

DISABILITY LESOTHO



From the Editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome once again to the edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled. The edition will cover news for the Month of February, 2016.

The e-newsletter is a platform whereby partners in the disability sector share the good work they do and learn from the work of others. This includes news, concerns, events, updates activities and all issues affecting people with disability in Lesotho.

We therefore welcome contributions of any nature from all organisations and institutions working to improve the lives of people in Lesotho, including those with disability.

Our issue this month coincides with passing away of 'Malecheko Lecheko, our icon who died on the February 2016 in South Africa, after short illness. She was a musician and strong member of our member organisation, Lesotho National Association of the Disabled (LNAPD). 'Malecheko performances over the years proved huge popularity amongst a broad spectrum of music fans in Lesotho in the Free-State province, South Africa, and her death has certainly come as a huge loss to music industry in this country. She was a seasoned campaigner, a strong

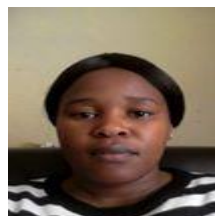
human rights activist who used her music to push for social change for persons with disability in Lesotho. Her last performance on LNAPD engagement was on 03rd December 2015, at the international day of persons with disabilities 2015 celebration. Her remains will be laid to rest on the 12 March 2016 at her home in KUBAKE, Ha API, in the Maseru District, Lesotho.

We pass our deepest condolences to her family and LNAPD. Our hearts are saddened by your loss and our thoughts and prayers are with you.

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 Morongoe Thatho on mthatho@gmail.com

If you missed the previous editions please visit www.lnfod.org.ls

Best Regards



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Inclusive Education Policy on the Doorstep in Lesotho



By: Nkhasi Sefuthi

Lesotho has been practicing mainstreamed education for learners with disabilities since 1989. This was when the government of Lesotho established the Special Education unit within the Ministry of Education and Training. Before then, the education of learners with disabilities was mainly the responsibility of churches and charitable organisations and the Disabled peoples' organisations. Many positive steps towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities took place since 1989 to date. For example, the government developed an operational plan for special education in 1989, Education Act of 2010 was enacted in 2010, and Education sector strategic plan was adopted in 2006 with specific reference to improving the education for learners with disabilities. Itinerant teachers were installed in about six districts to support the education of learners with educational special needs.

Nevertheless, the Living conditions study 2011 indicates that, learners with disabilities experience serious inequalities in terms of access to education due to lack of equipment, physical inaccessibility of the schools and the toilets. To mention a few, 40% of children with disabilities aged between 5 and 10 are out of school.

Despite all the above mentioned positive steps regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities, it is evident that, learners with disabilities encounter great challenges, which forced them to drop out of the schools because of the prevailing situation in the school environment.

It is against this background that, the Ministry of Education and Training through the Special Education Unit has organized a workshop on inclusive education from the 1st-3rd February in which all the stakeholders were invited to discuss the means through which inclusive education can be effectively addressed in Lesotho.

The outcome of this workshop is that, the inclusive education should first be addressed by developing the inclusive education policy which will assist all the stakeholders to handle the education of learners with disabilities and other vulnerable groups meaningfully. In order to develop the responsive inclusive education policy, it has been agreed that, the baseline survey determining the state of inclusion will be conducted which will then inform the policy development.

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) is fully in support of the development of this long awaited policy for the benefit of learners with disabilities. LNFOD shall therefore advocate for the design of this policy and ensure that, all learners with disabilities enjoy their right to education on an equal basis with others.

We therefore, recommend the government of Lesotho for considering the education of learners with disabilities in the form of putting in place relevant framework which will support the effective implementation of the inclusive education policy. The policy is expected to be completed by the end of 2016. However, LNFOD is noting the fact that, it will not be easy to develop this significant policy due to lack of government commitment to addressing disability issues, insufficient budget allocated to the Special Education Unit and other internal challenges facing the education of learners with disabilities. LNFOD therefore calls upon the development partners interested in education of learners with disabilities to assist the government of Lesotho to achieve this goal.

Advocacy Aspect



Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled: Advancing disability rights without pause

By: 'Masekara Sekoankoetla

On the 23rd January 2016, LNFOD and other stakeholders attended a workshop on the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by People who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disability. This workshop was organised by the National University of Lesotho Library and sponsored by the National University of Lesotho. Represented here were Key stakeholders on disability rights including the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Culture, the Office of the Secretary General, Ministry of Education, Lesotho National League of the Visually Impaired People and other National and International Disabled Peoples' Organizations and Human Rights Organizations.

The objective of this workshop was to sensitise the stakeholders of the presence of the treaty, its substantive provisions, its current status and its potential benefits to

Lesotho and worldwide. In addition, the aim of the workshop was to lobby the stakeholders to actively advocate for the ratification and implementation of this treaty by the Kingdom of Lesotho and other African countries.

As presented at this workshop, this treaty provides for the limitations and exception to national copy right laws for the benefit of visually impaired persons. Among others, the treaty allows for the reproduction and reprinting of published works in the formats that are accessible to visually impaired persons and for the sole benefit and exclusive use by them. It further obligates contracting parties to facilitate the 'making available' of this accessible formats of the published works by the national authorised institutions or entities. It also encourages the cooperation between the contracting parties on the cross boarder exchange of the visual disability accessible formats of published works.

The attendants of this workshop collectively shared the challenges facing visually impaired persons in meaningfully and accessing information contained in published works. Among others they identified the



Copy Right Act which prohibits the reproduction of the public work in any accessible form to visually impaired persons without first seeking authorization from the copyright holder. In addition, stakeholders pointed out that the limited number of the libraries which in addition are centralized is a massive challenge to people with visual disability to access information contained in published works. Moreover, it transpired at this workshop that this limited libraries have limited services in this regard.

Informed by these challenges, the stakeholder unanimously agreed that the ratifications and implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty is the resolution to the challenges identified. They therefore drafted and agreed to use the workshop recommendations to lobby for the advocacy on the ratification and implementation of this treaty by Lesotho and other African countries.

This according to the stakeholders will ensure the speedy entering into force of this treaty and the transformation of national laws to favour visually impaired persons so that they become active partners in economic, transformation and development in general. As agreed in this workshop, the ratification and implementation of this treaty will ensure that disability is indeed developmental issue and will indeed foster the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities in development. It will ensure that people with visual disabilities are the agents and not the subjects of development.

GENERAL NEWS



WORLD VISION LESOTHO LEADS THE WAY ON DISABILITY INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING

By: Rabasotho Moeletsi

This was revealed on the launch of their multi-million five (5) project aimed at improved access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene practices in Lesotho. The theme "Partnering for Excellent Execution of WASH Initiatives" guided the discussion on approaches that will ensure timely implementation of WASH activities and ensure that WASH programs cater for issues related to Disability Inclusion and Gender. World vision Lesotho took a brave step to develop a disability inclusive WASH Project, which many other development actors in Lesotho usually label as expensive and nearly impossible to implement.

By this project World vision Lesotho is already implementing international commitment of sustainable development goal, MDG 6, on availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

"We are committed to our target to achieve access to

adequate and equitable sanitation for all by 2030. Therefore in this project we will do all in our power to make sure that every toilet build accommodates everybody including individual persons with disabilities," said Masheane Nkopane, who is a team leader of the project.

This is a strong promise by World Vision Lesotho and commendable effort to meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities into development agenda. This is the unique project where persons with disabilities are included through all stages of the project cycle and LNFOOD as representative recommended disability is represented in all working committees in local communities. This shows the toilet facilities will be built according to universal design principles, where everybody benefits from such a facility. It also means an increased number of persons with disabilities who have access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation.

The benefits of planning together at an initial stages of programs is that everybody in the house including

the officers in the procurement department who will be responsible draw-up disability inclusive terms of reference documents for the contractors who would be bidding for a tender in the project are in the room. Project team were also advised to ensure that there are indicators that explicitly address disability such as number of accessible WASH trainings and facilities.

One important recommendation made from the launch was that WASH team at all levels be trained on WASH and Disability, after it was discovered that social approach of disability is new and broader. This will be vital to WASH people and engineers tend to focus on technical issues (infrastructure development and functionality of the systems).

This is the exemplary gesture by the World Vision Lesotho of which other development actors; both local and international organisations should follow if this country is to see true and lasting development.

GENERAL NEWS



LIVING WITH A SEVERE DISABILITY – Salemane Ralitomo Story

BY Justice Kalebe

Lesotho has a population of 1, 8 million according to household census 2006. Over 56% of the country's population live below poverty line, while 43% live on one dollar a day, this level of poverty is characterised by food insecurity, poor shelter and inadequate access to clean water and sanitation. According to the study conducted in 2010 on Living Conditions of Persons with Disabilities, Persons with disabilities make 3, 7% of the country's population, they do not receive basic services including access to Education, Welfare and Healthcare, Employment among others in relation to their non-disabled counterparts. They also do not take part in decision making about issues affecting them whether it's within their families or in their communities. The research has also found that People with Disabilities are among the poorest of the poor and families with People With Disabilities have a higher dependency ratio. The situation promotes vulnerability, poverty and exclusion and places PWDs at a high risk of life threatening diseases such as HIV & AIDs.

"I have been paralysed since I was 12 years. I have never been on a wheelchair except this bed that I am laying on. I was born on 18th August 1984 and never been to school or work. I would love to learn how to sew shoes." Says Salemane Ralitomo from Thabang village who received a wheelchair from LNFOD and Ministry of Social

Development. He is laying on layers of blankets soiled with black ash. I notice a bell next to him that he uses if he needs help from family. He is shy and speaks only when spoken to with no eye contact.

Thabang Village is about three hours' drive from Semonkong town using a four-wheel drive car as access to the village is almost impossible unless you use a horse. It costs community about R100 single trip to Semonkong town using pick up vans.

"It is very difficult as a mother to look after a severely disabled child as I have to look after him around the clock. I have to get help from my other children to turn him around or to get him outside. We have no knowledge on how to handle a person with disabilities but we thanks efforts by LNFOD to help us and Salemane," Says a 71 year old 'Makhoboso Ralitomo mother to Salemane.

She has twelve children including Salemane. Her older daughter "Matisetso Ralitomos" has ten children with only two attending school. "Even though there is a free education my children are not able to attend school as we do not have money to buy uniform and every time they go to school they get turned away." Says Matisetso.

Salemane is lifted on to the wheelchair with the help of his mother, sister and the Physiotherapist from the Ministry of

Social Development. He sits uncomfortably on the chair and within a short time he starts making sounds signaling discomfort. They put him back to his bed. The physiotherapist spends time with the family advising family on how to assist Salemane daily and stretching



him.

He later shown a smile showing appreciation and comfort on his new wheelchair.

Salemane and his family are one of the beneficiaries from the EU funded project benefiting from the project.

"Despite the harsh terrain of Lesotho physical accessibility anticipated during the inception of the project LNFOD is determined to achieve the project targets and reaching beneficiaries in remote rural areas where poverty is rife. We have to thank EU, it is through their support that we are able to reach out people in these mountains and bring back hope to individuals with disabilities here." Says LNFOD Director Sefuthi Nkhasi.

GENERAL NEWS



LNFOD empowers 'Makhoalipana community council

By: Justice Kalebe

LNFOD responded to EU call for proposal under Deepening Decentralisation and Non State Actors and received funding to implement a project called Empowering Rural Persons with Disabilities for Seeking their Entitlements. The project is implemented in Lesotho in the districts of Butha-buthe, Berea, Maseru, and Mhales'hoek. The project is aimed at promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in community decision making structure and target their families and communities as well as local government structures including area chiefs, and councilors.

The reason why the project recorded some interesting compliments in the area is the hard work by Mrs. Rosetta Qhoai. She has been working in this hard to reach area, spending most of her working hour on a horseback as it is the only means of transport reach out to the project beneficiaries during home visits and public gathering in most of the villages in project area. Rosetta is a representative of People with Disabilities in Semonkong Council who was elected by others to join LNFOD as animator 2 years ago to represent People with Disabilities within council. She is a mother of a child with disability. She has been active in agricultural projects such as running potatoes project meant

to benefit about 100 members of LNFOD in Semonkong. The project received a start-up funding of R3000.00 from LNFOD. It is around 6pm when Rosetta takes us to the project site. We cross Maletsunyane River and the newly built bridge gives a view of the river that community rely on for electricity, drinking, and for their farming. We then cross the second river called Tonamela. There is no bridge and the vehicle has to find the road inside the river. It is getting dark as we get across the river. It looks like we have reached a dead end. The driver has to create his path as Rosetta was getting confused as they use horses or walk to the project site. We get closer to the project site and see field from the distance but it is almost dark and cannot see much except blossoming potatoes flowers. "We are expecting to harvest at least 30 bags this season despite the drought we experienced this year." Says Rosetta.

'Makhoalipana community council organised a one day service day where stakeholders had stalls to educate community or provide services. LNFOD had a table where they displayed educational material translated into Sesotho for the community to take. The Project Coordinator, LNFOD, Rabasotho Moeletsi educated a community and students of about 700 people on understanding disability issues, advocacy for people with disabilities and how to accept people with disabilities. The event was well attended. "The relationship we have with LNFOD is very good and they have been able to penetrate most of the areas that we work in. As an outgoing chair of the council I am proud of the work they do." Says Ntai, Chair of Makhoalipana community council.

GENERAL NEWS

SURMOUNTING CHALLENGES FACED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

By: Morongoe Thatho

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has set a guideline under Article 8, that the states parties should conduct effective awareness raising policies to promote a positive image of persons with disabilities. This article is meant to promote and respect the rights and dignity of people with disabilities (PWDs), their capabilities and contributions, and to combat stereotypes, and prejudices against them. While still waiting for the enactment of the policy, it is crucial to lobby to our communities some of the things that demote people with disabilities. Some might not even be clinched within the coming laws or policies concerning PWDs because they are communities' unusual characters.

These are the communities' attitude towards people with disabilities and they are not even aware that they contribute to the barriers to PWDs. First and foremost is that our communities surmise PWDs to be inferior and of low standard and this disrupt them and they feel discriminated against. Moreover, the community will pity at PWDs portraying uncomfortability on their part. Other attributes are that they are surmised as ignorant but they are just like non disabled persons. PWDs that had the opportunity to be independent or pursue a profession are classified as brave or special. The most drastic one is that the community assumes that disability negatively affects other senses, abilities or personality traits. Furthermore, many disabilities are hidden; people are in denial due to the community's attitudes towards PWDs.

Families are now reluctant to live with their children or

relatives which are disabled due to the fact that some PWDs are accommodated by some institutions. This is important but PWDs feel bad to stay away from their family members and the community at large. Family is the natural and fundamental unit of society, where family members contribute towards the full and equal enjoyment of the rights of PWDs. This is where the community can contribute towards the protection and assistance of PWDs. Children with disabilities can start having friends by playing with other children within their communities and people will start to adapt/accommodate the disability they have. And this can ease the way children with disabilities are viewed by other children when they start attending schools.

When interacting with PWDs, people must learn to listen to what they say, do not make assumptions about what they can or what they cannot do. It is crucial to extend common courtesies to them. Some may have companions or interpreters, it is advised that people should speak to them directly not to the companion regardless of the type of disability one may have. Furthermore, it is essential to offer assistance to PWDs, but one should wait until the offer is accepted. At workplaces, PWDs still require to associate with colleagues and to be offered that better positions too regardless of their disabilities. Finally, it is acceptable to feel nervous and uncomfortable around PWDs and one has to admit that. It is human to feel that at first, but one has to think, "PERSON" instead of disability when encountering PWDs and eventually you will relax. Some of these points when interacting with PWDs were outlined in the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/ Youth supported by US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

FEB,2016

ISSUE 3 VOL.4

UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENT

Self-help groups formation continue

For more information please conduct LNFOD office: +266 22320345

Email: moeletsi@Infod.org.ls

Assembling of wheelchairs in Mohale's Hoek

For more information please conduct LNFOD office: +266 22320345

Email: moeletsi@Infod.org.ls

Forum on disability inclusion for CCS in the project areas

For more information please conduct LNFOD office; +266 22320345

Email: moeletsi@Infod.org.ls

NEWS IN PICTURE



THE WASH LAUNCH PROJECT HOSTED BY WORLD VISION



PARTICIPANTS OF THE MARRAKESH TREATY WORKSHOP



PARTICIPANTS DURING DELIBERATIONS



PARTICIPANTS AT THE WASH LAUNCH PROJECT



MATEBOHO HAPPY FOR WASH PROJECT

FEB, 2016

ISSUE 3 VOL 4

ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOOD

PARTNERS IN ADVOCACY WORK



European Union



equal rights and
full participation



Africa Disability Alliance

