

ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT



Gender Research & Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE
Windhoek, Namibia, 2008



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Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?	3
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	5
RAPE	10
MARRIED EQUALITY	14
PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS	18
ABUSE OF THE ELDERLY	22
ALCOHOL	24
WITCHCRAFT	26
EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	28



INTRODUCTION

Imagine a room full of people talking. You walk into the room and try to make yourself heard above the noise, but nobody can hear you.

This image describes the debate about gender-based violence in Namibia. There is a lot of “noise” about the topic, everyone is talking, but what is being heard? Everyone can tell a tale about a case of gender-based violence, everyone has reasons for why they think it occurs, but the violence is not being reduced. This suggests that the true problems and causes have not been sufficiently identified and addressed.

In 2008, the Gender Research and Advocacy Project at the Legal Assistance Centre conducted workshops across the 13 regions of Namibia in an attempt to identify some of the root causes of gender-based violence. The aim of the workshops was to get past the deafening and often misleading noise about gender-based violence to discover the real situation and help communities identify preventative actions which they could implement, based on their understanding of the underlying issues in their community.

Both men and women were invited to the meetings because both sexes must work together if a solution to gender-based violence is to be achieved. Focusing only on women would reinforce the stereotype that men do not have a responsibility to help fight gender-based violence. In reality, men and women must work together to achieve real and sustainable change in Namibia.

Namibia has some strong laws that address gender-based violence. However, they are just words on paper unless people believe in the laws and put them into practice. Local knowledge and a desire for change at the community level are vital if a reduction in gender-based violence is to be achieved. By working with communities, the Legal Assistance Centre has tried to create living law, to turn what is written down on paper into something that is relevant to communities.

Who is this publication for?

This publication has been written for the community members who attended workshops held by the Gender Research and Advocacy Project during 2008. It is a record of the information discussed and the ideas generated. It is also aimed at community members who were not able to attend the workshops but who are interested in learning more about gender-based violence and how gender-based violence can be tackled. **We would welcome feedback and reports of results from communities who decide to tackle gender-based violence after reading this publication.**

Why read this publication? What can one person do to fight gender-based violence?

“It is easy to think, ‘But I am just a drop in the bucket’. Yet in a desert country like Namibia, people know well how valuable each drop is and understand that when the drops are added together, this land becomes productive and beautiful, giving everyone hope for the future.”

Lucy Y Steinitz and Diane Ashton, Unravelling Taboos, pg 230

Reducing the level of gender-based violence in Namibia might seem an impossible task. But it is an achievable goal. The place to start is close to home, with ourselves, our partners, our children, friends and work colleagues. Start a conversation about gender-based violence with someone you work with, bring it up with members of your church. Talking about the issue is the first step to addressing it – although of course we must never become distracted by just talking, talking, talking so that we fail to take action. Reading this publication is the first step towards change.

How the meetings were run

The aim of the workshops was to discuss the level of gender-based violence in each community visited and to help the participants identify solutions or actions to address some of these problems. During each workshop, the groups were asked to choose one or two topics from the list below to discuss:

- (1) domestic violence;
- (2) rape;
- (3) parent-child relationships;
- (4) abuse of the elderly;
- (5) alcohol abuse; and
- (6) witchcraft.

To help the participants choose which topics were relevant to their community, newspaper articles and illustrations were used to show examples of some of the problems. The participants were able to look at the examples and see whether such things happened in their community. Some of the illustrations used have been included in this booklet. Every topic in this publication includes questions for discussion to help you apply the information to your own community. You might want to think about these issues by yourself or you might want to use them to stimulate discussion with a group of people.



Key to this book

Colour-coded information boxes are included throughout this publication:

General important points to note

Questions for discussion: issues that communities should think about and discuss

Suggestions for action

What the law says

Reports about specific community groups

WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Gender refers to the way men and women behave in a culture. This varies between one community and another and can change over time. The term gender has a different meaning to sex. The sex of a man or woman refers to the physical differences between them, such as having a penis or vagina. These differences are permanent. Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities men and women have. These differences are changeable.

Sex

The **physical differences** between male and female, such as penis and vagina. These differences are **permanent**.

Gender

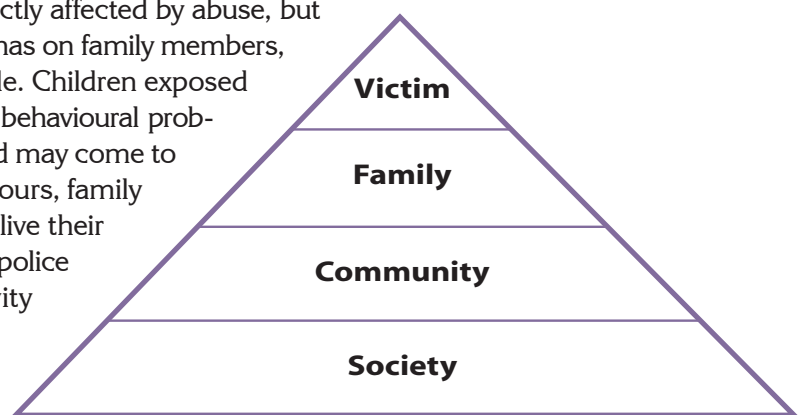
The way men and woman **behave in a culture**. This varies between one community and another and can **change over time**.

Gender-based violence is violence that is related to the way men and woman are expected to behave. It could be that a woman is beaten for failing to cook the dinner on time, or a man has to prove his manhood by showing aggression to a woman. Gender-based violence can be directed at children, adults or the elderly. A boy-child may be beaten if he cries because men are not supposed to show emotion. An elderly woman may be beaten if she fails to care for her children and her grandchildren, because traditionally elderly women are supposed to do this.

Gender-based violence is common in Namibia. It is estimated that one in five women are in an abusive relationship. "Hidden" issues such as witchcraft are also common in Namibia, although information on these issues is difficult to obtain as few people are willing to admit that such beliefs exist. Witchcraft can be related to gender-based violence because a man or a woman may use the threat of witchcraft to control another person according to the way he or she is supposed to behave, according to a gender stereotype.

Statistics report the number of people directly affected by abuse, but they do not show the impact that violence has on family members, the community and even society as a whole. Children exposed to violence may experience emotional and behavioural problems, either immediately or later in life, and may come to believe that violence is acceptable. Neighbours, family members and community members may live their lives in fear of abuse. The increased use of police time, medical care and loss of productivity affects society at large. Abusers are also affected by the violence they commit, as they often lose the respect of their family and their self-respect.

Some people think that gender-based violence is part of their culture. Although this can be true, information collected at the workshops in all 13 regions of Namibia showed that the same types of gender-based violence are present in many of the cultures in Namibia. This suggests that gender-based violence is often not really about culture but simply about the need for one person to dominate another. Culture is not something that stays still, it changes over time. If people assess what their culture was like one hundred or two hundred years ago, they will see that there are many differences between the past and the



A single act of violence affects the victim, the family, the community and society.

present. Just because something was done in the past, does not mean it has to happen in the present. This means that people do not have to blame their culture for the level of gender-based violence in their community. Culture can and does change.

Both men and women can be victims of gender-based violence. However, data shows that women are more likely than men to be victims of this kind of violence. There are several reasons for this:

- Men are often physically stronger than women. This can make it easier for a man to physically abuse a woman, than for a woman to physically abuse a man.
- In many cultures in Namibia, the traditional role of a woman is to serve the man. If the woman fails to do what the man wants, it is considered acceptable that the man should beat the woman.

Questions for discussion

- Does everyone in your community have the same understanding of the community's culture? Do men and women in your community ever have different ideas about the right ways of doing things?
- Do people in your community blame gender-based violence on your culture? Do you think this is a good excuse?
- How can you persuade people that culture is not an excuse for violence?



BASIC FACTS ON THE COMBATING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT



FACT SHEET

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE
Windhoek, Namibia, 2008

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is violence towards a family member or someone who is in a relationship with the abuser. When children are the victims, the violence is often referred to as "child abuse".

I do not understand the definition of "domestic violence". I thought violence always involved doing physical harm to another person, but this definition includes things like economic abuse and emotional abuse.



The definition looks at all the ways that people use to hurt and control others. When you think about it that way, you can see that there are many different forms of violence, and not all of them are physical attacks.



What is a domestic relationship?

- Marriage
- Living together
- Girlfriend and boyfriend
- Two people who are the parents of a child
- Parents and their children
- Family members with a domestic connection, such as where an uncle pays for the school fees of his niece and nephew

Examples of domestic violence

1. **Physical abuse**, such as beating, kicking or burning.
2. **Sexual abuse**, such as rape or forcing someone to have sexual contact.
3. **Economic abuse**, such as not allowing a person to have items or money they need or should expect to have (such as food or their own wages).
4. **Intimidation**, which is making someone afraid by using threats or similar behaviour.
5. **Harassment**, which is repeatedly following or communicating with someone in a way they do not want.
6. **Trespassing**, which is entering the home or property of someone without their agreement when they do not share the same home.
7. **Emotional or verbal abuse**, which is a pattern of behaviour that makes a person feel seriously upset or embarrassed. This could include repeated insults or jealous behaviour.
8. **Threatening** to do any of these things is domestic violence.

It is also domestic violence if a child is allowed to see physical, sexual or psychological abuse against a family member.

What can you do if you are experiencing domestic violence?

- (1) You can make an application for a protection order.
- (2) You can lay a charge with the police.
- (3) You can ask the police to give the abuser a formal warning.

You can go to the police and apply for a protection order at the same time.

What is a protection order?

A protection order is a court order saying that the abuser must stop the violent behaviour, stay away from the people who are being abused, or even leave the family home altogether.

How do you apply for a protection order?

1. Go to the Magistrate's Court. You do not need a lawyer and the Clerk of the Court will help you to fill in the forms.
2. You should take any witnesses who have seen the violence and any evidence you may have, such as medical records.
3. The Magistrate will look at your application. If there is enough evidence a temporary protection order will be made. The Magistrate may want more information before making a decision.
4. When the abuser is given the protection order, he/she must decide to accept it or to disagree with it.
5. If the abuser disagrees, an informal hearing will be held with the Magistrate. This hearing is private. At the hearing both people can tell their side of the story. The Magistrate will then decide whether or not to make a final protection order.
6. If the abuser accepts the protection order, the protection order becomes final without a hearing.
7. The court will send a copy of the protection order to the local police station.



See the Legal Assistance Centre's **Guide to the Combating of Domestic Violence Act** for more details.



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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

“For women, trying to protect ourselves in public doesn’t make a difference because we are not safe at home.”

Workshop participant, Keetmanshoop

Domestic violence is disturbing because the home and family should be places where people can feel the most safe and secure. One of the most famous cases of domestic violence to reach the news in Namibia was when a man killed his wife and cooked her body in the kitchen of their home. In the place where the woman felt that she was safe, she was brutally attacked and killed.



Many of the participants in the workshops said that women are often afraid to report domestic violence. A participant in the Tsumeb workshop gave the following example: *A man comes home after work and hits his wife because her cooking is bad. His wife threatens to report him to the police but he does not care because he knows that even if she does report him, she will withdraw the case in a few days.* The participant explained that women are sometimes afraid to leave their husbands. Women are often dependant on their husbands and are afraid of what the community will think if the woman leaves. However, the truth is that domestic violence is a crime whether it occurs in the home or in public, and the Namibian police are trained to take this kind of violence very seriously. Women should not be afraid go to the police if they are being abused.

DIVINDU

At the workshop in Divindu, we asked the participants three questions:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the problem of domestic violence in your community?
2. How would you like to change this problem? What is your goal?
3. What actions can you take to reach this goal?

The participants said that on a scale of 1 to 10, the problem of domestic violence is 7. This means that it is a fairly important issue and that it occurs frequently. The participants discussed the problem. Domestic violence was felt to be an issue because of alcohol, jealousy, affairs outside of marriage and because men expect women to do everything they are told. Some people believe that a man has the right to beat a woman if she does not do her work properly. For example if a woman does not have the food ready when the man comes home, she can be beaten.

To address these problems, the group came up with the following goal:

To develop respect and co-operation in relationships.

Five actions were suggested that could help reach this goal:

1. Teach the community about respect in relationships.
2. Teach people that alcohol abuse can lead to domestic violence.
3. Involve traditional leaders and community leaders in educating the community.
4. Teach people that trust is important in relationships.
5. Report incidents of domestic violence to the police.

Questions for discussion

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the problem of domestic violence in your community?
2. How would you like to change this problem? What is your goal?
3. What actions can you take to reach this goal?

Suggestions for action

- Does your community ignore situations of domestic violence? Organise a debate to discuss the issue and think of solutions that can help victims of domestic violence.
- Do people understand that domestic violence can be more than physical violence? Design posters that explain the other types of domestic violence. Remember that you do not have to have posters professionally printed – you can draw them yourselves.
- Domestic violence is not acceptable in a partnership or in a marriage. Do pastors in your community counsel couples about mutual respect in relationships? If not, ask your pastor to preach on the topic.
- Do people know how to apply for a protection order? Ask your local police station, Woman and Child Protection Unit or Magistrate's Court if they can give a talk to a community group about the process.



Sticking to stereotypes

BERNAFEY

The group was asked to list the different tasks men and women have in their community. The group came up with the list on the right. These are examples of gender stereotypes because the men or the women may not have the natural talent to do these activities, but they are expected to do them because of their sex.

Men

- Build the houses
- Control the money
- Watch the animals
- Protect the house
- Drive the car

Women

- Care for children
- Cook food
- Do needlework
- Wash and iron the clothes
- Clean the house

Questions for discussion

- Do men and women have fixed roles in your community?
- Is it good for men and women to have fixed roles?
- What are the consequences if a man or a woman does not do the tasks he or she is supposed to do?

Suggestions for action: How to change stereotypes

- For one week, ask the men do the cooking and cleaning. In the same week, ask the women take on the tasks that a man usually does in the household. Taking on the role of another person can make it easier to understand the challenges each person faces.
- Do tasks together. A husband can help his wife care for the children, and a wife can help a husband with building or repair work on the house. Working together means that burdens can be shared.





KEETMANSHOOP

The group was asked to make a list of the characteristics a perfect man or a perfect woman would have. The men had to describe their perfect woman and the women had to describe their perfect man. The group came up with the list on the right.

But it seems that in reality, many people seem to choose transactional relationships rather than relationships based on love, trust and respect. A transactional relationship means that one person is buying another person, and the person who has been “bought” becomes a possession. This kind of relationship is dangerous, because violence is more likely to occur if there is no love, trust and respect.

The perfect man

- Knows what he wants and where he is going
- Loving and trustworthy
- Has an ear to listen
- Has a sense of humor
- Has a helping hand
- Short hair
- Good smile
- Very neat
- Sexy body
- Hard worker

The perfect woman

- Trustworthy
- Diligent
- Loyal
- Beautiful from the inside
- Soft and loving
- Honest
- Reliable
- A good communicator
- Caring
- Loving and smiling
- A good listener/observer

Questions for discussion

- What makes an ideal man?
- What makes an ideal woman?
- Do you think that transactional relationships are common in your community?
- Do you think that transactional relationships can lead to violence?
- What can be done to educate men and women about the dangers of transactional relationships?

Suggestions for action

- Use role plays to illustrate how accepting gifts from older men can make young girls vulnerable.
- Teach young people about how to have a healthy relationship. Information should include teaching about gender equality, mutual respect, communication skills and self-esteem. Make sure that both sexes understand that healthy relationships should not be based on financial/transactional considerations.

BASIC FACTS ON THE COMBATING OF RAPE ACT



FACT SHEET

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE
Windhoek, Namibia, 2008

What is rape?

Rape is when a person carries out a "sexual act" under "coercive circumstances."

Both men and women can be raped.

A "sexual act" can be:

- the insertion of the penis into the vagina, mouth, or anus of another person
- the insertion of any part of the body of a human or animal into the vagina or anus
- the insertion of any object into the vagina or anus
- oral stimulation of the male or female sexual parts
- any other form of stimulation of the male or female sexual parts.



"Coercive circumstances" means that a person is forced or threatened by:

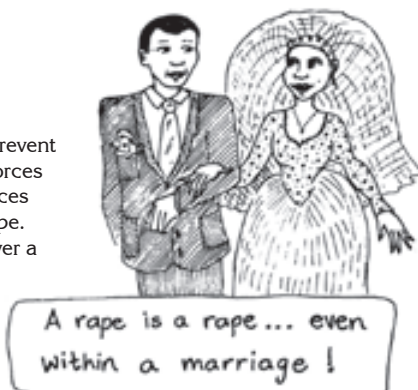
- physical force or threats
- threats to cause another type of harm
- being unable to escape from a situation
- being unable to understand or prevent the situation, because of being drunk/drugged/asleep/disabled
- the person pretends to be someone else or pretends that what is happening is not actually a sexual act
- more than one person is used to intimidate the person into having sex
- one person is under the age of 14 and the other person is more than 3 years older.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

You may need to be tested for HIV and you may be given PEP. This medicine can help prevent HIV infection. PEP is free if you cannot afford to pay.

Rape within marriage

Marriage does not prevent rape. If a husband forces his wife or a wife forces her husband, it is rape. Rape is rape whenever a person says no or is coerced into sex.



What to do if you are raped

Keep the evidence:

- Do not wash yourself.
- Do not change your clothes.
- Do not tidy up the place where the rape happened.
- Wrap any evidence in paper. Do not put it in a plastic bag.

Go to the police or a Woman and Child Protection Unit

You should report the rape to the police so that the person who raped you can be caught. Your information will be kept private. Even the trial is private.

Go to a doctor, clinic or hospital

You should see a doctor or nurse as soon as possible. The doctor can give you medication to prevent HIV infection and sexually transmitted infections, and medication to prevent you from becoming pregnant from the rape.



If you become pregnant from rape

If you become pregnant from rape, you can get a legal abortion. You should get a pregnancy test right away if your next period is late, and you should tell your doctor if you want an abortion.

See the Legal Assistance Centre's **A Guide to the Combating of Rape Act** for more details.



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RAPE



It is estimated that 40% of rapes in Namibia are committed by someone known to the victim. This means that the perpetrator (the person who committed the crime) may have been a family member, a member of the community or a work colleague. Some of the workshop participants suggested that acquaintance rape (rape when the perpetrator is known to the victim) happens because the perpetrator did not understand that “no means no”. Some people said that a woman will never say yes to sex and the man has to continue regardless of what the woman says. This is not true. A woman should be able to say “no” once and the man should stop. A number of myths are associated with cases of rape. The table below shows some of these myths, and gives possible answers to these myths.

Myth	Response
Wearing a skirt means that a girl is tempting men to have sex with her.	A woman who wears a skirt is not asking to be raped. Nobody will ever ask to be raped. If this statement was true, it must then mean that when men do not wear a shirt they are tempting girls to have sex with them.
When a man wants to have sex, he must have sex.	When a man feels a need for have sex, he does not have to have sex. Some men, such as Catholic priests, will never have sex in their entire lives. If a man does not have sex when he wants it, nothing will be injured or damaged, not in his brain or in his private parts.
Men cannot control their urges.	Men can control their urges.
Girls should cover themselves up and dress appropriately.	A woman should never have to feel afraid about what she can and cannot wear.
A man who buys a woman a number of drinks should expect to have sex with her afterwards.	Sex should not be seen as a transaction. If a woman wants to have sex with a man after they have been out for a drink, this is fine. But if she does not want to have sex, the man cannot force her. This would be rape.

30-year prison sentences for Katima gang rape

WERNER MENGES

TWO young men who were convicted on gang-rape charges in the Katima Mulilo Regional Court this week were each sentenced to an effective 30 years' imprisonment yesterday.

The trial of Makala Muyamenwa (21) and George Lunyango (21) started before Magistrate William Kasitomo in the Katima Mulilo Regional Court on Monday with both accused men pleading not guilty to five counts of rape.

After neither of the two men testified in their own defence following the closing of the case for the prosecution, the Magistrate convicted each of them on three charges of rape on Wednesday.

Their trial concluded yesterday with the Magistrate sentencing Muyamenwa and Lunyango to ten years' imprisonment on each of the three charges.

Magistrate Kasitomo further ordered that these sentences are to be served consecutively, with the effect that Muyamenwa and Lunyango have each received an effective term of 30 years' imprisonment.

Muyamenwa, Lunyango and a third suspect, Mubone Given Chikaziza, had been charged with gang-raping a 17-year-old girl at Katima Mulilo's Dairy Compound on November 14, 2005.

Chikaziza died before the start of his and his co-suspects' trial.

According to the complainant in the case she had left her house during the night of November 14 2005 to go to the toilet outside.

As she returned to the house, she was accosted by three men, who held her down and took turns raping her, she said.

She claimed that she could see the three suspects and also recognised them by their voices.

The three suspects however told the Police after their arrest that consensual sex had taken place with the complainant.

Each of them also claimed, though, that he himself did not take part in the sexual intercourse, but only helped his co-accused in the act.

That was not what the complainant testified, though, and it was also not what the Magistrate found in his verdict.

Questions for discussion

- Use the article above to discuss whether you think the perpetrators of this crime received a fair punishment.
- Would you report a rapist?
- Would you report your neighbour if he raped someone?
- Would you report your neighbour if he raped a friend?
- Would you report your neighbour if he raped your daughter?
- Would you report your son if he raped someone?

Suggestions for action

- Make sure that people in your community understand the statements below. This could be done through workshops, presentations, posters or radio shows. Or you might want to think of other ways to get this idea across.
 - "No means no". A woman should be able to say "no" and a man should know that he must stop.
 - In addition to the right to say "no", a woman should be able to feel that she can say "yes" to sex if she wants it.
 - Women must be able to say "yes" or "no" to sex as they wish, and men should understand and expect women to say what they really mean.
- Get women to act our role plays with other women where they practice saying what they mean more directly.

OSHIKUKU

At the workshop in Oshikuku, we asked the participants three questions:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the problem of rape in your community?
2. How would you like to change this problem? What is your goal?
3. What actions can you take to reach this goal?

The participants said that on a scale of 1 to 10, the problem of rape is 8. This means that it is an important issue and that it occurs frequently. The issue of rape affects the whole village.

The group identified causes of rape in their community as unemployment, alcohol, drugs, gender inequality and a power struggle between men and women. A rape may happen because the perpetrator wants to show power over the opposite sex. The perpetrator may also know that the victim will not report the case. This is because there is not enough education about what to do if a person has been raped. Other reasons that people do not report cases of rape are because they are afraid of further violence, or because "they just want to hold it inside".

The group felt that their first goal should be to make sure people have information on what to do if they have been raped.

Five actions were suggested that could help reach this goal:

1. Use the media to provide information.
2. Perform role-plays.
3. Get traditional leaders, the police and learners involved.
4. Find a community educator to take this information to the communities.
5. Educate people about the rights of women.

The participants made sure that action was taken following this discussion. They asked staff from the Legal Assistance Centre office in Ongwediva to give a presentation on gender violence at a community meeting that was held a few weeks later.

Gender Violence

New Start Centre, Oshikuku

22nd August 2008

Immanuel Iita & Tonderai Bhatasata

Legal Assistance Centre

Ongwediva Regional office

Questions for discussion

- Can women say no to sex?
- Can women say that they want to have sex?
- Do men understand "no means no"?
- Are women in your community taught to say "no" to sexual advances from men if they really mean "yes"? Discuss how this can be harmful.
- Discuss how women in your community can be more honest about whether they want sex while still respecting their cultural traditions.

Perhaps she said "yes" to him before, and perhaps she said "yes" to other men, but how is that relevant if he was holding a knife at her throat that night?



BASIC FACTS ON THE MARRIED PERSONS EQUALITY ACT



FACT SHEET

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE
Windhoek, Namibia, 2008

What is the Married Persons Equality Act (MPEA)?

The MPEA removes sexual discrimination from civil marriages. Married equality means that husbands and wives have equal power to make decisions.

Property and marriage

In community of property:

- Everything a husband and wife had before they were married becomes part of the joint estate. Everything earned or bought once married also becomes part of the joint estate. Each partner owns half of the joint estate. If one partner has a debt, money from the joint estate can be used to pay this debt.
- Both partners must agree to sell, give away or borrow money or property. Both partners must agree if they want to take out a large loan.
- If the couple divorce or if one partner dies, the property will be split in half.



Out of community of property:

- Everything a husband and wife had before they were married remains their own. Once they are married they keep their own earnings. They are each responsible for their own loans and debts.
- The husband or the wife can buy or sell their belongings without asking the other person. They can each take out a loan without asking the other person.
- Not all costs are separate. The cost of household needs should be shared because a husband and a wife have a duty to maintain each other.
- If a couple want a divorce, they each keep their own property and anything they bought together is divided in half. If one partner dies, it is only that partner's separate property which goes to the heirs.



Which system of marital property applies?

Most civil marriages in Namibia are *in* community of property. If you want to be married *out* of community of property you must make a contract before you are married and register it at the office of the Registrar of Deeds.

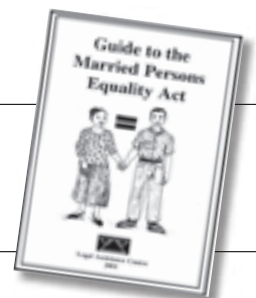
But if you live north of the old "Police Zone", in the areas known as Owamboland, Kavango and Caprivi, marriages that take place between "Africans" on or after 1 August 1950 are *out* of community of property.

If you want to be married *in* community of property you must make a contract with the marriage officer before the marriage takes place.

Marriage and children

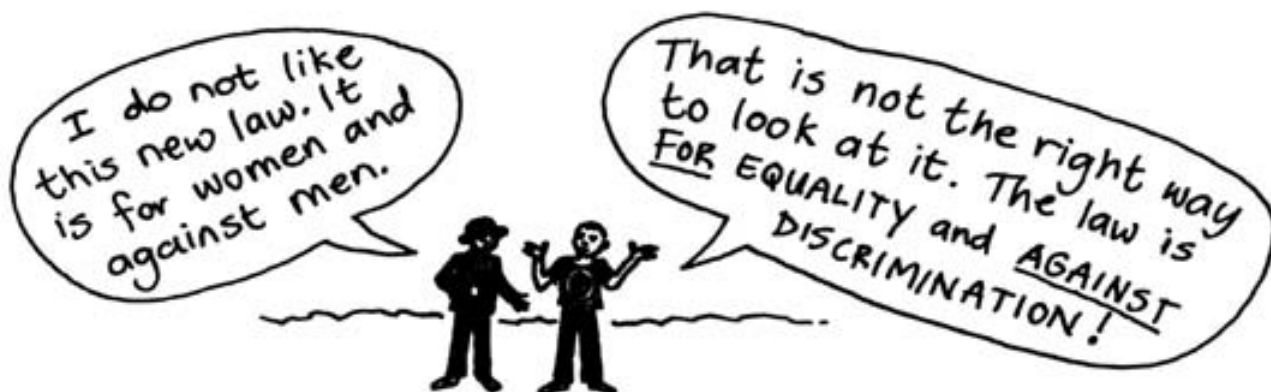
The MPEA states that both parents are *joint* custodians and *equal* guardians. This means both parents can make decisions about how their children are brought up. They do not have to consult each other on most decisions. But some decisions, such as deciding to put the child up for adoption or removing the child from Namibia, must be made together.

See the Legal Assistance Centre's **Guide to the Married Persons Equality Act** for more details.



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MARRIED EQUALITY



“What is love? The term love does not exist.”

Workshop participant, Keetmanshop

The Constitution says that “all persons shall be equal before the law” and that “no persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status”. The table below shows some of the opinions discussed at the workshops and the responses that could be given to support the right of men and woman to be equal in a relationship.

Opinion	Response
I am working for us, why should you? (A male opinion)	A job does not just provide money. It can also build self-esteem. A woman may feel like a prisoner if she is kept at home. Men must ask themselves what they are afraid of if a woman goes out to work.
If you buy a woman, you own her. (A male opinion)	Women are not objects that can be bought. They are human beings with rights and feelings just like men. You do not buy a woman. You enter into a relationship and you have to work at that relationship if it is to be a success.
Even if a woman is born poor, she can marry money.	Women have the right and the ability to earn money, just like men. Women do not need to rely on men to survive.
Once a woman is independent she is difficult to control.	Why does a woman need to be controlled? Relationships are about equal partnerships, not about one person dominating the other.
A woman should stay at home to avoid influences that might make her argumentative. She might learn information that could make her troublesome.	If a man is allowed this information, why can't a woman have this information? Men and women are equal. A woman should not be treated like a child.
A woman can't earn more money than a man.	Why not? If a man and woman love each other, the man should be proud that he has a wife who is able to earn a good salary. As the money could help to pay for household expenses, the man would benefit from his wife earning a good salary. If a man thinks that his worth can only be proven by money, then important aspects of a relationship, such as love and respect, are missing.

Some men in the workshops voiced concerns about women being viewed as their equals in relationships. But when relationships are built on love, trust and respect, the fears the men have about gender equality decrease. If a woman feels that she is an equal and that she is respected, she will not need to find another man who will treat her better. When the work loads are shared, and husbands and wives treat each other with respect, both men and women will benefit.

"If you really love a person, there should be equality in the marriage."

Workshop participant, Ndiyona

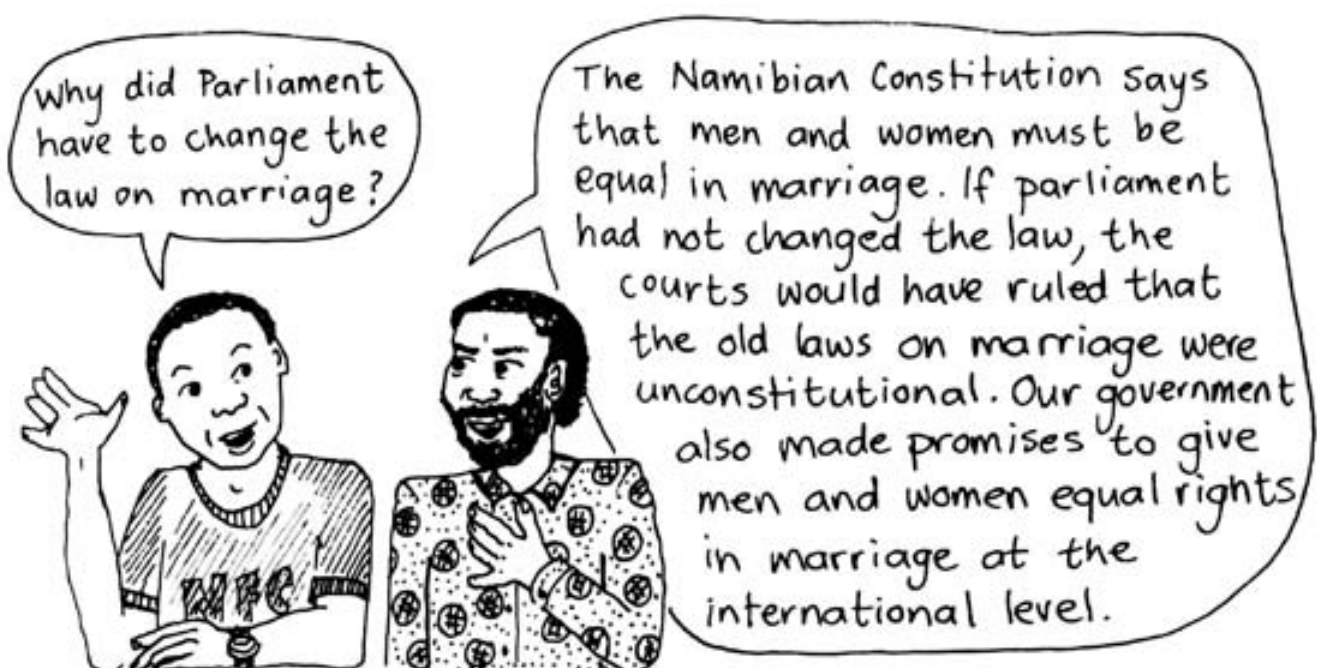


Questions for discussion

The Namibian Constitution says that "Men and women ... shall be entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution" (Article 14).

The Married Persons Equality Act removed the husband's right to have legal power over his wife and her possessions. This means that men and women in marriage are now equal in the eyes of the law.

- Is it a good thing that men and women are now equal in marriage?



Control in relationships

“Marriage sounds like a simple thing but it is complex.”

Workshop participant, Ndiyona

Some of the workshop participants reported that men in relationships set the rules. Women have to ask permission to do things such as visit their friends or stay out late. In Ongwediva, the participants said that the man will often make the following decisions:

- when a woman can go out (she can't go out at night);
- when a woman can visit her friends;
- how many children the couple will have;
- what time dinner should be served;
- how the wife should spend her money (he takes her salary);
- who drives the car (the man);
- which animals to slaughter;
- when to have sex.

In many cases, women in relationships feel that they have very little control about sex. Even when there is no coercion (which would mean that a rape had been committed), women can often feel unable to negotiate about sex. This can mean that women are afraid to ask their partner to use a condom, even if they know the man is sleeping with more than one woman. Or it can mean that women feel that they are unable to say no to sex, even when they want to say no. Gender equality means that women who are in relationships have the right to decide with their partner when, where and how to have sex.

Suggestion for action:

Hold a debate on “Who are Mr and Mrs Gender Equality?” in your town

- Invite three couples to compete to win the title of “Mr and Mrs Gender Equality”. You could invite a local pastor and partner or your local regional counsellor and partner.
- Invite your audience to come and watch the debate.
- Provide your speakers with some questions to prepare themselves. For example, they might want to discuss:
 - What does gender equality mean in their relationship?
 - How do they try to ensure that each partner is treated fairly?
 - Who does the cooking/cleaning/drives the car in their relationship?
 - If they could make one recommendation to other people on how to have an equal relationship, what would it be?
 - What do they enjoy most about equality in marriage?
- At the debate, ask each couple to present their argument on why they should receive the title “Mr and Mrs Gender Equality”.
- Once each couple has presented their argument, ask the audience for comments and questions.
- At the end of the evening, ask the audience to choose the winning couple.

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Gender-based violence can also be an issue in the parent-child relationship. This discussion was often related to how parents should discipline their children. Many people felt that if children were not beaten they would not behave well. For many of the participants, corporal punishment (the use of beating and hitting) was the only way they knew to discipline a child. Children do need to be punished when they do something wrong, but the use of corporal punishment is not a good choice of discipline because it does not tell children why their actions were wrong. If a child does not understand why there was a problem, he or she might continue to behave badly. Corporal punishment can also teach children that violence is the answer to problems – especially in situations where the other person is smaller and less powerful.

GOBABIS

The participants at the Gobabis workshop felt that part of the problem with child discipline was due to absent parents. In one of the role plays they performed, they showed children going to shebeens because their parents were away. It was not acceptable for other adults to reprimand the children as the parents would later say “You do not buy them food, so it is not your problem.” The participants said that in the past people had more respect for discipline from elders and the community. An elder used to be able to visit a mother and give advice about how to manage her children but this does not happen anymore.

Suggestions for action

The participants at the Gobabis workshop came up with the following ideas for action:

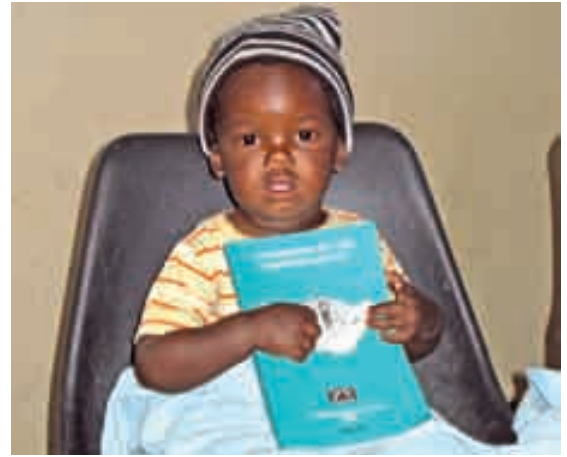
- Communities should get together to share ideas about how to discipline children.
- Perform dramas about child discipline.
- Make a badge, bracelet or necklace that is a sign for supporting the reduction of gender-based violence.
- Form a support group for women suffering from gender-based violence.

The Gobabis group were fairly nervous about their ability to put their ideas into action in order to reduce gender-based violence in their community. However, when the group were asked to think about the skills they had, it became clear to them that they had a lot of talent to use. The abilities the group had included:

- confidence
- happiness
- dancing
- singing
- playing sports
- cooking
- talking.

Questions for discussion

- What abilities do people in your community have which they could use in actions to reduce violence and improve parent-child relationships?



ONGWEDIVA

At the workshop in Ongwediva, we asked the participants three questions:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the problem of child abuse in your community?
2. How would you like to change this problem? What is your goal?
3. What action can you take to reach this goal?

The participants said that on a scale of 1 to 10, the problem of child abuse is 7. This means that it is a fairly important issue and that it occurs frequently.

The participants discussed the problem. Part of the problem is the way grandparents discipline their grandchildren. The grandparents have good intentions, but they can become so violent that the discipline turns into abuse.

The participants were asked to perform role plays on what is good and bad discipline. An example of good discipline was where the parent explains to the child what he or she did wrong, explains the consequences of the actions and takes away some of the child's pleasures as a punishment.

Three steps for good discipline were discussed:

1. Teach children to respect their parents. It is hard to discipline a child if the child does not have respect.
2. Be open with your children. Listen to their feelings, communicate and have fun together.
3. Give information to your children. Explain the consequences of their actions.



Alternative methods of punishment

At the workshops a number of alternatives to corporal punishment were discussed. The ideas below show some of the methods parents could use instead of corporal punishment:

Type of punishment	Description
Telling off and discussion	The parent explains to the child what he or she did wrong and why it is wrong.
Time out	Ask the child to stop doing whatever he or she is doing and calm down. The child should be taken to a separate room or outside and asked to sit down and take "time out". This could be for five minutes if they child is young, or thirty minutes if the child is older. During this time, the child is able to think about what he or she did wrong. Give the child this punishment every time he or she misbehaves. Being made to sit quietly and wait is boring for the child and the child will learn not to misbehave in this way.
Removal of rewards/pleasures	As a punishment the child is prevented from making a visit to his or her friends or has to go to bed early. Or the parent could think of another punishment that will remove a reward or pleasure.
Solve the problem	If something has been damaged, the child could be asked to mend it.
Take responsibility for the action	Sometimes making a child own up to an action can be a very effective punishment. If a child stole something from a shop, make the child visit the manager, return the item and apologise.



Suggestions for action

- Teach other people about alternatives to corporal punishment.
- Ask pastors to preach a sermon about what the Bible really says about discipline.
- Organise an event with local schools where parents and teachers can discuss how to discipline children.

Suggestion for action: How to hold a football competition

Some of the groups suggested that children need to be given more supervision and activities. This can help keep them out of trouble. One idea discussed at the Ndiyona workshop was to organise sporting activities for children.

1. Start your team. You might want to have 5 people on each team, 8 people or a full team of 11.
2. Find somewhere to play. This could be on a school sports field if you ask permission, or another open space in your area.
3. Organise one day a week when you can meet and practise. Make it regular and be dedicated.
4. Make sure you do fitness exercises and warm ups as well if you want your team to be the best.
5. See if there are any other teams in your area. If so, contact them and ask if they want to have a match.

You could organise a football tournament in your community.

1. Make posters to advertise your event.
2. Invite teams to play. Perhaps charge a small fee to enter (perhaps N\$1 or N\$5 per person). This could help raise money to buy new equipment or something your group might need.
3. Ask people to come and support the tournament. Make it a fun day for the community.
4. See if anybody wants to do some catering. This would be a great idea for income generation.
5. See if anybody wants to sell drinks. This is another good idea for income generation.

Football Tournament

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

LOCATION: _____

RULES: Form a team of 5 people.

Each person should pay N\$ ____ to play.

The winning team receives _____.



ABUSE OF THE ELDERLY

Abuse of the elderly is common in Namibia. Just as there are transactional relationships between men and women in relationships, it also appears many of the relationships between elderly people and their children or grandchildren are transactional. The children or grandchildren expect the grandparents to give them money from their pension payments, and if they do not provide the money, violence may follow. Another issue discussed was the vulnerability of older people in a commercial world. Tales were told about elderly people being sold goods on credit. The elders were later falsely told that they must pay all of their next pension money to the shop owner on pension day.

What the law says about abuse of elderly people

- Domestic violence is violence towards a family member or someone who is in a relationship with the abuser. A grandparent has a domestic relationship with his or her child or grandchild.
- If an elderly person is experiencing domestic violence, he or she can make an application for a protection order, lay a charge with the police or ask the police to give the abuser a formal warning. Applying for a protection order and visiting the police can be done at the same time.
- For details on how to apply for a protection order see the Domestic Violence Fact Sheet on page 5.

Questions for discussion

- Did you know that a grandparent can apply for a protection order against his or her grandchild, in the same way that a man or woman can apply for a protection order against his or her partner?
- Do you think that grandparents would do this? Why might they not do this?
- What can be done to support a grandparent if he or she needs to apply for a protection order?

One of the biggest problems relating to gender-based violence in Namibia is the lack of ownership about the issue. Abuse of the elderly is an important example of a lack of ownership. People do not like the violence that grandchildren show their grandparents but do nothing to stop it. People know about cases of extortion in shops but ignore it. Abuse of the elderly is not a fashionable issue; the elderly have a very quiet voice and few means and resources to make their voices heard. But this does not mean that their voices should be ignored.

Namibians need to speak out about these problems to ensure that they are addressed.



MARIENTAL

The participants at Mariental workshop identified elderly abuse as a particular problem in their town. The rate of abuse in Mariental is probably not any different to other towns in Namibia, but there are people in Mariental who are willing to take a stand against the problem. The group identified a number of issues:

- On pension day, elderly people are beaten up or coerced into giving their pension money to their grandchildren.
- The violence often occurs in the homes. This means that it is a hidden form of violence that is difficult to identify, and difficult to stop.

The group suggested a number of ways to tackle the issue:

1. Teach children about healthy relationships with elders.
2. Put on a play about good and bad relationships between grandparents, parents and children.
3. Explain to people that abuse is more than physical violence.
4. Teach people that grandparents can also apply for protection orders.
5. Find an elderly person who will stand up and say “this happened to me” and what he or she did to stop the violence.

HAGASEB, USAKOS

The workshop at Usakos was held with the !Khe!homs Community Leaders Committee. This was a group of elders who had decided to work together to improve their community, not only for themselves, but also for the youth. A number of ideas for action that would address many different types of gender-based violence were discussed with the group:

1. Start a youth group in Hagaseb to give the youth something to do in their free time.
2. Organise meetings with local authorities to discuss how to improve the facilities in the community.
3. Help parents work with schools to improve the life skills that children are taught. For example children may need more information about how to control their anger and how to maintain healthy relationships with the friends, partners, parents and elders.

OTJIVERO

The participants at the workshop held in Otjivero, the village where the Basic Income Grant is being piloted, came up with an idea for improving the living conditions of elderly people – to build an old age home for their elderly. This might seem like an impossible dream, but anything is possible if community members have the will and determination. The home does not have to be like a palace – it could start off as a simple structure where old people can go for shelter. The community could then try to raise funds or find sponsorship to make the home into something more permanent.

Suggestions for action

- Ask elderly people in your community whether they think that elderly abuse is a problem.
- What support do elders in your community think they need to prevent and address the problems they are experiencing?

ALCOHOL

“Respect alcohol and alcohol will respect you.”

Workshop participant, Bernafey

Discussions at the workshops showed that abuse of alcohol is a national problem. Whilst some people felt that alcohol was the cause of gender-based violence, other people identified it as just part of the problem. When people drink alcohol they become more relaxed and their inhibitions (the controls that stop people from doing certain actions) decrease or disappear altogether. A participant from the workshop at Bernafey described this as: “you are taping when you are sober, you are playing when you are drunk”. This means that people may think of or plan violent actions when they are sober but their inhibitions prevent them from actually being violent. They are “taping” or recording what they would like to do. This can mean that when they are drunk and their inhibitions are lower, they remember what they had been thinking or planning and now feel confident enough to do it. This means that there is a need for education when people are sober to reduce the violent concepts or thoughts that they may have.

The table below shows some of the opinions discussed at the workshops, and the responses that could be given to support the need to address alcohol abuse in the community.

Comment	Response
It is not your money I am drinking.	The impact of alcohol abuse affects the whole community. This means that the problem cannot be ignored.
Go to Windhoek and stop the alcohol abuse.	The problem cannot be solved from a distance, and the law cannot, by itself, prevent alcohol abuse. Communities must first stand together and then try to get support from government and other organisations.

What does the law say about alcohol abuse?

The Liquor Act 6 of 1998 states that:

- it is an offence for any person to sell or supply liquor to any person under 18 years old. This includes parents, bartenders and shebeen-owners, and even other youths.
- it is an offence to become intoxicated in a public place.
- it is an offence to produce any alcoholic drink (such as homebrew) in order to sell or supply it to others without a licence.

On a first conviction for any of these offences, the penalty is a fine of up to N\$4000 and/or imprisonment for up to a year. On a second conviction, the penalty is a fine of up to N\$8000 and/or imprisonment for up to two years.

WARMBAD

The workshop participants at Warmbad felt that alcohol was an important problem in their community. To address this issue, they came up with the idea of holding a “no drinking” weekend. They could put up posters about the event and provide activities for the community to during the weekend as alternatives to drinking. By showing the community that they do not have to drink every weekend, the group hoped that people would understand that alcohol should be used responsibly.

THE PEOPLE OF WARMBAD INVITE YOU NOT TO DRINK FOR JUST ONE WEEKEND

From Saturday _____ to Sunday _____

**WHEN PEOPLE DO NOT DRINK RESPONSIBLY,
ALCOHOL CAN BE THE CAUSE OF MANY PROBLEMS:**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
RAPE
CHILD ABUSE
CAR ACCIDENTS**

**PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT BY
NOT DRINKING THIS WEEKEND.**

Suggestions for action

- Report situations of alcohol abuse to the police.
- Organise a petition if you think that a shebeen or other place selling alcohol should have their liquor licence cancelled, suspended, amended or reviewed.
- Community leaders and community activists can lead by example. People can demonstrate what responsible drinking means.
- Perform dramas at drinking places such as shebeens about the dangers of abusing alcohol.

WITCHCRAFT

To some people, believing in witchcraft and traditional healing is a way of life. Some people believe that a witchdoctor can tell them how they can become successful. If that were the case, everyone would visit a witchdoctor and become successful. The table below shows some of the examples of witchcraft that were discussed at the workshops and the responses that could be given to explain why these are not examples of witchcraft.

Witchcraft	Reality
A man was cursed by a woman and became so ill that he needed to be in a wheelchair. A traditional healer tried to remove the curse but it was too powerful.	A number of diseases could have caused the man to become wheelchair-bound. This is likely to be the result of a medical condition not a curse.
A group of men raped a girl. Some of the parents of the men went to see a witchdoctor, taking the clothes of their son. On the first day in court, the case was thrown out because the magic was so powerful.	The law requires evidence beyond reasonable doubt. This means that if there is not enough evidence to convict a person, the person cannot be sent to prison. In this case, there might not have been enough evidence for the case to go ahead.

The following example was also discussed at the workshops: *A mother wants to apply for maintenance for her child. The father tells the mother that if she does so, he will curse the child. The child then falls sick.* This is not an example of witchcraft. It is an example of a person trying to threaten and intimidate another person, and a separate incidence of a child falling sick. How can the mother be sure that the child would not have got sick anyway? The answer is that she cannot be sure. It cannot be proven that the child would have stayed healthy without the curse. People often remember times when a curse and a sickness happen at the same time. But do people remember the times when a curse is not followed by a sickness? This probably happens far more often but people forget about these times.

What does the law say about witchcraft?

The Maintenance Act 9 of 2003 states that:

- Any person who with intent to compel or induce a complainant not to file a complaint at the maintenance court or not to lay a criminal charge against a defendant for his or her failure to support a specific person, in any manner threatens by whatever means, including the use of witchcraft, to kill, assault, injure the complainant or any other person or to cause damage to that complainant or any other person, or that complainant's property or another person's property, commits an offence and is liable to a fine which does not exceed N\$20 000 or to imprisonment for a period which does not exceed five years.
- The Witchcraft Suppression Proclamation 27 of 1933 also makes a number of practices related to witchcraft criminal offences. For example, it is an offence to make someone believe that you are going to use witchcraft to cause harm to a person or property. Depending on the crime, the punishment could be a fine or imprisonment for up to five years.

NYDIYONA

People at the Ndyiona workshop said that applying for maintenance could be an intimidating process. The group discussed the possibility of forming a support group. Together they could learn how the process worked, and support each other in their difficulties. The group even thought of a name: N4M (Ndyona 4 Maintenance).

- Could you do this in your area?

Suggestions for action

- If witchcraft is a problem in your area, organise a community meeting to discuss the issue.
- Ask the Magistrate's Court to provide a presentation about what the Maintenance Act says about intimidation.



Monday, June 30, 2008 – Web posted at 9:03:30 AM GMT

Police in South swoop on traditional healers

LUQMAN CLOETE

POLICE at Keetmanshoop have arrested five foreign traditional healers who have been operating at the town without valid work permits.

The four Zimbabweans and a Malawian were arrested on Thursday following a tip-off from the public, Karas Regional Commander, Deputy Commissioner Josephat Abel, told The Namibian.

They are Shame Marasha, Nelson Masavi, Tapiya Mhiyangiwa, Sam Masawi and Kingsley Karim.

On Friday, the four made a brief appearance in the Keetmanshoop Magistrates Court on charges of conducting professional business without work permits.

All remain in custody.

They are set to appear in court again next week.

When interviewed by the Police commander, one claimed he could even provide medicine that will cure AIDS.

"Weeks after you drink the medicine, you'll be totally healed from AIDS," Malawian Kingsley Karim told Abel.

Abel, who has strongly condemned the mushrooming of traditional healers at the town, warned the public to desist from using these services.

"These people (traditional healers) are fleecing on the already poor community members as they are charging them exorbitant prices that range between N\$600 and

upwards for a small portion of traditional powders," Abel said angrily.

"These fake traditional healers are only here to enrich themselves on the expense of the poor community," said Abel.

The healers charged an upfront consultation fee ranging from between N\$30 and N\$50.

Police also confiscated electric appliances such as fridges, stoves and computers which had been offered as payment for the traditional healers' services. These would be kept until the owners could be identified.

The healers apparently treated some locals for love, unemployment and financial problems.

"Why don't you go and treat your fellow nationals who I believe are rocked by unemployment and food scarcity," Abel wanted to know from the traditional healers.

Meanwhile, Karas Governor Dawid Boois while addressing the community of Berseba village during the launch of the Berseba Community Development Committee (CDC) on Saturday, implored the villagers to stay away from traditional healers.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

“If we know the problem and the solution, we can sort it out.”

Workshop participant, Ndiyona

Below are some ideas for ways to start addressing gender-based violence in your community. Many of these ideas came from participants at the workshops:

<p>Hold a meeting with community leaders to discuss how your community can tackle gender-based violence.</p>	<p>Organise a debate on issues such as rape in marriage, or whether men and women should be equal in a marriage.</p>	<p>Perform role plays about gender-based violence. You could perform them in the middle of the street or at a shebeen. If you perform the role plays in a place that people do not expect to see a role play, you will grab their attention.</p>
<p>Speak on the local radio to tell people about your cause.</p>	<p>Get T-shirts with a slogan, such as “This town is against gender-based violence”.</p>	<p>Teach children about healthy relationships. Talk to schools in your area to see what you can do to help.</p>
<p>Start a support group. It could be for men, women, people who need maintenance, the elderly, people affected by domestic violence or any other vulnerable group.</p>	<p>Wear ribbons or design a bracelet that identifies your cause. You could sell your ribbon or bracelet to community members for a small sum of money to earn money to use to tackle your cause. You could use the money to hire a hall to hold a workshop.</p>	<p>Design posters or even put up a billboard about your cause. Remember that you do not have to have posters professionally printed – you can draw them yourselves.</p>
<p>Ask taxi drivers to put posters about domestic violence or rape in their cars.</p>	<p>Decorate a bakkie or donkey cart and drive through the community to attract attention to your cause, playing music or shouting slogans.</p>	<p>Ask churches to preach a sermon on gender-based violence all on the same day.</p>
<p>Paint a mural about gender-based violence on a wall in a public area. Make sure that you ask for permission first.</p>	<p>Compose a song about gender-based violence and perform it in public.</p>	<p>Develop a voluntary code of conduct for your town, with guidelines on how people should behave towards each other.</p>

Suggestion for action: Ideas for an SMS campaign

To get the community involved in a campaign, it is important to make everyone aware of the problems. Using cell phones to pass on information about your campaign is a simple and effective way of communicating with friends. By asking people to forward the message, the information can be spread far and wide – from Karasburg to Katima Muello and from Gobabis to Grootfontein. It can even be free if you pick the right time – see what deals your network offers. Below are some examples of possible messages about gender-based violence:

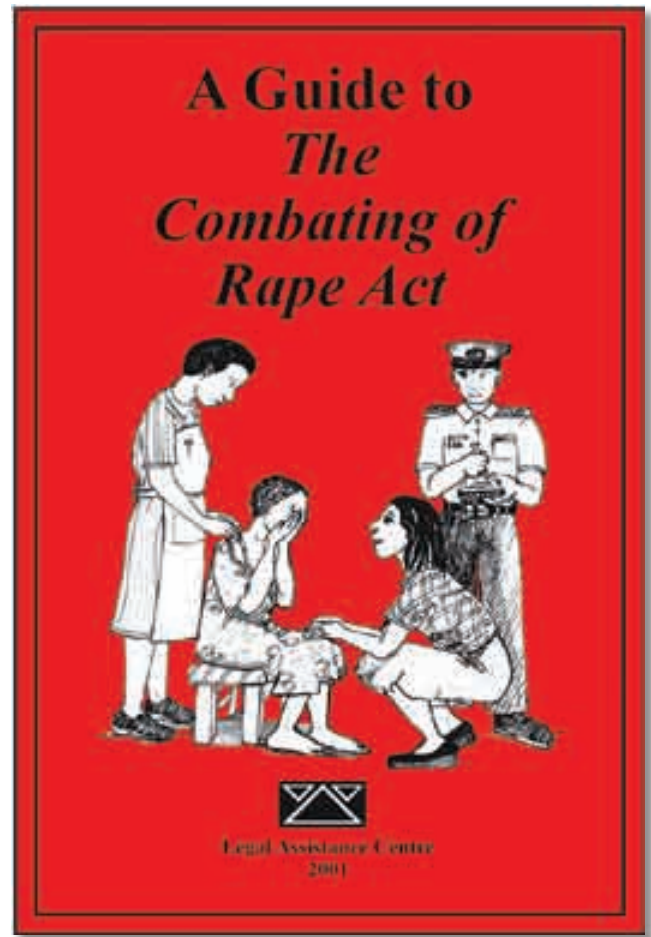
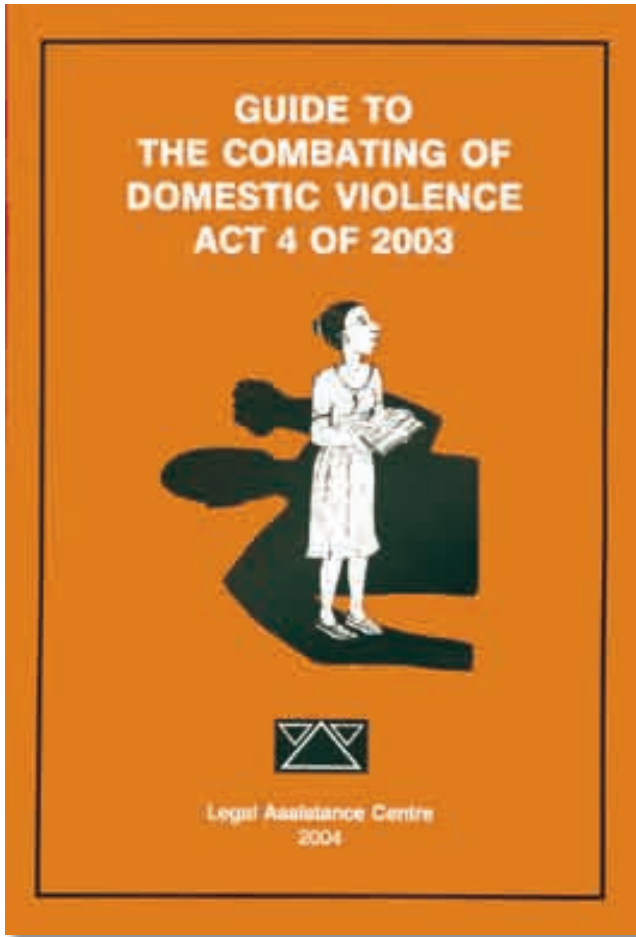
1. Make a promise to stop violence. Show your commitment by sending this message to 5 people.
2. Women deserve to feel safe in their own homes. Domestic violence is a crime. Please send this message to 5 people.
3. Rape is a problem in our community. We must work together to change this. Show your commitment by sending this message to 5 people.
4. Men and women must work together to make Namibia safe. Show your commitment by sending this message to 5 people.
5. A woman is not a punchbag. Please send this message to 5 people.
6. 6% of rape victims are men. Men need your support in the fight against violence. Show your commitment by sending this message to 5 people.
7. Give children a chance. Stop violence in Namibia. Show your commitment by sending this message to 5 people.
8. We are all one community. Stand together in the fight against violence. Show your commitment by sending this message to 5 people.
9. Over 1100 rapes are reported every year in Namibia. Take a stand against rape. Please send this message to 5 people.
10. There is never a good excuse for hitting a woman. Violence is not the answer. Show your commitment by sending this message to 5 people.
11. Nobody should live in fear of domestic violence. Take a stand against violence in our community. Please send this message to five people.
12. Victims of violence need support, not judgment. Please send this message to 5 people.

Feedback from the workshops

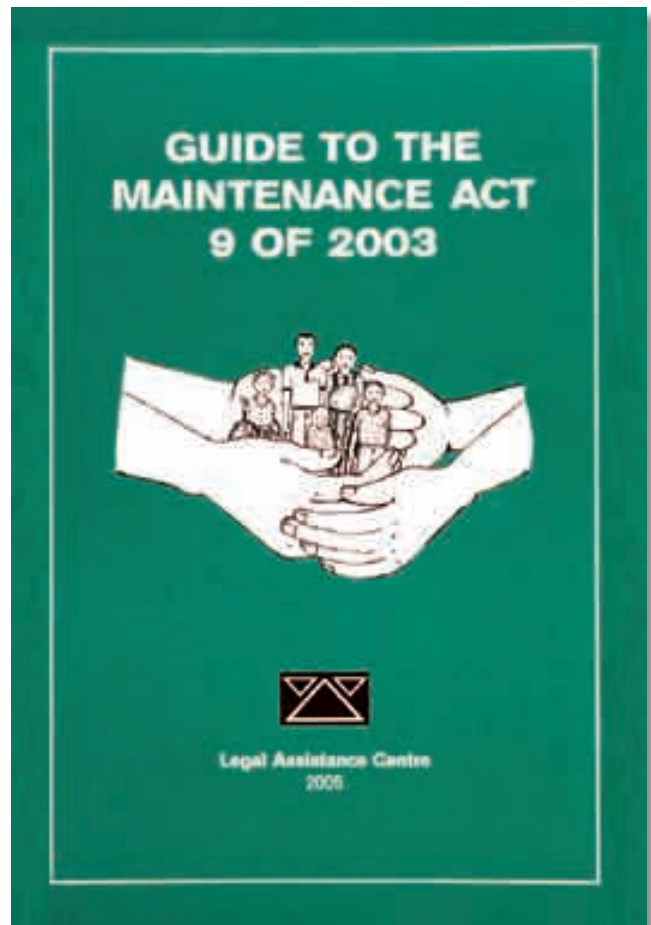
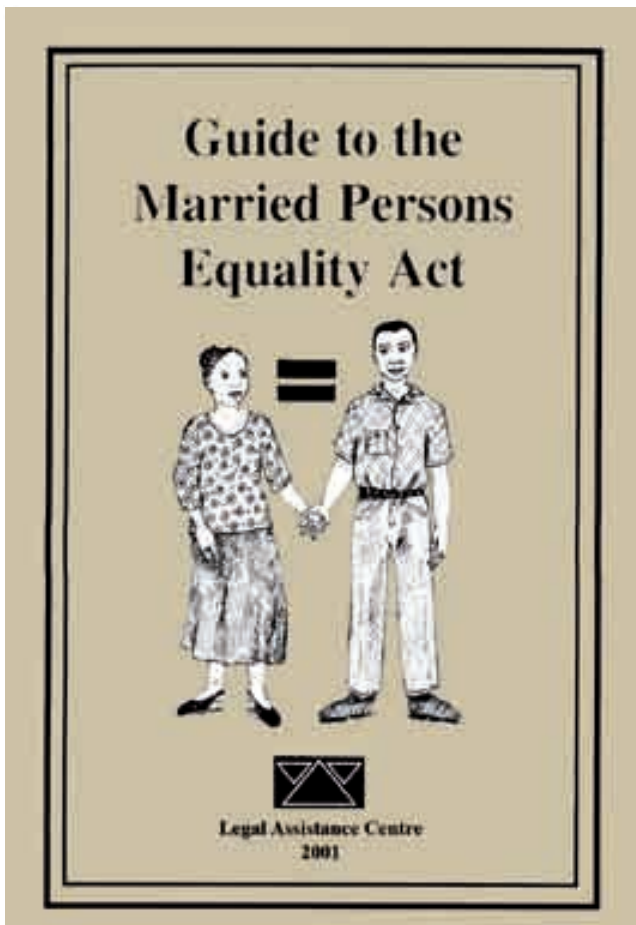
- I have a better understanding of how women feel about certain issues.
- I have learnt in detail about rape and that it's not your fault when it happens.
- Today I learnt that women are not for us to stand on, but rather to protect, love and care for.
- I have learnt things that I only heard about and it was an honour to hear.
- Thank you for the encouragement and motivation. We heard things we weren't expecting to hear.
- I learnt that gender-based violence is a problem and there is silence and too much noise about it but no definite solution.
- I enjoyed the workshop because we worked in a team.
- I will learn and tell people about what I've learnt.
- Because of the workshops, there will be a decrease in men beating women.







Four of the many LAC publications relating to gender. Digital versions (PDFs) of most LAC publications can be downloaded free of charge from the LAC website: www.lac.org.na. Hard copies can be obtained from the LAC offices.



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

Margaret Mead

