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News from DLN's Executive Committee

DLN-visit to Lesotho

Two members of the DLN executive committee, Karen Steffensen and Karina Ruby, paid a 2-week visit to Lesotho in November to monitor the progress of the water tank project. The visit was primarily dedicated to the cooperation with RSDA, but they also used the opportunity to visit other DLN partners and individuals in Lesotho for networking purposes. The first week was spent only on RSDA work, and the second week was used to strengthen the network in general in Lesotho and to visit potential project partners.

With RSDA they visited the rural areas around Mafeteng where the water tanks are being built. There are some tanks completed already, just waiting for rain to fill them up. Some tanks are under construction and others again will be built later this year. Some farmer groups have already participated in workshops and received training on water harvesting and permaculture (gardening method). The water tanks that Karen Steffensen and Karina Ruby visited looked very good; solidly and carefully constructed. In general the farmers, who participated in meetings in the different villages visited, were very eager to get tanks. They expect to increase their production of vegetables due to the water. The water tanks enable them to water their gardens also in the dry seasons. RSDA also showed the DLN-delegation some water tanks that were built by a German project 4-5 years ago. There were obviously some very nice and productive gardens in connection with the tanks. It was a clear impression that RSDA is working with experience and knowledge about water tanks, and that the farmers have a great interest in getting the tanks. The DLN-funded project is progressing according to the plan, and Karen and Karina were satisfied with results so far.



During the second week of the visit Karen Steffensen and Karina Ruby visited LCCU and CADC – both organisations that have submitted project proposals to DLN. They also paid a visit to Beautiful Gate, which maybe could be a potential partner. They also had a meeting with representatives of some NGO's, where information about DLN and information about the present situation of NGOs in Lesotho was shared. Some networking meetings with individual people were also held.

See the full report on the DLN-website.

Karina Ruby, secretary

Projects (others than RSDA)

In January DLN received a project proposal from Lesotho Youth Federation (LYFE). The exec. comm. will discuss the proposal in it's next meeting. The two proposals from last year from Lesotho Child Counseling Unit (LCCU) and Chaplin Athletic Development Club (CADC) are still pending. Karen Steffensen and Karina Ruby visited both organisations in November 2005, and their proposals are still being considered worth supporting. So far it has not been possible for the DLN executive committee to find funding for them.

Karina Ruby

Help wanted for smartening up DLN-website

The executive committee decided in their last meeting that our website www.lumela.dk needs to be redesigned. The exec. comm. would like the website to be more interesting with pictures, links and logo etc. It would also be convenient if more than one person could edit the website; as it is now only Michael Hansen from the information-group can put things on and off the web page. None of the exec. comm. members have skills or time to renew it.

There are different ways to get to a smarter website. DLN could pay it's way out of it by hiring a company to make us a new website. This would probably cost about DKK 16.000,-. DLN could also hope to have a member with skills and will to make a new design on the website for free or for very little. Do you have the wish, skills and time to do this job for your organisation? Please contact the executive committee on dln@lumela.dk or telephone: 8613 7252 (Karsten) or 8743 0285 (Karina).

Karina Ruby

News from members

A first timer in Lesotho

By Claus Bo Jensen

When I told people, that I was going to Lesotho, the most common reaction was a little confused expression on the other persons face – where is that, and why would anybody spend their holiday going to a place like that? When I then told, that I was going with people, who would be looking at water tanks – then the majority would think, that I was at least a little crazy – if not a lot!

My first impression was – really no impression at all! We were quite late driving from Johannesburg, and it was completely dark, when we arrived at the border. About an hour earlier Karen and Karina told me “if we came here during the day, you could see the boring flat landscape of South Africa changing into hills and mountains, and it's very pretty”. All I could do was saying – “well I believe you”. But the next day I found out. We were here to see how the water tank project was going, and on that next day we left Maseru and drove south towards Mafeteng. And we had some great views – it reminded me of old western movies, with the dry land and the tabletop mountains. And we even saw the local



variety of a cowboy, with blanket and rubber boots.

I had heard a lot about water tanks before we left, and I was looking forward to see what they really looked like. And it was quite interesting. The area was very dry, and it was obvious, that the tanks made a difference. The houses with tanks had gardens, and those without just had dry land. The farmers all wanted to have a tank, and even those, who already had one, wanted one more. Well it is easy to want a present, but here they have to do something themselves - collect stones and sand - so I believe that the wish is a real one. It is the kind of project, which I believe is the right way: Not a revolution, but a small thing, which helps instantly and can run without the need for more money.



A few days later we went on another trip to see some more villages, tanks, gardens, chickens etc., this time to the south of Lesotho near Quthing. It was quite a long drive, and I was surprised to see how good



the main roads are, compared to other African roads. (It changed instantly (!), when we left the highway and went into the countryside and used more than 2 hours to drive the last 40 km.) Another strange thing is that you see very, very few bicycles - almost none. Fortunately we had brought our hiking boots, and in the afternoon we made a trip up into the hills where - another surprise - we found some very large fields. We also saw, that some modern technology is coming very fast to Lesotho. Here, in the middle of nowhere, you could send an SMS!

So - what was the best of the whole trip?

The best I think was, that when you travel like this, you get a chance to see what is going on behind the surface. As a 'normal' tourist you would never come to a village at the end of a gravel road, you would not see the university or an editorial office, and you would probably never taste motoho (one can argue if that is good or bad!). I really think Lesotho is a great country, and hope to be back again some day.

Claus Bo Jensen joined Karen and Karina on the monitoring trip as a self-financing tourist, paying his own expenses (Edi)

The hidden Lesotho - trekking in the Maloti Mountains

*By Claus Bo Jensen, Dec. 2005
Photos: Karen Steffensen*

- I wake up at 5 o'clock in the morning in our rondavel in the tiny village Ha Mothakhathi, high on the banks of the Senqunyane River. It is still dark, and it takes some time to figure out the sounds, which have woken me up - it's the sheep and goats leaving for another day in the mountains. I turn around in my sleeping bag and close my eyes again, but I can't sleep - I just lie there and think of the difference from the busy city of Maseru, which we have left just 2 days ago.

“We” are 3 Danish tourists and our friend and guide Joe Thaba from the Raboshabane Tour agency. One of us had made this trek with nstate Thaba a few years ago – very likely the first tourists ever - and now we were going to be the second group. From Maseru we drove to TY, and then east to Mapoteng. In Mapoteng we visited the police station to let them know our route and what we were doing – just in case – and then we continued another half hour to the village where the road ended. Now the easy part was over, and we had to put our luggage on the back and start walking.



The first part was easy though, going through the tiny villages of Ha Lieta and Ha Mokhethi. The people were curious, and wanted to know where we were going. They were sure that we were going to do some work because we had so big backpacks. These people really know how to travel light, with just a stick and a blanket, so of course they look at our luggage and wonder. One farmer was going the same direction, and he showed us the right path to Mosalemane pass, and then he left. The “road” up Mosalemane pass is an old road built in the 50'es. The road used to be a “highway” in the mountains linking the villages near the river with the rest of the

world, but nowadays it has lost its importance, because better and more direct roads have been built. But for walkers like us it was perfect. It was a long and hot walk to get to the top, but when we finally made it the view was fantastic.

Up there is a large kind of a plateau with no villages or anything. Just a herd boy with his sheep or cattle now and then. We walked for maybe another hour and found a very beautiful campsite near a small stream, where we set up our tents for the night. We found some wood, cooked our supper and sat around the fire and watched the sun go down and the stars come out. It is amazing how many stars you can see, when there is no electric light anywhere.



The next day we continued crossing the plateau. It was a little up and down – not totally flat – but much easier than the day before. The weather was fine in the morning, but clouds were building during the day, and just as we had made it to the other side and were beginning to descend towards Ha Mothakhati, it started to rain. So we were wet and cold when we reached the village. We found the chiefs

rondavel, and asked him, if we could camp somewhere near the village. He remembered those, who had been there on the first trip, and was very nice. Instead of a camping spot he showed us an empty rondavel, and said we could sleep in it. As a result of the new road mentioned earlier, the village now has a small shop, and we went there and bought some biscuits and a candle to light up our new “home”.

When we finally got up on that third morning, we were treated with papa and mafi, and then we continued towards Senqunyane River. We were not going to cross the river, but we had to cross a smaller stream, witch had quite a lot of water because of the rains the day before. We followed the road a bit with nice views of the river, and then we started walking round Thaba Putsoa Mountain and westwards, up on the plateau again. Again we could see the clouds and hear thunder around us, but today it did not come our way. Our plan was to descend from the mountains today, but when we looked at our map in the

afternoon, we realised, that it was going to be too late. Instead we found another nice place for our tents, and enjoyed another nice evening under the stars.

The fourth and last morning we got up at sunrise. The backpacks felt light now – we were getting used to them and we had eaten our food! Just as we were packing we saw 3 people coming towards us – it was the police. They were not looking for us though, but there had been some trouble near by, and they were going to investigate it. We just had to walk up a small pass, and then a long way down again to the valley. Soon we saw fields and houses again, the houses became a village, the path became a road, and we were back in the civilisation again.



Read more on www.raboshabane.co.ls

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
Peter Rathmann: petula.rathmann@mail.dk
Michael Hansen: haslund@cool.dk

News from Lesotho

Minister shot ahead of polls

The foreign minister of Lesotho was shot in Maseru on Sunday just hours before the ruling party's meeting to elect a leader, said police on Monday. Maletone Letoane of police said: "The minister of foreign affairs, Mr Monyane Moleleki, was attacked by unknown gunmen outside his home in Qoatsneng in Maseru in the early hours of Sunday morning."

The motive for the attack was not known and no arrests had been made. Moleleki was hit in the arm and was in a stable condition in hospital, Maseru.

The attack came hours before Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili was re-elected leader of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) at its general congress on Sunday.

Mosisili, who had held the position since 1995, was elected uncontested for another three years.

On Friday, the party leader issued a statement denying rumours that Moleleki and communications, science and technology minister Tom Thabane were planning to contest his re-election.

Moleleki had also denied that he was seeking the party leadership.

30 January 2006

News24.com

Budget Emphasises Urban and Rural Infrastructural Development

The Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Timothy Thahane, presented the 2006/2007 budget in the National Assembly on February 8. Ministerial allocations of M4 907.5 million were tabled.

Dr Thahane said the 2006/2007 budget will prioritise and emphasise the development and construction of urban and rural roads, water, electricity and communications infrastructure. It will also work towards increased food production.

Lesotho's economic fundamentals remain sound, the Minister said, even though the textile industry is going through a rough patch. The end of the Multi Fibre Agreement has meant competition from Asian textile producers. From the 1999 to 2004 peak of 50 000 Basotho workers, industrial employment has fallen to 37 500 in 2005. Growth declined from 3.1% in 2004 to an estimated 1.2% in 2005. It is however, expected to increase to 1.7% in 2006, the Minister said.

There is, however, light at the end of the tunnel. Instead of joining the chorus of voices of those who want to restrict textile exports from the People's Republic of China, Lesotho has invited China to be a partner in solving the problems and generating jobs. Government will also diversify the economy into, among others, sandstones; agro-industries and agri-business; tourism, quarrying and mining.

The Minister said the size and composition of public debt reflects the country's commitment to the maintenance of sound and prudent economic and financial policies. Public debt, currently estimated at M4.4 billion, has consistently fallen from 100% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2000/2001 to 54% today.

08 February 2006

Lesotho News Agency (LENA)

Economic Growth Significantly Better than Most of Africa's

Lesotho's economic growth of around three percent since 2001 is significantly better than that of many African countries, but is far smaller than that needed to achieve the country's long term goals, as expressed in the National Vision 2020 and the Millennium Development Goals.

This is the view of Principal Secretary for Finance and Development Planning, Dr. Moeketsi Majoro on his Ministry's new look on opportunities for effective socio-economic growth for the country.

Dr Majoro said Lesotho's economy has been transformed considerably from an economy dominated by agriculture and migrant worker incomes to one that depends on manufacturing and construction.

01 December 2005

LENA

Archaic Civil and Customary Laws Shield Violence Against Women

Despite Lesotho's outlawing of any form of violence against women and children, offences remain prevalent and hidden from public view and are often exacerbated by archaic civil and customary laws.

Participants at an ongoing Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU) workshop in Thaba Bosiu have called for intensified action in the enactment of legislation for the protection and care of orphaned and vulnerable

children.

The CGPU officials, most of whom are police officers, said despite the country's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) addendum to the gender and development declaration, outdated laws help the perpetuation of the offences.

Child abuse is especially on the rise now, officers from the country's ten districts agree, when most children are being orphaned and left to fend for themselves.

According to CGPU National coordinator Ms Mot'elisi Mosotho, children are often employed in hazardous forms of labour to sustain their impoverished lives, while women migrate to the cities for employment, not only making them vulnerable to violence and offences but also endangering the young children left behind to fend for themselves.

It is necessary to develop legislation such as a domestic violence Act, until now non-existent in Lesotho, to curb the increasing violence against women.

The Child Protection and Welfare Bill awaiting endorsement must be enacted with utmost urgency, as it is the most critical piece of legislation reviewed in Lesotho that will empower the CGPU to protect the rampant number of orphans and vulnerable children being abused and exploited, Ms Mosotho said.

The CGPU is a unit within the LMPS, funded by UNICEF, dealing with the abuse, violence and exploitation of children and women.

16 November 2005

LENA

Indian Doctors to Help Out

Government has negotiated with its Indian counterparts for a team of doctors to help remedy the serious shortage faced by the majority of government hospitals, Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Motloheloa Phooko, announced in Mafeteng on January 31.

Cabinet has already approved the programme and the doctors are expected anytime, Dr Phooko said. The medical experts are to help alleviate the shortage in health personnel brought about by locals preferring South African and US positions, he said.

Mafeteng Hospital matron Mrs. Motsoanku 'Methane said they believed that with a few more nurses health services in the district could be improved.

"With a few more nurses, we would be able to deliver quality health services to the public," she promised.

01 February 2006

LENA

Doctors Without Borders Help Out

Doctors Without Borders, an international independent medical humanitarian organization has launched a three year HIV/AIDS programme in the country, according to a statement from the organisation.

The programme, an attempt to scale up access for HIV/AIDS treatment in Lesotho, was launched last month and is aimed at reducing HIV-related morbidity and mortality through the implementation of decentralised HIV/AIDS services, including provision of anti-retrovirals.

Initially the programme has targeted the Morija Scott Hospital health service area and will enhance community-based programmes by providing free HIV/AIDS care and treatment to 14 health centres in the area.

Two mobile teams comprising a nurse and a doctor will visit each health centre once a week to provide direct clinical care for HIV infected people and offer on-the-spot supervision and training for nurses, village health workers and other care providers, the statement said.

06 February 2006

LENA

King Launches Know Your Status Campaign

The religious and traditional cultural reasons offered to explain HIV/AIDS when it first manifested itself in the country encouraged sufferers to keep it underground, hidden and thus allowed it to spread without being checked. Speaking at a World AIDS Day commemoration and the launch of the National Operational Plan of the Know Your Status (KYS) campaign at Botsabelo in Maseru on December 1, King Letsie III said initially the disease was associated with witchcraft and later explained as God's punishment for sinners.

This made those infected hide their status, and by so doing continue infecting others.

The King said the pandemic is still escalating at a high and alarming rate despite all efforts taken to curb its spread. Basotho should all heed the Know Your Status campaign as doing will help prevent new infections because those already infected will live positively and not want to infect others, while the uninfected would try to remain thus.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Lesao Lehohla, also speaking at the commemoration and launch, urged people not to take AIDS as a life sentence like it was considered not so long ago, but should understand that there is still life even if one is diagnosed with this disease.

02 December 2005

LENA

Know Your Status Campaign Extended to 12 Year Olds

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's campaign to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country is being extended to encouraging people above the age of 12 years to know their status.

The Know Your Status plan will be launched simultaneously with the opening of the children's centre of excellence at Botsabelo in Maseru on December 1, according to spokesperson Ms 'Mamorao Khaebana.

The programme aims ensuring that people 12 years old and over know their status by 2007 and builds on the Know Your Status campaign that was launched in 2004.

World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Director of HIV/AIDS, Dr Jim Kim and the chief executive officers of both the Baylor College of Medicine and; Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS), Messrs Peter Traber and Peter Dolan are expected to attend the ceremonies, Ms Khaebana said.

The children's centre will provide care and treatment of HIV/AIDS children, and is a joint project between Bristol-Myers Squibb Secure the Future Programme, Baylor College of Medicine and the Ministry of Health. Lesotho is one of four Southern African Development Community (SADC)

countries which have benefited from over M600 million worth of support against HIV/AIDS from the BMS Secure the Future programme.

29 November 2005

LENA

Education Minister Receives 17 New Schools

Seventeen schools built at a cost of about M60 million of assistance from the Government of Japan will be handed over to the Minister of Education and Training, Mr. Mohlabi Tsekoa, at a ceremony at the Lancers Gap Primary School on January 20.

The Ministry's Information Officer, Mrs. 'Makopano Semakale said a total of 225 classrooms were built under this project, which covered schools in the Maseru and Berea districts. The classrooms are expected to accommodate at least 14, 000 pupils and will be ready for use when schools re-open. The project is part of Government's response to the large number numbers of pupils and shortage of classrooms after the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2000.

In the Maseru district, the schools were built at Mahlabatheng, Lehaseng, Ha Tlhakanelo, Ha Thetsane, Semphetenyane, Ha Abia, Ha Mpiti, Ha Lenono, Ha Legele, Ha Tsolo, Maseru East and Ha Maqhanyane. In the Berea district the schools are at Ha Mabote, 'Maseqobela, Lancers Gap, Senyotong and Ha Ntjabane.

The sod-turning ceremony marking the beginning of the construction of the schools was by the Prime Minister, Mr. Pakalitha Mosisili on April 7, 2005.

19 January 2006

LENA

Livestock Registration, Marking and Information System Very Soon

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Public Safety has employed a national livestock registrar and 10 district livestock registration managers as part of implementation of the National Livestock Registration, Marking and Information System (NLRMIS).

The NLRMIS, the chip project, is part of the Stock Theft Act of 2000 and aims at easing registration and marking of livestock, helping identify the animals and thus preventing stock theft.

A statement from the Ministry said the newly employed officers are currently undergoing three days of training on the livestock registration and marking design and software. Also attending the training are representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture; Local Government and; Trade and Industry; and the Lesotho Mounted Police Service.

21 November 2005

LENA

It's All Systems Go for Unleaded

Petrol stations throughout the country started distributing unleaded petrol only from January 1 as Sub-Saharan Africa tries to meet a United Nations deadline to have phased out all other kinds of petrol by the end of 2005.

The change stems from a pledge made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, when

almost all Africa was still using leaded fuel, according to a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report. Lead is associated with a wide range of health problems, including damage to the brains of babies and young children. Owners of late model vehicles unable to make the change over will have alternative lead replacement petrol (LRP), according to the Department of Energy's Ms Babalwa July. The Department said it believed that most Basotho would not suffer from the phasing out of leaded petrol as only about 20 percent of vehicles in the country used this kind of fuel because of its unavailability in most parts. There won't be any additional levies on lead replacement petrol, the Department said.
02 January 2006
BBC, Public Eye

Court Staff to Learn Chinese

The Maseru Magistrate's Court is to train some of its staff in the Chinese language, according to Court spokesperson Mr. Setho Moremoholo. The training is meant to enhance efficiency in the magistrate court; after the realisation that Chinese have become so integrated that some have been found to be involved in crime. This means the magistrate's courts have to ensure that they are given a fair trial, in a language understood by the accused. Most Chinese are not conversant with Sesotho and English and thus an interpreter is needed for court proceedings to be translated into Chinese. Initially two magistrates, two information officers, senior clerk of court and three interpreters will attend the training. It is cheaper to train members of own staff than hire temporary interpreters, who are paid M150 each per day.
07 November 2005
LENA

Quthing Rehabilitates its Roads Network

Nearly M2 million will be used for the maintenance of roads in the Quthing district beginning in the new year. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has allocated M1, 909, 435.00 to the Department of Rural Roads (DRR) in Quthing. DRR senior technical officer, Mrs 'Mat?itso Mokhothotso said 27 roads in different areas of the district will be maintained, expected to be completed a month later in February. Road maintenance will be carried out in Seforong, Mphaki, Qhoali, Makoae, Mount Moorosi, Sebapala, Bolahla, Moyeni, Tele, Dili-Dili and Sinxondo. DRR was in the process of selecting constructors who will maintain the roads and work hand in hand with members of the community, who will be paid M38.00 per day. Mrs Mokhothotso said the roads were last maintained in December, last year.
09 December 2005
LENA

Relief Hospital to be Built at Lepereng

An agreement between the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank and the Government of Lesotho will see a relief hospital being built at Lepereng towards the end of the year or at the beginning of 2007.

The Minister of Health and Social welfare, Dr Motloheloa Phooko announced this in an interview with a local newspaper. An ambitious programme to revive the country's medical services will begin this year, he said.

Dr Phooko revealed that despite the brain drain of health professionals, several previously working outside the country have promised to come back and help out at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital. Three have actually arrived back home.

A nurse assistant training programme has been started at Takholo, with plans to open another in the Qacha's Nek district soon. The National Health Training Centre (NHTC) has also reintroduced subjects in its curriculum that will help nurses have the capacity to manage clinics at the village level, the Minister said.

16 January 2006

Lentsoe la Basotho

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

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

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Homepage: www.lumela.dk

KHOTSO – PULA – NALA