

# SPEAK

JUNE 1994

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No.61



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**TSEPO KHUMBANE**

**For the love of the land**





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*We sadly say goodbye to Phumla Baloyi and Jacqui Mathabe and wish them all the best in their new jobs. Their contributions to SPEAK are greatly appreciated.*

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**Please note:** SPEAK will be moving offices. We will inform you of our new physical address in the next issue of SPEAK

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### COVER PHOTO:

Elmond Jiyane

## COMMENT

On April 27 and 28, millions of South African women went to cast their vote for a new, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

Women made some gains in getting their issues included in the policies of political parties. Many argue this was only to get women to vote for them.

In February this year, the 18-month campaign of the Women's National Coalition ended with the drawing up of the Women's Charter. This charter is the voice of the common experiences, visions and aspirations of South African women. It will be presented to the Constituent Assembly in June to influence the new constitution and Bill of Rights. If accepted, there will certainly be changes in the legal status of women. But it will not be easy. So far, none of this has been welcomed with open arms. Women had to force open the doors and will have to continue fighting hard to make their voices heard in the new government.

The women's movement faces many difficulties and challenges. Many strong women are going to parliament while others will be involved in other levels of government. This could weaken the women's movement if it does not continue organising as before. The situation of women, as with all South Africans, will not change overnight. But women must make sure the new government and society lives up to the promise of building a non-sexist South Africa.

# Talk Back

## Request for addresses

I am a childcare worker at Tsosoloso Place of Safety in Soshanguve in Pretoria.

I read with great interest your stories on Lavonia Pule, the soccer player, and Hilda Papo, in a much earlier issue of SPEAK. They really present themselves as role models for young people. It is for this reason that we would like them to visit our centre and meet with the children who live there.

We feel that, by doing so, they will be able to encourage the children to take up the challenge of doing something different.

Thank you SPEAK for a job well done.

*Khashane Stephen Malatji  
Pretoria*

**We will certainly ask them to get in touch with you. — Editor**

## WNC celebration

I am delighted to report that a very successful celebration of the South African Women's Charter on March 8 (International Women's Day) took place in Washington DC, United States of America.

The event saw US women leaders stand in solidarity with South African women and salute their achievement in creating a Women's Charter which demands full equality in a new democratic, non-racist and non-sexist South Africa.

I send South African women all my best wishes and will be

**Thanks to all our readers who have written in. Please keep your letters flowing. We are often forced to shorten letters because of space. Send your letters to:  
SPEAK  
PO Box 261363  
Excom 2023  
Johannesburg  
South Africa**

thinking of you.

*Rachael Kagan  
Women's Project Co-ordinator*

**We are glad to hear your event was successful and appreciate all the support you have given South Africans, especially women, over the years. — Editor**

## Offensive advert

Our attention was brought to an advertisement which was placed on the windshield of one of our members cars recently.

It advertises a topless bar called "The Silent Woman", said to be the "ideal venue for businessmen". We found this advert very offensive.

At a time when women are trying all they can to claim their rightful place in society, the way women are still being treated is quite shameful and

annoying.

We live in a violent society with very little respect for women. South Africa is said to have the highest incidence of rape in the world and that is nothing to be proud of.

We therefore register our strongest objection to marketing tactics which both humiliate and are threatening to all women.

*VISIONS — Group of concerned young women  
Auckland Park*

**We support your call for an end to advertisements that are offensive and threatening to women. We encourage you to continue this campaign by involving other organisations who hold similar views. Good luck! — Editor**

## Thank you SPEAK

As a regular reader of SPEAK, I now regard myself as a new and full woman. The new laws in our constitution will improve my life.

The story that touched my heart was the one on partner or wife battering. I was a victim of partner battering and I did not know who to turn to.

I am glad that, just before our historic elections, the law has been amended to help women.

Let us hope the new government of national unity will fight for women's rights.

*Flora Tlhabanelo  
Bertsham*

**The new laws will only be effective if women are informed about them. Political parties should keep the promises they made when they campaigned for women's votes. — Editor**

## Congratulations Gcina Malindi

Please allow me to commend Mr Malindi on his insight and compassion with regards to the abortion debate.

My hopes for South Africa as a truly democratic, non-sexist country increased when I read his well-informed opinion.

As a South African living in Swaziland, I was forced to go to England to have an abortion. Fortunately, I could afford to do this.

I feel sorry for the thousands of South African women who either settle to have unwanted babies or suffer due to unsafe backstreet abortions.

The decision to end pregnancy is difficult enough without pro-lifers passing judgement on you.

Congratulations to SPEAK for being brave enough to tackle this sensitive issue.

*Priveleged Progressive  
Swaziland*

**We would like more of our readers to get involved in the debate. Write to us and tell us how you feel. — Editor**

## Too many child moms

The article on teenage pregnancies in your April issue explains why we have all these child mothers in our society.

However, I feel that the cause of this social tragedy is the attitude of women health workers such as nurses at family planning clinics. Teenage girls are afraid to go to clinics because nurses harass them.

They behave the way the police do when attending to a rape victim. Health workers say things like: "So you are doing it too? When teenagers get a

reaction like this, they are discouraged from going back to these clinics.

SPEAK and other women's magazines should write about these health workers who should be working to empower women and not scare them away.

*Rosy Mahlobo  
Soweto*

**This is a problem many SPEAK readers experience. Family planning clinics are there to serve all women, no matter how young you are. Young women must not let these health workers scare them. They should challenge them. — Editor**

## WINNERS!

★ **The lucky winner of the Radio/Cassette player Competition is Rebecca Nkosi - Shongwe Mission**

★ **Lena Mathangana of Krugersdorp and DL Mofokeng of Bethlehem are the lucky winners of our camera competition**

★ **The winner of the Matla Trust Radio competition is Guy Dlamini of Empangeni**

★ **The winners of the SPEAK T-shirt competition are:**

1. J.N. Sibiyana — Spruitview
2. Maud Tshabala — Germiston
3. Josephine Mphana — Stilfontein
4. PC Boshomane — Potgietersrus
5. Neo Botlhoko — Warrenton
6. M. Dyonase — Stutterheim
7. David Skosana — Thabane
8. Monica Mgxekwa — Sterkspruit
9. Jonas Matlou — Chuenespoort
10. Nkosentsha Nyakaza — Umtata

*Congratulations to all our winners.  
Your prizes are in the post*

# Kwa-Sophie

## Lack of education is like castration?

Here's a comment sent through by the loony, lefty and loyal editor of Work in Progress, Chris Vick, after attending a conference in Cape Town:

A retired former International Press Institute president, pointing out how bad education in South Africa is, said: "Bantu education castrated the people of South Africa. It is up to us to restore their manhood."

It seems to me this man needs some lessons, not only in non-sexism, but also in where Biology stops and Her/History begins.

## South Africa's new fashion

I want to share with you a letter written in the Daily News by Stella Hlongwane from Durban:

"I note with amusement and a touch of sadness that you whites spent about one million rand to educate us black women how to dress properly at the beach.

Now, a few years later, you whites are doing the very thing you taught us to stop. We blacks get dressed while you whites get undressed!" Wow, what a fashion statement. Stella, maybe this has something to do with the new South Africa.



## Make sure you are the mother!

Now here's one you will really like. (Let's all thank my co-worker JM for this one):

When a friend of hers fell pregnant, she could not bring herself to tell her father.

Finally, the pregnant woman decided she had no choice. Sooner or later he would notice — its hard to hide a pregnancy sometimes. Well, the response she got from her father was one even I would not expect. He said: "Don't worry. I'll take you to a doctor for a blood test — just to make sure it is your baby." Do you think, dear reader, women would mind tests to prove if they are the mother or not?

---

## Quote of the Month

The real challenge for women in South Africa, like in Namibia, lies in the creation of structures that will act as lobby and pressure groups on governments. We need to ensure that women come first — after elections as well.

— Editorial comment, *Sister Namibia*

# Tsepo Khumbane

## In love with the land



Photo: Rafs Mayet

From a young age, Tsepo Khumbane loved working on the land. Affectionately known as Ma Tsepo to all who know her, Khumbane believes that proper development can only take place once women are given the land they work on. **Thoraya Pandy** spoke to her

**G**ive her a piece of land anywhere, and Tsepo Khumbane will make sure flowers, vegetables and other plants grow on it.

No matter how difficult the conditions, how dry the land, Khumbane will find a way to make it work. Her biggest love, from a very young age, has been working the land.

Khumbane, like the majority of black South Africans, especially rural women, faced many hardships. In 1958 people from her community, Tshukudung, were forcibly removed.

“Our entire social system was broken down. We did not have much, but managed to live off the land. It was the only life we knew. When people were forced off the land, they became very demoralised. They no longer saw the land as a means of survival,” remembers Khumbane sadly.

“But”, she adds, “life had to go on.”

Khumbane later became a social worker but found her work very frustrating. Every day she listened to people’s problems, especially

women's problems. She tried her best to help them.

Social work for Khumbane was not just sitting in an office listening to complaints. "I was going out into the field and finding creative ways of improving the lives of people.

"We organised workshops with women in Bochum around food production and nutrition and other social problems. We would look at different ways of making things better for ourselves," she adds.

Khumbane's style of work attracted many people and soon more and more groups were formed.

"At one point we had 31 village groups. All focused on ways of dealing with problems such as malnutrition and pellagra. These groups gave people a lot of hope but things only got worse," she says.

It was during this time that she decided to leave social work to join the Environmental Development Agency (EDA) as a fieldworker. "More and more people came to see me and I felt I was only raising their hopes. I realised that my work as a social worker did not change peoples' lives, it only gave them false hope."

**K**humbane continued working with groups focusing on health education and vegetable production.

"I have experienced it and I am convinced that, no matter how difficult things are, if you work together, things will work out," she says.

"Even if it is a small piece of land and you produce a little, at the end of the day we all

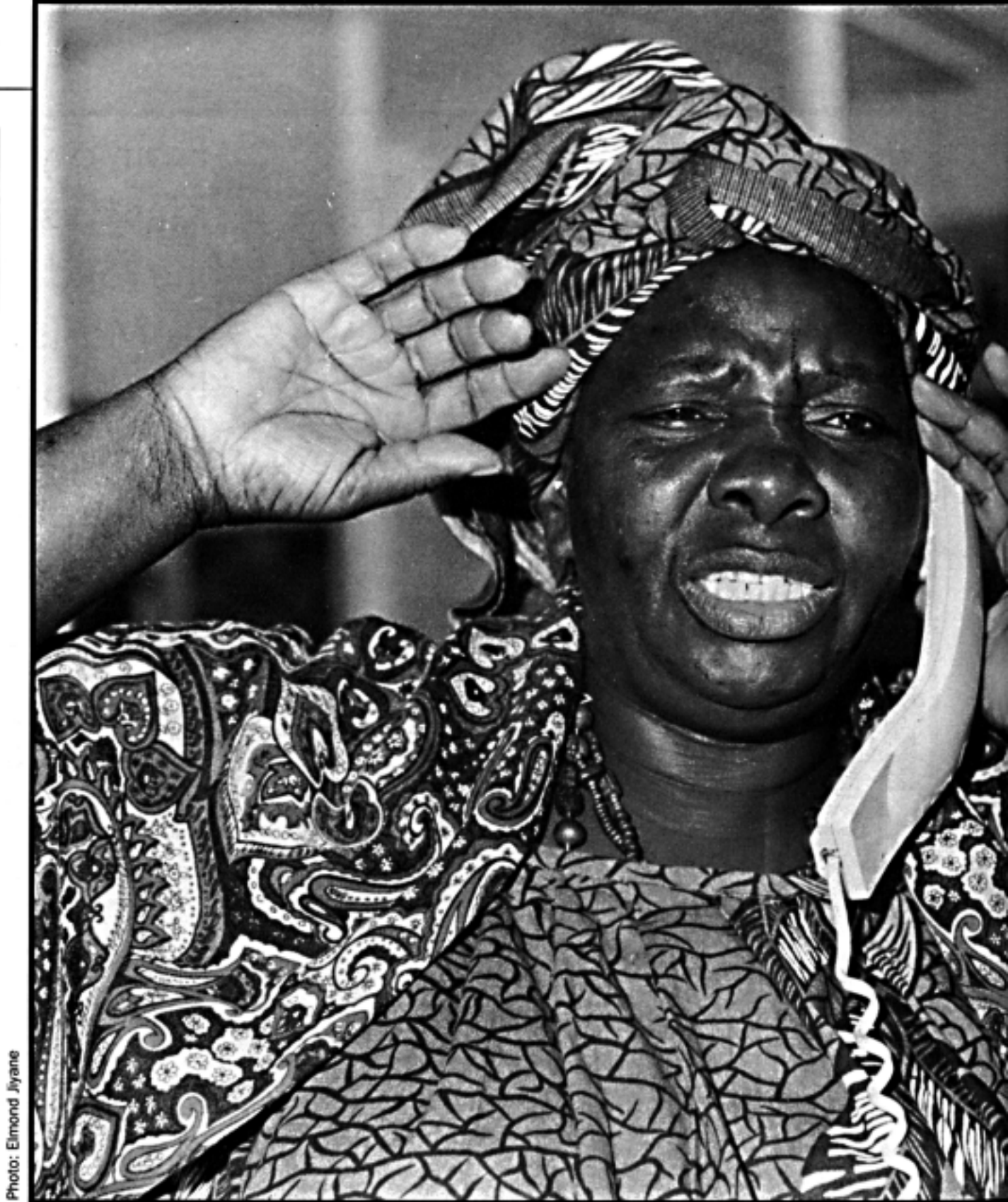


Photo: Elmond Jiyane

have something that we can share. These vegetables can last for a week and that is food on the table," smiles Khumbane.

Her work started in Bochum and spread to other parts of the Northern Transvaal. She laughs as she remembers getting a lift on a donkey cart, borrowing a bicycle or walking to different villages. Today, those groups have continued to survive.

Apart from difficulties such as a lack of resources, some people in the community did not want the groups.

"I cannot understand why people did not support us. Many of the traditional leaders believed that they were the ones who had to deal with the

problems in our community. They saw us as a threat to their power, and because we were successful, they began spreading rumours about us. Some women were even forced out of their homes just because they were producing their own food," adds Khumbane.

The groups did not only produce food. They also tried to address problems such as violence against women, child abuse and so on.

"As groups, we handled cases ourselves. Of course, we could not deal with all the problems, but we did what we could."

Twelve years later, Khumbane is pleased with the work she has done. Today she



**"Customary law has deprived women of the right to own land, yet they are the ones who till the soil. These laws must change and women must be given decision-making powers... Water and land is what we want. It's what we deserve."  
- Tsepo Khumbane**

that did not make me happy. I never stopped gaining skills and one day I said, I am going to work for myself. This monkey, I won't ask him for a cent."

And she did not. Today, Khumbane supports her husband's family. "They have never thanked me for what I have done, but I realise that they depend on me and I won't let them down," she says smiling.

Khumbane says giving women ownership of the land they live and work on is a must.

**"**I usually tell any planner or policy maker that if you don't consider women, you are making a big mistake. Women are carrying South Africa on their backs. They are the ones who made sure their families survived when their husbands working in the towns did not send money home. Women found ways of working together by sharing what they had to make sure they and their children wouldn't go hungry.

"Customary law has deprived women of the right to own land, yet they are the ones who till the soil. These laws must change and women must be given decision-making powers," she says.

"Water and land is what we want," says Khumbane. "It's what we deserve," she adds.

June 5 is Environment Day, SPEAK asked Khumbane what the day means for her: "It's a day to say to policy makers, address the land question. Give us the land, we know how to make it work. We have been making it work for centuries." ★

has been her main source of inspiration since her personal life has not been a very happy one.

"I was born in a village in Soekmekaar and grew up living on the land. We never knew hunger and did everything ourselves. When we were forced off our land, everything broke down. Our social system was completely broken down. No one felt that community spirit any longer because they did not have a sense of ownership."

When Khumbane got married, she tried to build a spirit of community with her husband's clan.

"My husband's family refused to accept my views as a woman. I used to cry everyday because everything I said or believed in was not regarded as important," she remembers.

The clan was living on a farm but, because the land did not belong to them, they had no desire to make it work.

"My husband did not support me either and simply told me to accept their way of life. I was in a polygamous marriage

is mainly involved in skills training of women in different villages. At least, these days, she does not have to borrow a bicycle or beg for a ride on a donkey cart. Khumbane moves from village to village in EDA's white bakkie training different groups of women about the environment, development and managing projects.

**A**lthough she has a busy work schedule, Khumbane makes sure she finds time to work in her garden. "That is where I am the happiest. I can work in my garden for hours and hours and not get tired. As long as I see things growing, I am happy," she smiles.

Khumbane says her work



Pearl Makutoana, who is deaf, speaking in sign language, with her mother, Shirley

# Breaking the silence

**For years disabled people have been discriminated against and their needs ignored. Now they are starting to speak out.**

**By Rosalee Telela**

**T**axis drive past hooting. Children laugh and scream as they play outside. Music booms from several 'ghetto blasters'. The whole block of flats is alive with sound. But, for 17-year-old Pearl Makutoana, the whole

world is silent — she is deaf.

Pearl's home is a small flat in Tshiawelo, Soweto. She lives with her mother, Shirley, two brothers and a sister.

As a young black woman who is deaf, life is not easy.

"People don't know sign

language and expect me to read their lips. I have to try to understand what they are saying," she said. Pearl can read people's lips, but they have to look directly at her and not speak too fast.

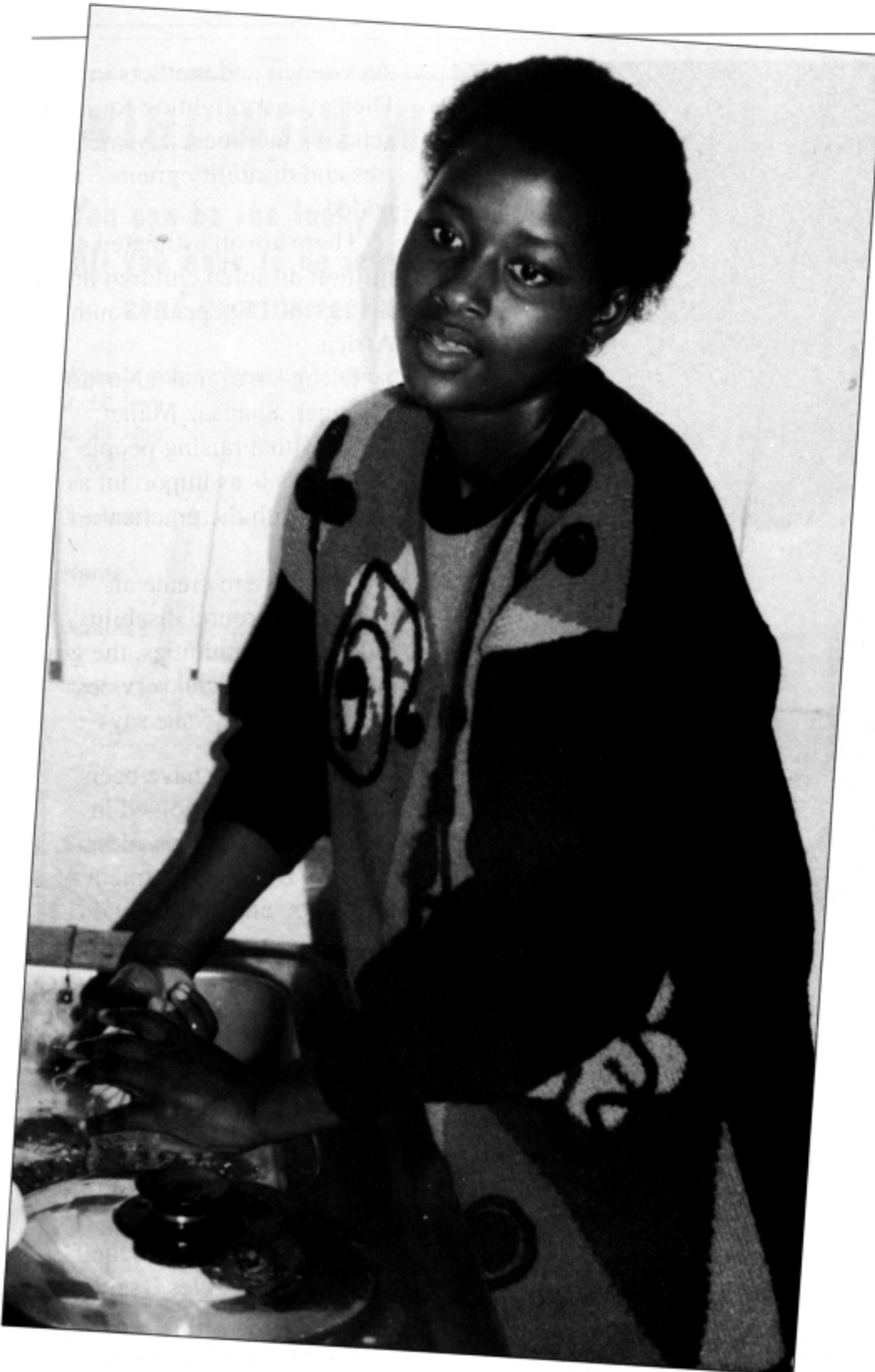
The family tries to avoid leaving Pearl at home alone, not only because she cannot answer the door, but for safety reasons. Many things are made in a way that people with disabilities, whether mental or physical, cannot use them.

At home, Pearl is able to cope. "I get along well with my family, not only because they are close to me, but they also learned sign language," she said.

Only her father is unwilling to learn sign language.

"Papa gets angry when I cannot understand what he is saying," Pearl said.

Photos: Rosalee Telela



Pearl Makutoana washing dishes at home, where she copes well. But outside the home, her life is made difficult by people's impatient and at times even hostile attitude towards her

to learn sign language," Pearl explained.

Most of her friends go to Sizwile (we heard) School for the Deaf where she is doing her Standard Eight.

Although Pearl loves her home and family, she feels more at home when she is at school. "I enjoy going to school because all my friends are there and also, everyone there uses sign language. I don't have to struggle to understand what people are saying," she said.

She hopes to work with computers or teach sign language when she finishes school.

**I**t was not easy for Pearl's mother, Shirley, to accept her daughter's disability. She did not understand what caused it and believed it could have been her fault.

"When I was pregnant with Pearl, a car smashed into the wall of our bedroom. I think the shock could have caused it," Shirley said.

However, when Pearl was a baby, the clinic told her the baby was fine.

Shirley, who is a teacher, discovered that her child was deaf when she stopped talking at the age of three.

Shirley, sometimes struggles to communicate with her daughter through sign lan-

Her mother and father are going through a divorce and she only sees him when she and the other children visit him.

**B**ut outside her home, Makutoana's life is made difficult by people's attitude towards her disability.

"If I go to the shops, I have to take someone who can talk for me because shopkeepers

get impatient and angry with me. In the street, boys and men talk to me and, when I do not respond, they say nasty things," she said.

Although she usually ignores them, it hurts her.

"I don't like what they do. This is one of the reasons why I refuse to make friends with people who do not want to make even the smallest effort



Shanaaz Majiet and Washeila Sait of the Disabled Childrens' Action Group. Majiet says that raising people's awareness is as important as dealing with practical needs

guage. "When Pearl was still young, one of the schools she went to encouraged her to read lips. As a result, I did not learn to sign as quickly as I should have."

Mothers of disabled children often have a hard time.

Washeila Sait, national projects co-ordinator of the

Disabled Childrens' Action Group (Dicag), said: "A woman who has a child with a disability is discriminated against because she is the one who is blamed."

"In the end, it is the woman who is left with the child. She has to fight for the child to be recognised as any other child.

As women and mothers in Dicag we are fighting for more schools, facilities, daycare centres and disability grants," she added.

There are an estimated 4.5 million disabled children under the age of 15 years in South Africa.

Dicag's national advocacy manager, Shanaaz Majiet, believes that raising people's awareness is as important as dealing with the practical needs.

"We have to create an awareness around disability with our communities, the government, the social services and the parents," she says

**"W**e have been involved in negotiations with the DET (Department of Education and Training) on education for children with disabilities."

Dicag aims to safeguard the survival, protection and development of children with disabilities.

"We are not a service provider. We aim to empower the parents so they can take up the needs and issues of their children themselves," said Majiet.

The organisation has daycare centres in the eight regions where it operates.

"In most daycare centres, parents are teachers as well as caregivers. They are trained in areas such as childcare, education and how to keep centres going through more training and fundraising," said Majiet. ★

● The Disabled Childrens Action Group can be contacted at this telephone number: (021) 448 4980

# WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

You can be the lucky winner of a wonderful camera. All you have to do is answer the question below and send your correct entry to **SPEAK** magazine.

When is International Environment Day? (See pages 5-7). Is it on:

- a. 16 June
- b. 26 June
- c. 5 June

Answer .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

..... **Postal Code** .....

**Send your entry to:** SPEAK Camera Competition  
 PO Box 556  
 Johannesburg  
 2000

**Competition rules:** The decision of the judges is final. This competition is only open to people living in Southern Africa. Employees and relatives of employees of SPEAK are not allowed to enter. The closing date is 13 June 1994. The winner will be announced in the August issue of SPEAK.

*South African*  
**LABOUR  
 BULLETIN**

*South African*  
**LABOUR  
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# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

We will be making a change in the next issue of **SPEAK**.

If you spot the difference, you stand the chance of entering one of our biggest competitions.

Yes! **SPEAK** will be giving away a CD player to one of our lucky winners who notice the difference in the July issue.

So don't forget to buy your copy of **SPEAK** and be a winner.

# Strong and single

**Being a single mother isn't easy. And the pressures of tradition make life even more difficult for women who choose to bring up children on their own. By Tendai Dube**



Pics: SPEAK

**W**hen Bertha Zikhali took up a job in another country, she decided to leave her child behind until she was settled in her new job and found a house that was suitable for her and her son to live in.

Zikhali left her four-year-old son with her aunt and did not expect to run into any problems. A month later, Zikhali was shocked to hear that her son's grandparents had tried to

take the child away. They argued that they had the right to take the child because his father was paying maintenance.

Zikhali was so angry she went home to sort the problem out. Although she was aware that they had no legal claim over her son, she talked to her lawyer to find out what the law says about children born to unmarried parents.

Her lawyer confirmed that neither the grandparents nor the

father of the child had a legal claim over the child.

Zikhali is just one of the many single black parents who are treated like people with no rights. In many societies, women are still treated as minors who are not able to make decisions for themselves and their children. Although Zikhali knows her rights, her son's family and society still expect her to run her life as tradition demands.



“Children have to understand why you are a single parent. You must be able to talk with your children and involve them in your plans”

On paper, a lot of progress has been made in fighting for women’s rights and equality, but women continue to have many problems.

Single and divorced mothers still struggle to get child support from their partners or ex-husbands.

**“W**omen should just get their act together. They should not allow their partners, ex-husbands or families to continue dictating how they should run their lives,” says a single mother, Agnes Moyo, of Soweto. Single mothers need to know their rights and be able to fight — for the sake of themselves and their children.

“We have to be good role models for our children.”

Apart from having to cope with financial and emotional demands, single mothers always have to be there for their children.

“Children have to understand why you are a single parent. We live in a world where the ‘ideal’ family is one with both parents. A world where

families laugh, play and cry together. But the reality is different. Our children have to understand that, as a parent, you have chosen to remain single.

“That in itself is a very big challenge. You must be able to talk with your children. Tell them the truth and always involve them in your plans. Let them be part of the decision-making,” she says.

Moyo believes single mothers are still expected to fit in with the traditional extended family set-up. This is a major problem which they have to overcome.

“Half the time we are afraid of being on our own. We hold on to the communal family life as dictated by our culture. We need to break away and be able to live our own lives in the way we want to,” she says.

“If we continue like that, we will never be able to take charge of our lives and those of our children.”

Unlike in the past, today’s woman has choices like where she wants to live, work or send

her children to school.

Moyo says women should make up their minds on what exactly they want. “We still allow men to control our lives. We allow them to come in and out of our lives as they please. This is not right,” says Moyo.

She says, while most women put on a brave face when they are hurt in relationships, “the inner woman is fragile and easy to break”.

**S**he warns that women should not just go into relationships with men without giving it a lot of thought.

“Women need to sort out their priorities, especially after a relationship breaks up. Women should put themselves and their children first.

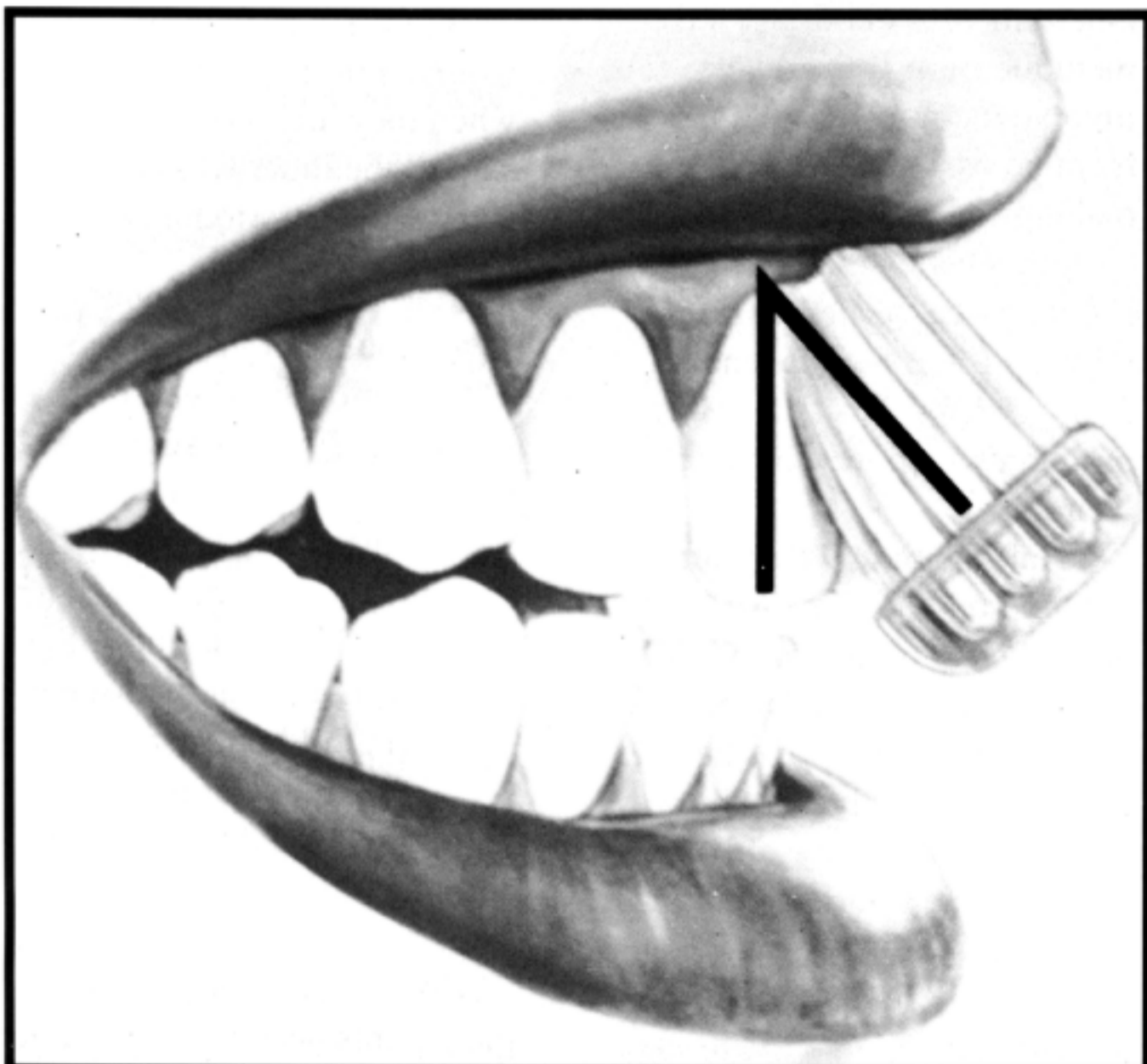
“They are the only ones who can decide their future and that of their children,” she said.

Zikhali and many other single parents need to take charge of their lives. That is the only way they — and their children — can have better lives. ★

# Don't forget the dentist

Tooth decay is a serious health problem. But, because it is not life threatening, most people do not visit the dentist to have their teeth checked.

Like all health sectors in the South Africa, a new dental policy has to be put into place to properly deal with the problem. Some people in health have begun to do this. *Doreen Zimbizi* attended a conference on dental health



**People should drastically reduce the amount of sugar in their diets to avoid tooth decay**

**M**ore than 50 dentists and dentistry workers met in Johannesburg in April to establish needs and work out a programme that will address dental problems, especially within the black community.

The conference debated, amongst other things, making dental health part of primary health care, effective and suitable teaching methods, a sugar policy and fluorinating water (adding fluoride to tap water) and the mouth.

Dental care in the larger, poorer and mostly black communities in South Africa is neglected. There are fewer dentists for blacks than there are for whites.

Much of the country's population suffers dental pain, disability or handicap. Those who go to dentists simply have their teeth removed without dentists considering other options. This attitude, the conference argued, has to change.

"Dentists have a responsibility to explain and to give their patients professional treatment," said one delegate.

The conference said information about dental health had to get to all communities.

"A problem in the promotion of dental health is the abuse of sugar. Sugar, after illegal drugs, tobacco and alcohol, is one of the most addictive substances used by humankind. People have to drastically reduce the amount of sugar in their diets to avoid tooth decay," said another delegate.

Healthy dental habits need to start at an early age. Children run the risk of losing their teeth at an early age.



Baby Bottle Tooth Decay is a leading dental problem in children under three years of age.

The problem begins when a child's teeth are exposed to sugary liquids for long periods. Most liquids children drink, except water, contain sugar. This includes milk, formula, fruit juices and other sweetened liquids such as soft drinks.

Dentists advise that, if you must put your baby to bed with a bottle, fill it only with water. Sucking other liquids for a long time can harm your baby's teeth.

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay causes unnecessary suffering for young children.

When a child is awake, saliva helps wash away sugars and acids in the mouth that cause tooth decay. During sleep, the saliva is reduced. A baby who

is put to sleep with the bottle may not swallow the liquid quickly.

The sugary liquid stays around the child's upper teeth, where it can dissolve into the tooth enamel and cause decay. The longer this happens, the more damage is done.

Tooth decay can develop quickly and cause severe pain.

**A** child's upper front teeth are most likely to be damaged, but others may decay as well. The cost to treat this condition can be very high.

Teeth are in danger of rotting as soon as they come up. To protect a child's teeth from decaying, proper bottle feeding methods must be used.

After each feed, gently clean the baby's teeth and gums with a wet wash cloth or gauze pad. When most of the child's 20 baby teeth have

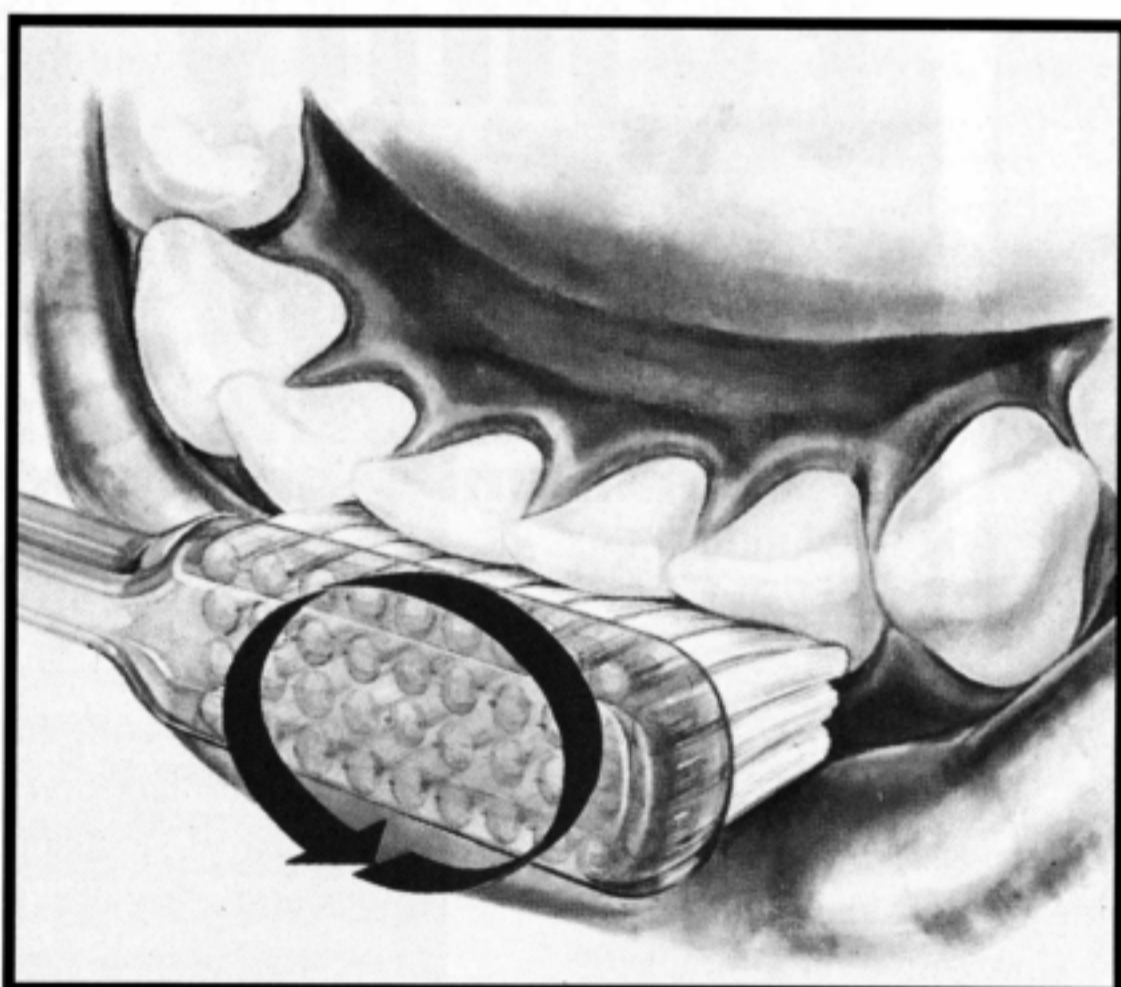
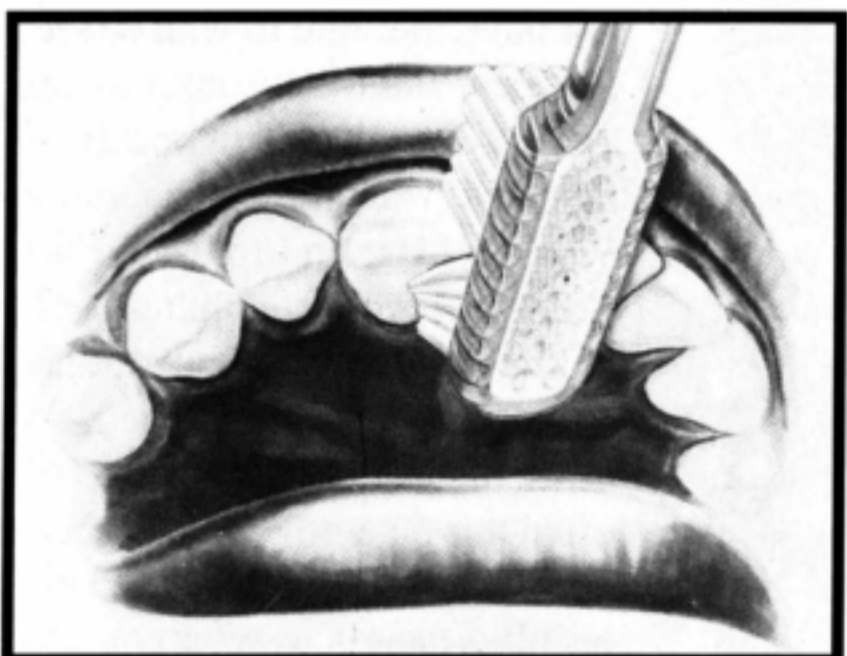
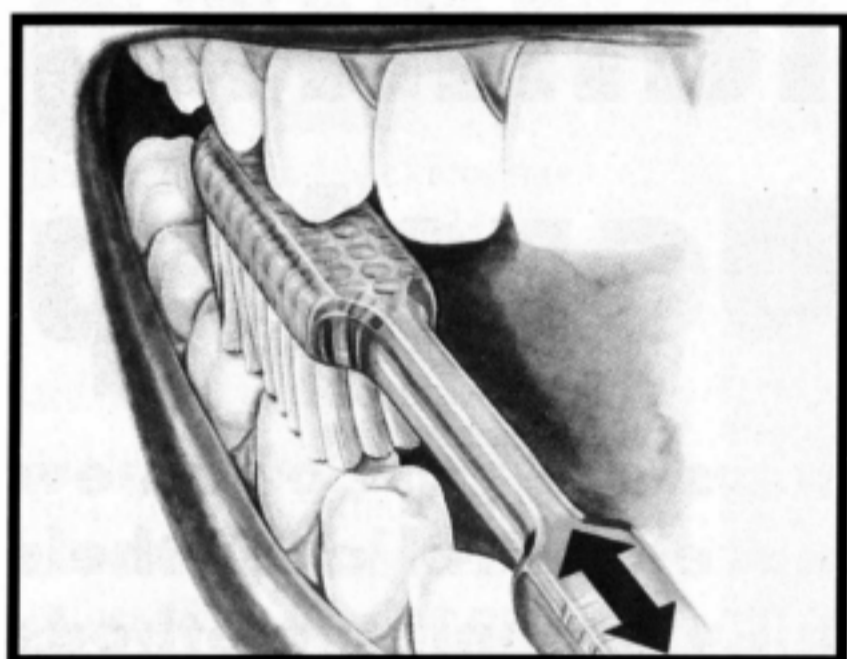
come out, start brushing with a small soft toothbrush and a small amount of toothpaste at least once a day.

Children should have their teeth examined by a dentist by the age of two or three. If, however, a child shows signs of dental problems before that time, take her/him to the dentist.

Another way to prevent Baby Bottle Tooth Decay is to stop bottle-feeding the baby from an early age. Instead, teach her/him to drink from a cup.

It will take a long time before people see dental health as important. The conference concluded that education programmes at all levels of society must take place and that the government should take responsibility for these.

Dental health is a right and not a privilege! ★



**Brushing your teeth regularly is a good way of preventing tooth decay. Brush all the surfaces of the teeth – the biting surfaces (top left), inner surfaces (left) and outer surfaces (above)**



# Family planning on your doorstep

**Community health workers are part of a new plan to give women more control over their bodies and family planning methods**

**S**outh African women have started to speak out about the kind of family planning services they want. In discussion with over a thousand women, the Women's National Coalition found that most women want to take control of their bodies. Women understand that contraception is important if they are to decide when or if to have children.

Many women complained that getting contraception is not always easy. Most services in towns and cities are only open between 8am and 4pm. Working women find it difficult to attend clinics during their working day. In rural areas, mobile clinics may only visit an area once every three months. Queues in these clinics are often long and many women do

not have the time to wait to see the nurse.

In another survey done in the PWV region by the Women's Health Project, women complained that they did not know enough about the different contraceptive methods. Nurses and doctors are often too busy to explain how contraceptives work or the problems some women get

when taking them. Women want more information about contraception so that they can make up their own minds on what is best for them.

One method of contraception that has been used since the early 1960s is the oral contraceptive (the pill). Millions of South African women use pills such as Triphasil, Nordette, Marvelon or Femodene. These pills are known as low-dose pills.

**R**esearch on low-dose pills shows it is a safe method of contraception for healthy women who do not smoke. However, all women using contraception, including pill users, should have medical examinations of their breasts and womb every year.

Many countries have similar problems to South Africa in making contraception available to women. A new solution that has been successful in Zimbabwe, Thailand, Bangladesh and Mexico, has been community distribution of the pill.

Community health workers are trained to educate women and men about contraception, sexually transmitted diseases and the health of mothers and babies. They are also trained to issue condoms and pills.

Before starting a woman on the pill, the community health worker will check that the woman is healthy and that it is safe for her to be on the pill. The health worker will then give the woman a supply of pills and refer her to the clinic for a checkup.

Once the woman has been checked by the local clinic, she can continue to get her pills

from the health worker for the next year. Community health workers also supply condoms to men and women and explain the advantages of using them.

This method of supplying pills within a community is called "Community Based Distribution". The community health workers can move from door to door in the community and get to know their clients well. They are trained to refer women with health problems to the local clinic. They are able to spend more time discussing health issues with men and women in their own homes.

Women are able to get their contraceptives easily and avoid long waits at clinics. Nurses in clinics do not have to see large numbers of healthy women who only want to collect their pills. The nurses' time can be better spent attending to women with health problems or giving healthy women thorough check-ups every year. ☼



These pages have been sponsored by PPASA. The Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa is a national non-governmental organisation working in the fields of family planning, reproductive health and sexuality education. It has branches throughout the country. The telephone numbers of their offices are:

Cape Town: (021) 448 7312  
 Durban: (031) 305 2588  
 Johannesburg: (011) 331 2695  
 Lenasia: (011) 852 3502  
 Port Elizabeth: (041) 34 3001

## Test run in Orange Farm

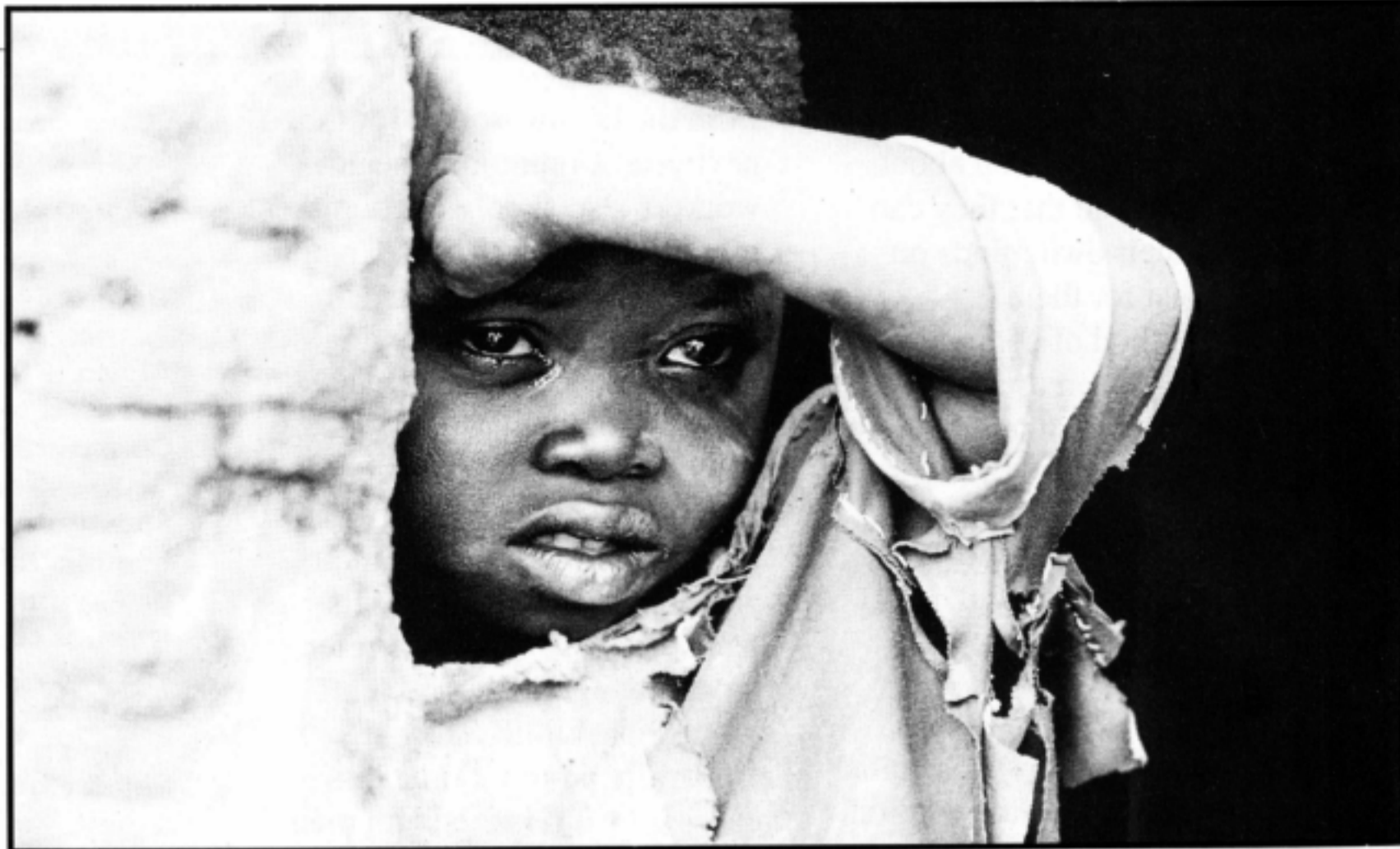
**The Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA) is planning to run a test of Community Based Distribution in the Orange Farm informal settlement area in July this year. This programme will involve trained community health workers who will live in the Orange Farm area.**

**These health workers will be paid a salary, not a payment for the number of people who accept the contraception they distribute. This means the health workers will not be tempted to make people use contraception that may not be right for them.**

**PPASA has been doing education work about mother and child health and sexuality in the Orange Farm area for the past three years. They have good working relationships with community structures, which have been closely involved in planning this Community Based Distribution project.**

**A survey on awareness and attitudes towards contraception and health care is being carried out so that the health needs of the Orange Farm community are properly understood. The information gathered in this study will shape the Community Based Distribution programme and will be shared with all the community organisations.**

**The community will decide which contraceptive programme they want. The community health workers for this pilot project will be chosen by community organisations and co-ordinators of the programme.**



Many children in South Africa are victims of poverty and oppression

Photo: Peter Williams/Wings

# LET CHILDREN BE CHILDREN

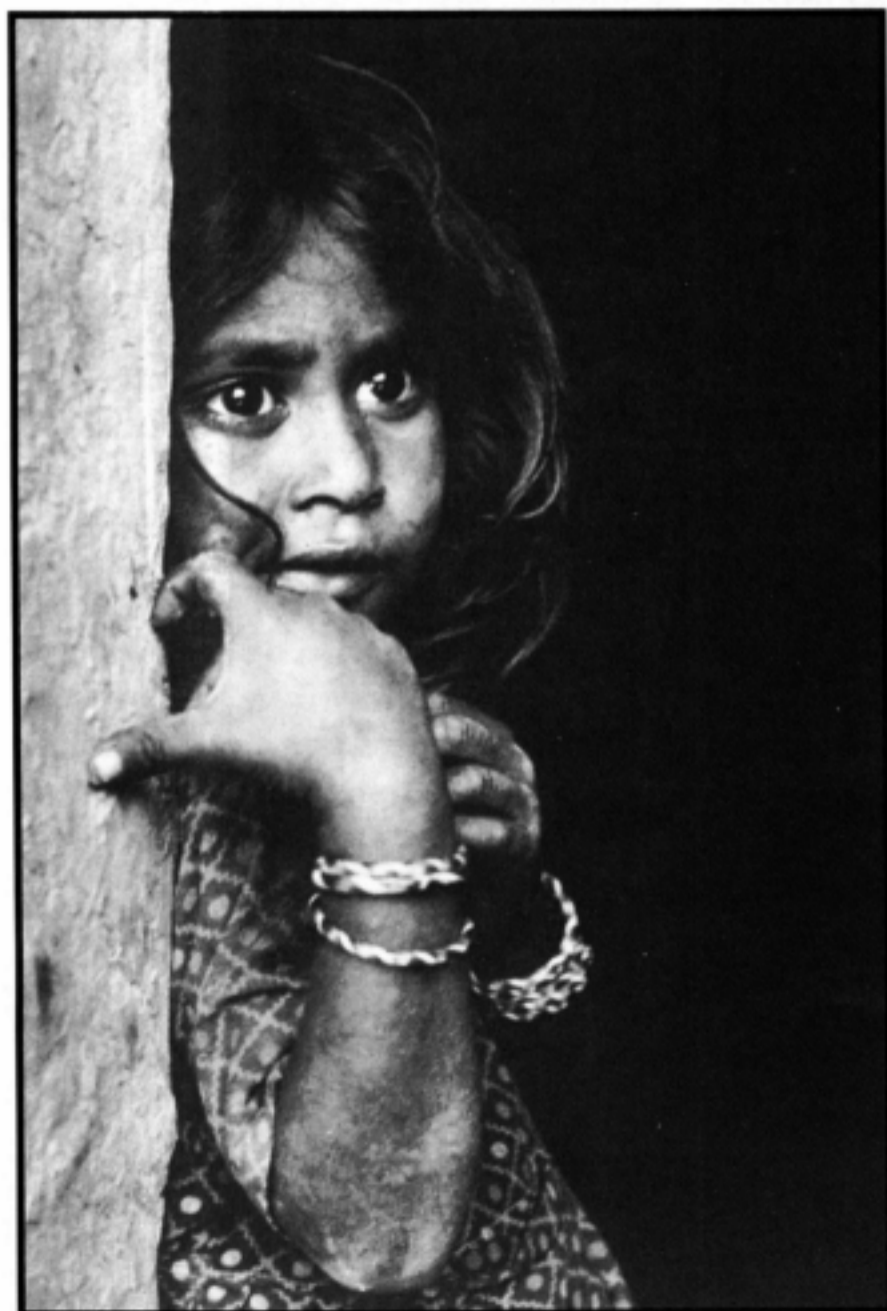


Photo: Claude Sauvageot

**J**une 1 is International Children's Day. Children's lives in South Africa have been shaped by the economic, political and social structure of our society. Many children are victims of poverty, violence, natural disasters, oppression and exploitation. Children are deprived of basic human rights such as health, shelter, child care, education, clean water and proper sanitation.

Our country is in the process of changing from apartheid to a democratic society. This must include the promotion and protection of children's rights. It must ensure the survival, protection and development of all children, irrespective of race, colour or sex.

Let children be children and let them grow up in a society that is caring, loving and safe.



Photo: SPEAK

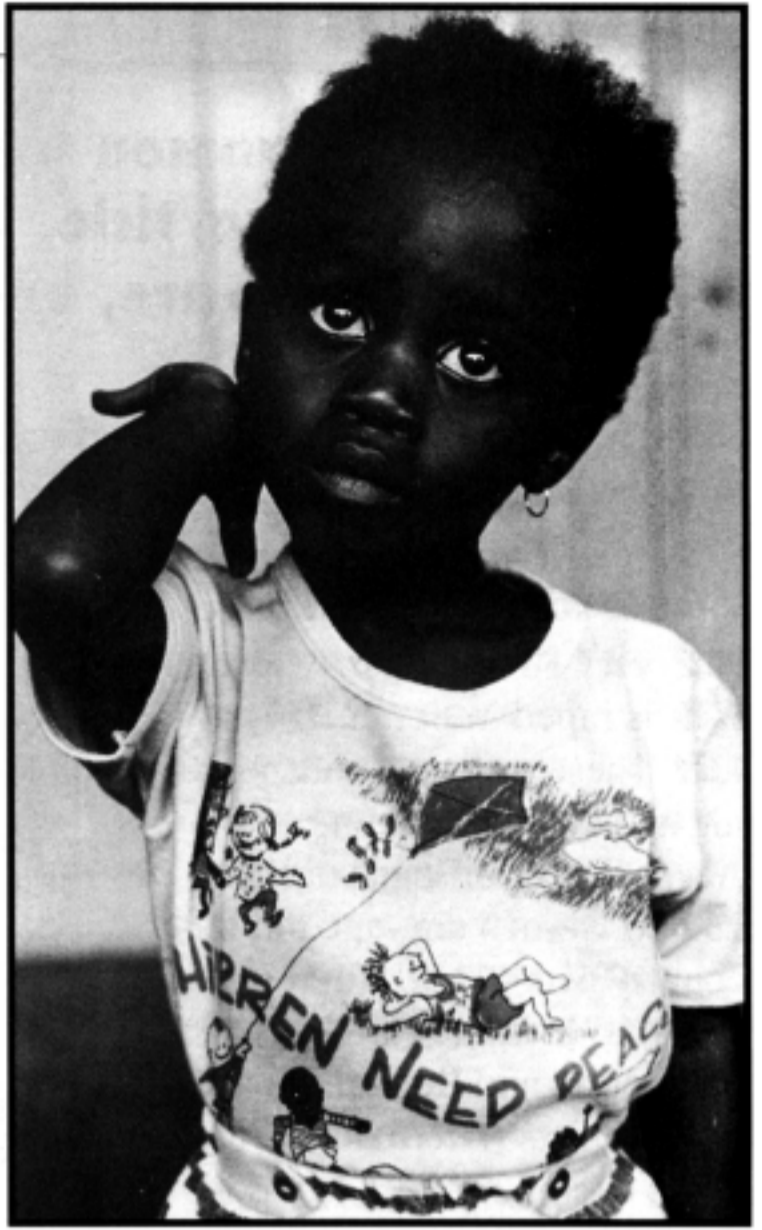


Photo: SPEAK



Photo: SPEAK

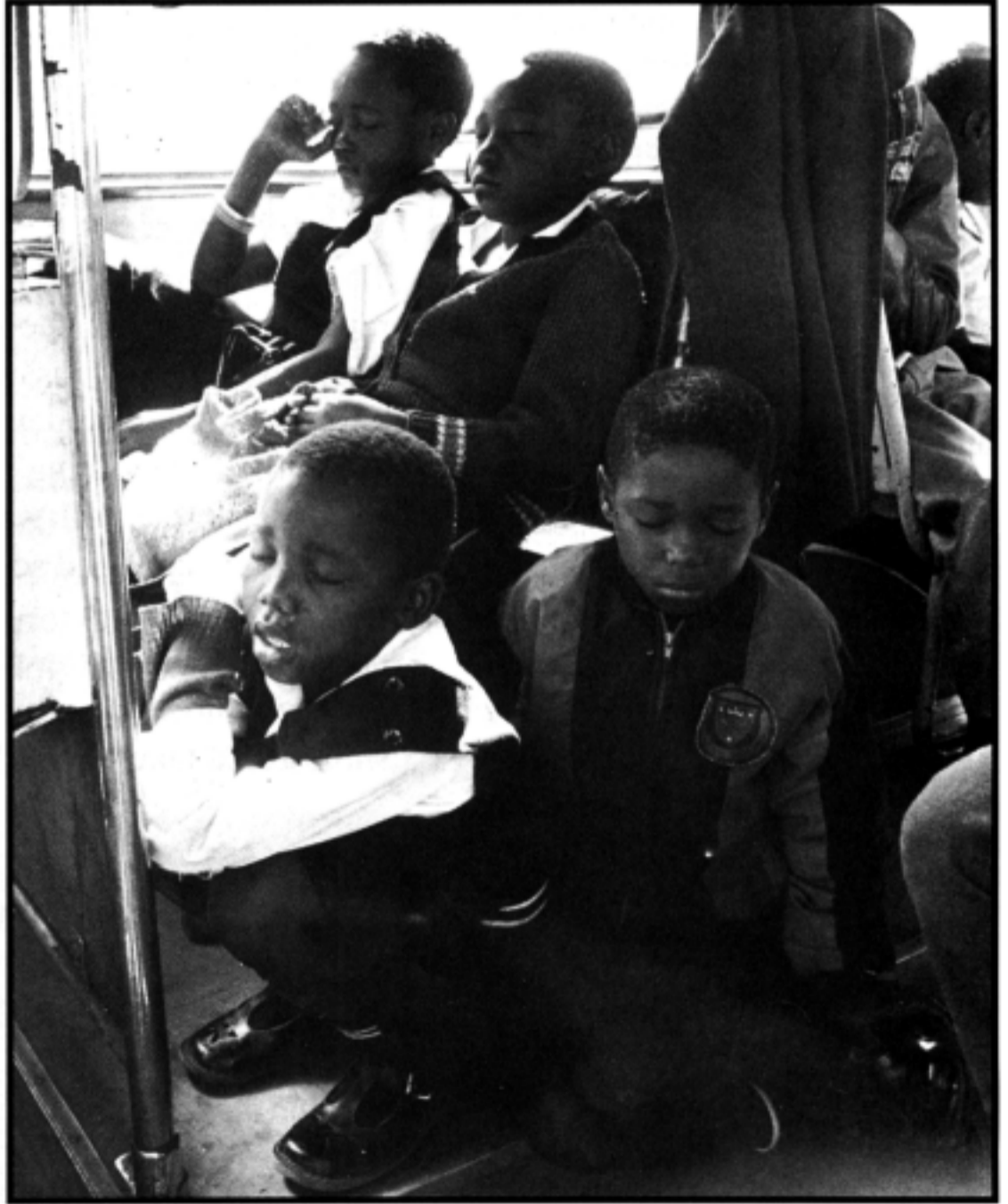


Photo: Edmond Jiyane

All children should have the right to a decent education. The democratisation of South Africa must include the protection of childrens' rights

**Many women find it traumatic to report they have been raped. In this article, SPEAK looks at what the rape survivor's rights are, and what she has to do to report the rape**

# Reporting a rape

**E**very 83 seconds a woman is raped in South Africa. These statistics are shocking and very frightening. According to official statistics, 23 000 women are raped in this country every year. But the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (Nicro) says only about one in 20 rapes is reported to the police, so the actual figure is probably much higher.

The reason for this is that many women fear they will be mistreated. Many are also afraid of having to relive the experience. Some women who have laid charges of rape have found that, in court, they are often treated as though they, and not the rapist, had done something wrong.

Rape is a serious offence and a terrible violation against women. It should be reported.

## Where to go

Most women go to a police station to report rape. This is not necessary. The police can be called to come to the scene of the rape in the same way they can be called to any other crime scene. If a rape victim is injured and needs to go to a hospital for treatment, the police can be called to take a statement from the hospital. The police may not refuse to take the complaint.

If a woman decides to

report the rape at a police station, she does not have to go to the station closest to where the rape took place. She can report it at any police station. There are organisations that give advice and support to women who have been raped. It may help to contact one of these organisations. Someone from these organisations may even go with the woman to the police station. Or the woman may take a relative or friend with her.

## What to do

The woman who has been raped should try to keep as much evidence as possible. This would include items such as the rapist's clothing, threads from his clothes, hairs, nail scrapings, blood and so on.

It is better for the woman not to wash until after she has been examined by a doctor. She should also take clean clothes

with her to the police station. They may want to keep the clothes she is wearing when she was raped as evidence.

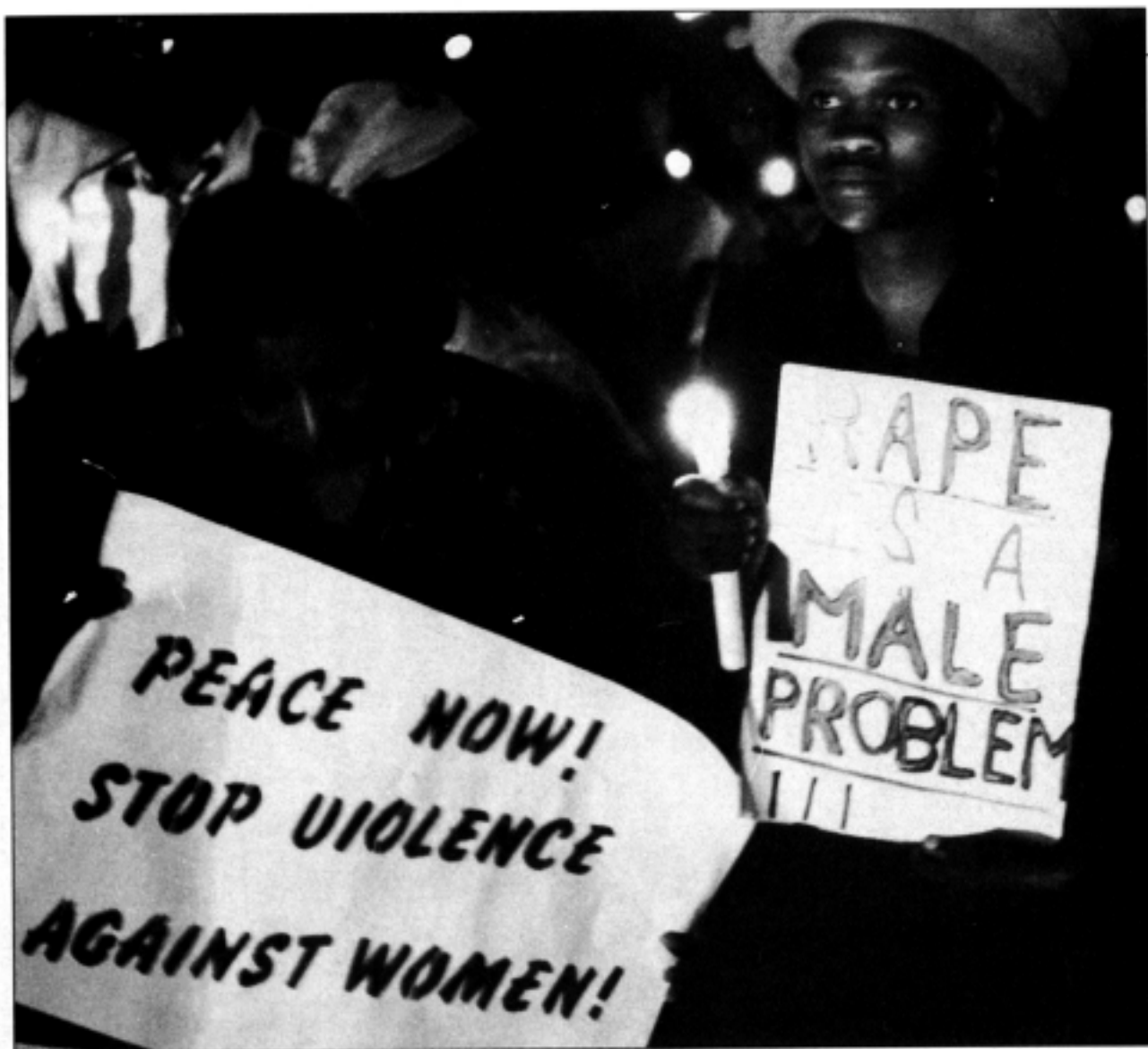
At the police station, the woman may ask to speak to the most senior officer there, or to a woman officer, if one is on duty. She may also ask to give her statement in a private room, rather than in the charge office.

After the statement has been taken, the woman has to be examined by a doctor. The doctor will fill out a report on his or her medical findings.

The police must go with the women to the doctor, but they must wait outside while she is being examined. They must have with them an SAP 308 form. By signing this form, the woman agrees to be examined by the District Surgeon. She is not forced to give this permission. If the woman is under 18 years old, the form must be signed by her parents or legal



Pics: SPEAK



guardian. After the complaint has been made, the police will open a docket. The docket has a number. It is important that the woman knows the docket number so that she can refer to it when she has queries about her case.

An investigating officer is put in charge of the case. He or she has to get statements from witnesses, medical evidence, take fingerprints and so on. The rape victim must keep in contact with the officer to find out how the case is going and when the court hearing will take place.

It is important to remember that once a charge of rape has been laid, it cannot be withdrawn. And, if the Attorney-General decides to take the case to court, the woman who has been raped will have to appear in court and explain what happened. ★

*Some places to go to for help*

- *People Opposing Women Abuse (Johannesburg)*  
Telephone: (011) 642 4346
- *Rape Crisis (Cape Town)*  
Telephone: (021) 47 9762
- *The Advice Desk for Abused Women (Durban)*  
Telephone: (031) 820 2862



## Abortion

If a woman falls pregnant as a result of a rape, she can ask for an abortion. But she must do this quickly as it can take time to get permission for the abortion. The abortion must be done in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

To be able to get an abortion, you must get an affidavit or signed statement from the police that you were raped.

You then take your papers to the local magistrate. The magistrate decides if you can have an abortion. If you can have an abortion, he or she will give you a certificate which you must take to hospital. Doctors will do the abortion.

If you did not report the rape to the police, you can still get an abortion, but it is very difficult. You must tell the police why you did not report the rape. Then the police will decide if they will give you a letter to take to the magistrate.

Rape is one of the worst things that can happen to a woman. Although it is difficult, it is better to report it than to keep quiet about it.

Thank you to *Learn and Teach* for granting us permission to use the article



Photos compliments Shifty Records

# Talk of truth

**W**ords and images of murder and rape, racial and gender oppression lace his poems.

*Most of the time he sounds angry.*

*He talks about pregnant women detained under horrible conditions and about men who are seen as heroes yet assault and rape women.*

*South African poet Lesego Rampolokeng is passionate about who he is and makes no excuses about his feelings towards a*

*society which discriminates and is full of double standards.*

*His feelings are reflected in his work. His poetry is angry, violent and at times is seen as offensive. Some people feel Rampolokeng's poetry is anti-christ. But he argues that oppression in this country was based on christianity. He feels his work challenges people's views on politics, gender, sexuality and religion. **Rosalee Telela** spoke to him*

## **Who is your poetry aimed at?**

I do not want to limit my poetry to a certain group. I do not divide those who read and listen to me by race, class, gender or sexual preference.

I perform my work because I want to share my truth with other people.

## **How would you describe your work?**

I write what some people have called poetry. I do not call myself a poet. My work centres around my whole life — my dreams, nightmares, fears and hopes. I deal with issues as I see them.

## **What do you write about?**

My own wishes for beauty and the need to love and be loved. I write about bullets killing peo-

ple, rape, violence against children, my relationships with other people and so on.

## **Are you trying to show the reality of the society we live in?**

I don't see myself as the mirror of society. What I try to do is explain the reality we live in.

## **Your words and images are very violent.**





**'I have been exposed to violence since I was a child and the only way I can live with it is by getting it out'**

I live in a violent society. A society that makes me afraid and horrifies me. I do not go around making shocking statements. I have been exposed to violence since I was a child and the only way I can live with it is by getting it out. If it comes out in violent forms it is because I have been influenced by what happens around me.

**Do you think you are justified in doing that to people?**

A lot of people like being unpractical about life. Everybody wants to pretend that things are going right because what they would like to see, in the end, is the kind of society that will have lions and lambs living in harmony.

If you try to get to the bottom of things, bringing out the bad in society, then you come

across problems.

**Would you like to be popular?**

It's not my aim to be popular. I'm just trying to deal with the truth as I see it. It just happens to make a lot of people unhappy, which is sad.

**Do you think people will change their attitude towards your work?**

I think my views will always be unpopular. I do not go out of my way to offend anybody. I keep the facts as I see them, but people will always be offended because I talk about things a lot of people do not want to hear.

**What are your views on politics?**

Every political party in the world abuses people's support. It is very sad when a people's movement becomes a political party. People then have to work for those who have been chosen as leadership.

**What are your political beliefs?**

I've got a political position, but I really don't think my political affiliation should be of national concern. As soon as I start putting a label on myself, people will link my poetry with it.

That is why I refuse to fly anybody's flag. Not even the flag of blackness.

**Why won't you fly the flag of blackness?**

Because there are black people who have ridden away in posh cars and put themselves in palaces because they presented themselves to the world as victims. I feel it is a rotten thing to

do to convince people that you are equal to them.

**What are your views on sexism?**

Women have been oppressed throughout history. Women have been treated as less worthy than slaves.

The ready-made excuse for treating women as less than human is the biological differences between them and men. Women are said to belong to the weaker sex.

**What is your view of this?**

I think when men are oppressed because of their race or class, they tend to take it out on women by oppressing them. I'm against this.

**Are you trying to change the way people see reality?**

I think if people really looked at my work, they would be able to recognise their own badness which we all have to deal with.

If people started putting down their defenses it would be all the more positive for us.

**Does your poetry intend to solve society's problems?**

It is not up to me to present solutions. It is up to me to ask questions and to pick out the bad in society.

*Lesego Rampolokeng started writing poetry as a youth living in Soweto. He has written two books, Horns of Hondo and Talking Rain. These are available from the Congress of South African Writers in Johannesburg. Their office telephone number is: (011) 833 2530 ☎*

**Bantu education and a government decision that all subjects be taught in Afrikaans to African students led to the student uprisings in June 1976. Students refused to accept the cruelty of an education system that**

**prepared them to be no more than miners, "garden-boys", labourers and so. Since 1976, the youth have played an important role in giving people hope and courage to fight against the evils of apartheid. By Thoraya Pandy**

# Looking back on the 1976 uprisings

**"N**atives will be taught from early childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them. What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics which it cannot use in practise? There is no place for him above the level of certain forms of labour." These racist words belonged to one of South Africa's most ruthless presidents', Dr HF Verwoerd. And they were words which were later regretted by a government bent on racist rule.

In order for apartheid to work, the government had to make sure it controlled every aspect of peoples' lives.

Unequal education was to prepare different groups of people for the different roles they would later play in our unequal society. While white education

prepared students for the better side of life, bantu education was meant to keep blacks at the bottom.

In line with this control, the government decided that all subjects at school be taught in Afrikaans.

"People can take only so much injustice and hardship before they fight to change their lives," says Boitumelo Mofokeng, one of the youth of the 1976 generation.

"June 16 was a turning point in the history of the black child in apartheid South Africa. The Afrikaans issue soon developed into an attack on bantu education and then the apartheid system as a whole," added Mofokeng.

She said the doctrine that blacks did not deserve to be treated as human beings "egged me on as a black woman to

fight on".

"The only language the government understood was mass mobilisation."

Mofokeng said although she was very scared because many people were killed, detained or forced into exile, the unity and commitment of the youth took away that fear.

Today, nearly 20 years later, she says the sacrifices she and millions of youth made were worth it.

"My education was disrupted and I only completed my matric in 1991. Many who were forced into exile have returned with qualifications but are facing many difficulties. South Africa does not recognise their qualifications. The crisis has not ended," she added. "But there is hope for a brighter future."

**C**ystal Dicks agrees. She was one of the countless students who joined school boycotts in the mid 1980s.

"I was 12 at the time when school boycotts in the Western Cape began. Barricades were burning all over the place and it was normal to wake up with casspirs and yellow vans in our community, even though I come from a middle class area.

When Dicks reached high



## Youth on the margins

Youth marginalisation is not specific to South Africa. Across the world, social, political and economic power are in the hands of the middle aged. With economic hardships throughout the world, unemployment amongst the youth is increasing.

Young women are even further marginalised by the system of patriarchy. The youth movement, with few exceptions, is male dominated.

A coalition of youth organisations formed to change and prevent the marginalisation of youth in a new South Africa, called the National Youth Development Coordinating Committee, is discussing the formation of a young women's network.

There is little disagreement about the need to give a voice to women in youth organisations. Earlier debates about organising women separately, triple oppression and the role of women in the struggle remained debates. Very little was put into practice. This is something that concerns all young women. As a generation we took part in throwing off the yoke of apartheid; as a generation, we should play our role in removing the yoke of patriarchy whose origins go back way beyond the 300 years of colonialism.

● We thank Agenda for allowing us to use sections of an article written by youth activist Febe Potgieter in her personal capacity.

### The movie Sarafina paid tribute to millions of South African youth in the struggle against unequal education and apartheid

school, she got involved in student politics.

"Protest action was one of the few ways students had to gang up against a system that was unequal and oppressive."

She said the 1976 uprisings was an inspiration to all who got involved in politics. "It is one of the things you can look back on and admire the youth."

Both Mofokeng and Dicks expect the new government to address the problems facing the youth, especially young women.

"Young women are at a greater disadvantage today. They are still victims of violence such as rape and of inequality at schools. They face many social problems.

"But all is not lost. The struggle continues on women's

issues and one of the key areas to address this is in an education system that is equal and non-sexist."

Mofokeng added: "We must fight for this but we must also begin to work towards our own happiness, comfort and future.

"Education is not just about sitting behind a desk. We must search for things which will lead to our total development as human beings."

**D**icks has a lot of hope for the future. "The student generation after me will have opportunities to develop better and should be able to realise their goals.

It is therefore the government's duty to make sure the education system is dynamic and that it gives equal opportunities to girls and boys. ♣

# For a better life

**F**or more than 12 years, Sithembiso Nyoni has been a worker of the Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP). Her involvement in ORAP has helped her live out her dream of improving the day to day lives of rural people, most of whom are women. ORAP has given her, and her team of hard working women and men, the chance to improve the lives of the communities they work with.

Nyoni's work has been recognised over the years. She was named one of the five winners of the Right to Livelihood award on October 6 last year.

She said this was the highest honour she had ever received.

"October 6 was the happiest day in my life. Winning the award shows the quality of people we work with and the community we serve. It's an honour, not only for me personally, but for women in Zimbabwe," she said.

The Right to Livelihood award was started by the Swedish government in 1980 to honour individuals and groups which have made great contributions in developing communities.

ORAP, which works with more than one million people throughout Zimbabwe, won the award for helping people in different communities choose their development path according to their needs, culture and traditions. ORAP was also very effective in distributing relief food during Zimbabwe's worst

**For most of her adult life, Sithembiso Nyoni has worked very hard to improve the lives of Zimbabweans, especially people living in rural areas. Doreen Zimbizi spoke to her**



Photo: Kate Truscott

**A women's cooperative garden project. Nyoni has devoted much of her adult life to setting up and developing projects such as this**

drought in 1992.

As one of ORAP's founder members, Nyoni has worked to share her experiences with the rest of the world.

The Right to Livelihood award prize money of 200 000 US dollars (about R600 000) was shared among five women or organisations led by women, who have made a positive contribution in situations of crisis or conflict.

Other winners were Arna Mer-Khamis from Israel who is from the Care Learning Organisation; India's environmental activist Vandana Shiva and Mary and Carrie Dann of

the Western Shoshone Nation in Beowawe, Nevada, USA.

**N**yoni said ORAP would put all the prize money into cultural self-help projects. Since it was set up in 1981, the organisation has given thousands of people a livelihood through self-help projects. Now the new focus will be on making sure these projects can manage on their own.

"We want to make these projects financially viable. In the past, we did not mind whether they succeeded or not, because they had to have a social purpose, but now we



Photo: Compliments The Chronicle Bulawayo

## Nyoni receives the Right to Livelihood award

want them to support themselves," she said.

ORAP has more than 20 associations throughout the country and its projects help more than one million people. It has grown into one of the biggest non-governmental organisations in Zimbabwe. Its main aim then and now remains the development of rural communities by involving the people.

Nyoni first joined ORAP as a coordinator of programmes. She has grown with the organisation and today she is ORAP's executive coordinator. It has not been an easy road, but Nyoni is strong-willed and professional. She has a lot of patience and is always willing to work hard. It has been total commitment on her part.

Years ago, Nyoni described her work as "difficult but

rewarding". Her interest in rural development started way back when she was still teaching. She was head of the Home Economics teaching staff at Mzinyathini High School. But she decided this was not the job for her. She left teaching and started working with communities.

**B**orn in Kwekwe, Nyoni was educated at St Patrick's Mission School in Gweru and Bonda Mission in Mutare. She studied Home Economics, adult education and rural social development, before going to Birmingham University in Britain for a degree in community work.

For the next two years, she studied at Reading University for her masters degree in rural social development. She then spent some time lecturing on rural development at colleges

in Birmingham. When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, she decided to go back home. She started teaching but decided she wanted to go out and work with the people. So she joined the Young Women's Christian Association as a rural programme secretary.

During that time she produced a paper on alternative rural development. She also helped ORAP develop its policies.

Nyoni's award and her work has made the community she works in and the whole of Zimbabwe proud of her.

The Right to Livelihood prize was presented to Nyoni and other award winners in the Swedish parliament on December 9 last year.

Nyoni accepted the award with pride and joy. ✪



**Almost half of pregnant women who are HIV positive will pass the disease to their babies**

# Children get AIDS too

**A**IDS is usually seen as an illness that adults get, but it is becoming a growing problem in babies and children. Children usually get the HIV infection from their mothers, during pregnancy and childbirth.

More and more babies are born with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. And most will die before they are two years old because their bodies will not be able to fight diseases.

Children can also get HIV from being sexually abused or from blood transfusions. It is rare for an infected mother to pass HIV to her child during breastfeeding. Children with HIV need special care, they need to be immunised carefully, and all illnesses must be treated and cured as soon as symptoms appear.

It is better to do something before a child is born. People who are thinking of having children can have HIV blood tests to see whether they have the virus in their bodies.

Almost half of all pregnant HIV women will pass the disease on to their babies. So a woman who has the virus must think very carefully about having children.

Even if the baby does not get HIV, the chances are that the child's mother and probably the father, will die within 10 years.

People who have HIV will get AIDS and die within 10 years of catching the virus.

If a baby's mother has HIV, the father is probably also infected, because the virus is spread through sexual contact.

A pregnant woman can



decide if she wants to have an AIDS test. She should have counselling before and after the test so she is better prepared if the result is positive.

The advantage of having a test is that doctors will look out for HIV-related conditions. The doctor will also be able to watch the newborn baby for possible infection.

Pregnant women who are HIV positive may choose to end the pregnancy by having a legal abortion and prevent future pregnancies by using contraception or being sterilised.

If a woman is found to be HIV positive, her partner can also be tested and both can practise safer sex.

Having an HIV test has its disadvantages. It can cause serious emotional and psycho-



Photo: Elmond Jiyane

## Food for babies

**HIV babies have to be on a strict and special diet. They must be given food that will not cause diarrhoea (runny tummies).**

**Their foods must be mashed and they should eat mostly vegetables.**

**If a mother is breastfeeding, she must continue to do so. A mother usually does not pass on the virus through breastfeeding.**

**Check with your clinic for a list of all the foods and ways of feeding.**

Primary Health Care (PPHC) in the Natal Midlands, says many mothers who test HIV positive refuse to tell their partners. They also do not go back to the hospital after the child is born.

“The main reason why women do not come back to hospital is because they are scared people will find out they are HIV positive. Most women do not tell their partners because they are scared their partners will leave them,” says Mthiyane.

And, once the woman leaves the hospital, there is little doctors can do if she refuses to come back.

Sam Nxumalo of the Northern Natal’s PPHC says they face similar problems.

He says he understands why women find it difficult to tell their partners: “The man often blames the woman, even though he is probably the one who passed the virus on to her. She can do nothing when he beats her up to get rid of his frustrations.”

He says the PPHC AIDS programme counsels many women. “Apart from helping them deal with the emotional

*The PPHC National AIDS Programme helps communities fight ignorance about AIDS. If you need the support of a community worker or if you have any further questions contact the PPHC National AIDS Programme. The telephone numbers of their offices are:*

**National office:** (011) 337 8539

**Eastern Transvaal:**  
(01315) 41 181

**Northern Transvaal:**  
(01521) 91 4221

**Southern Transvaal:**  
(011) 337 7126

**Orange Free State:**  
(057) 396 5509

**Natal:** (031) 301 2582

**Natal Midlands:** (0331) 45 0453

**Northern Natal:** (0354) 74 181

**Border:** (0431) 43 6733

**Eastern Cape:** (041) 41 1618

**Transkei:** (0471) 31 0757

**Western Cape:** (021) 696 4154



**These pages have been made possible by NPPHCN National AIDS Programme**

and psychological problems the virus brings, we also give them practical advice.”

Nxumalo says AIDS workers explain to women how to look after themselves and their babies, and about ways to get their partners to practice safe sex.

“A lot of education in communities needs to happen or we won’t be able to deal with the situation when it explodes. I can understand why women keep quiet, but it won’t help their situation. What will happen is that more people will be infected with the virus.” ☼

● *Part of the information for this article was received from a Learn and Teach article.*

logical problems. It can also cause difficulties in a marriage or relationship.

If an HIV mother has a baby, the baby can be tested immediately. If the baby is found to be free from HIV, the doctors can be sure that the child will not get AIDS.

If the baby tests HIV positive, the result may be wrong, because the baby may be showing HIV antibodies from the mother. In this case, the baby may not actually be infected. It is possible for some HIV positive babies to become HIV negative, that is, free from the virus, after four to 12 months. If the baby still tests positive after 18 months, then the baby definitely has the virus.

Nonhlahla Mthiyane, a regional trainer for Progressive

**Many people think netball is just a pastime. But it's more than that. It's a serious sport. But, like other sports played and enjoyed by women, it does not have the same status as sport played by men. This is according to Rita Oosthuizen, president of Netball South Africa (NSA). Rosalee Telela spoke to her**

**N**etball is the biggest women's team sport in South Africa, but the media don't take it seriously, says Netball South Africa (NSA) president Rita Oosthuizen.

It is played in nearly all schools, colleges, technikons and universities and in townships, towns and cities across the country, she said.

NSA, the unified body of netball in South Africa, was launched in October 1993. One of its aims is to give South African netballers the chance to compete internationally.

"Netball, like other sport in South Africa, is getting back into the international arena after years of isolation. Although we do not know how good we are compared to other countries, there is a lot of excitement and enthusiasm.

"As a person who has been in netball for about 40 years, I can tell you that we have the potential, talent and drive to get back into international sport," added Oosthuizen with confidence.

She spoke excitedly about NSA plans for the development of both the players and administrators of the sport: "We are working towards improving players, identifying women as leaders and creating opportunities for those who are underprivileged."

Oosthuizen believes the success of these plans will not only depend on the commitment of people in netball, but also on the media's attitude towards the sport.

"We have been fighting for more media coverage of netball. Many women involved in sport give the media informa-

# Give netball a chance

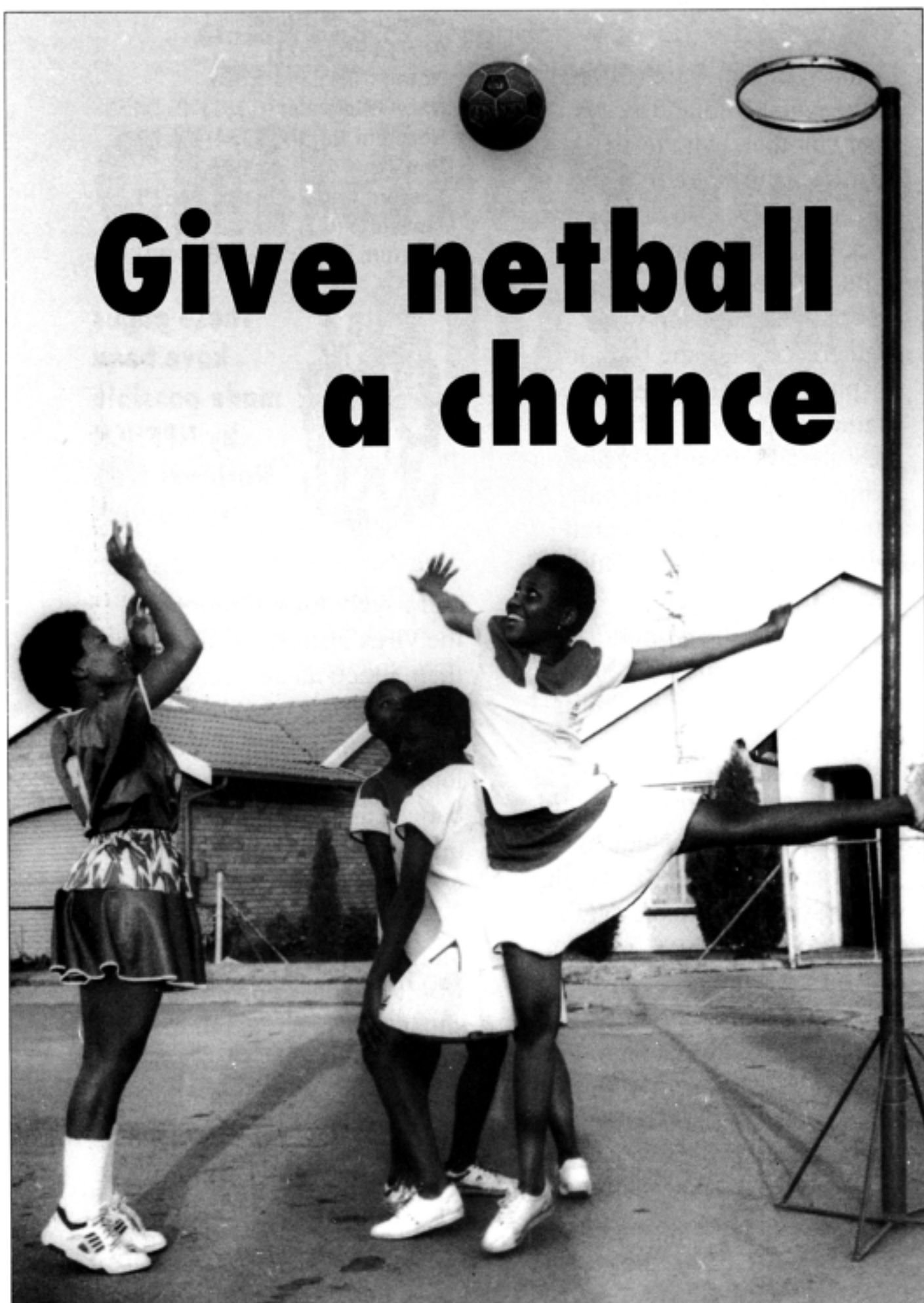
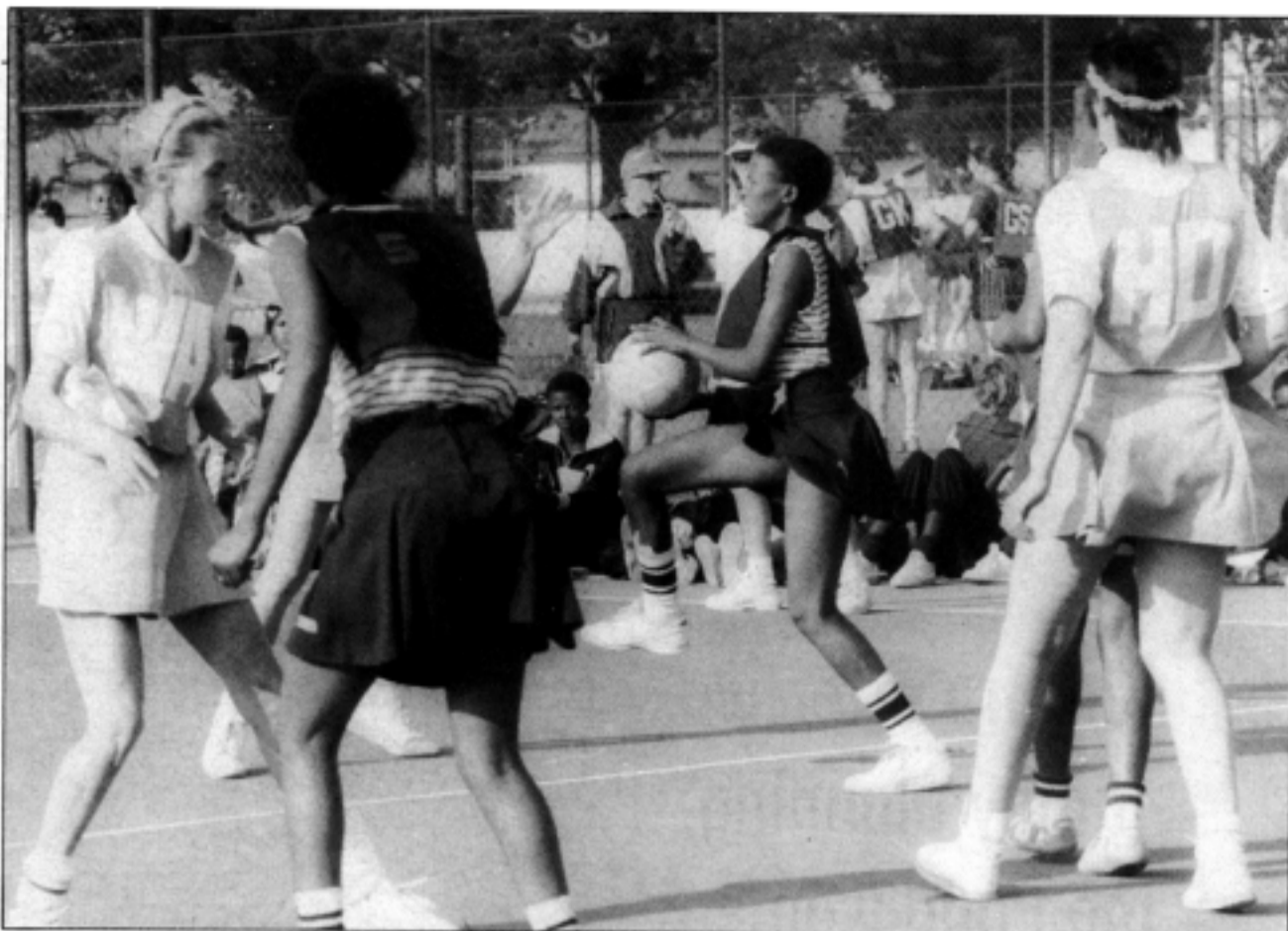


Photo: Sunday Nation





**Netball is South Africa's biggest team sport for women, played in nearly all schools, colleges, technikons and universities across the country**

Photo: Sunday Nation

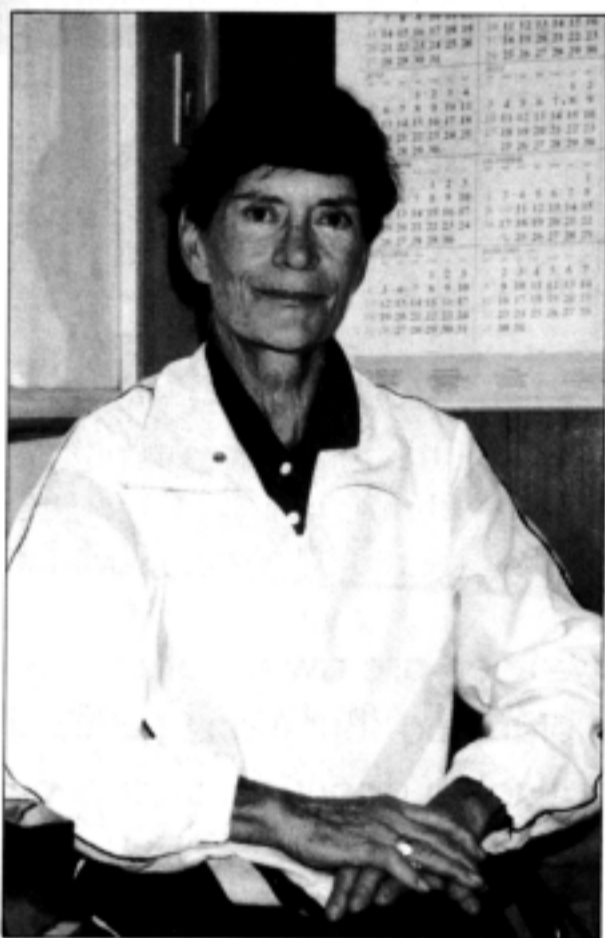


Photo: SPEAK

**Netball South Africa president Rita Oosthuizen: "One of the best ways of promoting any sport is through the media. All over the world it is men who get the media's attention. We would like to see this changing."**

tion about sporting events but they never get coverage. The media just do not take women's sports seriously," she argued.

"Newspapers place all the news about men's sport first and if there are a few lines open, they will place women sports," Oosthuizen added.

"One of the best ways of promoting any sport is through the media. All over the world it is men who get the media's attention. We would like to see this changing."

It is not only the media that stands in the way of NSA's aim to promote netball.

**"F**unds play a big role and women's sport does not get the sponsorship you need to promote the sport," argued Oosthuizen.

NSA is trying to get sponsorship by selling netball to the business and manufacturing world.

"Women are the main buyers and consumers of products such as food, clothing and fuel. We are the buying power in South Africa and must be recognised," she said.

The different education departments in South Africa have been NSA's biggest supporters.

"They have given us funds to promote the sport from the grassroots to the highest level," Oosthuizen said.

"During the past school holidays, we had many netball tournaments in which thousands of school children all over the country took part."

SPEAK asked Oosthuizen if men played any in role in the sport. "Men have been in netball for many years. There are many outstanding male umpires, coaches and promoters. But netball is a women's sport and so our top leadership are women."

**T**he NSA constitution says men are not allowed to hold top positions in the organisation.

"Women must be leaders in their own sport. We have enough qualified, competent and dedicated women who can handle top positions. There is no need to look for leaders. We have them and we must recognise and support them."

"But," she added, "men are and have always been welcome. We have no plans to kick them out."

As for playing the game, Oosthuizen said men have the right to play netball if they want to.

She said she would like to see people change their attitude towards women and sport.

"Women are good supporters of men's sport, but it is not the same the other way around. It's still a man's world we live in. But we are busy changing it," added Oosthuizen. ★

# Caring for contraception

**O**ver the years, women in South Africa — and elsewhere in the world — have been singled out as targets for family planning programmes.

It is true that women want to control their own fertility (reproductive rights). But, men should also share the responsibility of family planning, including the use of contraceptives.

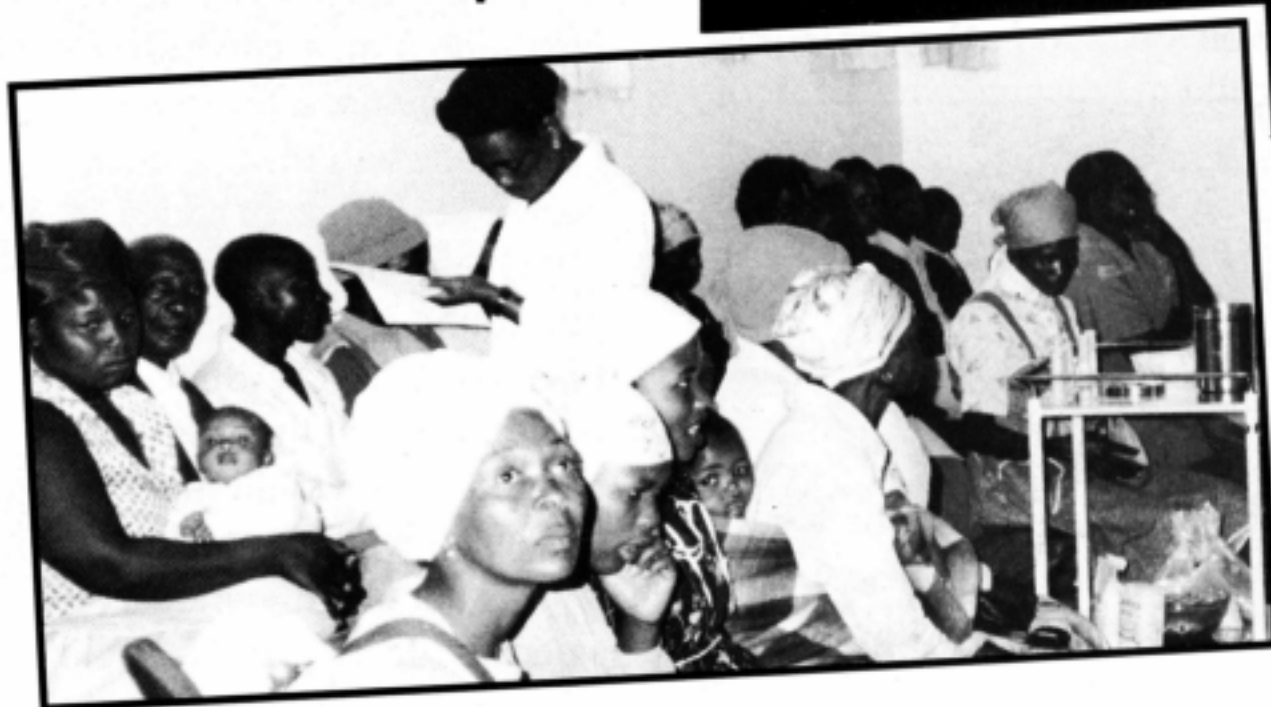
Men often decide how many children their wives or partners should have. However, family planning programmes in the past focused mostly on women. Family planners are now shifting their focus to include men. Educating them on the importance of family planning and contraceptives available for men is the starting point.

“Most women are aware of at least one method of family planning. But that cannot be said for men. We need to educate them and we can only do that by involving them in family planning programmes,” said Dr Helen Rees, national director of the Planned Parenthood Association.

Rees says it is important to work out a male motivation programme. This will help planners go to communities and find out what the people want.

The Zimbabwe National

To ensure effective family planning, men and women should share responsibility for contraception



Most women are aware of at least one method of family planning. But many men still need to be educated about contraception

Family Planning Council, which has had a successful male motivation campaign, has been asked to help.

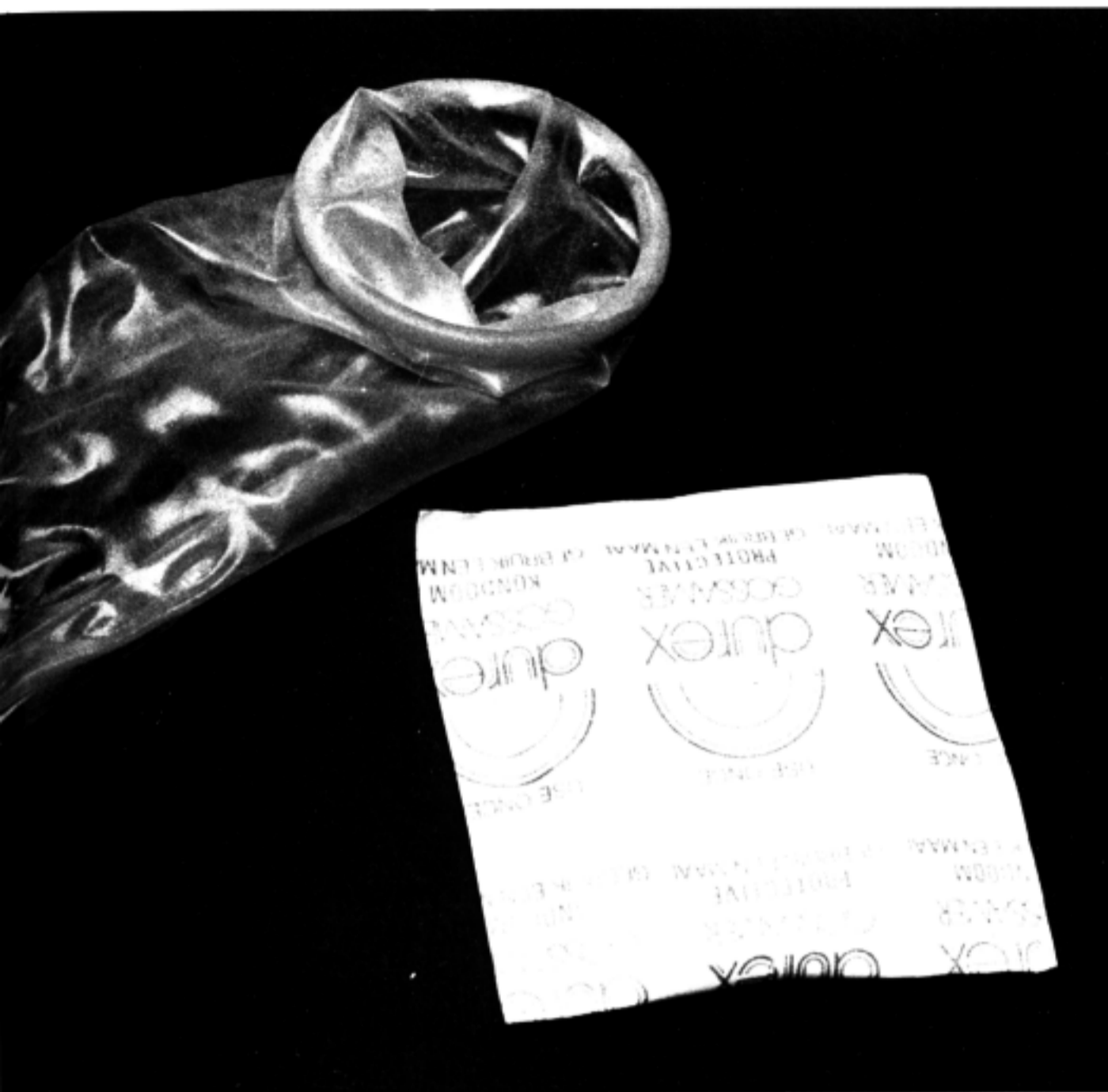
It is hoped the campaign will help raise awareness of the importance of family planning as a shared responsibility for both men and women.

“If men knew or understood how women suffer, the pain they go through, they would understand the importance of

family planning. There is very little information on men’s attitudes and beliefs,” said Rees.

“Worldwide, a lot of men would like to share the responsibility (of family planning), but they don’t know how to go about it. There is very little information available,” she said.

On the other hand, there are very few family planning methods available for men. The only



Photos: Learn and Teach

male contraceptives available are condoms, abstinence (not having sex at certain times of the month), withdrawal and vasectomy (sterilisation).

A few other methods like the male pill are still being developed and might only be available in South Africa in the next three years.

**R**ees believes that women have been targets for family planning methods regardless of how this affects their sex lives. It has been argued that developing male contraceptives is difficult.

"Stopping the process of sperm production is quite difficult. It cannot be done without having side effects," said Rees.

She said it is only now that condoms come in different sizes and acceptable colours, thus attracting more men to use them.

"The problem with condoms is that they don't transfer heat. People are now looking at other materials that can transfer heat, are thinner and more sensitive," she said.

While that is happening, the male pill, injections and implants are still being developed.

"All three are still being tested, including the male contraceptive injection.

They all work in different ways and will present our men with alternatives to vasectomy," said Rees.

"Vasectomy is an outpatient operation. It is safe operation, but sadly very few men choose this method," she said.

Rees says introducing new methods, especially among men, could meet with a number of problems.

Culture, lack of information, attitudes of health providers

and restrictive laws are some of the things which need to be dealt with.

"We will look at all problems in communities before introducing new methods. The male motivation campaign will help us develop proposals," said Rees.

Two men we spoke to said they were willing to share the family planning responsibility with their wives or partners.

"I am prepared to use some form of contraceptive instead of my wife. The only problem is that there is very little information on contraceptives for men. The only method I'm aware of is the condom, which I have been using for the past three years. My wife has problems with the pill so we decided to use the condom instead," said Sipho Khumalo.

**"**I can only consider other methods once I have enough information. The problem right now is that I am not aware of any other options," he said.

Vusi Mahlangu felt that family planners should use men to educate other men about what is available.

"I'm prepared to take over the responsibility of family planning from my wife," said Mahlangu.

"A men-only meeting should be arranged to address this issue. Many people still think that family planning is a women's issue," he said.

"Planners should go out into communities to find out what the people want. Traditional and cultural values should also be addressed," he added. ★

## New female condom

Women will no longer have to worry about partners who refuse to wear condoms. The female condom, Femidom, is one of the family planning methods now available from clinics.

Femidom is shaped like a male condom but is inserted into the vagina. It has a ring at one end which lies against the cervix (neck of womb) and another ring which holds the outside of the vaginal area. It therefore protects the female genital area from possible infection.

There have, however, been complaints that the female condom is difficult to insert and that it sometimes slips out of the vagina.

## What causes high birth rates?

When women and children lack health facilities, clean drinking water and sanitation, birth rates are likely to be high.

If a woman is afraid of losing her children as a result of malnutrition or common childhood diseases, she is likely to bear more children, to make sure that some reach adulthood. As a result, poorer, less educated people generally have many children.

In a society

# HEALTH BRIEFS

where men are in control, it might be difficult for a woman to tell her partner that she does not want to have more children. In South Africa, traditional practices such as polygamy and migrant labour mean that men may have more than one wife and up to 20 children.

## Cervical cancer — are you at risk?

Women who are at high risk of developing cervical (neck of the womb) cancer are:

- Those who have several sex partners, or whose partners have had several sex partners.
- Those who smoke or whose partners smoke.
- Those who have genital

warts or whose partner has genital warts.

- Those with a large family, especially if they started their family early.
  - Those with partners who work in 'dirty' or dusty jobs such as miners, metal workers, leather workers, or those who work on machines or with certain chemicals or textiles.
- Women should see a doctor or go to the nearest hospital or clinic if they:
- Develop any abnormal bleeding from the vagina.
  - Experience an unusual vaginal discharge.
  - Suffer unexplained weight loss or a swollen abdomen.
  - Develop an ulcer on your genitals that fails to heal, or any unusual lump or bump.

## No control

Although AIDS does not discriminate, the disease infects more women than men.

Women's social and economic position makes it more difficult for them to protect themselves. If infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, women face the risk of passing on the virus to their unborn children.

Women are the most defenceless sufferers of HIV and AIDS, because they do not have control over their lives.



# As a matter of fact...

## **HIV positive man infects girl**

An HIV positive man was recently sentenced to life in prison for raping his eight-year-old cousin.

The sentence given to Mereke Mhone is the heaviest passed on a rapist in Zimbabwe so far. The judge, Justice Ziyambi, said she would have considered sentencing Mhone to death had rape not been removed from the list of capital crimes last year.

## **Warning on female circumcision**

Africans living in France have been warned that it is illegal to circumcise their daughters.

Authorities in Paris, where about 4 000 girls have been circumcised, are campaigning for the girls' protection.

International efforts to stop circumcision started in Sudan in 1979. Female circumcision is a public health threat affecting about 110 million girls and women in Africa.

## **Woman not guilty because of crime rate**

Charges of illegal possession of a gun were withdrawn against Zambian councillor Elizabeth Kalenga because the magistrate felt that women need to protect themselves from rapists.

Magistrate Christine Nkama discharged Kalenga after she told the court that she obtained a gun illegally to protect herself from crimes, especially rape.

The magistrate said: "I am not only expressing my sentiments as a woman magistrate. This is a fact and protection against crime is important."

She told Kalenga to get a license for her gun and avoid getting into trouble with the law again.

## **Women should not wear pants**

A woman teacher wearing pants was thrown out of a government office in Mbabane, Swaziland, because a school inspector said she was not properly dressed.

An unwritten law prevents women from wearing pants in government offices. The teacher was wearing a track suit because it was a sports day at her school.

## **Many support abortion**

A third of 800 South Africans interviewed in a survey support legal abortion. The survey was conducted by the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network (NPPHCN) throughout the country. People living in informal settlements, who have no access to land, water and sanitation were more in favour of legal abortion than those living in formal, urban or rural areas. The survey also showed that more whites were in favour of abortion on demand than blacks. In South Africa, about 400 000 unsafe, illegal abortions are done each year.



# TAXI TALK

## Can men be feminists?

**In a previous issue of SPEAK, we asked a few people the question: "Can men be feminists?". Some said yes, others said no. Nicolette Smith, from Durban, gives her view**

**T**he general belief is that, since men do not experience women's oppression, they cannot be feminists. White people who did not know what it was like to be black fought side by side with black people to end oppression in South Africa. To stretch it even further, an individual who takes a stand against the de-beaking of battery hens has not personally experienced having their beaks removed.

I do not believe that only women can be feminists. Anybody who does not want to see another human suffer and believes in true and meaningful equality between

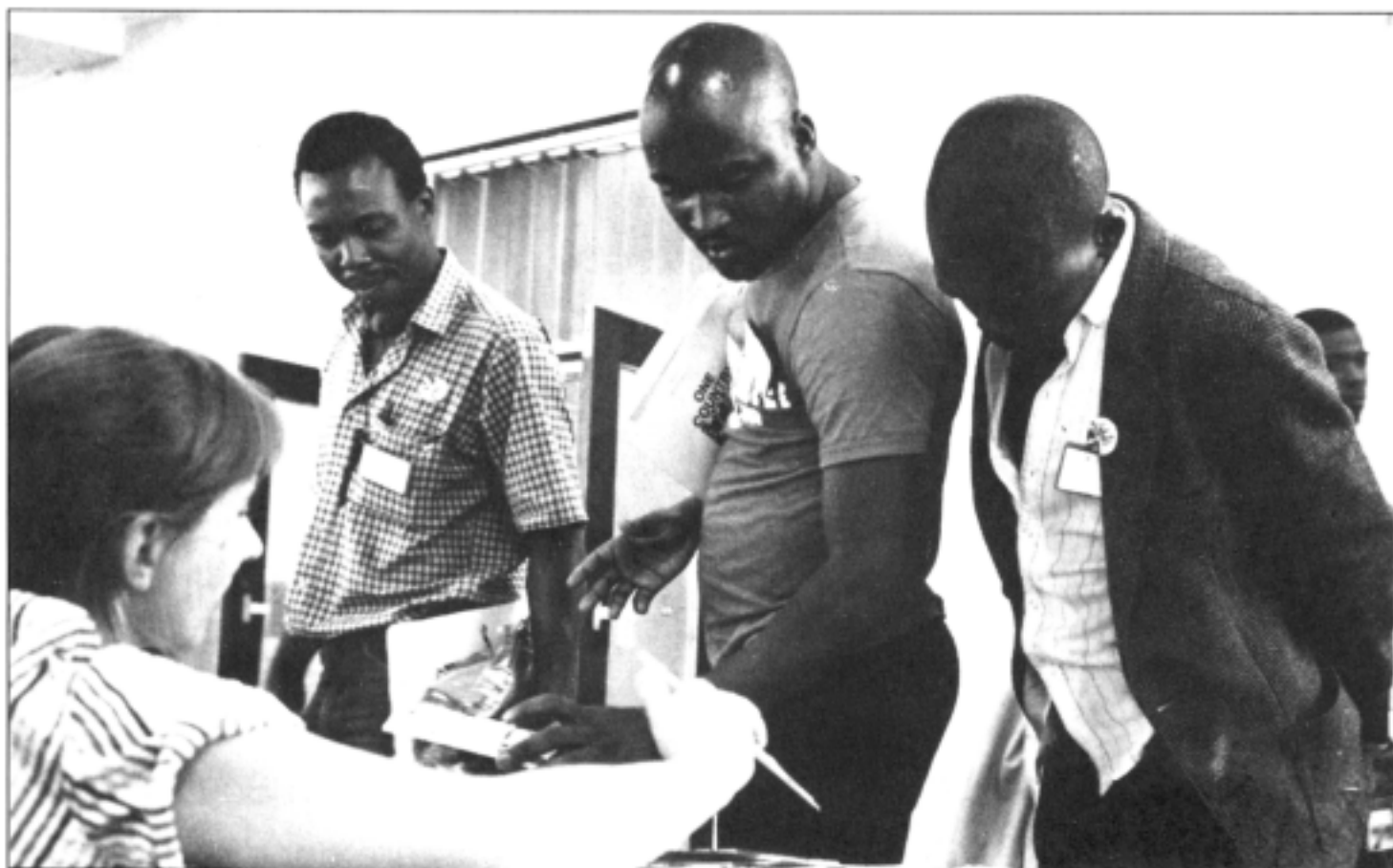
men and women can be a feminist. It is out of necessity that women take up issues that affect them in their daily lives. Men do not really have a choice anymore. They cannot continue to ignore the injustice against women. There is not a single man on this earth who is not connected to a woman.

Men need to realise that their manhood won't be taken away if they clean the house or play an active role in the lives of their children. There is also nothing "macho" or manly about beating up a woman. In fact, men who do that are cowards.

Men who respect their partners also respect themselves. They are not weak but strong, because they dare to be different.

Men who are easily influenced by the opinions of their "friends" are still really boys. They have not grown up and one wonders if they ever will.

So, men, stand up and make your move now. If you are afraid of being labelled a feminist, tell your friends you believe in human rights for all. Tell them that you don't believe that anyone should be oppressed, especially not women. ✪



**Men may show an interest in women's issues, but they don't directly experience women's oppression. Can they still stand up against women's suffering?**

# NOTICES

## Video on Family Life

The television series, Family Lives, is now available on video cassette for training purposes. The series was part of a programme to celebrate 1994 as the International Year of the Family.

Family Lives deals with issues within the extended family such as death, retrenchment, peer pressure and the transport system.

People or organisations who would like a copy of it will have to provide a blank VHS or Betamax video cassette.

If you would like to place an order or ask for more information, call Karin Knobel at this telephone number: (012) 312 0987

## Women's Leadership Course

The Young Women's Leadership Programme is a course offered by the Umtapo Centre in Durban. The course is aimed at black women between the ages of 18 and 28 years and is run in groups of 20 to 30. It is for women who wish to take up leadership roles in their communities, organisations and workplaces.

Women involved in non-governmental organisations, community organisations and youth groups are encouraged to apply.

**For more information, please contact:**

Umtapo Centre  
P O Box 2792  
Durban 4000  
Telephone: (031) 307 6830

## Weapon in the fight against breast cancer

SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals has made a cassette tape on breast cancer. The tape gives breast-cancer patients and their families information about the disease. This is the company's second tape on the topic and is available free of charge.

**For your free copy contact:**

The Cancer Association of South Africa and Derek Rusch of SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals on (011) 444 5200

## Youth and the environment

Tirelo Sechaba Youth Project, a Soweto-based youth organisation, has set up an environmental group. The group aims to: bring together people concerned with the environment; look at black environmental issues; organise workshops and work towards setting up a resource centre.

If you want to get involved, contact:

Shadrack Madingwane  
P O Box 1818  
Johannesburg 2000  
Telephone: (011) 837 7955 or 803 9750

## Healing the soil

When too many animals graze on a piece of land, they destroy the plants. When it rains, the top soil washes away because there are no plant roots to hold it.

Sometimes the soil runs into rivers or dams and fills them up. This leaves less water for residents and their animals.

Communities which would like advice on how to prevent soil erosion (the washing away of soil) can contact:

Noel Kiek  
Dohne Agricultural Institute  
Private Bag X15  
Stutterheim 4930  
Telephone: (0436) 21240

## New Soweto SAP numbers

The following are the new telephone numbers of the Soweto district headquarters of the South African Police. The dialling code for all the numbers is 011.

Switchboard: 986 9000  
Community Relations: 986 9310  
Murder and Robbery Unit: 986 9272  
Flying Squad (Commander): 986 9156  
Social Workers: 986 9417  
District Commissioner: 986 9060/1

**Women  
beating  
the  
drums  
of  
change**

