



discourse

“... the highest form of human excellence is to question oneself and others.”

Socrates

Comment

The theme of this issue of *Discourse* is the Xhosa word *Ubuntu*, which has its origins in the Bantu languages of Southern Africa and is pronounced uu-Boon-too. It is seen as a classical African philosophical concept. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, has defined *Ubuntu* as the essence of being human and speaks about the fact that one can't exist as a human being in isolation. *Ubuntu* speaks about our interconnectedness. “We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world”, he explains (2008). We affirm our humanity when we acknowledge that of others.

Ubuntu implies tolerance of different points of view, different customs and different ways of seeing the world. Peace, in other words. Peace is an essential element of democracy. It is essential if our society is to develop. Peace is a cornerstone of nation building. The first steps towards attaining a more peaceful world involve learning about the advantages of peaceful living. Recognition and respect for others, we believe, are a precondition for peace and sustainable development.

In this issue Dr Gudrun Kober, Director for People's Education, Assistance & Counselling for Empowerment (P.E.A.C.E.) writes about tolerance. Helen Vale, Clerk of the Namibia Quaker Meeting, writes about the Alternative to Violence Project and we look at the work done by CHANGE and the Hanns Seidel Foundation.

Well-known personality Robin Tyson gives pointers as to how we can improve the lives of others by a more conscious approach to everyday expenditures and Tezfaghi Tekle explains *Ubuntu* in practice, Eritrean style. And then we hear the views of the “person in the street”...

Read this issue and tell us how you think. We'd like to hear divergent views.

Bryanie van Harmelen

Comments Cont on Page 4

Perspectives

Discourse went into the streets of Windhoek recently and asked a cross-section of people three questions: the meaning of the word *Ubuntu*; whether or not there was *Ubuntu* in Namibia and how this quality could be promoted. Here are some of the responses:

“Hans” a young technical adviser had this to say: I'm not sure if I've got this right but I go for the term “brotherhood”. He felt that though there was brotherhood amongst families and clans in Namibia, this was not always the case amongst all Namibians.

His suggestions for promoting *Ubuntu* amongst Namibians were: “Primary and secondary schools should emphasize the topic. Politicians should act as role models and discuss the topic in public.”

A young German volunteer, “Bettina”, who works for an NGO, defined the word *Ubuntu* as “brotherhood”. She felt that there was brotherhood in some parts of the country, within tribes. She also noted that there was respect towards the elders in various tribes.

Her view was that *Ubuntu* could be promoted through open-mindedness, respect, caring and accepting and respecting difference and change.

Another young volunteer in her 20s, “Irmgard”, who tours the country doing development work, felt that there was brotherhood in Namibia and that it could be promoted through “respect towards others and nice social values.”

“Molo” a 50-year-old trainer, defined the word as “humanity, hospitality, friendship and support.” He felt that these qualities existed amongst people in Namibia and made the following suggestions for the promotion of *Ubuntu*: “Through the policy of reconciliation, through the integration of peoples in the country and by socializing.”

“Cassie” and “Tienie” both office workers with

Perspectives Cont on Page 7

Tolerance in a wounded society

By Gudrun Kober

"I thought that I had big problems, but upon hearing others stories I realized that I was lucky. I heard other peoples stories and felt their pain. I experienced second hand the pain they felt but it felt like my own pain. I could see relieved persons after the stories and drawing it was like a therapy. Now I am closer to different people not only as friends but also on a spiritual level. My wish: that the program goes on and reach more people with different traumas...."

Comment from a participant in a Healing of Memories workshop hosted by PEACE Centre and conducted by facilitators of the Institute for Healing of Memories.

Meanings of Tolerance

There are "weak" and "strong" versions of tolerance. In the "weak" or passive version tolerance entails putting up with someone, be that an individual or a group. Tolerance in this sense means enduring something. The UNESCO Declaration of Principles of Tolerance (1995, pp 2 - 3) explicitly rejects the possibility that this "weak" version even amounts to tolerance; paragraph 1.2 (Article 1) asserts that tolerance does not entail "concession, condescension or indulgence". In fact, such putting up with would amount to disrespect for the individual or group thus "tolerated". Furthermore, a passive "toleration of social injustices" is contrary to tolerance. Wierlacher (1996 in Losehand, 2009) elaborates on this point when he maintains that tolerance involves taking action to curb intolerance, discrimination and persecution of those who are marginalised, strangers, foreigners and those who think differently. His position and that of UNESCO are thus exemplary of the strong version of tolerance.

Tolerance in the context of victimisation

The call for tolerance in its "strong" sense

of respecting, even forgiving (see Andre du Pisani, 2003) the other in a context where people feel that they have suffered injustices and have been wronged is controversial. For people who have been victimised the "weak" form of tolerance in the sense of "putting up with" may be as far as they are able and willing to go. Since resentment, hatred, anger and the wish to exact revenge would be "normal" for victims, the weak form of tolerance should perhaps be seen as a major achievement in such cases.

However, anger, hatred, resentment and the wish to exact revenge (which, in some cases may be put into practice) have the effect of psychologically binding the victim to the perpetrator and to the painful past. By the same token the victim is unable to move on, to take responsibility for and create a future which is, within limits, self-chosen instead of being circumscribed by the experience of victim-hood. For some people who have been the victims (of intolerance) remaining in that role may be preferable to taking the risk of assuming responsibility for his/her own life. At least being a victim is a familiar role and thus some people may cling to it just as human beings tend to cling to any role that they know well, even though it may be limiting and even detrimental to their well-being.

Healing: a prerequisite for tolerance?

It is my contention that for those who have been victimised tolerance in the "strong" form is very difficult if not impossible in the absence of healing. What does healing entail and what would make it possible? Since this contribution has tolerance, not healing as its focus, a brief outline will suffice. For healing to take place the personal story of suffering must be related in a context of respect and acceptance. The experience of pain, loss, humiliation and suffering must be given the time to unfold and be fully acknowledged by

Dr Gudrun Kober has been the director of the PEACE (People's Education, Assistance & Counselling for Empowerment) Centre for the past six years. She is a clinical psychologist by profession and holds a Doctoral degree from the University of South Africa. Her PhD was aimed at investigating how the articulation of human subjectivity in the Namibian context may be constitutive of transformation at the individual and societal plane. During the time she was a senior lecturer at the Psychology Department at UNAM she was instrumental in developing the first Masters degree in Psychology and Bachelor of Psychology degree.

those who are witnesses to the story being told. This is a first step in another crucial element of healing namely re-establishing the connections between the victim and others, re-integrating the victim as a full member of a community, of social networks. Furthermore, healing is a process of re-establishing trust – in one's own value, in other human beings and in the world (and here it should be noted that, in the absence of some level of trust tolerance in the strong sense would probably not be possible). A further element of healing consists in restoring the victim's sense of agency, of being able to take control in his/her life. For most victims, justice in some form is a pre-requisite for healing.

At times, particularly when healing has not occurred, individuals or groups who perceive themselves to have been victimised will use this as a basis for practising intolerance in relation to another person or group once they gain power. In this case the victim may become the perpetrator.

It is also possible that the position or role of being the victim may be evoked for political expediency.

Vigorous engagement and Recognition thereof: two sides of the tolerance coin

Having considered healing as a possible precondition for tolerance, Charles Villa-Vicencio's (2000) "Restorative Justice: dealing with the past differently" and Bience Gawanas' (2004) "Anton Lubowski memorial lecture on tolerance" will now be drawn on to further elucidate what tolerance – in its strong version - might mean in Namibia.

Taking Robert Sobukwe's only criterion for being an African, namely to regard Africa as one's home, as a basis Villa-Vicencio (2000, pg 207) elaborates that this would also mean caring about the problems of Africa namely "poverty, underdevelopment and alienation". He explicitly states that whites as the former colonisers need to take on this responsibility. In other words he calls for active engagement to take the place of indifference to these problems or an attitude that "this has nothing to do with me" ..

The other side of this coin is that vigorous engagement in "the African family" by whites and people of other ethnic groups who choose to be African should be welcomed, not simply tolerated (in the sense of put up with) by "indigenous black Africans" (pg 207).

Villa-Vicencio's ideas need to be further unpacked and elaborated on. "Taking responsibility" in respect of problems such as poverty, underdevelopment and alienation is not the same thing as accepting the role of scapegoat for all that goes wrong. In fact blaming may militate against the scapegoat truly taking responsibility because it allows for a defensive dismissal of the need to take constructive action, thus undermining tolerance in the strong sense. Furthermore, as the UNESCO Declaration of Principles of Tolerance affirms, availing economic and social opportunities to each person is a crucial part of tolerance at the level of the State. In other words, a call on a particular group in this case whites to care about the problems of poverty, alienation and underdevelopment by no means absolves the state of its responsibility to create conditions for economic security of its citizens.

What might the "welcoming" of vigorous involvement referred to above look like? For one it would mean being open to the possible value in the ideas, opinions and actions of the other person or group. Especially in a context where difference between groups has come to be strongly associated with discrimination and injustice, whatever emanates from the "other" is likely to be filtered through the lenses of stereotypes and prejudices and, consequently, dismissed almost automatically.

As noted above the perception that justice has been done is an important element of healing for those, who have been victimised. In Namibia today large numbers of people may experience themselves as suffering the injustice of poverty and marginalisation. Gawanas (2004, pg 7) describes the effects of this as follows: "when people continue to live in economically and socially deprived situations, insecurity and intolerance take over."

Objection without interference

A crucial aspect of tolerance, which has not yet received sufficient attention in this contribution and which is described by Rainer Forst (2007, pg 1), is that the tolerated practices or beliefs should be regarded "to be objectionable and in an important sense wrong or bad." Simone Bonafaccia (2003) includes this element in the following interpretation: tolerance is the tendency not to deter another from behaving/ acting in accordance with his/her will/desire, even though one disapproves of the conduct and despite being in a position or having

the power to interfere with or prohibit the conduct. For Bonafaccia “conduct” includes the expression of opinions and speech acts. Thus, if the ruling party in a country has the power to curtail expression of opinions and ideas of which it disapproves but refrains from doing so this would amount to being tolerant.

Being tolerant includes adhering to own convictions and practices. At the same time it means acknowledging and accepting that others hold different beliefs and engage in other practices to which they will remain loyal or true (UNESCO Declaration, 1995).

Conclusion

At the beginning of this contribution healing of those who have been victimised was posited as a requirement for tolerance. What else can help to nurture tolerance? Democratic institutions and processes provide the needed social and political space for tolerance to flourish. The press and civil society are crucial in enabling the articulation of a range of ideas and beliefs including those that are different from the majority opinion. What about the interpersonal level? How can we promote tolerance in the daily interactions of people with one another? One way to do so is to start with the way we as adults relate to children. This is particularly important in the Namibian context where the wounds of the past, if allowed to fester, will be visited on the next generation. In this regard the warning of Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich (1967) writing about the inability of Germans following the second world war to acknowledge their pain and loss and to grieve are particularly apt: They maintain that the more we try to raise children by means of repression, in the absence of love and in-sight (into their worlds and needs),

- the less will be their ability and tendency to practice tolerance,
- the less they will know the truth,
- the more they will tend to avoid the truth by engaging in idealisation or demonisation [thus avoiding the inner discomfort of facing up to the flawed and multi-faceted being of the older generation]
- the less they will have qualms about maltreating – without the constraints of conscience – the other, who remains the stranger, worse still, is humiliated to the point of scarcely-being-human. (free translation from the German and structured for easier reading)

References

1. Bonafaccia, S. (2003). *Die Tugend der Toleranz. Theoretische Aspekte einer auf der Achtung von Menschenwürde begründeten Tugend.* Hamburg.
2. Du Pisani, A. (2003) *Liberation and Tolerance.* In H. Melber *Re-examining liberation in Namibia. Political Culture Since Independence.* Nordiska Afrikainstitute. Stockholm.
3. Forst, R. (2007). *Toleration* In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*
4. Gawanas, B. (2004) *Anton Lubowski Memorial Lecture on Tolerance: Affirming the dignity and humanity of people.* Windhoek
5. Gibson, J.L. (2004). *Overcoming apartheid: Can truth reconcile a divided nation?* Human Sciences Research Council Press: Cape Town.
6. Losehand, J. (2009). *Was ist Toleranz? Eine Aktualisierung des Nullmeridians.* *Tolerantia* 1.
7. Mitscherlich, A. & Mitscherlich, M (1967). *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern.* München.
8. UNESCO *Declaration of Principles of Tolerance* (1995, pp 2 - 3)
9. Villa-Vicencio, C. (2000). *Restorative Justice: dealing with the past differently.*
10. In C. Villa-Vicencio & W. Verwoerd. (Eds.), *Looking back Reaching forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa.* University of Cape Town Press: Cape Town.
11. Wierlacher, A. (1996). *Was ist Toleranz? Zur Rehabilitation eines umstrittenen Begriffs* In *Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache.*

Comments Continued from Page 1

Matters Arising

Many of our contributors are not mother tongue speakers of English. It has therefore been decided to edit such contributions lightly in order to maintain the voice and expression of the original writer.

For those who require hard copies the IMLT will make a limited number available on request.

Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) – Namibia

By Helen Vale, Clerk of the Namibia Quaker Meeting and AVP Facilitator

AVP is an international volunteer movement which began in 1975 through Quakers helping inmates deal with high levels of violence in a New York state prison. It teaches creative and non-violent ways of responding to conflict, through group processes for personal development and community building. It can be used in schools, prisons, work places and other group situations to empower individuals to deal with conflict in creative ways and without violence. AVP philosophy and techniques are inclusive so that secular as well as religious organizations find them meaningful.

Experiential learning is central to AVP workshops, which are offered at basic, advanced and training of trainers (TOT) levels and are strongly interactive. An important aim is to create a safe space where participants feel accepted and affirmed. Thus building self-esteem is an essential element.

Human beings normally feel affirmed when others really listen to them. Listening is integral to effective communication; where people communicate effectively, violence has no space to grow. Participants are given the opportunity to listen and be listened to. Other important building blocks of developing alternatives to violence, which participants experience through various activities, are co-operation and trust building.

Participants engage in the workshops holistically – intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically – through sharing, discussions, role play, brainstorming, games, inter alia.

In 2005 Namibian Quakers (Religious Society of Friends) decided to introduce AVP in Namibia. This step grew out of a concern at the escalating levels of violence, both domestic and general, in Namibia and a wish to do something practical. The goal was to train a core group of committed Namibians who could act as volunteer facilitators and take AVP forward.

With the help of Phapama Initiatives (which carries out AVP training in South Africa) who offered initial training and mentoring and with funding from Embassies, UN Agencies, Quaker

organisations and concerned individuals, this initial goal was achieved in 3 years but we have much to do to put the organization on a sustainable footing. We have to raise funds as we go along. AVP Namibia has now trained about 20 facilitators. Workshops take about 15-20 participants and have 3-4 facilitators and normally run over 2 days. AVP Namibia has no paid staff and no office but is fortunate to work closely with the People's Education, Assistance and Counselling for Empowerment (PEACE) Centre in Windhoek and to have its administrative support.

Six workshops were held in Windhoek each year in 2006 and in 2007 at basic and advanced level and 193 participants received training. The focus has been on training prisoners, rural women and youth. So far in 2009 more workshops have been organised in Windhoek, one of them with the group leaders of Philippi Trust Namibia.

As from this year AVP activities began to be integrated into two larger projects developed and implemented by the PEACE Centre. In particular the AVP approach and methodology was included in the training of Community Supporters. This group is enabled to provide basic counselling and simple legal information to community members who are victims of violence and abuse. Five workshops in the regions with 136 participants have been held in 2009 for community supporters.

A second project which has AVP as a component is "We are Together" (WEAT). This focuses on groups of Namibians, such as ex-combatant and ex-detainees, who have been strongly impacted by past organized violence. The participants engage in activities that have potential to affect psychological and social healing and transformation with the aim of working towards reconciliation and a peaceful future for Namibia. Five workshops with 110 participants in Windhoek were held in 2009 for under this project.

As from this November an exciting development for AVP Namibia is that the PEACE centre in cooperation with Life Line/Child Line, Namibia and the AIDS Law Unit of the Legal Assistance Centre will embark on a Child

The Social Obligations of the Presently Advantaged

By Robyn Tyson

Although we are all complaining about today's high cost of living, for those of us who are gainfully employed and earning a good salary, it cannot go unnoticed that there is a wide discrepancy between the rich (haves) and poor (have nots) in Namibia.

Whenever hosting visitors to Windhoek, I make a point of driving them to Babylon and Okuryangava. It is important that they see not only the luxurious side of the Windhoek lifestyle (equal, if not better, to living conditions in most parts of the developed world) but also the other side of life in the capital city.

A recent visitor from Finland was so upset at seeing these poor conditions that he was nearly in tears. When I told him about my relatively affluent lifestyle, including the domestic worker and gardener that I employ, he commented that, in his view, employing someone in Namibia was not a luxury, but a social obligation. And he was right. For those of us in advantaged situations, employing two people can spread the wealth just a little, helping directly families that need it.

However, it opened my eyes to the possible interventions we can make in society on a daily basis, just by changing some of our present spending patterns.

Apart from employing one or two people, here are some other opportunities we can grasp for directly assisting those less fortunate than ourselves.

- Pay yourself 10% of your monthly salary into a form of saving. There is no way you will be able to even consider helping others if you yourself are in debt. Rather than giving to churches (the Catholic church is the wealthiest organisation in the world and all churches in Windhoek receive substantial discounts on rates, water, property and electricity), give to yourself. It will, of course, provide you with a useful cushion if you can save six months salary and put it aside, but, more importantly, it will free you from debt and allow you to think of giving, without, at the back of your mind, being concerned about your own

financial welfare.

- Purchasing recharge vouchers. Rather than having a contract (benefiting perhaps only the cellphone company and our bank) we could revert to the 'prepaid' system of making cell calls, and in particular supporting those many sellers of recharge vouchers who are to be found on Windhoek city streets. There will be a cost involved, not only in financial terms, but also in inconvenience. Scratching the vouchers to reveal the number, and then putting that number into our cellphone will take time and not be as convenient as the automatic stop order. However, the benefits to the community members who are selling these vouchers will be immense. One N\$5.00 voucher, for instance, nets a profit of 50 cents for the seller. By purchasing, say, 50 of these each month (N\$250.00 in recharge vouchers), we will effectively be putting N\$25.00 directly into the pockets of families throughout the city.
- Purchasing the newspaper from newspaper sellers. Again, there is a temptation to purchase the daily paper from our local store, the garage or the supermarket – it's convenient and, somehow, anonymous. But purchasing a newspaper directly from a seller on the street puts up to 80c into his pocket each time you buy a paper. If you buy two newspapers daily, say *The Namibian* and *Republikein*, he will make a total of N\$1.60 from your purchases. If you buy two papers each day you end up putting N\$32.00 directly into the pockets of newspaper sellers per month.
- Buy from street sellers. Sitting in Dar es Salaam at an outdoor café, I realised that practically anything in that city (from T-shirts to drink to food) could be bought on the street rather than a store. Similarly, in Windhoek, there are numerous street sellers selling small packets of fruit, cool drinks, as well as handmade items for decorating your house. Instead of buying decorations from a store, you could consider an enjoyable stroll through Post Street Mall, supporting the local craftspeople there. Or, instead of purchasing an expensive piece of furniture (bedside table, coffee table),

imported at great cost, rather think of visiting the busy stall opposite SKW, which sells everything from chairs to carvings to decorations.

- Assist at least one Namibian each year to go through tertiary education. For most Namibians, there is no culture of study. Very few Namibian parents were granted the opportunity of tertiary study, either at Polytechnics or Universities. But the 'born free' generation (born after 1990) have that opportunity, and, at relatively low cost. Saving N\$600 a month will result in N7 200 – which should pay one year's tuition for, say, a B.A. Degree at university level. If, in your lifetime, you are able to do this, you will, over a period of 40 years, have assisted a total of ten young Namibians to achieve their dreams and provide them with a head start in life.
- Tipping. That's another relatively small thing that one can do that can make a big impact in someone's life. 10 – 15% is regarded as standard practice. So on a meal of N\$300, a tip of N\$30 or N\$40 can be a reward for good service. Most of the waitrons are young, and some look to the tips as their main source of income. Find

out if they are on a fixed salary, or if they are depending on tips. Either way, tipping should be a part of your daily expenditure.

- Sell the big car. Do you really need that huge N\$300 000 car? It certainly looks impressive, but, if you are simply driving to work and back each day, it may be unnecessary. My own vehicle (Sirion) cost less than N\$100 000, yet has most of the features of larger vehicles, including ABS, full electric windows, dual air bags, ample rear passenger space, economical engine and air conditioning. And a smaller car is cheaper not only on fuel, but also on insurance, on servicing and tyres. Plus, when you have to sell it, even though you will lose money (as on any car) the actual amount will be a lot less, because the car itself cost less.

There are possibly many other ways that we can think of whereby we can effect change in the lives of our fellow citizens, not necessarily by spending more (indeed, in some cases, spending less), but by deciding how to spend our money and where.

Robin Tyson is Lecturer in Media Studies at the University of Namibia

Perspectives Cont from Page 1

school-going children, held similar views on the topic. They defined the word *Ubuntu* as meaning "person" and when prompted with the word "brotherhood" both felt that this quality was present in Namibia. "Its all over", said "Tienie". Their ideas for the promotion of *Ubuntu* included attending training programmes, reading about the topic, talking to other people about *Ubuntu* and "exploring new ideas and visions."

"Ndunyema" a 34-year-old gardener/handyman said although he did not know the word *Ubuntu*, he thought that it meant the same as omumu (person) in Oshiwambo.

He was emphatic that the quality of *Ubuntu* was present in Namibia. "Yes, people here respect each other", he said. He felt that disunity could be blamed on politicians and urged them to promote unity amongst themselves. He also

saw radio as the medium to use for promoting *Ubuntu*.

"Sebastian" a 21-year-old student who was "not sure" what *Ubuntu* meant, nevertheless felt that there was brotherhood amongst people in Namibia and thought that radio could be used to promote this concept as "everyone listens to it."

"Lorna", a 22-year-old job seeker, felt that "togetherness", as she defined *Ubuntu*, did "not really" occur in Namibia. She felt that intercultural programmes on all radio stations, as well as public dialogue on the topic, would be the route to take in order to promote *Ubuntu* in the country.

"Sandro", a 33-year-old businessman, said he had not heard the term *Ubuntu* before and was, "not sure", if it existed in Namibia. "We must go to the media and talk about this. It needs to be advertised", he advised.

Book Review

Broodryk, J. *Ubuntu Management Philosophy*, (2007) Knowles Publishing, Randburg.

The author, Dr J. Broodryk, was the first person to obtain a doctoral degree on the philosophy of Ubuntu (humanness).

The contents of this book include:

- The African concept of Ubuntu
- Ubuntu Management
- Ubuntu and the management environment
- Ubuntu personality and conventional management
- Ubuntu cultural concepts
- Ubuntu strategy
- Ubuntu marketing
- Ubuntu management guidelines
- Intercultural Ubuntu relations
- Ubuntu management practice

Whilst this book contains much common sense advice and provides guidelines for achieving harmonious relationships in the workplace, it should, however, be read with

great circumspection. The reason being that the Ubuntu philosophy is, I feel, presented in a very subjective way. For example, the comparison of Western and African styles of management shows Western greed as opposed to African open-handedness, Western autocracy as opposed to African democracy and Western "cold relations" as opposed to African "warm openness".

I was reminded of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* where the animals adopt the slogan: "Four Legs Good. Two Legs Bad".

In similar vein, I feel that Dr Broodryk has adopted the slogan: "Ubuntu management philosophy, good. Western management philosophy, bad". In other words, I feel that Dr Broodryk has presented the Ubuntu philosophy uncritically as the answer to all social ills.

However, in the spirit of Discourse, which presents divergent views, read this book and tell us what you think. We value your contributions.

B.vH.

Maadi, The Communal Platter - Ubuntu in practice

An example from Eritrea

By Tesfazghi Tekle

It is noon and Ababa, the only daughter of the family, comes running. "It's lunch time!" she shouts. Her mother rises from the wooden stool on which she has been sitting drinking coffee. "Oh my, my children are hungry!" she thinks as she bustles around to get the big plate. There is a small child playing on the floor and the sudden movement of his mother and the voice of his older sister make him cry.

The mother instructs Ababa to call her brothers who are outside playing ball. Ababa protests, saying that she has already done so but none of them would leave their game.

"Go and call them again", says her mother. "You know the rules. If all of you are not here,

then there is no Maadi."

The boys come rushing in, each takes a stool and they sit around the low table. While dishing out, the mother asks why their sister's call to food was initially ignored. "We didn't hear her calling", one of the brothers explains. "You're a bunch of liars!" Ababa exclaims hotly. Mother intervenes. "I don't want this to happen again. Maadi is a respectable thing", she tells the children.

The food is blessed and the meal begins. Then one of the children starts to cry and disturbs the quiet atmosphere. "What is wrong?" asks his mother. He claims that his brother is eating from his side of the platter. This selfish act earns a reprimand.

Maadi is where parents, especially mothers, teach family values and manners. Respect and appreciation for food and consideration for others, are some of the values to be learned here.

Maadi is also where children can report the perceived wrong doings of their siblings and others, to be reminded, "We don't talk about other people here." It is, in essence, a family gathering.

Traditionally the Maadi was made from woven grass but today one can find Maadis made from materials such as steel and nickel.

The Maadi has its own rules that vary from family to family but the most common rules are that you should eat from your own side of the platter, that you should not leave your seat until everyone has finished eating and that you should not talk until you have finished eating.

Respect is shown to elders with hands being washed at the table with the water being poured from a pitcher for those older than you.

Maadi serves as a socializing process where the whole family can sit and eat facing each other and parents can observe the manners of their children.

Tesfazghi Tekle is an Agricultural Engineer working at the Dohne Agricultural Development Institute in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. He is Eritrean by birth.

Quiz - Do you know?

Questions

1. What is advocacy?
 2. What is a Bill of Rights?
 3. What is meant by political tolerance?
 4. What is meant by accountability?
 5. What does separation of powers, mean?
 6. What is a synonym for transparency?
 7. What is a coalition?
 8. What is a referendum?
 9. What is a constitutional democracy?
 10. What did CRIS stand for?
1. The organized effort of individuals, groups and organizations who try to influence public attitudes and get government to enact and implement laws and policies that benefit the people. (p.28 Citizen N & Democracy, NID 2003).
 2. It is the section in the constitution of a country that lists the enshrined or protected rights and freedoms.
 3. This is the willingness of individuals, political parties, other groups and organizations to accept, respect and defend the democratic right of others to have different opinions.
 4. This means that elected and appointed officials are expected to perform their duties properly and according to the law.
 5. The three different branches of government i.e. the executive, judiciary and legislative are all separate from each other.
 6. Openness.
 7. The combination of any political parties to form a majority.
 8. This is where citizens vote on a specific issue.
 9. A democracy which functions according to its written constitution.
 10. Criminals return into society.

Answers

Meet the People

Eva-Lisa Nailenge

"I like the challenges of local authorities and where we are going", says Eva-Lisa Nailenge, CEO of the Karasburg Municipality, who is an avid reader of "business-minded" literature.

She was born in the Omasati Region where she started primary school. She then moved to Windhoek where she attended A Shipena High School and continued her studies at UNAM, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree.

Eva's work includes working with programmes which deal with destitutes and street children in the Karasburg area. There is a soup kitchen too, which is run on municipal premises.

One of her main concerns is to promote

local economic development in order to better the lives of the people of Karasburg.

Asked about her views on Ubuntu she had this to say: "Ubuntu has lost its essence and we need to revert to the concept and see how we can incorporate it in daily life." She felt that Ubuntu should be taught as a subject in primary school.

When not at work Eva likes to spend time with her son. She speaks four languages, English, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo and Oshierero.



The work of the Hanns Seidel Foundation in Namibia

By Tina Icks HSF Volunteer

After touring the country and having just returned from Opuwo, Katima Mulilo, Otjozondjupa Region as well as the southern part of Namibia, we are enthusiastically looking forward to what's next...

But what exactly does the Hanns Seidel Foundation do while travelling all over the country?

Strengthening democratic values and having people understand its basic principles, is becoming more and more important, especially in the African context. The Hanns Seidel Foundation, as well as other German political associations, has the fore-mentioned ideals as its goals.

In the case of Namibia, with its history of apartheid and the economic and social difficulties the country has faced since independence, it is even more important to make the Namibian citizens, political parties and organizations of civil society aware of their human and political rights. The Hanns Seidel Foundation therefore offers training of

all kinds all over the country, with workshops on topics like "Democracy" and "The Electoral Process", which is of special importance as Namibia has its parliamentary and presidential elections in November 2009, a process that needs to be underpinned by well done and sustainable voter education. Also the so-called "born frees" (young Namibians born just before or after independence, who make up about 30% of the electorate) will take part in the elections for the first time. In addition to political training, people are taught administrative skills (like report writing, taking minutes, or how to run a meeting successfully). "Women and Youth Empowerment" and public health issues like "HIV/AIDS", are other courses offered.



Tina Icks

The interest in workshops for political parties has risen because of the upcoming elections. More and more parties have requested training during the last couple of months and

AVP continued from Page 5

Protection Project which will have an AVP component for the anticipated 160 Namibian who will participate in basic training.

Any individual who would like to participate in an AVP workshop or any organisation who would like ask for and fund a workshop for your staff please contact Pedro Kapiroka at the PEACE Centre on phone no. 061.371550. We welcome your support and interest as we have a long way to go!



Participants and facilitators at AVP training of trainers workshop - November 2008.

“Successful Election Campaign”, “Successful Party Organizer”, “Establishment of Local Party Branches” and “How to Find Candidates” courses are offered. This training is very interesting for both the participants and the presenter. Having the empathy to face the political or social problems at the grassroots level and the ability to “see behind the curtain” requires a lot of sensitivity, tolerance and an open mind. Every training experience, every place and every group of people is so different from the one before. You get to know new people and become part of them, by facing

their social, political or regional challenges that is basically what always makes working in this context interesting and fascinating.

Of course not all political parties show interest and it varies a lot, but the Hanns Seidel Foundation has established a good rapport with some parties and so is able to strengthen and encourage their work. The results can definitely be seen already, especially in rallying and local organization. This encourages the Hanns Seidel Foundation to keep up the good work!



Participants at a workshop

Since 2000 the lives of more than 1,200 people have changed for the better as they have acquired skills ranging from computer skills to dress design. These skills are the tools for reintegrating dropouts, the destitute and ex-inmates into society where they can then find employment or become self-employed.

One of the major goals of CHANGE is to assist, and where necessary, supervise ex-inmates in their efforts to be re-integrated into society. This is done by providing information on access and availability or self-employment opportunities to ex-inmates.

Some of the other goals are to motivate the general public to accept ex-inmates into society and to contribute to the reduction of recidivism by assisting and motivating ex-inmates not to commit any type of crime again.

Ms Michaela Hübschle, chairperson of CHANGE, says it is the only entity offering an after-care service for ex-inmates, providing not only skills and knowledge, but counselling for them and their families. Ms Hübschle feels that churches must prepare their congregations to accept returning ex-inmates and that government could use what is being done at CHANGE as a blueprint for the country.

There are several courses offered by CHANGE, ranging from fashion design to computer literacy.

Most people who have done the fashion design course start their own businesses, working from home. A six-month certificate course is offered as well as an eight month diploma course run by tutor Jean Chiketa-Gwenere. There is an intake

of 16 students per session with two intakes per year, in February and September. Students learn a variety of skills from pattern-making to machine maintenance.

There are three intakes for the basic and certificate level computer courses, in January, June and August. "Everyone should try to be computer literate", says tutor Erwin Tjipetekere.

Training can also be arranged in basic mechanics and plumbing. All students must, however, attend the IMLT business simulation course, which promotes business awareness. Courses for ex-inmates are free but the destitute must pay a token fee. All students are required to pass their examinations.

Many VIPs have paid courtesy calls to the CHANGE office. This includes ambassadors from different countries accredited to Namibia and many Namibian cabinet ministers, as well as two parliamentary delegations from Germany.

CHANGE has many success stories. Two students are employed at the Roman Catholic Hospital and are responsible for sewing bed linens, while another two have been employed at Mukorob Clothing Company since 2008 and 9 students worked at Ramatex, before its closure.

CHANGE is responsible for raising its own running expenses and is reliant on donations, sponsorships and a pool of volunteers, as it has only two paid tutors.

"We try to change the lives of people", says Ms Hübschle.

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in Discourse are those of the writers in their personal capacities and not the official view of either the Hanns Seidel Foundation or the Institute for Management and Leadership Training.



Comments and contributions may be submitted to the editor at the following addresses:

e-mail: discourse@imlt.org.na

Mail: PO Box 22524, Windhoek

