



# ETSIP

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

[N\$41.1 million]

### Background

1. Early Childhood Development (ECD) and pre-primary education are widely recognised as having a significant impact on the subsequent performance of children in basic education programmes. They lay the foundations for acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, they considerably reduce dropout and repetition rates and, well managed, they generate a predisposition of the child towards learning and attending school. (The repetition rate in grade 1 was 18.8% and the dropout rate 4.2% in 2005, higher than any comparable SADC country). Pre-primary education would ensure a smooth transition between ECD and primary education and lay the foundation for lifelong learning. ECD and pre-primary education are much sought on behalf of their children by parents who themselves are literate and value them and can afford them. The challenge in Namibia is to ensure they are also available to the less advantaged communities most in need of them.

### Achievements

2. Namibia has a progressive ECD policy in place that reflects its commitment to promoting a multi-sectoral community-based approach to early childhood development and care involving parents, the family and their community organisations, although its resource base is still in need of clarification. Access to ECD facilities has improved since independence, under the guidance of various Ministries, of late the Directorate of Community and Early Childhood Development (DCECD) in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) and the 2001 census data showed 32% of children between the ages of 3 and 6 enrolled in some form of ECD programme. An institutional framework governing and facilitating services to young children has been established and is evolving. Under this framework, the intention is that ECD centres will be registered and monitored, and caregivers will be provided with practical support in the form of simple guidelines on the management of centres and a manual covering various ECD topics. Together with NGOs the government has piloted a number of new approaches including home-based programmes. The National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) has developed a 12-week training programme for caregivers, currently under training for piloting in 2006. A 10-week school readiness programme was developed by the Ministry of Education in 1994 as part of the grade 1 school curriculum.

### Challenges

3. *Improving management of, delivery systems for, quality of and access to, pre-primary programmes:* The first challenge in improving the management and delivery of pre-primary education is to establish a new policy and institutional framework within the Ministry of Education to manage pre-primary education effectively. This has as its ultimate goal for 2030 the establishment of a pre-primary year in primary schools for all children aged 5/6 years, to be developed first of all in the schools serving the poorest populations and OVCs. Secondly,

the needs of the existing system must be reviewed and a coherent capacity development programme should be developed and implemented to improve the quality of teaching in existing schools, to allow for children reaching grade one with little or no prior ECD experience, or for children living in difficult circumstances. A pre-primary programme, based on an expanded version of the existing school readiness curriculum, should be developed together with an emergency training package. Norms and standards should be developed against which the performance of existing institutions and teachers can be evaluated and improved, using EMIS and tracking systems to measure the progress of the most vulnerable children. Thirdly, the capacity to deliver pre-primary has to be increased, in the first instance through tapping the existing pool of ECD staff through recruitment and in-service training to meet the required standards, and through appropriate remuneration, and subsequently, through attracting new recruits from vocational and teacher- training , and the establishment of a pre-primary career structure. In addition, infrastructure support necessary to provide curriculum revision and materials development as the system progresses. A parallel programme of classroom construction should be developed as money becomes available.

### Priority components

**Strategic Objective A:** Improving management of, delivery systems for, quality of and access to, early childhood development programmes

*Component 1:* Enhancing early childhood education management systems, quality and access

**Strategic Objective B:** Improving management of, delivery systems for, quality of and access to, pre-primary education programmes

*Component 2:* Establishing the management framework for pre-primary education

*Component 3:* Developing pre-primary teacher support and materials development

4. There are three components to this programme. The first seeks to improve the current structures for managing early childhood care and to enhance both access and quality. The second will establish the necessary policy, management and support framework within the Ministry of Education to manage the expansion of pre-primary education. The third is to address quality issues in pre-primary education through teacher development and the development of the curriculum and appropriate materials and the measurement of children's progress through EMIS and individual tracking of children in difficult circumstances. All three components will have a short and a medium term element in order to address the immediate needs of existing centres, and to lay the foundations for the longer term goals of Vision 2030. These components will be directed at supporting those children in greatest need.

### Component Descriptions

**Component 1. Enhancing early childhood education management systems, quality and access [N\$16.9 million]**

5. *Challenges:* A national ECD policy exists but there are no effective plans or institutional framework or resource allocations for promoting ECD adequately. Although there has been a rapid growth in ECD provision, the care offered tends to be of poor quality with no professional standards, few training opportunities and lack of recognition of ECD as an occupation. Access to ECD has increased, but generally the poorest children receive the poorest quality services. Poverty is widespread, and there are increasing numbers of children living in difficult circumstances. Two categories of children identified as having particular needs not currently addressed are orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), and children from

marginalised groups such as the San, the Ovahimba and the Riemsvasmaker communities.

6. *Objectives:* The existing policy, legal, institutional and resource framework for the delivery of ECD programmes is improved, and monitoring systems introduced to enable efficient data collection for planning and resource allocation. A sub-sector Education Management Information System (EMIS) is in place. The competencies of ECD caregivers are improved. More equitable access to ECD programmes is available, particularly for OVCs and marginalised groups, through the development of a subsidy system.
7. *Component description:* The revised ECD Policy document, with resource allocations and implementation plans more fully developed, will be finalised, and an executive summary sheet will be translated into selected languages, disseminated and operationalised. A broadly representative National ECD Committee with regional sub-structures will be established. A main task for regional and national ECD committees will be to receive reports and scrutinize monitoring data about the uptake and impact of local developments on the poorest children.. A subsidy system to support the poorest children in ECD will be developed.
8. The capacity of current staff within MGECW to deliver the above will be developed through job specialization. Currently community liaison officers undertake a variety of tasks including the delivery of ECD, but these tasks are not clearly defined and with one exception, the budget for ECD is not disaggregated from the general community budget, making monitoring of expenditure and effectiveness difficult to assess. Training will be provided for those allocated a specific ECD role, including monitoring responsibilities. Additional management training will be developed for senior staff.
9. The 12-week basic ECD caregivers' syllabus and the parental education manual, which have been developed in 2005, will be piloted, disseminated and introduced with appropriate training. In addition to the above, norms and standards for appropriate delivery of ECD programmes will be developed. Data collection processes will be devised in line with the sector-wide EMIS. A basic ECD monitoring and evaluation strategy will be developed. Competencies and standards for effective ECD caregivers will be defined. An advanced curriculum for ECD caregivers and a specialist package of training materials for OVCs will be developed, disseminated and implemented with appropriate training.
10. The 12-week basic ECD caregivers' syllabus, the advanced curriculum for ECD caregivers and the specialist package for OVCs will be translated into the various local languages and widely disseminated. The existing advocacy materials on ECD will be made available in different local languages and distributed across the country. Subsidies in the form of technical and material support will be provided to ECD programmes that show that they can support children living in difficult circumstances.
11. *Implementation:* Contingent on 8 above, ECD policy development and planning issues will be undertaken under the direction of the Directorate of Community and Early Childhood Development (DCECD) with assistance from UNICEF in 2005-6. Capacity building for newly allocated ECD jobs within the MGECW will be delivered. Norms and standards for caregivers will be developed by DCECD during 2006-7. Subsequent biannual training events will be offered by DCECD with NGO assistance. The national and regional management ECD structures will be operational from 2005 and the EMIS and monitoring systems will be in place by 2007. These new structures will have as a primary task the scrutiny of EMIS and other monitoring data.

12. Specialised training materials targeted at OVCs will be developed (2007) and implemented with appropriate training by 2008. The needs assessment of marginalised groups will be undertaken in 2006 and appropriate educational materials developed by 2008.
13. *Outputs and indicators:* The key outputs of this component related to management and delivery systems are (a) a revised national ECD policy, reinforcing the need to support the poorest children and children living in difficult circumstances through its resourcing proposals; an executive summary of the policy will be available in selected languages nationwide; (b) a national costed ECD strategic plan anchored in the policy; (c) norms and standards for appropriate ECD delivery; (d) an assessment of MGECW ECD delivery and management capacity; (e) training programmes for ECD managers and caregivers operationalised (f) a national and regional structure for ECD management; (g) EMIS ECD data collection processes established; and (h) monitoring and evaluation tools operational.
14. Key outputs related to quality and access are: (a) standards and curricula for caregivers; (b) an operational training programme for caregivers (c) specialised training materials targeting OVCs; (d) educational packages targeting marginalised groups in use and (e) ECD support for OVCs implemented.

**Component 2. Establishing the management framework for pre-primary education**  
[N\$10.5 million]

15. *Challenges:* The responsibility for pre-primary education will move from MGECW to MoE in 2006, the long-term intention being to establish pre-primary classes in primary schools. Currently, no structures of staff exist to support such a development. As a first priority, staff must be allocated to it, centrally (NIED) and regionally. Appropriate structures and policies must be developed, and the possibility of attaching pre-primary classes to existing schools needs to be urgently explored. At present ECD centres may include a notional pre-primary group, but access to good quality, pre-primary schooling is mainly limited to wealthier parents who can afford the fees to pay qualified teachers, further exacerbating inequalities. In general, expansion of pre-primary classes will target poor communities. Particular categories of children identified as having needs not currently addressed are OVCs, and children from marginalised groups such as the San, the Ovahimba and the Riemsvasmaker communities and disabled children.
16. *Objectives.* The legal and institutional framework for the delivery of pre-primary programmes are improved and further aligned to the school system. Posts are created at NIED and regionally to manage and support the delivery of the pre-primary programme. The existing school readiness programme is updated and brought in line with the new framework to allow learners to acquire requisite levels of school readiness. Access for poorer and marginalised children to pre-primary classes is improved through having trained pre-primary teachers on the government payroll. A career path for pre-primary educators is established. The capacity of institutions to deliver pre-primary programmes is enhanced and community participation on their governance strengthened. A longer term programme of curriculum revision and associated materials development is under way. A sub-sector EMIS is in place and a tracking system is introduced for Grade 1 primary children to measure their progress. Revised norms and standards for pre-primary education are in place and operationalised.
17. *Component description:* Existing policies and structures for the support of increased access to pre-primary education will be reviewed and revised and new ones, made necessary by the

move of the locus of responsibility from MGECW to MoE, developed and operationalised. A staff of 14, one per region and one central, will be identified to spearhead and manage the process (see also component 3). They will be assigned prior to the formalisation of posts. A career path for pre-primary educators will be established. A pre-primary programme, based on the existing school readiness curriculum, for the implementation and enhancement of pre-school education will be developed. Data collection procedures will be developed in line with the sector-wide EMIS and existing child tracking systems.

18. Expansion of access in the first phase will be limited to a pro-poor programme, in particular addressing the needs of OVCs (see component 2 in the HIV and AIDS sub-programme) and marginalised groups (assisted by NAMAS).
19. Existing norms and standards will be reviewed and revised. The current delivery capacity for pre-primary programmes will be assessed and a programme developed to assist existing schools in meeting the standards. Where this is impossible, for reasons of space or lack of capacity or lack of local access, existing school sites will be explored. Community participation in pre-school management will be enhanced.
20. *Implementation:* Interim national and regional structures for managing pre-primary education will be fully operational from 2006/7. Permanent structures for pre-primary education management, with the capacity to further expand to meet need and demand will be fully operational from 2009. A revised pre-primary curriculum and associated teaching and learning materials and training packages will be available by 2008, addressing the issues of HIV and Aids (see component 1: Curriculum and Teaching in the HIV and AIDS sub-programme). Pre-primary policy development and planning issues, including the identification of sites for pre-primary classes for poor children and children in difficult circumstances (particularly for OVCs, those infected and affected by HIV and marginalised groups) will be undertaken in consultation with MGECW, under the direction of PAD, PQA and NIED in 2006-8. In order to recruit and retain staff to work in new or existing pre-primary sites norms and standards and career paths for pre-primary teachers will be developed during 2007-9. EMIS and monitoring systems will be in place by 2008. Community participation in the governance of pre-primary education will be strengthened in 2009. A detailed and costed plan for the long-term expansion of the system will be available by 2011, identifying how the goal of pre-primary classes for all children can be achieved, in line with *Vision 2030*.
21. *Outputs and indicators:* The key outputs of this component related to management and delivery systems are (a) a structure within the Ministry of Education for delivering the pre-primary programme; (b) a school readiness curriculum and indicators developed and in use; (c) norms and standards for appropriate pre-primary delivery including basic competencies of pre-primary teachers; (d) an assessment of pre-primary delivery and management capacity; (e) EMIS data collection processes established to monitor the increased access of poor children (particularly for OVCs, those infected and affected by HIV and marginalised groups) to pre-primary classes; and (f) well advanced plans for the future evolution of pre-primary education, including a fully revised curriculum, classroom construction and provision of the necessary resources.

**Component 3. Developing pre-primary teacher support and materials development**  
**[N\$13.9 million]**

22. *Challenges:* In the short-term, a revised and expanded version of the existing school-readiness programme will be implemented. An emergency training package with relevant teaching and learning materials must be developed, targeting the training and remuneration of 300 teachers in marginalised communities, including existing pre-primary teachers/caregivers and a cadre of promising grade 12 school leavers. A major difficulty is poor or inappropriate sites for pre-primary classes in marginalised communities. For an interim measure afternoon sessions at existing school sites may be considered, but eventually additional classrooms will have to be erected to house pre-primary classes. Mobile teacher packs will have to be developed for mobile communities. In the longer term, teacher education support programmes and formalised structures for pre-primary educators must be developed and curricula and teaching and learning materials must be revised. Quality pre-primary delivery must result in better literacy and numeracy levels in primary schools.
23. *Objectives:* Pre-primary management capacity is enhanced. Expanded and more equitable access to pre-primary programmes is available for poor children, particularly for OVCs, those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS and marginalised groups through the development of specialised support materials. Primary school readiness is enhanced as are the competencies of pre-primary teachers, providing a smooth transition between ECD and primary education and laying the foundation for lifelong learning. Learner achievements and shortcomings are tracked and analysed to inform curriculum review. BETD Preset and Inset programmes are developed to cater for student teachers opting to specialise in pre-primary education.
24. *Component description:* An emergency in-service training package will be developed and implemented by a combination of face-to-face and distance modes for 300 pre-primary teachers, 100 per year, commencing in marginalised communities and including OVCs and children with special needs. The quality of children's school readiness level will be improved through the development of a comprehensive package of teaching and learning materials which will be provided to the trained teachers and through site-based teacher support.
25. The 300 trained teachers will be supported through the provision of fixed allowances, thus removing the need for poorer parents to pay high fees to employ such staff. School readiness levels will further be improved through the translation of the school readiness programme and the package of teaching and learning materials in 10 African languages. Aptitude testing materials will be developed, amended and piloted. Minimum entry requirements and performance-based salaries for pre-primary educators will be established. A teacher training curriculum will be developed as part of the BETD pre-service and in-service programmes.
26. *Implementation:* The 14 assigned staff members (see component 2) will spend the most part of the first year centrally at NIED, developing a revised and expanded

version of the existing school-readiness programme and an emergency training package, including a teachers' guide, training manual and a set of basic teaching and learning materials. In 2008 they will then co-ordinate in-service training of 100 pre-primary teachers at regional level, by a combination of face-to-face and distance modes in a pro-poor sequence. The permanent staff will take over this role in 2009/10. Study tours will be arranged to broaden the experience of pre-primary staff members (2007-2010) and staff members will be supported in enrolling into distance study programmes within the pre-primary field. A mechanism will be developed that permits the remuneration of trained teachers by the government prior to the development of a coherent pre-primary employment structure. A fully articulated sequence of professional development programmes will be developed for pre-primary teachers as an element of Tertiary Education Component 3 and delivery mechanisms will be defined and operationalised in 2010/11. An effective tracking system and aptitude testing instruments for learners will be in operation from 2010.

27. *Outputs and indicators:* Key outputs are (a) basic competencies for pre-primary teachers defined; (b) an emergency training programme for pre-primary teachers developed and implemented (c) 300 pre-primary teachers meeting the defined basic competencies; (d) minimum entry requirements and performance-based salaries for pre-primary educators will be established (e) a package of translated teaching, learning and aptitude testing materials developed and in use; (f) pre-primary curriculum developed for the BETD Preset and Inset programmes, and (g) trained pre-primary teachers in recognised institutions receiving a fixed allowance (h) a demonstrable number of poor children (particularly for OVCs, those infected and affected by HIV and Aids and marginalised groups) doing better in primary school.



## REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

ETSIP is spearheaded by the Ministry of Education

For further information, comments or concerns regarding ETSIP, please contact:  
 The Public Relations Office, Ministry of Education, Private Bag 13186, Windhoek  
 Tel: + 264 61 2933366 • Fax: + 264 61 2933368  
 e-mail: [info@etsip.na](mailto:info@etsip.na).