



Namibia designs strategies for keeping children in school

Press release

Windhoek, 23 June 2016 - The Government of Namibia, together with the United Nations and other stakeholders, have agreed that the information from the School Drop-out and Out-of-School Children Study is important for designing of strategies to keep all children in school. This was said during a national conference to launch the School Drop-Out and Out-of-School Children report and to deliberate on the appropriate response.

The School Drop-Out and Out-of-School Children report, which was completed in 2015 by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC), with the support of UNICEF and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, encourages collective means to remove the social, cultural, economic and geographic barriers which deny thousands of children the basic human right to education.

“The information which we now have in our hands can be used as a platform for action to ensure that all children go back to school and that their needs are catered for. Let us make it our priority to address the issue of school dropout and ensuring that all Namibian children including those in marginalised settings, are motivated to pursue their dreams for a better future.” said Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, who was represented by Hon. Peya Mushelenga the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

Information from the report shows that 103,768 children aged between 6–19 years were out of school in Namibia in 2011. The report also indicates that an additional 99,200 children were at risk of dropping out of school before completing primary or secondary education. Some of the major challenges that may impede education opportunities include poverty, gender inequalities, huge distances between communities and school, minority status, disability and learner pregnancies.

“We have identified the factors which account for the exclusion of children from school and which make it difficult for children to complete the full cycle of learning. What we would like to get from this conference are the appropriate evidence based strategies and action plans to mitigate this problem,” said Minister of Education, Arts and Culture Hon. Katrina Hanse-Himarwa.

The School Drop-Out and Out-of-School Children report sets out a comprehensive agenda for change to give children back their right to education. This is through interventions such as supporting education opportunities for vulnerable populations, including children from the San and Himba communities and children living with disabilities, as well as preventing and managing the prevalence of learner pregnancies.

“Namibia is taking the lead in addressing key issues related to Sustainable Development Goals in Education and our collective duty is to continue improving conditions for children for their success and ultimately for the success of Namibia,” said UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Kiki Gbeho.



The national conference has brought together representatives from different stakeholders, including young people and children from all 14 regions of Namibia, and will culminate in the development of a comprehensive action plan for progressive uptake and implementation of recommendations to respond to the challenge of out of school children in Namibia.

At the Conference, the MoEAC and UNICEF also launched the report on Positive Deviant Schools in Namibia. The report, entitled “We are the architects of our own destiny”, provides insights into why some schools in poor and remote settings outperform other schools in more affluent or similar settings. The main findings of the report were as follows:

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- a) There was nothing extraordinary about the infrastructure in the Positive Deviant Schools; they varied and most were under-resourced.
- b) Effective leadership with high levels of trust and accountability is key to the success of the Positive Deviant Schools.
- c) The Positive Deviant Schools maximise teaching time and time on task, and are high-performing schools in national exams and regional tests.
- d) Most of the Positive Deviant Schools are not selective in their enrolment.
- e) Few of the 40 lessons observed were rated highly, and most were mediocre teacher-centred lessons with little innovation.
- f) The schools take control of their environment and manage external pressures while having a culture of constant improvement.
- g) The schools provide a caring and safe environment.

“This report goes a long way in highlighting how simple and effective management solutions and a culture of care and support can break cycles of poverty that persist in our schools. The answers to our questions are often straightforward and we don’t have to go out of Namibia to learn from good practices. This is an exciting report that can influence how we provide quality service delivery in schools towards quality education for all,” said UNICEF Country Representative, Micaela Marques de Sousa.

For more information please contact.

- Ayesha Wentworth, Ministry of Education and Culture; Ayesha Wentworth ayeshawentworth@yahoo.com;
- Judy Matjila; jmatjila@unicef.org; +264811275963
- Diana Ndimbira, diana.ndimbire@undp.org