

Remarks
USAID/Namibia Deputy Mission Director, Doug Ball
NETA close-out conference
Monday, June 5, 2006
Safari Hotel Conference Center

- Honorable Dr. Becky Ndjoze-Ojo, Deputy Minister of Education
- Mr. Joseph Davis, Deputy Director for International Affairs from the American Federation of Teachers
- Development partners in the education sector
- Dear teachers
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a pleasure for me to represent USAID at this close-out conference of the Namibia Education Technology Alliance – also known as the NETA project -- and to join Namibian education officials, technology specialists, NETA partners and the teachers who participated in the project, to review the achievements of this initiative.

In 2002 USAID provided seed funding for the establishment of a public-private partnership for the implementation of a three-year pilot project to introduce information communications technologies as a teaching tool in Namibian schools.

The partners of this important undertaking have been the Ministry of Education , the American Federation of Teachers, the Discovery Channel, SchoolNet, World Teach, Peace Corps and Microsoft.

The project -- which was piloted in 13 rural primary and secondary schools -- highlights the important role that information communications technology -- or ICT -- is playing and will continue to play in helping Namibia achieve its goals under Vision 2030.

I personally have had the opportunity to observe teachers in Groot Aub being trained on the use of computers to improve their teaching -- and I could see from the excitement and the way these teachers embraced the technology that they firmly grasped the importance of ICT in the classroom.

Today we are going to learn more about how teachers have been able to utilize ICT as a teaching tool. These teachers are among the 300 who were trained under the NETA project in basic computing.

An additional twenty teachers also received advanced training on the use of the software to access computerized textbooks, generate workbooks, create tests and use the computers to manage day-to-day class work – and school administrators have been trained to use computers to help them manage their schools.

These achievements are notable, but significant challenges remain if we are to achieve the ICT Steering Committee goals of: training 12,000 teachers in basic ICT literacy; and having 350,000 learners using ICTs at least half an hour each week, by the year 2010. Partnerships like NETA are vital if we are to accomplish those goals.

The United States Government has supported education and training in Namibia since shortly after the country's independence.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the Namibian Government and our other development partners in improving education in Namibia and transforming Namibia into a knowledge-based society.

Here's wishing you success your conference! Thank you.