



“I now feel as if I am a computer – full of knowledge”

Three of the LAC’s Projects (on Land, Environment and Development, AIDS Law and Gender) teamed up to run a workshop on Tsumkwe for members of San communities. The topics covered were Human Rights and HIV/AIDS (presented by Amon Ngavetene), the Combating of Domestic Violence Act and the Combating of Rape Act (conducted by Naomi Kisting and Anne Rimmer) concluding with a group discussion on youth and sexuality facilitated by visiting US Professor Suzanne Lafont.

The participants included members of Traditional Authorities, paralegals and community activists.

There was active participation, lively energisers and interesting discussions – including comments about how the San way of life is changing.

“Nowadays the influence from outside has changed things – most of the children go to other towns and schools and they get exposed to new things and they choose their girlfriends and boys for themselves and it is a mix of other races/ethnic groups.”



Amon (far right) energizing the workshop participants

On HIV/AIDS, the participants were surprised to learn that an HIV positive mother could, with the right treatment, give birth to an HIV negative baby.

At the beginning of the session on domestic violence, a number of male participants expressed concern that this law was “just for women”. They were pleased to hear that men and children are also covered in this gender-neutral law.

The workshop was very well received. A number of participants expressed their intention to go back and train their communities on what they had learned. One participant said in her evaluation “I now feel as if I am a computer – full of knowledge”.



Naomi (right) shares a musical break with the workshop participants



The Legal Assistance Centre is a public interest law firm based in Windhoek. It has five major units or projects which focus on different areas of work:

Human Rights and Constitutional Unit; Gender Research & Advocacy Project; Child Justice Project; Land, Environment and Development Project; and AIDS Law Unit.

All the activities of the LAC strives to make the law accessible to those with the least access, through education, law reform, research, litigation, legal advice, representation and lobbying.

This month, we will look at education and training, and law reform and advocacy.

This e-newsletter will appear once a month and is e-mailed to a select group of individuals and organisations to inform them of developments within the LAC. To remove your name from our mailing list, please forward an e-mail to lac@lac.org.na.

Questions or comments? E-mail us at lac@lac.org.na or call on +264 61 223356

Created by Norman Tjandje

The work of the LAC

Education and training

The LAC produce information for educational purposes – books, booklets, leaflets, videos and radio programmes. Examples of our publications include a simple guide to the Constitution, simple guides to laws on rape, domestic violence, maintenance and communal land. Most of these are available in a number of Namibian languages. Our office has a list of all the publications. Also see our website (www.lac.org.na) for full information.

We also run training workshops for communities and service providers (such as legal officials, police and social workers) on:

- ◆ Advocacy – influencing decision-making at all levels
- ◆ Gender-friendly laws including rape and domestic violence
- ◆ Communal Land Reform Act and conservancy-related legislation
- ◆ HIV/AIDS and rights, including testing, confidentiality, affordable drugs and discrimination
- ◆ Child justice (including the restorative justice approach, diversion programmes, assessment/screening)
- ◆ Basic human rights training

There is a big demand for our training. We will consider all requests, but due to limited resources we may not be able to agree to everyone. If we cannot conduct training we may be able to offer other resources.

Law reform and advocacy

We advocate for law reform based on our research. Recent laws which the LAC contributed to and advocated for are:

- ◆ Combating of Rape Act
- ◆ Combating of Domestic Violence Act
- ◆ Maintenance Act
- ◆ Non discrimination on the basis of HIV in the Labour Act