

OSISA now has an HIV and AIDS Programme

OSISA has introduced a new programme in HIV and AIDS. The vision of the programme is a region whose citizens enjoy health and well-being and have full access to information, skills and services related to the full attainment of their health, including access to the information, commodities and services necessary to prevent, manage and treat HIV and AIDS.

OSISA believes that both the determinants of and the solutions to HIV infection and AIDS-related social challenges often lie outside the health sector. Systematic and sustained responses to HIV and AIDS therefore require analysis and action on a variety of levels. Furthermore, the development of appropriate strategies requires sound knowledge and understanding of the cultural and social contexts required for change.

In this regard, the programme seeks to empower Southern African civil society organisations to participate in, advocate for and monitor HIV and AIDS policy and implementation processes. The programme will also contribute to the development of analytical tools and methodologies that enhance the ability of this region to play a significant role in policy debates at the continental and global levels.

OSISA notes that HIV and AIDS present a human development crisis that is compounding already existing inequities in the region. In the last 15 years, the region has witnessed a growing number of new HIV infections and deaths due to AIDS. These have led to declining social and economic indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and productivity. At the household level, families are bearing the brunt of high healthcare and funeral expenses at the same time that many are forced to take in orphans and vulnerable children.

The goals of the programme are:

- to strengthen public participation in policy-making through legal reform and advocacy in order to push for the implementation of the right to health;
- to increase the capacity of civil society groups to monitor public expenditure and service delivery related to HIV and AIDS;
- to promote Southern African analysis and to encourage participation by activists and civil society groups from the region in continental and global decision-making processes relating to HIV and AIDS;

- to support efforts that decrease stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS and empower others who are vulnerable to HIV infection.

As an overarching principle, OSISA will support programmes that have an emphasis on policy and law, and on structural, institutional and social change.

For more information on the programme, contact the Programme Officer, Sisonke Msimang, at sisonkem@osiafrica.org or the Programme Assistant, Beauty Mbewu at beautym@osiafrica.org or visit our website www.osisa.org.

Language Rights Fellowship Initiated

A language rights fellowship has been launched following the recent recruitment of a Language Rights Fellow. The aim of the fellowship is to promote indigenous language rights in the region. The broad vision of the programme is a region that cherishes the promotion, use and development of indigenous languages. The objective is to enhance Southern Africans' effective participation in all spheres of life. Details of the programme will be available soon.

For more information contact, lazarusm@osiafrica.org

OSISA Website under Reconstruction

The OSISA website is currently being revamped to keep up with the fast-paced developments in the region. It is being re-structured to highlight key open society issues and developments and to provide visitors with cutting edge information on interventions, programmes, debates and advocacy initiatives around these. *OPEN-SPACE* will be highlighting these in a regular column; "What's New on Our website." But in the meantime, bear with us as we give our home a new look and we urge you to be patient when you visit www.osisa.org during this time of reconstruction.

The Education Programme Commemorates the Global Action Week on Education

OSISA and partners pooled energies together to commemorate the Global Campaign on Education. As part of the commemoration under the theme of "Educate to end poverty", OSISA, in collaboration with the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) and the Global Campaign on Education (South Africa chapter) hosted a regional round-table meeting focusing on qual-

ity free public education. Whereas the global theme was “educate to end poverty”, in South Africa the theme was expanded to include inequality.

The meeting noted that free education on its own is not enough to ensure that the right to education is fulfilled. Free education must be accompanied by the necessary infrastructural support structures, attitudinal changes by society and the necessary political will. A culture of human rights, responsible citizenship and good governance must also accompany it.

The round-table meeting concluded that free basic education is a must; it is feasible if political will exists, and if all relevant stakeholders are on board. The meeting further concluded that free basic education does not necessarily result in quality erosion, but that bad governance does, because of failure to plan and execute plans.

EISA Human Rights in Education Meetings

At the invitation of the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), OSISA has been participating in a series of round-table discussions on infusing human rights into the formal curricula in SADC. The first of such discussions was in Maputo (Mozambique), followed by two others in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg (South Africa). The meetings brought together educationists, human rights activists and other interested individuals.

OSISA Hand Over Mbawa Model School – A CIPE Model School

The Education Programme Officer handed over Mbawa Model School to the Minister of Education in Malawi. The event was convened by CRECCOM on the 25 June 2005. The school was established in 2002 through the CIPE project and was selected as a model during a stakeholders meeting in June 2004, because of its central position in the zone. It has two permanent blocks of classrooms, two teachers’ houses and five permanent pit latrines. The community has contributed through moulding bricks and they have also constructed six permanent pit latrines through a small component of the CIPE grant.

Launch of the Southern African Litigation Centre (SALC)

A partnership between OSISA and the International Bar Association (IBA) has resulted in the creation of a unique enterprise: The Southern Africa Litigation Centre (SALC). The Centre has recently been joined by

the international law firm of DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary. The SALC is located in Johannesburg, South Africa, and is designed to provide services in three principal areas:

- support for human rights cases;
- advice on Constitutional advocacy in the Southern African region; and
- training in human rights and rule of law issues.

The Centre, in providing training, mentoring and facilities, will thus promote the effective implementation of human rights in the region. In particular, the Centre will:

- Provide on-going support and assistance to lawyers in the region who are in the process of litigating human rights, constitutional and public interest cases;
- Provide regular training to the legal profession within the respective jurisdictions on constitutional, human rights and democracy issues;
- Support, assist in, and identify, prospective cases allowing for timely preparation and resolution of cases;
- Engage all members of the legal profession, including the judiciary, on issues of constitutionalism, human rights and democracy and provide assistance where required;
- Promote awareness of human rights litigation frontiers and capacity-building possibilities, and stimulate advocacy for law reform, human rights and constitutionalism.

Further, the Centre shall strive to:

- Develop the skills and mobilise resources within the respective jurisdictions allowing lawyers to initiate human rights, public interest and constitutional cases that they would not have otherwise undertaken;
- Develop regional lawyers’ interest in involvement in human rights, public interest and constitutional litigation;
- Establish a repository of up-to-date information on contemporary human rights, public interest and constitutional issues in the region generally and litigation thereon specifically;
- Provide a forum through which lawyers in the region can exchange information and enter into communities and networks of mutual interest and support;

- Facilitate the development of regional networks of lawyers' organisations and other initiatives aimed at strengthening the rule of law, constitutionalism and human rights.
- The provision of training and support for lawyers at the forefront of human rights cases will be a unique development for the region.

For more information on the SALC, contact Nicole Fritz, The Executive Director, at nicolef@osiafrica.org or Lindiwe Buthelezi, Receptionist/Administrator at lindiweb@osiafrica.org

ICT Programme

The ICT programme convened a two-day workshop on Community ICTs in Zambia, with the objectives of:

- Providing a platform to debate issues around ICTs, and to reviewing Zambia's ICT policy, which is currently in a draft form;
- Collectively reviewing the challenges facing NGOs and community-based organisations involved in ICTs;
- Sharing best practices amongst organisations supported by OSISA; and
- Exploring new project partnership development opportunities.

The workshop brought together civil society organisations (CSOs), government officials, the private sector and the community at large. The opening presentation by Dr. Lemba Nyirenda indicated that there is political will to utilise ICTs as a development tool, including incorporating them into the school curriculum. However, it also focused on the challenge of limited capacity to roll out ICTs. Computer Aid International, SchoolNet Africa, CECS Zambia, Access to Essential Learning and Ungana Africa shared their activities and invited the Zambian ICT community to approach them for sharing ideas and experiences. The workshop also offered a good platform to debate ICT issues and to challenge relevant stakeholders such as the academic community, private sector and government officials to work together towards ensuring the usage of ICTs in Zambia.

Media programme

The Media Programme Officer participated in a region-wide conference on the media and democracy in Maputo, Mozambique. He chaired two sessions on the

role of community media in promoting democratic development and the role of Public Service Broadcasting, and the principle of free and pluralistic media. Participants came from all over the SADC region as well as the Nordic countries.

A meeting was also held in Johannesburg, with the Southern African Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development (SAIMED), Southern African Media Development Fund (SAMDEF), the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) and the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA) on the future of SAIMED. In general, all the organisations at the meeting held at the OSISA offices, pledged continued support for SAIMED, as it was an essential actor in the media arena in Southern Africa.

The Programme Officer also participated in the Southern African Media Funders Forum in Johannesburg, and shared ideas on what OSISA was focusing on this year. He also represented OSISA at the official launch of the Malawi Institute of Journalism's (MIJ) project to extend radio coverage to all the regions of Malawi. This is one of the media projects supported by OSISA in Malawi.

Executive Director's Office

The Executive Director and the Executive Assistant traveled to Windhoek, Namibia, for a partners' consultation with the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), which was convened using the opportunity of the signing of a grant agreement between the Southern African Development Community, SADC-PF and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). The objective of the meeting was to engage partners on the Forum's initiatives, to share lessons learnt and the Forum's vision and Strategic Plan for 2006-2010, to identify potential areas for co-operation with partners, and to establish linkages and dialogue with and among the Forum's partners. This was an important meeting for OSISA as an opportunity for focused consultations with the Secretary-General of SADC-PF and as a platform to form a partnership with the organisation given OSISA's work on engaging with the state and our increasing portfolio of work with parliamentarians.

Capacity-building Programme

The Programme Officer attended the SADC Council of NGOs consultative meeting held in

Johannesburg, funded by OSISA. The meeting was aimed at building consensus in the region on the mandate for the Council, and also at ensuring a systematic and effective engagement of the NGO community with the regional development initiatives. Representatives came from all umbrella organisations in the region, including regional NGOs as well as funding organisations.

The programme is working on a regional platform of support to the women's movement in the region. This is an initiative by OSISA to facilitate the reinvigoration of the women's movement in the Southern Africa region. A team of consultants will be engaged to do both desk and field research to establish the state of the women's movement: the trends and patterns and possible causes of its deterioration, as well as the strategies and modalities (what has worked and what has not). The findings will be tabled at a regional round-table targeted for November 2005. The consultants will also make recommendations for interventions towards reviving the women's movement, which will be considered at the round-table. This will be the initial activity towards reviving and reenergising the movement. Follow-up activities will be very much guided by the outcomes of the research and the recommendations and plan of action developed at the round-table meeting. So, keep end of November open for the round-table meeting!

For more information on this initiative, contact Alice Kwaramba or Thandi Motasi at alicek@osiafrica.org and thandim@osiafrica.org respectively.

HIV and AIDS Programme

With the assistance of the Zambia Board Member, the Unit was able to set up a round-table discussion with a few key NGOs in Lusaka. Present at the meeting were Zambia Network of AIDS Organisations (ZNAV), the Zambian AIDS and Law Research Network (ZALAN) and Women in Law Southern Africa (WLSA). The meeting provided an opportunity for the Programme Officer to introduce OSISA's work in HIV and AIDS and for her to, in turn, understand the priorities for action in Zambia. The meeting also identified a partner to participate in a monitoring project on HIV and AIDS that will be funded by Public Health Watch.

The Programme Officer went to Swaziland to meet with The AIDS Support Centre (TASC), which had sub-

mitted a proposal for funding. The meeting provided insight into the services that TASC provides and identified a number of areas in which further research could be conducted on sexual behaviour.

The Unit is currently preparing for a regional conference on AIDS and the law, as well as for a larger conference which will take place in Abuja, Nigeria, in December.

Human Rights and Democracy-building

OSISA, in collaboration with the Southern Africa Human Rights Trust (SAHRIT), held a successful regional workshop on Civilian Oversight of Police in Swaziland. The aim was to infuse the need for national civilian oversight bodies and to initiate a civilian oversight movement in the region. A Task team was set up at the meeting, to guide the follow up process to ensure that the draft action plan put in place by the participants to the meeting is implemented.

The Unit held consultative meetings with funding partners (HIVOS and DCI) and Women for Change in Lusaka, in an effort to better co-ordinate the vision and support for projects on traditional leadership. The Unit also consulted with a number of faith-based organisations in the region, exploring the opportunities to effectively partner with them.

The Unit is planning to undertake missions to Angola and Zambia, to assess opportunities for programming, partnerships and collaborations, ahead of the anticipated national elections in 2006.

Zimbabwe Country Programme

The Zimbabwe Programme Manager in partnership with the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) organised a public meeting at which the SALC was profiled as a special project of a partnership between OSISA and the IBA.

The Zimbabwe Programme Manager took part in the *Gender Montage*, a special OSI series that has united film makers in the former Soviet Union with women's rights activists to produce a series of advocacy films. The experience was phenomenal, as it provided opportunity to learn about a methodology that may be replicated in the region with respect to positioning in the public domain various themes on women's empowerment, equality and transforming gender relations in post colonial Africa. This also provided the Zimbabwe Programme Manager with

an opportunity to illustrate some of the strategic projects OSISA is actively engaged in with respect to women's rights in the region. The next steps are for OSISA to pioneer some film work on women as agents of social transformation in the two crisis countries Swaziland and Zimbabwe and in South Africa, our base country.

Angola Country Programme

The Human Rights and Media Programme Officer held workshops and training sessions on ethics and professionalism for journalists in the province of Lunda Norte. She also initiated the second phase of the reporting macro-economics training programme for journalists in Luanda and started preparations for training activities in human rights and HIV and AIDS in the provinces of Lunda Norte and Malanje.

Swaziland Country Programme

The Swaziland Programme Manager (SPM) made a presentation before 12 new WLSA legal aid recruits who have been tasked with rendering legal assistance to indigent clientele in the different rural areas. WLSA is hosting this project on behalf of the National Emergency Response Council for HIV and AIDS (NERCHA). Centres which have been earmarked for the conduct of this exercise are the Kagogo centres which have been constructed by NERCHA throughout the different rural areas of Swaziland as posts for managing affairs of vulnerable and orphaned children in the respective chiefdoms. The presentations centred on human rights as well as generally assisting participants to appreciate Swaziland's constitutional history.

The Country Programme Manager also attended a civil society press briefing/ discussion around civil society's concerns around the Constitution Bill which had recently been passed by Parliament. This was necessitated by the inappropriate reporting by the press wherein they heralded the passing of the Bill before Parliament as a major milestone in spite of the sustained concerns that have been expressed by civil society.

The Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations (CANGO) hosted a breakfast to introduce the Freedom of Expression Initiative (FXI)/ OSISA initiative on Access to Information. CANGO has been selected as the partner for the project in Swaziland. This project was initiated by OSISA.

Staff News

OSISA welcomes Patrícia Galvão Ferreira, who is joining the organisation as the Deputy Country Representative for the Angola programme. Patricia will manage and deputise in the Angola office as well as co-ordinate OSISA's innovative Angola-Brazil partnership for civil society development programme. She holds an LL.M. (Magna Cum Laude) degree in International Law and Human Rights from the University of Notre Dame, USA, and has worked as Executive Secretary, Association for Prison Reform; Lawyer, Center for Justice and International Law Washington, DC and Rio de Janeiro; and in the Ministry of Justice in Brazil as Assessor for the Council of the Defense of Human Rights. Welcome to the family, Patricia!

A special welcome also to Professor Lazarus Miti who joins OSISA as the Language Rights Fellow. Professor Miti joins OSISA from the University of Venda, where he has been working as Associate Professor and Head of the Linguistics Department. He holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of London School of Oriental and Africa Studies, an MA in Linguistics from the University of York (UK) and a BA from the University of Zambia. Professor Miti, you are welcome to the OSISA family!

On a sad note, OSISA bids farewell to Leya Chatta-Chipepa, who has been responsible for managing the Monitoring and Evaluation and Capacity-building portfolios. Leya leaves the organisation after two years of professional service. Thank you Leya for your input and contribution in advocating for open society ideals. Wish you success in your new job.

EFA Dream for Southern Africa

*We have made a circle of unity:
Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi;
Our hands joined in the Dream:
Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa;
To take action for Education for All
Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe*

*The Dream started in Dakar –
We all embraced the six wings
To fly EFA to heaven;
Three wings in front:
ECD, UPE and Adult Literacy
Three wings in the rear:
Equity, Skills and Quality*

*In 2000 we thought 2015 was far
We danced slowly in this unity on EFA
From Dakar to Rosebank
Our failure is clear
As the year draws near
We still join hands, however
To make the dream real
In Southern Africa*

*From Rosebank to our capitals
Having been freed by OSISA, World Education and UNESCO
We are resolved to dream farther
And in our circle dance farther
Moving faster in this circle of unity*

*We begin by renewing the dream
Then break all the barriers on our flight
Like bad governance, HIV/AIDS and poverty
And their allies insecurity and poor attitude
To move forward and fast
In this joint prayer*

