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## **Building the feminist movement in Namibia**

### **Annual Report January to December 2009**

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**Approved by the board of trustees**

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## A Challenges in the National context

### General background

In the twenty years since independence, Namibia has made significant strides with regard to law reform, thereby effectively promoting and guaranteeing gender equality, and protecting women's rights. These laws, which are among the most progressive on the African continent, include the Combating of Domestic Violence Act, the Maintenance Act, the Combating of Rape Act, the Married Persons Equality Act, the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act, the Communal Land Reform Act, the Labour Act and the Children's Status Act. These laws essentially create a legal basis for gender equality and provide formal recourse to justice. However, as stated in the National Gender Policy, which was recently launched on 08 March

2011, “inconsistent implementation and ineffective enforcement efforts continue to undermine the ability of these laws to achieve gender equality.”

Without effective implementation of the above laws, women will continue to face inequalities with regards to political representation and participation. Violence will continue to threaten the safety and lives of women and children. Unemployment and poverty will further exacerbate many women’s ability to fully enjoy social and economic freedom.

### *Current political climate*

In the November 2009 Presidential and National Assembly elections, H.E. Hifikepunye Pohamba was re-elected for a second term as State President by 75.25% of the voters. The SWAPO Party gained 54 of the 72 seats in the National Assembly with 74.29% of the vote, down one seat from the 2004 elections. The new Rally for Democracy and Progress party became the official opposition with 8 seats in the National Assembly. The former official opposition party Congress of Democrats (CoD) experienced the most significant loss, down from five seats to one.

Despite a history of exemplary, free and fair elections in Namibia, these were the first national elections marred by incidences of violence. There were also a number of alleged irregularities with the voters’ roll. Additionally, a long delay in the release of the results, led to suspicions of vote rigging. A number of opposition parties are currently taking the electoral commission to court, while refusing to occupy their positions in parliament until the case has been heard. A further major issue was the lack of access to the state-controlled media (radio and television). There are very few changes in the cabinet. Many of the previous members of parliament are now serving their fifth terms as ministers. This does not bode well for improving governance and democracy. An important goal will thus be to educate all sectors of the Namibian public on what it takes to build the most basic pillars of democracy including basic human rights, freedom of speech, and the establishment of an independent judiciary and so on.

### ***Women's political participation***

Women constitute 51% of the population and 52% of the electorate in Namibia. While we recognize the efforts made to restructure Namibian society so as to eliminate impediments to women's access to political power and participation, the recently held Presidential and National Assembly elections show an unfortunate reversal.

While we hadn't expected any of the 14 contesting political parties to nominate a woman as candidate for the presidency, we were shocked at the low number of women candidates on the party lists for the National Assembly, Namibia's lower house of parliament. As a result, only 16 women (22 %) were elected among the 72 MPs, down from the 18 women elected in 2004 (25%). Only 9 of the 42 cabinet ministers are women (21%). Yet Namibia is a signatory to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which calls for gender balance in all elected positions of government by 2015.

Calls are coming from the SWAPO Party Women's League to legislate for quotas to achieve the SADC goal. Government already enacted a quota for the local authority elections in 1992. This was reiterated in 1998, which has resulted in almost 50% women elected into local government. However, there are only 12% women in the regional councils, which are elected on a constituency basis instead of the party list system.

Whether or not we agree with their politics, chosen political leanings, or political aspirations, women in political leadership represent an important entry point for championing women's rights at large. Our responsibility will therefore be to ensure that women in political leadership are equipped with the capacity to represent women's issues effectively.

An additional task for the women's movement will be to continue to lobby and advocate for the adoption of the 50/50 Bill, which was developed in 2002 by the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network, an effort led by Sister Namibia. This should ideally be done in time for the Regional and Local Authority elections scheduled for November 2010.

### ***Media***

Namibia has a vibrant print media and a diverse commercial radio landscape, but the national radio and TV broadcaster are controlled by the State and mainly serve the interests of the ruling party. The government ban on advertising or offering tenders to the English daily *The Namibian* continues as punishment for its critical voice and exposure of corruption. A new and progressive development is the establishment of a Media Council by the Namibian Editors' Forum. This body has now adopted a Code of Ethics for the media and appointed a Media Ombudsman to whom the public can forward their queries, comments or concerns. Women's voices, perspectives and issues are still underrepresented in all mainstream media, women continue to be presented in stereotyped ways or in roles traditionally assigned by society,, and sexist advertising is still rife.

These sexist stereotypes in the media perpetuate a simplistic, incontrovertible and distorted image of women and men, legitimising everyday sexism and establishing a barrier to gender equality.

Emphasizing the positive role that the media can play in promoting gender equality, the women's rights movement and all stakeholders in Namibian society should promote training, education and awareness-raising actions and to strengthen women's visibility in the media. Ideally the media should favour a more balanced and non-stereotyped representation of women and men in the media and promote gender equality objectives.

Furthermore, actions that assist efforts in the media to prevent images that perpetuate violence against women and domestic violence need to be promoted.

### *Poverty*

According to the UNDP Development Report 2009, Namibia still has the highest Gini coefficient in the world (gap between rich and poor). Despite this, donors are continuing to pull out of the country, as the average income puts Namibia into the category of lower middle income country.

The majority of the poor are women. These women are often holding families and communities together through subsistence farming, domestic work, trading in the informal sector, or regular or casual sex work. In some regions of the country, up to 50% of households are headed by women alone.

Poverty denies women their right to live with dignity and make choices, and thereby puts them at risk of violence and HIV infection. As more people become infected with HIV and ill from AIDS and the death toll rises, scarce family resources are used up on payment for transport to clinics and hospitals, medication and funerals. Women are often forced to leave productive work to take care of the ill. Families lose their breadwinners and sink further into poverty. Grandmothers are left with more and more orphans to care for with their meagre pensions and the small social grants, which they struggle to access.

It is unfortunate that corruption scandals involving exorbitant amounts of tax-payers money continue to rock the country, while the piloting of the Basic Income Grant by a number of civil society organisations in a small community in eastern Namibia has come to an end without gaining government support. Fortunately, this incident has sparked much debate on the pros and cons of introducing such a grant which we hope will result in positive outcomes for the poor majority who are women. Additional concerns are that the new budget tabled in parliament prioritises spending on defence over health, and the main approach for alleviating poverty is to promise greater support for small and medium enterprises.

## *Education*

Education is not only a critical factor in sustainable development; it is also cited internationally as a means to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. One of the many challenges facing Namibian society with regards to issues of access to education for all children is the issue of learner pregnancies. It is estimated that approximately 13% of women aged 15 to 19 were already mothers at the time of the latest Demographic and Health Survey, conducted in 2006–2007. Another 3% in this age group were pregnant with their first child at the time of this survey (Legal Assistance Center, 2009).

Previously, girls and boys would be expelled from school in such instances. However, an important recently adopted learner-pregnancy policy guarantees education for all learners finding themselves in these situations. According to the LAC (2009), this policy “places a very strong emphasis on prevention, includes the encouragement of abstinence and the communication of values such as gender equality and respect for individual autonomy.

Practical prevention measures such as providing safer school and hostel environments, facilitating effective access to contraceptives and encouraging alcohol-free social activities for youth are also included” (LAC, 2009, p237).

Additionally it is also suggested that “the concern about improving the educational rights of girls who become pregnant is based in part on the knowledge that this will affect the fate of their children and future generations” since children born to educated mothers have a higher chance of enrolling and completing school and of survival in life.

Although the enrolment of girls in schools now matches or surpasses boys at every level, various other concerns have been identified in the public education system. For example, large sums of money continue to be spent on infrastructure and staffing to provide access to education for all children in Namibia while the quality of education is low. . This is compounded by numerous challenges that include the following:

- an inappropriate curriculum for the majority of learners
- both teachers and students still struggling with English as the medium of instruction
- a lack of textbooks and other reading and learning materials in most schools
- a lack of skills among teachers with regard to learner-centred education
- a lack of motivation for good teachers to remain in schools, and
- a break-down of discipline in schools.

As a result, half of the grade ten (10) students regularly fail their end-of-year examinations, and only a small percentage of every co-hort passes grade 12 and accesses tertiary education. Many of these students leave the university or the polytechnic with appropriate skills for employment.

### ***Violence against women and children***

Despite the progressive laws adopted by the county, many of our homes continue to be sites of various forms of violence, particularly violence against women, including rape, sexual abuse, physical and emotional violence, with a growing incidence of intimate partner murders - women being murdered by ex-husbands and boyfriends. Girls and women with disabilities and lesbian women are particularly at risk of various forms of abuse and violence that often go unreported.

More than 1100 cases of rape and attempted rape are reported to the police annually, but very few perpetrators are actually brought to book due to sub-standard police investigations and the fact that many rape survivors withdraw charges due to family and community pressure.

A UN baseline study on gender issues in Namibia conducted in 2009 found a high rate of acceptance of wife-beating not only among men but also among women in rural communities, in particular in Caprivi Region. However, no link was made to the particularly violent initiation practices many of the women there have endured as a preparation for marriage.

### ***Sexual and reproductive health and rights***

Namibia's maternal mortality almost doubled between 2000 and 2006, rising from 271 to 449 deaths per 100,000 births, related to poor ante- and post-natal care, the high rate of HIV and Aids as well as the lack of access to quality medical care in many rural areas. The teenage pregnancy rate stands at 15% for girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years, with a rate of 30% for the Caprivi Region, indicating the absence of condom and contraceptive use among young people. There are high rates of STIs; unwanted pregnancies leading to infanticide, baby dumping and unsafe abortions; and a general lack of decision-making power for women in issues regarding sexuality, exacerbated by an array of harmful traditional practices such as early marriages, lobola, widow cleansing and dry sex that expose women and girls to HIV and Aids. A number of HIV positive women are currently going to court over alleged forced sterilisations at state hospitals. However, the new policy on learner pregnancy provides for continued access to education for pregnant girls and young mothers.

### ***HIV and Aids***

The bi-annual national surveys conducted by the Ministry of Health and Social Services among pregnant women show a national average of 17.8 percent of those tested in 2008 were HIV positive, compared to 19.9 percent in 2006. Figures vary greatly among the regions of Namibia. Caprivi Region remains the hardest hit: in the age group 25 to 49 years, almost 50 percent of pregnant women tested in 2006 in Katima Mulilo were HIV positive. This figure came down to 40.3 % in 2008, still way above the national average.

The draft National Gender Policy 2009 – 2018 currently tabled before parliament for consideration provides the following analysis:

“There are many root causes contributing to the high HIV prevalence rate in Namibia. These include: the low socio-economic status of women, which causes gender inequality and poverty; gender-based violence exacerbated by cultural definitions of manhood and masculinity; high rates of STIs; unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions; poor ante- and post-natal care; a general lack of decision-making power for women in issues regarding sexuality; and, biological factors which increase susceptibility of girls and women to HIV and AIDS. Despite intensive education and awareness efforts, there are people who still do not have complete and accurate information about HIV and AIDS. This is particularly true among rural women.

“Other factors leading to poor women’s health include harmful traditional practices such as early marriages and dry sex. There is limited research on the magnitude and types of harmful practices in Namibia, but several media reports and public outcry indicate that dry sex, widow inheritance, initiation ceremonies for girls and women, treatments for infertility involving sex and unconventional treatments often administered by traditional healers, are practiced in Namibia. Because of traditional gender roles, women and girls are expected to provide care for those infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS. This creates a time burden on women, leaving them with less time to earn an income or learn new skills. It also leads to girls having less time to attend school.”

### ***Conclusion***

Over the past twenty years the women’s movement has contributed significantly to changing the discourse and practice regarding gender equality and women’s rights in Namibia. The women’s rights movement has also been a critical collaborator, providing key inputs into the many progressive laws and policies adopted by the State. However, as acknowledged in the new draft National Gender Policy, there is still much to be done with regard to educating in particular, rural women, on their rights. In addition, all of these policies and laws require effective implementation. This indicates the continued need for a vibrant women’s movement in Namibia that can educate all women on their rights and equip them to hold the state accountable to them as full and equal citizens.

## **B Profile of Sister Namibia**

Sister Namibia is a feminist women’s rights organisation based in Windhoek, Namibia.

*Our vision* is a society that recognises, protects and celebrates the full personhood of all women and girls including respect for our dignity, diversity, sexual choices and bodily integrity. We aim to inspire and equip women to make free choices and act as agents of change in our relationships, our communities and ourselves. We are dedicated to developing a new feminist politics and consciousness. We work for transformation through education, information, collective action, and celebration.

## **Strategic goals**

For the period 2009 to 2011, we have identified the following three strategic areas and ten strategic goals through a comprehensive and inclusive planning process:

### ***External activity: Building the feminist movement in Namibia***

- To mount a campaign for sexual rights
- To build young women's capacity for feminist activism
- To provide a platform for women's voices and concerns, particularly from marginalised groups

### ***Internal growth and development: Building Sister Namibia as a feminist organisation***

- To improve the visibility and public understanding of the whole range of Sister Namibia's activities
- To deepen our feminist consciousness and critical feminist analysis as staff and board members
- To support staff performance and well-being
- To establish a Sister Namibia presence in the North

### ***Sustainability: Ensuring the continuity of Sister Namibia***

- To ensure a smooth transition to a new director
- To keep Sister Namibia financially viable
- To measure the social impact of Sister Namibia's activities.

## **C Activities, achievements and challenges in 2009**

The year 2009 was a landmark in the history of Sister Namibia, as we celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and set in motion the transition to a new director, a process which is ongoing up to June 2010.

We faced major challenges throughout the year due to the fact that contracts with our long-standing donors Oxfam Canada and HIVOS were only signed in June, and the amounts for core costs were reduced drastically, forcing the director to continue fundraising throughout the year to try and cover both running costs and staff salaries. Our intern media officer went on maternity leave in May and was then only available part-time for the rest of the year, while the consultant who had supported the director in her work during 2008 took on a new project funded by UNICEF, which left the director to do most of the implementation of our programmes as well: regular production of *Sister Namibia* magazines, and preparation and conducting of workshops together with the outreach officer.

Despite these challenges we were able to achieve most of our planned activities for the year. This report is structured according to the ten strategic goals set out on the previous page.

## Strategic goal 1: To mount a campaign for sexual rights

### Our key strategies for mounting the campaign for sexual rights are:

- Developing a feminist critique of cultural practices that violate the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls to share with partners, stakeholders and the public;
- Developing training materials on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in collaboration with partner organizations;
- Conducting training on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights at the national and local level;
- Developing publicity materials and using the media and public events to create visibility for the Sexual Rights Campaign;
- Partnering with educational institutions and teachers on teaching about sexuality as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Networking with national, regional and international organisations and institutions working on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, culture, violence, and HIV/Aids.

### Activities conducted prior to 2009

Sister Namibia's sexual rights campaign is based on field research we conducted in 2002 on sexual and other cultural practices in Caprivi, Owambo and Damara communities that violate girls' and women's rights to dignity, privacy, bodily integrity, autonomy and choice with regard to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. We developed materials in English and local languages in collaboration with the Women's Leadership Centre on the interlinkages between harmful cultural practices, sexual violence, poverty, HIV and Aids; conducted TOT and local workshops with facilitators of the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network; identified and trained staff and volunteers of partner organisations as well as women leaders and professionals in Herero and Owambo communities who are already working on issues of violence, sexual rights and HIV/Aids; and created publicity for these activities and SRHR broadly through stories in *Sister Namibia* magazine and features on our weekly show on community radio.

### Activities conducted in 2009

Our main activities in 2009 were the conducting of three training workshops, publicity for the campaign and SHRH broadly through our media, as well outreach activities in northern Namibia and networking.

### Workshops

We held a two-day workshop on *Claiming our Sexual Citizenship* in Windhoek for 20 staff and volunteers of the following partner organisations: the Aids and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA); the Legal



Assistance Centre (LAC); the Namibian Girl Child Organisation; Namibia Planned Parenthood Association; Namibia Red Cross Society; PACT Namibia; Positive Vibes; Pots of Hope; the rainbow project; VSO Namibia; Women's Leadership Centre; Women's Solidarity; and Young Women's Christian Association. Also present was Advocate John Walters, Namibia's Ombudsman.

We further held a three-day workshop on *Claiming our Sexual Citizenship* with forty women working in the fields of women's rights, human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and Aids in both government and NGOs in Ohangwena, Oshana and Omusati regions in the North. Participants came from the National Society for Human Rights (from Eenhana); Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (Eenhana); Development Aid from People to People (Oshindete and Eenhana); Catholic Aids Action (Anamulenge); Lifeline/Childline (Olupumbu); Network of Women living with HIV and Aids (Uuwangula); Ongwediva College of Education; Yelula U-Khai (Onelago); the rainbow project (Oshikuku); Ministry of Health and Social Services (Engela, Ondangwa, Eenhana); NAWA Life Trust (Oshikuku); Regional Council (Okankolo Constituency Office); Namibia Red Cross Society (Oshikuku); Women and Child Protection Unit (Eenhana); Namibia Police (Ongwediva); Endola-Onangubu Support Groups; Youth Forum (Oshitowa); and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (Oshakati). Among the participants were social workers, youth workers, nurses, counsellors, police officers, support group leaders, lesbian activists, a college lecturer and a psychologist. We also conducted a one-day information sharing meeting with members of the LGBTI rights organisation the rainbow project in the North.

The objectives of the workshops were:

- To share information on Sister Namibia's Sexual Rights Campaign with key partner organisations and government stakeholders working at the national level and in northern Namibia on issues relevant to the campaign
- To share research findings on patriarchal cultural practices that violate women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, exposing them to violence and HIV infection
- To develop a common understanding of sexual rights as human rights, using the Namibian Constitution, National Gender Policy, CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, ICPD, AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development as well as recent UN Resolutions on LGBTI issues to frame these rights
- To develop an understanding of gender and sexual diversities
- To discuss how the above knowledge can be incorporated into the advocacy and training work of the participants' own organisations
- To lay the ground for soliciting input and support from the participants' organisations for the forthcoming booklet: *Claiming our Sexual Citizenship*.

We began the workshops by looking at the ways in which harmful and oppressive cultural practices impact and violate the bodies and minds of women and girls, through a case study on

Culture, Women's Rights and HIV/Aids in the Caprivi Region presented by the Women's Leadership Centre. This study revealed a range of cultural practices and beliefs that violate the rights of women and girls to dignity, bodily integrity, sexual autonomy and choice. There are practices which reshape women's bodies and behaviour to conform to male sexual desires, which include stretching the labia minora, dry sex, initiation, testing for sexual readiness, and *mulaleka* ('having sex with someone who is asleep'). Other practices involve 'cleansing' and cutting women's bodies, such as widow cleansing and scarification. Then there are practices that commodify women's bodies and treat them as possessions of males, for example through arranged and forced marriages, *lobola*, inheritance practices and polygyny (a man having more than one wife).

We analysed that these cultural practices persist, in violation of the national and international laws governing Namibia, because women living in rural areas, including Caprivi, have not yet become citizens of the new nation state of Namibia. Instead they remain under the control of traditional patriarchal family structures which are governed by customary law and ruled over by traditional authorities. The power of men over women is firmly entrenched in these three institutions.

In groups we contrasted these practices with women's and girls' rights to dignity, privacy, bodily integrity, health, well-being, autonomy, choice and pleasure as guaranteed in the Namibian Constitution and National Gender Policy as well as the regional and international instruments our state has signed, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. We agreed that all women and girls need to know these documents as important tools for claiming our rights as citizens, as they become part of our national law once ratified.



Many of the participants were shocked to learn that such cultural practices are still happening in modern-day 'democratic' Namibia. They have remained invisible due to the fact that most academic research has focused on 'customary law', while most of the cultural practices that violate women's sexual and reproductive rights have not been codified into law, and remain taboo and silenced.

Participants at the workshop in the north stated that there were no such practices in their own communities. They agreed however that there were high rates of domestic violence with many women filing for divorce. The socio-cultural practice of expecting all women to get married, and to bear children, remained invisible to the heterosexual women in this workshop, but emerged

strongly in the workshop with members of the rainbow project, many of whom had been forced into marriage and were unable to access divorce due to the high cost of lawyers, the fear of losing their children because they are lesbian, and the ostracism in their communities. In the workshops we further examined mainstream and alternative understandings of the concepts of sexuality, sex and gender, pushing the boundaries in our attempt to understand these three key concepts anew in light of feminist research and analysis.

We used the case of Caster Semenya to grapple with the interrelations between 'sex' and 'gender'. In mainstream gender training we have been taught that a person's sex is a biological category, with babies classified as either female or male at birth or *in utero* depending on their external sex organs, while gender relates to the feminine or masculine social role that we are taught and expected to play in accordance with our biological sex. Yet the South African athlete Caster Semenya has thrown these binary categories into question, as a young woman who looks and runs 'like a man'.

We learnt that many people are born neither clearly female nor male, and that intersex people have both 'female' and 'male' biological characteristics. In fact there are so many different biological markers of 'sex' that each of us is a unique mixture! In addition, the ways in which we use our bodies changes them to become more 'female' or more 'male', which takes us beyond the notion of a fixed biological sex that is either strictly female or strictly male. This then challenges our notions that our social gender roles need to be strictly feminine or masculine based on our 'sex'. We explored the idea of transgressing, transforming and transcending gender. We envisioned a world beyond gender where people were free to be people. This would also do away with the hierarchy of power between men and women.

Participants recognised the importance of this knowledge in relation to the fact that many children in Namibia are born intersex, with ambiguous external sex organs, leading to 'sex re-assignment surgery' on newly-borns in hospitals without full medical examination of their internal sex organs, hormones and chromosomes, and without the full knowledge, understanding and consent of the parents. The nurses in the group in the North confirmed this and urged Sister Namibia to develop information and training materials for medical practitioners, parents and communities on this issue.

We moved on to explore the diversity of gender and sexual orientations and identities, which in the (women-only) northern workshop led to an open discussion on how women – heterosexual and lesbian - have sex, and our right to sexual pleasure. Participants of the workshop agreed that we invite members of the rainbow project to share their experiences of discrimination and violation of their rights in the North, which led to a very emotional moment of publicly accepting and embracing the two gay men who had joined us by one of the women who had been vocally negative and prejudiced. Many of the participants took down the contact details of trp, and we learnt the next day at the meeting with trp members that they had already been contacted by some of the women for information, referrals and invitations to other workshops

and meetings. "Sister Namibia, you have given us the key to Owamboland!" was the heartfelt comment of the regional coordinator of trpTRP.

The workshops provided participants with relevant background materials and ample time for intensive group discussions on all the above issues. We found that a number of articles from earlier issues of *Sister Namibia* magazine were very useful for the training. Participation and engagement with the issues was strong.

The information-sharing meeting with members of the rainbow project brought to light issues faced by lesbians and gays in the North. Most participants indicated that it was very difficult coming out to their families and communities. Many of those who were 'out' had experienced hatred, extreme acts of violence or threats of violence and ostracism from their family and community members, although some said their close family members have learnt to accept them after realising that there was nothing they could do to change them. Younger members of trp were still in the closet for fear of being expelled from their homes and losing family support for payment of their school fees.

Some of the participants are married to men while they are lesbians, have been forced to bear children and then left by their husbands who refuse to pay maintenance because they label their lesbian wife as "the man" who must provide for the children. Others are deeply unhappy in their marriages but cannot access divorce due to the high costs of legal representation, and the fear of losing their children. Even some of the single lesbian women and gay men have been pressurised by their families to produce children as their mothers insist on getting grandchildren through them. Churches and traditional authorities were described as particularly homophobic, although there were also some supportive pastors in the communities.

All in all in these were very interesting and groundbreaking days of searching for new meanings of the concepts sex, sexuality and gender in order to create space for the diverse human beings that we are, and taking the first steps towards claiming our sexual rights as citizens. The participants agreed to take what they had learnt back to their families, communities and places of work.

#### **Commitments for action made by participants of the workshop in the north:**

- *I started educating my friend by bringing her to the launch of the Sister Namibia satellite office during the week of our workshop. She didn't understand what the speakers were saying there, but I explained on the way home and she could understand better.*  
- Palliative Care Nurse, Catholic Aids Action, Anamulenge
- *In cross-curricular studies I will bring reading texts about sexual rights, cultural practices, sex and gender; engage student teachers in debates and mini-researches on these topics; raise awareness amongst my colleagues through workshops and seminars.*  
- Lecturer, Ongwediva College of Education

- *I will explain to my husband and children about LGBTI issues and rights according to my new knowledge and tell them we must not be homophobic because everyone is a person with the same rights. I will also communicate with two pastors. - Trainer, Yelula-Ukhai Project, Ondangwa*
- *I will start to educate my boyfriend on women's rights so that he can change his behaviour to reduce violence against me. I will also give feedback to my colleagues and explain in more detail how important it is for women to know their rights. - Trainer, Yelula Ukhai Project, Oshakati*
- *To me it is easy because my mind is already open for this workshop. I have to share this knowledge as it is especially important for us, the LGBTI people, because we are always in trouble with our community and church - we are not accepted. - Member of the rainbow project, Oshikuku*
- *I will have an aspect of sexual citizenship included in the ongoing community meetings. I will also offer life skills teachers to come into their classes with this information, and bring it to the old age persons' forum my department is establishing for the district. At Engela hospital we have continuous education, where all staff members meet on Thursday morning from 8.00 – 9.00 am. Our department will request one session to educate our health workers on this information. Social Worker, Engela Hospital*
- *I will educate my family to do away with typical traditional things that violate bodies. - Unemployed activist*
- *I didn't want to attend this workshop because I thought I knew it all about sex and gender. But my colleagues insisted that one of us must go, saying that Sister Namibia always brings new knowledge that is important to us. Now I'm happy that I came, and I will go back and continue meeting with our women's rights fighters/defenders committee and share with them about this workshop. I will also do a meeting with my men colleagues and share with them what I have learned, and defend women's rights by helping the abused women out there. - Psychologist, St Martins Hospital, Oshikuku*
- *I will discuss with the headwoman to allow me into her village to talk about Sister Namibia and the Claiming our Sexual Citizenship workshop. You are our sister organisation and we want to work and network more with you in our region. - Regional Manager, National Society for Human Rights, Eenhana*
- *I will first inform my supervisor so that I can present the outcomes to the 57 field offers from all 12 constituencies in Omusati Region so that women around should know their rights and be respected. I am sure that most women will easily understand and that taking action will not be difficult. - Counsellor/Social Worker, Development Aid from People to People, Oshindete Village*
- *I will train my support group and I will invite the parents to inform them about intersex. - Community Counsellor, PMTCT Plus Project, Ondangwa*
- *I will do my best to conduct workshops for other police officers to accept men who have sex with men and women who have sex with women whenever they are come to the police to report on violations of their rights. I will also do outreach programmes to schools to share this information. I want to thank you, Sister Namibia, for opening my eyes, brain and heart. - Investigator, Namibia Police, Ongwediva*

### ***Media activities***

We have used *Sister Namibia* magazine as a vehicle to share information on our work in this area with our readers in Namibia as well as with feminist and women's rights organisations across the continent, and included a broader focus on women's and girls reproductive and sexual rights with articles on violence against women; sex workers demanding rights; the need for law reform regarding the school pregnancy policy; report on workshops on abortion; the forced sterilisation of HIV positive women in Namibia; LGBTI issues in Africa and a writing workshop with lesbian people; and celebrating women with disabilities. We also featured a story on why complainants withdraw rape cases in Namibia, from a report done by the Legal Assistance Centre. Further, we featured the above issues on a number of *Women's Voices* shows on BASE FM community radio. The *Namibia Economist* published an article on the work done by Sister Namibia on LGBTI issues.

### ***Outreach activities in the North***

The Sister Namibia satellite office in the North was opened in June 2009 at the Sam Nujoma Multi-Purpose Centre run by the Ongwediva Town Council. Our office was staffed by an outreach officer, who conducted meetings on violence against women and sexual rights with girls clubs in secondary schools in Ongwediva and Oshakati, and groups of women students at Ongwediva College of Education, the University of Namibia (Northern Campus), the Valombola Vocational Training Centre, the Ongwediva Youth Club, and Tukwafela support group in Ongwediva.

The outreach officer distributed *Sister Namibia* magazines, our new youth magazine *REAL!* and the Educational Supplements for both magazines at these institutions, and used these materials for her outreach activities. She was also able to access the Oshiwambo language service of NBC radio to inform listeners of our work and invite women and girls to participate in the outreach activities and the workshops.

### ***Launch of the Sister Namibia satellite office in the north***

We officially launched the satellite office in the North on 19<sup>th</sup> of November, with representatives of partner organisations as well as participants of the Claiming our Sexual Citizenship workshops and their friends and family in the audience. We used this event to inform the public about the work of Sister Namibia including the Sexual Rights Campaign. The event was framed by the photo exhibition *Women Transforming Namibia*, which features 20 'cover girls' from past issues of *Sister Namibia* magazine, and was attended by Paula Assubujji, Programme Officer of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, Cape Town, who also participated in our workshops.

### **Outcomes of the Sexual Rights Campaign 2009**

Through the above activities Sister Namibia was able to reach important partner organisations and government stakeholders, professional women, community activists as well as the general public with the message of Claiming our Sexual Citizenship, developing a deeper understanding of what this involves, and expanding our networking, particularly in the North. Institutions such as the Prosecutor General's Office in the North asked to be invited to future

workshops. While there is no official recognition of our work yet from the side of government, our work on harmful cultural practices has been noted in the draft National Gender Policy as “media reports and public outcry”.

Participants of the workshops enthusiastically committed to spread their new knowledge in their families, workplaces, churches and communities. We will use participatory action research methods to capture the extent and impact of the activities taken up by our partner organisations at the national and local level, and how the local activities in the North contribute towards building women’s leadership and active citizenship in Namibia as the campaign develops.

### **The way forward**

Based on our own learnings in these workshops, Sister Namibia is now developing the booklet: *Claiming our Sexual Citizenship*, which we will request the organisations who participated in the workshops to review, strengthen and publicly endorse. This will be published in a number of local languages and distributed to our partner organisations and other stakeholders during 2010 for their training and advocacy purposes.

We will further develop the **Sexuality Resource Book for Women and Girls**, which is planned to become the major training tool for the Sexual Rights Campaign, providing information on the biology of reproduction as well as women’s and girls reproductive and sexual health and rights, to support women and girls in claiming ownership of their bodies and their sexuality in face of patriarchal cultural practices that violate their right to dignity, bodily integrity, sexual autonomy and choice. The book will include case studies from Sister Namibia’s field research on the sexual cultural practices of three Namibian communities that violate these rights, leading to unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and exposure to HIV and Aids.

We are fundraising for the book to be published in English as well as local languages, and will establish and train a team of 20 trainers who speak the relevant local languages and can work with the book in their communities.

We further aim to approach the Colleges of Education with this material in 2011 to find ways of including some of the issues into the curriculum of trainee teachers in order to eventually reach into the schools with a feminist understanding of girls’ and women’s sexual rights.

We are currently negotiating with the Swiss development agency Interteam for a volunteer to function as Programme Officer for the Sexual Rights Campaign and our Young Feminists Programme – see below.

## **Strategic goal 2: To build young women’s capacity for feminist activism**

### **Our key strategies for achieving this goal are:**

- Using media to build self-awareness and skills of young women
- Establishing a Girls’ Empowerment Project
- Developing a feminist education programme for tertiary students

Although Sister Namibia has conducted writing and drama workshops for young women in the past, these were developed through partnerships with other organisations who initiated the projects. Through our strategic planning process in 2008 we recognised the need for a more strategic approach to developing feminist knowledge and activism among the current generation of young women.

Young women are bombarded with messages about how they should behave and who they should become. Often these messages are mixed. "Act like a lady" contradicts the signals they are getting from music videos that objectify women. Advertisements in leading newspapers offer men the opportunity to be "playas" with three young women clad only in undergarments awaiting their arrival. Girls are told they should remain virgins until marriage, yet are forced into sex by older family members or encouraged into transactional sex in order to obtain the latest consumer item that would make them attractive to others.

In Namibia, while materials are being published with the intention of helping young people to protect themselves from pregnancy, HIV and other STIs, few of these are geared specifically to young women and few actually deal with these contradictions. Traditional culture and modern consumerism, poverty and power dynamics, gender stereotypes and the influence of the media are all elements that play a role in how a young woman views herself and whether or not she is able to make fulfilling and healthy choices.

In 2008/2009 we developed a Girls Empowerment Project, which aimed to educate and equip young women with insights and skills to question the structures and systems that deprive them of their rights, whether public or private, and to help them to know and love themselves so that they can achieve self-actualisation. Through this project we also created a platform for young women's voices and creativity.

We further developed a draft curriculum to introduce feminist knowledge and analysis to tertiary students.

- **Girls' Empowerment Project**

The Girls' Empowerment Project was conceived as a one-year pilot project that involved the publication of four issues of a twenty-page youth magazine created for young women by young women.

**Target groups**

- Urban and rural teenagers (14 -19)
- Secondary and tertiary students
- Youth groups
- Educators

## Objectives

- To provide information and a platform for the voices of young women on issues of concern to them;
- To develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills and creative expression among a group of young women who will contribute to the youth magazine and to Sister Namibia's *Women's Voices* broadcasts on Base FM community radio;
- To help young women to deconstruct gender stereotypes and to analyse their impact on their own lives, particularly in the areas of sexual health and personal well being.

## Activities

Our activities for achieving the above objectives were the production and distribution of four issues of the youth magazine *REAL!* and the development and distribution of an Educational Supplement for each issue, accompanied by a Girls' Empowerment Project. The magazine was produced through training project participants to develop critical thinking and analysis, literacy skills, knowledge on careers in the media and the arts, as well as providing opportunities for creative expression. This component of the project was accomplished through weekly meetings which also included training on women's rights, gender, and sexuality.

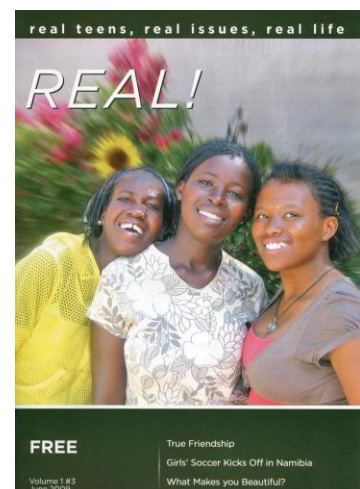
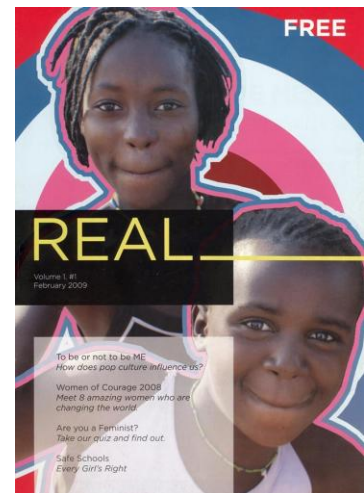
### Activity 1 *REAL!* magazine

#### *Production*

Sister Namibia published four issues of *REAL!* Participants in the Girls' Empowerment Project were instrumental in selecting and researching topics for each magazine and, with the support of the facilitator, became more involved in the writing and editing process with each magazine.

The magazine was designed to be an interactive space. Each issue included a "Dear Diary" component, which followed the feature story and included five or six questions for personal reflection on the ideas in the story with ample place to respond. A Vox Pops section had our 'reporters' out on the street, photographing and interviewing young women on their thoughts on a pertinent question. In addition, we called for creative writing submissions, ideas for topics, and reader letters. A quiz was included in every issue. We also featured an inspirational SMS quote-line which provided subscribers with a weekly inspirational SMS. This feature was incredibly popular and garnered nearly two hundred subscribers.

Each magazine also included a poster for the middle pages which could be removed from the magazine and displayed. Poster themes included 'love your body', 'let beauty shine from within', 'I am a girl and I can do/be anything', 'for every girl, there is a boy (a



message about how gender stereotyping hurts both girls and boys)'.

The feature articles in the magazines focused on the influence of pop culture on how we see the world and ourselves; what makes schools unsafe for girls; the social construction of gender including a quiz to help young women identify whether or not they believe in gender equality; teen sexuality, with a quiz on deciding when to start having sex, a personal story on surviving sexual abuse and a feature on being gay and lesbian in Namibia; the current policy on learner pregnancy; living with HIV as a young woman; friendship; girls' soccer; career guidance; the dangers of alcohol for young women.

### ***Distribution***

Five thousand copies were printed of each issue of *REAL!* Sister Namibia piggy-backed on our existing distribution of *Sister Namibia* magazine, utilising partner organisations to distribute *REAL!* throughout the country. The Ministry of Education also distributed *REAL!* to all combined and secondary school libraries, and the schools attended by the girls involved in the project also received multiple copies.

### ***Monitoring & Evaluation of REAL! magazine***

- ***SMS Inspiration Line***

The weekly inspirational message was very popular with readers. Nearly two hundred readers subscribed to this feature with requests to "be inspired". Responses to these weekly quotes were often very positive.

- *Keep rocking Namibia, we really need it!*
- *Thanks for your inspiring messages, you are my light and give me power every week.*

For feedback on the magazine we sent out surveys, conducted focus groups at Eros Children's Home in Windhoek and four secondary schools in northern Namibia, and collected written responses from four secondary schools in Windhoek. The feedback helped to shape the content of the magazine, as well as the layout and design. We tried to include reader responses in the magazine as part of the interactive nature of the periodical. The following are some of the responses from readers.

- *REAL! makes one feel much stronger. It gives strength and confidence to readers, especially those who are going through difficult times. REAL! is simply just the best.*
- *It makes teens want to express their feelings and do what they love more than having the fear that someone will laugh at you and keeping all that's depressing you in your heart, not knowing who to tell - whether to trust them or not, and being able to look forward to getting advice from different people.*
- *It tells of true stories and experiences. This makes people trust and believe in it, as they know that the authors of REAL! know what they are talking about and are not just publishing a magazine to attract attention.*



- *I feel relieved because someone (organisation) finally stood up and talked about situations that most of us are afraid to talk about.*
- *REAL! shows me that I can also stand up and fight things that can put women down and also change Namibia.*
- *Reading REAL! gives me courage, strength, power. I feel like this magazine will change my values towards life in an inspiring way. It's good to know that we women also have what men have and that we are all trying so hard to stop the discrimination against us; that we are also living and have to show them what we are made of.*
- *After reading REAL! I felt passion for a better life. Finally there is something women can relate to, an image, a mirror of themselves. I think most women will really get a lot from the magazine.*

### **Activity 2 Educational Supplement**

Our second activity in achieving our goals and reaching our target audience was to create and distribute an Educational Supplement with each issue. These two-page handouts focused on selected articles in each issue and served as a resource for teachers, youth group leaders and peer educators. Each supplement included critical thinking and analysis questions, vocabulary and/or reading comprehension questions, opportunities for group work, and a creative or artistic component.

Two thousand copies of the Educational Supplement were produced for each issue and distributed to secondary and combined school libraries (through the Ministry of Education – 1300 copies) and to NGOs working directly with young people (700 copies).

The Educational Supplement was also utilised by the Sister Namibia outreach officer based in our Ongwediva satellite office in order to lead discussion groups with her young women's outreach programme.

### **Activity 3 Girls' Empowerment Project**

The Girls' Empowerment Project started in July 2008. Sister Namibia's original intention was to work with young women (age 14-17) living in the Namibia Children's Home in Eros. This group was selected for several reasons. Firstly, the facilitator of the project had a working relationship with many of the young women in the home. Through her volunteer work there, she recognised a dire

need for education and outreach in that community. The children live together in groups or ten per house with one care taker looking after each group. The facility houses over 100 children from age two months to twenty years old. The children are often unable to participate in after school activities because they do not have transport. The young people often suffer from low self esteem. These factors, along with the fact that the children's home is in close proximity to the Sister Namibia office, were the basis for the partnership.



The group (approximately ten regular members) met in the Sister Namibia resource centre twice a week to discuss issues, grow their feminist consciousness and work on the magazine. We explored themes of gender roles, self awareness, self esteem, positive affirmations, love, relationships and sex. We introduced the concept of journaling and keeping a writer's notebook in order to prepare the young women to contribute meaningfully to the magazine. They brainstormed a working title and ideas for articles. The girls attended a workshop at the Women's Leadership Centre on sexual and reproductive rights.

Unfortunately, due to scheduling difficulties and the implementation of a mandatory daily "study hour" at the Children's Home, the structure of the project had to be revised. The young women were no longer able to regularly attend the sessions and attendance dropped dramatically.

In order to get the most out of the project, we implemented a new structure. We began by targeting groups already in place with the aim of drawing in young women who might be interested in learning more about their rights and contributing to a magazine. Through two-hour mini workshops and introductory lessons, we introduced the concept to several organisations (Physically Active Youth, Namibian Girl Child Organisation, Kayec, Young Achievers, Children in the Wilderness). From these groups, we were able to attract about fifteen young women to join the project in weekly meetings at the Sister Namibia office. Two girls from the original group continued to work with the project for a few weeks, but eventually left the group due to other responsibilities.

From January, the young women became incredibly involved in the production of the magazine and most of the weekly sessions revolved around developing the skills that were required to do so. In addition, Sister Namibia made her resources available to the participants throughout the remainder of the project, allowing the girls to utilise the internet, the resource centre and to receive one on one tutoring to support them in the writing of articles for the magazine. The participants were responsible for content, researching and writing stories, conducting vox pops, photographing, creating artwork, creative writing, and providing input on design and layout. In addition, the participants helped to distribute the magazine and were responsible for collecting feedback and submissions from their peers.

*Our sessions including the following:*

**Workshops & skill based sessions:** Internet research, drafting, writing a strong lead, using quotes, citing your sources, photography, comic drawing, fact vs. opinion, interviewing, and note taking

**Information & knowledge workshops/sessions:** gender vs. sex, living with HIV, child care and protection act, reproductive health, girls and the law, social profiling, keeping it safe: use of the Internet, social networking sites, cell phones and other electronic media.

Many of the topics that were discussed in the group became stories in the magazine. Topics that came up often were relationships, gender stereotyping, racism, careers, sex, peer pressure,

alcohol, violence, rape, music/movies/celebrity culture, unfair treatment at school, parental expectations, discipline, and teen pregnancy.

### ***Launch of REAL!***

One of the highlights of the project was the successful launch of the magazine. The young women designed the programme, wrote speeches, prepared the magazine and the event, invited friends and classmates, and contacted the media for coverage. The event was held at Studio 77 and was attended by approximately one hundred and fifty guests.

### ***Field trips***

Field trips were another component of the programme designed to expose the girls to various forms of creative expression around issues relevant to women's lives. These included attending two theatre performances and visits to the History Museum and BASE FM community radio. In addition to the work for the magazine, the young women were given a chance to present a show "Young Women's Voices" during Sister Namibia's regular Tuesday evening slot on Base FM community radio. Two young women from the project prepared and hosted a show on the Girls' Empowerment Project, *REAL!* magazine, and the importance of getting involved and being active as a young woman.

### ***Monitoring & Evaluation***

Throughout the project, we constantly assessed the content and the structure of the programme in order to get the most out of it. One tool we used to monitor was **attendance** of the weekly meetings and **active participation**. After the challenge of the original group, a stable group was finally secured in January 2009. Although fifteen girls were consistently involved in the project at some level, eight core members continued to attend weekly meetings and to display dedication through turning in work, collecting feedback, and distributing magazines at their schools.

Another way we monitored the success of the Girls' Empowerment Project was to examine the **quality of work** that was coming in to the magazine. Although this is difficult to measure and a rather subjective approach, as the project progressed it was clear that the young women were bringing a deeper critical analysis to a variety of topics. They thought about what kinds of role models were important to portray and which stories would be more likely to empower young women.

Below are some of the comments made by participants of the Girls' Empowerment Project at our final evaluation session:

- *I see myself differently because I gained a lot of confidence. I can speak in a crowd and also learned how to use a camera, write stories with facts and I am discovering my skills in journalism.*
- *Now when I'm reading a story, I look at a lot more than just a story. I look for facts, opinions, types of comments made and the types of questions asked.*

- *I never really had a vision in life, I never dreamed but since I came here, I realised that things are possible if you dream.*
- *Usually I stay with my mum and my brother. As a guy he would always tell me what to do and boss me around but as I got here, I learnt how to defend myself, speak out at home and tell him what he is doing is wrong. I learnt that we are all equal - women and men.*
- *I was never able to do team work and here I learnt how to co-operate and communicate with people.*
- *This is the only place I can express myself fully.*
- *I used to think being a journalist was an easy task, but when I did the story on the young woman living with HIV in America, I realised that this is a lot of work. Just being in this REAL! team I realised things don't come easily; we need to work for them.*
- *I am proud just to see how far we've come with these four issues. I know we could continue to do a lot better.*

### **Overall achievements of the project**

In general *REAL!* magazine and the Girls' Empowerment Project were a great success for both participants and readers. Getting young people involved in the production of the magazine at every level was crucial to its youth appeal and to our overall aims and objectives. Although it was a challenge at first, in the end it produced fruitful results and clearly impacted the lives of the participants.

A great success was using our NGO partners to distribute in the regions. This cut down on costs and got the magazine out into rural areas, as well as "urban" centres (Oshakati, Katima Mulilo, Ongwediva, Keetmanshoop) outside of Windhoek. Getting the magazine into school libraries and into the hands of teachers was another success.

Finally, the spirit and commitment of the core team of participants is inspiring. They would love to see the magazine continue and are incredibly proud of their work.

### **Challenges and recommendations**

One major area of challenge was being able to collect stories from around the country or to do more rural features. In order to achieve this, perhaps one could budget for one-day workshops with schools or girls' groups in the regions and collect writing from them. Another option would be to partner with Peace Corps or another such organisation and negotiate time to teach a writing workshop during one of their Girls' Conferences.

Another area of challenge was trying to run a project to deadline and having to compete with exams and school holidays. Participants of course had to prioritise their school work, but this wound up interfering with the timely production of the magazine. Another challenge was participant retention. Although girls were excited to join the *REAL!* team and thought the initiative was a long time coming, as time progressed, we saw girls dropping out of the programme due to prior commitments, family obligations, and the challenge of balancing school with a demanding extra-curricular activity. This was an eye-opening moment for the

programme where we saw just how hard it is for young women to get time for themselves to spend on things that they enjoy doing.

### **Possibilities for the way forward**

“Coming to an end, I think it has been a long journey,” said one participant. “We have learned a lot and we have gained a lot of experience. We would love to see our magazine read by the youth all over Africa and the world. We just hope that our magazine continues.” While this may not be possible due to issues of staff and funding, *Sister Namibia* magazine will reserve a few pages in each issue for contributions by young women from the Girls’ Empowerment Project and others.

One possible way to support this would be to create a funded position for a facilitator for the project and a small budget for supplies for activities. This would enable the spirit of the project to live on in the pages of *Sister Namibia* while encouraging this team of dedicated young women to follow their passion.

It helped us to explore new ways of reaching out to the next generation of young feminists, which will certainly enrich our work in the future.

- **Developing feminist activism among tertiary students**

We were able to identify and support two young feminist activists to participate in a three-week introduction to feminism conducted by OSISA and the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University, Mutare, Zimbabwe in 2009. One of the two is now building a young feminists movement in Erongo Region with support from OSISA and the Women’s Leadership Centre, and using many old and new stories from *Sister Namibia* magazine as materials for her programme.

Towards the end of 2009 we developed a draft 10-week curriculum targeting students training for the teaching profession at the University of Namibia and the College of Education. We focused on these students as future agents of change in their schools and classrooms. This will be reviewed and materials developed for its implementation once a Programme Officer and other staff have been appointed.

<b>Strategic goal 3 To provide a platform for women’s voices and concerns, particularly from marginalised groups</b>
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Media work has been a core activity of *Sister Namibia* since her inception.

#### **In 2009 our key strategic goals were:**

- Continuing publication of the bi-monthly *Sister Namibia* magazine with broader appeal;
- Using Women’s Voices broadcasts on Base FM more inclusively;
- Developing the *Sister Namibia* website and e-newsletter.

#### **Target Groups:**

- Members of women’s groups and other civil society organisations and networks
- policy and lawmakers including members of parliament, regional and local councillors, traditional authorities and staff at the gender ministry
- teachers, lecturers, secondary and tertiary students
- researchers on gender issues; and
- the general public.

**Objectives:**

- To generate and disseminate feminist knowledge and analysis and challenge patriarchal ideologies, norms, values, attitudes and practices that divide and oppress people
- To raise awareness about current issues of concern to women and girls, and promote women’s and girls’ rights in all spheres of life
- To give women and girls a forum and skills to exercise their voice through access to print media and radio as well as through media skills training workshops.

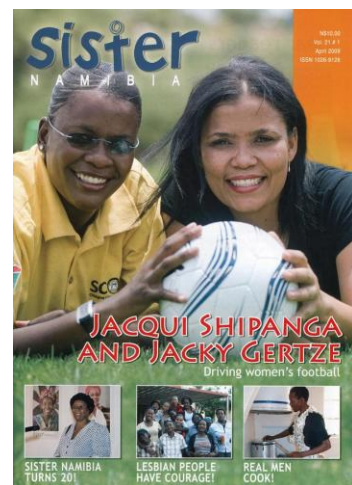
**Strategies:**

Our strategies for meeting these objectives in 2009 comprised the regular production and distribution of *Sister Namibia* magazine together with an educational supplement; producing weekly *Women’s Voices* broadcasts on community radio; publishing the youth magazine *Real!* together with an educational supplement; and developing the Sister Namibia website.

**Activities of the Media Programme in 2009**

**Activity 1 Sister Namibia Magazine**

During 2009 we produced three single issues of *Sister Namibia* magazine at 36 pages each and one double issue at 48 pages, with a print run of 9,000 copies and 8,000 copies respectively.

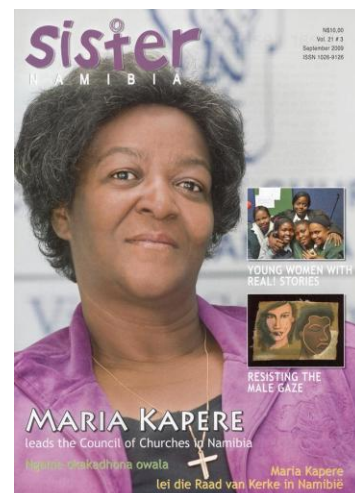


**Production of the magazine**

The work of producing the magazine was carried by the director who functioned as editor, assisted by our media officer and the senior programme officer. A number of freelance journalists and community activists provided stories for the magazines, and a professional photographer was commissioned to provide the cover story photos.

**Contents**

In these magazines we featured women’s leadership and covered a wide range of issues affecting women’s and girls’ personhood and human rights in Namibia. Our main focuses were as follows:



**Profile stories** of two leaders in women's soccer; the new General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia; an optician who restores eyesight through award winning eye clinics; and profiles of two leading activists in the field of HIV and Aids.

**A focus on women's and girls reproductive and sexual rights** with articles on violence against women; sex workers demanding rights; the need for law reform regarding the school pregnancy policy; a report on workshops on abortion; the forced sterilisation of HIV positive women in Namibia; LGBTI issues in Africa and a writing workshop with lesbian people; and celebrating women with disabilities. We also featured a story on why complainants withdraw rape cases in Namibia, from a report done by the Legal Assistance Centre.

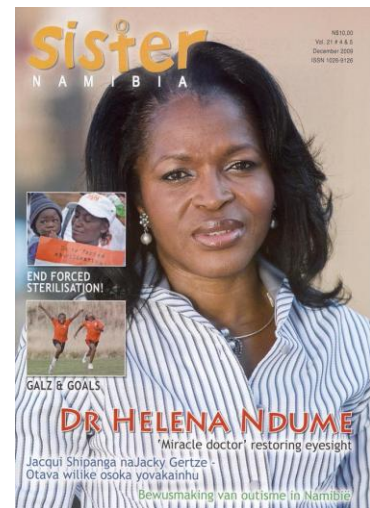
Other stories featured the successes of the Basic Income Grant; a children's conference and the national dialogue on the new Child Care and Protection Act; as well as women writers and artists.

Under the heading **Community Action** we introduced our readers to the Autism Society in Namibia; a project that changes lives through sport; an HIV/Aids support project in the Kavango Region; a bicycle project for former sex workers in Katutura; a feature on the SAfAIDS project which aims to transform cultural practices that contribute to the spread of HIV and Aids; and a soccer tournament targeting girls with the message of making healthy lifestyle decisions through engagement in sports.

We continued our **Brother Namibia** section with articles on fertility testing for men; men engaged in care work; and the new Namibian Male Engagement Initiative. A male journalist offered to write for this section regularly "bro bono", but only managed to submit two articles due to time constraints. We also featured the work of a male artist that challenges the objectification of women in art.

The **Feminist Forum** section featured a feminist analysis of "beauty", and an article on the fluidity of sex and gender focusing on the Caster Semenya case, which had received a lot of mixed publicity from mainstream media. It was important for us to add a feminist voice to this debate and offer a different perspective. Also included in this section was a look at feminist motherhood, calling for gender balance around the cot with both men and women engaging in childrearing.

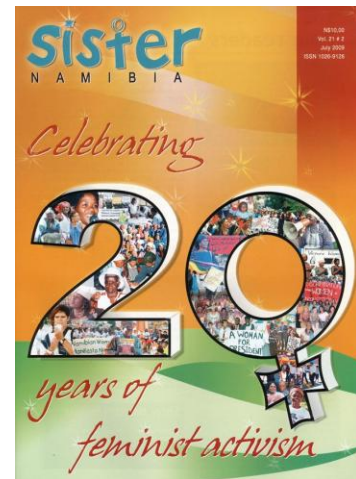
In the first magazine for the year we launched the **Sister Namibia Green Ball Holder Award for sexism in the media and advertising**, which received some strong responses from the companies and media thus awarded, making us realise the power of our voices in a small country like Namibia, where reputations must be maintained by those who want to make business. Altogether eight awards were issued throughout the year to a range of sexist advertisers and the media publishing their ads, and at least three of these ads have not been seen since!



**In regional news** we portrayed the struggles of feminists engaging with change in Zimbabwe; and gender in the South African elections. We also looked at the role and experiences of women in Liberia in brokering for peace during Liberia's brutal civil war.

**We introduced a new HOME PAGE** on which to regularly showcase the work of Sister Namibia in accordance with our strategic goal of making all our activities more visible to the general public. Here we featured our workshops on women's sexual rights, our new youth magazine *REAL!* and our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in March.

**The July issue had a focus on 20 years of feminist activism**, for which we invited our readers and partners to respond to a set of questions on the importance and meanings of our work for them. The responses we received were overwhelming and were compiled into a 4-page story. In their words, we have let women know their rights, changed paradigms, opened minds, unravelled taboos and exposed cultural practices that are harmful to women. In the following issue we gave space to former staff and volunteer members to reflect on the first ten years of Sister Namibia, focusing specifically on the birth and growth of *Sister Namibia* magazine.



All the magazines featured the creative expression of women and girls through poetry and short texts, photography and fine art. Each magazine included stories in Afrikaans and Oshiwambo.

## **Distribution of *Sister Namibia* magazine**

### ***Subscriptions***

In 2009 the national broadcaster NBC took out 5 subscriptions for its libraries. We are following up again with the 65 community libraries, they subscribed in the past but not last year; we will include them in our free distribution if they cannot renew their subscription. The total number of individual and institutional subscribers stood at 127 at the end on 2009. The individual subscribers were mostly readers in Namibia; the institutions included women's libraries and archives as well as university libraries in various countries, as well as the Library of Congress in the US. We again lacked staff capacity to work on getting more subscribers to the magazine, and this may now become obsolete, as the December issue was the first to go up in full on our new website. All future issues (and back issues) will follow suit, which will likely lead to a reduction rather than an increase in subscriptions. However, the National Literary Museum in Grahamstown, South Africa, requested back copies from Volume 1 to Volume 7, they have been subscribers from Volume 8 and now want the older back issues to complete and bind their collection. We will bind the volumes of the past ten years in 2010 to store in our resource centre; the earlier volumes are already bound.

### ***Distribution to government institutions and policy makers***

We distributed each issue of the magazine to all members and most staff of both Houses of Parliament, 45 staff at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, 20 Gender Focal

Points in various government ministries, and senior staff in the City of Windhoek. Ten Windhoek-based UN agencies continued to receive 20 or more copies, while UNHCR continued to regularly deliver 100 copies to the Osire Refugee Camp. We further distributed to the 13 Regional Governors, all 52 Local and Village Councils, and increased the number of Traditional Authorities. The Office of the Presidency is included in our distribution, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to receive 50 copies of each issue that they distribute to the Namibian foreign missions abroad, saving us postage costs. We also distributed to selected foreign embassies in Namibia and Pretoria. The National Library of Namibia received 5 copies of each issue as Legal Deposit. We added the subject advisers for English at the regional offices of education at their request.

#### ***Distribution through NGOs and at workshops and conferences***

The number of Windhoek-based NGOs, cultural centres, educational institutions and health facilities distributing our magazine has now reached over 70 and they distribute altogether approximately 5,000 copies per issue to their staff and constituencies in various regions of the country.

A number of NGOs requested more copies for their own distribution during the year, including the Aids Awareness club at the University of Namibia. Further copies were distributed by staff and a board member at local, regional and continental conferences and events.

#### ***Distribution to educational institutions, correctional facilities, churches and the media***

The heads of member churches of the Council of Churches in Namibia were a new addition to our distribution. The school library services continued to distribute copies of *Sister Namibia* to all government secondary and combined schools in the country. All 29 teachers' resource centres, the 4 colleges of education, the 7 vocational training centres and the 13 multi-purpose youth centres across the country continued to receive the magazine. Sociology and media students at the University of Namibia as well as media students at the Polytechnic of Namibia received copies. We also continued to provide magazines to correctional facilities and the Women's Holding Cells in Katutura. All 11 language services at NBC Radio as well as NBC TV, Base FM Community Radio and other media houses received the magazines.

#### ***Distribution abroad***

We continued to exchange our magazine with feminist magazines from other countries and continents, and posted free copies to a number of women's rights and LGBTI organisations across Africa.

#### ***Sale through shops***

In 2009 we continued selling the magazine in two bookshops in Windhoek, as well as in the Craft Centre and the Blue Olive delicatessen. We sold approximately 40 copies per issue, which is not a large amount, but provides for visibility in different spaces and lays the ground for more sales in the future if we have to reduce our free distribution due to decreased funds.

### ***Website postings and royalties***

The AfricaFiles website based in Canada regularly posted stories from our magazine and sent them out to readers subscribed to their gender listserv. The Thompson Gale Group and ProQuest Publishing posted selected stories, for which we received royalties when downloaded. The Wisconsin University Library System in the US has a quarterly listing of feminist magazines that continued to regularly include the contents page of *Sister Namibia*.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

In our bi-weekly staff meetings we regularly reviewed the contents of our magazines, planned the forthcoming issues, discussed ways to improve the distribution, identified new target groups and shared feedback we received from our readers.

Our outreach officer conducted a number of focus groups to get feedback on *Sister Namibia* magazine in the North, with groups of girls and young women from Iipumbu Senior Secondary School and Oshakati Senior Secondary School, the College of Education and youth groups from the Ongwediva and Oshakati Multipurpose Youth Centres.

Participants responded that *Sister Namibia* magazine is a good platform to share ideas, and that it has the capacity to educate, change attitudes, open minds and help women and girls to love and respect themselves and to speak out without fear.

### **The following were some of the comments received from our readers:**

- *It opened up my mind to face the world.*
- *It encouraged me that we can fight for our rights as women, and be proud of ourselves.*
- *It motivates Namibian women to be able to challenge difficulties that we are experiencing in our lives.*
- *It is showing us and educating us about other women in the world.*
- *I felt encouraged and educated and just loved the magazine.*
- *I realised that lesbians also feel proud of themselves and they need their rights to be protected.*
- *We want to read more about relationships, and about abortion.*
- *I would distribute it in all languages all over the country.*

### **Activity 2 Magazine outreach programme**

We continued to produce Educational Supplements for teachers and other educators, providing reading comprehension and critical thinking questions, ideas for creative expression as well as other suggestions for activities teachers can use with students to discuss issues raised in the magazine. The Educational Supplements were distributed along with each magazine to the Colleges of Education, the Agricultural and Vocational Training Colleges, Teacher Resource Centres, Multi-purpose Youth Centres and the secondary school libraries. In total, 2100 Educational Supplements were distributed with each issue of the magazine.

Both teachers and students reported that they enjoyed working with the Educational Supplement - in some schools these were used for class work, for home work and even to set examination questions.

### **Activity 3 Women's Voices broadcasts on community radio**

The main aim of Sister Namibia's weekly *Women's Voices* radio on BASE FM community radio was to bring up and openly discuss the broad range of issues that affect women and girls in Namibia, and in particular those living in Katutura and Khomasdal, where most of our listeners live. With the programme we aimed to promote critical thinking from a feminist perspective, and to provide women and girls who are usually marginalised with a platform for their voices. The show was produced and hosted by our media officer. Up to the time that she went on maternity leave in April, the shows received an average of six SMS text messages per broadcast from listeners, indicating a high level of interest in the show's topics of feminism, social activism and women's issues. During her maternity leave the show was hosted by a volunteer at the radio station, who was not as committed to our issues and to the show itself, and feedback went down. Unfortunately the media officer was not able to build up the listenership again from September to the end of the year, and with the station's increase in fees from 2010 we decided to end this activity and investigate other ways in which we can reach women across Namibia through the national broadcaster.

#### **Activity 4 Sister Namibia Resource Centre**

In 2009 the Sister Namibia resource centre had approximately 80 repeat visitors. Many were researchers and students as well as some professionals looking for information on gender and sexuality issues in Namibia. They borrowed books, journals and some DVD's and VHS videos, We also provided training materials and resources for several NGOs.

We received another generous donation of 70 books from Book Aid International with many titles highly relevant to our work, covering discussions within feminisms, sexualities and LGBTI issues, women's rights issues in various fields as well as broader development debates in Africa and the world.

The Sister Namibia resource centre also hosted five different international student groups and professors who were interested in finding out more about our work with and for women in Namibia, as well as *Sister Namibia* magazine. Two of the groups were from the Center for Global Education (CGE); one from Georgetown School of Law in the US; another from Warthburg College in the US who were interested in Sister Namibia's work and the role of the church in the women's movement. There was also a group of students and professors attached to the Namibian Women's Health Network who were interested in finding out more about Sister Namibia's activities in the End Forced Sterilisation Campaign. Finally, we met with a staff member from the Legal Assistance Centre in Namibia and two law students interested in traditional cultural practices and inheritance issues affecting women in Namibia.

#### **Activity 5 Sister Namibia website and E-Newsletter**

The director compiled the initial contents for the [www.sisternamibia.org](http://www.sisternamibia.org) website and worked with a volunteer to get it up, hosted by the Domain Factory in Germany. The last two *Sister Namibia* magazines for 2009 were uploaded, and the media officer has received training in maintaining the website while the (now former) director is still adding content on the history and past activities of Sister Namibia as time allows. We have pdf files of the back issues of the magazine for the past 4 years which are ready to go up, but there is currently a problem with

the speed of our internet connection that needs to be sorted. The *Contact Us* page has recorded 258 hits to date and the *Strategic Plan* and *Vision and Mission* pages have recorded 121 and 108 hits respectively.

### **Overall results achieved by the Media Programme**

***Goal 1: To generate and disseminate feminist knowledge and analysis and challenge patriarchal ideologies, norms, values, attitudes and practices that divide and oppress people***

We achieved this goal through building staff capacity in feminist analysis, which led to a new **Feminist Forum** section in our magazine, as well as a number of discussions on our **Women's Voices** show on feminism in Africa. This sparked a lot of interest, and we have a sense that publicly naming ourselves feminist in this way is generating a greater acceptability of feminism among women activists and our readers and radio audiences in general. We further gave space in the magazine to other feminist voices from the NGOs we partner with, including Women's Leadership Centre and the Gender Research and Advocacy Project of the Legal Assistance Centre. Further, *Sister Namibia* challenged some of the advertisers, their graphic design companies and the media that printed sexist advertisements full of stereotypes, successfully raising awareness through the controversy caused by our Green Ball Holder Award.

***Goal 2: To raise awareness about current issues of concern to women and girls, and promote women's and girls' rights in all spheres of life***

We achieved this through the broad range of issues covered both in the magazine and the radio show, as well as through the broad but targeted distribution of the magazine. *Sister Namibia* is continuing to reach our target audiences in secondary and combined schools across the country, most of which are in rural areas, as well as through more NGOs distributing greater numbers of the magazine to their constituencies. More government officials are receiving the magazine through the distribution by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Namibian embassies abroad. The request for magazines and educational supplements by education officers in the Ministry of Education is a further welcome indication that our contributions to the national discourse on subjects concerning women and girls are valued, despite often taking up controversial positions.

***Goal 3: To give women and girls a forum and skills to exercise their voice through access to print media and radio as well as through media skills training workshops.***

We achieved this goal as a number of women and girls sent us articles and creative writing for the magazine, and those living in Katutura had access to our radio show, either as live guests or by sending text messages. This goal was also achieved in a major way through the Girl's Empowerment Project that trained young women in the many different media skill involved in the production of *REAL!* magazine.

### **Plans for 2010**

Due to reduced funds from the Heinrich Boell Foundation and HIVOS we will only be able to produce four single issues of *Sister Namibia* magazine in 2010, at 36 pages with a print run of 6,000 copies, down from the usual 9,000 copies. Fortunately the Dutch Embassy agreed to fund

one of the issues in 2010. We will need to make concerted fundraising efforts to keep the magazine going beyond this, as our contract with HIVOS comes to an end this year. In light of rising print costs and the trend towards electronic media, perhaps the time has come to review Sister Namibia's media programme as a whole and chart a new course.

**Strategic goal 4 To improve the visibility and public understanding of the whole range of Sister Namibia's activities**

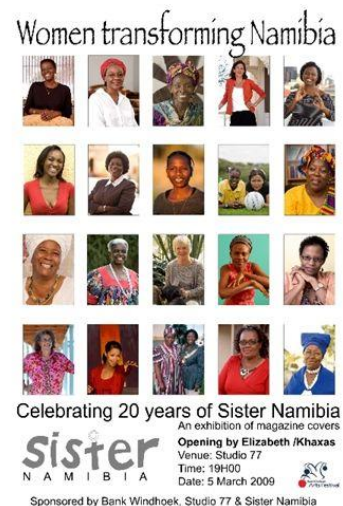
**Our key strategies for achieving this goal are:**

- Using Sister Namibia's own media to showcase our work
- Using mainstream media to showcase our work
- Using special occasions to conduct public events

**Activities, achievements and challenges in 2009**

In order to achieve this goal, we established a new section in *Sister Namibia* magazine – the HOME PAGE, where we regularly reported on the workshops and other activities of the organisation. We also used our radio show to report on these events.

Our public events centred on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sister Namibia, which we celebrated with three events in Windhoek in March 2009 and the launch of our satellite office in the North in November. Our first event was the launch of the photo exhibition: *Women transforming Namibia* at Studio 77, which was kindly co-sponsored by Studio 77 (who have provided our cover photos over the past years) and the Bank Windhoek Arts Festival.



This was a memorable and moving occasion, with many of the 'cover girls' included in the exhibition present and willing to share their reflections on being featured in our magazine with the audience. For some it had become part of their own life journeys of empowerment and transformation. "It was through my profile story in *Sister Namibia* that I got to know myself and to start valuing the work I was doing in the community. It was like a mirror to me," said one.

Our second event was a cultural evening titled *Feminism is fun* at the same venue, featuring poetry and spoken word performances by some of the contributors to *Sister Namibia* magazine followed by some sizzling scenes from the **Vagina Monologues**. The following week we launched our first issue of *REAL!* magazine in the same venue, while the photo exhibition was still up. Each of the events was well attended by a different audience, so we were able to reach many different people in this way. The last public event for the year was the launch of the

satellite office in the North, again framed by the photo exhibition **Women transforming Namibia**.

**Strategic goal 5: To deepen our feminist consciousness and critical feminist analysis as staff and board members**

**Our key strategies to achieve this goal are:**

- Defining the core values and beliefs Sister Namibia espouses;
- Providing opportunities for growth through reading, analysis, discussion and debate;
- Analysing the work of Sister Namibia through a feminist lens.

**Activities, achievements and challenges in 2009**

Due to the heavy workload of the director and the many issues dealt with by the board, we were not able to invest much time and energy into this strategic goal during 2009.

The board of trustees held five ordinary meetings and one extraordinary meeting throughout 2009, addressing the following matters: Annual narrative and financial reports for 2008; budgets and work plans for 2009; quarterly reports from the director; fundraising and donor relations; recruitment of new board members; recruitment of a new director and contingency plans for the transition; performance indicators for the director and the board; staff salaries and job descriptions; appointment of auditors; the consolidation of Sister Namibia's bank accounts and investment of savings; a review of the staff handbook in light of the new Labour Act; the development of the website; Sister Namibia's 20th anniversary celebrations; and the recommendations from the Hivos workshop on governance that was attended by one board member together with the bookkeeper. The board established two committees: one to conduct the performance review with the director, and the other to interview candidates for the position of director.

We therefore did not make time for defining the core values and beliefs Sister Namibia espouses, which will need to become an important goal for 2010 in view of the transitions taking place regarding the director and board membership.

Sampa Kangwa-Wilkie resigned from the board due to work pressure. Leigh-Anne Agnew was appointed as a new board member. Dianne Hubbard resigned from the position of chairperson after serving for six years (the three years prior to the official registration of Sister Namibia Trust and the following 3 years). Lucy Steinitz was appointed as the new chairperson, while Eveline January was appointed Deputy Chairperson. More changes will take place in 2010 with some members resigning and new members being appointed.

We did make time for four **Feminist Forums**, held together with staff of the Women's Leadership Centre, thereby continuing with our in-house training in feminist analysis for staff and interns during which we read and discussed feminist writers and reflected on and wrote about our own journeys through life in terms of "being born female" – our compliance with and resistance to the gender roles prescribed to us through family, school, church and other social

institutions. The issues we tackled were 'parenting vs. motherhood'; feedback and discussion of the feminist training attended by two volunteers in Zimbabwe; the stigma of being labelled a lesbian when you work for Sister Namibia; and the impact on women in northern Namibia of the culturally prescribed silence on personal matters that then leads to explosions of violence. Personal reflections on these issues were published in the magazine. The **Girls' Empowerment Project** and the development of the **Draft Curriculum for Young Feminists** provided further opportunities for staff to gain new knowledge and sharpen their analytical skills. The goal of analysing all of Sister Namibia's work through a feminist lens was partially achieved through our discussions in staff meetings, and should certainly underlie the next (external?) review of the organisation.

### **Strategic goal 6: To support staff performance and well-being**

#### **Our key strategies for achieving these goals are:**

- Improving communication among staff at all levels to inform staff of their rights and responsibilities and achieve a sustainable workload;
- Developing and implementing a mechanism for regular professional and personal reflection;
- Implementing a performance management system;
- Utilising training opportunities in Namibia and abroad to meet identified training needs of staff.

#### **Activities, achievements and challenges in 2009**

Throughout 2009 the only staff employed was the director and a part-time bookkeeper. Contracts with our longstanding donors - HIVOS and Oxfam Canada, were only signed in mid-year, which meant that we could only employ an outreach officer based in our satellite office in northern Namibia on a consultancy basis instead of providing her with a full contract. We further utilised a consultant to run the Girls' Empowerment Project up to its completion in August, a part-time intern as media officer, a part-time intern for reception and the resource centre, and a part-time accountant to train and support the book keeper. A student from the DAPP Vocational Training School in Outapi worked with the outreach officer in the north for one month. The intern media officer was on unpaid maternity leave from April to September and then only worked part-time up to the end of the year.

This situation made it impossible for the director to achieve a balanced workload and saw her doing overtime throughout the year to try and achieve all our other goals. In preparing for the transition to a new director, we took cognizance of this and agreed to employ a part-time 'guest editor' to produce Sister Namibia magazines in collaboration with the media officer, and to employ consultants to assist with fundraising in early 2010.

We did make time to go through the staff handbook together at the beginning of the year to acquaint ourselves with the rights and responsibilities of staff, and staff were also able to meet with the board member responsible for staff liaison to discuss the new policy for grievance procedures which allows them to approach the board directly if for any reason they do not wish

to approach the director first with a grievance. Staff including volunteers and interns was also involved in the performance review of the director conducted by the board.

With regard to staff training, the bookkeeper received training in Excel at her request, and the outreach officer participated in a three-day Training of Trainers workshop conducted by SAfAIDS on facilitating community dialogues that aim to surface and change cultural practices that fuel violence against women and HIV/Aids. The director was invited to participate in a three-week seminar on sexuality education in Africa at the African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town. Unfortunately none of the staff / interns were able to attend the feminist training in Zimbabwe due to personal reasons, but this will be offered again in 2010.

### **Strategic goal 7: To establish a Sister Namibia presence in the North**

#### **Our key strategies for this goal are:**

- Establishing a Sister Namibia satellite office in the North;
- Establishing a Sister Namibia programme in the North.

#### **Activities, achievements and challenges in 2009**

We have already reported on the opening of the satellite office and the activities of the outreach officer in the section on the Sexual Rights Campaign. Once new training materials have been developed for this campaign we plan to upgrade this position to programme officer and provide training to develop a full Sister Namibia programme in the North.

### **Strategic goal 8 To ensure a smooth transition to a new director**

#### **Our key strategies to achieve this goal are:**

- Securing the right person to fill the post of director;
- Monitoring the progress of the appointed candidate;
- Maintaining the continuity of programmes, plans and partnerships;
- Providing guidance for the new director.

#### **Activities, achievements and challenges in 2009**

We began advertising the position of director in May, and re-advertised following the first round of interviews. After the second round of interviews we advertised regionally and internationally, and this led to the successful application of a Namibian who was employed at the African Union in Addis Ababa. She is currently on maternity leave after supporting our fundraising efforts on a consultancy basis during February to mid-March. She will be employed full-time as the new permanent director from June 2010, and in the meantime Sister Namibia is being managed by a part-time interim director. The former director handed over the management to the interim director in January 2010, and will provide further information as needed to the new full-time director in June and beyond. One of the board members will mentor the new director for the first few months.



### **Strategic goal 9: To keep Sister Namibia financially viable**

#### **Our key strategies to achieve this goal are:**

- Developing the fundraising capacity of the organisation;
- Exploring new funding opportunities.

#### **Activities, achievements and challenges in 2009**

Fundraising remained a challenge and constant pre-occupation of the director throughout the year. For 2009 we secured funds from our already existing or former partners: Hivos, Oxfam Canada, the Heinrich Boell Foundation, UNICEF and OSISA. We were able to develop a new funding partnership with Urgent Action Fund, at whose request Sister Namibia organised a roundtable for staff from their Nairobi office with members of 25 women's rights NGOs in Namibia. This facilitated access to funding from a new donor not only for Sister Namibia but for many of our partners as well. We further became eligible for funds from Fahamu/Sigrid Rausing Trust, based on our membership of the Solidarity for African Women's Rights Network (SOAWR) that lobbies for the ratification and implementation of the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. Despite all the above efforts, some of the running costs had to be covered by Sister Namibia's own resources in the end, and we need to strategise how these will be covered in the future, as donor funds for this budget line are shrinking.

Funds for 2010 were secured from Hivos (our final year of a ten-year partnership) and the Dutch Embassy as a new partner. Proposals to AUSAID and the French Embassy were unsuccessful.

The director strengthened Sister Namibia's relationship with Oxfam Canada through participation in a regional partners meeting in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and was asked to stay on

to train Oxfam Canada staff from Canada and the region on issues of gender and sexual diversities.

The director was further invited to a strategic planning workshop by the Heinrich Boell Foundation Southern Africa Office for a regional programme on women's political empowerment being planned in collaboration with the HBS office for Eastern Africa, but could not attend at short notice. The interest of HBS was to include the issue of sexual citizenship into this programme, following the participation of HBS programme officer Paula Assubuji in Sister Namibia's workshops in northern Namibia in November 2009.

The incoming director will focus on the development of a fundraising strategy for the longer term as soon as she is in office.

### **Strategic goal 10: To measure the social impact of Sister Namibia's activities**

#### **Our key strategies for achieving this goal are:**

- Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation capacity of the organisation;
- Integrating monitoring and evaluation into all aspects of our work.

#### **Activities, achievements and challenges in 2009**

We continued with the monitoring and evaluation methods developed over the past years, including participatory action research for the Sexual Rights Campaign, but due to staff and time constraints we were not able to take these to the next level. This is a focus of our work for 2010.

#### **Publications produced in 2009**

*Sister Namibia Vol 21 # 1 - April 2009*

*Sister Namibia Vol 21 #2 - July 2009*

*Sister Namibia Vol 21 # 3 - September 2009*

*Sister Namibia Vol 21 # 4 & 5 - December 2009*

*REAL! no 1 – March 2009*

*REAL! no 2 – May 2009*

*REAL! no 3 – June 2009*

*REAL! no 4 – August 2009*

#### **Conclusion**

The year 2009 was an exciting and eventful year, looking back at the past 20 years through our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, and forward to new ideas and energy under the new management of Sister Namibia.

We began with the implementation of our three-year strategic plan: moving the Sexual Rights Campaign forward, establishing our satellite office and outreach programme in the north, and learning how to reach out to the next generation of young feminists through the Girls' Empowerment Programme.

The transition to the new director is now completed.

We sincerely thank all our donors for 2009: Oxfam Canda, Hivos, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the Opens Society Initiative for Southern Africa, Urgent Action Fund, the Dutch Embassy and FAHAMU/Sigrid Rausing Trust.