



Providing Quality Education in Namibia

Challenge

Namibia is a young country emerging from almost a century of colonialism and decades of apartheid rule. Under apartheid, parents were discouraged from getting involved in their children's formal education. Their relationships with teachers and administrators were expected to be subservient.



Photo: Dr. Donna Kay LeCzel/AED

A parent helps in the creation of teaching aids.

“We are an involved kingdom of Ondonga, striving to bring authentic learning closer to schools.”

—community leader who donated an ox for a school's animal husbandry program.

Results

Children and schools throughout Namibia have benefited greatly from the program. At the Bukalo Public School in Caprivi, a school garden planted by students and community members made a profit of almost \$300 in 2003 from the sale of fruits and vegetables. In addition to students learning lessons about entrepreneurship and business management, scurvy is no longer a common affliction among students at the school due to the availability of the fresh produce. In Ondonga, an animal husbandry program was initiated at the local school from the donation of an ox, five goats, and twenty-six chickens. The Endola School in Ohangwena now has an HIV/AIDS Awareness Center with seventy-five registered members who are part of a home-based care team, an HIV/AIDS awareness choir group, and a counseling team

The Onathinghe South Combined School developed learning materials, as part of a regional inter-school competition, which were considered eligible for production and distribution at the national level by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture. Given the serious lack of textbooks as well as supplementary learning and teaching aids, the development of locally-produced teaching materials at the school level by both teachers and students has been strongly promoted by the Ministry.

Initiative

USAID is working with Namibia's Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture to encourage parents and communities to become more actively involved in their children's education. Namibia's education sector leaders are seeking to empower parents through greater involvement in the classroom and in school management. Communities are also being encouraged to contribute to improving the quality of schools.

As part of the program, school boards are elected and parents collaborate with teachers and administrators in the development of school improvement plans. Parents and community members, which include elected local officials and business leaders, are increasingly assisting teachers in the classroom - for example developing teaching materials. Students are participating in learning experiences such as planting and sorting school garden produce to be sold in the market to obtain funds for school improvement projects. They identify the nutritional value of various garden products, and develop marketing and distribution procedures to sell school garden products.

