



# Opening Minds through Educational Technology

## Challenge

Namibia gained independence in 1990, after a long period of South African rule and apartheid policies that discriminated against the majority black population. The Namibian government has made equity and access its primary goals in education, and has been successful at boosting enrollment as well as reallocating resources for education to disadvantaged regions. Namibia still needs to improve the quality of education and develop tools to maximize the teaching workforce, which is being reduced by the impact of HIV/AIDS.



Photo: Nora Ndopu/Discovery Channel

Teachers and students receive blank tapes to record educational programs from local cable company.

***“Thank you for making video available to our school – it is important that our children experience such new things.”***

**– Namibian Parent**

## Results

The USAID-funded learning centers serve more than 13,813 students. A total of 282 teachers have been trained in the effective use of TV and video in the classroom, and integration of educational and entertainment programming into the curriculum. Currently, more than 2,394 parents and community members have used the learning center facilities to view programs and conduct community workshops. Such involvement enhances community ownership and therefore security of the equipment, and encourages parental involvement in the education of their children – an ideal which is new to many Namibian parents.

## Initiative

USAID supported Namibia's government program of building basic education system capacity, while promoting community involvement in schools through a public-private partnership with the Discovery Channel Global Education Fund (DCGEF) and MultiChoice, a Namibian satellite television service provider. USAID helped introduce educational video as a learning and teaching tool at eighteen schools through learning centers. Each center is equipped with a TV, VCR, satellite, a set of twenty-four video tapes with customized educational programming produced by DCGEF, and print resource guides for each video program.

Teachers are trained to maximize the use of television and video as a supplement to the formal curriculum. All project activities are designed to meet the information needs of children and adults. In addition to serving teachers and students in the classroom, the learning centers are used as venues where parents and community members view programs and attend workshops on HIV/AIDS, health, micro-enterprise development, and other issues of local interest.