



UPDATE

PROGRAMME FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)



Educator reading a story to children at a reading event in Oshakati

Dw DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

CHILDREN

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All children have a right to quality education, including early childhood education. This right is enshrined in Namibia’s constitution and international conventions. Early childhood education is especially important, as it provides the foundation of a child’s development.

In socially and economically unequal societies like Namibia, early childhood education has an important role to play. It can provide a boost to children from disadvantaged and marginalized communities, giving them a better chance to succeed at school and in their professional development.

Goals for improved Early Childhood Development (ECD) are an important component of Namibia’s national development plans and the Harambee Prosperity Plan II. In support of those goals, Development Workshop Namibia (DWN) is implementing an ECD programme with a current focus on informal settlements.

Donors:



OVERVIEW

The programme is currently active in 6 towns across Namibia, including Windhoek, Karibib, Omaruru, Katima Mulilo, Oshakati and Opuwo. It is benefiting 260 ECD centres in informal settlements, with some 9,000 children. Financial support is provided by MTC, Capricorn Foundation and the Twin Hills Trust.

The programme currently implements activities in following areas:

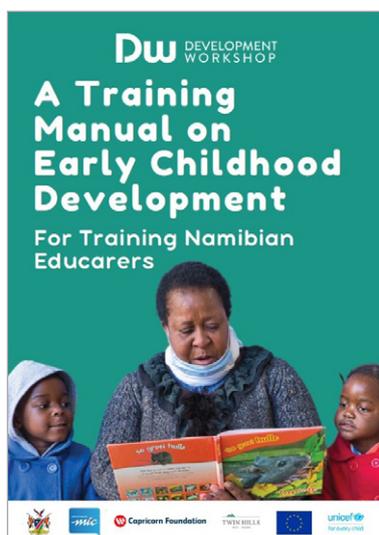
1. **Educarer (ECD teacher) training courses**
2. **Provision of learning and teaching materials**
3. **ECD centre improvements, such as construction of toilets or playgrounds**
4. **Parents engagement to improve the support to children at home**

All activities are implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, and Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

3. Resource manual

> for educarers, with practical exercises and play based learning activities to use in the centres with children (96 pages)

The 9-week training course is aligned with the Government's ECD curriculum and builds on the 36 five-day training courses that were implemented by the programme during 2021. The new 9-week training incorporates lessons learned, as well as feedback from facilitators and educarers. The implementation of the 9-week training course started in July 2022.



Cover of training manual

MAIN EVENTS – JANUARY TO JUNE 2022

9-WEEK TRAINING COURSE FOR EDUCARERS

Over the last months, DWN developed a 9-week training course for educarers at ECD centres in informal settlements. The training includes classed-based training, homework and practical exercises that the educarers can apply in their respective centres.

Three separate manuals have been developed for the training:

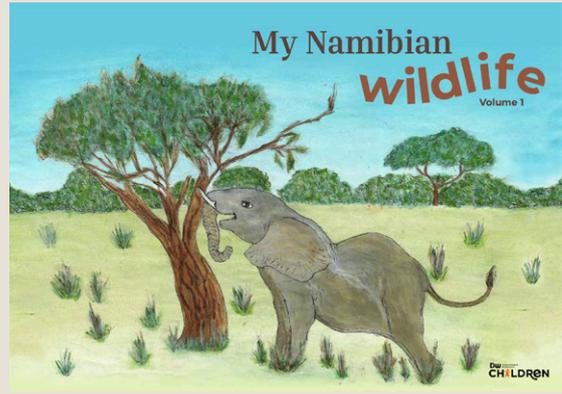
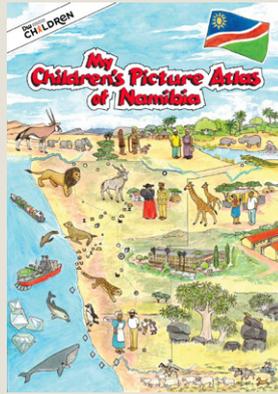
1. **A training manual on Early Childhood Development**
> for training ECD educarers (78 pages)
2. **A handbook on Early Childhood Development**
> for educarers (88 pages)

LAUNCH OF NEW PUBLICATIONS

On 24 February DWN launched two new children publications:

1. **My Children's Picture Atlas of Namibia**
2. **My Namibian Wildlife**

The launch took place at the Goethe Institute in Windhoek, and was jointly organized by MTC and UNICEF who supported the development and printing of the publications. A keynote address was given by Hon. Bernadette Jagger, Deputy Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare. A total of 15,000 copies were printed of the picture atlas and 4,000 copies of the wildlife book. Since the launch, each child in all DWN assisted ECD centres has received a copy of the atlas, with many more copies distributed to other ECD centres, partners and stakeholders.



Left: Hon. Bernadette Jagger during the keynote address | Middle and right: The two publications

LIBRARY BOXES AND DISTRIBUTION OF BOOKS

Access to reading and learning materials is a serious challenge for ECD centres in informal settlements and rural areas. The provision of library boxes has proved a simple and effective approach to assist ECD centres in this regard, providing them with story books and other materials for daily use.

Since June, 100 library boxes are being distributed to ECD centres: Windhoek (48 boxes), Oshakati (20), Katima Mulilo (10), Omaruru (6), Karibib (10), Otjiwarongo (4) and Opuwo (2). The boxes are given to specially selected ECD centres that provide access to the boxes to neighbouring centres. Both educators and parents can borrow books, and each box contains between 50 – 150 books, depending on the number of ECD centres it serves. 20 of the library boxes were generously donated by Cymot.



Library box with books



A new class room and playground built by the project for the Amagola ECD centre in Oshakati.

DISTRIBUTION OF OTHER BOOKS

During 2021, DWN printed 30,000 copies of children books that were translated from open-source ECD libraries. These books have now been distributed to ECD centres across the country, as well as ECD organisations and partners.

ECD CENTRE PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

ECD centres in informal settlements are private initiatives without external financial support, except from NGOs. Educarer salaries and equipment are paid for by the ECD centre's income, which is the fees paid by parents (usually between N\$ 50-300/child per month). As a result, many of the ECD centres have poor physical structures which limit the quality of the education provided.

Between February and June, the programme supported 10 ECD centres in Oshakati to improve either classrooms, construct toilets or outdoor play areas.

PARENT SUPPORT

Until June, DWN staff and facilitators implemented a total of 82 parents workshops with some 1,700 parents that attended. Through these workshops the programme raises awareness about the importance of providing support to children at home. They include topics such as positive discipline, responsive and nurturing care, as well as the importance of reading to and with children.

ECD CENTRE SUPPORT VISITS

The DWN team and ECD experts conduct regular visits to individual ECD centres to provide support and assist educators to:

- > **Employ age-appropriate learning through play pedagogy**
- > **Improve the quality of stimulation that the children receive**
- > **Improve interactions between educators and children**

These visits are important to follow up on trainings, assist educators with classroom organization and get feedback for continued improvement of assistance provided by the programme.



Eric ECD centre in Windhoek: parents of all registered children receiving the Atlas



Making the best with very limited resources – Ndeshy ECD centre in Windhoek

