

LAC gets N\$4m for GBV fight

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THE Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) yesterday received N\$4,3 million from the European Union for the education of communities on childcare and gender-based violence.

The two-year project will be rolled out under the theme, 'Love With Respect And Discipline With Care: Outreach On Gender-Based Violence, Alternatives To Corporal Punishment And The ChildCare And Protection Act.'

The project is aimed at informing the public on the ChildCare and Protection Act which was enacted in January this year.

It will also focus primarily on outreach programmes to popularise the new legal framework, to help communities see how the law can be relevant to them in practice and how it can help to prevent gender-based violence.

The act contains a number of important provisions to protect children from violence, and prohibitions on corporal punishment, to teach children non-violent ways



Dianne Hubbard

of dealing with problems. Gender advocate at the Legal Assistance Centre, Dianne Hubbard, said at the handover that in order to prevent GBV in the country, there is need to start with children not being treated with violence.

"If we can protect children from learning about violence both as victims and observers of violence in their homes, we have a real chance of turning Namibia into a less violent society," she said.

She added that if children are taught from a tender age that love is not about violence but respect,

then there is a chance of improving the situation.

Hubbard said the project will include 10 radio shows, 36 community workshops, new comics about the act, a YouTube video on corporal punishment and reprint of materials on the links between GBV and corporal punishment.

Reading materials will be distributed at local clinics, schools and non-governmental organisations.

"Our message is not focusing on not punishing children, it's more of showing positive ways of discipline that build good values," she said. European Union ambassador Sinikka Antila noted that Namibia has a strong Constitution with a good protection of human rights, however, what looks good on paper does not necessarily translate into implementation on the ground.

She added that women's rights are not fully respected in Namibia because gender-based violence is too widespread a problem.

"As you all know, every day the newspapers are full of horri-

fyng stories about rape, physical and psychological abuse against women and I believe that we can only improve the most vulnerable members of our society – children," she said.

Antila said it is also important to work with men as most of the perpetrators of violence are men, adding that access to information about human rights and education are essential for this.

"Combatting violence against women, through legislative and policy measures, financial support and raising awareness, is a priority for the European Commission," she said.

The project was signed after this year's observance of 16 Days of Activism, which is an international campaign aimed at intensifying awareness and firming the voice of advocacy against gender-based violence (GBV).

The campaign ran from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, which is Human Rights Day.