Challenging attitudes, changing lives
Sta-C Namases, director of Special Olympics Namibia
Helena Ochurus and the Estorff Kindergarten in Damaraland
Dear Sister Readers

This issue of Sister Namibia is full of stories about women in interesting forms of employment: our ‘cover girl’, Sta-C Namases, started as a volunteer at Special Olympics Namibia and ended up as its director, Helena Ochurus established a very special kindergarten in Damaraland and keeps it running against all odds, Annastansia Keniale drives a haulage truck and loves the sound of its powerful engine, Lotta, a young law student and researcher, is determined to become a magistrate in Namibia one day so that she can ‘make real change happen’, and publisher Jane Katjavivi has just become the author of a beautiful book. Magano Neri, however, also reflects on all those thousands of women in our country who are officially termed unemployed but work ten or more hours every day as keepers of the house, workers in the field, water carriers and informal traders, as educators of our children and carers for the sick. Why are they, she ponders, not ‘officially’ recognized as vital contributors to our economy?

Are you a feminist? we asked Youth Minister Kazenemabo among other questions - and received thought provoking and amazingly honest answers. Read the interview on pages 8 and 9 – and tell us what you think! We also included contributions by our young men – don’t miss the beautiful poem on the topic on manhood, and the first part of the story “A search for Truth” which starts in this issue and will be continued in the next.

In reaction to current issues, we also included reflections and interviews on ‘Sexism in the media’, violence against women and the recent murder of Magdalena Stoffels, and an informative article on rape.

Despite the continued humiliation and horror that women experience, let us not forget to celebrate the beauty and power of life. Enjoy Kate Cowley’s artwork on ‘fertility and abundance’ in our middle pages.

A huge thank you to all readers who sent us SMS messages! Your comments on the magazine – see page 33 - are truly encouraging and we appreciate every single one. Please continue writing to us at 0814 629 639! We need to hear your voices from all parts of Namibia.

Happy reading!

Your Sister Team

Who we are ...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Board of Trustees: Leigh-Anne Agnew (chairperson), Tamsin Bowra, Rudolf Gawaseb, Dianne Hubbard, Eveline January, Nicky Marais, Fransina Mutumbulwa, Immaculate Sechogele

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With a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering and chemistry you would expect Stay-C Namases to work in a laboratory or on a construction site. Instead, you will find her in a track suit at the Dagbreek School in Klein Windhoek, working for Special Olympics Namibia (SON). The passion in her voice and the expression on her face tell you that there is nothing that Stay-C would rather be doing. “I know that this is what I need and want to do at this season of my life”, she says with absolute conviction.

According to WHO statistics, 3-5% of every country’s population live with some form of intellectual disability. In Namibia this would amount to around 60,000 people, a very large part of our society, about which we do not hear and know much. To take these women, men and children out of the seclusion of their homes and villages, Special Olympics Namibia was founded in 1998. It started off with 50 intellectually disabled athletes and has grown to currently serve over 1 500 adults and children. SON offers them year-round sports training and athletic competitions. The aim is to develop their physical fitness and to provide them with opportunities to demonstrate courage, to experience joy and to share skills and friendship with their families, other athletes and the community.

Currently, SON has 7 sub-programs in Erongo, Khomas, the far North, in Luderitz, Tsumeb, in the Kavango and in Hardap with 249 volunteers all over Namibia. SON focuses on athletics, basketball and football as their main Olympic sports.

While Paralympics provides sports opportunities for elite-level athletes with physical disabilities, Special Olympics is a separate organization, creating sports opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities of all ability levels.

From volunteer to director

Stay-C was introduced to SON when she was still a student at the Windhoek International School. As part of the International Baccalaureate programme, students were required to do a certain amount of social service. Stay-C trained as a volunteer at SON, participated in one of SON’s sports events - and that was the moment, when she got hooked. “Working with SON opened my eyes,” she explains. “When I engaged with the disabled athletes, I felt that there was a lot of realness and genuineness in them.” Stay-C learned that each
person is special and unique and that everyone has special abilities. Even during her studies at Stellenbosch, Stay-C continued to dedicate some time during her holidays back in Namibia to Special Olympics. When she finished her Bachelor degree and returned to Namibia, SON offered Stay-C the position of full-time National Director. From the beginning they made it clear that, as a volunteer driven organisation, they would not be able to pay Stay-C a salary commensurate with that of other directors. Stay-C was passionate about her work at SON, but she thought long and hard about whether to take the job. Eventually she said yes - and has not looked back since. Working at SON gives her the feeling that she is actually doing something for her community, and not just talking about it.

**Challenging Attitudes**

Stay-C’s family initially struggled to accept her decision. Her father especially could not understand why Stay-C, with her high qualifications, would want to spend her time doing this job, for so little money. Over time, however, her family realized how happy and fulfilled Stay-C felt doing what she is passionate about. Today they are proud of Stay-C for following her heart and, according to Stay-C, God’s will.

“I realised that through our organisation’s awareness building even my dad’s attitude towards people with intellectual disabilities has changed. This is the core of what SON is trying to achieve: To challenge attitudes and change them, one at a time. In this way we will be able to create a lasting change within our communities in which people with disabilities can be accepted. We all have different abilities and qualities - so why not accept us all?”

For Stay-C it is important that SON is not a charity organisation, where people merely come together to play and have fun. “It’s a movement that celebrates the human spirit and tries to break down negative stereotypes. In the past, people with intellectual disabilities were ostracized and shunned, because they had abilities that people didn’t understand. But through awareness and simple training people are learning to accept them and recognise their importance in society.”

**The team**

Sta-C is supported by a team consisting of Sports Coordinator LaRochel Snyder, Finance Intern Karlien Visagie, Katutura Football For Hope Centre Coordinator Bruce Heyns, and Athlete Representative on the SON board Deon Namiseb, who is also the International Global Messenger for Special Olympics.

**Changing lives**

As a volunteer driven organisation, SON depends on the consistent dedication, patience and love that their volunteers put into their service. “Volunteers are the pillars of SON,” Stay-C says. Any member of society with the time, will and energy to participate in a SON event is welcome. If volunteering is not your cup of tea, you could simply support SON financially, or spread the word about its work and encourage others to get involved.

The most effective way to show your support for SON though is to accept people with disabilities in your community instead of stigmatizing them. The kind of acceptance and love that differently abled athletes find at SON goes a long way in building their self-esteem and their pride in who they are and what they can achieve. Imagine if this love and acceptance was replicated in the wider community - it would not only change the person with the intellectual disability, it would change your life too!

**If you would like to get involved with SON, contact:**

Stay Namases at phone/fax +264 61 302 403, email special-olympics@iway.na or write to P.O. Box 7246, Windhoek.
On July 2nd 2010, two newspapers in Namibia published a sexist advert produced by the advertising firm Paragon Investments and commissioned by Metcalfe Attorneys. The almost full page advert featured the bare buttocks of a woman in a skimpy thong, with the imprint of a boot and the words ‘Still Kicking It’ on one cheek. Sister Namibia and other organisations as well as members of the general public were appalled and called for the immediate retraction of the advert and an apology from the responsible agencies. Although they were initially reluctant to retract the advertisement, Metcalfe Attorneys eventually replaced it with a less offensive one.

Sexism in the media – which in short could be described as the exploitation of a woman’s or a man’s body and sexuality for the purpose of selling a product or a story - is an issue on the pulse of which Sister Namibia has had her finger for a long time. In 2008, fed up with continued sexism in the media, Sister Namibia launched the “Green Ball Holder Award for Sexism in the Media” and commissioned an artist to design a provocative and controversial advert to gauge the public’s thoughts. The shock value of the advert attracted much needed attention and got both women and men talking about sexism, but Sister Namibia later decided to take a more subtle approach, as in a way their advert was stooping to the levels of the sexist advertisers. While in the past Sister Namibia’s cries for women’s bodily integrity has been a lone voice in the wilderness, the reaction to the Metcalfe advert showed that its small but insistent efforts to raise awareness have borne fruit.

Sister Namibia (SN) would like to see debates and discussions around sexism in the media to continue until positive changes are visible. The magazine therefore spoke to Robin Tyson (RT), a media personality and lecturer in Media and Information Communication at the University of Namibia on his views about the issue and in particular on his reaction to the Metcalfe advert.

SN: Why are people not responding strongly to sexist images and the stereotyping of women in the media, especially in advertising? Why such apathy?
RT: I am not sure if there is apathy - with the huge outpouring of comments and criticism from readers in the case of the quite repulsive advert of Metcalfe Attorneys. On the SMS pages in The Namibian newspaper there was a lot of intelligent response, pointing out to Metcalfe the connection between that kind of advertising and the increase in gender based violence. Maybe he did not realise this, but maybe he did and was doing it to provoke controversy.

SN: One could argue that this particular advert was blatantly sexist and therefore not too difficult to spot. In 2008, Trustco had an equally sexist advert on a billboard and in print, and Sister Namibia was the only organisation to speak out against it and confront Trustco. Why this big difference between then and now?
RT: You can look positively on this situation and say, maybe things have changed. Some years ago Trustco could get away with it, but now people are more conscious about sexist images in the media.

SN: Would you say that Metcalfe, The Namibian and Paragon Investments had the ‘guts’ to place such an advert, because very few people had spoken out against more subtle sexist adverts before?
RT: Yes - I suppose you could. Perhaps he wanted to stir up that controversy.

SN: Why do you think are people not sensitised or conscious of the more subtle forms of sexist
UNAM Media Lecturer Robin Tyson

and stereotypical portrayal of women in the media?

RT: I guess we all need more education on the issue. I have personally never thought about it that ‘deeply’. Maybe we need to do more research on that.

SN: What is the responsibility of the newspapers that ran the advert? Who holds them accountable? They tried to justify their actions by saying that they were trying to spark social debate on the issue. Are they right in saying this?

RT: The Namibian has a woman editor, a woman sub-editor, a woman business manager, so you can’t say that it was done by a group of men who thought it was funny. If anybody could have stopped such a blatantly sexist advert from being published it would have been the editor and her female team.

But you must remember that it is a commercial newspaper and, excuse the pun, the bottom line is: Money talks. The Namibian got N$ 6 000 or N$ 10 000 for the advert, and with government having withdrawn all its adverts, I am sure the editor is under some commercial pressure.

The other thing is - and I am going to be a bit controversial now - that freedom of speech is freedom of speech. It does not mean that we should have sexually provocative images of women in our newspapers, but within reason, let us have a bit of controversy and generate discussion. Maybe Metcalfe did some good in a funny kind of way. By getting people so angry about the advert, he made it clear where the line is, even for the newspaper editor and her team. Next time they are considering running a similar advert, maybe they will be guided by their readers’ previous responses.

SN: Do you think that a regulating body should be established to regulate and check these kinds of adverts, and not just sexist ones, but racist, ageist and homophobic ones too?

RT: Well, we used to have an advertising authority in Namibia... but I don’t know what happened to it, it would be very interesting to find out. With the Metcalfe advert, there were complaints laid against the Law Society of Namibia, so there are bodies that complaints can be directed at.

But as a media person I am very reluctant to have these bodies telling you what you can and cannot publish. And do we really want an advertising body saying ‘don’t do that’, even before the media have put it up? I would rather have the controversial or offensive thing appearing and the public’s reaction to it, than the controversial advert or story not appearing at all. We would run the danger of sanitising our media output. When we never see any signs of sexism or racism it will falsely create the impression that it does not exist, while it does. Whereas having a sexist advert – I am not saying it is a good thing - provokes responses in the way that the Metcalfe advert did. Rather have that than not having it at all.

In the past, adverts were blatantly sexist. Are they more subtle today?
How does your Ministry assess the situation of women’s rights in Namibia today?

We are not a government on our own; we are part of the Namibian government and are guided by our gender policies. We have good laws that protect the fundamental human rights of women and children. At a constitutional level, Namibia is one of the best places you can find on earth. Namibia also has an open environment at policy level.

But societies are dynamic and evolving structures. While some societies are open and quick in embracing change, others are stagnant or react differently to different stages of development. To be honest: The majority of people in this country are conservative. They will sing national unity in public, but deep down they are still chauvinistic, tribal, xenophobic and homophobic. Our founding president used to preach 50/50. But we used to gossip about him and nicknamed him 50/50 behind his back. Some pretend to be open for political convenience - to be popular, to speak the language and to play to the gallery. But when they retreat into their comfort zones, they become who they really are. This is true for both men and women.

But I am not blame-focused, I am solution oriented. And if you are solution oriented you don’t pretend, because reality does not pretend - reality presents itself as it is. And the reality is: As much as we would like to be an open society, we are still predominantly tribal, traditional, and patriarchal. While at a national and policy level we have everything it takes for a plural, open society, at a practical level we are not open to embrace change.

Why is this so?

Our minds, attitudes and behaviours are rooted in and influenced by our different cultures, whether we like them or not, and also the social, economic and political challenges which women and girls are facing are often influenced and caused by cultural values and understanding.

For example, in my Otjiherero culture, when I die, my heritage traditionally goes to my nephews, while the Constitution now says that my heritage should go to my wife and children. But you will find that even my educated sister will be on the front line to abuse her fellow women in cases of heritage. And this unfortunately also manifests itself in politics. If you go to our SWAPO congresses, you will find that the women do not vote for one another. This is a cultural influence that comes from home.

What do you think needs to happen?

We have to understand why women are doing this to each other. Colonialism treated both men and women as non-entities, but women were doubly oppressed - by the system and by the culture that was supposed to protect them. Women in our society have had no authority over anything or anyone else, and now some try to exert their authority to the detriment of their own kind. If you grow up under oppression and violence, you tend to become oppressive and violent yourself. Because you have been so much deprived of opportunities, you deny opportunities to others with the first chance you get. It is like black on black oppression which has no civility, no rule, and which is barbaric.

It is sad when you find that the oppressed become the oppressors. We went to fight apartheid, but today we...
find that we want to replicate the same system that we fought. We say, we are one Namibia and one nation, but where do appointments reflect the Namibia rainbow? Where are the women? We must arrive at a point where we feel truly guilty when a colour is missing in our rainbow and where not having 50/50 representation of women and men in politics is seen as a crime.

What in your understanding does it mean ‘to be a man’ in Namibia today?

If I am a man, I must be strong. I must be intelligent. And I feel threatened, when I am sitting in front of a very intelligent young woman. I must be the one who owns things, and I lose confidence, when my girlfriend or wife has a rewarding job. Instead of welcoming this, I feel intimidated, threatened and disowned. It is the cultural attitude that society must be led by men which prevents assertive women to advise and lead.

Why is this not changing?

Because we suppress openness and we don’t address the ‘why’. We are not taught to ask why - because when you ask ‘why’, you are challenging the situation. - Even a child must grow up asking questions. It is a fundamental right to ask and to be given answers.

What needs to happen to ensure that this consciousness develops especially among young Namibians?

Namibia needs to become a plural and open democratic society. We must learn to live and co-exist with differences and with people of different cultural and political persuasions. Feminism must be part of this open society; nobody in an open society should be locked up or silenced. I am ready to engage with feminists in a debate about their issues, because they will enrich the process. I embrace and enjoy diversity.

Are you a feminist?

I am not a feminist, but I have many friends, inside and outside Namibia, who are. Some are even fanatic feminists, and I enjoy their company, because I want to understand their language and their expectations. Some of their points boil down to human rights, some points simply say: let us share opportunities and respect me as a human being, not as an object. I wouldn’t like to be treated like an object, and if another person says ‘don’t treat me like an object’, I will definitely sympathise with that person. But feminists also have to be prepared to live alongside non-feminists and hear what constitutes their world. As an open society we must also allow voices to be heard that we don’t like to hear and understand their motivations. Feminism must exist. Tradition and culture must exist. Tribes and people of different colours cannot be wished away, women and men and people choosing to become gays and lesbians cannot be wished away. Namibia has emerged from a period of oppression and repression and has decided to be a pluralistic society, and therefore all these differences must be accommodated.

Let the people make their own choices and let society accept them. Let us internalize laws and policies that guide our fundamental human rights. I believe in liberty, and I believe that liberties are not exchangeable; they are a birth right, as long as I am working within the parameters of the law.
WOMEN’S HEALTH

What to do and know if you are RAPED

The Gender Research and Advocacy Project at the Legal Assistance Centre has been working for many years to increase awareness about rape and what to do if you have been raped. The department’s most recent project has been to produce a series of pamphlets designed to give rape survivors the key information they need after a rape.

What to do if you are raped

The first pamphlet provides information about what a rape survivor should do immediately after a rape. For example, a rape survivor should not wash him or herself until after a doctor has performed a medical examination. The pamphlet also recommends that a person who has been raped should take a spare pair of clothes to the police station as the police are likely to keep the clothes the rape survivor was wearing as evidence. The pamphlet also gives information about the healthcare a rape survivor should receive. For example, a doctor should discuss with the rape survivor whether he or she should take post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). PEP is medication that may help to prevent HIV infection. The doctor should also discuss with a female rape survivor whether she needs to take medication to prevent pregnancy.

Bail in cases of rape and domestic violence

The second pamphlet explains how bail is managed in these cases. Bail is the conditional release of a person charged with a criminal offence. Being “free on bail” is not the same as being free because the Magistrate will often set conditions that the accused must follow. For example, in all cases of bail given for crimes of rape and domestic violence, the accused may not have contact with the complainant (the rape survivor). In cases of rape, the police also have a duty to inform the complainant of the court date of the bail hearing. This is because the complainant has the right to ask the prosecutor to present relevant information at the hearing. For example, if the accused had threatened to kill the complainant, the complainant should tell the prosecutor. The Magistrate will consider this information when deciding whether or not bail should be granted and what conditions should be set.

A rape complainant’s guide to being a witness in court

The third pamphlet explains the process of a rape trial. For example, the prosecutor has a duty to meet with the complainant before the trial. The purpose of this meeting is to explain what will happen during the trial. The pamphlet also explains what the term “vulnerable witness” means. A rape complainant is a vulnerable witness. Vulnerable
witnesses are allowed to ask for special arrangements in a trial to make the process easier. Possible arrangements could include holding the trial in a less formal setting whilst the rape complainant gives evidence, holding the trial in the courtroom but placing a screen between the complainant and the accused, or allowing the rape complainant to give evidence by closed circuit television, if such equipment is available.

**Withdrawing a rape case**

The fourth pamphlet provides information for a complainant who is not sure whether he or she wants to continue with the case. The pamphlet explains the process that must be followed to withdraw a case and gives reasons why it is a good idea to continue with a rape case. For example, the pamphlet explains that rape is a serious crime and should be punished. If the accused is found guilty, the minimum sentence may be five, ten or fifteen years in prison. The pamphlet also explains that a rape trial is private. This information can help reassure complainants who are concerned that people from the community will come to the trial.

The set of four pamphlets provide important information about rape in an easy-to-read format. The pamphlets will be distributed across the country by the Legal Assistance Centre at workshops and trainings, and will also be gradually available at police stations and courts. Community-based organisations and social workers will also receive copies to distribute to the public. The pamphlets are available in English, Afrikaans, Otjiherero and Oshiwambo.  

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**Contact for more information!!!**

For more information about the Combating of Rape Act or to obtain copies of our publications, please contact the Legal Assistance Centre:

Email: info@lac.org.na
Fax: 088 613 693
Post: PO Box 604 Windhoek
Who is unemployed?

By Magano Neri

Who in our society is defined as unemployed? Does this definition do justice to the innumerable women without formal employment, who work more hours per day than most formally employed citizens? How does the official definition of ‘employment’ affect government policies and strategies and in particular the position and recognition of women?

Let us imagine a poor rural woman with no or very little education. She has one, two or more children and a partner who is working in the city in order to earn a living in a formal employment situation. From the time she wakes, she fetches water, collects firewood, makes a nutritious meal for her family, ensures that the animals are fed and watered, bathes the children, ensures that their clothes are clean, sees to their school duties and tends to the subsistence agriculture economy of the household. She does all of this before she prepares her goods to sell them through informal trade.

Do we ever measure the value of this woman’s work as part of the ‘manufacturing’ productive labour for Namibia? Do we ever include in employment statistics the time that this woman uses to ensure, every day, that her children are well fed and able to successfully participate in class? Or is she just part of the huge number of ‘unemployed’ people of Namibia?

We should go back to the drawing board and comprehensively look at the lens we are using to classify people as unemployed. And which frameworks do we utilise to conclude that women who are not employed in the formal sector do NOT contribute to the economy, even though they do so in indirect but equally significant ways? And how do we measure all this, if at all?

Who accounts for the working time of the woman in our example? Is it possible that her time can be calculated and included in models that present ‘contributors’ to economic growth and the national gross domestic product (GDP)? Can her work and time be included into national reporting of productive labour? They certainly do contribute to national development in my view.

Measures of economic progress historically value only paid work. For example, if you pay a stranger to look after your child, the economy grows. Take care of your own child, and it has no value in our measures of progress. Therefore, much of what is recorded as ‘growth’ is simply a shift from the unpaid household economy to the market economy. But this is not just an accounting quirk. The lack of value assigned to unpaid work has serious implications for policy making, budget spending and for the quality of life of a country’s citizens. It affects the persistent gender wage gap, the high poverty rates among single mothers and their children, the increasing unemployment figures, as well as the decreasing time parents spend with their own children. (The latter is of course a topic for another conversation.) Is it possible that there would be less people, who are technically ‘unemployed’, if we looked at the problem differently?

Feminist economist Marilyn Waring suggests...
their activities in a given week. This means that governmental officials, statisticians and policy-makers know how much time is spent on unpaid work in Canada. Using different methods, they can then calculate the monetary value of that unpaid work which turns out to be between 30.6% and 41.4% of the GDP - no small amount!

The spread between 30.6% and 41.4% is the result of two different valuation methods used. A so called replacement value is calculated on the basis of how much it would cost to replace unpaid workers with paid workers, based on current hourly wages for comparable work. In Canada in 1992 this was $284.9 billion! Opportunity value, on the other hand, is calculated on the amount women would be earning if they were in the paid labour market instead of doing unpaid work in the home. In Canada in 1992, the opportunity value of unpaid work was $318.8 billion! I think you see my point.

Unfortunately, calculating replacement and opportunity values per se do not change the fact that women’s work, even in the paid work force, is undervalued and paid less than men’s, and that women continue to belong to the domestic sphere. However, the more than $300 billion of opportunity value of unpaid work in Canada highlight the absolute dependency of paid work activities on women’s unpaid work of reproduction and care of life.

I wonder therefore, if not something can be done to arrive at a more realistic and comprehensive view to address the unemployment issue in our country. To value the existing contributions of (mostly) women who work at home as an integral part of a healthy socio-economic environment could be one answer.

Perhaps we can start by recognising that it is our right - and responsibility - to question the basis on which our government takes economic decisions and consequently allocates government money. We could cooperate with government and civil society to create or maintain systems that protect the most vulnerable, not as a gesture of charity, but as an essential part of a healthy economy. We could adapt our language, so that we no longer make statements like: “My mother doesn’t work.” We could also acknowledge that all people of all ages and all abilities are contributing to our society, regardless of whether or not they are recognized by the monetary economy.

The staggering value of unpaid work

Since 1996, time-use surveys have been an integral part of the Canadian census. A percentage of respondents are asked to fill out detailed forms noting all

“In Canada in 1992, the opportunity value of unpaid work was $318.8 billion!”
versatile, well-travelled and candid, author and publisher Jane Katjavivi, in her recently published book, reflects on her life story and her connection with Namibia, friendship and family, the importance of books and challenges for women.

Born in Leeds in northern England in 1952, Jane was the third of four children. She was lucky to live in a large house with large garden, which was her playground in summer and winter. As a teenager she became involved through the church in support of projects in the Third World, and then studied Literature and African Studies at the University of Sussex. This brought her into contact with students from Southern Africa and led to her involvement in student campaigns against apartheid. Later doing an MA at the University of Birmingham, she wrote on ‘South African Subimperialism’. While the 1970s were filled with political activity, for Jane the 1980s were years of raising a family and working with books.

Meeting Peter, marriage and travel

Her first job in the mid-1970s was as a scholarship officer with an educational charity in London, World University Service. She raised funds for students from Southern Africa who had been denied education on the basis of race or politics. There were five Namibians, one of whom was the late Jackson Kaujeua who was staying with Bishop Colin Winter, who had been deported from Namibia by the South African authorities. It was Bishop Winter who suggested she talk to Peter Katjavivi, then SWAPO Representative for the UK and Western Europe. Later she went to work with Peter as an Information Officer, and over many press statements and booklets about the Namibian liberation struggle, they fell in love.

They moved to Oxford where Peter studied for his doctorate in Namibian history, and married in 1981. They had a son, Perivi, in 1984 and a daughter, Isabel, in 1988. They moved to the States in 1988 where Peter was a Visiting Fellow at Yale University at the time when talks about Namibian independence restarted. It was the end of the Cold War. The UN went to Namibia in 1989 and oversaw free and fair elections. Peter went home in July 1989, after being in exile for 27 years and Jane followed in December 1989 with the children.

New life in Namibia

Jane knew Namibian history but she had to learn about the actual country, and people’s customs. Despite the racial politics of the past, she found Peter’s family very accepting of her, as most Namibians have been. She had dreamt of opening a publishing house in Namibia and that dream came true when she set up New Namibia Books in 1990. It focused on Namibian writing, and published 65 books over ten years: literature, life stories, history, politics, traditional folktales, children’s books. In 1995 Jane opened a bookshop in Post Street Mall believing passionately that books can liberate our minds and potential, particular after the cultural isolation under South African rule – she felt the worst desert in Namibia was the book desert!

She published for ten years, from 1990 to 2000, and helped various book development associations in Namibia and continent-wide. But publishing is demanding and needs capital to develop. Jane was overstretched from running the publishing company and the bookshop. Also she had two children to look after. Her health started to suffer.

On the move again – this time to Europe

In 2003, Peter was posted to the European Union and Belgium and later to Germany as the Ambassador for Namibia and Jane became a diplomatic wife. It was both a challenge and an opportunity. There were few official duties but lots of possibilities and she learned to converse with people from different countries, cultures, religions and political opinions.

One challenge was learning to entertain on a grand scale. It was a privilege to have some evenings discussing world events with

**Undisciplined Heart**

By Helen Vale
ambassadors from different countries. Life was quieter because she was not working fulltime though she became involved in networking within the diplomatic and host country communities; promoting Namibia in business and other networks; working on specific programmes of cultural exchange; and fund-raising to assist in disaster relief in developing countries.

**Back home again**

Jane’s focus since her return to Namibia has been on writing. Her memoir *Undisciplined Heart* was launched in Namibia in June this year. The title came from the fact that for six years she had struggled with episodes of heart failure and an irregular heart beat termed an ‘undisciplined heart’. The book was written between 2004 and 2009. It deals in part with the challenges of diplomatic life and learning how to be the wife of an ambassador. But she started *Undisciplined Heart* as a means of exploring the friendship of her women friends in Namibia, before coming to see that it was also her story, and the story of her connection with Namibia.

She had missed the landscape of Namibia, the climate and open lifestyle but most of all her family and friends - a group of strong, independent women who had all come from outside Namibia, like her, and made it their home. They’re involved in work on HIV/AIDS, in theatre, early childhood education, and community development projects. For some years they met each week for breakfast and brought their lives to those gatherings, talking about the personal and political, about work and life in Namibia.

Jane’s story is well worth reading - her moving description of her life, her friendships, her political activism and ongoing commitment to Namibia, her sadness over deaths of friends, her courage in dealing with her own health and the new spiritual insights gained - are fascinating and inspirational.

“When I first arrived in Brussels, I found it strange to be back in Europe after making my home in Namibia. Most people saw me as an English woman, although by then I considered myself a Namibian. It took some time to make friends and I spent a lot of time looking back at my life in Namibia and writing about it. This was the beginning of Undisciplined Heart.”

“The development of a culture of reading would enhance people’s broader educational achievements as well as enrich us all culturally.”

*Isabel Katjavivi*
Annastansia Kenaihe was the first female taxi driver in Windhoek and is probably the only female haulage truck driver in Namibia. She enjoys doing work traditionally reserved for men, because she loves strenuous physical activity and - the exciting sound of engines!

Meet Annastansia Kenaihe, a *haulage truck* driver. The 45-year old mother of nine from Windhoek says she loves her job with a passion and would not exchange it for anything. She is probably the only woman in Namibia, who has chosen this profession so far.

Anna, as she is called by colleagues, works for Etosha Transport in Windhoek as the driver of a Scania haulage truck. She has always been attracted to jobs traditionally reserved for men. “I enjoy doing hard labour or a job that requires physical activity, it’s where my talent lies,” she says.

**First female taxi driver**

Her career in driving dates years back, when she had a sedan vehicle which she used to transport children in her neighbourhood to and from school, and charged the parents a monthly fee. As time passed, she discovered that, being a single mother, the business was not earning her enough to fend for her large family. “I had to make a plan to generate more income from my car, and I thought of registering it as a taxi.” In 1999 she did so and became the first female taxi in the city. She drove her taxi for nine years.

Needless to say she turned heads. Sometimes people were even afraid or uncertain whether to climb into her taxi because of her gender. “But that did not discourage me at all,” she maintains. “In fact, it encouraged me, because I was able to prove to the nation that women too can drive taxis and not just stay at home waiting for financial support from a man.”

However, after nine years, Anna got tired of driving her taxi and started to look for a more challenging job. One day, a female passenger asked her how long she intended to stay as a taxi driver. “I remember that I just laughed and told her that my dream was to drive haulage trucks. I could see that she was shocked that a woman really wanted to drive those ‘big trucks’. But I was willing to go to the end of the world to make that dream a reality.”

Anna started to look for information where one could be trained as a truck driver. Her efforts landed her at the Unitrans Driving Academy. She learned to drive a haulage truck and obtained a code CE driver’s license. “When I first walked into the Academy, the trainer couldn’t believe it. He was overwhelmed and eager to train me from day one,” she remembers. “I only paid for one lesson, then he offered to train me free of charge. He said he had never had of a woman at the Academy and was very inspired by me and the great progress I made.” Anna was amongst ten male learners, and she says everyone was helpful to her. She also *pays tribute* to Unitrans Academy for helping her realize her dream.

“I could see that she was shocked that a woman really wanted to drive those ‘big trucks’. But I was willing to go to the end of the world to make that dream a reality.”
Anna enjoys working for her current employer, because she has benefits such as medical aid and a pension fund. “My life at home has improved so much, and I thank God each day.” She has been driving haulage trucks for Etosha Trucks for two years now and describes this time as full of new experiences. The job has made her a “stronger and happier person”.

She admits that when she started her work she was scared, felt unsafe and lacked confidence, especially when driving at night, but by now driving her truck has become second nature to her. Some passersby are so fascinated by her that she ends up getting tips. “I get tips for driving a truck as a woman,” she chuckles.

“I was also very worried about my children in the beginning, as I had to spend days and nights away from them, but my faith in the Lord grew bigger. Now I am at peace when I am away.” She has employed a nanny who takes care of her children when she is on the road, and there is a man in her life who takes over looking after them after 5 o’clock, when the nanny knocks off.

Anna used to drive to South Africa when she started. Now she only does local trips, mostly to the north of the country, also at least 700 km away. She spends two nights on average on the road, driving to and from the northern part of the country. She cooks, bathes and sleeps in her truck. “My truck has become a home away from home, as I spend a lot of time in it,” Anna explains. When she gets tired along the way, she drives to the nearest town rather than on a side road along the highway.

How does she cope with breakdowns? Will she be able to change a tyre if she has a *puncture? “Fortunately I have not experienced major breakdowns. I have only had minor ones, and I cope. If I have problems, I phone my employer, and they are quick to respond.”

Anna says she does not see herself changing her job or career any time soon. The toughest challenge she is faced with as a truck driver is the very limited time on her hands, but she has learnt to accept it. She loves her job intensely and speaks fondly of the Scania engine. “The sound of the engine gives me joy, it gets me so excited, and I could listen to it all day. My daughters say they want to drive trucks like mommy too one day.”

Adapted from an article in The Southern Times by Antonette Kakujaha

**Glossary**

*haulage truck* – a truck that carries a very heavy load
*to pay tribute* – to show respect, admiration or gratefulness
*puncture* – a small hole in a car or bicycle tyre
In September 2010, a mixed media exhibition was held at Studio 77, Windhoek, called "Images of Fertility and Abundance". The artist, Kay Cowley, is celebrating the female form by exploring the concept of 'fertility through different media: 'fertility figurines', stone carvings, linocuts, sand and oil pastel mandalas in chakra colours, and oil paintings.

Kate emphasizes the need for spirituality in a society obsessed with consumer goods and materialism. "Abundance is the result of..."
fertility. We should show wisdom in the fertility and abundance that we choose to generate, also in what we choose to enshrine with fertile and abundant thoughts. Choosing abundance in the form of consumerism and material culture will endanger the fertility of our natural world, unless we choose to re-establish a symbiotic relationship with our planet.”
Ombara Ongazendu Ondenga
Omarundurukiro wongaro yombazu mwe ritono oporotika yovira

Mark Nonkes
Omutanaure: A. U. Tjoutuku

A pe pa hara okutambuka ombata yomuhoko. Meheke rononu pe novarumendu vevari mbu mave rokohana ngunda varwe ave ve kovere otjouta okutarera kutja mape kaenda vi. “Ngwe ve yandjere okuhakaena nOmuara owai?” omurumendu ngwi ngwe ripata okaku okerinyae okake’ake’ake pokutwini wa pura noutwe.


Onurumbata ndji kai ri ohumuruka nombara ongazendu ondenga yOvahimba, ndji ri Ombara Katjambiaa Tjambiru. Nungwari Ombara oini n ongambuririro yokutja i ri mozondambo zoombazara omodziyuka ozengi na ri po komeho ye, ama umurumenda tji tja kwa kutanga okutjungura. Opo aruhe ri opakahuke kutja nga rire ombara, Hiiruuko Tjiningire, omutjajangere po wOndjuwo yOvavika wa Katjambia we pe zeuparisa nai. Ove ye, Ombara, ngunda ami nomuninyo, we tu raera pikivako ngi amva. "Omuakazona wandje ngwi, ongu me vanga kutja mape kaenda vi. " – Ovo ri noripure mbwa sana na ihe. Wina vu ri nongo ngaitjiva nongombe umwe.”

Kombunda yoniro yaihe mo 1991, omuena kwe umwe otje ritwa kotjihavero tjouhona hi, nungwari opo ape ha tombo ohange mozondendera za Tanga moure wozombura ozengi inyai zo1990. Omahitiro we womotjihavero, kombazu tji tji rira tjovarumendu, ya uta okupirurwa tjinene mo2003, indu tji mwe ya okurirunga oporotika yovira.

Omunane, Katuutire Kaura wotjira ihi oDemocratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) wa kavarura Etanga na tji va rira tji rira kotjire tji rira kotjihavero. Pa zepewa ozongombe ozengi.

Ozombara zarwe zOvahimba okuzayanda ondangu yapana. Ovaya omuphiko yovira yone pwoNBC indwi rwoOtjiherero na kave pa kumunoko okuvyongorokisira mo Vemui. "Pe munika aayo omorende i eta oporotika movyombazu amai turungire moporotika yovira."


Katjambia ya tena mo2008 odzanda omo wotjiwaa tja Vemui wa kumunoko ongawa. "Eve omuakazona wandje ngwi, ongu me vanga kutja mape kaenda vi. " – Ovo ri noripure mbwa sana na ihe. Wina vu ri nongo ngaitjiva nongombe umwe.”

“Ovandu vandje ve nondjere. Ovinamunyoo kavi nomeva nga yenene. Ovia mbyo tjtjiri vi ndji kurungisa mourekoto womunyoo wandje.”

Onganda yombara
Oruvezu ntu ndu tsa zava pongoza yOmbara Katjambia, tjiandje ape va vekumanda ombapira.

Okuyerurura oruvara rwoSWAPO morukondwa ndwo. Tjiva ve
muna kutja omena rokutja Katjambia omukazendu.

“Mbe mu yakura tjinene ponganda yandje,” ombara ya hungire nohange.
“Nambano mwe ya okumuna pu mbi kara.” Ouezu kwee okukambura kutja mama
omukurukaze ngwi ongu ri omumenga wonjakaha ondwezu onguryoma ndjii
mai kaenda. Eye omukaendu ngu kanda
ozongombe nokuhupa otja kongo
yavo yombazu movisoko mbi. Nungwari
Katjambia u rivara otja ngwa kwaterwa
okunana. “Ami mba kwatwa omunane, ihi
otjiyandjewa tjandje,” wa hungire ama
twa po momambo nga toororwa nava.
Nomutongatima wa hungire ohunga na
ihe yngwee mu hohiza kutja aruhe nga
suvere okutjitarera nokupuratena. “Tate
we ndji suverere tjinene,” eye we riyaruka.
Owami erike ngwee zuvasana na ye
nokumupuratena.

Ohai yoporotika i tomba
omekurisiro

Otjiwaa tja Tanga tja haika navi
ekombunda yaindu oSWAPO tji ya zika
Vemui otjomunane. Ohinga yovandu
vokarukondwa komatoororero ka
Kakurukouje va kongorera Vemui
ngunda ohinga ndji oyarwe aya panera
pu Katjambiaa. Pe nobameno ndji
munika oukahu morupanda. Ovitjwaa
vyozoporojeka zomekurisiro aruhe vi
kayanda monyee motjimbe tjozombata
pokati kovimbumba vivari mbyo.
Na Katjambiaa porwe wa yenena okutonwa
i ouebo mbwi mbu mu pirura. Otja ku
kemwe koueopo wounduwo ye younane
wombazu, eye wa kwatjwa orupuyu, a
undurwa na tonwa nomurui
wongumi – ondjito ndja etisa
kutja eye ma kapatere
motjipangero. Ohai ndji
ya vaza pondondo ombi
ndja etisa kutja Katjambiaa
a ha pangwa pokakirinika
komotjirogono ho, tjinga mu
ko amwe urire ouebo mbwi
oupirure wouhonapare wobambu
mbu wa kehi ye.
Pe noviue katjondumba mbya etisa
kutja Katjambiaa a ha varwa kotjvetu nu ngwi
Vemui, omuzandu womusuko womuena
ari ngwa zemburukwa kotjiyeta. Ovandu
tjiva ve tja ihii otjiwaa tjopokati koSWAPO
noDTA ape na onyungunyungu ndjii
kuwa i Ovahimba tjiva ovanaporotika mbe vanga

“Ami mba kwatwa
omunane, otjo
otjiyandjewa
tjandje.”

Okuyerurura oruvara rwoSWAPO morukondwa ndwo. Tjiva ve
muna kutja omena rokutja Katjambiaa omukazendu.

Nokombanda yaavihe, Katjambiaa ngunda wa akama
mokuyandja ondengero konoro yaihe momuano
wokunana nokutjevera otjiwaa tje. “Ovandu
vandje ve ndjii oyarwe aya panera
pu Katjambiaa. Pe nobameno ndji
munika oukahu morupanda. Ovitjwaa
vyozoporojeka zomekurisiro aruhe vi
kayanda monyee motjimbe tjozombata
pokati kovimbumba vivari mbyo.

Nkumbanda yaavihe, Katjambiaa omukazendu.

Nkumbanda yaavihe, Katjambiaa omukazendu.

Orukonnda rwa Kunene indwi wina ndu tjiukwa
otja Okaoko, ru ri kongurova ya Namibia, okupikira komanen.
Otjihuvo

Oukurisiro Opwo. Mu ro omu mwa tura ovahungire

vOtjiherero imba Ovahimba.

Mark Nonkes
I can hardly tell you what’s been going through my mind the past week or so. I’m not normally the emotional type. But some things have happened lately to make me question a whole lot of things that I used to think went without saying.

It all started last Saturday. Maria left the house on one of her crazy ventures. Leaving me all alone the entire day. Not that I’m a sexist or anything, but the least she could have done was to ask me in advance. And maybe prepared a meal. I’m no Jamie Oliver. Thank goodness the twins were with their grandmother that weekend, wouldn’t have known what to do with them.

“Just tell me,” I yelled after her as she rushed out of the house, “What a consciousness-raising workshop is? And how is it going to put food on our table? You know what? These women’s rights are killing us! What about my rights? What about ME?”

I know I shouldn’t have said all that but sometimes…. with Maria at home and my mad boss at work, seems like life doesn’t live up to the advertisement any more.

Dejected, I dragged myself back into the house, and who should phone right then but Michael? Michael! My old school-friend. Did I want to meet him at Hausiku’s Pub round the corner? He could be there in an hour. Michael was a legend at school, a real guy’s guy. Hugely built, best player in the soccer team. The girls loved him. A keen bodybuilder and martial artist, few people dared to question him on the streets. But after school, Michael had struggled. A stint in the army did not go well for him. Then there were rumors that he’d become a ‘security consultant’, whatever that may be, in some Middle-Eastern country. No one knew for sure.

So, about 11 or 12 I got to Hausiku’s, and there was Michael. At least someone who looked like him. Sure, the muscles were unmistakable. But there was none of that bluster he used to have, none of that old arrogance that had allowed him to dominate a room of people without saying a word.

“Mike!” I greeted him, “How the hell are you? How’s the mercenary, er, security business?”

“Please John,” he said, “That part of my life is long gone. And I don’t miss it a bit. In the long run, problems are not solved through the barrel of a gun. Nor even through a good pair of fists, though I used to think so.”

This stopped me short. A few years ago, you wouldn’t even have passed a remark about this guy’s shoes, lest you got a bloody nose as a result.

“So, uh, what do you do for a living these days, Mike?”

“Well, I’ve been working odd jobs since I got back from the war zone, but I see my real role as an ambassador for peace. And for equal rights, of course.”

“Equal rights?”

“Yeah, for sure. You know, at the end of the day people whom we might think we’re ‘superior’ to, say women, or disabled people, or people with a different religion, want the same things we want: safety, dignity, a chance to fulfill one’s dreams.”

To be honest, ‘peace and equal rights’ was the last thing I expected out of this guy. He seemed to sense my misgivings. A silence fell.

“So how’s life treating you, John?”

I decided that if he wanted to pontificate about equal rights, I’d tell him exactly where he could get off. So I explained about Maria, and how I felt her increasing desire for independence was pulling our relationship apart. I told him how, meanwhile, I felt that my dead-end job was making me feel less and less of a man.
“Maria keeps talking about ‘empowerment’”, I said, “but I feel less and less empowered as the days go by.”

“Sounds like the two of you need to engage in a constructive conflict,” Michael said.

“What?”

“These situations represent a chance for the both of you to embark on a ‘search for truth’, to use Mohandas Gandhi’s words. To examine your positions and find points within them that you both agree on and can implement. You may find your two angles of vision ultimately illuminate the same truth.”

“I doubt there’s any room for compromise.”

“Compromise? I wasn’t talking about compromise necessarily. With compromise, you both gain a bit of what you want, but you both give up a bit too.

“But I believe there’s another way. What thinkers like Gandhi and Martin Luther King called a ‘third way’ or ‘middle way’. You both examine each other’s views. Find out what truth – however little – your ‘opponent’s’ views contain for you. Together you can then put forward elements of a whole new way of tackling the problem. You find a way more inclusive than either of the two ‘bargaining positions’ you started off with.”

“Let’s talk about Maria’s ‘drive for Independence’ as you call it,” Mike said. “Talk to her about it. Really talk. Find out why she wants to be more independent. What parts of her character she feels are left unexplored by being a housewife, perhaps? How she could help you gain new insights in your work situation? You need to be empowered there as much as she does in the home, perhaps?”

“Perhaps,” I admitted grudgingly.

Mike said maybe Maria could help me with that, perhaps by sharing some of the things she learns in those workshops of hers. Maybe she could help me find meaning outside of work, maybe relate better to the kids. I must say I was taken by it. I asked what other advice he had.

“If you try to resolve conflict peacefully, trust the process,” Mike said. Don’t give up on it. Treat the other person - and yourself - with respect at all times. And ask for a non-violent solution. Violence is something we must stay away from whenever we can.”

I asked if he’d come back home to tell me more. Already we had half the drunks in the bar just itching to give their comments. He agreed.

From Hausiku’s Pub you go up a small hill; my house is just on the other side. Now, as we walked over the crest of the ridge, we saw the unmistakable shape of a police car. As we got closer, it became clear its lights were flashing, and two burly officers were walking around, clearly waiting impatiently, outside my front door!

What will happen next? Find out in the next issue.

Acknowledgement: The Basic and Advanced Manuals of the Alternatives to Violence Project and the book Gandhi’s Way: A Handbook of Conflict Resolution (published by University of California Press, Los Angeles), were used in preparing this article.
When does a man become a MAN?
Does he become a MAN after his first shave?
Does he become a MAN after his first save?
Is he a MAN when he stands on his two feet?
No longer a part of, but an individual
Seeking out his destiny?

Is a man a MAN when he knows his place in life
His responsibilities
His strengths and
His weaknesses?

Does a man become a MAN
At the passing of rite
At the cutting of foreskin or
At the slaughter of a lion?

Is a man a MAN when he sires offspring?
When he builds a home
When he destroys a home?
Is a man a MAN at the unwilling
Subjugation of his spouse?

Does a man become a MAN,
When he runs forwards ever
And backwards never?
When his heart leads him
His body carries him
And his spirit heals him?

Is a man an MAN when
His dreams guide him and
His vision pushes him and
His family backs him?

Is a man a MAN
The day he was wrapped
In a blue blanket
And not a pink one?

Does a man become a MAN
When he submits to a higher order
When he is strong enough to say “sorry”
Humble enough to say, “I am nothing,
It is everything around me
That makes me something!”

Tell me
When does a man become a MAN?
Does a man ever become a MAN?
Lunch with

Lotta

Meet a 22-year old law student who is dedicated to making Namibia a better place

Chelsey Ziegler

I walk into the Human Rights Documentation Center of the University of Namibia (UNAM) to meet Lotta for lunch. Lotta is in her final year of Law School and a student researcher at the Center. The front desk directs me through a hallway, where Lotta has her own office in the back. When I open the door, I find her working diligently. She asks me to wait as she finishes, because it is important to her that she gets her work done before leaving for lunch. As I sit in her office I anticipate Lotta to be this kind of woman - dedicated to her work and determined to do the best that she can for her country.

Since independence in 1990, Namibia has concentrated on legal reform, carving its own laws and institutions from their South African origins. As Namibian law is still heavily influenced by South African laws, many law students get their legal education in South Africa, and often the enticing opportunities in one of South Africa's big cities cause promising Namibian law graduates to relocate there permanently. This trend has contributed to the shortage of legal professionals across Namibia. This is particularly devastating because Namibia has successfully established important legal instruments, but now needs lawyers to facilitate their implementation.

A passion for change

Lotta, however, has chosen to attend law school in Namibia and plans to practice law here as well. Born in the small town of Ompudja but having resided in Oshakati for most of her life, Lotta describes Northern Namibia as “home, a place where we can express our culture freely”. In a country which recognizes customary law, Lotta is a special asset to the legal profession because she has insight into life as a traditional community member. Using this experience, Lotta is currently assisting the Namibian Ministry of Justice in their attempt to record the customary laws of traditional communities. Lotta shows me with great reverence a picture of one of the chiefs she interviewed. She loves her country; she loves her people.

Lotta’s goal is to possibly become a magistrate one day, as this is a position where she could make real change happen. She is very proud of her country’s legal instruments, but she feels it is time to take the next step. Legal rights remain ineffective, unless brought to life by people, who demand that they will be enforced and their existence be tested. Female magistrates are also important, because they are more likely to take the impact of law interpretation on gender equality into consideration.

Additionally, observing the upsurge in unemployment rates in Namibia, Lotta hopes that she can create opportunities for women by one day opening her own law firm. She feels that opportunities for women in the legal field are a progressive step towards providing a stable income and job security.

This country needs young women like Lotta, strong and intelligent, with a passion for implementing change and educating herself to make a difference. When asked how she deals with the distractions from education that young girls often experience, she replies, “My parents sent me to school for one reason, namely to get an education. So I keep in mind what kind of life I want for myself”. 9
The small settlement of Estorff is located deep in Damaraland. But you won’t find it on the map; you won’t find electricity or any municipal services there. Water is sourced from a community bore hole. The settlement consists of families farming with small stock and some cattle. The nearest town, Kamanjab, is around 70kms away and donkey carts are the main form of transport. It is a remote rural area not unlike many others in Namibia and when the time comes, the children must be sent off to primary school in the distant larger towns in the region.

In the past it was not unusual for children from the Damaraland communities to drop out of primary school after Grade 1 or 2. This has been due to a combination of factors. The young children are used to growing up in the tight knit community, speaking only the Damara language, and they are not used to being separated from their families. Once at primary school, the main language is English, so often the kids are at a disadvantage. Missing home and family is also a big issue for the young kids who often have to go a whole term without being able to return home as the distances and costs involved are prohibitive.

A second mother to the children

One woman could see the problem and took the initiative to make a difference in her community. In 2001 Helena Ochurus decided she would set up a small preschool kindergarten. The idea was to get young children aged from four to six familiarised to living away from their families and homes and getting them comfortable with hostel life. Helena could see that the children need time to acclimatise to this concept slowly. She therefore decided that the kindergarten terms should be the same as regular primary school terms but incorporated extended long weekend breaks so the children can return home more frequently. Being located at Estorff in communal Damaraland, the travel distances for parents are not so far.

This method of gently accustoming the children to school life has shown great benefits. By becoming a second mother to the children, Helena provides the nurturing support and fun enthusiasm (with a measured amount of firmness!) which the children respond to.
Helena introduces the kids to education with learning the basics of numbers and alphabet, learning how to write their names and of course lots of drawing and painting. The kids enjoy singing in English and Helena emphasizes that the learning has to be fun, otherwise the young children will not respond. It is important for the children to develop social skills and learn, play and live together at the kindergarten. In this way they are prepared for life in grade one and further, when they move on to primary school.

Keep it running ...
For much of the time Helena has managed to keep the Kindergarten running almost against all odds. Fortunately the community has been behind the project, and some local commercial farmers have also helped with food rations for the children during term time, diesel for pumping water and organising donations of classroom supplies and books, cooking utensils, plates and cups, and all the things you need to house and feed over twenty five children! The Ministry of Women and Child Welfare donated some classroom tables and chairs and the local Afrikaans Farmer’s Wives Club of Kamanjab donated mattresses and blankets for the dormitory. Donations have come from as far as field as United States of America, England and Italy.

The greatest problem Helena has encountered is securing the future and improvement of the kindergarten. Plenty of parents are behind the project and donate as much of their time and efforts to assist the wherever possible including collecting fire wood and often providing milk for the children. As a result of this community support, the local Khoadi//Hoas Conservancy permitted Helena to use a building in Estorff to set up the Kindergarten in 2001. It was little more than a shack, but it was a start. In June 2005, the building was formally turned over to the kindergarten by the Chairman of the local Land Board, securing the future of the school.

Renovations at work
The kindergarten building consists of 4 small rooms – one used as a basic storeroom and kitchen area, two for hostel dormitories and the fourth is a tiny classroom. There was an urgent need to renovate the building and extend the size of the classroom and dormitories and also adding an ablution block. After approaching the Namport Social Investment Fund, the community are delighted that the fund has awarded Estorff Kindergarten a fantastic donation of N$140,000.00, specifically for the renovations project. A Renovations Committee, led by David Goagoseb (Chair person of the #Khoadi//Hoas Conservancy), has been elected to compliment the already supportive Parents Committee, and plans are underway to commence in 2010.

Helena has no formal teacher training but is keen to seek sponsorship to attend a formal teacher training course so she will be a recognised qualified pre-school kindergarten teacher. In the mean time she has managed to achieve what seems impossible and kept the project going for ten years; she is simply one of those women who has a gift for working with children and enjoys teaching and looking after them. In 2003 she took part in an introductory teacher-training workshop in Anker (16km from Estorff), working along with volunteers from the US Peace Corp. The Ministry of Education also sponsored her to attend a further workshop for teachers within the #Khoadi//Hoas Conservancy. This basic training has been put to good use, but it is her energy, motivation and enjoyment of educating young children in her community that have meant she has been able to keep the school going against all odds.

It is Helena’s determination and hopes for the future that have created a brighter future for the children within the #Khoadi //Hoas Conservancy. Her success is illustrated by the sustainability* of the project and when children from Estorff Kindergarten graduate on to primary school, ready and excited to continue their education.

Glossary

*prohibitive so high that it cannot be paid
*acclimatise to get used to, or accustomed, to a new environment
*sustainability continuation and stability for a long time
The Namibian film ‘We were young’ has recently won an award for the second best youth film at the Lola Screen Film Festival in Kenya.

“Lola Kenya Screen received 302 films from 38 countries. It allocated 14 prizes only, and we are one of them! I’m so happy!” said producer Philippe Talavera, who is the director of the well known Namibian youth organization Ombetja Yehinga. “We were beaten by Malawi but came ahead of France.”

The film developed from a play with the same name, and until now more than 30,000 young people in Namibia have already watched and discussed either the play or the DVD. The script depicts the life of four young Namibians and how they deal with ‘life after school’: Tyson tries smoking his first cigarette when he was still in Primary School, and he becomes a drug addict; John has never liked school and wants to fail grade 10 in order to feel free again; Cubic dreams of the day he will finally meet his father; Patricia has learning difficulties and decides to drop out of school.

Four young Namibians. Four stories. In the film, they look back and see what happened in their life – and what others can learn from their experiences.

Many young people were involved in the development of the final version of the film. The project started, when in 2007 OYO allocated one issue of its magazine to the topic ‘Life after school’. Learners often have a very idealistic vision of this time and do not realise the difficulties lying ahead, especially if only poorly educated. Because of the strong response OYO decided to further investigate this issue and to discuss the challenges that young people who have dropped out of school are facing. A writing workshop was organised and from there a script developed.

Four talented young actors (Nyandee Mbarandongo, Norman Kapunda, Bergo van Wyk and Estomine Haradoes) were then selected. Under the direction of Talavera, they trained and rehearsed for a show that was toured first in the Kunene, Erongo and Khomas regions and later in the Oshana and Ohangwena regions, with more than 20,000 audience members in total. At each venue the show was followed by a facilitation session, during which the audience were asked questions to ensure that they had clearly understood the play. They were also given an opportunity to put questions to the actors so that they were able to get deeper understanding of characters.

As a next step, the monologues were adapted for the screen. Shooting took place in March 2009 in various locations, and the film was launched early in 2010. So far 39 DVD shows have been presented in Namibian schools and communities, reaching 9,693 audiences. “All actors’ performances are great,” says Talavera. “The actor students enjoy most is Nyandee Mbarandongo who portrays Tyson, the drug addict. But in all schools, learners relate the most to the story of John, since it is a great encouragement to study.”
Gender, Development and Marriage

Oxfam Focus on Gender, Oxfam, 2003
Edited by Caroline Sweetman

The vast majority of women and men get married at least once, and in many places life outside marriage is almost impossible for either sex to contemplate. Yet marriage as experienced by men is very different from marriage for women. This is because marriage is, in all male-dominated societies, an institution imbued with inequality, in which husbands and fathers rule the roost.

Marriage is thus acknowledged today as an institution of key relevance to development policy, practice, and research. This collection of essays traces the economic and social impact of inequality in marriage on women, men and wider society, and considers its implications for development. Topics include child marriage, the link between women’s economic contribution and equality within marriage, NGO responses to domestic violence, and the need to understand particular forms of marriage as a prerequisite for appropriate policy.

The Invisible Cure

Africa, the West and the Fight against AIDS

The AIDS epidemic in Africa is uniquely severe. It is partly a consequence of the political, social and economic upheavals of the past century, which have left millions of Africans adrift in an increasingly globalized world. Their poverty and social dislocation have generated an earthquake in gender relations that has had devastating consequences for the spread of the HIV virus.

There are ways to address the AIDS crisis that may be simpler than many people imagine, argues author Helen Epstein in her deeply affecting story of scientific breakthrough and false starts, and of the human costs of policy makers’ missteps and inaction.

The Invisible Cure will change the way we think about AIDS, a disease without precedent.

Women’s Rights

Geraldine Terry
Pluto Press, 2007

This small book is part of the series “Small Guides to Big Issues” and serves as a guide to women’s rights. It is designed for campaigners and activists, for students and researchers, in fact for anyone interested in looking behind the headlines. It includes facts and figures, analyses of key issues, an overview of different human development approaches, extracts from important speeches, key treaties and protocols, case studies and testimonies.

The book furthermore exposes systematic discrimination wherever it occurs – in education, access to public services, in reaping benefits from trade, and elsewhere. It explores violence against women and how the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa is linked to the denial of women’s rights. But the author also looks at positive examples of women acting to transform inequalities and oppression by asserting their rights.

For information on
Women’s Rights, Feminisms, HIV and Aids, Sexuality and Sexual Rights

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163 Nelson Mandela Avenue, Windhoek
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UN Women Born!

In July 2010, the UN General Assembly voted unanimously to create a UN agency devoted to issues of concern to women and girls. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women - to be known as UN Women - will work to promote equality and end discrimination against women around the world.

This move had been sought by women’s organizations and other civil society organizations around the world for many years. “We have high expectations for this new agency to be a solid foundation for advancing the human rights of women as central to global policy efforts to reduce poverty and move toward greater realization of peace and democracy in the world,” says Charlotte Bunch of the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University.

Particularly notable in the resolution are the paragraphs regarding the importance of civil society participation in the new entity. The body must have increased operational presence at the country level, including engagement with women’s groups and other civil society organizations invested in gender equality and the empowerment of women.

UN Women will merge the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) with its three existing sister UN entities working on gender issues — the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

UN Women will become fully operational on 1 January 2011. “It is important to note that until then we will continue to be fully operational as part of the new entity. Agreements made with UNIFEM, whether in the context of partnerships, programmes or funding arrangements, will then be transferred to and honoured by UN Women,” explained Inés Alberdi, (UNIFEM) Executive Director.

The main roles of UN Women are to support inter-governmental bodies in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms; to help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support and to forge effective partnerships with civil society, and to enable member states to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality.

First female bishop for Finnish Lutheran church

Rev. Irja Askola has become the first woman to be elected as a bishop in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, a step described as a “milestone” by the general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Rev. Ishmael Noko.

The Lutheran Church in Finland has about 4.5 million members, accounting for more than 80 percent of Finland’s population. Askola received 591 votes to 567 for her rival Matti Poutiainen.

“It is an important sign that a woman has been elected to the office of bishop in yet another LWF member church,” said Noko after the 3 June vote. “I congratulate bishop-elect Askola and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland for taking this milestone step forward.” He pointed out that bishop-elect Askola “is well known in the ecumenical world and brings enormous ecumenical experience to her new post. We know her to be committed to the inclusive ministry of men and women throughout the church.”

57-year-old Askola took office on 1 September, following the retirement of Eero Huovinen, Helsinki’s bishop since 1991. Her ordination as a bishop was set for 12 September.

Women have been ordained in Finland since 1986, but while some, including Askola, have been nominated for the episcopate, none made it to the final balloting.

This event will be of interest to Namibian Lutherans, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is a product of Finnish missionaries and still has strong ties with the Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM). ELCIN has almost 700 000 registered members in Namibia and is the largest Christian church in Namibia. No female bishops have ever been elected to ELCIN, and female pastors have only been ordained since 1992. The first female ELCIN pastors were Aune Shilongo-Hamunyela, Aino Kapewangolo, and Wilhelmina Shikomba. Hilma Pauly sadly died of cancer just before her ordination.
A new study recently released by the World Bank shows how young women in Malawi, who were given cash payments, had significantly lower HIV and other sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates than other groups in their communities. The cash transfer study randomly enrolled 3,796 young women between the ages of 13 and 22 from a district in Malawi with high HIV rates and school dropout rates. The only condition for receiving cash payments every month was that the girls who were enrolled in the program had to attend school regularly. Although the cash payments were made purely on the basis of school attendance, the study showed that the money also made the girls less vulnerable to contracting HIV and other STIs. Eighteen months after the program began, HIV infections among girls in the program were 60 percent lower than those who were part of a control group and did not receive payments. “(It shows) the potential for using cash payments to prevent people, especially women and girls, from engaging in unsafe sex while also ensuring that they stay in school and get the full benefit of an education,” Dr. David Wilson, the World Bank’s Director for its Global HIV/AIDS Program, says.

Girls who received payments not only had less sex, but when they did, they tended to choose younger, safer partners. The new study suggests that the cash transfers may have led to a drop in so-called ‘transactional sex.’ At the beginning of the study, a quarter of sexually active participants said they started relationships because they ‘needed his assistance’ or ‘wanted gifts/ money.’ After a year, schoolgirls receiving payments from the cash-transfer program seemed to avoid older men, who tend to be wealthier and are much more likely to be HIV positive than schoolboys. Conditional cash transfer programs have not typically been part of HIV prevention strategies among adolescent girls and young women. Such programs could, however, become an important part of effective HIV-prevention strategies and complement interventions that explicitly target ‘behavior change’. At a relatively small marginal cost, they immediately boost income among poor families while investing in better health and education prospects for children.
Today the issue is....

VIOLENCE against Women

By Magano Neri

It’s been just a few weeks since the passing and laying to rest of one of Namibia’s beloved children, Magdalena Stoffels. As the mother of a little girl, and as a woman, my heart is broken a thousand times over. I often do not allow myself to fathom the extent of dismay and grief her family must feel. I imagine that it is overwhelming. I wrote the letter below to Magdalena and to all our sisters who died through acts of gender-based violence and whose light continues to shine in our hearts, compelling us to act.

“I think about you. I wish to cup your warm and beautiful face in my hands. I wish to show you my heart, where I hold a sadness that is deep and primal. I cry for you, even when I celebrate your life. I feel restless in my mind, as I wonder how to keep your voice alive. How can I heal the heart of our land? You tell me to be still. The answers will come. You tell me to be brave and to persevere. You tell me to sense your spirit. It is gentle and strong. You are graceful and whole. I hear you whisper warmth and life into the broken cracks of our times. I know that the Divine and Great Custodians of all that is Good, Beautiful and Life Affirming accompany your soul. You are at peace.”

I hope that we Namibians will pursue the issue of violence against women and girls with the same resilience, tenacity, conviction and commitment that went into ending apartheid in our country. We did express our anger and horror at the instance of violence against women and girls. We were united. But now is the time to direct our anger into selfless and productive action that will make change real and meaningful.

Magdalena is one of thousands of women who have suffered unimaginable forms of violence. One out of every three women worldwide is physically, sexually or otherwise abused during her lifetime. This violence is one of the most widespread violations of human rights, and it is the outcome of still largely ‘sanctioned’ gender inequality and discrimination. However, it is a problem that has a solution. So let us ask ourselves: What can we learn? What have we not done yet? What can we do more of?

First of all: Our government must continue to provide assistance and resources. We have to demand effective legal measures and compensatory provisions to protect women against all kinds of violence. We need preventive measures, such as public information and education programmes to change attitudes. But we need more. Namibians! We need to initiate empowering conversations. We need to present positive images of men as role models. It is time for our men to become visibly involved in collective actions. It is time to acknowledge the role that male privilege and socialization plays in violence against women. Our men must begin to see that they are part of the solution – and take on responsibility.

Silence is always affirming. When we choose not to speak out, we are in effect supporting the behaviour that we condemn. But let us also DO SOMETHING. Write against violence! Dance against violence! Challenge the norm! Sing against violence! Discuss the issue, have an opinion! Educate others! Join Campaigns! Play sport against violence! Make films against violence! Use technology and the media! Whatever you choose, DO SOMETHING against gender-based violence!
Reader’s responses to the June Issue:

Julle het so mooi ‘Menstruation and Me’ uiteengesit. Baie dankie! Hou so aan! Bettie

It’s true, we need the Consent is Sexy Campaign in Namibia, we all need rights to defend ourselves from unplanned decisions and to respect yourself and your partners’ ideas too.

Girls in Namibia are powerless when it comes to sex decisions. They need to be empowered so that they can stick to their NO answers until YES exists. Helmi

I understand the articles in Sister Namibia magazine and I really like them, because I like to ask questions so that I can understand things.

I just want to hear more about the Sister Namibia magazine which I read today. It is very nice! Mirjam

I really enjoy getting the latest copy of Sister Namibia magazine. It’s nice to know what women are doing in Namibia and being recognized for it!

I love the new layout! Its fun and engaging but it still tells the real stories of women. A great magazine!

Great work!

Thank you, Ellen Namhila for writing about women in the north. P., Oshakati

Congratulations to the first female Himba chief. Can you please write more about other traditional leaders in our country? Claudia

I like the new layout, it is fresh and good for young people. H. Windhoek

I am a man, but I read Sister Magazine, because it teaches me about women. Women read a lot about men, but men do not read about women, therefore they do not know how they tick. Matthew

The articles are very interesting, and I keep all Sister issues for reference. Monica

I love the new layout. And I love the article about the 5 ordinary but extraordinary women, because I find it inspiring that at last they are allowed to speak out. In earlier times you did not hear or read about normal women and their opinions and about their life. It makes me happy and inspires me. Julia

I like it that you use local languages not only English. At least for one article. It makes me feel part of the Sisters of Namibia. N.

I know it’s a women’s magazine. But it might be even more interesting to cover some male issues too. Are there also ordinary, yet extraordinary men?

The layout is very colourful and attractive. It makes you want to read the magazine. S.

SMS your Say!!!

We would love to hear your views and opinions. Please SMS them to 0814 629 639 or email us at sheena@sisternamibia.org
In June this year the Oxfam Gender Justice Summit was hosted in Toronto, Canada, and as an Oxfam partner Sister Namibia was invited to participate. The Summit brought together volunteers, donors and partners of Oxfam Canada from America and Africa to share experiences and discuss issues like food security, climate change, and maternal health. Given Sister Namibia’s work on sexual rights my contribution focused on sexual and reproductive health.

As a new mom I had to take my 3-month old breastfeeding baby Ondeya with me. My fears about travelling with her were quelled, when she was absolutely well-behaved on the flight. I dressed her in over-sized diapers to avoid the cramped toilets to change her, but she slept so much that I changed her diapers practically in her sleep. When she was awake, she was so fascinated by the people around us that she would always find someone to giggle at. This totally interrupted her feeding. She would suck a little on my breast, but instantly remember that she had recently found a friendly face to charm and look up to see if it was still around. This would go on until I covered her head with her blanket to stop further interruptions.

We were very fortunate that my husband’s mother in Canada could assist me with caring for while I participated in the summit. This was a real bonus as there are obvious challenges to business travel with an infant. Fortunately, I was also welcome to bring her along to meetings, and the accommodating and warm attitude of my colleagues helped me to feel comfortable about participating. I was able to connect with many of them, particularly with those who were parents themselves. I enjoyed listening to their experiences of juggling work and family, and their support reminded me that I was not the only woman out there trying to combine work and motherhood.

Breaking down walls

I recall when people first started using laptops at conferences, about ten years ago. People would ask others to put them away, complaining that they found the key tapping to be disturbing. Ten years later, everyone has their laptops out to take meeting notes (or check their e-mail). That culture shift happened gradually - and a similar culture shift has to happen around children. The more parents will include their – well-behaved - children in their professional lives, the more we will break down the wall that separates the public and private spheres, a wall that has historically served to keep women and men in separate worlds. I realized that bringing Ondeya along was as much a parental responsibility as a political statement. I was not just helping my family and Sister Namibia; I was in effect contributing to a culture shift.

I have survived my first long distance trip with my infant daughter and we are both safe and happy back home! So to all you working moms who also have a paid job and juggle work and family, just remember: Bringing your baby to work and advocating for a more family friendly work environment means you too are in fact helping to make our culture stronger, healthier and more human! ¶
COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

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Website: www.philippinamibia.com
Physical Address: off Ara Street, Dorado Park, Windhoek (road between NETS and Channel 7)

LIFELINE/CHILDLINE

Do you or someone you know need counselling? Contact LifeLine/ChildLine for the following services:

National Crisis Counselling Telephone Line
Offers immediate counselling, onward referral and follow-up face to face counselling by appointment
Staffed by lay counsellors from 8am to 10pm, 365 days per year
Telephone: (061) 23 22 21

National SMS line
Offers delayed counselling, onward referral and follow-up face to face counselling by appointment
SMS a brief message and a counsellor will call you back within 24 hours
Telephone: 0811 400 222

Face to Face Counselling by appointment, Windhoek
Offered free of charge at our Windhoek office in Bismarck Street
Mainly for those who cannot access counselling through medical aid
Telephone: 061 23 22 21

Drop-in Counselling, Kavango and North Central Namibia
Offered free of charge by lay counsellors at the following counselling points, weekdays:
Rundu (LL/CL office), Nkurenkuru (Hospital), Ondobe (Clinic), Onankali (Clinic), Ongwediva (MPC), Ondangwa (LL/CL office, Oluno Clinic), Eenhana (MPC)

For more information phone (065) 246252 North Central or (066) 256663 Kavango

WOMEN’S SOLIDARITY NAMIBIA

We act together to stop violence
Peace building is our mission

Women’s Solidarity Namibia believes in a holistic approach that is based on human rights and equality, recognises diversity and guarantees all people access to essential resources.

We are a feminist organisation and believe in speaking out against violence and discrimination against women and children in our communities, at schools and at work places. Our goal is to eradicate violence from all spheres of Namibian life.

Contact information: Women’s Solidarity Namibia, P O Box 7378, Katutura, Windhoek, Namibia, Tel/Fax: (061) 260924, E-mail: womensol@iway.na

PEACE CENTRE

Our centre provides professional psychotherapy and counselling through our network of psychologists, who do pro bono work, and our own staff members.

Our contact details are: Telephone: 061 371550;
Fax: 061 371555; 26 Rhino Street, Windhoek North;
E-mail: info@peace.org.na

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E-mail: info@peace.org.na
We know that women have many shoes to fill these days. From the professional arena to the home, modern women have to make a lot more strides in their everyday lives. At Bank Windhoek we want to celebrate and thank all the women, including the 64% women in our workforce, who continue to work hard and make a difference.