

Rights Here Right Now



BONELA Acting Director Mr. Uyapo Ndadi hands over a package of information, education and communication materials to His Excellency Ian Khama at the 2009 World AIDS Day (WAD). As a champion of human rights in Botswana, BONELA's stall was selected as one of the few stalls the President toured at WAD commemorations in Kasane which was held under the theme: Universal Access and Human Rights. The President was also presented with BONELA's training manual on human rights and HIV/AIDS.

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Taking World AIDS Day Beyond Ritual – The Launch of Hearts and Minds Campaign

By Euna Lhee*

World AIDS Day in Kasane brought together the major players working in the HIV and AIDS field, namely, the Ministry of Health; National AIDS Coordinating Agency; Tebelopele; the Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA); the Botswana Network of People living with HIV and AIDS (BONEPWA+) and the Botswana Church AIDS Intervention Programme (BOCAIP) to name a few.

But what did this gathering on December 1 really accomplish? Most organisations erected booths at the commemoration and handed out information packets to those who seemed genuinely interested. However, if organisations gave out free promotional material, people were queuing outside the tents for a rubber World AIDS Day bracelet.

Surely events like this raise awareness. By now, we all hope that Botswana know what HIV and AIDS are and how the infection is transmitted.



MISA launched its Hearts Minds campaign at a candlelight vigil held by civil society organizations working on HIV and AIDS in Botswana, namely BOCONGO, BONASO, BONELA, BONEPWA+ and Forum Syd on World AIDS Day eve in Kasane

World AIDS Day commemorations could easily turn into a ritual, especially since many organisations address the same matters each year. And this, perhaps, contributes to the issue of fatigue on HIV and AIDS activism and coverage in the media. Furthermore, some efforts against the war on HIV and AIDS may often be overlooked, duplicated or forgotten, if stakeholders do not engage with each other on their efforts and progress.

This is where the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Botswana chapter, tried to bridge gaps. On November 30, the eve of World AIDS Day, MISA invited all the major players to an open forum discussion in Kasane. The goal of the exchange was to bring together the national community and the local organisations of Kasane for a frank conversation about HIV and AIDS and the issues involved in combating the epidemic.

And, of course, with MISA being a media institute, conversations needed to include journalists, who have faced tough challenges in

covering HIV and AIDS, from issue fatigue to lack of initiative to report beyond events, such as this one.

During the open forum, facilitators Margaret Kgathi (education officer and presenter for *Talk Back*, a Botswana Television programme) and Penny Moanakwa (lecturer at the University of Botswana) asked representatives from various organisations to speak about their efforts in preventing and mitigating HIV and AIDS, the value of World AIDS Day, and the national response to the epidemic.

The reaction from the 40-member audience was overwhelming. In a four-hour, sometimes heated discussion, almost every person in the room stood up and gave a point of view. Stakeholders acknowledged the need for further involvement in these types of conversations in order to address such challenges as knowledge ownership, policy implementation and language sensitivity, to combat stigma and discrimination.

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On the road

→ Treatment Literacy Programme travelled to Letlhakane from the 27th to the 30th of October 2009. The purpose of this trip was to conduct a TB awareness raising March in collaboration with Boteti Sub-district Health Team. The march was part of the Treatment Literacy programme on-going TB/HIV advocacy that is aimed at increasing awareness on TB issues in relation to HIV as well as highlighting the importance of TB/HIV collaborative services. The march started at 0600hrs from Motsumi Junior Secondary School on 30 November and ended at Carnival Furnishers in Letlhakane mall where the community was further engaged through drama, testimonies, and presentations from the District and Health Team and BONELA.

→ At the beginning of November, Anna Mmolai-Chalmers, the Training and Advocacy Officer; Lenah Baitirile, the Gender Officer; Linny Keorapetse, the Assistant Legal Officer; and Yael May, an American lawyer volunteering at BONELA

travelled to Kang to conduct a four day workshop. The workshop was given to about 30 community members and leaders including a priest, school teacher, police woman, nurse, prison ward, and so on. The focus of the workshop was on the importance of human rights and issues such as domestic violence and Botswana's legal framework were discussed in detail. The Kang participants were very receptive to the messages BONELA transmitted and expressed great appreciation for BONELA's efforts to travel all the way to Kang to meet with them.

→ On the 18th- 19th November Training Officer Mrs Anna Chalmers and Gender Officer Lenah Baitirile conducted a training on Domestic Violence act and sex work project to BCL male employees and Botswana Defense Force women's wing. The workshop was organized by Department of women affairs in Selibe Phikwe



Call for submissions

The Botswana Review of Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BRELA) welcomes contributions on a wide variety of relevant issues from a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds. Each contribution sent for publication will be reviewed by a peer review committee.

Submission guidelines

- * Short articles should be up to 5,000 words long. Long articles should be up to 10,000 words including footnotes.
- * Recent Development and Events should be up to 2,500 words.
- * Reviews of books and articles should be up to 2,500 words.

Format

All manuscripts should be submitted in their final form and should conform to the following guidelines:

- * Submissions must be typed, 1.5-spaced with pages numbered.
- * Contributions should include the name(s), professional details (including affiliation), and contact information of the authors (s).

You can:

- share your opinions on controversial issues like providing condoms in prisons
- exchange ideas about HIV and human rights
- engage in debate about topics important to Botswana

Join BONELA's online community forum today in 3 steps:

1. Go to www.bonela.org/forum/index.php
2. Register (it's free)
3. Inform and be informed. Involve and get involved. Discuss and create discussion.



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The final consensus seemed to be that everyone wanted to better understand HIV and AIDS issues and then apply evidence-based interventions.

During the evening session the same day, MISA formally launched the Hearts and Minds project, a media relations training programme funded by the Botswana and United States of America partnership (BOTUSA) with support from the American International Health Alliance. The aim of Hearts and Minds is to improve the quality, quantity and scope of HIV and AIDS reporting in Africa. This event was combined with a candlelight vigil organised by the Forum Syd Partnership that brings together the four main HIV and AIDS networks

in Botswana, that is, the Botswana Council of Non-governmental Organisations (BOCONGO); the Botswana Network of AIDS Service organisations (BONASO); BONELA and BONEPAWA+, with Forum Syd as the funding and facilitating partner.

At the vigil, people sang “Morena Boloka Sechaba Sa Rona” (Lord Save our Nation) while passing on their candle flame to their neighbours in commemoration of the lives lost to HIV; those living with HIV and AIDS and the brave men and women who openly disclosed their status in a bid to fight stigma and discrimination. Afterwards, Francistown theatre troupe Ghetto Artists performed a play on the role of the church in HIV infection - the highlight being when the actors fundraised for their troupe by walking around with offering

plates. At the end of the night, the Hearts and Minds documentary was shown, and journalists Tswelelo Mogotsi and Pauline Letsatle, who were featured in the movie, spoke of their experiences with HIV and AIDS reporting.

All in all, the day, although long, achieved its main objectives of mobilizing different voices and opinions around the epidemic, as well as identifying space for media participation in its campaigns.

And these types of efforts should never end, even though, as my co-worker puts it, tomorrow is another day.

**Euna Lhee is a journalist, HIV/gender specialist, at MISA Botswana on assignment from the American International Health Alliance.*

Forum Syd Annual Planning Meeting



Ms. Ogopoleng Robsen, BONELA's Finance officer presenting financial highlights for the organization at the 2009 Forum Syd Annual Planning and Partnership Meeting held in Francistown from the 10th to the 12th of November. On her right is Mr. Pedro Motau, BONELA's Treasurer.

BONELA team brainstorms on the future of the Forum Syd Partnership. From right to left: Cindy Kelemi – Treatment Literacy Coordinator; Pedro Motau – Treasurer; Wame Jallow – Programmes Manager and Doris Kumbawa – Media Officer.



Lethakane TB March



Botswana prison and police officers take part in the TB/HIV community awareness raising march held on the 30th of October in Lethakane organized by BONELA and the Boteti sub-district District Health Team. The March brought together about 350 people including representatives from five support groups from the district; the armed forces; Botswana Teachers Unions Botswana Federation of Trade Unions; Tebelopele and the Youth for Hope (YOHO).



Community Members, organizations, support groups, government departments and the community join hands in raising awareness on TB in Lethakane



Fit to fight TB! Prison and police officers get ready to tackle TB in Lethakane head on!

BONELA, Boteti DHT Join Effort in Community Participation to Tackle TB

By Tautona Chaba and Rodgers Bande



The Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA) in partnership with the Boteti sub-District Health Team (DHT) held a Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV awareness-raising march on the 30th October in Letlhakane.

The march was part of BONELA's national drive to highlight TB as an emerging public health concern. It also aimed to amplify calls to strengthen collaboration between existing TB/HIV programmes, underpinning the relevance and critical importance of community participation to TB response

through partnering, networking and forging mutually benefiting working relationships with District Health Teams and other partners at district level.

The march drew together over 400 representatives which included representatives from District AIDS Office, District Health Team, Traditional Leadership, partner organizations such as the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU) Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC), Boteti Youth Organisation (BOYO); Tebelopele; Youth, Health Organisation (YOHO), local political leadership, representatives of

support groups of people living with HIV drawn from Letlhakane and the surrounding villages of, Kumaga; Mmatshumo; Mokobaxane; Mokobilo; Mopipi;; Rakops; Xere; Xhumu and the general public.

Addressing the community gathered at the Letlhakane Mall, Kgosi Baruntshi Kegapetswe in his welcome remarks bemoaned that in the past, TB was not common and was mainly associated with men from the mines. However, given the now apparent co-relationship between HIV and TB, he motivated that intensified and continued community awareness was imperative as part of the mapping of

orts and Call for B Response



Above: Boteti leadership in the line of fire in the war against TB. Two chiefs from the area follow awareness raising proceedings after the march

Left: Partners for mutual benefit – the BONELA team and Boteti sub-district health team conduct a post-mortem of the march. The consensus was the march was very successful and the success was unprecedented in the district. BONELA and the DHT will thus continue to collaborate to achieve a greater impact in the district to curb the incidence of TB and the stigma, morbidity and mortality associated with it.

required interventions to confront TB as a rising medical challenge.

In recognition of the gravity TB poses to the health of HIV-positive persons, and its burden to our already overwhelmed health-care system due to HIV/AIDS, the march provided an avenue to mobilise civil society's active participation to promote TB control at community level. Through these public marches and campaigns, BONELA calls for greater effort to be put into the creation of community TB care projects. This has been shown in other countries where such initiatives have been implemented to influence positively higher treatment

completion rates and reduced defaulter rates which is the goal of TB control programmes.

The march started at Motsumi Junior Secondary School and ended with a formal official community outreach session at Carnival Furnishers in Letlhakane Mall where marchers and the public in general were further engaged and resourced on TB issues through drama, life testimonies by TB champions from Sunshine Support Group and the distribution of information, education and communication materials on TB and HIV.

About BONELA



Who Are We and What Do We Stand For The Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA) is a non-governmental organization established in 2002. It is dedicated to creating an enabling and just environment for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS through the integration of ethical, legal and human rights dimensions into the national response to HIV/AIDS in Botswana.

Mission Statement

- BONELA promotes a just and inclusive environment for people affected by HIV and AIDS through education, legal assistance, research and advocacy.

Vision

- Making human rights a reality in the response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Botswana. To achieve its vision, BONELA works within the following five programme areas:

- Advocacy
- Training
- Research
- Legal Aid
- Media

Through these programmes, BONELA carries out activities that ensure that ethics, law and human rights are made an essential part of the national response to fighting HIV and AIDS in Botswana. This is done through a focus on Goal 5 of the National Plan of Action on HIV and AIDS as articulated in Botswana's National Strategic Framework on HIV and AIDS.

The Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS

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BONELA, Boteti DHT Join Efforts and Call for Community Participation to TB Response (continued)



Can prayers and water cure TB? Only timeous and correct treatment says this theatre group to the Boteti community



On TB treatment and consuming alcohol – a recipe for disaster! Members of Boteti sub-district youth theatre group provide edutainment to highlight basic TB issues such as early detection of TB; adhering to treatment; infection control; the role communities can play in tackling TB and the fact that TB is a curable disease.

PLWHIV Week

BONELA joined four other organizations, namely Forum Syd; the Botswana Network of AIDS Service Organisations (BONASO); the Botswana Network of non-governmental Organisations (BOCONGO) and the Botswana Network of People Living with HIV (BONEPWA+) that make up the

Forum Syd partnership in hosting the People Living with HIV Week in Kasane from the 25th of November to the 1st of December. The main objective of the week is to strengthen networking and linkages through sharing of best practices, information on management and coordination of support groups from civil society

umbrella Networks working on HIV and AIDS interventions; mainly BONEPWA+, BONELA, BONASO, BOCONGO, and Forum Syd. The PLWHIV Week will provide a forum for rolling out the Prevention among the Positives strategy.



Anna Chalmers – BONELA Training and Advocacy Officer sensitizes PLWHIV support groups; staff from BOCONGO; BONEPWA+; Forum Syd and the Kasane community on human rights and HIV/AIDS issues to help them better understand the international World AIDS Day theme: *Universal Access and Human Rights* and the importance of human rights in combating HIV and AIDS.



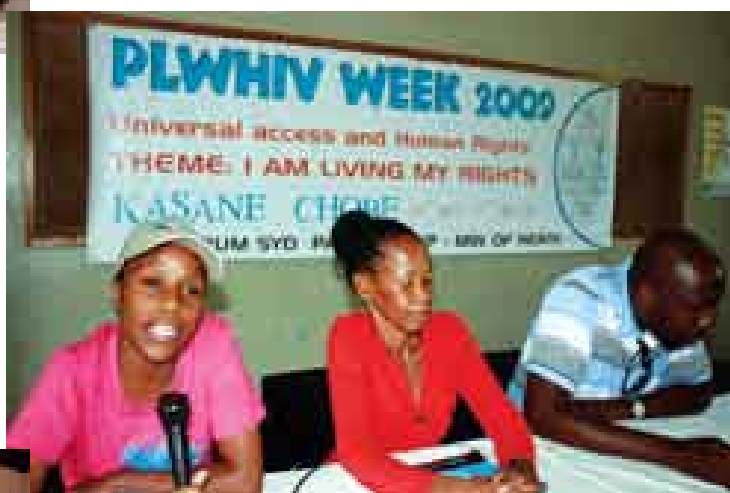
Members of support groups; organizations and Kasane community members participate in a community awareness raising march for the PLWHIV Week. The march was coordinated by BONELA and attended by close to 250 people.

PLWHIV Week (continued)



BONELA legal aid client gives a testimony on how she was assisted by BONELA after her husband had neglected her and their children and ultimately filed for divorce when she tested positive for HIV. The testimony also revealed how stigma and discrimination at personal, societal and institutional levels drives the pandemic further underground as they encourage denial of one's status in order to gain acceptance.

Lenah Baitirile, BONELA's Gender Officer explains issues of sexual reproductive health for women from a human rights perspective in a panel discussion. Other panelists next to her were from BONEPWA+ and the Women's Affairs Department.



Rights and Responsibility: Ghetto Artists, a drama group based in Francistown and affiliated to organizations in the Forum Syd Partnership perform a play in line with the PLWHIV theme: I am living my rights, which in turn is a derivative of the 2009 World AIDS Day theme: Universal Access and Human Rights. The play sought to bring out the complimentary role of exercising both rights and responsibility to curb the spread of HIV.



The Usual Suspects?! Sharing a light moment during PLWHIV proceedings is from left and round to right – Wame Jallow (in BONELA t-shirt): BONELA Programmes Manager; Nana Gleeson: BONELA Finance Manager (in pink top); David Ngele: BONEPWA+ Executive Director; Pedro Motau (with camera): BONELA Treasurer; Uyapo Ndadi: BONELA Acting Director and Martin Mosima: Forum Syd Country Coordinator.



That Good Old Christmas Feeling...! A Befitting Farewell to a Year of Hard Work



BONELA held its Christmas party on the 18th of December to bid farewell to a year which though fruitful, left staff gasping for air.

We want this party started right! BONELAMediaAssistant – Tautona Chaba shows off how to kick start a party and get down.



Above left: Ma Awuah (with present), BONELA's Resource Centre volunteer receives a Christmas gift from Mpho Pueng- BONELA's Office Assistant whilst Tebogo Nwakomonnye (in yellow top) - BONELA Administrator, looks on.

Above right: Sir Malefo Molatelele – BONELA “pilot” attempts to guess who his “secret santa” is. Wame Jallow and Nana Gleeson (BONELA Programmes Manager and Finance Manager) respectively anxiously wait to make sure he dances as punishment for getting it wrong!



Left: All work and no play make Jane a dull girl! BONELA staff members Tsegofatso Mpundu; Kabo Mothumi and Kaone Malope celebrate the end of the 2009.



Uyapo Ndadi

From the Director's Desk

We are delighted to say that we played a very instrumental role in the 2009 World AIDS day preparations. My team was at Kasane for the activities preceding the commemoration day and took active part in same. The theme of the day was **“Universal Access and Human Rights.”**

I am pleased to indicate that our transformation process is in full swing. We have assembled a team of consultants to guide us through this process and their guidance is rich.

Our board has been actively involved in ensuring that the transformation happens as smoothly and swiftly as possible. They deserve our collective commendation. What is apparent is that as an organization, we have been doing fantastic work out there and not particularly pausing to reflect on what the internal needs of BONELA are. For instance, our financial and organizational systems were intended for a small organization such that in the light of the magnitude of work and growth, have been either irrelevant or inadequate.

I would like to thank one of our key donors, HIVOS, for having also taken the initiative to come and carry out a financial inspection on us. They came to the conclusion that our current financial systems are cumbersome for the number of donors we have and this has subsequently resulted in delays in reporting and outcomes, such as timely audited financials. HIVOS has promised us a financial accounting package that will help ease our challenges tremendously. My dedicated team of workers has also felt the brunt of focusing

too much on external delivery and neglecting organizational development issues such as timely programmatic reporting to donors and creating time for staff development. In a bid to become more unified and powerful, we have resolved to work in two different teams as opposed to having many fragmented departments exclusively independent of each other. Once this plan takes full effect, I will appraise the reader of the specifics of same.

My gratitude goes to all our donors who have continued to stand by us through these difficult times, your patience and understanding means a lot to us and at the end of this transformation you will continue to get value for your money and support.

We are delighted to say that we played a very instrumental role in the 2009 World AIDS day preparations. My team was at Kasane for the activities preceding the commemoration day and took active part in same. The theme of the day was “Universal Access and Human Rights.” We are thankful to the opportunity we were given by NACA to play an advisory role in the preparations, including the drafting of His Excellency Lt. Gen. President Ian Khama’s speech. We are however saddened by the fact that the President did not speak in

detail and substance to the theme. We had expected him to highlight critical human rights challenges faced by Botswana in the area of HIV and AIDS, such as the danger of denying foreign inmates access to antiretroviral drugs and the absence of interventions targeted at key populations such as sex workers and men who have sex with other men.

I wish to extend my goodbyes to Mr Batho Molomo, NACA Coordinator, who is due to retire from the public service at the end of February 2010. We wish him all the best in his future aspirations and thank him for his tireless efforts of driving the responses to the epidemic. We know its not an easy role but he did his best.

Internally I welcome Mrs Dikeledi Phoo Dingake who is our new head of legal aid. She was formerly a magistrate. We trust that she will do well for BONELA and for herself.

Lastly, my acting tenure as the Director of BONELA is coming to an end and I must say I enjoyed every moment of it. I expect my board to make a decision soon regarding my fate. Should the board appoint me to the position of Director, in the next edition I will share with you plans for the year 2010.