

Denmark Lesotho Network	<h1>Lumela.dk</h1> <h2>DLN – Newsletter</h2>	<b>Nr. 11</b>  <b>August</b> <b>2006</b>
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## News from DLN's Executive Committee

### Annual General Assembly 2006

This year the AGM will take place on the weekend of Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September. The program will be slightly different from the previous years. Unfortunately we had to cancel the weekend of reflections on the DLN-future in July due to too few enrolments. The discussion on the future of DLN is now set to take place on the same weekend as the annual general assembly. By combining the two activities in one weekend the executive committee hopes that many members will participate. Saturday afternoon will be a meeting about the vision of DLN. Projektrådgivningen will provide us with a facilitator to lead the discussion. The themes will be: What are the vision or the goals of our organisation? Where is Denmark Lesotho Network going? Do we aim at growing bigger or do we want to remain small? Do we want to become a large NGO with employed and paid staff? Do we want to remain a small NGO based on volunteers? What kind of human resources do we have within DLN? Sunday morning the annual general assembly will take place following the usual agenda. We will finish by lunchtime Sunday. Invitations are going out very soon.

**Festudvalg søges!** We would like to make a party on Saturday evening like we did the previous years. It is about some good food, some talk and sharing of Lesotho opinions, some dance and some music and some fun. The exec. comm. will organise the food, but we need somebody to volunteer to organise some kind of entertainment. You have free hands to do anything you like. Please get in touch with someone from the committee, if you have some kind of interest in helping us make a nice evening. Contact details: Helga Højsager 66141664 or [hojsager@galnet.dk](mailto:hojsager@galnet.dk), Karen Steffensen 97578252 or [karen.steffensen@mail.dk](mailto:karen.steffensen@mail.dk), Karina Ruby 87430285 or [karinaruby@stofanet.dk](mailto:karinaruby@stofanet.dk)

*Karina Ruby, DLN Board*

### New person for the information group needed – are you the one?

I need to be replaced in the task of making the DLN newsletter. It is too time consuming for me to be both a member of the executive committee (secretary) and a member of the information group. I like both appointments, but the workload of the committee has been increasing since we got into the project with RSDA, and now I don't have time to do two posts. Therefore this is the last issue of Lumela.dk that I am doing. After the annual general assembly (AGM) there must be a new person instead of me. At present the information group consist of Peter Rathmann, Michael Hansen and myself. Michael Hansen is administrating our website, Peter Rathmann and I are making the newsletter. Michael Hansen is planning to leave the information group when a new and more advanced website is in place. Peter Rathmann will continue in the group, but he will need one or two more people to help him make the newsletter. I am sure there are many ICT-skilled people among our members, who could set up and distribute Lumela.dk four times a year. As the group is working now we never meet physically in the

information group, we do all the cooperation via email. Geography amongst the group members is unimportant.

Please let us know if you are interested. You are also welcome to ask us more about the task before you decide about it, contact details: Peter Rathmann 51322210 or [petula@mail.dk](mailto:petula@mail.dk), Karina Ruby 87430285 or [karinaruby@stofanet.dk](mailto:karinaruby@stofanet.dk)

*Karina Ruby, DLN Information Group*

## **Water Tank Project Progress**

DLN has received the April-June report from RSDA:

RSDA and their farmer groups are doing very well. They have now built all 116 water tanks, they have trained a large number of farmers on crop growing methods and they also got plenty of rain to fill up the tanks. 110 farmers have planted winter vegetables – it is right now winter in Lesotho. 6 farmers' leadership monthly meetings were held (3 in Phamong and 3 in Mafeteng). The three meetings focused on bringing information from groups on status of vegetable production, and they also took time to engage and interact with each other transparency and record keeping. The farmer leaders have been able to update and compile information on membership as well as their plans for 2006. FAO Maseru has been approached and has supplied additional 300 drip irrigation kits, which will be awarded as an incentive to all those households who have completed tanks and have planted vegetables in both summer and winter season.

*Karina Ruby, DLN Board*

## **News from members**

**No news from members this time.**

*Dear member. You are very welcome to participate with an article, an opinion or just any comment on the work of DLN. Just send it on e-mail to someone in the information group:*

*Karina Ruby:* [karinaruby@bigfoot.com](mailto:karinaruby@bigfoot.com)

*Peter Rathmann:* [petula.rathmann@mail.dk](mailto:petula.rathmann@mail.dk)

## **News from Lesotho**

### **FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT VISITS MAFETENG HOSPITAL**

Former United States (US) President Bill Clinton, accompanied by U.S billionaire Mr Bill Gates and wife Melinda took a brief tour of Mafeteng Hospital on Wednesday.

In a brief interaction with staff and patients at the Clinton Foundation affiliated, Karabong clinic in the vicinity of Mafeteng hospital , Clinton commended the staff of for providing quality services of HIV/AIDS, hence building patients who are brave and courageous enough to talk openly about their status.

He said the clinic should at all times strive to work hard and produce best results for the benefit of people living with HIV/AIDS, adding that his Foundation in Lesotho still has mountains to climb regarding access to treatment and testing. He called on all stakeholders to pledge their support for the initiative.

He said Clinton Foundation's HIV/AIDS Initiative (CHAI) helps enhance access to treatment in Mafeteng and throughout the country by amongst others providing clinical mentors, lab support, pediatric drugs, supply chain management expertise as well as assisting in the day to day running of the clinic.

During his one-day visit Mr Clinton also had an opportunity to meet with HIV positive mothers whose children are benefiting from infant diagnosis testing introduced by the Foundation, patients living with HIV/AIDS as well as community health workers who will soon be trained to provide HIV counseling and testing.

Speaking during this interaction, Mr Gates said although he is not certain if Lesotho can be lined as an example of the region as this is his first visit, through interaction with the Minister of Health and others he is convinced that there is hope in Lesotho as far as the fight against HIV/AIDS is concerned.

Speaking at the same occasion the Director of Lesotho CHAI Dr Mphu Ramatlapeng, expressed hope that after the ongoing Know Your Status campaigns more people will understand the importance of knowing their HIV/AIDS status.

She said due to shortage of human resources and equipment they are unable to reach rural communities. She however indicated that they have introduced pilot projects of ARV's in some selected areas of the district to enhance health services.

Mr Clinton and Mr and Mrs Gates were also accompanied by the United Nations special envoy on HIV/AIDS Dr Stephen Lewis.

Present at the occasion were; Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Health and Social Welfare, Government Secretary, District Administrator of Mafeteng, Senior Government Officials and the public. Bill Clinton and his entourage arrived on Wednesday and are expected to leave same day.

*Lesotho News Agency July 2006*

## **PROJECT TO PROTECT THE DEAF**

The National Association of the Deaf in Lesotho (NADL) has embarked on a project to break the barrier between education service providers and children with hearing disabilities.

In an interview, the Secretary of the Association Ms Likopo Lesoetsa said the purpose of the project which started earlier this month, is to sensitize the Government and the entire community about the learning difficulties faced by deaf people in Primary and High Schools.

She showed that in a regular primary school, children with hearing disability suffer, as they are unable to crasp what other children are learning.

She therefore appealed to the Ministry of Education to train teachers both at the Lesotho College of Education and the National University of Lesotho in sign language skills so that they could be able to teach these children.

She also appealed to the Government to give a helping hand to the already existing Centres such as Kananelo Centre for the Deaf so that it could accommodate as many children as possible.

The project is expected to end in December and it is sponsored by the Commonwealth Education Fund.

NADL is a non profit making organisation whose objective is to create awareness on people with hearing disability and to promote their rights.

*Lesotho News Agency July 2006*

## **MALE CIRCUMCISION UNDER SCRUTINY**

The relation between male circumcision and HIV/AIDS prevention came under scrutiny at a one-day consultative meeting held in Maseru on Tuesday.

The meeting saw a diversity of stakeholders discussing the latest evidence on male circumcision and HIV prevention at global, regional and country level, the implications of the practice within Lesotho context, as well as strategies for follow-up for programming.

Attendees accepted that, much as studies have shown that male circumcision lessens the risk of HIV infection, it is essential that the practice not replace other known effective means of reducing infection., such as abstinence, sex between people who both know they are negative, avoiding concurrent sexual relationships and correct and consistent use of condoms.

The director-general of Health Services, Dr Tlhabi Moorosi, pointed out that despite the strength of medical data, considerable debate remains about the potential role of male circumcision as a public health measure to prevent HIV infection.

Dr Moorosi said, according to the Demographic and Health Survey of Lesotho of 2004, the relationship between circumcision and HIV levels in Lesotho does not conform to the pattern seen elsewhere in Africa.

He said HIV rates are in fact substantially higher among circumcised men (23 percent) than among males who are not circumcised (15 percent).

Traditionalists who attended the meeting highlighted the need to galvanize practitioners of traditional male circumcision into conscientiously taking part in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS, without necessarily delving into the sensitivities associated with the practice in Lesotho. They also called for a thin line to be drawn between male circumcision and initiation.

Lesotho does not have statistics on the prevalence of male circumcision, but generally it is estimated that less than 20 percent of men in Southern Africa are circumcised, between 50 percent and 80 percent in East Africa and 80 percent or more in most of the rest of the continent.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), male circumcision is attracting heightened attention and scientific scrutiny now because studies show that circumcised men have lower levels of HIV infection than uncircumcised men. Also, HIV prevalence is generally lower among populations that traditionally practice male circumcision than in those where most men are not circumcised.

WHO says three trial studies in Eastern and Southern Africa have been undertaken (two of them are still ongoing) in recent years to assess through controlled research the benefits of male circumcision in preventing HIV transmission. The study in South Africa's Gauteng province was halted earlier than planned because the results very strongly indicated that circumcision was protective against transmission.

It adds that if the two trials still underway in Kenya and Uganda involving eight thousand men produce results similar to those in South Africa, male circumcision will join tools such as male and female

condoms as key means to prevent HIV infection.

*Lesotho News Agency July 2006*

## **EFFORTS TO HELP RAPE SURVIVORS**

The Lesotho government is to improve medical care for sexual violence survivors after rape cases reported in the first three months of this year climbed to almost the total number for 2005.

According to Motselisi Mosotho, a member of the Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU), 484 rape cases were registered by the police in the tiny land-locked kingdom between January and March this year, compared to 501 cases in the whole of 2005.

The CGPU is part of the Lesotho Mounted Police Services, which monitors reported cases of abuse and violence against children and women in a country with a population of two million.

A recent training programme, run jointly by the government and the UN Children's Fund (Unicef) to improve services for abuse survivors, was attended by more than 40 private and public medical personnel as well as members of the Christian Health Association of Lesotho, a faith-based NGO that has eight hospitals and 70 health centres.

The course covered how to provide post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), a regime of antiretroviral drugs that reduces the risk of contracting HIV from a positive attacker; collecting evidence to help prosecute rape cases; the investigation of sexually transmitted infections (STIs); HIV and pregnancy tests; and providing psychosocial support.

"The training is one of the many awareness campaigns to bring all stakeholders up to speed on the handling of raped persons, especially children," said Mandaba Limema, a social worker with the Ministry of Health.

A gynaecologist working at a government hospital, Dr Hassan Elhag, said the course had been comprehensive and timely, as medical personnel in the country had previously only been required to identify sperm and the presence of STIs.

"We concentrated on physical examination, where we looked for scratches that would indicate a rape. We would do a vaginal swab where, microscopically, sperm would be examined, and a possibility of infection would be determined. Then we would prescribe medication for STI and emergency contraceptives. We never gave PEP. Though counseling was done, it was not intensive because in an emergency setup there is just is no time," he explained. "But with this training ... the sexual offences act [has] come to life."

According to Unicef, the current case-reporting and data-collection forms used in hospitals focused mainly on physical evidence and were comprehensive enough to allow doctors to follow up on rape and abuse cases, but "without the guidelines to standardise management of rape, and ensure a holistic and coordinated approach among concerned sectors, treatment of survivors relies entirely on individual service providers, often without further referrals."

In Lesotho's patriarchal society, violence against women is characterised by shame and stigma, and regarded as a family affair. Proper care and management of rape survivors could help reduce the burden of work placed on NGOs, who often lacked the resources to deal with the abused, said Mavis Mochochoko of Ministries of Insured Salvation, a children and women's rights NGO based in the capital, Maseru.

If all services were made available at one centre, they could also help traumatised abuse survivors, she added.

According to CGPU's Mosotho, gender rights campaigns have encouraged people to report abuse, and "the sensitisation of the people [by] the unit to raise awareness of their rights and the responsibility of reporting rape" has contributed to the jump in the number of rape cases this year.

"Before these campaigns, rape was viewed as a family issue that, even when a family member raped another, the matter was dealt at the family level," Mosotho commented. "However, people now understand that ... fathers cannot father their [own grand]children, as was the case before.

*Integrated Regional Information Network June 2006*

## **WOMEN HOLD SEMINAR ON INHERITANCE RIGHTS**

The Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA)-Lesotho will hold a three-day national seminar on property and inheritance rights for women and girls at Victoria Hotel in Maseru from August 20.

WLSA Legal Officer, Ms. Puseletso Sello says the purpose of the seminar is to collect views on issues relating to property and inheritance rights especially for women and girls.

She said participants will be briefed on two forms of marriage, customary and common law adding that topics to be discussed will include among others; dispossession of property and inheritance.

Ms. Sello indicated that the seminar will put more focus on women and girls as they have no rights to own or inherit property as they are still regarded as perpetual minors in the families.

She further said the training will be attended by different sectors of the community who will be drawn from various districts of the country.

Sensitization workshops on the same issues have already been held in the districts since September last year.

WLSA is a research trust formed in 1989 to deal with issues relating to women abuse and promotion of their rights.

*Lesotho News Agency July 2006*

## **CONSTRUCTION OF WATER PROJECTS**

The Department of Rural Water Supply (RWS) will construct two water projects in two areas of the Berea district, during this financial year.

The District Engineer, Mr Heqoa Moru, said the commencing date of construction of the two projects, will be determined by how soon the tenders will be approved and that the areas which shall benefit are Ha Ramapaeana and Ha Senekale.

He indicated that the water project of Ha Ramapaeana which would be of gravity system, would cost M377,000, adding that construction of the project would be completed after 11 weeks.

Mr Moru told LENA that the Ha Senekale water project would be a diesel system and shall cost about M1.2 Million. He said the project is expected to be complete after three years.

He stated that construction of the two projects would be funded by the Lesotho Government.

Meanwhile, the construction work of the electric borehole water project's construction at Ha Mokhehle, that started during the last financial year, will be completed next month.

The project that will benefit 1,250 villagers, was funded by the Lesotho Government to the tune of M593,000.

*Lesotho News Agency July 06*

## **SEKAKE POLICE RECOVER STOLEN LIVESTOCK**

The Sekake police in Qacha's nek have recovered stolen livestock that comprise of ten cows and a horse during their anti-stock theft operation that was carried out in the Qabane area last week.

Inspector Lebuajoang Mohlalisi of the Sekake police said that a two-day operation that started on Friday last week focused mainly in the villages within the Qabane area, following people's complaints from different villages that their livestock were being stolen by residents of Qabane.

Insp. Mohlalisi noted that four people were arrested during the operation in connection to the stolen livestock as they failed to produce documents that prove the right of ownership of the livestock though they claimed the livestock belonged to them.

He however pointed out that further investigations on the matter are continuing and that the suspects will appear before the magistrate court after the investigations are completed.

He further congratulated the community for alerting his office and urged them to keep on doing the good job as it would help the police in the fight against the escalating stock theft in their areas.

Police anti-stock theft operation covered the villages of Ha-Mohlomo, Ha-Qoloane and Tumahole.

*Lesotho News Agency Aug 2006*

## **TEXTILE INDUSTRY ON FULL SPEED**

Lesotho's single largest employer, the textile industry, has made a remarkable comeback, setting an example for the region and giving thousands back their jobs.

"All the factories that were closed have been reopened - the number of jobs that had shrunk from just over 50,000 to below 40,000 have now climbed back to around 47,000," Andy Salm, Regional Textile and Apparel Specialist at ComMark Trust, an NGO that monitors the industry in Southern Africa, told IRIN.

Lesotho was an early victim of cheap Chinese exports to the key US market when the World Trade Organisation's 30-year old Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA) expired in 2005. The MFA was established to protect smaller textile industries in developing countries by insulating them from Chinese competition.

But the industry was now "significantly picking up and a lot more orders are now being placed in Lesotho again", Salm said. One of the reasons large retailers and brands have returned to Lesotho is that the "government has been working hard to become a destination of ethical choice, and this has started to pay off".

"We have seen a strong increase of demand from the US and more recently from Europe," said Bahlakoana Shaw Lebakae, deputy secretary-general of the Lesotho Clothing and Allied Workers Union.

Tiny Lesotho has even grabbed the attention of U2 rock band singer and global campaigner, Bono, who launched a new labelling scheme in January, known as 'Product Red', to generate durable funding from top commercial brands and consumers to fight HIV/AIDS in developing countries. Bono recently visited Lesotho's textile industry.

With commitments from brands such as Levis, GAP Inc and Nike, and consumer-consciousness in the US and Europe on the rise, Lebakae had "high hopes that orders will continue to come into Lesotho".

Salm cited the Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS (ALAFAs) as an example of a broader move to enhance the industry's growing reputation as a socially responsible source of clothing for famous brands, commenting that ALAFAs aimed to fight HIV/AIDS in Lesotho's garment industry, and "these brands like looking after their employees".

Lebakae said Lesotho was also benefiting from the MFA forum, a network of companies, trade unions, NGOs and international institutions working to mitigate the negative impact of the MFA phase-out: "Lesotho and Bangladesh are part of an ethical trade agreement through an MFA forum pilot programme that aims to attract large brands and retailers to source in Lesotho."

According to Salm, the industry's revival could not be attributed to a change in consumer consciousness alone, and noted when comparing Lesotho to other countries in the region that there were "a number of lessons learned", which others might want to consider.

One of the key factors was that "the cost of employment is much lower than in other countries, such as South Africa", he said, where the textile industry was in dire straits.

"Companies are showing increased interest in Lesotho because they appreciate the engagement of the government - the minister of trade and industry is very receptive to working with the industry and comes together with key players every two weeks to work out any issues that there might be. The government is very actively fighting to keep the industry and to grow it," he pointed out.

Lesotho has also made concerted efforts to develop strong relationships with buyers and "clear bureaucratic red tape", a significant contribution to turning around the industry.

But Lebakae cautioned that with "100 percent of the textile industry foreign owned", mostly by Asian investors who were struggling to compete with mainland China, there was room for improvement. Lesotho had welcomed foreign textile industry investors when officials thought the African Growth and Opportunity act (AGOA), which granted duty-free access to the lucrative US market, would give the country a chance of establishing a sustainable a textile industry. "But they [foreign investors] all left," Lebakae said.

However, Salm expected foreign investment to stay: "around 95 percent of Lesotho's textiles go to the US, and there is new interest in Lesotho as anticipation grows that AGOA [due to expire in 2007] will be extended."

"It's early days, but it is clear that these influences have brought big brands to Lesotho, and there is a lot of trickle-down: the freight industry, the transport industry and everything around the textile industry will benefit - 17 million US dollars is paid to textile workers a year," Salm said. "This cash is feeding people."



## **Good Advice to all Readers of Lumela.dk**

If you would like to read more in-depth going news stories from Lesotho, we highly recommend the website of former MS-partner Transformation Resource Center:

[www.trc.org.ls](http://www.trc.org.ls)

where you will find a summary of recent events provided by Professor David Ambrose from the National University of Lesotho.

This summary is excellent stuff for hard core connoisseurs.

Lumela

## **What is Denmark Lesotho Network?**

The NGO Denmark Lesotho Network (DLN) was founded in 2002 by former Danish development workers in Lesotho and other good friends of the tiny mountain kingdom in Southern Africa. DLN aims at supporting NGO's in Lesotho in their work to develop civil society. DLN uses its network of people and organisations in Lesotho to pinpoint beneficiaries of DLN's support – and to keep an eye on that funding is used according to agreements made. DLN wishes to enhance knowledge of the living conditions in Lesotho and to seek funding from foundations, business enterprises and organisations for actual projects in Lesotho.

### **Membership of DLN**

Anyone, who can support the aims of DLN, can achieve a membership. Members contribute to support initiatives in Lesotho that develop and better living conditions in the country. Members will receive an electronic newsletter four times a year and be invited to DLN's annual general assembly. The cost of a membership is 100 Danish kroner yearly.

For membership contact cashier Karen Steffensen, tel.: +45 97578252, e-mail: [karen.steffensen@mail.dk](mailto:karen.steffensen@mail.dk)  
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**KHOTSO – PULA – NALA**