



# NETWORK

News

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GENDER EDUCATION AND TRAINING NETWORK

July 2001

## A chance to break the logjam on racism in South Africa

South Africans could use the content of the forthcoming conference on racism to take a fresh view of their own, rather stubborn, demons of race and xenophobia.

By FRANK MEINTJES

South Africans puzzle me. The latest cause of my bemusement is the low level of enthusiasm for the forthcoming UN conference on racism and xenophobia to be held in Durban.

You would not say that we are the same people who not so long ago put our hearts into winning the right to host the Olympics and the soccer World Cup – and who were left inconsolable when those attempts failed.

Does it not matter having a major world event? Don't we yearn to be holding court to the world and to harvest the economic and psychological benefits of being the country chosen as organiser?

So far there has been little publicity and certainly no buzz. We are not preparing for our role as welcomers and providers of service.

We all know the line: do our bit with visitors and we help tourism. By doing this, we help job creation. Now's our big chance to do all of this en masse.

There are immediate benefits if we fully exploit the opportunities pre-

sented by the Durban conference. There are financial benefits, yes, but also – and certainly no less important – intangible and nation-building benefits: the potential to use others' experiences to free ourselves from our mental logjam on racism and xenophobia.

The media is key in raising awareness and preparing the public. However, for weeks now, the most the media could crank out was an occasional few paragraphs on the conference. In the main, it has covered the event as a matter of record, not as a burning world issue. And only two aspects have dominated coverage: the issues of reparations for victims of past racism and the question of who will foot the R100-million conference bill.

Yet there is much more to this indaba. It must take stock of growing racial intolerance and of sporadic outbreaks of genocide. It must examine the overlap between inequality and the black-white divide. It must determine how soci-

eties can marshal education, the media, legislation and civil society to popularise values of equality and mutual respect.

It doesn't take a specialist to see what more the media could be doing. Where are the interviews with leading thinkers and analysts on race? Where are the "case study" type documentaries on projects aimed at breaking down racial thinking? Where are the stories that look at the Jewish communities' campaign for reparations, and the implications of this for other historical claimants? Where are the pieces on the messages the Maoris, Aborigines, Native Americans and ordinary Rwandans will be bringing with them to Durban?



Bandaaid on racism: Thembu Goniwe's billboard during the One City Festival in Cape Town last year. See Page 2

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‘ We seem to be wedded to our vicious cycle: the more irritated key white people become about racism, the more confrontational black people become ’

But we can't just blame the media for insipid coverage. Official organisers and NGOs could do much more to raise the level of discussion and expectation, and thus provide the raw material for better coverage.

South Africa should be using the conference's content to take a fresh view of our own, rather stubborn, demons of race and xenophobia. Freshness is needed because, for the moment, we appear to have exhausted our ability to introspect and honestly confront the issue. Most of us just hate talking about race, even though it invariably bubbles up anyway.

In the rare debates on the issue, predictable positioning causes paralysis rather than

exploration. We seem to be wedded to our vicious cycle: the more irritated key white people become about the issue, the more confrontational black people become.

Maybe, just maybe, we'll get moving in a constructive direction again if we blend our stories with the tales of others confronting the race issue, if we hear other narratives of oppression and change.

The conference (Aug 28-Sep 7) starts with a youth segment, and then the NGO Forum, for which the SA National NGO Coalition acted as programme co-ordinator. The culmination is government deliberations, where rich and poor countries will cross swords because poor countries want recognition for the suffering caused by colonial domination and slavery.

Of course, a major issue

hanging over a conference like this one is whether governments will have the political will to implement bolder anti-racism programmes.

How many countries will sign the conventions that flow from Durban? And how many signatories will adopt the laws, mobilise the funding and make the institutional changes that will be needed to make a difference? In this sense, global conferences are usually not an end point but a rallying point and a beginning for the extensive work that still needs to be done in building a more just world.

*Acknowledgement: This is a shorter version of an article that appeared in The Sunday Times.*

*Frank Meintjies is an independent business consultant, and a former board member of Getnet.*

## Questioning 'post-racism'

This is what Thembinkosi Goniwe has to say about his art work on Page 1:

If colonialism is now “post-colonialism”, if apartheid is now “post-apartheid”, and as we know these projects primarily were conceived and premised on race difference, then when are we going to have “post-racism”? Or can we talk of “post-racism” while so many racist constructs and impositions exist in our so-called enlightened or modern world? For that matter, modernity or modernism itself was conceived and premised on these very racist notions. Why should it be surprising to note that the modern world with its material goods has been designed by and for the white race?

This work-in-progress is premised on negotiating these racist constructs, examining power relations that are based on colonial and apartheid leftovers coupled with modern developments. I am concerned with racial classification or differentiation, issues of power and authority; superordinate and subordinate; superior and inferior; black and white.

The photographic images (black and white men) in their form of identity documents are a play on these racial classification and identity differentiations. The “self” and “other” are visually negotiated by the colour contrast; direct and indirect (eye) gazes or portrait gestures and postures; the highly visible Band-aid plaster pasted on the black

face, which on the white face subtly blends into the pink skin.

In this work my concern is with the unspoken racist constructs that are visible and implicit in our “post-colonial” and “post-apartheid” era. And I am prompting an inquiry into a possible examination and understanding of whether post-racism will ever exist or not. That said, this work is questioning, and becomes a question; it provokes and projects and thus is a debate to be debated ...

*Thembinkosi Goniwe is a full-time artist. An MA graduate and former lecturer of Michaelis School of Fine Arts, he has participated in exhibitions around the world and in art residencies in South Africa, the US and Britain.*

## Denial: the worst kind of racism

When the Human Rights Commission called on the media to account for the racism in the institution, many of the journalists and editors cried “foul!” and vehemently denied that there was racism in the media. Understandably, no-one wants to be identified as racist or even be associated with racist remarks. However, for the media to deny the existence of racism in the institution is tantamount to preventing us from unlearning the evil system that has plunged the country into disaster and caused misery for the majority of our people.

The big question still is: is the media in South Africa racist? The answer is an unequivocal YES. The media, like all other institutions in South Africa, have not yet rid themselves of the racism of the past. Racism will not disappear of its own accord. There was a conscious effort to ensure and enforce white superiority in all the spheres of life of South Africans for centuries, therefore a conscious effort is needed to undo the damage. Secondly, a white-dominated institution like the media is not qualified to judge whether or not it is racist because white people are generally not targeted for racism. Therefore, they might not be aware of the effect of their actions, especially when the racism is subtle.

The other side of the coin is to cry “racism!” for every action that involves people of different “races”. This is equally faulty because it conceals the real monster. So what is racism? It is a system of white superiority (social, political and economic – found in all the systems and structures of

By PETHU  
SEROTE,  
DIRECTOR OF  
GETNET



institutions and using the power of the institutions) that excludes black people based on the fact that they are of a different “race”. Black people have been targeted the world over by this system. Because institutions are made up of individuals, they in some way become carriers and implementers of this system.

As a system based on exclusion, domination and oppression, racism works with other similar systems and also intersects with them. In South Africa there is a strong intersection of racism and sexism that serves to exclude and oppress black women. This complicates life in the case of working class and rural black women. It therefore becomes important to include a gender focus in working against racism. The results of affirmative action programmes best illustrate this need. Because there has not been a proper analysis of the country’s historical background, and because there is no analysis of the intersection of racial and gender oppression, white women are the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action and therefore can be said to have benefited from apartheid and the present dispensation. The intersection of race and xenophobia has become clearer since xenophobia has become so visible in our society. The case of the border police feeding their dogs on illegal immigrants is a case in point.

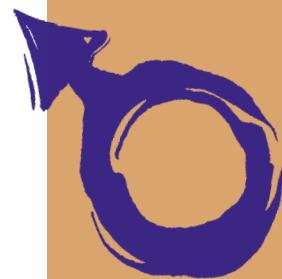
The mechanisms for exclu-

sion used by racism are all so evident in the daily lives of the majority of South Africans. Discrimination, the most visible of these mechanisms, is everyday experience for black people in dealing with the different institutions. Banks, for example, still require extensive insurance when they lend money to black people. The other mechanism is the “invisibilisation” of black people. Black people and women become invisible by their absence, and in some cases by their very presence (because of their small numbers), in the decision-making positions in all our institutions.

The denial of racism in South Africa is most potent as a way of reproducing the system. The denial, for example by the media, had the effect of diminishing the effects of racism on the people who are targeted for this type of exclusion. The media is not the only institution in denial. In fact, most of our institutions are in denial: there is a sense in which the dominant message is, “let’s forget the past and move on”. While this is an apparently positive message, it seems to under-estimate the effects of the past on the present.

The denial does not only come predominantly or mainly from white people. Black people who have experienced racism in its crudest forms, have forgotten the effects of it. It is common nowadays to hear the argument that in present-day democratic South Africa, “race” does not matter. The point is that it does. To deny the effects of so many years of oppression is not acceptable. We are where we are as a

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## Participation in the NGO forum



NGOs, academics, media, civil society organisations and individuals may participate at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Wcar) NGO Forum taking place at Durban's Kingsmead Stadium from August 28 to September 1

At the forum civil society stakeholders will devise a programme of action which it will forward to Wcar. NGOs accredited by the UN will also participate in the government meeting.

Wcar's objectives are to review progress made in the fight against intolerances; to find ways to

ensure the application of existing standards and the implementation of existing instruments to combat intolerances; to increase levels of awareness; to review factors leading to intolerances; and to make recommendations for ensuring that the UN has the necessary resources for its actions to combat intolerances.

The quickest way to register for the NGO Forum is through the web site <[www.racism.org.za](http://www.racism.org.za)>. There is a registration form that can be downloaded from the site and completed.

Organisations need accreditation to participate in Wcar. Information and application forms

are available on <<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/racism/index.htm>>.

The NGO Forum costs R750 or US\$100 per registering individual and the fee only covers registration. More information is available on <[www.racism.org.za](http://www.racism.org.za)>. There is sponsorship available for NGO delegates, and requests for sponsorships should be indicated on the registration form.

*The Wcar NGO Forum secretariat can be reached at telephone +27 (0) 11 403 7270, fax: + 27 (0) 11 403 5250; E-mail: [HYPERLINK mailto:info@wcar.sangoco.org.za](mailto:info@wcar.sangoco.org.za)*

South African women NGOs and other interested institutions who met in Cape Town in May to prepare an input on the Declaration of the African NGO Forum at Wcar have made recommendations which they believe are necessary to address the forms of intolerances in which racism intersects with gender.

They want states to conduct a situational gender analysis of how the experience of gender discrimination intersects with racism and other intolerances. They also recommend that:

- States should provide mechanisms to enable women to do

### States must invest in gender, say NGOs

introspection to determine and acknowledge their own racist convictions and other related intolerances or biases.

- States that have not signed and ratified Cedaw and Cerd should be encouraged to do so.
- States should encourage NGOs and women to take an active role in the debates conceptualising the African Renaissance.

The group feels the African

NGO declaration fails to comprehensively articulate the gender analysis that is needed to make racism and discrimination fully visible.

UN member states will be asked to explicitly include sexual orientation in the Wcar Declaration and Programme of Action. A position statement by the Sexual Orientation, Multiple Discrimination and Related Intolerance Caucus says experiences of racism are exacerbated by, and cannot be separated from, discrimination experienced on other grounds, including sexual orientation.

#### From Page 3

society and a country because "race" played such an important role in our lives.

The effects of the denial of racism can only work to the disadvantage of our country. It continues to benefit the few, who can find a space for

themselves in the dominant group and its systems. It also causes inaction among people who could benefit from changing their attitudes. There is no getting away from the impact of racism on our society, it still affects the majority of the people in this

country. The forthcoming international conference on racism and xenophobia is therefore a good opportunity for us to come to terms with our past, to understand our current problems and challenges and to plan differently for the future.



## Race, gender and research merge in founding of Khib

A black women's research NGO is pushing the boundaries of academic research, not the least with a strategic focus on violence against women, which they believe will only end when society's patriarchal structures have been demolished.

By YVETTE ABRAHAMS,  
Khib RESEARCH CO-ORDINATOR

**T**he Khoekhoe word for "peace" is Khib. When we thought about what to call our new NGO, we immediately realised that it would be difficult to build consensus around the issue of language. So we decided to be named in the first language of this country, to avoid conflict.

The words "Women's Centre" was a suggestion by a steering committee member, who pointed out the need for a one-stop women's centre. She said there should be a place where women could walk in and get all the help they needed at one place, rather than being shunted around from pillar to post in the midst of a crisis. Thinking back, I now realise that it is probably an impossible dream to be able to put everything in one place, but at least we should be able to know the place, the office and person who could help. Knowledge is such power! And dreams are important in moving us forward. They are what motivate us to find the time and the energy to get things done.

Khib is a national, independent black women's research NGO. Our vision and mission is to build peace in a society where violence against women is systemic. We strive to do

this through the creation of women's solidarity towards economic security, self-reliance and self-actualisation for the complete emancipation of women. Khib seeks to challenge patriarchal institutions and to empower women from disadvantaged communities - socially, politically and economically - through conducting action research, running pilot projects, pursuing ongoing education and training, and the establishment of a women's university.

### Why black?

While many people understand the need for gender-separatism, I often encounter suspicion and hostility towards the concept of a black women's research organisation. Oddly enough, this hostility has come even from white feminists who have been active in gender-segregated organisations for years.

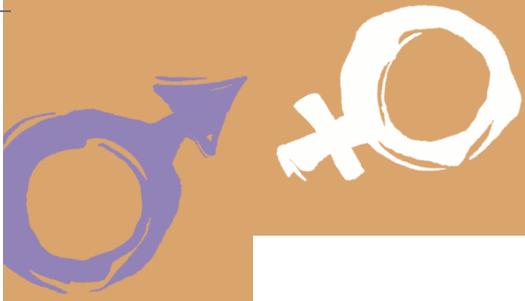
The most obvious response is that research, because it is so expensive to learn and practice, is heavily classist, that is, it tends to benefit and be practiced by those who are already rich. In this country that means that research is a heavily white and male-dominated field. Even in gender research, which tends to be dominated by women, black women remain a minority, sometimes excluded from decision-making

processes around what type of research to fundraise for, execute and implement.

Young black women in particular, though they may have the formal qualifications, often find it hard to get entry-level jobs where they can gain the necessary experience. Where they do, they tend to go from short-term contract to short-term contract, with limited power to influence the scope of research, problem statements or conclusions. So there is a definite need for a gender research organisation that mentors and builds capacity among black women researchers. This might prove of importance, not just to the researchers themselves but to the broader community of black women who often do not get an input into the research conducted about them, and supposedly for them. It is not unreasonable to assume that an organisation of black women might prove more adept at listening to, and supporting, the community we are bound to serve.

The second aspect is an intellectual one. When it comes to race, people often cast the debate in terms of difference: race becomes an issue of coming to terms with each other's difference. What is overlooked is that race is also about similarities. With research, the answers you seek are determined by the kinds of questions you ask. What happens when thoughts and ideas are refracted across a certain similarity of experience? Which questions assume importance, what new ways of framing debates emerge, and





how do possible solutions arise through a more culturally familiar process?

My experience as a member of the Women of Colour Consciousness Raising Group (WCCR) at the University of Cape Town demonstrated

‘ Academic institutions are likely to be the last place where a strong anti-racist, anti-sexist research plan is going to be implemented. ’

‘ Our nation is late in setting a critical research agenda that genuinely affects the country's needs. ’

quite conclusively that race does make a difference to the form and content of debates. Universities are still very white and patriarchal. When black women present our ideas in these contexts, we are heavily outnumbered, sometimes completely alone, and always on the defensive.

This is not a conducive environment for developing analytical thought. Learning proceeds faster when the learner feels safe and comfortable. The WCCR at UCT

provided a safe nurturing space for us in a place where we were a minority. It provided immense impetus for my, and many others', intellectual development. While applied policy research conducted outside of established academic institutions tends to appear less hierarchical, the fundamental axes of power along race and gender lines are the same. So a similar need arises for an empowering space, which will strengthen us to interact more confidently in multi-racial, multi-gendered research spaces.

#### Why research?

Knowledge is power. Even just to know where to go and whom to ask is a form of power denied many disadvan-

tagged women in this country. When policies are debated, budgets determined and implementation planned, it helps to have in-depth knowledge about how these policies have worked in other countries, their likely effects here, and the range of alternative policies available. Good research is essential to all of this, as well as to the advocacy and lobbying process that is part and parcel of building a strong civil society.

When you are presenting an argument to policy makers, it helps to have quality facts and figures at your disposal. Yet research, as I have said, is classist. What does it mean when the research process replicates the very same inequalities of power that the policy it is developing is supposed to remove? Change is likely to happen slowly, if at all.

In the field of gender, it is difficult for ordinary NGOs to build research expertise. Employing an in-house researcher is possible only for the largest NGOs. Knowledge is expensive generally and doubly so when it comes to small or under-funded areas like gender. Much of the latest knowledge is not published or kept by libraries, it is presented at workshops or kept within individual NGOs. So it is costly to track down and keep available. Yet knowledge is also cumulative: the more you know the quicker you learn. There is clearly a strong argument to be made for an optimal use of resources through a specialist gender research organisation that conducts some research itself, while also making its services available to other NGOs and policy-makers.

#### Why an NGO?

The issue of independent

research is a difficult one. As I have said, established research institutions tend to be conservative, mirroring in their staff complement, research focus, and research content, the race and gender hierarchies of society at large. What are the implications of this for the implementation of academic freedom, and the development of strong, critical, research voices?

While these institutions are transforming, the pace of change is slow and is likely to be reflected last in the distribution of research money and the re-focusing of research agendas. Academic institutions are likely to be the last place where a strong anti-racist, anti-sexist research plan is going to be implemented. Individual women working within these institutions, whatever their personal strengths, are likely to remain on the defensive for some time to come. They can, and do, achieve astounding work. But that is not the same as a cohesive, strategic research agenda, developed in collaboration with the communities we are supposed to be aiding through our work.

Further, academic institutions are largely state-funded, while research funded by the corporate sector is restricted to that which they find profitable. This raises difficult questions regarding the spaces where autonomous, critical thought is supposed to flourish in an independent Africa.

While it would be wrong (and probably futile) to pinpoint any one continent, I am entitled to speak of mine, and am content to remark that African governments are not distinguished by their determination to abolish patriarchy. The idea that they will fund, protect, and nurture a strong,



anti-sexist body of research seems far-fetched. Of course, NGO research is not without its problems. For the first five years of black majority rule, many of our largest foreign donors preferred to fund NGOs who could demonstrate a close connection to government. The implications of this policy for the development of politically independent research do not appear to have been carefully considered. There are signs that this policy is now changing, and indeed it is high time. Our nation is late in setting a critical research agenda that genuinely addresses the country's needs, particularly with regard to chronically under-funded areas such as gender.

#### Khib's strategic focus

We chose to begin our work in the struggle to end violence against women, because we felt that this was the most urgent area to tackle. I believe that violence against women is systemic, that it both upholds and is embedded in patriarchal structures, and will only come to a complete end when we have demolished those struc-

tures. In that sense violence against women is the final frontier of women's struggle. I also believe it must be our first. We cannot change patriarchal structures if we are weak and divided against ourselves, yet women's solidarity is notoriously hard to achieve. Women can be immensely

competitive, tend not to support one another, will vote for a man rather than another woman, and may be jealous of each other's success. Yet these issues can be dealt with once we have adequately grappled with a fundamental reality. If, as the latest figures suggest, one in three women are victims of sexual violence, this means that in any random gathering, at least one-third of the women present are likely to be sufferers of Rape Trauma Syndrome. How are we supposed to build women's solidarity under such conditions?

If we cannot provide one another with nurturance and support, we shall never build women's solidarity. It should not be impossible. We nurture a nation. We should be able to love ourselves right. But this reasoning does underline the necessity of opposing violence against women as a strategic priority.

#### Conclusion

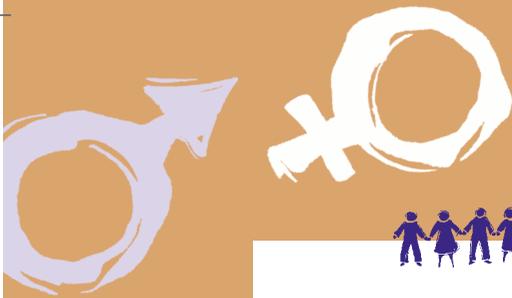
So that is Khib. At the moment, nine months after our first steering committee meeting, we are still grappling with the practicalities of com-

ing into being. Between writing project proposals and developing fundraising strategies, we do research consultancy work. We began keeping a database of black women researchers and trainers, originally as a service for the decisionmakers in government and NGOs who, when asked, "How come research consultancies still tend to be awarded to large, white and male-dominated companies?", responded that they simply could not find enough qualified black women. At that, we began collecting CVs, and put together a database of suitable candidates. When the work comes to us, the profits go towards our seed money fund.

I could not conclude without acknowledging the mentorship and support of the Gender Equity Unit at the University of the Western Cape, who is generously building our capacity to become an independent NGO. Finally, thanks are due to the dedicated and hardworking members of our steering committee and volunteers, who demonstrate daily that women's solidarity is not only possible but instrumental in keeping the dream alive.

*Yvette Abrahams has worked as a researcher and research consultant with many institutions in the Western Cape. Her field of specialisation is local economic development, with specific reference to the impact on women. Her doctoral studies involved the history of Sarah Bartman.*

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## SA men are grappling with the new order

The different masculinities of South African men, the way they are changing and their responses to gender change come into focus in a new book reported on here.

**T**he transition to democratic rule in South Africa has shown that the content of masculinity is not fixed and unchangeable. Different visions of masculinity are emerging in the country, and with them the hope of a more peaceful society.

Prof Robert Morrell, who has been studying masculinity in SA for more than a decade, notes this in the recently published *Changing Men in Southern Africa\**, a compilation of current research and the first book of its kind to examine SA men and masculinities. The book records a range of progressive, accommodating and reactive responses from men of all races in the country to gender change since 1994.

The book makes two fundamental theoretical and political points: the category "man/men" is a gender category and needs to be analysed and treated in this way. Until recently studies of gender ignored this formulation by equating gender issues with women's issues. Secondly, not all men are the same. The concept of "masculinities" can be used to capture the range of experience and realities lived by men.

The discussion of masculinities among black, African and white men is arranged in four parts, dealing with "the body in action" (guns, sport and

violence); fathers, families and kinship; performing masculinity; and sexuality.

Morrell, who edited the collection, says in an introductory chapter that although SA men have been described as chauvinistic, misogynistic and homophobic, such sweeping reference is too loaded to advance analysis or capture the diversity of local men's experience. He says the studies in the book show that there is no one, typical, SA man, but many different masculinities, some of which support violent and exploitative gender relations, others which accept such gender relations, and still others which oppose them. "Consistent threads running through the chapters of the book are the categories of race and class which have taken a particular form under apartheid and whose legacies live on in the new South Africa," he notes.

The fact that the gender order is changing is as much an effect of an interventionist state committing itself (at least at the level of policy) to gender equity, as of the small moves made, often in contradictory ways, by men themselves, he says, adding that hegemonic masculinity has shifted and continues to shift.

The book explores the particular conditions under which masculinities are formed, showing that masculinities

change, particularly when a society is in transition. Morrell says some of the violent gender responses in SA may be seen as part of a wider social attempt by men to deal with feelings of emasculation or actual loss of status and power. However, there are also opportunities for realising gender justice. Such change can be quite rapid - as in the case of state interventions which put gender legislation on the statute books, but for the most part gender change is slow.

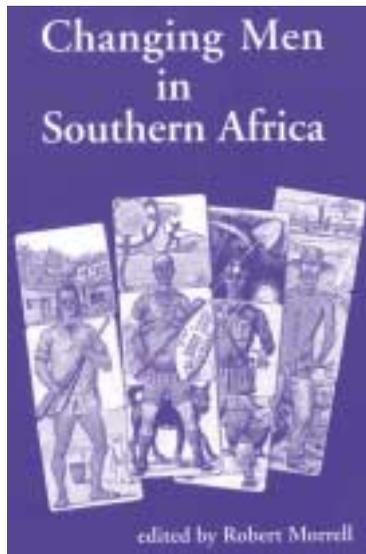
In an introductory chapter he gives useful summaries of the theory of masculinity and of the history of masculinities in 20th century southern Africa. Noting martial traditions among men of all races in the region, he makes the point that the men who agreed to the landmark shift to democratic rule in SA had earlier been committed to a military defence of white privilege or the armed overthrow of white rule. This provided heartening evidence that masculinity was not fixed and unchangeable.

Morrell concludes the history section saying that SA, until recently, was "a man's country": "Power was exercised publicly and politically by men. In families, both black and white men made decisions, earned the money, and held power. The law (both customary and modern) supported the

presumption of male power and authority and discriminated against women. But the country's history also produced brittle masculinities - defensive and prone to violence. For white men, the uneven distribution of power gave them privileges but also made them defensive about challenge (by women, blacks, and/or other men). For black men, the harshness of life on the edge of poverty and the emasculation of political powerlessness gave their masculinity a dangerous edge. Honour and respect were rare, and getting it and retaining it (from white employers, fellow labourers or women) was often a violent process."

Discussing the motors and sites of change of masculinities in the context of the contributions in the book, Morrell says the hand of the state is evident in gender change without it appearing to be the primary actor currently.

The studies look at how masculinities have been shaped and continue to be shaped in the workplace (e.g. the mines), the townships and white suburbs. Township life, for example, contributed to toughness being revered as an essential part of masculinity. It could be used respectably (in sport) or violently as a way of becoming a criminal. In the suburbs a hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity developed with men regarding it desirable to be white, financially independent, Protestant, mature (over 25 years old) and of irreproachable personality (Kobus du Pisani). Under a range of influences this form of masculinity became more materialistic and competitive, particularly in sport, but it remained in relative terms socially and politically conservative, and it remained hostile to blacks.



Competitive teams sports, even when racially segregated, have been an obsession among SA men for much of the century. Among the minor sports like surfing, alternative masculinities failed to emerge. Despite the promise of its "hippy" origins and its early emphasis on recreation, surfing became highly competitive and commercialised (Glen Thompson). Over time, the leisure orientation that offered some chance of a more tolerant, anti-authoritarian sport, became competitive and commoditised. It developed its own macho orientation. The racist context of the sport (it was for whites only in the 1970s) and the strength of consumerist culture ultimately blunted its transformative capacity.

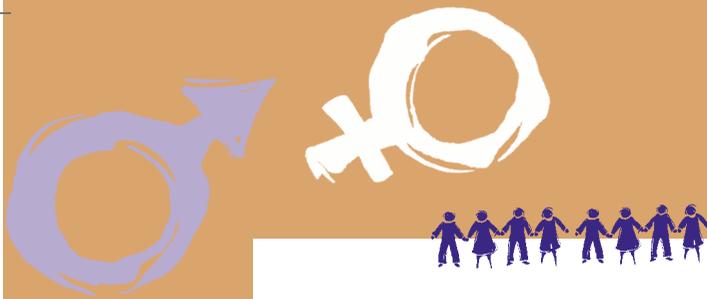
Political transformation has given African township youth the opportunity to engage with the sea and their bodies in new ways. Crispin Hemson's study shows that to African Zulu-speaking youth in Durban lifesaving offers a way of escaping poverty and constructing new forms of masculinity. These draw on a traditional Zulu lexicon of masculinity and rough township masculinities with emphasis

on perseverance and self-confidence respectively. Morrell says the result, evident in the bodily conscious, confident and resilient lifesavers, offers some insight into what a new SA masculinity, freed from the dominating force of poverty, might look like.

In a transitional society such as SA, the question of which discourse on men is hegemonic is a complex one. Morrell says the pre-existing, formerly hegemonic white masculinity continues to exert influence via media images and through institutions (particularly business) within which such masculinity remains embedded. Since all masculinities influence one another and are never discrete and bounded entities, elements of white masculinity can still be seen in many other masculinities, primarily in the emphasis on achievement and appearance, which are features of a commoditised society. Yet masculinities that were formerly oppositional - urban black and rural African masculinities - are now jostling for ascendancy. The emerging masculinities draw on competing images and legacies. One of the most powerful masculinities centres on Nelson Mandela and has been termed a "heroic masculinity". Others derive their existence from the egalitarian world of transnational agencies (like the United Nations) that emphasise human rights and gender equity.

No one masculinity or group alone is likely to be the carrier of new values. Gender change is a highly complex process and it occurs within individuals, within groups and within

“ For black men, the harshness of life on the edge of poverty and the emasculation of political powerlessness gave their masculinity a dangerous edge. ”



institutions.

Morrell groups men's responses to gender changes in recent years in three loose categories: reactive or defensive, accommodating, and responsive or progressive. One example of contradiction and overlap between these categories, says Morrell, is the black urban youth masculinity described by Crispin Hemson in the book. It still contains a worrying capacity for violence, yet it also is anti-individualist and communitarian and generally redefining itself, which is essential for gender change.

In the first category, men have attempted to turn back changes in order to reassert their power. One of the few explicit organisational manifestations of this is the SA Association of Men launched in 1994 shortly before the elections. Primarily a white, middle-class organisation, its goal was to fight discrimination against men in order to "restore the tattered remains of

the male image". The movement emerged at a time when white men were facing their greatest challenge. In the political sphere, government was being "taken over" by blacks; in the business world, affirmative action policies were "giving jobs to blacks"; and in public spaces, gay men were openly flaunting their sexuality, a clear sign that the homophobic grip of hegemonic masculinity was losing its strength.

The appalling rise in incidents of rape in SA can also be considered as a masculinist response to transition, says

Morrell. A member of the SA Rapist Association formed in a Gauteng township in the early 1990s, complaining about being politically sidelined by "senior comrades" in the run-up to the 1994 elections said his group raped women who needed to be disciplined and thought they knew better than "most of us".

In the second category of responses, some which are apparently traditionalist and might be considered defensive can in fact be understood as attempts to resuscitate non-violent masculinities, says Morrell. One example is the initiation practices among African youth, which is currently on the increase in rural and urban areas. Being initiated into manhood has strong ethnic connotations but it also invokes the ideal of manhood that is responsible, respectful and wise.

The subjectivities that are constructed under the new SA conditions still have to negotiate the legacies of race and class inequality. Young urban and educated blacks are exploring new ways of being, but they still cling to old ways, not least the claim to superior status over women (Kopano Ratele). In time, the increase of women's economic and public power will challenge (and already is challenging) the discourse of male superiority, says Morrell. In the meantime, processes of asserting racial identities are becoming less violent, slowly being disconnected from an oppositional imperative to be assertive and dogmatic.

The absence of any widespread male opposition to the improvement in women's positions and to the tolerance of gay men is possibly the most impressive testimony to the accommodationist posi-

tion, although misogyny and homophobia have far from disappeared.

A number of organisations currently working in the field of violence are trying to get men to take responsibility for violence, to condemn it and work for more equitable gender relations, domestically and publicly. Initiatives have been undertaken that cross gender and race barriers in an attempt to combat violent masculinities, two examples being The White Ribbon Campaign and Gun Free South Africa.

Among middle class, mostly white, professionals the idea of the "new man" is widespread, says Morrell. These men may be involved in men's groups engaged in introspection and gender consciousness raising, or they may have an equal division of housework with their partners, or they may be involved in childcare. Some black men are also embracing this new masculinity. Morrell says both working and middle class men are changing, responding to the particular challenges of their circumstances in ways that reflect their class position, but are not determined by it.

*Robert Morrell is a professor in the School of Education at the University of Natal, Durban.*

*Changing Men in Southern Africa (2001) is published by University of Natal Press and Zed Books Ltd. Other contributors to the book not mentioned in this report are Jacklyn Cock, Sandra Swart, Benedict Carton, Jonathan Hyslop, Bjorn Lindgren, Thembisa Waetjen and Gerhard Mare, Sean Field, Rob Pattman, Catherine Campbell, Ronald Louw, T. Dunbar Moodie, Katherine Wood and Rachel Jewkes., Michael Kimmel, Joan Wardrop, Thokozani Xaba*

‘ No one masculinity or group alone is likely to be the carrier of new values ’

‘ The appalling rise in incidents of rape can also be considered as a masculinist reponse to transition. ’

## GENDER CO-ORDINATOR'S TRAININGS

### Hanging in there for empowerment

By MERCIA APPELS, DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY

When our group started the gender co-ordinator's training course with Getnet last year, I was curious to learn more about gender issues but also apprehensive because previous courses with other consultancies had left me confused and frustrated. My fears were immediately allayed and now, after having completed the second part of the Getnet course, I am delighted to report that the fog has cleared at last.

Both workshops were held in Cape Town, in November 2000 and February 2001. At the first workshop with Getnet I quickly realised that my earlier confusion was caused by the manner in which the training was presented. Although Getnet used similar frameworks, there were visible differences in how they used these tools. After giving us contextual information and exercises with the frameworks, followed by reportbacks to plenary, a solid foundation for understanding was laid.

When I heard of homework I was sceptical and thought,

"What is going on here?" So I merrily forgot about it until I had to submit a

proper gender mainstreaming plan. During the first workshop we had to draw up a preliminary plan of action for gender mainstreaming.

When Pethu Serote, Getnet's director, asked us at the end of the training course how we felt I experienced a tremendous sense of fulfilment and excitement. I now knew how to produce my plan to management and how to get started on gender planning.

I think all the participants would agree with me that Getnet's facilitators were able throughout the training to maintain a high level of participation and a spirit of oneness; they even handled our frustrations with tremendous skill and understanding. The nine participants were from provincial government departments and NGOs, from Bloemfontein, Kimberley and Pretoria.

Those of us who worked for the government needed the



Participants in the gender co-ordinator's course held in Cape Town.

training to draw up employment equity plans. The rest of the group had gender mainstreaming as common ground, needing, in particular, to know how to plan around this.

The course sensitised participants with regard to gender conscientisation and social constructs, but also brought to the surface our own personal prejudices and gave us all the opportunity to do some soul-searching. Particularly effective in this regard were the exercises on time lines and the power relationship (e.g. we had to look at situations in which we felt powerful and powerless).

We also learnt to always consult when planning (one's view might not always be the only correct one), and never to forget to work towards something. I remember Pethu every time asking: "To what end?"

Mercia Appels is based in Kimberley.

### Diverse group takes stock of challenges

By SIDNEY KHUMALO, NADEL

The first leg of Getnet's new 2001 gender co-ordinator's training course did justice to its objectives of deepening the participants' understanding of gender issues, providing them with analytical tools and



The workshop was held in Johannesburg in April. It was

exploring strategies for the implementation of gender equality.

facilitated by Getnet panelists Nomkitha Gysman and Peter Jordaan. There were 15 participants, a diverse group including representatives from government departments (e.g. SANDE, Eastern Cape welfare department, Northern Province tourism department), trade



## GENDER CO-ORDINATOR'S TRAINING

unions (Samwu) and rural NGOs.

The sessions were thought-provoking, also providing a perfect platform for dynamic discussion and evaluation of where we are as a country in relation to gender equality. It allowed the participants to identify and analyse the challenges facing us in the implementation of gender policies.

The workshop noted that the female role continued to revolve around the domestic affairs of the family - as wife, mother and home manager, while the male role remained located in the occupational world, with its status-giving and income-generating advantages. The situation gets worse in rural areas where, despite the constitutional imperatives that underpin gender equality, men still wield more authority than women; there a woman still is expected to be submissive and hard working to "qualify" as a "good woman".

The supporting materials disseminated during the workshop enriched my knowledge and I emerged with renewed determination to contribute to sensitisation, conscientisation and transformation in this area of societal relations. Our society is still dependent on a rational ideological construct which legitimises gender inequality, for example through culture and religion, at the expense of women.

It is our collective obligation to ensure the advancement of the struggle for gender equality by demystifying our gender roles in societal structures. It also is our obligation to uncompromisingly challenge those who want to maintain the status quo or are caught up in the luxury of stoicism.

I was struck by a number of contradictions in the workshop group. For example, a participant whose job involves gender policy making in government clearly battled with

translating policy into practice; something was preventing the conceptual switch to seeing the world through gendered eyes. Another contradiction was how some of the women participants, fully conversant with their rights, could not challenge the masculine prototype.

To me the latter example again confirmed that hypocrisy is still alive and well among gender activists; the men tend to be two-faced and the women are inclined to compromise. Unless we can begin to openly talk and challenge in the area of gender relations, we will remain frustrated with the pace of change.

I am looking forward to the second part of the training in June. Participants will be expected to report back on practical gains made since the first round.

*Sidney Khumalo is a project trainer with Nadel in Cape Town.*

## Welfare managers ready to apply learnings

BY CHEANETTE TEMBANI, EASTERN CAPE WELFARE DEPARTMENT

A three-day gender training workshop was held for Welfare Department personnel in the Eastern Cape at the end of May.

The workshop was facilitated by Getnet's director, Pethu Serote, and Getnet training panel members Nomkitha Gysman and Mvula Yoyo. Namhla Dikeda, the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Welfare Department, opened the workshop.

The workshop was organised by the departmental Special Programmes Unit,

whose main brief it is to institutionalise gender into departmental business. The unit has adopted a co-operative approach/paradigm which sees mainstreaming as the responsibility of each and every manager, district head and programme manager, that is, virtually everybody in the department! Because of this paradigm, heads of districts, programme managers and provincial managers were targeted for exposure to gender training so that they can understand conceptualisations of gender and use these within the department and particularly in their areas of opera-

tion. There were 23 participants altogether.

The workshop was a resounding success. It helped participants gain a deeper understanding of the social construction of gender and exposed them to tools of application and intervention in programme planning and interventions.

For many, a high point of the exercise was that everybody went away with an intervention plan and strategy. Participants were assisted to put together plans that would be fine-tuned for implementation back in their districts and offices.

## GENDER AWARENESS

# Diakonia moves the gender spirit

By WAYNE ALEXANDER, PACSA

Diakonia Southern Africa hosted a gender workshop facilitated by Getnet in Pretoria in May.

Diakonia had invited all its southern African partner organisations as well as associated organisations from other countries. The event was truly international and included representatives from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Somalia, Sweden, South Africa and Cambodia.

I work for the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (Pacsa), an agency in partnership with Diakonia. My particular interest in the workshop was connected to research I was doing for Pacsa around men and gender. It is hoped that the research will lead to a pilot project working with men in churches around issues of gender.

From our arrival in frosty Johannesburg, there were indications that the exercise would challenge more than the physical ability to survive. The intellectual journey we were about to embark on was to become a place of interrogation of personal beliefs and a challenge to the institutions we invest our working lives in. The participating organisations and individuals did not all have gender as their focus, or even on the periphery of their work. This would make it tough to have a discussion on mainstreaming gender, let alone on the issue of the patriarchy.

As a man at a workshop on gender which asked the question "Gender: what's in it for men?", I could not escape the



process of self-reflection. How have I contributed to maintaining the patriarchal order within the community? Have I really ever challenged long held belief systems that placed me as a male ahead of females? These questions, if not answered, were certainly to resurface time and again as the workshop progressed.

My major observation was that the space created outside of the formal workshop was more valuable in understanding people's "real" position on questions of gender equality. Watching the Kaizer Chiefs versus Sundowns soccer match, which would determine the outcome of the domestic soccer league, conversation

**Gender relations in the NGO sector are often a forgotten area of engagement in the struggle**

and private thoughts could no longer exclude the earlier workshop discussions on power and its impact on gender roles and on what it means to be a man.

Gender relations in the NGO sector are often a forgotten area of engagement in the struggle.

We "NGO types" assume that as hardened activists and "progressives" we are beyond analysis and rebuke. We tend to think that the real problem lies not with "us" - it is

"them" (the private sector, churches, traditional leaders, etc) we have to reform.

I am certain that when we look at our institutions there may be many lessons learnt on how we maintain the patriarchy. The workshop discussion on the institutional web and re-evaluating our organisations would also require us to revisit the individual beliefs that collectively shape the NGO world.

I want to make one reference to self as a learning point. I was at pains in one session to make the point that Pacsa was headed by a female director and that this would determine the direction of the organisation. My assumption was that this directorship was evidence of our progressive stance on gender issues, but in a discussion with the facilitator I learnt about a number of difficulties women face in gaining employment, even when the employer is a woman. I was asked: "If your director was looking to hire a field worker, who would she hire? A man who is able to work till late and go into communities with less regard for safety or a married woman with children?" My answer was that it would be the man, because of the many imposed gender roles the woman would have to fulfil while her male counterpart remained less encumbered.

Certainly the most stimulating session for me was the investigation of gender and HIV/Aids.

When I worked on the secretariat of last year's international Aids conference held in Durban, this issue was continually part of discussions and





## WOMEN'S BUDGET

became a central area of interest. The patriarchy, power and gender inequality has impact beyond the engagement of personal relationships, it goes to the heart of our existence and affects the choices we make about reproductive health. The fact that women are more vulnerable to infection by HIV/Aids is unquestionable.

Considering our country's "United Nations" of experience, it is undeniable that issues of race, class and ethnicity are thoroughly enmeshed with the perpetuation of inequalities.

These were the areas that many participants would have

further discussed and interrogated if there were no time constraints.

It was the exercise of designing the "future man" that was the most fun and grudgingly led to the greatest agreement between men and women in the workshop. The "future man" is expected to be sensitive, open and willing to redefine customary beliefs of the role of a man. We may not have arrived there yet but people felt this could be achieved and we agreed that we would go out and work to create this new man.

Ultimately, for organisations and individuals placed very dif-

ferently in terms of their understanding of gender issues the workshop helped develop an awareness of gender relations and sparked both personal and organisational debates on questions change.

Diakonia has committed itself to continue working with its partners in taking forward gender work.

It is my belief that as individuals and organisations the challenge lies with us to start personal processes of change on questions of gender and then to proceed to taking on the "big bad world" of patriarchy, gender inequality and gender violence.

## More local government budget workshops needed

In June Getnet presented a two-day "Women's Budget" workshop for women and men councillors in Cape Town. The workshop was facilitated by Getnet director Pethu Serote and training panelists Sindiswa Tafeni and Elston Ronnie Seppie.

Heinrich Magerman, who is the councillor in the Macassar area, commented as follows:

"The workshop was of great value because it enhanced our understanding of the budgetary process on a local, provincial and national government level.

"Participants were equipped with tools to analyse budgets and their implementation (monitoring) and alignment in terms of reaching strategic objectives. The session on the integrated development plan (IDP) was also of immense importance and value.

"I was particularly impressed with the quality of Getnet's facilitators and the techniques they employed during the

course of the workshop.

"There is definitely a need for workshops of this nature and it should extend to civil society formations, CBOs, local government practitioners, etc."

Councillors Judy Hermans (Northpine) and Jo-anne Simons (Elsies River) commented as follows:

"The workshop was a truly empowering experience. Getnet have shown their commitment to development and liaison through the provision of skills training and capacity building at the level of local government.

"As councillors we are constantly faced with budgets, proposals and draft policies drawn up by officials who are mainly men who are sometimes out of touch with the concerns and dynamics of the community.

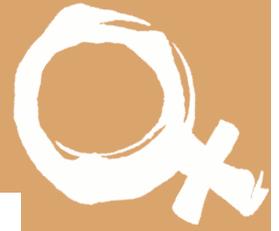
"The budget component of the workshop was well planned and geared to all participants gaining a thorough

understanding of the processes and procedures involved in the budget being finally accepted by council. We are now empowered to ensure that community participation informs what appears on the budget, how to prioritise community needs and, most importantly, how to monitor the budget from a gender perspective.

"The programme has a positive impact on the personal as well as the professional aspects of a participant's life – education and training for life!

"A fellow councillor who did not attend expressed concern about how and when funds allocated in the budget will be used in her community. 'Well,' I said, having just attended the workshop, 'You have a right to request a business plan for each project, set time frames, interrogate the outcomes as presented ...' Needless to say, she is motivated to attend the next Getnet workshop!"

## WOMEN'S BUDGET



# Budget materials workshop boosts efforts in Sadc

By ELSIE ALEXANDER  
UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA

Promoting and advocating full and effective participation by women at all levels as well as the eradication of all forms of gender discrimination are stated priority objectives of the international and Sadc communities. It is therefore of paramount importance that each nation state formulates and implements laws, strategies, policies and programmes to mainstream gender in all sectors and levels of development. Gender is a significant variable and concept of development that can make a difference to the lives of many poor people if incorporated meaningfully in development policies, plans and programmes.

One of the major achievements of our region since Beijing '95 has been the establishment of the Gender Unit at the Sadc Secretariat, an institutional mechanism that facilitates the mainstreaming of gender in all Sadc policies and programmes. To enhance this process the heads of states signed and committed themselves to a Gender and Development Declaration, which has been translated into a Sadc Plan of Action.

This plan provides a framework for countries to implement the Global Platform for Action based on common priorities and concerns. At the national level several governments and NGOs have developed their own action plans to implement the major recommendations of the Platform. One of the activities undertaken relates to developing gender

training materials/tools of analysis to facilitate gender mainstreaming in all sectors of development as well as in the financial budgets of government and NGO bodies. Organisations are developing mechanisms and tools to mainstream gender as a viable strategy to achieve the long-term goal of the empowerment of women, gender equity and equality.

Getnet has been facilitating the development of training materials/tools to mainstream gender in government budgets as well as create awareness of the importance of analysing budgetary allocations from a gender perspective. The budget is a key government tool for the implementation of policies and programmes that should impact positively on the different sectors of development and women and men in urban and rural areas.

The gender budget tool is a strategy that has been developed and used very well over the years in South Africa, spearheaded by the Women's Budget Initiative. Getnet has facilitated a sub-regional process to enable NGOs to learn from the SA experiences as well develop capacity to use gender budgets to promote gender mainstreaming.

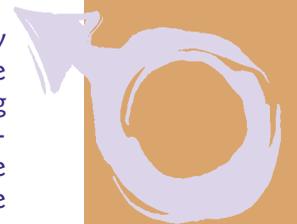
As a follow up to the Harare workshop that was held last year, Getnet organised a three-day workshop for researchers from the region with the view of sharing the SA experiences and develop training modules and material for the region. This workshop was held in Cape Town in March and was attended by participants from Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe,



Mozambique and Namibia. It sought to promote understanding of the gender budget initiative and process, and related matters.

The workshop was the beginning of a process that should culminate in a document on training modules/-materials to assist trainers. It was very informative and useful for researchers and trainers to make further input into government strategies and approaches to mainstreaming gender.

The next step is to identify NGO trainers who will receive training in the use of training modules for the gender analysis of government budgets. The next training workshop will be held in September where the materials developed by the researchers will be tested. This is a very important process as it will strengthen and enhance existing strategies promoted by governments and NGOs. Consequently follow-up action by all the stakeholders is essential.





## GETNET TRAINING PROGRAMME JULY TO DECEMBER 2001

### **The Policy Makers Programme Workshop 1-3 August**

Aimed at councillors and officials of local government structures. The programme provides education and information resources and skills training on the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies. It aims to enhance the competencies of policy makers and change agents to develop and implement gender sensitive policies in strategic sectors. Participants have access to information and resources related to institutional transformation.

### **Masculinities Programme Workshop 22-24 August**

Aimed at gender practitioners, managers, programme co-ordinators in all sectors. Contributes to building partnerships between women and men for mainstreaming gender equality in institutions and organisations. This involves the provision of education and information resources on the importance of gender equality, forms of masculinity and the roles of men in organisational change.

### **Sadc Gender Co-ordinators Programme Workshop 1-5 October**

Aimed at gender co-ordinators and focal persons in NGOs, CBOs, trade unions and other civil society structures. Provides education and information resources and skills training on the formulation, implementation and monitoring of gender policies. Aims to enhance the competencies of gender co-ordinators/change agents to develop and implement gender sensitive policies. Enables participants to analyse existing policies for gender sensitivity.

### **Training of Trainers Programme Workshop 5-9 November**

Aimed at educators, training officers, employment equity officers, diversity programme staff, human resources personnel, southern African based trade unionists responsible for gender education and training. Provides knowledge, skills and resources to design, co-ordinate and facilitate effective gender education and training programmes in diverse settings.

### **Consultancy Services**

Consultancy services are offered in specialised areas. These include gender training, gender analysis on policy, gender and organisational change, national and international instruments and strategies for gender equality. Provided on specific request from clients.

Cost and contracts for Getnet training programmes and consultancies are negotiated with individual clients. Training in all programmes is grounded in the specific institutional or organisational realities of our clients. Training takes place in participatory, group-based training workshops. Depending on the needs identified, the duration of the programme can vary. Each programme comprises a combination of modules to fit the needs of the clients.

**The Police Makers, Gender Co-ordinators and Masculinities Programmes are also offered on a consultancy basis**

**Please note that all venues are still to be confirmed. For more information, contact Elizabeth Schutter at Getnet, Tel (021) 697-5355.**

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