

Brief background

Namibia became an independent democratic Republic in November 1990. Prior to independence the country was governed by South Africa under the laws of that country. The main features were that the peoples were segregated on racial and ethnical lines and the white population received preferential treatment while the majority of the people in the country were oppressed. This policy was particularly harsh on education in terms of budgetary allocation and resource and facility provision. Even during the transitional period that started in 1978 the country's educational system did not benefit at all. Under the so-called "interim government" that were in place immediately before independence education was still fragmented and managed by 12 different authority structures based on ethnical grounds. Since the curriculum in schools were not relevant to the needs of the country at large and were forced on the people, it was not widely accepted. It was primarily examination driven, not skills orientated, teacher centred and not sensitive to the needs of the majority of Namibians or geared to meet the challenges of the developing world.

However, to the one hand the educational infrastructure of the country was fairly well structured with good access, communication lines and school buildings in many parts of the country. On the other hand it was characterised by inequities, disparities and many cases of neglect. The majority of the population was severely neglected in terms of a suitable school environment and facilities especially in the remote rural areas where most of the people lived. In these schools most teachers were untrained or under trained, support materials non-existent and teachers' morale and work ethics low. The curriculums in place provided study programmes for the education system based on the systems in place in South Africa at the time. Content wise the curriculums were of some use but did not provide for contextual teaching and learning in a new educational paradigm envisioned for the new nation.

A severe problem was the general ignorance of teachers concerning the intentions of the curriculum and clarity on the breadth and depth to be taught. Very few teachers ever saw a curriculum or subject syllabus and mostly based teaching on text book content where available. The system was very insensitive towards education at large.

At independence the new government was obliged to dismantle the previous regime of oppression and segregation and probably had to demonstrate sound educational views and new direction. Education was a key sector in the public and international attention and to demonstrate the good will, the brave and challenging decision to reform the entire curriculum and school system was an obvious and justifiable step.

The decision to start the reform at Junior Secondary level was curriculum wise very demanding but the only appropriate area to ensure a quick and immediate change where the negative effects could be absorbed with the least harm to individuals. That was also necessary since the integration of the national language policy where the official language were to be English, could hardly be considered at any other phase due to low levels of English proficiency in the country amongst learners, teachers and the community at large. NIED was institutionalised to spearhead reform and development of the curriculum and to assist with the implementation and teaching.

Junior Secondary was phased in per grade per year covering all subject areas and was followed through to the final school year at the end of Senior Secondary Education at Grade 12. That ensured that the first learners will take only 5 years ('91 to '95) to receive education in the new paradigm, new approach and with new relevant content. The next step was to follow the implementation of the language policy in Upper Primary and to phase in a subject per grade per year as well as English as the medium of instruction per year for the subject area across all grades. That meant that when Mathematics was reformed and implemented in Grade 4 in 1993, Mathematics for Grades 5 to 7 were taught from that year on through the medium of English. Grades 5 to 7 were still on the old pre-independence syllabus. That trend was followed through year after year for the other core and non-core subjects. It appears to be the best option to introduce English gradually and to minimize disruption. Lower Primary reform was recognised for the first time as the most important phase being the foundation of schooling. Careful planning and collaboration of the implementing authorities were secured in an effort to make a huge impact. The curriculum for Lower Primary covered Grades 1 to 4 (6 yrs old for school entry) and was phased in per grade per year including all subjects. Furthermore, to provide for the constitutional rights of parents, all syllabuses and materials for the first 3 grades were provided not only in the English language, but also in nine Namibian African languages and two Namibian European languages. The National Task Force for Lower Primary implementation planned and oversee the implementation per grade from '96 to 98. That included in-service training for all teachers per grade, provision of basic teachers' equipment such as black boards and securing of money and creating of administrative mechanisms to buy and supply stationary.

The reform plan and implementation schedule ensured that after 10 years the whole education system will be reformed and implemented. Through assumptions the risk factors, enabling factors and resources were considered. The approach was to be proactive, attend to all variables and to communicate the process and the details effectively to ensure transparency, involvement of all stakeholders and to secure ownership of the reformed curriculum. Furthermore, curriculum development theory and educational experience was merged with national needs and international standards and trends. A set of basic requirements and information were transformed into instruments and structural

mechanisms and guidelines in striving towards viability, sustainability, practicality and articulation between grades, phases and subject areas achieve an inclusive, skills oriented balanced form of education where positive achievements are encouraged and problems could be re-addressed. The reform and development process was democratized and authorized and ensured that national aspirations and aims such as equity, access and quality would be reflected. It ensured that gender parity, national tolerance and reconciliation and recognition of the cultural diversity is rightfully placed. The whole process positioned the country educationally on par on a national, sub-regional and international level. The reform process experienced very positive support from the political leaders and the nation at large. In the country where the freedom of speech is encouraged and expressed people were able to participate and share views and information. The process was very sensitive towards communication and involvement of people at grass roots levels. All national programmes were drafted in a decentralised context involving democratic principles before it was suggested to the statutory bodies in education for national implementation. Careful and disciplined attention to the process was a key factor in ensuring ownership and contribution.

External examinations were set on the curriculum for Junior Secondary annually since 1993 and for Senior Secondary annually since 1995. The examination outcomes are very encouraging and provide valuable information for curriculum development and teaching. Focussed continued monitoring of the curriculum performance in the class room provides data towards refinement and updating.



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

ADEA STOCKTAKING REVIEW 1999

CURRICULUM REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT IN NAMIBIA reflecting equity, access and quality

Achievements	Results	Evidence	Analysis	Lessons learnt
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of NIED and secure government funding and donor support- N\$30 million • Design and purposeful construction of the facility: 80 offices; 7 conference rooms; auditorium; accommodation for 68; full time catering; publishing unit; resource centre and media unit; administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of staff, financial commitments from Government, Sida and Namdeb • Tender allocated and work started in 1991 in Okahandja. Official inauguration on 20/03/95 by the honourable Prime Minister Dr H. Geingob 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIED is established, a recognised directorate in structures of civil service • NIED is situated in Okahandja and are in operation. About six thousand educational staff visit NIED annually for various curriculum activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political will of people, support from decision makers and Minister's professional attitude • NIED is suitable for its purpose, well staffed and resourced. It is a national resource widely acknowledged in the country and fully utilised by education and the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest authorities must have vision and drive to ensure development • Apply Government regulations correctly and involve staff during planning and construction phase for practical inputs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of staff establishment for NIED according to roles and functions. Headed by Director, two Deputies, six senior education officers various subject officers, support and domestic staff sections • Creating mechanisms to respond to the obligations • Develop and confirm curriculum policies and development structures • Establish and confirm national Panels for curriculum reform and development covering the whole system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing structure approved by Public Service Commission: Management appointed and most positions filled. • NIED structured into divisions and sub-divisions and areas demarcated • Publication of Broad Curriculum Guides for Sen Sec (1993), Basic Education (1996) indicating all subjects • First term of 25 Curriculum Panels started on June 1992 based on regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff establishment is in place and vacancies advertised and filled as the need arises. All the different needs are addressed by staff: professional, domestic, administrative • Management plan of NIED is in place and annual plans, monthly reports in operation • Documents are in the system and consulted on-going by developers and implementers • Second term 1995 and third term of Panels started in June 1998 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of committed educationists in system and at NIED is crucial for success • Professional management and trust in expertise of senior staff important • Approval of system from top to bottom and support for decided implementation programme • Commitment, professionalism, good infrastructure and working environment and recognition of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure proper selection and induction of staff and attend continuously to staff development. Provide resources and tools • Ensure that staff on establishment are equal to the task. Continue with upgrading • Ensure ownership by collaborative work, ongoing sharing of information, attend to practicalities, adjust on legitimate needs • Determine official structures, involve senior authorities and execute regulations. Never compromise on quality and due dates
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate donor assistance in the system approach and form counterparting for Sciences, Art, Mathematics • Agree on and adopt on highest level an implementation plan as guide for development and implementation • Adopt a design approach and set up instruments to guide developers, veters and users • Secure annual budget provision for facilities to execute the plan according government regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO Technical Advisors assigned to areas of need based on project agreements and budget • -Junior Sec: '91 - '93 -Senior Sec: '94 - '95 -Upper Pr: '93 – '99 -Lower Pr: '96 – '99. • Syllabuses for each grade in each subject indicating Topics, Objectives, Basic Competencies in place • Annual budget approved to provide for remuneration of staff, recurrent costs in order of N\$12 million per annum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects called FSU, INSTANT, CASS, Life Science, CCPP were involved and completed contracts • Implementation schedule and teaching in schools are according to dates on schedule / syllabuses • Syllabus documents widely available and provided for every teacher and usage is controlled • Budget documents for the past years are on file and the budget for F/Y '99/00 is now in operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff should be counterpart with local professional staff and based in sub-divisions/ Panels. To provide expertise, equipment and needed inputs • Communication of schedule and focussed progress on development work. Provide documents on schedule • Sustainable user friendly syllabus and support materials implemented. Text book catalogue annually published • Budget structured to provide for Panel activities/training/ publishing and distribution and fully utilised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine project aims and objectives, create counterparts. Control development of tasks and ensure that TA work for the country • Set up detailed plans, timelines, resources and check points to keep momentum. Provide on schedule • Create scope and sequence matrixes ensuring proper links and spiraling between phases. Ensure expertise, transparency at all times • Hands on involvement during budgeting process to ensure financial resources are secured for the needs
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of policies and curriculum documents to all stakeholders such as schools, Colleges and interested public • Attend to in-service teacher upgrading according to implementation schedule • Monitoring and research on curriculum and syllabuses functioning in system • Evaluate all support materials for teaching and learning and list on national catalogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper vetting, editing, printing and distribution of documents to all regional HQ. Follow up on provision. Control on ground by Regional offices • Trainers trained centrally and regional training assisted according to cascade model adopted in the country. Teachers confident to teach in a learner centred way and to conduct assessment • Data processed and information used for revision as collected per interviews/question • Information available to teachers, schools and authorities and materials supplied to schools as per tender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers teach the curriculum. Regions and Advisory Teachers provide support and communicate needs. External exams and internal assessment based on syllabus • Training programmes developed and actual training of trainers conducted. Regions involved in providing trainers. Teachers in the system are informed and developed new skills • Monitoring reports 1993/'95/'98 available • Annual publication of text book catalogue, continued evaluation, tender procedures and ordering done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regions responsible for implementation of compulsory curriculum and provide support. All needs and problems communicated to NIED • Training plans and programmes aimed at understanding of intentions and aims of curriculum and skills development in teaching approaches such as learner centred teaching in all subjects • The teaching of the syllabus in the class room is the only place to collect reliable information • Materials available to all learners at ratio 1-1. Text book policy state the life span is 5 years per book and control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable printing equipment, trained staff and relevant statistics for provision are essential. A production and delivery schedule and system should be in place • All stakeholders must support the training, trainers trained on developed training programme. Follow up training in regions to all teachers is very important and should be controlled. • Do research in the class room with the teacher and use data confidently • Insist on quality, support private enterprise and sound competition in the open market.
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