



FIRST PERSON School Inspector Builds Capacity

A skeptical inspector becomes a big advocate for change



Photo: AED/Donna Kay LeCzel

School Inspector Eddie Bezuidenhout presenting a USAID program to improve Namibian schools to new teachers and principals.

In partnership with the Namibian government, USAID is helping schools train teachers, develop a strong curriculum, improve school management, increase the effectiveness of instruction, and measure student performance.

When Eddie Bezuidenhout, a School Inspector for the Oshana Education Region in northern Namibia, was assigned to participate in a USAID-funded basic education project, he was skeptical about its benefits. At the time, he recalls saying, “These projects come in with big ideas that we can’t sustain when they close.” In the early months of the project’s first year, Eddie kept a tight watch over the program to be certain that the activities met the needs of teachers, principals, students, and parents. He also offered many suggestions.

Eddie’s thoughtful, intelligent, and practical advice helped ensure that the project built local capacity that would benefit the schools for years to come. This enabled the schools to continue pursuing the project’s goals even after USAID funding was complete. Eddie’s approach was very much in tune with a USAID motto: “Building Capacity from Within.”

After six years of participating in USAID education support projects, Eddie is a prime example of how teachers and school administrators have adopted and embraced concepts and improvement activities promoted by USAID. These activities include training teachers, developing a strong curriculum, improving school management, increasing the effectiveness of instruction, and measuring student performance.

At a meeting to bring new teacher facilitators and principals into the program, it was clear that Eddie had become one of the program’s strongest advocates. To introduce the program, he provided a clear and concise explanation of the existing partnership between USAID and Namibia’s government and education ministry. He outlined the roles and responsibilities of each party in the schools and districts. Eddie’s presentation showed that he and his colleagues had been empowered to bring innovation to the country’s education system. It was also a testament to the fact that USAID’s partnership with the Namibian government to improve the country’s education system is starting to pay dividends.