



Taking Action: 2010–2011

REACH is a registered non-profit and public benefit organization that addresses sexual harassment and violence against women, including interlinking factors such as HIV/AIDS, on farms and in communities of the Western Cape.

2010 marked a significantly busy year for REACH with the implementation of three awareness raising projects, three campaigns, two advocacy activities, two special events and a research study. A host of other activities also fleshed out the organizational calendar which included partnering with funders and organizations who hold the same values and ideals in ad-

ressing violence against women and the impact that **women's rights abuses holds** for the well-being of the victim and the community.

Much effort was also put into marketing our organization through the development of a new website and launch of several social media campaigns.

In 2010 REACH also undertook a strategic evaluation of its work from inception and developed a five year strategic plan for the organization.

All of our activities yielded positive impacts but also some unanticipated outcomes.

2011 was a challenging year. While we had to deal with some internal misfortunes we were also confronted with a funding shortage. Despite many applications being sent out, the funds generated, particularly operational funding, was not sufficient to sustain the organization. While REACH was still able to continue with project work and adopted several creative fundraising activities this year, we nevertheless had no choice but to reduce operational expenditure. This involved giving up our home and moving into temporary cost-free premises and sadly also involved the retrenchment of its staff. These dedicated individuals remained

committed to REACH and we are very thankful to Claudia, Nafeesa, Kim and Rafael, who at different times and different capacities, voluntarily continued to support REACH with delivery of projects and fundraising activities. We also thank our board who took on a very hands-on approach as we travelled this difficult road.

To all the volunteers, friends of REACH, partner organizations and funders who supported REACH during these trying times a very big thank you. We will continue to do our very best to resurrect our beloved organization for the greater good of our beneficiaries.



Awareness Raising

Projects focusing on issues of gender based violence, HIV and AIDS, and other interlinking factors

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Friends, Funders & Sponsors

A list of all of those who helped us on our journey. Be one of these friends in 2012

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“Her family abandoned her...they found out that she has AIDS and that’s why she stays in a squatter camp”

“She is HIV positive and doesn’t work and lives with her abusive partner and is dependent on him”

“Her husband is abusive when he is drunk and takes his money to the shebeen”

“She lost control over her kids due to the TIK. Her children are trying to join a gang. They don’t respect her anymore.”

“She has two children but doesn’t take care of them. She uses the grant money for drink and does not even wash the children for school.”

Beneficiaries reached 49 females, 23 males trained as CBV’s

2402 community members supported by CBV’s during door-to-door campaigns



Awareness Raising

Project Objective: To provide training and awareness raising on sexual harassment and violence against women including interlinking factors such as HIV and AIDS

CHANGING THE RIVERS FLOW: 2009–DECEMBER 2010

A project partnership with the Southern African HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service

With the rapid spread of HIV in farming communities REACH realized that it was critical to identify the drivers of this pandemic and assist rural communities to start dialogue on these issues.

The objective of this project (based on a model by SAfAIDS) was to encourage and support men and women to critically think about the inter-linkages between culture and gender based violence (GBV), women’s rights and HIV/AIDS, particularly on how certain traditional cultural practices are harmful to the rights of women to be respected, appreciated and free from violence. The project also sought to bring about a realization that the power to bring about meaningful change comes through the community themselves.

REACH, in further partnership with a local community committee and a governing department, implemented this project for the Paarl communities of Avondale and Mbekweni. The

project commenced with engaging community leaders in discussion around the issues of culture, HIV/AIDS and GBV. REACH also trained community based volunteers (CBV’s) with the intention that the CBV’s would each engage 100 people in their community through door-to-door campaigns. The project also included two four-day community dialogues and a gala.

By mid 2010 REACH had trained a total of 81 CBV’s. Although certain challenges were faced, the CBV’s were active in their community with door-to-door campaigns in an effort to raise awareness as well as change the mindsets of people that it is taboo to discuss issues of sex and domestic violence in these traditional communities. CBV’s were also able to provide support and referrals to those experiencing problems.

“He refuses to use condoms because he doesn’t know who infected him with HIV so he will do the same to others because he won’t die alone”

Within February to April CBV’s had reached 400 people and 40 cases were referred for support regarding GBV and during May to July a further 283 individual families were visited and 85 reported cases of GBV were referred. The Avondale CBV’s commenced their visits on the 7th July 2010. Within the month of July the Avondale CBV’s conducted 39 door to door visits and identified 15 cases of GBV for referrals.

As a demonstration of the types of cases seen by CBV’s, for the months of September and October, CBV’s saw 223 cases - 72 cases of HIV and AIDS (27 males, 45 females); 42 cases of GBV (9 males, 33 females) and 50 cases of drug and/or alcohol abuse (19 males; 31 females) marked the majority of the problems being experienced within this community. Other cases included unemployment and poverty; homophobia; infidelity; teenage pregnancies, prostitution, and xenophobia.



BUFFELJAGSRIVIER OUTREACH: JUNE – SEPTEMBER 2010

Funded by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund

This project comprised of 8 weekend workshops (totalling to 16 days in total) in the Buffeljagsrivier community of Swellendam and aimed to educate women, men, boys and girls from this community about their rights in relation to domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape and HIV and AIDS and to encourage participants to take responsibility for combating women's rights abuses and other social ills within their own community.

The workshops were participatory and interactive allowing participants to reflect on their lived realities. This made the workshops more meaningful and allowed them to assimilate the new information delivered in the workshop. The facilitators made use of small group discussions and activities, videos, role plays, case studies and games to further expand discussions and activities. Local experts such as the police and local organizations (e.g. organization called Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging - A.C.V.V) were also invited to partner in this project. Counselling was provided to those needing emotional support during and after the workshops.

The response to this project was very good. After each weekend the participants were asked to provide input into how they experienced the workshops and whether they felt that their expectations were met. The evaluation forms were completed in addition to the post test. Overall expectations of the workshops were met. Participants enjoyed the different methodologies used and felt that the workshops were very interactive and participatory and helped them to understand the issues.

Emerging from the workshops were discussions on the high rates of violence in their community. Sexual

assault was prevalent amongst the youth not only as victims but of perpetrators too. Many of the participants could identify family or friends who are abused or are abusive towards their partners. Both males and females admitted that they lacked parenting skills and needed to learn how to communicate with their children if they were to stop the cycle of violence. Three men admitted to being perpetrators of domestic

"Today was my first day that I began to learn and my eyes has [sic] been opened to what is happening around me" (male)

violence in their relationships. Virtually all of the participants (particularly the men) recounted their life stories as having grown up in homes that were riddled with violence, poverty and alcohol and drug abuse. They felt that they had no proper role models growing up which affected their relationships with their children. The men also learnt that rape was not about sex but the need for men to exert their power over women. Men reported that they had a greater understanding and empathy for survivors of rape following the workshops.

The female youth group raised **how common it is for a girl's first sexual experience to be one of rape.** The community often labels (and blames) people who have been sexually violated and/or who are HIV positive – the victim gets isolated from the community and cannot seek (or is afraid or too embarrassed to seek) the services and support they need. **Young people's risk taking behaviour** was also raised as a point of concern. Not only do young girls need to protect themselves from becoming pregnant but also from **contracting HIV and AIDS and STI's.** It was also discussed that safe sex is not just the responsibility of the man but women too should take responsibility for ensuring the use of condoms

during sexual relations.

What was particularly evident for the boys was their need to know more about sex education. The workshop also covers what safer sex practice is about and demonstrates the proper use of both male and female condoms. Many young boys had never been shown how to use a condom and felt that there had never been anyone that they could ask to show them (this was also true (shockingly) of the workshops with males – many did not know how to use them correctly). What was also very sad was that, much like the men, the boy youth could not identify their parents as role models.

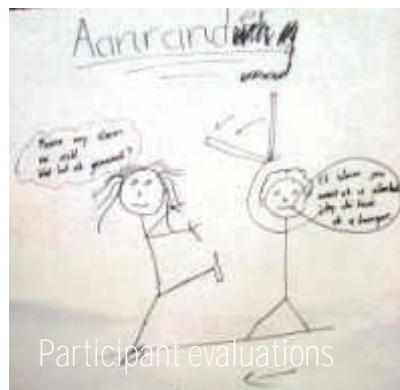
It seems quite clear that there is a perpetuating cycle of "dysfunctionality" within these families. Female participants want to get involved in fighting violence in the community and the males wanted a change in their lives and asked REACH to find the means of running a support group and personal growth training with them. The process in these participants journey of personal growth and development has begun but it is imperative that we find the means to continue to support them along this journey for long-lasting affective change for all.

Lessons Learnt

We are used to high levels of illiteracy amongst the adults from our beneficiary areas but were surprised at the low level of education amongst the youth as they struggled to read and write. We were also **concerned by the youth's lack of sufficient information on HIV and AIDS** despite them reporting to us that the school had sent them for HIV testing! Following the workshops the **ACVV's community developer** agreed to speak to the school principal about the concerns that were noted but it is obvious that we need to start working with schools from the areas that we service or will service in the future.

This project also highlighted the need for our awareness

raising projects to be coupled with life skills for the youth and personal growth training for the adults and in particular with male participants as we were taken aback by how deeply affected they were by their upbringing of being raised in homes riddled with violence, poverty and substance abuse. We also realize that we need to place more focus on including drug and alcohol abuse in our workshops and other project work. Partnering with an organization that specializes in this field would also serve as a strategy to addressing these issues.



"I feel good about what I learned. Things that I did not know. I feel proud to be here. I cannot wait for the next weekend." (Female participant)

"Today was great and I learnt a lot. We did lots of cool things. You are great girls you rock my world. May God give you the strength to continue working with young people because you build their self esteem, just like



Beneficiaries reached
18 females
14 males
22 girl youth
27 boy youth



PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: JULY—OCTOBER 2010

A project partnership with the Western Cape Network on Violence against Women.

This project was initiated by the Network and uses a social mobilization strategy for communities to realize that violence is never justified and that they have the power within themselves to stop violence in their community. The training program consists of two 90 minute awareness raising sessions and is aimed at allowing community members to think differently about violence against women and target the stereotypes and traditional

mind-sets about men and women, relationships and violence. The project also includes the encouragement of the community to act differently towards violence against women and to allow them to take action to stop the scourge which runs rampant in our communities.

This project achieved its mandate and inspired action against abuse as participants made use of various community and media platforms to raise awareness. The project also inspired the creation of community groups and resulted in REACH being able

to provide support and intervene in cases of abuse

The groups came up with some interesting activities. One group participated in an open mic event in Mbekweni talking about violence against women. Another group came up with hip hop songs and slogans stating that violence in the community is not acceptable. This group named themselves Young Generation in Action. Another group held community dialogues with others in their community to raise awareness about violence against women. One of the

groups that attended the workshop was also invited by the Radio KC in Paarl to hold a discussion on violence against women. The group from New Rest realized that one of the greatest barriers to women leaving abusive relationships is their financial dependence on their partners. They want to start a bakery and each person contributed R50 to the start up capital of this venture.



Beneficiaries reached
1st round: 128 people
2nd round: 65 people



Campaigns

To develop sexual harassment and violence against women campaigns

CHANGING THE RIVERS FLOW DIALOGUES: JUNE, JULY & OCTOBER 2010

The Changing the Rivers Flow project encompassed two sets of community dialogues – one for Avondale and the other for the community of Mbekweni.

The programme for the dialogues covered the concepts of Culture, Gender, GBV, HIV and AIDS and attempted to identify and explore the harmful cultural practices that were practiced in the community and how these could be changed. The dialogues ran over a period of four days – the first day catering exclusively for women, the second for men, and the third day catered for two sessions for the youth – a session in the morning for the girl child

and a session in the afternoon for the boy child. The final day brought together all the participants from the previous three days and commenced with a play that depicted all the issues that had been raised throughout the dialogue. The aim was to unpack all the issues and find possible solutions from the perspective of the community.

Community dialogues were received with much enthusiasm and participation from the community. The majority felt that they could make their communities better places and some good ideas and methods for change emerged from the process. The community seemed to

take ownership of the issues in the community and displayed a keen willingness to change. The hope for change was very inspiring and indicated a keen energy and motivation to do the work required for change on the part of the community. The following provides more in-depth descriptions of the individual dialogues:

In Mbekweni there was much debate about the connection between culture, violence and HIV and AIDS. Participants felt that the connection only lay when culture was not practiced correctly e.g. the traditional practice of circumcision and the increase of HIV infection. Others thought there



CTRF Dialogues

“It [the dialogue] was very good for me I can now inspire other people.” (participant, Avondale Dialogues)

“I feel in my heart that I will [now] respect the opposite sex.” (participant, Avondale Dialogues)

“I enjoyed [the dialogues] and would love to see more of this in our community even in other issues like crime” (participant, Mbekweni Dialogues)

“They [REACH] have shown that once again together we stand.” (participant, Mbekweni Dialogues)



Beneficiaries reached
Mbekweni: 64 females, 40 males, 60 youth

Avondale: 15 males, 18 females and 42 youths

CHANGING THE RIVERS FLOW DIALOGUES CONTINUED

was no connection – it was people not culture that increased the spread of HIV as one participant stated **“culture have [sic] no effect on spreading HIV. It is people whom [sic] are stubborn.”** Women raised their concerns that parenting is seen as their responsibility – fathers are not encouraged to be active participants in the family. Men go to work if employed and spend the rest of their time in shebeens. Many parents do not monitor and supervise their children sufficiently and failure to communicate with them leads to greater problems in the long-term. Adults felt that children are becoming more modern and westernized – **they’re losing their cultural roots** and they note a general decrease in respect for elders. Others brought up their belief that children are losing respect for their parents as their parents have sex in front of them. Child abuse is also on the increase and often one parent **is aware that it’s happening** but keeps it a secret for fear of the scandal that is associated with it. This has detrimental effects on the children.

The youth raised being ill informed and unprepared for the consequences of sex. They complained that their parents do not talk to them about sex and most of the knowledge gained has been through television and the broader media. Media generally represents women as sex symbols and presents poor role models for young people to aspire to. Young people also face an enormous amount of peer pressure which results in risky behavior such as drug (particularly Tik) and alcohol usage and unprotected sex. This has led to a general and common devaluation of sex and love – there is no longer an association between being in love and being intimate with a partner. This was highlighted again in the dialogues as

much as it was during one of **the training with CBV’s** who said that it is common to hear that a young girl will have sex with a man as long as he buys her **“a savannah and air-time”** for her phone. Sex today is a commodity – a means to an end. This also brought about discussion that if a girl has not lost her virginity by the age of 16 then she is not popular – **i.e. not in the “in crowd”**.

The community all confirmed that violence against women is a huge problem: rape is common and men abuse women as they lack the ability to communicate with them. The boy youths felt that GBV was a private matter but also admitted to not knowing how to intervene without taking sides. GBV amongst men was also an issue raised amongst the boy youths who spoke of men being laughed at by police when reporting cases of GBV. Community members were also to blame as male victims were seen as wimps in not being able to control their partners.

Assault and violent crime is closely associated with substance abuse which is rife in the community. There are many shebeens in the area (statistically 1 shebeen to every 3 households) and often this becomes the site of crime. Drug abuse is of particular concern especially amongst the youth.

People who are aware of their HIV status are still having unprotected sex with their partners. The community disclosed that many men are having sex with multiple partners and the cultural practice of having multiple wives was linked to HIV. The link between culture, virginity and HIV was highlighted again during the dialogues with the girl youths. One participant **stated “most of the cultures can check whether you are a virgin or not. Many people will be scared and HIV won’t spread”**. **Myths about HIV** are still very prevalent and this increases the stigma associ-

ated to HIV which prevents people from disclosing their status and leading positive lifestyles.

On the final day of the dialogues, there was consensus that culture is not static and that communities need to change with the times. There was acknowledgement that attempting to implement old cultural practices will result in women being vulnerable and boxed within the stereotypical gender roles. More community awareness needs to be created around parenting and parents acknowledged that they need assistance with raising their children as the youth face many challenges. There was also an acknowledgement that when families are worried about survival issues due to the high levels of poverty, parenting and communication become secondary issues. Assisting families who are in the crisis of poverty is very important. Substance abuse and in particular the abuse of alcohol exacerbates the problems of poor families. The participants felt that the community should assist the police in shutting down illegal shebeens. They also felt that the Liquor Act should be enforced and shebeens should not be allowed to operate after a particular time in the evenings. There was a call for more programmes of this kind.

“They [REACH] have shown that once again together we stand.”

In Avondale much discussion was held on the role that culture plays in the lives of farm workers. These included what is now seen as cultural practices amongst coloured farm workers, namely alcohol and drug abuse, promiscuity and domestic violence. Female participants revealed that alcohol abuse was first on their list including the shebeens

that keep people’s wage cards so that their alcohol debt is paid first. This leads to the family not having enough money for food and other basic goods and hence often results in child neglect. Sexual misconduct by men, child abuse, teenage promiscuity, teenage pregnancies, domestic violence and a breakdown in communication and relationships were also cited as factors incited by alcohol abuse. Child prostitution was also cited as a problem and participants stated that poverty and lack of purpose and direction were some of the reasons that led to young girls turning to prostitution. The women felt that they were not equal partners in their relationships with their husbands and felt that they were expected to be subservient to men (as it has been written in the bible).

The men voiced their frustrations and their feelings of feeling neglected and not worthy. They felt that there was a lack of communication and respect in the family and the community did not work together as a whole. The high use of alcohol and drugs was cited as an after effect of having no self worth and no positive vision or future prospects. They also felt that women were now given more rights and opportunities than they could. Despite citing bad relationships with farmers as one of the reasons of their feelings of low self-worth; they also described lack of activities as a strong precursor to alcohol abuse and the link this plays with HIV and GBV.

The youth also rated “nothing to do” as one of their biggest problems. They would like to be more involved in sports but do not have the facilities or the resources. The youth also felt that they did not have a safe place to spend time with their friends and participate in fun activities. The youth no longer have the same strict rules regarding sexuality and sexual relations and behaviour as the adults had when they were children. Drugs and alcohol are also being used at a younger age. The youth feel frustrated in not being able to leave the



CHANGING THE RIVERS FLOW DIALOGUES CONTINUED

farms whereas the older generation accepted this as fact. The girl youth also cited not being respected by their boyfriends – should this not be curbed this will no doubt be another cycle or pattern in their future relationships with men.

The last day brought out some good recommendations. The community agreed that weekend activities would reduce the problem of alcohol and drug abuse. The youth were also vocal about the development of a youth centre where they

could have access to books and computers and a safe space to have some fun. The youth also asked for training on life skills, personal growth, and career counseling while parents suggested parenting skills training and communications workshops as a means of facilitating and improving the communication between parents and children.

Participants wanted she-beens to be held more accountable and recommended that an organization that focuses on safe drinking

would be of value to those already in the cycle of addiction. Participants advocated that they had to stand together and support each other. Violence against women had to become **everyone's problem and not just a private matter.**

<http://www.reach.org.za/projects/making-avondale-a-better-place.html>

<http://www.reach.org.za/projects/making-mbekweni-a-better-place.html>



The 2010 Face of REACH

The launch of the 2010 “Face of REACH” was met with surprise at first. This year REACH had nominated Sydney Johannes. Sydney is a long standing friend of REACH and a CBV. **While he is not REACH's general demographic of its Face of REACH, we felt that it was time we honoured him for all the work he has done for his community. His speech centred on motivating men to also play a role in stopping the scourge of violence against women in their communities.**

Beneficiaries reached
5 communities: 327
females, males and
youth



5TH S.A. RURAL WOMENS DAY “ON TOUR”: 30 NOVEMBER—3 DECEMBER 2010

REACH's self-initiated South African Rural Women's Day (SARWD) campaign is celebrated on an annual basis and serves to raise awareness of GBV while honouring rural women who have made a difference in their community and who can inspire other women to do the same. Each year REACH chooses a “face of REACH” which is usually a phenomenal woman who has triumphed in the face of extreme adversity.

During the 16 Days of Activism REACH took this campaign on a week-long tour reaching 5 communities (Swellendam, Napier, Gansbaai, Grabouw & Villiersdorp). The objective of the tour was to raise awareness of violence against women and children and interlinking factors and to encourage communities to take action. The tour featured an interactive play by a professional drama group from Paarl who focussed on issues of violence against women, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancies, and family communication problems amongst other issues. Community members were able to interact with the characters by asking them questions; debating their actions or reactions; and making suggestions as to how to deal with some of the issues **being raised in their “family”.**

Through debates participants were able to get a further glimpse of how people are affected by these issues and were able to learn from each other through this process. Other motivating speeches were also held and the “face of REACH 2010” was launched in each community.

The tour was very successful. REACH had worked with the drama group before and therefore the actors were well versed on the types of problems that most afflicted communities in farming areas. The play depicted a rural family consisting of a father, mother and son. Each actor began with a monologue on how they felt as that character. While the mother and son remained in their stage positions, the character that played the father drank alcohol while he complained about his life particularly of not being respected by his wife and the farm owner. When he was done, the character who plays the wife talked about how she had devoted her life to the church. She said she **didn't listen to her husband** anymore but had strategies on how to avoid any violence that may be inflicted on her. She was concerned about her teenage daughter who they had sent away to stay with family because she had fallen pregnant after being

raped. When she was done the son spoke about how he hated weekends because that was when his parents would fight. He said that **his father and mother didn't** know how to communicate with each other, nor with him. He described how hurt, sad and confused he **was. He didn't know what to do** and felt that there was no future for him. The play highlighted how the cycle kept repeating and how all these problems led to violence in the home.

Audiences were vociferous in their responses to the drama and frank discussions were held on how violence is accepted and victims judged in the community preventing them from leaving abusive relationships or seeking reprieve from the abuse. They raised their issues around alcohol and how it aggravates the situation of GBV. They highlighted the importance of communication in the family and on community support for victims. Through these events community members came forward to share their experiences – their disclosures were very moving and allowed and encouraged support for them from the other members of the audience. Communities encouraged the need for more events of this nature.

MBEKWENI UNITE AGAINST ABUSE: MARCH—SEPTEMBER 2011



"Stop women abuse and stop raping children and older men that's spreading HIV to children and stop selling drugs in the community and parents must stop eating children's grant because children end up in Jails because they want food to eat."

"She is HIV positive and doesn't work and lives with her abusive partner and is dependent on him"

"Her husband is abusive when he is drunk and takes his money to the shebeen"

"She lost control over her kids due to the TIK. Her children are trying to join a gang. They don't respect her anymore."

"She has two children but

Beneficiaries reached
49 females, 23 males
trained as CBV's

2402 community
members supported by
CBV's during door-to-
door campaigns



In March 2011 REACH applied to the Foundation for Human Rights for a project called "Mbekweni Unite". The project had been earmarked after REACH had spent more than a year doing work in the Mbekweni Community, a township on the outskirts of Paarl. The project conducted revealed the high incidences of human rights abuses in this community as well as the prevalence of substance abuse, HIV, poverty, unemployment and crime. The community dialogues and door-to-door campaigns conducted by REACH's Community Based Volunteers revealed that more interventions were needed in this community.

The Mbekweni Unite project aimed to further explore some of the key issues facing this community and what they believed needed to happen to circumvent these problems. Our overall goal however was to draw out what the community themselves could do to be free of these human rights abuses and resurrect a better Mbekweni community. Our focus would provide awareness of gender based violence, the stigma and the victimization associated with HIV amongst many other issues. The project would entail two main events - one on the 16th of June and another follow-up event on the 16th of July.

The first event was planned to be educative but also fun and participatory. It would include a performance by a drama group that REACH has worked in before and who were well versed on the types of problems affecting REACH's beneficiary communities. The play would allow the audience to interact with the characters, providing a platform for further awareness, discussion and debate.

Participants would then be welcomed to use their creativity to express (via art

work or words) their thoughts and feelings about the issues that were raised and the role they could play to address these issues. Following the group work participants would be invited to nominate 5 main "works of art"/pledges/quotes/slogans (etc) that they felt they could identify with and that could exemplify a plan of action for their community. All participants would then have an opportunity to mark their pledge on a pledge wall which would contain a piece of artwork by a local artist and a slogan against these abuses. This would serve as an everyday reminder to community members of the pledges they had committed to make. The nominated art works/pledges would also serve as a reminder of the event and be used to carry on spreading the message through posters, bags and bookmarks. An event on the 16th of July, called the Pledge Ceremony, would facilitate the distribution of these items.

Local organizations, stakeholders (e.g. police) and CBV's would play a role in the implementation of this project and our goal was to directly reach 500 community members (ages ranging from 16 and older) through the event and to indirectly reach a further 2000.

The event on the 16th of June 2011 was successful in raising awareness of domestic violence, substance abuse, poverty, crime and other issues. The play served as the lead introduction into reflecting how circumstances perpetuate a repetitive cycle that led rise to violence and miscommunication within a family. The play; the dialogues that ensued and the group work achieved its objectives of inspiring community members to pledge their support towards combating some of the key issues facing their communities.

The group work revealed an

overwhelming number of problems affecting their community. Substance abuse, gender based violence, crime, poverty and parenting issues in particular featured as the greatest debilitating factors affecting their community. The participants were quite clear in how they felt these problems could be addressed both within their community through improved service delivery but also calling for intervention from government. Participants agreed that community themselves also had a big role to play.

Each group highlighted how they would play a role in dealing with these issues. After careful consideration it was decided that the pledge wall would be revealed at the follow-up event.

The pledge ceremony on the 16th of July 2011 enabled participants to interact with the outcomes of the Youth Day event. Participants were shown a power point presentation which highlighted the majority of what had arisen out of the group work. Participants were encouraged to dialogue further. While the attendance was not as successful at the follow-up event and included a greater number of children than expected, REACH was surprised on how well both the adults as well as the children could address an entire audience and share their experiences of substance abuse in their families and in the community as well as sexual violence against children amongst other issues. At the event bookmarks were handed out to the participants and a framed poster was handed over to the Library in thanks to their support of the project.

Challenges were faced, as is normal with any com-



MBEKWENI UNITE AGAINST ABUSE: MARCH—SEPTEMBER 2011



participant comments

“Stop women abuse and stop raping children and older men that’s spreading HIV to children and stop selling drugs in the community and parents must stop eating children’s grant because children end up in Jails because they want food to eat.”

“There [are] many kids that they copy things that happens at home and there [are] many people that are being raped everyday and they are being hurt and they don’t want to tell even there (sic) mothers because they don’t trust them.”

“In my community...everyday lots of children suffer from lots of things and they chose to go and smoke because of poor things he gets from home and they see from their fathers e.g. father that beat his/her mother because he is drunk.”

“we have to take the responsibility for ourselves so that we can change [and] volunteer in our communities, projects or clinics”.

Beneficiaries reached
364 participants at
first event; 143 at 2nd
event; 1000 + via art-
work, bags, bookmarks



community intervention, and attempts were made to address these challenges.

What was wonderful and initially not anticipated was the development of a partnership between REACH and the Catholic Welfare Development office in Mbekweni. The organization and its representatives played a very important role in not only assisting REACH to plan the action but also through its implementation by serving as facilitators and translators for a community that prefers to speak in their own language. The organiza-

tion has a very good knowledge of the problems affecting the community and played a valuable role in facilitating discussions.

The evaluations that followed both events indicated that participants enjoyed the project; gained insight into the issues raised and some changes had already been enacted. While not all were sure that participants would stick to their pledges they felt it was certainly a step in the right direction. Participants welcomed more interventions of this nature and asked that there be follow-through on the outcome of

this action.

The project was able to reach 364 participants at the first event and 143 at the follow-up event. We are positive that many more beneficiaries will be reached indirectly with the distribution of the bags, bookmarks, posters and by participants sharing with others what they learnt through the event.

The project certainly has highlighted the need to continue this important work which REACH would do if an opportunity arose.



Visit <http://www.reach.org.za> for more info and to view the project DVD.



WOMEN REACH OUT: A REFLECTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & WOMEN'S STORIES OF HOPE

Across 2010 to 2011 REACH has been developing a book of women's stories to highlight the plight of women as they struggle with GBV and other forms of abuse.

its challenges on an individual, social and judicial level. The book therefore also aims to inspire those working with women such as community development workers, women's rights activists and other relevant role-players and stakeholders.

implications of public policy. Joy has published both academic articles and more contemporary pieces in women's magazines and journals. She uses her writing as an agent for social change.

We aim to publish and launch the book in early



While the book was initially aimed to inspire hope for other women living in abusive relationships, as the book progressed we realized that it could play a greater advocacy role by providing more information on violence against women in South Africa and exploring strategies at addressing

The book is being written by the Interim Director of REACH, Claudia Lopes and REACH Chairperson, Joy Watson, who has written extensively on women's rights issues and the gendered



GENDER EQUALITY BILL: MAY 2011—ONGOING

A project partnership with Women on Farms Project and the Western Cape Network on Violence against Women.

participants, representing 64 diverse and inclusive organizations from the Western Cape, Northern Cape and Gauteng, who made the workshop highly successful.

tions followed on how to take the process forward, including the expansion of the coordinating committee called the Gender Advocacy Task Team (GETT). The workshop ended with a clear agreement on the importance of working together and formalising coordination and action amongst participating organizations.

In April, the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities held a national consultation on the draft Gender Equality Bill. This was done so with minimal involvement and consultation with civil society. The Department now plans to roll out provincial consultations. Given the dire situation of women in South Africa and the failure of this department to have fully interacted with civil society in the formulation of such important legislation up to this point, REACH in partnership with Women on Farms Project (WFP) and the Western Cape Network on Violence against Women (WCNVAW) took the lead to create a space for civil society engagement (across various sectors) on this crucial issue.

The workshop commenced with discussions on what gender equality actually means. Participants also discussed the advances and rollbacks for women and other sex/gender minorities in South Africa, since 1994. While there was an acknowledgement of advances, inclusive of a paradox of progressive legislation on gender equality in South Africa, participants identified many more remaining challenges inclusive of the high incidences of sexual and domestic violence against women and children; hate crimes against lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex persons; and unequal working conditions between women and men.

GETT comprises of representatives of the Community Law Centre; Gender Dynamix; Intersex South Africa; New World Foundation; Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce and the Women's Legal Centre, held several meetings to discuss the workshop outcomes and strategize the way forward. There was an overwhelming feeling that a follow-up session was required with all participants who attended the workshop.

On the 12th of May, REACH, WFP and WCNVAW, supported by Heinrich Böll Stiftung and Oxfam Canada, held a workshop for Civil Society on the Department for Women, Children and **Person's with Disability's** proposed legislation in the form of a Gender Equality (GE) Bill.

With this in mind, participants were challenged to identify whether South Africa did in fact need a Gender Equality Bill. There was by in large a collective perception that the Bill had the potential to further the aims of gender equality but took heed of some of the gaps/shortcomings and challenges that needed addressing prior to the development of the bill. Various sugges-

This follow-up workshop took place on the 22nd of June 2011 and served to establish 5 commissions focusing on legal/advocacy; media; public education; communication with the department and funding each with their own plans of action and time-frames.

Nominated commission representatives now sit on GETT.

"While most understood gender as a set of behaviours and attitudes based on social constructs and equality as equal achievement in relation to rights, services and opportunities, others exclaimed the need to broaden the definitions of gender equality and additional time was spent on brainstorming what this definition would look like."

"The Committee has also drafted a letter to the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities to communicate the outcome of our workshop and make arrangements for the official provincial engagement. No response was received."

Beneficiaries reached
Workshop 1: 84 participants representing 64 organizations



Workshop 2: 43 participants



Special Projects/Events

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE: MARCH—MAY 2011

REACH was approached by a large and national company to assist with the provision of sexual harassment training in the workplace. This was a result of incidences of sexual harassment having taken place within one of their departments. REACH commenced with a baseline study and interviewed 51 of the 64 employees that worked within the department. The baseline study was used to provide management with some insight into the mindsets of their employees and to establish the extent and nature of the problem within

the department. The study revealed some important information. Even though the company had a sexual harassment policy in place, this had done little to change the attitudes, and mindsets of employees. As the department is dominated by male employees, pornography in the workplace was seen as acceptable. The study also revealed that while most employees knew of the policy few knew how to access systems to report incidences when they occurred. The baseline study motivated strongly for the need for training on gender and sexual

harassment in this department.

On the 3rd of March REACH commenced the first of 8 full-day workshops on sexual harassment and rape to be conducted for ACSA.

A report on the outcomes of the workshops completed and ending on the 31st of May, recommended key strategies for the company to take on including the provision of sexual harassment workshops for all departments particularly upper management.



Special Events in 2010

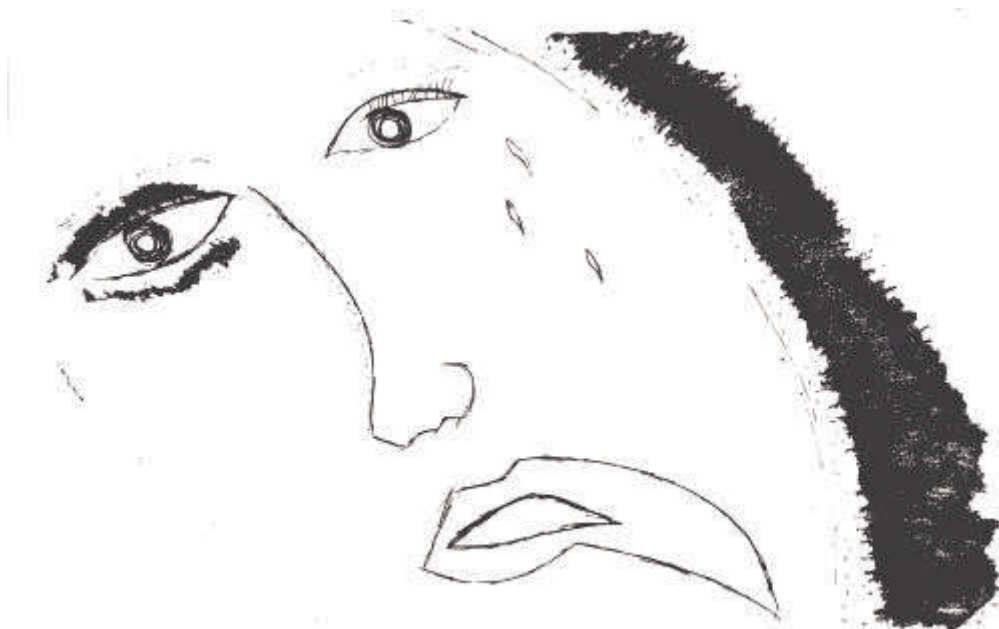
REACH AGM: May 2010

"I am writing to thank you for hospitality and to congratulate you on a successful AGM (and celebration of your fifth year in action). I was very impressed with your team, and your leadership at the event. I feel that you had a very good response from the community, and could sense the pride of the CBVs and Counsellors who took part in the meeting. Keep up the good work- I am happy and proud to have REACH as a partner of SAFAIDS."

(Sara Page, Deputy Director of SAFAIDS)

Women's Day Event: 9 August 2010

This event was hosted by a group called OutREACH formed after attending REACH's awareness raising project in Buffeljagsrivier. This group recognizes the high incidences of violence against women, child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, unemployment and social welfare problems in their community and are striving toward the development and empowerment of a healthy community free of violence against women and children. The committee acts as a voice piece for the community and collaborates with other organisations and forums to make Buffeljagsrivier a safer place. This group already sits on the Community Policing Forum and have taken the lead in organizing some community events and violence against women training. REACH is mentoring this group and is seeking funds to implement a project that will provide capacity building for this group and provide overall support to Buffeljagsrivier.



CHANGING THE RIVERS FLOW GALA: 4 DECEMBER 2010

Marking the final day of REACH's activities during the 16 Days of Activism, REACH held a celebratory Gala in Paarl. The Gala not only served to celebrate and give recognition to all of the CBV's hard work, passion and dedication to this project; to REACH and to their community but also to advocate for the eradication of GBV and the spread of HIV and AIDS. Each CBV trained received a certificate but those who went the extra mile were given a certificate of recognition and a small

gift of appreciation.

Time was also set aside on the programme to commemorate the women and children who have lost their lives as a result of violence and abuse and a candle ceremony was held in their remembrance. This ceremony was then followed by a call for pledges from the audience on what their commitment would be toward eradicating GBV in their community.

Carrying on this theme, the audience was also intro-

duced to REACH's website and an online poll, to assess whether a law on sexual harassment was needed in South Africa, was done. 100 % of guests agreed that it was.

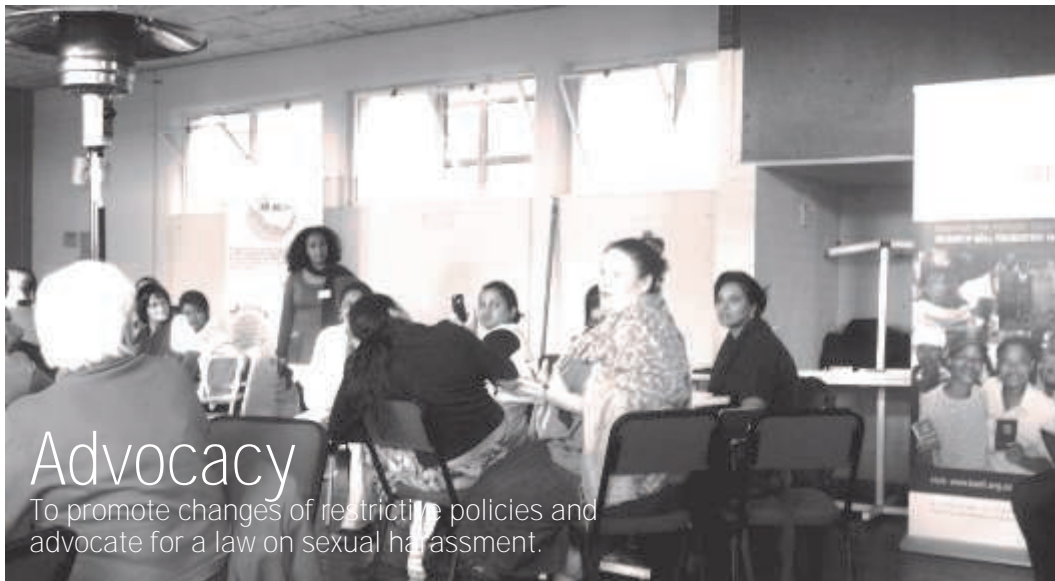
Guests were treated to a three course meal and entertained by a local Cape Town artist who graced the event with inspiring poems and songs about the plight of women in South Africa and performances by a youth dance group.



CTRF Gala Pledges

"I will be available to my community", said one CBV, "two weeks ago a girl was raped by 4 men and I went with her to the police - as children of god we need to reach our communities. We must help one another. Get involved in the community! People need you".

Another guest said "I want to make a difference - where I live people are high and mighty and don't care about others. They're not there for others. I am the only one in the community that goes out even if it is 2 or 3 in the morning. I go alone - I am a woman. I am not scared. I have a sjambok - you must see how men run away when they see me. In my community there's lots of rape and theft but if I come out then their hearts must beat".



Advocacy

To promote changes of restrictive policies and advocate for a law on sexual harassment.

SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENT - PROTECTION FROM HARASSMENT BILL

A project partnership with the **Women's Legal Centre** REACH makes use of its experience with working in farming communities to make submissions to Parliament about the need to review and/or implement policies geared to the protection of women.

In October 2010, REACH in partnership with the **Women's Legal Centre** presented a submission on the Protection from Harassment Bill to the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development. REACH made use of this opportunity to endorse the bill but at the same time cautioned the legislative system to not allow the same failures to take place as it had and continues to have with the DVA particularly within its implementation in rural

farming areas. REACH made use of examples where women in farming areas were unable to sufficiently access and/or be protected from abuse by the state (be it the courts or the police or both) and the consequences that it holds for her emotional, psychological and physical well-being and her economic livelihood. **REACH's submission** also made some key recommendations to circumvent some of these failures such as the establishment of specialized/circuit courts in farming areas that specifically address domestic violence and harassment; as well as stricter enforcement of the law and accountability by the police.

The Protection from Harassment Bill was signed by President Zuma on the 2nd

of December 2011.

To download the submission please go to: <http://www.reach.org.za/advocacy.html>

REACH's future advocacy strategy is to conduct research on the extent and nature of sexual harassment within a South African context and a review of the current legislative framework.



Beneficiaries reached
111 participants



<http://www.reach.org.za/special-events/changing-the-rivers-flow-gala.html>



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 amazing people
 and join our
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 Sydney Johannes

Tel: +27 (0)21 638 7024
 Outreach: +27 (0)79 8890289
 Fax: +27 (0)86 529 5183



1 Fernwood Avenue
 Newlands
 7700
 Cape Town, South Africa

Email: info@reach.org.za

Website: www.reach.org.za