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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 7th Issue of the SRP Bulletin which will now be branded under the name, "New Society". This issue features a synthesis of 5 SRP study reports, under Cycle 1 for 2008.

In this issue you will find useful information on the research that was conducted under the auspices of the SAFOD Research Programme that we are conducting with the support of DFID.

The research presents the Southern African Disability community and regional governments with a unique opportunity to examine their policies and programmes on disability and to improve their services to people with disabilities. With the SRP we have the UN Convention on the Rights of People Disabilities which have been ratified by Zambia, South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho and other regional governments are considering the ratification of the Convention.

The SRP and the Convention presents the Disability movement in the region with interesting challenges. The SRP provides a knowledge base to the movement while the Convention

HIGH RISK OF UNEMPLOYMENT?

People with disabilities are more likely to be uneducated and unemployed than their non-disabled counterparts, researchers found in a pilot study in South Africa and Lesotho.

The study, *Education and Training of disabled people in Lesotho and South Africa*, compiled by A.R. Gwitimah and W. Khuphe, said people with disabilities failed to secure long term employment because of illiteracy and lack of skills.

"Disabled people are less likely to complete basic primary education than their non-disabled counterparts. This lack of basic education reinforces their social exclusion and marginalization thus leading to lack of life requisite skills making it more difficult for them to secure long



presents us with a human rights treaty based on the principles of rights and development which we have always advocated and lobbied for.

The debate we should be engaged in is how to stimulate the movement and reclaim our activism

The debate we should be engaged in is how to stimulate the movement and reclaim our activism to ensure that we can use opportunities presented by the SRP and the Convention to improve the lives of people with disabilities. The "New Society"

welcomes responses from readers to its content and we hope you find the content useful.

Shuaib Chalklen
SRP Director

term sustainable employment," the authors said in the 2008 study commissioned by the Southern African Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD).

The study further revealed a small number of disabled children had access to basic education and training to enhance their skills and independent living. For a majority there was lack of appropriate learning materials such as Braille, absence of qualified teachers especially in early education, lack of inclusive schools within reach and the general logistics of transport to and from school. For example, in Durban, South Africa, the study found that many disabled children dropped out

of school because of the daily transport costs to and from school. Furthermore, some disabled children needed regular services of a personal

WE HAVE SEXUAL RIGHTS TOO!

SAFOD represents over 11 million disabled people in 10 countries through its programmes and projects designed to promote the rights of and welfare of people with disabilities as full citizens of their countries.

SAFOD is comprised of national organizations of people with disabilities in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These organizations are the Botswana Society of People with Disabilities (BOSPED), Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled (LNFOD), Federation of Disability Organisations of Malawi (FEDOMA), Forum of Associations of Disabled People in Mozambique (FAMOD), Federation of Organisations of Disabled People in Angola (FAPED), Disabled People South Africa (DPSA), Zambia Federation of the Disabled (ZAFOD), Federation of Organisations of Disabled People in Swaziland (FODSWA), Federation of Organisations of Disabled People in Zimbabwe (FODPZ) and National Federation of People with Disabilities in Namibia (NFPDN).

People with disabilities are sexually active and should be included in national reproductive health, HIV and AIDS prevention and care programmes despite assumptions they are asexual and therefore at little or no risk to infection.

A pilot study commissioned by the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD) in Malawi and Namibia has indicated that people with disabilities are marginalised when it comes to health and reproductive services. HIV and AIDS is a double blow to people with disabilities because they are vulnerable to abuse at the same time have limited access to reproductive and health services. Cultural beliefs that people with disabilities are incapable of maintaining sexual relations have increased the abuse of women and girls with disabilities.

Furthermore, the lack of up-to-date data of people with disabilities living with the HIV virus and their reproductive needs is evident in the failure by national governments to allocate adequate financial, technical and material resources. The study used individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. The sample population comprised of people with disabilities from a cross section of the population in the two countries. There were 12 key informants and 11 focus group discussions were conducted.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is clear on equal access to healthcare, marriage and reproductive rights by people with disabilities but many do not enjoy these rights, according to a pilot study, *HIV and AIDS and Reproductive Health Care amongst Disabled People in Malawi and Namibia*. The study was conducted by Gubela Mji and Siphokazi Gcaza from the Centre for Rehabilitation Studies Stellenbosch University, the University of the Western Cape and the Unit on Research for Health and Society in collaboration with research associates, Dr. Margaret Wazakili and Dr. Donald Skinner.

Using Malawi and Namibia as case studies to



determine the implementation of sexual and reproductive rights of people with disabilities, the study highlighted that discrimination and abuse needed to be addressed. The marginalisation of people with disabilities in terms of access to HIV and AIDS information, prevention and care was a result of entrenched and false myths about the sexuality of people with disabilities. For example, one informant illustrated this by saying:

"Due to the fact that disabled people are seen as asexual in particular disabled women are virgins, therefore, together with girl-child they are seen as HIV/AIDS cleansers, they are unsafe within communities as they are targeted and raped for this purpose. Disability within communities is seen as a mystical thing (juju) for example, sex with a disabled person increases wealth, a white cane brings luck and stirring brewed beer with a leg with mobility impairment will draw customers to come and buy your beer."

The pilot study indicated that people living with disabilities were exposed to more risk factors for HIV such as lack of protection, ignorance, abuse and inadequate knowledge to make informed decisions regarding their health and sexual rights. In fact, the authors pointed out that women and girls with disabilities were more likely to be raped and abused and at the same time less likely to report the violence and succeed in legal protection, getting counselling or Antiretrovirals (ARVs). For example, the Malawi Council for the Handicapped (MACOHA) intervened in a case where a visually impaired woman had been neglected by her relatives and was starving. In desperation, she resorted to sleeping with several men who promised her money. But the woman later found out that

REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS GAP IN DISABILITY RESEARCH

Thousands of people with disabilities in Southern Africa are excluded from the national development agenda because little is known about their situation, especially on poverty.

An investigation by Shuaib Chalken, Kedibone Seutloadi and Safoora Sadek from Diabalwa Professional Services has revealed that the situation of people with disabilities is a result of poor research evidence on their needs. The study reviewed 79 research and policy documents on disability issues.

The independent literature review of academic research on disability and poverty issues undertaken in the last 15 years in the Southern African region, called for investment in research focusing on best practice models and approaches on disability and the active participation of people with disabilities in the research activities.

The purpose of the review was to increase SAFOD's existing resource and knowledge base on disability and poverty issues in the Southern African Region. It was also aimed at assisting SAFOD identifying future opportunities for disability and poverty policy targeted research and enhances the Federation's perspective during its advocacy campaigns and helps improve policy advice capacity.

Spurred by the need to present an accurate picture on the conditions and needs of people with disabilities in Southern Africa, disabled people's organizations are focusing on research to inform policies and programmes as well as assess impact. Such baseline data is increasingly proving valuable in developing new and appropriate lobbying strategies for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the social and economic spheres of society.

Furthermore, the evidence forces governments in Southern Africa to implement MDG commitments and the objectives of the recently adopted UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Citing Swartz (2007), authors of the review, said there was overwhelming

agreement of a close and bidirectional relationship between disability and poverty. This is demonstrated in previous research conducted in all SAFOD countries. What was missing in the reviewed literature was research closely documenting how the relationships between disability and poverty work and possibilities for intervention.

According to (Swartz, 2007) there are also no large scale evaluated intervention projects which have attempted to break the disability-poverty cycle. The poverty-disability link had not been translated into information that can guide future programming on disability in Southern Africa.

The review was commissioned by the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD) in 10 member countries. While current research provided a broad picture of the impact of the political and socio-economic contexts of developing countries on the full inclusion of people with disabilities, it lacked the depth to trigger changes in disability policy and programming, the review noted.

The poverty-disability link had not been translated into information that can guide future programming on disability in Southern Africa.

According to Swartz (2007), disability has not been adopted as a cross cutting issue. The lack of commitment and execution was blamed for the failure of disability mainstreaming to deliver changes in the livelihoods of people with disabilities. However, the review noted that disability research has highly potential to make an impact in countries where disability friendly policies existed, such as Uganda and South Africa.

The review highlighted the insufficient research by disability experts from African and the Southern African region, with South Africa dominating the regional research output. Furthermore, the review found that existing research did not focus on solutions and there was inadequate inclusion of disability in poverty reduction policies, strategies and programmes. Besides, the implementation of policy to change the lives of people with disabilities was limited.

Chalken, Seutloadi and Sadek (2009) recommended: "SAFOD should consider establishing a team or network of



such disability experts that can partner with experts from northern or developed countries to enrich the content of the research by combining technical and theoretical expertise with on-the-ground political, social and economic development expertise that exists at a national level."

People with disabilities can determine the research agenda and its outputs if they are involved at participative and conceptual level of research, the review recommended. Besides, the review identified gaps in the current literature which specifically cited the needs of the elderly, women, the youth and children with disabilities to inform development policies.

In addition, rigorous research into the education needs of students with disabilities and assess how inclusionary practices will impact the general classroom atmosphere was needed. Education is the one area that champions the principle of inclusivity, integration and mainstreaming of people with disabilities and is linked to employment opportunities. The participation of people with disabilities in entrepreneurship which was the focus of 32 of documents reviewed, remained undocumented and under-researched.

"The documentation on education can thus be utilized to play the additional role of providing information and models for planning, budgeting and implementing mainstreaming and for promoting education and training for the disabled," the review said. Botswana's policy of inclusive education – though with room for improvement – was cited a best practise.

As a way forward in closing the gap between disability and poverty, Chalken, Seutloadi and Sadek said there was need to include people with disabilities in all research stages. This would improve impact on policy. Furthermore, there was need for research that provided in-depth information on the "disabled face of poverty", the review recommended. •

DEVELOP STRONG DISABILITY LAWS IN LESOTHO

Points to ponder!

we live & learn

1. Ham and eggs. A day's work for a chicken, a lifetime commitment for a pig.
2. Consciousness: That annoying time between naps.
3. I used to have a handle on life, but it broke.
4. Don't take life too seriously; No one gets out alive.
5. A hangover is the wrath of grapes.
6. Earth is the insane asylum for the universe.
7. Wrinkled was not one of the things I wanted to be when I grew up.
8. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a cash advance
9. God must love stupid people; He made so many.
10. He who dies with the most toys is still dead.

Inadequate research capacity within Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs), poor legislation and weak policies are some of the hurdles in improving the livelihood of people with disabilities in Lesotho, says a qualitative research study commissioned by the SAFOD Research Programme (SRP).

The study, *Disabled People's Organisations Needs Assessment Research*, conducted by SAMAITA ASSOCIATES, concluded that DPOs in Lesotho should lobby for strong laws to integrate, include and empower people with disabilities in national development programmes. The study recommended the need for strong advocacy to get political support for pro-disability policies at higher government level. It cited the tension between researchers and people with disabilities as a result of current policies and practices that were based on outdated statistics and preconceptions about disability. This was due to a serious lack of research evidence that will influence authorities to develop and implement laws that will include people with disabilities as full citizens in all development spheres in Lesotho where inequality levels are among the highest in the world according to Ntlatlapa (2008) citing the UNDP's ranking of Lesotho's Human Development Index in 132nd position out of 175 ranked countries in 2001.

Singling out the poor research capacity within the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD), Dube et al (2008) said this was representative of the generality of DPOs analysed under

the research. In addition, DPOs were limited from fully promoting the rights, welfare and development of people with disabilities by inadequate leadership, management and fund raising capacities. Many were not undertaking fully fledged research because they lacked the skills and experienced personnel to do it.

Discrimination remains a drawback in the inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in Lesotho who make up 4.2 percent of the population according to the 2001 Lesotho Demographic Survey cited by the study. Amputations were the leading type of disability in Lesotho, followed by blindness, severe deafness, mental problems, lameness and paralysis.

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The six DPOs in Lesotho surveyed as part of the study, met part of the criteria used to measure the effectiveness of their governance structures. Governance relates to DPO Boards to run their operations effectively and delivering on their set goals. In addition, the capacity of the governance is linked to the experience and capabilities members bring to the DPO Board, such as advocacy, fund raising and networking. A questionnaire was used as a tool to assess the selection and composition, orientation and training, structure and organisation of DPO Boards.

The umbrella body, LNFOD, and DPOs in Lesotho were well structured and passionate about the rights of their members, even though some of the Board appointments were found to be political as they did not consider the competence and skills of those chosen to the Board. Such appointments, according to the study, caused conflicts between the Boards and DPOs management and affected smooth running of the DPOs. There is need for training and orientation of Board members. Some of the members, it was noted, had invaluable administrative experience that was a plus in boosting the capacities of the Boards and the DPOs in terms of professional conduct, gender balance and experience of Board members.

In order to improve the operations of DPOs in Lesotho, a periodic

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DISABILITY LAWS TOOTHLESS WITHOUT IMPLEMENTATION



Despite enacting robust disability laws and policies, governments lack the political will to translate them into action, says a policy study of four Southern African countries.

According to a research study, *Disability Policy Audit in Namibia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique*, commissioned by the Southern African Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD) in 2008, people with disabilities do not enjoy their rights as full citizens because of weak policy implementation. This was despite that all the four countries had signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons, which holds government accountable for disability rights. In addition, the countries were signatories to other international human rights treaties, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1971 Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons and had also ratified the 2002 Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade for People with Disabilities.

It has become abundantly clear that many politicians and senior civil servants do not have a clear and nuanced comprehension of the implications on implementing a rights-based agenda to disability.

The study – *analysing disability policy and practice* – further found that the Constitutions of all countries studied were explicit on the rights of people with disabilities and some had even passed anti-discrimination disability legislation. The achievements however, had been handicapped by poor implementation of the laws.

“Ostensibly, all the Governments are committed to a rights-based agenda for disability policy and practice,” said the principal investigator of the study, Dr. Raymond Lang, from The Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre at the University College of London. “However, from the evidence gathered during the course of this research, it has become abundantly clear that many politicians and senior civil servants do not have a clear and nuanced comprehension of the implications on implementing a rights-based agenda to disability.”

Part of the political inertia was due to the lack of in-depth understanding of the social model of disability as some governments viewed disability from a medical approach. Besides, governments were reluctant to ratify the Convention whose commitments included full implementation of inclusive disability policies, matched by the allocation of appropriate financial, personnel and technical resources. Namibia's disability laws – though in need of fine tuning – were some of the inclusive in Africa with the country being one of the few in Sub-Saharan Africa that maintained a social safety net for the people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. For example, the Disability Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister in Namibia is writing a “layman's guide” to the UN Convention in an effort to ensure across the board implementation of disability rights.

Disability services and DPOs must be equal and interact with each other in mutually supportive and reinforcing ways.

Lang (2008) said a possible explanation to the lack of political will in developing genuinely inclusive disability policies was a result of development challenges. Disability -- owing to the competing demands of HIV and AIDS, chronic poverty, health care and industrial expansion -- was not prioritised in national budgets. The policy audit study sought to identify the extent to which disability issues were included in national policy and legislation

in the backcloth of UNCRPD which came into force in May 2008. Key information sources included government statistics, records, laws and policies whose impact was assessed through poverty level and access by people with disabilities to basic facilities. If non-disabled citizens suffered from access to education, good nutrition, medical care, and equal employment opportunities, the situation for people with disabilities was worse.

A semi-structured questionnaire and face to face interviews were used to collect data in addition to a literature review and focus group discussions. Samples of the study comprised mainly of government officials, politicians and leaders of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs).

The ‘Stepping Stool to Inclusion’ – a tool originally developed and used by the UK's Department for International Development to assess those factors which either promote or militate against the effective social inclusion of disabled people in any given society was used in analysing the findings. >>⁷ According to the ‘Stepping Stool to Inclusion’, the state; disability services and DPOs must be in equal and interact with each other in mutually supportive and reinforcing ways.

Governments, Lang (2008) recommended, should ratify the UNCRPD as a starting point to fully implementing appropriate national laws on disability. Thereafter politicians should be made aware of the responsibilities of ratifying the Convention and improving the livelihoods of people with disabilities.

However, the study noted that despite disability inclusive laws guaranteeing equal access by people with disabilities to

Quotes

to inspire & encourage

"I had to learn to be my own hero, my own role model – which is another way of saying that I had to learn to live with neither heroes nor role models"

Leonard Kriegel in his book, Flying Solo, where he describes his fight with polio and the process of accepting his disability in a world that values able-bodiedness.

"God creates out of nothing, therefore until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him."

Martin Luther

HIGH RISK OF UNEMPLOYMENT? From pg 1

assistant even during class sessions. Without a personal assistant some students especially those with multiple disabilities, dropped out of school.

The study which investigated whether basic education was accessible to disabled people and if that was adequate to help them to train in vocational skills, was carried out in Lesotho and in three provinces in South Africa. The sample for the study comprised 250 informants who included young men and women aged between 18 and 25, teachers, parents of disabled children and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs).

The authors noted with concern that despite global agreements such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child many people with disabilities were not going to school or had attained post-high school qualifications that will prepare them for the job market or entrepreneurship. This was contrary to Article 24 of the Convention on Human Rights which guaranteed people with disabilities the "right to access an inclusive, quality, free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live". Some parents with disabled children, the study found, were not even aware of the global conventions that promoted inclusive education.

In an effort to respond to the educational needs of people with disabilities, ministries of education in the Lesotho and South African government had established departments or units of special education.

Without implementing policies on education for people with disabilities, the goal of Education for All by 2015 will remain a pipe dream, authors warned.

"There is need for capacity building to help

the growth of some of the DPOs. On education, serious policy implications need to be looked into. DPOs have to lobby and do a lot of advocacy in order to help in the promotion of education and training of disabled people. Awareness programmes and campaigns by both Governments and DPOs have to be done and carried out," the study recommended.

Some parents with disabled children were not even aware of the global conventions that promoted inclusive education.

In line with the UNESCO 'Education for All' initiative, the authors recommended that appropriate legislation protecting access to quality education by people with disabilities should be enforced. This legislation, they said, should be supported by all education players; parents, government authorities, educators and students themselves. Furthermore, education and training can only be inclusive if students with disabilities had access to learning facilities, qualified teachers and technical aids such as Braille, hearing aids and sign language to participate in the learning process.

Children with disabilities have to be integrated into schools at the earliest stage possible in line with policies of mainstreaming disability in education, even though some of the children may be taught in their own groups without being confined to special schools.

The authors also recommended further research to establish training and employment trends among people with disabilities, evidence that will inform inclusive policies and how best they can be implemented to better their lives.

The authors hope their findings will help in enforcing the implementation of the UN Convention to improve education among people with disabilities as well as help employers consider people with disabilities as employees like any other. •

WE HAVE SEXUAL RIGHTS TOO! From pg 2

she had been paid cut up newspaper notes for 'her services'.

Reaching people with disabilities, a majority of whom were found to live in remote rural areas, with timely messages in user friendly formats, was a challenge as accessing reproductive services such as contraception, pre and post-natal care. According to the study, people with disabilities reported being denied access to voluntary counselling and testing facilities as well and being ill-treated at maternity clinics and hospitals because of the false assumptions

that people with disabilities cannot develop AIDS or become mothers.

The study recommended, among other strategies, more people with disabilities should participate in research activities for them to include their felt needs on national health and reproductive programmes. In addition, governments should bankroll campaigns to address specific health and sexual issues affecting people with disabilities as well as the need for focused media coverage of this challenge. •

DEVELOP STRONG DISABILITY LAWS IN LESOTHO *From pg 4*

operational review was recommended by the study team which concluded that:

"The assessment confirmed that there is a severe lack of core competencies, skills and knowledge required for DPOs to successfully manage and deliver on substantive issues of programmes."

The study further highlighted that lack of adequate funding was a major con-

"The rights of disabled people in Lesotho remain an illusion because of the absence of any disability specific legal protection in the country,"

straint in DPOs fulfilling their mandate. The situation of people with disabilities in Lesotho remained bleak as a result of a combination of factors such lack of capacity and material resources and poor staffing. It was recommended that DPOs should be empowered to conduct and participate in disability research that will improve their lives and ensure the enactment of pro-disability laws.

"The rights of disabled people in Lesotho remain an illusion because of the absence of any disability specific legal protection in the country," the study concluded, recommending that "Concrete steps should be taken to ensure that the rights of disabled people are mainstreamed in line with the changing ethos that is taking place regionally and internationally. In addition, human rights and social models approaches to disabilities should be pursued vigorously in addressing, prioritising and identifying the needs of disabled people." •

DISABILITY LAWS TOOTHLESS WITHOUT IMPLEMENTATION *From pg 4*

health, education, civil liberties, employment opportunities and other rights, discrimination and stigmatization remain huge obstacles to integration and inclusion.

Die-hard cultural beliefs and myths about people with disabilities being asexual have made people with disabilities vulnerable to sexual, emotional and physical abuse. For example, the study cited cases where women with disabilities have been raped and abused because 'HIV positive men believe that sleeping with someone with disabilities will cure them of the illness.'

The absence of robust disability statistics for planning, implementing and evaluating disability services, has also weakened the disability agenda in the four countries studied. Without the research evidence, the disability movement has no arsenal to fight discrimination and exclusion from development processes. Hence the research agenda on disability issues should be driven by people with disabilities to ensure it tackles their issues and is supported from the highest political office in the land. The suggestion for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the political sphere was commended for highlighting disability rights as human rights.

Die-hard cultural beliefs and myths about people with disabilities being asexual have made people with disabilities vulnerable to sexual, emotional and physical abuse.

"During the last 20 years, Namibia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique have all included questions on disability within their National Census. However, it is highly questionable about how robust these are, and to what extent such statistics provide an accurate analysis of the social, political and economic situation of disabled people," the research noted.

While disability service provision was the mandate of government ministries, financial limitation has prevented governments from this responsibility. Non-governmental organisations were actively involved in awareness raising, capacity building, rehabilitation and advocacy. However, limited resources and the wide need meant that people with disabilities in remote rural areas were excluded from the essential services. The study confirmed that a majority of people with disabilities in rural areas were the most impoverished and had



limited access to public services and job opportunities.

The study further posed the question of why strong inclusion and integration laws have not resulted in improved livelihoods for a majority of people with disabilities in Southern Africa. Lang (2008) concluded that it was partly a result of negative attitudes to disability that viewed disability as a charity issue and not civil rights. It is not the problem of people with disabilities but of society that has not adapted itself to including people with disabilities as an integral part of that society. In essence disability rights should not be granted by implication but must be regarded as human rights. Poor implementation of the disability laws has perpetuated illiteracy, unemployment, vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, poverty and a poor quality among people with disabilities. •

New Society Bulletin

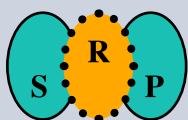
New Society is apolitical and is tireless in its quest to see all people, including disabled people, women and workers, men and children are treated with dignity, respect and on the basis of equality.

New Society is financed through the generous support of DFID.

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Commissioned by: SRP

This bulletin is an output from a project funded by the UK Department For International Development (DFID). However, the views expressed and information contained in it are not necessarily those of or endorsed by DFID, which can accept no responsibility for such views or information or for any reliance placed on them.

Design & layout:
Nel Multimedia
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Who is SAFOD?

In 1986 the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD) was formed by disabled people for disabled people as a federation of non-governmental disability organizations in the then Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) countries. SAFOD, established as a non-profit organization, is comprised of national organizations of people with disabilities in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These organizations are the Botswana Society of People with Disabilities (BOSPED), Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled (LNFOD), Federation of Disability Organisations of Malawi (FEDOMA), Forum of Associations of Disabled People in Mozambique (FAMOD), Federation of Organisations of Disabled People in Angola (FAPED), Disabled People South Africa (DPSA), Zambia Federation of the Disabled (ZAFOD), Federation of Organisations of Disabled People in Swaziland (FODSWA), Federation of Organisations of Disabled People in Zimbabwe (FOPDZ) and National Federation of People with Disabilities in Namibia (NFPDN).

Our Vision

- A new society where all people, including disabled people, women and workers, men and children are treated with dignity, respect and on the basis of equality.

Our Mission

- To strengthen Disabled People's Organisations in SAFOD member countries through training, research, coordination and information sharing, promotion of human rights and adoption of appropriate strategies for stimulating people with disabilities to enhance their economic, political and social development.

Our Core Values:

- Participation
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Commitment
- Gender-Sensitivity
- Empowerment

Our Objectives:

- To promote and encourage the formation of organizations of disabled people in the region and strengthening existing ones;
- To promote training of personnel and leaders of disabled people's organizations;
- To promote and uplift the status of women and children with disabilities in the region;
- To promote and coordinate development efforts and self-help projects among people with disabilities and their organizations in the region;
- To promote, support and compliment government policies and programmes in favour of disabled people in Southern Africa;
- To facilitate exchange of information in the field of disability through public education programmes, seminars, travel and exchange, conferences, assemblies, journals and other publications concerning all aspects of the lives of people with disabilities;
- To partner SAFOD affiliates with other international organizations in the region who share its objectives and whose activities and approaches are developmental in nature and rights-based;
- To strengthen SAFOD as a regional network of independent civil society organizations of disabled people in Southern Africa.

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Southern African Federation of the Disabled



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