

Beyond Inequalities: Women in Namibia

One of the most significant areas of progress on gender in Namibia since 1996/7 has been government policies and programmes, including the establishment of the national gender machinery, the ratification of international instruments and national policies, as well as progressive gender-related law reform. The first section of this publication focuses on post-Beijing legal reforms. Although law reform is a key step in institutionalising women's equality, changing laws and government policies alone neither guarantees women's protection of their human rights nor ensures that gender based discrimination is eliminated at all levels of society. Indeed, gender specific law reforms may, initially, lead to higher levels of gender-based violence because some men may perceive women's rights as a loss of their own rights. This is not to say that law reform should not be instituted, but that law reform alone cannot effect changes in the social and cultural realities within which women live. Changing attitudes and behaviour is important in effecting gender-equality.

The Beyond Inequalities books are part of a series on the status of women in southern Africa and the initiatives to mainstream gender in development processes in the region. From 2002, SARDC WIDSAA and its national partners organisations in the respective SADC countries have been updating the **Beyond Inequalities** books on Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Southern Africa with financial support from Southern Africa Regional Office of HIVOS. The rest of the books on Beyond *Inequalities: 2005 Women in Botswana; Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa* are in different stages of production.

In particular, the information in the **Beyond Inequalities books** is targeted at policy makers, researchers, academics, media, co-operating partners, development agencies, and the non-governmental sector.

The *Beyond Inequalities series* were first published between 1997 and 2000 by SARDC WIDSAA and its national partner organisations. The Royal Netherlands Government Directorate of International Cooperation (DGIS) through its regional WID programme in Zimbabwe funded production of the 13-book series which comprises: *Beyond Inequalities: Women Angola; Para além das Desigualdades a Mulher em Angola; Beyond Inequalities: Women Botswana; Beyond Inequalities: Women Lesotho; Beyond Inequalities: Women Malawi; Beyond Inequalities: Women Mauritius; Beyond Inequalities: Women Mozambique; Para além das Desigualdades a Mulher em Moçambique; Beyond Inequalities: Women Namibia; Beyond Inequalities: Women South Africa; Beyond Inequalities: Women Swaziland; Beyond Inequalities: Women Tanzania; Beyond Inequalities: Women Zambia; Beyond Inequalities: Women Zimbabwe; and Beyond Inequalities: Women Southern Africa (Para além das Desigualdades a mulher na África Austral)*

It is our sincere hope in SARDC WIDSAA that these books will be useful tools towards the processes to gender equality, equity, and justice in the southern African countries.

Those interested in getting hard copies of these publications can contact us at: widsaa@sardc.net

For full report: <http://databases.sardc.net/books/namibia2005/index.php>