The National Namibian Men Against Violence Against Women Conference tackled issues such as the experiences of men and women, linking manhood and violence. Speakers talked about African manhood, dealing with feelings of anger and frustration, and the economic, social and political impact of VAW and the legal position of women in Namibia. The discussions at the Conference attempted to raise and deal in a non-confrontational way with some of the fears and issues men encounter in their struggle to be part of the movement against violence against women.

By the end of the Conference, men from every region in Namibia had committed to a plan of action, which they felt was measurable and implementable. Participants also decided to establish a national steering committee that would monitor and provide support to regional initiatives. Namibian Men for Change (NAMEC) emanated from this Conference, and has been supported by and situated within the Legal Assistance Centre.

NAMEC operates as an awareness-raising group among young adult men on issues such as masculinity, relationships, parenthood, sexual abuse and the promotion of a non-violent culture in Namibia.

NAMEC has an outreach approach and according to Abdullah Hussein Mwakembeu, Chairperson of NAMEC, it does not aim to isolate men and boys who commit violence and other forms of abuse against women and children. It works with men in a way that challenges their patriarchal assumptions and privileges, whilst reaching out with respect and compassion.
**CHALLENGE**

A key challenge for the organisation has been its lack of financial resources. Yet, NAMEC has been able to achieve a significant degree of awareness-raising during its brief period of existence.

**SUMMARY**

This case study highlights the usefulness of a national Conference that enables men to share histories, stories, frustrations, fears, ideas, models and commitment within a structured process. The Conference consolidated a men's movement in Namibia and established further structures around which to organise men. Preconceptions were broken down, and men were empowered to act within a new dynamic.

The Conference report highlighted the usefulness of working within small groups. While speakers told stories and gave ideas and models, the most useful work was done within facilitated group sessions. These structured formats enabled men to open up to one another in a contained environment, and connect with each other's experiences.