



## New National Craft Forum Established

**Action Lesotho** organised a pioneering National Craft Symposium, which was very kindly hosted by the **Irish Embassy** and officially closed by **HRH Prince Seeiso**. The delegates (pictured) included Government officials, industry organisations, craft groups, academics & NGOs. The highlight was the establishment of a Sector Wide National Working Forum (more details Page 3). This is a hugely significant and important step in terms of developing the Art & Craft Sector in Lesotho. Some of the other main outcomes from the Symposium were:

- ❖ A recognition that the Craft Sector has significant economic potential.
- ❖ An agreement that the key to the future success of the Craft Sector is investment in Arts & Craft education throughout the education system as well as continued learning opportunities for those engaged in the Craft Sector.
- ❖ An understanding that linkages between third level educational establishments and existing craft sector workers/companies are essential in bridging the gap between those with production skills and those with training in design and technology.
- ❖ Arts & Crafts are intrinsically linked with Tourism, Heritage & Culture and synergy is essential in terms of planning & development in all these areas
- ❖ Before attending Trade Fairs and Exhibitions, investment is needed to ensure that products are developed which are of high design & production quality, draw on the heritage & culture of Lesotho and are packaged/labelled appropriately.



## Irish Embassy in Lesotho to Close

**Action Lesotho** was very sorry to learn that the Irish Embassy in Maseru is to close in June this year. In January, the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade made the announcement & stated that Ireland's Embassy in South Africa would be assuming responsibility for the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Throughout **Action Lesotho's** existence, we have been honoured to receive invaluable, inspirational & continuous support from the Irish Embassy, firstly from

**Ambassador Paddy Fay** and, since 2010, from **Ambassador Gerry Gervin** (pictured above officially opening Action Lesotho's Enterprise Centre). During their tenures, both Paddy Fay & Gerry Gervin showed genuine personal interest in all our initiatives in Maputsoe. Of particular significance in recent times has been Gerry Gervin's instrumental role in linking Action Lesotho with the relevant Government Ministries for all our project areas.

With the loss of the Embassy, we will also be losing the presence in Lesotho of Anna Gervin, who honoured us by becoming the Patron of LMC. We would like to thank her for the hard work and commitment she has given to this role & also for the warm welcome she & Gerry always gave to Action Lesotho staff, volunteers & clients.

We will greatly miss the Embassy in Lesotho but know that their work will leave a lasting legacy in the country. Our thoughts & best wishes are with Ambassador Gerry Gervin & all the staff at the Embassy who have put in so much work over the last four years for the benefit of the people of Lesotho, especially some of society's neediest.





## Project News: Lesotho Mountain Crafts

### Consultants' visit: Part Two

Design Consultants **Anne Ferguson** (left) & **Morag Tweedie**, who are both from Scotland, returned to Lesotho in February to spend a second six week period working with LMC. They also made important contributions to the Craft Symposium.



One of the initiatives that Anne & Morag helped set up during their last visit was the linking of LMC with **Limkokwing University of Innovation** (Maseru). This has translated into a practical reality, with the first batch of students from the university receiving internships with the LMC groups in February. The aim is for the students to gain practical craft skills whilst the LMC groups benefit from the new technology and fresh ideas brought by the young undergraduates. During their visit, Morag and Anne monitored the internships, provided training and made sure everyone was getting the most from the experience.



The LMC groups & their interns engaged in several intensive workshops run by Morag & Anne. Core skills training was attended by all the groups, e.g. exhibition design, trends & colour (above), whilst other sessions were tailored to meet the individual needs of each group. For example, **Nyenye Crafts, Eliza Crafts & Mazarrello Training Centre** & their interns did a fabric dye workshop (below) while **Hatooa Mose Mosali** & their two interns did Nuno felting featuring Litema inspired designs (above, top right).



Morag & Anne said that the students (some of whom are pictured below right, dressed in their own designs) 'seemed to really enjoy their internships and we were very impressed with their enthusiasm, work ethic and willingness to learn and to pass on new skills to their hosts'.

This relationship between LMC and Limkokwing University meets one of the key targets agreed by the National Craft Symposium (see Page 1) i.e. that linkages between third level educational establishments and the existing craft sector workers/companies need to be established to bridge the evident gap between those with production skills and those with training in design and technology.



Let's hope this pioneering linkage between LMC and Limkokwing University marks the start of a long & fruitful relationship that will benefit the wider Craft Sector.

### New Designs:

Part of Morag and Anne's brief, was to work with each of the LMC groups, providing individual design critiques and giving the craft workers the confidence & skills to develop new designs which will be marketable worldwide. This simple, but stunningly effective, cushion (below), is one



of the results of this process. It was designed and woven by **M'e Matanki** (Hatooa Mose Mosali) & was photographed by Anne Ferguson at Living Life in Ladybrand: some of these beautiful images will be used for marketing opportunities such as websites and catalogues. Living Life is the venue of a monthly Moonlit craft sale held 5pm-9pm on the first Friday of each month. The cushion proved to be a very popular item at the most recent sale!

Photos: Pippa Kearon, Morag Tweedie & Anne Ferguson

Lesotho Mountain Crafts & Action Lesotho owe a huge debt of gratitude to the **Hick Family Trust** who have very generously funded the visits of the design consultants, whose input has led to some very positive progress within LMC: all the beneficiaries are very grateful to the Hick Family



## Project News: Lesotho Mountain Crafts

### Sales & Marketing



**Anne Ritchie** (above, right), an International Textile Consultant, is again working with Action Lesotho to help further the sales and marketing aspects of LMC. During her visit she advised the individual groups and helped LMC prepare for an International Exhibition being held in Morocco. She also made Fashion & Interior Trends presentations to large groups of students at Limkokwing University and Mazarrello Training Centre in Mafeteng.

### Enterprise Centre: Phukalla



L-R: Mamolapo Setho, Dominic Matooane, Fran Whelan, Grace Motete, Eliza Mohanoe, Niall Fitzgerald, Mamahau Manyathela, Tony Doyle, Ambassador Gerry Gervin, Anna Gervin, Mabafokeng Motsoene and Matsepo Moqolobane.

In recent weeks a number of visitors have been to see **Action Lesotho's** Enterprise Centre in Phukalla where LMC group members, **Nyenye Crafts** are based. Representatives from **Action Ireland Trust (AIT)**, **Fran Whelan, Niall Fitzgerald & Tony Doyle**, were on a tour of Action Lesotho's projects and they visited the centre with the Irish Ambassador to Lesotho, **Gerry Gervin**, and LMC's Patron **Anna Gervin**. Nyenye Crafts put on a great display of their crafts for the visitors, including a range of newly designed Seshoeshoe bags.

Also on a tour of the Action Lesotho projects was District Administrator **Ntate Mokhabelane Morahanye** (see page 6). While at the centre he was delighted to see a dye workshop in progress (left) that was being organised by Morag & Anne and to meet the three Limkokwing interns working with Nyenye Crafts (below).



L-R: Nt Afelle Sekhamane (Information Officer), 'M'e Limakatso 'Matli (Local Development Officer), Nt Mokhabelane Morahanye (District Administrator) & interns 'Malereko Makhesi, Mookho Moeketsi & Nyalleng Thlaletsi.



## Sector Wide National Working Forum

**Action Lesotho** is proud to have been the organiser of the first National Craft Symposium (see front page) which resulted in the agreement to set up a National Working Forum for the craft sector. The establishment of this working group is a massive step towards putting craft production at the heart of economic progress in Lesotho.



Pippa Kearon introducing Stephen Gill & Patrick Rorke of Morija Museum & Archives at the Craft Symposium.

The Working Forum includes representatives from eight Government Departments, & associated government organisations, along with Action Lesotho and a range of private sector representatives e.g. Morija Museum & Archives (see p7), Lesotho Mountain Crafts, Lesotho Coop Handicrafts Ltd., Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, Lesotho Women's Mohair Exporters & SMART partnership.

The group's remit is wide-ranging & comprehensive, with its draft terms of reference including the following:

- ❖ Analyse performance & evaluate progress in the craft sector
- ❖ Undertake SWOT analysis to guide further planning
- ❖ Facilitate training for artisans on e.g. latest market demands & expectations.
- ❖ Provide expert guidance to programme partners & stakeholders on craft related matters.
- ❖ Coordinate efforts and assist in promoting a common approach towards effective and sustainable business management
- ❖ Coordinate the necessary legal frameworks to allow the sector to operate effectively
- ❖ Serve as a planning, administrative and monitoring body for the development of the crafts sector
- ❖ Analyse public & private investment opportunities for financial and other support to the craft sector
- ❖ Establish standards within the sector
- ❖ Organise exhibitions and trade fairs
- ❖ Promote information sharing among artisans

The first meeting of the Sector Wide Working Forum is happening soon and Action Lesotho looks forward to being part of this pioneering initiative to develop the art & craft sector throughout Lesotho.



## Project News: Agriculture

Photos: Brian Flaherty & Pippa Kearon

Since our last farm report the season has moved from Spring\Summer to Autumn\Winter and the maize crop is looking very promising. **Brian Flaherty** visited the project in March\April and was given a comprehensive report of the farming progress by the farm manager, **Molemo Lethea**.



Nt Mankoe, Brian Flaherty, Carl von Maltitz and Molemo Lethea examining the maize cobs. Estimated yield: 4 to 5 tonnes/ha.



The well maintained machinery stored from the elements.

### Training days for famers

On the 25<sup>th</sup> March, **Molemo** and **Carl von Maltitz** – our agricultural advisor – hosted the first 'Formal' Farm Training Day at Ha Masele. The training which had been organised by **Pippa Kearon** was attended by 16 farmers. This coincided with Brian Flaherty's visit and he also attended in a supporting capacity.

Molemo and Carl gave an outline of our methods of farming and the systems which are giving excellent results. They also set out the broad outlines of the training which will take place once a month. The training will focus on the needs of the farmers and will be largely 'field' based. A survey of the participants showed that they farm 2 – 25ha, that they all have tractors and that they farm maize, sorghum, beans, wheat, potatoes and sunflowers. After lunch, which was provided by **'M'e Limakatso** and her team at the centre in Ha Masele, everyone went to the fields to view the crops and discuss the issues (below).



Above: Discussing farming matters – Carl (left) and Molemo (right). Four of the farmers are women.

Below: More active learning with notes being made.



### Sales and marketing

The farm team of Molemo, Nt Mankoe and Carl, along with Pippa, are currently evaluating the most feasible and practical means of harvesting, storing and selling the crop. The most likely means of harvesting will be by combine due to the size of the crop – a measure of the success of the project. The estimated yields are 4-5 tonnes/ha.



Right: The Grain store

Below: Action Lesotho's bookkeeper Mphoko (right) explaining the project's accounting and recording system to Ministry of Agriculture officials. The system uses a modern computer, is transparent, provides up to date management accounts and is readily audited.





## Ministry of Trade visit to Phukalla

During Brian's trip, Pippa organised a delegation from the **Ministry of Trade** ([www.mtiem.gov.ls](http://www.mtiem.gov.ls)) to visit the project at Phukalla on the 31<sup>st</sup> March. They travelled from Maseru by mini-bus and they were given a conducted tour of the Ha Nyenye Craft Centre (below) and the farm. They were overawed with the sense of planning that Pippa had imbued in the craft workers and the absolute requirement for quality products to ensure successful sales.

The visit will hopefully assist the government in compiling a strategy for many aspects of trade. Follow up visits dealing with the specific areas of trade are planned.



Above: M'e Mamalapo explaining product design & pricing.

Left: The Ministry of Trade visitors were so impressed with our garden that they bought carrots, cabbage and spinach.

## Country Crest Visit

Action Lesotho's agricultural project is part-funded by **Country Crest (Ireland)** and their Commercial Manager, **Tony Doyle** recently came to view the farm and all the other Action Lesotho projects. Also visiting the projects were Irish Ambassador, **Gerry Gervin** and his wife **Anna Gervin** along with representatives from Action Ireland Trust, an organisation set up by **Portmarnock Community School** to work on development projects in Southern Africa. It is hoped that this kind of information sharing between the organisations will benefit everyone involved.



Action Lesotho's Farm Manager, Molemo Lethea (third left) with L-R: Anna Gervin, Tony Doyle (Country Crest), Niall Fitzgerald (Action Trust Ireland) Gerry Gervin (Irish Ambassador to Lesotho) and Pippa Kearon (Action Lesotho).

## Ploughing Championship launched



Irish Ambassador to Lesotho, Gerry Gervin (right) with Brian Flaherty (left) and Carl von Maltitz at the launch.

**Brian Flaherty** has launched the 'Lesotho Ploughing Championship', which will be held in August. It is sponsored by **GWK** ([www.gwk.co.za](http://www.gwk.co.za)), a supplier of farm inputs. Molemo & Carl will organise the event & they are looking forward to a successful show. **Tjonane Matla**, the Chief Editor of The Silo ([www.thesilo.co.ls](http://www.thesilo.co.ls)) - the Lesotho farming paper - will visit the project & write a news feature on the farm & the forthcoming ploughing championship.



Koos Rosslee, Operational Manager, GWK, Ficksburg with the Flaherty Cup which Molemo (right) hopes to be the 1<sup>st</sup> winner of!

## Economic Transformation Conference

In January 2014 **Pippa Kearon**, In-country Director for Action Lesotho, attended Lesotho's Economic Transformation National Conference in Maseru which aimed to further discussion & understanding of the National Strategic Development Plan as a means of implementing the National Vision 2020. The conference was hosted by the Ministry of Finance & the International Monetary Fund and was divided into three areas:

1. Balancing Macro-Economic Stability with Development Goal;
2. Developing & Supporting the Private Sector (Improving the Investment Climate); and
3. Developing the Private Sector (Skills Development, Technology & Innovation)

Pippa was invited by the Ministry of Finance to participate in the conference representing Action Lesotho & LMC. She urged synergy between Ministries in the planning & implementation of the strategic plan and called for sector wide national working forums to be created towards that end, drawing on Government, NGOs & other interested parties operating throughout Lesotho.

The Private Sector Competitiveness & Economic Diversification Programme is focussed on development in three key areas; tourism, textiles & craft and agriculture (primarily horticulture & fruit tree growing). Action Lesotho's own strategic plan also focuses on the areas of craft sector development and agriculture which provides for much synergy between ourselves and Government over the coming years.



## Project News: Community Development

Photos: Limakatso Rantsoa & Mapule Radebe

### District Administrator's visit



L-R: Pippa Kearon (Action Lesotho), Nt Mokhabelane Morahanye (District Administrator), Sr Teresa (Ferrando Centre Manager), 'M'e Limakatso 'Matli (Local Development Officer), Nt Afelle Sekhamane (Information Officer, Nt Mankoe (Action Lesotho).

**Lesotho** is divided into ten districts, each of which is headed by a District Administrator. **Ntate Mokhabelane Morahanye**, the District Administrator for Leribe where most of our projects are located, visited **Action Lesotho's** projects for the first time recently. He saw at first hand the work being done at the Community Development Centre in Ha Masele, the Enterprise Centre in Phukalla and on the Action Lesotho farm. He also took the time to visit the Action Lesotho-initiated Ferrando Resource Centre for differently-abled children. At each site he met with the project staff and asked them about their work with Action Lesotho, their achievements and their plans for the future.

**Limakatso Rantsoa** (Action Lesotho's Community & Humanitarian Manager) reported, 'He was really impressed and congratulated the staff on the marvelous work being done. He promised his office will work together with Action Lesotho to change the lives of all the people in our care and the community around us'. The District Administrator promised to visit the projects again soon and assist where possible. This interest of local government in our work is a very positive step and we look forward to working with him and his team into the future.

### Lease Agreements



Lesotho has been carrying out an extensive land reform project which means people with land can now receive a lease which proves that the land is rightfully theirs. This proof of ownership could make a huge difference for the people, giving them security of tenure, enabling them to choose who will inherit their land and providing collateral for loans.

**Action Lesotho** facilitated the process in Ha Masele by allowing the community development centre to be used for lease registration and collection.

### Classes-4-Fun

In our last newsletter we mentioned that **Mapule Radebe**, Action Lesotho's Assistant Centre Manager, had started weekday arts classes for children. Her classes have gone from strength to strength and she has branched out to include crafts, cooking, reading & writing and story-telling. These subjects are part of the primary school curriculum in Lesotho, but many schools have no resource materials so have to teach subjects like sewing, art and cookery by theory only! So Mapule's daily after-school classes complement the formal school system and are also proving hugely popular with the children!



### Revamping the centre at Ha Masele

The centre in Ha Masele was built 5 years ago by volunteers from Cork & Kerry. It's had a lot of hard use since and so staff decided to do some redecorating at the start of the year. The main room was repainted bright white & one of the smaller rooms was converted into a classroom for the Classes-4-Fun, complete with pictures on the wall and a blackboard (below). It's looking good for the year ahead!





## HIV/AIDS Awareness Workshop



**Limakatso Rantoa** (Action Lesotho) recently organized a workshop on HIV/AIDS for the older children at Ha Masele and sent this report: 'The AIDS epidemic in Lesotho has had a devastating impact on the country, its economy, social structure and capacity of families to care for themselves. Crippling poverty combined with AIDS has caused average life expectancy to drop to 48.2 years. The impact on individuals, families and the whole nation is being felt as adults become too sick to work and children orphaned by AIDS are left to run households.

Fear and confusion surrounding HIV/AIDS, coupled with gender inequity in relationships, has resulted in increased infection rates and teenage pregnancy among orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The devastation of the social structure in Lesotho from the AIDS epidemic has left a huge cohort of children increasingly vulnerable and alone, especially in rural Lesotho. They lack essential psychosocial support and life skills training required to develop into responsible adults.

To help combat these impacts and fight the spread of HIV/AIDS, Action Lesotho has formed a partnership with a youth led NGO called **AIM** and plans to run regular workshops for youths & children. On the 15<sup>th</sup> February, a workshop was held for the children under Action Lesotho's care. About eighty children were part of this workshop, with the concentration being on the 12+ age group. Action Lesotho's nurse and a recovered patient from our Malimpho program (speaking above) led the workshop.

The ice was broken by asking the children what they would like to be when they grow up. They all came up with different professions. Children were urged to make good choices in life, including the people they hang out with. Relationships were part of the discussion & they were advised to wait for the right time. They were told how wrong choices can kill their dreams.

Children seemed to know about the disease but knew only one way of contracting it – through sex. The nurse intervened by explaining other ways and how to live a good life after being diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The expert patient further explained that living with HIV/AIDS is not a curse and people with it should not be stigmatized. She told them she is still living a normal life even though she is living with HIV. However, she encouraged them to make good decisions in their lives to avoid contracting the disease.

The workshop was a great success and we are planning more sessions for the coming months to help change the lives of children not only in Maputsoe but around Lesotho.



## Love and Respect Workshop

Another workshop organised for the children at the two community centres was on the topic Love and Respect. It was facilitated by **M'e Mphunyetsane** on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

**Limakatso Rantoa**, the organiser, reported, 'Love and respect are the most essential elements of life. Loving and treating people with respect makes the world a nicer place to live in, whether it's at home, at school, or in the community. And it's easy - all one has to do is treat people the way s/he likes to be treated.

'Greatest love and respect come from within oneself', said M'e Mphunyetsane. 'You cannot love or respect others if you don't love and respect yourself', she continued.



'One of the interesting things they were told which they did not know was that they cannot only respect people; they also have to respect their environment e.g. by not littering', said Limakatso.

## Ferrando Centre Celebrates 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday



**The Ferrando Resource Centre** for children who are differently-abled celebrated its first birthday in March. The centre's staff and children, the **Bishop of Leribe, Fr Sebastian** from St Luke's Mission and **Action Lesotho** staff, all gathered for a joyous event to mark this important milestone for the centre. The setting up of a facility for differently-abled children was initiated by Action Lesotho several years ago and it is heartwarming to see how successful the centre has been under the management of **Sister George** (Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians). With 20 children now enrolled, the Ferrando Resource Centre is truly changing the lives of both the children & their families. It is the first & only such facility of its type in Lesotho.

*Photo: A mother with her child who attends the Ferrando Centre.  
© Pippa Kearon*

## Letter from Action Lesotho's In-Country Director Pippa Kearon



Dear Readers,

As winter draws in here in Lesotho the Action Lesotho team finds itself extremely busy & is delighted to report excellent progress in all areas of our development activities. At the wonderful St Patrick's Day celebrations hosted by His Excellency, **Gerry Gervin** in Maseru, Action Lesotho was proud to receive accolades for its work at a grass roots level in Lesotho.

The Craft Symposium in February was a major breakthrough in our Art & Craft Sector development programme. The idea for the Symposium and a National Working Forum came initially from **Prince Seeiso Bereng Seeiso** who sowed the seed with me during a brief conversation at the Garden Party exhibition of Lesotho Mountain Craft products at the Irish Embassy Residence hosted by **Anna Gervin**. Gerry Gervin, Irish Ambassador to Lesotho, was quick to support the idea & brought the Ministry of Tourism, Environment & Culture to the table.

It was heart-warming and inspiring that at the end of the week-long presentations and discussions, the Government Ministries and all other interested parties in the development of the sector unanimously agreed to engage in a sector wide approach through the National Working Forum and gave a clear commitment to work in partnership with Action Lesotho to create development plans within each Ministry for the improvement and economic growth of the Art and Craft sector. Key to the future development is the change in status of the sector from Handicraft to the Art and Craft Sector and the acknowledgement that education and training from pre-school through to tertiary needs to be a priority development area if we are to create economic advantage for those working in the sector in the years ahead. With little or no formal art education the Basotho are currently at a severe disadvantage in terms of design and new product development of their crafts.

We are confident that the sector will rapidly grow over the coming years given the tremendous commitment shown by all parties at the Symposium & guided by our new Craft Sector Development Officer, **Dominic Matooane**. I am indebted to Gerry & Anna Gervin for their untiring support of this initiative & to **Anne Ritchie, Anne Ferguson & Morag Tweedie**, our international consultants, who have played an invaluable role in helping me to develop this project.

In our agricultural project the farming team (**Brian Flaherty**, Agricultural Director on the Board; **Linne Mankoe**, General Manager; **Molemo Lethea**, Farm Manager; & **Carl Von Maltitz**, Farm Advisor) are anticipating a very good crop of maize. Through excellent farm management 21 hectares of yellow and white maize was planted at the optimum time and there was even time to assist other local farmers with their planting and spraying before Christmas. The farm team have engaged with 20 farmers throughout the Leribe District to develop a training and discussion forum where Action Lesotho can share its learning, assist in addressing agricultural challenges and work towards yields of above 2.5 tonnes per hectare for all farmers in the District (national average is 0.5-0.8 tonnes per hectare).

Our Community Intervention Programmes are progressing very well under the capable management of **Limakatso Rantoa**. The Health & Wellbeing programmes are also doing well with dedicated work from our Nurse, **Makhomohelo Futho** & Medical Director on the Board, **Diane Foorde**, & we are delighted with the recovering patients' progress in becoming self-supporting through the income generation support Limakatso has provided. Links have been made to the local primary school benefitting both the children & the teachers. Distance Learning students at Jonsson's factory have registered to sit their Primary, Junior & Leaving Certificate exams this year. The centre has been given a facelift & a new Craft4Fun classroom has been developed for children in the community. Under Limakatso's guidance, two weekend co-ordinators assist in implementing the programming for vulnerable children at our centres in Ha Masele & Lepoqong. They now enjoy a wide programme of activities, regular development training, discussion groups and nutrition & wellbeing courses. Limakatso is assisted in her role by **Jacqui O'Riordan, Eileen Coates, Rita Kelly & Clare Heardman** who are the Directors on the Board with responsibility for Community Development, Health & Wellbeing; we are extremely grateful for their commitment and regular guidance through Skype & email discussions.

**Mapule Radebe** who assists Limakatso in all aspects of our programming at the centre has launched the Craft4Fun initiative which has been a great success with the children in the community at Ha Masele. Art and Craft activities are guided by Mapule drawing on cultural and heritage themes. We hope that this pilot project will be adopted by District Cultural Officers throughout the Mountain Kingdom over the coming months.

The community development programming is now focussed on preparing for the Winter Holiday programme for children which runs during the school holiday from June until the end of July. They are also preparing for **Theresa Moriarty's** visit to Lesotho in June which will see 10 primary school teachers undertake an intensive English Language teaching course developed by Theresa 2 years ago. Theresa is travelling the world delivering this unique language course which was so effective in 2012 with her first 8 students in Lesotho that they all found employment as teachers within 6 months of completing the course.

Our Accountant, **Mphoko Molatsa**, working with our Financial Director on the Board **David Buttimer**, ensures that Action Lesotho is fully accountable for each & every cent spent here in Lesotho and that budgets are adhered to. Our accounting practices were praised by the auditors during this year's annual audit and both Mphoko & David are to be applauded for this achievement.

The Action Lesotho Team are recording positive and continued progress on the ground in all aspects of its programming and I am extremely grateful to our staff, the Board of Directors, Consultancy team, the Irish Embassy, funders and supporters for the tremendous impact they make in improving the lives and futures of the sick, poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged in Lesotho. There is always more work to do but your enthusiasm and dedication to the job in hand is inspirational and energising.

We are now looking forward to a visit from our Chairman, **Paul Hanrahan**, in April and the continued success of our project development.

With best wishes to you all,

**Pippa**



## People & Places

### Lesotho Mountain Crafts Coordinator



Action Lesotho has appointed a new craft sector coordinator to support LMC. **Nt Dominic Kefuoe Matooane** (pictured left with M'e Mateboho) is 47 years old and Masotho. He previously worked as a Branch Manager for Nedbank in Butha Buthe and left the bank in 2011 after working with them for 20 years. He first became involved with Action Lesotho in 2013 when he was an excellent & enthusiastic participant in the Training for

Transformation (TfT) programme run by Pippa Kearon in Ha Maqele. Dominic is computer literate, speaks and writes English fluently and with his banking background has good skills in relation to finance, business and development. He will be undertaking many of the day to day tasks required to develop LMC into a thriving and self-sustaining organisation. Dominic says he 'is passionate about projects that empower Basotho . . . without spoon-feeding them' and he was drawn to the work of Action Lesotho because of 'its mission to assist with skills development'.

### Activity Coordinators recruited



Action Lesotho is delighted to welcome **Limpho Ntene** (left) and **Mabele Ya'hya Shao** (below). They have been appointed to the new posts of activity coordinators to run the OVC weekend development programmes at Ha Maqele & Lepoqong. They are responsible for organising a comprehensive range of educational, developmental & fun activities for the children at both

community development centres. The aim is to help give these vulnerable children the developmental tools that will provide them with a better start in life & give them hope for a better future.

Limpho attended local secondary school St Boniface's High School before going on to study education at Lesotho College of Education. She is outgoing and loves working with children. Mabele also attended St. Boniface's. He describes himself as being friendly, reliable and energetic and having a positive attitude.

We wish them both all the best in their new jobs!



### Morija Museum



Anyone visiting Lesotho, who is interested in art, culture, heritage and history, will be fascinated by the **Morija Museum**, with its associated **Archives and Arts Centre**. It has an extensive indoor collection featuring Basotho heritage items e.g. pre-historic artefacts, historical material, objects of ethnological interest and traditional Basotho art. It also has an outdoor display area (above). The centre features regular modern art exhibitions, craft sales, a resident artist, an arts outreach programme and an annual Arts & Cultural festival.

At the recent Craft Symposium organised by Action Lesotho (P1), the Museum gave a presentation outlining their initiatives and the important role it plays in arts, crafts & creativity in Lesotho:

- ❖ Founded in 1956, it is a fantastic resource centre for Basotho art, craft & creativity.
- ❖ It is a site of learning, mentoring, skills training, production and creativity.
- ❖ It is a site for the marketing & sale of arts & crafts.

The centre is open daily (Tues-Sat) from 11am to 4pm, Sundays 1pm-5pm (closed on Mondays). More information about this heritage site can be found on the Morija website: <http://www.morija.co.ls/museum/>



Photos of Morija Museum © Morag Tweedie

### Baby Pippa!

The daughter of **M'e Mamolapo** from Nyenye Crafts recently gave birth to a baby girl (pictured on the back of her grandmother). **Pippa Kearon** played an important role in ensuring M'e Mamolapo's daughter reached the hospital in time for the baby to be delivered safely. In gratitude for her friendship & support, the baby was given the middle name of Pippa. This is probably the first baby Pippa in Lesotho & is a huge honour for Pippa senior!





## Finance & fundraising news

### Arrabawn Co-op



**Cheque presentation. L-R: Action Lesotho's David Buttimer (Company Secretary) & Paul Hanrahan (Chairman) with Arrabawn Co-op's Patrick Meskill (Chairman) & Conor Ryan (Chief Executive).**

Action Lesotho were recently presented with a cheque for €5000 from **Arrabawn Co-op**, who are based in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. **Patrick Meskill**, Arrabawn Co-op's Chairman, said 'We are committed to helping Action Lesotho . . . who are doing fantastic work through their pilot farming project in teaching local farmers with small holdings how to improve and increase their output and how to generate income from new enterprises'.

They have generously pledged €5000/annum for three years to help fund Action Lesotho's agricultural project. The money will be used to part-fund the position of our Agricultural Advisor **Carl von Maltitz**. Action Lesotho is delighted to know that funding for this important role is secure for the next three years and is very grateful to Arrabawn for their support.

### Show-jumping for Lesotho

A big thank you to **Georgia & Andy Shiels** of Bantry Bay Pony Trekking who ran an 8 week show-jumping league at their centre near Bantry with all proceeds donated to Lesotho. They made the great total of €1255. An extra special mention for their 11-year old son **Cathal** (pictured) who won his class but donated his winnings & some of his Christmas money to give a very generous €175 to Lesotho. What a fantastic role model this young boy is!



**Increase the benefit of your donation:** If you are a PAYE worker who donates €250 or more a year, then Action Lesotho can claim the tax back. It's a painless way to increase the benefit of your donation. To get a form contact our Treasurer at [djbuttimer@eircom.net](mailto:djbuttimer@eircom.net)

**Donors:** The companies & people named above are just some of those who have helped us, but we send many thanks to ALL our donors. Without your support we could not exist. Donate via [www.actionlesotho.ie](http://www.actionlesotho.ie)

## Christmas parties

The annual children's Christmas parties were held at the community centres in Ha Magele and Lepoqong at the end of last year (pictured below). There was lots of fun, games and a special (and colourful!) celebratory meal. A donation to the food for the party was kindly made by **Melissa Moffett**. The children each received a set of new clothes (courtesy of **Heather Kearon** and **Seaford & Hambridge Primary School, UK**), a fine new pair of school shoes (courtesy of **Reflex Shoes**) and a comprehensive food package to last them over the holiday period.

The weekend development programmes resumed in January, with the boost of two new activity coordinators (see page 7). Their appointment will hopefully make great strides in terms of making sure this programme is feeding minds and not just mouths and therefore making a long-term difference to the children. Helping boost the range of toys available for the children was **Engela Moffett** who donated handmade teddies and dolls to the centres.



## Living Life and other outlets for LMC products

Craft items from the twelve LMC groups will be on sale on a regular basis at **Living Life** in Ladybrand, South Africa. There is a moonlit craft fair on the first Friday at each month 5pm-9pm. Meanwhile, the **Lesotho Mountain Crafts Gallery and Café** is open 7 days a week from 9am to 5pm at Hatooda Mose Mosali, Teya-teyaneng.



**IMPACT**

Trade Union

 **Irish Aid**  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha