

**Year end report 2003
from**

**MASIMANYANE WOMEN'S
SUPPORT CENTRE**



MASIMANYANE WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE

Report on activities for the period ending December 2003.

Introduction

The period under review was full of activity, learning and challenges for Masimanyane Women's Support Centre. Many women and girls benefited from the organizations services and many communities received public education and training from Masimanyane. New volunteers were trained, men's groups were established in 7 communities and support groups were established for people living with HIV/AIDS. One notable success was the hosting of a regional training for women from 25 countries across Africa. The bringing together of these human rights activists was the culmination of two years of planning and organizing.

Another huge success was the hosting of a national conference which looked at men's work on violence against women in the country. This conference brought together over 100 men and women to examine the approaches and trends in men's groups who work or claim to work to end violence against women.

The organization lost some people who were recruited into the corporate sector. This is a growing trend in South Africa where business is able to offer much better remuneration packages and Black women are particularly targets for these jobs. While this is not good for NGO's who have become the training ground for corporates as the criteria for employing people is not stringent, Black women are gaining access to previous no go areas. This has to be seen as a step in the right direction; a part of transformation and the empowerment of women.

Like many other organizations dependent upon foreign funding, the organisation suffered the effects of the stronger rand. Since most of the organisations' funding is provided in US dollars or Euros, there was a substantial loss of revenue for the organization. Nevertheless, the organization raised the funding required to implement its objectives and it has managed once again to have received a clean audit report for the entire year.

Context

Political

There are huge changes taking place in the country as the transformation to democracy takes hold. Developing human rights norms and values is imbedded in the transformation to a democratic society. Government has undertaken enormous legislative reform much of which positively affects women. New laws are in place which set the standard for the way in which women should be treated. These include setting standards with regard to the new spaces which women have access to. This can be seen in the political arena where the ANC (largest political party) has ensured that women occupy at least 25 % of all political spaces. This creates an enabling environment for women in other spheres of society. Women continue to be appointed into the highest political positions including

government ministers, and deputy ministers, director generals and other high powered positions.

Women benefit from the numerous programmes which government has and is initiating. It is often mind boggling to see the vast changes which are taking place. New programmes are being developed in all areas which government is responsible. In relation to violence against women, the police have numerous new programmes and the courts have had court managers appointed and an Integrated Justice System (IJS) has been introduced. These new developments put a lot of pressure on women's groups as their roles are often unclear and they need monitoring for alignment to women's rights frameworks nationally and internationally.

Social context

Women suffer most in the private sphere of their lives where men continue to dominate. Some small changes have occurred in some private and social spaces where men have come to understand that they are at risk when they abuse women. Unfortunately such men are few and far between so that women and girls continue to experience oppression in the family, community and other social spaces. Violence against women is not receding in South Africa. New forms of violence surface all the time and in many communities, girls and boys are being abused at younger ages. Women suffer numerous forms of violence which causes bodily harm and often leads to their deaths.

In many instances we observe fundamentalism and other ism's increasing rather than decreasing. As an example, Masimanyane has observed an increase in traditional practices which oppress women even leading to their deaths. Virginity testing is being practiced in a rising number of communities. Masimanyane was asked to comment on this and said that it violated the human rights of girls as it did not ensure their right to dignity and bodily integrity. There was an outcry reported in the local newspapers from the head of the Xhosa chiefs who said that Masimanyane should not comment on their cultural practices as it was like spitting in the face of the Xhosa culture.

Religious institutions continue to perpetuate the loa status of women and in these arenas fundamentalism is increasing. Many women report not being allowed in decision making structures and

In another instance a man entered one of the counseling offices and verbally attacked the staff saying that they had no right to oppose the cultural practice prohibiting women from attending the funeral of their children or looking at their dead bodies. According to the Xhosa culture if women do this it is believed that they were responsible for killing the child/children. Many women approach our offices to request support because they are not allowed to see the bodies of their children and this denies them a mourning process causing them great distress.

Community projects.

The community projects programme has numerous arms to it. These include counseling services, para-legal, services, community development and outreach programmes.

The community projects form the back bone of Masimanyane's work as it works directly with women on the ground providing much needed services to them.

Scenery Park

The community projects flourished in spite of some difficulties at the beginning of the year. The Scenery Park office had to relocate to more appropriate offices and for a month or two clients had to re-orient themselves to the new location. A group of 21 people from the Scenery Park community were trained on domestic violence, rape and HIV/AIDS. Client numbers rose by more than 50% resulting in the need for additional staff. Some of the women who were trained were recruited to provide volunteer support to the office and three remain as volunteers. The introduction of a volunteer support allowed for workshops and seminars to be held in the community which also led to more women getting to know about the service.

A challenge which this office faces is that of safety. It is adjacent to the offices of a civic organization but is still at risk as it is somewhat isolated. Some safety precautions are being investigated to provide the staff member and volunteers with adequate support.

Zanempilo Centre

Two young lawyers were employed in August 2003. They worked at Zanempilo for some months in order to get to know the environment and to learn from experienced staff. While the young women have had legal training, they had no gender or human rights training. They were given some training but this has proved to be insufficient. Some conflict arose due to the lack of understanding about women's human rights and the feminist approach to working with gender based violence. Measures have been put in place to address this. What surfaced as critical issues was the need for a better orientation of new staff members; the provision of adequate gender and human rights training is essential for anyone joining the organization both as full time staff or as volunteers. Masimanyane has a very unique way of working and is pro feminist in its ideology and philosophy and not many people understand this without good exposure to gender training.

In September the Human Resource Manager, Community Projects Manager and one of the counseling staff traveled to Boston Massachusetts USA as part of a learning exchange programme. They were accompanied by the principal of a school in which Masimanyane conducts a life skills/public education programme. The group visited various organizations working on domestic violence, rape and HIV/AIDS. This exchange provided information into different approaches and strategies to addressing violence against women. It was a huge learning experience for the group who participated in the exchange.

The Community Projects manager resigned at the end of the year. She had great difficulty settling into the position and found it too challenging for her. She did manage to put some good systems in place and she made some significant contributions but decided to leave to start a cultural village in one of the rural villages in the Eastern Cape. She will be replaced by someone from the current staff as the senior managers realized that the women working for Masimanyane have skills and capacity which few outside of the centre have. A good management training programme will be put in place to support the chosen candidate.

A receptionist was employed freeing up an additional counselor to support the others based at Zanempilo. The counselor based at Mdantsane magistrate's court went on maternity leave for four months so someone had to move to Mdantsane.

East London Magistrate's court.

This office remains the busiest office in the group. They encountered numerous constraints in the period under review. The courts have changed considerably with new units opening and most recently an Integrated Justice System was put in place. This has meant that Masimanyane had to give back one of the three offices which it had and clients visiting the offices now have to use a common waiting room. This situation is not conducive to good working but there were not other options. The staff plan to monitor the situation and if an opportunity arises to secure more space, this will be done. For the moment there are two offices and two counselors with one legal assistant.

Some wonderful achievements which the office has had was that they recorded a large number of women coming from the adjacent communities of Kidds beach and Tyalumna. They identified that the police were not able to assist the women who sought their assistance so the women ended up traveling to the court in town for help. The women approached the police and negotiated training on the new domestic violence act, the maintenance act and the customary marriages act. The police were very excited and requested a joint workshop for their respective communities. This was done and it was very successful. As a result of this, the magistrate at the East London court recently commented that the two police stations were now producing the best responses in the area. She thanked the Masimanyane staff members for the work which they had done.

The two women have now identified a problem at the Buffalo Flats police station. They have planned an intervention which they will put in place shortly.

Mdantsane magistrate's court.

A change of staff at this office has led to an increase in the numbers of clients which now use the office. Much work still has to be done to increase information about the offices location and services.

Numerous difficulties existed in this office when it was taken over. The most difficult problem is the attitude of many staff members. The chief magistrate has said that the staff were inherited from the previous system and most of them are not adequately trained or motivated. This leads to poor performance and really bad attitudes to people they encounter.

Some of the impact has been that women are ignored, poorly treated with no sensitivity to the trauma which they face. One of the common problems was located by our office in respect of maintenance payments/collections. Women would come to court often walking great distances or having to take time off from work at a loss of pay and be not seen on that day, told to return or simple told that their money has not arrived. Upon investigation, it was found that the money could be accessed but court officials simple did not care. Our office has worked to change these experiences from women and some good successes have been recorded.

Peddle Women's Support Centre

This centre still relies heavily on Masimanyane for technical and financial support. The centre is rural based and works under extremely difficult circumstances. There are three public education officers who provide information and training in the villagers where Peddle WSC operates.

The area is largely governed by traditional and cultural practices which disadvantage women. The field workers come up against this kind of resistance all the time. The area is also known as a political nightmare with many factions from the same political party fighting for power. The mayor was ousted from her office by one such faction but large parts of the community fought to have her remain in office and she has held that office in spite of the difficulties. She is a firm supporter of Peddle Women's Support Centre.

Rape is rife in Peddle. Many young girls of 8-10 years are being raped by boys little older than themselves (12). It is unclear why this occurs but it appears to be linked to the high levels of poverty and unemployment which often fuels sexual violence. School children report these rapes to the public education officers but will seldom follow through with reporting to the police. The police are apathetic and lethargic. They have often refused to investigate reports of rape and domestic violence. This has led the centre staff to report the matter first to the station commander and later to the Independent Complaints Directorate which is part of the human rights framework in South Africa and is the body which investigates offences allegedly committed by the police.

The centre also plans to conduct community research this year to try to understand why rape and sexual abuse is so high in the area.

HIV/AIDS is ravishing the community. Because it is such a poor area and only people working as policemen, teachers and nurses work, young people are driven to leave for bigger cities. They are more often than not forced to provide sex to the men giving them lifts to the cities and when in the cities they are forced into prostitution. After a short while the women find they are ill and return home to Peddle with AIDS. Many have full blown AIDS because their immune systems are run down and they have little or no defenses due to their poverty. They come home to die and often leave little babies. The Peddle WSC workers report that every weekend they bury two – 3 or even more people. They are constantly being called out now to attend to sick people and often the parents or grandparents of these young people now little or nothing about HIV/AIDS.

Ikhwezi Women's Support Centre (Cathcart and surrounding rural areas)

This centre is struggling along. While it is now independent from Masimanyane Women's Support Centre. Close ties still exist and Masimanyane provides support for a pension and medical aid scheme for the staff. The centre is unable to secure its own schemes as it is too small to qualify.

The Director of this centre, Esther Cossie retires at the end of March. She is 65 years old. She trained and groomed a woman, Linda Broekwe who was her administrative assistant since she started the centre.

Linda has approached Masimanyane Women's Support Centre for support and it has been agreed that she will be coached and mentored as she requires. Already measures have been put in place to ensure that she is fully supported.

Ikhwezi is slowly beginning to recover from the horrific murder of one of their clients who was also the niece of the retiring director and a close friend of the new Director. The woman had been counseled by the centre and a protection order had been obtained for her against her husband who had grown up in front of the director and was a friend of her assistant. The retiring directors nephew was the offending perpetrator and he too was counseled. One night he approached the woman at her mothers home where she was staying. She called the police and the community including the two women who assisted the victim asked the police to arrest the man in terms of the protection order. The police took the man away promising to arrest him but released him at his home. A while later he returned to the home where his wife was, locked her inside and set the house on fire.

The community including his aunt, the centre director and his wife's best friend, Linda Broekwe heard the commotion and came to try to chase the perpetrator away and rescue the woman. He would not let them near the house and they watched it burn to the ground. They eventually over powered the man but by then the house was completely burned and they were left to scrap together the charred remains of the woman they knew so well and loved dearly. The experience left the women and their staff deeply traumatized. For months they simply cried and cried until a psychologist was asked to provide them with support.

This incident once again indicates that violence against women in South Africa is a life or death situation and a fight for survival which many women face daily in this country.

Many women are killed in Cathcart where the centre is situated and little is done by the police to arrest murderers. In addition it is alleged that magistrates and prosecutors are known to dismiss cases or ignore the facts put before them and release perpetrators. It is envisaged that research into this phenomena will be conducted during the course of 2004.

Masonwabisame Women's Support Centre (Butterworth)

This centre is thriving. Three offices now operate under the auspices of Masonwabisane. One of the offices is based in the local magistrate's court, one is a counseling and administrative centre and the third is the Love Life franchise office which was awarded to Masonwabisane.

The centre remains one of the only resources in the vast impoverished town of Butterworth and surrounding areas. It is deeply rural and faces the cultural and tribal systems which operate in the area. A good relationship has been established with local chiefs who have invited the centre to conduct educational programmes on HIV/AIDS and violence against women in their villagers. The chiefs call the community together for these talks and support the centre in this way.

This centre has struggled with the kinds of problems and difficulties which are brought to it. Many of the problems fall outside of its focus which is violence against women and girl children but because it is the only resource in the area, it has responded to most of the problems. This has led to exhaustion, a weakening of focus and the stretching of financial resources. Recently the centre called for an evaluation of its work over the past three years and here too it was pointed out that the centre has been spread too thinly. The staff are working on redefining its boundaries and will work towards narrowing its focus in 2004.

The centre works extremely hard and sees huge numbers of people every week. The educators are out in the community all the time providing information to school children, women's groups, youth and other relevant groups. In addition, the centre does extensive work with local and provincial politicians. Masonwabisane assisted Masimanyane in compiling a short report on the current status of women in the province which was presented by Masonwabisane at the provincial legislature in Bisho. This report was included in the provincial government's review of the Beijing +10 report which will form the basis of the national government report.

Empilisweni Aids Education and Training Centre

This centre has recovered quite nicely from having lost its founder and director early in 2003. A manager was appointed in August and she has worked steadily to build the centre. The manager began her work by interviewing every staff member about their work and trying to get sense of what they were doing and how they worked. She then visited everyone of the 21 villagers which make up the area and realized that too work effectively they would not be able to service all the villagers. She called all the communities, staff, local government officials and other stakeholders together and held a two day strategic planning meeting. The participants were asked what they knew about the centre which turned out to be very scanty knowledge. The participants were asked to do a SWOT analysis and to identify Empilisweni's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and the threats which it faced. A presentation was made on the aims and objectives of the centre and the participants were then asked to develop a vision for Empilisweni.

A 12 point action plan or activity schedule was agreed upon. This provided the manager and staff with direction. Work was begun to assess the staff's skills and capacity and programmes were developed for community education and training and staff development. The workshop agreed that it was not possible to work in all the communities at the same time so four villagers were targeted to receive the programmes while the others could attend training and educational programmes in the targeted four villagers.

To date, Empilisweni has conducted a door to door campaign in its targeted villages. This has provided information on which households are poor, where violence occurs and which families have people who are ill. It has also provided information on what kinds of programmes and support is needed.

Youth Activists clubs have been started in the four villages where the young people have received some training. A resource centre will be established on the centre's facilities (these are extensive) where the youth will be able to meet.

The resource centre will be provided with books from the Treatment Action Campaign and the local department of education.

A counseling facility has been established and people are beginning to use it. A Women's Wellness centre is planned for the centre where the reproductive health of women will be taken care of together with related support programmes.

Public Education

The work in public education has continued in spite of the loss of the most experienced person early in the year. Two women (counselors) were asked to provide public education in various communities and continue working in schools where Masimanyane had established a base. Many workshops, seminars and public talks were given by the public education officers and counseling staff. It has been a feature of Masimanyane's work to create opportunities for all staff to conduct public education programmes. What is learnt while working with women provides valuable information about what knowledge and information women in communities have and what they need to be given.

Two people work as full time public educators while all other staff are all obliged to conduct public education programmes when requested to do so. This allows for the staff to be kept informed of community needs and they can link the problems being presented with the community. There is one trainer, one social worker and community projects manager involved in the project.

A.W.Barnes Technology centre

The greatest success has been the establishment of a technology centre at A.W.Barnes primary school. Masimanyane has worked in this school for more than two years and managed to partner with another organization to establish this technology centre. The idea of this centre is to be able to provide the learners with computer skills and teach them internet and email skills. These two mediums will then be used to provide public education. It is a novel idea for this area and an interesting model is developing.

Extensive consultation has taken place in the school with the school governing board, the care givers and parents and the teachers all benefiting from the consultations and training which Masimanyane has provided.

At present there are only 6 computers on which 196 Grade Seven learners are being taught. This is a huge challenge but one which the computer teacher is taking up rather courageously. The children are divided into groups of ten and given some time to work on the computers. Life skills are being taught alongside the computer training and already the information base has been increased in relation to domestic violence, rape and HIV/AIDS.

Sadly, it has come to light that many of the children have direct experiences of one or the other form of violence and sometimes all three. The enormity of how these issues play out in the lives of many of the children with whom we work is often daunting to the programme officers.

Leaders of Tomorrow programme

The Leaders of Tomorrow programme continues. It slowed down considerably towards the end of the year with the learners in the high schools having to concentrate on studying for their final exams. One group of youngsters from the Nathaniel Palma High School in Peddie requested a year end camp which Masimanyane agreed to sponsor in recognition for the effort they had put into the programme for the year.

Community programmes

18 workshops were held during the course of the year on various aspects of women's human rights. Two workshops were held at police stations in Tyalumna and Kwelera where both the police and the communities were provided with information on the new laws.

Twelve schools were included in the Life Skills programme. Three in Scenery Park, four in Mdantsane, One in Kwelera, one in Woodlands location and three in East London central including the A.W. Barnes technology centre. In all the schools at least five classes participate in the programme with each class having a minimum of 50 children. The school programmes cover a variety of topics such as sexual assault, rape, sodomy, sexual harassment, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. Children are given information but also assisted to develop mechanisms to protect themselves.

Radio programmes

The Director of Masimanyane made three radio broadcasts while other staff members made three more such broadcasts. The inputs were on International Women's day, National women's day and the International day of no violence against women and girl children. The discussions focused on the changes which had taken place in South Africa, the struggle for gender equality and of the programmes which Masimanyane provides for victim/survivors of gender based violence. The radio programmes were both local and national broadcasts and it is estimated that some 5 million people were reached.

Newspaper reports/inputs

Numerous newspaper reports about Masimanyane's work were made over the course of the year. The Men's Conference, the campaigns and certification of people whom Masimanyane trained received extensive coverage.

In addition, the local and national newspapers regularly call up the centre for comments on reports of discrimination, violent crimes against women and girls or cultural and traditional practices which women are subjected to. Masimanyane has been subjected to back lashes after giving comments which has sometimes led to death threats.

Campaigns.

Masimanyane always hosts events to commemorate campaigns which highlight the plight of women. **International Women's day** on 8 March was commemorated with a big event held at Amalinda Forest. The community of women from a single women's village were given information on the domestic violence act, the maintenance act and the customary marriages act. The community was enthralled with the event that they requested on going education and support from the centre.

Youth day was commemorated with Masimanyane combining with another organization and holding a youth rally. HIV/AIDS was the main focus of the discussions.

National Women's Day was held by hosting various workshops across the province. The international day of no violence against women was celebrated with an international conversation about women's rights across the world. Experts from 6 developing countries came to share their knowledge and experience around various aspects of violence against women this included trafficking, forced prostitution, economic violence, poverty and women, and all traditional forms of violence against women and girl children.

World Aids day was held by the Empilisweni Aids Care and training centre which is one of Masimanyane's outreach offices. All staff and stakeholders were invited to this event which was held in the rural area of Woodlands. The event drew a large number of people and youth from the surrounding villages who had benefited from Masimanyane's programmes provided drama and musical activities which highlighted the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on their communities.

Training

Introduction

Masimanyane Women's Support Centre works towards empowering Community Based Organizations and NGO's with skills and capacity to provide services in rural communities. The focus of the work is on gender, violence against women, HIV/AIDS and human rights. The year was focused on providing the existing community outreach offices together with other CBO's and NGO's with training opportunities.

Discussions took place prior to drawing up the training programme to establish what the specific needs were and agreement was reached on the course to follow. Each office nominated the people they wanted trained.

The main object of the Masimanyane training institute is to provide women and men with skills which assist them to effectively engage with the issues which they confront in their organizations and their communities. Although women have gained more visibility in communities over the past few years, many lacked the skills and capacity required to

manage projects or organizations. The women in the outreach offices provide very important services to communities for which they rarely receive support.

Women who do have leadership positions struggle to survive and find it very difficult negotiating the terrain of organizations.

Stress levels are high and burnout is not uncommon amongst women. Providing women and men with training opportunities teaches them how to manage and lead more effectively.

The courses provided this year were

Basic Counseling Skills - This course was a foundation course for all people providing support services to women and girls in communities. Twenty two people from four offices attended this course. It was very important for the participants to have this learning as all of them work with people in their own communities. Many of them expressed great appreciation for the training. One difficulty that arose was the need for on-going supervision of participants so that the difficulties which they experience in the counseling environment can be addressed. The problem was referred to the coordinators and directors of their offices with the request that they find professional people within their communities who could provide on-going psychological supervision.

Financial management training -The course was targeted at people who have some management responsibility. Both finance and non-financial managers attended it. It was geared at enabling relevant people within the Community Outreach programme to understand financial implications and performance of their projects, and to ensure that they can plan effectively, implement and account for utilisation of financial resources.

The overall purpose of the course was to provide managers with a basic understanding of financial management issues in the development sector. To provide exposure to the broad areas of finance and economics, and to financial management principles, concepts and practices. To examine how these impact on the day-to-day work of the organisation.

The financial management training was split into two phases of training. The same group of people participated in both. The basic concepts were taught in the first part.

Participants struggled to understand these.

It was decided that the participants should each work on a project related to financial management issues within their own organizations and present these at the second training. This assisted the participants to grapple with the training in a practical way. They said it was the most helpful teaching mechanism as they learned how to translate the concepts into their work. The facilitator said that there was a marked improvement in the way that participants presented their projects after the second training. The proposals improved considerably once the course had been completed.

Project management -The primary purpose of this course was to provide the theoretical knowledge of project management, and skills in areas of public and development management. The course was designed to familiarize project managers with the cycle of

project management and provide actual project development and management practice of public, development and private sector projects.

The thrust of this course was on the concepts, processes, and approaches to project management. It focuses on common project characteristics, the behavioral and quantitative aspects of project management.

Participants were very impressed with this programme saying that they had not had a framework for implementing their projects. After the training they were able to develop a project plan and an activity schedule. Monitoring and evaluation was always a vague concept but they acquired a sound understanding of how to monitor their work. Participants were given assignments to carry out in their projects and they were invited to submit these to the trainer for assessment and input. They welcomed this.

Proposal and report writing workshop -The overall objective of this training programme was to strengthen the writing skills of all staff in the outreach offices so that they could write effective proposals and enhance their report writing for internal and external purposes. There were two topics covered – proposal writing and report writing.

Participants reported a huge increase in their knowledge of report and proposal writing and once again reports from donors are that the quality of proposals and report submitted have improved considerably.

All participants said that the training provided an accessible framework for constructing proposal and reports and this was easily translated to their project plans.

Human Resource Management training - Specific Objectives were to:

- To understand the importance of effective Human Resources Management.
- To describe the major techniques of Job Analysis and the development of Job Specifications and Descriptions.
- To learn the dynamics of recruitment and selection
- To expose participants to South Africa Labour legislation and its implications for the organizations
- To learn the fundamentals of Performance Management.

This course was found to be interesting and informative to managers of the out reach offices. Some had rudimentary systems in place which they were able to upgrade. Some of the work was difficult to grasp and there was concern about not being able to develop all the systems. It was agreed that the process need not be intensive but that offices should implement what was most needed incrementally.

Organisational Board Governance training – Members of various boards were given training on Board Governance. It was felt that this was necessary as many organisation's work with Boards which do not provide strategic input into the organization. They often fail to provide the necessary support to the directors. In some cases they operate as managers of the project. The overall objectives of this course were to expose

directors to the critical issues pertaining to organisational governance and improve their performance in the board to ensure effective governance.

Evaluation and Assessments

Competency levels of understanding and application was measured in different parts of the courses according to:

Group assignments and exercises were given throughout the course to test understanding and ability to apply concepts.

Group presentations to assess the participant's ability to discuss the application of concepts in a simulated context.

Simulation exercises given demonstrated improvement in the participants understanding of concepts, practices, particularly of project management and financial management. The quality of project plans and project budgets and cash flow projections produced after the workshop were of high quality compared to those done at the beginning of the workshop.

There is a need to develop an assistance and support programme (mentoring) for board members particularly in respect of Resource mobilisation, proposal writing and budgeting so that those who participated can receive coaching and mentoring. This would greatly enhance the learnings which were gained.

Analysis

The people who benefited from the training reported an enhanced understanding of organizational development and management issues and realized that their input was of great value. They said that they understood the funding environment, the responsibility placed on the organization and its staff and the need for them to be more accountable. Participants reported that they felt inspired and motivated in their work because they were able to measure their inputs and visibly see the effects.

Directors and coordinators reported that their work of reporting was facilitated by the improved input from staff.

The benefits of the training offered by Masimanyane had some short term effects but will probably serve organizations better over a longer period of time as they being to link their learning practically to the work which they do. There is a need for on-gong support of the people who have been trained so that they can explore the experiences which they encounter in their day to day lives. While many report growth and skills enhancement, it does take time to integrate all the learning.

There was a great deal of training done over a fairly short period of time. This should possibly be changed for next time so that people have time to digest one course and work with the ideas before moving onto something else.

Nevertheless, the training has broadened the general scope of all staff within the offices and an enabling environment created for organizational growth and development.

While the training focused on aspects of organizational development, there is clearly a need to provide comprehensive training on HIV/AIDS. Training for staff from all offices will be conducted in 2004 and will cover, HIV/AIDS, gender and human rights.

Men's programme

The project aims to include men and boys in the struggle to end all forms of violence against women and to entrench women's rights. This takes place through the establishment of groups of men actively working alongside women in their communities, a process of capacity building for these groups, and through the establishment of programmes aimed at young boys in these communities.

A number of workshops have been conducted in 7 communities. Training methods vary and materials have been produced for the groups. These are highlighted in a table which has been annexed.

One of the objectives has been to community and school based youth programmes that challenge traditional views of masculinity and provide alternative ways of being.

The youth programme is working in two ways. The first is to link the men's groups with existing youth programmes in their communities.

This provides an existing structure for them to work with and to mentor the youth. This is happening in the Butterworth, Cathcart, Ilitha (Berlin), Peddie and Woodlands communities.

The second is the establishment of new youth groups within the communities. New groups have been and are being developed in Amalinda Forest, Kwelerha, Mdantsane 1 and Mdantsane 2. The Mdantsane 1 group consists of 15 youth, while work is being done in Kwelerha with 120 youth attending the local schools.

We are working with local councillors, community workers and sports groups in Amalinda Forest and Mdantsane 2 in order to establish youth groups in these communities.

The training schedule that had been established in consultation with the communities we are working in was changed slightly owing to public and school holidays.

As the only possible training venue in a number of these communities is the local school, we had to delay the training while the schools were closed for holiday periods. There have been some minor problems in Fort Grey and Amalinda Forest, as some of these participants are senior students and have had to stop attending meetings due to them studying for exams.

Furthermore the programme being conducted with warders in the local prisons has also received newspaper coverage (reported in the Daily Dispatch dated 3 December 2003).

Some 56 prison warders attended an 8 month training course on gender, women's rights and HIV/AIDS.

The training of these men has had a significant impact on their personal lives. About six men have approached Masimanyane to become active volunteers in the wider work that the organisation is involved in.

We have also learned from the partners of some of the men that these men have made a distinct change in their behaviour and attitudes. This was very encouraging to us

Challenges

There are however a number of difficulties that we have to address with the men on the courses. During our discussions with women's groups in two of the communities it was found that a small number of the men involved in the training were causing a number of problems for the women in these groups. They seemed to believe that they were now responsible to run those projects and did not accept women's leadership roles. This was a major disappointment to us as we have always stressed the importance of men living out what they learn. This issue will be addressed before further training can take place.

Men's Conference

The men's conference held in February 2003 was one of the highlights of the year for Masimanyane Women's Support Centre. Participation at this conference was around 50% male and 50% female. This is in keeping with the pro feminist approach which Masimanyane has taken and it aligned with the philosophy that men's groups must be accountable to women's groups when working on violence against women.

The discussions at this conference moved beyond the superficial to deep discussions around the role of various institutions, approaches and strategies to including men in the fight to eradicate gender based violence. It was a huge learning for both men and women who said that they had never listened intently to the views of each gender.

A full report has been published and is being distributed.

Research

Masimanyane focused on completing the research on the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS for the Buffalo City Municipality. The report on resource mapping was also completed. This research project was one of the most challenging assignments which Masimanyane has ever undertaken largely because it worked in a consortium for the first time.

None the less it was a huge learning experience from which greater knowledge was gained on HIV/AIDS and the responses to the pandemic in communities. It gave Masimanyane greater access into new areas in the municipal area which opens the way for new contacts and the spread of the organisation's work.

Advocacy and Lobbying.

Masimanyane together with Masonwabisane Women's Support Centre prepared a commentary on the Beijing +10 report of the Provincial government. This report was submitted to the provincial legislature where it was circulated to members of the legislature and women's groups through the province.

Masimanyane made two submissions to parliament. One via the Port Folio Committee on Justice and the other via the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement in the Quality of Life and Status of Women.

The most significant event relating to advocacy and lobbying this year has been the African Consultation on CEDAW. Women from 25 African countries were brought together to receive training and information on CEDAW and the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. The idea was to get women to use CEDAW in their countries both to establish standards and to have a universal framework. In addition, countries were to look at developing strategies to get their government's to ratify the Optional Protocol. Many countries are not keen to ratify the OP to CEDAW as it will raise the bar in terms of government accountability.

Masimanyane held an International Panel discussion on November 25th where women from around the world made inputs on various aspects of women's human rights. Many policy makers including a provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC) and the head of the women's league of the major political party attended the vent which was a huge learning experience for all.

Board Retreat

Masimanyane Women's Support Centre's Board of Directors held a retreat in the second half of the year. The retreat was aimed at providing a space to look at the vision and mission of the organization, to evaluate the boards contribution to the organization and to talk about the organisation's strategic direction.

The exercise proved to be hugely useful as the Board had time to reflect upon the organizations achievements and to look at whether the organization was still relevant. The question about where the organisation should be heading and how it should move ahead was discussed at length. In the final analysis it was agreed that an external evaluation of the organization was essential to measure the impact that the organization has had over the past nine years and to gauge what its strengths and weaknesses are. In addition, such an exercise would open up discussion on the role the organisation can and should play in the future.

Administration

Two major setbacks occurred in the latter part of 2003. The book keeper who had been with the organization for many years immigrated to New Zealand. This created a disturbance in the financial management of the organization.

The director's personal assistant who originally provided the book keeping function was asked to step in to fill the gap. This has caused a delay in reporting. By the end of the year some 18 people had been interviewed for the position but none of them were suitable or demanded far higher salaries than the organization could afford. When the audited occurred some difficulties were encountered mainly in locating documentation. In spite of this, after the three week auditing process, Masimanyane received a good, clean audit report. A new book keeper has since been employed and it is envisaged that the financial management systems will once again be strengthened. Price Waterhouse Coppers conducted a review on the financial management systems in the middle of 2003 and provided an excellent report on the organization with only a few suggestions made to improve and strengthen the current systems. Most of these have been implemented.

The Executive Assistant who had been with the organization for five years was offered a very attractive position in the corporate sector. She started with Masimanyane as a young woman with no experience at all. Masimanyane could not match the offer which she was made and reluctantly bid her farewell. The director felt this loss most of all as her support base was considerably weakened by these two resignations. The positive spin off has been that another staff member was promoted into the assistant position and is currently being trained. The appointment of a new book keeper had created the opportunity for changes and improvements to be made to the current systems but has delayed the reporting for 2003. Another positive development has been that the organization has become more aware of the need for succession planning. Measures are being put in place to develop this aspect of the organization.

Staff development

It remains one of Masimanyane Women's Support Centre's chief goals to build the skill and capacity of staff on a continuous basis. Many staff members attended various training programmes. Some participated in the organizational development training. Two began university degree courses and 8 attended training internationally. Some staff members received training in gender, human rights and HIV/AIDS. Almost all staff received some training on research methodologies. A critical omission which came to light is that at no time has Masimanyane conducted training for all staff on HIV/AIDS. Staff have had exposure to various and differing aspects but not all staff have had training on all aspects of HIV/AIDS.

Some deep thinking has gone into how better to re-structure the staff development programmes to ensure that all staff have equal access and that they receive training in various aspects of Masimanyane's work. New staff require a much more comprehensive orientation to Masimanyane's philosophy and ideology which is very different from any other organization working on violence against women in the province.

Challenges facing the organisation

Programmatic challenges.

A growing challenge to the organization is that of HIV/AIDS. A recent information gained while compiling this report revealed that many staff members have not had adequate training on HIV/AIDS. This was a frightening oversight.

Measures are being put in place to address this oversight and all staff will receive sound consistent training on HIV/AIDS.

As Masimanyane continues to grow its work in communities, more and more women and girl children report acts of violence including rape, sexual abuse, domestic violence, battery and HIV/AIDS infection. The work load is huge with many counselors facing horrific cases up to four times per day. The threat of burn out is greater and stronger measures are required to address this phenomena. Staff are watched closely by each other and management in order to detect when they are taking strain. Support is provided by means of massage and other support therapies but more and more use is made of psychological support for staff who are really struggling. Investigations are under way to determine how else care can be provided for carers.

Cultural and traditional practices are gaining greater visibility. Women are being burned in the Eastern Cape are witches. Much of these deaths are under reported and relate directly to HIV/AIDS. When people within a family get ill, often that family is informed by a sangoma (traditional healer) that they have been bewitched. They then seek out someone to lay the blame on. More often than not, it is an older woman which some indigenous knowledge who is then killed. No men have been reported killed as witches.

Virginity testing has also begun to surface as a preferred means of preventing early pregnancies, HIV/AIDS infection and promiscuity. Newspapers are advertising virginity testing rituals.

The Commission on the Status of Women has condemned this practice but support for it is strong amongst Xhosa chiefs in the Eastern Cape. Masimanyane's Director has come under public attack by the House of Tradition Leaders and Xhosa chiefs for speaking out against virginity testing. She said that it violates the right to bodily integrity amongst other things. The Xhosa chiefs made a public statement saying that criticism was like "spitting in the face of the Xhosa nation". There ere two incidents where men approached the centre's offices and verbally abused the women about the fact that Masimanyane opposes oppressive cultural practices. Other women including Xhosa women in government and other walks of life have also spoken out against various cultural practices.

Many funders are shifting their focus and insisting on a stronger focus on HIV/AIDS. This does cause some tension with regard to the core business of the organization (in this case violence against women and girls) and the need to secure funding. Masimanyane is challenged to look at how it continues to provide services to the increasing number of women and girls who are victims of gender based violence.

The discussions on how to respond appropriately and effectively to HIV/AIDS will have to take on more urgency. Of course the links between the two are acknowledged but there is a very real danger of losing the focus on VAW.

Finance

While a substantial amount of funding was secured by the organization for the period ending 2004, a fare amount was for special events such as the Men's Conference and the African consultation.

The strengthening of the rand resulted in the loss of expected funding. The organization develops its budget in rand values but most of its funding is provided in US dollars, Euros or British pounds. While in the past the organization has gained from the weak rand, the past year has resulted in some serious financial difficulties. One being that the organization had to request that its core funder, SIDA, make available the funding ear marked for 2004 in the last quarter of 2004. Some of this was utilized and the impact will be felt in 2004.

An encouraging development has been an increase in the government subsidy which the organization gets from the department of social development. For the past 8 years the organization has been given R 19077, 00 per month. In the middle of the year the government subsidy was increased to R 43 000,00 per month. The organization welcomes this increase which is also a recognition of the work which Masimanyane does.

The Swedish Development Agency has indicated that it intends continuing funding Masimanyane until its current agreement with the South African government runs out in 2008. The prospect of having this funding for four years after the end of 2004 is encouraging.

The biggest challenge in 2004 is going to be to meet the budgetary needs of Masimanyane. This is he first time in the organizations history that finance poses the kind of problem envisaged here. Clearly a greater effort must be made to breach the expected shortfalls to the budget and/or some activities will have to be curtailed.

Conclusion

While 2003 has been a year of great successes and serious challenges, the organization has proved that it can respond to both with energy and strength. The increase in HIV/AIDS is having an impact on the organization in subtle and overt ways. 2004 will the year to seriously look at developing stronger responses to the pandemic.

The staff continue to grow and develop and many of them have become tremendous forces in their communities. The growth of new community based groups and the rise of support centres across the province are testimony to the impact which the organization is having.

**Prepared by: Lesley Ann Foster.
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