribe on inclusive health care



Candidate Forum conducted by Voter Educators (PWDs) for Local Government Election



Molise Foso on his tour to view the beautiful of Lesotho

UPCOMING EVENT

Capacity Building Program Team Management meeting

For more information please contact the
office: +266 22320345 or email;
moeletsi@Infod.org.ls

Inclusive Health Care training for Health workers in Maseru, Mafeteng and Mochale's hoek

For more information please contact the
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School monitoring visits

For more information please contact the
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International Disability Day – 3rd December, 2017

For more information please visit; UN
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