

THE LESOTHO SOCIETY OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS (LSMHP)

EVALUATION AND STRATEGIC PLANING REPORT

JUNE 2006

Thanks and Appreciation

Sincere thanks to all those people in Lesotho who made my visit to Lesotho interesting and inspiring. I am most grateful to the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson and the Co-ordinator for all their assistance and help in understanding the situation in Lesotho and the remarkable work that is being done by the Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons. The commitment, strength and dedication of the branch committees, the members of the NEC (past and present), the past and present full-time employees of the Secretariat and the friends of the LSMHP is awe-inspiring and humbling. I thank you for your time and trust.

1. SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Lesotho, a constitutional monarchy, is a relatively young democracy which has oscillated between a military dictatorship and a parliamentary democracy ever since independence in 1966. whilst it has enjoyed increased political stability, especially after the electoral reforms were put in place after the 1998 unrest, and particularly since the 2002 elections the Lesotho state is nevertheless characterised by a fragile state. A process of decentralisation has started with local government structures being put into place to focus on development strategies at municipal level. This is one of the cornerstones of the ruling party's manifesto and one that will hopefully provide the much needed infra-structural development that Lesotho needs.

Lesotho is the poorest and the only Less Developed Country (LDC) in the SADC region with a per capital gross domestic product (GDP) of \$580 in 2004¹ with 56% of its population of approximately 2m living below \$2 per day. With limited natural resources or agricultural sector – brought into sharp focus through the food crisis in the early 1990 – Lesotho is surrounded by , and heavily dependent upon the economy of RSA. Despite a slow, but steady economic growth² the incidence and depth of poverty has however increased during the 2000s. Reports indicate that between 1970/71 and 1974/75 economic growth averaged 8 per cent. However it slowed down to an average of four per cent from 1983 to 2003.

The recording and interpretation of development trends has been severely restricted by a very weak statistical base. Largely anecdotal evidence indicates a (growing) trend of population shift from the mountainous areas, to lowlands and to increasing urbanisation, drive by economic opportunities, the effects of HIV/AIDS, cattle theft and the long term degradation of the environment. There is a worsening of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the HIV infection rate is now approximating about between 29% and 32% of the 15 049 age group (the third highest in the world); the Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT) is continuing to rise; and the number of AIDS orphans is estimated to be between 100,000 and 150,000. Critical data on the rate of new infections is not available.

Access to waged employment is seen by the Government of Lesotho and the Basotho as the key to sustained poverty reduction. There has been a rapid decline since its peak in the late 1990s in unskilled migrant (mainly male) labour opportunities in South Africa and therefore in remittances. The unrelenting ‘brain drain’ from Lesotho to South Africa and beyond, is set to continue until the skilled labour market in South Africa becomes less attractive.

There is sizeable foreign direct investment (FDI) in the garment industry which has created approximately 54,000 (mainly female and mainly urban) jobs and

¹ World bank indicators

² Due to a heavy investment in the Lesotho Highlands Water project

accounts for around 70% of exports. Recent downturn due to the uncertainty over the extension of the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) the removal of textile quotas under the Multi-fibre Agreement (MFA), the arrival of Chinese entrepreneurs and traders and, most critically the strong Rand/US\$ exchange rate has had a negative impact on this industry.

Despite the downturn in the economy and the social issues that are a consequence of this Lesotho is not overly aid dependent. External funding has provided about 7% of non-principal expenditure (but 33% of capital expenditure) since 2000/1. There has been an overall decline in development assistance over the past 10 years³ but a slight increase over the period 2001 – 2004. The donor community is small with significant World Bank, EU and UN programmes and five large/medium scale bilateral programmes: Ireland, Germany, UK, USA and Japan.

Since 1998 there have been three major development policy initiatives in Lesotho; Vision 2010, the Public Sector Improvement and Reform Programme (PSIRP) initiated in 1999, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process (started in February 2000 and approved by Cabinet in 2004). To accelerate sustainable growth and poverty reduction His Majesty King Letsie 111 called on the nation to join hands in preparation for a long term Vision 2020 that will guide economic development. The nation came together to prepare the National Vision, embodied in this Vision Statement:

'By the year 2020, Lesotho shall be a stable democracy, a united and prosperous nation at peace with itself and its neighbours. It shall have a healthy and well developed human resource base. Its economy will be strong, its environment well managed and its technology well established

³ Total overseas development aid in 1990 was 23% of GDP compared to 2002 figure of 10.7%

It remains to be seen if Lesotho is able to turn around its development and growth strategy in the remaining 14 years of the mandate set by the Nation.

It is within this political, social and economic context that the Lesotho Parents Association has established an organisation to focus and support the needs of people with intellectual disabilities and children with other disabilities. The challenges that the association faces are tremendous given the background outlined above.

2. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The legislative context in which the Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons (LSMHP) operates is to a large extent supportive but weak on implementation. Human rights, the protection of the individual and a Lesotho for all its citizens are principles that are enshrined in the Constitution of Lesotho in terms of the Constitution all citizens, including the disabled are entitled to a secure life without fear, hunger and prejudice. The policies of the various Ministries and the legislative frameworks that have been put in place to implement the policies first and foremost have to reflect the fundamental principles of the Lesotho Constitution.

2.1 Ministry of Education: Special Education Unit

In 1988 the Ministry of Education developed a policy to reflect the key principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, especially those relating to integrated education. The Education policy was reflected in the numerous educators who were trained to educate learners with special needs and they in turn were required to train others. Schools were identified where the programme was introduced and a monitoring process was put in place to track how effectively the new policy was being implemented. At the same time the inclusive education training policy was introduced into the education curricula of the Lesotho Teachers' Training College. It was however limited in focus and

concentrated primarily on mild to moderate disabilities. Education for children with severe disabilities has to date not been accommodated, but a pool of District Resource Teachers have been deployed in most of the school districts to enskill parents to provide some form of education for children with severely disabled children.

In essence the focus of the national education policy for disabled children has been at primary school level, and not many children or young adults with disabilities have been integrated into secondary schools. This policy does not reflect the inclusive principles of the Constitution and it is an issue that needs to form part of the advocacy strategy of the LSMHP.

The Education Act of 1995 made provision for every Mosotho child in standard 1 to 2 to receive free education in primary schools in 2000. Children or young adults with mental disability do not go beyond primary education. This policy was envisaged to continue gradually to standard 7. The opportunity that this presents for children with disabilities is that they too, as part of the integrated education system, will benefit from these provisions and will be able to attend the community schools close to where they live.

From discussions with the present Special Education Unit Director, from the Ministry of Education it would seem that the relationship with LSMHP remains cordial and the Unit Director is of the view that LSMHP has contributed substantially over the last decade to the inclusion policy by participating in the Unit's workshops, seminars, policy making initiatives and training programmes that focus on teacher training and awareness raising campaigns. The Unit has also relied on the LSMHP to access resource persons to assist with their outreach and training programmes. The Special Education Unit is however frustrated by its own internal tensions and inability to deliver on its departmental plans and policies. There seems to be a waning interest in the issue of children with disabilities, particularly mental disability. This is due to a lack of resources, staff turnover as well as the change of Ministers after each election. All these issues undermine the efforts that have already been put in place. It was reported

in the 2001 NFU⁴ report that the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) had worked collaboratively with the Department of Social Welfare to draft new legislation for the disabled. This initiative was not sustained because LNFOD was not operational for some years. The relationship has subsequently been restored.

2.2 Ministry of Health: Department of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation

The Department of Social Welfare is divided into 2 units – the Social Welfare section and Rehabilitation unit. LSMHP has ensured that there is a relationship between both units of the Department. The units have historically been responsive to the needs of the disabled but are limited in their programmatic implementation by lack of resources and a perceived lack of political will by the political leadership within the Department. Despite all these difficulties both units continue to seek opportunities where they can work collaboratively with LSMHP and other DPOs. According to the senior management staff in the Rehabilitation Unit, LSMHP is a key role player and they value their interaction and relationship. This however seems to be contrary to the way in which LSMHP perceives the relationship, ie that LSMHP is not invited to attend some decision-making meetings nor are they informed about policy decisions that are being discussed, even although they are one of the important stakeholders.

2.3 Ministry of Health: Department of Health Services

The 2001 report indicates that the Ministry of Health Services views the LSMHP positively. The review of the mental health services, as anticipated in 2001, is still in the process and no definitive decisions have as yet been made. The relationship between LSMHP and the Department however continues to be strong. None of the plans and mental health strategies that are discussed in the 2001 report seems to have come to fruition. Subsequent to the report elections were held in 2004 and the strategies re mental health issues are once again on the agenda for national discussion and consideration. During the period between

⁴ How to Scale up Positive Development: Evaluation Report April 2001

the 2001 report and the 2004 elections local government elections were also held and newly established municipal and district structures have been put in place. This new tier of governance will also participate in policy making and decision making regarding issues pertaining to the disabled.

2.4 Partnerships with other NGOs

The Lesotho NGO umbrella organisation for people with disabilities, LNFOD, is comprised of Disabled People's Organisations in Lesotho, of which LSMHP is one,

LNFOD values LSMHP's contribution to the network and views it as an important advocacy organisation. Despite the changes that have recently taken place in LSMHP's leadership and management and the impact this has had on its participation in the Coalition, LNFOD believes that LSMHP remains a key organisation dealing with issues related to people with intellectual disabilities and children with other disabilities. There has for some time been a strained relationship between LNFOD and its partners but the umbrella organisation has reconstituted itself and is re-engaging its members. LSMHP has agreed to continue working with the umbrella organisation. Previous NFU reports have recommended that LSMHP continue as a partner of LNFOD so that it is not excluded from any possible policy decision making forum where it no doubt will be able to make a contribution. There are also other benefits to being part of a forum that discusses issues related to disabilities.

3. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

In anticipation of preparing a funding proposal to NORAD for continued support of LSMHP, and in terms of the requirements of the previous NORAD grant, an institutional evaluation needs to be undertaken to assess whether the organisation has been able to achieve the objectives set out in the original funding proposal.

The NFU summed up the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation as follows:

1. To establish whether there are good foundation of further co-operation between LSMHP and NFU.
2. To determine strategies for sustainability in order to assess LSMHP's institutional and economical viability as a democratic member based advocacy organisation in Lesotho for persons with developmental disabilities and children with disabilities
3. To give recommendations about NFU's role in this process.

4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology included perusing the documents provided by the NFU prior to the Consultant visiting Lesotho. In Lesotho the Consultant met with the office staff, board members and undertook field visits to 3 branches (the Maseru branch met at the office in Maseru) and met with a couple of donors in Maseru. Two ministries, pertinent to the work of LSMHP were also interviewed.⁵ Thereafter a two day strategic planning meeting was convened where members of the board, the Head Office staff, a resource person associated with the organisation, as well as two NFU staff attended. The purpose of the strategic planning meeting was for senior members (NEC members and staff) in the organisation to develop an institutional 'road map' for the next 4 years, taking into account all the circumstances that they are currently facing as well as those that they anticipate the organisation could face in the medium to long term.

The NFU recommended in their *Terms of Reference* (Annexure A) that the Consultant use a "naturalistic qualitative research approach, because it would allow for a flexible yet in-depth inquiry. This approach allows for engagement and active involvement of LSMHP membership in the research process, so that they would not become the objects of evaluation, but to all intents and purposes,

⁵ Annexure A: LSMHP Evaluation Programme

would find mutual learning and benefit from participation in the process.” These principles reflect the methodology used by the Consultant as witnessed in the discussions at the branches, the meetings with the LSMHP NEC, staff members (past and present) and resource persons. The outcome of such an interactive and participatory approach to Evaluation creates a sense of organisational ownership, not only of the process, but of the results as well. This is one of the fundamental ingredients to ensuring effective delivery and successful impact of the project or activity.

Part of the *Terms of Reference* was that once the Evaluation had taken place a Strategic Planning meeting would be convened to review at an institutional level, the successes and challenges of the organisation in terms of its own stated objectives, and to build on these to ensure LMSHP's long term sustainability, ie financial and institutional. The Consultant relied on the participation of the members at the meeting to develop trends and identify strategies for the strategic period between 2007 and 2009. Without this valuable interaction it would not have been possible to develop a strategic plan for the organisation, which at the same time reflects the internal dynamics as nuances as expressed by the staff and members of the NEC.

5. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The Lesotho Society for Mentally Handicapped Persons (LSMHP) was established in 1992 by parents of children with intellectual disabilities. The organization was registered in 1993 under legal registration no. 93/32.

The original focus of the organization was on children with intellectual disabilities but later the focus included children with other disabilities as well. Today it is an organization that protects and advocates for the rights of children with disabilities

and adults⁶ with intellectual disabilities. To date LSMHP has 16 branches in 8 districts nationwide, and totals approximately 1200 members.⁷

LSMHP has identified three key institutional objectives⁸:

1. to support and build the capacity of parents to advocate for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and children with other disabilities;
2. to focus on young people and assist them with self-advocacy strategies and life skills development in order to be able to cope better in society;
3. to ensure that social services are extended to people and children with disabilities in Lesotho. This includes ensuring that there are specialized health care services, the protection of people with disabilities and education and training for those with severe and multiple disabilities.⁹

Progress has been made in some of these areas, but the organization continues to face many challenges¹⁰ which it continually seeks to overcome.

NFU has been the primary donor since the establishment of the organization. The LSMHP received its first grant in 1994 for institutional development, to ensure that an organizational framework is in place,¹¹ parent mobilization, awareness raising and general advocacy, as well as for the first needs assessment that identified the following as the core needs for the newly established organization:

⁶ 'adults' are not defined in the LSMHP literature and reports but the assumption is that the term adults could include any age because of the effects of intellectual disabilities.

⁷ These statistics vary in different reports. It is imperative that the membership database be kept updated as it is important for evaluative purposes. The need for accessible quantitative data is important when measuring impact and success.

⁸ Reformulated from the LSMHP (2005-2007) Concept Paper prepared by the Co-ordinator

⁹ Children with learning disabilities to be accommodated in mainstream schools and appropriate provision be made available to ensure that each person (including children) reaches their academic potential. Educators to be provided with the necessary training skills.

¹⁰ These issues were tabled at the strategic planning meeting, where recommendations were made about how best to give effect to the Objectives noted above.

¹¹ According to the NFU policy documents it "provides support to democratic, membership-based organizations that advocate for the full participation and inclusion of people with development disabilities" from document entitled: How to Scale up Positive Development, Pg 7

- training on human rights and mobilization
- needs for community based services related to rehabilitation and income generation
- training of parents on activities of daily living
- training of young people on rights

In addition the LSMHP has received grants from various other donors during the last 11 years. These have been project- based grants provided by the Danish International Development Co-operation¹² (MS), Skillshare,¹³ a once-off grant from Canadian CIDA¹⁴, as well as other smaller grants for individual programmes at branch level. These are however not consistent enough to sustain the organization in the event of NFU's withdrawal, nor do they provide resources to support the institutional development of the organizations.

In 1998 the Ministry of Education developed an Inclusion Policy for children with special needs. Schools were selected for integration and educators were trained to be able to respond to the special needs of children with disabilities. There has been an incremental increase in the number of schools with an Inclusion policy and the Lesotho Teachers Training College has developed a curriculum which now forms part of the overall education system.

6. The EVALUATION PROCESS

6.1 Desk Top Review of Documentation

The Evaluation Report (June 2006) has been prepared in the context of several other reports by the NFU. The most important of these for the present intervention are:

- 1) 'How to Scale up Positive Development, April 2001;

¹² ADL training, training for young people on rights and support for Development Workers.

¹³ Support for Development Workers

¹⁴ Income generating projects that did unfortunately not succeed

- 2) the 18-22 March 2005 Report: NFU Project Visit to LSMHP;
- 3) the 23-30 August 2005 :NFU Project Visit to LSMHP.;
- 4) LSMHP (2005-2007) Concept Paper

The above reports outline the challenges facing the organization and they all seek to provide useful strategies as to how best the institutional difficulties can be dealt with.

The NFU is the primary donor since the establishment of the organisation. The LSMHP received its first grant in 1994 for institutional development, to ensure that an organizational framework is in place,¹⁵ parent mobilization, awareness raising and general advocacy, as well as for the first needs assessment that identified the following as the core needs for the newly established organisation:

- training on human rights and mobilization
- needs for community based services related to rehabilitation and income generation
- training of parents on activities of daily living
- training of young people on rights

The 2001 Report provided a comprehensive analysis of the context, challenges and achievements of the organization. Several of the issues contained in the 2001 report remain unresolved and their relevance to the strategic planning process remains. Of interest too is the fact that many of the official processes that were discussed in the 2001 report have not come to fruition or are still in the process of being discussed, debated or are to some extent being implemented. It is important that these issues be revisited as their relevance remains pertinent

¹⁵ According to the NFU policy documents it “provides support to democratic, membership-based organizations that advocate for the full participation and inclusion of people with development disabilities” from document entitled: How to Scale up Positive Development, Pg 7

to the cause of disabled people in Lesotho, especially the areas that the LSMHP focuses on.

The August 2005 report confirmed that the NFU continued to see value in the activities of LSMHP and would seek approval from its NEC to approach NORAD for continued support and the findings of evaluation¹⁶

The NFU highlighted the following issues that require attention by the LSMHP in order for the NFU to be able to motivate for continued financial support:

- 1) increase in LSMHP's capacity to involve youth and adults with development disabilities in the management of the organization,
- 2) LSMHP endeavours to share more information about the risks of HIV/AIDS,
- 3) that the relationship with CBR programme be clarified and strengthened;
- 4) that LSMHP takes advantage of the opportunities offered through the new governmental decentralization policy ie to create relationships with councilors in the local government structures to give effect to their advocacy strategies;
- 5) that LSMHP strengthen the capacity of the organization at Secretariat level and branch levels to ensure institutional sustainability.

The March and August 2005 reports were based on discussions with stakeholders, within and outside of the organization, as well as on the findings of branch visits where uneven levels of support and commitment for LSMHP were experienced. Some of the reasons for this lack of consistent support is:

- a sense of alienation by members ie parents from the organization due to the fact that there are no real 'tangible' benefits to being a member;
- lack of financial resources to implement projects and programmes;

¹⁶ The evaluation was meant to have taken place at the end of 2004.

- inconsistent communication between the Head Office in Maseru and the branches;
- lack of leadership and capacity at branch level;
- ‘competition’ from other international aid agency;
- poverty and hunger – parents’ primary responsibility to look after their families leaving no time or energy for participation in the activities of LSMHP;
- a perception amongst some members that LSMHP has a misplaced focus ie the development of policy document for lobbying and advocacy, rather than the provision of services to practically improve the lives of families living with children and/or people with disabilities (this relates to bullet point 1); and finally
- personality differences at branch level, manifesting themselves in disputes about unfair access to limited resources and the distribution of whatever funds become available.

Other reports and documents that provided useful background information about the LSMHP and its activities include the LSMHP Constitution¹⁷, the policy document “Speaking in One Voice” and the NFU Progress Reports. These provided a comprehensive appraisal of the organization, its projects, activities, successes and challenges and will be dealt with in various sections of the Evaluation Report.

6.2 Field Visits

The Vice Chairperson of the National Executive Committee (NEC) and Co-ordinator accompanied the consultant on the field visits and both very kindly assisted with the translation. The visits provided the Board member and the Co-

¹⁷ In the April 2001 Evaluation Report it was noted that the Constitution needs to be revised. This has been done and reflects the recommendations made in that report.

ordinator an opportunity to be appraised first-hand about what branch level activities ie progress being made in the programmes and projects; obstacles to progress and overall achievements. The Consultant met with four branches¹⁸ and on each occasion the branch chairpersons outlined the branch's achievements and provided an overview of the constraints experienced by the branch. Some of these constraints were:

- lack of financial resources and the impact on branch activities;
- mobilization of parents and home visits difficult because of lack of transport and no funding at branch level;
- an unstable membership – because there are no tangible benefits to being a member, individual members and families are easily seduced to join other international organizations that offer food, clothing etc etc. It is possible to see members belonging to different international organizations in order to benefit materially from this association;
- members' expectations not managed leading to frustration and resignation from the organization;
- social and economic hardships that impact negatively on the branch membership, including the effects of HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse of children and young adults, poverty, unemployment ;
- an unresponsive state in terms of social services not being provided to parents with children who have disabilities and people with developmental disabilities;
- Ineffective education for children with intellectual disabilities as there are insufficiently trained educators to deal with children with intellectual disabilities;

¹⁸ Visits were made to the Mofoka , Tanka and Ramorakane branches. Representative of the Maseru branch met at the LSMHP offices in Maseru.

- in some instances meetings had to be held at members' homes as there were no facilities available for LSMHP meetings;
- no transport facilities to transport parents and children to meetings, visits to the clinic, to schools etc etc;
- difficulty in communicating with the head office because of a lack of telecommunications;
- where schools do admit children with disabilities they are more often than not left to their own devices in the classroom as the educators don't have the capacity to deal with them. There was also a concern that the schools did not have the appropriate equipment or technology to educate the disabled children.

The successes that were reported on at branch level include:

- branch committees showed a great appreciation for NFU and indicated that the organization would not have grown to the extent that it has without NFUs financial, moral and intellectual support;
- even although the membership base is unstable there nevertheless has been a core group of supporters in each of the branches that have managed to keep the management of the branch activities on track;
- the relationship with the 2 head office staff was good but there is a view that the office needs more capacity in order to be able to interact more successfully with the branches;
- visits made by international visitors and consultants have provided access to important knowledge sharing about best practices and principles.
- in general the relationship with the chiefs/headman were good and that they had been responsive to the awareness raising undertaken by the branch committee and had intervened in cases of child abuse;

- the awareness raising initiatives were starting to have results and parents/caretakers were more open about their children with disabilities or adult family members with developmental disabilities.

What was impressive at most of the branches visited was the level of commitment of the committee members, the school teachers, volunteers and resource parents. Although in most cases the lobbying and advocacy strategies have uneven results, the branch committees are nevertheless encouraged by these and develop a sense of confidence from the tangible impact of their efforts.

These successes are mostly experienced in those branches where there is capacity as well as strong leadership, generally the branch chairperson. It would seem that the ability of the branch to advocate successfully at local level is to a large degree dependent on how the chairperson is able to educate and raise the awareness of the local authorities and/or the chiefs and headman about disability issues. Although these leadership qualities can be enhanced by the training provided by LSMHP, on its own training does not create the kind of leader that is needed for the branches to advocate successfully for the needs of their constituency.

With the establishment of local government many lobbying and advocacy opportunities are opening up for the LSMHP branch committees. They will have greater access to the local government councilors, because of their closer proximity as well as the fact that they are resident within the community. This will ensure a greater degree of accountability between the public representative and the community members.

6.3 Stakeholder Meetings

Further meetings included discussions with several members of the present and past National Executive Committee, present and former staff members, the Director for Rehabilitation and the Special Education Director. A couple of donors

were also contacted about their policies and support for non governmental organizations in Lesotho.

National Executive Committee – past and present

The present and past NEC members interviewed were all of the view that even although LSMPH faces many challenges it was nevertheless a viable institution with a proud history of speaking on behalf of people with developmental disabilities and children with disabilities. The members who are all parents of disabled children all maintained that they are best qualified to assess whether the LSMHP is in fact having impact on the education and health policy framework in Lesotho. They also argued that as members and parents they were fully aware of the shortcomings of the organization, including those experienced at NEC level but felt that these were not insurmountable problems that could not be resolved. Some of the issues noted were:

- financial constraints which not only affect the sustainability of the organization but also impact on the branches ie the need to provide some sort of support for parents such as lunch and transport stipends, for attending LSMHP meetings, and engaging in advocacy and mobilization work,
- the lack of certain skills at NEC level; eg. how to manage meetings, conflict management and conflict resolution, how to read a budget, advocacy and lobbying, fundraising;
- insufficient staffing at Head Office,
- the need for ownership of the office building,
- more effective access to government ministries relevant to disability issues,
- the need for greater membership mobilization and the imperative to increase the number of branches, and strengthen the existing ones.

- more effective lobbying and advocacy capacity at branch level,
- men to be encouraged to become more actively involved in the organization and its activities,
- strategic relationships to be pursued with local authorities, and
- the consolidation of the achievements of the organization in order to be able to build on these lessons for the future sustainability of the organization.

An important issue tabled by one of the founder members of the organization was the need for the organization to plan a national campaign which would run for the period of a year. The focus of such an initiative would be one of the key strategic issues that the organization has advocated for. This theme for the campaign needs to be decided by the NEC. The suggestion was supported by several present NEC members.

The present NEC is newly appointed and some of the members have no experience of being members of a board. The issue of institutional memory vis a vis board decisions and policies was noted as an issue of concern by both members of the NEC as well as staff. It was also noted that the majority of the NEC members did, as yet, not have the capacity or confidence to engage senior decision makers within government, the donor community or high level civil society representatives.

Staff Members – present and past

There were varying views from present and past members of staff about the LSMHP, its effectiveness, its ability to sustain itself and its organizational structure and operation. A past staff member who remains deeply committed to the ideals of the organization referred an institutional tension that exists between the NEC members and the secretariat. This was as a result of a perception by the NEC that the ownership and control of the organization was at one time with

the secretariat, rather than at NEC level, where executive members felt it should be. This issue undermined the commitment and effectiveness of the secretariat and weakened the organization. The proposals to review the Constitution to incorporate operational board sub committees was seen to be part of a strategy by some of the NEC members of that time to assert their control over the operational arm of the organization.

Other previous staff members noted the lack of market related salaries as a problem for the organization and one of the reasons for the high staff turnover experienced during the last year to 15 months. Past members of staff noted that there was an unresolved underlying tension between members of the previous secretariat and NEC about the level of staff remuneration. Although it was not clearly articulated there was a sense that the NEC who had the primary responsibility for the organization and who attended meetings on a regular basis were not being remunerated, and that staff were receiving relatively generous salaries. It was however understood that the remuneration of staff was agreed by the NEC. This issue needs to be clarified and resolved because it has the potential to impact negatively on the relationships of trust that are being built between the Secretariat and the NEC.

The issue of respect was noted in several of the discussions. It was reported that in some instances staff felt unappreciated, where some of the past NEC members felt that some of the previous staff, who have now left the organization had been disrespectful of them because they were not necessarily as literate or educated as the staff.

6.3.3. Social Welfare Department : Director for Rehabilitation

The meeting with the office of the Director of Rehabilitation was informative even although it never become clear what the nature of the co-operation and relationship between this unit and LSMHP is. The Director was not present at the meeting but she was represented by two officials who provided useful insights into the programmes and projects of the Unit. The issue of the Community Based

Rehabilitation programme was discussed as well as the relationship between LSMHP and the Unit. The officials were full of admiration for the work being done by the LSMHP and discussed how the Unit used the Project staff Officer from LSMHP for their own training.¹⁹ The Co-ordinator was however skeptical about the depth of the relationship and is of the view that a more substantive collaboration can take place to the benefit of both organizations and the community of disabled youth and children. It was suggested that common projects be explored where the LSMHP shares knowledge and experiences in the field of rehabilitation. Both LSMHP and NFU noted their concerns about the inadequate and inconsistent involvement of LSMHP in CBR issues and contact between the Rehabilitation Unit and LSMHP. Approaches have been made to NAD by NFU and LSMHP to facilitate ways in which LSMHP can be more included in the activities of the Community Based Rehabilitation programme. It is however, hoped that this situation will be improved by the involvement of LNFOD. DPOs have recently started to hold monthly meetings at LNFOD that are meant to look into CBR implementation critically. For a start this arrangement seems to be effective.

Special Education Director

A very informative and interesting meeting was held with the Director. She is committed to the cause of the disabled and shared her very positive experiences about the work of LSMHP with the Consultant. The Director noted that despite the good and sound principles of the current legislative framework regarding Disabilities and Inclusion, the political will for effective implementation of the policies was unfortunately absent. The department's ability to deliver on the policy issues is predicated on whom the Minister is and whether s/he has a commitment to issues related to disabled children and their education. The lack of policy consistency from one Minister to the next, within the Department, has impacted negatively on the Special Education Unit. A further concern noted was

¹⁹ It did not seem as if LSMHP was being reimbursed for the time of the staff member used by the Rehabilitation Unit. This needs to be explored further by the secretariat as a source of income for the organization.

that if the Unit is staffed by functionaries and not people committed and passionate about issues related to the Disabled and especially disabled children's education the limited services offered at present will diminish even further.²⁰

Donors

Donors signaled that there is a move away from stand-alone projects towards more programmatic support in line with the Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS). However in accordance with statements made by the Minister of Finance 'the bulk of development assistance remains in the form of un-harmonised project aid which has a multiplicity of conditions, reporting requirements and numerous supervision missions including workshops with stakeholders.' In this context donors such as NFU, that are programmatically focused, are easier to partner. They have the interests of the organization at heart and are committed to help strengthen the institution through various capacity building support initiatives. For an organization the size of LSMHP it is preferable to seek support from these relatively smaller non-bi-lateral donors.

The process of gathering information about LSMHP and the experience (and perceptions) of the various stakeholders ie parents, branch committees, provided useful information which informed the Strategic Planning process.

7. STRATEGIC PLANNING

The two day strategic planning meeting was attended by 6 board members, the two staff members and two representatives from NFU. A former founder member of the organization also attended and was able to provide the necessary institutional memory necessary for strategic planning. NFU was represented by the Project Officer and the regional consultant.

²⁰ These problems could substantially undermine the gains made by both the present Special Education Unit and LSMHP. This issue needs to be monitored very carefully and LSMHP through its Staff , Board members and if necessary, members of the Advisory Committee should meet with the Ministry and the Unit.

Participation was of a high standard and it was evident from the meeting that there is a sincere commitment to the organization, not only in terms of what it can offer each of the parents, but how the organization can be strengthened to fulfil its mandate and meet the objectives that it has set itself, which are broadly to:

1. advocate for the rights of adults with intellectual disabilities and children with all disabilities, and
2. secondly to assist parents with children with disabilities and adults with developmental disabilities enhance their capacity to manage the lives of their children and their lives, respectively. The first objective will no doubt impact on the second and vice versa.

7.1 Methodology

In order to be able to develop and design a strategic plan for the organization for the period from 2007 to 2009 it was first important to evaluate as a group where the organization sees itself currently placed; where it would like to be in the year 2009 and how it intends to achieve the goals established for 2009.

7.1.1 PEST Analysis

In order to assess its current position and analyse the context in which the organization operates a **PEST** analysis was undertaken. The focus was on analyzing the **P**olitical, **E**conomic and **S**ocial context of the organization (it was thought not relevant to consider the **T**echnological context). The following issues were raised by the participants regarding the various aspects of the contextual environment of LSMHP.

POLITICAL	SOCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of commitment by ministries - lack of subventions/ grants to Disabled People - no trained teachers + health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HIV/AIDS – death of parents resulting in many orphaned children - Infrastructure at school not

<p>service providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no employment for persons/youth with developmental disability - no national policy on disability - proper structures to be used by members for advocacy services - use structures from grassroots (chief/local government), then district administration, then parliament – then the minister. - Unstable government – frequent change of persons – need to retrain every time - Decentralisation positive (chiefs + council work hand in hand) - Government takes time to approve bills - People don't know about existing laws - There is political will on behalf of the government but need guidance to change 	<p>accessible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy lacking for People with disabilities in educational field on exams - Mobilisation have full community support - Free to talk about our children, we accept ourselves - Free to join support group for HIV/AIDS + free to talk about disability - DPO's working hand in hand (register of DP to be handed to other DPOs) - Same applies to community policing groups - Some parents too sick to deal with their children with multiple disabilities - Discrimination against disabled people especially in areas where there is no DPO - Traditional beliefs about disability, but people are open to change their view - National AIDS Commission (NAC) support living with HIV/AIDS – use the possibility to talk about disability - Still mothers' responsibility to take care of the children with disabilities
<p>ECONOMIC</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poverty high - No employment for people with disabilities - Lack of capital for vocational training graduates - Impacts on our access to food, health, education etc etc need funding for the family. If disabled child in the family – not able to address these needs 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents still capable of finding IG jobs - Free primary education, but funds still needed for secondary, vocational and university. - No resources for specialised medical attention - Money is there but misallocated, priorities confused. Money used for workshops, but no implementation - Rural area not accessing servicing, but urban have access. 	
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Once these contexts issues had been interrogated and reviewed by the participants, the traditional SWOT analysis was done to provide a basic analysis of the opportunities and threats facing the organization.

7.1.2 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis includes the **Strengths** of the organization; the **Weaknesses** – which also often provide a clue as to where improvements will lead to organizational gains; **Opportunities**, which are presented by the external environment of the organization; and the **Threats** which are those factors beyond the organisation’s control that could measurably affect success. These factors need to be managed.

The participants offered the following insights:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are able to raise awareness and sensitise service providers - We are able to reach out to the districts, spread out country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of men - Subscriptions are not paid in time - Membership fluctuation

<p>wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our members understand their rights and their children's rights - LSMHP collaborate and network with other organisations. - We are able to sensitise chiefs and communities about abuse, so that it has been reduced especially the sexual abuse in some communities. - We are able to give job placements members with developmental disability in some communities - Have office and secretariat - Trained members on mobilisation, advocacy - Parents at districts know how to advocate for services - Parents involved in existing IG projects for members - Some branches pay subscriptions - Have members - Have a democratic constitution - Annual General Meeting - We have four members in the LNFOD board. - We have increased membership through advocacy - Only organisation working for persons with developmental disability - Inclusive Education - Know what step to take in case of abuse of their children - Have equipment - Have means of communication within the secretariat - LSMHP is well-known at branch level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of funds for activity implementation - Shortage of staff - Not trained service providers, teachers etc. - At branch level lack of confidence among members - Members don't attend branch meetings regularly - Some don't accept what has been agreed upon in previous meetings - Members not wishing to be committee member, always moaning and groaning - Some members at national level don't seem willing to share at branch level - Branches are not reporting back to the office - Some branches don't pay subscriptions - Lack of skills to fundraise - NEC don't have skills to write proposals - Inability to apply knowledge of Rights to change on situation of their children - Lack of confidence
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>THREATS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political will out there but need guidance - Local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distant services to community - Services are to far away from our homes/community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have Chiefs, MPs, schools, health centres and services to the communities - Membership based - Attractive for more volunteers - Follow up an advocacy issue if we have one, because we have the skills - Freedom of association and expression - Well known organisation at branch level, therefore they are the first one to be identified among the civil organisations - Exchange programme among weak and strong branches - LSMHP is the <i>only</i> organisation working with children with disabilities and people with developmental disability - Participation in meeting with different Ministries (ministry Social Welfare) - Government has open door policy - Policies and legislations that can protect and give the services are available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Withdrawal of donors - Parents die (of HIV/AIDS) and leave children with disabilities - Our organisation is an advocacy organisation, people don't stick to the organisation due to lack of incentives if we don't take into consideration to change - High staff turnover, because of lack of funding - Can't attract technical support due to lack of funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Can also create conflict o Culture of sitting fees - change of government - limited donor base, sometimes we have to deviate from our own objectives to follow the donor driven objective - negative attitude in the society discourage the organisation to take action - Poverty - Bad allocation of funds from the government especially of the marginalised - Orphans centres don't accept children with developmental disabilities - No national policy on disability - No early intervention on multiple disability - No site – threat to our sustainability - Competition among organizations that provide tangible handouts e.g food items
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The analysis is critical in terms of not only understanding the external context in which the organization operates but also the internal challenges and pressures that need to be resolved for the organization to be able to be effective. Once

these issues had been tabled the participants started the process of identifying strategic objectives for the next 3 years. This included reviewing and re-assessing the **Vision and Mission Statement** which meant also revisiting the **Values** and **Identity** of the organization. The participants analysed the **Interdependencies** of the organization ie the key relationships that they have established and need to establish to give effect to the organisation’s Vision and Mission. Part of this process was also to critically evaluate the risks that are associated with these relationships.

Once these issues had been settled the group evaluated the way in which the organization is presently structured, its operations and its capacity ie staff, financial, systems and processes. The Model presents a wholistic overview of how an organization can use the experiences of the past – be they positive or negative – to improve systems and build a stronger foundation for continuing the activities and projects in the future.

7.1.3 The Vision and Mission Statement

In order to interrogate whether the current Vision and Mission Statements remain appropriate as the guiding principles of the organization the participants identified core Values that they thought reflected the essence of LMSHP. These are:

Values	Identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caring - Courageous - Non-discriminating - Tolerant - Honest - Confident - Humility - Nurturing - Supportive - Unique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy organisation - For rights - Grassroots/community based - Inclusive - Parent’s organisation - Supportive (value) - Disabilities - Children/Adults - Democrat - Networking - Organisation - NGO - Non-political

The Values and Identity as suggested by the participants at the meeting was used to review the current Vision and Mission and then to reformulate both to reflect what had been proposed.

The following Vision and Mission was agreed to:

Vision

A society where the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and children with all disabilities are respected.

Mission Statement

Where people with intellectual disability and children with disabilities realise their full potential and achieve their rights in society.²¹

7.1.4 Strategic Objectives

The Strategic Objectives as contained in the Mission Statement are:

- Parents of children with disabilities are empowered to enable their children to live fulfilled lives
- Programmes are implemented to encourage authorities to deliver services that meet the needs of children with disabilities and enable them to live fulfilled lives

Annexure B provides a table of the programmes that form part of each of the Strategic Objectives.

²¹ A further fine-tuning of the Mission Statement was made. It reads as follows: "This is achieved through the delivery of programmes that empower the parents of disabled children and advocate for effective and appropriate services for people with intellectual disabilities and children with other disabilities."

7.1.5 Interdependencies: Relationships and Risks

Once the 3 year high level strategic objective had been resolved by way of the Vision, it was possible to confirm the organisational Mission Statement.

Thereafter the group interrogated who their most strategic partners ought to be in order to fulfil both their 3 year goal and their strategic interventions. The following interdependencies were identified as important strategic relationships that need to be cultivated as part of the organisation's quest to reach its 3 year goal. It was also noted that each partner brings with it a series of risks which need to be understood before the relationships can be fully developed. The interdependencies and their risks were explored and noted:

Interdependencies	Risks
<p>1. Professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Health - Ministry of Education - Ministry of Forestry - Ministry of Employment - Local Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Health don't know much about disability issues, such that they normally transfer persons with developmental disabilities to LSMPH to provide services - Ministry of Education - although children are included in mainstream, they don't get effective education, especially those with developmental disability. - Ministry of Forestry produces trees for sale and use by the community. No follow up. - Ministry of Employment lacks knowledge, especially re developmental disabilities, youth and others with developmental disabilities. Their capacities are underestimated. - Local government is a new structure and needs to be educated re

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Sports & Culture - Ministry of Police - MP 	<p>disabilities. They don't know how to deal with cases related to persons with developmental disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some parents were of the view that the Ministry is ignorant about disability issues. But others believed that the Ministry is one that is responsive to advocacy efforts. Special Olympics now has a national budget for youth with mental disability sports activities - Ministry has set up special dept for children and gender protection but need more education and awareness raising about disability issues - Although MPs are elected by us, they still lack knowledge about disability issues
<p>2. NGOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World Vision, - Other organisation/NGO's LNFOD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competitiveness for membership. Provide hand outs which attracts LSMHP membership. - Use LSMHP plans and strategies to benefit their own organisations
<p>3. Religious groups:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religious ministers are not sensitised. Discriminate against children with disabilities ie exclude them from undergoing religious rites.
<p>5. Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents 	<p>If parents not aware of organisation's Vision and Mission, they expect hand-outs and are disappointed and discouraged when they don't receive them</p>
<p>6. Donors</p>	<p>Divert LSMHP from its objectives and</p>

	becomes donor driven.
7. Business sector – local partnership for funding	Don't employ disabled people, especially those with intellectual disabilities. Some of the infrastructure is not available for disabled people. Codes of Practice need to be advocated for with the Dept of Employment to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is installed in each corporate business environment. Approach Corporates and appeal to them for funding on the basis that it is imperative that each medium to large scale business operating in Lesotho should have a Corporate Social Investment strategy. LSMHP can offer to the CSI beneficiary/partner
8. Traditional practitioners	Parents are tracked into unnecessary expense by being advised by traditional practitioners that children with disabilities are bewitched. This Issue needs to be addressed in the local community through mobilization
9. Service Providers	Doctors have no training in disabilities which can worsen the situation and the disability.
10. Those who do not wish LSMHP well	Speak ill of the organisation and disseminate misinformation about LSMHP, especially to donors. Could result in the organisation closing down.

Even although the NEC has only recently been elected and the Co-ordinator appointed within the last year the sense of institutional cohesion and support was evident in the manner in which the strategic issues were explored and the responses to the questions developed in pairs and small groups. There was also a sense of common purpose about how the objectives are to be achieved and a willingness on behalf of both the NEC members and the Co-ordinator to compromise where necessary and to seek consensus.

8. SYSTEMS, STAFFING AND STRUCTURES

The Consultant found that the relationship between the present secretariat and NEC is harmonious and non adversarial. NEC members and staff are respectful towards each other at all times, regardless of the different levels of experience and education. Previous reports indicated that in the past there were tensions between the well capacitated, goal oriented Secretariat and an inexperienced, newly elected NEC with varying educational levels. The NEC felt undermined in terms of organisational ownership, institutional governance issues and policy making.

The current situation is somewhat different. The Constitution of LSMHP indicates that the NEC is the supreme policy making board of the organisation and the Secretariat implements the projects at national and branch level as well as provides the administrative functions for the organisation. But as was discovered at the strategic planning meeting the NEC has a tendency to become directly involved in the administrative issues of the Secretariat. This was explained by members of the NEC as an attempt to assist and be helpful because of the lack of staffing capacity at the Secretariat, rather than wanting to take over the role and functions of the Secretariat. It is however important that the NEC clearly understands its role and responsibilities, and allows the secretariat to perform its duties as prescribed in the individual job descriptions and performance assessment tools.²² Good corporate governance principles need to be put in place at NEC level to define the parameters of the NEC and that of the Secretariat. This will prevent a blurring of roles and responsibilities and will pre-empt any possible conflicts or negative perceptions that may occur due to role confusion.

²² It is essential that staff have proper job descriptions and performance appraisal processes are institutionalized.

As a membership-driven organisation it is essential that the decision making structures of the organisation are predicated on strong democratic principles and processes. In the case of LSMHP, elections are held at branch level to elect branch committee members and similarly branches elect members of the NEC during the General Assembly. These processes are indicative of a democratic culture that exists within the LSMHP. But for the elections to truly reflect the wishes and needs of the membership the terms and conditions of membership must be clearly defined. It is important to ensure that only eligible members who have an interest in the organisation are allowed to participate in the decision making processes of the organisation. This 'eligibility' needs to be clearly defined and spelt out because if not the issue of membership could be manipulated to serve the purposes of only a small group, with a different agenda. This has to date not been the case but for the purposes of good democratic governance LSMHP needs to resolve the issues of membership for the sake of its own future sustainability.

The Organisation consists of three interlinked structures viz:

1. The National Executive Committee
2. The Secretariat
3. The Branches and their respective committees

8.1 National Executive Committee (NEC)

There are different levels of skill and capacity in and between the three structures. The NEC members have their own style of management and understanding of the responsibility they have to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. These are based on being accountable and responsive to their constituency, transparent in their decision making and inclusive vis a vis the varying interests of their membership. The NEC members have varying levels of education and capacity. Although this does not impact negatively on the work

the members do at branch and community/local level, it could work against them at national level when engaging government ministries, donors and other stakeholders.

Recommendations:

1. Capacity building initiatives need to be put in place to support the NEC members, as well as the branch committees:
 - to manage those aspects of the organisation that they are responsible for;
 - to advocate on behalf of people with developmental disabilities and children with disabilities;
 - to promote the values of the organisation, especially in lieu of the fact that there are no material benefits for members and those with disabilities, other than the hope that in the long term the organisation will achieve its objectives of creating a society that is inclusive of ALL its citizens – including those with disabilities; and
 - to ensure that there is a greater awareness at all levels of the society of the needs and aspirations of those living with disabilities, including family members.

These capacity building initiatives to include:

1. How to Manage a Meeting
2. Conflict Management/Resolution Skills
3. A Team Building Programme with the following aspects:
 - an Orientation Programme (Induction Programme) for newly elected NEC members. Some of the issues that need to be focused on are how to be an effective Policy Making body and what it means to have Oversight Responsibilities

2. To ensure that there is institutional capacity available to the NEC members and the Secretariat it has been proposed that an Advisory Committee of between 2 and 3 persons be convened to provide access to networks, information, expertise and experience in the various fields where LSMHP may be lacking. These would be professional people who have the technical expertise to help strengthen the organisation.

The Advisory Committee would not be a sub committee of the NEC but would be a reference group to be drawn on by both the NEC and Secretariat on a needs only basis, for example there might be organisational development issues that need to be dealt with and without the internal expertise available, the Advisory Panel would be constituted to assist in this regard. Similarly they could provide useful information and contacts regarding bi-lateral and domestic donors and could be a vital 'think tank' about how to develop and conduct a national campaign on the rights of adults that have developmental disabilities and children with disabilities.

3. To ensure organisational continuity and institutional memory being transferred from one NEC to the next, a provision in the LSMHP Constitution needs to be emphasised ie the 'staggering' of NEC members from one election to the next. This will also ensure that 'experience' remains in the NEC until the new members have been sufficiently familiarised with the organisation and the requirements of the NEC.

8.2 Secretariat

At present the Secretariat only has two full time staff members; the Co-ordinator and the Programme Officer. Their interventions at branch level are supported by Resource Parents and volunteers.

The role of the Secretariat is, among others, to:

1. manage the organisation administratively;
2. ensure that training takes place as required at various levels of the organisation;
3. monitor the effectiveness of the training and its impact;
4. develop funding proposal and present to donors (having invited an NEC member to be present at donor meetings);
5. engage with donors and prepare donor reporting;
6. assist in strengthening branch committees and provide advise and support where necessary. In association with the NEC to visit branches and help problem solve difficulties and obstacles;
7. build and strengthen the LSMHP in the strategic direction that it has agreed;
8. develop and implement national advocacy initiatives and oversee that the same is undertaken at branch levels;
9. assist with early child development and parent empowerment activities;
10. develop and strengthen relationships with strategic partners at national level, in SADC, continentally and internationally through NFU. (these include international donors)
11. identify new branches and assist in providing capacity, sharing institutional imperatives and mobilising new parents as members

These are some of the responsibilities of the Secretariat as discussed with the Co-ordinator during an interview session. It is however not possible for a Secretariat of 2 to be able to effectively and efficiently fulfil their roles and functions. As has been agreed at the strategy planning meeting, LSMHP has to be strengthened in order to remain an attractive proposition for NFU and other donors to support, but this is definitely not possible if there are only 2 full time members of staff.

Recommendations:

1. The Co-ordinator proposed that LSMHP consider employing an administrative assistant. Although this would be useful it is however more important that the NEC and the Secretariat firstly decide what the role of the Secretariat is within the broader organisational structure – apart from being the administrative hub. Is the Secretariat a purely nuts and bolts component of the organisation or does it also provide some of the strategic direction.
2. If the former, then an additional administrative clerk is sufficient, but if the latter then consideration needs to be given to employing a senior staff member as a Co-ordinator and the present incumbent to be promoted to Managing Director. This will not only provide the necessary capacity to strengthen the operational arm of the organisation but it will also provide additional intellectual capital to take LSMHP to the next developmental level. These matters need to be resolved so that there is not a repeat of the creative tensions that existed between the previous NEC and Secretariat.
3. Job Descriptions with Terms and Conditions of Service to be developed for existing staff as well as for staff to be employed in the future. These issues need to be resolved by the Finance and Administration Sub Committee of the NEC.
4. Performance Appraisal processes be established as part of managing staff and their performance. These too form part of the Finance and Administration Sub Committee's mandate and brief.
5. Domestic donors to be approached to purchase the present office accommodation in lieu of a grant.

6. Depending on resources staffing salaries need to be market related ie in terms of the NGO salary scales. This will assist in attracting qualified and committed staff.
7. In previous reports NFU has noted that as an organisation dealing with people with developmental disabilities and children with disabilities should employ at least one person with disabilities. This is an issue that the organisation needs to attend to.
8. The membership database needs to be updated and managed effectively to produce accurate statistics at any time. This is particularly important for reporting to donors and to the AGM. This facility could be connected to an LSMHP website.

8.3 Branches

The Secretariat calculated that there are between 12 and 14 active branches. The branches have many challenges to deal with – some of which have already been dealt with above, namely:

- the instability of the membership base;
- lack of communication systems ie fax, telephone etc between branches and the Secretariat;
- lack of venues where LMSHP branch committees can meet;
- no money for meals and transport for members who come from afar to attend meetings, capacity difficulties in branch committees etc etc
- that it is primarily a women's-focused organisation with only a few men participating in the activities of the branches.

But despite these difficulties, branch committees are functional and operate as best they can under these trying circumstances. They endeavour to maintain the membership of their branches and the sub branches by holding regular meetings, advocating for better policies vis a vis their core objectives - at local level and through the NEC (and Secretariat) at national level; encourage parents and community members to be more accepting of people/children with disabilities, and report child abuse cases involving disabled youth and children to the chiefs/headman and the police and follow up on these cases. The Committee members reported that to some extent their lobbying and advocacy programmes have made an impact at community level in that parents and community members have started to accept people and children with disabilities, and that in many instances children/people were no longer being kept away from the public eye and were being encouraged to participate in 'normal' mainstream society. There seems to also be a greater public awareness, where the branch committees are strong, of the rights of people/children with developmental disabilities and children with other disabilities. This is as a direct consequence of the work of the branch committees and the parent/members.²³

The parents in the districts have also to some extent being successful in advocating for services for children with disabilities and people with developmental disabilities. Community schools have, albeit in a hesitant way, started accepting children with intellectual disabilities into their classrooms.

There were also instances noted, by the NEC members, where members paid subscription fees. It would be very helpful if this practice could be generalised to all branches, but because of the levels of poverty and unemployment in the country, and especially in the countryside, it would be unrealistic to have this expectation. Concerns were expressed at several meetings about the lack of commitment of some members because they were forced, due to circumstance,

²³ For future evaluation processes it would be useful to have quantitative and qualitative results of attitudes before and after the LSMHP public awareness campaigns.

to spend more time looking for employment or doing piece-work or being too involved in income generating projects.²⁴

Recommendations:

1. To strengthen branch committees it is recommended that the following be provided in addition to those already offered²⁵:

1. Refresher training courses are provided for all training programmes;
2. Capacity building initiatives be provided for all newly elected Committee members in the following:

Orientation Programme – to understand the roles, functions and responsibilities of being a branch committee members

How to Manage a Meeting

Conflict Management/Resolution Skills

3. Prior to Elections public awareness initiatives are convened with members at branch level and focus on the following topics:

Qualities of a Good Leader

The Roles and Responsibilities of a Branch Committee member

2. Membership of the Branch Committees need to be 'staggered' to ensure consistency and the passing on of 'institutional memory' from one branch committee to the next

²⁴ This is not a core activity of the organisation but it is understood that if it is possible for such a project to produce some source of income for the parents it should be encouraged, but not at the expense of the other LSMHP projects.

²⁵ These would be in addition to the Child Development and Advocacy training provided to Resource Parents

3. Only a couple of branches reported to the Secretariat on a regular basis. Performance Assessment processes need to be institutionalised to ensure that reports are received on a regular basis from each of the branches. It is critically important that the Secretariat knows what progress is being made in terms of agreed projects. The Secretariat and the Branch Committees acknowledge that there are telecommunication difficulties between the branches and the Secretariat but in order to circumvent these, the Programme Officer and the Co-ordinator, with the support of some of the board members, should regularly visit branches and discuss progress with them. Depending on logistics and the distances involved the onus to report does not necessarily have to only be the responsibility of the branch committees. Regular branch visits should form part of the Secretariat's duties and responsibilities.

4. The Deputy Chairperson of the NEC to attend as many branch meetings as possible to encourage the male population of that community/branch/sub branch to participate in the programmes of LSMHP.²⁶

In summing up; the NEC, Secretariat and the Branches have a difficult and complicated task in maintaining membership. The Vision and programmes of the organisation will not deliver sustainable and tangible results in the short term. The challenge for LSMHP is to keep its membership engaged and committed to the ideals of the organisation, despite the many hurdles and disappointments that they will experience along the way. The solution is not to increase the number of sub branches or branches by spreading the limited resources even further and placing the reputation of the organisation at possible risk, because of lack of delivery.

²⁶ This could be very important for the organization as Lesotho is a patriarchal society and men's voices would in most instances be more forceful.

It is very important that the organisational strategy for the next couple of years is to consolidate and strengthen those branches that are effective and operational. Where there are weak branches, exchange visits with stronger, more capacitated branches should be arranged through the Secretariat. This could be a far more effective capacity building strategy than providing continual training programmes which don't necessarily have effective accompanying assessment mechanisms to determine the impact of the training on those participating in the programme ie the course participants as well as on the beneficiaries of the training programmes i.e. the end users – those that will actively be lobbying, advocating etc etc

Branches provide an excellent training ground for leadership skills at NEC level and if LSMHP accepts the recommendation of consolidation at branch level, the quality of the future leadership of the organisation will be greatly enhanced.

9. Partnering with NFU

The relationship with NFU is a long standing. It was inspired by Ms Lilian Mariga who currently works as the Regional Consultant for NFU. At the time she was a consultant for the Ministry of Education. The NFU has over the years been a consistent source of funding and technical support. It has also been the primary donor. Over the last couple of years there has however been uncertainty as to whether NFU will continue its funding. This seems to have been because LSMHP has been able to fund from other sources and because the lead donor, ie NORAD has not been sure whether it should continue funding the programme in Lesotho.

All the members of LSMHP interviewed about the relationship with NFU were very positive about the NFU and the various members of staff that they have interacted with over the years. However concerns were expressed about the uncertainty of the future relationship with NFU and there was also a level of

resentment because of a perception that one of the reasons why NFU was withdrawing is because LSMHP had managed to acquire other small donors to support ad hoc individual projects. This they felt NFU perceived as a threat to it as the sole donor and therefore had an effect on the long term relationship between NFU and LSMHP.

The NEC members felt that LSMHP is at the stage of its organisational development where it was starting to consolidate its activities and where it was now able to take control of its destiny ie its Strategic Objectives and Programmatic areas. But it could not do this without the financial support of NFU and other donors. In the various NFU evaluation reports and assessments the consultants stressed the need and urgency for the organisation not only to become sustainable in terms of its organisational imperatives but that it also seek out additional donors to support its various activities. If NFU's strategy is that it will comfortably be able to withdraw support from the organisation once LSMHP has been able to mobilise other sources of funding, this needs to be clearly articulated and the organisation should be assisted with this. This is clearly an area where LSMHP can leverage its relationship with NORAD and other international donors and organisations to ensure that the excellent work that has to date been done by both NFU and LSMHP is made sustainable. Despite all the difficulties and frustrations that have been experienced over the years, LSMHP is clear that it has a long term role and future in Lesotho and for this it needs financial support. It is therefore important that if NFU, for whatever reasons, intends to decrease its support or withdraw its financial assistance from LSMHP it put in place strategies that have been negotiated and discussed with the leadership of LSMHP. This is important not only because it would be irresponsible to do otherwise but because NFU has made a commitment to LSMHP which it needs to manage with a great deal of care and sensitivity.

Recommendations:

1. NFU continues to provide the technical and moral support it has provided up until now
2. NFU needs to, in consultation with LSMHP, develop a funding strategy which includes an exit strategy with time frames
3. NFU needs to support LSMHP's efforts to take control of its own organisation without threatening its funding base
4. NFU needs to leverage access to other international donors and agencies for LSMHP
5. NFU needs to assist LSMHP to engage with the SADC Secretariat and similar organisations in other SADC countries where they are working
6. NFU to identify appropriate regional resource persons who could assist LSMHP on an ad hoc basis with developing strategic partnerships across the region.
7. NFU needs to understand that what the current capacity of the organisation reflects the capacity of the membership and that even with training programmes this capacity will not be enhanced to the extent that it can engage at levels beyond their competencies. LSMHP is a grassroots organisation, its membership, its NEC and its institutional base reflects the interests, views and aspirations of ordinary community based people. These are the organisation's strengths within the context that they are operating. They will not be able to extend their reach beyond this and so need support to engage beyond their present parameters ie at a national level within their own country, a SADC level (including South Africa) and internationally. This is where external regional expertise is required to help LSMHP package its programmes in such a manner that they can be shared at different levels outside of Lesotho.
8. It is important that NFU resolve their own dilemma regarding what it is they expect and want from LSMHP. A strong Secretariat will provide

the necessary leadership in order to engage beyond the parameters of the organisation with a strong vision of how to achieve its objectives. The difficulty of this is that it could again be perceived, as it was in the past, to be taking over the ownership of the organisation. But on the other hand, with a weak and less pro-active Secretariat and an NEC that itself does not have the necessary competencies to 'take the organisation to the next level', the organisation will continue to be one that has a 'grassroots' perspective. Although a positive asset it is still necessary for grassroots organisations to have individuals within the organisation who are able to engage beyond the organisation's parameters in order to attract support that will empower it and make it more appealing, not only to the donor community and international Disability organisations, but also to the relevant authorities at a national level, and the members. The organisation needs to demonstrate some successes in order to attract more success and here it needs the support of NFU.

9. CONCLUSION

The LSMHP is a unique organisation whose strengths are that it is a community-based, grassroots organisation focusing on the developmental disabilities of people and other disabilities of children in a society that to all intense and purposes have not the political will to ensure the protection of this constituency.

LSMHP has a critically important role to play in ensuring that the human rights of people and children with disabilities are protected and upheld at all costs. A democracy which does not care for all its people, despite their differences, is a democracy that will not succeed. An important contribution that LSMHP has made to building a democratic culture in Lesotho is that at grassroots level it elects its representative structures democratically and ensures that its organisational practices are based on democratic values. Another demonstration

of its commitment to the values of democracy is that its key projects are to lobby and advocate for the rights of the people and children that it represents. It does this as part of its oversight role, and to hold the government (including local government), its ministries (and local government councillors) accountable. A critical role for any non governmental organisation and one that it undertakes with a great deal of seriousness and commitment.

The issue of a transient membership is something that the organisation needs to deal with. It is not a major obstacle as there are branches that are committed to the objectives of the organisation and understand the limitations of not being able to receive any direct compensation for being involved in the organisation. What however is important is that LSMHP has managed to mobilise parents as the fundamental cornerstone of the organisation. Branches may come into existence and then also disappear for whatever reasons. If these are related to the issue of compensation or incentives, the organisation may want to develop innovative and creative strategies to deal with this . What needs however to be done as a matter of urgency is to ensure that there are funds to provide food and refreshments for those who attend meetings, a travel allowance for those who travel distances to either do house to house visits or parent to parent counselling or to attend LSMHP meetings. It is inappropriate that members who are poverty stricken are not supported in their efforts to be involved in the organisation. Income generating projects do not form the core business of the organisation, even although it is understandable why it has become one of the projects of some of the branches. However it is the view of the Consultant that this is a subsidiary activity and support can be provided by others whose core business is focusing on small enterprise development. The Secretariat can facilitate opportunities where the branches involved in these projects can consult with experts in the field. As part of its international support, NFU can help to open markets for the various commodities produced by branches of the LSMHP for example the Vaseline creams etc etc This however is not the core business of

NFU and must be viewed by LSMHP as merely providing access to markets which it would hitherto not had.

The members and staff are very knowledgeable and experienced in the area of developmental and other disabilities and know exactly what the problems and needs of their membership are. This is also one of the major advantages of the organisation, namely that it is not just an NGO that is providing support to the disabled but that it is made up of members who are directly involved in the issues and try and resolve them on a daily basis.

At the strategic planning meeting the participants identified the weaknesses of the organisation. From an external, objective perspective these are however not severe enough to destabilise the organisation. At branch level their might be conflicts, but they can be solved by branch committee members or through the intervention of some of the NEC members – these should not be allowed to undermine the organisation at district or branch level. When the issue of weaknesses was being explored it became evident that one of the critical weaknesses hampering LSMHP is that of the lack of capacity, lack of understanding and knowledge about the issues at hand, as well as a profound lack of commitment by the various ministries which LSMHP lobbies to be able to deal with issues. There does not seem to be anything that LSMHP can do about this but it can mobilise families who are voters to demand that political parties include issues related to the disabled, especially people with developmental and children with other disabilities, is placed on their political manifestos. It is also important that LSMHP participates in the activities of the various NGO umbrella organisations to ensure that their issues are fairly and squarely placed on the development agenda of the government.

The most fundamental weakness, however that LSMHP has, is that it is dependent on primarily one donor. This issue has been dealt with in the report and it is an issue that needs a separate discussion within the organisation.

LSMHP needs to draw on those in Lesotho who can assist them with resource mobilisation and develop strategies to raise sufficient funding from large bi-lateral donors in Lesotho. This will ensure the sustainability of the organisation, both in terms of the implementation of its projects but also organisational survival. This however can only be achieved if the organisation itself has put 'its house in order' and can demonstrate that it is a reliable, effective and trustworthy partner in which a bi-lateral donor can invest.

All the ingredients are there it is merely taking the next step to ensure that the internal operations are competent, that the systems, processes and staff discussed in the strategic planning meeting have been put in place and that the programmes and activities are implemented. It would also be useful for LSMHP to develop monitoring tools so that they themselves can monitor progress and identify contingencies where they are required.

Finally LSMHP needs to resolve that even though it is a grassroots, community based organisation it needs skill within the Secretariat to champion the organisation and where necessary to include the members of the NEC in its promotional endeavours. The ownership of the organisation will always rest with the NEC, as they are the representatives of the members, so there should not be any concerns about this issue. But without a well capacitated Secretariat that has competencies to administer, fundraise, implement and support the branches and the NEC the LSMHP will not reach its goals.

D Nupen/ 7/2006