



### Inside this issue

	Page
Treatment literacy programme takes its first steps in Botswana	2
World AIDS Day showcases common themes, diverse commemorations	3
Campaigning for an HIV Employment Law	4
LeGaBiBo heads south for advocacy training	6
Staff News	6
From the Director's Desk	8



BONELA marks a year of advocacy through networking (p.2)



PLWHAs protest World AIDS Day event (p.3)



Judges and lawyers discuss how HIV challenges the legal system (p.5)

## Botswana demands HIV employment law

By Cynthia Lee



Francis Gleeson photograph

**GABORONE—With each step they take, the heat is intensifying on this particular Saturday summer morning.**

The hot day is taking a toll on hundreds of peaceful, chanting demonstrators. But they are determined to advocate for a law specifically protecting HIV-related rights in the workplace.

The 11 November march and rally are also increasing the pressure on the Government to take action. Despite hosting one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, Botswana currently does not have such a law.

In its absence, individuals do not have guaranteed protection against many acts of HIV-related discrimination in the workplace, including:

- dismissal simply for being HIV-positive;
- mandatory testing for HIV before being considered for a job;
- being denied promotion because of HIV-positive status; and,
- being refused time off to care for family members living with HIV.

While no official statistics have been collected on this issue, anecdotal evidence suggests these acts of discrimination are common. Most people who seek help from BONELA's legal aid clinic have suffered HIV-related discrimination in the workplace.

"About 90 per cent of the roughly 10 cases we consider per week deal with concerns about employment," explained BONELA Director Christine Stegling.

There are also the individuals who seek out private law firms, those who do not know legal action is an option for their problem, and others who do not feel empowered to seek assistance, she added.

Existing policies—including the Government's own National Policy on HIV/AIDS—recommend measures to protect the rights of people infected and affected by HIV.

But even in the courts, it has been ruled that these policies are not legally binding, leaving their implementation to the discretion of each employer.

In a landmark 2003 legal case that involved the firing of an HIV-positive employee by the Botswana Building Society (BBS) and the issue of pre-employment HIV testing, the Court of Appeal noted that the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, which recommends that this kind of HIV testing should not be carried out, "had never been translated into law and had no statutory authority."

"While it had strong moral persuasive force, [BBS] was not bound to follow it and had the right to make its own decisions regarding recruitment and its requirements," noted the Court.

For years, this lack of binding legal protection of HIV-related rights at the workplace has been a concern for BONELA and the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU).

In October 2002, the two organisations hosted a workshop to draft a policy and legal framework on HIV/AIDS and employment issues along with representatives from unions, the private sector, the Botswana Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS and several government departments, including the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, the National AIDS Coordinating Agency and the Ministry of Health's AIDS/STD Unit.

*continued on page 4*

## BONELA marks a year of advocacy through networking

By Nthabiseng Nkwe

**GABORONE - To confront a challenge as complex and widespread as HIV/AIDS, no one can do it alone.**

Marking the partnerships built and sustained over the years, BONELA's fourth annual general meeting featured the theme, "Advocacy through Networking."

"For me, today is yet another significant opportunity to reaffirm the spirit of and need to reinforce partnerships between BONELA and UNAIDS and other partners around the common value that human rights, legal and ethical considerations are and should be central to any action and response to HIV and AIDS," said Evaristo Marowa, the newly appointed UNAIDS Botswana Country Coordinator, in his keynote address for the 23 November event.

This year BONELA engaged in dialogue and support for diverse issues, ranging from the reproductive rights of people living with HIV to treatment literacy and a law for protecting HIV-related rights at the workplace. Over the year, concerned individuals and groups came together to form strong coalitions for each of these issues: a working group for HIV-positive women's sexual and reproductive health rights; the Botswana Treatment Literacy Coalition; and, the national Campaign for an HIV Employment Law.

BONELA has not only been able to strengthen its advocacy efforts but also demonstrate the



New UNAIDS Country Coordinator Evaristo Marowa delivers the keynote address at BONELA's annual general meeting

extensive public support for human rights issues and for the organisation's work.

"An unexpected boost to our morale, it was such a gift to discover that we share beliefs with the media as it is a great indicator of the mood and sentiments of a community," said BONELA Board Chairperson Duma Boko in his welcome remarks, pointing to recent media coverage supporting the HIV employment law campaign.

Sharing his experiences, a member of the HIV employment law coalition expressed that working in partnership with BONELA

gave him insight into other approaches in advocating for change.

In the past, unions have often failed to engage other groups in their deliberations on issues of workers' rights, said Edward Tswaipe, Secretary-General of the Association of Botswana Tertiary Lecturers.

But being a part of this coalition has shown us the importance of engaging other stakeholders apart from unions alone, he added.

It was a sentiment echoed by the UNAIDS Country Coordinator in the keynote speech to an audience of 70 members, stakeholders and development partners of the organisation.

"To this end, it is imperative that a more forceful coalition among different players... be forged and strengthened to stamp the chain of HIV transmission and spread," said Marowa.

Providing an update on the past year's activities and future plans, an energetic team of BONELA staff presented a colourful Secretariat Report and introduced new programmes such as the HIV, human rights and people with disabilities project.

BONELA says it plans to open its doors to more members in the coming year and focus on their involvement in the organisation.

## Treatment literacy programme takes its first steps in Botswana

By Cynthia Lee

**PALAPYE—Hand holding hand, they form a circle in an empty car park.**

A moment later, this human chain—which represents the outer layer of a CD-4 cell—is broken, invaded by a short train of people acting as HIV.

The group is acting out a larger-than-life representation of how the virus affects the human body. By invading and eventually destroying CD-4 cells, a crucial part of the immune system, HIV uses the cell to multiply.

The activity is part of an intensive five-day training in HIV treatment literacy, the first of its kind in Botswana. Recently, 22 participants were coached through sessions on human anatomy, opportunistic infections, sexually transmitted infections, virology and antiretroviral (ARV) treatment.

Treatment literacy refers to knowledge of HIV drugs, their interaction with human bodies as well as holistic ways for people living with HIV to take care of themselves.



A participant of Botswana's first HIV treatment literacy training reviews the life cycle of the virus.

Advocates are keen to scale up training related to this issue since initiatives to provide ARVs are expanding around the world. Botswana and Lesotho were recently chosen from SADC countries to access funding for such a programme supported by the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA). "This is the beginning," BONELA Training

Coordinator Oratile Kidd-Moseki told the participants. "This meeting is a very important one for treatment literacy. Among you is going to be the first cadre of trainers in the country."

Using diverse methods such as songs, games, presentations, video, personal examples and role playing, BONELA facilitated the 30 October to 3 November training in Palapye with the expertise of specialists from ARASA, South Africa's Treatment Action Campaign, and I-Base, a London, UK organisation focused on HIV treatment information.

Those selected to be trainers are expected to facilitate trainings within a year, which ARASA will support financially. It is hoped that they will also mainstream treatment literacy into their organisations' programmes.

"We really want to roll out treatment literacy in a very ambitious way," said Kidd-Moseki, adding that one of the programme's goals is to have trainers throughout Botswana by the end of 2007.

ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT



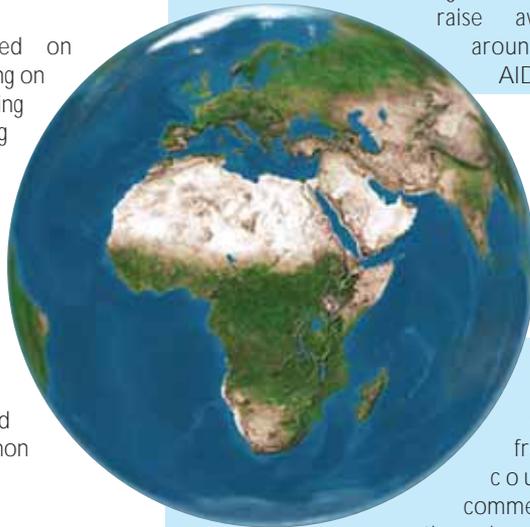
# WorldAIDSDay showcases common themes, diverse commemorations

By Kate O'Connor

*In places ranging from the grand Egyptian pyramids to small Pacific islands, the arid Kalahari to Thailand's humid shores, people as diverse as their respective countries spent a day in common purpose.*

World AIDS Day, celebrated on December 1st, saw many reflecting on the impact of AIDS, remembering those who have died and standing in solidarity with those affected and infected.

"Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise" was set as the theme for World AIDS Day from 2005 to 2010, responding to the promises of world leaders. Commemorations around the world—diverse in scale, scope and style—were united by this common theme.



Pune, India—a city of more than four million with twice the national HIV prevalence rate—is hosting the youth-led "Wake up Pune" initiative, consisting of street plays, concerts, public discussions, a march, a rally and nightclub events to raise awareness around HIV/AIDS issues.

About 40,000 youth from 10 countries commemorated the day through

Dance4Life, an international

movement that aims to stop AIDS by involving young people in dance. From the Egyptian pyramids to a state-of-the art atrium in Germany, together they participated in a "dance for hope" on 25 November.

"Seeing all those people in all those countries and knowing that we were part of that was so cool. Now I really want to do something to help make sure that AIDS is not a problem in the future," said Fatima, a UK participant.

Music played a role in Botswana's commemoration. In Gaborone, local artists performed to make some noise about the pandemic. Event organisers noted that musicians have a key role to play in fighting HIV given their role-model status. Concerts were held at Botswanacraft, Bontleng Freedom Square and Lions Park.

Within the diversity of nations, peoples and cultures, AIDS has created a common purpose. From prayer in Iran to drumming in the Cook Islands, from art in Estonian prisons to quilts in the southern USA, citizens of the world dedicated a day to stopping AIDS.

For seven fashion students in Australia, this day provided a showcase for their talent while promoting condom use. In collaboration with Marie Stopes International, which provides sexual and reproductive health information, the Melbourne School of Fashion used thousands of condoms to create clothing, now on display at the city's Fashion Incubator.

In Thailand, condoms were put to a different use. Attempting to break a Guinness World Record, UNESCO, Thai Red Cross and other NGOs created the Condom Chain of Life Festival. Over the course of an hour, 1,436 people used 24,516 condoms to create a chain 2,715m long. Confirmation that a record was broken is pending.

Canadian professionals were asked to donate a day's earnings for the Give a Day to World AIDS Campaign. Started 2 years ago by Dr. Jane Philpott, it is aimed at supporting organisations like the Stephen Lewis Foundation and Dignitas International. More than US\$260,000 has been raised this year.

"To see, first hand, the impact of AIDS on African communities inspires you as an individual, to try to do something to help. Dr. Philpott has taken this further—she has inspired other individuals to join her in her fight against AIDS," says Dignitas International President Dr. James Orbinski.

## PLWHAs protest World AIDS Day event

By Kate O'Connor



Cynthia Lee photograph

David Ngele spoke on behalf of PLWHA support groups who felt excluded from the national World AIDS Day event.

**TSABONG—A demonstration by support groups of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) disrupted the national World AIDS Day commemoration.**

Under white tents set on Kalahari sand, a group representing PLWHA support groups expressed disappointment over not being included in the programme for the day's official ceremonies. On the morning of the event the scheduled line-up did not include speakers to represent PLWHAs.

"It was a legitimate cry for assistance and to voice our concerns," said Fresh Kasale, an activist from the Coping Centre for People Living with HIV/AIDS.

As a result of the protest, David Ngele, Executive Director of the Botswana Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, was offered a last-minute place to speak at the event. On behalf of the protestors, he delivered a statement urging more support for and meaningful involvement of PLWHAs.

The move seemed to displease Health Minister Sheila Tlou, who responded in her speech, calling the protest ill-mannered coming on a day to remember.

"This was definitely not the platform to present those kinds of grievances. This is a day not to grieve, this is a day not to complain," she said.

But the activists disagreed.

World AIDS Day should be the time for PLWHAs to "share, educate and get our voices out, but we are nowhere," said Kasale.

Arnold Sokwa of Selibe-Phikwe's Positive Living Helper Cells support group added, "This is a moment of remembrance that has not been planned with our involvement."

continued from page 1

Since then, the government has engaged in a consultative process to finalise a policy that is to eventually inform a law.

But that process has taken an unnecessarily long time, say advocates who want the legislation to move forward. They point out that Botswana has taken the lead in many areas of HIV prevention, treatment and care, but has made only limited progress in creating a legislative environment to promote the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Botswana has waited long enough, said BFTU spokesperson Patrick Chengeta. "Now we should move. The courts have announced that without a policy workers are vulnerable. The Government has a social responsibility."

The delay in enacting a law prompted BONELA and BFTU to spearhead the Campaign for an HIV Employment Law. Launched in late September, it is arguably one of the largest advocacy movements orchestrated in Botswana's recent history. Supporting the campaign is a coalition of more than 20 organisations, including trade unions, civil society organisations, human rights groups, youth associations and support groups of people living with HIV/AIDS.

They believed that after waiting four years, a new approach was needed: to garner public support for demanding an "HIV Employment Law. Now!"

"The campaign tells us that we should no more allow nor accept those things that violate our human rights," said Edward Tswaipe, Secretary-General of the Association of Botswana Tertiary Lecturers and a coalition member.

"This is a time when we as workers should not allow trampling down on the rights of employees. We should not accept discrimination as if it's normal and legitimate," said Tswaipe whose organisation represents teaching staff at 65 government-owned training institutions nationwide.

By the end of December, more than 10,000 people had signed a petition supporting the cause. Distributed nationally and internationally, the petition has been made available to sign on paper and, believed to be the first time in Botswana, on the Internet ([www.bonela.org/petition](http://www.bonela.org/petition)).

It has made its way through cities and villages, shopping malls, AIDS commemorations, meetings, offices, trade union events, networks of people living with HIV/AIDS, and gone door to door among its many stopovers.

In 2007, the coalition plans to present the petition to its ultimate destination—Parliament—to urge action on passing the law.

The outreach of the campaign has been bolstered by a comprehensive media strategy consisting of a billboard, posters, informational leaflets, radio commercials, newspaper advertisements, a webpage and a press relations initiative.

"This campaign has galvanised the energies of civil society organisations to sensitise the public about the lack of protection from discrimination experienced by people living with HIV/AIDS at the workplace," said BONELA's Stegling.

"At the same time, the massive number of people supporting the campaign has shown us that the public is behind us and Government will need to take the demand for adequate legislation seriously."

No doubt, the campaign has turned up the heat on the issue—nowhere more evident than the hot Saturday morning of the march.

With each stride, participants hope that they will be closer to their goal. For some, the quest for this law is a personal one—they reveal that they themselves have faced HIV-related discrimination at the workplace. The marchers' message is clear: the human rights of those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS must be protected.

"The purpose of this march is our intention as Botswana to ensure that each and every person living with HIV receives equal treatment regarding the respect and protection of their rights," says Benson Sedio, 38, who participated in the event with his wife, Grace.

Others are concerned about a future without such a law.

"I am here to show my support because even though I may not be affected today, it is not a guarantee that I may not be affected in the future," says Moreri, a 26-year-old hospital worker.

—With files from Nthabiseng Nkwe

## Campaigning for an HIV E



Cynthia Lee photograph  
High-energy marchers take their message to the streets calling for protection of their rights at the workplace.



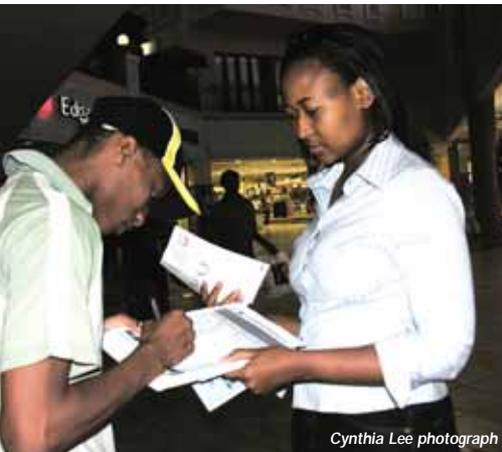
Cynthia Lee photograph  
Supporters at the 11 November rally call for an HIV employment law "now!" in sign language.



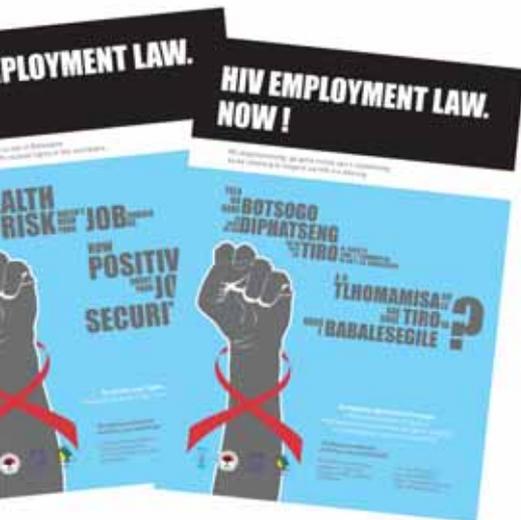
Cynthia Lee photograph  
ABOTEL Secretary-General Edward Tswaipe addresses the crowd at the rally in Main Mall supporting an HIV employment law.



# Employment Law



Cynthia Lee photograph



## HIV Employment Law Photo Contest



winning image is the entry from Lefoko Mogapaesi of Gaborone who will receive a t-shirt and pen, a BONELA t-shirt and an enlargement of the photograph.

## HIV continues to create challenges for the legal system

By Oratile Moseki

GABORONE — Dressed casually and sporting a black felt hat, Albie Sachs walked in looking a lot more like the anti-apartheid hero he had been and less like the Honourable Justice of South Africa's Constitutional Court he has become.

Participants of BONELA's 25 November seminar on "Emerging legal issues on HIV/AIDS" eagerly awaited his keynote address, intrigued by the mystery of a humble man with an astonishing history.

Speaking about the South African legal context, Justice Sachs' personal dedication to HIV-related legal and human rights issues was clear.

The ruling on Hoffman v. South African Airways was an emotionally charged experience, he told participants. In that case, the airline was ordered to employ an HIV-positive individual as an airline steward. Sachs admitted he cried before his colleagues in chamber when the judgment was pronounced.

"I cried to feel that I am a judge in a court with the possibility to intervene to contribute something to protect fundamental human rights—not the way we were with racial discrimination but against the new forms of discrimination," he said.

Though four years had passed since the last HIV/AIDS seminar for the legal fraternity—judges, magistrates and legal practitioners—it was not for lack of relevant legal concerns in Botswana.

On the contrary, little progress has been made since the last event in 2002 while new challenges continue to emerge, pointed out BONELA Director Christine Stegling.

She said she hoped that the seminar would encourage lawyers to address confidentiality and informed consent, health- and work-related rights of those infected and affected by HIV.

Botswana's justice system is challenged by the lack of laws put in place to deal with HIV/AIDS, noted several seminar speakers and participants.

"If the National HIV/AIDS Policy could be turned into an act of Parliament, the better," said Botswana High Court Justice Key Dingake, who is a former judge of the Industrial Court. "In the absence of this legislative framework, it means the judges have to do with what is available."



Cynthia Lee photograph

Justice Albie Sachs of the South African Constitutional Court delivers the keynote address at a BONELA seminar on legal issues related to HIV/AIDS.

The Industrial Court, which deals with employment-related cases, is rising to meet this challenge by using, for example, International Labour Organization and international human rights conventions.

"But there is a limit beyond which judges can't go," Dingake added.

Lawyer Mboki Chilisa shared experiences from his involvement in Botswana's earliest HIV-related discrimination cases and emphasised the importance of making legal aid more

accessible.

Cases are often dismissed on "flimsy technicalities" because workers do not have legal representation, he said.

He also speculated on an alternative ending in the legal case of Rapula Jimson who was fired by the Botswana Building Society when it became known that he was HIV-positive.

Had it been argued that Jimson's Constitutional rights had been violated, a favourable judgment may have then been used to defend future cases of HIV-related discrimination, he said.

Audience members remarked that the in-depth look into Botswana's legal system was eye-opening.

"It is very interesting when one looks at the flaws our law has and into how much work still needs to be done in this area," said Tirelo Ditshipi, a Midweek Sun reporter.

Presenting on the context of customary law, President of the Tati Town Customary Court Ludo Mosojane expressed concern that customary court judges have their hands tied when it comes to protecting individuals' rights with regard to HIV-related issues.

Despite having knowledge about right-based approaches, she said she feels that these skills are sometimes undermined in conflicts between family members.

"Some individual rights are giving way to customary, family and cultural rights," she said. "I'm not making a judgment...I am just telling you this happens."

HIV continues to challenge human rights and the legal systems around the world, which is why Justice Sachs travels often.

"It is vital that people exchange and learn from one another how to deal with HIV across all frontiers," he said.

## LeGaBiBo heads south for **advocacy training**

By Prisca Mogapi

**JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA**—Even after a week of advocacy training, Skipper was still most struck by the dreadful story she heard on the first day.

At her placement at Forum for Empowerment of Women (FEW), a lesbian advocacy organisation, Skipper met 24-year-old Busi Sigasa.

Busi has been raped three times.

At 11 years old, she was raped by a sangoma (traditional healer) whom she trusted like an uncle.

When she was 17, a male neighbour in Soweto raped her, knowing she was a lesbian. At 23, she was violated again. These latter two men, she said, wanted to show me how to be a “woman.”

“When I tested for HIV, the results came positive...I hate the men who did this to me,” she said, her eyes watering. “If it wasn’t because of these men, I wouldn’t be taking ARVs.”

Crimes resulting from discrimination against sexual orientation are rarely talked about in Botswana, which is why Skipper was particularly touched by Busi’s openness about her experience.

“Whenever I looked at her, the story just kept coming back to me,” said Skipper. “It is cruel.”

That interaction was important for Skipper, who was one of three members of LeGaBiBo



Marchers support legalising same-sex marriage in South Africa.

(Lesbian, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana) participating in a study tour of South African groups working for the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered and intersexed (LGBTI).

The 16 to 20 October study tour was aimed at building participants’

capacity in media, training and advocacy. South Africa was chosen for its many well-established LGBTI organisations and because LGBTI rights are protected in its Constitution.

Participants were also placed at Behind the Mask (BTM), a media house centered on LGBTI issues, as well as Gays and Lesbians Archives, an organisation focused on documenting the historical and current experiences of the non-heterosexual community.

Thuli Madi, the director of BTM, welcomed the LeGaBiBo initiative.

“We have never had an intern from Botswana and also we never had a one-week internship, so it was a challenge,” she said, adding that she was excited about hosting the study tour participant.

Each LeGaBiBo participant was tasked to learn about the organisation at which she or he was placed.

“It is a dream come true,” said Dee of her placement. “I always see BTM on the internet

and, today, I am going to meet the staff and have time to see what is going on in the newsroom.”

During the study tour, participants were among the many LGBTIs who sang, danced and marched from Pretoria’s city hall to the Union Building where they delivered the Civil Union Bill.

“It was my first time to march with the LGBTI community and waving placards, hailing for equal marriage for all,” said Skipper. “Although I was scared that some people might throw bottles or stones at us, I really had great time as I kept my helmet on all the time.”

Another participant, Sexy, explained similar exhilaration and fear. “I am happy that I stepped into the Union Building for the first time in my life but I am scared since people have been taking my pictures. And if my boss can see that, I’m telling you I am going to lose my job.”

A 14 November vote in its National Assembly led South Africa to become the first country in Africa and the fifth in the world and to legalise such marriages.

The LGBTI movement in South Africa is ahead of many countries in establishing their legal rights. But many are still killed because of their sexual orientation, which is one reason why the movement is so vocal in South Africa.

“We have gone to South Africa, where people have experienced hate crimes, and we are learning how to handle it,” said Skipper. “We have trained in advocacy and we have learned to respond to discrimination by the media and the public. We are learning how to stand up for the LGBTI community in Botswana.”

## BONELA staff news

### Research Officer Yorokee Kapimbua



Having recently returned from the USA where he earned his master’s degree in Social Work, Yorokee has joined BONELA as a Research Officer.

During his time in the States, Yorokee was involved in various capacities with important human rights and AIDS-related issues. Working as

a researcher for the Social Research Institute, he focused on the impact of HIV/AIDS on social development and orphans. With the Utah AIDS Foundation, his work touched on same-sex relationships, HIV/AIDS and human rights.

Now at BONELA, Yorokee’s skills and knowledge will be applied to researching AIDS-related issues and developing initiatives for educational institutions of all levels.

“BONELA is a human rights group that is multi-pronged in their approach. Therefore, as an aspiring human rights activist, BONELA was an ideal place for me,” he said.

### Research Volunteer Shyami Puvimanasinghe

Born and raised in Sri Lanka, Shyami completed a masters degree in Law at Harvard University in the United States. She returned home to teach as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Colombo’s Law faculty. In 2001, Shyami completed a PhD in Development Studies in the Netherlands.

Since moving to Botswana last year, Shyami’s interest in human rights has kept her busy working with socio-legal organisations. At BONELA, she has worked on human rights aspects of routine HIV testing.

The BONELA Board met on 14 September.

Legal Officer Oscar Gaboutloeloe delivered a presentation on wills and inheritance laws to the Ministry of Agriculture on 20 September

Yorokee Kapimbua joined BONELA as Research Officer on 3 October.

Director Christine Stegling and Media and Advocacy Officer Cynthia Lee participated in a lunch briefing on HIV/AIDS programmes with Harare-based Canadian High Commissioner to Botswana Roxanne Dubé on 5 October.

BONELA hosted a 10 October meeting on HIV/AIDS, human rights and people living with disabilities, which resulted in a proposed taskforce on the issue.

Oscar Gaboutloeloe presented on HIV/AIDS and the law at the Nkaikela Youth Group Stakeholders Workshop on 10 October.

New UNAIDS Country Representative Evaristo Marowa paid a courtesy visit to the BONELA office on 12 October.

The Global Fund Portfolio Manager for Southern Africa Edward Greene visited BONELA to discuss challenges to the implementation of the fund's grant on 17 October.

The National AIDS Council Sector on Ethics, Law and Human Rights hosted a breakfast meeting with Permanent Secretaries on the legislative review report on 19 October.

On 24 October Cynthia Lee and Oscar Gaboutloeloe discussed the Campaign for



BONELA Training Coordinator Oratile Kidd-Moseki facilitates a public forum on HIV testing in Gaborone, one of three conducted in Botswana in October.

an HIV Employment Law on GABZ-FM's *The Daily Grind* morning radio show.

BONELA held a public forum on HIV testing at Sedibeng Community Education Centre on 24 October.

Yorokee Kapimbua attended a 26 October BOCONGO

meeting about the implementation of the national NGO policy.

Oscar Gaboutloeloe and Cynthia Lee facilitated the second Pitso on the HIV Employment Law Campaign on 27 October.

Media Intern Kate O'Connor attended BOCONGO's AGM on 27 October.

Christine Stegling appeared on BTV's *The Eye* to discuss the campaign for an HIV employment law on 31 October.

Intern Shirley Keoagile and a LeGaBiBo representative participated in a workshop on drafting the Domestic Violence Bill at Kagisano Women's Shelter on 31 October.

RB1's *Maokeneng* show hosted Oscar Gaboutloeloe and other panelists on 1 November to discuss the need for an HIV employment law.

The BONELA Board's finance sub-committee met on 2 November.

Programme Officer Nthabiseng Nkwe was invited by the Department of Social Services to sit in a reference group on the amendment of the Children's Act.

In early November, Yorokee Kapimbua and research volunteer Shyami Puvimanasinghe

conducted interviews for a baseline survey on stakeholder attitudes towards human rights.

GABZ-FM's *The Daily Grind* hosted Christine Stegling and other coalition members on 6 November to publicise the HIV employment law campaign.

At a NACA-hosted retreat for The Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism, Training Coordinator Oratile Kidd-Moseki was selected to the working group focused on revising guidelines and initiating a Secretariat proposal.

Yorokee Kapimbua attended the DITSHWANELO book launch of *In the Shadow of the Noose* on 8 November.

Open Society Initiative's Delme Cupido visited BONELA on 9 November to discuss the NGO's programmes.

NAC Sector Coordinator Diana Meswele attended a NACA consensus workshop on the National Policy on HIV/AIDS on 9 November.

A LeGaBiBo representative addressed volunteers from World University Services of Canada about sexual minorities in Botswana on 10 November.

Diana Meswele, Oratile Moseki and Oscar Gaboutloeloe facilitated a 16 November workshop for the private sector to develop awareness of HIV-related ethical, legal and human rights issues.

The BONELA Board met on 20 November.

Shirley Keoagile was among the 10 hearing-impaired or deaf individuals who met with President Festus Mogae on 20 November to discuss challenges facing Botswana's deaf community.

Christine Stegling attended a National AIDS Council meeting on 24 November.

"The paradoxical relationship between HIV/AIDS and human rights is such that just as people with HIV/AIDS experience abuse of rights, vulnerability to the epidemic thrives on violations of the rights," she said.

Now working with BONELA's Research Officer, she is in the process of conducting a baseline survey on the attitudes in Botswana towards human rights and HIV/AIDS issues.

"This is in many way a new experience for me—a step from theory to social reality," she said.

**Volunteer  
Maabo Tshako**



Motswana by birth, Maabo has spent the last few years living and studying in the United States. Currently a university student interested in pursuing medicine, Maabo returned home on a study break to volunteer with BONELA.

focuses on two significant areas of my life: human rights and my country," she said.

Providing administrative support for BONELA projects during her month-long placement, Maabo learned about human rights issues in the context of HIV/AIDS. Her assistance with mobilisation for the petition for an HIV Employment Law was especially valuable. BONELA wishes her the best of luck as she returns to the USA to continue her studies.

"BONELA intrigued me most because it



## From the Director's desk



Strengthening networking through advocacy—the theme of this year's BONELA Annual General Meeting—perfectly summarises BONELA activities of 2006.

Many new partnerships and networks were formed during the year, broadening our advocacy agenda. Whether it was the Coalition for the HIV Employment Law Campaign, the Working Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights of Women Living with HIV or the Treatment Literacy Coalition, BONELA has certainly widened its base to engage with people of diverse backgrounds.

We hope that these partnerships will

continue in the new year in order for all of us to take advocacy on human rights and HIV to a higher level. The past few months have been incredibly exciting at BONELA—with the first-ever march organised with our friends and partners, calling on the Botswana Government to enact legislation to protect HIV-related rights at the workplace.

By 12 December, we had reached our goal of collecting 10,000 signatures supporting our petition for this law before we officially hand over the petition to Parliament. We are confident that policymakers will take note of the Botswana public requesting urgent action on behalf of those infected and affected by HIV.

BONELA also revived a long-established but somewhat dormant partnership after hosting

a seminar for legal practitioners, judges and magistrates. It was obvious that there is energy and interest amongst Botswana jurists to get more involved in the HIV and human rights discourse and we hope that that energy will be translated into action in 2007.

Let me end by thanking all our friends and partners for continuous support this year. I would also like to send a very heartfelt thank you to the BONELA Board for all their ideas, commitment and support. And last, but certainly not least, let me thank the staff and volunteers of BONELA who make this organisation the vibrant, articulate and exciting place that it is. To all of you, happy holidays and best wishes for a wonderful new year.

—Christine Stegling

## On the road

• Director Christine Stegling travelled to South Africa to participate in an 8 to 11 October meeting on reinvigorating the women's movement in Southern Africa. It was co-hosted by Women and Law in Southern Africa and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa.

• Legal Officer Oscar Gaboutloeloe was in Maun from 15 to 19 October to conduct a legal awareness workshop for PLWHAs and community leaders.



• Oscar Gaboutloeloe conducted a legal awareness workshop for PLWHAs and community leaders on 21 to 23 November in Lobatse.

• Shirley Keoagile attended the Disability HIV/AIDS Trust retreat in Rasesa from 21 to 24 November to discuss the inclusion of people with disabilities in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

• On 26 November to 3 December, she attended the Botswana Society for the Deaf workshop, "HIV/AIDS and the deaf," in Francistown.

• Bonela held a public forum on HIV testing in Maun on 18 October

• BONELA staff participated in a 27 October health fair organised by the Men's Sector at the Ramotswa kgotla.

• At a Southern African Treatment Literacy and Advocacy Summit in Johannesburg, Programme Officer Nthabiseng Nkwe and Training Coordinator Oratile Kidd-Moseki presented on treatment conditions in Botswana. The 26 to 28 October event hosted representatives from the region involved in treatment literacy projects.

• Media and Advocacy Officer Cynthia Lee and Intern Shirley Keoagile attended the Networking Forum on People with Disabilities and HIV/AIDS in Otse on 7 November.

• Christine Stegling attended a 15 to 17 November Johannesburg meeting organised by Physicians for Human Rights and the Centre for the Study of AIDS to discuss a recent study on gender and HIV undertaken in Botswana and Swaziland.

• Shirley Keoagile attended the Commemoration Day for People with Disabilities in Francistown on 17 November.

• BONELA staff travelled to Tsabong to facilitate a 30 November workshop on human rights issues as part of PLWA week activities.

• BONELA Chairperson Duma Boko and Oscar Gaboutloeloe attended a Model Legislation International workshop in Nairobi, Kenya from 3 to 6 December.

• In Johannesburg, Christine Stegling attended an ARASA advisory board meeting on 4 December followed by an ARASA board of trustees meeting the next day. She also attended an event on ARASA's report evaluating the steps taken by SADC countries implementing the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, officially launched by South Africa Supreme Court of Appeal Justice Edwin Cameron.

• Research Officer Yorokee Kapimbua participated in ARASA's regional trainer of trainers on human rights and HIV/AIDS in Johannesburg in early December. At the workshop, Oratile Moseki conducted sessions on routine testing, stigma and confidentiality.

## About BONELA

The Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA) is a non-governmental organisation committed to integrating an ethical, legal and human rights approach into Botswana's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. To learn more, visit us online at [www.bonela.org](http://www.bonela.org).

### Interested in becoming a member?

We welcome those from the legal community, academia, community-based organisations, and public and private sectors as well as people living with HIV/AIDS and concerned individuals.

### The BONELA Guardian

This quarterly publication is on the lookout for timely, insightful articles on topics related to HIV/AIDS and human rights, ethics, policy development or the law. We also accept first-person accounts, opinion pieces and responses to previously published articles. For further information, please contact Editor Cynthia Lee at [media@bonela.org](mailto:media@bonela.org).

Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS  
Plot 50662, Medical Mews, Fairground  
P.O. Box 402958  
Gaborone, Botswana  
Tel: +267 393-2516 Fax: +267 393-2517  
Email: [bonela@bonela.org](mailto:bonela@bonela.org)  
Web: <http://www.bonela.org>

