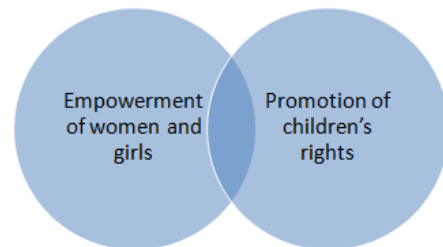


Gender Research & Advocacy Project (GR&AP)

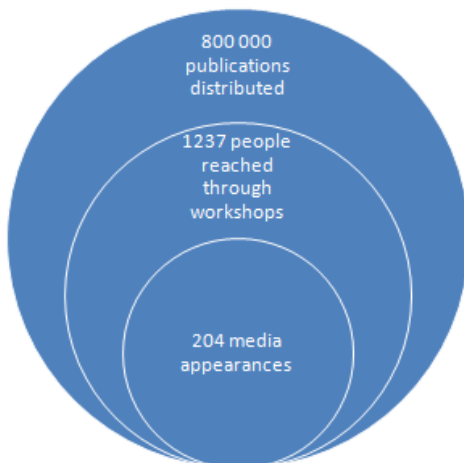


In 2011, GR&AP worked on 2 main programmes, namely the **empowerment of women and children** with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs MDG3 fund; and the **promotion of children's rights** with support from UNICEF Namibia and Save the Children Sweden, South Africa office

Main projects in 2011



Achievements in 2011



In 2011, GR&AP achieved the following outputs:

- **Distribution of over 800 000 publications** in English, Afrikaans and a range of indigenous languages, aimed at raising awareness of gender-related legal issues. Approximately half were distributed through inserts in the newspaper, with the remainder distributed from our office.
- **Hosting of more than 2 workshops per**

month (26 workshops in total) on a range of topics, involving 1237 people (507 men and 731 women).

- **204 media appearances** (88 radio show appearances, 40 television appearances and 76 print appearances).

GR&AP also helped a wide range of clients with queries, mostly on family law issues. Questions from clients included problems with inheritance, custody, maintenance, domestic violence, adoption, domicile and rape. We continued to operate our sms response line which is constantly utilised by members of the public.

Thank you very much for your help. It is exactly what I need!
Feedback from a client

A **new project** started in 2011 was the development of two **animations** based on our comic series. The first animation is on what to do if someone stops paying maintenance whilst the second is on how to get a protection order. The animations were finalised at the end of 2011 and will be released on national television, on the internet and used at workshops in 2012.



Another **new project** was to work in partnership with **commercial radio stations** to develop and air adverts about key issues.



Whilst the majority of our funding continues to come from overseas donor, we also continued to receive local support from the Self-regulating Alcohol Forum (SAIF) which supported the reprinting of our publication on underage drinking.

Advocacy

In 2011 we lobbied on a range of laws, bills, policies and action areas. A summary of the main areas we worked on is shown below:

Child Care and Protection Bill	The laws on birth registration, marriage, citizenship and domicile	Mental Health Bill
Employment Service Bill	Access to Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge Bill	Combating baby-dumping
Land Bill and Flexible Land Tenure Bill	Statistics Bill	Implementation of Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy

Examples of our impact are as follows:

- Following on our advocacy on improving the laws on **birth registration, marriage, citizenship and domicile**, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration is in discussions with the LAC about the provision of technical support to the Ministry to revise some of the problematic areas we have identified in these laws. Our working relationship with the Ministry on these issues was started when we produced information booklets in 2011 on birth registration and how to change the surname of your child.
- GR&AP gave extensive comments on the **Mental Health Bill** and was subsequently invited to be part of a technical working group for the revision of the draft bill. Virtually all of our recommendations have been accepted.



- The **Ministry of Education Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy** was approved by Cabinet in 2009 but has not been adequately implemented. Here, our most important role has been to maintain pressure on the government for implementation of the policy. We have engaged media coverage of this issue to ensure that the public becomes aware of the new policy and have encouraged the Ministry to develop supporting materials. As a result of our ongoing lobbying, we have been engaged to produce an information package on the policy and may be asked to produce an accompanying training manual.
- We influenced government outreach activities on **baby dumping**, including facilitating the first-ever research by text message. The results of this research were used to inform the production of information materials which are responsive to public needs.



Lobbying on the Child Care and Protection Bill

We spent a considerable proportion of time in 2011 lobbying for the passage of the Child Care and Protection Bill. We were also engaged by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to facilitate the preparation of the regulations which will accompany the law. Innovative forms of lobbying in 2011 included:

- An **event on children’s rights for Parliamentarians** at which African Union representative Benyam Mezmur gave a presentation on the importance of Namibia passing the bill as soon as possible. We arranged the event in partnership with the Ombetja Yehinga Organisation, who performed a series of dances on children’s rights at the event.
- Conducting **on-site consultations with magistrates across Namibia** on the implementation of the Act and the contents of the regulations. Getting magistrates together in groups for training and consultation is costly and means that court processes are delayed. By making individual visits to the courts, our team was able to



respond to the needs and concerns of individual magistrates, and to meet with a range of relevant service providers including local police, social workers and other court officials. We invited a British judge and social worker from the United Kingdom to be part of the visiting team. This allowed the participants to share examples of best practices and challenges experienced by the two countries.

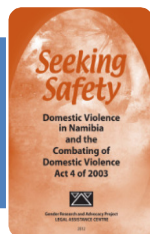


Research

We worked on three main research studies in 2012 – (1) a study on *Stepfamilies in Namibia* (2) a study of the operation of the Combating of Domestic Violence Act 2003 and (3) a study of the implementation of the Maintenance Act 2003.



Stepfamilies in Namibia: A study on the situation of stepparents and stepchildren and recommendations for law reform



Domestic violence study - to add title and thumbnail (pre-press at end of 2011)

In final stages of development at the end of 2011

Study on the operation of the Maintenance Act

We also worked on a range of other smaller research project including research on public interest litigation strategies and the right to education.

Public outreach

Film

We produced three films in 2011. Our ***Think Twice*** package consists of two individual films about relationship issues: *Sex and Chocolate*, aimed at older teens and *Teddy Bear Love*, aimed at slightly younger audiences. Both of these films were structured around the consequences of alternate choices, and both were produced in partnership with the Ombetja Yehinga Organisation (OYO). The *Think Twice* package was screened to over 12 000 people in 2011, by LAC and OYO together. OYO submitted *Think Twice* to the Lola Kenya Screen Film, where it received the Special Youth Prize. Our third film was ***Maintenance Matters***, which explores different maintenance scenarios grouped around a day in the life of a maintenance officer. This film was completed in 2011 and will be launched in 2012.



Local Director Vickson Hangula who directed Maintenance Matters, during rehearsals

Animations

We piloted a new project of producing animations based on our popular and successful comic books. Two animations were produced, one on what to do if someone stops paying maintenance and the other on how to get a protection order. The soundtracks of the animations were designed to do double-duty as radio skits.



Information books

We produced and distributed a booklet and factsheet on how to register the birth of your child (booklet produced in 4 languages, factsheet in one language) and a booklet on how to change the surname of your child (in 4 languages).



Comics

We produced and distributed 9 comics in 3 languages in 2011, bringing our comic library to a total of 23.



We constantly receive feedback on the effectiveness of our comics. One example is shown below:

I made a visit to Anker last week and distributed some of the comics... I made a turn to the primary school and the teachers thought the comic on bullying was very good and plan to use it in each of the upper primary grade classes. I thought it was of note that the teachers themselves found the comic very informative as a guide.

I also met with the Clerk of the Community Court. I always make a point to take LAC comics to him as he is a very good distribution point, based at the Anker village traditional leaders and community office. He tells me the Afrikaans version of comics is most applicable for the Anker community and the one about making a will is very useful.

I also visited the principal of the Kamanjab Secondary school. She thought the bullying comic was brilliant! She explained that the school now has a teacher who is the dedicated Life Skills teacher and the subject of bullying should be discussed in this class.



The comic about 'wills', has put my parents minds at ease. Thank you!
Feedback by sms from the public

I juz wana CONGRATULATIONS 2 u because u always did good things 2 the national keep it up. Feedback by sms from the public

Workshops

We hosted 26 workshops in 2011, reaching 1237 people (507 men and 731 women). The workshops covered a range of topics. Three of our larger workshop projects are discussed below as examples.

We continued our strategy started in 2010 to run a series of **community workshops for selected communities in isolated rural areas**. The goal is to provide ongoing support to communities to empower them to address problems on their own. Feedback from the project paralegal illustrates the effectiveness of this programme:



The issue of domestic violence and alcohol misuse remains high on the community agenda but the community members confirmed that they have tried to implement change since the previous visit. For instance many mothers (approximately 12) visited the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and Home Affairs offices in Gobabis to apply for social grants and to register children. They further said that maintenance issues are still not satisfactorily handled but they are encouraging mothers to apply for it and they also approached the local Ministry of Education offices to apply for exemptions from paying school fees where necessary.



We also ran trial workshop with **church leaders**. The purpose of the workshop was to strengthen our community outreach programmes by building the capacity of church leaders to address issues related to gender and the law. We hope to expand this project in 2012.

We also responded to requests for **workshops from stakeholders**, providing workshops for government and civil society throughout the year. For example we conducted our fifth training in the past two and a half years for the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Before starting the latest training programme, the participants were



given an opportunity to share with other members how the previous workshops helped them and how they have been actively involved in helping their communities. The following are examples of the responses:

- *Participants from all 13 regions confirmed that they have been actively involved in sharing information with community members on a daily basis.*
- *A participant from the Otjozondjupa Region reported that she and her colleagues are having community workshops in their region every third month to talk about problems in the community.*
- *Pastors from the Caprivi region said they conduct outreach in the community, speak about gender problems on NBC National Radio every Saturday and provide help to women’s organisations.*
- *All gender liaison officers employed by the MGECW reported that they join other stakeholders in outreach activities to address community members.*
- *Participants from at least three regions are involved in radio programmes where they talk to members of the communities to educate them on gender-related laws on a monthly basis.*
- *At least six participants stated that whenever they are stuck with a problem they contact the LAC facilitator of the training to try and get assistance.*



Television and radio

We have live slots on National Broadcasting television (*Good Morning Namibia*) and radio (*Young and Cool, Your Rights Right Now* and *Damara Nama* radio) and appear regularly on the television discussion show *Tupopyeni*. We also conduct frequent ad-hoc interviews about topical issues, such as sex work and baby-dumping, on a range of radio stations. We have also worked with three radio stations (Radio Wave, Fresh FM and Radio Omulunga) to develop and air repeated advertisements on four topics: the rights of domestic workers, how to claim a maintenance, what to do if someone stops paying maintenance and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Facebook

We also maintained a constant presence on Facebook, encouraging our ever-increasing number of “Facebook friends” to post comments about the materials we produce and activities we conduct.



Signs of success

A lawyer from a United States law firm (DLA Piper LLP) working with the Namibian Paralegal Association to develop a training manual gave us the following feedback:

We are getting ready to finalize the chapters of the NPA manual.... In doing my review, I wanted to touch base with you regarding our use of LAC materials, which have been the singularly most valuable resource in compiling the manual for the NPA.

- We also received the following feedback from a contact from the International Human Rights Clinic, University of Maryland School of Law who is working with the LAC:
Your publications are so important and influencing the lives of people throughout the country. I have spoken with paralegals from 10 regions throughout Namibia and each one has praised your work and used it frequently.

A South African organisation working with the MGEW to develop the National Plan of Action on Gender gave us the following feedback:

We drew extensively from your website and documentation; you have done cutting edge work in the legal field

- A former VSO volunteer who spent a year with GR&AP who is now on a second VSO placement in Guyana reports that she is referring local NGOs in need of resources to the GR&AP comics, corporal punishment materials and other publications on the LAC website, as some of them are easily transferable to the Guyana context.

Save the Children in Angola has requested permission to use a GR&AP poster and two comics on corporal punishment of children, adapted for the local situation and translated into Portuguese.

Conclusion

In 2011 GR&AP continued to maintain a high level of output despite challenging financial circumstances. Our advocacy work covered a range of topics, and was clearly successfully in influencing law and policy. Our highly-popular comics, associated animations, radio productions and films were all well-received, and we hope to source additional funding to do more of these types of mass outreach which can reach people in Namibia's far-flung rural areas as well as those in urban centres. We have found that such innovative presentations of "stories" are highly effective awareness-raising strategies. At the same time, we also continued to implement tried-and-tested outreach techniques such as workshops and the production of information pamphlets – aimed at both the general public and at key service providers. As one key long-term funding contact came to an end in 2011, we will be seeking new funding in 2012 to allow us to continue and build on our successful projects.