



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY, POVERTY ERADICATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE

NEWSLETTER

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A close-up photograph of a young girl with her mouth wide open in a joyful laugh. She is wearing a light blue shirt. The background is filled with a soft, out-of-focus light, and there are colorful confetti particles (pink, purple, blue, and yellow) floating in the air around her head, creating a festive and happy atmosphere.

DAY OF THE NAMIBIAN CHILD

VISION

A caring and inclusive society where all Namibians enjoy a dignified life.

MANDATE

To ensure gender equality, poverty eradication and socio-economic development of targeted groups.

MISSION

To create, promote an enabling environment and equal opportunities for sustainable socio-economic development for the wellbeing of targeted groups.

PILLARS AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Gender Equality and Related Human Rights Advocacy
2. Accelerate Socio-Economic Development and Integration of women, girls and boys, marginalized communities and persons with disabilities
3. Stakeholder Coordination
4. Institutional Excellence

CORE VALUES

Integrity
Teamwork
Empathy
Inclusivity
Professionalism
Accountability
Accessibility

SENIOR MANAGEMENT



Hon. DOREEN SIOKA
Minister



Hon. BERNADETTE JAGGER
Deputy Minister



Hon. ALEXIA MANOMBE-NCUBE
Deputy Minister
Disability Affairs



Hon. ROYAL /Ui/o/oo
Deputy Minister
Marginalised Communities



Ms. ESTHER LUSEPANI
Executive Director



Ms. MARTHA MBOMBO
Deputy Executive Director

CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION SERVICES



Ms HELENA ANDJAMBA
Director
Child Welfare Services



Ms RAHIMISA KAMUINGONA
Deputy Director
Child Care Services



Ms AMELIA MUSUKUBILI
Deputy Director
Child Care Facility
and Protection

POLICY, PLANNING AND RESEARCH



Mr WILBARD NASHANDI
Director
Policy, Planning and Research



FILIMON SHIIMI
Deputy Director
Policy and Planning

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



Ms PENOSHINGE SHILILIFA
Deputy Director
Research & Legislation

SOCIAL PROTECTION SERVICES



Ms VALENTINA MULONGENI
Director
Social Protection Services



Ms LOURENCIA TJIHO
Deputy Director
Grant Reconciliation



Mr ALBERT BIWA
Deputy Director
Social Assistance

DISABILITY AFFAIRS AND MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES



Ms NIITA IIPINGE
Director
Disability affairs and
marginalised communities



Ms MERCY KUFUNA
Deputy Director
Disability Affairs

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION



Ms ROSINA MUBONENWA
Director
Community Development
and Poverty Eradication



Ms LOIDE VELISHAVO
Deputy Director
Early Childhood Development

ADMINISTRATION & GENERAL SERVICES



Mr NICHLAS MBINGENEEKO
Director
Admin & General Services



Ms ALISA KANUTUS
Deputy Director
Finance



Mr SACKARIA SHEEHAMA
Deputy Director
HR Management



Mr JOHANNES K. EMBULA
Deputy Director
General Services

FOREWORD

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication, and Social Welfare was established as a strategic decision by the President of the Republic of Namibia to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of Namibia's Social Protection Services.

The Ministry decentralized its social welfare functions, which include the provision of Old-Age Grants, Disability Grant Benefits, and Funeral Benefits, to guarantee that people have easier access to social services in their local communities.

Decentralization of tasks to the Regional Council is a provisional requirement in Namibia's Constitution, allowing Regional Councils to better fulfill their role of regional development and bringing government services closer to the people.

People can participate in the decision-making process as a result of this approach, making it easier for Regional Councils to integrate and efficiently coordinate planning with relevant sectors whose other activities are regionally driven.

As the government decentralizes, it is vital to ensure that all people, especially women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and children, have access to these services.

The Ministry recently revised the Child Care and Protection Act, 2015 (Act No. 3 of 2015), which focuses on a child's best interests and safeguarding a child's future in Namibia.

Inclusive in the Act is special grant for the children living with disabilities. It also covers the disparities between children born within and outside of marriage. In addition, the Act also established mechanisms to track the progress of legislation and initiatives aimed at protecting a child's best interests.

On September 28, the Ministry and Namibia honored the Day of the Namibian Children, which celebrated the beauty and diversity of the Namibian child.

I acknowledge that addressing the needs of children and ensuring that their rights are maintained and respected has taken a decade of hard effort.



A child in Namibia has the right to be safeguarded from economic exploitation and must not be compelled to undertake labor that is dangerous, interferes with their education, or is harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.

The Namibian Constitution, Chapter 3 Article 15, protects the rights of Namibian children. These legal affirmations provide various chances and protection to a Namibian child.

As a social development entity, the Ministry is committed to creating an enabling environment in which all Namibians, including people with disabilities and marginalized communities, can live a dignified life while being mainstreamed into the economy and formal economy, allowing them to fully participate in trade and economic development.

The year 2021 will be remembered as both memorable and unforgettable. Nobody has escaped unscathed in their personal or professional lives. As we look ahead to the rest of the year, may our experiences encourage us to hope for better times and new opportunities.

Regards,

Esther Lusepani
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DAY OF THE NAMIBIAN CHILD



Universe of Art Live Band, keeping the crowd entertained during the launch of the Namibian Child's Day.

Amid the devastating impacts of COVID 19, Namibia observed the Day of the Namibian Child once more. As a result, the focus has shifted, with less emphasis on children, because the focus is now on preventing transmission rather than dealing with the pandemic's devastating effects on vulnerable groups.

"The pandemic's devastating impact on children may not be quantified in terms of illnesses or fatalities, but it is perceptible in terms of lack of access to essential services like education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation, and water," said Hon. Doreen Sioka, Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare in her keynote address.

Children must be prioritized when providing basic services because it enables them to

take protective precautions, which they cannot do without, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown, which puts them at risk of sexual, physical and exploitation. She added that the Government is also working hard to identify strategies to mitigate the pandemic's and its aftermath's negative impact on Namibian children.

Celebrated on 28 September each year, the day was celebrated under the theme "**30 years after the adoption of the Charter: accelerate implementation for Agenda 2040 for a Namibia fit for children**". Derived from the African Union commitment by member states to the protection of children.

The theme speaks to the Namibian government's commitment to secure the safety of its children. "We have worked relentlessly as

a country to meet the needs of children and to guarantee that their rights are protected and preserved", she added.

This includes several child protection legislations, including the Child Care and Protection Act, No of 3 of 2015, cash grants to children living in difficult circumstances, free access to education and health services.

To reduce violence, the Ministry conducted a study with the goal of enhancing Namibia's capacity to design and implement effective violence prevention programs, as well as to establish and improve effective child protection systems in accordance with Child Care and Protection No. 3 of 2015.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN SURVEY

In keeping with the commemoration of the Day of the Namibian Child, the Ministry in collaboration with the Namibia Statistics Agency, and with the support of the Centre for Disease Control and UNICEF launched the Violence Against Children Survey.

The aim of the survey was to:

- estimate the national prevalence of physical, emotional and sexual violence in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood.
- Identify risk and protective factors for physical, emotional and sexual violence against children and youth in Namibia to inform stakeholders and guide prevention efforts.
- Identify the health and social consequences associated with violence against children and youth in Namibia.
- Assess the knowledge and utilization of medical, psychosocial, legal, and protective services available for children and youth who have experienced violence.

Speaking at the launch, Hon Bernadette Jagger, Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, said "The survey results point to a potential disaster of child violence, and I want to encourage all of the young people here to look for themselves.

Keep an eye on what is going on around you and seek help if you feel threatened or in danger."

According to the poll's findings, about four out of every ten girls and nine out of every twenty boys have been victims of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse as children. According to the survey, 4 out of 10 males and 3 out of 10 girls are physically assaulted before they reach the age of 18. Furthermore, emotional violence by peers affects 39.3% of females and 30.0 percent of males.

Physical violence is most common among adolescents aged 12 to 17, with two out of every three girls and eight out of every 13 boys reporting physical violence.

The Ministry is coordinating the development of a National Plan of Action to Address Violence Against Children in collaboration with key stakeholders. This will be a five-year approach to address some of the survey findings. She encouraged children to seek support from social workers or phone the toll-free hotline – 116.

"The day was created to raise awareness about the rights and well-being of Namibian children," she mentioned, adding that the Ministry's social workers are available to provide psychosocial support to children and their families.



Hon. Bernadette Jagger (right), launched the Violence Against Children Survey, with Ms Rachel Odede (left), UNICEF Representative.



Hon. Bernadette Jagger (left), presents a gift package to students from a variety of schools.

THREE DECADES ON

This year marks the third decade of for the commemoration of the Day of a Namibian Child, 28 September under the theme **“30 years after the adoption of the Charter: accelerate implementation for Agenda 2040 for a Namibia fit for children”**.

Speaking at the commemoration in Okaku Constituency, Ms Esther Lusepani, Executive Director, Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, mentioned that the day was established to:

- Celebrate the Namibian child as a right holder,
- Educate the public on the rights and wellbeing children.
- Create a platform for the country to reflect on the progress made towards achieving the commitment made in achieving children's rights and needs and as well as the barriers they continue to face.
- Mobilize political will and resources around children's will.

The Government of Namibia works tirelessly to guarantee that every child in Namibia grows economically and socially to become a great future leader and lives in a sustainable environment with good governance, she added.

For this reason Namibia has:

- Strengthened its social safety nets which comprises of child grants.
- Have intensively increased access to education inclusive of 3,100 IECDs country wide.
- Since independence, we have pulled over 400,000 people out of extreme poverty, and we now have 17 percent of Namibia's population living in poverty. This is a tremendous effort and improvement.
- Reduced the under-five-year-old mortality rate from 22,500 in 2010 to less than 17,000 in 2020.
- Ensured access to water to approximately 1,920 (89.4%) in public schools.

- Have achieved 50% national electrification rate.
- Have managed to reduce the GBV rate to approximately 30%.
- It has legislated the Combating of Rape Act, 2000 and the Domestic Violence Act, 2003 and the Newly child protection act of 2015.

The Child Care and Protection Act has domesticated the United Nation Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The UN Convention on children's rights that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

DECENTRALIZATION

The Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication, and Social Welfare delegated the function of social welfare functions, which include the provision of Old-Age Grants, Disability Grants, and Funeral Benefits, to various Regional Councils on 27 September 2021, to bring services closer to the people.

better carry out their purpose of developing their regions and bringing government services closer to the people.

“It becomes easier for Regional Councils to integrate and efficiently coordinate planning with relevant sectors whose other tasks are regionally driven,” she noted, because

extended families, frequently with more than five family members and only one breadwinner, are common. Nearly a fifth of all families rely on social pensions as their primary source of income, according to estimates.

She reminded decentralized staff members that they have the responsibility of acquiring

sufficient knowledge to ensure that early interventions take place that will chart the way for Namibia to evolve as one of the countries with, if not the best, comparable social safety nets.

As more government programs become decentralized, which expands Regional Council structures by default, it is critical to continue to improve the social well-being of children, ensure gender equality, ensure poverty eradication and socio-

economic development of targeted groups, and ensure the quality of early childhood education as per the previously decentralized programmes, she added.

“As we hand over the second set of responsibilities, it is equally important to ensure that at its core is the creation of a caring and inclusive society in which all Namibians live in dignity and promote an enabling environment and equal opportunities for sustainable socio-economic development for the well-being of all,” she concluded.



Mr Daniel Nghidinua, Executive Director, Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, signed off the delegated functions to the chairpersons of each regional council.



Mr Benedictus Diergaardt, Acting CRO of //Kharas region receives the delegated functions on behalf of his region.



Hon. Bernadette Jagger, Deputy Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, signed off the delegated functions to the chairpersons of each regional council.

Hon. Bernadette Jagger, Deputy Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication, and Social Welfare, said, “The Policy of Decentralization emphasizes the importance of empowering councils and communities, as well as encouraging broad-based grassroots participation in development planning and implementation of projects that are responsive to locally defined needs and priorities.”

Decentralization of responsibilities to the regions is a provisional necessity in Namibia's Constitution, allowing Regional Councils to

people may participate in the decision-making process. In a world marked by widespread poverty, Namibia is notable for its high levels of inequality.

Namibia also follows its own set of patterns in terms of safety net arrangements, and there appear to be a variety of informal safety net arrangements in the country. According to records, extended families account for more than 50% of all households, while non-relatives make up around 10% of all homes.

The sociology of rural Namibia also shows that

AMENDMENT OF THE CCPA

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare held a Consultative workshop on the amendment of the Child Care and Protection Act, 2015 (Act No. 3 of 2015) on 29 September - 01 October 2021.



Objectives of the Workshop:

- To review the provision of the Child Care and Protection Act
- To propose amendments to the Child Care and Protection Act
- To propose new areas to be included in the Child Care and Protection Act.

Hon. Doreen Sioka, Minister, stressed in her keynote address that the Act identifies several challenges during its short period of implementation. The following are some of the issues that compelled the amendment:

- There is roughly one social worker for every 13 000 children in Namibia. This underscores the magnitude of the task ahead of our social workers face in resolving our social concerns. In total, the Ministry employs 83 social workers around the country.
- To respond to all reported occurrences of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, the Act requires a substantially greater staffing structure. Throughout the country, social workers dealt with 293 cases of children who were abandoned or dumped, 1587 cases of children who were neglected by their parents, 883 cases of children who were physically abused, and 1 566 cases of children who were sexually abused between 2019 and 2021.
- In addition, 3 122 children and their families received psychosocial assistance from social workers from the Gender Based Violence Protection Units. Services provided to children who are not enrolled in GBV Units are not included in these statistics. There is an immediate need to increase the number of social workers to at least 242, or one for each constituency. Some social workers are covering two or three constituencies due to current staffing limitations. This means that social workers are limited to dealing with crises and are unable to delve deeper into cases. As a result, it's difficult for them to provide full services and complete investigations into

complaints of child abuse and exploitation within set the time frame.

- Children have become pawns in custody and dispute proceedings between parents/ caregivers and guardians. The child's voice is not sufficiently represented or articulated in these situations. As a result, the Ministry proposes to alter the Act to improve the child's expressed voice in matters relating to custody, access, and disputes, as well as guardianship.
- The Ministry also intends to expand the regulations governing the registration of child protection organizations in order to ensure that only the appropriate organizations are registered and designated to provide services to children.
- Surrogacy is an important issue that the CCPA does not cover. Many children are born as a result of this process, but the Act makes no safeguards to protect such children. As a result, more extensive protections and provisions to protect children undergoing surrogacy are required. The legislation should include provisions for the establishment of legal agreements between parties involved in surrogacy, as well as the definition of the relationship between children born as a result of such procedures and the commissioning parents. Providing protections for children born as a result of such arrangements.

Despite the fact that the Act is still in its early stages of implementation, the Ministry and its stakeholders have already achieved a number of key milestones, including:

1. The formation of the National Advisory Council for Children, a body tasked with encouraging cross-sectoral collaboration on children's issues and advising the government on issues relating to the protection and care of children under this Act and any other law relating to children in Namibia;
2. The effective establishment of an adoption registry for children who are available for adoption and adoptive parents. The registry contains information about adoptable children as well as people who have been vetted and approved to adopt children in Namibia.

The CCPA amendments seek to strengthen the administration of justice for children, remove policy gaps, and make the Act more resilient and responsive to Namibian children's evolving needs.

CCPA ACHIEVEMENTS



Ms Esther Lusepani

On 29 September 2021, the Ministry held a Workshop on the Amendments of the Child Care and Protection Act, 2015 (Act No. 3 of 2015).

Despite difficult conditions in providing

childcare services such as low capacity, significant staff turnover, and insufficient resources to reach the most vulnerable communities, Ms Esther Lusepani, Executive Director, maintained that significant progress has been made in protecting children who have been subjected to various forms of abuse.

These accomplishments include:

1. The nomination of 8 private social workers and 61 government social workers to provide child protection services throughout the country.
2. Similarly, 61 social workers were assigned as probation officers to provide services to those suspected of committing or convicted of crimes.
3. During the last three years, Ministry social workers have dealt with 4353 cases involving children in custody/ access issues, 2656 instances involving children in maintenance disputes, 480 cases involving children in divorce proceedings, and 887 cases involving children in need of guardians.

She praised the staff's commitment to improving, caring for, and protecting the well-being of children. She described this as a critical undertaking that is gaining in importance with each passing day as the challenge becomes more complex.

As a result, we're not going to stop there. We're aiming to strengthen our country's commitment to child safety by pursuing an ambitious agenda that places children at the heart of the Ministry's mission, she said.

She reiterated that Government and stakeholders remain committed to child protection and attainment of the:

- The Ministry's strategic goal 5 which aims to improve the care and protection for children's well-being,
- SDG 3 "good health and promote wellbeing to all"
- Goals 3 and 18 of the AU's agenda.

INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN

The National Advisory Council (NAC) is an executive platform for Executive Directors to deliberate on and influence policy issues across various sectors. The members of the Council were sworn in on 30 July 2021, in accordance with the Child Care and Protection Act, 2015 (Act No. 3 of 2015). The National Advisory Council is made up of 16 people.

Each Ministry is required to exercise oversight on child protection issues and to effectively address child protection mandates.

Specific Functions of the National Advisory Council on Children include:

- To encourage cross-sectorial cooperation on matters relating to children;
- To advise government on matters relating to the protection and care of children in terms of the Child Care and Protection Act or any other law relating to children;
- To advise organs of state on how best to fulfil their functions under the Child Care and Protection Act or any other law relating to children;
- To advise the Minister and where appropriate an organ of state on the need for law reform on any issue relating to children;

- To encourage the involvement of non-governmental organizations and communities in establishing and promoting services and facilities which can advance the well-being of children;
- To design and recommend programs relating to prevention services or the protection or care of children for consideration by the Minister or organs of state;
- To study, investigate and monitor implementation of the Child Care and Protection Act and other laws relating to children, and to make recommendations for improved implementation to the Minister or any other relevant organ of state;
- To perform other functions assigned to it by the Minister.
- The Council with the approval of the Minister, invest moneys of the Children's fund that are not immediately required for the purpose of the Children's Fund.
- Submit Annual Reports on the activities of the council, as well as the Children's Fund to the Minister.

CASH BASED TRANSFER



Hon. Royal /Ui/o/oo, address the residents of Onamatanga

On 20 August 2021, the UN World Food Programme (WFP), launched the food assistance Cash Based Transfer (CBT) Programme.

The programme was implemented in partnership between the Government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare and the UN World Food Programme with considerable funding from the European Union (EU), and technical support from Epupa Investment Technologies to conduct cash distribution.

The official inauguration of the Cash Based Transfer program (CBT) for

the Khomas and Omusati regions, according to Hon. Royal /Ui/o/oo, Deputy Minister of Marginalized Communities, "marks yet another milestone in the provision and strengthening of our social protection."

The Cash Based Transfer aims to support communities adversely affected by COVID-19 and residual effects of recurrent drought spells.

The intervention in Khomas focuses on people living in informal settlements in the peri-urban areas of Windhoek City and in Omusati, the marginalized communities whose livelihoods continue to be disrupted by years of recurrent drought. This program aims to help 6900 homes

(about 27,600 people) with a total budget of N\$ 12,417,391.

As stated in the Harambe Prosperity Plan 2, pillar 3 goal number 2, which provides directions to revise and convert the Food Bank, Special Feeding for Marginalized Communities, and Marginalized Grant into a monthly payment, the effort is expected to provide a mechanism for introducing Basic Income grant by transforming the Food Bank and Marginalised Communities Food Assistance Program into a cash transfer program.

Namibia has some of Africa's most robust social protection. However, gaps in our social policies and programs persist, causing many Namibians, particularly the young and unemployed, to fall through the cracks of social protection.

According to Hon. /Ui/o/oo, the Social Protection Policy was recently approved by Cabinet, with the main goal of addressing risks and vulnerabilities of all Namibians throughout their lives.

Hunger and food insecurity remain a challenge among many Namibians, most profoundly among rural communities, the urban poor and marginalised communities. Food insecurity in Namibia is less a problem of availability and more

a question of access and utilization. Although being a structurally food deficit country, Namibia is still able to ensure availability of food at national level through imports and local production.

As a result of the country's strong reliance on food imports, it is subject to high food costs, further jeopardizing the ability of the poorest and most vulnerable people to receive adequate food that is available in the country.

As a result, the government has implemented a number of programs and methods, such as the food bank, drought/emergency assistance, school feeding, and a specific feeding program for marginalized groups.

In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform is conducting programs targeted at increasing agricultural productivity to improve food security in rural areas.

This does indicate a stronger engagement between the government and development partners in achieving the global commitment to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) goal 2.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

For the fiscal year 2019/2020, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication, and Social Welfare built Model and Standard Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres with support from the European Union (EU), with the goal of ensuring excellence in the provision of ECD Centre-Based Services in the Regions.

Constituency, was upgraded at a total cost of N\$200,000.

Early childhood development, according to Hon. Jagger, is critical for shaping and molding children into good citizens and can help to prevent many societal ills such as substance abuse and gender-based violence.

“The development of Integrated Early Childhood Services and early interventions ensures that children have the necessary foundation of health and development, which helps in optimizing a child's ability to learn, develop social skills, build up immune deficiencies, and become a happy, healthy, and able child,” she added.



The Hon. Bernadette Jagger participates in a sing-along with the pupils.

On August 24, 2021, the Otuvero and Orotjirindi Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres in Opuwo were officially opened. Hon. Bernadette Maria Jagger, Deputy Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication, and Social Welfare, stated in her keynote address that the ECD centers are one of eight (8) that are funded by the European Union through the 11th European Development Fund (11th EDF) towards the Namibian Education Sector.

The Ministry received more than six million (N\$6.1 million) in support, resulting in the construction of one model, three standard ECD centers, and the upgrade of four ECD centers across Kunene Region, namely:

- Katutura Model ECD Centre in Opuwo Urban was constructed at total cost of N\$2 million.
- Orotjirindi, Otuvero and Puros ECD centres were constructed at a total cost of N\$1.1 million each.
- Kamanjab ECD Centre, was upgraded at a total amount of N\$200,000.
- Yvonne Pickering ECD Centre in Outjo Constituency, was upgraded at a total cost of N\$200,000.
- Ombombo ECD Centre in Opuwo Rural Constituency, was upgraded at a total cost of N\$200,000.
- Warmquelle ECD Centre in Sesfontein

Early Childhood Development provides a critical window of opportunity for a child's holistic development. This developmental stage lasts from conception to the age of eight years.

Because the child's brain grows rapidly during this period, interventions that address children's needs should begin as soon as possible if children are to reach their full potential, and these services should be implemented as efficiently as possible.

In this regard, key stakeholders such as the Ministries of Health and Social Services, Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication, and Social Welfare, Education, Arts, and Culture, and Home Affairs are responsible for ensuring the provision of Integrated ECD services such as antenatal, immunization, early stimulation, pre-primary up to grade 3, and birth registration, respectively.

As the Ministry in charge of Early Childhood Development programs, I'd like to highlight some of our efforts to improve ECD programs and services:

- In consultation with key stakeholders, the Ministry developed the Namibian Standards for Early Childhood Development Centre, to standardize the provision of quality ECD services.
- The Ministry also developed an Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Framework for Action to improve



Otuvero ECD Centre, Opuwo.

collaboration in the delivery of inclusive and holistic ECD services.

- The Ministry has put in place a Curriculum for children from 3 to 4 years of age. This curriculum is linked to the Ministry of Education's Curriculum for Pre-Primary Education so that there is a smooth transition from the ECD to Pre-Primary Education phase. I believe the Educators are fully utilizing this Curriculum so they are guided on how children should be taught at the centres.
- The Ministry is in a process of finalising the Curriculum for the age group 0-2 years old, which is currently a gap in the delivery of early stimulation and especially in aiding early identification of developmental delays in children.
- Furthermore, in accordance with the Child Care and Protection Act, No. 3 of 2015, there will be a requirement for all Educators around the Country to obtain a police clearance Certificate (Certificate of Conduct) which is aimed at preventing people who have been convicted of serious offences from working with children at any institutions providing Welfare Services including ECD centres.

She urged parents and caregivers to enroll all children aged 0 to 4 years old and instill in them a culture of learning, reading, and investigating from an early age. “I urge you to collaborate closely with parents to instill good discipline and respect for oneself, other children, and, most importantly, adults.

If children have self-respect and respect for others, Namibia will be free of crime and Gender-Based Violence.” She urged Regional and Local Government representatives, Traditional Authorities, and the entire Community to work together to ensure the infrastructure's safety and maintenance so that it can serve today's children and future generations.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

On August 24, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication, and Social Welfare handed over N\$88, 000.00 in Income Generating Activities (IGA) materials and equipment to beneficiaries in Opuwo, Kunene Region.

Hon Bernadette Jagger, Deputy Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, said in her keynote address that IGAs are one of the platforms through which the Ministry substantiates how allocated resources have been used for socio-economic development.

“Through the IGAs Support Programme, the Ministry strives to contribute to the improvement of livelihoods by encouraging entrepreneurship,” she said.

She also asked funded beneficiaries to increase their revenues and provide job chances for others, reminding them that the materials are still the Ministry's property and should be used for the intended purpose.

As a result, the Ministry will not take material and equipment mismanagement lightly. As a result, in the event of mismanagement, the Ministry has



Hon. Bernadette Jagger presents beneficiaries with equipment.

the authority to seize materials and equipment in accordance with the Operating Guidelines for Income-Generating Activities: 2017-2022.

Hon. Jagger acknowledged the damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is compounded by other economic difficulties, but she encouraged beneficiaries to work hard, register and market their enterprises, and produce high-quality products in order to fairly compete and sustain their businesses.

IGAs Support Programme is complemented by three (3) other interventions, these includes:

1. The Women in Business Associations (WBAs): The Ministry provides technical support for women to form WBA committees in the regions. This provides a platform for female entrepreneurs to mentor one another, mobilize resources, network, and advertise their products and services jointly through market connections. Kunene Region has three (3) functional constituency WBA committees.

2. The Production and Technical Skills Training: Through the Ministry's Community Empowerment Centres (CEC), the programme builds the capacity of IGA beneficiaries in various production skills. Kunene is one of the regions that has a CEC.

3. The Advanced Business Training on ILO packages: The Ministry also provides advanced business skills training by using the ILO training packages, which includes the Generate Your Business Idea (GYB), Start Your Business (SYB) and Improve Your Business (IYB).

INCLUSIVE REPORTING



Media Disability Inclusive Reporting and Sensitisation Workshop.



Most people with disabilities characters are depicting using the Medical Model of Disability. This means that persons with disabilities are viewed as sick and need to be cured to function and even be happy,” she added. She advised the media to use caution when reporting on issues affecting people with disabilities, noting that the media can be a strong tool for changing perceptions, eliminating prejudice, and raising public awareness.

On 28 September 2021, Hon. Alexia Manombe-Ncube Deputy, Disability Affairs, Minister of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare addressed a Media Disability Inclusive Reporting and Sensitisation Workshop.

She noted that communities cannot continue to receive false stereotypes about people with disabilities. “Failure to create a conducive environment on positive reporting will ultimately be undermining our own legislation and policies”.

She mentioned that the media as highly important and influential to drive the agenda of human rights for persons with disabilities nationally and globally.

“I take a key interest in the articles on people with disabilities that appear in the media, and I have picked up a lot of improvement over the last year. I am also impressed with the increase of reporting

on various aspects concerning persons with disabilities”. She applauded all journalists who have written reports on people with disabilities over the last 12 months, particularly with reports that have made a positive difference in the lives of people with disabilities through the Covid-19 pandemic.

“It is impossible to deny that persons with disabilities are subjected to incorrect preconceptions because of the media. The media has propagated and reinforced both good and negative stereotypes about individuals with disabilities, as it does for all minority groups.

Negative portrayals, albeit exaggerated, send the incorrect message; positive and realistic portrayals will help to raise awareness and opportunity for everyone,” she said.

“The portrayals that I personally dislike the most, whether in movies, TV shows or news stories, the depictions show people with disabilities as being desperately in need and seek help for charity.

Hon. Manombe-Ncube urged media houses to maintain contact with various stakeholders, such as the government, agencies, and organizations of people with disabilities, through the establishment of a Disability Forum, which consists of representatives from various institutions' perspectives on disability.

“I would want to invite the media to join us in our efforts to increase the number of persons with disabilities on board in the labour market. You can help the Government of the Republic of Namibia achieve its short- and long-term objectives, such as VISION 2030, the 2nd Harambee Prosperity Plan, the SDGs, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Namibia ratified in 2007.”

She went on to say, all of those legislative frameworks have been established to help the Namibian people and the that the media has a critical role to play in attaining these objectives.

NATIONAL DISABILITY COUNCIL OF NAMIBIA INTERIM BOARD



Hon. Manombe-Ncube posting with the interim board.

Hon. Alexia Manombe-Ncube, Deputy Minister – Disability Affairs, Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare on 28 July 2021, inaugurated the interim board of the National Disability Council of Namibia (NDCN).

According to Hon Manombe-Ncube, the Namibian government has made considerable progress in ensuring that Namibians with disabilities are integrated in the socioeconomic mainstream and do not feel excluded. This is demonstrated by the number of legislative instruments in place to promote access to services for individuals with disabilities, as well as to

promote and protect their rights and dignity. Article 10 of the Namibian Constitution affirms all citizens' intrinsic human rights and freedoms, which imply that Persons with Disabilities are included. The Namibian government has gone even farther, passing a number of laws and policies that are directly related to disability issues, including the following:

- The National Disability Policy, 1997
- The National Disability Council Act, 2004, (Act No.26 of 2004) which makes provision for the establishment of an advisory body, with the mandate to provide strategic oversight on the implementation of the National Disability Policy.
- Affirmative Action (Employment) Act, 1998, (Act No. 29 of 1998 that aims to achieve equal opportunity in employment in accordance with Article 10 and Article 23 of the Namibian Constitution.
- Namibia has further signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disability on the 25 April 2007, and ratified the Convention (including its Optional Protocol) on the 4th December, 2007.

“However, despite having excellent legal mechanisms in place, I must admit that there is still a gap between existing policy and implementation. The amount of people with disabilities, including children, who are excluded from disability mainstreaming, reveals this,” she noted.

Section 10(21) of the Public Enterprises Governance Act, 2019, (Act No. 1 of 2019) was used to establish the interim board. Members of the Interim Board included:

1. Mr Nichlas Mbingeneeko, Director
2. Hon. Lidwina N. Shapwa, Board Chairperson
3. Mr Roster Chali Matengu, Board Vice-Chairperson
4. Dr Cynthia K. Haihambo-Ya Otto
5. Ms Beata N. Armas
6. Ms Damoline Muruko
7. Mr Johannes T. Matsi
8. Mr Jeremia Penefiku Shalukeni

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS INNOVATIONS



Assistive technology.

During a Webinar on Assistive Technology Business Innovations held on September 28, 2021, Hon. Alexia Manombe-Ncube, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare: Disability Affairs, acknowledged that the through work involving academia, researchers,

organizations for persons with disabilities, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs aimed at impacting the life of persons with disabilities positively.

She expressed her excitement for the Assistive Technology Expo, which was initially postponed

because to the Covid-19 pandemic, and will be hosted by the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD). “I am delighted that we are using technology to connect us in this virtual environment today.” She stated that entrepreneurial technology ideas are wonderful because they improve people's lives. The innovations are a win-win situation that will assist Mother Africa to take her place on the global stages.

“I am pleased that we have a diverse range of stakeholders on this webinar, including researchers, manufacturers, suppliers, service providers, Civil Society Organizations, and representatives of OPDs from Southern Africa and beyond -

through our interaction, we can and will create a better world”. She encouraged people with disabilities to pursue their ideas by telling the story of Rob Smith, founder of the Active Hands Company and designer of gripping aids, who despite suffering a spinal cord injury and partial paralysis, managed to establish a thriving business selling to people all over the world.

“I would like to reaffirm the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's call to leave no one behind.

To the organizers, through webinars like this, you are already doing this, and in doing so, you are supporting the Government of Southern Africa's efforts to uplift marginalized groups of people, such as people with disabilities. Such efforts aid in the achievement of both short and long-term objectives,” she stated.

UNDERSTANDING ALBINISM

Albinism is still profoundly misunderstood, socially and medically. The physical appearance of persons with albinism is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition, which foster their marginalisation and social inclusion. This leads to various forms of stigma and discrimination.

On 27 September, the Ministry Deputy Minister of The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare: Disability Affairs: Hon. Alexia Manombe-Ncube, addressed a Workshop on Understanding Albinism arranged by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Understanding Albinism: Equipping ourselves with knowledge and resources to share with others for advocacy was the workshop's theme.

“The worst form of discrimination against people with albinism is dehumanization, which serves as the foundation for horrifying physical attacks on them. Because some people believe they are magical beings, they mutilate or even kill them so that their body parts can be used in witchcraft rituals,” she explained.

She stated that the Directorate of Disability Affairs is continuing to work tirelessly to ensure the mainstreaming of disability rights through the Mainstreaming Plan to ensure the protection of people with disabilities.

She urged all communities, including traditional authorities, to protect and uphold the rights of people with disabilities, and to put an end to all forms of harassment and discrimination against

She mentioned that these attacks claim many lives and cause severe trauma to survivors and their families. Persons with albinism deserve to have their rights to life and security protected, as well as the right not to be tortured or ill-treated.

To combat the superstition and stigma associated with Albinism, education and awareness campaigns should be stepped up.

The human rights-based approach is the best way forward because it aims to empower people with albinism to assert their rights and hold states accountable for responding to such assertions.

“Human rights are rights inherent in all human beings, regardless of race, gender, disability, language, religion, or any other status,” according to the report. Economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights, are all part of human rights.”

Non-discrimination and equality, accountability, participation, empowerment, and legality are the pillars of the Human Rights approach, she mentioned, adding that most Namibians do not discriminate against persons with Albinism.

Despite the country's unfortunate reputation for baby dumping, it was never reported that any of these children were Albinism babies, demonstrating that Albinism babies are them. “I urge all Namibians to respect the inherent dignity of people with albinism, and to support them in realizing their potential, ability, and achievements,” she concluded.

Picture source: <https://www.freepik.com/photos/man> Man photo created by freepik - www.freepik.com

Combating superstitions.

welcomed in their families. "So far, I am not aware of any reports of mutilation or other life-threatening practices against Albino people in Namibia", she added.

“I am impressed with the Office of the Ombudsman's special effort since 2019 to dig deeper into understanding Albinism and to raise awareness about Albinism among persons with disabilities and the general public,” she added.

CHILDREN LIVING AND WORKING ON THE STREETS

Following a recent street visit to Goreangab, Havana, and Hakahana, After School Staff (ASC) staff members were overjoyed to meet youngsters (three girls and five boys) who had previously lived in the Rocky Crest riverbed and had been reintegrated back into families.



Street visit

Furthermore, all children aged 11 to 15 were transported to the ASC's temporary night shelter, where they stayed from August 14 to 20 August (they continue to visit the center every day, and the interventions are listed below:

- Tracing of Parents /guardians
- Individual Counselling
- Group work activities
- Identification of national documents and school reports
- The Social Worker and intern work with the parents to register the children
- Conduct home visit
- The driver picks up the children from their

homes on a daily basis after they have been discharged from the shelter and brings them to the centre to continue their sessions.

- Children are provided with a meal everyday
- Children receive literacy classes at the centre with a literacy teacher from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, who helps them prepare for school integration in 2022.
- The children are also taught how to garden
- Only two children are ready for school integration, while the others have never attended school or have been out of school for four years.

AWOME



Mr Nashandi, hands over a certificate of attendance to one of the 53 women micro entrepreneurs on 17 September in Khomas region.



Mr Nashandi, hands over a certificate of attendance to one of the 53 women micro entrepreneurs on 17 September in Khomas region.

The Ministry partnered with United Nations Women (UN Women) and De Beers Group of Companies to implement the Acceleration of Women-Owned Micro Enterprises (AWOME) Programme that aims to build the capacity of women micro-entrepreneurs through business and life skills training as well as strengthening the capacity of women business associations in Namibia.

The Ministry collaborated with the United Nations Women (UN Women) and the De Beers Group of Companies to implement the Acceleration of Women-Owned Micro Enterprises (AWOME) Programme, which aims to strengthen the capacity of women business associations in Namibia and build the capacity of women micro-entrepreneurs through business and life skills training.

Since 2018, 666 women entrepreneurs have been trained, with 408 from the Khomas region

and 258 from the Erongo region. 117 women entrepreneurs were trained in 2020, notwithstanding the impact of COVID-19 on program implementation. At the handing over of certificates to the entrepreneurs, Mr Wilbard Nashandi, Director - Policy, Planning and Research stated that, unlike in the past, when the Ministry issued certificates on the last day of the training, the new approach is for entrepreneurs to earn the IYB certificate by demonstrating the use of basic skills learned during the IYB training. Hence, after training, support was provided through coaching and assessment.

NATIONAL TRAINING MANUAL AND TRAINING PLAN

On the 06-10 September 2021, the Ministry organized a training for Health Extension Workers (HEW) on how to use the National Training Manual and Training Plan for Men and Boys on GBV, SRH, and HIV/AIDS.

Training objectives

- To strengthen participant's understanding of the key concepts of GBV, SRHR and HIV/AIDS as relating to gender to issues within the context of men and masculinity

- To enhance the knowledge of the HEW on the prevention of the GBV, HIV & AIDS and the promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights,
- To build capacity of the HEW on sharing information on the prevention of GBV and engaging men and boys during their door-to-door extension work and during their meetings.
- Introduce participants to the National Training manual and Training Plan for Men and Boys on GBV, SRH and HIV & AIDS as a tool for their work



Health Extension Workers and Health Assistants Attending the training on male engagement.

In a speech read on his behalf by Mr Mitchell Mubuyaeta, Acting Deputy Director, Gender Mainstreaming, Hon. Royal /Ui/o/oo, Deputy Minister, Marginalised Communities remarked that Health Extension Workers play a greater in safeguarding communities especially in the era of COVID-19, furthermore, they can help in creating a society where people understand and protect themselves from health risk situations including HIV, STIs, GBV and unplanned pregnancies.

A total of 37 Health Extension Workers and Health Assistants were trained.

And the **WINNER** is...

Mr. Gerhardus Mouton.



Mr. Gerhardus Mouton, the monthly prize winner, receives a getaway voucher from Ms Loide Velishavo, ECD's Deputy Director.

SMS COMPETITION

In its effort to contribute to the reduction of poverty and create a caring and inclusive society where all Namibians enjoy a dignified life. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (MGEPEW) launched an SMS competition.

The need to integrate their social concerns by reaching out to the less privileged has never been greater, and thus the Ministry commends all its supporters for helping to make the competition a reality.

There have been 23 projects funded so far. Financial assistance for education, gardening, the construction and rehabilitation of sanitation and water supply facilities, dignified burials

for people living in extreme poverty — e.g., Marginalised Communities, the provision of clothes and blankets, and any other emergencies relating to people living in extreme poverty are all examples of this.

Although the Ministry continuously receives financial donations, there is still an overwhelming request for (financial) assistance from communities. In this regard, the Ministry uses the Resource Mobilization Strategy (RMS), which explores various strategic interventions to continue sourcing funds.

Given that the Ministry is a public institution that relies entirely on Government funds, the purpose of the competition's resource mobilization is to allow the public to help fellow Namibians in

need, so contributing to their welfare and well-being. Companies and/or individuals who wish to participate in this or future Ministry poverty reduction efforts are warmly invited. We hope to raise \$1 million (NAD).

To stand a chance to win, simply **SMS SOCIAL PROTECTION** to **22110** and stand a chance to win weekly/monthly prizes: Samsung Galaxy J8 Cell phone, A get away weekend for two, shopping vouchers or the grand prize of N\$50 000

Congratulations to all of our weekly winners, as well as the monthly prize winner, Mr. Gerhardus Mouton.



Ministry of Gender Equality
Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare

SMS "Social Protection" to 22110

and stand a chance to win a
Samsung Galaxy J8, Gataway weekend for two, Shopping vouchers

(Ts & Cs apply)

N\$50.000
Grand Price



SHOPRITE



Woermann, Brock

namibmills
FEEDING THE NATION



WECKE & VOIGTS
WHOLESALE



OPERATIONALIZATION OF GBV, VAC AND TIP SHELTERS



Training participants.

The Ministry identified Gender Based Violence (GBV), Violence Against Children (VAC), and Trafficking in Person (TIP) shelters in all regions, as directed by Cabinet Decision 11th 23.06.09/007, developed and implemented victim assistance programmes.

The Ministry has so far obtained shelters that are fully furnished and equipped. Following that, on 30 August – 03 September 2021, the Ministry held a training for volunteers and social workers on how to operationalize shelters for survivors of GBV, VAC, and TIP, taking into account the current demand for services and the country's situation with GBV, VAC, and TIP.

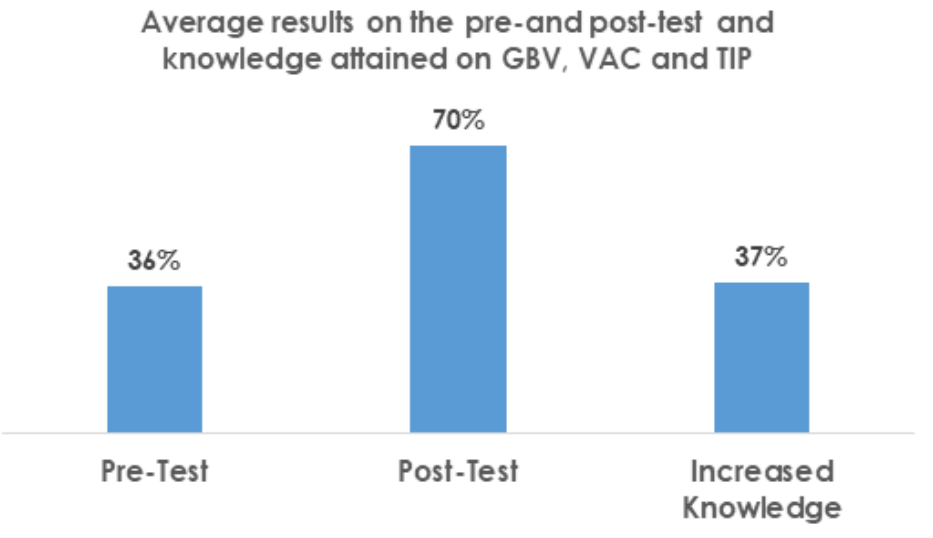
With the support of the UNFPA, a total of 14 social workers and 16 volunteers were trained.

Workshop objectives:

- To understand the standard operating procedures for shelters for GBV, VAC, and TIP survivors
- To understand how to deal with survivors admitted to the shelter
- To discuss and agree on basic activities/programmes for victims at the shelters

The training covered sessions on the definitions, concepts and legislations pertaining to GBV, VAC, TIP, referral mechanisms and support available for victims, as well as the standard operating procedures of shelters for the victims.

The trainees were given a pre- and post-test, as well as a knowledge enhancement test, and the following are the results:



The graph depicts the average pre-and post-test results, as well as knowledge gained on GBV, VAC, and TIP. The overall results of the pre-test are 36%, whereas the overall results of the post-test are 70%. As a result, the workshop resulted in a 37% gain in knowledge.

CHILDREN LIVING AND WORKING ON THE STREETS



Children who have been found living and working on the streets are enrolled in the ASC's Psychosocial Support Programs, which include reading classes.



On a daily basis, children who live and work on the streets are taught how to garden.



Learners receive their toiletries when schools re-opened on 3 August 2021.

AFTER SCHOOL CENTRE



SCHOOL INTEGRATION PROGRAM - The ASC has 154 children on the school integration programme, which integrates children living and working on the streets, as well as children from vulnerable backgrounds, in boarding schools so that they can receive an education. All learners in the program were taken to boarding schools in Khomas rural, Hardap, Omaheke and Otjozontjupa regions.

NAMIBIA CHILDRENS' HOME



Cleaning campaign at Namibian Children's Home.



JOYFUL JUMPING - Joyful Jumping - A trampoline donated to the Namibian Childrens' Home brought joy to all of the children. It's a fun addition to the children's already-existing activities. They also feature a pool table, karate lessons, colouring and drawing activities to stimulate play.

WRESTLING



The ASC wrestling team competed in the Windhoek wrestling tournament on 11 September 2021, at Windhoek High School. The ASC wrestling club, Windhoek wrestling club and the Swakopmund wrestling club were the three teams who competed. 17 Wrestlers from the ASC competed and all won gold medals. The team will compete at Swakopmund on 1-2 October 2021. Luis Forcelledo Paz is the team's coach.

Wrestlers from the the After School Centres, Romio Goliath and Alvaro Eixab, earned sports rewards monetary prizes from the Sports Commission and the Ministry of Sports, Youth, and National Services on August 24, 2021, for medals they won at the African Wrestling Championship in Algeria in 2019. Goliath won Silver and was awarded N\$20,000.00, while Eixab was won Bronze and was awarded N\$10,000.00.



Romio Goliath back left: On the podium after winning a silver medal at the African Wrestling Championships in Algeria, 2019



Team Namibia in Algeria, March 2019.

GLOBALLY

235 175 106

Confirmed cases of COVID-19, as of 6:27pm CEST, 5 October 2021.

4 806 841

deaths, reported to WHO

6 188 903 420

vaccine doses administered as of 3 October 2021

NAMIBIA

127 756

Confirmed cases of COVID-19,
as of 6:27pm CEST, 5 October 2021.

3 515

deaths, reported to WHO

279 829

vaccine doses administered as of 6 September 2021

MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY, POVERTY ERADICATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE

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