



WELCOME TO NTSOE-LENG

Welcome to the sixth edition of *Ntsoe-Leng*, the bi-annual newsletter produced by the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOOD).

This newsletter contains news and views from a range of stakeholders in Lesotho's disability sector spanning the past 6 months.

If you are interested in learning more about LNFOOD, our partners or disability in Lesotho, please visit our website www.lnfod.org.ls or sign up to our monthly e-newsletter Disability Lesotho by e-mailing pletsau@gmail.com.

Please feel free to offer any feedback, suggestions or contributions by

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Alternatively, call us on [+266 22320345](tel:+26622320345) or come visit us at the LNFOOD office on Mabile Rd, Old Europa, Maseru.

Best regards,
Rabasotho Moeletsi

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L a n g u a g e h a s unsuspectingly been used to perpetrate stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities. Admittedly, correct language is always relative to a particular group of people owing to culture, background and beliefs.

As Basotho, culture played a significant role to shape the way we speak. Culture labels and gives descriptive names to those that are deemed 'different', which is an indicator of respect and our level of acceptance towards people with disability.

The paradigm shift that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) presents in terms of moving from the medical model to the social model signify an imperative

Disability Etiquette: the relativity of correct language usage

Mamello Phekani-Makau (Disability and Human Rights Advisor, LNFOOD)

need to also change the way we speak to and about people with disabilities. Within the disability movement, language has been a very important aspect of advocacy and has been elevated to the level of a human rights issue as opposed to mere political trivia because people with disability have a right to chose how they want to be addressed and or described.

I recently joined the disability movement in Lesotho and it

"... the house descended on me with correct language that it is in fact 'people or persons with disability.'"

dawned on me how important language is when we talk about people with disability and disability issues. I was giving a presentation at a workshop hosted by LNFOOD for the advocacy task team members on the 17-18 May 2014 and despite having read the manual on practical guidelines on how to interact with people with disabilities,

"*A re Amohelaneng*", I got caught in a trap that most non-disabled people get caught in - I used language which in my mind, seemed most appropriate when talking about people with disabilities. I kept on saying "people living with disabilities". I think I said it one or two times and then the third time, the house descended on me with correct language that it is in fact 'people or persons with disability.'

Although I was convinced that my initial statement was correct, I later realised that my statement gave a sense that an individual is living with a disability and is therefore, disempowered, dependant, and incapable. I have now come to the realisation that it is crucial to adhere to a person's choice on how they wish to be addressed despite my convictions either formed as a result of culture, my background or my belief in what is right and wrong.

ELEVATING DISABILITY RIGHTS IN AFRICA ROUNDTABLE: EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN LESOTHO

Maseru US Embassy organized employment roundtable for persons with disabilities with Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) on the 25 June 2014 at US Ambassador house in Maseru.



Disability Rights Roundtable: US Embassy, Maseru

The Lesotho private sector and the relevant government ministries were invited to share the experiences in how they accommodate people with disabilities at the workplaces as well as to how they ensure the recruitment of employees with disabilities in the companies. The invitees included the ECONET Telkom Lesotho, Vodacom Lesotho, and Lesotho Standard Bank, Employers association, Principal Secretaries of the Ministry Of Labour And Employment and Others.

Carl B. Fox, who spoke on behalf of the US Ambassador, expressed the US government commitment to elevate disability rights in Africa and in this instance Lesotho will not be an exception. He said that, one of the main reasons why the roundtable was organized was to deepen the understanding of the US government on the challenges facing people with disabilities particularly on employment. Having understood the issues around this matter, the US government will be in a position to support Lesotho in ensuring that people with disabilities access job opportunities on an equal basis with others.

The executive Director of LNFOD

Adv Nkhasi Sefuthi delivered keynote address on the situational analysis concerning the employment of people with disabilities in Lesotho. He indicated that, People with disabilities in Lesotho face various barriers such as isolation and exclusion from the society and extreme dependency on their families and the society at large. The barriers are two-fold; attitudinal and institutional. Attitudinal barriers are those imposed by the nondisabled which are often characterized by beliefs and sentiments held by the nondisabled. People with disabilities are often called mockery names and are often viewed as objects of charity and passive recipients of rehabilitation services. The institutional barriers include physical barriers such as those caused by infrastructure, policies, practices and procedures adopted by various entities that constitute the society. As a result of attitudinal and environmental barriers faced by the PWDs, the PWDs experience serious inequalities in terms of access to employment opportunities and recruitment for example, accessibility issues by the wheelchair users and the visually impaired when trying to access job opportunities at various institutions.

The other major problem faced by the public institutions pertaining to the recruitment of PWDs relates to the current database in that it does not disaggregate data by disability. Thus, making it difficult to know the number of PWDs enrolled in the public and private sector.

According to the 2006 Census report disabled persons make up 3.7 of the total population. The majority of the disabled remain poor because of a lack of education and high unemployment rate amongst disabled people.

Lesotho acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on December 2nd 2008 which in Article 4 calls n state parties to implement policies, laws and administrative measures aimed at securing the rights of people with disabilities and to abolish laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination towards people with disabilities. To date Lesotho has not adopted a disability specific legislation. There are however some law's which prohibit the discrimination of people with disability such as the Education Act 2010 and the Children's Protection and Welfare Protection Act,

There is currently also the National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy which has been adopted by the government of Lesotho 2011.

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Disability Rights Advocacy Coalition Meeting:

By LNFOD Advocacy Desk

LESOTHO NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANISATIONS OF THE DISABLED joined the rest of the world by conducting its biannual disability rights advocacy coalition meeting in March on the topic, *Inclusive Post 2015 Global Framework*, in which LNFOD strongly appeals that, Lesotho

should ensure that, targets and indicators of the post 2015 global framework specifically include persons with disabilities. The specific inclusion of disability in the global framework for development enable Lesotho to measure the progress made towards the inclusion of people with disabilities and encourage data

disaggregation based on disability. Minister of Social Development Honourable 'Matebatso Doti officiated the meeting in which she shared the same sentiments with LNFOD, that MDGs did not promote inclusion of disability.

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Disability Rights Advocacy Coalition Meeting

By LNFOD Advocacy Desk

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Speech by the Honourable minister of Social development

The Gist of the Minister of Social Development's keynote address was, in her own words, "The ministry of social development was established with the main purpose of addressing the needs of persons with disabilities and making sure that MDGs are fully adhered to with regards to disability empowerment."

Honourable Minister, 'Matebatso Doti observed that globally the number of persons with disability is increasing, and the needs of persons with disability are evident and need to be attended to. She noted that the government of the kingdom of Lesotho, just like other countries of the world has ratified important protocols, like the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

"...advocacy meeting... the exact forum in unpacking the needs of persons with disabilities..."

The minister further informed the meeting that her ministry has taken serious measures to accommodate persons with disabilities in various ways. This is demonstrated by the establishment of the office directly working with persons with disabilities through the community based rehabilitation initiative. She further noted that meetings such as the one in progress are aimed at gathering the needs and aspirations of PWDs, so that when they are



Addressing the needs of PWDs: Minister of Social Development, Hon. 'Matebatso Doti

tabled at UN in September they encompass the dire needs of the disabled in general.

The minister ended her speech by indicating that it is the wish of her ministry to serve the diverse needs of the vulnerable people and those with disabilities. She hailed the advocacy meeting to be the exact forum in unpacking the needs of persons with disabilities and promised to adhere to them in any way possible.

LNFOD's Statement on inclusive post 2015 development agenda for persons with disabilities

The advocacy coordinator at LNFOD, Mr. Sefuthi, when addressing the meeting on Advocacy, reiterated that the MDGs will expire in 2015 and that the UN is looking forward to what the member states have done so far towards inclusion of persons with disabilities.

He indicated that one of the yardsticks of the MDGs is to enhance the visibility of PWDs within the developmental frameworks. This is justified by the fact that PWDs through their

advocacy organisations have over the past two years been closely collaborating with partners at international level, and this provides leverage for PWDs to be seen and understood.

He further alluded to the fact that UN has the responsibility of guiding the member states on what the new inclusion framework should look like and that countries are compelled to ascertain their implementations. In his deliberation he made mention of the Kenya declaration which bears testimony to what African countries are intending to do in terms of adhering to the needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities.

"...MDGs will expire in 2015 and the UN is looking forward to what the member states have done so far towards inclusion of PWDs."



Advocating for the Rights of PWDs: Director at LNFOD, Adv. Nkhasi Sefuthi

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Disability Rights Advocacy Coalition Meeting

By LNFOD Advocacy Desk

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Discussion on the need to ensure that the specific support post 2015 development agenda with explicit targets and indicators during the UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY is enhanced.

Participants in the meeting had an opportunity to discuss what they do to include PWDs in their activities, this was done with the sole purpose of ensuring that stakeholders do understand their roles in terms of “support post 2015” which forms a core message towards the UN general assembly in September 2015.

Presentations by Development for Peace Education (DPE), Sentebale, Disaster Management Authority (DMA), Campaign for Education Forum (CEF), and Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)

When addressing the meeting, a representative from the development for peace education indicated that DPE involves people with disabilities from all walks of life, he attested that DPE does not directly work with PWDs as an entity, but they work with them as part of the society. He further indicated that DPE does advocate for public participation, and this includes people with disabilities, but their doors are opened for PWDs to advise them on issues of disability.

The presenter from Sentebale informed the meeting that Sentebale is a charity organisation founded in

2004, through the initiative by Prince Harry and Prince Seiso. She highlighted that Sentebale provides assistance to a number of special schools which cater for disabled children in the country and that they are guided by the standards designed by the MSD and also they rely on the rights of the child charter and many more conventions which are geared towards social development. She indicated that the major goal for Sentebale is to assist the vulnerable communities in Lesotho and that Sentebale aspires to work together with the interested parties particularly the organisations of persons with disability. To showcase the intention of their desire, Sentebale provided hearing aids to deaf students and they are calling upon all the stakeholders to join Sentebale in providing social assistance to vulnerable members of the society.

The presenter from Disaster Management Authority (DMA) indicated that they have a substantial funding to involve PWDs in activities, and that her office is also looking forward to involving PWDs in livelihoods, so that when hazards occur they are able to withstand extreme situations. She pointed out that DMA has a contingency plan that looks at a larger community and often PWDs do not feature in such plans, hence the need to involve PWDs in every step of national planning. The DMA chief further informed the meeting that her office is intending to train NGOs and PWDs as this groups are relevant to the work done by DMA. Lastly, she indicated that as a way of recognising the presence of PWDs, PWDs are represented in the DMA board of directors.

The presenter from campaign Education Forum, indicated that her organisation deals with PWDs on issues of inclusive education in schools. She also mentioned that her organisation advocates for the inclusive education policy which forms a pinnacle of development towards inclusion of PWDs. One other development that she pointed out is that they are intending to include PWDs when they do radio programmes as this will help in diversifying the issues of inclusive education in schools. Lastly the presenter made mention of the fact that within their system they have thematic groups for early childhood level up to the tertiary.

The presenter indicated that her office is geared towards increasing education access for learners with disability at all levels. In her presentation it transpired that Special education unit provides technical support on how to work with learners with special needs. She further mentioned that her department raises awareness to the public, so that those who hide their children could let them to go to school.

The presenter went further to inform the gathering that her office engages in assessment and referral of children to the prospective service providers e.g. MOSD. Further her office works closely with NGOs and LNFOD. Lastly, she indicated that they support disabled teachers by providing teachers who support them in schools. This is demonstrated on blind teachers who have been provided assistant teachers in various schools where they are deployed, but the biggest challenge that faces these teachers is availability of funding.

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Comment on LNFOD advocacy message

The gathering was requested to comment on the presentation from LNFOD as it was the key presentation for the day. Only one comment came from the participants, whereby the suggestion was that government should see to it that LNFOD constitutes high level delegation that would represent Lesotho.

Closing remarks by Acting Executive Director, Mr. Moholi Raseabi

The acting director thanked the delegates to have participated in the meeting. He raised a concern that the issues of disability are not only directed to ministry of social development but they are cross cutting, and should be treated in the manner that all the ministries are cognisant about disability issues.

On a serious note the advocacy coordinator reiterated the concern that other ministries which were invited did not attend. He particularly took notice of the ministry of foreign affairs, they are the ministry responsible for tabling the Lesotho disability inclusion and reporting success of MDGs. Basically they were to address the following pertinent issues:

- Statement of support towards inclusive post 2015 development agenda with explicit targets and indicators
- Statement on how to ensure that the Lesotho delegation will support post 2015 development agenda

Briefing After The Millennium Development Goals – Including Disabled People In Post 2015

BACKGROUND INTRODUCTION

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expire in 2015, and therefore the United Nations is currently running a process of negotiations aimed at developing a successor framework of development goals which will guide the international community's development work up until 2030 (which will most likely be called 'Sustainable Development Goals' to reflect the growing recognition that climate change and sustainability need to be recognized in development frameworks).

There was no mention of disabled people in the original MDGs, and, partly as a result, disabled people have been excluded from much of the progress that has been made since their adoption in 2000. If the new framework is fully inclusive, it could be a game changer for disabled people. The MDGs profoundly influenced both national development plans and donor policy, and we can expect that the new framework will do the same. *If disabled people are highly visible in the new framework, it will be much easier for us to negotiate inclusion in our countries and with donors.*

WORK DONE SO FAR

Over the past two years disability and development organisations have worked with partners in International Disability Alliance and the IDDC to actively engage in the process. The disability

movement's first target was the UN's High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Framework (HLP). This was a great success: the report that the Panel released made three key recommendations: 1) that attention to disabled people be a key component of the new framework, 2) that data to measure progress against it must be disaggregated by disability so that we can measure whether disabled people are benefiting equally, and 3) no target should be considered achieved unless it has been achieved for all relevant population groups, including disabled people.

The responsibility for this process and the future framework was passed on from the HLP to a new group, called the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG). This group is made up of nation state representatives, although not every UN member nation is represented. The OWG has been holding a series of thematic meetings to get input from its members. The meeting included sessions such as session on the theme of 'Promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment'. The OWG, like the HLP, will produce key input to the UN Secretary General. The Secretary-General will make recommendations in a report to UN member states on what the new framework should look like, and then countries will enter a long period of negotiation over the final text, ending in 2015.

Based on these global consultations and input to the OWG, the UN member states are now starting their discussions on what the goals should be and what kind of targets and indicators are feasible and useful in order to monitor progress.

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Disability Rights Advocacy Coalition Meeting

By LNFOD Advocacy Desk

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Briefing After The Millennium Development Goals – Including Disabled People In Post 2015

CONCLUSION

On March 6-8th, 2014 representatives from 13 African countries met in Nairobi, Kenya, and agreed on a list of priorities for the post-2015 goals. The document that was launched on the 8th March, 2014 has been

named “The Nairobi Declaration” (attached). Based on the foregoing, LNFOD is humbly asking the Lesotho UN country negotiating team and the focal point ministry, development planning to explicitly support the inclusive post 2015 development agenda so that Lesotho will be able to measure progress made towards Basotho with disabilities.

WAYFORWARD

Specific targets and indicators for targeting disabled people should be developed in all relevant areas, including disaster risk reduction

and adaptation to climate change as well as social sectors and employment;

The new framework should require that data used to measure progress must be disaggregated by disability so that we can monitor whether disabled people are benefitting equally with non-disabled people;

Disabled people and our organisations should be included in the development, implementation and monitoring of the new development goals.

European Union Week Celebration

LNFOD in partnership with the EU celebrated the EU week in Semonkong on the 28 April 2014. European Union is one of the Developmental Partner which is funding the programme of Deepening Decentralization on issues of Disabilities within rural communities.



Celebrating European Union Week

Making the week successful, LNFOD campaigned for Inclusive Education of learners with disabilities. The campaign was to place their coloured painted hand prints on the Lesotho map to support inclusive education in the country. The campaign started in Semonkong where the week was launched. LNFOD delegation started early on the day by running the flag to the schools around Makhoalipana A10 community council in Semonkong. Learners from those schools put their hand prints on the flag signifying their support to education of children with disabilities. The schools who were involved were as follows; Polateng ECCD, Samuel Primary, St. Leonard Primary, Semonkong

High School.

This was followed by an overview of European Union and quiz led by His Excellency Head of EU Delegation in Lesotho himself at the Semonkong High school. This created a lot of interest from students at the school who showed a great participation.

The day ended with formal speeches at the Makhoalipana A10 community council premises where the Principal Chief of Matsieng who is also Mr. Masemene was advising the house in many things to make Lesotho a better country.” said Morena Seeiso

He continued; ‘I am supporting the

Sentebale, with that reason I would like to tell you that like I am assisting herd boys, I will not hesitate to help even people with disabilities as they deserve that. I am here for everyone who needs assistance.’

He continued by showing that he is prepared to continue the legacy of

his late mother, Queen Mamohato Bereng Seeiso who spent her whole life helping those who could not help themselves, and showed his appreciation to the EU head of delegation for considering to give support to the organisations of disabilities in Lesotho.

Ministry of Social Development was also invited. Acting PS, Mr. Masasa who was representing the Minister Mrs. ‘Matebatso Doti, said; ‘the Minister is out of the country and we were hoping that the minister of Agriculture will attend this event on behalf of ‘M’e ‘Matebatso but unfortunately got a serious problem that hindered him to be part of this event.

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European Union Week Celebration

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On behalf of the minister, Mr. Masasa said; "The ministry is working in consultation with DPOs. The ministry is in the process of enacting Disability specific legislation that will establish clear legal framework for the promotion and protection of the rights of people with disabilities." He further continued that will be the fulfillment of the obligations of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Lesotho signed in December 2008. "The ministry is hoping that before the end of this financial year ends, the Disability Equity Bill will have been presented to parliament and its subsequent enactment into law will start to make positive improvement in the lives of persons with disabilities." He concluded.

People of Semonkong were very excited about the day which they said it was that the project came to their area. They also made a

promise to support the project to succeed to realise the objectives of improving lives of persons with disabilities while they appealed to those who brought the project to continue until the project life time. "This was an important day in which we learned a lot as people in these mountains. From all the speakers we got hope that children with disabilities in Semonkong will get educated, and our role as residents is to support this good course," said by Mrs. Florina Thatho, an influential resident post the event.

All we pray for is for you LNFOOD, and the funders (European Union) to stand true to this place and not to desert the place like other projects which have moved away from our area on grounds that it is costly compared to other community areas in the lowlands. We have shown by putting our finger prints on the flag to show support to education of children with

disabilities all is left now is for you to lead the way and we will support that as citizens of Semonkong," concluded Florina.

On the other hand speaking on behalf of persons with disabilities, Mrs. Mafusi Qhoai of the Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho expressed her hopefulness that the project is heading for a success.

"We were impressed we held such a eventful celebration today. What excites us even more was the speech from our council, 'Makhoalipana who affirmed that they support the project and start to intensify their efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities benefit from services that are given in the council. Presence of our Principal Chief, Chief Seeiso Seeiso in person also confirms to us that this day was important," commended Mafusi who had a smile in her face.

Global Action Week Celebration

Introduction

As part of the preparations for the Global Action Week (4-10 May 2014) which is dedicated towards celebrating the nation's milestones in pursuing the 'Education For All' goals, bearing the theme: "Equal Right, Equal Opportunity, Education and Disability", five community dialogues were held in Mokhotlong by the Campaign for Education (CEF). These dialogues were meant to sensitize and mobilize the communities to gather their opinion on the Right to Education of people with disabilities as well as putting the communities' level of

understanding and conceptualization at par as far as the human rights, education and disability are concerned and this was largely achieved through a Peace March on May 5th 2014 from Thabang to Mokhotlong Pitso ground. Moreover, they dialogues were meant to find out what challenges communities have regarding the attainment of education for people with disabilities and what they feel could be done to help them.

Generally, children with disabilities are marginalized from the rest of the society and remain invisible to the mainstream population and education officials. As a result, there is no relevant data to identify their number

which could be helpful in devising means of providing them access to quality education. It is very important that societies adapt their structures to ensure that all children, irrespective of age, gender and disability, can enjoy their basic human rights without discrimination of any kind. Thus, the dialogues targeted the general community as any structural change in society starts with the communities themselves.

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During the dialogues, communities highlighted that although the government has gone a long way in making education accessible through implementation of the Free Primary Education Programme, there are still some challenges in various schools which include the following: local authorities do not

have a say in the running of the schools; parents are not consulted by schools when decisions are made; unavailability of specialized facilities and special educators; schools are distant; and the government imposes its decision on communities.

The objectives of the dialogues were, to a great extent, achieved

as people felt that they were part of the discussions and gladly embraced their responsibility in giving access to education to children with disabilities. It was then recommended that child education systems need to change to fit the specific needs of children with disabilities.

MY DISABILITY and JOB POLITICS **Thabiso Masenyetse**

Dear reader, this article attempts at giving you a short summery on a piece of my experience in disability and the struggle for job. The rationale is to paint a picture on how unfairly disability is treated in Lesotho; and a call for your active support towards mainstreaming disability in all government ministries.

I am a visually impaired Mosotho man aging between 25 and 30.

I have just graduated from the National University of Lesotho in 2013 in the programme called Public Administration and Political Science (PAPS).

Furthermore, I participated in a field of a number of political parties in my local constituency since the year 2006. I was still in a more tender age for I was in high school. However, most people have known me with sensible statements towards advising and resolving political matters at hand. Sometime later my aunt gave more of inspiration to me by introducing me before some of the local parliamentarians and some of the government ministries. She explained to them my strengths and commitment in politics. It seemed they were impressed for they started directly communicating to me about political issues in the constituency. They even referred

to me as comrade.

Moreover, it became so dominant that political affiliation was of great importance for recognition by leaders. As a result in 2012, my aunt reintroduced me before the same ministers; and this time she spoke the different language. She told them that I had graduated from the university and I needed a job in order to sustain my life. It is worth noting that I suddenly sensed some doubts from them, especially about my potential. Ridiculous questions then came up such as: whether my PAPS was the same as the one taught to the nondisabled students. Whether teachers and the exams were all the same.

More importantly, after some discussions they promised to look for a (chance) of giving me a job in their ministries. The word chance is in quotes because it then appeared in a too flird statement which was not emphasized. Three months later, I inquired about their progress, and I was immediately called for a meeting. It was then explained that it had been quiet difficult to create a job simple enough to suit me. The equipment used in the offices would not be friendly to me as I am blind; and there was no money to create new job post. So the ministers' resolution to this matter had been that they would talk to

the ministry of Social development to offer me the social grant and they would also top up with some amount from their pockets.

It is very apparent that my clarifications were contrary to their thoughts. As a result their last response was not so clear to me for they said they would think about it. Thereafter they have been so busy such that even the communication between us is broken. We only meet in the political meetings where there is no room for discussion. They only greet and now refer to me as (our friend), and it comes from very pitying voices.

In conclusion, I would like to raise awareness to all people that people with disability are also part and the direct product of the society, and therefore, they are eligible for all opportunities in Lesotho. Let us all rise and support and aspire to know about them. Dear reader once more, would you please not forget that (DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY).

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'Speech by the Prime Minister was a Turning Point for me'

Nqosa Morienyane

When LNFOD and the Ministry of health social welfare and the other partners organised international day of persons with disabilities on the 03rd December 2007, no one knew that the event would bring such an impact. The event was one of the most successful events in the history of IDPD celebrated in the land, where the event was graced by her majesty queen, Prime minister and his entire cabinet.

"That day was a turning point for me, the celebration inspired me in many ways," said Morienyane, who has been disabled since 2004.

"The then prime minister (Dr. Mosisili) in his speech indicated we need to get organised in forming the groups if we were to get any support from government. From that day I started calling other individuals with disabilities around TY to form a group, and then later we decided that we form an Association of the disabled in Berea."

As a founder of the Berea Association of the Disabled, Mr. Morienyane had one thing in mind; to see improvement of the lives of people with disabilities in Berea. He knew that for them to gain recognition there was a need to mobilize more people to join and speak in one voice. He says, "We approached the office of DA Berea for provision of transport to enable us to visit some other areas in the district; Mapoteng, Bela – Bela, Sebitia, Maqhaka. We were successful to in all these areas to get membership of persons with disabilities."

Having met with the people with disabilities in these areas, results were already showing and people were hopeful that the association was a vehicle for improving lives of persons of disabilities.

"Already we have few individuals



A Turning Point for me: Mr. Nqosa Morienyane

like me who are now getting the social grants from the government from all these areas, so for us this is positive step," he proudly said.

They later on realized that there were some organised Disability People's Organisations (DPOs) at national level and as an organised movement in Berea; they decided to join the national platform. They approached LNFOD who was quick to engage them in a one year pilot project, the Awareness Building Campaign Project. In this project they were introduced to the principles of advocacy by the LNFOD advocacy desk in 2011. "Coming from the training we wrote letters and held face to face lobbying meetings with the DA Berea, (who was Mr. Mofihli Phaqane) to voice our dissatisfaction about his inaccessible offices.

The man didn't take two (2) months to break those stairs and constructed the ramp through which we are now able to enter the offices on while sitting on our wheelchairs. We did not stop there, we went on to influence Berea police station management to make it accessible which they did," related Morienyane.

The ramps might not be to the required standards but they are very helpful and are best practices to the rest of the country

managements who would like to make adaptations to their inaccessible public buildings.

These were some of the success stories that get Mr. Morienyane the recognition that he is getting lately. He has since been recognized as a speaker on many important occasions taking place in the Berea district. Late last year when LNFOD wanted people to serve as District coordinators for their Deepening Decentralisation Project, Mr. Morienyane was appointed a coordinator for the Berea district at the beginning of the year.

"For me this is the work I've dreaming of for some years now. I'm working with persons with disabilities (young and old) empowering them to exercise their right to fully participate at the community councils developments. I couldn't ask for more," he said with joy in his face.

The running up and down around the district on his wheelchair has brought more fortunes on the way of Mr. Morienyane. The Berea district has recently appointed him on the tender board. Asking him about his appointment to the role he had this say.

"I'm humbled to be in that high role for this district I love, I didn't expect it to come so soon but I have accepted it and will do all in my powers to serve the my district and my people," concluded Morienyane, who was modest.

Asked about appointment of an individual with disability in the board, Mrs. Tlali of the district management committee was upbeat about their decision and hoping that it will contribute in their district becoming universally designed.

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'Speech by the Prime Minister was a Turning Point for me'

Nqosa Morienyane

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"We have no doubt that nate Nqosa will add value to the board, he has done very well for this district. As the district we are in the process of making Berea a place for everybody including those with disabilities. You'll see the developments starting from this fiscal year," said Mrs. Tlali of

the district council Berea.

His colleagues at LNFOD were grateful to the Berea district council and hopeful that it will not be the end.

"We are happy for him as LNFOD and we see it as a nice challenge for us now to capacitate him even more to enable him to be more

assertive on inclusion issues as he is in a strategic position. We hope more districts would copy what Berea doing - taking initial steps towards universal design in their service delivery," said Rabasotho Moeletsi, who is coordinating the Deepening Decentralisation Project at national level for LNFOD.

'I am What I am Today' Relebalitsoe Mohlokaqala



Relebalitsoe Mohlokaqala

I have been the girl that I have known to be the only person with disability in the village. I grew up unable to play or visit with other people. I even ended up being unable to attend school as one would think.

I first got involved in associations of people with disabilities in the year 2000. As association branches were being established throughout the districts later on, I realised the importance of association and thought of ways by which we can notify other people of our presence.

The most important thing that our associations did was to conduct workshops and

share skills. This enabled us to accept ourselves. It is only through acceptance that we can progress in life. After we were trained, I removed my confidence from other people, where I had put it, and put it on myself. I was now confident and I resolved to carry on with my life. I had been complacent with myself, allowing everything to be done for me by my relatives. I realised that I wasted my time.

Now I am a very capable woman who knows what to do in order to survive. I work hard to put food on my table by *seshoeshoe* dressmaking, sewing bags and anything that can be sewed. The main challenge in this business of mine is that I work from home. This is not a convenient place for marketing purposes, but I am good at what I do.

My wish is that all our endeavours may prosper as do those of people without disabilities. Perhaps we could be afforded financial

assistance through loans to procure materials we need, such fabrics, and modern sewing machines for our businesses to flourish and perform as those of others do.

'My Disability, ... My Pride' Mamolemohi Ramokotjo

I am a woman who has had physical disability from birth. By that I mean I was born with one of my feet not quite facing forward as is common with many other people. I am 30 years old and I come from Ha 'Mathata Maputsoe. I am a single parent to my only son who is about three years old.

I would consider myself as having grown up a lucky girl in my village. I say this because my parent first accepted that I am a child of my nature, hence it became easy for neighbours and their children to accept me in the same manner. I played with other children, went to school with them until high school and did everything with them.

I have now come to experience a few challenges that I was never aware of since my childhood. I realised, after completing my Diploma in Primary Education that I have now come into another world. It was really tough on me to realise that I am now different from other people. I tried very much to apply for a job in schools, many government departments and private businesses, but to no avail. I am still jobless even today.

The main issue here is not being afforded an opportunity to showcase what I studied. I remember this other day when somebody at a place I had gone to

submit my job application told me that I am over-qualified over other candidates therefore my application might be immediately thrown into the it bin. I found that to be very painful, so much that I left that place with a lost hope of even being considered for interview. It then turned out so; I was never called.

In 2012, members of the Lesotho National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD), in particular, one Mr Tšereane Matsumunyane approached me with a proposal to join the association. I wanted to refuse, but instead, I took time to consider what could be of benefit to me as a person. He mentioned several things including rights. I got interested when he talked about rights, even though I did not yet know quite well what rights are. I hesitantly joined the association.

Now, being among these people, I felt reenergised when I realised that we talk about almost similar issues. I realised that this discrimination issue was not mine alone, hence I have to work with other people with whom we can together fight this issue.

Having realised that the main contributing factor in unemployment is discrimination, I made an effort to see what I can do with unemployment. I joined hands with one lady, a former schoolmate, to open an Early Childhood Development Centre as a way of applying what I have learnt. This idea actually came as a result of hearing people with disabilities discussing means of conquering poverty on many occasions. I realised that opening this type of a school was not that

demanding.

Even though I am happy for this job of caring for children, there are challenges here and there. These challenges relate to needs that will make children feel welcome, such as toys. Nevertheless, we are proud of our partnership because we now have a site for construction of a proper school if we manage to raise the funds to do so.

Under the umbrella of LNFOD, I was further trained on HIV and AIDS issues, counselling and testing. We were trained by the Motebang Hospital personnel in Leribe. As a result of this training, here I am now in the Maputsoe Filter Clinic to do what I was trained to do over a period of two weeks. We were assigned this clinic with Ms 'Mapootsela Lekeba, who has the speech and hearing disability.

I now realise and recognize the importance of our associations. It is while I worked here that I found out whether or not I can be employed. My presence here has attracted many people with disabilities to come to test for HIV and AIDS. We have so far tested 15 people with disabilities. Since our arrival here, people with disabilities come for services in numbers because they are now aware that those to whom they can easily talk, those with whom they speak the same language, are here.

I find myself a changed person in life in many aspects: accepting that I have a disability and taking time to acquire knowledge. What I can point out is that our associations, with the support of LNFOD, are playing a huge role trying to transform our lives. I am very grateful for all the things that our associations are doing.



'Mamolemohi Ramokotjo in the office at Maputsoe Filter Clinic for internship

ELEVATING DISABILITY RIGHTS IN AFRICA ROUNDTABLE:

EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN LESOTHO

From Page 2

In Employment:

Both the Labor Code and Public Service Act do not specifically provide provisions for support service needed for the persons with disabilities in both private and public sector to meaningfully access employment.

Employment policies do not guide the private and public employers on how best persons with disabilities can be treated at work places so as to realize their full potential.

There are no direct strategies employed for the employment of persons with disabilities,

There are no provisions for affirmative action such as quotas adopted for the employment of people with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities in the private and public sector work under unfavorable conditions due to lack of assistive technologies and devices.

Employers are not sensitized on the need to provide reasonable accommodation for the persons with disabilities.

There are no incentives for the private employers who employ people with disabilities at high percentages, e.g. tax rebates are also necessary.

In conclusion people with disabilities continue to face discrimination, ill-treatment and segregation in employment. It is therefore important that

A disability-specific legislation is enacted as a means of protecting the rights of people with disability and to ensure their integration in the mainstream society.

Employment policies in both the public and private sector reflect the rights of persons with disability

Government adopts specific strategies on the employment of persons with disability in the public service through affirmative action

mechanisms such as quotas

Government generates a database for persons with disability employed in government in order to assist with assistive technologies and devices

Government adopts a code of good practices for the employment of persons with disabilities.

The private sector recognized the need to recruit and employ persons with disabilities so as to uplift the lives of people with disabilities. Thus, it was generally agreed that, the follow up meeting should be conducted in which companies should design a model that will promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector.

On the other hand, the representatives of the government did not commit to undertake any measures towards the problem because the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Public service did not show up.

We wish His Majesty King Letsie III a very happy 51st Birthday!!!



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About LNFOD—A Brief History

Established in 1991, the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) is an umbrella body of organizations dealing with disability in Lesotho. Its mission is to protect the rights of people with disabilities in Lesotho by providing support for disabled people's organizations and empowering their members with life-skills, financial and material resources and representing their needs to the government, development partners and wider society. Its membership consists of the Lesotho National Association of Physically Disabled Persons (LNAPD) the Intellectual Disability Association of Lesotho (IDAL), Lesotho National League of the Visually Impaired Persons (LNLVIP) and National Association of the Deaf in Lesotho (NADL).

For further information, please visit www.lnfod.org.ls