

Looking at Manlish Where are the women?

By Liz Frank

Street Manlish:

Hey man, how are you man?
I'm not a man, I'm a woman.
I know, but listen man ...

Text book Manlish:

Some environments are not friendly. It is difficult for man to live there. It is difficult for men to live in deserts. There is not enough water. ... Men like to settle where there is plenty of water.

This man is a farmer. He grows crops for food. This lady is a secretary. This man is a carpenter. This lady sells vegetables in the market. Farmers and their wives ... (It seems that women, I mean

ladies, can live in deserts, but that farmers are always men)

Telephone Manlish:

Could I speak to Mr Swartz please?

Speaking, lady. What can I do for you lady? Yes lady, I hear you lady, listen lady ... yes meisie, listern girl ... (Should we call him gentleman every time he calls us lady?)

Job descriptions:

Tea lady, tea girl, cleaning lady, office girls, sales lady, lady doctor ... (why not bar gentleman then?)

Technical Manlish:

man-sized, man-made, walkman, two-man tent ...

Newspaper talk:

A man and his wife ...

Government talk:

Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development ... (Is this because women already do three-quarters of the world's work, including housework and child raising ...)

So where are we women? Are we really such an unmentionable part of "mankind"?

Could it be that the word woman carries an image of greater strength and independence compared to the words girl and lady? Is this why the word woman is avoided by so many speakers of Manlish? Including some women?



The Namibia Women's Centre has been established as a multi-purpose venue with the aim to improve the standard of living of Namibian women, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

It is one of very few places in the country where women can meet and develop skills as well as self confidence

through a variety of training courses.

The centre offers the following courses:

- ◆ Literacy classes
- ◆ English Beginners
- ◆ English Intermediate
- ◆ Afrikaans
- ◆ Ndonga
- ◆ Kwanyama

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Training courses

- ◆ Needlework
- ◆ Life Skills
- ◆ Agriculture & Vegetable gardening
- ◆ Health education, nutrition, cooking
- ◆ Textiles tie & dye, African print
- ◆ Pottery

There is also a creche for children of one to five years.

For more information contact the centre at the address given above.