

# The Young Feminist Movement

In 2009, after a two-week training on feminism in Zimbabwe, Florence Khaxas decided to build a Young Feminist Movement in Namibia, starting in the Erongo region.

A report by  
Florence Khaxas

**T**his is the birth of a new era in Namibia! In the midst of all difficulties I see a new breed of young women. They are hungry for knowledge and are challenging the moral imperatives of how a real woman should behave. I listened to young women who had so much to say, yet so little time. They spoke about their sexuality and openly admitted their day-to-day hardships. Many had never experienced an all female group of support and understanding. In the midst of it all, I saw many bright smiles.

The Young Feminist Movement represents the collective voice and heart of young women. The first of a series of meetings started when I organized a protest against 'violence against women' in Mondesa, Swakopmund, last year. Women realized that they needed to stand together to eradicate gender based violence.

Swakopmund thus became like the birth town of the Young Feminist Movement. From there coordination took place and will take place for the Erongo Region in future. I also visited Walvis Bay, Arandis, Uis, Usakos, Okombahe, Spitzkoppe, and Omaruru. I listened and I talked, and I am extremely proud to say that a simple vision has become a reality. It has awakened the urge to question our religion, culture, personal beliefs as well as morals and values that were imposed on us.

Young women face so many problems – in school, in the family and in society.



Liz Frank

Unemployment is a major challenge, and some young girls cohabit with male pensioners, living off their little N\$ 450 pension money. Many find it difficult to negotiate their sexual rights. As a result the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to rise. There is a high percentage of school dropouts in rural towns. Alcohol abuse among young women is a major concern, as I heard from so many women. The abuse of alcohol by their partners is also leading to ever increasing domestic violence. Many women desperately need advice on how to sustain themselves. They want to start businesses to support themselves and not to depend so much on boyfriends or husbands.

In my meetings, I used *Sister Namibia* as a tool. The women would read articles from the magazine, and then we would debate various topics. The fact that *Sister Namibia* is written in three languages made it easier for the participants to read and translate stories. They will use *Sister Namibia* for future meetings, they said, in their newly formed groups. Many women had never read or heard of *Sister Namibia* before, but are now aware of its existence.

I hope that the Young Feminist Movement will soon reach places outside the Erongo region and mobilize young women all over Namibia to advocate for their rights, to empower themselves, and to support each other. ♀