

NAMIBIAN MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Report on the National Conference
in Windhoek on 23-25 February 2000



Organised by the
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

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Members of the conference organising team, Willem Odendaal (left), Dianne Hubbard (second from right) and Milly Jafta (right), pictured with the keynote speaker, co-founder and international director of the White Ribbon Campaign Dr Michael Kaufman (centre), and LAC Director Clement Daniels (second from left).

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Foreword

This National Conference of Men Against Violence Against Women was the first event of its kind ever to take place in Namibia. According to the keynote speaker, it was also a *world first*.

During the proceedings a participant suggested recording the minutes in the form of a 'magazine', hence this publication. We decided to produce a *comprehensive* report so that it can serve as a reference source. Every effort was made to capture all key points accurately in transcribing the contributions, and in editing them in the light of space constraints. We hope that this report does justice to an enormously successful undertaking by all involved.

This foreword is primarily intended to inform the reader about the preparations for the conference, which began in 1999.

First, a Windhoek-based **Working Group** was set up to assist the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) in the planning phase. The group was composed of community members Sammy Lawrence, Romanus !Garoseb, Gerson Mutendere, Moses Kaeka, Willem Pieters, Simon Mbahuma, Abdallah Mwakembeu and Rosa Namises. The group was led by a **Secretariat** composed of LAC staff members Norman Tjombe (chairperson), Dianne Hubbard, Milly Jafta and Willem Odendaal.

The LAC organised **25 consultative meetings countrywide** (except in the Caprivi Region), with the aim of raising awareness on the conference topic, publicising the conference, obtaining input into and support for the conference from men in the regions, and identifying men to participate. These meetings were conducted between 10 January and 13 February, by the following LAC staff members: Napoleon Uutoni, Ambrosius Makongwa, Kishi Shakumu, Monica Nganjone, Alec Boois, Aloysius Katzao, Willem Odendaal and Milly Jafta.

Secretariat and Working Group member Willem Pieters organised a **TV panel discussion on Religion and Violence Against Women**, which was televised by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) on Sunday 20 February. The panellists were: Prof. Paul Isaack (Christian faith), Rev. N. Kathindi (Secretary General of the Council of Churches in Namibia), Sheikh Abubakar Francis (Islamic faith), Mr Akin Odulate (Baha'i faith), Mr Harold Pupkewitz (Jewish faith), Mr Mwakembeu (Working Group) and Dr Kapofi (moderator).

The Secretariat and Working Group chairperson organised a **live TV panel discussion** for the NBC's *Talk of the Nation* on Monday 21 February. The discussion topic was "Men Against Violence Against Women", and the panellists were: conference speakers Michael Kaufman (Canada), Samukelo Madonsela (South Africa) and Jonah Gokova (Zimbabwe), and Working Group member Abdallah Mwakembeu (Namibia). The studio audience comprised the Working Group members and others involved in planning and organising the conference.

A **Facilitation Training Workshop** was conducted on 22 February for the 20 pre-selected facilitators of the small group discussions to be held during the conference. The workshop was conducted by keynote speaker Michael Kaufman, whose aim was to impart skills on "how to get men talking". The four speakers from South Africa and Zimbabwe also attended.

Also on 22 February, Willem Odendaal of the LAC and two speakers, namely Augustine Mututu from Zimbabwe and Thulani Nkosi from South Africa, **visited the Windhoek Central Prison** where they addressed approximately 100 inmates on the pressing need to end men's violence against women.

It must also be noted here that translators were employed to provide simultaneous translations of all presentations and plenary discussions into Oshivambo and Afrikaans. All participants had access to a language channel selector and headphones.

The official opening of the conference on Wednesday 23 February brought together over 300 people (participants and invited guests) to witness the start of this momentous event. The air was filled with expectation, and the men were eager to begin their deliberations. We, the Legal Assistance Centre, our sponsors, our partners in gender-related work, and no doubt all the women of Namibia, hope and trust that a concerted nationwide campaign of men against violence against women will flow from this conference, in accordance with the participants' resolutions.

Welcoming Address

Clement Daniels

Director of the Legal Assistance Centre



Mr Chairperson, representatives of government, foreign embassies and non-governmental organisations, ladies and gentlemen, friends –

It is indeed a great honour for me to open our national conference on men against violence against women, and it is my pleasure to welcome you to the official opening of this historic conference in Namibia.

Many of us know that violence against women and children remains one of the most pressing issues facing Namibia at the present time, and it is the biggest shame to our nation. Despite the various efforts of government and women's organisations to change the situation, the abuse and oppression of women by men continues. The abuse of women and children has indeed increased in both the number of reported cases and the degree of violence perpetrated.

The question troubling our minds, of course, is why this increase, if we claim that our country is experiencing "unprecedented peace and harmony". If one looks at the statistics on violence against women, it is clear that we have a major problem that requires urgent attention.

Although this is not the first time in Namibia that men are standing up for the rights of women, it is still very heartening to witness this historic event, where men are standing up to be counted as peace-makers and builders of a new nation in which women enjoy equal rights, are respected as equals, are treated with dignity, are taken seriously when they say "No!", and are able to walk the streets and paths in every town and village without fear and harassment. Men becoming *real* men.

The aim of this conference is to provide interested and concerned men an opportunity to deliberate on this important social problem and discuss their future role in seeking and implementing strategies and durable solutions to address the problem.

I want to thank all the participants, who represent men and women from all walks of life and from all corners of Namibia, for making this historic journey. May your deliberations be fruitful and may our nation be built on the ideas and plans that flow from this conference.

I further wish to thank a number of people and organisations for making this event a reality:

- ☞ The idea for this conference came from the Domestic Violence Action Group, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Prisons and Correctional Services, the Honourable Michaela Hübschle. I want to thank Ms Hübschle and her colleagues in the group and trust that they will continue with this noble cause.
- ☞ Rosa Namises, who previously worked at the LAC, for her preparatory work during the 1990s.
- ☞ Dr Michael Kaufman, co-founder of the Canadian White Ribbon Campaign, who assisted in planning this conference. The campaign has spread from Canada across the globe to become the biggest worldwide effort of men against violence against women.
- ☞ The LAC head office and advice office staff, who worked many extra hours to organise this event and help ensure its success.
- ☞ Employers in the relevant towns, who have shown their commitment to the cause by allowing their employees time off work to attend this conference.
- ☞ Finally, I wish to express the LAC's sincere gratitude to the Ford Foundation, UNICEF, the British Council and Austrian Development Cooperation for their generous financial support for the conference. We sincerely believe that your support is for a worthy cause and that it is a good investment in Namibia's future.

I thank you

Keynote Address

Michael Kaufman

Co-founder and International Director of the White Ribbon Campaign

The White Ribbon Campaign was founded in Canada in 1991 and is now the largest worldwide effort of men working to end violence against women. Dr Kaufman has been active for the past 20 years in working to improve relations between men and women and transform the lives of men. He is a former professor, and the author of six books and hundreds of articles on violence against women, which have been translated into many languages. He now works full time as a public educator and writer.



If we were to ask almost anyone in the world what is the greatest epidemic in the world today, and what is killing the highest number of people in the world, and in particular, the highest number of women, people would come up with many answers. They would think of wars, Aids, cancer, car accidents ... but I am with you today because the No. 1 killer in the world of women between the ages of 16 and 40 is none of those things. The No. 1 killer of women in that age group is *violence* – violence usually committed by someone who says that he loves, cherishes and cares about the woman he violates.

Though you and I are separated by half of the globe – I live in northern Canada, you live in southern Africa – there is one way in which we are not separated at all: we all live in societies in which there is an epidemic of violence against women.

When I speak of this epidemic, I am referring to the assault going on daily in many households, where wives and girlfriends are beaten, often under the pretext that they have done something wrong; where they are sexually assaulted, usually not by a stranger, but by a husband, father or uncle. I am also

referring to the sexual harassment that goes on in our offices, in our schools, in the streets of our countries, where girls and women do not have the right to walk without fear of what some men might say or do to them. Indeed, it is an epidemic of violence.

The explanations, excuses and evidence

We hear many different explanations for this violence. Some believe that a man having sex with whom-ever he wants, whenever he wants, is a matter of tradition. Yes, it is traditional for men to do this, but let me say right at the outset that although all of us should celebrate, value and be proud of what is good about our traditions and cultures, this explanation is just an *excuse*, and we must no longer put up with this excuse. We must challenge those aspects of our traditions and cultures which are not good.

Some say that women ask for it – that they *want* to be beaten and raped. This too is just an excuse.

Some say that men are *naturally* violent – that violence is in our genes; that we're born and bred that way. This is what we call the 'biological argument'. Yes, human beings in general, and certainly men, have the biological capability to be violent. Whereas some animals are not capable of violence against their own species, humans *are* capable of this, but the important thing to ask is what turns that possibility into reality. We know that not all men are violent towards women, nor towards other men. Some men are quite simply non-violent.

We also know that the levels of violence against women vary greatly from country to country. In some countries they are completely staggering; the levels of sexual assault are beyond belief. In other countries the levels are currently far less. If human beings were hardwired to be violent, we would not see these great variations.

Furthermore, we have sound historical evidence that human beings can live without violence. Much of that evidence comes from this part of the world. Over the past 150 years, anthropologists have travelled the world talking to people and observing different tribal societies. Many of these societies no longer exist, or their cultures have been destroyed. In recent years, people who have sifted through this vast body of research, have discovered something very important to us. They have asked which of these societies were violent and which were not; which of them had violence against women, among men, or against children, and which did not. They discovered that there were as many societies with little or no violence as there were societies with violence. In other words, we have a 50/50 chance of living in a violent or non-violent society. This tells us something very important: we have the capacity to live our lives peacefully, without violence against women or among men. As I have noted, some of the historical evidence is from your part of the world, and there are African cultures which historically have either very low levels or no levels of violence against women or among men. These are cultures which we could all celebrate.

So, if violence against women is not due to men being biologically hardwired to commit this violence, and if the cultural/traditional explanation and the view that women *want* to be violated are just excuses, then what are the reasons for this violence, and how can we stop it?

The real reasons

The anthropologists studying the levels of violence in different societies made another important discovery: societies which had little or no violence were based on *equality* between women and men. This does not mean that everyone was the same. Women and men did play different roles, but in terms of respect, power, sharing ... they were equals. Conversely, when anthropologists looked at societies *with* violence against women and children, and among men, they found that in each and every case, these were societies based on *inequality* – first between men and women, then later between people of different classes and skin colours.

I would therefore suggest that *the first and root cause of men's violence against women is unequal power between the sexes*, or in other words, what we call a 'patriarchal' or 'male-dominated' society.

All of you know about violence and inequality. Every one of you lived through an era in which your lives were controlled by violence because of an unequal system. Think back to the apartheid era, to the clones of apartheid and the people controlled by that regime. Did anyone you know *ask* to be treated as a second-class citizen? Before I lived in Canada I lived in the southern United States, which 140 years ago was a slave society. In that society, the oppression of black men and women was not carried

out through consent, but by violence. *When you have inequality between people, ultimately it takes violence to maintain that inequality.* Violence maintained slavery and apartheid, and today it maintains unequal power between men and women.

The following scenario is common in all of our communities: A man comes home from work. His wife has also worked a full day, either at the office or doing household chores. His dinner is not on the table on time. He hits her. Why is he hitting her? *He is trying to maintain his power and control in that relationship.*

Tightly linked to the first source of men's violence against women, being unequal power, is the second source: *men's privilege, and a sense of entitlement to privileges.* It is a privilege for a man to expect that when he arrives home from work, his dinner will be right there on the table, on time. Did he have to cook it? Did he have to gather the firewood and carry the water? No. He expects that this will all be done *for him*. He expects his wife to wake up earlier to get breakfast ready, and to get all her housework done even though she also has a full-time job outside the home. He expects her to do all this *for him*. The most common form of rape or sexual assault is not carried out by a stranger, but by a woman's husband or boyfriend. He feels that he is entitled to sex with this woman whenever he wants it, just because she is his wife or girlfriend. And a man has this sense of entitlement just because he is a man. There is no other reason. Because he is a member of that sector of the population which has a certain set of genital organs, he feels that someone should cook and clean for him, and have sex with him when he wants it, the way he wants it. It's rather bizarre that this one part of a man's body supposedly gives him the right to control the lives of other people.

Most of the privileges that men enjoy are *invisible* to us as men. This is because we enjoy them. A privilege is invisible to those who enjoy it. In my country I have certain privileges due to my skin colour. For example, an Afro-Canadian friend was driving along in his car when a police officer stopped him and asked whose car he was driving. This is a racist act. I have never been stopped and asked whose car I am driving, so I am enjoying a privilege without even knowing that I'm enjoying it. One day I took a walk in the park in my home city, Toronto. It was a beautiful autumn day, the leaves were turning orange and yellow – the kind of day we all enjoy in the northern hemisphere. I took a long walk and felt good to be alive. The next day, still floating, I ran into a woman friend of mine. I told her about my wonderful walk in the park. She said, "Michael, that's interesting, because I also took a walk in the park, and here's what happened to me" She had started walking, and soon realised that a man was following her. She walked down this path and that path, and he followed her. This went on and on, until she felt terrorised by this man. A little later she walked past a bench on which two men were sitting talking. As she passed by, they stopped talking and just watched her. So, what for me had been a beautiful day in the park, was for her an experience of fear and terror. This story is not only about her fear as a woman. It is also a story about another invisible privilege that I enjoy as a man: I can move around as I please without fear. To maintain this privilege, some men resort to violence.

The third cause of violence against women is *social permission. We allow it to happen.* We glorify violence. We find it entertaining. We celebrate our war heroes. Sometimes people have to pick up a gun to defend their country, but this is not something we should enjoy. We should see it as a necessity at times, but not glorify it. We give our permission to individual acts of violence. In many countries it is still legal for a man to rape his wife. This is not considered rape since she is considered to be his property. We permit wife assault. When police are summoned to a house where a man has been beating his wife, they say they can't do anything because it is a 'private matter', or a personal problem between two people. If you witnessed a shop across the street being robbed, would you say that you can't do anything because it's a private matter between the robber and the shop owner? I hope that the people here will never engage in an act of violence against a woman. Perhaps some of us already have. One thing is certain: virtually all of us have allowed these acts to continue. Today we are here to say, "No more!"

Having said that men violate women as a means of maintaining their power and privilege, if we were to go into any of our communities with a TV camera to interview individual men about their power and privilege, they would look at us like we're crazy, because the truth is, men don't feel very powerful. We feel like we're *supposed* to be powerful and in control, but the sad truth of every man's life is that we can *never* live up to the expectations, pressures and ideas of what a 'real man' is. From birth we're told that we must always be strong and in control, that we must never feel or cry, that we must always have the answers ... on and on. But the truth is that none of us is *always* strong, all of us have feelings, all of us experience fear or terror.

Our *socialisation* into ‘real men’ is the fourth cause of our violence. It begins from the moment of birth. Here is a story about just how early we begin to train boys to be ‘real men’. I was present when my son was born. Five seconds after his birth, I heard the nurse’s voice booming into the room. Until that moment she had spoken in her normal tone of voice, but now she dropped her voice to a very deep tone and said, “It’s a boy. What a strong fellow!” I was shocked – not at the fact that it was a boy, since there was a 50/50 chance of the baby being a boy, but rather I was shocked at the change in the nurse’s behaviour. I knew that if it had been a girl, she would have said in her normal high-pitched tone something like, “It’s a girl. What a beautiful little thing!”

My son was 10 seconds old, and he was being measured for his football uniform, his army fatigues, for being a man. Yes, he was strong, but he was also the most beautiful thing that ever walked the planet. We are all of that. Whether we are girls or boys, we are born perfect. But from the moment of birth, each and every society today begins to assign to a child the human characteristics it supposedly must embody. If the child has a penis, it must be strong and fearless. If it has a vagina, it must be weak and submissive. But men and women share all of these characteristics. Sometimes I feel strong and fearless, sometimes weak and submissive. The reality of every man’s life is that we can *never* live up to the expectations and pressures of being a ‘real man’. What is a ‘real man’? If a real man is supposed to be a provider or breadwinner, what is he if he is unemployed? If a real man is powerful and always in control, what is he if he’s being bossed around at work?

How does all this relate to violence? Some men use violence to make themselves feel better; to compensate for their own feelings of weakness or insecurity; to compensate for not making enough money, having no car, being unemployed, being bossed around at work, not having enough women, feeling scared, and so on. To prove that we are still real men, some of us start hitting someone.

So, the strange and paradoxical thing about men’s violence is that it is not only about power and privilege, but also, it is about the opposite: fear and insecurity.

Men are raised to put on a suit of armour, which they do to feel strong and invincible, but in fact, this suit of armour is a *trap* for men. The knights in the Middle Ages who wore suits of armour for protection in battle were very well protected while standing up, but if they fell over, they couldn’t get up. We men are trapped in the same way. We’re stuck in a suit of armour which makes us look like ‘real men’, but inside we’re still just human beings, with all sorts of fears and insecurities.

It is important to realise that not only do we use violence to compensate for feeling weak, but the suit of armour itself leads to violence! *If you are wearing armour, you cannot feel what someone else is feeling. If we raise our boys to wear armour, they are more likely to commit violence.* They will not be able to feel anything because there is steel in the way. A man in armour who hits someone will say, “I didn’t really hurt her.” A man in armour who commits rape will say, “She wanted to have sex.”

Another cause of men’s violence is that *men are told never to show emotion*. In many cultures we’re told not to cry or not to feel too happy. But these are natural human mechanisms. Human beings evolved to cry, because when you cry, you feel better. If you’re scared, you shake, because shaking produces adrenalin and this enables you to respond to emergencies – to run or to fight. If we’re told not to have these feelings, we bottle them up, until we become like a pressure cooker ready to explode. And some men do explode – against women, against other men, or against themselves. The explosion may occur in the form of alcoholism, drug abuse, dangerous driving, and so on. *If you do not get rid of feelings, they build up, and you explode.*

The final cause of men’s violence is the *past experience* of men and boys ourselves. The sad truth is that many boys in many cultures grow up witnessing or directly experiencing violence. Many witness their mothers being beaten, and grow up to believe that this is what men are supposed to do. A young child seeing this would have very confused feelings: one person he loves is hurting another person he loves, and he is unable to do anything to stop it. He just bottles up his emotions. Then, a great many boys experience violence directly from a very young age. In many cultures it is believed that parents should hit their children to discipline them. But by doing this, they are teaching their children that it is okay to hurt someone you love.

Concluding remarks

We have looked at the causes of men’s violence, which we will be talking about over the next three days. We will look at claims like, “There has always been and will always be inequality!”, and consider whether

such claims are true or whether they are just excuses. We need to have the same attitude towards gender equality as we have had towards racial equality. We need to look at this issue with the same passion, with the same sense of wrong.

When I talked about the epidemic and causes of violence, I was bringing you the bad news. The good news is that we are here, together, for the next three days. Around the world right now, there is very good work being done around this issue. We will hear from men in South Africa and Zimbabwe about the work being done in those countries. There are men across the globe doing very important public education work. But in no country of the world has anyone done what you are doing here. *You are making world history!* This is the first time anywhere that there has been a national conference where men from all walks of life across the country have come together to learn about these issues so they can return to their communities, organisations and homes, to work towards stopping violence against women. I feel so honoured to be part of this historic event, and you should all feel very proud of what you are doing.

More good news is that Namibia's Parliament yesterday passed the Combating of Rape Bill. This law sends a very clear message to all men: no matter who she is, if she does not want to have sex with you, it is rape! I want to make it very clear that a law like this is not anti-sex. It is pro-sex. It is in favour of sex. Why? Because this law will help to ensure that all sex is *good* sex; that all sex is between people who *want* to have sex and who are going to *enjoy* it!

More good news is that governments and organisations around the world are beginning to respond, and men everywhere are taking up the challenge presented to us by women around the world who have said very clearly to us that they do not want to live in fear, and "Enough is enough!" There are more and more men, like you, who have left their families for a few days and travelled far to be together to talk about this issue, because they feel strongly that they do not want their daughters or granddaughters to come into a world in which someday they will have to live in fear of violence at the hands of a man. More and more men do not want to see their mothers, sisters, wives and girlfriends subjected to any form of violence.

More good news is that more and more men are discovering that ultimately, to be a 'real man' is not about power and domination, but rather, it is about being human; being a man who is capable of stepping out of his armour and into the world to meet other humans, without fear and aggression, but with tolerance, understanding, and where applicable, with love.

More good news is that you and I will be working very hard over the next three days to help create a world in which all women will be able to walk and live freely; a world that will be so much better for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you very much

After concluding his address Dr Kaufman said that the speeches did not constitute the most important part of this conference. The most important part would be when the participants talk. The underlying philosophy of this conference was participation, and "the world's biggest experts" on how to work in Namibian communities are the community members themselves, i.e. each and every participant in this conference.

He explained that the plenary would be divided into 13 small groups of about 15 members each. (For those who did not feel comfortable communicating in English, there would be a group communicating only in Oshivambo and another only in Afrikaans.) The groups would be asked to talk about what they think and know, and about how to proceed to end men's violence against women in Namibia. The following two sections of this report provide an overview of the group work.

Training for Facilitators of Small Groups

Prior to the conference the organisers selected 20 men to facilitate the group discussions. These men attended a one-day Facilitation Training Workshop the day before the conference started. Dr Kaufman was their trainer. Each trainee received a manual to supplement this training and guide him during the conference.

The essential role of a group facilitator is to guide a group discussion so that the group does not lose sight of its topic and fail to fulfil the purpose of the discussion. So the essential aim of this workshop was to train the facilitators on guiding the groups' discussions.

The facilitators were told what the purpose of each group session would be, and how they should proceed in each session to ensure that this purpose was fulfilled. For example, the purpose of the first session was to allow the men to identify the expectations of men and women in Namibia and the costs to men and women of these expectations.

The facilitators were given specific instructions on how to develop process guidelines together with their group members, and on how to introduce the topics and initiate the discussion on each topic. For example, they were required to ask their group members specific questions to get them focused on the topic, and to give them specific background information to enable them to address the topic.

The facilitators had to follow certain steps very carefully for some of the sessions, while for others they were instructed to *try* to get through all the steps, but not to rush their group if they felt that the group was having a good discussion. This would mean that not all the groups would cover the same ground. It was most important for the men to have an opportunity to discuss what *they needed* to discuss.



The men selected prior to the conference to facilitate the small group discussions pictured during a one-day facilitation training workshop conducted by keynote speaker Michael Kaufman.



Two of the 13 small discussion groups in session during the conference.

Men Talk to Men

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Each small group was assigned a space in the conference centre, which would be their space for the duration of the conference. Each group was provided with flipchart paper on which to write up their outputs.

There were five group sessions altogether. For the fifth session, the participants were re-divided into *regional groups*, as it was necessary to discuss the assigned topic with members of their own communities. Only the outputs from the fifth session will be presented in this report.

The session topics were as follows:

☞ **Session 1: The Experiences of Men and Women**

For this session the men were asked to discuss what they saw to be the characteristics of a ‘real man’ and a ‘real woman’. The group facilitator initiated the discussion by asking the men to think about how they would complete the following sentences: “A real man is ...” and “A real woman is ...”. The groups came up with hundreds of words. The responses provided evidence that people are conditioned to *expect* men and women to have certain characteristics, and that men and women place themselves ‘in boxes’ by trying to be what society says they are *supposed* to be.

☞ **Sessions 2 and 3: Linking Manhood and Violence**

For these sessions the men were asked to make connections between their responses in the first session and the issue of men’s violence against women. They were reminded that there is a system of reward and punishment for fitting or not fitting in ‘the box’. The aim of this exercise was to determine whether expectations of men and women lead to violence. The responses largely showed that they *do*. For example, there was a strong feeling that a man who does not feel powerful enough will use violence to make himself feel more powerful.

☞ **Session 4: The Reasons for Violence in Namibia**

In this session the men discussed what they saw to be the leading causes of men’s violence against women in their own country and communities. The reader can get an idea of their views from the report on the plenary discussion on pages 19-23 of this report.

☞ **Session 5: Strategies to Address Men’s Violence and Ways to Implement them**

The aim of this exercise was to come up with ideas and *very specific* action plans for ending men’s violence in each of Namibia’s communities. The responses from each regional group are reported in full on pages 42-44 of this report.



A small discussion group in session during the conference.

Defining 'African Manhood' with regard to Violence Against Women

Ben Uugwanga

Pan-African Centre of Namibia

I wish to thank the organisers for according me the honour of addressing this very important forum. In fact, when I received the invitation to do so, my initial thought was that it is quite extraordinary to be asked to address 'an entity' which is at once accused of crimes against its own kind and asked to make a genuine contribution to ending the suffering of its victims by campaigning against the very crimes it is committing! Were it not for the saying, 'There is an exception to every rule,' I would not have been able to resolve such a puzzling state of affairs. One can only hope that this will not be a conference where participants make intellectual exchanges without following up on them.

On that note, allow me to admit that I have not found it easy to arrive at a standard definition of what 'African manhood' should and has entailed, as I run the risk of being accused of claiming spokespersonship on African culture. Nonetheless, as an African man, I would base my definition of 'African manhood' on my own observations and experiences while growing up in the multi-cultural black urban township of Kuisebmond in Walvis Bay. To me, then, 'African manhood' meant:

- ☞ strength;
- ☞ perseverance;
- ☞ leadership;
- ☞ heroism;
- ☞ achievement; and
- ☞ affection.

These characteristics may evoke mixed feelings in some of you, particularly with the inclusion of 'affection' on my list. But yes, we have to go deeper than the narrow confines of a normative analysis of our topic and look to descriptive attributes.

The African man is shaped by his culture and by the external dominant values dictated by the overall socio-economic and political systems set within the boundaries of his environment. Different men from different cultural environments act differently in different situations. For example, when I was a boy I saw boys at school defending their little sisters against school bullies, and while growing up I knew of men who intervened whenever their sisters were beaten up by their husbands. Such expressions of compassion for women are universal acts among men.

In my opinion, violence against women is an expression of *cowardice* on a man's part. Men who violate women have it all wrong: inflicting pain on women will never mean having power over them.

Women should be treated with the utmost respect. In becoming who we are today, how many of us were not inspired by our grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives or girlfriends? I believe that every man on the planet has grown through the tutelage of women, and that it is therefore abnormal behaviour for any man to raise his hand against a woman.

Allow me to share with you what I believe to be the two most important sociological scenarios under which violence against women becomes prevalent.

Poverty: A man feels threatened by a state of poverty and consequently his inability to provide for his family. He resorts to violence and other forms of domestic abuse against the woman he lives with in order to stamp his mark of authority over her and the family. He sees this kind of 'power' as a commodity; as the only insurance for or guarantee of his manhood. In most cases, abuse is perpetrated after excessive amounts of alcohol have been consumed – the abuser's drunkenness being a smokescreen for his intentional, if subconscious, crime.

Male chauvinism: A man who was raised to believe that men are superior to women is likely to be disrespectful to any woman and certainly capable of acting violently towards a woman. In this regard, traditions and beliefs should be challenged, in the sense that the measure of ‘superiority’ should be *achievement* rather than gender. Both genders have tremendous potential to lead, whether in society or the home.

Queen Nzinga of Angola, who led her people in resisting Portuguese domination in the 16th century, represents a clear historical symbol of great female leadership. Her shrewd political and military strategies thwarted the enemy. She fought alongside her army and was a source of inspiration to her fighters, who achieved victory after victory in all their military campaigns.

Man’s worship of the Black Madonna in antiquity can be cited as another example of the glory of female leadership. Images of her could be found in Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Norway and other European countries. She was the high point of every traveller’s expedition. Men who knelt in prayer before her image claimed to have received blessings and everlasting health in response. Their stories are well documented.

These are but two examples of the countless forgotten or untold stories of woman’s role in African and other societies through time. Telling these stories could help to dispel the notion that ‘male represents power’ – a notion that is self-ascribed, self-rewarding and inappropriate, and which has to be rebuked.

One wonders why African cultures adhere to the matrilineal system. Could it be that our ancestors wanted to convey the message that women should have custody over the lineage of African communities because it is extremely unusual for a mother to abandon her children whereas it is ‘normal’ for a father to do so?

Any society and individual should surely find any suppression of women inconceivable. Surely we should cherish women’s contributions to humanity’s evolution. It is important to note that, as with the right and left sides of the brain, a woman represents balance in a man’s life; through synergy they fulfil their roles in the home and in society.

I submit that violence against women should be treated as a *taboo*. Furthermore, a focus of sociological enquiry should be to examine the causes of this evil with a view to remedying the situation by means of sensitisation campaigns, counselling for perpetrators and also punishing them as necessary, for example by imprisoning them.

In conclusion, from my point of view, ‘African manhood’ means:

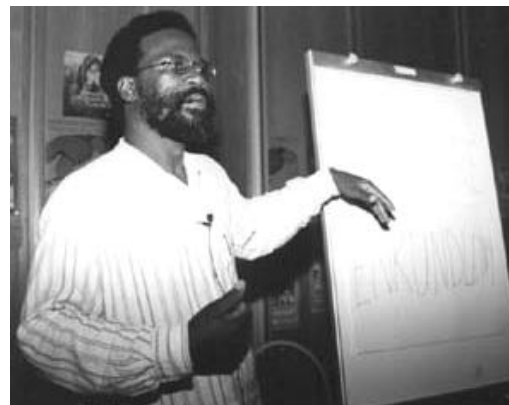
- ∞ empowering women socially, economically and politically;
- ∞ supporting women emotionally; and
- ∞ treating women as equals.

This definition could be regarded as an urgent prescription for society’s ills. Lifting a hand against a woman is a socially constructed, self-aggrandising and abnormal form of behaviour which is inconsistent with the laws of nature. I therefore believe that we cannot hope for a healthy society if we allow violence against women to continue.

Following this address a participant commented that it would be interesting to hear from a female counterpart in response. The organisers explained that they had attempted to limit participation in the conference to males, to provide an appropriate environment for men to explore their own perceptions. This question was thus deferred to Day 2 of the conference, when there was a specific slot on the programme for considering the female point of view.

Dealing with Feelings of Anger and Frustration

Jonah Gokova
Padare, Zimbabwe



In discussing how we men deal with anger and frustration, we must be conscious that we are not speaking of men ‘out there’, but of *ourselves* as men.

Clearly, we men live very isolated lives. Unlike women, who are open, we are closed. Women speak to each other and share their emotions in a very open and honest way. When we men meet, there is no difference between our individual ways of relating to one another. We all want to maintain our isolation. We do not share our emotions because we fear what other men will say about us. But that isolation makes us unable to deal with crisis situations, or with our anger, our frustrations, our fears ...

A friend of mine in Harare told me a story about a friend of his – a woman. He had asked her one day why her eyes were red. She replied that she had driven her car somewhere, parked, cried and cried, and then drove back to town. My friend told me that he wished he could do this. He felt angry and tense, and could not release these feelings. He felt that he needed to learn from his woman friend.

Our challenge as men is to take the step of finding ways to release our anger and frustration. Our violence against women is our way of dealing with moments of crisis. When our tension bursts out, it does so in the form of violence. Many explain this kind of behaviour by saying that they were drunk. Alcohol consumption is just an excuse.

There *are* ways to control our violence. For one thing, each man needs to find his personal indicators that make him aware of being close to the point of exploding into violence. I will give you some examples of personal indicators which I have come across in my work with violent men:

- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you are not open enough to sharing your problems with women *and* other men.
- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you are in a situation where you should cry, but you don’t because you are a man.
- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you are very jealous of your wife or girlfriend.
- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you always criticise what your wife or girlfriend says or does.
- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you come from an abusive home.
- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you tend to become very aggressive after consuming alcohol.
- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you ever threaten to beat your wife or girlfriend, or her friends, or to kill yourself.
- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you often feel depressed or withdrawn, but won’t talk to anyone about these feelings.
- ☞ You are likely to be violent if you have very conservative views on what women and men should do or not do.

Anger and frustration leads to emotional, psychological and other forms of abuse, such as insulting or humiliating a partner, or destroying property. But these emotions can be managed.

We men must take responsibility for our own behaviour and not blame our partner. She did not make you hit her. We should also be able to take responsibility for the behaviour of other men. Violence is likely to increase if we don’t take firm action to stop it. Those of us who are violent are likely to lose heavily in the long term. We may lose our relationship. We may kill our partner! The payment of lobola should not mean that your wife cannot refuse to have sex whenever you want it. Not having sex at will does not mean that you are not man enough. A ‘real man’ is someone who respects the wishes of others, just as

he expects others to respect his wishes. We must practice what we preach. Let us not be found wanting in this way. We can control our anger and frustration and we should not look for excuses. We must take responsibility for our own and other men's behaviour!

Dealing with Feelings of Anger And Frustration

Thulani Nkosi

Men for Change, South Africa



Addressing this topic of men dealing with anger and frustration means focusing on the emotional aspects of being a man. As human beings, we have emotions which influence our behaviour in very definite ways. Focusing on those emotions in turn means focusing on our socialisation as men.

As infants, toddlers and boys, we behave normally in terms of expressing our emotions. We cry, we love, we get angry and frustrated, and these are natural emotions. What happens when we become teenagers and young men? We are told, "Boys don't cry!", so we stop crying.

Has any man here *not* been in a situation where he wanted to cry but couldn't because as a youth he was told that he couldn't? Crying is an expression of hurt, disappointment, sadness, grief ... so by telling boys not to cry, society constructs men who suppress these feelings, never acknowledge them, and pretend that they don't exist. Rather than deal with them, we spend much of our lives strategising to avoid and suppress them. We use strategies like alcohol and drug abuse. Even as young men we become specialists in avoiding and suppressing these feelings.

Avoiding and suppressing these feelings means learning to keep secrets – to never verbalise what we are feeling. Eventually, the body cannot take anymore, and we find that we are short-tempered, aggressive, we lack patience, we want to get away from a situation immediately.

Where has this suppression of emotion led men? The answer is, to a level of frustration close to bursting. We are so pent up that we are ready to explode. A short temper is a result of the body not being able to take anymore.

What about the tendency to resort to violence in our anger? Have you heard people say something like, "When he's angry enough he'll hit you"? Somehow, men have been permitted to express their feelings only by means of anger and violence. Does anger really have to lead to violence? No! But men have never learnt how to deal with their anger without harming other people in some way. Somehow, the only language for settling disputes known to men is the language of harm to another, usually weaker, person. We would think twice about being violent towards another man!

Everyone needs to acknowledge the pain and fear of their past. There is no medicine for healing but to cry. However, as much as we need to acknowledge the hurtfulness of the past and to cry about it so that we can heal, we also need to pardon ourselves and not try to rush through this emotional healing, because there is much to heal.

We are certainly capable of controlling our violence, but we first have to come to terms with our past – the pain, the fear, the anger, the frustration. We are no longer comfortable with ourselves because we have not come to terms with our past. We don't want to see men being judged. We want to see men being human!

Men's Violence Against Women: International Perspectives

Michael Kaufman
White Ribbon Campaign



Yesterday we looked at the root causes of men's violence, and discussed our ideas about how men and women should behave.

We discovered that all societies have ideas which actually encourage violence in many ways, for example, the idea that men should control or be the boss of women, and that women should submit to them. We also discovered that we ask impossible things of men (to always be strong, etc.), and because they are human, sooner or later they will explode into violence.

Having looked at the root causes of or reasons for men's violence against women, our next task is to look at the *nature* of the problem, so as to develop a deeper sense of its dimensions – in Namibia and internationally. We have to do this so that tomorrow, our last day together, we will be informed enough to be able to take on our final task of looking for strategies to end the problem, and developing plans of action.

Today we will look at the problem in a different light: from the perspective of women in Namibia and around the world. We will do this because it is very important to know how women view the problem. We can only really understand the problem by listening carefully to women's voices. For many years they have been the leaders in working to end violence worldwide, while men have been the followers. To reach the point of working together, we have to take the first step of working alongside them with respect, and not try to take over and dominate, as men usually do. We have to listen to women with humility and try not to become defensive, but just to learn.

This afternoon we will hear about the legal situation in Namibia – what Namibian law tells us about violence against women and what protections the law provides to women. To be able to propose laws and to educate our communities about the laws that protect them, we need to understand the law ourselves. We need to have insight to be able to say that an act is morally wrong and against the law.

We will now spend just a few minutes speaking about the international dimensions of the problem.

We have men here from several countries, all of which face the same problem. It is important for us to be aware that we are not alone as men working to end violence against women. All over the world men are trying to listen to women and helping to find effective ways to solve the problem. No country in the world does not have this problem.

To give you an idea of statistics in other countries, I will use the example of Canada. Canada prides itself on having a fair degree of gender equality, yet the problem is still huge: 1 in 4 women are physically violated; 1 in 5 are sexually assaulted. This means that about 25% of Canadian women have been beaten or raped. Many Canadian women fear going shopping or going for a walk.

These figures are also true for the United States and many European countries, therefore in this regard, no country is more developed than others. The same excuses are heard from men all over the world – North America, Europe, Asia, Africa ... and sometimes their crimes against women are truly horrific. In Asia, for example, Indian men have murdered baby girls in their villages, or buried them alive. Families in various parts of the world sell their young daughters into prostitution. In India these young sex slaves are taken away to brothels in Bombay or Calcutta. Other Asian women have migrated to Europe from countries like Thailand, supposedly to work as maids and child-minders, but in reality they become virtual slaves and are raped and beaten by their employers.

Many women fear leaving an abusive relationship. Why? A man would just leave, but a woman feels that she can't, either because she fears that her abuser will come after her and harm her, or because she has never held a job and fears having no money, or she feels sorry for her husband because she knows he is under pressure and she actually loves him. These are the most common reasons why an abused woman remains in her relationship. She may feel ashamed that she is being beaten, so she tells nobody and just stays. We also have the scenario of young men putting drugs into the drink of the women they are dating so they can rape them when they fall asleep.

Namibia's new Combating of Rape Act could be regarded as the 'Good Sex Act'. It is not sex to rape a sleeping woman, or of course *any* woman. This is nothing but an act of violence. Sex should be for procreation or pleasure. I can tell you many stories about such acts of violence in all parts of the world. Even in Scandinavia – in peaceful Sweden with its humane politics, studies have revealed that beatings increase when a woman is pregnant; that in fact she is more likely to be beaten when carrying a baby. This is a monstrous and cowardly act!

So this is an international problem. People from other countries who regard Africa as 'backward' are *no more advanced* in terms of this problem. In no country can men use the excuse that they cannot do anything about it because it is not a problem in their country. It is a problem in *every* country. True, in some countries it is not quite as serious as it is in others, but whatever the degree, it is most important to say that there is no excuse and that international solutions must be found. Numerous international conventions (laws) have been adopted by the United Nations, for example the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). We are developing solutions to many problems internationally.

We will now watch a video about cases of violence against women in Namibia, and thereafter we will have the opportunity to hear from women. It is wonderful that a participant yesterday asked to hear from women. This shows respect for Namibian women.

After concluding this address, Dr Kaufman asked the participants how they felt about the group sessions so far, and whether they were finding their discussions useful. The response was very positive. One participant responded that so far they had been "Terrific!".



NBC TV News Clips of Violence Against Women in Namibia

In response to a request from the conference organisers, the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) compiled a video of recent TV news reports on cases of violence against women, for screening during the conference. The video was about 30 minutes long. Among the cases reported on were the following:

- ☞ The rape and murder of a 13-year-old girl in Stampriet.
- ☞ A woman in Okahandja who was set on fire after petrol was poured over her. The Otjozondjupa Women's Council organised a march for the women of Okahandja in response to this crime.
- ☞ The rape of a 9-year-old girl. The HIV-positive suspect had already reached the stage of full-blown Aids. He had raped the girl in the belief that sex with a virgin would cure his illness. A woman interviewed in this clip made the point that this widespread *myth* must be "condemned in the strongest terms".
- ☞ The stabbing to death of a female student at the University of Namibia (UNAM) by her 24-year-old ex-boyfriend. He stabbed the young woman more than 30 times. He pleaded guilty, saying that although he committed this crime while under the influence of alcohol, he knew what he was doing. The crime outraged UNAM students.
- ☞ The murder, dismemberment and cooking of the remains of Monica Florin by her husband Thomas Florin in Swakopmund. This case, probably the most notorious and gruesome example of violence against a woman ever seen in Namibia, shocked the nation. In response, the people (women and men) of Swakopmund took to the streets in a march of protest against violence against women, and the Law Reform and Development Commission was prompted to commission the drafting of a Domestic Violence Act to criminalise all acts of domestic violence in future.

The conference participants expressed horror at what they saw in the video. They were told that these news clips showed just the tip of the iceberg.





The Impact of Violence on Women

Gisela !Haoses
Women's Solidarity

Renowned Namibian women's rights activist and now parliamentarian Rosa Namises, who assisted with preparations for the conference, introduced the speaker. Gisela !Haoses is "one of the older and most concerned mothers" of Namibia. She is a former employee of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation's Damara>Nama radio station, and still does voluntary work for this station. She joined Women's Solidarity in 1988 as a volunteer member, and worked for this organisation for almost five years, without pay. Women's Solidarity provides information, advice, counselling and referral services, particularly for abused women, and also does community education, awareness-raising, research, advocacy and lobbying work. Today Ms !Haoses is employed at the Women's Solidarity office in Katutura (Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) building). She goes out to communities to educate women *and* men, counsels abused women, and works with youth on gender issues.

I would like to begin by congratulating the Legal Assistance Centre, the conference sponsors, and all of the men present, for making this event possible.

Women's Solidarity runs many programmes for women as well as men throughout Namibia. We have, for example, an educational outreach programme for community groups and school children, we run workshops for special interest groups, we produce information materials on women's rights, we provide counselling for women, men and also couples, we refer people to other organisations for medical and legal assistance, and we do research on violence against women so that we are able to make proposals for law reform and act as a human rights pressure group.

Perhaps our most important activity is to go out to all Namibian communities to make violence against women known. Even women don't know that they are being violated. They accept such practices as cultural norms. They think that men harm them because they love them. Women's Solidarity tries to tell them that this is not so. Battering is not love. Rape is not love. We go to secondary schools to make our youth aware of what is and isn't rape. We talk to the police about people who come to police stations to report rape. We try to reach everyone.

Women's Solidarity, I am happy to note, has very powerful women among its ranks. I am very happy that men will now be joining our ranks and talking to their own communities. I should mention that when a men's group was formed in the Erongo Region recently, other men called its members "cowards". We do recognise that not all men are violators, just as not all women are violated. Together we can achieve so much more.

As a nation we achieved something crucial just yesterday: the Combating of Rape Bill finally went through to become law. I would like to speak to you about rape.

A very small number of rape cases are reported. Many many more cases are not reported. People keep quiet because they fear that they will be considered as bad people, because they were raped. In other words, they consider themselves to be the guilty party. It is true that quite often, a woman who lays a charge against a man for rape is made out to be the perpetrator rather than the victim. Women are blamed for wearing sexy clothing and "asking for it", but what can a child or an old woman in a long dress be blamed for?

Rape has serious effects. A woman who is raped by her husband – and some are raped *many* times – will not want him anymore. Her body says "No!", even if she still loves him. Love has blinded women. Speaking of blindness, I ask you to take note that a disabled woman may well have been disabled by a man's violence.

Our women suffer many different kinds of violence and abuse. Financial abuse, for example, is very common in our country. A man will take his earnings and buy himself a three-course meal in a restaurant,

maybe even every day, while his family at home goes hungry. Many women are deprived of the freedom to be who they really are and live their own life. What should a woman do if her husband doesn't like the dress she is wearing and beats her because she does not look attractive enough for him, but she has no other clothes? Many a woman appears proud and content, but others do not know that she lives in a jail. If she greets another man on the street, her husband wants to know who that man is. There are men who suspect even the pastor who wants to help the family.

Women stay in abusive relationships because it is not so easy for them to leave. A woman may have no income, no other family, nowhere to go. If she loves her abuser, she will believe that "he will change".

Emotionally, an abused woman is already dead inside. Just her body lives on. Giving birth is supposed to bring us joy and hope, but some women give up all hope if they give birth to a girl: from experience they know that the girl stands little chance of living a good and happy life.

Women are afraid, and they don't know what to do to protect themselves. They do not believe that the police will help them. Too many have heard the police say, "It's private family business. We can't do anything." I will tell you of a woman in Outjo who called the police because she feared being killed by a certain man if she left home. The police ignored her call for protection, and a few days later that woman was dead!

This violence, gentlemen, is killing your women! Kill a woman and you kill the whole nation, because men cannot take care of themselves and their children. [This statement evoked loud applause.] A woman killed by a man's violence could have been your mother, your sister, your wife, your daughter ... so, PLEASE STOP!

We know that there are men who are beaten by their wives or girlfriends, although I must say that for every one man beaten, 100 women are beaten, and few men are killed by a woman. If an abused man does not stand up for himself, who will stand up for him? Well, Women's Solidarity is there for men too. You are welcome. Many abused men come to us for help.

Like the White Ribbon Campaign, which started small and then spread around the world, you can start here in this room and then spread your message to all the people of Namibia. We at Women's Solidarity are your willing partners. We will make ourselves available, free of charge, to come and talk to your communities, set up programmes, run workshops, distribute information materials, give advice and counsel your friends in need.

I thank you for the opportunity to address you.

PLENARY DISCUSSION: Main Points Made

The participants were invited to comment and pose questions on Ms !Haoses's address. This discussion was facilitated by Gisela !Haoses, Rosa Namises and Dianne Hubbard, co-ordinator of the LAC's Gender Research and Advocacy Project. All three women, who are all involved with Women's Solidarity, responded to the questions and comments. To initiate the discussion, the session chairperson, Alec Boois of the LAC, noted that the main message of this address, the "bottom line", was that, "Women do not feel safe in their own homes, so where can they feel safe?".

Question: I would like the men to rise and the women to sit, so that we men can applaud you women and say that we will work with you to stop the violence! [*The men all rose and applauded.*] I welcome the idea of Gisela coming to Swakopmund to share her ideas with our community. I want to direct a question not only to her as a Women's Solidarity representative, but to any of the women here: How is African manhood described by women in the African context? What do you want to see in an African man?

Answer: We take an African man as he is – as a loving husband or whatever. We don't want anything from African men except that you take care of your families and be men of God. As Christians, you must

believe in and respect the word of God. Then your wife and children will respect *you*. Just fulfil your responsibilities, respect us and allow us our dignity. We have no other expectations. Regarding our cultures, we do respect them, but we must look at them and change what is bad about them. Yesterday you looked at African men in relation to African cultures. You now understand that sometimes you place yourselves in a box, i.e. you tell yourselves that you have to be strong and brave and never cry. But we know that you are just human beings. Whether you are African or European is unimportant. You are just human, so we don't have major expectations of you. We just expect that you will be a good husband and father. Women should not place extra pressures on you. We only expect you to be there for your family.

Question: I wish to express appreciation to our sister Gisela. You are doing a very good job and we love and admire you. Regarding the Combating of Rape Act, is it fair for a man to be charged with raping his wife? Isn't this just *alleged* rape?

Answer: The new law on rape says that wherever a person (woman *or* man) is forced to have sex, this will be regarded as *rape*, so a woman who is forced by her husband to have sex is being raped. To illustrate the point, I would like to cite two cases: In one case a man became angry and assaulted his wife by shoving her against a mirror, which broke and injured her seriously, and then he proceeded to force her to have sex – in front of their children. In the other case a man forced a broom handle into his wife's vagina. Should these examples *not* be considered as rape? Should they *not* be punished? Any forceful or undesirable sexual penetration against a person's will is now seen as rape under our law. We used to define rape only as penetration of the penis. Now we have a broomstick. What's the difference? *It is rape when a person does not want sex and is forced!*

Question: Does the new law also protect people such as mentally retarded men on farms, who can be violated in the same way as women?

Answer: The new law is completely neutral. It makes everyone equal. It protects all people, regardless of their sex, age, state of health or anything else. *Anyone* who is forced to have sex will be deemed to have been raped.

Question: Is there a law on marrying more than one woman, i.e. under customary/traditional law?

Answer: The Law Reform and Development Commission is working on such a law. It is proposed that polygyny should be possible only if *all* parties involved consent. The proposed law will be circulated for public discussion before the proposals are finalised.

Question: I attended a juvenile justice workshop on Sexuality and Communication, where the delegates were told, "Trust no man. Fear all." What effect does this attitude have on relationships?

Answer: You will have to direct that question to the juvenile justice experts. But what one can certainly say in response is that trust is precisely what is destroyed by rape and other forms of violence.

Question: We understand that the office of Women's Solidarity is situated in Katutura. Do you have an office in any of the other regions?

Answer: We do not have regional offices per se, but we do have regional support groups. We work closely with a number of other organisations – governmental, non-governmental and community-based – in all the regions and most towns, through the Multimedia Campaign on Violence Against Women and Children, so we have a countrywide presence.

Question: In the 1970s we had no violence against women. It started after that. What is happening with marital contracts that causes one partner to act violently to the other? What happened to break the contract? Money? What is going on? In the video it seemed that younger men are the violators. What are the causes of that? Maybe something has happened to disturb good relationships. No man hates his wife. He chose her. Is it because they build a house and have children and then become poor? Does a man break his contract with his wife because they are poor and there is nothing left in the house?

Answer: We have to educate people about what violence is. A 50-year-old man will never change if he feels he is the boss. He will take the last piece of meat, his family will go hungry, and his wife will keep

quiet as in the past. It is not so that this violence only started 20 years ago. People just didn't hear of it or talk about it then. Times have changed. We are in the information age. We are informed and we have new laws which outlaw unacceptable behaviour. Violent behaviour is no longer acceptable. Violence is like a seed that grows like a cancer. We don't keep quiet anymore.

Question: Regarding the new rape law, having heard about the two incidents of marital rape referred to, I feel seriously concerned. No normal person would call these acts by any name other than *barbaric*. But what about men who fall victim to their wife's hatred? It seems to me that a man can be accused of marital rape when actually there was no force or violence involved, and the couple just had a fight or something happened to turn her against him.

Answer: False charges can be laid for any crime, and this does happen. But the law has safeguards, for example, there is a presumption of innocence, and supporting evidence is necessary if there is only one witness to the crime. Also, it has always been possible for a woman to charge her husband with indecent assault, and yet we have hardly seen any cases of this. The new law will not increase the problem of false charges.

Question: I am a very concerned young man. If the police don't react, what happens if my father is violating my mother? What can I do?

Answer: One should not just start harassing elderly people about abuse out of the blue. Don't start on a high note. Start by trying to talk. Don't just criticise, because you'll be thrown out of the house. Start slowly. Explain properly what you mean.

Question: Are you aware that there are more women than men in the world? How is it possible to have one woman to one man if there are so many more women? Shouldn't we educate the girls to share a husband?

Answer: The gender ratio in Namibia's population is 51% female to 49% male. This ratio does not justify men having two wives. In any case, some women are too old, some are too young, some are sick ...

Question: I want to talk about abortion. Is this not just a matter of killing children, or throwing them into boxes so you can go and find another man? Some women marry for just a short time and then leave to find another man. Also, what about women abusing alcohol? Have you considered that? What about women having intercourse outside marriage? Is this good? Will the woman build her house with that man? Since yesterday we have heard nothing about the fact that women also do wrong. Or do you think that women do nothing wrong?

Answer: Many of us women do not like abortion, but sometimes it is necessary. You should go and find out *why* it is sometimes necessary. I will give you one reason: if a woman is raped and impregnated by a man with HIV/Aids, her baby will be born with and will die of that disease. Inform yourself on these issues, then look for your own answers. [*The panel did not answer the other questions posed by this participant.*]

Question: Some mothers, for example stepmothers, torture children who are not their own. Is there any way to deal with this problem, or are we saying that women never abuse children?

Answer: Complaints of child abuse come from all kinds of people and all kinds of organisations deal with this problem, for example the Legal Assistance Centre. Yes, certainly there are women who abuse children. Women also blame other women for being involved in fighting the abuse. It is good that men are talking about female abusers, and if men's groups want to challenge this, they should! They should also challenge extramarital affairs that women have if they perceive this as a problem. Often there is another man involved when women abuse children.

At this point in the discussion, the chairperson made the point that some men had started using this platform to attack women. He asked the participants how they felt about attacking women in this forum. The response was that they were not attacking women, but just raising these points. The chairperson asked the men to keep their focus on violence against women.

Comments from participants:

The issues raised so far, as well as the video footage, do raise our concern. But clearly we feel that something is unfair; that we are being attacked and blamed. Regarding one participant's claim that there was no violence against women in the 1970s, we should remember that we were fighting a liberation war then, so we may not have been aware that violence against women was going on. Regarding abortion, we men don't know how it feels to be pregnant, and if we find it difficult to understand why a woman impregnated by a rapist wants to abort, then we are in no position to dictate what she should do. Yes, men too are abused, but we have never come out and said so. Women are speaking out about their abuse, but still men remain silent. It is women's silence that has led us here, and to efforts to combat violence against them. For the sake of progress and stability, let us stop trying to address these complex issues as a large group, and rather return to our small groups to discuss them further.

The abortion issue should not be in the hands of women only. Decisions on abortion should be made by women and men together. A real man would thank his wife for giving him a child and he would love the child. This is not a one-sex issue.

Culture influences all aspects of our lives. If a culture allows domestic violence, so that women deteriorate, then it is no good. But it will be very difficult for me to tell my mother that what my father is doing to her is bad. I would call on Women's Solidarity to go and discuss these issues with our elders. If my child lives in my mother's care, I would want my mother to teach my child about these issues.

Question: What has Women's Solidarity actually done about all these cases of rape and violence – if there really are so many?

Answer: We run workshops countrywide focusing on rape. Hopefully men will now join these workshops. We do need to talk to men – if they will open up, and often they won't. A major problem is that many women refuse to admit or otherwise do not realise that they are being abused. If a woman will not talk to you, then you can't help her. We also need to do more research. At the High Court we have scrutinised rape cases to find out exactly what is happening.

Question: If a man doesn't have money but needs sex and goes to a prostitute, and later she accuses him of rape, is he protected by the new law?

Answer: Our legal system makes it very difficult to falsely accuse a person of any crime. The system is set up to protect innocent people. It is very hard to convict a person on a false charge.

Comments from participants:

We know that everyone here would like to speak. I just want to make one thing clear: Yes, men are also abused, and maybe our women do not serve us as willingly as we would want – maybe they don't wash our clothes on time or maybe they mix up our clothes with the nappies. But I appeal to all of you to respect our women and treat them like the human beings they are. We have to stop doing these things to our women! [*Loud applause.*]

I just want women to know that no man hates women – and I was nearly raped by a woman. No one here is attacking women. We are attacking each other. We will give 99% to women, if we can have just 1% in return: my woman must respect me too!

The household finances are handled by men, while sometimes, their women are sitting in bars drinking with other men, the men buying the drinks. The women know that they will be expected to have sex, but they won't. Instead, they'll accuse the man of rape, abuse, etc. Is Women's Solidarity doing anything to stop women from behaving like this? Is *anyone* doing something about this? We need to look at the causes of this kind of behaviour among women.

Gisela is a very brave woman. Let us applaud her for her courage to talk to over 200 men as she did today. [*Loud applause.*] Men were created as givers, women as receivers. Women's Solidarity *should* look into

issues like sexual relationships. What leads a woman to move from one partner to another? We also need to address women's socio-economic problems. We also need to encourage Christianity; to encourage our woman to go to church on Sunday – if she doesn't have a hangover. We need psychotherapists for women, because they know how to kill us psychologically!

Response: Obviously we need to talk a lot together. Some things you've said are assumed, some things are pure myth. Many issues have never been discussed in this country, for example sexual relations, and the question of attraction – a big question. *Of course* we need counselling and psychotherapy. We were born into the apartheid system. We are traumatised people. Abortion is an issue that we need to discuss together as mothers and fathers with responsibilities. These are all issues that you can begin to discuss here at this conference, and continue discussing back in your communities, your workplaces and your homes.

Concluding comment from Dianne Hubbard: I would like to close this discussion on a positive note, with an anecdote which proves that we are not on opposite sides: I was once attacked by a man wielding a knife. I cannot now remember his face, but I will *never* forget the two men who came to my rescue!



THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Human Rights Issues and the Situation in Namibia

Johann Malan
Legal Assistance Centre

What is violence against women?

We think of violence against women as physical violence, meaning rape, assault and beating, but there are also other forms of violence against women, such as verbal abuse and shouting, intimidation, humiliation, neglect, psychological or mental torture and economic exploitation.

A comprehensive definition of violence against women is needed, within which framework we can discuss the issue. A useful definition of gender-based violence is given by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): “Gender-based violence is violence which is directed at a woman because she is a woman or which affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, psychological or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion or other deprivations of liberty. Violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights, irrespective of whether perpetrated by public officials or by private persons.”

This definition makes it clear that violence against women can occur in the family as well as in the general community. And it occurs regularly. Studies show that at least one in five men from all layers of society perpetrate some form of physical violence or sexual abuse against a partner during his lifetime. Unacceptable!

The sad truth is also that the consequences of violence against women do not end with the violent act. For example, young women who were sexually abused as children are twice as likely to place themselves at risk through unprotected sex with multiple partners. Psychological and emotional trauma could result in Aids-risk behaviour such as drug use and prostitution, in addition to unprotected sex.

Legal protections for women in case of abuse

Crimes under the common law, such as assault, assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, defamation, *crimen injuria* and rape, are well known to us, and we know that these crimes can be reported to the police for investigation and prosecution.

The Combating of Rape Bill passed this week by Namibia’s National Assembly defines rape as follows: “Any person (the perpetrator) who intentionally under coercive circumstances commits or continues to commit a sexual act with another person or causes another person to commit a sexual act with the perpetrator or with a third person, will be guilty of the offence of rape.”

A “sexual act” includes anal, vaginal or oral sex, while “coercive circumstances” include physical force, threats and even threats against others that would force the complainant into sex.

This definition of rape is much broader than the old definition: sexual intercourse between a man and a woman without her consent.

We have no domestic violence legislation in Namibia.

A human rights abuse?

Namibia’s Constitution guarantees, among others, the right to life, equality and dignity. Protection of human rights is necessary to realise a person’s full potential. The right to equality is protected by Article 10 of the Constitution, which reads as follows:

- (1) *All persons shall be equal before the law.*
- (2) *No persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status.*

Equality before the law includes equal protection by the law, and equality means that all people are equal bearers of rights. *Substantive* equality, on the other hand, requires us to examine the actual social and economic circumstances of women in order to determine whether the Constitution's commitment to equality is being upheld. It is important to recognise that the root cause of violence is inequality.

Respect for human dignity is protected by Article 8 of the Constitution:

- (1) *The dignity of all persons shall be inviolable.*
- (2)(b) *No persons shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

No religious, cultural or traditional practices may allow degrading treatment of a woman, man or child. As much as each and every person has the right to human dignity and to freedom of expression and opinion, so every person should grant other people the same rights.

A private matter?

If violence against women is a private matter, is it excluded from the constitutional protections?

The fear of violence, including harassment, is a permanent constraint on the mobility of women and girls in Namibia, and fear deprives them and/or limits their access to resources and prevents them from participating in basic activities.

Violence against women and girls stems primarily from cultural and traditional practices, language or religion that perpetuates the lower status accorded to women in the family, the workplace, the community and society at large. Violence against women is made worse by social pressures; women's lack of access to legal information, aid or protection; the lack of laws that effectively and strictly prohibit violence against women and children; inadequate efforts in enforcing existing laws; and the absence of educational programmes to address the violence at all levels.

Customary law, practices and tradition, which regulate the lives of many women and men, play a significant role in the subordination of women. These regulate the practices regarding inheritance, marriage and the property of men and women living under customary law. Customary law patronises women. Women are not allowed to inherit property under customary law, and a woman's property falls under her husband's control upon marriage, with the result that she loses her economic independence. Customary law also has a bearing on the *person* of a woman. Where there is payment of *lobola*, women are viewed as the 'property' of men, one repercussion of this being the view that a man can beat his wife. Finally, customary law limits women's access to land.

All this makes it clear that the position of women, and the violence they suffer as a result thereof, infringes on the right to dignity and equality, so making violence against women a human rights violation.

A public matter!

Violence against women is a human rights violation and thus a public matter, with resultant obligations on the state. Realising that violence against women is a human rights violation means that, in addition to other means of addressing instances of violence, the government is obliged to recognise that women are entitled to be protected from violence, and that this is a human right which the government should guarantee and protect. It should also provide remedies when this right is violated, regardless of who perpetrates it.

Under CEDAW, which Namibia has ratified and which is therefore binding on Namibia, to eliminate violence against women, states are required to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, and to eliminate all practices that are based on the notion of inferiority or superiority and on stereotyped roles for men and women.

Stereotyping – of both males and females – is a societal problem which instils certain gender roles for both genders. Women are stereotyped as submissive, dependent and in the kitchen, while men are required

to be macho, sexually active and philandering. The position of children in the family is also affected by this problem. Stereotyping is a major factor in the life of traditional women that denies many women any form of social mobility.

Article 5 of CEDAW calls for the enactment of appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices, and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either sex or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

Article 10 imposes an obligation on Namibia to eliminate any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education, by encouraging co-education as well as other types of education which will help to achieve this aim, and in particular by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods.

Improving the position of women

Namibia's Constitution also deals with improving the position of women by providing for affirmative action. The Principles of State Policy recognise that women do not have equality of opportunity, and thus provide for their promotion. The principles contained in Article 95 read as follows:

The State shall actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting, inter alia, policies aimed at the following:

- (a) enactment of legislation to ensure equality of opportunity for women, to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of Namibian society; in particular, the Government shall ensure the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination in remuneration of men and women; further, the Government shall seek, through appropriate legislation, to provide maternity and related benefits for women; ...*

The Principles of State Policy are not legal rights, but rather they constitute a statement of societal goals: they are “not of and by themselves legally enforceable by any Court, but shall nevertheless guide the Government in making and applying laws to give effect to the fundamental objectives of the said principles. The Courts are entitled to have regard to the said principles in interpreting any laws based on them.”

The government may follow affirmative action policies. When enacting affirmative action legislation and applying policies and practices, Article 23(3) of the Constitution authorises Parliament to have regard to the fact that women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and that they need to be encouraged and enabled to play a full, equal and effective role in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the nation. As a result, the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act was enacted, providing for affirmative action policies in respect of women, persons with disabilities and persons who were disadvantaged by past discriminatory policies.

The Married Persons Equality Act did away with the marital power and regulates the equality of spouses in decision-making in marital relationships. It does not relate to traditional marriages and marriages entered into under customary law. The Labour Act outlaws discrimination and harassment in the workplace on various grounds, including sex.

HIV/Aids and violence against women

Regarding HIV prevalence, Namibia is rated No. 3 in the world. Women's risk of infection through sex is at least double, and maybe four times as high as that of men.

The special vulnerability of women in this regard has social roots: their inferior status and the resulting power imbalance makes it difficult or even impossible for them to protect themselves from HIV or to negotiate sex. Women have less control over the initiation of sex and the nature and conditions of each sexual encounter as a result of the power dynamics at play. Furthermore, women's lack of access to resources such as information, skills, technologies, services, social support and income, increases their vulnerability to HIV/Aids. Sexual coercion is also a form of economic exploitation: people use it to help cover expenses like school fees. Coercion = wanton rape!

Violence against women *increases* vulnerability to HIV infection. Both verbal and physical abuse play a role where women do not insist on safer sex, and especially on the use of male condoms. Violence against women can take a variety of forms: marital abuse, domestic violence and sexual coercion by male relatives or 'sugar daddies', and rape. There is also violence *as a result of* HIV infection. A tragic example is that of the South African woman, Gugu Dlamini, who was murdered by community members when she publicly announced her HIV status. One often hears of people with HIV/Aids being evicted from their homes, abandoned by their families and dismissed from their jobs on the basis of being HIV positive.

Respect and concern for human rights, including the right to equality and the rights of the child and of women, must be at the core of the fight against Aids.

What can be done?

Legal norms are not sufficient to bring about change in private behaviour, particularly in relations between couples within families and between neighbours. But they are indispensable for providing protection for women against violence, and legislation in this regard should be enacted.

Awareness-raising and education at all levels of society are key to changing behaviour and stopping the violence against women.

We as men must learn to respect differences, to respect others and to respect ourselves. And, we must take responsibility for our behaviour towards others.

Following Mr Malan's address, Samokelo Madonsela from ADAPT, South Africa, gave a brief overview of the legal situation in South Africa with regard to violence against women, and the initiatives being taken by government (lawmakers) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like ADAPT, Men for Change and women's organisations, and through government-NGO partnerships.

He referred to South Africa's new Domestic Violence Act, the new definition of rape which covers men also, government's recognition of an annual Women's Day, and the 16 Days of Activism held in December 1999, organised by government bodies and NGOs in protest against violence against women. He noted that women's groups are encouraging men to participate in efforts to end the violence, and listed some organisations which are focusing on sensitising men (see page 35 for more information).

NIGHT VIGIL AT THE HIGH COURT

The night vigil took place on the second day of the conference. After the day's proceedings, the participants were transported by bus to the High Court building in the centre of town. All wore the conference T-shirt. While waiting for all the men to arrive, several individuals took the floor one by one to lead those present in a chorus of chants and song. It was an extremely impressive display of determination and unity, which drew the attention of all passers-by. Reverend Ngeno Nakamela of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), who chaired the vigil, launched the proceedings when the press and NBC TV arrived. The speakers' presentations are recorded on the following pages.



Opening Address

Rev. Ngeno Nakamela
Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN)

I come from a woman. So do you. A woman has taken care of me for 30 years. Thanks to her I am a healthy man!

We are here tonight to express our concern as men. This is not a political demonstration, but a demonstration of our concern and our determination to change the ways of our nation's men – to make *real* men of them all.

I would like to welcome our keynote speaker, Dr Peter Katjavivi, who is well known to you. But before Dr Katjavivi addresses you, Pastor Ernst //Gamxamûb would like to share some thoughts with you. We will also be hearing from two of our poets tonight. Thank you.

CHANTS:

MEN SAY NO TO VIOLENCE!
MEN SAY NO MORE VIOLENCE!
MEN SAY SORRY FOR PAST VIOLATIONS!
MEN ASK WOMEN FOR FORGIVENESS!
LET THE REAL MEN COME FORWARD!
DOWN VIOLENCE DOWN!



A Participant's Thoughts

Pastor Ernst //Gamxamûb

I come to you as a brother in the struggle against a terrible disease – men's violence against women. I come as one of you – Namibian Men Against Violence Against Women. I speak to you with mixed feelings, ranging from shame, disappointment, frustration and anger, to delight at the marvellous turnout at this event. Your presence here signifies your sincerity, interest, concern and commitment. Thank you!

On behalf of all the men present, I salute and thank the Legal Assistance Centre, the organising team, and all the distinguished, concerned speakers. You have created for us a national platform of encounter – of talking, sharing and searching for lasting solutions to the burning issue challenging us.

I would like to define this venture as a blessing, an educational event, an eye-opener, an opportunity for self-exposure and self-examination. This is our "Opportunity 2000"!

Through the contributions on the various topics, and in viewing the NBC TV news clips, we have experienced shock – at the seriousness of the crimes that men commit against women. Through the presentations of our national and international experts we have come to learn of the emotional, physical, cultural, financial, psychological, legal and other implications of our abuse of women. The contributions made in our group discussions, and our questions and remarks in plenary discussions following the presentations, have revealed many a reservation, hesitation and scapegoat attitude amongst us when we are called to stamp out the threat to our women.

We have come to learn that the women we abuse, beat, kill and rob of their humanity are not anonymous. They have names. They may be Ndinelao, Tsego-fatso, Tsu-khoes, Anna or Mary. We have come to learn that these abused people are none other than our mothers, wives, girlfriends, sisters, daughters, nieces, aunts and relatives. What a tragedy! What a shame!

In the discussion on the Combating of Rape Bill just passed, I observed that we were divided by our differing views and standpoints. I had the impression that the participants indeed welcome the protection guaranteed or at least offered by this new law to all people of both genders, and very importantly, to people with all kinds of disabilities. Therefore, the new law must no longer be regarded as a threat, but rather it must be embraced as an extinguisher of evil.

It gives us an opportunity to become human beings again – *Real Men!* It gives us an opportunity to find the real meaning and sacred value of life which we have lost. It gives us an opportunity to guarantee security and protection to our loved ones and ourselves.

The message that we have received from this conference is very clear: If the ladies say “No!”, that is precisely what they mean! Please, let us understand, let us fully comprehend the all-embracing disallowing connotations of this word. “No!” means “No!”.

Another thing is very clear: we are afraid of losing the privileges which have always secured us our special status, and our power and control over others. I could sense insecurity within our ranks when the loss of our privileges was mentioned. But our pathetic defensive arguments will bring us nowhere. We will never get past square one with those arguments.

Colleagues, it is good that you are all willing to implement the action plans that we have set, but to me it is of much greater importance to call for your *total commitment* to the realisation of our goal.

In conclusion, unless we are prepared to lose the power and control which we have wrongly interpreted as being granted by the Bible, and unless we are prepared to lose our self-proclaimed traditional power and control, we shall forever be at war with our women. Only at the moment of losing our power and control will we gain our rightful place in our society. He who chooses to surrender his power and control will save himself and life itself.

People throughout Namibia – the women imprisoned by fear, the abused children – are looking to the outcome of this conference, hoping that it will bring solutions to save their lives. Let us be men of integrity!

Let us be REAL MEN! Viva Men of Namibia! Viva Men of Africa! Viva Men of the World Against Violence Against Women!!!

God Bless

Keynote Address

Dr Peter Katjavivi

Vice-Chancellor, University of Namibia



Gentlemen, Ladies –

I would like to begin my address by thanking the organisers of this important event for their work. They are very hard-working men and women!

It is with great pleasure that I join you today. When I received the call to come here and address you, I had an appointment with my wife, but I *had* to accept the call to speak out in support of what is not only *your* cause, but the cause of every caring Namibian; a very important national cause. How could I refuse to cancel my appointment in favour of coming here to indicate my support for this event, and for all the efforts exerted over the years in fighting for this cause? No man or woman who values life should ever refuse such a call.

On arriving here I saw people full of life and determination and ready to say “No!”. Thank you for coming here, and for your forcefulness in saying “No!” to evil!

With the passing of the Combating of Rape Bill in our Parliament this week, we can say that we have now taken the first step in a long series of steps that will ensure equality for women in our society. It is a small step, perhaps, but a very significant one, in that it signals to society at large that the abuse of women is *unacceptable, intolerable*, and most importantly, *punishable* under the laws of this country.

I often wonder what triggers in us men this irrational need to express dominance over women. If it is frustration, then why, I wonder, are some of us unable to overcome that frustration in other ways? Are we nothing but bullies and cowards who feel good about ourselves only by intimidating soft targets? Can we only value ourselves as men through physical domination over another?

The Neanderthal era, in which life existed under very different conditions and in different forms, has long since passed. Today we have vibrant and intelligent women as partners; women who fulfil

multiple roles in relationships and in marriage. I am sure that every enlightened man will agree that there is seldom a time when he returned home from work to find his wife kicking off her shoes and having a drink. And I know that most women would agree that their second work shift starts the moment they open the door of their home after a hard day's work at the office.

How then, do we bring about the desired changes in our society? One way is through the passing of laws. But civil society has as great a role to play as government in formulating and implementing systems to address wrongs committed in society, and to ensure that these wrongs do not persist. I trust that you will reach resolutions by the end of your conference that will help to bring about the changes desired. Another less obvious but very important means of initiating change in attitude, and by extension in behaviour, is by re-educating and sensitising others through our daily interactions.

Most often, women place little emphasis on their own values and standards, and compromise these and their expectations for unforeseen and usually unattained results. I speak to women now. You may sometimes lower your standards to keep the peace or to be nice, not wanting to be considered aggressive, assertive or nagging. But by lowering your standards, you have compromised the level of respect that is due to you *by right* – as a human being and as a woman. I want to suggest that you demand respect in your workplace, in your home and in our streets. Command it by your positive attitude, your values, your standards, and by your high expectations of us men!

We need to address these issues. We cannot allow the citizens of our country to compromise their own safety. We need to close ranks and ensure that there are no loopholes in our legal and political systems. We need to empower our police force and our community leaders.

We hear stories every day of women beaten up, raped, even killed. Do we respond? Do we care? How can we *not* care when our own sisters are being killed? We *must* respond! We have to sensitise our people so that these evil doers will find it very difficult to continue with their evil practices. Passivity encourages them to continue. It is enough now. We have to find a way to stop them. The time has come! Let us face the challenge of undoing the wrongs.

As the Vice-Chancellor of the leading institute of higher education in this country, namely the University of Namibia (UNAM), I am pleased to be able to report to you that we are taking up the challenge of undoing some of the wrong perceptions, assumptions and practices obtaining between women and men in our society. For one thing, the Dutch government is currently funding a UNAM gender equality programme, so UNAM is adequately mobilised for protecting gender equality.

If we want to find the national leaders we are looking for, in all fields, then we have to sufficiently sensitise our youth to this issue of gender equality. At UNAM we have found that due to the rapid movement of enlightenment for women across generations, the experience of our female students has been dissimilar to that of their mothers, but the same cannot be said for a high number of their male counterparts, who still conform to the norms of the past. Balancing the new and old ideologies, and creating harmony among our youth, is a big responsibility for UNAM, and we are making every effort to fulfil it. The alternative could be a collision course for our country. Through UNAM's Gender Studies Unit we are actively pursuing discussion and initiatives to bring about the necessary gender balance and harmony. For example, we include gender-specific orientation in all of our policies and practices.

The desired change in gender relations will not come about overnight. Only through a unified, concerted and sustained effort to ensure gender equality will we be able to end this terrible violence and bear witness to a peaceful society that really represents our mutual needs, goals and aspirations.

We must *all* promote gender equality, not merely by talking, but by pursuing it aggressively. The new law on rape tells us that our lawmakers are taking the issue seriously. Where there are still loopholes in our law, these must be addressed. Men who violate women should be brought to book. They must know that there is no place for them in Namibian society. They must know that we are following them, that we will isolate them, that the law *will* catch up with them.

Let this event mark the beginning. Go back to your homes and your communities, and move from town to village, spreading your word. Let women feel a sense of comfort. Let them know that they are no longer alone!

Thank you

Concluding Address

Augustine Mututu
Musasa Project



Our keynote speaker said it all, but I would like to say just one more thing.

We are here for one purpose: to fight a monster! Yesterday we fought a monster called 'Slavery', and then we fought another called 'Apartheid'. Men and women fought together to slay those monsters.

We have now learnt that there is still another terrible monster alive and kicking: 'Violence in the Home'. We have learnt that this monster is alive and kicking due to our own failure: we have not been *real men*. We have realised that we need not fight to be real men. We have realised that we can slay this monster only if we *stop* fighting and start loving our women!

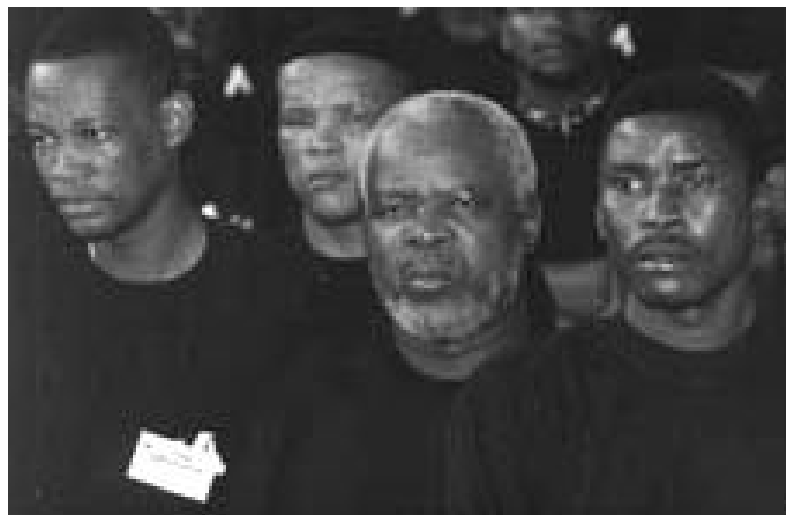
We are here today to tell women that we have learnt a lot. We have realised our mistakes. We apologise for them, and we will go on apologising. We beg you to accept our apology. It is a genuine one.

When we return home we may be seen as people who have been brainwashed. Let us face those who see us that way. Let us challenge their view. Let us tell our brothers that we have all done wrong. Let us tell the men of Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe that we must feel ashamed if we have ever delivered a fist to the woman who fed us from her blood. Let us remind them that Jesus died for the people he loved. We must be prepared to die for the women we love.

Let us tell our men that this monster is a terrible threat to all of us. Let us speak everywhere about our love for our women and children, and fight this monster in our homes. Let us save ourselves, our families and our nations.

NO MORE VIOLENCE!

POETRY READINGS



Woman

Woman was created
from the rib of man
Not from his head
to be above him
Not from under his feet
to be trampled by him
But from under his arm
to be protected by him
And from under his heart
to be loved by him

Careful Moses Kaeka, 15 February 2000

Ubuntu?

Fathers and sons
From north to south
From sunrise to sunset
Support the hope for peace
To harmonise social links
Amongst humankind

Fathers and sons
Be loudspeakers
Against traumatising rape acts
Against life-threatening acts
Towards our dear loved ones
The feeders of the nation and
The future leaders

Fathers and brothers
Share the memories of past violence
Forge the fervent desire to tolerance
Reject with all means gender boundaries and ego barriers

Gentlemen, fellow brothers
Let us not lift our hand to hurt
Rather to pat
Let us not harden our heart
Rather be accommodating
Let us not scamp the life and bodies
Of our honeys and toddlers

Stop substance abuse, sexual abuse,
Lust, greed, self-centredness, rage and insecurity
Conferred to threat of failure
Into whirlwind of fear, isolation, anger,
Self-punishment, self-hatred and aggression

Fellow men and brothers
Share privileges and power
Be empathetic and emotionally attuned
To needs of those around us
Show love and joy
Show humour and harmony
Because violent attitudes strew unison

Can we respect and nurture Ubuntu?

Siballi E.I. Kgobetsi, 17 February 2000

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND WAYS TO IMPLEMENT THEM

BEST PRACTICES WORLDWIDE

(Presentation 1 of 5)

South Africa's Experience: The Work of ADAPT

Samokelo Madonsela



I and my organisation consider it a great honour to have been invited to address this gathering on the situation in South Africa regarding violence against women.

Before I begin my speech, I wish to emphasise that when we speak of violence against women and children, we usually focus on physical abuse and forget about the other forms of abuse commonly perpetrated, such as verbal abuse – where one person offends another verbally – or financial abuse, where one person denies another financial benefits and responsibilities for control purposes. It is important to bear these other forms of abuse in mind.

The extent of the problem

In South Africa today it is estimated that a woman or child is raped every 26 seconds. This very unfortunately means that while I address you for the next 10 minutes, around 23 women or children could be raped.

Before arriving in Namibia to participate in this conference, I was dealing with a case in which a father tried several times to rape his daughters aged 13 and 17, claiming that according to his culture or tradition, a father should sleep with his daughters before they sleep with any other men.

Statistics provided by Alexandra Police Station in Johannesburg reveal that for the period 1 January to 31 December 1999, 209 cases of rape and domestic abuse were reported. Of this total, 70 went to court, 31 were withdrawn, 126 were never investigated and 69 are still under investigation. In only 12 cases the perpetrators were found guilty, and in 36 they were found not guilty. Of the 31 cases withdrawn, some were withdrawn because the perpetrator struck a deal with the victim to pay a certain amount to withdraw the case.

I have provided a picture of what is happening only in Alexandra. It would take days to talk about the whole of South Africa.

Reports of men raping men have recently started coming to our attention. According to one magazine, few men believe that this happens, since in their view only unfortunate women are raped. According to police statistics, from 1996 to 1998, between 740 and 800 adult men reported being indecently assaulted. ('Indecent assault' is the official term for rape, the definition of which refers to penetration by the penis, another body part or an object without consent.) The fact that many men who have been raped were raped by men who know them, even by name, proves that we men do not love one another, and that like women, we are not safe. One man who was raped stated that whenever his wife – a woman he loves and finds "incredibly sexually attractive" – touches him, he feels "sick", because her touch reminds him of what his rapists did to him. She has asked for a divorce on the grounds that she cannot live with his loathing after having supported him through his experience.

Activities of the ADAPT Men's Programme

ADAPT runs a programme for men which essentially seeks to provide a platform for men to heal themselves and one another, to engender a sense of love for one another, and to discuss why men violate women. The following are some of the main programme activities to date.

Men Against Rape: In 1997 ADAPT organised the first men's march against rape in South Africa, as well as a Men's Seminar on Rape. We also helped to get men to form a human chain during a subsequent women's march against rape.

Shebeen Project: This project addresses the issue of violence against women in shebeens. We have come up with this slogan: "When the tough get going, the tough get drinking. Now it is time for the tough to get help and speak out!" We invite respected and influential South African men to address men and women in shebeens. This is also done in the form of entertainment. A play titled "Redefining Manhood" led us to discover that we can touch men and women in many ways through this type of outreach. We also provide individual counselling in shebeens. In the pipeline is a plan to train shebeen owners to provide services to their customers, with whom they spend a lot of time, in the form of identifying those in need of counselling and referring them for professional help.

Project for Adult Men: This project involves older men who belong to the Burial Society. This society offers a support system for men in the event of a family member dying. The society members comfort and help one another. ADAPT works through the Burial Society to challenge men on the issue of performing their roles in the family responsibly. We do this work by means of organising debates and motivational talks by influential South African men.

Church Project: This project challenges the role of the church in combating domestic violence and sexual abuse against women and children. Running this project is not an easy task, because churches are run by men who have been in control for a long time and who hold fast to their beliefs.

Project for Young Men: This project involves early education for young men on taking care of themselves and expressing their feelings freely. The participants learn about self-awareness, or in other words, they are led to discover who they are and where they are going. This project also encourages the young men to develop their various talents and links them up with respected and prominent South African men in the relevant fields. It also provides a platform for young men to engage in discussion and debate around issues affecting them.

Prison Project: ADAPT believes that people who have been imprisoned can be rehabilitated and re-integrated into society if they receive the necessary support, such as counselling. This project is aimed at providing such support to perpetrators of violence against women after their release from prison. Without judging them, the project helps them to accept their conviction and to heal. It also provides training for prison wardens, who have problems of their own.

Measures to end the violence

Our Parliament has passed the Domestic Violence Act and the Maintenance Act, thus there is legislation in place to protect women, and children affected by their warring parents.

ADAPT recently initiated a process whereby social workers, police officials, magistrates, lawyers and health workers (doctors and nurses) meet once a week to report on and discuss cases of violence against women and children. This is effectively a 'watchdog' structure which assesses cases with the aim of making everyone involved accountable.

Men have formed the South African Men's Forum to address violence against women and children.

A challenge to REAL MEN!

Before I step down, I would like to challenge every man present who knows that he has violated a woman to stand up and say to women: "*I want to apologise for all that I did to you.*" [Virtually all the participants stood up and offered this apology.]

Real men don't abuse women and children. I am a real man! Are you?

I have welcomed the opportunity to address you. Thank you for your attention.

BEST PRACTICES WORLDWIDE (Presentation 2 of 5)

South Africa's Experience: The Work of Men For Change

Thulani Nkosi



Violence against women and children is a well-known crime that cuts across our social boundaries. The social context of South Africa is presently dominated by past racial discrimination, sexism and social injustice. And, still rooted down within the new democratic dispensation, is violence against women and children. This occurs in the form of battering, rape, child abuse, domestic violence and murder in thousands of South African homes.

Women's organisations have taken numerous initiatives to address the problem. But these initiatives still tend to isolate men, and abusers are dealt with only through prosecution and imprisonment. The violent conditions existing within prisons are not conducive to rehabilitating an already violent person. In fact, these facilities only serve to enhance the problem.

Men have always been regarded as the problem, never as part of the solution. The approach of Men For Change (MFC) is to encourage men to be party to the solution. MFC seeks to integrate men as *partners* in identifying the root causes of violence, without judging and seeking to prosecute abusers.

MFC hopes that by taking this approach, men will begin to regard women's organisations not as threats, but as partners in efforts to end gender-based violence in the home, in the workplace and in society at large.

The objectives of Men For Change

- ∞ To educate men about the negative aspects of gender socialisation.
- ∞ To raise their awareness of the work of community-based organisations.
- ∞ To provide counselling and support for men who have been violent towards women and/or children (sexually, physically and emotionally) and who are prepared to change.
- ∞ To train men in leadership positions, schools and organisations on gender sensitivity.

The functions of Men For Change

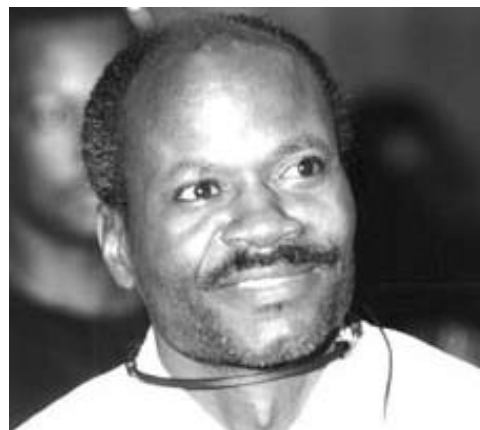
- ∞ To educate men on the negative aspects of gender socialisation and raise their awareness of gender issues through a series of workshops addressing men's socialisation, sexism, violent behaviour in general, domestic violence, child abuse, and many other gender-related topics.
- ∞ To provide counselling and support services for violent men seeking to become non-violent. This is a therapeutic process aimed at bringing men closer to their own emotions and teaching them how to manage their anger and stress. The process involves sessions on self-awareness and conflict management, group sessions on issues affecting men in general (i.e. socialisation), and screening videos which demonstrate and discuss the short temper, aggression, anger and stress.
- ∞ To train men on gender sensitivity. This training provides an opportunity for men to understand the dynamics of their own socialisation and conditioning from childhood into manhood. It also enables them to better understand how social conditioning can be the root cause of violence, and how their conditioning and violence impacts on their own lives.

MFC targets men of all ages from various levels of society. Our area of operation is Gauteng Province.

BEST PRACTICES WORLDWIDE (Presentation 3 of 5)

Zimbabwe's Experience: The Work of the Musasa Project

Augustine Mututu



Violence against women is perpetrated worldwide. In some countries governments have been quiet about it, while in other countries governments and law enforcement agencies have tended to support violators by not enforcing laws that prohibit domestic violence. The end result is that the majority of women have been left at the mercy of violators, that is, men, leading to injury and sometimes even death among women.

Women are human beings. They have the same feelings as other human beings, or in other words, men. In this day and age, with civilisation, education, science and technology so far advanced, one wonders how come men's violence against women and children goes on increasing.

In my country, Zimbabwe, the problem of violence against women is so severe that it necessitated the establishment of a whole organisation to address it. The Musasa Project was established in 1988.

In the language of Zimbabwe, the term 'Musasa' has two meanings: (1) temporary shelter; and (2) an indigenous tree that provides shade on a hot summer day. Troubled women in Zimbabwe can find temporary shelter or relief from 'the heat' at the Musasa Project, where they are able to recollect and to consider their next steps while secured in a homely environment. In short, Musasa offers temporary relief – temporary because as yet no permanent solution to the problem of violence against women has been found in Zimbabwe. This is partly due to the fact that the government has not been in a position to enact laws to halt this evil practice.

Women of all ages and from all walks of life are violated, even those with disabilities. Women of over 90 years old have been raped by young men, infants as young as one month have fallen victim to rapists, and defenceless girl children have likewise been violated. In many cases these women and girl children are threatened, beaten and injured before they are raped. It is disheartening indeed to see defenceless children and women being subjected to such inhumane acts. One may ask how a man can enjoy sex with someone who is screaming and crying for help. Where is our respect, our dignity, our humanity?

The consequences of violence against women for the family, community and economy are many. A family that experiences violence is not united. The violence impacts on the growth of children and also on their performance at school. Children who come from violent families are usually withdrawn, they lack confidence and also tend to abuse other children and their spouses when they are adults. Violence in a family also reduces the family's income, since most employers pay their staff for the number of hours worked, and a battered woman often has to spend days seeking treatment for her wounds and recuperating in hospital. Poverty becomes the order of the day, and when poverty strikes, the first victims are women and children.

People who live in a violent situation are part and parcel of their community. Unfortunately the members of any community tend to copy each other's behaviour, including the wrongs. I see violence in the family as a seed. The seed is passed on to the children, and the children pass it on to other children. Other community members copy this evil practice and the seed grows, until eventually the community becomes a considerably violent one. Development is affected, and in most cases communities living with widespread violence abandon development and the economy suffers.

As already noted, violence often results in poverty and in some cases it produces thieves and commercial sex workers. A country's economy needs educated people to effectively and efficiently manage resources. A nation consists of family units. If most families are violent, the nation becomes a nation of

violent people, with crime the order of the day. In such cases governments would channel human and financial resources towards reducing crime. This is not development and it has negative effects on the economy of any country. These resources could rather be used for the country's development. Underdevelopment increases poverty and crime. The health sector is also affected, in that a larger number of people who do not contribute much to the economy end up in hospitals with crime-related injuries, malnutrition, pregnancy, Aids and other illnesses. This demands additional financial and human resources and impacts negatively on the economy.

The abuse of alcohol is an undeniable contributor to violence against women and children in the home. The family is starved of basic necessities like food and clothing because a large proportion of the family's income is channelled into financing the father's intoxicating substances. When he is drunk he comes home to abuse his family. On being questioned about this behaviour, most men blame beer or drugs, not themselves.

My organisation has learnt that most violence in the family flows from a man's quest for power. Men want to be in control of things, even in situations where they cannot realistically be in control. One cause of violence is a man's feeling that he is no longer in control because his wife earns more money than he does. Another cause is a man's feeling that his position is threatened when his wife has better plans or ideas for the family. Women are beaten for spending their own money on items that will benefit the family. She must seek her husband's permission before she buys anything. So great is men's desire to control women that the number of domestic violence cases continues to rise by the day. The following statistics were recorded in Zimbabwe for 1997:

- ☞ 1 in 4 women were subjected to various forms of assault at the hands of their husband or partner.
- ☞ 1 in 25 women were assaulted while pregnant.
- ☞ 1 in 12 women were assaulted with a dangerous weapon or object.
- ☞ 1 in 4 women were threatened with violence.
- ☞ 1 in 4 women were forced by their husband or partner to have sex.
- ☞ 1 in 6 women were subjected to emotional abuse by their husband bringing girlfriends home.
- ☞ 1 in 6 women were prevented from getting a job or going to work.
- ☞ 1 in 4 women were prevented from seeing family or friends.

Girl children are also raped or killed for ritualistic purposes. Some men rape girl children believing that this would cure their ailment, such as HIV/Aids. In most cases the rapists are not strangers to the children, but rather, relatives or trusted people well known to the children and expected to care for them. So, in most cases rape victims are caught unaware. They would never have suspected that a male relative or a person whom they know well could pose a danger to them.

Generally speaking, it is a fact that human male adults are physically stronger than human female adults. This greater physical strength gives men unrestricted power to abuse women. It is also a fact that men are prone to vent their unresolved feelings of anger and frustration on women. When a man prone to abuse is disappointed, harassed, financially impoverished, unsuccessful, threatened, beaten by other men, and so on, he directs his anger and frustration at a woman. In short, harassing or abusing women is the method most often used by a great many men for dealing with their anger and frustration. Women cannot vent such feelings on men because they would be battered. According to sociologists, abused women tend to vent their own feelings of anger and frustration on children, and in turn, abused children vent these feelings on domestic animals like dogs, cats and chickens. Violence breeds violence. A violent man will pass on this habit to his children, and so the practice of violence is passed on from generation to generation.

Legal systems and violence

Violence against women is a violation of their human rights. In Zimbabwe there is no clear policy that makes molesting a woman a crime. The common law leaves too many loopholes, and these are exploited not only by the perpetrators, but sometimes also by those who are supposed to provide security and protection, that is, the judiciary and police. The state does not take seriously its duty to investigate, punish and prevent acts of violence against women. In most cases the state will attempt to reconcile a couple, but will not insist on punishing the perpetrator for his offence.

Historically, human rights have been attributed to the tortured prisoner of war, or the person unfairly prosecuted for his political views. When visualising an individual being deprived of fundamental rights and freedoms, most people would see a man, not a woman being tortured in her home by a member of her family. How often do people consider that a woman deprived of access to land and property merely because she is a woman is a victim of a human rights violation?

Almost all the countries of the world are ruled by men. If these male leaders always view the world from their own male perspective and never from the female perspective, of course they will overlook the issues of importance to women, and treat those issues as separate from the broader issues of concern to the nation. In this way governments persist in violating the fundamental rights of half the world's population.

Most of the perpetrators of violence I have come across agree that men are superior to women and women must accept their inferiority. Some even quote the Bible, saying that men are "likened to Jesus", and just as Jesus is the head of the church, so a man is the head of his family. These men forget that the very same Jesus humbled himself and died for sinners. How many of them are prepared to die for their family?

Strategies to address violence against women

Society must encourage men not to suppress their anger and frustrations. They must be in a position to talk about their problems, and to cry. Counselling services for men are needed. Any person facing a serious problem needs someone to talk to, someone to listen, someone who offers a shoulder to lean and cry on. Suppressed frustrations breed violence in a man!

Court sentences should be made stiffer. In my view, rapists and perpetrators of all such serious forms of abuse should be sentenced to imprisonment for a number of years with hard labour. Stiff sentences would drastically reduce violence against women.

Men themselves must discourage violence. If a man beats his wife or abuses any woman in any way, other men must be able to confront him. They should tell him that what he did was bad and that they do not wish to be associated with an abuser of women. If men are confronted in the pubs which they frequent or at social gatherings, the impact could be great enough to reduce violence against women. The old adage, "Send a thief to catch a thief", applies. Let men tell men that violence is evil. More men should form organisations to educate people, especially other men, about the dire consequences of men's violence against women.

As I mentioned earlier, in my country we have a shelter to which women can temporarily escape from violent situations. I believe that similar shelters for men should be established to cater for men who feel that they are frustrated and stressed, and that as a result they could commit an act of violence against a woman or child. They would receive counselling at the shelter. Someone would listen to their problems and offer a shoulder to lean and cry on. When they have poured out their feelings, the women and children in their home will be able to enjoy a life free of violence.

Thank you



BEST PRACTICES WORLDWIDE (Presentation 4 of 5)

Zimbabwe's Experience: The Work of Padare

Jonah Gokova

How do we take advantage of this gathering? The answer: by talking to other men. For some of you, this may be a first experience of really *talking* to other men. That said, I will now present an overview of what is happening in Harare in relation to violence against women.

I am here as a member of an organisation called Padare. It is important that you understand why we have called our organisation by this name. We have two major languages in Zimbabwe: Shona and Ndebele. *Padare* is a Shona word, the Ndebele translation of which is *Enkundleni*. Some men in my country ask why our organisation is promoting “these western concepts”. You will also be asked this question. We tell them that what we do has nothing to do with the West.

Padare refers to the early evening in a traditional setting, men sitting around the fire or under a tree, having come there to discuss the affairs of the village. This is a place for men only. (You have this tradition in Namibia too.) The women are busy preparing the food. Because they are not allowed to be where the men are, they clap to signal that the food is ready, and in turn the men clap to signal that they have received the message. The boys go to fetch the food and bring it to the men.

Padare is very exclusive. We wanted to target that very important institution and make it *inclusive*. But this has proved difficult to achieve. We try to discourage women from attending our meetings, since if women are present in discussing gender issues, men tend to get very defensive and to start targeting women. We talk better when there are no women present.

Padare has set up groups throughout Zimbabwe. The groups consist of around 25 members. They meet once a month to talk – sitting in a circle – about gender issues; to become more sensitised to gender issues. Men who know of *Padare* approach us to ask if they can form a group, and this is how the organisation has grown.

We have guidelines and a code of conduct which every group must follow. For example, we do not allow jokes about women, and minutes must be taken at every meeting and sent to head office. The guidelines are provided to each new group, and they must be taken seriously.

We have a national convenor at head office, and the groups each have a co-ordinating committee. The committees make decisions on how the meetings will be run. They will decide, for example, whether or not to invite a guest speaker such as a magistrate or teacher. All discussion at the meeting must involve gender. An example of a discussion topic is *lobola*.

Padare members are encouraged to publicly confront any man they see harassing a woman in the streets or public places.

We do not talk of these issues in clubs and bars, but we do not assume that men would not be interested in talking about them. If you start talking to the men in your workplace, you will see that they are interested. Tell them what you are doing and invite them in. You will discover that there are two groups: those supportive of what you are doing, and those who will say it is rubbish – traditional men.

This is an option you have for spreading your message. Just as you have come here to talk to men about violence against women, you can get the men in your communities together to talk about all gender issues. You can start a group as soon as you get home!

Thank you

BEST PRACTICES WORLDWIDE (Presentation 5 of 5)

The White Ribbon Campaign

Michael Kaufman

Campaign Co-founder and International Director

I would like to present to you yet another idea. Eight years ago, three men, including myself, got together one night. We felt that we had a big problem in Canada – men’s violence against women. We knew that there were many good men who did not abuse women, but we felt that those many good men had been quiet. They had said nothing to their fathers, brothers and friends. They had allowed the violence to continue.

We had no organisation or conference to deal with this problem, but we had an idea – of a way for men to speak out in public, to challenge other men and to look at their own behaviour.



Our idea was to encourage men to wear a *white ribbon* – white being the colour of peace in our part of the world, and the colour of mourning in Asia – once a year, for one week, starting on 25 November, which is now commemorated as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Wearing the white ribbon for this one week every year was a promise never to commit or condone violence against women, not to make excuses for it and not to remain silent about it.

We had no office and no money, but just an idea that caught on. To gain support for it, we approached famous people (men), such as actors and politicians, to put their names down, saying that they support this. Incredibly, just two weeks later, almost half a million boys and men wore a white ribbon.

We still encourage men to wear the white ribbon each year, and in addition we have produced materials like pamphlets and information sheets for distribution in schools, shops, banks, fire stations, police stations – wherever there are boys and men to be reached. We attach a white ribbon to all these materials so that they can wear it, and

we encourage them to do so, and to put them on their office doors and wherever it will be seen by men.

We also produce a poster every year, with the words, “*These men want to put an end to violence against women*”, accompanied by the signatures of famous men, and we encourage boys and men to add their names. We display these posters in shops, schools, churches, offices, etc. Other organisations we have asked to help spread the message include trade unions, all political parties, and large and small companies.

These are very simple ideas, therefore every boy and man can join the effort. Simple ideas are better if you are a small organisation, with limited funds or no funds, and if you rely on other organisations to help you with your task.

The idea began to spread to other parts of the world, and today it is no longer a Canadian-owned idea, but rather, it is an idea for all men in the world to take up. We are proud to be able to say that men throughout the world have joined the White Ribbon Campaign. It is starting up in new countries, on every continent, continually. In Africa, South Africa has a big campaign, supported by Nelson Mandela.

I would encourage the use of a symbol in your own campaign – one that is symbolic for all men, of all colours, ages, political leanings, religions, etc. You can of course use the white ribbon if you wish to.

I would also encourage you to focus on just one issue in your campaign: ending violence against women. Don’t talk about any other issue!



WHITE RIBBON
CAMPAIGN

REGIONAL GROUPS SESSION

After concluding his address on the White Ribbon Campaign, Dr Kaufman said that the participants would now be dividing into their regional groups, whose purpose would be to *find solutions*. Now there would be no more talk about problems. "This is where it all happens; this is the most important part of the conference."

He encouraged the men to come up with "*very very specific*" ideas and plans, for example, "Next week we will hold a meeting for traditional leaders," or, "In one month we will meet with church leaders." In other words, they should decide WHAT they will do, WHO will do it, and WHEN. Each regional group would then report back to the plenary. Some regions would be combined according to geographical or language proximity, because some of the groups were very small.

Asked whether they should come up with budget proposals too, Dr Kaufman replied that they should do so only if they can also propose where the money will come from. He encouraged them to think of what can be done with *no* money. He added that most men campaigning worldwide are working as volunteers, and that the participants should think of themselves as men who will do whatever they can as volunteers.

Following these statements, Milly Jafta of the LAC took the floor on behalf of the conference secretariat, to thank the participants for their co-operation. The secretariat had thoroughly enjoyed working with them. She then explained the proposed grouping of the regions for the final session. After a brief discussion and minor amendments, consensus was reached and the regional groups began their deliberations.

Strategies to be Implemented in Namibia to End Men's Violence

REPORT ON REGIONAL GROUPS SESSION ON REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Karas Region

Introductory remarks

We have named our 'institution' Kamav, which stands for Karas Men Against Violence.

Action plans

- ☞ We will set up local committees in each town and village represented at this conference, for example Karasburg, Keetmanshoop, Lüderitz, Tses, Berseba. Our deadline for setting up these committees is 31 March 2000.
- ☞ Before setting up these committees, we will call for a general gathering of men to inform them about the issues we have discussed here.
- ☞ Each local committee should decide on the road ahead for their community.
- ☞ We will hold a planning and review meeting twice per year.

Hardap Region

Introductory remarks

The LAC's Marital Advice Office will act as our task force for implementing our action plans.

Action plans

- ☞ *March:* We will conduct a sensitisation campaign for men at all levels, including school boys, youth forum members, church leaders and members, village councillors, other community leaders, men in workplaces, and men on other town forums. We will conduct this campaign by means of "door-to-door visits".
- ☞ *April:* We will hold seminars in towns and villages, with the aim of establishing representative committees to come up with and implement strategies for their town/village.

- ☞ *May*: We will hold a regional conference, with the aim of establishing a regional body to come up with and implement strategies for the region.
- ☞ *June onwards*: We hope to start networking with other regions with a view to organising our next national conference, at which we would propose electing a national body.

Erongo and Kunene Regions

Action plans

- ☞ We will begin by reporting back to our respective communities about this conference.
- ☞ We will form local and regional committees.
- ☞ We will hold information-sharing meetings with:
 - community leaders, starting with the church;
 - school children;
 - media representatives;
 - employees of contractors and companies like fish-processing factories, in the towns and in the export processing zone (EPZ); and
 - with men in shebeens.
- ☞ Women will be invited to join these meetings.
- ☞ We will devise a timetable – a ‘Year Planner’ – (March onwards) for holding meetings and for providing counselling for men.
- ☞ We will start generating funds for implementing our plans. We will approach donor organisations, businesses, etc.

Omaheke, Otjozondjupa and Kunene Regions

Objective

Our objective is to create a platform of awareness for men and facilitate information-sharing, ideas and experience on the problem of men’s violence against women, our overall goal being to stop this violence.

Action plans (methodologies and activities)

- ☞ We will set up local platforms and committees.
- ☞ These bodies must share information with men in their communities by holding meetings, workshops and seminars for different groups, such as community leaders, pastors, employees in the private and public sectors (e.g. police and social service workers), NGO and CBO employees, men in shebeens, prisoners and school boys.
- ☞ They must establish local support groups for men, to provide counselling and other support services.
- ☞ They must train counsellors in counselling and on the topic, ‘Gender Equality and Awareness’.
- ☞ They must organise fundraising activities.
- ☞ We will call on men to establish a ‘neighbourhood watch’ in their localities, to watch over houses (or families) when, for example, a man has to leave home for the weekend.
- ☞ We will lobby for the establishment of a national men’s organisation: a Department of Men Affairs.

Timeframe

Implementation will start immediately.

Concluding remarks

We call on the LAC to organise a follow-up conference in 2002. We wish to thank the LAC, the organising team, the donors, the participants, the presenters and the facilitators for holding this conference.

Khomas Region

Introductory remarks

We, the group of 32 men from Khomas Region, have come up with seven objectives, which we aim to start achieving as from today. We have also elected a steering committee. We have prioritised our objectives and have also decided what must be achieved at the individual level and at committee level.

Objectives

- ☞ To educate men in our communities in order to initiate a faster and clearer understanding of the issue of men's violence against women.
- ☞ To go back to our organisations or communities and report on what we have learnt from this conference.
- ☞ To break the barriers between men and women's organisations.
- ☞ To create and encourage a non-violent environment on an organisational basis.
- ☞ To start small men's groups in our communities.
- ☞ To use the media (newspapers, magazines and daily NBC Radio phone-in programmes such as the *National Chat Show* and *Open Line*) to get our communities talking about the issue.
- ☞ To encourage counselling before marriage and before engaging in relationships.

Responsibilities

- ☞ Our members' individual responsibilities are to inform and educate at least 10 men in their communities (so at least 320 men will be reached for a start), and to invite them to attend the group's next meeting, scheduled for 25 or 26 March 2000.
- ☞ We have elected a regional steering committee, comprised of:
 - Henry Meintjies (chairperson);
 - Sibali Kgobetsi (secretary);
 - Haina Goseb;
 - Fritz Gowaseb; and
 - Jackie Ananias.
- ☞ The committee is tasked to find a venue for our next meeting and to inform members of the venue, date and time. We have agreed that we cannot be unrealistic in setting our goals. We will be able to do more as we become more organised.

Oshikoto, Omusati, Oshana and Ohangwena Regions

Introductory remarks

We are determined to bring an end to all forms of violence against women in our regions. It is therefore our intention to convey the message from this conference to our communities as *gospel*. We would like to see a national office for men established by government, to do this work in future, and will lobby for this. We have come up with a plan of action for combating the violence ourselves until we have such an office.

Action plan

- ☞ We will elect a committee for each of our regions to devise and implement activities and projects in each region.
- ☞ We will hold a meeting on 18 March (if possible) for our community leaders and regional and local government representatives at all levels, to discuss violence against women and other gender-related issues. The meeting will be held either in Oshakati or Ondangwa.
- ☞ We will suggest to organisers of independence celebrations on 21 March that they add to their respective programmes an address on domestic violence. The conference participants and staff of the LAC's Ongwediva advice office will facilitate and address the crowds. The LAC is therefore requested to hasten the minutes to us so that we can give factual and concrete information.

Concluding remarks

In saying that we would like to see a national office for men established, we do not mean that we want to separate or isolate ourselves from women, or use such a platform to criticise women. Rather, what we want is an office that will get men organised and motivated to combat violence against women, and to do this as 'real men'. Bearing these points in mind, we would like to leave you with these words: "*A man is born from a woman, but a woman was made from a man!*"

Resolutions and Closing Remarks

Following the regional group reports on their plans of action, the idea of establishing a national steering committee was taken up by the plenary.

Various proposals were put forward. One of the South African presenters proposed that structures exclude people and it was better for the men to meet in their numbers and not have structures. A Zimbabwean presenter agreed, and suggested that a good compromise would be to have a voluntary body rather than an elected one. It was finally agreed that no matter what is being done at the regional level, if there is no proper national coordinating structure, regional efforts may not succeed in ending violence against women. So the participants agreed to form a voluntary national steering committee to coordinate efforts until such time as a proper governmental structure is established, and they will lobby government for one. A participant commented that government should have a Department of Gender Affairs rather than a Department of Women Affairs (or Men Affairs).

Various proposals were put forward on how the committee should be constituted, for example, by one man from each region or by a regional management committee from each region. Eventually it was agreed that men who really *want* to do the work and who *know* that they can give of their time should volunteer. Twenty-seven men volunteered (see their names and contact addresses on page 48).

It was then proposed that a constitution should be formulated to guide the steering committee, and that another conference should be organised to do this.

At this point Dr Kaufman asked to make some input, based on his own experience. He said that the goal should not be to hold conferences. This one cost half a million dollars! There are many things the men can do as individuals. It is very exciting that a men's organisation has been formed on an informal and voluntary basis. Dr Kaufman suggested that the organisation be called **Namibian Men Against Violence Against Women**. No final decision was taken on a name.



WHITE RIBBON
CAMPAIGN

Dr Kaufman closed the discussion with the following remarks:

The problems of men's violence against women goes back 8000 years. For what you have achieved in just three days, men of Namibia, you are amazing!

It is wonderful that we have felt our strength together. The next time you have to speak to a man who is committing violence, you will know that you are not alone, but that over 200 others in your own country, and many thousands more in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Canada and elsewhere, are supporting you and saying that they are busy changing 8000 years of history by building societies based on true justice. This is a new struggle for liberation. Just as you swept away apartheid, you are making history by sweeping away cruelty and violence inflicted on women. I feel so honoured to be with you to see what you are doing. Back home I will say that Namibians are setting up regional committees and ask why we are not doing the same.

There is room for anyone who wants to work with the steering committee. Bring your fathers and brothers in. If each of 200 men brings 10 more, that's 2000!

I look forward to hearing from Namibian men and developing closer ties with you. I have felt inspired by your singing and your strength.

Thank you

CLOSING CEREMONY

The conference was concluded with a cocktail hour, an official closing ceremony and dinner.

Several guests were invited to join the participants for this final gathering, including representatives of the LAC's governmental and non-governmental partners in gender-related work, representatives of the conference sponsors, Namibian and foreign dignitaries, and LAC staff members.

A cultural song and dance group from the Katutura Youth Enterprise Centre (KAYEC) entertained the participants outdoors before the cocktail hour and continued indoors before the closing ceremony began.

Before the closing address, LAC paralegal Alec Boois presented an overview of the conference resolutions and action plans. He began his presentation by asking, "Are there any *REAL* men present?", to which the response was a resounding "YES!".

Dr Kaufman then called upon each small group facilitator in turn to receive a certificate as testimony to their having undergone training in group facilitation. He congratulated them all on a job well done.

Thereafter, the Chairperson of the Legal Assistance Trust, Advocate David Smuts, officially closed the conference. (Adv. Smuts served as the founding director of the LAC from 1988 when the organisation was established, until 1992 when he stepped down to practise full time as an advocate at the Windhoek Bar. He currently chairs both the Legal Assistance Trust and the Human Rights Trust, whose trustees supervise the work of the LAC.)

Before dinner was served, the men comprising the Kunene regional group entertained the guests with a traditional song and dance performance.



The cultural song and dance group from the Katutura Youth Enterprise Centre (KAYEC) entertaining the participants outside prior to the closing ceremony.

Closing Address

Dave Smuts

Chairperson of the Legal Assistance Trust



Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues, Friends ... welcome to you all! For too long, the issue of violence against women has been treated as a women's issue – in Namibia and elsewhere. This conference has demonstrated that this is going to change!

The success of the conference has also demonstrated the importance of civil society in working for human rights, and we are here to work for the realisation of one of the most basic fundamental rights: equality between men and women.

I would like to congratulate all who have been involved in this conference for taking this initiative and demonstrating that civil society is alive and well!

It is a great sadness that the Caprivi Region has not been represented here. I sincerely hope that the Caprivi will be able to join us again soon.

I would like to thank, first and foremost, the funders of this event: the Ford Foundation, UNICEF, the British Council and Austrian Development Cooperation, for their generous contributions.

Thanks also to the participants, the facilitators and the translators. You have all done a magnificent job, and we – the trustees of the Legal Assistance Trust and Human Rights Trust, and the director and staff of the Legal Assistance Centre – are very grateful to you.

A special word of thanks must go to Dr Michael Kaufman, and to the South African and Zimbabwean presenters, for the wonderful work that they are doing in their own and other countries, and especially for their contributions to our country through this conference.

Without the dedication of the organising committee at the LAC, this conference would not have been possible, and I thank Dianne Hubbard, Milly Jafta, Monica Nganjone, Willem Odendaal, Norman Tjombe, Melanie Demarte, and former LAC staff member Rosa Namises, for their dedication and very hard work.

This conference has been a great success, but we have to keep following up on its achievements. When we go back to our communities, we must face the challenges and not allow our work against violence against women to stop with this conference. Let us not allow this to be just another conference! Hopefully we will be able to meet again next year, and look back and say that we have brought real change.

Again, I thank you, and wish you all a safe journey home! Goodnight.

NAMIBIAN MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Volunteer Steering Committee

Name	Postal Address	Telephone	Fax
1. Aloysius Katzao	Box 180 Keetmanshoop	063-223187	063-223758
2. Alec Boois	Box 729 Mariental	063-240374	063-242354
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4. Gift Kazombaue	Box 848 Windhoek	061-239469	-
5. Michael Kudumo	Box 1258 Windhoek	081-2406691	-
6. Jafet //Garoëb	Box 1079 Okahandja	062-501721	-
7. Mbangu Lucas	Box 1188 Rundu	-	-
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9. Jacky Ananias	Box 60646 Katutura	061-216030	-
10. Reginald Ndara	Box 730 Rundu	067-255237	-
11. Careful Moses Kaeka	Box 61711 Katutura	-	-
12. Joe Murangi	Box 9396 Eros Windhoek	-	061-246042
13. Henry John Meintjies	Box 98001 Windhoek	081-1294247	061-214629
14. Gerson Mutendere	P/Bag 12372 Windhoek	061-2122571	061-2122571
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16. Abdallah Mwakembeu	Box 70490 Khomasdal	061-217621	-
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18. Siegfriedth-Bandu Aebob	Box 510 Khorixas	067-331392 / siegfriedth@yahoo.com	
19. Charles Pumulo	Box 2303 Gobabis	062-562249	062-562827
20. Rev. Ernst //Gamxamûb	Box 304 Okahandja	062-501166 (w) / 504182 (h)	
21. Josef Gariseb	Box 5262 Rehoboth	062-236318	-
22. Elrich Pretorius	P/Bag 13359 Windhoek	061-220066 (w) / 243159 (h)	
23. Hans Stramisch	Box 1295 Okahandja	062-501968	-
24. Eben Tsihoto	P/Bag 502 Opuwo	065-273409 (w) 065-273321 (h)	065-273032
25. Simon Mbahuma	Box 60246 Katutura	061-2846204 (w) 061-245006 (h)	061-257675
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27. Vetaruhe Kandorozi	scayinokakarara@hotmail.com (no other contact details provided)		