

Katutura Community Radio (KCR) is living up to its aim to be the radio station with a difference because it has truly become the voice of the people. Since it was re-launched on 6 October 2003, various voices have been given a platform to raise whatever issues they felt impacted either positively or negatively on their lives and that of their community.

Four NGOs - Sister Namibia, the Legal Assistance Centre, the Namibia Planned Parenthood Association and the Desert Research Foundation, along with students of Media, Arts and Technology Studies from the College of the Arts, are currently producing programmes that focus on all aspects of life in the townships of Katutura and Khomasdal.

Regular listeners would be surprised if they tuned in and found no discussion on issues related to human rights, women's rights, HIV and Aids, sexual and reproductive health and rights, issues confronting sexual minorities, and matters relating to health, safety, the environment, housing, unemployment and education. What makes these discussions different is that they are conducted by members of the community - the very people who live with the realities of HIV and Aids, sexual violence, the violation of human rights and unemployment.

For example, one of the many guests on KCR's weekly gender programme, **Women's Voice**, was Ousie Lakens, who refused to be introduced as Magriet Appolus, her official name. "Why call me by that fancy name. My people know me as Ousie Lakens," she said adamantly. When she was asked why she thought life has become so difficult, she said it is because nobody wants to listen to anybody anymore and there is no respect for human life and dignity. "We have forgotten what makes a community a community. There is no respect," she said.

On Mondays KCR features the **Suzie & Shafa Show**, a fast-paced youth programme that deals with the realities of being young in a country that is fast changing with promises of



KCR presenter Fidel Odel interviews artist Nicole Pietersen on the Friday Arts and Culture Programme.

106.2 FM

voice of the people

By Natasha Tibinyane

better days. But the reality is that many are disillusioned and are struggling with unemployment, issues of sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

Tuesdays are booked for two half hour programmes: *Women's Voice* and *Good Living*. *Women's Voice* is a gender programme that has featured discussions on domestic violence, rape, being a lesbian woman in Namibia, community based women's organisations and an inspiring interview with Neshani Andreas, one of the few black woman authors in this country.

Good Living is a lifestyle, health and safety programme focussing on preventable illnesses such as cancer and stress related diseases. It gives listeners tips on how to live a quality, happier and healthy life.

Your Rights Today and *True Life* are featured on Wednesdays. **Your Rights Today** deals with basic human rights, the Namibian Constitution and legal issues. Topics featured so far include the land question, tolerance, violence against women and children, the right to housing and education.

True Life has featured Namibians' interesting diets, and the highlight so far was an interview with two street kids, Gavin and Donovan, who make a living by performing Namibian songs in Independence Avenue using

self-made instruments. They not only entertained listeners with their music but also spoke about the harsh realities of life on the streets. "Parents should not make children and run away like my parents did," said 14-year-old Donovan, who was left all alone after his grandmother, who raised him, died.

Thursdays it's time for environmental issues on **The World We Live In** and youth sexual and reproductive issues on **Choices**. The right to water and the effects of desertification have been discussed among other topics on *The World We Live In*. *Choices* has featured topics that can still be termed as controversial in Namibia, including abortion and masturbation.

On Fridays KCR features a full hour of arts and culture, providing listeners with an update on what is happening on the social calendar, and with folk tales and interviews with authors, poets, performing and visual artists.

And all of this in just five hours of broadcasting per week (5 to 6 pm. daily) with a repeat on Saturdays between noon and 5 pm! KCR plans to expand its broadcasting hours early next year as more NGOs and community based organisations become involved, and there is no doubt that the voice of the people will just get louder.

