

UNICEF-LNFOD QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT ON Project: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION for learners with disabilities in Lesotho

First Quarter (26 January 2021)

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15th September- 15th December 2020 inclusive education report

Objectives

The project seeks to ensure that more children with disabilities access inclusive, equitable and quality education through skills development and in service training of teachers on inclusive education methods. Under COVID-19 the project intends to promote COVID-19 public health messages among children with disabilities and learner packs in accessible formats. The initiative also seeks to promote equal job opportunities for young adolescents with disabilities by increasing their vocational skills which increase their job opportunities in the labour market.

Executive summary

With UNICEF Lesotho support, the Lesotho National Federation of (LNFOD) with the representative organisations of persons with disabilities, Intellectual Disability and autism Association of Lesotho (IDAL), Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD), Lesotho National League of the Visually Impaired Persons (LNLVIP) and National Association of the Deaf Lesotho (NADL) have undertaken a **campaign** to support the MOET to implement the Lesotho Inclusive education POLICY (2018). Through public gatherings in 16 local community councils¹ in which community leaders and leaders of organisations of persons with disabilities in the community were sensitized on Inclusive education and importance of including persons with disabilities in the education system. Also through equipping Primary and Post- primary teachers with basic practical inclusive education skills and lastly to effectively support children with disabilities during the covid 19 pandemic.

Ever since the inception of the project in end of September 2020, LNFOD has been able to implement the following activities: to ensure that more children with disabilities are enrolled in mainstream and specialized schools; whereby 4 (2F,2M) children were enrolled in primary schools in Quthing while 16 persons with physical disabilities (10F, 6M) were considered for Ithuseng vocational training centre waiting list. As of October 2020 53 [31(f) 22(m)] children and youth with disabilities have been identified and will be supported to enroll in vocational and special schools working hand in hand with the MOET. 73 Primary and post primary teachers have been equipped with basic practical inclusive education skills working together with special education officers in the district level and 1,853 Covid 19 NACOSEC health information has been translated into accessible and easy to read material which have been distributed in both mainstream and special schools in the districts of Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Maseru and Mafeteng with the help of the education districts offices. The COVID-19 health messages were produced in Braille for the blind learners; large print for the partially sighted learners; easy to read or plain language for learners with intellectual disabilities and a video message was produced and distributed to the deaf learners so that they could learn on how they can protect themselves from COVID-19.

Output 1 More children with disabilities receive quality education and skills training (on going)

¹ Refer to annex for list of community councils visited

Output 1.1

Public gatherings

This output seeks to promote inclusive education and ensure children with disabilities have access to education by advocating for better integration of learners with disabilities in schools. As thus LNFOD and its affiliates have conducted public gatherings to mobilize out of school children and youth to enroll in special/ regular or vocational training institutions in the above mentioned community councils. Due to the second corona virus pandemic schools re opening has been postponed so none of the identified children has been placed. The output aimed to facilitate enrollment of 120 out of school children and youth and so far only 53 have been identified mainly because the identification forms have not been collected from all the community councils. This task will be completed as soon as the lockdown restrictions ease.



Figure 1 Public gathering held at Mohlakeng Community council to identify children and youth with disabilities out of school

Public gatherings were conducted by LNFOD and affiliates in 13 community councils where community leaders including leaders of organizations of persons with disabilities in the community were sensitized on the project and requested to identify children with disabilities who need to be enrolled either on special or regular schools. 5 community councilors of the Metsi-Maholo, Motanasela, Ratau, Tsoili-Tsoili and Mashaleng directly assisted with the identification while in other community councils, the leaders just supported 25 (12 Male and 13 Female) leaders of organizations of persons with disabilities in the community in their areas. The Auxiliary social workers in Metsi-Maholo and Mashaleng as well as Ratau area chief were also part of the mission. Present at the public gatherings were also persons with disabilities as well as others representing persons with disabilities.



Figure 2 Public gathering held at Ratau community council to identify children and youth with disabilities out of school

It was in the community councils in Maseru, Mafeteng, Leribe and Mohale's hoek that 53 persons with visual, hearing, intellectual and physical disabilities were identified 30 children with the 4 mentioned different types of disabilities (age 3-17) 15 male 15 females and 23 youth (17-35) 17 Female, 7 Male. These individuals are to be linked with the mainstream special or vocational training so that they enroll in 2021.

All the identified are from the Councils in Maseru, Mafeteng, Leribe and Mohale's hoek districts. The youth eligible for enrolling in vocational institutions will be guided by LNFOD and affiliates through the TVD in the ministry of education. LNFOD will further work with the special education officers in the districts to ensure proper assessment and placement for the children identified. LNFOD will also monitor and support learners in collaboration with the ministry of education and the ministry of social development where necessary.



Figure 3 Public gathering held at Tsoili-Tsoili Community council to identify children and youth with disabilities out of school

Output 1.2

Teacher trainings

This activity aimed at promoting inclusive education and to ensure children with disabilities have access to education by advocating for better integration of learners with disabilities in schools and reasonable accommodation for those who are already in schools. The concept of reasonable accommodation requires the education to be adjusted and modified in order to enable learners with disabilities to access education on an equal basis with others and to participate in education without being disadvantaged by their disability. Meaning that the teachers should be equipped with the skills which may enable them to fully understand the different situations and disabilities of learners with disabilities and the different modalities which they can apply to ensure that learners with disabilities are not denied their right to education due to their disabilities.

To date 73 Primary and Post- primary teachers have been reached against the 139 that was targeted. This is simply because the rest of the remaining teachers which are pre-primary and TVET teachers will be trained during the second quarter.

Through the use of its inclusive education manual LNFOED has been able to deliver the following content to the teachers who attended in service on inclusive education:

The Definitions of inclusive education versus special education so that teachers may understand the difference between the two concept and why government is shifting to inclusive education for learners with disabilities.

The educational theories behind both inclusive and special education being social and medical model of disability.

The definition of disability versus impairment was delivered so that the teachers may appreciate the difference between the two and the challenges which are either brought by the disability or impairment of learners to the education of a learner with disability. Disability is defined as the result of an interaction between a learner with impairment and the attitudinal and environmental barriers which may hinder such a learner to access education on an equal basis with others whilst impairment is the functional limitation of sensory, mental/intellectual and physical body functions.

The barriers faced by learners with disabilities have been discussed and the manner in which the identified barriers can be addressed in the school settings.

Provision of reasonable accommodation for learners with disabilities has been highlighted as one of the key strategy through which learners with disabilities can fully be included in the classroom situation. This concept requires teachers to understand the disability of each learner and adjust, modify the lesson in such a manner that the learner with a particular disability is able to learn on an equal basis with others without being disadvantaged by his or her disability.

Since education must be available, accessible, adaptable to all learners including learners with disabilities, teachers were equipped with the techniques and skills which they should employ when teaching in order to ensure that learners with disabilities fully participate in the classroom situation and receive and learn on an equal basis with others.

In addition, LNFOD has unique way of imparting knowledge on teachers through the lived experiences of persons with disabilities who also become part of the training in order to ensure that the practical skills on how to deal with certain situations of learners with disabilities is also addressed.

Further using 'A re amohelaneng' booklet teachers were taken through how to effectively interact with learners with disabilities. Reasonable accommodation was introduced as a concept that should be employed by teachers as it is essential for individual learners, these topics the topics mentioned above have capacitated teachers on inclusive teaching methods including through reduction of the attitudinal barriers in schools and visualize how to bring it into practice in their respective schools.

Teacher trainings were conducted for Quthing, Mohale's hoek, Mafeteng, Maseru, Berea and Leribe both Mainstream and special school teachers with the aim of deepening their understanding on inclusive education so that they are able to accommodate and assist learners with disabilities achieve in schools. Through this activity, 73 teachers were reached 53 (F) 17 (M). Quthing 9, Mohale's hoek 10, Mafeteng 23, Maseru 10, Berea 10 and Leribe 11. These teachers consist of 35 Primary teachers and 38 post primary teachers.



Figure 4 Teacher training at Mafeteng District

These teachers were taken through aspects of disability using a training tool developed by LNFOD which gave teachers an insight of variety of impairments that they may or already coming across in classrooms and how to interact and support such learners. Additionally, teachers learned different learning pathways to use in their classrooms in order to reach out to all learners including those with disabilities. It was at this point that teachers realized the importance of inclusive education and teachers being diverse in delivering content. They were further highlighted on different policy and legal frameworks protecting education of learners with disabilities among other topics of a two-day training.²

Teachers shared their experiences and challenges which included neglecting learners with disabilities while they rush to finish the syllabus, ignoring their needs, labelling them out of frustration and not doing anything to help them because they lacked skills. Teachers admitted that more often than not, they leave behind learners with disabilities in their classrooms because of the negative attitude they have towards them.

² Schedule attached (Annex 4)

There were however teachers that have initiated support for learners with disabilities, however they face a great challenge of not receiving sufficient support from the ministry of education. For instance, the schools would report their various cases and seek support and assistance to help such learners with conducive environment as they lack expertise, but the ministry seem to have insufficient resource to support schools. Moreover, there were teachers who were not aware that they could engage the ministry of education to help accommodate learners with disabilities in regular schools.



Figure 5 Teacher training held for Berea and Leribe district teachers at Leribe district

Going forward teachers promised to work hard to ensure inclusion of learners with disabilities and support them according to their individual needs (Practicing reasonable accommodation). It was in this workshops that teachers explored different learning pathways that could be used to reach out to variety of learners in the classroom. The Individualized educational plan for learners with disabilities was highlighted as a major tool in educating learners with disabilities.

Some of the major challenges teachers face in educating learners with disabilities are but not limited to: having a mindset that learners with disabilities are not teachable, lack of resources, lack of parental involvement, lack of support from colleagues and in some cases the Ministry as stated above, being mocked by colleagues when they try to advise them on how to assist these learners.

The special education officials who were part of the training briefed teachers on referral systems where there is need. The barriers that learners with disabilities face in accessing education were discussed bringing forward how those barriers can be removed so that learners with disabilities can access quality education on equitable basis with their peers who are non-disabled.



Figure 6 Teacher training workshop held for Quthing and Mohale's hoek teachers

At the end of the workshops evaluation was done to determine whether the message was delivered home for the teachers. To an issue of whether the training was relevant to the teacher's needs, 96% of the teachers strongly agreed that the training was relevant to their needs while the other 4% just agreed. 31% of the participants strongly agreed that the length of training was sufficient while, the other 31% agreed and the other 39% disagreed. Overall majority of participants (72%) strongly agreed that the training met their expectation while the rest simply agreed.

The training revealed a great need for teachers to acquire deep understanding of specific impairments learned as well as how they can practically deal with such learners which calls for a follow up school based workshops focusing on specific challenges the school faces with regard to providing reasonable accommodation for children with disabilities.

Output 2

2.1 Mini survey

1. LNFOOD has completed the covid 19 impact on learners with disabilities in 5 special schools 2 centers and 2 schools mainstreaming learners with disabilities where findings revealed severe impact academically, socially, emotionally and psychologically. Respondents confirmed that learners with disabilities were unable to learn during schools' closure due to lack of learning materials and assistive devices, lack of guidance, inaccessible remote learning initiatives. In addition, most learners at this time had no sufficient food at home, even the little that some school provided for learners was not enough because it was shared among the whole family. Learners also faced social exclusions in communities.

24 teachers (22F 2M), 2F social workers, 47 learners and 25 (20 F 5M) parents/ caregivers of CWDs interviewed about the impact of Covid 19 on learners with disabilities in 5 special schools, 2 schools accommodating Learners with disabilities and 1 centre. These interviewees shared the struggle brought by the covid 19 pandemic which did not only exacerbated the educational problems of learners with disabilities but also their lives holistically especially the psycho-social aspects.

COVID-19 health information

LNFOOD and its member organizations translated 1, 852 copies of the Ministry of Health and NACOSEC COVID-19 messages in accessible formats including in Braille, easy-to-read for children with intellectual disabilities; and a video intended to reach out to the deaf children about COVID-19 messages.

76 copies has been distributed in Thuso-E-tla Tsoa kae, 76 Phelisanong, 82 St. Paul School for the Deaf, 81 Mt. Royal Primary 81 Mt. Royal High school, 82 Kananelo Centre for the Deaf 250 St. Angel for learners at Abia High School and the ones in Seeleso Primary, 36 Brailled messages, including 5 card messages each learners and 36 flash drives describing what Covid 19 is, how it is transmitted and how Visually Impaired Learners can protect themselves in St. Catherines High school, 9 flash drives at Life High School and 3 Braille messages at Mabathoana High school with the same messages.

The translated messages are aimed at helping learners with disabilities to gain proper information of what Covid 19 is, how it can be transmitted as well as how they can protect themselves against the virus.



Figure 7 NACOSEC messages translated into accessible formats for children with disabilities

Monitoring

Along with the UNICEF Lesotho ECE specialist and ministry of education official, LNFOOD carried out monitoring activity to get a sense of how the implemented activities have impacted the targeted beneficiaries. The monitoring was done mainly on two activities:

1. Covid 19 Health information distributed for Visually impaired learners at St. Catherine's high school

Learners and teachers at the above mentioned school confirmed the receiving of Covid 19 health messages (5 braille cards for 9 learners, 36 2page braille pamphlets). They acknowledged that the messages came in very handy as they had no correct information about Covid 19. They shared that some of them come from the remote site of the country where there is a believe that Covid 19 does not exist.

Learners were able to recall at least 3 Covid 19 messages such as 'wash your hands with water and soap', 'Avoid crowded place', 'avoid touching your face'. In the discussion with the learners they outlined that as much as the messages were helpful for them to minimize the spread of the virus, they face a great challenge in following some of the recommendations. For example, they shared that as the visually impaired, they depend on touching to manipulate the environment which as a result put them at a greater risk of contracting the virus.

They made a request that they may each have their own sanitizers so that they may frequently sanitize as they manipulate the environment on daily basis. Learners also shared some of their daily challenges hindering them to learn effectively such as having inadequate learning devices and resources.

2. Teacher training executed for teachers teaching learners with disabilities at Mohale's hoek High school, Likuena high school and St. Patricks High school

In collaboration with UNICEF Lesotho ECE specialist and the special education inspector in Mohale's hoek, LNFOOD visited the three schools mentioned above to find out what the schools have done with the lead of representatives who attended a two-day teacher training workshop that was intended to equip them with practical skills. The findings were as follows;

At M/hoek high school the two teachers who attended the workshop disseminated the information they acquired to their colleagues who warmly welcomed the information. They mentioned that their colleagues were not aware just as they themselves were not prior the workshop that they are failing learners with disabilities. Teachers at this school were able to identify and referred for medical examination in Mafeteng and Maseru (Queen Mamohato Hospital). Teachers added that before this workshop they had a learner who was unable to write for four years and after being informed at the workshop they got hands on to assist that learner with the support from the ministry of education. They however mentioned that the workshop lack information about how to properly identify learners with disabilities.

These teachers along with the principal and the school counsellor representing their other colleagues, mentioned a need for a school based workshop to equip the rest of the staff with the skills to identify and support learners with disabilities in school going into details on strategies to be used for specific disabilities. They alluded that their colleagues demonstrated eagerness to know more and assist learners during and post information sharing.

The school is very challenged with non-accessible environment. They shared that except having learners with disabilities who are challenged by the environment, they also had a teacher who was using a wheel chair who could not access the environment. Learners had to come to her while she stays in one class, if

there was a meeting that meeting had to go to her and the school did absolutely nothing about that. However, after the inclusive education workshop they felt a need to do something about their environment.

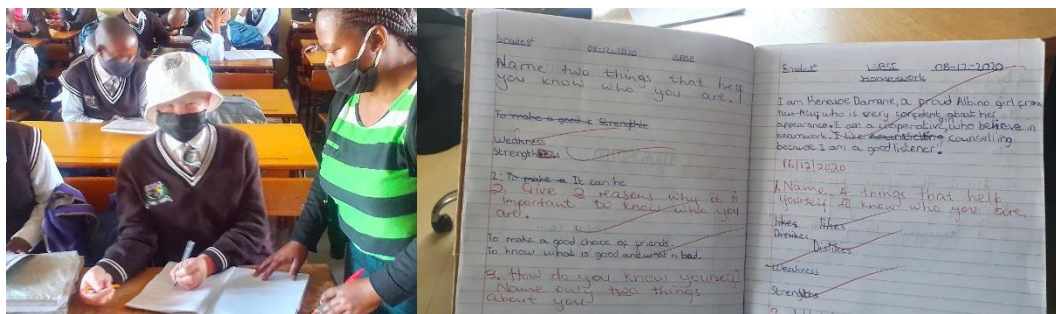
Likuenia High School

Only one of the two teachers who attended the workshop on the day. She together with the principal confirmed that there was no information shared after the workshop for no valid reason. They told UNICEF Lesotho ECE specialist and the team that some of their challenges include having a learner they call 'naughty' who move from one class to another because no teacher wants them in their class. It was at that meeting that they need to disseminate the information was emphasised as the two teachers who went for the training were just representatives of the school.

St. Patricks High School

The teachers who attended the training told the ECE specialist and the team that this training was their first. They shared that one of the important issue they learned was approaching learners as individuals so that they are able to meet their needs. Details of the workshop was also shared with colleagues in this schools who received the message positively. The two teachers claimed to have notice change of attitude from their colleagues, for instance teachers are not as harsh as they used to be towards learners.

One of the teachers who attended the workshop shared that she has change her approach towards a partially sighted learner who could not see on the board even when wearing spectacles. This teacher stated that she now writes on that learner's exercise when giving class work and ever since she adopted that strategy the teacher is enjoying and doing well.



Challenges

- ❖ Majority of Persons with disabilities struggle financially which results in them missing opportunities such as educational opportunities.
- ❖ Persons with disabilities face great ill treatment and discrimination in societies including inability to access essential services and public opportunities.
- ❖ Teachers do not receive sufficient support from the ministry of education in accommodating and supporting learners with disabilities in classrooms.
- ❖ Resources are lacking for learners with disabilities to be accommodated and supported in schools
- ❖ The Covid 19 Pandemic as exacerbated the already existing challenges learners with disabilities face on daily basis.

Conclusion

Output 1 which aimed at promoting inclusive education and ensure children with disabilities have access to education have been partially achieved as out of school children and youth have not yet been placed in relevant school or institution. Continuation of this activity is recommended hand in hand with the ministry of education and technical and vocational training schools/ institutions. Additionally, only primary and post primary teachers have been equipped with inclusive education skills so that they are able to accommodate learners with disabilities, some of them however conveyed a need to be provided with deeper skills of accommodating specific impairments they learned. With regard to the second output which focused on ensuring that learners with disabilities have access to Covid 19 health information in accessible formats, the output has been achieved.

Recommendations

- ❖ Schools should strengthen disability awareness in sexual reproductive health curricula
- ❖ Four-day school based workshop for all teachers
- ❖ Teachers to strengthen orientation of learners on disability.
- ❖ Learning sessions for teachers to share information and experiences.
- ❖ Collaboration with the ministry of education and TVET institutions in placing the identified youth and children with disabilities.

Annexes

Annex 1

Schools trained on Inclusive Education

District	Name of the School	Number of teachers trained
Quthing	Sebapala High School	2
	Tiping Secondary School	2
	Mpapa Secondary school	1
	St. Gabriel High School	1
	Moorosi high school	2
Mohale's hoek	Mohale's hoek High School	2
	Likuena High School	2
	Qhalasi High School	2
	Morifi High School	2
	St.Patrick's High school	2
	Naleli English Medium High school	1
Leribe	St. Paul school for the Deaf	2
	Leribe English medium	2
	Hlotse Methodist Primary	2
	Hlotse High school	2
	Mt. Royal Primary	1
Berea	Lipohong High school	5
	Assumption Primary	5
Mafeteng	Motsekuoa Primary	4
	St. Johns Primary	5
	St. Johns High school	5
	Makintane High school	5
	Phokoane Primary	5
Maseru	Ts'osane Primary	2
	Maseru Methodist Primary	2
	Maseru East Primary	2
	Moshoeshoe II Primary	2

	Boitelo Primary	2

Annex 2

Distribution of Covid 19 health messages

Name of School	Number of materials	Type of material
Thuso-E-tla Tsoa kae	76	Posters and pamphlets
Phelisanong	76	Posters and pamphlets
St. Paul School for the Deaf	82	A2, 3, and 4 Posters
Mt. Royal Primary	81	A2, 3, and 4 Posters
Mt. Royal High school	81	A2, 3, and 4 Posters
Kananelo Centre for the Deaf	82	A2, 3, and 4 Posters
St. Angel	250	Posters and pamphlets
St. Catherines High school	102	Flash discs, 2 page braille pamphlets and braille cards with short messages
Life High School	9	flash discs
Mabathoana High school	3	braille 2 page pamphlets
Motsekuoa Primary	125	Posters and pamphlets
Motsekuoa High school	125	
Mohloli oa Bophelo	19	10 2 page pamphlets 9 flash discs
St. Bernadette Resource Centre for the blind	90	flash discs and 2 page braille pamphlets

Annex 3

District	Community council	Date Visited
Quthing	Qomo-Qomong	September 2019
	Quthing Urban	September 2019
	Mjanyane	September 2019
Mohale's hoek	Khoelenya	November 2020
	Mashaleng	October 2020
	Thaba- Mokhele	October 2020
Mafeteng	Metsi- maholo	October 2020
Maseru	Ratau,	October 2020
	Qiloane	November 2020
Berea	Motanasela	October 2020
	senekane	October 2020
Leribe	Menkhoaneng	November 2020
	Maputsoe urban	November 2020
	Tsoili-Tsoili	October 2020
	Maoamafubelu	October 2020

Annex 4

2-day Inclusive Education Teacher training for teachers of children with disabilities- schedule

Day 1		
Time	Activity	Facilitator
08:00-08:30	registration	
08:30-08:40	Prayer	
08:40-08:50	Welcome remarks	
08:50-09:00	Introductions	

09:00-09:30	Overview	
09:30-09:35	Purpose of the training	
09:35-09:40	Housekeeping rules	
09:40-09:45	Objectives of the training	
09:45-10:00	Background	
10:00-10:30	Break	
10:30-10:45	Policy and legal framework	
10:45-11:15	Understanding Disability	
11:15-11:45	Practical skills for teachers to interact with learners with disabilities	
12:00- 13:00	Understanding Inclusive Education activity	
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-14:30	Definition of terms supporting Inclusive Education	
14:30-15:30	Principles of Education	
15:30-16:00	What have you learned? How are you going to apply it	

2-day Inclusive Education Teacher training for teachers of children with disabilities

Day 2		
Time	Activity	Facilitator
08:00-08:30	registration	
08:30-08:40	Prayer	
08:40-09:00	Reflection	
09:00-09:45	Social vs medial model	
09:45-10:00	Are the Educational Needs of Children with Disabilities Different or Special?	

10:00-10:30	Child-Centred Pedagogy	
10:30-11:00	Break	
11:00-12:00	Activity (Laos case study)	
12:00-13:00	Educational barriers facing full participation and inclusion of learners with disabilities	
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-14:30	Barriers (Activity)	
14:30-15:00	Activity learning approaches	
15:00- 15:30	Assessment	
15:30-15:40	Cross cutting issue	
15:40-15:50	Way forward	
15:50-15:55	What have you learned? How are you going to apply it	
15:55-1600	Closing Remarks	