



Motivational Address

by Veronica De Klerk - WAD Executive Director
during the 8th Graduation Ceremony of the WAD Omahenene Training Centre
Multipurpose Youth Resource Centre, Isak Pondo Street , Outapi
Thursday, 24 January 2013

[Director of Ceremonies – Mr Salatiel Shinedima – WAD National Gender Based Violence Coordinator]

- **Madam Director of Ceremonies:**
- **Hon Angelika Muharukua – Officiating on behalf of Hon. Rosalia Nghidinwa - Minister of Gender Equality & Child Welfare;**
- **Hon Sophia Shaningwa - Governor for the Omusati region;**
- **Hon. Simon Shileka-----Regional Councillor for the Outapi Const;**
- **Mr Holger Haibach-----Res. Repr.: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung; and Director of the Project: “My Rights as a Woman & Namibian Citizen”**
- **Mr Tarah Iita-----Old Mutual Branch Manager at Outapi;**
- **Mr Daniel Shilongo-----Mutual & Federal Oshakati Branch Manager;**
- **Ms Isolde Hauala-----Nedbank Acting Sales Administrator;**
- **Deacon Kaarina Haishonga-----from the Eengoma Evan. Lutheran Church;**
- **Members of the Namibian Police Force;**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests; Members of the Media; Trainers;**
- **Teachers and Learners; and Dear Parents and Graduants:**

Good Morning!

It is a great pleasure for me to be present at Outapi today, at the 8th Graduation Ceremony of the WAD Omahenene Training Centre!And as I am looking over this impressive audience, consisting of a large number of graduants who have successfully completed their courses in various subjects, I am feeling a wonderful sense of pride because you have taken the first step towards improving the quality of your lives and in the process, you have made yourselves and your parents proud!

I welcome and acknowledge with appreciation, the presence of our Keynote Speaker, the Hon. Rosalia Nghidinwa, Minister of Gender Equality & Child Welfare; as well as the Governor of the Omusati region, Hon. Sophia Shaningwa - and all the other distinguished Speakers at the Head Table.

The presence of the leaders of this region, clearly demonstrates their profound interest in the empowerment of unemployed young people in their region, which is greatly appreciated.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The Old Mutual Group of Companies, consisting of Old Mutual Namibia, Nedbank Namibia and Mutual and Federal, are trusted names in the country. This Graduation Ceremony would not have been possible had it not been for their wonderful financial support towards all WAD's graduations across the country, for the past 7 years.

Ladies & Gentlemen: Please join me in giving these wonderful sponsors a big hand!

I trust that you have listened carefully to what Old Mutual, Mutual & Federal and Nedbank have to offer rural communities. One important example is, that it is crucial for parents, to start acquiring study insurance policies for their children already now, to enable them to advance to higher learning institutions, once they had completed Grade 12.

I would therefore advise you to plan timeously and wisely, and not to wait until it is too late.

***Most importantly – L & G: You can contribute towards reducing poverty today, if you take out an insurance policy, or if you open a savings account with one of these companies because all business which will be concluded with the Old Mutual, Nedbank, or Mutual & Federal today, will enable WAD to earn financial points for such transactions, which in turn, will eventually be converted into cash, and these funds will immediately be ploughed back into community development.

Ladies & Gentlemen: I am particularly proud of what the Omahenene Training Centre has achieved since it opened its doors during 1994. It is WAD's pride that this Human Development Centre has, since its establishment, succeeded in giving hope and opening windows of opportunity to thousands of young people who have found jobs in the labour market or who have established their own income-generating ventures.

I am further pleased that this centre has served as a "catchment" area for school-leavers and school drop-outs since its establishment, and very proud that the centre has, according to the Head of the Centre, trained to date, over 5 000 unemployed young people in various subjects to become self-sustained.

Also according to the Head of the Centre, an estimated **68%** of the students trained, have already found jobs in the labour market or started their own income-generating ventures. We are immensely proud of these achievements!

In this regard, I wish to express my sincere congratulations and gratitude towards the dedicated trainers at the Omahenene Training Centre, which is managed by highly committed staff members, and I now request them to come to the front as I mention their names.

- Firstly, Ms Secilia Nghuumono, who is the Head of the Centre and Needlework Trainer for 18 years, since the Centre's establishment;
- Ms Melila Simon – Trainer in Computers and Office Administration;
- Ms Hileni Tobias - Trainer in Office Administration;
- Ms Penny Shimhopileni - Trainer in Hospitality; Catering, break-baking; and the production of Marula Jam and Juice at the Centre. She has also acted as a Trainer at the Centre for 18 years;
- Ms Kornelia Niingo - Trainer in Horticulture
- Ms Marcellina Shipwata - the Office Assistant. And
- Mr Absai Kashululu - Ad hoc Trainer in Aspects of the Namibian Constitution; and Contents of Gender-related laws.

L & G: Please give these wonderful Trainers a BIG HAND!!

I am very pleased to announce that, after having written their examinations, a total of **122** students will receive their certificates this morning, in Computer Literacy; Hospitality; Tailoring; and Aspects of the Namibian Constitution; and the Contents of Gender-related Laws.

Having said that, Ladies & Gentlemen: I wish to congratulate the students for having successfully completed their respective courses. I particularly wish to congratulate the best-performing computer student, Ms Laurentia Kamwanka, for having reached an outstanding pass mark of **85% in her computer examinations** - **and I request her to stand!**

Congratulations Laurentia – We are very proud of you!

And now.... L & G - I wish to focus on very alarming issues such as Passion Killing, Baby Dumping, the abuse of alcohol and crime in general, which have for a long time, been plaguing the Namibian society! So please forgive me for lingering a bit longer on these disturbing issues, while trusting that the media will assist in carrying WAD's views on how to henceforth reduce these evils in society.

Hardly a day goes by without a baby having been dumped by its mother like refuse, or without women having been abused, raped or murdered by their partners. I still vividly recall how the late Petrina Goagoses from the Hardap region, landed in hospital with 95% burns all over her body when her boyfriend locked her in her bedroom at Dordabis and set her bedroom on fire, after she ended their relationship.

The result was that she died shortly afterwards in the ICU of the Katutura State hospital.

He was thankfully apprehended and charged with murder!

L & G: Although Women's Action for Development and other stakeholders have in the past, expressed ourselves strongly about these ugly diseases in our communities, the evil of Passion Killing of women, Rape, Baby Dumping by young girls and Teenage Pregnancies are still haunting us and are still continuing at such an alarming rate, that an outsider would believe that women and babies have become fair game in Namibia!

To say the least, Ladies & Gentlemen, Namibia has become an embarrassment and a shocking disgrace because of the poor image which the country is gaining internationally. In the process, H/E, President Pohamba, has repeatedly called upon the entire citizenry, including the Police, NGO's, Churches, Youth Movements, etc to do everything possible to assist in stopping this madness of throwing our babies away and of men being unable to accept rejection by women and to see killing them as the only solution to sooth their hurt egos.

However, in the case of Passion Killing, there is a clear line between boys who might have experienced serious rejection before, or not having learned right from the parental home and through their school career, to accept defeat like a real man.

It is most disturbing, that instead of developing refined skills of maintaining a relationship with girls, based on love and respect, boys are rather developing an ownership perception of girls, which is fueled by the presentation of gifts to “buy” their love.

Girls on the other hand, who might have grown up marginalized, unfortunately often contribute towards such a relationship which is based purely on the desire for more and more material things, even beyond the point where they have fallen out of love with their boyfriends.

...And to prove this - I wish to refer to a suicide note last year, in which a young man testified that he was continuously investing in a young woman, by regularly giving her material support and gifts to win her love. **This was clearly pointed out, as the trigger for Passion Killing, when he summarily killed her, as well as himself, after she continuously accepted many expensive gifts and money from him, totaling as high as N\$50 000,00, but thereafter rejected him! Sadly, she paid dearly with her life!**

The question is: “Why are our Parents so silent about these evils being committed by their children”? We as parents, should start asking ourselves: “Where did we go wrong in the upbringing of our children, and why is it that our children have no respect for the lives of others?”

If this were not true, why then, are our boys summarily killing - and why is it that our daughters are throwing their babies away like refuse and becoming murderers?

It is no secret that the Parental Home unfortunately often presents to children the first exposure of disrespect and violence against women, when fathers beat up mothers in front of their children. In this way, boys in particular, are developing more and more, grossly distorted perceptions of male/female relationships from such incidents.

Thus, when the Parental Home fails in this way, it fails the entire community - and when it fails the entire community, it fails the entire generation!

...And what is more - many young men sadly do not know how to deal with their emotions, because they were ever so often told by their parents that boys must act like real men who do not cry, because crying is a sign of weakness! No wonder

that many boys grow up to become men who cannot deal with disappointments because they have never really learned how to deal with their emotions.

Thus, when explosive emotions pile up, many men are totally unprepared on how to deal with their emotions, and it eventually sadly erupts in Passion Killing within relationships with girls.

This is therefore, the biggest mistake parents can make, because how then, will boys ever learn to deal with their emotions if they are not aloud to cry?

Since children are not born with knowledge of the dress code of social behavior, failure of the Parental Home and the school - which is the extension of the family home - to train and strengthen the norms and values; the rights and wrongs before children enter into adult life, they enter life totally unequipped with crucial life skills and become the eventual Passion Killers, Thieves, Alcoholics.....yes, the Drug Addicts of our society.

The influence of alcohol and drugs on social behavior, is a well-documented topic in male/female relationships, and a proven cause of GBV which can spill over into Passion Killing.

In this regard, WAD highly commends the continuous revitalized action by the Police against illegal shebeens, which should be complemented and enforced by the co-operation and support of the entire citizenry.

Ladies & Gentlemen: There is no doubt that Namibia is in a serious crisis and has now come to the cross-roads of this serious problem. The question is now, where and how do we start to correct this massive problem in our society?

In WAD's view - For the new generation of young people to set up well-informed and formative Parental Homes, they should already, **at school level**, intensively be exposed and prepared for the art of gender relations and parenthood.

The answer is undoubtedly to focus on that GOLDEN SUBJECT called "Life Skills" at school: It is for this reason that WAD appeals to the Ministry of Education to ensure that the subject, "Life Skills", which was grossly neglected in schools in the past, should now, as a matter of great urgency, become a subject on which learners should start writing examinations and which should be passed by all learners, to enable them to advance to the next school grade, instead of

learners playing rugby, and teachers marking their examination papers during “Life Skills” periods.

WAD believes that the implementation of that **GOLDEN SUBJECT, “Life Skills”**, as an important **examinable** subject, is fully justified. It is the most important subject to prepare learners on how to deal with life - to train learners on how to respect themselves; how to respect human life; how to respect women; how to respect our norms and values; how to refrain from misusing alcohol and drugs; how to deal with family life; yes, how to deal with their respective careers....

WAD views the gross neglect of children in their parental homes, together with the gross neglect of the subject, “Life Skills” within schools for so long, as a primary reason for the social horrors which the Namibian society is experiencing right now with increased frequency.

It is for this reason that WAD has, since 2011 penetrated all Secondary Schools country-wide to equip “Life Skills” Teachers and School Counsellors with knowledge regarding the causes and consequences of GBV, based on the findings of a research which WAD conducted together with the University of Namibia some years ago. In this manner 67 500 learners will be reached for orientation on GBV and its causal factors.

Women and Child Protection Units are crucial to support women who are in a serious crisis! However, WAD has received numerous complaints by women, that our “Women and Child Protection Units” are not functioning as they should, and that the telephones of those units very often go unanswered. It should be remembered that when women make calls to those centres, they are desperate, and that they might be in a life-threatening crisis. Thus, if those telephones are not answered, these Units become dysfunctional, leaving desperate women in complete despair and without assistance when they needed it the most.

I therefore respectfully appeal to the Inspector-General of the Police to lodge an urgent investigation into the efficient functioning of the “Women and Child Protection Units” across the country, to ensure that women receive the necessary assistance when they need it the most.

Country-wide “Stand Up against Crime Campaigns” are equally crucial! WAD has taken note with great appreciation, of the “Stand Up Against Crime”

campaigns which are being established by the Police in a proactive bid to curb Passion Killing and crime in general. WAD pledges its unconditional support to this commendable initiative by the Police, to assist in curbing crime.

It is therefore, incumbent upon every single citizen of the nation to join the Police in such campaigns to ensure a crime-free society.

Churches should do much more, because Churches should be a refuge for the community and should assume a much more meaningful role of outreach and become more experienced as a formative force in communities. Gone are the days when Spiritual Leaders merely preached about spirituality from their pulpits on church days, because it is crucial that spiritual leaders should, more than ever before, become involved as important facilitators for church groups, where men and women can talk freely about their trials and tribulations in difficult relationships.

I therefore, respectfully appeal to the Council of Churches to ensure that when Training Manuals are compiled for Spiritual Leaders, it should incorporate the training of Pastors on how to address social problems such as Alcoholism and Drug abuse, GBV, Passion Killing, Baby Dumping, etc.

The Print and Electronic Media are equally indispensable in any society and as such, has a very important informative role to play in this game.

The Media is therefore encouraged to engage in “Investigative Journalism”, instead of merely engaging in “Sensational Reporting”. The Media is a powerful force to influence public opinion and should therefore, investigate causal factors behind these social evils, and continuously expose them to its readers and viewers.

Having said that, Ladies and Gentlemen, and as I am concluding, I sincerely trust that the young people, parents, the Police and the Media present in this audience, will take my words seriously.

I urgently and sincerely appeal to men to stop killing women when they are rejected!!

I urgently appeal to men to forget about their bloated ego's and to accept rejection like a real man. **Walk away and leave her life alone - or suffer the consequences, and spend the rest of your life in prison!**

I urgently appeal to women to stop the habit of just grabbing gifts from men, when you are not serious with the relationship, **because if you do, you are playing a dangerous game, which can lead to your death.**

...And to our successful graduants: You, as our young leaders of tomorrow, have taken the first step towards paving the way to a bright future for yourselves - and I am immensely proud of what you have achieved today. I congratulate you and I wish you great success for the future.

But we can only be successful if we are operating in a crime-free environment - free from Gender Based Violence and Passion Killing.

The challenge will therefore be, for all of us to join hands to transform Namibia into a safe and peaceful country - **And we can do this**, for the benefit of our entire nation, but also for potential tourists and investors, because this in turn, will contribute profoundly, towards the economic stability and well-being of our country. **THANK YOU!**