

News from the DLN

Annual general meeting 2008 (AGM)

Next year's AGM will take place at FYN Saturday the 12. April in Odense at Danish Refugee Council's premises which is located at Klingenberg 15,1. 5000 Odense C.

It is our hope, that shifting between parts of the country will attract more members to participate, and take part in the plans for the coming year, as well as contribute with ideas and feedback.



DLN Chairperson
Helga Halck Højsager

Here at the beginning of 2008 I will take the opportunity to wish all of you **happy New Year**. Thank you for good cooperation in 2007.

On behalf of the board

Helga Halck Højsager

Founding board member of Friends of Lesotho back in the board of DLN.

By Bodil Mathiasen

Five years ago a very small group of former development workers and people who had a connection to Lesotho founded the association Friends of Lesotho during a very cosy dinner on a dark October night in Mogenstrup.

The agenda was handwritten, but we had prepared a constitution that was agreed upon and we set out to conquer the often difficult road of small NGOs in Denmark.

In this issue:

Page 1: *News from the DLN*

Annual general meeting 2008 (AGM)

Founding board member of Friends of Lesotho back in the board of DLN.

Page 3:

DLN journey to Lesotho in 2008. (Danish and English)

Page 6:

Where the road ends

Page 9:

Postcard from Lesotho

Page 11: *News from Lesotho*

Lesotho child protection Bill sent to AG

New Hospital for Lesotho through Public-Private Partnership designed by IFC

Page 12: *What is Denmark Lesotho Network?*

Membership of DLN



One of our first objectives was to recruit members, knowing that we would have to be 50 in order to be able to apply for funding from Projektrådgivningen. We had a lot to learn about organisational work and I do not think that any of the then board members had imagined how time consuming our task would be.

The good thing was that we all had close contact with development workers still in Lesotho, we had an ongoing dialogue with Basothos from our own former partner organisations and staff from MS Country office.

Within the first year we succeeded in recruiting more than 50 members, and then circumstances did that I had to leave the board. A new contract with MS took me to Mozambique where I worked until 2006. I lived in a remote district where internet access was impossible and often when I came to the internet café in the city it did not work. But I managed to follow the development of Friends of Lesotho and see it change into DLN. I felt very proud to hear about the first big project with RSDA and the substantial funding from Projektrådgivningen.

At the 2006 AGM I was happy to see good old friends again and to meet new faces in DLN – all dedicated to the development and living conditions in Lesotho.

I feel proud that our small and modest association has grown not only in membership but in capacity, professionalism and experience. Internet technology has also made fast communication between Lesotho and Denmark possible. No more handwritten agendas, but board meetings on SKYPE and electronic newsletter! I am glad to be a board member again.

I learned that DLN has been entertaining the idea of organising a trip to Lesotho for members – and since I miss Lesotho and have not been there since 2004 I find it a welcome challenge for me to attempt to organise this journey in October 2008.

I hope to see old friends and colleagues from CLRAC where I was a DW from 1996 to 1999 and meet and discuss with all the good people from LCN and member NGOs that I have come to know over the years.

And I look forward to enjoying the beauty of Lesotho.



Board member Bodil Mathiasen



Danish Version 

Engelsk Version 

TAG med DLN på rejse til Lesotho i 2008

En af DLN's formålsparagraffer er at styrke mellemfolkelig udveksling og kulturforståelse – at udbrede kendskabet til Lesotho og levevilkårene i landet.

Det kan blandt andet gøres ved selvsyn!

Bestyrelsen har derfor besluttet at arrangere en grupperejse til Lesotho for medlemmer af DLN og andre interesserede i oktober 2008.

Vi forhandler i øjeblikket med UNITAS rejser om en fordelagtig pris på grupperejse fra Danmark til Johannesburg i Sydafrika. – med afrejse fra Danmark 09.10. og hjemkomst 20.10.

Det er tanken, at rejsen fra Johannesburg til Lesotho skal foregå i bus – ca. 400 kilometer.

I Lesotho vil vi møde venner af DLN – som kan give os en god introduktion til landets historie, sprog og kultur, den aktuelle politisk situation, udfordringer og håb for fremtiden.

DLN har kontakt til mange facetter af samfundet i Lesotho: universitetsfolk, politikere, ildsjæle i lokale Ngo'er, bønder med vandtanke, børnehjem, skoler, kirker, den spirende økoturisme, så der er mange muligheder for at sammensætte et program efter deltagernes ønsker.

DLN journey to Lesotho in 2008.

One of the objectives of DLN is to strengthen the friendship and understanding between people in Lesotho and Denmark and to create awareness in the Danish public about living conditions in Lesotho.

The board of DLN would like to organize a journey to Lesotho for members of DLN in October 2008.

At the moment we are negotiating with UNITAS TRAVELS in order to obtain a good price for group tickets from Denmark to Johannesburg. Departure date will be 09.10.08. and we will return to Denmark 20.10.08.

We plan to travel from Johannesburg to Lesotho by bus – approx. 400 kilometers.

In Lesotho we will meet friends of DLN who will be able to give us a thorough introduction to the history, language and culture, the present political situation, challenges and hope for the future of Lesotho.

DLN have contacts in various circles of life in Lesotho: University professors, politicians, dedicated NGO workers, farmers with water tanks, schools, churches, emerging tourism. In short there will be ample possibility to design a program according to the wishes and interests of the participants in the DLN journey.





Vi starter med at bo et par dage i hovedstaden Maseru, men derefter skal vi ud på landet og opleve livet der i den enestående natur og bjergene. Vi arbejder på at gøre en Ramabanta Lodge til vores base for besøg i naturen. Stedet ligger ca. 30 kilometer fra Maseru ved foden af Maluti bjergene. Her vil det være muligt at sammensætte sit eget program efter ønske og fysisk formåen: vandreture, tur på hesteryg, med eller uden overnatning i Basotho landsbyer, tur til Lesothos nationalpark, til de store dæmninger meget højt oppe i bjergene.

We will stay in the capital Maseru for a number of days, but later we will be going to the country side and experience life in Lesotho's striking nature and wonderful mountains.

October is the spring season in Lesotho, the climate is mild and we will surely see beautiful blooming peach and apricot trees.

We plan to make Ramabanta Lodge our base camp for visits outside Maseru. The lodge is situated 30 kilometers from Maseru at the foot of the Maluti Mountains.

From the lodge it will be possible to do individual trips according to wishes and physical ability: hiking, horse-back riding, overnight stays in Basotho villages, visits to the National park of Lesotho or to the great dams high in the mountains.



Hjemturen starter søndag den 19.10. fra Lesotho med bus til Johannesburg. Der er afrejse med fly om aftenen, og vi vil være i Danmark den 20.10. om formiddagen.

Maksimum 20 personer kan deltage i turen. Derfor hører jeg gerne fra eventuelt interesserede allerede nu. Vi regner med en pris på omkring 12.000 kroner, der skal dække flybillet, transport Johannesburg-Lesotho, overnatning i Lesotho, transport i Lesotho, syge- og afbestillingsforsikring. Endelig bindende tilmelding og betaling af depositum vil skulle ske i marts.

Tag med på en anderledes ferie til et land, der ligger udenfor de gængse turistområder. Lær et venligt folk at kende og oplev det lille kongedømme i himlen "Kingdom in the sky" som Basothoerne selv kalder deres land.

We will head homewards by bus on 19.10 towards Johannesburg where we will catch a plane in the evening. Arrival in Denmark the following day in the morning.

The group journey will have a maximum number of 20 participants. I would like to hear from people interested already now.

We calculate that expenses for air tickets, transport Johannesburg-Lesotho, transport and accommodation in Lesotho, health- and cancellation insurance will amount to 12.000 kroner. A deposit payment will have to be paid in March.

Join us in a different holiday to a country that few Danes have visited. Get to know a very kind population in their small "Kingdom in the Sky".

Interesserede bedes skrive til

Bodil Mathiasen

på: mathiasen1@hotmail.com
Tlf.: 86198464

Are you interested? Write to

Bodil Mathiasen

on mail:mathiasen1@hotmail.com
Phone: 45 86 19 84 64



Where the road ends

By Claus Bo Jensen

“A couple of hills, a couple of bends – Semonkong is where the road ends” The red and white sign is the only human thing at the 2800 m high Thaba Putsoa pass in inland Lesotho. No parking lot, no souvenir shop, just the sign, the bitterly cold wind and the view of the mountains sprinkled with the first snow this winter. And the sign continues “Semonkong lodge – 23 KM” – another hour or so on the winding gravel road through this remote and very beautiful area.

We had decided to take a weekend trip to Semonkong to see the waterfall. In Maseru everybody talked about that there had recently been a lot of snow – Maseru completely covered. The snow had melted in town, but we thought, that there might still be some left in the mountains. And seeing snow on a summer holiday and especially seeing snow in Africa – it is something special for a Dane. And we were not disappointed – not long after Roma we saw the first white mountaintops and here in the pass the surrounding mountains were white.



The road however was dry, and around noon we arrived in – as Lonely Planet says – the one horse town Semonkong. Not a bad name characteristic actually – I think there were more basotho ponies in down town than cars! We checked in at Semonkong lodge – first the lady showed us some quite nice 2 bed rooms, and then – I will not say reluctantly – more like “and I also have this, but I don’t think you will want it” a rondavel dormitory with a big fireplace and no other guests, which was half the price of the rooms. Of course we took the rondavel – after a week of cold Maseru nights, she could have charged us the same, and we would still have taken it – just for the fireplace!



The lady told us something interesting. Today there was a local horserace taking place. "Where", we asked. "Oh, just walk up that hill, and it is somewhere on the other side – just follow the locals". So after a quick lunch – which you have to bring yourself, the restaurant only does dinner – we walked up the hill and followed the various blankets and horses. After half an hour or so we saw a lot of people gathering on a flat hill – that must be the

place. As we got nearer we saw how the thing worked. 2 or 3 horses were running against each other in every race. I suppose they were selected based on some kind of handicap, but I don't know exactly.



The horses were thoroughly inspected by a very knowing audience, then they had their blankets (or curtains or tablecloth or bed linen) removed. The horses slowly walked through the crowd, down the hill and followed a small curving path. As they disappeared in the distance, the betting started. Betting on the horses in Lesotho is very simple. Let's say you want to put 10 M on the black horse with the jockey in yellow blanket. You simply say so, and find someone who believes in the brown horse, whose jockey wear white rubber boots. You make a bet against that other person, and the winner takes all! At some unspecific point in the distance the horses turn around, and starts racing back towards the shouting and excited crowd. The finish line is between 2 people – you have to know who, but it is really not so difficult once you are in it...

The spectators really deserve a chapter to themselves. All over Lesotho in winter you see people in blankets. You also see the herdboys in their uniform – blanket and rubber boots. But I have never seen so many so colourful people in one place. But they were all male!





I have no idea why, but the only women present were us – the tourists. And speaking of tourists. We were there – 3 Danes – and there was another group of 3 – one being – almost of course – also Danish. And that was it. And did the locals take notice of us? Well some kids wanted their photos taken, but generally – no. It was clear that this was a local thing – we felt welcome, it was noticed that we were there, but everybody was there for the horse-event, and there was no hassle, no “give me” or anything. It was one of those much wanted, but seldom found, “authentic experiences”.

Semonkong is a basotho word meaning “place of smoke”. The reason for this is the 204 m high Maletsunyane Falls, where the Maletsunyane River drops into a gorge. Clever people have found this remote spot and established nothing less than “the worlds longest commercially operated single-drop abseil” None of us wanted to risk our lives dropping down the waterfall, but the Danish guy from the other group was going early Sunday morning. We decided to make a trip down to the bottom of the gorge – hoping to see him coming down.



As it were, we were too late. We spend too much time over breakfast at the lodge. Next thing we were surprised, that the descent was so steep, and none of us had brought

proper walking boots. It was a bit scary a times going down over bits of ice and loose gravel in just shoes, but we made it, and could look at the waterfall and think "this doesn't look like 204 m". But I believe that it must have been, and our friend looked very happy with his accomplishment, when we met him and his guide coming up, when we were still descending.

Sometime ago there was a program in Danish television "The edge of the Earth" where an Australian journalist went to remote and isolated places. I don't think he ever went to Semonkong, but I do think that he should consider it for the next round. I have seen many great places in Lesotho, like Khatse, the Maluti Mountains, and Sani Pass in a snow storm. But one of the things, I will always remember is the horse racing event in Semonkong - where the road ends.

Postcard from Lesotho

By Anna Marie Haslund

Seven years has passed since we left Lesotho and it's an amazing feeling to be back again. We left Denmark on the 13th of October and now after touring South Africa for three weeks we are here in our home away from home.

We crossed the boarder at Botha Butha and drove down to Maseru. Butha Butha were very familiar, crowded, noisy and dirty.

We didn't book any accommodation in advance but let the possibilities guide us. Since our bank and budget advised us not to be extravagant it was good to learn that Maseru had got a reasonable guesthouse as an alternative to the expensive Lancers Inn and Maseru Sun. We stayed at the Foothill Guesthouse and was served perfectly by Melvin, who has turned his childhood home into a nice Bed and Breakfast.

One of the aims of the trip was to walk our own footsteps. It was important to see familiar things as our old house to make sure the apricot tree were growing well and to see the pre- and prep schools Katrine and Julie attended.

And not least it was important to see our old colleages.

So off I went to visit LSMHP (Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped People). In a Maseru that has changes (and improved) it's road system during the last seven years I was wondering how easy it was to find my way to the stadium area and LSMHP's office.

The way was still on the backbone.





When I worked at LSMHP one of my objectives was to develop a programme for young people with mental disability together with my counterpart (YDP, Youth Development Programme)). I wanted to see if the programme was still in progress. It was! Two seconds after I entered the gate I was surrounded by young people who were shouting: Anna

Marie, Anna Marie!! It was a fantastic experience and I'm so proud and glad that they remembered me.

A lot in Maseru has changed, but not the office of LSMHP. It was as I left it, with the

same photos on the wall, the same curtains I made, when working there, The young people in YDP (not so young anymore) even the staff is almost the same even if some of them had been out and in again. As the director said. "We make it easy for people to come back". I dare say so! It seems as the office suffer from lack of support from parents in Maseru and it makes it hard for them to develop programmes and activities for disabled and to implement the objectives of the organisation.

We did not have enough time in Lesotho, but a must was to go to the mountains. We always found that Lesotho have such a potential for tourism, that is not developed. Luckily some people have started to utilise the potential which we saw at the Ramabanta Trading Post, a quite new lodge, situated in an old trading post, near the river and with stunning views to the mountains. If you need to calm down and to gain new energy, it's here.

We went swimming in the rock pool, we went on a horse riding trip and realised that it was easy and very useful to find the hidden Sesotho language again. More than one time people said: Oh, me, you are not a tourist! My very limited Sesotho showed to create a great contact.

We meet people working in Lesotho, among them a midwife and a medical doctor, who told about the critical health-situation in the country. It's probably well known to all readers that 30% of the population between 15 and 29 suffer from hiv or aids. And we meet people who had lost their dear ones recently and as always in Lesotho it's told with a smile and a laughter, that can be difficult for us Danish people to understand. Laughter probably covers the sorrow in the heart. And many Basotho are fatalists, so what can they do, but laugh!

Lesotho also gave us time to see old friends in Ladybrand and all in all the conclusion on the trip is: We have to come back soon, as we did not have enough time to cover our need for Lesotho. We want more!

We ended the trip as we started, in the Soweto Backpackers, owned by Lebo and South Africa's first black owned Backpackers. The place can really be recommended. He has made a backpackers in his grandparents old house in Orlando West, close to both Desmond Tutu's and Mandela's old home, and he's doing a great community work by introducing various activities in the area.



News from Lesotho:

Lesotho child protection Bill sent to AG

Published in: Legalbrief Today, Date: Fri 21 December 2007

Lesotho is erring on the side of caution in enacting its Children's Protection and Welfare Bill – in the wake of its 'problematic' brother in SA.

According to a report in The Citizen, the Lesotho Parliament has reneged on its promise to pass the 2004 Bill this year because it is too verbose and includes restorative justice. The Bill has been sent to the Attorney-General for editing but another hold-up has been the slow establishment of institutions to monitor children's rights. Child welfare proponents are worried about the amount of time it is taking because children are facing many problems, including property-grabbing. The right structures have to be put in place before an amount of R112m, pledged by the UN Children's Fund, can be transferred to the Social Welfare Ministry for projects to assist orphaned and vulnerable children. The funds from the EU will only be released once an independent body is established to monitor the programme and ensure that children's rights are realised in a fair manner.

See also: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/92327.php>

New Hospital for Lesotho through Public-Private Partnership designed by IFC

Published in: APO-SOURCE : The African News Source, Date: Mon 17 December 2007

Maseru, Lesotho, December 17, 2007— The Government of Lesotho today announced that a regional consortium led by Netcare, has been selected as the winning bidder for the country's new National Referral Hospital, which is expected to dramatically improve the level and quality of publicly funded medical services in the country. IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, advised the government in the design and implementation of the project, a public-private partnership (PPP) for the greenfield public hospital.

The new 390-bed facility will replace the aging Queen Elizabeth II hospital, whose staff and patients suffer from a chronic lack of resources required for the provision of medical services – including hot water, heat, medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, trained staff and regularly functioning equipment. The project requires the operator to design, build, partially finance and fully operate the hospital, including the provision of clinical services for a period of 18 years.



Operating costs for the new hospital are roughly equivalent to those at the existing facility – this means that patients will have access to significantly better medical services at the same minimal charge they pay today.

The hospital project in Lesotho is the first of its kind in the region. It includes the refurbishment and upgrade of three semi-urban filter clinics to provide primary and secondary health care services to the public.

Together with the hospital, these clinics will operate as a regional health network. The project also anticipates receiving a grant of \$6.25 million from the Global Programme for Output-Based Aid and a partial risk guarantee, both offered by the World Bank Group.

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

DLN's address is: Denmark Lesotho Network, C/O Helga Højsager, Asylgade 16, DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark

Responsible Editor:
Helga Halck Højsager
Edited by: Karsten Lund

(submission of articles
to i.k.lund@c.dk or any
board member)

Homepage: www.lumela.dk

KHOTSO – PULA – NALA

