

Knowledge is power

In the Sister Namibia Vol 8, no 5 & 6 of Dec '96 - Jan '97, Sister Namibia hosted an intense weekend course on self-defence. Sixteen years later Sister Namibia had a Swedish volunteer, Anna Pelleberg who re-introduced the possibility to us. We have since begun with self-defence training and it is our aim to expand these services to schools in Windhoek and across the country.

I believe an eye for an eye will leave the whole world blind. I do not see fighting aggression with aggression is the answer. Having gone through the self-defence course with Marco Grunert, the knowledge and understanding on how to AVOID potentially harmful situations were enough to make me feel safer when I am out by myself.

It would be difficult to find one woman, who at one time or the other in her lifetime had not been afraid merely because she was a woman.

Conflict is a reality of life; Resources are limited and our hierarchy of needs may intersect with another's at a time which may lead to conflict. Not all conflict stems from an intent to violate - therefore different skills are required at different times. At a desperate juncture where one person's no and another's yes clash, self-defence skills could make all the difference.

Three levels of gender-based violence exist. This includes the family or relationship level, the community level and the state level.

In the family/ relationship level and at state level skillful communication skills are required to deal with the violence. On community or public level,, knowledge and, physical skills will be required to escape those unexpected attacks.

On the state level where laws, socio-economic policies, infrastructure and other elements contribute to the protection or exposure of women, self-defence skills will not be effective. Debate, dialogue, sensitization, negotiation, research, campaigning, negotiating and other communicating skills are required.

On community level – be it in the work place, at school, in the neighbourhood, at places of social gathering, and so forth – self-defence skills can save you in many ways.

The first rule in the self-defence class is that fighting should be the last option. The second rule is to consciously gather information around your safety in terms of people, places and times.

Look out for future editions of Sister Namibia for more on our self-defence training.

Photo by Marco Grunert



By Vida de Voss

Prevention is better than cure

Self defence training empowers women

By Elanza Coetzee

Rape, domestic violence, child abuse; these are familiar topics in newspaper and television reports. As part of the Multi-Media Campaign on Violence against Women, *Sister Namibia* organised two self defence workshops in Windhoek and Walvis-Bay, sponsored by the US Embassy.

Both were conducted by Sanette Smit (better known as Smittie). She is well known in karate circles and has been a self defence trainer for the past 9 years. Women from different age groups and classes came to participate.

Myths around self defence are that it is only for people who are physically fit, that it is too violent, or that women are not really able to defend themselves against male attackers.

But it does not mean that you have to fight when someone just looks funny at you. It is rather



Smittie demonstrates on Elanza that by grabbing your attacker's ear or nose and pulling hard while twisting yourself out of his grip technique worth practising. In the photo below Smittie is just about follow it up with a fast kick to the groin or bringing her elbow down the back of the neck.



photos: Hellate