

## Twining the Kingdoms Field Report

August 2008

Executive Field Officer: Eileen O'Leary



**Skills Transfer Workshop for Carers and People with Disabilities;** held in Phela U Phelise Community Centre, Maputsoe, Leribe District 21-25 July 2008. Course facilitated by: Juliet Muzondo (Occupational Therapist/Skillshare Development Worker), Mathabo Pama (District Social Welfare Officer), Masekane Lekobane (Physiotherapy Assistant, Motebang Hospital) and Malehloenya Nkhasi (District Peripatetic Special Education Teacher). Guest facilitators were Mr. Shale (Leribe Police, Child and Gender Protection Unit), Mrs. Motaung (District TB Coordinator) and Mrs.

Mamotheo (District HIV/Aids Coordinator). Ntate Mankoe (TTK's Project Coordinator) set up the Community Centre; chairs were loaned by St. Luke's Mission. Ntate Phiri (TTK Disabilities Officer) gave the opening address and the workshop was officially opened by Chief Morena Peter Rantoa. The workshop was catered by three ladies from the local community who provided three meals a day for participants.

The workshop was used to raise awareness of disability issues in Maputsoe and had 5 **Key Objectives;**

- To discuss the different disabilities that are within the community; causes, presentation & management
- To share information on the challenges faced by people with disabilities and their caregivers
- To discuss the roles of different stakeholders in community based rehabilitation
- To transfer skills, therapy, advocacy & self representation to the carers of and people with disabilities



-To select a committee that will facilitate the progress of disability and rehabilitation issues in Chonapase village

**50 participants** attended the workshop; only 1 participant had ever attended a course before, ages of participants ranged from 5 to 75 years and covered the full range of disabilities. 88% of participants walked to the Centre. 14% of the Carers

are caring for more than 1 person with a disability. 57% of Carers are single or widowed. 18 participants have a physical disability, 13 have an intellectual disability. Of the 50 participants only 9 have had access to school. The most popular sessions were; Economic Empowerment, Disability Rights and Disability Issues, the group valued the communication, information and discussions and fully appreciated the staff of Pheile U Phelise and the food that was provided. Participants were registered with full details; Certificates of Attendance were awarded to all participants and an evaluation of the course was undertaken by all participants and analysed by TTK volunteers. The 'Breaking the Barriers' photographic exhibition was on display on the last afternoon.



### Issues identified

Inaccessible toilets

No access to public transport, discrimination from drivers and members of the community

No access to employment

Inadequate number of schools for children with disabilities

People with disabilities not accepted as productive members of society

Abuse of children and people with disabilities

Discrimination by teachers



No opportunity to continue education

No assistive devices, especially wheelchairs

Difficult to get financial assistance

Discrimination and lack of understanding of people with an intellectual disability

### Outcomes

-Participants now aware of the role of the Social Welfare Department in the community

-Group have discussed ways in which they can improve their economic independence

-Participants nominated a committee who then met to decide on the officers; the committee has 11 members. The committee, Reikamohetse, undertook a one week training workshop, 28 July to 1 August, to equip them with leadership skills, map the way forward and look at how they will try to address the issues raised in the workshop and in particular explore the economic empowerment ideas.

- The committee developed a constitution which will be sent to a legal office.
- The committee would like to take part in a financial management skills workshop so that they will be able to handle funds independently.
- The committee will be keeping a register of all the people with disabilities in Ha Chonapase, database created by TTK volunteers
- Clients will be invited to the hospital for further assessment and management and they will also be referred to other relevant services
- School going children will be supported through the District Education Offices and the Special Education Teacher
- The Social Welfare Office will assist clients with assessing of assistive devices as well as placement in special schools where recommended

### **Recommendations**

- Transportation to and from the course would help immensely
- Transportation for people to access schools, hospitals and clinics
- Support in the form of physical aids
- Workshops should be held in the summer months as the facility is cold
- More workshops should be run
- Access to education for children with disabilities and special needs schooling
- Work/training opportunities
- Regular physiotherapy
- Financial management skills training course for the committee

### **Summary**

The course is the start of some real understanding of the needs of people with disabilities in the community and it is our first link with the local professionals who work to support people with disabilities. Nt. Mankoe and Nt. Phiri are a tremendous asset having gathered the 50 participants; Juliet Muzondo will be key to the ongoing work in the area and has committed to following through with the committee and clients in the area. The final day of the workshop was televised and the committee that has been formed are now prioritising the issues faced by people with disabilities in the village of Ha Chonapase. It is important that the committee are funded for the financial management training workshop

### **Camara/School Net**

TTK have financed the purchase of 21 computers through Camara/Schoolnet. These computers were purchased at the cost of R200 each; 15 of which have been placed in St. Monica's Primary School and 6 in the Community Resource Centre in Ha Maputsoe. Future purchases will

be at the cost of R450 per computer. The Camara workshop is currently based in St Agnes School in TY and is moving to a larger premises this month where they will have a training area; the organisation is led by the Director Malefetsane who heads the Curriculum Development Unit in the Department of Education and now employs Simon Mokhathali, Technical Services Manager on a full time basis repairing computers for schools. So far 50 secondary schools have been supplied with reconditioned computers from Ireland and Camara volunteers have been training teachers to use the machines and the software programmes. St. Monica's is the first primary school to get computers. Simon is arranging four and a half days of training on Linux for TTK projects on Saturdays to accommodate teachers and students. Cost of the course is R120 per person and the course can facilitate 6-10 people. TTK needs to become a member of Schoolnet at the cost of R1, 500 per year to ensure maintenance, software updates and discounted computers.

Currently one of the rooms in the Community Centre is being outfitted with a computer bench to take the 6 computers and this room will be used as a technology training room for committees and young people. Wiring was substandard; this will be rectified by LEC who will also be providing extra sockets in the room.

### **Lebohang Morena**

This is a profitable and sustainable enterprise now with over R5, 000 in the bank; an accounting system has been put in place by Eileen O'Riordan and is up-to-date. Continued demand on the mill means that Nt. Mankoe is now training a miller; the committee will need to employ the miller and pay him a wage from the profits. The mill needs to advertise opening hours on a sign on the building so that people know when to access.

### **St Monica's Building Project**

Funding accessed from Irish Aid and foundations for the three classrooms have been completed by the community. Colleen O'Kane and Brian O'Donovan arrive at the end of August and the building team mid September. Electrification of the school will be completed the week of the 25<sup>th</sup> August at a cost of R12,000. Father Marian at St. Luke's Mission has facilitated the opening of accounts with all building suppliers.

### **Chonapase Pigs**

Boar house built, boar installed and being productive, currently TTK supporting feeding of the pigs, R1,400 per month. More people in the community would like to be involved in this project; I will make a cash flow projection and loan repayment schedule on the sale of projected piglets and make a recommendation after the September field trip.

### **Sewing Projects**

Women created quilts, TTK supporting purchase and distributing to needy families in the community. Suggest that we advertise this as a Christmas promotion on the website so that people can support us with a 25 Euro donation to ensure women continue to be employed and children are kept warm. Pippa Kearan, volunteer from Waterville is going to work with the two sewing groups in September on new products that have a distribution potential in Europe.

Sewing group in Ha Chonapase have been working in the fields harvesting and are now going back to sewing, TTK supporting rent and electricity at Me' Mary's house and basic materials for the group. Pippa will be working with this group on a commercial product.

### **Phela U Phelise Community Centre**

The centre is continuing to provide a feeding programme for children of single parents and orphans at the weekends. This programme is very successful and more and more children are availing of the service; currently 58 children attend on a regular basis. It would be good if TTK were able to extend this service to more children in the community. There is a need for TTK volunteers, youth workers in particular, to develop programmes that will engage the older children in voluntary roles in play programmes and computer courses for the younger children. TTK have been paying R1,500 a month to support this project, it is clear that this needs to be raised to R2,000 per month after an analysis of costs over the past three months.

The committee are concerned about; the rising cost of food, the lack of heating in the building, a need for fencing for the security of the building and ideally a television set so that children and members of the community have access to educational films and training programmes from organisations such as CARE Lesotho.

Eileen O'Riordan and Sheilann O'Riordan have developed a new process for recording information on new orphans and conducted training with the committee to ensure that the records are kept up-to-date.

### **Care Lesotho**

Members of the Pheile O Phelise Committee are providing palliative and home based care to members of the community; this work is supported by Care Lesotho. Twinning the Kingdoms and Care Lesotho had a joint meeting with the committee to review the work plan. Mameloko Makoane, Co-ordinator for Care together with Ntsopa Mokitimi and other members

of their team are funded by USAID. This team services four groups in Maputsoe and they concentrate on organisation, capacity building, strengthening the groups that they work with and setting targets. There is financial support for the group in the form of R400 per month per member to cover transportation costs and food purchases for those clients in need. The group have undergone three training courses since April looking at the areas of drug resistant TB, volunteer management and the role of the committee. In August they will be attending a workshop on behaviour change communication in Maseru; this workshop will look at what are the main drivers in AIDS behaviour. Each member collects data on the clients that they visit and that is given to CARE for USAID collection.

### **Loantsang HIV/AIDS Prevention Project**

A community survey was undertaken in August; this was managed by the committee who hired members of the community to undertake the house-to-house visits and funded by TTK. The site has been measured and Sheilann O'Riordan is creating a drawing to scale and analysing all the data from the survey; this information will be available on 31st August. From there a funding proposal will be written for the building of a Community Resource Centre.

### **School Sponsorships**

Third quarter fees have been paid for Kopano Ntakatsane at Morate Medium High School.

Lepekola Kompfi is now in St. Luke's Preschool, TTK is currently supporting extra food for Lepekola so that he can start on ARV treatment as soon as possible, as he was diagnosed HIV positive in May. Nt. Mankoe currently trying to access a death certificate for Lepekola's mother so that we can approach the Social Welfare Department for financial support.

Seven vulnerable children attending St. Boniface Secondary School, Maputsoe were supported to attend an educational school tour to Durban as part of their curriculum; funding for this project was provided by 6<sup>th</sup> year student at Pobalscoil Lís O'Connor who donated her Community Award prize money. Lís visited Lesotho as a Transition Year Student in 2007 and is delighted to have been able to make the trip possible for the children.

### **Donation**

The Irish Army have donated a vehicle and trailer to TTK; this has been facilitated by Fiona de Buis in Waterville. The vehicle, together with spare wheels, has been loaded with sewing machines, tools, materials, sports equipment, books and copies. The vehicle is currently on its way to

Rotterdam and then to Durban in a container where it will be transported to Maseru Bridge by a clearing agent. Paperwork pertaining to import duties and taxes have been cleared by Thabo Letjama, Commissioner of Customs in Maseru, and all other documentation was prepared by Eileen O’Riordan; the vehicle will then be driven to Maputsoe, where it will be initially utilised by the TTK building crew. It is anticipated that the vehicle will be used to provide a service to those people with disabilities who need to access clinics and hospital appointments. This could provide local employment for a driver.

### **Water Project**

Simon Mokhathali approached TTK to help a community group get a central water source to their village of Qoqolosing near Leribe. The water is a number of kilometres away and thus people who are elderly and sick are finding it a tremendous challenge to get water to their homes. The community would like to pipe water from a local reservoir to their village. At present the village have saved R3,000 to try and make this project operational. Simon has agreed to be the local coordinator on this project and is currently trying to get an engineer from the Rural Water Supply to survey the site; the cost of this was estimated at R10,000. Eileen O’Riordan photographed the site, the committee members and current access to water in the river bed.

### **Sesotho Design Website Development**



Waterville Friends of Lesotho are supporting Sesotho Designs in Teyateyaneng by creating a website that will ensure that the work of this high quality weaving company will reach international markets. Photographs of twenty of the tapestries were taken, together with photographs of the weavers at work and Saeed the owner manager of the organisation has prepared text for the site.

Painters in Kerry have given a favourite image to the weavers so that they can produce a tapestry by September in order that the work can be brought to Ireland and auctioned in December at Tech Amergin thus giving money to the employees of Sesotho Designs and raising funds for the tools that are needed in the Carpentry room in Morate High School.

## Christmas Cards

Brenda Friel, is currently working with Meshu Motikimi on four designs that will be used as Christmas cards this year in order to generate funds for the Chonapase Pig Cooperative, cards will be ready for sale and distribution in early October. The four original designs will also be auctioned at Christmas.



### Morate Medium English High School

Brenda Friel and the volunteers visited Morate English Medium High School in order to view the suite of classrooms that have been funded by Waterville Friends of Lesotho; this community group have provided 30,000 Euro to build three classrooms for vocational education.



To date the Home Economics room is now outfitted with gas and electric cookers, presses and sewing machines; the Technical Drawing room has desks chairs and drawing boards and the Carpentry room has a number of carpentry benches fitted with vices and cupboards awaiting tools. There is a small store room; the classrooms are secured by metal gates. Dee

Fay and two Irish volunteers visited the school in August and they have promised a contribution of R18,000 towards the purchase of more tools.



Ntate James feels that the biggest challenge for teachers in the school is the lack of physical education for the students and the lack of a full time computer teacher. Ntate Isaac has approached Simon of Camara for leads on a computer teacher. The link between Pobalscoil and Morate is strengthening; the Morate team of thirteen students who meet twice a week

after school have produced a magazine giving Irish students an insight into Basotho culture with articles and poetry. The students have addressed the issues that are most pertinent to them and the project was overseen by Ntate James, Co-ordinator of the linking project. 'I have really learned from the students during this project; it pains them so much to be referred to as 'double orphans' they are feeling alienated by these terms that are used so liberally by the government and NGOs.'

With the aim of giving those young people a voice Eileen and Sheilann O'Riordan worked with the group so that they could input their work onto computers and prepare work for the TTK website together with photographs of the students.

### **Contact**

Ntate James introduced TTK to Dr Ester Mary Aceng, Country HIV Officer. Dr Ester is based in the UN Compound in Maseru. Brenda met with Dr Ester to outline the TTK projects. Dr Ester gave a clear outline of the HIV health structure in Lesotho and the supports available to us in Maputsoe; she is committed to visiting our projects in September and will be an invaluable contact in helping us access the two health clinics in Maputsoe and their staff.