

# Sister

N A M I B I A

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**JANET MATOTA**  
Rural revolutionary

**TALUSO KA  
ZA MUTU  
KABUKUSWANI**

Jeneti Matota  
Petuho mwalibaka za  
Matakanyani



# Dear Readers

Welcome to the first issue of **Sister Namibia** for 2010. As you flip through the pages you will immediately see that change is in the air. Yes, we have a new graphic designer, Stasa Atanasovski of Studio 77, who is building on the excellent work of Estelle Coetzee, our first editor/graphic designer and Petra Tegethoff, our most recent graphic designer, and adding her own creative flair. Welcome Stasa! And thank you Estelle and Petra for your many years of dedicated work, helping us to regularly publish a magazine that so many readers have praised with "I love the layout!"

There are more changes to come. This is the last issue of **Sister Namibia** produced by Liz Frank, who has been our editor over the past ten years. From the next issue, Erika von Wietersheim will be our guest editor up to the end of this year. Welcome Erika! And thank you Liz, for the passion, commitment and sheer hard work you have put in to keep **Sister Namibia** not only alive but flourishing, adding new sections as well as reaching out to new groups of readers with every issue. We have recently added church leaders and traditional authorities to our distribution.

To broaden input and ownership of **Sister Namibia** we have now established an editorial committee that will review each issue published and plan the next ones along. Unfortunately our funding has decreased for this year, allowing us to produce only four issues of **Sister Namibia** at a reduced print run of 6000 copies - down from five issues including our usual end-of-year double issue at 9000 copies per issue.

But the good news is that **Sister Namibia** can now be read online on our brand new website: [www.sisternamibia.org](http://www.sisternamibia.org)! We are gradually uploading our back copies, eventually taking you back to the first issue that hit the streets of Windhoek in July 1989!

*Enjoy!*

## Who we are ...

Sister Namibia is a feminist organisation based in Windhoek, Namibia.

Our vision is a society that recognises, protects and celebrates the full personhood of all women and girls including respect for our dignity, diversity, sexual choices and bodily integrity.

We aim to inspire and equip women to make free choices and act as agents of change in our relationships, our communities and ourselves. We are dedicated to developing a new feminist politics and consciousness.

We work for transformation through education, information, collective action, and celebration.

Our current activities include publishing *Sister Namibia* magazine, developing a Young Feminists Programme, and campaigning for women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights through the Claiming our Sexual Citizenship Campaign.

We house a resource centre with materials on feminisms and gender issues in our Windhoek office, and conduct outreach activities on women's rights in Northern Namibia from our satellite office in Ongwediva.

Our work is sponsored by Oxfam Canada, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, OSISA, Fahamu/Sigrid Rausing Trust, Urgent Action Fund, the Royal Netherlands Embassy and HIVOS.

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# Janet Matota

## Rural revolutionary

By Linda Baker

**L**oud applause ends Janet Matota’s presentation on the role of women in conservation in Caprivi. About fifty people have braved a chilly Windhoek evening to listen to the challenges facing rural women in this region, from elephants destroying precious maize fields to the impact of living with HIV and Aids in the community. Addressing a session of the regular Park Talk Forum hosted by the Strengthening the Protected Areas Network, Janet has captivated the audience for forty minutes, without the use of the customary PowerPoint presentation.

### From homemaker to leader in conservation

A rural homemaker sixteen years ago, she has become a role model for thousands of women in north-eastern Namibia. She has championed the cause of natural resource management by sharing the story of Caprivi women at international forums, and is working with colleagues to improve the living standard and choices for women and their children. As co-head of the Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) office in Katima Mulilo, Janet coordinates women’s resource management, office administration and institutional support. She controls the organisation’s considerable budget, ensuring that auditors and donors are satisfied.

Her story starts back in 1994, when she heard through the local *induna* (headman) that a non-governmental organisation was seeking to hire a woman as a Community Resource Monitor.

IRDNC was introducing Community-based Natural Resource Management activities in Caprivi Region, where years of war, colonialism and other factors had alienated people from natural resources and led to a drastic reduction in wildlife numbers. While it was mainly men who attended meetings to discuss the use and ownership of natural resources, it was noted that women were the main users of these resources, particularly veld products, and needed to be involved in discussions and management.

Twelve women applied for the post, but Janet’s application proved successful. In the early days, she worked with women in villages, compiling lists of natural resources that were used in everyday life for food, crafts, medicine, building and other purposes. She then looked at the availability of these resources, how far women had to travel to collect them and which part of a tree or plant was harvested, such as the bark, root or leaves. She also obtained her driver’s licence – an event that attracted much attention, as few women in the

region had achieved this at the time. “Nearby villagers would come to watch and clap as I practised,” she laughs.

### Establishing Mashi Crafts

Working with conservationists and various organisations, Janet Matota began to educate women in using resources sustainably. Due to her success, more resource monitors were employed. Notable progress was made in the correct harvesting of palm leaves and dyes for basketry. Where previously, women had struggled to earn an income through brewing traditional beer to put food on the table, the establishment of Mashi Crafts enabled them to sell baskets and other crafts for profit while using natural resources sustainably.

“At present, 267 women supply crafts to the market along with 36 men. Up to 2000 people currently benefit from Mashi Crafts, with producers using income to buy cattle, care for orphans, pay school and clinic fees and feed their families,” she proudly reports. Mashi Crafts is one of Namibia’s most successful community enterprises, with many of the A-grade products sold at the Namibia Crafts Centre in Windhoek. Janet has always encouraged women to take an active role in conservancy structures. With the establishment of communal area conservancies in Caprivi Region and growing interest in Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), more and more resource managers have been employed in conservancies.

“Nearby villagers would come to watch and clap as I practised.”

### Women to the fore

It is this involvement of women in conservancies in the north-east that Janet Matota feels is her major achievement. Twenty years ago, men dominated meetings and decision-making. Today women are well-represented in communal conservancies in the area, with the endorsement of the traditional *khutas* (courts) and chiefs. In the eleven established and six emerging conservancies in Caprivi Region, nearly all conservancy treasurers are now women. Women constitute thirty-seven percent of committees, while two conservancy managers and three conservancy game guards are women.





Tony Figueira

In addition, resource monitors have taken on a broader role in their communities, disseminating information on HIV and Aids, working with support groups through village structures and helping people to access treatment. "We found that women had less time to be involved because of HIV and Aids. There was less time to make crafts. They were caring for the sick and the orphans or attending burials, so production was down." Figures released at the time (2006) showed that forty-three percent of pregnant women tested in Caprivi Region were HIV positive. "People did not have information about anti-retroviral drugs, and they were shy to get tested or to disclose their status once tested," says Janet.

### Promoting Aids awareness

Working in partnership with the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations, Janet helped to set up an HIV and Aids organising committee to sensitise fellow staff. They then worked at conservancy level and through village structures to disseminate information in siLozi and other local languages - linking

with other organisations and using video presentations, promotions as well as quizzes with prizes.

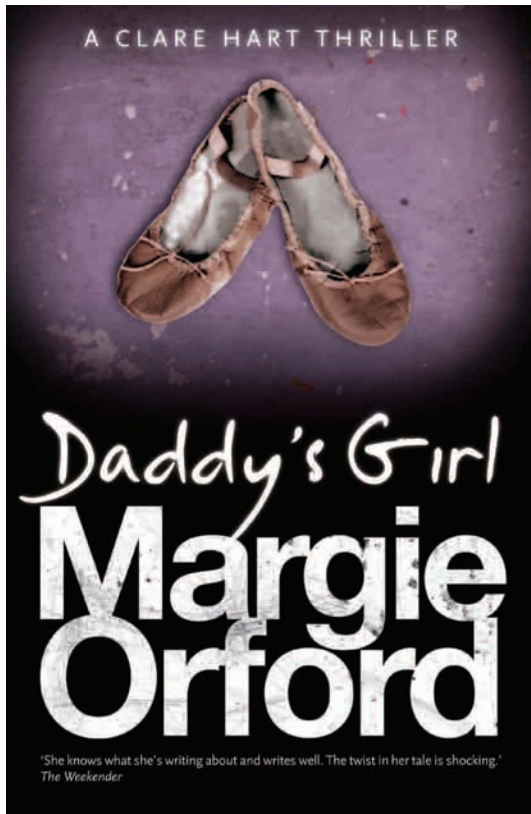
"Twenty members of support groups in conservancies have now disclosed their HIV-positive status. We are gradually fighting the stigma attached to HIV and Aids and this is winning the battle. The latest surveys reveal that infection rates have dropped to under thirty-two percent among pregnant women tested in 2008 in our region."

### Awarded for her work

Janet Matota has also been instrumental in organising Caprivi's first women's conference held in 2005, and, with the help of other IRDNC staff, she has trained more than 200 women in public speaking. The confidence built in women is tangible, so that women in neighbouring Zambian institutions have requested her to assist them with similar skills training. But, says Janet, there are still many

challenges ahead. The many elephants migrating through the area, particularly along the Kwando River, often destroy fields of crops as they travel. This creates food insecurity and increased poverty. New markets for crafts are needed, as well as more assistance in helping people to access treatment for HIV and Aids as well as general healthcare.

Yet, looking back, it is clear that a rural revolution has taken place in the sixteen years that Janet Matota has worked for IRDNC. Women have become partners in natural resource management and have increasingly found their voices. Small wonder she was the first joint recipient of the Namibia Nature Foundation's Conservationist of the Year Award in 2000! Asked what has brought about such a remarkable change in the region, Janet responds: "Women now have role models. They look at us and say - if they can do it, why can't we?" ♀



# Margie Orford

## Crime writer with a mission

By Helen Vale

**I** love to teach, I love to tell stories, I am very curious about the world and people and how we somehow manage to love and build families despite war, despite the dangers we face, despite the knowledge we have that we will live and struggle and die in the end. I always have this feeling that there is so little time and so much to do. So I get on and do it."

Margie Orford - university lecturer, writer of crime thrillers and children's stories, journalist, film director, trainer, researcher, campaigner and activist, editor, feminist, wife and mother - shares her experiences and advice with the readers of, *Sister Namibia*.

### Shaped by Namibia

Namibia is the place that formed Margie and where her memories really begin. Her parents moved to Windhoek in 1972 when she was only seven years old. After leaving to study English at the University of Cape Town she returned to Namibia in 1990 and lived here with her husband and daughters for another ten years.

These were the formative years of her adult life. She did everything she could fit in – teaching at UNAM – English literature and publishing, and working as an editor for Jane Katjavivi when she set up New Namibia Books. Margie made films – documentaries. She wrote. She co-edited a book on Namibian women's writing called *Coming On Strong* and it was a revelation. She really found out about the country that she had grown up in – half-blinded as so many of us were by apartheid. It was an amazing time of learning and growing.

In 1999 Margie left Namibia again to complete a Masters in Comparative Literature at the City University of New York, returning to Africa in 2001, this time to Cape Town where she and her family now live.

### Imagining another world

What challenges does Margie see for women in South Africa and Namibia? "Simply staying alive seems to be quite a challenge for many. It is a rough and violent and often misogynistic place where many women are extremely poor. But it is also a place that has opened up enormously for women: legally, socially and artistically. I

sometimes think the biggest challenge

might be finding the courage to take on all that freedom, and to make the most of ourselves. Fear of success – fear of flying – holds many women back.

"Go! Fly! Dream yourself into what you want to be, what you want to achieve. You have to be able to imagine the world before you can take it over!"

"Go!  
Fly! Dream  
yourself into what  
you want to be,  
what you want to  
achieve."

### Speaking out against violence

Margie Orford is the patron of Rape Crisis in the Western Cape. She explains that sexual violence is so debilitating – on the women who are subjected to it, on their children and loved ones, and on the truncated, blunted, brutal men who rape with seeming impunity. So she acts and speaks on behalf of Rape



Margie Orford with her first two crime thrillers at the Book Den in Windhoek

## Advice to Namibian women

- Get to know yourself (strengths and weaknesses).
- Get to like yourself (good and bad) and believe in your dreams (impossible or not!)
- Get your own education.
- Save your own money.
- Pay your own bills.
- Buy your own house.
- That way you will make your equality a reality.
- That way you will make yourself safe and secure.
- Those are the building blocks for making your dreams come true.

Margie Orford

Crisis, using the public voice she has gained through her writing. This is important for women who have survived sexual violence - and for the commemoration of those who have not survived. Their stories and struggles and bravery and resilience need to be remembered and celebrated.

### Becoming a crime writer

Last year Margie Orford's third novel in the Clare Hart series was published. *Daddy's Girl* is set in Cape Town and follows on her bestsellers *Like Clockwork* (2006) - also based in Cape Town - and *Blood Rose* (2007) set in Walvis Bay.

What turned her to writing thrillers? Well, she loves a good story – and thinks sometimes that contemporary literary fiction lets you down. She likes writers who grab her attention immediately and hold her, with a strong sense of place and social context.

As an investigative journalist she found that she could tell the facts in an article but not always get to the truth. "In fiction one can get to an emotional truth that lies beyond a mere listing of the facts." She did not plan to be a crime writer. She wants to tell a good story about places and people. The question for her in South Africa and Namibia is this: Why are so many men so violent? And why

do they cause so much harm? She finds that the investigative novel – the thriller – is a way of answering those questions.

### Working with prisoners in South Africa

Margie taught a creative writing course to a group of fifteen maximum security prisoners. Out of this came the book *Fifteen Men, Words and Images from Behind Bars* (2008).

She recalls that this was a harrowing experience in many ways – these are extremely damaged people. They are the men we fear. And yet in them were the shadows of the little boys who had been lost and abandoned and abused along the way. She is not a very liberal-minded person when it comes to punishment for violent crimes. But she does think that our society fails its sons – and that fathers in particular fail their sons by too often being absent, by being violent, by being drunk.

The men she worked with learned to write – to reflect on their lives and to find ways to empathise – this she could see from the progression in their writing. But her view is that men need to take responsibility for their children and learn a new way of being a man – a way that involves strength instead of hardness – if we are to alleviate the amount of violence we all endure. ♀



# Women - the **losers** of the 2009 elections

Story & photos by Liz Frank

**W**omen constitute 51% of the population and 52% of the electorate in Namibia. Yet they were the losers of the Presidential and National Assembly elections held in November 2009. While we hadn't expected any of the 14 contesting political parties to field a woman as candidate for the presidency, we were shocked at the low number of women candidates on the party lists for the National Assembly. As a result, only 16 women (22 %) were elected among the 72 MPs, down from the 18 women elected in 2004 (25%).

How is this possible in a democratic state with a progressive constitution and national gender policy - that in 2009 became the second country in the region to ratify the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development? This protocol prescribes the achievement of gender balance in all elected positions of government by 2015!

## Erratic political will

Two years after independence, parliament adopted an affirmative action provision in the Local Authorities Act, which contributed to the fact that 37% of the local councillors elected in 1992 were women. In 1997, the quota for women candidates on party lists was increased, with both the ruling Swapo Party and the opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance calling on party branches to alternate female and male candidates 'zebra-style' on party lists. This resulted in an increase of women's representation in local government up to 41%. Had the zebra principle been adhered to, gender balance would almost have been achieved! In 2004, following strong calls from the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network led by Sister Namibia for gender balanced zebra-style candidate lists, women's representation rose to 46% percent.



Campaigning for 50/50 gender balanced 'zebra' lists for national and local elections

Yet, apart from the Congress of Democrats, there has been strong resistance against voluntary or legislated quotas at the national level, despite the findings of research conducted by Sister Namibia in 1998 that identified the many obstacles and challenges facing aspiring women politicians at all three levels of government.

## Obstacles to women's political participation

Our study found that access to formal politics is controlled by political parties led by men, who had made little effort to promote women within their own ranks and as candidates for elections at national and regional levels. There was a tendency to blame women for not coming forward as candidates rather than to analyse and alleviate the many barriers and constraints facing women who enter the patriarchal sphere of party politics. At the same time, women face a difficult choice, as the price of access to formal political power is subordination to male party hierarchies.

Women's ascribed reproductive roles as wives, mothers, sisters and daughters responsible for the everyday well-being not only of themselves but of the men in their families was identified as another major barrier to women stepping out of the so-called private space of the family into the public realm of politics.



"Who is going to cook for me?" was a common response from men whose wives aspired to political office, and many of the women politicians interviewed had paid the price of being either single or divorced.

If personal autonomy and freedom from ascribed social roles is fundamental to exercising one's citizenship rights and obligations to the fullest, then the vast majority of rural and marginalised urban women are severely hindered by poverty, illiteracy, violence, cultural bonds and a lack of knowledge about their constitutionally guaranteed human and citizenship rights.

### The unbroken power of 'traditional' institutions

Two weeks before the recent elections, the Namibian government provided each of the fifty recognised chiefs who are members of the Council of Traditional Leaders with a 4x4 vehicle. 47 of the 50 chiefs are men. A paid driver and free fuel were part of the package. This 'gift' highlighted the usually more invisible layer of patriarchal rule which is still very strong among many rural communities in Namibia, and which is being exploited by the ruling party to stay in power.

This second layer of rule clearly casts women as non-citizens, living under the control of patriarchal family structures which are governed by customary law and ruled over by traditional authorities. The power of men over women in their socially ascribed roles as wives, daughters and sisters is firmly entrenched in these three institutions. Feminist writers have explored the ways in which traditional practices were codified into 'customary laws' by the colonisers of countries in the South to create 'bounded communities' based

on religion or ethnicity as part of the divide and rule politics of subjugation.

While Namibia's civil law guarantees fundamental rights for all citizens, recognising customary law only to the extent that it does not infringe on individual rights, customary law emphasises restoration of balance among patriarchal family groups, rather than protection of individual rights, especially for women. Over the past 20 years, parliament has failed to comprehensively review customary law to ensure that it is in compliance with civil law. For example, between 90 and 95 percent of all marriages in Caprivi Region are customary marriages, yet the Customary Marriages Bill is still not passed, along with the Property and Inheritance Bill and the Child Care and Protection Bill – all of which would challenge and curtail the power of men over women and children in the so-called 'private' realm.

### Dust off the 50/50 Bill!

The time is ripe for dusting off the 50/50 Bill drafted by the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network in 2002 if Namibia is to achieve gender balance by 2015 in fulfilment of its obligations under the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. And women will need to exercise their individual and collective agency and citizenship 'beyond numbers' to transform the mainstream patriarchal discourses, institutions and practices governing the political, economic, social and cultural spaces in our post-colonial state. ♀

This article was first published in *Perspectives* by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southern Africa Office, Cape Town. It has been shortened.



Marching the 50/50 Bill developed by the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network to Parliament in 2002



# Children's contributions to the Child Care and Protection Bill

By Dr. Elizabeth Terry



**A**t first glance, the issues covered in the draft Child Care and Protection Bill look quite straight forward. After reading through them in more depth one soon realises how very complicated, far-reaching and difficult they actually are. Through most of 2009, children across Namibia tackled these many challenging issues, making very insightful contributions to the re-drafting of this bill.

More than 20 different issues are covered in this bill including such wide-ranging topics as: age of consent for medical care, age of majority (at what age children should obtain the rights of adults), foster care and adoption, basic requirements that should be found at any facilities caring for children, mandatory reporting for children in need of protection, whether Namibia should create safe haven laws to prevent infanticide, harmful cultural practices that should be prohibited, child labour, access to alcohol and alcohol abuse, and corporal punishment. Once passed, this piece of legislation, along with its companion act, the Children's Status Act of 2006, will replace the long outdated Children's Act 33 of 1960.

## The need for children's participation

Because of this importance, the Namibian government needed to ensure that as many people as possible could have a say on this bill – including children. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and UNICEF asked the Legal Assistance Centre to assist with a ten-month-long public consultation. To facilitate children's participation, the Legal Assistance Centre contracted the Namibian-based social science research and training company, Design and Development Services. DDS director Dr. Elizabeth Terry established a team of researchers and trainers with solid experience working with children and youth: Kaarina Amutenya, the Acting Director of INara Training Centre and Shelene Gentz, registered psychologist, plus three young researchers: Enteny Cloete, Flavian Libita and Dominic Kalokela.

## The children's participation process

The children's participation efforts included a three-prong approach: the establishment of a children's steering committee, the development and distribution of fact-sheets on the bill, written in a style to ensure children's understanding, and workshops conducted with children to introduce the bill and obtain their opinions. The Children's Reference Group was made up of 15 youths representing various schools and NGOs, UNAM, the City of Windhoek,

and the Children's Parliament. Three facilitator training workshops were held in Windhoek, Swakopmund and Katima Mulilo for staff members of key NGOs working with children. The DDS team and these trained facilitators then conducted 12 workshops in Khomas, Erongo, and Caprivi regions. In addition to these workshops, a fact-sheet booklet was developed specifically for children and 275 copies were distributed to children in various locations in Namibia. Part of the booklet was a contest where the children were asked to answer questions on 13 different topics and submit these to the Legal Assistance Centre in September 2009.

Almost 200 children participated in the various workshops and submitted answers to the contest questions in the fact-sheet booklet. The children did a remarkable job of grappling with the issues contained in the Bill and coming up with insightful opinions and solid recommendations on what this piece of legislation should contain to ensure that Namibia's children are properly taken care of and protected under law. Just like the opinions obtained from the adults, the children's opinions varied and full agreement was not possible. Some of the prevalent opinions and ideas of the children are summarised here.

## The children had many ideas and opinions

Almost half of the children indicated that the ability to **consent for medical treatment** should be based on 'level of maturity and age'. Most of the children felt that the age should be 16 years, while some preferred 18 years.

About 60 children felt that ability to **consent for HIV testing** should be based on 'age only' with the age being 14 years. Almost 40 children wanted consent to be based on 'the level of maturity *and* age', with



the age cited as 13 years. Another 40 children said all people under 21 years of age should have consent from their parents or guardians.

Almost one third of the children felt that ability to **access contraceptives** should be based on the child's 'level of maturity and age' with the age pegged at 16, followed closely by age 14. Most children thought there should be different rules about **access to condoms** compared to access to other forms of contraceptives. These children suggested that it should be easier to access condoms compared to other contraceptives, because the condoms provided protection against sexually transmitted infections, not only pregnancy; and if the other contraceptives were not used correctly, serious complications could result.

Most of the children thought that **the current adoption law** was not good, which states that when a child is adopted all ties should be cut with the biological family. "Adoptive children will want to know their biological parents when they get older" and "Children who already know their biological family have formed bonds with them. It's not good to break these bonds," they remarked.

More than 80 ideas were given about the **basic requirements for any facilities caring for children**. The top suggestions were: food, clean drinking water, clean toilets, playgrounds, hygienic conditions, warm comfortable beds, comfortable friendly environment, hot showers, love and care with lots of hugs, other children to play with, sports facilities, educational activities, toys and games,

and teachers or other adults to supervise the children.

About two-thirds of the participating children said that **reporting of child abuse should be made mandatory**. Those who said that reporting should *not* be mandatory felt that reporting would lead to more abuse as a reaction to the report, and that children might be reluctant to seek help if they know the case must be reported.

The opinion on **age of majority** was split: half felt the age of majority should be changed to 18 years; the other half said the age should remain at 21 years.

Almost all of the children felt that **Namibia should create safe haven laws to prevent infanticide**. A list of more than 40 labour activities was drawn up by the children that **the law should prohibit as hazardous labour for children**. Top responses were: mining activities, selling alcohol or working in any place that sells alcohol, selling drugs, sexual exploitation such as prostitution and pornography, and looking after livestock.

**Harmful cultural practices that the children wanted prohibited** included forced child marriages, male circumcision, female genital mutilation, cutting on the cheeks or back with blades, sexual initiation, and dropping out of school to herd cattle.

All of the children wanted to see **'children's rights and responsibilities' listed in the**

**Child Care and Protection Act**. Top on the list for 'rights' included: shelter, education, freedom of speech, right to a name/identity, food and nutrition, right of choice, to have fun/to play, and to be loved and cared for. Key 'responsibilities' were: attend school regularly, be responsible for own actions, help at home, follow rules and regulations, and respect/obey/love your parents.

**All forms of corporal punishment** were deemed unacceptable by the majority of the children. Only six children thought that spanking and hitting a child with your hand was acceptable. Children would like to be disciplined by their parents by either being told what they had done wrong and/or by taking away privileges. Some children also insisted that ground rules need to be set so a child knows what is expected.

The results above are only some of the topics discussed - many other issues were also debated. The input from the youth during the revision process has been invaluable to the consultation. The Child Care and Protection Act will be all the better for the input received from the youth, and it is hoped that the Act will make positive differences to the lives of many children in Namibia. ♀



# Wife beating still acceptable in some communities in Namibia

**T**he beating of women is still everyday practice in communities in the north – and it is not only accepted as a rightful cultural practice by men, but even more so by women themselves. This was one of the findings of a 2009 baseline study for the United Nations Joint Programme on Gender and Development, conducted among 300 women and men in ten rural and peri-urban communities in the Ohangwena, Oshana and Caprivi regions in. Women's acceptance of wife beating was found to be especially high in the Caprivi Region (71%) and among the San population (94%).

## Wives seen as subordinate to husbands

A repeatedly cited reason for wife beating was women's subordinate position in marriage and that men consequently feel entitled to discipline women if they 'disrespect' them. Examples of such 'disrespect' include going out without seeking permission, an untidy house, food that is not ready on time or accusations of wives having affairs.

The payment of *lobola* was also cited by many women as a reason for promoting violence against them, because in practice *lobola* means that 'women can be regarded as property of their husbands.' Once married and paid for, they are expected to fulfil certain obligations and if they fail to do so, strict discipline is seen to be justified.

It was also said that peer pressure among men to exercise their male 'authority' often reinforces violence against women. This cultural acceptance of wife beating leads to women suffering in silence, regarding the beatings as a private matter with little hope for intervention from the community or the state except in very severe cases.

In all three regions, people agreed that alcohol abuse was the main cause for the increasing violence in the communities involved in the study. Another factor named

was women's low level of economic empowerment: they usually do not own property or have their own income, and are thus completely dependent on their husbands for housing, access to land, and cash.

## Low self-esteem among women

The finding that the majority of women in the communities studied accept wife beating as a normal part of life and as their 'husband's right', is an alarming sign of women's continued low self-esteem, states the report. For most situations, especially if the motive is the neglect of children, women accept wife beating even more readily than men.

It is interesting to note that the middle-aged women interviewed were the least tolerant towards wife beating, while - against all expectations - the youngest group of women (15-24 years) accepted wife beating more readily. An explanation given in the report was that the present-day young generation has often been raised by grandparents and thus been instilled with traditional

values, while the middle-aged group has also been influenced by television, radio and public campaigns against gender based violence.

## Setting things right

The UN Joint Gender and Development Programme for Namibia: *Setting things right – towards gender equality and equity* will become operational in 7 of the 13 regions of Namibia, with a special emphasis on issues such as problems faced by women-headed households, girls' education, gender-based violence, the protection and expansion of women's socio-economic and political rights, and enhanced rural employment and income through the diversification of livelihood strategies for women and girls.

The baseline study recommends that gender sensitivity, HIV and Aids awareness, and prevention of gender-based violence need to be an integral part of all interventions in all communities. These would include legal literacy programmes, challenging existing gender stereotypes, and using local media to educate on alcohol abuse and attitudes that condone violence as normal.

This study contains many other interesting findings and recommendations on issues of gender equality and equity in the ten communities studied, and is worth reading by everyone interested in gender issues and women's rights in Namibia. ♀





# Women in Iran fight discriminatory laws

By Justina Shivolo

**I**ranian women began fighting for their rights over a century ago, at the time of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, and have not stopped since. The campaign for 'One Million Signatures Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws' was launched by women's rights activists in Teheran in August 2006, as a mobilising tool for change to the many patriarchal laws still governing the lives of girls and women in their country.

## Second class citizens

At present in Iran, one man's testimony equals that of two women. Certain positions, such as that of a judge, are closed to women. An Iranian woman does not automatically confer citizenship on her children or spouse, and in some cases a woman who marries a foreigner can lose her Iranian citizenship.

For girls, the legal age of marriage is thirteen. A father's consent is necessary for any woman to get married, regardless of her age. There is also inequality in divorce laws; it is more difficult for a woman to divorce her husband than it is the other way round. Divorce laws are often exploited to make women opt to forgo a return of their 'meher' or dowry.

Child custody laws assume that whereas a woman can be in charge of the day-to-day caretaking of her children, she cannot be their legal guardian. The age of criminal responsibility for girls is eight years and nine months, while for boys it is fourteen and a half years. There are several other examples of unequal laws and of loopholes that allow for conservative and patriarchal interpretation of laws.

## The 'One Million Signatures' campaign

This Campaign is run by a network of women who are active in promoting equality within society, and working towards achieving their peaceful demand for change in discriminatory laws by collecting signatures. Activists contact women where they usually gather – shops, schools, offices, hair salons, or in their homes. They ask them to sign the petition, but whether they sign or not, they receive a booklet explaining how the Iranian legal system denies women full rights. Thus, even the women who do not sign the petition will be informed about their second-class status.

About 30,000 women have already signed. As evident from the writing of activists in this campaign, unlike political parties, the women's movement has neither



Shirin Ebadi, Iranian feminist and human rights defender who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003, is one of the many women standing in the front line for the equal civil rights of women in her country.

the intention of overthrowing the government, nor of seizing state power. It reaches beyond government and aims at transforming the dominant cultural, social, economic and political relations to achieve greater equality for women.

The campaign also intends to promote cooperation between a broad base of women's groups from different backgrounds and other social activists in creating and advocating for bottom-up reform and creating change through grassroots and civil society initiatives that strengthen public action and empower women.

It amplifies the voices of women whose needs are often not addressed at the national policy level, and is based on the belief that legal problems faced by women are not a private matter, but rather symptomatic of larger social problems faced by women.

## Campaign activists detained

The campaign has not been a smooth one. A large number of activists have been arrested and accused of taking part in an "illegal group". Many have been sent to solitary confinement and are not able to receive visitors or see their lawyers, others have been prevented from leaving the country by security forces, and the website of the campaign Change for Equality has been blocked numerous times in an attempt to silence the voices of the activists.

Human rights defenders detained are also subject to ill-treatment including beatings, verbal abuse and interrogation. The crackdown and persecution of activists has increased since the controversial 2009 national elections, yet women are continuing to stand in the front line for social change in their country. ♀

# “I am a beggar no more...”

## The Basic Income Grant tackles poverty and restores human dignity

By Erika von Wietersheim

“**W**e begged every day for food ... and during the evening we got under pieces of blankets ... I prayed under the tree that something will happen and I will become a human again.” This is what August IHuiseb, a grade 6 learner at Otjivero Primary School, wrote when asked how life was two years ago. A girl in grade 3 sketched how she was chased from school, because her parents did not pay school fees. She also drew the tattered plastic sheets that formed the roof of their shack, and the stones that they used as chairs.

### A pilot project in one informal settlement

Life in Otjivero, 100 kilometres east of Windhoek, was typical for many locations in Namibia: abject poverty, unemployment and social problems were staring every visitor in the eye. In January 2008, a controversial and much debated pilot project was introduced among close to 1000 registered residents in the informal settlement, namely the Basic Income Grant, called BIG. The aim was to try out in practice what would happen if all residents in a community, including children - but excluding pensioners who receive a monthly pension - would receive a monthly grant of N\$ 100. Would it lead to a better life for children and adults? Would it lead to some kind of economic and social development in the village?

The hope was that in case of a positive result the government could be lobbied to introduce a BIG for the whole country in an effort to reduce the shameful poverty in Namibia. The project was initiated by the BIG Coalition, made up of a number of institutions including the Council of Churches in Namibia and the National Union of Namibian Workers. It was funded by contributions from all sectors of Namibian society and by international organisations, and coordinated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia.

### Changes in the community

In December 2009, after a trial period of two years, the BIG pilot project came to an end.\* “The impact of BIG was nothing short of spectacular,” read a press statement by the BIG Coalition in December 2009. “Poverty levels and child malnutrition declined dramatically, while school attendance and utilisation of the local clinic improved. Likewise, economic activities

increased significantly, while crime levels dropped.”

In addition, as the first country that has ever implemented a BIG project, Namibia gained worldwide publicity through local and international media and organisations, and the pilot project has become part of a global discussion on new approaches to reducing poverty. “In fact, Namibia has been put on the map because of the people in Otjivero. They have shown the world what can be done with very little money,” the press statement continued.

“The Basic Income Grant has exceeded our expectations in many ways,” explained project coordinator Claudia Haarmann, “and success can surely be measured.”

The Otjivero Clinic, where children are regularly weighed, reported that child malnutrition had decreased drastically, and the number of visits to the clinic increased fivefold, as everyone could afford the N\$ 4 per visit. Access to medication for HIV positive people improved. At schools, parents were able to pay school fees, all children were clothed in school uniform, and teachers were happy that during winter children sat in class in warm clothes. “We are a proper school at last,” were the words of a principal, according to Haarmann. Being able to pay school fees also instilled in parents a new sense of responsibility and interest in the well-being of their children.

“You can see in the people’s faces that things have changed.”

### Restoring dignity and community spirit

“You can see in the people’s faces that things have changed,” said Haarmann. “The BIG has given people back their dignity.” She tells of an emaciated elderly man, who started dancing when he received his red N\$100 bill and sang, “I am a beggar no more! I have new trousers and a new shirt; I can walk again among people.”

The BIG also proved to be of special importance to women. It reduced their dependency on men for survival, giving them greater control over their own bodies and freeing them to some extent from pressure to engage in transactional sex.



“With the BIG grant, there will be hope for us, at least I will be able to buy my children food and send them back to school,” explained Willemina Gawises, who before the introduction of the BIG had said: “The pain a parent has to go through, knowing that you cannot send the children back (to school) because there is no money, is unbearable...I wish I did not have them.”

The Basic Income Grant not only became a blessing for individuals and families, but also helped to develop community spirit and a sense of public responsibility. The use of the grant was not seen as a private matter, but members of the community were expected to use their BIG money in a socially responsible way. For example, when people drank up their BIG money at the *shebeens*, they would hear words like: “You cannot use it up for alcohol, it’s public money!”

### Poverty creates dependency

Of course there were critical voices as well. The BIG will create dependency and a culture of laziness, said some. The BIG will teach people to spend rather than to earn money, stated others. Although this happened in individual cases, experience after two years shows that this was not generally the case. “It is not the Basic Income Grant, but poverty that creates

dependency,” said Haarmann.

“The BIG increased self-confidence and self-motivation. For many, it was like a trigger to start with some kind of economic activity. A number of small businesses have started in Otjivero such as repair shops, hair salons, and food and drink stalls. People have shown initiative, have tried out things and overcome the lethargy of poverty. Criticism that the BIG would lead to increased alcohol intake is also not supported by empirical evidence.”

### No action by government

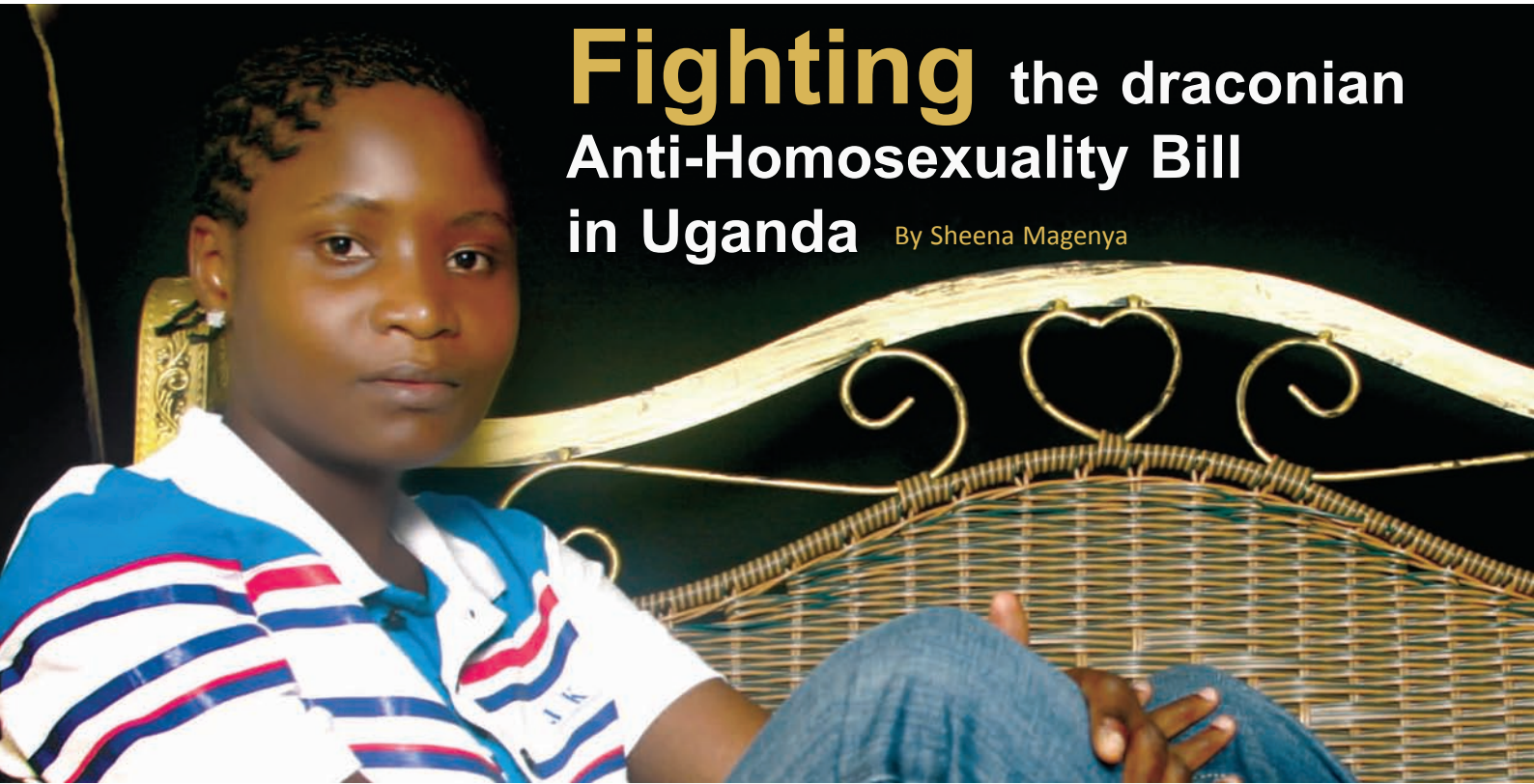
Despite the impressive results the BIG Coalition is disappointed that the Namibian government has not yet committed itself to the introduction of a country-wide BIG, although in Namibia 75% of all inhabitants live in poverty, and unemployment among the youth is more than 50%. The cost of the Basic Income Grant would of course be substantial, ranging from 2.2% to 3% of national income. However, with shifts in budget priorities, adjustments to income tax and other measures, the BIG Coalition insists that implementation is possible - that a BIG would increase economic empowerment and, in the long run, increase economic growth.

The Coalition therefore hopes that the government, with its renewed mandate after the recent elections, will take concrete measures to alleviate poverty in a rich country such as Namibia. A national BIG would be a small step for wealthy tax payers, but a huge step for all those who sleep on empty stomachs under pieces of blanket every night. ♀

\* A ‘bridging allowance’ of N\$ 80 is being paid to households in Otjivero for the time being, while lobbying continues for the implementation of the BIG nationwide.



The Basic Income Grant allowed parents to pay school fees and send their children back to school.



# Fighting the draconian Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda

By Sheena Magenya

In December 2008, the sexual minorities movement in Uganda celebrated a major victory when the High Court of Uganda ruled that Ugandan constitutional rights apply to all people regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The case had been brought by two brave human rights defenders, Victor Juliet Mukasa and Oyoo, against the Attorney General of Uganda.

This victory has been followed by a serious backlash, forged by conservative church leaders from Uganda and the United States of America. In October 2009 a member of the Ugandan parliament introduced a draft 'Anti-Homosexuality Bill' that he is hoping to see passed into law. Its provisions include a life sentence for people who are guilty of "the act of homosexuality", which includes same-sex acts such as "kissing, touching or caressing with homosexual intent", and the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality", where living with HIV is an aggravating factor. In addition, organisations that "promote homosexuality" can have their registration removed and their directors imprisoned for up to seven years. A person in authority, such as a teacher, doctor or social worker who fails to report an "offender" to the police within 24 hours will face three years in jail.

*Sister Namibia* managed to speak to a brave lesbian in Uganda about the Bill. Val Kalende works for Freedom and Roam Uganda, a non-governmental organisation that advocates for the rights of LGBTI members of society. She shared with us the mood of the LGBTI community in her county in the face of this Bill.

## An interview with Val Kende

**Val, what is the general attitude towards the LGBTI community in Uganda right now?**

Since this Bill was tabled in parliament, Uganda is becoming one of the most dangerous places for LGBTI people. Homophobia has always been deeply rooted in the society but we have never experienced it the way it is now. Transgender people are mostly targeted because of their non-conforming looks and behaviour. There have been reported cases of 'curative' rape against lesbians.

The media is known for their 'name and shame' games where they publish names of suspected lesbian and gay people in local newspapers. This has resulted in loss of employment for many. I am a victim of that and I am now convinced it would be very hard for me to be employed anywhere apart from organisations working on LGBTI issues.

Most Ugandans are homophobic, though with the gradual growth of the gay rights movement some people are beginning to understand and embrace sexual minorities and transgender people. The feminist movement is one of such groups who are showing signs of being progressive regarding our rights.

**What do you think makes Uganda such a homophobic society?**

It is a combination of both culture and religion. In Uganda it is mostly religion which is being used to bash homosexuals. The church contributed a lot towards the drafting of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. Culturally, homosexuality was not condoned, although homosexuals



existed in Uganda even before British colonial rule. It was Christian missionaries who imported homophobia to Uganda.

**How does the LGBTI community feel about the Bill now being tabled in parliament?**

This Bill has caused unimaginable fear and tension among LGBTI people here. Some are contemplating leaving the country and going to seek refuge elsewhere. Personally I feel betrayed by my own country. The death penalty has no place in the world we live in today.

The Bill proposes imprisonment for things that are impossible to determine, such as 'intent to commit homosexuality'. We will not be able to continue working here and having our organisations if this Bill becomes law. In fact, it will be impossible for LGBTI people to exist in this country whether we are out of the closet or not. Simple things like being open to your doctor or a counselor will become impossible, because they will be required by law to hand you over to authorities for imprisonment.

**What kind of repercussions do you think it will have if this Bill is passed?**

There will be irreversible consequences that Uganda will regret for so many years to come. This piece of legislation will be used against the very people who are pushing for it to become law. Politicians themselves will use it to blackmail each other, just like what happened in Zimbabwe. I foresee genocide.

**What are local LGBTI and human rights groups doing to prevent the passing of Bill?**

A coalition of now 25 civil society organisations including LGBTI organisations was formed in October 2009 to campaign against the Bill. The coalition is challenging the Bill from a human rights point of view and not necessarily as an LGBTI issue. We have a legal team whose work is

“Since this Bill was tabled in parliament, Uganda is becoming one of the most dangerous places for LGBTI people.”

to engage the Legal and Parliamentary Committee that is handling the Bill at parliament. There is a media team whose work is to write articles and arrange interviews as well as document the coalition's work. Some members of the coalition have been hosted by local television and radio talk shows to discuss the Bill.

So far we have organised two public dialogues to create more understanding of the implications of the Bill. Some members of parliament attended.

**And what are local LGBTI organisations doing to raise awareness for the rights of sexual minorities in Uganda?**

We have created a strong partnership of human rights activists, organisations and allies. This has helped strengthen and make loud our voices for freedom. We have used mainstream media and new media such as blogs and websites to gain visibility of LGBTI issues. Organising LGBTI people into one movement has been very helpful in raising awareness, but the safety of activists is always at risk.

**Anything else you would like to add?**

On behalf of the LGBTI movement in Uganda, I extend my gratitude to human rights activists and LGBTI people of Namibia for standing with us through these difficult times. Our success against odious legislation such as this Anti-Homosexuality Bill is Namibia's and indeed Africa's success too. If this Bill is passed it will have huge repercussions across the continent.

But I want to remain optimistic and believe that this Bill will not be passed.

**Thank you, Val!** Sister Namibia recognises that you are risking your own safety for the sake of all other human rights defenders in Uganda and Africa. We commend your bravery and stand together with you and your fellow activists in calling for this Bill to be scrapped immediately, and for all states in Africa to respect the personhood, dignity and equality of all their citizens, regardless of their sexual and gender diversity. If we cannot safeguard the rights of minorities in our societies, then we have failed all human rights, for we are all humans. ♀

**Glossary**

**draconian:** oppressive, severe

**homophobic:** expressing rejection, fear and hatred of homosexual people

*The meanings of LGBTI*

**lesbian:** a woman who is attracted to/loves other women

**gay:** a man who is attracted to/loves other men

**bisexual:** a person who is attracted to/loves both women and men

**transgender:** a person who resists and transgresses the gender boundaries of being 'a typical girl/woman' or 'typical boy/man' as expected in their society

**intersex:** a person born with a mixture of female and male physical characteristics, including hormones and sexual organs



The Speaker of Uganda's parliament (second from left) with petitioners from the church and civil society calling for the withdrawal of the Bill



# Gina Figueira

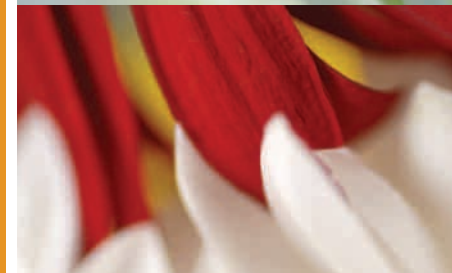
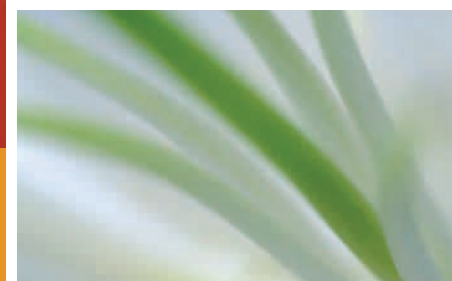
## Looking through a macro lens

From a young age, I was inspired by my father to take on photography. He always had a camera with him, so it was bound to happen that my curiosity led to him teaching me how to use a camera and eventually landed me with an old film camera of my own when I was ten. I grew up, and evolved, and so did photography. Before I knew it, digital photography came into being and as my father learned more and more about digital photography, he taught me some of his newly acquired wisdom.

I eventually discovered the magic of a macro lens, where I could focus on just the smallest detail of any object. The fantastic world that lies through a macro lens is something you can never discover unless you actually look through it. I was so taken aback by this new world that I wanted to share it with as many people as possible. So came about the idea for my first solo exhibition, "Energy in Emotion" opened on my 15th birthday.

The main idea behind this was to get people to think about the images that I exhibited. Personally, when I look at any picture, be it a photograph, painting, print or anything I get a feeling, a certain vibe about it that sways my decision about whether or not I 'like' it.

I wanted to portray this in the exhibition and get people to question the images and make up their own minds about them. I felt that abstract images through a macro lens would allow for this kind of investigation because often people will pay more attention to something if they do not know what it is.



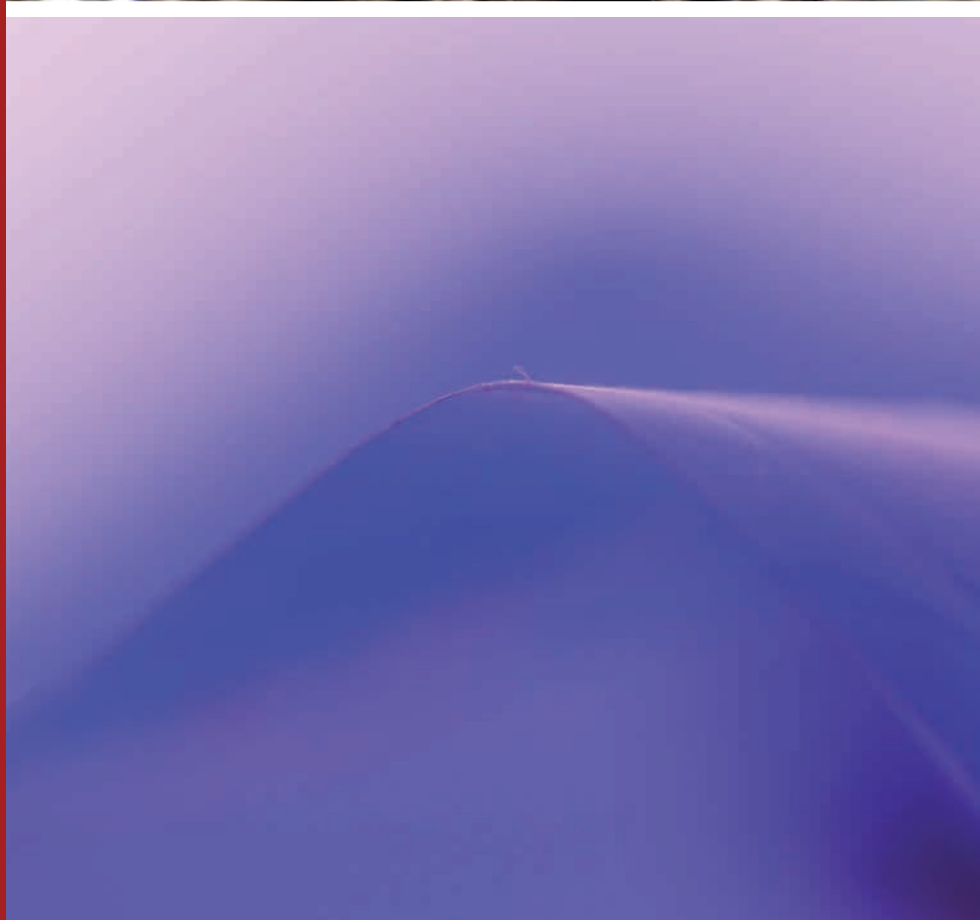
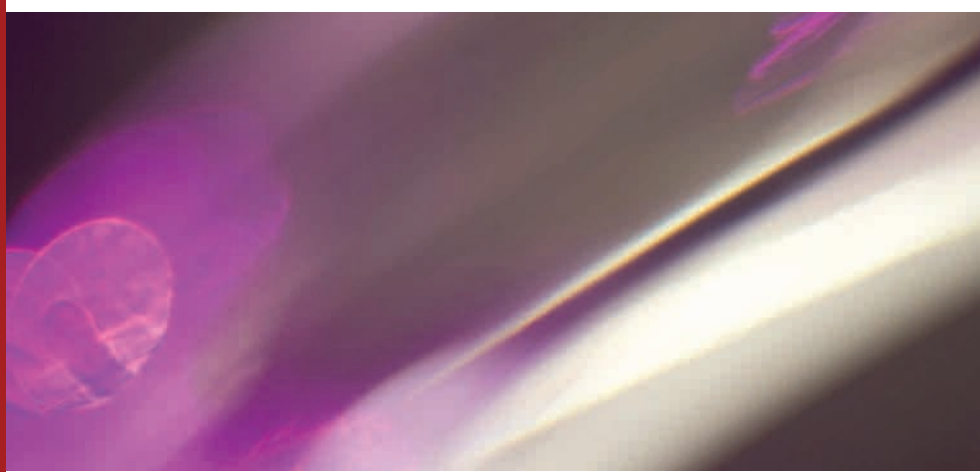


I remembered a project I did in Grade 5 on the American artist Georgia O'Keeffe, who painted huge canvasses of flowers and hung them up around New York to remind people to take some time out of their busy lives to look at the beauty around them, and how I admired her for that idea.

I love what she said, "To fill a space in a beautiful way. That is what art is to me." Looking back on that exhibition, I am definitely proud of what I accomplished at a young age, but I also see a degree of naivety as well as room for improvement.

I am now trying to gain experience and experiment with as many media as possible. I am currently doing Visual Arts as a subject for my final year at the Windhoek International School and trying to incorporate photography with other media.

I have the greatest respect for photography and will continue to adore it as a medium. What else gives you the gift of capturing the one split second of a genuine smile on someone's face or allows for you to change reality as you thought you see it by the use of a lens?



# Taluso ka za mutu Kabukuswani

I tahisizwe ki Linda Baker  
Itolokilwe ki Mt. Mbala R. M



Tony Figueira

## Jeneti Matota Petuho mwalibaka za Matakanyani

**T**umbo tuna ki ye feleleza tahiso ya Mufumahali Matota kuamana ni kalulo ye bapalwa ki basali mwa Caprivi kuamana ni Pukelezo ya lifolofolo. Batu baba fita fa mashumi a ketalizoho ki ba babile ni bundume bwa kutalimana ni kubata hahulu kwamanzibuana mwatolopo ya Windhoek kuto teeleza kwamiliko ye talimani ni basali ba libaka za matakanyani mwa Sikiliti sa Caprivi, kuzwelela kwa litou ze sweli kusinya masimu a mbonyi ya butokwa mane kungelela butata bwa kupila ni kakokwani ka HIV ni AIDS mwahalaa sicaba. Kanako ya kubulela kwasilundwamanje mwakalulo ya kamita ya Sibaka sa Kuambolela za Butata bwa Sibaka sa Pukelezo ya Lifolofolo ko kulukisizwe ki ba Strengthening the Protected Area Network (Kutiiseza Swalisano ya Sibaka se Sibukelelizwe), Mufumahali Jeneti na hapile takazo ya bateelezi ka mizuzu ye eza mashumi a mane, kusina kusebelisa Sisupiso sa kamita sa kutahisa tuto.

### • Kuzwa kwa kuba muyahi wa sibaka ni kuba mueteleli wa sibaka sa pukelezo

Muyahi wa sibaka mwalibaka zamatakanyani lilimo ze lishumi ka ze silezi ze felile, u bile ya file mitala sakata kwalikitikiti za basali mwamutulo upa wa Namibia. U zwile mubano kwa kutelela mihato ya kamaiso ya limbule za Nyambe kakuikabela makande a litaba za basali mwa Caprivi mwingambolo ni manaha a lifasi lote, mi usweli kusebeza ni balikani ba hae kumbweshafaza mayemo a mipilelo ni buiketelo bwa basali ni bana babona. Sina ha li mueteleli mwalikalulo ze peli za ofisi ye zwakanyize moho za Zwelopili ya Libaka za Matakanyani ni Pukelezo ya za Naheñi (IRDNC) mwa Katima Mulilo, Janeti ki ya ongaonga za kamaiso ya limbule za basali, kamaiso ya ofisi ni kufa lituso mo ku swanehela kaufela. Ki ya zamaisa musulo ni kamaiso ya masheleñi a kopano, kuikolwisisa kuli batatubi ba masheleñi ni baneuli ba ona ba tabela ze ezwa.

Likande la hae li kalela kwamulaho kasilimo sa 1994, ili fa na utwezi kubo Induna (baeteleli ba munzi) ba sibaka sa habo kuli katengo ka kwamukunda ka kaikemezi ne ka bata kulifa musali kuli a be ya Okamezi Limbule za Sicaba.



Misebezi ya ba Zwakanyize moho za Zwelopili ya Libaka za Matakanyani ni Pukelezo ya za Nahefi (IRDNC) mwa Sikiliti sa Caprivi, ili mo lilimolimo za ndwa, buhateleli ni lisitataliso ze fiwi ne li ketulizi batu ni kubazwisa kwalimbule za Nyambe ni kutahisa kuli palo ya lifolofolo i kutele hahulu mwamulaho. Nihaikekuli hañata ne li baana feela bao ne ba inanga famikopano kuambolisana ka za sebeliso ni buluwi bwa limbule za Nyambe, ne ku lemuhilwe kuli basali ne li bona basebelisi tuna ba limbule za Nyambe ze, sihulu limbule ze fumaneha mwanahafi/mabala, mi kutokwahala kuli ba be teñi mwalingambolo ni mwakamaiso cwalo.

Basali ba lishumi ka ba babeli ne ba fitisize likupo za kufiwa musebezi, kono pampili ya kupo ya musebezi ya Jeneti ki ye ne fumanehile kuli ki ye tuzi. Mwamazazi a makalelo, na sebezanga ni basali ba minzi, kubeya hamoho mukoloko wa limbule za Nyambe ze ne sebeliswa kazazi ni zazi mwabupilo kuba lico za batu, kuba ze betiwa ki batu, kuba milyani, kuyahiswa ni kusebeliswa mwalika ze fiwi cwalo. Kacwalo a Talima kuba teñi kwa limbule ze cwalo, ni kuli ki butelele bo bukuma kai bo ba kona kuzamaya basali kuyonga lika ze cwalo ni kuli ki kalulo mañi ya kota kapa simela ye swanelwa kuselwa, ze cwale ka makwati, mibisi kapa matali. A fumana cwalo liñolo la bukwaenzi – ili kezahalo ye ne kile ya hapa maikuto a batu ba bañata, kakuli ne li basali ba banyinyani bao ne ba kile ba fumana liñolo le li cwalo kanako yeo. “Bo Iyaminzi ba fakaufi ne ba kona kutaha kuto buha ni ku ni fa mazoho katumbo ha ni nze ni kaliketa ze ni eza,” a seha.

### Kutateka kwa za Bukwala kwa Mashi

Kakusebeza ni licaziba za pukelezo ya lifolofolo ni tutengo to tushutanashutana, Mufumahali Jeneti Matota a kala kufa tuto kwa basali, ya kusebelisa limbule za Nyambe kuyakuile. Bakeñisa kuculauka kwa hae, kwa kenya batu ba bañata famusebezi wa kutokomela limbule za Nyambe. Zwelopili tuna ne i kile ya ba teñi kamukwa wa kulema hande mukulwani ni kulombiwa kuluha lizuma. Mwalikalulo zeo basali ne ba fumananga butata kufumana mashelefi kakukondola macwala kuli ba tise sico mwamukeke mwalinako za kwamulaho, kukalwa kwa za Bukwala mwa Mashi ku ba konisize kulekisa lizuma ni ze fiwi za bukwalu kufumana mashelefi kakusebelisa limbule za Nyambe kuyakuile.

“Kanakano ya cwale, basali ba 267 ba tahisa ze lukilwe famusika hamohocwalo ni baana ba 36. Ki batu ba bafita fa 2 000 kanako ya cwale ba bafumana sesiñwi kuzwelela ku za Bukwala za Mashi, ili mo baluhi ni babeti ba sebelisa mashelefi kuleka likomu, kubabalela lindiala, kulifa mashelefi a bana ba likolo ni litifo kwasipatela ni kuutisa mabasi a bona,” a biha cwalo ka buikumuso. Za Bukwala za Mashi ki ze fiwi

za misebezi ya makopanelo ya kufumana mashelefi mwahalaa sicaba mwa Namibia ye zwile mubano, mo kuna ni ze ñata ze lekiswa ze fa Mayemo (a pili) A fa Sibaka sa ze Betiwa mwa Namibia mwamulenefi wa Windhoek. Mufumahali Jeneti nako kaufela u susuezanga basali kuba ni kalulo ya kueza kuamana ni likalulo kaufela za pukelezo ya za nahefi. Kakutahiswa kwa pukelezo ya za nahefi ye li mwalibaka za sizo mwa Sikiliti sa Caprivi ni litakazo ze nze lihula mwa Kamaiso ya Limbule za Nyambe ye mwahalaa Sicaba (CBNRM), bazamaisi ba limbule za Nyambe ba kenyizwe hahulu famisebezi mwalibaka za pukelezo ya za nahefi.

### Basali kwapaata

Ki kuba ni kalulo ya kueza ni kukopanywa kwa basali mwapukelezo ya za nahefi mwamutulo-upa ko ku tisize kuli Muf. Jeneti Matota a i kutwe kuli u petile ze tuna hahulu. Lilimo ze mashumi a mabeli ze felile, baana ki bao ne ba hatelezi hahulu mikopano ni kuiketela ze ba lata. Kacenu basali ba na ni kemelo tuna ku za pukelezo ya za nahefi mwalibaka za sizo ze tahisizwe mwasikiliti, ka kufiwa kemelo ki likuta za sizo ni malena. Mwalibaka ze lishumi ka si li siñwi za pukelezo ya za nahefi ze li teñi ni ze silezi ze se kalile kuiponahaza mwa Sikiliti sa Caprivi, lu ka li buñata bwa babuluki ba sikwama kanako ya cwale ki basali.

Basali ba eza likalulo ze mashumi a malalu ka ze supile za mwanda (37%) ya tutengo, mi kanako ye swana bazamaisi ba babeli ba pukelezo ya nahefi ki basali ni bakanteli ba lifolofolo ba balalu mwapukelezo ya za nahefi ki basali.

Kuekeza kuzeo, batokomeli ba batahisa za butokwa ba ngile kalulo tuna mwahalaa sicaba sa bona, kufa litaba kabutungi ka za HIV ni AIDS, kusebeza ni likwata ze fa lituso mwahalaa likalulo ze bupa munzi ni kutusa batu kukona kufumana likalalo. “Lu fumani kuli basali ba na ni nako ye nyinyani ya kuitenga ku ze eziwa bakeñisa HIV ni AIDS. Nako ya kuluka lika neli ye nyinyani. Ne ba babalela bakuli ni lindiala kapa kuya kwalikepelo kwamatotaeti, kacwalo ze ne ba eza ne li kutezi fafasi.” Lipalo ze ne li zwisizwe kanako yeo (2006) ne li supelize kuli likalulo ze mashumi a mane ka ze talu za mwanda (43%) ya basali ba baitwezi mwa Caprivi ba fumanehile kupila ni kakokwani ka HIV. Batu ne ba si ka fumana litaba kabutungi kuamana ni milyani ye lwanisa ni kukutiseza fafasi sifanu se si yambukela, mi ne ba swaba kuya kwakuitatubisa kapa kubulela ka za mayemo a bona kasamulaho a kuitatubisa,” kubulela Muf. Jeneti.

### Kuhulisa zibo ya AIDS

Kakusebeza kaswalisano ni Kopano ya Namibia ya Katengo ka Kafa Lituso ka CBNRM, Muf. Jeneti na tusize kubupa katengo ka HIV/AIDS kufa liseli kwababeleki ba bañwi. Kutuhafo cwale se ba sebeza mwalibaka za pukelezo ya za nahefi ni

mwahalaa likalulo za minzi kufa litaba kakutala mwapuo ya Silozi ni lipuo ze ñwi ze sebeliswa mwasilalo – ili kutomahanya kwatutengo to tuñwi ni kusebelisa lituto za maswaniso a zamaya, kuhulisa cwalo lipapali kapa siyano ya lipuzo kakufa mipuzo. “Ne lu fumani kuli sebeliso ya makondomu ki taba ye tokwa tokomelo. Basali ne ba bilaela kuli Mafemidomu a eza lilata kwa kuasebelisa kuyemisa lupepo, mi ba bañata ba zwise mwaalo ni ku u penda kueza samende ya kwalizoho.

“Makondomu a baana a bulelwa kuli a hasanya HIV ni AIDS – kulumelwa kuli ha u beya mwakondomu mezi a cisa u ta bona tukokwani twa HIV inge tu inezi kumatamata mwateñi, nihaikekuli se mu bona ki lika ze nolofaza mwahali kanako ya kusomana,” kubulela Muf. Jeneti. “Bali a sa tiseza cwalo batu ba bañwi bulumaluma haiha mibili ya bona ha i lumelelani ni ze bisa bunolo mwahali. Nihakulicwalo, limembala ze eza mashumi a mabeli za likwata ze fa lituso mwalibaka za pukelezo ya za naheñi kanako ya cwale se ba tumusize mayemo a bona a kuba ni HIV. Kabunyinyani lu sweli kulwanisa libubo maswe le lizamaelela ni HIV ni AIDS mi taba ye se i komile ndwa luli. Patisiso ya cwanuñufa i patuluzi kuli mayemo a kuyambula butuku sa kutezi fafasi ni kuba mwatasaa likalulo ze mashumi a malalu ka ze peli za mwanda (32%) mwahalaa basali ba baitwezi bao ne ba kile ba tataubiwa mwasikiliti sa luna mwasilimo sa 2008. Se sitatama ki kuli lu bata kulukisa misipili ya kucincana zibo ni manaha a mañwi ili kuli lu kone kusebelisa lika ze ba eza kwalibaka ze cwalo,” kumenya Muf. Jeneti.



Kuluha lizuma ze nde kuezwa mwasibaka sa Bukwala sa Mashi

### Mupuzo wa musebezi wa hae

Muf. Jeneti Matota hape na kile a bapala kalulo tuna kwakulukisa mukopano wa pili wa kuambolisana ka za butokwa mwa Caprivi ono kile wa ba teñi mwasilimo sa 2005, mi katuso ya babeleki ba bañwi ba IRDNC, na sa lutile basali ba bafitelela 200 ka za kubulela fanyangela. Mukopano wa kuambolisana za butokwa ka za kubupa basali u tahisa ze bonahala, kuli mane basali ba kopano ya naha Zambia ye li mabapa ni luna ne i kile ya mu kupa kuli a yo ba tusa kufa tuto ya zibo ye swana. Kono nihakulicwalo, kubulela Muf. Jeneti, ku sa na ni miliko ye miñata kwapaata. Mifilifili ye li mwahalaa kamunu ni lifolofolo i sa siyala kuba taba ye tata. Litou ze ñata ze tutatuta mwahalaa sibaka, sihulu kwamukulela wa nuka ya Kwando, hañata li sinyanga

• masimu ha li nze li yembana cwalo. Taba ye i tisa kusaba ni pulukelo ya lico ni kuekeza kwabunjebwe. Misika ye minca ya ze ba luka ya tokwahala, hamohocwalo ni lituso ze ñata za kutusa batu kukona kufumana likalafo za HIV ni AIDS kungelela cwalo ni lipabalelo ze ñwi za makete.

• Nihakubacwalo, kotalima kwamulaho, ki taba ye bonahala kuli petuho mwalibaka za matakanyani i bile teñi mwalilimo ze lishumi ka ze silezi zeo Muf. Jeneti Matota sa belekile ni ba IRDNC. Basali se ba bile balikani mwakamaiso ya limbule za Nyambe mi ba zwezipili kufumana manzwi a bona ha ku ambolwa. Ha ki taba ye komokisa hanyinyani kuli ne li yena wa pili kukopanela kuamuhela mushukwe wa Namibia Nature Foundation’s Conservationist wa Silimo sa 2000!

• Ha buzizwe kuli ki sika mañi se sitisize licinceho tuna cwalo mwasikiliti, Muf. Jeneti na alabile sina cwalo: “Basali kanako ya cwale ba na ni bao bakona kukopisa kubona. Ba lu talimela ni kubulela kuli – haiba ba kona kueza cwalo, ki kabakalañi ha lu sa ezi cwalo ni luna?” ♀



# Roswitha Mushova-Ndumba

## A woman of courage By Elizabeth IKhaxas



Roswitha visiting the Sister Namibia office in 2007

Aids activist and founder of Kavango Bridges of Hope, Roswitha Mushova-Ndumba, passed away in February after a long struggle with the disease. Roswitha shared her life story with *Sister Namibia* and Women's Leadership Centre, featuring on the cover of the May 2007 issue of the magazine and in the WLC anthology *We must choose life*.

Born in 1961 and raised in Shighuru village, Roswitha fondly remembered her happy childhood spent with her friends along the Kavango River. Looking after her younger siblings saved her from early marriage, and she later stayed with missionaries of the NG church and with their help completed standard 5 in 1978.

A dedicated student who was always top of her class, Roswitha received a bursary from the Roman Catholic Church to study early childhood education at Dóbra College near Windhoek. She returned to Kavango Region in 1982 to begin her teaching career, during which she founded a kindergarten, taught at secondary schools, and built up the Martin Ndumba Combined School for San children at the former South African army base as its acting principal.

Roswitha married in 1990, but left when her husband took a second wife some years later, after she had become seriously ill. She tested HIV-positive, but with strong support from her family she was able to

start taking anti-retroviral medicine and regain her health. She formed a support group of HIV-positive people in Rundu, the Kavango Bridges of Hope, and the group began working on projects including home based care training, counselling, and awareness raising.

Roswitha attended workshops on women's rights given by the Women's Leadership Centre, developing skills in writing and photography. One of her stories is included below. She used her voice to challenge harmful cultural practices that expose women and girls to HIV, and called for outreach programmes for women in rural areas.

### *My cousin fainted*

by Roswitha Ndumba

This is the story of a cousin of mine who had problems with his wife. They used to quarrel all the time even though they didn't know why. One day while they were arguing, the wife told the husband that she was going to divorce him because one of his girlfriends had passed away.

My cousin came to see me at the Kavango Bridges of Hope to complain about his wife. I asked him whether it was true that his girlfriend had died of Aids, but he said he didn't know. I advised him to go for the test. At first he didn't want to but later he agreed. He was afraid he would collapse with shock when he got the results.

After he had the test done he had to wait two days for the results. The waiting was very difficult for him. He was worried that he might be positive and that his wife would divorce him. She was a teacher and he was a taxi driver, but his wife owned the car. So he had the fear of having the virus, the fear of getting the results, and the fear that his wife would leave him and he would lose his livelihood, his wife's car!

When he went back to the clinic, the doctor gave him some counselling. My cousin asked for water to drink because he was shivering and sweating so much. Everybody could see that he was sick with anxiety. When he finally got the results he fainted – just like that. He didn't even listen properly to the doctor or see the paper. He thought that he was positive. His friend who had accompanied him opened the forms just to make sure. He asked my cousin what the problem was because the results were negative!

My cousin came to show me the results and told me he would promise his wife that he would carry a packet of 12 condoms everywhere he went. I told him he must stop sleeping around even with condoms because condoms can burst...!

Reprinted with permission from *We must choose life. Writings by Namibian women on culture, violence, HIV and Aids*. Elizabeth IKhaxas (ed), Women's Leadership Centre, 2008

# WHO MAKES THE NEWS?



## Results of the Global Media Monitoring Project 2010

By Sheena Magenya

**Only 24% of persons seen, heard, or read about in the news are female. Only 16% of all stories focus specifically on women. Almost one half (48%) of all news stories reinforce gender stereotypes, while only 8% of news stories challenge gender stereotypes.**

These are among the findings of the 2010 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), which released a preliminary report in March on the occasion of the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. This CSW session reviewed world progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, fifteen years after it was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.

### Who monitored the news?

The monitoring of news items in regard to gender took place on 10 November 2009 in 130 countries across the world, with gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, university researchers and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and faith-based groups poring over their national newspapers, listening intently to radio newscasts and closely watching local television.

The results contained in the preliminary report are based on

a sample of 42 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Pacific Islands, and Europe. The findings encompass 6,902 news items and 14,044 news subjects, including people interviewed in the news.

The Global Media Monitoring Project is coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change, in collaboration with Media Monitoring Africa, South Africa. Gender Links, also based in South Africa, provided advice on refining the monitoring tools and methodology. The project's overarching purpose is to bring about fair and balanced gender representation in and through the news media. The project is supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The final regional, national and global GMMP Reports will be released in September 2010.

### What were the preliminary findings?

In addition to the above-mentioned key findings, other results were as follows:

- Women have achieved near parity as givers of popular opinion in news stories. At the same time, less than one out of every five experts interviewed is female.
- Issues of special concern to women as contained in the Beijing Platform for Action receive an average of less than 1.5% media attention each.
- News stories by female reporters are much fewer than news stories by male reporters.
- News stories by female reporters are almost twice as likely to challenge gender stereotypes as stories by male reporters.
- Only 12% of news stories highlight issues of gender equality or inequality.
- Women are five times as likely as men to be portrayed in their roles as wives, mothers, etc.
- Only 9% of news stories mention gender equality policies or human and women's rights legal instruments.

According to the report, the increase in women's visibility in the news has been only 6% over the past ten years. As one of the male media monitors in Congo Brazzaville observed: "News media seem to serve male interests; attention to women is extremely negligible even though women outnumber men nationally, and women are the lifeblood of communities, particularly in informal settlements and in the rural areas." ♀

Source: [www.whomakesthenews.org](http://www.whomakesthenews.org)



# Promoting women's access to the media in Namibia

By Liz Frank

## The National Gender Policy

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has drafted a new National Gender Policy (2009 – 2018) which is currently before parliament for debate and adoption. One of the policy objectives is to promote women's access to information and communication technology and eliminate negative portrayal of women and girls.

The policy states that "the media have an important role to play in informing and educating society on the situation of women, and on gender issues. Gender concerns in the media include the portrayal of women and girls in the media and women's access to and awareness of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Another issue is the representation of women in media houses at managerial level and as decision-makers."

Further, "the media have great potential to promote a positive image of women. However, the media could also perpetuate cultural, social, political and economic stereotypical attitudes and practices, by projecting negative and degrading images of women."

The policy recognises that "ICTs have great potential to promote women's empowerment through breaking barriers to knowledge, and opening new opportunities in education, political participation, health-care and income generation. Through ICTs, women can access information and opportunities through the Internet without leaving their homes, villages or communities, thus bringing positive change for poor women and men, especially in rural areas."

## Recommended strategies for change

The draft National Gender Policy identifies the following strategies to promote women's access to the media and overcome gender stereotyping:

- Make community radio/alternative video and television, public call-in stations, community Internet access, computer networking and alternative print media services accessible to both women and men.
- In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, avail resources and implement programmes that would increase women's access to ICT-resources and knowledge, especially to new communication technologies.
- Improve women's employment opportunities and career paths in the media industry with guidelines for encouraging women's participation at all levels of decision-making in media enterprises and in senior positions in technology-driven industries, and on government-convened advisory Boards.
- Support gender training for journalists and media personnel to create awareness on how women and men are portrayed and given a voice.
- Encourage media bodies to review policies on ethical standards, including the principles of gender equality and commitment to gender-aware media portrayals of both men and women. ♀

## NGOs leading change

Non-governmental organisations such as Sister Namibia and Women's Leadership Centre have been promoting the voice and visibility of women and girls in all their diversity over the past twenty respectively five years. With every issue of *Sister Namibia* magazine we profile the work, leadership, opinions, community involvement and creativity of women in Namibia. While the

gender ministry's Beijing plus 15 Report to the Commission on the Status of Women bemoans the fact that women living with HIV and Aids hardly feature in mainstream media in Namibia, their voices have taken centre stage in all our more recent issues of this magazine, as well as in the publications of the Women's Leadership Centre. ♀



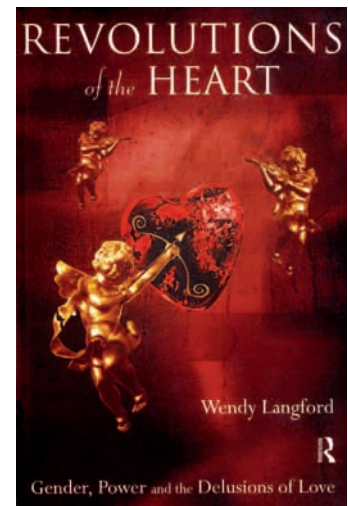
Women in Caprivi Region learning photography skills at a workshop conducted by the Women's Leadership Centre in 2006

## Revolutions of the Heart

By Wendy Langford  
Routledge London  
and New York 1999

In this challenging and highly original book, Wendy Langford dispels some of the mystery surrounding romantic love and presents a compelling explanation for why it does not give us what we desire. Love appears to be liberating because it arises in resistance to all that our social conditioning has led us to become and gives us a glimpse of a radically different way of being in the world. But love is fuelled by unconscious compulsions which turn revolution into counter-revolution - the 're-becoming' of all that we meant to leave behind.

*Revolutions of the Heart* focuses in particular on how love disrupts but then reproduces power relations between men and women. It shows how women's own emotional investments help to transform love into an alienating dynamic of domination and submission.



## The Way We Care

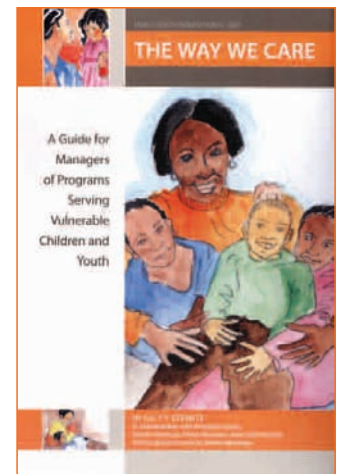
**A guide for managers of programs serving vulnerable children and youth**

By Lucy Y. Steinitz with Kim Green, Marika Matengu, Tanya Medrano and Lydia Murithi  
Family Health International 2009

Written in down-to-earth language, this 150-page manual aims to develop awareness, reinforce knowledge and assist those designing, implementing or managing programmes for children and youth affected by poverty, HIV and Aids, and other diseases.

It outlines child-focused, family-centered activities; promotes the integration of care, prevention and treatment; and offers practical information on programme design and project management. It can be used as a personal guide, a resource for collaborative learning or a source of handouts for workshops or courses on performance management or capacity building.

Send an email to [CMershon@fhi.org](mailto:CMershon@fhi.org).

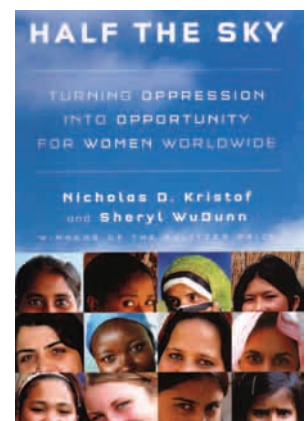


## Half the Sky

**Turning oppression into opportunity for women worldwide**

Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas D. Kristof  
Alfred A. Knopf 2009

This book presents a passionate call to arms against our era's most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world. With Pulitzer Prize winners Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas D. Kristof as our guides, we undertake an odyssey through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there, among them a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth. Drawing on the breadth of their combined reporting experience, WuDunn and Kristof depict our world with anger, sadness, clarity and ultimately, hope. They show how a little help can transform the lives of women and girls abroad. The Cambodian girl eventually escaped from the brothel and, with assistance from an aid group, built a thriving retail business that supports her family. The Ethiopian woman had her injuries repaired and in time became a surgeon. These stories help us see that the key to economic progress lies in unleashing women's potential. They make clear how so many people have helped to do just that, and how we can each do our part.





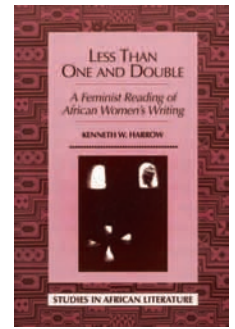
## Less Than One and Double

### A Feminist Reading of African Women's Writing

By Kenneth W. Harrow  
Heinemann 2002

This provocative book introduces a psychoanalytic dimension to the study of African women's writing. In so doing, the author opens up relatively uncharted terrain in African literary studies. Comprehensive and nuanced, this book covers an impressive range of hitherto neglected francophone novels that are examined alongside canonical anglophone texts. The author places these texts in their colonial and postcolonial contexts, developing upon, and linking with, structuralist theories of colonialism and patriarchy. This study offers a radical new position for those scholars who have long sought alternatives to the liberal humanist bias pervading many studies of African women's writings.

Students often struggle with the models employed by feminist and postcolonial theorists such as Judith Butler and Homi Bhaba. The clarity with which Harrow explains the positions of such theorists makes his book an essential companion to, and commentary upon, their publications.



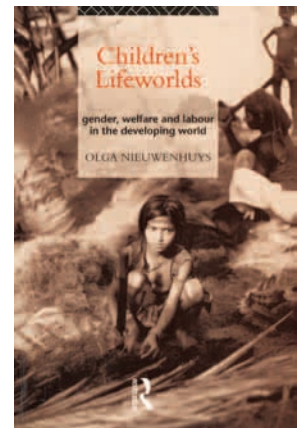
## Children's Lifeworlds

Gender, welfare and labour  
in the developing world

By Olga Nieuwenhuys  
Routledge London and  
New York 1994

Children's Lifeworlds examines how working children face the challenge of having to combine work with school. Moving beyond the usual concern with child labour and welfare to a critical assessment of the daily work routine of children, this book questions how class and kinship, gender and household organisation, state ideology and education influence and conceal the lives of children in developing countries.

Presenting an extraordinarily sympathetic and detailed case study of boys' and girls' daily work routines in a village in southern India, this book shows how children negotiate the value of their work.



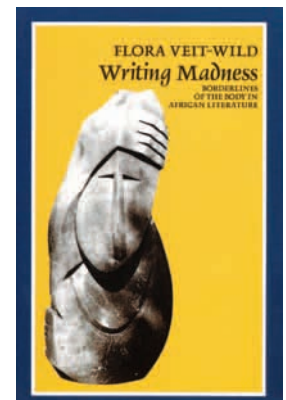
## Flora Veit-Wild

### Writing Madness

Borderlines of the  
Body in African - Literature

Introducing the perspective of 'writing madness' into African literature means seeing that literature from a different angle, through the lenses of writers who have ruffled up the surface of realist representation and have explored issues and styles that represent a trespassing of borders, introducing an element of risk and instability.

This study follows the transformation from colonial narratives projecting settlers' horror of the 'heart of darkness' onto the African body and mind, to African writers' interaction with these narratives and their own projections of what constitutes madness in a colonial and postcolonial world.



For information on

Women's Rights, Feminisms, HIV and Aids, Sexuality and Sexual Rights

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The materials on these pages are part of our collection and can be borrowed by members.

163 Nelson Mandela Avenue, Windhoek  
Call (061) 230618 for an appointment.

# Polygamy, promiscuity and progressive leadership

By Colleen Lowe Morna



If nothing else, South African President Jacob Zuma's belated apology about his out-of-wedlock child with Sonono Khoza following unprecedented outrage at the way he has demeaned the highest office in the land has shown the power of public opinion in a democracy. We have also established once and for all that the personal is political and that leaders must practise what they preach where HIV and Aids is concerned.

Still lacking from the public discourse, however, is how Zuma has taken the country back a few decades when it comes to the progressive gender discourse so proudly a part of the new South Africa. In the week that we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Nelson Mandela's release from jail, and await President Zuma's State of the Nation address at the start of a new decade, his crass behaviour reminds us that there is still a long walk to freedom for South African women.

## Philandering and hypocrisy

2010 opened with a frenzy of reports about Zuma's third wife and fifth marriage, peppered with letters and opinion pieces justifying polygamy on the grounds that it's not illegal or unconstitutional; that it's better to be transparent about relationships than have concubines hidden away and that liberalism demands tolerance of all lifestyles.

The love child case shattered this backslapping barrage. It showed that contrary to Zuma's own claims about openness within his polygamous circle, the president philanders at will outside this circle. Of course, we already knew this to be the case from the trial that acquitted Zuma of rape, but revealed that he had unprotected extra-marital sex with an HIV positive woman half his age before he became president.

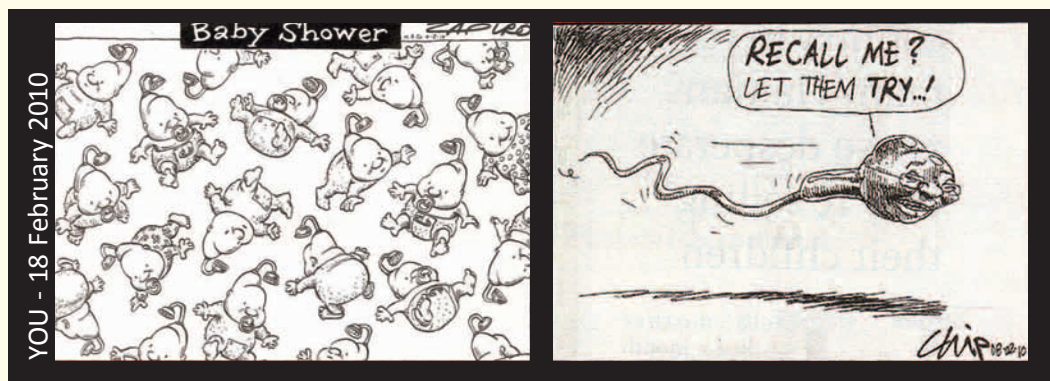
That case and the outcry it caused when he said he had a shower to prevent himself getting infected got conveniently forgotten as Zuma earned praise on World Aids Day by going for testing. Now we are at least waking up to the fact that it's as dangerous to have a hypocrite as it is to have a denialist leading the country in the fight against this deadly pandemic.

## Higher standards for leaders

We're also coming around to the fact that whatever the African National Congress (ANC) and Zuma himself may say about his right to privacy, leaders answer to a higher set of standards than even the courts may set. They are role models who set the tone and pace for the rest of the nation: think, for example, of the messages that Barack and Michelle Obama exude about race and gender in the US and further afield.

Yes, polygamy is not illegal in South Africa. But how does it square with a Constitution that provides for the equal rights of women? The South African Law Reform Commission concluded that a system that allows men to have several wives while a woman can only have one husband is self-evidently unequal. It went on to say that unfortunately allowing women to have many husbands offered no real solution in a deeply patriarchal society. The Commission argued that giving women in polygamous relationships equal rights would protect these women and lead to this system gradually fading away for social and economic reasons.

The role of progressive leaders is to push the envelope, not take us back in time. Mandela, despite having similar traditional roots to Zuma, struck a



South African cartoonist Zapiro attached a shower to his images of Jacob Zuma after he stated in his 2006 rape trial that he had taken a shower to protect himself from HIV infection after having



goal for gender equality when he married former Mozambican first lady Graca Machel who kept her surname and identity, and negotiated a commuter marriage between two countries. With Zuma, who has tried to step into Mandela's shoes, it has become the fashion to flaunt women and children in a way that says: my conquests, my wealth, my possessions.

**Exploiting inequality**

In response to the frequently asked question: what about the women who choose to be his additional wives or mistresses it is amazing that we fail to question the meaning of "choice" where the forces of power are still so heavily stacked against women. Wherever there is a power imbalance, some in the ranks of the powerless will buy into the agenda of the powerful: witness for example the homeland leaders under apartheid. That surely did not make the system right!

What is frightening about the effect of Zuma on gender discourse in South Africa is that because the most powerful man in the land is involved, the ANC Women's League (also the driving force behind the Progressive Women's Movement) has lost its voice, joining in the chorus of Zuma's right to privacy, to practice his culture, without the slightest critique of how this sits with constitutional provisions for equality.

**Irresponsible fatherhood and risk taking**

According to Zuma, all men need do if they go around fathering children with many women is accept paternity, pay damages, invoke children's rights, blame the media and claim their right to privacy. If that does not work, you can also say "sorry" before rushing off to deliver the State of the Nation address.

It's only in another moment of crisis that we are being reminded that although the judge in the 2006 rape trial did not find sufficient evidence

...all men need do if they go around fathering children with many women is accept paternity, pay damages, invoke children's rights, blame the media and claim their right to privacy.

to convict Zuma, he took a dim view of Zuma's conduct. Following the outrage over Zuma's comments in court about showering away the Aids risk, Zuma said: "I wish to state categorically and place on record that I erred in having unprotected sex. I should have known better. And I should have acted with greater caution and responsibility."

Evidently, no lessons were learned as Zuma has since not abstained, acted faithfully, or used a condom.

The issue is not whether or not Zuma should step down as president, but the fact that if we had included attitudes towards women as a key test of leadership - a point many of us made at the time - he should never have been president!

**Revolutionary or feudal traditionalist?**

Now, as Sibongile Dabeka, a disgruntled ANC supporter, asked in a letter to the *Sunday Independent*: "How do you market a president who sees young women as potential sleeping partners rather than comrades? How does a revolutionary become a feudalist or traditionalist?" How, indeed, are we to square polygamy, promiscuity and the progressive values of the ANC that Mandela gave his life for and that Zuma agrees he must uphold? If we are to push our democracy to greater heights, how are we to emerge from this quagmire? ♀

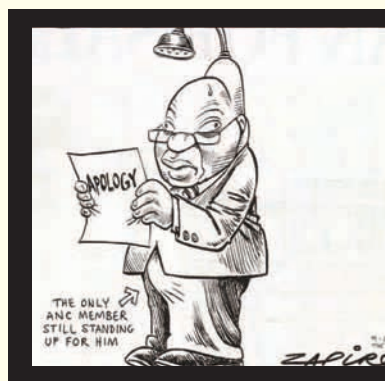
Colleen Lowe Morna is executive director of Gender Links. This article is part of the Gender Links Opinion and Commentary Service.

**Glossary**

**philandering:** having casual affairs with many women, especially when married to another woman (or women)

**quagmire:** predicament, dilemma

unprotected sex with a woman he knew was HIV positive. Zapiro withdrew the shower when Zuma became president, stating that he wanted Zuma to succeed as a good leader. Since the recent 'love child' incident the shower is firmly back on Zuma's head, and on the heads of his many offspring!



Translation: He's on the Zuma route!

# Transitions at *Sister Namibia*

Sheena Magenya



The three directors – Liz Frank, Magano Neri and Yasmin Agnew at Sister Namibia

Following the resignation of Liz Frank as director of Sister Namibia in December 2009, Magano Neri will become the new permanent director from June 2010. Magano hails from northern Namibia and recently returned to the country after holding a position at the African Union in Ethiopia. She is currently being introduced to Sister Namibia while preparing for maternity leave.

Magano's passion for issues pertaining to women's rights, gender and development is evident in the diverse roles she has occupied over the years. These include crisis counselling and advocacy work with the Rape Crisis Centre in Cape Town, and various gender focal point roles in United Nations (UN) units in New York such as the Interagency Taskforce on Gender and Water, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Most recently she worked at the African Union Commission's Department for Social Affairs in Addis Ababa.

Magano also brings skills in staff development, human resources management and project management from roles she occupied in Namibia's private sector. Her work experiences are rounded off well with a Masters in Gender and Development.

In the interim period Sister Namibia is being directed by Yasmin Agnew. Yasmin has worked for many years as a teacher

for secondary school sciences, and recently retired as Principal of the Holy Cross Convent school in Windhoek. Yasmin has always been passionate about promoting the human rights of girls and women in society and has championed the cause of women in every classroom, staff and board room in which she has found herself.

Liz Frank joined Sister Namibia as a volunteer in 1991, contributing to *Sister Namibia* magazine and serving on the management committee during the time that the organisation functioned as a voluntary association. Liz joined the staff in 1999 as editor of *Sister Namibia* magazine. She conducted research on the political participation of women in Namibia, and on sexual cultural practices in different Namibian communities, which led to the 50/50 Campaign for Women's Political Empowerment run by Sister Namibia over a period of six years, and our current campaign: Claiming our Sexual Citizenship.

Liz has joined the board of Sister Namibia and will continue to support our organisation on special projects. Her new career focus will be research and training on gender and sexual diversities. The board thanks Liz for her excellent work and leadership over the past years and wishes her every success in her new endeavours.

Under the new leadership Sister Namibia will continue to publish *Sister Namibia* magazine, broaden the scope of our radio outreach, extend the work of our recently established satellite office in northern Namibia, build the young feminists movement and work for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights through the Claiming our Sexual Citizenship Campaign.

We look forward to continuing and deepening our collaboration with all our partner organisations in civil society as well as with relevant state institutions over the coming years.

Lucy Y. Steinitz, PhD.  
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees



# Sister Namibia

## launches a Satellite Office in the North



Since our establishment in 1989, Sister Namibia has been operating from Windhoek, although through the countywide distribution of *Sister Namibia* magazine, our youth magazine *REAL!*, our campaigns and women's rights training we have reached out to women and girls, as well as boys and men across Namibia.

In November 2009, our twentieth year of existence, we opened a satellite office in Ongwediva, in order to work more closely with communities in northern Namibia in promoting the human rights of women and girls. The launch took place at the Sam Nujoma Multi-purpose Centre in Ongwediva, where the office was located for its first year. Since March 2010 we have moved to the ELCIN Centre in Onwediva, where we share space with the Legal Assistance Centre.

The launch was attended by members of the communities of Ongwediva and Oshakati, as well as by women from other regions in the north who had come to Oshakati to attend a workshop on sexual rights held by Sister Namibia. Paula Assubuji of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, that has funded Sister Namibia since 1992, also attended the launch.

### Receiving a warm welcome

Women who know Sister Namibia through our magazines and workshops were very happy to be present at the launch of the satellite office. Sesilia Ndeikoyele from Ohangwena Region welcomed representatives of Sister Namibia on behalf of other women living in northern Namibia, saying that at last they had the chance to meet some of the staff.

Liz Frank provided a brief history of Sister Namibia as the outgoing director, and thanked Paula Assubuji for the many years of support from her organisation which has enabled us to lay strong foundations for the next twenty years. Paula shared her joy at witnessing this event as well as our workshops, and gave us an inspirational poem. Members of the audience also welcomed Sister Namibia to the North. Among them was Rauha Nghifindaka of the Women and Child Protection Unit of the Namibian Police, who went down memory lane and told the gathering how she used to sell *Sister Namibia* magazines in the streets of Tsumeb when she was still at school. She congratulated Sister Namibia for publishing a very informative magazine which had also earned her an income towards her school fees.

Before the closing, Justina Shivolo, Sister Namibia's outreach officer who operates from the satellite office, encouraged the audience to attend outreach meetings that she holds with various groups of women, saying that it was good to come together to share experiences and discuss issues that affect our lives. She further invited them to visit the satellite office to gather information, collect magazines and bring suggestions for activities. ♀

Paula Assubuji of the Heinrich Böll Foundation speaking at the launch of Sister Namibia's satellite office

## Support Sister Namibia!

Sister Namibia is a non-profit organisation that depends on donor funding for our work. Any donations or contributions are welcome.

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**THANKYOU!**

## Success on sterilisation cases in Namibia



Vikki Tallis

The High Court in Namibia agreed with the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) that the Public Service Act does not apply to the forced sterilisation cases, in which the LAC is representing several women suing the Government of Namibia for damages.

Earlier, the Government raised a legal point that the LAC's clients did not comply with the Public Service Act of 1995, which requires that a person wishing to institute legal action against the Government, must do so within 12 months of the action arising and only after written notice of one month has been given to the Government.

The LAC argued that the Public Service Act does not apply as that law only regulates the employment affairs of public servants, and not to disputes of non-public servants against the Government. As a result, no such notice was given, and in some of the cases, the legal action was only instituted more than 12 months after the sterilisations were done.

The High Court, in a judgment in December 2009, agreed with the LAC's arguments. The cases will now continue on the merits of whether or not the clients – all women who are HIV positive – were unlawfully sterilised without their consent when they were in labour. The women are each suing the Government for over N\$1 million in damages.

The clients have obtained an order from the High Court that their identities should not be revealed as they fear further discrimination and stigmatisation because of their HIV status.

Legal Assistance Centre

## HIV tribunal in Kenya

The Kenyan government has created the first ever tribunal to handle legal issues relating to HIV, including discrimination against people living with HIV and protecting the confidentiality of medical records.

The new tribunal, under the office of the Attorney General, has the status of a subordinate court, with the right to summon witnesses and take evidence. It will handle issues relating to the transmission of HIV, confidentiality, testing, access to healthcare services, discriminatory acts and policies, and HIV-related research.

"Nobody can pretend that there haven't been cases of violations and abuse of people living with HIV. When an HIV-positive woman is chased from home, either by in-laws or the husband, you have a serious case of human rights abuse," said Ambrose Rachier, chairperson of the new tribunal. "Human rights do not take leave because one is living with HIV. Our duty will be to look at these complaints within the confines of the Act that establishes the tribunal, and to act as expeditiously as we can."

People living with HIV have welcomed the formation of the new court. "Setting up the tribunal is the clearest indication by the government that it is ready to entrench the rights of people living with HIV," said Nelson Otuoma, chairperson of the Network Empowerment of People Living with AIDS.

PlusNews, 21 January 2010



## WOZA members arrested and beaten

On 25 January a delegation of 200 women and men marched to Mhlahlandlela Government Complex to deliver the WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arise) report regarding the collapse of the education system in the country. Once the ministry of education official had attended and received the report, members began to disperse.

As they dispersed seven riot police officers ran out of the Police Drill Hall and started to beat the peacefully dispersing activists as well as bystanders and vendors. A total of eleven members were arrested, and released again later without charge or explanation. WOZA stated that the organisation will continue to demonstrate as long as children are still being chased from schools and the constant demands for fees, levies, incentives to teachers and other demands continue unabated.

WOZA also noted that despite promises made by the power sharing government, for security sector reform and respect for civil liberties, these have proven to be empty promises.

[www.wozazimbabwe.org](http://www.wozazimbabwe.org)

## Muslim leaders ban female circumcision

A group of Muslim clerics and scholars in Mauritania have declared a fatwa, or religious decree, against the practice of female circumcision, which involves removing part or all of a girl's clitoris and labia, and sometimes narrowing the vaginal opening. About 72 percent of the women in Mauritania have undergone FGM, which health workers say often causes severe bleeding, problems urinating and potential complications during childbirth.

"Are there texts in the Koran that clearly require that thing? They do not exist," said the secretary general of the Forum of Islamic Thought in Mauritania, Cheikh Ould Zein. "On the contrary, Islam is clearly against any action that has negative effects on health. Now that doctors in Mauritania unanimously say that this practice threatens health, it is therefore clear that Islam is against it," he added.

Many campaigners back an approach which involves human rights education, community development and health care, and leaves the decision to the communities themselves. A campaign run by the Mali Centre Djoliba based on this approach has seen 40 villages abandon female circumcision and set up community groups to oversee the implementation of the decision in a country where over 80 percent of the women have experienced FGM. In Senegal, 4,121 villages have abandoned FGM since 1997 with the support of the local organisation Tostan, which has also contributed to a law against FGM passed in the country in 1999.

"But a law is not what will change a social norm. Change has to come from the people, because they really believe in it," said Molly Melching, executive director of Tostan. "The key is empowering people to make their own decisions but with good information."

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## First woman speaker in Mozambique parliament

**M**ozambique is continuing to see a steady stream of changes when it comes to upping the gender mix in the country's political landscape. The most recent victory was the unanimous election of Veronica Macamo, a member of the ruling Frelimo party, who made history when she became the first woman speaker of parliament.

Macamo was one of 106 women elected to Parliament during last October's elections, an increase from 96 in the previous parliament, which brought the gender balance to 42.4 percent women. Macamo was elected to parliament in the country's fourth legislation. At the end of her five-year term, she took on the deputy speaker position, which she held until her latest appointment.

Women in Mozambique are increasingly challenging traditional notions of gender, taking on jobs such as mechanics or drivers for public transport, which have traditionally been reserved for men. However, the election of Veronica Macamo, like the other 105 women parliamentarians, will only be a real victory for women if they use their powers and influence to make positive changes for women and girls in the country.

There is an urgent need to approve pending legal instruments that could protect women, put in place binding laws to counter violence against women, and implement the SADC Protocol and Gender and Development. In pushing for these laws and their implementation, the women at the pinnacle of the country's decision-making can offer real hope for women and girls all around the country.

Gender Links



## Mexico allows same-sex marriage

**A**cross Latin America, civil unions between same-sex couples are recognised in some cities in Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina and Mexico. Uruguay is the only country where the recognition of civil unions extends nationwide. Marriage, however, generally carries more rights than civil unions, such as adopting children, inheriting wealth, and enabling a partner to gain citizenship.

In Mexico City, legislators recently passed a bill allowing same-sex couples to marry by changing the definition of marriage in the city's civic code, from 'the union of a man and a woman' to 'the free uniting of two people'. This law is a precedent for the rest of Latin America and an achievement for the Mexican capital, where the law was approved despite strong opposition from PAN, the party of the Mexican president Felipe Calderón, and the Catholic Church.

Jose Maria Di Bello and Alex Freyre made history as the first same-sex couple to marry in the region at the end of December. The ceremony went ahead in Argentina's most southern state, Tierra del Fuego, where the governor issued a special decree allowing the couple to wed there after they had been refused permission to marry in Buenos Aires.

[www.aidsalliance.org](http://www.aidsalliance.org)

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# Still I Rise

Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.  
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.