

REMARKS BY USAID DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DOUGLAS BALL,
AT THE WALVIS BAY MUNICIPALITY HIV/AIDS SCHOOL POSTER COMPETITION
PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY
&
HANDOVER OF EQUIPMENT TO J P BRAND SCHOOL (TOPNAAR COMMUNITY)
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, WALVIS BAY, ON FRIDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2007

It is my pleasure to be here today representing the U.S. Government at the occasion of your World AIDS Day celebrations.

I congratulate you on the excellent work that you are doing to combat HIV and AIDS in your schools and communities.

HIV/AIDS is killing far too many Namibians in the prime of their lives.

This poster competition in schools is one of the many ways that we can promote awareness about HIV/AIDS in the community, and arm our youth with key prevention messages to reduce risky behaviors.

I hope that everyone can benefit from the messages that are shared in these posters about HIV/AIDS, alcohol abuse, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS prevention, and the key actions we can take to reduce these risks.

I am proud of the steps that have been taken in Walvis Bay to ensure that everyone understands the impact that HIV/AIDS can have on health, the community, and economic progress.

I trust that your efforts will go a long way to mobilize communities today to take action to stop this disease which is killing your children, parents and workforce.

Each home and school in the Walvis Bay must be part of the collective effort to prevent new infections.

I hope that the posters are widely shared and indeed published in a calendar, and wish the Municipality success in reaching out to the private sector and business community for support.

USAID/Namibia would like to acknowledge the hard work of the Walvis Bay Municipality HIV/AIDS team, as well as the leadership of the Chief Health Officer.

I congratulate the Municipality in building local capacity and developing a transition plan that will enable the continuation of these important activities even after USAID/Namibia and Emergency Plan support ends.

Today, as part of this event, I am also pleased to hand over instructional audio/video equipment to the J P Brand School (Topnaar Community).

My humble appeal to Topnaar Community leaders is to ensure that the equipment is used for the community to be sensitized about HIV/AIDS, and how to access care, support, and treatment as needed.

I also want to register my sincere thanks to the teachers in the schools represented here today for integrating critical messages into their daily instruction about how to prevent HIV and AIDS, and for helping our youth understand the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol.

To the parents and caregivers, I want to urge you to keep on educating your children about these dangers, and help them make some informed choices to reduce risk taking.

As a parent, I know how difficult it is to do this, but we must work together to safeguard our children from HIV/AIDS.

Our youth are our future, and we must entrust them to be key players in preventing new infections.

And finally, my special congratulations go to you, learners, who have expressed your thoughts and feelings so beautifully on paper.

I hope that these posters are used to generate more discussions about HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, alcoholism, and drug addiction, and that your messages will be carried out to your friends and families to alert them to the dangers surrounding them.

I wish all of you here today success with all your efforts and trust that, together, we will start to stem the tide of new HIV/AIDS infections in Namibia.

THANK YOU.