EVALUATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NAMIBIA

SUPPORTED BY BERNARD VAN LEER FOUNDATION / UNICEF

Prepared by:
Catherine A Remmelzwaal
March 2001
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FINAL REPORT

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March 2001
Executive Summary

UNICEF’s ECD programme in Namibia is characterised by a willingness to recognise the strength that is to be found in diversity. The nine different interventions, evaluated herein, reflect the different strands of an ECD strategy striving to be complementary and multi-sectoral in approach. Instead of investing in the development of a single national model, UNICEF has opted to affirm the strategies advocated by the National ECD Policy in its acceptance of diversity while striving for equity. Such a policy allows UNICEF’s ECD programme to be shaped by local needs and resources.

The interventions evaluated were found to be united in a common vision of a human rights approach to programming, which looks beyond the immediate causes to examine the underlying reasons of why parents, guardians and communities fail to fulfil their responsibilities in caring for young children and orphans. Each intervention provides its own unique contribution to strengthening the capacity of these primary duty bearers to enable them to provide quality childcare and development for their young children.

This evaluation was carried out to meet a requirement of the donor, the Bernard van Leer Foundation. The original Terms of Reference stated that the evaluation should provide a detailed analysis of currently implemented ECD projects as supported by the Foundation. A brief summary of each intervention in terms of objectives, findings and major recommendations is given below.

Intervention 1: Capacity Building of the MWACW

The overall objective of this evaluation was to examine the process by which the DCD, within the MWACW, has been strengthened in terms of organisational and human capacity as a result of technical, financial and organisational assistance.

The main findings revealed that recommendations made by the Mid-Term Review in 1999, to use to capacity assessments, were never fully realised. This resulted in attempts to strengthen capacity being based on broad assumptions. Expectations of the DCD’s capacity to implement certain programmes were found to be too high. As a result, output in some programme initiatives often fell short of original objectives. Levels of participation and communication have not always been optimised, resulting in various blockages between the MWACW and other stakeholders at the national level. Decentralisation was found to have no implicit magic formula for mitigating the shortcomings of previous efforts made at the national level. On the other hand, decentralisation provides UNICEF with a new window of opportunity, which has in regions such as Omusati, already begun to bear fruit.

A main recommendation suggests that future plans to integrate capacity building into ECD programmes, whether process of goal orientated, should be based on thorough capacity assessments. Assessments should be made using an appropriate capacity building framework. UNICEF should ensure that assessments of organisational and human capacity are be written into planning documents and be an integrated part of the logical framework, giving clear, measurable indicators for use in monitoring and evaluation of all ECD initiatives.

Intervention 2: Community Action Plans

The objective of this evaluation was to examine the context in which the Community Action Plans (CAPs) were developed and to determine to what degree to they have been implemented.

The evaluation found that the intrinsic value of the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and the CAPs experience for the communities and DCD staff involved was, on the whole, positive. However, it was established that that several factors contributed to a shortfall in the effectiveness of the PRAs as well as the development and implementation of the CAPs. An attempt to define the needs of the community within a narrow range of ECD issues, resulted in an imposition of a pre-determined ECD agenda. This clearly undermined the sense of value and ownership of the CAPs by the communities. This finding goes some way to explain why the implementation of the CAPs has not been entirely successful. Other reasons why the CAPs have not reached their original objectives, are related to the logistical problems experienced by the CLOs and CAs in terms of lack of capacity, funding and transport.
A key recommendation suggests that future PRAs and CAPs, carried out to determine ECD needs in communities, should be multi-sectoral in approach. The team of facilitators should reflect a holistic approach to community development including ECD, health, education and even stakeholders who have an interest in income generating-activities. This mix of strategic and practical approaches would ensure that communities are able to freely express all their priorities and determine their own solutions.

**Intervention 3: Family Support Strategies**

The overall objective of this evaluation was to review the process and outcomes of the Family Visitors pilot programme in terms of the impact that the FVs have had on the attitudes, behaviour and practices of parents and caregivers of young children.

In spite of the various constraints and shortcomings in the initial programme design, structures and management, it was found that the Family Visitors (FV) programme has, to a large extent, achieved the original programme objectives. There is no doubt that these have been achieved through the tenacity and commitment of individual FVs and their ability to mobilise community support. One can only conclude that at an early stage in the programme, the community perceived the FVs as useful and necessary agents of change. Although the families involved in the programmes could rarely afford to show their appreciation in material terms, they clearly recognised the benefits of the programme to themselves and their children. It was found that the programme has survived in most communities on very little outside input and support, demonstrating that the ownership of the programme lies essentially with the communities.

One recommendation for this intervention suggests that the scaling-up of the FVs programme should be treated as Phase II of the pilot project. Lessons learned from Phase I must be given full cognisance and internalised before planning of Phase II begins. As Phase II of the pilot, scaling-up should be done in a carefully controlled manner. A reassessment of the number and capacity of DCD personnel, currently available in the regions for follow-up support and supervision, will first be necessary. It is suggested that the FV programme builds on its own success at the community level and should begin to scale-up through two or three selected satellite communities near those communities already involved in the programme. Networking between the communities will provide an indigenous support system for the FVs and ensure that the CAs and CLOs are not overloaded.

**Intervention 4: Orphan Care Project**

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the progress made during the pilot phase of the Orphan Care Project (OCP) in relation to the original objectives and in consideration of the specific contexts in which the initiatives took place.

A case study of the implementation of the OCP in Omusati region, found that the pilot has raised more questions than it has been able to answer. This confirms that Namibia’s experience of orphans, as a ‘social problem’, is limited. The introduction of the OCP at the end of 1999 provided the regional DCD with an innovative and structured approach to dealing with an ever-increasing problem. Using ECD facilities as a platform, the DCD began implementing a series of agreements with ECD workers whereby they agreed to take orphans for free in return for assistance in improving their ECD facility. The OCP has also opened the way for other ‘alternative’ solutions to emerge via the ECD platform. While progress has been made in terms of recorded commitments to the care of orphans and the implementation of material assistance to ECD facilities, there are several constraints, which have limited the potential progress of the OCP in Omusati Region. There is no doubt that similar constraints are likely to arise in other regions.

It is recommended that the OCP programme should be ‘re-launched’ nationally by the GRN and UNICEF, following a round table discussion with all stakeholders including regional CCLOs and NGOs. The presentation should be more participatory and less prescriptive. A case study of the Omusati pilot could provide the basis for a formal presentation, but should be followed by a facilitated discussion of the situation concerning orphan care in each of the other regions, in order to reflect on commonalities and differences. This type of facilitation will help to deal with some of the misunderstandings and promote a broader ownership of the project.
Intervention 5: Capacity Building of the National Early Childhood Development NGO Association

The main objective of the evaluation was to determine to what degree the original capacity building objectives, in terms of both skills transfer and sustainability, have been achieved by the Capacity Building Team in their first year.

The main findings suggested that one year into the CBT’s programme, it is possible to pinpoint real capacity building milestones. There is clear evidence that the CBT has been most meticulous in remaining close to the original objectives of the capacity building initiative. This structured and well-disciplined approach has resulted in effective and sustainable capacity building in many key areas. There are, however, some areas that will require more in-depth attention.

One of the main recommendations suggests that in order to sustain the gains that the Coordinator has clearly made, the CBT should seriously consider the Coordinator’s current ‘overwhelming’ needs. This should be done by resuming with the close mentoring approach, for at least a further six months, which proved to be so successful in the first year. At the same time, the CBT should plan an internal assessment of the Coordinator’s activities and capacities to take place within 3-5 months of their second year. The objective being to realign or readjust the capacity building agenda for both the Coordinator and the Office Administrator. This would allow the CBT sufficient time to identify any areas of capacity shortfall that would need strengthening in the final phase.

Intervention 6: Omaheke San Trust

The objective of this evaluation was to assess progress made in each of the ECD initiatives in three San communities, within the context of the existing structures and other various ongoing initiatives in Omaheke region.

The evaluation found that across the three communities, there were varying degrees of the ECD initiatives becoming an integrated part of the total community development strategy. Ownership in most cases, was in the hands of the San and had not be imposed from outside. More efforts are needed to involve San parents in ECD initiatives so as not to dis-empower them. The chronic lack of food security and its impact on young child was found in all San communities. Outside standards in relation to ECD were, to some degree, still imposed and this countered attempts to look at alternatives to centre-based care.

A major recommendation suggests that affirmative action is urgently needed to break the deadlock around the issue of food security for kindergartens and other ECD initiatives in Omaheke region. This issue needs to be brought to the attention of the Regional authorities who are a position to plan drought relief and school feeding programmes. An interim plan of action, which targets ECD initiatives in San communities, should become a priority of the Educationally Marginalised Communities project (UNICEF/OST), which is currently in its start-up phase.

Intervention 7: The Total Child Family Visitors Programme

The primary objective of this evaluation was to assess the degree to which the Total Child FVs have acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote community and family-based processes that focus on the socialisation of children and their caregivers towards human rights and the protection of children. It also compared some aspects of the Government’s FVs programme with the ACORD FVs programme.

One of the main findings was that communities and FVs, who have been exposed to a process of critical enquiry and analysis as well as training in redirecting children’s behaviour and children’s rights, are more likely to engage in positive child rearing practices than parents in those communities which have not. The type and content of the training undertaken by the Total Child FVs so far, has provided a very important dynamic and although it is early days, it may prove to be one of the key differences between the two programmes. An important constraint found in the programme was the lack of input, beyond training, from the MWACW.

It is recommended is that the partnership between ACORD and the MWACW in relation to the Total Child FVs pilot programme should be clarified so that each partner knows what their roles and
responsibilities are and what is expected of them. A joint work plan, drawn up between the Ministry and ACORD giving a time frame, activities and outcomes, clearly stating who the responsible agents are, would probably help to increase the degree of shared ownership and responsibility for the pilot programme.

**Intervention 8: Material Development**

The overall objective of this evaluation was to assess the appropriateness and impact of the materials and to examine the degree of usage and impact at different sites, from training institutions to the community and household levels.

The main findings revealed that there is a wealth of information on ECD and related issues which, if fully utilised, could impact the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of duty bearers for the provision of childcare. Presently, there is no comprehensive listing or organisational structure at the national or regional level, which gives an overview of the materials currently available. Access to, and availability of the materials at the community level, remains problematic. Most of the materials are classed as resource material and are not user-friendly at the community or household level. Guidelines tend to be overly prescriptive and fail to take cognisance of cultural diversity of childcare provision.

One of the main recommendations suggests that a low-cost catalogue of all the ECD materials available should be designed, giving samples of posters, summaries of relevant documents, videos and an indication of where they can be obtained. Materials could be organised according to type or by subject. This would provide all stakeholders with an overview of the materials available and encourage distribution and usage.

**Intervention 9: Technical and Administrative Support**

The main objective of this evaluation was to assess the current role of the UNICEF Assistant ECD Officer as reflected in both formal expectations and in the changing perceptions of the position as held by UNICEF’s partners and various ECD stakeholders.

The evaluation found that UNICEF had been fortunate in their appointment of the current ECD Assistant Project Officer as she has a broad technical knowledge of ECD as well as positive work experience in early childhood development and care programmes. However, three main constraints to the effectiveness of the role of current ECD Project Officer were identified during the evaluation.

The recommendations suggest that trade-offs between the role of the ECD Assistant Project officer and internal demands, made during the UNICEF programme cycle, should be minimised. Quarterly and yearly work plans should realistically reflect all demands made by events in the programme cycle as well as disturbances caused by UNICEF’s internal bureaucracy and public relations events, such as visits from the Executive Board. This should then be relayed to all of UNICEF’s partners so that they in turn can be realistic in their expectations of the ECD Project Officer’s capacity and availability.

**Thematic Recommendations**

The rich ‘diversity’ of the nine individual interventions evaluated does not lend itself easily to listing generic recommendations. However, it is clear from the overlapping and interweaving of the initiatives that there are common thematic strands that run through the interventions. The following thematic recommendations attempt to provide the UNICEF ECD Programme with more explicit guidelines, which can be either interpreted as ‘lessons learned’ or as ‘pointers’ in the ongoing process of programme revision, realignment and strengthening. Although examples are given, it is not the intention of this section to provide a prioritised list of activities to be undertaken in order to achieve improved project implementation. That will need to be carried out by UNICEF and its partners at the level of individual initiatives and in accordance with the specific recommendations given for each intervention.
Participatory and Consultative Planning

While cognisance must be given to the pressures and dynamics within organisations like UNICEF, to respond to time bound resource allocations within programme cycles, the current evaluation noted a clear contradiction within some of the ECD Programme initiatives, which promote participation in externally determined projects. While this dilemma is not unusual, in this case, it has caused some degree of confusion between partners in terms of responsibilities and accountability. There is no doubt that a move towards more participatory planning methodologies would result in an increased sense of ownership among partners within the ECD Programme.

It is, therefore, recommended that the ECD Programme should review its planning processes to ensure that appropriate levels of consultation and collaboration take place among all stakeholders. This recommendation is, of course, based on the assumption that all stakeholders are willing and able to participate fully in the planning and design processes. It also assumes that stakeholders are open to innovative and creative solutions. In order to generate constructive collaboration between stakeholders, it is further recommended that participatory techniques be used in order to create a common platform from where the programme can be steered forward. One such planning tool could be the ‘Objective-Oriented Project Planning’ (ZOPP), which aims to undertake participatory planning that spans the life of a project while building stakeholder team commitment and capacity through a series of workshops.

Capacity Building Assessments and Agendas

While acknowledgement is given to UNICEF’s facilitation of the comprehensive capacity building programme of the NECD NGO Association, the current evaluation found that the ECD Programme has sometimes assumed a somewhat passive role in this all important area. The following recommendations are not only firmly grounded in the findings of the current evaluation, but also lean heavily on the explicit findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (UNICEF, 1999) in the area of capacity building.

It is strongly recommended that the ECD Programme should urgently review and redefine its strategic and practical role in relation to its capacity building efforts. While the current evaluation acknowledges that realism, in terms of limited human and financial resources within the programme, must prevail, it is felt that failure to act on this recommendation places the current programme in danger of being perceived as a ‘grant-making’ initiative.

It is recommended that UNICEF staff within the ECD Programme should be given the opportunity to expand their understanding of the concept of capacity building. Cognisance needs to be given to the various facets of the concept which range from developing organizational structures and culture, including a vision statement, to the facilitation of skills transfer through direct technical assistance, mentoring and focused training. Clarification along these lines should, in turn, lead to the consideration as to whether capacity building within the ECD programme should be a strategy or an objective in itself. Once these issues have been worked through, the ECD Programme can begin to dialogue with key stakeholders, such as core members of the National ECD Committee, in order to assess and set capacity building agendas for positive outcomes.

While some ECD programming tools such as planning and review, need an element of flexibility, the capacity building component would benefit from a more structured approach. It is recommended that it should be guided by the SMART methodology, which calls for it to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. This would ensure clarity of purpose and goals among all stakeholders. On the basis of this type of approach, the ECD Programme could begin dialogue with partners in an advisory capacity to discuss issues such as staff quotas as well as engaging in open consultation about the skills necessary to ‘get the job done’ and thus achieve the overall strategic objectives of the programme.

It is recommended that efforts should be made to ensure that capacity building does not remain merely an ‘assumption’ within the ECD Programme’s Logical Framework. Capacity building assessments and agendas should be explicitly written into planning documents. Systematic capacity assessments should be carried out in a participatory manner at the appropriate level, be it national, regional or within the community, at the appraisal stage of a project cycle. This will ensure that organizational structures and skills capacity are in place, or, at least has the potential to be developed. Such assessments should be
shared openly with the relevant partners so that ownership of the capacity strengthening agenda is ensured from the beginning.

In consultation with partners, progress indicators should be developed at the initial stages to ensure that progress towards the capacity building objectives is fully monitored. It is recommended that where capacity building is an objective in itself, as in the case of the NECD NGO Association, mid-term assessments of initiatives should be carried out. It is further recommended that Annual ECD Review Meetings should use these progress indicators as tools to measure the degree of success and sustainability of capacity building efforts before establishing new agendas.

**Programme Focus and Prioritisation**

It is recommended that the ECD Programme should address the need to improve the quality of its inputs in terms of technical assistance to each of its diverse initiatives. In particular, attention should be given to the areas of monitoring and follow-up support. The shortfall in these programme areas has been clearly identified as being due to the over-extension of the human resources and capacity presently available within the ECD Programme.

In order to avoid spreading its resources too thinly, it is recommended that the ECD Programme should seriously consider cutting back on the number of UNICEF supported projects in order to ensure quality-focused attention to the remaining projects. This suggestion for re-prioritisation, does not imply an exclusive policy approach. On the contrary, as the ECD Assistant Project Officer becomes more focused in her role as advisor and catalyst, a new synergy will be created between all ECD stakeholders. The immediate benefits, accrued from this recommendation, would allow for improved follow-up activities in terms of monitoring and field visits. It would also mean that more time and energy could be invested in building up stronger linkages in terms of communicating and networking with ECD stakeholders at all levels.

A more focused approach on selected projects by the ECD Programme should, therefore, result in streamlining and consolidation of existing initiatives. In turn, scaling-up of projects should be more controlled and, therefore, more likely to enjoy success and long-term sustainability. The Family Visitors programme, for example, would benefit from technical assistance on how to scale-up activities as well as improving structures and systems for monitoring and follow-up.

**Programme Monitoring**

It is recommended that UNICEF should review its strategic approach to monitoring of supported initiatives within the ECD Programme. The findings of the current evaluation clearly indicate that, while cognisance was given to the need for follow-up and monitoring at the planning stage by all stakeholders, in reality this was rarely implemented.

The concept of monitoring clearly needs to be ‘demystified’ within UNICEF and among its partners. Monitoring should be promoted as being the management tool that is; providing periodic oversight of the implementation of each initiative. It should be seen as being a systematic attempt to establish the extent to which input deliveries, work schedules and targeted outputs are proceeding according to plan, so that timely action can be taken to correct deficiencies or strengthen ‘best practices’.

It is further recommended that more qualitative indicators, which go beyond Log Framework ‘percentages’ to the real issues at stake in community-based initiatives, should be employed for monitoring the assessment of project progress.

It is also recommended that the ECD Programme adopts a process learning approach to monitoring, which allows the programme to evolve constantly in response to changing needs and new lessons learned. This approach will enhance a culture of accountability while encouraging partners to make active and real use of lessons learned. It is suggested that UNICEF promotes a liberal policy based on the sharing of information gathered from monitoring of ECD programme initiatives. This can be done by developing a strategy that monitors, documents and disseminates the most significant experiences of the ECD Programme among a broader range of ECD stakeholders.
Complementary Approaches

It is recommended that the ECD Programme should look to its strengths and build on them. The current evaluation takes pains to point out that the rich diversity of the UNICEF’s ECD Programme reflects the range of complementary approaches as endorsed by the Namibian National ECD Policy. Embarking on a re-prioritisation of UNICEF supported ECD initiatives does not have to negate this strength.

It is further recommended that the ECD Programme should explore the possibility of the interlinking of supported interventions, in order to avoid a fragmentary approach and to enhance effectiveness of individual initiatives. The current evaluation found evidence of this beginning to happen as in the case of the Family Visitors of the DCD and ACORD programmes. Further potential for interlinking was noted in the Orphan Care Project where Family Visitors could be introduced, in order to strengthen the capacity of families and communities to respond to the orphan crisis in the region.
## Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACORD</td>
<td>Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development</td>
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<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>Community Activist</td>
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<td>CAA</td>
<td>Catholic Aids Action</td>
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<td>CAP</td>
<td>Community Action Plan</td>
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<td>CCN</td>
<td>Namibian Council of Churches</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organisation</td>
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<td>CBRP</td>
<td>Community-Based Resource Person</td>
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<td>CCLO</td>
<td>Chief Community Liaison Officer</td>
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<td>CLO</td>
<td>Community Liaison Officer</td>
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<td>DAPP</td>
<td>Development Aid from People to People</td>
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<td>DCD</td>
<td>Directorate of Community Development</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>FV</td>
<td>Family Visitor</td>
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<td>GRN</td>
<td>Government of the Republic of Namibia</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<td>HRAP</td>
<td>Human Rights Approach to Programming</td>
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<td>MBESC</td>
<td>Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture</td>
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<td>MOHSS</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Social Services</td>
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<td>MRLGH</td>
<td>Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTP II</td>
<td>Medium Term Plan II</td>
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<td>MTR</td>
<td>Mid Term Review</td>
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<td>MWACW</td>
<td>Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare</td>
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<td>NACOP</td>
<td>National AIDS Coordination Programme</td>
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<td>NDP II</td>
<td>National Development Plan II</td>
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<td>NECD</td>
<td>National Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NRC</td>
<td>Namibian Resource Consultants</td>
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<td>OCP</td>
<td>Orphan Care Project</td>
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<td>OST</td>
<td>Omaheke San Trust</td>
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<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<td>WIMSA</td>
<td>Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa</td>
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**LIST OF PEOPLE VISITED**
Introduction and Background

At a cursory glance, this evaluation may look to the inexperienced eye like nine interventions; nine different stories and nine sets of recommendations. A second look though, will reveal its true nature which is more akin to a patchwork quilt of early childhood initiatives. It is sewn together to create a pattern unique to Namibia, reflecting strength in its diversity. Individually the patches vary in size, pattern and even quality. Alone, they may seem insignificant and some even futile. Yet, when bonded together they have the potential to become transformed into the ‘whole’, which can reach its objectives of effective coverage and quality provision of early childhood care. The thread that runs through this ‘patchwork quilt’ of initiatives, represents the vision that is common to all and holds the ‘whole’ together; connecting and coordinating the diversity. In early childhood development, that thread has to be the fundamental belief in every child’s ‘inherent right to life,….survival and development’ (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 6).

Like the patchwork quilt, the nine interventions evaluated herein, together create a ‘whole’ picture of early childhood development in Namibia that was funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, through UNICEF’s Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes, between 1998-2000. Although each intervention has been evaluated in its own right, there is inevitable overlapping and inter-weaving, merely affirming the patchwork quilt analogy.

As a ‘whole’, the interventions need to be set in a framework of changes that have taken place within the Namibian context of early childhood care and development since funding was first requested in 1997 at the start of an new UNICEF programme cycle.

The Education and Early Childhood Development Programme began as one of six components of the 1997-2001 Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN)/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation. Within the broad framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the UNICEF ECD programme aimed to direct support towards priority issues that have been established within the National Development Plan 1 (1995-2000) and are highlighted in the National Programme of Action for Children (1991-2000).

The main focus of the UNICEF ECD Programme was to improve the delivery of services through strengthening the capacity of Government and NGO officials in target communities and to empower parents and other caregivers in order to promote better parenting practices. A formal Mid Term review was conducted in 1999 and resulted in a revision of the overall objectives of the ECD programme.

Changes in the ECD programme strategy were further impacted by events and developments in the external environment. These included the implementation of the Government’s decentralisation policy, and a growing awareness of the need for new initiatives to meet the growing needs of children affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These changes called for programme objectives and strategies to be readjusted in order to meet the need for a more responsive human right’s approach to programming for children, their parents and caregivers.

The sum total of these changes is now reflected in the draft of the new strategy document that will form the basis for the GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation (2002-2005). There is no doubt that the new strategy was been born out of the lessons learned along the way from the range of interventions presently under review, reflecting UNICEF’s flexibility and capacity to respond innovatively to the current needs of early childhood development and care in Namibia.

Evaluation Objectives

This evaluation was carried out to meet a requirement of the donor; the Bernard van Leer Foundation. The original Terms of Reference stated that the evaluation should provide a detailed analysis of currently implemented ECD projects being supported by the Foundation in Namibia. More specifically, the objectives of the evaluation were to:

- assess the viability of strategies and mechanisms in place and present an overall analysis of the development of the projects
- ascertain the cost effectiveness and sustainability of the projects
- take stock against the original objectives and set recommendations for adjustments to future ECD programmes

Methodology

Most evaluations begin with the assumption that something has happened and that changes have occurred. This evaluation is no different, in that it begins with the assumption that through the nine interventions currently being assessed, UNICEF’s ECD Programme in Namibia has made a significant difference in terms of improving the quality of young children’s lives within the context of their families and communities. Asking the question ‘What difference has it made?’, led to the need for a more process oriented approach. Such a qualitative methodology strives to identify milestones of achievement, while interpreting constraints and barriers as vital signposts that indicate the need for redirection and realignment. It is an approach that looks back in reflection, but also forward in anticipation of moving closer to realising the vision for ECD within the Namibian context.

Each intervention obviously required its own individual methodology. The evaluation has overall, employed a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative tools for data collection and analysis. Details of the methodological design and implementation of individual evaluations can be found in each of the nine sections of the report. Each intervention has which have been formatted to be used as a stand-alone report as well as for collective usage.

Financial Support

A common denominator of all nine interventions evaluated, is their source of funding support from the Bernard van Leer Foundation, as requested by UNICEF. The financial picture is not an homogenous one as support was given to the nine interventions in varying amounts and at various times, with some interventions being supported since 1998, while others have only received funding within the last six months. A summary of the distribution of the funding by intervention, is given in Table 1. It is further illustrated in Figure 1, in a format that captures a breakdown of the finances for individual interventions at the same time as depicting the ‘whole’ness of the nine interventions.

Table 1 Distribution of Funds by Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Funds Invested</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Capacity Building of MWACW</td>
<td>31,805.17</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Community Action Plans</td>
<td>14,541.89</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Family Support Strategies</td>
<td>52,474.06</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Orphan Care</td>
<td>14,451.69</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 NGO Association</td>
<td>53,838.99</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Omaheke San Trust</td>
<td>13,304.71</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Total Child Family Visitors Programme</td>
<td>19,303.54</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Material Development</td>
<td>22,067.65</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a Administrative Support (Salary)</td>
<td>37,040.73</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b Technical Assistance</td>
<td>13,157.02</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total US$</td>
<td>271,985.45</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig 1  Distribution of Funds by Intervention

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement and an expression of appreciation for the unique opportunity that this consultancy presented, is felt to be in order. The list of people interviewed (See Annex) reflects just a portion of the people who helped to make this evaluation possible. The hospitality, generosity of spirit and remarkable openness of individuals and whole communities willing to give, often in the face of adversity and when there was little sign of immediate gain, was in itself a humbling experience. Hopefully, some feedback to the communities visited will be possible. This would not only be ethical and courteous, but also be in line with the methodology of the evaluation.
INTERVENTION 1:
CAPACITY BUILDING OF
THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN’S AFFAIRS AND CHILD WELFARE

EVALUATION REPORT
Bernard van Leer Foundation / UNICEF

Prepared by:
Catherine A Remmelzwaal
March 2001
INTERVENTION 1:
CAPACITY BUILDING OF
THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN’S AFFAIRS AND CHILD WELFARE

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Annex 1.1 National ECD Structure
1.1 Introduction and Background

Institutional capacity building was originally an integrated component of the GRN/UNICEF ECD Programme (1997-2001) and aimed to:

*Improve the delivery services through the strengthening of capacity among Government and NGO officials to develop and support ECD activities in target communities (GRN/UNICEF1997-2001)*

Two years later an internal assessment of the programme revealed that a lack of capacity in the, then, Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing (MRLGH), had proved to be one of the major impediments to pursuing improved centre-based and parental approaches. Weaknesses in the capacity building efforts were observed in the Mid-Term Review (MTR). It was noted that important aspects such as targeting middle management and the creation of decentralised operational budgets had been neglected (MTR, 1999).

Such a shortfall in results immediately poses the question as to whether capacity building is a worthwhile investment. However, institutional capacity strengthening is renowned for being a difficult and lengthy process. Assisting in the process of institutional development is not an easy task and there are no shortcuts or easy solutions. It comprises of attempts to strengthen the institutional capacity of partners and requires a long-term perspective. Institutional capacity, as used here, refers to both the capacity of the institution as a system to perform its functions; its organisational capacity as well as the capacity of its current management staff as individuals; its human capacity.

In development circles today, there appears to be more open-mindedness about how institutional development might best be achieved. Programmes of institutional development are increasingly replacing conventional programmes of focused technical assistance. Yet, an evaluation of institutional development, like its implementation, is never an easy task.

In the first place, institutional development is not always considered a goal in itself, but rather as a means to other development goals which, in this case, would be the coordination and delivery of ECD services. This particular evaluation has been assigned the task of examining both institutional development as a goal in itself as well as the outputs of this process as seen in the implementation of programmes such as Community Action Plans (Intervention 2: Community Action Plans) and the Family Support Programme (Intervention 3: Family Support Strategies).

Secondly, unless institutional development has been based on a capacity assessment, it is often a low specificity activity, which has few inbuilt mechanisms to assist an external evaluation in identifying areas of low performance. As the Mid-Term Review noted:

*With few exceptions, capacity building initiatives were not developed on the basis of needs assessments. No capacity building framework was used. This led to weak programmatic linkages between desired outcomes and selected activities (MTR, 1999 GRN/UNICEF)*

Thirdly, because of its very nature, institutional development is a long-term investment where the results may only emerge in the long term. Following the Mid-Term Review’s recommendations, several adjustments were made to the ECD programme. The focus of the capacity building lens seems to have broadened to include:

*Capacity building through networking, training and operational support for key Government Departments, the National ECD NGO Association and ECD NGOs (UNICEF, 2000:5)*

There is no doubt that the parallel UNICEF initiative of intensive capacity building within the NECD NGO Association took some of the capacity building limelight in 1999 and 2000 (Intervention 5: Capacity Building of the NECD NGO Association). However, capacity strengthening initiatives within the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW) did continue, albeit at a lower level of intensity. As the GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation (1997-2001) comes to an end and a new strategy takes its place, it is perhaps timely and appropriate to evaluate the level of institutional development that has taken place within the MWACW as a result of UNICEF’s capacity building efforts.
1.2 Evaluation Objectives

The overall objective of this section of the evaluation is to review and examine the process by which the DCD, within the MWACW, has been strengthened in terms of organisational and human capacity as a result of technical, financial and organisational assistance.

1.3 Methodology

An initial review of this capacity building intervention indicated that an assessment of the DCD’s organisational and human capacity was never explicitly undertaken. Neither was a framework for capacity building employed to develop a capacity building agenda for the MRLGH (MWACW). The evaluation, therefore, had very little, by way of indicators to judge the progress made. This necessitated the use of externally created evaluation indicators. The indicators, which included effectiveness, participation, ownership, accountability and sustainability, guided the design of the semi-structured interviews of key informants and the focus group discussions used in the collection of primary data. A variety of secondary sources: reports, documents and minutes of relevant meetings, informed the situation analysis and provided material for an integrated literature review. Conclusions and recommendations are included to complete the evaluation.

1.4 The Directorate for Community Development

At the national level, the Directorate for Community and Early Childhood Development (DCD) has been situated within the MWACW since early 2000. The ECD related functions of the Directorate are said to include: policy formulation, the provision of guidelines and procedures as well as monitoring and supervision of ECD initiatives. As in any other Directorate, the degree to which these functions are carried out effectively depends on the level of organisational and human capacity. This is turn depends on their access to and control over both human and material resources. Following the move from the MRLGH to the MWACW in April 2000, the national level capacity of the DCD has been somewhat depleted in terms of human resources. The previous Director, as well as one of the two Deputy Directors, remained with the MRLGH in another capacity. This meant that the DCD was left with only one Deputy Director to head the Directorate. Ironically though, it is generally felt that more has been achieved, at least in strategic terms of promoting interest and dialogue on ECD issues nationally, during the last nine months than in previous years. On the other hand, capacity to plan and implement ECD policy is felt to have been somewhat undermined with the relocation of the previous ECD Coordinator to Omusati region in October 1999.

After a year of major changes and reshuffling of roles and responsibilities, things have begun to settle down in the new ministry. The transition from one ministry to another according to several key informants interviewed, has resulted in a decline in the number and quality of activities carried out by the DCD. An example of this is demonstrated in the somewhat irregular meetings of the National ECD Committee, for which the MWACW is mandated to provide the secretariat. In theory, the ongoing decentralisation process within the GRN, should leave the national level DCD with more time for issues such as; policy development and interpretation; the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems; data collection and analysis; the introduction of new initiatives; the soliciting of donor support through proposal writing; networking with ECD partners; strengthening cooperation between the National ECD Coordinators; mobilising the National ECD Committee and putting the ECD Trust Fund into operation. However, the current low capacity within the DCD greatly constrains the possibility of fulfilling many of these functions and it is clear that technical assistance at the national level will be necessary for some time to come.

Short-term training and exposure visits have long been part of the UNICEF capacity building programme within the DCD. In general, the effectiveness of this strategy has been very positive. While training was thought to be focused and effective, it was found that exposure visits were not always appreciated because they did not meet with expectations. Technical assistance from UNICEF is officially channelled through the ECD Assistant Project Officer who has a remit to work with project partners in order to develop and implement the project components, support capacity building in project planning and oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The use of a structured in-house mentoring programme, within a set time frame, giving technical assistance as based on a capacity building assessment, has not yet been tried. The first step towards such a programme is the readiness of the partner to conduct a critical self-assessment of its own capacity. Focus group discussions, with DCD
staff, clearly indicate that they are more than willing to admit to elements of low capacity in the following areas:

- Data collection and analysis
- Report and proposal writing
- Design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems
- Budgets

Attention to these expressed needs could provide the programme with a platform for dialogue about the lack of capacity, which is currently perceived as hindering progress in some areas. Furthermore, the strengthening of partnership structures and mechanisms, such as communication channels, is thought to be key to effective and sustainable capacity building. Regular dialogue would help to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different partners and facilitate the building of common ground.

Capacity building has a greater chance of success if a sense of ownership can be fostered by the full participation of the MWACW in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of new and ongoing ECD initiatives. There is, however, evidence to suggest that projects and programmes within the GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation are not always perceived as being participatory initiatives. Instead, it is felt that agreement is often sought after the programme had been designed or after the initiative had been conceived and planned. While the following examples are only based on the perceptions of a small sample of individuals interviewed, they do shed some light on the importance of fostering a participatory process and how it can affect institutional capacity and its outputs.

- The implementation of the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) training took place in an atmosphere of ‘confusion’ because DCD staff members at all levels were not conferred with, but merely informed of the objectives of the exercise. This may well have influenced the outcomes of the PRAs and the Community Action Plans (CAPs) carried out in the communities. In retrospect many CLOs admit that through the PRAs they gained valuable insight and some still use the techniques to mobilise the communities. Yet, at the time it was perceived as an imposition and may have negatively impacted their sense of ownership and commitment to the PRAs and the CAPs.

- The design and packaging of the Family Visitors programme is another example of a programme being perceived by DCD staff as being exogenous in nature. Although the consultant, hired by UNICEF in 1999, based her design on the outcomes of the PRAs and in consultation with some members of the DCD, the process was clearly not participatory enough as the idea was never fully bought or owned by the regions. This insight may go some way towards explaining why the programme has only had limited success.

- The Orphan Care Project, which is still in its early stages in pilot regions, is also to some degree perceived as being ‘delivered’ rather than discussed. While all of those interviewed were in agreement that the project could have a valuable impact on the growing problem of orphans, it was felt that initial teething problems, such as the complexity of the data collection forms, would not have occurred if the design of the project had been more participatory in nature.

In line with UNICEF's new human rights approach to programming, it is believed that real capacity building can only take place when there has been acceptance of human rights and responsibilities as duty bearers. In order to acquaint key Government partners, UNICEF staff and NGOs with the basic concepts of human rights and how to develop programming approaches, UNICEF organised a workshop early in 2000 on Human Rights Approach to Programming (HRAP). The first step towards the realisation and enjoyment of human rights for the individual is acceptance of responsibility to carry out their duty. Such acceptance should be expressed in the conduct and roles of the duty bearers. There is no doubt that one of the most important indicators of a human rights approach to programming is the concept of accountability. It therefore follows that the development of institutional structures within the DCD that are effective, participatory and accountable will be key to the strengthening of institutional capacity.
1.5 ECD National Coordinator

The role of the ECD National Coordinator in the DCD is crucial in the overall development of ECD policy and implementation strategies. Situated within the MWACW her role includes:

*liasing with the ECD Coordinators in the MBEC (MBESC) and the NGO ECD Coordinator, to ensure coordination among those providing ECD services* (National ECD Policy, 1996:44)

For various reasons, the working relationships between the three ECD National Coordinators is not perceived as having been optimised during the last year. This is said to be reflected in several cancelled meetings and generally in poor communications. This contrasts greatly with the active roles the National Coordinators played following the creation of their positions in 1996. At that point they were commissioned by the National ECD Committee to form a working group, which would then guide and inform the Committee. This role has since been abandoned, and with that, it seems an opportunity was lost to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the National ECD Committee. The ECD Coordinator within the DCD is further charged with heading the secretariat for the National ECD Committee, which involves the setting of the agenda and informing members in advance of dates and times.

1.6 National ECD Committee

At its inception in April 1996, the National ECD Committee was mandated to become a National Directorate level decision-making body for ECD. Its role, as defined by the National ECD Policy, was to include a variety of activities from issuing guidelines for standardisation and curriculum development, to making amendments to policy. Yet, in retrospect, it can be said that only some of these duties have been undertaken. Reasons for this are perceived to vary from a lack of participation by some committee members (GRN/UNICEF Progress Report, 1997:73) to a lack of organisational skills and political will to use the Committee as a platform for improving ECD services for the benefit of all Namibian children. The high turnover of members, as well as different people arriving each time to represent their line Ministry, does not lend itself to effectiveness or continuity.

The GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation 1997-2001 clearly aimed at supporting the institutional development of the National ECD Committee through the development of position papers, international literature and ideas associated with the further development and expansion of the ECD programme. The project was also willing to support study tours and international exchanges to expose the membership of the Committee to ECD activities that are implemented elsewhere in southern Africa. (GRN/UNICEF Programme Plan of Operations, 1997:20).

Attempts have been made to unify and mobilise the National ECD Committee. In 1999 a one-day consultative workshop was held in an attempt to build the capacity of the committee and mobilise it around its duties of coordination and collaboration on ECD issues. It also aimed at sharing information on the draft of the ECD Trust Fund. The fruits of this one-off capacity building effort were to be seen in commitment to attend the four quarterly meetings that took place in 1999. During this time the members successfully completed the final draft of the ECD Trust Deed. However, for various reasons, in 2000 only two meetings of the National ECD Committee took place.

The multi-sectoral composition of the National ECD Committee has not always been reflected in member attendance and commitment. For some members, mere attendance at sporadic meetings is seen as being sufficient to fulfil their role as duty bearers. The Draft Strategy of the new GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation 2002-2005, summarises this lack of commitment:

*The National ECD Committee has so far only been marginally successful in creating commitment of other sectors other than those of community development and basic education* (Draft Strategy GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation 2002-2005:56)

In particular, it is noticeable that the health sector has not been fully represented at the meetings. The person sent to represent the MOHSS actually represents the Social Service Directorate.

While the National ECD Committee may not have enjoyed major success thus far, cognisance needs to be given to the fact that the Committee could and must play an important role in the coordination of a multi-media campaign and general advocacy on the ‘best interests’ and ‘first call’ for children. Commitment to a more structured plan of capacity building is perceived as being necessary to assist the
National ECD Committee in holding regular meetings with a meaningful agenda and follow-up. Strategies by which this can be achieved such a longstanding Committee will need to be carefully thought out.

1.7 Decentralisation and Regional Capacity Strengthening

The on-going process of decentralisation within the GRN has, to some degree, justified and provided the impetus for the re-focusing of UNICEF’s ECD programme and strategies. The Regional Development Committees, under the authority of the Chief Executives, will be responsible for the prioritising of regional needs and expenditures. The DCD, under the leadership of the CCLOs, will continue to function as before with responsibility for the implementation of ECD initiatives to be supervised and monitored by the CLOS and CAs at constituency and community level. The CCLOs have been encouraged to establish regional ECD Committees. Ideally these should be cross-sectoral in nature, involving personnel from health, education and other line ministries. However, in reality there are very few regional ECD committees in existence and those that do exist are only just beginning to grasp the meaning of their duties.

The CCLOs have recently been tasked with developing regional training plans. This has, until now, been centralised as the responsibility of the Top-level Trainers from the MWACW and MBESC. A consensual decision made at the ECD Annual suggested that comprehensive training plans from the regions should now be submitted to UNICEF and to the respective regional ECD Committees who will consider the proposals for funding. Cognisance was also given to regional NGOs who have been effectively assisting in the training of ECD workers. This new strategy initially caused some confusion among CCLOs, who have not been responsible for training of ECD workers and perhaps lack the capacity and confidence to integrate this aspect of ECD into their work plans. Technical assistance from the national level, UNICEF included, was considered to be necessary to assist regional staff in this role transition. However, following discussions between the MWACW, MBESC and UNICEF, this decision has more recently been reversed and the overall responsibility for training schedules and budgets will remain within the MBESC at central level.

The extent to which decentralisation will prove to be a real window of opportunity for the implementation of the ECD Programmes objectives, has yet to be seen. Interviews with key informants in several regions indicate that the regional DCD offices are experiencing some level of integration problems. An increase in workload has not been met with an increase in staff numbers. Hardap Region, for instance, struggles with a staff of four CAs, one of whom has been acting CCLO for the last eighteen months. CLOs in the regions were found eager to point out that ECD is only one part of their overall regional activities. Other activities include income-generating projects, capacity building, and community mobilisation which are all perceived as being equal to, if not more important than, ECD activities.

When cognisance is not taken of this shortage in capacity at the regional level, national plans to decentralise roles and responsibilities are seen to fall flat. This in turn, can be misinterpreted as resistance to new ideas, or at best apathy. In some regions, there is evidence that new roles, even as simple as having to spend a small budget on materials for ECD facilities, can become a major issue for some staff. Yet, a few words of technical advice from staff at the national level was seen to put the situation in perspective and led to a positive outcome. The MTR document (1999) stipulated that ‘suitable conditions’ should be provided for partners in capacity building programmes in order for them to perform. To be effective these should include a fair workload, a clear distribution of responsibilities, an agreed work plan, adequate supervision as well as operational funds to cover recurrent costs including transport. Recent observations made in the regions, merely confirm that capacity building efforts have neglected important aspects within middle tier management. These gaps in capacity are still remain and clearly, still need to be addressed.

1.8 Conclusions

An analysis of the efforts to build capacity and strengthen institutional development within the MWACW at the national and regional levels gives much food for thought and leads to a clear set of conclusions and recommendations.

Programmes that are designed and implemented without considering the current human and organisational capacity levels are not sustainable. Without proper capacity assessments, assumptions
are made as to the level of understanding and capacity available to carry out important initiatives. This oversight in the capacity strengthening of the MWACW, has meant that programme reorientation has been necessary. Related to this, and equally important, is the fostering of participation at the design and planning stages of individual programmes and projects. There is evidence to suggest that levels of participation were not optimised and this may well reflect a lack of confidence in current and past capacity levels.

Decentralisation is clearly not in itself a panacea and it comes with no implicit magic formula for mitigating the shortcomings of previous efforts made at the national level. The channels of intervention may have changed, but the structures, with all their inherent constraints, still exist. Until recently ECD has been the ‘poor sister’ within the DCD, tagged on to community development with very little funding being given to its development and support. Low staffing levels in the regions go some way to explain why some ECD objectives are not being met. Lack of training and information has resulted in low levels of commitment and ownership. Regional Councils, with their own agendas and limited capacity, often have a narrow perception of ECD and lack information about ECD from a multi-sectoral and human rights perspective. Regional and Constituency level ECD Committees remain the exception rather than the rule. Technical assistance is blatantly lacking in some regions and confusion abounds over some issues.

On the other hand, decentralisation provides the GRN/UNICEF programme with a new window of opportunity. The effectiveness of this more direct approach to ECD programming will depend on timely capacity assessments within the present regional institutional structures, identification of regional ECD priorities through participatory consultation with all stakeholders leading to the development of integrated, multi-sectoral and comprehensive regional ECD plans and budgets. In reality, decentralisation provides, at best, an opportunity for UNICEF and its partners, to work ‘closer to the fire’. This will, undoubtedly, allow for more direct input, not only at a financial level, but also in terms of regional planning and capacity building.

No matter how much primacy GRN/UNICEF gives to ECD, unless it has effective and accountable structures to work through at the national and regional level, the programme will always run on half measures and may never reach its full potential. In the new GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation (2002-2005), the MWACW at the national and regional level will face new challenges in reconciling ECD policies and budgets within a strategic approach that takes a holistic view of children’s rights through multi-sectoral childcare services.

1.9 Recommendations

- Future plans to integrate capacity building into ECD programmes, whether process or goal oriented, should be based on thorough capacity assessments. Assessments should be made using an appropriate capacity building framework. UNICEF should ensure that assessments of organisational and human capacity are written into the planning documents and become an integrated part of the logical framework, giving clear measurable indicators for use in monitoring and evaluation of all ECD initiatives.

- A major assessment of institutional capacity and organisational structures within the DCD at the national level should be facilitated with consent from the MWACW. This would allow for a redefining of roles and responsibilities following its integration into a new Ministry and in the light of the changes that are taking place as a result of decentralisation. Such an assessment would need to be sensitively facilitated preferably by an objective party such as ACORD or !NARA, both of which have considerable experience in the area of participatory institutional assessment and development.

- A possible outcome of an internal capacity assessment of the DCD could well be the confirmation of the need to intensify technical assistance within the DCD. If so, it is recommended that this should take the form of a recruited Technical Adviser, possibly a volunteer from an international volunteer programme, who has relevant experience in both ECD and management. A sample costing of a volunteer recruited by the Windhoek based British Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO) for a period of two years is given below in Table 1.1. Based on the concept of professional mentoring, the adviser would work within a specified capacity building framework, with clear objectives and an work plan to be carried out within a given timeframe. The overall objective would be to increase the effectiveness of the DCD at the national level in terms of planning, implementation and coordination of the various
ECD initiatives. This short-term intensive mentoring should be seen as being complementary to the technical assistance already offered by the UNICEF ECD Assistant Project Officer.

**Table 1.1 Costing of a Volunteer as Technical Assistant in ECD Issues for the MWACW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs Paid by Receiving Partner</th>
<th>Costs Paid by VSO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Allowance (N$ 2,500)</td>
<td>Return Airfares to Home-base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Costs (N$ 300)</td>
<td>Training and Induction Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Insurances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A reassessment of regional DCD staffing needs, in terms of capacity and numbers, should take place as soon as possible. Where budgets allow for it, a recruitment drive should be undertaken to increase staffing levels and capacity. Alternative sources for staff suitable as community activists, could be sought in training institutions such as !NARA, which holds a list of individuals in the regions, who have been through diploma courses in participatory methodologies and are now available for work in the area of community development.

- More formal, but effective channels of communication should be established between UNICEF and the MWACW (Intervention 9: Technical and Administrative Support). These need to be robust enough to withstand changes in personnel and roles in both institutions. Sensitivity to the dynamics involved in the donor/recipient relationship should be actively fostered in order to avoid underlying tensions that can compromise progress.

- A review of the National ECD structures should be undertaken with special attention being paid to the structures as set out in the organogram (Annex 1.1 National ECD Structure). In particular, the roles and responsibilities of the three ECD Coordinators as key actors should be redefined. The multi-sectoral nature of the ECD Policy should be reinforced through the recruitment of a fourth ECD Coordinator, this time from the MOHSS. Such a move towards strengthening linkages between health and ECD, would do much to reinforce UNICEF’s multi-sectoral approach to ECD in the new Programme of Cooperation (2002-2005). This multi-sectoral team of four ECD Coordinators could then be re-commissioned by the National ECD Committee to form a taskforce or working group, which could provide highly structured and relevant inputs into the Committee meetings. This proactive approach should also help to revitalise the role and responsibilities of the National ECD Committee.

- UNICEF’s overall plan to channel funding to decentralised structures needs to be tailored to the real capacity of individual regions. A capacity assessment of selected regional structures, in relation to the implementation of ECD, should be carried out as soon as possible. This assessment should be followed up with the correct level of technical assistance needed if systems are to be put in place, which allow for transparent administration of those resources. The basis for this would be the regional ECD plan of action drawn-up by the regional ECD Committee.

- A feasibility study of the roles and responsibilities of Regional ECD Committees should be carried out with special attention being given to regions, which have already established them at the Regional, Constituency and village level. The study should take into consideration the projected needs in terms of management and technical knowledge of the Regional ECD Committee as a multi-sectoral body, which will play a crucial role in the coordination of current and ECD initiatives. It could examine the possibility of using community mobilisers who were trained, through a UNICEF education initiative, to work with School Board members to train ECD Committee members. Guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of ECD committees at the various levels could be a positive and tangible output of this study. Where possible, case studies should be used to illustrate the opportunities and constraints of regional committees. These guidelines could be very useful in stimulating interest in other regions to create their own appropriate structures.

- Regular joint programme monitoring and assessment exercises should be written into the programme document. Less formal monitoring should also be scheduled to take place at regular intervals in the project cycle, particularly where pilot projects are concerned. While an annual assessment, within the context of the UNICEF ECD Annual Review is necessary, it should be a
structured event rather than a ‘checking-off’ exercise. The ‘review’ element should be emphasised and more time spent on participatory discussion of overall strategies and alternative ways of achieving the programme’s objectives.
INTERVENTION 2:

COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS

EVALUATION REPORT

Bernard van Leer Foundation / UNICEF

Prepared by:
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March 2001
INTERVENTION 2:

COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS

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2.1 Introduction and Background

Before 1990, the provision of government early childhood services had been limited to pre-primary schools, which reached only 1.7% of the eligible population. After Independence the new government continued to support pre-primary schools until the end of 1993 when the cost of financing and maintaining the system proved too much for the Ministry of Education. When the GRN closed its last pre-primary school in 1994, it began instituting a policy to devolve responsibility for early childhood development to communities.

This reorientation of the ECD strategy was clearly reflected in the National ECD Policy document (1996), which served to highlight the increasing focus on the development of community-based programmes. The need for ECD programmes to be developed in collaboration with the community led to the innovative recommendation of building local capacity within the communities to:

identify needs and seek solutions; create ownership and accountability; encourage unity and strength within the community; enhance the probability that decisions will be implemented and that programmes will be maintained once initial outside support is withdrawn; and empower people to make decisions in relation to all aspects of their lives (GRN: 1996:29)

It was clear that this new approach required reorientation of the GRN/UNICEF ECD programme focus from childcare centre management to management of a wider community-based childcare and development programme.

By 1998 the GRN had begun to embrace the idea of direct parental interventions as the most cost-effective approach to reaching the majority of young children in the 0-6 years age group through Family Support initiatives. The challenge remained on how to systematise the approach and to widen to capture the whole spectrum of issues at community and household level that affect children (UNICEF 1998:15).

This section of the evaluation is concerned with the processes through which the GRN and UNICEF responded to this challenge of capturing the needs of communities relating to ECD issues, namely through the introduction of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRAs) and Community Action Plans (CAPs).

2.2 Evaluation Objectives

The overall objective of this evaluation is to examine the context in which the Community Action Plans were developed and to determine to what degree to they have been implemented. More specifically, it has asked the question: To what degree did the PRAs/CAPS enabled communities to identify needs and seek solutions; create ownership and accountability; encourage unity and strength within the community; in relation to ECD and other aspects of their lives?

2.3 Methodology

The methodology employed for the evaluation of the CAPs was in part a desk review of reports documenting the events and outcomes of these initiatives. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with government officials at central and regional level, with community leaders and members, as well as staff from the NGO !Nara, were very important sources of data collection. A review of the broader literature on PRA/CAPS and community participation led to the development of an appropriate evaluation framework. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the analysis.

2.4 Literature Review

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) creates a setting in which community and outside groups share goals and agree on actions and inputs to meet common needs. It helps communities to mobilise their human resources, to define problems, consider previous successes and failures, evaluate local capacity, prioritise opportunities and prepare a systematic and site-specific plan of action. It stresses process and participation but avoids time-bound and pre-determined agendas.
A Community Action Plan (CAP) is a starting point for a community to demonstrate its commitment to adopting and implementing actions that will address their needs. In fact, the CAPs are the most concrete output of the entire PRA exercise. It serves a variety of purposes in that it not only records of the communities priorities and potential but also forms the basis of for future sustainable development planning.

The three pillars of PRA in practice are said to be:

- Methods
- Sharing
- Behaviour and attitudes

The basket of tools and techniques which constitute the PRA methods enable communities to do more of the investigation, mapping, modelling, diagramming, ranking analysis, presentation and planning themselves. PRA promotes the visual sharing of a map, model or diagram to allow for public discussion and, if needs be, alteration. Triangulation and cross-checking are continually taking place. The information is visible and public, owned and verified by the community themselves.

While the methods are important in enabling the participants to express themselves, the methods in themselves are not enough. None of the methods will work effectively if the approach is wrong. The approach depends on the attitude and behaviour of the outsider and their ability to facilitate the participation of the whole community. The key to facilitating real participation is rapport. All too often the attitudes and behaviour, such as patience, humility and respect for the community by the outsiders, that are needed for good rapport, are missing (Lelo, 1995:4).

2.5 A Framework for Evaluation

The following premises on the PRA/CAPs process were drawn from the literature and used to inform the analysis, conclusions and recommendations. An intervention that claims to use PRA/CAPS should be:

- Process orientated, not goal orientated
- Non-directive with open-ended outcomes
- Promoting 'ownership' by enhancing community analysis and prioritisation of the issues at stake
- As much about attitudes and behaviour as it is about tools and techniques

2.6 Participatory Rural Appraisal & Community Action Plans

In 1996, the National ECD Policy stressed the need for ECD programmes to be developed in collaboration with the community in order to promote ownership. Just how this strategy was to be implemented was left open to interpretation. The MRLGH and UNICEF promptly took up this challenge.

Focusing on marginalized communities, the programme began to identify potential communities and planned to carry out needs assessment surveys. During visits to the regions the CCLOs were contacted and they organised meetings with the Governors and other regional officials and community members. A proposal for a needs assessment survey, using participatory research methodologies, was presented in detail.

The PRAs were said to have a dual purpose:

- To inform the development of more appropriate parenting initiatives, and
- To develop Community Action Plans for implementation in selected marginalised communities

More specifically, the PRAs were meant to assist the CLOs and CAs to identify specific needs of parents and communities and development parental involvement in ECD strategies.

Using the expertise of the Namibian based NGO INARA, 11 national trainers from 8 regions, received training in Participatory Rural Appraisal in November 1996. As part of their training they conducted a PRA exercise in Rehoboth, Hardap region.
Following the training, the Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) returned to their respective regions. They then became the driving force behind the implementation of a series of Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs), which took place between May-October 1997 among eighteen communities, in nine regions.

The PRAs were planned to take place in three stages:

1. Site selection of two communities in each region visits was followed by pre-testing and information gathering over a period of 2-3 days with the assistance from the !Nara facilitators. The data collected was taken away and summarised by the !NARA team member.
2. The teams were to return to the communities and present the results of the PRAs. The communities were then supposed to plan strategies to address their specific needs in ECD and develop Community Action Plans (CAP).
3. The communities were to implement the plan of action (CAPs) with support from the CAs and CLOs, NGOs and CBOs.

A review of the documentation and comments from key informants illustrate that although eighteen PRAs were carried out, the quality of the PRAs varied enormously. The development of Community Action Plans (CAPs), took place a considerably long time after the initial original PRAs and, in most cases, without the guidance of a !NARA facilitator.

2.7 Analysis

Evidence suggests that the lack of success experienced in implementing the CAPs at the regional level may be directly correlated with the less than satisfactory way in which the CAPs were drawn up as part of the PRA process. The general sense of dissatisfaction expressed by various stakeholders has been examined in the light of the present evaluation framework and comments made.

- PRA/CAPS is process orientated exercise, not goal orientated

The PRAs took place within a tight but fragmented timeframe. The initial PRAs lasted only 2-3 days. Judging from the number of exercises carried out, this seems rather rushed. The communities themselves were sometimes reluctant to participate and saw it as a ‘disturbance’, illustrating that that the purpose of the exercise had not been fully explained during the preparation stage.

The CAPs, which should have been a natural extension of the PRAs, became a completely separate exercise carried out in the communities anything from a year to eighteen months later. Not only were the facilitating teams not the same as the PRA teams but also many of the communities had changed. In at least one case, in a peri-urban squatter community, the whole community is said to have changed. Ownership of the PRA outcomes was, understandably, not easy to promote.

The teams of CLOs were trained in how to facilitate the development of the CAPs but many of them admitted to feeling less than confident about the exercise. They were told to spend half a day revisiting the results from the PRAs which were over a year old and the second half of the day facilitating the CAPS. Why the whole process had not been completed during the first stage is not clear. Without the CAPS the PRAs had no concrete outcomes.

- PRA/CAPs is a non-directive exercise with open-ended outcomes

It is felt strongly felt by some that the whole PRA process has not been met with an open agenda. The CAP part of the PRAs was clearly carried out with the purpose of directing the communities to choose from a prescribed list of ECD options. This list was drawn-up by a team consisting of representatives from the MRLGH, UNICEF and !Nara and included the following:

- Toy-making
- Constructing Playgrounds
- Increasing Father’s Involvement
- Children’s Activities
- Stories and Singing
- Training for Kindergarten Teachers
- Financial Management

Difficulties were experienced by the facilitators in matching the ‘real’ needs of the communities with the ECD list.
It was not clear why the time consuming and labour intensive process of PRA took place at all when there seems to have been a set agenda for the kinds of ECD initiatives that were to be promoted. Furthermore, the raising of expectations within the community, when they are not in a position to address them with appropriate solutions, is believed to have put the CLOs in an awkward position and undermined their credibility in the community.

- **PRA/CAPs exercises enhance ‘ownership’ by promoting community analysis and prioritisation of the issues at stake.**

A review of the eighteen PRAs/CAPs shows that while local knowledge was generated in participatory ways, the presentation, analysis and prioritisation of the findings was not fully carried out by the community members themselves. The communities did ‘own’ the information until it was taken away from them to be summarised. This type of extractive methodology is contradictory to PRA philosophy and leans more toward conventional, dis-empowering research methods. At best, what took place was more in line with Rapid Rural Appraisal methods (RRA), a forerunner of PRA. While the neatly packaged PRA summaries made the work of the ‘outsiders’ a lot easier when they returned to do the community action plans, the initial sense of ownership was lost. The communities lost their grip even further on the ‘ownership’ of the process when they were presented with a prepared list of outcomes for the CAPs. It is hardly surprising that when it came to the implementation of the CAPs levels of enthusiasm and ownership have been remarkably low and not only from the communities’ side but also from the side of the CLOs and CAs.

- **PRA/CAPs is about attitudes and behaviour as much as it is about tools and techniques**

There is no doubt that the communities who took part in the PRA exercises were exposed to a potentially empowering experience, which affirmed the value of local knowledge and encouraged them to apply critical analysis and arrive at their own solutions. For the first time they were recognised. The experience is also said to have been an enlightening experience for the CLOs. Some of them admitted to having realised for the first time the sort of problems that the communities were enduring. They had gained a new respect for community members. Others felt that learning to facilitate using a participatory approach to information gathering had given them a new entry point into the community.

Implementation of the CAPs has proved to be very difficult. Where plans were implemented in communities, it was often done in a very haphazard way. During the CAPs exercise, activities were planned in some detail. Dates were set and responsible agents were named and recorded, giving the communities and other stakeholders a sense of achievement. Yet, in reality very few of the activities in these joint work plans were actually carried out on time and most not at all.

**Table 2.1 Summary of Activities Prioritised in the CAPs Compared with Activities Implemented**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities Prioritised in the CAPs</th>
<th>Implemented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECD Training for Kindergarten Workers</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toy making Workshops</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds Constructed</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid Workshops</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition and Health Workshop</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers’ Involvement Workshop</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIP Toilets Constructed</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Water Supply</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Drugs Abuse Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Generating Activities</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training in Children’s Rights</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building of a School</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Security against Theft</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More specifically, Table 2.2 illustrates the PRA/CAPs process as it took place over a period of almost four years in one particular community, Satco in Karas Region.

Table 2.2 Analysis of the PRA Process: Satco, Karas Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Fees</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Problems</td>
<td>Financial Administration and Management</td>
<td>Workshop (1 week) in April 1998</td>
<td>CCLO, CLO</td>
<td>Not Realised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance of School</td>
<td>Training for ECD Worker</td>
<td>Attend 6 weeks ECD Training Course</td>
<td>CCLO, CLO</td>
<td>1 teacher trained &amp; 1 awaiting training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage Pregnancy</td>
<td>Fathers’ Involvement in ECD</td>
<td>Workshop for ECD Committee, July 1998</td>
<td>CLO &amp; UNICEF</td>
<td>Not Realised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Abuse</td>
<td>Stories and Music</td>
<td>Workshop (2.5 Days) for 5 women &amp; 5 men</td>
<td>Development Committee</td>
<td>Not Realised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Recreation</td>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>Workshop (2.5 Days) for 5 women &amp; 5 men, June 1998</td>
<td>Community members &amp; UNICEF</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian Influences</td>
<td>Toy-Making</td>
<td>Toy-making Workshop with the whole Community, March 1998</td>
<td>CCLO, CLOs</td>
<td>Completed in 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Self-Confidence</td>
<td>Establish ECD Committee</td>
<td>Form a new multi-sectoral ECD Committee</td>
<td>Old ECD Committee</td>
<td>Not Realised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A review of Table 2.2 shows that the activities that actually took place, quite naturally, reflect the 'shopping list' of ECD related choices that the team facilitating the CAPs had offered the community, and not the reality of the communities own priorities as expressed during the PRA exercises. Satco was selected as a fairly positive example and because it went on to have the most success in the Family Visitors programme, which was one of the major outcome of the whole PRA exercise. Other communities, which did not enjoy as much success in the PRA/CAPs, did not go on to benefit from the Family Visitors programme. With such a small sample of communities it is not possible to establish a direct correlation.

2.8 Conclusions

The intrinsic value of the PRA/CAPs experience for the eighteen communities was, on the whole, positive. Several members of the national and regional DCD staff expressed their satisfaction with the initial PRA training and admitted that they still used some of the techniques while working with the communities. However, they did not feel that they had been adequately prepared to develop the CAPs with the communities. Some felt it was not realistic to return to the communities, as much as a year later, and to produce a 'shopping list' of ECD related intervention choices. Some felt they had done more damage than good in the communities that expressed disappointment at the outcomes of the PRA exercises.

It can be concluded then that several factors contributed to the shortfall in the effectiveness of the PRAs themselves as well as the development and implementation of the CAPs. An attempt to focus the needs
of the community within a narrow range of ECD issues, resulted in an imposition of a pre-determined ECD agenda. This clearly undermined the sense of value and ownership of the CAPs by the communities. This perspective certainly goes some way to explain why the implementation of the CAPs has not been fully successful. Other reasons why the CAPs have not reached their original objectives, are related to the logistical problems experienced by the CLOs and CAs in terms of lack of capacity, funding and transport.

2.9 Recommendations

- Future PRAs and CAPs, that are carried out to determine ECD needs in communities, should be multi-sectoral in approach. The team of facilitators should reflect a holistic approach to community development including ECD, health, education and even stakeholders who have an interest in income generating activities. This approach will ensure that communities are able to determine all their needs and solutions without having to bury them again and being left to feel frustrated and dissatisfied.

- Expectations of regional capacity to implement community action plans should be realistic. Where planning and expectations are not in line with the reality of human and material resources available, there will always be a fall short in the expected outcomes. Inevitably, this will result in frustration at all levels and among all stakeholders.

- Communities and DCD staff should be further sensitised on ECD issues before embarking on any new initiatives. A campaign to raise awareness of the importance of ECD, especially in terms of children’s rights should be undertaken, as this would pre-empt any resistance to seeing ECD issues as a priority. Such a campaign, whether in preparation for future PRAs, Family Visitors or other programmes, needs to be well planned and project ECD initiatives as an integrated part of the overall community development plan.

- Further training in PRA approaches to community development should be offered to all CAs and CLOs. With the in-country availability of experienced !NARA and ACORD staff, there are ample opportunities to provide more training for CLOs and CAs who wish to build on earlier PRA training. This could be done as group training or as individuals. CLOs and CAs should be encouraged to participate in one of the established !NARA courses which cover PRA, Gender and Social Exclusion issues. These in-service capacity building programmes should be selected to build on the ACORD facilitated training programme that the some CLOs will participate in during the course of 2001.
INTERVENTION 3:

FAMILY SUPPORT STRATEGIES

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3.1 Introduction and Background

Since Independence in 1990, UNICEF has, through its ongoing Programmes of Cooperation with the GRN, assisted the Government in realising a number of ECD objectives and goals. In 1992, a national conference on ECD was held in Windhoek. This conference resulted in the formation of a multi-sectoral National ECD Committee. In 1995 this committee developed a national policy document on early childhood development. Upheld as being one of the most innovative ECD policies in Africa, this policy forms the basis for the early childhood development programmes throughout the country.

The National ECD Policy clearly states that the goal of developing appropriate ECD programmes is to ensure that community-based, sustainable early childhood programmes are accessible to all young children and their families. The policy places particular emphasis on ECD programmes in rural areas and for children living in difficult circumstances. The achievement of this goal is based on certain assumptions. The first assumption clearly places the primary responsibility for the support of a child’s healthy growth and development with the family. The second recognises the Government’s role, in partnership with communities, the private sector and NGOs, to assist families with the support they need to carry out their responsibilities.

Implementation strategies of the policy suggest that new community-based initiatives should be built on the strengths of what already exists, including positive traditional child-rearing practices. Formal centre-based programmes were not to be seen as an exclusive strategy for ECD implementation. The policy explicitly suggests that alternative and complementary approaches should be tested, fostered and embraced.

This license to actively promote diversity and encourage alternative approaches with ECD was, at the time, further reflected in the GRN’s increasing focus on the development of community-based programmes. These would, ideally, be built on local capacity to identify needs and seek solutions; create ownership and accountability, encourage unity and participation within the community while empowering people to make decisions in relation to all aspects of their lives and ensure sustainability of the programmes once outside support is withdrawn.

This new community-based focus led directly to the development of an appropriate Family Support programme. Early in 1997, UNICEF supported the MRLGH to undertake 18 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRAs) throughout Namibia. The PRAs specifically looked at a range of ECD issues and child-rearing practices in marginalized communities and the needs of families in these target areas (Intervention 2: Community Action Plans). Community Action Plans, with a focus on ECD activities, were then drawn up. Finally, eight communities in four regions were selected as pilot areas for direct parental support interventions, based on information from the PRAs and in conjunction with the Community Action Plans.

In a joint collaboration, the GRN and UNICEF began to design a pilot intervention, which would test the use of community-based Family Visitors as a strategy to promote home-based education through direct parental involvement in order to reach 0-6 years old children, especially those living in marginalized communities. This document was completed by December 1998 (Yates, 1998) and the Family Visitors (FVs) programme was born.

The overall goals of the FVs project were said to be to strengthen the self-confidence of parents and to empower them with the knowledge and skills that will enhance their capacity to foster physical, mental, social and emotional development in young children.

By early 1999, plans were underway for the mobilisation of selected communities as well as for the selection and training of Family Visitors (FVs). Evidence from reports suggests that the whole focus of the project, at this point, seems to have been on the preparation of the FVs for their role in the project. Although it had been clearly spelt out (Yates, 1998), little attempt, beyond informing the Chief Community Liaison Officers and the National Trainers, was made to set up sustainable supervisory and monitoring systems at the regional level. This ‘oversight’ was to have important repercussions for the whole project.

The 16 FVs completed 5 weeks of residential training in Windhoek. Notably, no CAs or CLOs attended any of these training sessions. Even the follow-up visits between the training sessions were all initiated and carried out by staff at the national level. The course was facilitated by the Top Level Trainers from...
MRLGH and MBEC, using themes adapted from the ECD Training Manual, plus additional ones. These themes included:

- Self-awareness and communication
- Early childhood development
- Understanding families
- Working with communities
- Health and nutrition
- Record keeping and planning
- Monitoring and evaluation

At the end of each training session each participant received N$100. They were each given a pair of shoes, an umbrella, a uniform and a kitbag containing stationary materials. After the final training session in September 1999, the FVs returned to their respective communities to begin their work.

3.2 Evaluation Objectives

The overall objective of this evaluation was to review the process and outcomes of the FVs pilot programme. More specifically, the evaluation examined the impact that the FVs have had on the attitudes, behaviour and practices of parents and caregivers of young children.

3.3 Methodology

In order to evaluate the multidimensional aspects of the FVs programme, it was considered necessary to employ a variety of evaluation tools and methods. These included a desk review of a wide range of reports and documents retrieved from a variety of stakeholders at the national and regional levels. In order to evaluate the impact of the FVs programme at the community level the following target groups were selected: communities, families, FVs as well as selected CLOs and CAs at the national and regional level. Semi-structured questionnaires were designed for interviews with the CLOs and CAs with a separate one for the FVs. Focus group discussions, using participatory exercises, were designed for use with families and communities.

Discussions about the nature of the external evaluation and its objectives within the DCD at the MWACW, led to the conclusion that an internal evaluation of the FVs programme by the Ministry was well overdue. At this point a joint decision was made between UNICEF and the consultant to assist the DCD with designing their own internal evaluation as a meaningful capacity building exercise. While assistance was given with the design of the questionnaires and transport to the evaluation sites was shared, great efforts were made to ensure that the present evaluation was carried out independently. Due to this capacity building element, the evaluation process was slowed down somewhat. However, the investment of time was considered well worthwhile and appreciation from the staff of the MWACW was clear.

There were certain limitations to this evaluation. Time and transport constraints meant that only six out of eight pilot communities were visited. However, efforts were made to ensure that all of the regions were represented. Field trips were made to Satco and Snyfontein in Karas Region, Gibeon and Rehoboth in Hardap Region, Hainyeko in Khomas Region and Donkerbos in Omaheke Region. Community profiles are included in the text in order to demonstrate the enormous diversity between the different communities in which the FVs worked.

A review of relevant literature and revisiting the original programme objectives, helped to develop a framework for analysis of the primary data collected during field trips. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn from this analysis.

3.4 Literature Review

Much of the literature on alternative community-based approaches to ECD addresses the reality that many families can no longer adequately care for their children. The break-down of traditional safety mechanisms, such as the extended family, means they are no longer able to provide for the basic well-being of their children. Instead, they need to rely on other actors and agents in the community to assist
them. Traditionally, neighbours and friends were able to offer advice and help, but even this is no longer adequate. In such instances, the wider resources of various agents in the community and beyond are required. In particular the literature identifies the lack of parental knowledge, skills competence and awareness of their responsibilities with regard to ECD (Shaeeffer, 1995:4). Family support programmes are seen to provide an alternative strategy which has the potential to return benefits to the community as well as to families and their children.

A review of the literature on family support programmes revealed that while the concept of home visiting is not new, home-visiting that focuses specifically on ECD is a relatively innovative approach. Home-visiting, in various forms, has long been supported by governments and NGOs in conjunction with extension programmes of health and social work in rural communities. While the concept may be much the same, the literature reveals that programme goals and approaches have changed radically. In the past, home-visiting was often a form of external inspection or simply a channel for handing out food, clothing or information. The new family visiting model relies on community members working as volunteers. Their role is to help families build up confidence in their abilities as parents and work in partnership with the parents without patronising them. Family visitors should start with the assumption that parents not only care about their children, but are also aware of their own limitations to provide for them. Programme goals of this type of home-visiting are said to include: increased knowledge, changed attitudes, behaviour adaptation, increased self-confidence and increased parent-child interaction (Myers, 1989:3).

The literature emphasises the difference between ECD centre-based programmes and home-visiting programmes. While centre-based programmes place major responsibility for a child’s care and development with an institution outside the home and family, home-based programmes, such as family visitors, assign the primary responsibility for a child’s care and development to the family. These types of family support programmes focus on the home and assume that the child’s growth and development can be strengthened by providing some form of education and support to family members. The main purpose of such programmes is said to strengthen the self-confidence of parents and empower them with the knowledge and skills that will enhance their own ability to foster the physical, mental, social and emotional development in their child. To be effective, this kind of parenting education must recognise and support ‘common wisdom’ and those local practices that foster a child’s healthy growth and development (Landers & Meyers, 1989:1).

The advantages and disadvantages or family visiting programmes are discussed at length. A summary of both as drawn from the literature is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supports the position of parents</td>
<td>The ‘expert’ undermines parental authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforces existing strengths and cultural practices</td>
<td>Imposes ‘outside’ knowledge rather than recognising good local practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates private family problem solving</td>
<td>Logistics can make supervision very difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost saving</td>
<td>Labour intensive approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one interaction</td>
<td>Relies on the ‘good-will’ of volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable improvements</td>
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</table>

Although there are obvious advantages of family support programmes, the literature also points out that they should not be viewed as a low cost panacea. Instead, family visiting should be viewed as one, albeit important, strategy in the larger complementary programme designed to improve the physical, mental and socio-emotional well-being of the child.

While many programmes have been successful in transmitting knowledge about ECD, it is clear that increasing the individual’s knowledge-base is not sufficient to bring desired behaviour change. In addition to transferring knowledge, programmes should provide the interpersonal contacts and organisational structures needed to reinforce and sustain changes in attitudes and behaviours.
3.5 Community Profiles

3.5.1 Hardap Region

Gibeon, situated 50 kilometres south of Mariental, is a relatively well-established settlement community with a small number of shops, a clinic, several primary schools and a secondary school. There are at least three formal ECD facilities. Two of these are church-based and the other is a community-based initiative. There are plans, via the Catholic Church, for a fourth kindergarten. There is also a range of informal home-based ECD facilities, although none of these are registered as members on the present database of the NEDC NGO Association.

Despite having a reasonably well-developed infrastructure, development in the community is hindered by high unemployment resulting in patterns of migration to Mariental and Windhoek by the economically active section of the community. The consequences of this are seen in the large number of female-headed households and the increasing number of households where grandparents have been left to care for young children.

The Community Activist (CA), is based in the community. This provided an ideal situation for a FVs project as support structures were readily available. However, the CA did not receive any training or information about the FVs programme and therefore never really took responsibility for supervision and support of the two FVs in Gibeon.

After an enthusiastic start made by the two FVs, their enthusiasm began to wane and eventually both resigned. One of them took employment outside of the community and the other decided that the FVs role did not combine well with her commitment to the local kindergarten where she worked in the mornings. During the 18 months that she worked as a FV, she has visited 10 homes on a regular basis in the afternoons. As the CA did not visit her, she had to walk to the Government Offices, often with her two young children, to report to him. In two homes she identified two cases of hearing and speech disability but did not succeed in referring the cases to a social worker in Mariental. The need for training in basic sign language was highlighted here, as well as the need for clear channels of referral.

Rehoboth is the second largest urban centre in Hardap region. The original two FVs, who were selected by the community in Rehoboth resigned after the first training session because they had received offers of paid employment. As a result, the present FV only received three weeks training. She is, however, a mature and resourceful person, who has already had training as a Literacy Promoter and HIV/AIDS counselling, who has managed her role as FV very well.

The FV lives in Block E, which is the informal settlement area of Rehoboth. On returning from the FV training she selected 14 homes with young children who did not attend kindergarten. Unemployment is high in the settlement and parents struggle to feed their children. Many families cannot afford to send their children to kindergarten and so welcomed the FV into their homes. At first the parents saw the programme as a substitute for the kindergarten and some suggested that she should take the children to her own home. This was a clear misunderstanding of the programme’s objectives. The FV felt that the parents understand the programme better now and are beginning to become more involved in activities for their children. Involving fathers in the programme was, however, more difficult as they were often not at home.

The FV is supervised by a CA who is based in Rehoboth. The CA did not attend any training for the FVs programme. As a result she is unsure as to what the FV should be doing. The close proximity of Rehoboth to Windhoek means that the FV programme as a pilot in Rehoboth could have received far more attention than it did from the national level DCD. The fact that a second FV was never recruited is in itself questionable.

3.5.2 Karas Region

Situated about 40 kilometres west of Keetmanshoop, Snyfontein is a small community in a communal area. The community has a large contingency of contract workers who are often away and sometimes take their young children with them. The only people in paid employment are the schoolteachers and Principal. Others are dependant on old age pensions and remittances sent from relatives who take opportunities of seasonal contract labour on farms. Although the population was said to be over 300
people a few years ago, it is now thought to be a lot less. The majority of the population are either between 0-11 years old or over 55 years.

There is a primary school, Grades 1-7, with 60 children in attendance. Several children in the area live too far away to attend the school on a daily basis. The Principal of the school is considering starting a hostel to accommodate these children. She is very active in the community and supports the kindergarten and the FVs programme.

Near to the school is a well constructed stone building, which is used as a kindergarten. It was built by the community as part of a Food for Work programme. The DCD supplied the kindergarten with materials for the construction of a shade and a fence. There are presently only 7 children between 3-6 years old attending the kindergarten. Other children may join them when they return from the surrounding farms. There was a plan to build a pit latrine for the kindergarten but it remains half finished because the community members refuse to build it without the incentive of Food for Work.

Originally two female FVs were appointed but one resigned when she was offered full time employment. A second FV has only recently been appointed. Both of the FVs are very active in the community and hold positions as elders in the Church. Between them they visit 7 homes, selected because they had young children who did not attend the kindergarten, and whose parents were generally not involved in community activities.

Satco, situated 15 kilometres from Karasburg, is a mainly Nama speaking community. High unemployment in the area combined with contract workers, means that the community consists mainly of female-headed households and elderly grandparents. The only permanent buildings are the church and the kindergarten. There are 59 homes in the community and they are all made of tin sheets. There is no primary school in the community. When children reach school age they have to go to school in Karasburg and stay in the school hostel. A mobile health clinic team visits the community once a month.

The kindergarten and its own VIP toilet, which were built by the community while the materials were supplied by the Catholic Church. The DCD also supplied this kindergarten with materials for the construction of a shade and a fence. Both were constructed by the community. They are presently collecting old car-tyres to use in the construction of a playground. The newly appointed kindergarten teacher is paid N$200 per month by the Catholic Church and will attend a training course for ECD workers shortly. On the day of the visit, there were only nine children attending the kindergarten. More were expected to attend when they returned with their parents from the surrounding farms.

There used to be a brick-making project in the community, however, it has closed down because of the limited supply of water available. The lack of water has also negatively impacted the vegetable garden project, which started as a result of the Community Action Plans. Only a few households, situated near the water source, have been able to maintain their gardens. There is, however, a remarkable diversity of other more successful small income generating activities in the community, which range from chicken projects supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, to a small shoe-making workshop, which was initially supported by the DCD office in Karasburg. Other community development projects include the construction of VIP toilets for almost all the households with assistance from the MOHSS.

The two FVs, both mature ladies, have been very active and fully committed since the beginning of the programme in 1999. They have stimulated a lot of interest in ECD issues within the community and individual families. They are both active church members and have initiated or helped organise inputs into many of the development projects mentioned above. Both of them have exhibited strong leadership qualities.

In spite of all their other commitments, they both manage to visit the 17 households involved in the FVs programme. 15 of these households are headed by females. They visit the homes between Monday and Thursday. On Wednesdays they arrange to meet the families at the kindergarten, so that the children in the programme can socialise through playing with the kindergarten children, while the parents discuss various topics facilitated by the FVs. Both of the FVs are extremely creative. Inspired by the toy-making workshop held by the DCD for selected members of the community in 1998, they have made tremendous efforts to produce a wide selection of low-cost toys and games. Even more importantly, they have inspired parents to produce their own toys and games for use in their homes.
3.5.3 Khomas Region

The two communities in Khomas Region, Hainyeko and Oshatotwa, are both peri-urban squatter settlements of Katutura. Katutura has an estimated population of 120,000 inhabitants with about 25% of the people living in sub-standard shanty conditions. The two communities were originally selected as sites for the pilot FVs programme because they were perceived as being socially and economically disadvantaged and there were considerable numbers of young children who did not have access to any ECD programmes. The original two FVs appointed to work in Oshatotwa are still working there. In Hainyeko community one of the FVs resigned and was never replaced. The remaining FV also works as a kindergarten teacher. In the afternoons she visits ten households that are in close proximity to her own house. Eight out of the ten households are headed by females. The mother in one of the households recently died and the two orphaned children were sent back to their family in Owamboland.

These communities are largely made up of migrants, mainly Oshiwambo speaking people from the rural areas of northern Namibia, who came in search of employment. The pattern of migration is somewhat seasonal with many people returning to the north when the rains start to assist families with planting crops. The urban-rural link involves not only the exchange of labour but also agricultural produce as well as care of the sick and orphan children. Households that do not maintain strong links with the rural areas are usually the most disadvantaged and a large proportion of these are female-headed households (Kamminga, 2000:51). There is a tendency among the residents to consider themselves temporary residents of Windhoek. This inevitably affects their overall orientation and social relationships making the communities less stable and more difficult for support programmes to build on the initiatives implemented in these communities.

3.5.4 Omaheke Region

Okahungu is situated 150 kilometres east of Gobabis. It is made up of a mixture of Damara, Herero and San people. Although it is a relatively well-organised community with a strong leadership structure in place, it is perceived as being very poor. There is only one FV left to run the programme. The FV, who is the daughter of the headman, is physically disabled having only one leg. This does not hinder her in doing her duties as a FV and she moves from house-to-house using a donkey cart.

Donkerbos and Sonneblom communities are situated 200 kilometres from Gobabis. They are both resettlement communities and lie three kilometres apart. In 1996 a community building was established half way between the two communities. This building is also used as a kindergarten for the children from both communities. Currently there are two kindergarten teachers who were trained in ECD in Gobabis. The kindergarten does not often function as parents refuse to send their children when there is no food available for them. The two original FVs, a man and a woman, are still working in these communities. The woman has recently become involved in teaching in an informal Grade 1-2 class. Although she does not like this new job, and would prefer to do home-visiting, she does receive N$50 per month for it. The FVs programme is also often adversely affected by the shortage of food. When drought relief food fails to arrive in the communities it often means the majority of the community members have to go in search of wild foods. Other strategies to enhance food security, such as the GRN Food for Work scheme, have a similar impact on community life. In reality, this means that both the kindergarten and FV programme are interrupted for relatively long periods during the year.

3.6 Data Presentation and Analysis

3.6.1 Family Visitors

Of the original 16 Family Visitors (FVs) selected and trained in 1999, 10 remain in the programme. This gives an attrition rate of 37%. Of these 10 remaining FVs, nine are women. Of the six FVs who dropped out from the programme, at least two of them did so during the course of the training. No attempt was made by the DCD to replace them even though most of the communities had a reserve list of potential candidates. Only one community, Snyfontein, very recently appointed a replacement FV.

During the evaluation visits eight FVs were interviewed in six different communities. The average age of the FVs interviewed was 46 years. The oldest was 59 and the youngest 26 years old. The level of formal education averages at Grade 7, with only two FVs having any secondary school education. All of the FVs interviewed were literate and numerate. Two out of the six FVs were involved in running
community kindergartens during the mornings while four out of seven were very involved in church and community activities. This was particularly evident in Satco where the two FVs were making major contributions to other community activities such as a chicken-rearing project, the building of VIP toilets as well as supervising the newly recruited Kindergarten teacher.

Of the eight FVs interviewed, six had received five weeks training at the start of the programme. Of the other two, one had only attended the last three weeks of the training course, while one has had no formal training as yet but is receiving informal training from her fellow FV. All of the FVs found the initial training very useful but regretted that there had been no follow-up training. They all expressed the need for further training. Specific areas identified were as follows:

- Counselling skills, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS
- Disability including community-based care and referral systems
- Care of orphan and other vulnerable children
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Child abuse and protection
- Redirecting of children’s behaviour
- Coping with adolescents
- Children’s rights

In Satco and Snyfontein, it was clear that the FVs and the communities had benefited from the Toy-making Workshop run by the DCD. Particularly in Satco, a wide range of low-cost toys had been produced to the benefit of the programme and community kindergarten. This had been done at the expense of the FVs themselves with no material input from the DCD. Requests for material inputs in terms of paper, paint, glue and stationary came from all the FVs to enable them to produce games, toys and puzzles for use in the programme.

The eight FVs interviewed had visited 58 households giving an average of 11 households per FV. Of these households 57% were female-headed. Eleven households contained orphans between 0-6 years of age. All of the FV had selected these particular households through personal contacts and on the basis of each household having young children who were not attending kindergartens, either because they were too young or because the parents could not afford to send them. In Snyfontein the FV had purposely selected families with young children who were not usually involved in community activities. The FVs visited homes within a 2km radius of their own homes and always went on foot when visiting. All of them spent between one and one and a half hours in each household, usually in the afternoons between Monday and Thursday. In Satco the FVs had made an arrangement with the families to meet at the Kindergarten centre one morning a week where their children could socialise with the children in the Kindergarten while the parents, mainly mothers, discuss different issues with the FVs. Although calling regular community meetings to discuss ECD issues had been part of the FVs original brief, in practice these meetings have not taken place frequently, and when they did happen they were poorly attended.

All of the FVs felt their visits were welcomed and much appreciated by the families. They all noted an increase in interest and participation levels among members of the families. At the beginning of the programme it was often only the mother or grandmother who talked with the FVs, but as time passed everyone present, including the men, began to participate. Although they usually planned the topic to be discussed during their visit, there seems to be an element of flexibility to respond to the immediate needs of each household. When asked about changes in attitudes and behaviour among the families they visited, most FVs reported that there were definite improvements in parent-child relationships with parents spending more time with their children in a wider range of activities. At least half of the FVs noted that when fathers were around, they tended to be more involved with caring for their younger children. In the peri-urban communities, however, the FVs complained that parents had at first tended to see them more as mobile kindergarten teachers who could teach their children at home and release them to do other things. This attitude made it difficult for the FVs to use their visits as entry points for discussions on parenting, but all felt that some progress was being made.

One of the most difficult topics for the FVs to talk to families about was nutrition. This was not because they had not been informed about the importance of promoting healthy balanced diets using local foodstuff, but because families felt frustrated talking about nutritious foods when they could barely afford to make maize meal porridge for their children. Some parents even became angry when the topic was brought up (Rehoboth). In peri-urban settlements, it often proves very difficult for parents to supplement children’s diets with vegetables whereas in rural areas some communities, such as Satco, are able to
grow a limited supply. Most FVs responded to this difficult food situation by avoiding the topic of nutrition altogether.

Problems and constraints experienced by the FVs interviewed varied from lack of time due to personal problems and involvement in other community activities, to lack of material and moral support. A major constraint was the total lack of any incentives for the FVs to assist them in their own daily struggle to provide basic needs for their families. There is no doubt that the high attrition rate within the programme was due to the need for FVs to find paid employment. Those who have stayed within the programme either work as kindergarten teachers, or have to interrupt their programme periodically to find casual employment, in order to pay for school funds and uniforms. Although their expenses were not regular, all of the FVs had incurred job related expenses such as wear and tear on shoes, stationary and materials for producing educational aids as well as for phone cards used in two cases to contact the regional DCD office. Only two out of seven FVs had ever received any gifts from the families they visited. These were in the form of milk and traditional beer. Others said they had not even received a drink of water. Knowing just how poor these families were, helped the FVs to understand why they could not offer them any material goods and they all appreciated the support and gratitude they felt. When asked what sort of incentives they would like to receive, all of the FVs initially said they would prefer either cash or food. Further discussion of this topic led to the general conclusion that the FVs would benefit from access to a small income generating activity such as a sewing or gardening project.

All of the FVs interviewed kept up-to-date records of the families they visited and found their own system adequate. Each FV was asked to write monthly reports for the CA or CLO supervising them. In practice though, this system was not really effective and only in one or two cases had regular reports reached the DCD office. In other cases, verbal reports were given every three months when, and if, supervisory visits were made by the CLOs or CAs or the FVs visited the DCD office. The amount support and supervision received by the FVs from the CLOs and CAs varied considerably. In Hainyeko, Khomas Region, the contact was almost daily as the office of the CLO is next door to the kindergarten where the FV works in the morning. The other extreme is found in Gibeon where the CA never once went to visit the FV. Most FVs reported that they had only brief contacts with the CLOs and CAs once every three or four months. All of them expressed the need for more regular and more supportive contact in terms of materials and advice. While some of the FVs had contact with local NGOs, they all expressed disappointment at not being able to have contact with other FVs within the programme in other areas after the initial training.

3.6.2 Family and Community Responses

A review of Table 3.1 shows that in practice there is a clear balance between traditional and modern child rearing practices. The fact that the FV is from the community, allows her to identify proven positive traditional practices and affirm their use. At the same time the FV has, in most cases, been able to encourage parents to visit the health clinics more often. In this sense the FV has taken on the role of ‘watchdog’ on child related health issues and most FVs see it as their responsibility to make sure that parents follow-up on vaccination schedules for their children.

In peri-urban areas, such as Khomas and Hardap, the families were more likely to visit the clinic for advice on medical issues concerning their children. In rural areas parents are more likely to resort to traditional methods and medicines. In both rural and urban areas the FVs were likely to be called on by parents for advice on health and medical issues.

There is clear evidence from the discussions with all the communities that the FVs programme has had a positive impact on the parent-child relationship. Parents have begun to play a more active role in their children’s early development. The greatest increase in parent child interaction was in the areas of language development and play. The FVs and the families involved in the programme, indicated a marked increase in the amount of traditional storytelling, songs and dialogue that parents were now willing to share with their children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
<th>Gibeon, Hardap: Damara Community</th>
<th>Satco, Karas: Nama Community</th>
<th>Hainyeko, Khomas: Ovamboland Community</th>
<th>Donkerbos, Omaheke: San Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name three things you (or your wife) can do to have a healthy pregnancy</td>
<td>The child will get sick &amp; have convulsions</td>
<td>Keep warm, no alcohol or smoking</td>
<td>Eat healthy food, visit the ante-natal clinic</td>
<td>Eat certain vedunks and avoid others such as tortoise meat, don't smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If your child begins to talk loudly and never seems to listen, should you be worried?</td>
<td>The child is mentally sick - take him to the clinic</td>
<td>The child will be disabled or may die</td>
<td>The child has an ear infection or is deaf</td>
<td>The child will get polio as well as coughs and colds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your child has a high fever, what should you do?</td>
<td>Apply cold water to the head and rub castor oil on the body</td>
<td>The child is mentally sick or deaf</td>
<td>Use wet clothes to cool him down</td>
<td>Grind the leaf of a common indigenous tree and smear it on the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name three nutritious local foods you can give to your child</td>
<td>Cabbage, pumpkin and beetroot</td>
<td>Potatoes, pumpkin &amp; tomatoes</td>
<td>Pumpkin, beans &amp; tomatoes</td>
<td>Maize meal and pumpkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you spoil your child by hugging her too much?</td>
<td>Not when young, but you must stop as he grows older</td>
<td>You can 'over-love' your child or spoil - but we still do it</td>
<td>Hug the child as much as you want to</td>
<td>It is not good to hug them all the time but there's nothing you can do to stop it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can you help to improve your child's language development?</td>
<td>Talk with the child &amp; correct her speech</td>
<td>Teach her by repeating sounds and storytelling</td>
<td>Talk to the child a lot</td>
<td>Tel to the child about things in the home and outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think your child learns lots of things by playing &amp; exploring</td>
<td>The child learns lots of things by playing and exploring</td>
<td>He gets exercise and learns to socialise</td>
<td>He learns to talk and communicate with others</td>
<td>Playing makes a child clever - they learn as they play in the sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your child throws dirt into the drinking water, how do you respond?</td>
<td>Nothing as the child may be too young to understand what they have done</td>
<td>Beat the child and/or chase him away</td>
<td>Beat the child</td>
<td>Beat the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying 'Well done!' too often to your child makes them too proud - True or false?</td>
<td>False, it is good to say 'well done!'</td>
<td>False, it is good to say 'well done!'</td>
<td>True, it makes him too proud</td>
<td>It is good to encourage the child with praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your child has a sore, sticky eye, what should you do?</td>
<td>Clean the face &amp; eyes with fresh urine from a baby's nappy</td>
<td>Clean the face &amp; eyes with fresh urine from a baby's nappy</td>
<td>Clean with juice from Owamboland fruits &quot;oshipeke&quot; or water</td>
<td>Clean the eyes with breast milk or babies urine</td>
</tr>
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<td>Your child has an ear infection - what do you think may happen?</td>
<td>Use fresh urine from a baby's nappy to wipe the eyes</td>
<td>First talk to them &amp; then go to the social worker or police</td>
<td>Ask the family about the problem</td>
<td>Take action against this immediately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents fail to take their child for vaccinations - what do you think may happen?</td>
<td>Approach the family to talk about it/ go to the community leaders</td>
<td>No rights except the right to play</td>
<td>Rights to a name and a birth certificate</td>
<td>Children have no rights</td>
</tr>
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**Table 3.1 Selected Family Responses to Evaluation Questions**
The importance of creative play as part of their children's development was also acknowledged by all the communities. In Satco, families had begun to abolish taboos that had long stopped children playing with water and sand. Some communities benefited from the Toy-making Workshops that the DCD had held for both men and women. These workshops had clearly been an entry point for men to get involved in early childhood care in a very practical way. In both Satco and Snyfontein, where there had been workshops, the ECD centres had clearly benefited from the toys that the men had made from tin and wire while working on the farms. Other parents had also begun to copy some of the materials and toys that the FVs took with them during their visits to their homes. This strong role model element of the FV for improving parent-child interaction is clearly very important.

The weakest areas of response from all the communities visited, were redirecting children's behaviour and children's rights. Although there was generally a positive attitude about changing children's behaviour through encouragement and dialogue rather than punishments, it was clear from anecdotal responses that this did not always translate into changed behaviour and many parents still beat their children. More striking was the fact that in every community family members either struggled to name even one right of the child, or blatantly stated that young children had no rights at all. Yet in reality, all community members, in all of the discussion groups, agreed it was their responsibility to act on behalf of children who were physically abused. Both topics of redirecting children's behaviour and children's rights had only just been touched on superficially in the original training of the FVs. It is clear that more in-depth training is needed. As both topics call for a change in attitude and behaviour of parents and the community, a more dynamic facilitation of these areas will be necessary. Fortunately, they are both areas that will be covered in more depth in the new training modules being developed by ACORD.

3.6.3 Regional CLOs and CAs

To ascertain the degree to which the management and supervisory structures have impacted the FVs programme, three CLOs and three CAs who were responsible for the FVs programme at the regional level, were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. The average length of service of these particular Government civil servants was seven years. All but two had finished Grade 12 and all had had previous work experience as community workers or as teachers. All of them, except one, had received some in-service training in ECD. The length of training varied between two weeks and six weeks. Only one of the CLOs was able to give an expansive definition of ECD. The others held a somewhat limited concept such as 'assisting the child to write his name'. Four out of the six had attended the two day workshop in April 1999 which was not only an introduction to the FVs pilot project, but also expected the participants to compile a training manual for FVs programme. All four people expressed strong dissatisfaction with this workshop and claimed it did not help them to understand the FVs programme or their own roles and responsibilities in it. Of the remaining two, the CLO (Khomas) received a one-day introduction on the FVs programme and the CA (Gibeon) had no training at all, yet, both were expected to supervise and support the FVs. It is hardly surprising that the CLOs and CAs all struggled to name the objective of the FVs programme. Some of them still thought that its main aim was about bringing children together for storytelling. There was further confusion about who was to supervise the FVs and all but one (Karas) felt they had never been officially informed or asked to undertake this duty.

The frequency of visits to the FVs by the CLOs and CAs was on average once in three months. The exception being the CA in Gibeon who never visited the one remaining FV in the programme, but instead waited for her to visit him at the Government offices. This particular FV resigned from the programme in December 2000 partly because she felt she lacked support. Reasons given for not visiting the FVs more often were mainly transport constraints. When asked about coordinating transport with other line ministries, three out of six said that this was possible but only one CA actually practiced it.

The CLOs and CAs were asked, on the basis of their experience in the FVs programme, to identify characteristics of a good FV. They readily listed the following characteristics:

- Mature females
- Ability to commanding respect and confidence of the community
- Active and influential in the community
- Good communication skills
- Experienced in caring for children
Almost all of these characteristics were, according to the CLOs and CAs, to be found in the present FVs and all thought that they were doing a good job. However, further training was thought to be needed for all the FVs and this should include counselling, report writing and leadership skills.

When asked to assess the impact of the FVs on the families taking part and on the communities, some of the CLOs and CAs struggled to be specific and just said that parents seem to be more involved in caring for their young children. Others obviously knew the communities better, and they were able to give examples of how the programme had resulted in more openness and cooperation within the community making community mobilisation easier for other projects. Other examples showed that families were closer, with fewer family squabbles and a definite increase of fathers’ involvement in caring for young children.

On the subject of problems experienced by the FVs, all of the CLOs and CAs mentioned the lack of incentives and felt that they should be assisted in meeting their basic needs. When prompted for ideas on how to do this they all came up with income generating activities and one even suggested that contacting the local Councillor to get a plot of land for growing vegetables would not be difficult. Yet, none of the five CLOs and CAs had talked with the FVs about the possibility of starting an income generating activity nor had they put in a request to their Regional or National DCD.

On the topic of scaling up the FVs programme, the CLOs and CAs interviewed all felt that it would be a good idea mainly because there are many other communities that need such a programme. It was suggested that the programme might be more suited to communities where families were not physically divided due to contract labour on distant farms. Urban areas were considered to be less receptive as people were unlikely to volunteer as FVs if they had house rents to pay. Squatter settlements in peri-urban areas were considered to be potential target areas where the need for FVs was greatest due to the level of social problems that affected families.

3.7 Conclusions

The concept of the FVs programme as a ‘pilot’ project may have been clearly understood by the MWACW, yet there is little evidence to suggest that it was treated as a ‘pilot’ project should be. In retrospect, evidence of the careful nurturing and fostering of a fledgling pilot project in terms of moral and material support, monitoring and follow-up, is sorely lacking. Evidence of UNICEF’s technical support in terms of advice to the DCD and in monitoring, was also notably missing.

The lack of clear vertical lines of responsibility for supervision and monitoring of the pilot, indicates that these issues were not clearly thought out at the planning stage. This ‘oversight’ inevitably resulted in the assumption being made by the regional staff, that because the FVs had been trained at the national level, the Top-level Trainers would take overall responsibility for the monitoring and supervision of the FVs. Although visits, nine in all, were made to the regions by national level staff, there seems to have been little feedback from these visits in terms of modifying and strengthening the structures. Sporadic reports from the regions provide a sketchy picture of the reality and did not result in attempts at the national level to address the problems that the FVs and the regional staff were experiencing. This poor response rate from all the stakeholders at national level, whether due to budgetary or capacity constraints, needs to be examined to ensure that future pilots are not subjected to the same treatment. The extent to which UNICEF exercised its advisory role during the planning and implementation of this pilot project is also questionable in the areas of monitoring and supervision of the project, particularly during its second year.

A total lack of material support meant that once the FVs training was over in September 1999, they had to use not only their own initiative but also their own materials – paints, paper, glue, stationary. For those of us with funds and access to these basic materials, this does not seem an enormous feat. However, for the FVs remaining in the programme for two years without any kind of remuneration, credit should be given to them for their sheer inventiveness and willingness to draw from their own meagre resources. At the same time questions have to be asked as to why material support for the programme was not budgeted as part of the follow-up support.

The question of incentives – should they be given to FVs, and if so, in what form? – was discussed thoroughly during the evaluation at all levels and in a variety of forums from the UNICEF ECD Annual Review Meeting to one-to-one conversations with individual FVs. It can be concluded that for the sake of sustainability of the programme, it is necessary to consider some form of incentive which will provide...
the FVs with access to a small income. This would in turn free them from their immediate concerns about supplying their families with basic needs. The kind of incentive offered will depend on the individual circumstances and will need to be given at the discretion of the FVs supervisor. For instance a FV working in a kindergarten will not be in need of assistance in starting up an income generating activity, but may well need materials and shoes. Provision of small incentives should not be seen as creating dependency but rather as a means of boosting the morale of the FVs in order to encourage a self-perpetuating impetus, which has already been seen to exist within the programme.

Lack of training of key regional personnel clearly led to a very poor level of understanding about the aims and the vision of the FVs pilot programme. This shortfall in training was later interpreted as being a lack of commitment and motivation among some regional staff. In three out of four regions the FVs have been supervised by CLOs and CAs who did not have any training, or at most a one-day introduction, on the objectives of the programme or on the roles and responsibilities of the FVs. Even the training of the FVs took place without much thought being given to monitoring and supervision. The five weeks of training for the FVs took place in isolation in Windhoek, forfeiting the possibility of having contact with the CLOS and CAs who were due to supervise them.

An analysis of the attrition rates in the pilot shows that young people selected as FVs are more likely to drop out of the project and are less likely to cope with the demands of the programme than older people. Older FVs are said to enjoy the trust of the communities they work in and are mature enough to be able to handle difficult situations. There is, however, a danger of these trusted individuals becoming pure ‘social workers’, who give advice, and at most, increase the knowledge base of individuals on ECD issues. This is not enough to bring about sustained change in attitudes and behaviour. Without more dynamic training, and the organisational structures to reinforce it, it is unlikely that the changes in parental attitude and behaviour, already experienced, will be sustained.

A further review of the attrition rates shows that two out of three men dropped out of the programme in order to take paid employment. As this happened early in the programme, it is difficult to say if the role of FVs is better suited to one sex or the other or whether it is necessary to have a gender balance in the programme. This aspect will eventually be easier to evaluate in the ACORD family visitors programme where there is an equal balance of both men and women. However, discussions at community level did shed some light on this matter. It was generally felt that some sensitive topics would be difficult for men to discuss in households predominantly headed by women. Where male and female FVs worked together as a team, this issue could be dealt with more appropriately.

An evaluation as to whether kindergarten teachers, often seen as ‘experts’ in ECD issues, could successfully fill the role of the FV in the community was also undertaken. Attrition rates show that kindergarten teachers find it difficult to combine their teaching duties with the role of FV. The reasons given for this is the fact that working in a kindergarten is demanding and teachers are tired in the afternoons when visiting usually takes place. On the other hand, in Khomas Region the FV who is also a kindergarten teacher, purposely selected homes very near to her own home so that she could visit the families when it suited her own schedule. The families interviewed clearly thought that their children benefited from her skills as a kindergarten teacher. However, in most of the rural communities visited, kindergarten teachers were very poorly paid, if at all. This was due to the parent’s inability to pay fees. As a result, there was a high turnover of kindergarten teachers. In urban areas the kindergarten teachers may be better paid but are less likely to volunteer to work as FVs in the community without material incentives. It can be concluded that the roles of the FV and the kindergarten teachers are not mutually exclusive. Yet, the specific role of the FV is not necessarily best fulfilled by a kindergarten teacher. Levels of energy and enthusiasm, as well as stability and commitment, are clearly key ingredients in fulfilling the role and responsibilities of the FV and this will depend entirely on the individual.

In spite of the various constraints and shortcomings in the initial programme design, structures and management, the FV programme has to a large extent achieved the original programme objectives. There is no doubt that these have been achieved through the tenacity and commitment of individual FVs and their ability to mobilise community support. One can only conclude that at an early stage in the programme, the community perceived the FVs as useful and necessary agents of change. Although the families involved in the programmes could rarely afford to show their appreciation in material terms, they clearly recognised the benefits of the programme to themselves and their children.

The fact that the programme has survived in most communities on very little outside input and support, demonstrates that the ownership of the programme lies with the communities. Communities that are
continually struggling with problems of hunger and unemployment do not have the energy or time for superlative projects and will naturally abort imposed programmes from which they do not accrue immediate benefit. Yet, the FVs programme has in most cases survived in the face of hunger and other poverty related adversities. This shows that communities find it relevant and appropriate to their present needs. This ongoing need may provide some of the impetus for the programme to continue. It would, however, be totally naive to assume that the programme will continue to survive without any inputs. Nearly all the FVs interviewed indicated that without some form of incentive, preferably a small income-generating project, they would not be able to continue for much longer. It can be concluded that morale among the FVs is lagging and needs to be boosted.

Making a difference where it really counts: among families and communities. In spite of all its shortcomings, the FVs pilot programme has shown that this objective is attainable. The challenge for the MWACW now lies in establishing structures which will allow the programme to support and sustain changes in parental attitudes and behaviour. The following recommendations provide some pointers for strengthening the existing programme while attempting to identify potential areas of expansion.

3.8 Recommendations

- Methods and approaches, used to introduce new pilot programmes and new concepts in ECD on a national or regional level, should be reviewed by all stakeholders. Pilot programmes within the DCD would benefit from a more structured design which should include: capacity assessment, a sensitisation campaign, well targeted and appropriate training for all involved parties, clear guidelines on roles and responsibilities of all actors as well as the establishment of realistic monitoring and evaluation systems as part of follow-up procedures. The second phase of the FVs programme would be a good opportunity to review current approaches.

- Clarification and restructuring of the monitoring and supervisory systems structures used in the family support programmes is urgently required. Specialised technical assistance from UNICEF in establishing monitoring and evaluation systems would be beneficial. A joint workshop on the subject of monitoring and evaluation systems should be considered. The participants should include the staff of the DCD and the UNICEF ECD Project Officer. The workshop should include the identification of simple measurable indicators in the context of specific ECD projects. It should also consider focusing on the skills necessary to interpret the new GRN/UNICEF logical framework (2002-2005), for evaluation purposes.

- The question of creating material incentives for FVs should not be ignored. It should be urgently addressed through the introduction of appropriate small scale, preferably home-based, livelihood maintenance projects. These projects should not be equated with full-scale income-generating projects. Examples of these livelihood maintenance projects could be a bale of second-hand clothing to be sold in order to cover expenses incurred through working as FVs. Another idea would be a sewing machine or material and threads for sewing or embroidery activities.

- A more comprehensive and dynamic type of training is called for future and currently active FVs. This training should provide them with the skills they need to sensitively mobilise their communities around issues of social transformation such as children’s rights and redirecting of children’s behaviour. The FVs training that is presently being piloted through ACORD in Omaheke Region, promises to provide a more vigorous approach to future training. However, it is recommended that training for FVs should in future take place in the regions in order to ensure that culturally sensitive issues are dealt with appropriately. Furthermore, training sessions should always aim to bring together FVs and their immediate supervisors, the CLOS and CAs, for joint training in order to share perspectives and enhance the rapport between them.

- Scaling-up of the FVs programme should be treated as Phase II of the pilot project. Lessons learned from Phase I must be given full cognisance and internalised before planning of Phase II begins. As Phase II of the pilot, scaling-up should be done in a very controlled manner. A reassessment of the number and capacity of DCD personnel available in the regions for follow-up support and supervision will first be necessary. It is suggested that the FV programme builds on its own success at the community level and should begin to scale-up through two or three selected satellite communities near those communities already involved in the programme. Networking between the communities will provide an indigenous support system for the FVs and ensure that the CAs and CLOs are not overloaded.
• The results of the internal evaluation, presently being carried out by the MWACW, should be shared with other line ministries and NGOs who are active in the communities. This sort of multi-sectoral forum for the dissemination and sharing of research and ideas promotes positive dialogue, which can lead to further coordination and collaboration.

• To strengthen the impact and outreach of the FVs programme, and expand the role of the FVs, efforts should be made in the second phase of the programme to link the FVs with other community-based institutions besides the ECD centres. In some communities this has begun to happen and informal linkages have been formed with either the primary school or the clinic. More formal linkages with primary schools could help to forge better relations between the school and the community, giving the FV the role of liaison between the two. In communities where children have to be sent away to school at the age of six to stay in hostels, this connection with the school authorities would assist parents in preparing their child for this traumatic experience.

• Recognition of the FVs as important resource people in the community, needs to be acknowledged and strengthened. The more rooted and accepted they are in the community the more effective they will be in realising the goals and objectives of the FVs programme. The FVs should be encouraged to become recorders of the community’s development through keeping a photo or sketch album or even a scrap book. The Total Child programme has used this idea in Omaheke Region to record the development process in the communities and given each community a Polaroid camera.

• A basic standardised pack of teaching aids for FVs, complemented by a regionally specific focus, giving cognisance to language and culture, should be prepared. This pack could be used during the initial training sessions for the FVs regional training, covering the range of topics and themes that the FVs are expected to introduce to the families. This could, for example, include a set of A3 size, laminated picture posters covering the main themes.

• Efforts should be made to link FVs to other FVs in the region after their training. Exchange visits could be arranged to share ideas and discuss issues of regional concern. Linkages with other ECD workers in the area should also be encouraged. As ECD caregivers, FVs should be allowed to have membership of the NECD NGO Association. At present full membership is limited to groups or centres and not to individuals. Until this is modified, FVs could form a CBO and gain membership in that way.

• Transport at regional level remains a major constraint to all programmes including the FVs programme. Decentralisation of budgets should through timely planning allow the DCD regional staff to use regional government car-pools, which will allow for better supervision and more extensive follow-up within the FVs programme. Failing this, more effort is needed to plan and coordinate trips to remote rural areas. The regional DCD staff should take the lead in promoting a policy of transport coordination among the different line ministries.

• Clearly there would be little purpose in attempting to stem the tide of the tremendous increase in the number of kindergarten centres that have sprung up in Namibia, especially in urban areas. Yet, this evaluation confirms that there are still many rural communities, which for a host of different reasons do not have, and may never need, collective care for young children. Efforts should be made to counter the general tendency of focusing on ECD centre-based care without perhaps giving sufficient cognisance to the real need for complementary approaches. The participatory development and publication of a manual called ‘Where there is no Kindergarten’, is one idea that might go some way to attracting renewed attention and support to the idea of various Family Support Strategies such as home-visiting programmes.
INTERVENTION 4:

ORPHAN CARE PROJECT

EVALUATION REPORT

Bernard van Leer Foundation / UNICEF

Prepared by:
Catherine A Remmelzwaal
March 2001
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### 4.1 Introduction and Background

Until very recently, ECD has failed to make a major contribution to the mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS. Recent innovative initiatives have, however, shed a new and welcome light on the possibility of promoting ECD as a potential platform for organising collective orphan care.

Between 1994 and 1997 Namibia experienced the highest increase in the number of children orphaned by AIDS, with over four hundred per cent increase. Although accurate data on the actual number of orphans in Namibia is difficult to obtain, the MOHSS has recently published data that shows there may be as many as 43,000 orphans in Namibia (Fig. 4.1). The 39% increase in the number of orphans since 2000, is an alarming trend that is expected to continue over the next five years. This data has been used to project the expected rise in the number of orphans over the next twenty years, when the figure could well be a staggering 200,000. Even more conservative estimates, which suggest a current figure of 20,000 children who may have lost their mother or both parents, does not allow for anything less than an immediate, magnanimous and innovative response to this ever deepening crisis.

![Fig 4.1 Projected Number of Orphans in Namibia](source: MOHSS 2001)

In the absence of a national orphan care policy, responses to the orphan crisis have mainly focused on assisting orphans by addressing the short-term economic needs of the foster parents. The quality of care given by the foster parent is often taken for granted. In August 2000, the GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation (1997-2001) developed a proposal ‘Ensuring the Rights of Orphans to Adequate Early Childhood Care’, which provided a highly innovative response to the orphan crisis. The proposal document fully elaborates on the Orphan Care Project (OCP), which is considered to be one of the first initiatives in Namibia to address the situation of orphans from a perspective other than charity.

In keeping with UNICEF’s human rights approach to programming (HRAP), the project seeks to identify children who’s rights are clearly at risk through orphan hood and to strengthen the capacity of those who are responsible for respecting, protecting, facilitating or fulfilling these rights. The OCP proposal focuses on a set of interrelated underlying causes, rather than immediate ones, of why certain duty bearers fail to exercise their duties. It suggests that strategies that address the underlying causes are more likely to achieve greater, sustainable impact than those dealing with the more immediate causes and effects.

Some of the fundamental causes of the non-exercising of parental responsibilities by foster parents, were identified as being the breakdown of the traditional family structure and coping mechanisms as well as the lack of knowledge of good childcare practices. By placing these and other interrelated causes
within a causality framework, the proposal places the primary responsibility for action on foster parents, claiming that they have the duty to care and provide for orphans as their own children. Second line duty bearers are also identified. The extended family has the responsibility to share in the costs of care of orphaned children while the community is seen as having the duty of monitoring the conditions of orphaned children as well as assisting foster parents in times of stress. Although childcare workers are not seen as being in the direct line of duty, they are identified as potential partners. The final group of duty bearers are identified as the Government departments as represented by their management and extension staff. They have the duty of assisting all parents, especially foster parents, in enhancing their knowledge and skills in childcare. While technical assistance may be required for the design and implementation of specific strategies, it is clearly stated that the Government should facilitate the establishment of support programmes that alleviate individual hardship through collective support for orphans.

One of the most innovative features of the OCP is that, for the first time, ECD is used as a platform to meet the needs of young orphans (0-6 years old children who have lost their mother or both parents), their foster parents and their communities within the reality of their situation. More specifically, existing childcare centres, many of which are home-based facilities, will be used to promote collective orphan care. The OCP proposal suggests that these home-based care arrangements are more often than not negotiated community based solutions. It then follows that childcare workers, as experts in early childhood care, have the potential to become community mobilisers who can advocate and organise a broader community support for young orphans. Reaching the majority of parents through the ECD centres is put forward as a logical and viable proposition.

The overall objectives of the OCP are stated as being:

To establish a support system for foster parents to better care for young children and increase the knowledge of parents and childcare workers on good childcare practices (GRN/UNICEF, 2000b:20)

To reach these objectives, the OCP proposes a dual implementation strategy whereby an in-kind incentive scheme is provided for ECD facilities that take care of orphans for free or reduced fees. Parents who are not caring for orphans will continue to pay fees, which will supposedly cover the recurrent costs of the facility. The type of in-kind incentives suggested in the proposal are aimed at improving the ECD facilities and include tarpaulins for shade, construction of pit latrines, paper and crayons and, where necessary, training opportunities for the ECD worker. The resources made available for this first strategy will be used as leverage to promote collective responses to orphan care.

This dual implementation strategy also calls for capacity building of the regional Directorates of Community Development, which among other things would need the capacity to enter into agreements with individual centres and communities and to monitor levels of compliance and progress. Further capacity building is considered necessary to build on the progress already made within the NECD NGO Association, which has the duty to provide a viable support network to childcare workers so that they might become mobilising agents in their communities for better understanding of sound childcare practices and orphan care. An effective communication strategy, at the national and regional levels, is also seen as key to fostering an understanding of the rights of orphans and promoting a sympathetic environment towards orphans.

The OCP aims at creating a win-win situation whereby all children benefit from the improved standard of care in the ECD facilities, while at the same time relieving the hardship of orphans and foster parents to some degree at least. Other positive spin-offs include an increased awareness in childcare workers of the special needs of orphans. This should facilitate the creation of an environment sympathetic to the needs of orphans. A key strength of the project is not so much the actual improvement of ECD facilities, or even the provision of free childcare, but is its facilitation of social transformation that can take place when enlightened foster parents, caregivers and communities fully exercise their responsibilities as duty bearers. An expected outcome of the project is that the principle of collective care for orphans would become accepted and internalised even with diminishing incentives within the project cycle.

4.2 Project Sites

An initial review of the Orphan Care Project showed that the project has so far only been initiated in two regions namely Ohangwena and Omusati. At an introductory workshop the concept of OCP was, according to some participants, ‘presented to’ rather than ‘discussed with’ key stakeholders by UNICEF.
Following this workshop several regions have submitted proposals. Most of these have not been accepted by UNICEF, as they were not in line with the original proposal and have been returned for adjustments to be made. Interviews with CCLOs in the regions showed that there is still some confusion over the objectives and modalities of the OCP.

Odhongwena Region received funding for the Orphan Care Project in July 2000. However, by the end of 2000, very little progress had been made. This was clearly due to initial misunderstandings of the programme's objectives and modalities. Funding requests to date have been made for administrating the registration of children in the 0-6 age group with the purpose of identifying orphan children in the communities. So far, out of the 5,952 children registered a total of 1,021 orphans have been identified. Registration had been organised on a village-to-village basis in cooperation with headmen, councillors and ECD caregivers. The registration survey was administered by a team of six staff members from the regional Directorate of Community Development. The team experienced several constraints such as lack of transport and cooperation at the village level, which hindered their progress. The need for further explanatory talks to take place between UNICEF and the regional staff is clear. Valuable lessons can clearly be learned from the problems faced by Ohangwena Region in the start up phase of the OCP and these will be incorporated into this evaluation. Omusati Region on the other hand, has made considerable progress in implementing the OCP and provided the current evaluation of the OCP with an ideal focal site.

4.3 Evaluation Objectives

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the progress made during the pilot phase of the project in relation to the original Orphan Care Project objectives and in consideration of the specific contexts in which the initiatives took place. A more specific objective being to review the introduction of new mechanisms and structures with a view to identifying ways of further stimulating and strengthening local responses to collective care for orphans.

4.4 Methodology

Omusati Region was selected as a focal point for the evaluation because the region was thought to provide the most viable case study for the evaluation of the pilot phase of the OCP. The project was introduced to the region at the end of 1999 and is the only longstanding OCP initiative. Although, in terms of capacity building, it may seem rather premature for an in depth evaluation of the progress made, it is hoped that lessons learned will be reflected in the scaling-up phase of the OCP.

Data for the evaluation was drawn from various primary and secondary sources. These range from site visits during a two-day visit to Omusati region, to an in depth analysis of relevant documents and reports. Evaluation instruments included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. A conscious effort was made to broaden the scope of the evaluation beyond the Omusati case study and opinions on the anticipated benefits and constraints of the OCP were actively sought among a wide range of stakeholders at national and regional level. A brief review of relevant literature focuses on regional responses to the orphan crises and helps to situate the OCP in the larger context. The conclusions and recommendations are given considerable attention in order to provide relevant feedback and insight on the pilot OCP to be used in future scaling-up of the initiative.

4.5 A Framework for Evaluation

The OCP proposal clarifies the overall objectives and outcomes, outputs and measurable indicators of the project within a detailed logical framework. This logical framework provides the necessary tools for monitoring progress at different stages within the project cycle. The current evaluation chose to use the framework as a guideline by which to measure the progress made in Omusati Region and inform an analysis of the regional activities. These activities, which also reflect the objectives of the OCP, are as follows:

- Strengthen the capacity of Government to manage the regional support services to ECD and orphan programmes
- Establish regional information bases on ECD facilities and participating orphans
- Implement agreements between ECD workers/facilities and Government for orphan care
- Strengthen current training programmes for childcare workers
4.6 Literature Review

A review of the broader literature on the orphan crisis in sub-Saharan Africa, shows that there has been an enormous shift in approaches from the early 1990s when the orphan problem was really perceived as being a ‘Pandora’s box’ of development, which was kept tightly shut for fear of unleashing ungovernable demand for services and creating expectations which could never be met. By the end of the decade, however, Governments and programme planners alike had begun to realise that their plans, policies, strategies and interventions would be far more realistic and appropriate if they had a better idea of the scale of what was by then a major problem.

There seems to be little doubt now that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is unravelling years of progress in economic and social development. Perhaps most devastating is the realisation that AIDS related mortality will eliminate the gains made in child survival over the past 20 years with infant mortality rates likely to double and child mortality rates will triple in many of the most affected regions of the world. A review of the literature shows that many studies have attempted to identify innovative or indigenous models of care for orphaned children in order to gain insight to improve existing models of care. Generally speaking, there is a call for a four-tier response:

- The family should provide the basic needs for the children as well as emotional support
- The community must support both the children and their caretakers as well as act as a forum for lobbying authorities to assist in providing an effective response to their needs
- The churches and NGOs and CBOs should coordinate all responses whilst also providing material help and other support services
- The State must develop local infrastructure, empower state personnel, create an enabling environment at all levels, modify state services and facilitate funding for grassroots responses (McKerrow, 1996, Hunter & Williamson, 1997)

More specifically, however, it is thought that children in Africa benefit from broad support mechanisms that may provide a stronger safety net than in other regions. These include multigenerational families, single mothers living in sub-households, customs of exchanging children among kin and the sharing of child support and child rearing (Hunter & Williamson, 1997).

Focusing on Namibia, some of the literature suggests that the extended family system is still considered to be strong enough to absorb the ever-increasing number of orphans. For how long this will continue is questionable. In 1998 the first ever study to focus on orphans in Namibia, revealed that 86% of all households surveyed contained at least one child who had been orphaned by AIDS. Even more notable was the fact that these foster parents, many of whom were elderly grandparents, reported feeling tremendously overburdened by their new responsibilities. Poverty and hunger were seen as being the most overriding concerns with day-to-day survival taking precedence over psychosocial issues (MOHSS/UNICEF, 1998).

The Namibian study confirms the belief, as supported by others, that many of the problems faced by households affected by HIV/AIDS are fundamentally economic. Households that are already struggling to make ends meet suffer setbacks when a member is sick or dies and when they have to take in orphans. Strategies that reduce demands on household members’ labour so that they can be free to undertake other productive activities may well include supporting community-based childcare (Hunter & Williamson, 1997). The broader literature clearly demonstrates that the community is the second safety net for families who cannot adequately provide for the basic needs of orphans. There are several examples of how various programme initiatives, which have facilitated communities in identify problems related to orphan care, have resulted in them organising cooperative child care. However, there are no examples where ECD facilities have been used as a platform for encouraging support systems for foster parents or of increasing their knowledge and that of childcare workers on good childcare practices.

Left on their own, it seems that many communities have devised identification and assistance initiatives for orphans of varying sophistication. Many of these community-based initiatives are developed by community-based organisations (CBOs). They are often formed as a response to shared experiences and generally, they do not rely on outside sources for funding. They are usually local but often have the potential to spread and grow into networks forming a powerful constituency for governments and NGOs. Assisting communities in developing and implementing such initiatives involves respecting communities' decision-making structures and enhancing their ability to target assistance to vulnerable families, especially those caring for orphans.
As the HIV/AIDS epidemic is constantly evolving, monitoring its effects provides essential information to guide policy and programme development. Generally, the literature on this subject suggests that systems that regularly collect and disseminate information on the health and socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on families and children are particularly important. There is a need to enhance mechanisms for collecting and analysing data on the impact of HIV/AIDS on children, families and communities and their coping strategies. When community members become more familiar with the scale and nature of the problems created by HIV/AIDS, they are usually more motivated to take charge and find their own solutions. Data must be updated regularly to reflect the changing face of the epidemic and the impact of various interventions.

4.7 An Evaluation Case Study: Omusati Region

4.7.1 Situation Analysis

Situated in northwest Namibia, Omusati is one of the four political regions, which constitute northern Namibia. Omusati is predominantly an agricultural region with both livestock rearing and crop farming dominating the subsistence economy. During the 1991 population census, the region’s total population was estimated at 189,919 with an annual growth rate of 3 per cent per year. According to the DCD office there are some 10,651 children in the 0-6 age range. Of these 800 are orphans. Currently, only 180 orphans attend one of the 457 community-based kindergartens in the region.

The impact of the HIV/AIDS has been devastating, resulting in household decision-making and coping strategies being driven by the need to survive. The extended family system, which has always provided a security net, is gradually seen to be breaking down. There are a variety of family systems, which are beginning to take its place such as the grandparent/grandchildren household or female-headed households. Generally, the family network that children can rely on is getting smaller and less reliable. Often children at risk, such as orphans, have caretakers who lack the resources in terms of labour, cash, information or remittances to make decisions in their best interest.

The political and social structural set-up of Omusati Region is characterised by the existence of a range of structures. Traditional Authorities and the Omusati Regional Council (ORC) constitute the main governing bodies of the Omusati Region. The ORC is the legal and recognised supreme body in the region and serves as the link between the communities and the central government in Windhoek. The ORC exercises governance over the whole region through the 11 Constituency Councillors, while the Tribal Authority governance is largely restricted to specific tribal groupings. However, these two governing bodies are seen to cooperate and work closely together.

The relationship between the ORC and the Traditional Authorities can be described as one of partnership characterised by constant and regular consultations on issues and matters of mutual concern. They are not only significant change agents but also serve as key gatekeepers. It is quite clear that approval by these bodies needs to be sought if any new initiatives are to be introduced at the regional or community level.

An important component of the Omusati Regional Council is the Regional Development Committee, which was established in 1994 to facilitate coordination of regional development. This committee is chaired by the Regional Executive Officer and its membership comprises of heads of departments from various line ministries, Traditional Leaders and heads of NGOs operating in Omusati Region. It plays an advisory role to the Regional Council. The Government’s decentralisation policy calls for every sector to have its own committee including a Regional ECD Committee. These committees should comprise of members from Constituency Committees, which in turn should represent the Village Development Committees. The Village Development Committees are beginning to play a greater role in formulating action plans as well as coordinating and monitoring community development.

4.7.2 Implementation of the Orphan Care Project in Omusati Region

- Strengthening the Capacity of Government to Manage Regional Support to ECD and Orphan Programmes
The Orphan Care Project in Omusati Region was officially introduced at a workshop attended by representatives of the ORC and the Traditional Authorities. In all, 30 Traditional Leaders and 15 Councillors met for a two-day workshop. Regional CLOs, CAs as well as representatives from NGOs also participated. This strategic move gave cognisance to the key players in the region and, no doubt, had a positive impact on the success of the OCP in Omusati Region in terms of the response received at the constituency and community level. Already there is evidence of real ownership and participation in the OCP at all levels, from councillors who are willing to assist the DCD with transport to communities willing to organise themselves and provide labour to improve ECD facilities that are prepared to take orphans for free.

Some difficulties have been experienced as a result of the introductory workshop. One of these was the inevitable raising of expectations, which comes with any new initiative that offers material inputs. Dealing with this issue has not been easy, and still results in foster parents arriving at the regional Directorate of Community Development and the offices of the Traditional Authorities with orphans of all ages in need of assistance.

In line with the on-going process of decentralisation, the DCD has over the last year made notable efforts to ensure that all stakeholders, from the regional government to the village level, have a voice in the regional development process. These structures also provided the DCD, which has a limited staff quota, with a pool of human resources to enable them to implement strategies including those of the OCP. Meetings of the ECD Committees at the constituency level take place bi-monthly and quarterly at the regional level. A review of the structures, however, suggests that this commendable attempt to encourage vertical participation in the decision-making process has actually created a somewhat cumbersome structure. The number of representatives, attending village and constituency level ECD Committee meetings, may well need to be reduced if the present structures prove to be ineffective.

Representatives of the ECD Committees at the constituency level have all attended a one-day workshop on ECD issues including those directly related to the OCP. The idea being that these Committee members will go back to the Village Development and ECD Committees and pass on the information to the other members. Just how feasible and effective this filtering down of information on issues such as children’s rights and the responsibilities of foster parents as primary duty bearers, has yet to be monitored. The development of the facilitating and monitoring roles of the CAs and CLOs is more crucial than ever. At least some of them will benefit from training in new facilitation methods as planned by the MWACW and ACORD and scheduled to take place from March 2001.

General satisfaction with these new structures set up by the DCD suggests that they have so far had a positive impact on the levels of effectiveness and ownership of the OCP and other ECD initiatives. Yet, this strengthening of the Government’s capacity is somewhat offset by an undermining of the Traditional Authorities’ capacity to cope with the ever increasing orphan crisis. Until very recently, the traditional concept of assimilating orphans into the extended family and communities, had worked effectively. Within the last two years there has been a tremendous increase in the number of deaths from HIV/AIDS in Omusati region, especially among young people. This has resulted in the shift from what was a natural process of integrating orphans into family life, to the emergence of a problem that has become a major concern for the Traditional Authorities and is verging on a crisis situation within each and every community. Their role, which would normally be assisting in inheritance disputes after a death, has had to broaden to include issues, which are tantamount to an emergency situation.

Dealing with emergency situations is not a new task for the Traditional Authorities. For example in times of drought they would rely on established coping strategies such as collecting in-kind by whole communities for redistribution by the Senior Headman. Yet, the present orphan ‘crisis’ is perceived by the Traditional Authorities as being something that is well beyond their normal coping capacities. What is most daunting, it seems, is the sheer scale of the problem. As one Senior Headman explained, out of his immediate community of 55 households, at least 40 have one or more orphans. Elderly grandparents, some of whom are also responsible for looking after sick relatives, head many of these homes.

The OCP is being fully endorsed by the Traditional Authorities and they are currently assisting the DCD with data collection as well as supporting the ECD Committee members at the community level. However, they are fully aware of the shortfall in the coverage provided by the OCP, which caters mainly for orphans in the 3-6 years age group. A critical issue of concern for the Traditional Authorities is the alarming number of orphans in the 0-3 years age group. As most of these are not registered at an ECD centre, the Traditional Authorities are the only source of data on the numbers and status of this group of
children. Data is presently being collected to update the regional information and will shortly be available for use by the DCD. An estimate of between 450-600 children between 0-3 years was given. The greatest need at present is baby milk powder for feeding these children especially for those in the 0-6 months age group. Alternatives, such as wet-nursing for young babies, are linked to strong taboos in the Owambo culture and would not be acceptable in most cases. None of the Regional authorities, including the hospital are presently able to help with this situation, leaving the Traditional Authorities with a sense of hopelessness in assisting the communities, a feeling that basically akin to dis-empowerment.

Desperate situations often call for desperate measures. In questioning their own innate capacity to cope with the growing orphan crisis, the Traditional Authorities have begun to examine the institutional structures within which they have always worked. They are becoming increasingly desperate for solutions and would welcome an outside Task Force that has experience in this situation, to assist them in identifying new and innovative coping strategies.

- Implementing Agreements between ECD Workers/Facilities and Government for Orphan Care

A decision was made by the DCD to carry out closely monitored ‘pilot’ OCP initiatives in 10 selected ECD facilities in each of the 11 constituencies. The first step was to inform both the Traditional and the Regional Authorities about the OCP. The next step was to inform and mobilise the communities throughout the constituencies. Following the mobilisation meetings in the communities, ECD facilities that were already caring for orphans were approached and asked if they would like to participate in the project. The whole community was involved in the decision making process. Eventually, the DCD were able to list 100 ECD centres that were willing to participate in the project.

After some initial confusion over the set of forms compiled by UNICEF, for the administration of the OCP, the DCD staff took the initiative in developing forms that could be understood at the community level and translated them into the appropriate local language. An agreement between the DCD and each ECD facility was then drawn up in which the ECD worker accepted to take a number of orphans free of charge or for half of the normal fee. In return, the facility would receive assistance from the project to improve their structures. By the end of 2000 the DCD had assisted 25 ECD centres with roofing sheets, timber, fencing and VIP toilets. Assistance to the facilities has deliberately not been fully comprehensive, so the community has had to supplement the initiative with some materials and labour. This was done to increase the community’s sense of participation and ownership.

The type of assistance offered also varies. For example, the Himba community in Ruacana constituency participates in the OCP but are given food supplies instead of assistance in building permanent structures. At the same time a more sustainable strategy was employed by the DCD whereby the community was provided with seed for planting their own food. Further socio-cultural sensitivity was called for by the DCD staff working with the Himba community when trying to determine the number of orphans in the community, as the concept of ‘orphan’ is foreign to their culture. In spite of these ‘constraints’, there is evidence to suggest that the OCP is strengthening the positive child rearing practices of this particular Himba community. The concept of collective childcare is being practiced in a culturally acceptable manner and at the same time the OCP has empowered the ECD caregivers to decide for themselves when and how they would benefit from attending an ECD training course.

Variations within the Omusati OCP are not limited to the type of assistance offered. Besides fostering the mainstream approach advocated by the original OCP proposal, which aims to set up agreements with the childcare workers running ECD facilities, the DCD has chosen to assist initiatives which are ‘alternative’ in their approach, but equally committed to promoting better childcare practices for orphans. In all, five initiatives have been financed through the OCP which are fundamentally different from the others as they go beyond the parameters of the project proposal in that they do not directly focus on ECD facilities as a platform for improving care for orphan children. Each initiative is unique in its approach, often meeting the immediate needs as well as the underlying causes that prevent duty bearers from fulfilling their responsibilities for orphan children. Details of two of the projects are given below.

- Oongo Pottery Project – This initiative centres around two women who are skilled in making pottery as a small-scale income-generating project. They sell their pottery in order to provide for their own children and orphans who stay with them. Although the nature of this initiative is not strictly in line with the OCP objectives and strategies, yet the DCD chose to support these women because they are providing for orphans and needed to have their economic resource
base strengthened in some way. The DCD assists them with funds for clay and dye. The two women are very active in their community, providing positive role models through visiting and supporting vulnerable families. They both expressed the desire to be trained in ECD issues and in particular in the area of children’s rights. With training these women, and others like them, have the potential to assist the DCD in addressing the gap in the OCP, which is the 0-3 years old orphans through a home-visiting programme yet to be established in Omusati Region.

- **Anamulenge Women’s Project** – This is a community-based self-help project comprising of 14 women who have banded together to help share the burden and meet the needs of families who are looking after orphans. Coming from seven different villages, their outreach within the constituency of Anamulenge is quite extensive. Their objective is to alleviate some of the suffering that families and orphans suffer as a result of the AIDS epidemic. Their approach is very practical and they come together to help families with preparation of their fields during the planting season and during the harvest time. They also prepare and plant seasonal vegetable gardens. Among the families they are helping are at least two child-headed households. One of these families consists of four children between the ages of 3 and 12 years. These children have been rejected by the clan and cannot be absorbed into the extended family system. This is because both the mother and grandmother have died of AIDS and there is a belief that the family has been cursed. The community response to the needs of families with orphans is being strengthened by the inputs given by the DCD. These inputs consist of hoes and wheelbarrows, which are used to assist the women in their work. Although, this initiative is not directly related to ECD it is dealing directly with an infringement of young children’s rights. This group of women, with some training can provide the DCD with self-motivated, community-based resource people to address the more strategic needs of families with orphans, at the same time as helping to meet their practical needs.

The effective implementation and administration of the OCP in Omusati Region has been somewhat constrained by both the lack of capacity and shortage of DCD staff. Considering the density of the population in Omusati region, the DCD is grossly understaffed. In total there are only 13 CLOs and CAs in the region. Some districts have only CAs working without the supervision of a CLO. The problem is said to be the lack of available funds to create new posts, rather than lack of capacity to fill the posts. The ideal of having 1 CLO working with 2 CAs in each district is, unfortunately, not considered to be a viable reality in the near future.

Problems relating to staff commitment and motivation are said to be common among government extension workers. Incentives, in terms of salary and benefits, are not considered to be very high and this may explain the lack of a strong work ethic. It is, however, notable that involvement in the OCP has had a significant impact on the levels of motivation and general staff morale within the DCD. This is partly due to the fact that the issue of orphans has affected the lives of so many families and is therefore, seen as being a very relevant and urgent issue that needs to be dealt with immediately. The raised level of interest and positive approach has resulted in more efficient and effective outputs in terms of mobilising communities, in report writing and data collection.

Lack of transport remains a constraint for DCD staff in the implementation and monitoring of the OCP. Presently, the DCD has only one roadworthy car with the second vehicle off the road awaiting the arrival of spare parts. The transport situation for the DCD was further complicated by the move to the new Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW). An oversight within the new Ministry meant that transport had not been budgeted. In consequence, the DCD was not able to avail of transport from the Government car pool in 2000-2001. It is believed that this situation will be resolved in the new financial year. It is notable that transport was not used as an excuse for work not being done. The DCD has developed its own strategies of dealing with the transport constraint. Close working relationships with the Omusati Regional Council has positive spin offs in the constituencies where Councillors are more willing to assist CLOs and CAs with transport when visiting communities. It was clear during project visits, that the CLOS, CAs and the CCLO were well known and respected by the communities, indicating that they actually do visit on a regular basis.

**Establishing Information Bases on ECD Facilities and Participating Orphans**

The DCD in Omusati has begun to establish a system of data collection administered through the CLOs and CAs with the help of the members of the village level ECD Committees. These committee members have been given the task of approaching the traditional leader or headman at the village level on a
regular basis to collect information about the number and status of orphans in their communities. The traditional leaders remain the most informed and reliable source of information at the community level. This information is then relayed to the CA who records it systematically on a specially designed form and then submits it to the regional DCD office.

The regional DCD office maintains a database of all registered ECD facilities. These can range from a formal urban kindergarten to a rural home-based group that meets under a tree. By encouraging all formal and informal facilities to register, the DCD aims to extend their services equally to all caregivers dealing with children between 0-6 years old. The next step will be to merge the information from the OPC on ECD facilities that are caring for orphans, with the main database to give a more comprehensive picture of ECD services in the region.

- **Strengthening Current Training Programmes for Childcare Workers**

While the introduction of regional organisational structures may have increased the effectiveness of the CLOs and CAs as community mobilisers, capacity for training and facilitation among the regional staff is notably lacking. Until now, there has been a total reliance on national level trainers to train ECD workers. With the growing number of home-based ECD facilities and the number of children, including orphans attending them, there is an urgent need for a regional training plan. Of the 536 registered caregivers, only 260 have been trained at the basic level. This means that over 50% of ECD workers in the region are still in need of training. With decentralisation, each regional DCD will have control over its own training activities. UNICEF will support this through direct funding to regional training programmes. These will need to be an integrated part of each region’s overall plan of action.

Until recently, some of the DCD’s training needs have been met through the ECD training programmes of the Omusati based NGO DAPP. Due to recent changes in their resource base, DAPP is now forced to look for other sources of funding for training ECD workers. They already have a waiting list of 130 ECD workers from the areas covered by their programmes, who have formally requested training.

Improving the quality of the day care centre at the same time as improving the skills of ECD workers are clearly stated objective of the OCP. DAPP’s involvement (funded through UNICEF by another source) in the OPC has so far been limited to 13 ECD facilities. Their approach to the OCP has been different from the DCD and is worth considering. With training resources available within the NGO itself, DAPP was able to link the upgrading of the ECD facilities, including the installation of a VIP toilet, with upgrading of the ECD workers through training. In return for these services, each facility agreed to take between two and ten orphans free of charge. Through providing training DAPP was able to improve the quality of the ECD structures and the quality of the care given, to both orphans and non-orphans, by the ECD workers. Considering the limited training resources of the DCD, this combination of improvements has only happened on a limited scale. This will, however, improve once regional staff have been trained to train ECD workers.

At the national level, the MWACW is in the process of planning the re-training of all ECD national trainers. They intend to introduce them to new facilitation methods and issues including counselling and children’s rights. (Intervention 1: Capacity Building of the MWACW). Each region will be able to send one or two CLOs to the training sessions that are due to begin within the first quarter of 2001. It is hoped that this improved and more dynamic type of training will not only equip the national trainers to train ECD workers, Family Visitors and other stakeholders at the regional level in ECD issues, but will enable them to apply their skills to a whole range of development concerns.

### 4.8 Conclusions

*Historically, large scale orphaning has been a sporadic and short term problem caused by war, famine or disease. AIDS has transformed it into a long-term chronic problem that will extend at least through the first third of this century* (Hunter & Williamson 2000:1).

Namibia’s experience of orphans as a ‘social problem’ is limited. In Omusati region the issue of orphan care is not new, but the extent of this social problem is. The introduction of the OCP at the end of 1999 provided the regional DCD with an innovative and structured approach to dealing with an ever-increasing problem. Using ECD facilities as a platform, the DCD began implementing a series of
agreements with ECD workers whereby they agreed to take orphans for free in return for assistance in improving their ECD facility. Eager to encourage other community-based responses to the orphan crisis the DCD took the initiative to fund ‘alternative’ initiatives, which were beyond the official parameters of the OCP objectives and strategies. There is evidence to suggest that these community resource people could become part of a Family Visitors programme to complement the work being done by the ECD workers.

As part of the ongoing process of decentralisation, the DCD began to establish regional structures, which would promote greater participation and ownership of the OCP and other ECD initiatives. In principle, these ECD committees provide the DCD with extra resource people at the community level to assist in collecting data on the number of orphans and to monitor the progress being made in the OCP. Training of the ECD committee members at constituency level has already taken place. Just how effective and sustainable these new structures are, remains to be seen.

The DCD has begun to establish a system of data collection administered through the CLOs and CAs with the help of the members of the village level ECD Committees. These members have been tasked with the work of collecting data on orphans. They collect the information from the traditional leaders who are the most reliable source of information at the community level. This data is then fed back to the regional office where it can be used for planning purposes.

The regional DCD in Omusati is well aware that the OCP does not explicitly meet the needs of children between the ages of 0-3 years, nor does it meet the needs of children between 3-6 years old who do not attend a day care centre for various reasons. Orphans children in the 0-3 years age group are seen as being an extremely vulnerable group of children who warrant urgent attention. This shortfall in the project’s remit has also been pointed out by the Traditional Authorities who have expressed an urgent need for practical and strategic assistance to strengthen their own diminishing capacity to cope effectively with the orphan crisis.

While progress has been made at in terms of recorded commitments to the care of orphans and the implementation of material assistance to ECD facilities, there are several constraints, which have limited the potential progress of the OCP in Omusati Region. These include a shortfall in capacity and numbers of DCD staff, a lack of transport and a dire shortage of training for ECD workers. The lack of training has meant that ECD care workers have not yet had the opportunity to gain the knowledge that will allow them to be seen as ‘experts’ in early childhood care. This important aspect of the programme has yet to be developed and with it they’re potential to become community mobilisers who can advocate and organise a broader community support for young orphans. There is no doubt, that some of these constraints are likely to arise in other regions. Cognisance needs to be taken of them, and where possible, they should be mitigated so as not to jeopardise the impact of the OCP.

The implementation of the OCP in its pilot form in Omusati region has, to some degree, raised more questions than it has been able to answer. Yet, this is almost inevitable in a crisis situation that is constantly changing its dimensions. The OCP has, however, opened the way for other solutions to emerge via the ECD platform. The challenge for the GRN and UNICEF will be to allow the platform to become a springboard for other innovative solutions for dealing with the rights of orphan children along the whole continuum of early childhood care.

Although the following recommendations are made in the light of the Omusati case study, many of them can be easily transferred to a broader, more general application of the OCP.

4.9 Recommendations

- The OCP programme should be ‘re-launched’ nationally by the GRN and UNICEF following a round table discussion with all the stakeholders including regional CCLOs and NGOs. The presentation should be more participatory and less prescriptive. A case study of the Omusati pilot could provide the basis of a formal presentation, but should be followed by a facilitated discussion of the situation concerning orphan care in each of the other regions in order to reflect commonalities and differences. This type of facilitation will help to deal with some of the misunderstandings and promote a broader ownership of the project. Detailed presentations about the modalities should not be attempted in this setting an audience and should be worked through in smaller working groups at a later stage. A user-friendly summary document should be prepared from the original detailed
Networking with the regional and Traditional Authorities is essential and the DCD in Omusati should continue to foster these linkages. Attention should also be given to networking with other line ministries and agencies with an interest or experience in the area of orphan care. The CCLO is already a member of the Regional AIDS Committee and should use this forum to inform and advocate. Efforts should also be made to connect with the newly appointed Regional AIDS Coordinator and with NGOs such as DAPP and church organisations like Catholic Action AIDS who are already active in the region. Networking activities in the form of regular meetings and exchange visits should be actively encouraged in order to ensure better coverage and to strengthen the comparative advantage of each stakeholder. Sharing of information on the data and status of orphans in the region is vital as is the sharing of positive coping strategies.

The plight of orphans, in the 0-6 years age range, in Omusati and in other regions devastated by the AIDS epidemic, clearly needs to be highlighted further and additional coping mechanisms identified. In many regions the situation is too urgent to suggest a study, which would bring these positive coping strategies to light. Besides which, this would be an extractive approach to what is an ongoing indigenous and participatory process. An alternative idea is to provide immediate facilitation services to groups of communities, traditional leaders and other stakeholders, to draw out and identify ways of strengthening the coping mechanisms for dealing with orphans in the 0-6 years age range. At the same time, this could provide a much-needed platform for communities to express their fears and concerns and explore ways forward in this crisis. Using an experiential methodology, similar to that used in the Family Visitors in Aminuis, the consultant concerned could be commissioned to provide tailor made facilitation sessions almost immediately in a pilot area. The material developed alongside these sessions would then form a facilitation manual that could be used on a wider scale.

A rights-based approach to orphan care should not necessarily be limited to working through centres for collective childcare centres. As in the case of Omusati, the challenge of caring for orphans in the 0-3 years age group provides a new dimension to the OCP. Equally important, is the necessity of reaching orphans in the 3-6 years age group who for various reasons do not attend a day care centre. Alternative approaches and community-based solutions need to be sought and strengthened. The introduction of a Family Visitors programme that, among other things, could specifically target orphan children and their foster parents would provide structures through which the programme could be administered. Incentives would have to be seen to be benefiting orphans directly. This complementary component to the OCP would ensure that all young orphans along the continuum of ECD care benefit.

Regional DCD offices should be offered technical advice on how to go about setting up effective regional ECD structures. Capacity to do this within the regions varies greatly and assumptions should not be made that if it happens in Omusati it can happen elsewhere. ECD Committees at the community level should be established even in communities where there are no formal ECD facilities. The NECD NGO Association could be used to advise communities within their sphere of influence on how to democratically set up ECD Committees. Once trained, the members of the committees could monitor the facilities that participate in the OCP. In communities where there are no kindergartens, the ECD Committees could be asked to administer a small revolving fund to strengthen the community’s economic base from which they would be able to support orphans and their foster parents.

The implementation of the OCP within marginalized communities should be approached in a culturally sensitive manner. Flexibility is called for and tailor-made rather than standardised solutions should be sought. In communities where the term ‘orphan’ has never been assimilated into their culture and language, a different entry point for the OPC is needed. In other cases, nothing less than a policy of affirmative action will be necessary to break the deadlock in one or more areas, such as hunger, in order to move the community into a position where it can reflect on the more strategic issues at stake in the care of young children. This demands individualistic, socio-cultural interpretations of the OCP. These means the parameters of the OCP have to be elastic enough to encompass the socio-cultural diversity of all the regions.

Within the OCP, there needs to be a stronger link between improving the quality of the ECD facility and the quality of the service provided by the caregiver, who is a key player in ensuring that the
rights of orphan children are fulfilled. Unless training is readily available, the OCP is likely to remain lop-sided in its achievements and only achieve one of its dual objectives. Giving ECD facilities material assistance to obtain free places for orphan children is one thing, but social transformation in terms of attitudes and behaviour will only come about through raising awareness and empowering people to take their responsibilities as duty bearers seriously. This will only happen if the ECD workers are exposed to training that challenges their own perceptions of orphan children’s rights and the responsibilities of caregivers. Presently, the training needs of the regions are not being met because many of the regions do not have CLOs who can facilitate training workshops that deal with ECD issues from a children’s rights perspective. Support needs to be given to the type of facilitation workshops that ACORD is currently organising for selected CLOs from the regions, which will allow them to design appropriate workshops in their respective regions.
INTERVENTION 5:

CAPACITY BUILDING OF
THE NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
NGO ASSOCIATION

EVALUATION REPORT
Bernard van Leer Foundation / UNICEF

Prepared by:
Catherine A Remmelzwaal
March 2001
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Annex 5.1  CBT Financial Statement, Year 1  (2000)
Annex 5.2  CBT Financial Statement, Year 2  (2001)
5.1 Introduction and Background

One of the major impediments to promoting the improvement of early childhood care and development in Namibia in the ten years following Independence, has been the absence of a functioning support network among ECD practitioners and caregivers. Due to a variety of constraints, such as lack of transport, support systems, training and follow-up services, the current GRN extension services in the area of ECD have proved inadequate to meet the country’s growing needs. In an attempt to bridge some of these gaps and to complement the efforts being made by the Directorate of Community Development in the area of ECD, in 1999 UNICEF turned its attention to the National Early Childhood Development NGO Association (NECD NGO Association).

Founded in 1995 and formally registered in 1997, the NECD NGO Association is essentially an umbrella organisation. It formally represents the NGO community and ECD practitioners on the National ECD Committee, the major policy-making, inter-sectoral body for ECD matters in Namibia. Furthermore, the Association has been selected and mandated to administer the ECD Trust Fund that was initiated in the ECD National Policy Document of 1996. Among other things, a major objective of the ECD Trust Fund is to mobilise resources for ECD programmes.

Through its ‘goodwill capacity’, generated by a core group of committed and highly motivated volunteers, the Association made commendable progress in terms of outreach and quality support services between 1995 and 1999. Many of these early pioneering members, who constituted the Association’s Executive Committee, were greatly constrained by their full-time involvement in their own individual NGOs and Church based organisations.

An informal evaluation of the Association’s capacity early in 1999, clearly demonstrated that its overall institutional capacity was extremely low and in danger of undermining the Association’s ability to effectively carry out its original objectives. Following discussions between UNICEF and the Executive Committee of the Association, a proposal was drawn up. The objective being to transform the NECD-NGO Association, over a defined period of two years, into a fully operational and professionally managed NGO.

It was expected that the NECD Association should be turned into a fully professional organisation, that has a recurrent resource base, able to employ skilled office staff, and able to manage its financial and human resources in support of nation-wide networking of ECD facilities in Namibia.

Detailed terms of reference, outlining a challenging and intensive programme of capacity building, set a very high standard in a competitive tendering process among Namibian consultancies. The outcome of this was the identification of a Namibian Consultancy that could provide an experienced and well-qualified Capacity Building Team (CBT) and whose proposal most adequately met the requirements of the set terms of reference and time frame (Table 5.1).

5.2 The Capacity Building Team

Namibian Resource Consultants (NRC) is a Windhoek based consultancy company that has been operating since 1992. NRC’s Company Profile suggests that its strength lie in its multi-disciplinary approach, which combines relevant skills and expertise to provide a comprehensive, appropriate and sustainable service, which is in accordance with the national development strategy. The guiding philosophy of NCR’s approach is to maximise the participation in decision-making of the stakeholders, particularly the users of the project.

A core team of three consultants, with overlapping and specific individual skills, was suggested in the initial proposal (Table 5.2). A review of their CVs suggests that they possessed the required experience to establish and run the organisation under the Association’s Executive Committee and build the capacity of the staff. Provision was also made for the appointment of specialised short-term consultants when appropriate.
### Table 5.1  Summary of the CBT’s Original Work Plan and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Main Focus</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Stage 1 Objective:  
- To reach consensus on the organisational vision, shape and strategies |  
- Familiarisation | 0-3 months |
| Stage 2 Objective:  
- To establish preliminary activities, prepare the NECD NGO Office and develop a resource base |  
- Establishment staff recruitment  
- Develop office systems  
- Capacity building  
- Implementation of ECD project activities  
- Develop publicity packs | 4-9 months |
| Stage 3 Objective:  
- To build capacity of the staff and the Executive during implementation of the Association’s activities |  
- ECD Activities & Capacity Building  
- Disbursement & monitoring of small grants  
- Organise training  
- Organise special events  
- Develop PR strategy  
- Recruitment of additional staff,  
- Evaluate strategies,  
- Funding activities | 10-16 months |
| Stage 4 Objective:  
- To consolidate the Association’s capacity to perform its core functions and specialist activities |  
- Consolidation & Handover | 16-24 months |

(Source: NRC, 1999)

### Table 5.2  Summary of Proposed Consultancy Input 1999-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Team</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant 1: Team Leader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Strategic planning  
- Organisational planning  
- Reporting |
| Consultant 2: |  
- Networking with Stakeholders  
- Staffing procedures and systems  
- Office management systems |
| Consultant 3: |  
- Financial Management systems  
- Small grants procedures  
- Office Administration |
| Short-term Consultants |  
- Information management  
- Publishing/ publicity  
- Funding/ donor involvement |
5.3 Funding and Accountability

In August 1999 the entire cost of the capacity building intervention was projected to be US$ 130,000 over a period of two years. UNICEF approached the Bernard van Leer Foundation for assistance in funding this initiative. The Foundation agreed to assist with the funding of the first year of the intervention and contributed more than US$50,000. UNICEF welcomed the support of the Foundation in this new ECD initiative and agreed to cover the balance from other sources.

A financial statement detailing the overall costs of the CBT’s capacity building efforts for the first year of operation (Annex 5.1) and a projection of the financial budget for the second year are included (Annex 5.2).

Funding to cover the operational costs of the NECD-NGO Association, enabling them to carry out the networking activities, travel to ECD sites and others activities for the two-year period was secured by UNICEF.

Monitoring and reporting systems were established by UNICEF. Detailed quarterly reports from the CBT have been submitted on time. On the basis of these reports Quarterly Review meetings were regularly convened with UNICEF, the CBT and a member of the Association, usually the Coordinator.

5.4 Evaluation Objectives

The following specific objectives, relating to this intervention, were drawn from the original terms of reference for the evaluation:

- To determine whether the original capacity building objectives, in terms of both skills transfer and sustainability, have been reached
- To examine the extent to which newly capacity has been translated into measurable improvements in the support services and network promotion among NGOs and ECD service providers for children, their families and communities

5.5 Methodology

In considering the methodologies most appropriate to use in evaluating a capacity building intervention, it was felt that the choice should be determined not only by the nature of the task being evaluated, but also by the organisational culture. Initial contact with members of the Association was made at UNICEF’s ECD Annual Review. Informal conversations with several members of the Association and their presentations helped to determine that a participatory methodology would be most appropriate. Semi-structured interviews, observation and participatory exercises were, therefore, planned and carried out with selected key informants ranging from ECD caregivers to members of the Executive Committee.

The CBT were approached through the NRC and semi-structured interviews were carried out along side a more formal quantitative assessment of the capacity building elements. All three core team members of the CBT were interviewed at length as well as the consultant responsible for the development of the database.

In order to triangulate or verify the evaluation findings from the above two groups of informants, opinions of ECD stakeholders in the Association’s external environment were also sought. A range of key informants were, therefore, also consulted and their opinions gained through semi-structured interviews.

Documentation and reports, relating to the Association’s activities and development prior to the capacity building intervention, were consulted. Documentation generated during first year of the CBT’s activities has been read and assimilated into the evaluation report. These range from Quarterly Reports to Minutes of the Executive Committee and NGO meetings. Other materials consulted or reviewed include NECD publications such as the newsletters and brochure.

The main limitation of evaluating this capacity building intervention is related to the actual concept of capacity building. By virtue of its nature, capacity building is a long term, process-oriented approach to development. Realistically, a one-year capacity building time frame is unlikely to produce an abundance
of measurable outputs in relation to indicators such as sustainability, ownership and empowerment. However, accountability is called for, and the evaluation process was seen as an opportunity to review and to reflect, to revisit and to revise the original objectives of the capacity building agenda in the light of a dynamic, changing environment.

5.5 A Framework for Evaluation

Capacity building, as defined by UNICEF, Namibia during the 1999 Mid Term Review refers to:

_All those interventions that aim to improve the ability of people in an informal or formal organisational context to work towards a particular mission_ (UNICEF, 1999: 3)

This is seen as an appropriate definition for this particular evaluation. Not only does it reflect the summary objective of the CBT, it also emphasises that organisational capacity building should begin with the mission statement.

The Mission Statement of the NECD NGO Association is stated as being:

_To provide support services and promote networking for the healthy development of all young children, their families and other early childhood service providers throughout Namibia_

For the Association to attain the level of capacity necessary to carry out these objectives, it requires strengthening in certain elements of capacity. These elements can be defined as follows:

- Financial Capacity & Resource Management
- Management Systems
- Human Resource Development
- External Environment

When the original objectives of the CBT are slotted into these elements and then compared to the current level of progress, it provides some idea as to which elements have been strengthened and which need more attention. By itself, it was felt that this framework would result in an unbalanced quantitative approach to the evaluation. To get a fuller appreciation of the degree and quality of the capacity building that has so far taken place, it was judged necessary to look at each of these elements through a filter of more qualitative indicators.

In line with the evaluation guidelines for GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation documents 1996-2001, five indicators have been selected and used to guide the analysis of the capacity building effort. These were:

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Ownership
- Empowerment
- Sustainability

5.6 Financial Capacity & Resource Mobilization

In terms of setting up financial systems and improving the delivery on financially related issues, _efficiency_ has clearly characterised the capacity building efforts of the CBT in its first year. An initial assessment of the financial situation of the NECD NGO Association by the CBT in November 1999 showed that finances had been carried out in a very transparent manner but it lacked any kind of system in its approach.

The first task of the financial adviser was to liquidate the then current budget with UNICEF and present the report to the Executive Committee. This cleared the way for 2000/2001 Association Budget that was drawn up initially by the CBT and tabled for discussion with the Executive Committee. Financial guidelines covering a range of issues from petty cash to Bank signatories were drawn up together with the new Coordinator shortly he was appointed in March. These have since been implemented on a day-
to-day basis and have improved the delivery of services greatly, indicating the effectiveness of this capacity building effort.

The administration of membership fees remains somewhat unclear in terms of effectiveness. The procedures used have been adapted slightly to meet the expansion of full membership to ECD workers and NGOs. A review of the membership form itself revealed that there is room for ambiguity. This is further reflected in the Coordinator’s concern for legal protection for the Association when membership forms arrive without the appropriate fees being included. Finding a sustainable solution to this with the CBT financial adviser will no doubt improve the efficiency levels of output in the capacity building effort.

Banking procedures were also refined and developed with the introduction of a high interest earning account for the Association. By July 2000 a user-friendly accounting system, Pastel, was installed on the office computer with the view to establishing an efficient and transparent financial system. To further improve the efficiency level in delivery on financial issues, a decision was taken to change the end of the financial year from February to June. The implication being that the Association will be able to provide the AGM, held in October, with recently audited financial statements. By mid October the accounts had been audited by an external auditor. These were presented to the AGM by the Treasurer in a well-prepared financial report, indicating that the financial capacity building efforts have generally been very successful in terms of effectiveness and sense of ownership.

However, the effectiveness of the CBT in improving outcomes in some financial issues has been somewhat hampered. This short fall has been due to circumstances that have mainly been beyond the CBT’s control. The greatest ‘disappointment’ has been the delay in establishing administrative control over the ECD Trust Fund. This is presently with the Minister of MWACW in the form of a Bill and is awaiting presentation to the Cabinet. Reasons given for the delay remain ambiguous.

Repeated attempts to meet with the Minister to discuss the Trust Fund issue and other ECD related did not meet with any success during 2000. Through personal contacts of the Executive Committee members, a meeting with the Minister finally took place early in 2001. The impact of this delay should not be underestimated. While ministerial acknowledgement of the NECD-NGO Association was welcomed, the Association is no nearer to being in a position of administrating the Trust Fund. Overall administrative control of the ECD Trust Fund would, admittedly only secure a small, but stable resource base (15% of the disbursements) for the Association. However, it would allow them to control and deliver the much needed grants to ECD workers who are eager to improve the quality of their services to children and families in their communities. Judging from the strong opinions expressed by the members at the AGM, this delivery of service by the Association would undoubtedly improve their credibility among their membership. While the CBT can hardly be held accountable for the delay in the establishment of the Trust Fund, the confusion among members about the logistics of administrating the Fund demonstrates a certain hesitancy to deal with this important issue.

The establishment of a solid, stable and sustainable resource base for the Association remains an ongoing challenge for the CBT at the end of their first year. While the efficiency of the groundwork done by CBT on resource mobilisation is bearing fruit to some degree, the deficit in funding for the Association’s budget (2000-2001) for the year, remains a constant reminder of the need to persevere with follow-up on private sector contributions. A major financial concern is related directly to the payment of the Coordinators salary which, until now, has been paid from the CBT’s own budget. In the short term, this was an effective way of employing key personnel but can hardly be seen as a sustainable outcome. In the same light, UNICEF may have agreed to fund two-thirds of the Associations costs for the next year but is also not a sustainable strategy and only emphasizes the need for the CBT to focus more urgently on a more stable and more diverse resources base. CBT’s recent recruitment of a consultant with experience in public relations management is a step in the right direction towards developing a more sustainable strategic plan for resource mobilization.

In terms of ownership of financial issues, and all the responsibilities that come with it, clearly lie firmly in the hands of the Coordinator and the Executive Committee. Having two separate and distinct budgets for the Association and the CBT has assisted this sense of ownership. A culture of financial accountability and responsibility has, it seems, always been very prevalent in the Association. The CBT have, in their own way, effectively reinforced this culture by setting up clear and transparent financial procedures and systems. By insisting on the Coordinator’s complete commitment to overseeing each small step taken in the process of setting up these systems, the CBT’s financial adviser has rendered the Coordinator and the Executive Committee an invaluable service. She has ensured that they are well prepared, in terms of knowledge and attitude, to take on the responsibilities of ownership.
The financial capacity element of the CBT’s efforts has without doubt led to varying degrees of empowerment for several members of the Association during the first year.

Most remarkable has been the ever growing confidence and competence of the Coordinator in the management of the Association’s financial affairs. Credit must be given to the participatory mentoring style of the CBT’s financial adviser who has brought the Coordinator from the point of wanting to outsource financial procedures to being confident enough to contribute with informed decisions making in financial matters. The empowerment process in the area of finance is clearly an ongoing one. While the Coordinator is now in the driving seat, he is still clearly dependent on his financial navigator. The next twelve months will not only be a test for the effectiveness of this mentoring partnership but it will also reveal just how empowering the capacity building process has been. The CBT is also aiming to strengthen the capacity of the new members of the Executive Committee in understanding the financial underpinnings of the Association particularly in relation to budgets. This has already been programmed for early in 2001 and will empower the Executive Committee members in the planning and monitoring of the Association’s annual budgets. The only constraints here are of investment and sustainability because the present Executive Committee members only remain in office until October 2001.

Long-term sustainability as an outcome of the CBT’s financial capacity building is not easy to measure after twelve months. However, the degree to which financial systems and procedures have been efficiently and effectively established, clearly indicate a fairly high potential of sustainability.

5.7 Management Structures and Systems

5.7.1 Organisational Structures

The professional development of management structures and systems is key to the overall strategic development of the NECD NGO Association. The original terms of reference stated that the CBT should:

Transform the Association into a professionally managed and run organisation. This will include, inter alia, to create an organizational profile and to establish office structures and procedures (Tender Document: Capacity Building for the ECD NGO Association, 1999)

No formal capacity building assessment of the organisational systems or structures within the Association was carried out by the CBT. The initial work plan drawn up by the CBT seems to have been based on the information received about the Association’s infrastructure during the tendering process. This may well reflect the low status of the Association’s ‘professional’ capacity, leaving little to assess in November 1999 but ignores the fact that the Executive Committee were a major resource of diverse capacities.

A more participatory approach was adopted during the familiarisation stage of the capacity building process. The CBT began by meeting with the Executive Committee members to review the strategy of the CBT and to agree on goals, work plans and time frames for each stage of the capacity building process. During these meeting the CBT efficiently and effectively facilitated the development of an organisational culture and structures through a process of defining the Association’s ‘vision, shape and strategies’. The ease with which this process took place suggests that some credit should be given to the pioneering members of the Association whose values and noble dedication have, no doubt, greatly impacted the essence of the present organisational culture.

An important outcome of this process was the development of an organogram for the Association. The CBT took the initiative and developed an organogram, which was then presented to the Executive Committee for discussion and was accepted. A review of the structures set out in the organogram, almost a year later, suggests that some changes may need to be made to reflect more realistically the objectives of the Association, particularly at the regional level. In order to promote further discussion and true ownership of the organisational structures by the Association’s members, a more participatory review of the structures will need to be planned.
5.7.2 Office Administration

A review of the Association’s office and administrative routines reveals that the CBT were initial responsible for planning and implementing the establishment of the office infrastructure. While this did not constitute true capacity building, it was necessary due to the lack of office personnel. The recruitment of the Coordinator as a full-time office manager in March 2000 meant that many of the office routines could be either handed over or jointly refined to meet the perceived needs. Clearly, progress has been made and is reflected in the efficiency and effectiveness of the office’s capacity so far to meet the daily demands. A major constraining factor has been the issue of office space. The recent relocation of the office to a larger premise should ease this problem.

The CBT’s success in setting up clear channels of communication at an early stage through scheduled regular meetings, has fostered an open exchange of ideas which reflects a high level of efficiency in this element of the capacity building process. The effectiveness of this process is demonstrated in the sustainable improvement of outcomes in several areas.

5.7.3 Networking Tools

The participatory process of designing a brochure for the Association led to the formulation of a mission statement and a clarification of the Association’s objectives and focus. An objective review of the brochure itself as a tool, suggests that the actual design may be over ambitious in the amount of information it gives to its target group. There is, however, no doubt that this tangible improvement in outcomes has positively impacted the sense of ownership not only for the Coordinator and the Executive Committee but also for the membership at large.

Changes in the Association’s Constitution have been made. These were necessary in order to accommodate an expansion of the membership categories and voting rights as well as establishing the Association’s charitable status. The CBT’s participatory management of this process, involving all relevant stakeholders, reflects efficiency and effectiveness in the capacity-building process. The outcome has directly empowered the majority of the membership, which consists of ECD practitioners in over 450 ECD facilities throughout Namibia. The degree of ownership perpetuated by this empowerment was clearly demonstrated in the attendance of 250 ECD practitioners at the AGM in October 2000, where they were able to exercise their right to vote and express their concerns. The degree to which this impact is sustainable is not easily measurable. This will depend on the Association’s policy of inclusiveness, flexibility and its ability to respond to the needs of its membership and a dynamic ECD environment.

By employing a short-term consultant with expertise in media issues, the CBT has successfully revitalised the Association’s newsletter as a valuable tool for fulfilling its networking responsibilities. The process of redesigning and developing the Association’s newsletter as an operative tool for networking provides a clear benchmark for measuring the indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. Overall improvements in the format and design are in themselves notable. It is, however, the improved quality of its content, and the scaling up of its coverage, that are the real indicators as to its effectiveness in strengthening the capacity of the Association’s networking role.

A review of the newsletters printed by the Association over the last three years is a tangible measure of how the newsletter has evolved from being a news and fact sheet to its present form as a dynamic, informative and interactive platform for all ECD practitioners and interested partners. An evaluation of the individual responses from the recipients of the newsletter, clearly demonstrates that it has fostered a real sense of pride in and identification with the Association. Increased input from the membership, especially in local languages, can only increase the sense of ownership and empowerment that this capacity building effort in the area of networking has already generated.

Sustainability of this excellent networking tool, is again, more difficult to measure at this early stage. The potential is clearly there. This will depend on the Association’s willingness and capacity to maintain sensitivity to socio-cultural issues as they impact ECD at the national and local level and to its continued commitment to giving its entire membership a voice.
5.7.4 Database System

The original terms of reference for the CBT commissioned them to establish a database of members as well as a system of soliciting, recording and tracking payment of membership fees. This same database was to be used for networking purposes and in particular assist in the sending of newsletters and other mailings to members and interested partners.

Within the first three months, the CBT employed a short-term consultant to establish a database system, that has to some degree fulfilled these criteria. The database was set up using Excel and housed at the CBT’s own office (NRC) for sake of convenience while the consultant merged all the lists of the ECD Association, church lists and that of the MWACW onto one database. The database is being updated on a regular basis by the CBT consultant from membership forms that are posted to the Association. Since the January information has been periodically extracted from the database to assist in sending members newsletters (bi-monthly) and other information at least once a month.

Capacity building as measured by the indicators of efficiency and effectiveness is very clear in this case. A system has been established and resulted in improved delivery of service and competence. However, the level of ownership as an indicator is somewhat questionable while the database is still housed at the NRC office. The intention behind this may well be to relieve an already overburdened office of another routine activity. However, the handing over of the database, with backstopping in place, will signal a shift in responsibility and ownership, which is essential to consolidate the capacity building process.

In terms of empowerment, the database has tremendous potential. In its present simple form, it has already been used to promote solidarity and networking among the Association’s membership. A review of the database indicates that it is under-utilised and its potential as an ECD national database underestimated by the CBT. Sustainability of the database as a mailing list will not be difficult. The challenge will be to take it further. Further development of this tool depends very much on the Association’s vision and the CBT’s capacity to facilitate the process by which it can reach its full potential as a dynamic management tool.

5.8 Human Resource Development

5.8.1 Management

The decision to pre-empt the establishment of a resource base and recruit a full-time Coordinator, was taken jointly by the CBT and the Executive Committee. The CBT agreed to pay the Coordinator’s salary from the CBT budget until a sustainable resource base was established. The simple logic behind this being that it is impossible to build sustainable capacity if there is no human capacity to build on. This astute move resulted in the recruitment of the present Coordinator Shamani-Jeffery Shikwambi in March 2000. Holding a Masters in Education with a specialization in ECD, combined with good communication skills and willingness to learn new skills, made him an ideal candidate for the position.

Without this staff appointment, the CBT would have found it very difficult to achieve many of their objectives in terms of effective and efficient capacity building in the areas of management and networking. It is notable that the Coordinator’s salary and that of the newly appointed Office Administrator will now be taken from the Association’s own budget. While this inevitably places a greater financial strain on the Association, it is a more realistic approach and will allow the CBT to foster a sense of ownership that comes with full financial responsibility during the second year of capacity building.

The close mentoring relationship, which existed between the Coordinator and the CBT adviser appointed to work with him, was based on the complementarity of their skills. This has been very effective in that it has allowed the Coordinator to immediately take responsibility for the day-to-day routines but gradually take ownership of planning and implementing more complex routines such as the newsletter and preparations for the AGM. The CBT have dealt with capacity building in the area of report and donor proposal writing in a very structured way. By providing the Coordinator with prototypes and skeleton reports, capacity in this area has been efficiently and effectively established. The degree to which this capacity building process has empowered the Coordinator is reflected in his changing perception of the role of the CBT from being ‘evaluators’ to being ‘equal colleagues’.
The Coordinator’s firmly established personal competence in many of the above areas was undoubtedly the result of the close mentoring of the CBT adviser. It was very unfortunate for all concerned, that she resigned to take up another post only nine months after the Coordinator had started work. The CBT has ‘replaced’ her promptly. Yet, the remit of the person who replaced her seems to be very different and does not involve the same type of working relationship with the Coordinator. Although the Coordinator and members of the Executive Committee showed some surprise, initially the repercussions of this unplanned severing of the mentor relationship were not really apparent. Within a very short time, however, the Coordinator has begun to feel ‘overwhelmed’ by the amount of routine work which leaves him little time for personal development and expansion of his role. The first test case will be in the training and management of a new Office Administrator who is has been recently recruited to help cope with the growing workload. Her strength lies in the area finance and not in writing or public relations, areas that the Coordinator feels he needs help in. The CBT will need to take cognisance of this situation in order to maintain their effectiveness in this area capacity building and ensure sustainability of the progress made so far.

5.8.2 Executive Committee

During the first three years after the NECD Association’s establishment in 1997, the Executive Committee played a major role developing, maintaining and actually running the day-to-day activities of the Association. All of the members of the Executive Committee were fully employed individuals in other NGOs, or as in one particular case, as a volunteer already heavily committed on other fronts. So, while commitment and enthusiasm abounded, limitations of time and energy became major constraints to the Association’s growth and institutional development.

The introduction of the CBT to the Association in November 1999, meant that a rather ‘weary’ Executive Committee were, to some degree, relieved of these extra activities. While the first few months were, understandably, taken up with the setting up of office management routines and financial systems, the CBT made notable efforts in terms of consulting with the Executive Committee in reaching a consensus on the ‘vision, shape and strategies’ of the Association. This participatory approach was considered by the Executive Committee to be an effective and efficient way of establishing an identity and ownership of the Association’s aims and objectives as expressed in the mission statement.

The swift recruitment of a Coordinator early in March 2000 required the CBT to facilitate the defining of the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee relative to those of permanent management staff. By October 2000 when the new Executive Committee had been elected at the AGM, portfolios for each of the Executive Committee members had been drawn up and came into effect at their first meeting. An analysis of the newly elected Executive Committee shows that only two out eight are from the original founding members. While these two members provide welcome continuity, in terms of institutional development at this stage this is viewed as being a healthy progression. The new members bring not only fresh experiences but, also a host of new networking contacts which will be of enormous value to the NECD Association. The fact that at least three of the new members locate their NGO constituencies at regional level already, is in itself an asset.

Further guidance was given to the Executive Committee in the document ‘Good Governance’ which was drawn up by the CBT. This document clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee and clarifies the internal lines of authority and accountability between the management and the Executive Committee and the membership. The document is a set of guidelines on good governance, which have been adapted from a Red Cross Governance Manual, and provides an effective and efficient way of dealing with the roles and responsibilities.

The wealth of diverse experiences, including the holding of international and national public office, which characterize the present Executive Committee, clearly demonstrates that they are not in need of capacity building in terms of skills. Popular request, however, has resulted in the CBT planning a series of half-day workshops to coincide with the bi-monthly Executive Committee meetings. These will cover issues such as the annual budget and governance. General satisfaction with the CBT’s methods of enhancing capacity within the Executive Committee has been expressed by the members who feel a sense of ownership and empowerment by being able to confidently represent their constituency.

Although the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee have been re-defined the length of office remains the same at one year. Considering the necessary period of orientation and training for the Executive Committee members and their potential input in terms of networking and advocacy a one-
year length of service is neither an efficient nor effective use of valuable capacity. It will be necessary to make changes to the constitution if the length of office is to be extended.

5.9 External Environment

5.9.1 Introduction

As an umbrella organisation, networking and advocacy on ECD related issues, are central to the overall objectives and the mission of the NECD NGO Association. Focusing on this role means the Association must have the capacity to represent itself and its members in different arenas beyond its own parameters. To cater for this need the CBT has had to broaden its capacity building agenda to suit the needs of the Association in the external environment. Although no strategic plan for public relations and networking has been drawn up there are several initiatives, which reflect varying degrees of progress in this area of capacity building.

5.9.2 NGO Networking

The NECD Association initiated a series of four networking meetings during 2000 to which they invited NGOs, both members and non-members, who were involved in some aspect of ECD. The main purpose of these meetings was to provide a forum through which common concerns could be discussed and information shared. The response has been very encouraging with up to 20 people attending and representing the interests of 17 NGOs. The invitation has not been limited to national or international NGOs but its doors were opened to locally based ECD associations such as the Katutura Home-Based Kindergarten Associations.

The CBT’s input into these meetings has been limited to initial planning, giving a brief introduction in the first meeting and ongoing support reflecting their commitment to efficiency and effectiveness in setting up and improving the outcomes of networking and advocacy as part of their capacity building agenda. The Coordinator has now taken full responsibility for planning the agenda, making arrangements for and chairing these meetings. Ownership of this initiative is clearly in the hands of the Association, empowering the Coordinator to run the meetings in accordance with the Association’s objectives. The sustainability of the Association’s role in this initiative is clearly linked to the Coordinator’s capacity to act as a catalyst in creating feelings of solidarity and then mobilising the participants into advocacy-related action around key issues in ECD. The CBT will need to continue to support, advise and monitor this initiative over the next year.

5.9.3 Regional Seminars

A focus on its regional outreach led the Association to plan a series of seminars/workshops. These seminars are an extension of the one-day workshops that had been successfully held during 1999 in Keetmanshoop and Oniipa, then facilitated by members of the Executive Committee. A repeat of the Oniipa workshop on ‘Child Abuse’ took place early in 2000 due to popular demand. The seminar style workshops which followed this, were initially planned by the CBT and facilitated by the Coordinator in 10 regions, were structured differently. In most cases the Coordinator was invited to attend and contribute to a pre-planned workshop for ECD practitioners by an NGO or, as it happened in two regions, by the Chief Community Liaison Officer from the Regional Government Offices. From a logistical point of view this proved to be much easier.

The theme of the Coordinator’s presentation was for 2000 was: ‘How Children are Affected by HIV/AIDS’. These regional seminars provided an opportunity for the Coordinator to introduce himself and the Association, stating its objectives and the support services offered. A direct result of this public relations effort has been an increase in the number of members. As a capacity building strategy, it has been measurable in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The Coordinator feels that the effort was ‘more than worthwhile’. The opportunity for him to share, at first hand, the experiences of ECD workers in rural communities was clearly enriching. A sense of ownership was forged as the Coordinator spoke on behalf of the Association and felt empowered to advocate for ECD issues while speaking with Regional Governors and Government Officials. While a major benefit of the regional workshops is to allow the Association to remain in touch with its constituency, the level of sustainability of this strategy is uncertain due to its labour intensive nature. There seems to be mixed feelings, not only within the CBT
but also among the Executive Committee members, as to whether this form of ‘training’ will remain be a priority for the Association in the long term.

5.9.4 Regional Structures

The mushrooming of ECD facilities and the increase in the number of members has created an impetus for the NECD-NGO Association to begin to consider the development of regional structures. Discussions with key informants have indicated that there is some confusion about the objectives and form of these regional structures. The Executive Committee has recently discussed the various ways of establishing the Association as a supportive presence for their members at the regional level. Various options include; organized groups of members could begin to work via the Regional ECD Committees; the possibility of engaging Community Liaison Officers from the MWACW to support ECD workers and using regionally based NGOs as focal points for supporting regional members.

Whatever option is eventually chosen, the Association has agreed that it would be better to pilot regional structures in two or three regions and preferably in regions, which are known to have an organized membership. Regional visits by the Executive Committee members will take place over the next few months to enhance their understanding of the situation in selected target regions. It is hoped that regional meetings, where representative can be elected, will take place prior to the next AGM. The CBT are apparently in the process of drawing up a funding proposal advocating a programme of capacity building at the regional level, which will benefit the Association’s membership. Still in its embryo stage, it is rather difficult to evaluate the CBT’s role in this whole process. They have been effective in tabling the issue but clearly need to do more efficient groundwork in terms of gathering more specific regional information that will enable them to give cognisance to regional diversity.

5.9.5 Public Relations & Special Events

The development of a public relations strategy was clearly prescribed in the original terms of reference:

Develop a public relations strategy that informs the public of the intentions of the NECD NGO Association, and generally, the importance of improved early childhood development practice

(Tender Document: Capacity Building for National ECD NGO Association, 1999)

Although the CBT has not yet developed a public relations strategy it assisted the Association during the first year in organising special events that informed the public about the intentions of the Association. Among them was the celebration of the Day of the African Child (June 16th) at the national and regional level. This event involved the organisation and distribution of posters, hats and badges to all the kindergartens that were members of the Association. Although the impact of this event is hard to measure, the Association received a lot of positive feedback about regional events and participation by a range of key people from government officials to parents with their children. Such events, which provide a platform for a recurring annual focus on children, are considered to be very important for raising public awareness. Inspired by this, the NECD NGO Association is planning to initiate an ECD Day. Approval for a day in September to be set-aside for this purpose was recently given by the Minister of MWACW. In response to this, the CBT has recruited a consultant with experience in public relations.

5.9.6 Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Child Welfare

Relationships between the NECD and the new Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Child Welfare have, at the national level, been somewhat strained. An invitation by the Ministry to the Coordinator to attend a Commonwealth Conference on Children’s Rights was a promising start. However, repeated attempts to meet with the Minister herself have, until very recently, failed. Attempts to facilitate meetings between the three National ECD Coordinators have been repeatedly initiated by the NECD-NGO Coordinator. More often than not, these meetings have failed to take place. Apart from being a frustrating experience, this also creates underling tensions.

Dealing with these structural barriers requires more than mere patience and diplomacy, which, to his credit, the Coordinator has shown. These vertical networking linkages with the very Ministry mandated to implement the National ECD Policy, must be seen as a vital ingredient to the Association’s long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Yet, compared to the efforts made to establish structures and
communication channels at the horizontal level with NGOs and CBOs, the CBT seems to have given much less attention to this area. This ‘oversight’ may be based on the assumption that the Coordinator can manage this situation in the same way as he deals with NGOs. The lack of clear strategies and mechanisms to deal with these sensitive issues has not yet been detrimental to the NECD position vis a vis the Ministry, but it has clearly resulted in frustration and stagnation of some initiatives. The ownership of, and response to, this situation needs to be a corporate one.

Fortunately, relationships between the NECD and regional DCD staff are generally very good. Invitations to the Coordinator from various CCLOs to speak at regional workshops, clearly indicates that the NECD has already effectively established its credibility in some regions. These positive relationships at the regional level will provide a sustainable foundation for the realization of a regional focus for the NECD-NGO Association.

5.10 Conclusions

The NECD-NGO Association has from conception, had the potential to provide ECD in Namibia with a human face. ECD is, after all, about people; from parents with newborn babies to elderly grandparents struggling to provide for orphans in their care. The UNICEF initiative of building the capacity of the Association, through the work of the CBT, has given it a professional platform from which it can continue to operate its unique people-to-people approach.

One year into the CBT’s programme, it is possible to pinpoint real capacity building milestones. There is clear evidence that the CBT has been most meticulous in remaining close to the original objectives of the capacity building initiative. This structured and well-disciplined approach has resulted in effective and sustainable capacity building in many key areas. There are, however, some areas that need more in-depth attention: such as the establishment of a more diverse and sustainable resource base and developing the potential of the Association’s database and developing operational plans for the administration of the ECD Trust fund. Other areas such as mentoring or structured support of the Coordinator’s role clearly need to be revisited and reaffirmed before withdrawal or the handing over phase begins. The challenge for the CBT will be to move on into new areas of development such as establishing regional structures, while continuing to consolidate the progress they have made.

This review of the progress made so far has not only been an opportunity to revisit the original objectives but also aims to provide useful signposts for redirection in the recommendations that follow.

5.11 Recommendations

- In order to sustain the gains that the Coordinator has clearly made, the CBT should seriously consider the Coordinator’s current ‘overwhelming’ needs. This should be done by resuming the close mentoring approach, for at least a further six months, which proved to be so successful in the first year. At the same time, the CBT should plan an internal assessment of the Coordinator’s activities and capacities to take place within 3-5 months of their second year. The objective being to realign or readjust the capacity building agenda for the both the Coordinator and the Office Administrator. This would allow the CBT sufficient time to identify any areas of capacity shortfall that would need strengthening in the final phase.

- The CBT should help to steer the NECD-NGO Association away from the Association’s tendency to overextend its limited capacity in terms of human resources. Strict prioritisation, discipline and a policy of saying ‘No’, when necessary, is called for. This also applies to the area of financial resources where acceptance of funding without a focus can create a vicious cycle of new projects increasing the need for more funding for core expenses. For example, the Association should where possible, schedule inputs into seminars and workshops pre-planned by regional NGOs and regional government departments in order to contribute and complement without overstretching its limited resources. The NGO Forum meetings provide an excellent opportunity for planning and scheduling such a coordinated approach. In short, the CBT should further assist the Association in developing a more focused identity which reflects its strong comparative advantage amongst other players in the ECD arena.

- The CBT should revisit its initial effort to draw up a strategic plan for resource mobilization. A reassessment of the overall strategies and ideas on implementation should be reviewed in the light
of the limited progress made in this area and of the need to attain a stable, diverse resource base before the end this year. A facilitated session between the consultant and an informed Executive Committee would be good starting point for the Association to move beyond its present predicament.

- The CBT should advise the NECD NGO Association to consider extending the length of office of the Executive Committee members from one to two years. This extension would give cognisance to the investment of time and input during the of induction period of each new Executive Committee. The extra year would allow the Executive Committee to establish themselves and give higher returns on the investment that has to be made each time the Executive Committee is elected. In order to foster a more rapid building up a positive team dynamic, the CBT should also consider facilitating a series of team building sessions.

- The CBT should begin to explore and use the presently under-utilised capacity of the Executive Committee. Increased levels of involvement and empowerment will undoubtedly, result in an increased sense of ownership. It is suggested that the CBT should carry out a more formal assessment of the Executive Committee’s capacity with the view to focusing on their diverse skills, experience and contacts vis-à-vis the projected needs and priorities of the Association. This could be carried out through a SWOT Analysis type exercise and the results used to mobilize the members to form sub-committees such a Fundraising and Advocacy, which would serve the objective of supplementing and supporting the work of the Coordinator.

- The CBT has so far given priority to horizontal networking. While this needs to be consolidated, efforts should be made to build vertical linkages within institutions and ministries. This broader approach will make advocacy more effective and delivery to constituency more efficient. Vertical linkages at the national level should be strengthened through more strategically planned efforts by the NECD. It is suggested that the CBT should facilitate a brainstorming session with the Coordinator and the Executive Committee to explore ways of moving beyond the present impasse. Considering the vast experience and the diverse networking systems of the present members of the Executive Committee, it would be surprising if solutions were not quick in coming. A very practical idea would be to address the issue of database sharing with the Ministry and explore together the potential of a networking system which would provide them with much needed data on ECD workers and facilities. At the same time, this exercise would help develop a sense of partnership and result in joint ownership of this initiative. In spite of the inevitable trade-offs, a win-win solution like this is far more conducive to progress and much more preferable to stalemate.

- The CBT needs to begin planning and setting up operational structures for the administration of the ECD Trust Fund by the NECD-NGO Association. Following the recent dialogue with the Minister of MWACW, it seems more likely than ever that the Association will be asked to take up its mandate later this year. Although the immediate advantages accrued to the Association are limited compared to the amount of input that will be necessary, the real potential lies in the assistance that it will be able to direct to its membership. Considering that the credibility of the Association will be at stake if the ECD Trust Fund does not run according to the expectations of all the stakeholders, this matter needs to be taken very seriously. The CBT should begin by sensitising the Executive Committee to the importance of this issue and facilitate sessions around an understanding of the Deed of Trust document of the Trust Fund as published in 1999.

- The CBT should facilitate a process whereby the NECD-NGO Association begins to consider developing a broader, more inclusive community outreach which extends beyond the ECD worker and reaches directly into the homes of families with young children. This could be done with very little extra expense using already established networking mechanisms such as the newsletter. The inclusion of a family focused pull-out activity sheet, perhaps linked to the current theme of the newsletter, could facilitate a very important outreach activity In particular, it has the potential to reach parents who, as key stakeholders in ECD, must not be sidelined or forgotten. Some parents may not, for a variety of reasons, be able to send their young children to a home-based or centre-based ECD facility but may well be part of the government’s Family Visitors programme. Such an outreach also has the potential of reaching the much neglected 0-3 years age group. This broader and more inclusive concept of ECD, should to be explored by the Association at the regional level when support systems and structures have been firmly established.

- The CBT should build on the success of the Association’s newsletter. It’s potential as an outreach tool is presently under-utilized and should be explored. Members should be actively encouraged to use material in the newsletters to engage parents, ECD committees and other community members
in discussions about ECD issues. This could either take place on a one to one basis or take the form of evening or weekend forums where one or more Association members could facilitate the discussion. Outreaches to extend the Association’s network should not be restricted to only certain sectors of Namibian society. Instead, the CBT should facilitate attempts to establish a truly national identity for the Association, which transcends all boundaries such as class, race, education and ethnicity.

- To ensure sustainability of the newsletter’s new dynamic, and avoid it becoming a ‘chore’, the CBT should facilitate a more organized ‘team’ approach to the planning and writing of the newsletter, possibly made up of the Coordinator and a sub-committee of the Executive Committee. Skills in forward planning and design need to be developed as well as research and writing skills. Out sourcing of the articles needs to be planned well in advance. Members of the NGO Forum should be encouraged to give their input on a regular basis. For example, a ‘Regional’ page that focuses on regional events and researched by regionally based NGOs, could become a regular feature.

- The establishment of regional structures for the NECD-NGO Association is an immediate priority. Capacity building, in terms of advising and facilitating the process by which the Association moves towards the empowerment of their constituency, should be a major focus for the CBT. Funding or research proposals being developed by the CBT should take cognisance of the need to be regionally specific in their outlook. Any study of regional structures and resources must begin by looking at the wide spectrum of stakeholders involved directly in ECD issues as well as those working on the parameters. These should include Regional Government and its own structures, Traditional Authorities, NGOs, CBOs and church-based organisations. The rich diversity of capacity to be found at the regional level, will no doubt affirm the Association’s decision not to set up parallel structures when it is possible for members to work through established structures.

- Dialogue and networking with other umbrella NGOs could also benefit and enrich the Association’s vision of setting up and maintaining regional structures. For example, NANGOF is a well-established umbrella organisation for all NGOs in Namibia. Although it does not specialize in ECD issues and exchange of experiences could be very useful. Within the region, there are other examples, such as CHIN (Children In Need) in Zambia, that are umbrella organisations supporting members involved specifically in child-related issues.

- While the idea of a Regional Capacity Building Study is feasible, the pressing need for the Association to begin to establish regional structures means that the CBT should not delay the start of the process. Advantage should be taken of working in the regions where government and NGO structures lend themselves to the support of an organised group of members. For example, in Omusati Region there are established ECD Committees with trained ECD representatives at all eleven Constituency levels. Complementary to the Government structures, are the structures set up by the NGO DAPP, which works in three of the Constituencies. Dialogue with these stakeholders and an analysis of the Association’s membership in Omusati could already provide the basis of a plan to pilot regional structures without further delay.

- Encouragement should be given to exploratory attempts by the Coordinator to develop a research element which could benefit the Association by strengthening its knowledge base and increasing its advocacy role. Without overtaxing its staff and members of the Executive Committee, the Association could align itself with current research that is already being funded through NGOs such as ACORD or the University of Namibia in areas such as Orphan Care, Fathers’ Involvement and Children’s Rights.

- As part of a public relations strategy to be developed by the CBT, the Association should consider publishing a National Directory of ECD Services and Facilities. It could contain information about ECD facilities and other useful information on a regional basis. This publication could be sponsored by private sector companies that have ECD related services to offer, such as educational materials. It could be updated once a year and sold to the public as an essential reference guide for parents with young children.

- The CBT should seriously consider guiding the Association along more up-to-date and user-friendly paths in relation to the Association’s database. There are a number of ways in which this could be done. The Table below gives a summary of the progressive levels of development which could be opted for with an increasing degree of technical assistance.
At present the ECD Database is contained in a so-called Spreadsheet format and resident on just one Personal Computer at the Association’s Office in Windhoek (Option 2). When required, specific data is retrieved manually by scrolling through a long list of addresses, resembling a mailing list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 1. Mailing List in Table Format</th>
<th>Use of Word Processor (Word, WordPerfect, etc.) to organize the data in Table format. This method does not facilitate customized reporting and/or data queries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 2. Mailing List in Spreadsheet Format</td>
<td>Use of Spreadsheet Program (Excel, Lotus 123, etc.) listing the data in rows and columns. This method facilitates only very basic calculations and reporting features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3. Records in Database</td>
<td>Use of Database Software (Access, DBase, etc.) listing ECD Centres as records. Facilitates customized data retrieval, calculations and reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 4. Shared Database via LAN and/or WAN Network</td>
<td>Multiple PCs are linked via a Local Area Network (LAN) in one location (building) or a Wide Area Network (WAN). Networking facilitates sharing of data between multiple users (user privileges are granted by the System Administrator)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option 5. Web-Based Solution</td>
<td>The ECD Database is hosted by a local ISP (Internet Service Provider), which calls for an annual fee. Multiple users have access to ECD data though a modem and the internet (standard HTTP Protocol). The Administrator updates the Database; Users have read-only privileges.</td>
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</table>

An alternative to using a Spreadsheet programme for the ECD data would be to use a basic Database programme, such as DBase or Microsoft Access (Option 3). Advantages of using a Database program are: improved facilities for retrieving data, perform periodic statistics and rapidly generate customized reports for clients.

One contemporary alternative, which deserves serious consideration, is a so-called web-based solution. Basically, the Association’s database would be kept on an internet web-site, named by the Association. The Database would be accessible for selected members, in any location, who have access to the Internet through a PC and a modem (Option 5). In practice this means regional members could have access to the data as well as the MWACW if data was to be shared. Membership would be regulated through a system of assigned user names and passwords (See diagram below).
One person or focal organisation would be appointed to have so-called ‘Administrator-privileges’, meaning that he or she has access to the Database and is able to update, add or delete records from the Database. This system would allow for the Association to share information on a ‘need-to-know’ basis with for example the MWACW or other NGOs. Alternatively, the role of Administrator could be taken on by the ISP (Internet Service Provider) that hosts the web site.

There would be an initial cost involved in setting up the web site plus a recurrent annual fee, which includes the optional maintenance (i.e. updating) of the Database by the host. The Table below gives an indication of the total cost involved (Based on a quotation from Africa Online, Windhoek, dated March 2001).

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<tr>
<th>Cost Item</th>
<th>Cost (N$)</th>
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<td>Initial Investment (First year)</td>
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<td>Web Site 50Mb, Domain Registration, 1 Year Web-Hosting, Log Analysis (Client Statistics), Access to Home-page by Administrator</td>
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<td>Development of ECD Homepage (User-friendly Interface to Database)</td>
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<td>Database Software (estimated, depending on choice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recurrent Cost (Annual)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web-hosting plus maintenance of Database by Internet Service Provider</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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An additional advantage of opting for the web-based database would be to have a website with the option to “advertise” the Association and its activities on the Internet, at little extra cost. The NECD NGO Association would have its own homepage, which could carry the archives and the current newsletter as well as other information. It would not only point the user to the database, but also to various ECD related activities and to links to affiliated programmes and organizations.
## Annex 5.1 CBT Financial Statement, Year 1 (2000)

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(Sources: NRC, 2000, 2001)
INTERVENTION 6:
OMAHEKE SAN TRUST

EVALUATION REPORT
Bernard van Leer Foundation / UNICEF

Prepared by:
Catherine A Remmelzwaal
March 2001
INTERVENTION 6:

OMAHEKE SAN TRUST

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6.1 Introduction and Background

6.1.1 The San People

Few would dispute the fact that the San are among the most marginalized ethnic groups in Namibia. It is estimated that of the approximately 100,000 remaining San in southern Africa, 38,275 live in Namibia. The San are not, however, an homogeneous group. In Namibia alone there are more than 10 clusters of San speaking different languages and not all of them are mutually understandable.

The San often live in conditions of extreme poverty. They are often dependent on food handouts in the form of drought relief or at best food-for-work schemes. Many San have little access to education and health services and they lack leadership and representation. Yet, in spite of this rather bleak background, the San have proved themselves to be extremely resilient. This is demonstrated by their insistence on upholding their rich culture, traditions and egalitarian structures in spite of consistent undermining by mainstream society which is often interpreted as being those who control the money, land, natural resources, school system and the political decisions.

6.1.2 The Omaheke San Trust

In 1996 WIMSA (Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa) began working with the San in Omaheke Region. It was soon realised that if the San were to have a voice and be included in decision-making, they would need to set up their own organisation to facilitate unity and promote education among the San in the Omaheke Region. Supported by the Governor and the other ethnic groups, the Omaheke San Trust (OST) was started under the guidance of WIMSA in March 1999. A formal Board of Trustees was established. This Board was made up of six San representatives from different San communities in the region and included two San Chief Designates.

The main objectives of the OST are to promote and preserve San traditions and culture. At the same time it aims to build capacity towards self-reliance as well as education on rights, which include adequate health care and access to schools.

6.1.3 San Education

Educational marginalisation of the young leads to social exclusion of the same people as adults (MBESC, 2000:3)

San children are the most educationally marginalized in Namibia. Their parents are often poor and illiterate and culturally marginalized and, therefore, find it difficult to get their children into school and keep them there. One of the greatest challenges for the San of today is to break this vicious circle of educational marginalisation. To do this means facilitating the education and training of San children, and at the same time, allow them to keep and be proud of their origin and culture.

So far as early childhood development (ECD) is concerned, the San believe that if their children have the opportunity to participate in ECD programmes, it will help to develop their self confidence and skills that will make the transition into the formal education system easier (OST, 1999:9).

UNICEF does not usually favour direct support to ECD facilities. However, when OST developed a community based proposal to assist in financing capital expenses for three ECD centres in Omaheke region, it was accepted as being part of UNICEF’s affirmative action strategy for marginalised minorities (UNICEF, 2000a).
6.2 Evaluation Objectives

The overall objective of this evaluation was to assess progress made in each of the three ECD initiatives within the context of the existing structures and other various ongoing initiatives in Omaheke region. These initiatives include others supported by the Omaheke San Trust. More specifically, the evaluation sought evidence of whether:

- material support to each initiative had resulted in improved facilities and environment for the staff and children attending the kindergartens
- parental and community involvement was being fostered and strengthened

6.3 Methodology

An initial review of the available literature on the impact of formal education on San culture and the challenges it poses to San children, made it clear that any attempt to design a framework for this evaluation needed to give cognisance to certain basic criteria. Being able to draw from this well of wisdom and insight has provided a rich, culturally specific and appropriate platform for this evaluation. The following statements, drawn from the literature, were used as benchmarks in the evaluation framework in order to assess the appropriateness and sustainability of the three ECD interventions reviewed:

- ECD should be an integrated part of a total community development strategy
- Ownership of ECD initiatives should be in the hands of the San and not be imposed from outside
- Special care should be taken to involve San parents in ECD initiatives so as not to dis-empower them
- Outside standards should not be imposed with regard to quality of ECD initiatives
- Alternatives to centre-based care should be explored

These five criteria guided the formulation of specific evaluation questions, which included the following:

- Is the ECD initiative part of an integrated development action plan?
- Was the need for an ECD centre expressed by the community or imposed from outside?
- Was/is the training and on going support of the ECD teacher culturally relevant?
- Is there any evidence that the programme is directly reaching, involving or empowering the parents?
- Is there any evidence that the parents have adjusted their child rearing practices as a result of their child's attendance?
- Is the ECD programme culturally specific/relevant?
- Is the language of instruction appropriate?
- Is there evidence that the children are happier/healthier/stimulated/more socially adjusted and more aware of their own traditions and culture?
- Does the programme bridge the gap between the school and the community? How?
- Does the programme prepare 5/6yr olds for the transition to formal education?
- What evidence is there that the programmes are having an impact on attendance and dropouts in Grades 1-3?
- Is a formal centre based ECD approach really relevant in this community?
- Which alternative or complementary approaches might be more appropriate?

In turn the evaluation questions informed the development of semi-structured interviews and focus discussion groups as evaluation tools. A broad mix of desk based reviews, institution based interviews and community-based fieldtrips in Omaheke region (Gobabis and Donkerbos/Sonneblom) were employed to utilise complementary data from both primary and secondary sources. Each initiative is individually described and analysed then accorded conclusions and recommendations.

6.4 Literature Review

A review of the literature dealing specifically with the educational situation of San children in southern Africa, strongly suggests that Western and formal notions of education have weakened the traditional and community-based learning and socialisation processes in San communities and thereby contributed to their alienation and marginalisation. In spite of the relatively long history of formal education for San
children in certain areas, the majority of San children are still not finishing their formal education while the handful that did, did not achieve satisfactory results to allow them to enter tertiary education. Even more disconcerting is the fact that many of the San children who have gone through primary school have begun demonstrating signs of cultural alienation and are turning their backs on their identity and background. Formal education was said to be ‘stealing’ the San’s children from their parents and communities (Le Roux, 1999:7).

The cultural appropriateness of educational interventions is given a lot of consideration in the literature. In her pre-assessment of study on the needs of San children and the desirability of pre-school facilities, in 1996, Le Roux concluded that ECD initiatives were not necessarily a priority in San communities and that learning interventions from outside would not be sustainable if they were not embedded in a total development strategy.

A comparison of educational initiatives, ECD included, for the San throughout the southern African region indicates that Namibia has by far the most innovative and progressive programmes for testing alternatives to mainstream education. However, it is also noted that these initiatives are generally hampered by the material and structural stumbling blocks, which directly affect the educational opportunities available to San children.

Le Roux (1999) suggests that such alternatives should be ‘low-cost, replicable, culturally appropriate but politically non-threatening and adaptable to ethnically mixed group situations’. A prime example of such an alternative initiative is Gqaina Primary School in Omaheke region, which was started over 10 years ago by Omaheke farmers in order to educate their San farm labourers. Although it is not specifically a pre-school, it does have an active pre-primary ‘bridging’ class that is taught by a teacher who has some knowledge of Ju/'hoan. The majority of learners are said to be San children and in 1999 there were 21 San children out of 29 in the ‘bridging’ class. A literacy programme is also given in Ju/'hoan after classes up to grade 4 and the school hostel has some San members of staff. However, even this model is not without its shortcomings. In spite of repeated efforts over the years, the school had not managed to increase the level of parental involvement in the school. This illustrates the need to look at alternative approaches and to learn from them. While support is needed to strengthen alternative models that are seen to be working, there must be also be an awareness of their inherent weaknesses which will give rise to further probing questions.

A broader review of the literature looked at some key concepts with the view to finding alternative solutions and ideas that could be used to inform the recommendations of the evaluation. The concept of marginalisation is seen to be central to the understanding of the San in relation to the formal education system. Molten (1997) points out that marginalised people are not marginalising themselves but are marginalised by society whose attitudes and behaviour contribute to their marginalisation. This idea of societal, rather than individual responsibility for marginalisation is further reinforced through the more applied concept of social exclusion.

Social exclusion offers a way of re-conceptualising and understanding cumulative disadvantage as experienced by marginalized communities. It involves going beyond resource allocation mechanisms which ‘haves and have-nots’, which usually results in policy recommendations that are dependent on welfarism (Gore, 1996:17) Instead, a social exclusion approach to marginalisation tends to focus on the different sites of exclusion including institutional mechanisms and other agents of exclusion.

In many ways the concept of social exclusion reinforces and complements UNICEF’s newly introduced human rights methodology for programming (UNICEF, 1999). A human rights approach to programming (HRAP) suggests that parents are the primary duty bearers or those charged with the responsibility of the successful learning of their children (UNICEF, 2000:11). Yet, due to the mechanisms of social exclusion, San parents presently lack the capacity to exercise their right to education for their children.

Education is thought to be a primary tool with which marginalized minorities will free themselves from discrimination, political, economic and cultural marginalisation. A new UNICEF funded project, based on the principle of using affirmative action to break specific deadlocks for educationally marginalized children, has recently begun in Omaheke region. It aims to develop the capacities of the San communities to understand formal education both as their right and a pre-requisite for escaping marginalisation (UNICEF, 2000b). Although the MBESC is the main Government partner in this initiative, the relevance of supporting ECD initiatives has, fortunately, not gone unnoticed.
6.5 ECD Community-Based Initiatives

6.5.1 Community-Based Kindergarten, Corridor 17

6.5.1.1 Background

Corridor 17 is situated in the southern part of Omaheke Region. As its name suggests, it lies within the strip of land known as the Corridor, which runs north south along the Botswana border. In this area the San language groups are mainly !Xoo or Nara. Here the San are found living as labourers on white owned commercial farms as well as in the communal areas. The San have no exclusive land rights, as the majority groups are Herero, Mbaneru, Tswana and BaKgalagadi.

Corridor 17 was allocated to the San after Independence and has the largest concentration of San with approximately 20 families and up to 20 children under the age of seven. Since 1996, some of the community has been living at the Intu Afrika game reserve near Mariental. Under an arrangement with the lodge management, a Kalahari Bushman project was set up as a tourist attraction. Initially, it was seen as means of generating income for the San community who sold crafts and offered various cultural activities. A pre-school and adult literacy classes were also established. During the last year or so, relationships between the San and the lodge management began to sour and a disagreement over the bed levies to be paid into a communal Corridor San fund, resulted in the withdrawal of several San participants in the project. For various other reasons, including encroachment on their grazing and watering rights by their neighbours, it is thought that Corridor 17 is fast becoming a 'centre of San dissatisfaction' (Felton 1998:1).

In 1999, under the leadership of the Chief Designate Willem Ryperd, the community requested that the Omaheke San Trust should assist them in drawing up an integrated community development plan. A Community Development Committee of twelve people was elected to begin working with the OST. Using this as an entry point, the OST began a process of facilitation within the community to ensure that decisions were made in a participatory manner. An integrated development plan was drawn up and included the following priorities:

- The renovation of the pre-school
- A solar pump
- A community campsite
- A cattle project
- A community garden

It was felt that the solar pump would greatly help the community, as there would be no reliance on diesel. The campsite, community garden and cattle project would serve to feed the community and generate income for a community fund. The fund would be used to pay pre-school teachers. They received funding for the renovation of the pre-school and the solar pump from UNICEF. Terres de Hommes funded the campsite. A food for work programme made it possible for the community to start work on these projects.

A pre-school was built in the community by the Council of Churches in Namibia in 1992. Between 1993 and 1996, the pre-school had been able to function through Government funding. When in January 1996 the Government ended its national support to pre-school education, the pre-school closed down. Since then the building was used for the storage of food.

The Development Committee decided that, if an ECD programme was going to be successful, an ECD committee should be elected. The community themselves would, however, take full ownership and responsibility of the centre and the programme.

The overall objectives of the ECD Committee were to ensure that:

- Their children gain confidence and acquired skills which would help make the transition to primary school easier
- Their children would learn more about their own culture
- Parents would become interested and offer support
- As a result of this ECD initiative, more children would attend school
Proposed plans included the erection of a fence, the renovation of the existing building, the building of two pit latrines and a storeroom. They also requested equipment for the centre. Two donkey carts and mules were requested to transport children from the other corridors to the kindergarten.

6.5.1.2 Current Status

A recent review of the situation in Corridor 17 revealed that, in spite of all the detailed attention given to the original community plans, there have been some major constraints, which have impeded the full realisation of the ECD initiative. These are summarised as follows:

- The kindergarten building was renovated, although the planned outhouse for storage was not added. Unfortunately, the building itself was recently badly damaged by a mentally disturbed member of the community who had previously damaged the solar pump. Windows were broken and holes were made in the walls. While the community as a whole cannot be held responsible for the actions of an individual, it is thought that some effort by the community, could have been made to restrain the person and seek help for him.

- Fencing-off of the area around the kindergarten had begun, but, came to an abrupt halt when, it seems due to bad planning, the materials ran out.

- Two donkey carts and mules were bought with the idea of transporting San children from to the Kindergarten in Corridor 18. The OST admitted that the donkey carts and mules were added as an after thought without full consultation with the community. The carts, which the community admits were of inferior quality, were used for carrying building materials for the renovation of the kindergarten. Both carts are now broken and awaiting repair. The mules are weak and unfit to pull the carts due to the lack of good fodder for them.

- The campsite and cattle project have not yet been realised, so the community has no means of paying the two kindergarten teachers.

- The main community fund is slowly dwindling and has recently been used to repair the solar pump. Some of this expense is due to be reimbursed by the Regional Water Authorities.

- To date, no kindergarten food supplies have been sent by the Regional Directorate of Community Development to meet the needs of the teachers and the 20 plus kindergarten children who could be attending the kindergarten. Instead, the kindergarten has been running at half strength with only ten children attending. Apparently, these children still attend because they do not have far to walk and can somehow manage a morning session without food.

- A major exacerbating factor to all the above constraints is the ongoing internal community conflict and divisions, which have to a greater degree immobilised all community plans for action. One perception of the root cause of this is the emergence of an authoritarian type of leadership among the community leaders, which is based on a model alien to San culture and is, therefore, causing conflict and division.

The above-mentioned constraints have clearly jeopardised the progress of this community-based ECD initiative. Yet, there are some very positive and sustainable outcomes of this intervention, which should be noted. These aspects will, hopefully, ensure that the children’s rights to quality early childhood care are not ignored amidst the internal community struggles.

- Two people were selected by the community and attended a two-week basic ECD training course in Gobabis. It was facilitated by the ‘On the way Centre’ and the OST, for kindergarten teachers. This has provided the community with two more resource people who can now address ECD related issues as they arise in the community.

- Even though the two kindergarten teachers have not been paid by the community, as initially planned, they have shown real commitment in their efforts to keep the kindergarten open in spite of the damage done to the buildings and the lack of food.

- A verbal report on the community’s current perception of the kindergarten’s impact on the community revealed that they believe that the kindergarten has done a lot to prepare the children
for the primary school. Being taught in their mother tongue has benefited the children. It has also taught the children to work together. Ironically, this is not something that is presently reflected among the adults in the community.

- Although the kindergarten is currently only dealing with children in their pre-school year, the needs of younger children, at least in the 0-3 years age group, are to some degree being dealt with by the Community-Based Resource People (CBRPs) who have also been selected by the community. These volunteers were trained by the NGO Health Unlimited to work as community health mobilisers. A recent study by the NGO indicated that their training and outreach worker covered up 70 per cent of ECD issues. While this may be somewhat optimistic, it can put in perspective by looking at the culturally specific context of San child rearing practices. Particularly in rural areas, childcare is still dealt with in a collective way within the extended family. There is much less gendered division around childcare practices allowing fathers to take a far more active role. The role of the CBRPs in sustaining and affirming these positive child-rearing practices is not clear and may need further reinforcement through more specific ECD training.

- While the experience of working with the leadership and committees in this particular community has not been very effective, the OST have had much more success in their close mentoring of individuals. An example is found in the case of two San people, a man and women, who last year asked for assistance in registering their children in schools. They had to be literally ‘taken by the hand’ and shown exactly how things were done. This was a labour intensive investment. However, this year they not only confident enough to register their own children but they also took other people along with their children to the school to show them how things were done. This kind of capacity building helps to break through barriers of fear and suspicion by building a self-confidence, which has its own momentum and sustainability.

6.5.1.3 Conclusions

The ECD initiative in Corridor 17 was, at least initially, clearly an integrated part of a total community development strategy. Unfortunately, the participatory structures that had been set up to support the ECD initiative and other community action plans were undermined by the conflict and divisions within the community. Lack of success in other areas such as the income-generating projects, has meant that the kindergarten teachers do not have the benefit of a steady livelihood. The very integration, that should have assured the success and sustainability of the ECD initiative, has actually jeopardised its viable existence.

In spite of the initial participatory planning process, real ownership of the initiative appears to have remained in the hands of just a few people namely the teachers and a few interested parents. The ECD Committee seems to have lost its initial motivation. Lack of interest in and responsibility for the initiative by the Directorate of Community Development, in Gobabis, at this point is clear. This may well be due to the fact that the teachers were trained outside of the Government ECD training and the OST has facilitated the development of a community action plan. Both of these activities normally come under the DCD.

Beyond the commitment of a few parents who continue sending their children, in spite of there being no food available, there is little evidence of parental involvement in the ECD initiative. It is difficult to say if this is due to apathy or just a lack of opportunities in the present unsettled community climate. The community’s understanding of the concept of ECD does appear to be very narrow and limited to a focus on a centre-based approach. There is no evidence of an outreach to parents of young children beyond that, which is being done through the CBRPs. Networking between the various community mobilisers and the kindergarten teachers does not seem to have been actively encouraged. Attempts to establish a liaison between the community and the primary school in order to expose children and parents to the school environment appear to be non-existent.

There is no evidence that outside standards have been imposed on this ECD initiative. The basic training in ECD and the follow up visits, which the two teachers have received, has clearly had a positive impact on them and enabled them to maintain a good level of motivation in spite of very difficult circumstances. At this point further training and appropriate material inputs, can only serve to improve their performance and broaden their understanding of ECD issues.
The community’s appreciation of the kindergarten’s work in preparing the children for the formal education system is notable. Yet, in itself suggests that the community has a rather narrow interpretation of ECD. The CBPRs work with young children between 0-3 years and their parents is not yet seen as being part of the ECD initiative. Linkages between the kindergarten and the other community resource people have not been explored or strengthened.

6.5.1.4 Recommendations

- Affirmative action is urgently needed to break the deadlock around the issue of food supplies for this kindergarten and others in Omaheke region. This critical situation is preventing many marginalized children, and particularly San children, from benefiting from ECD initiatives, which may well assist them in adjusting to the formal educational setting in primary school. This issue needs to be persistently brought to the attention of the Regional authorities that are a position to plan drought relief and school feeding programmes. An interim plan of action, which targets ECD initiatives like this one, should be a priority of the EMC project (UNICEF/OST), which is presently in its start up phase.

- Further training of the kindergarten teachers should be considered. It is recommended that they attend the six weeks, mid-level training course which is run periodically by the regional DCD. This will also serve to develop the role of the DCD as an ECD stakeholder in this community, which until now has not been significant.

- A rekindling of interest and motivation within the ECD Committee is key to the sustainability of this community initiative. Not only should the roles and responsibilities of the ECD committee be redefined but they also participate in a basic ECD training course.

- Parental involvement in the kindergarten should be actively encouraged by the teachers and the ECD committee. The level of involvement could range from participation in the programme for one or two mornings a week to familiarisation visits to the primary school with the teachers and the children. A more active outreach to the parents of young children in the 0-6 age range could be an effective way of involving parents as primary duty bearers.

- Extending or supplementing the training of the CBPRs on ECD issues should be planned immediately. This would be an effective way of reaching parents and families. The training could include the specific knowledge and skills that is already being given to ECD Family Visitors in other communities. (Intervention 3: Family Support Strategies and Intervention 7: Total Child’s Family Visitor’s Programme). Discussions held with Health Unlimited suggest that this recommendation is very feasible and would serve to strengthen linkages and foster a multi-sectoral approach to ECD. Responsibility for the training should be shared between Health Unlimited and the DCD as a multi-sectoral joint venture.

- The establishment of a regional network of ECD workers involved in centre-based and home-based activities would help to mitigate the sense of isolation that many ECD workers experience. The Omaheke San Trust is in a good position to take responsibility for establishing itself as a focal point in Omaheke region for the NECD NGO Association. It has the potential and the technology to become a regional support centre for ECD workers without losing its focus on San communities. Without too much extra expenditure the OST could manage a database system on regional ECD facilities and use their outreach capacity to disseminate information on training and other ECD issues sent via the national office in Windhoek.

6.5.2 ‘On the Way Centre’ Kindergarten, Epako, Gobabis

6.5.2.1 Background

Epako is situated on the outskirts of Gobabis, the regional capital of Omaheke Region. Before Independence, Epako was a black township and even today it is where the majority of the black population of Gobabis live.

There is a large squatter area in Epako is where over 5,000 people live in extremely poor conditions. A recent survey of this area (MOHSS/Health Unlimited, 2000) showed that two-thirds of the households
rely on candles for lighting and communal water points for water, all rely on firewood for cooking. Only one-third of all the adults there are formally employed and most of the households are headed by women. Over one-third of all 6-16 year olds were not in school, having either never gone or having dropped out. The social problems identified as being most prominent included tuberculosis, malaria, violent crimes, malnutrition, teenage pregnancy and alcohol abuse. The most serious problems for young children were identified as being diarrhoea and malnutrition while ninety per cent of respondents mentioned that alcohol abuse by parents led to the neglect of young children.

Many San families who have been sent away from farms, or leave because of poor conditions, migrate to Gobabis in search of employment. They often end up living in the poorest areas like Epako squatter camp area. The San children are the most marginalized and play in unhealthy areas on the streets.

With the help of two Christian Community workers, Marie Claire and Raymond Martin, the San community started an ECD centre in 1998. With funds from the Reformed Church of Switzerland, a small house was purchased in the Epako settlement area. The Kalahari People’s Fund provides salaries for a teacher and three assistants. Besides the structured play and learning activities, the 30 children who are mainly San living in the Epako squatter camp, also receive a daily meal.

Funding, via UNICEF, was requested in 2000 to assist with the replacement of materials that had been stolen and for the part renovation of the kindergarten building to make it more suitable for use during the rainy season.

6.5.2.2 Current Status

During a pre-planned visit to the On the Way Kindergarten, interviews and observation, as guided by the evaluation framework, were used. The visit took place at the beginning of the new school year. This meant that parents who came to enrol their children could also be interviewed. While the following comments provide an update on the current status of the kindergarten, they also aim to reflect the progress made by the kindergarten to achieve its overall objectives.

- The overall impression of the building and the environment was clean and well organised. The renovation of the building had been completed providing a dry walk area and a sheltered activity area for the children and staff. Materials, together with tables and cupboards had been replaced.

- This centre-based ECD initiative began in 1998 as a direct outcome of the needs expressed by the San community to assist their children in the transition from the home to formal education. Its intake and curriculum define this initiative as a pre-school, which focuses on preparing 5-7 year olds for entry to Grade 1 primary school. The decision to focus specifically on pre-school children was made by the Centre Committee set up to manage the On the Way Centre projects; a mix of income generating, woodwork and sewing, and educational projects. The Committee’s other development activities have been somewhat hampered by the lack of an Administrator. They hope to appoint a San to this key position very shortly.

- The pre-school staff consists of a kindergarten teacher, who is part San and three San/Nama speaking Assistants. The teacher was trained at the Kuru Development Trust ECD programme, in Botswana. The Assistants, two of whom are illiterate, have received a basic course in early childhood development. With only 18 children, rising to a maximum of 30, this gives an excellent adult/child ratio. Although it is difficult to judge the level of ownership among the staff, it was clear that they all seemed satisfied with the work that they were doing and were eager to do further training and attend afternoon meetings.

- Selection criteria demands that the child is 5 years old before being registered. A two-tier fee system has evolved in which parents in full time employment are asked to pay an enrolment fee and N$10 per month. Parents who are unemployed or depend on casual labour are asked to contribute N$5 per month. Parents who fall behind in paying their fees are asked to assist with cleaning or maintenance of the school. Discussions with parents showed that this system is generally considered fair and promotes a sense of ownership in the school at least at this basic level. The money from the fees is used to cover the cost of food given to the children each day.
The pre-school curriculum seems to be in the process of evolving with parts of it being taken from various sources. A WIMSA initiative planned for 2001, will involve a curriculum workshop for developing a more culturally sensitive and appropriate curriculum for ECD teachers. There were already several examples of recycled waste materials being used to make locally appropriate toys and games. As it was the beginning of term, there was little evidence of the children’s own work but assurance was given that art and craft activities were given a high profile in the curriculum. While the children are mainly being taught in their mother tongues, a mixture of San languages and Nama, they were also exposed to Afrikaans, which helps them to become more familiar to the language of instruction in the primary school. There is evidence that attendance at the pre-school has had an impact on the children’s ability to cope better than other San children who have not attended in the first two grades of primary school. Of the children who were registered at the local primary school after attending the pre-school, there was an attendance rate was almost one hundred per cent. Not all of the children were registered though and the pre-school staff are unsure as to whether the children attending a school at all.

Marie Claire Martin has taken on the role of adviser, leaving the day-to-day running of the pre-school to the teacher and the Assistants. The degree to which she instrumental in imposing outside standards of quality was difficult to judge during the visit. Observation showed that, although she still helps with administrative issues, decision-making is consciously being handed over to the staff. To enable the Assistants to take more active responsibility, it is clear that they will need further training in the future. Preparation and planning of the curriculum is done during scheduled weekly meetings, which all staff members attend. These sessions seem to be less about imposing standards and more about developing a close mentoring relationship, which is clearly still be needed to boost professional confidence and self-esteem among the staff. They also deal with more ethical issues such as discipline, which demands a greater degree of cultural sensitivity.

Although the pre-school management committee is made up of three parents, two men and one woman, parental involvement in the pre-school seems to be rather limited. The main points of contact are at enrolment times, during occasional meetings that are not always well attended, presentations given by the children and when the parents are asked to partake in cleaning or maintenance in lieu of school fees. Parents coming to enrol their children appeared to be quite relaxed and comfortable in the school environment, which is not said to be their experience when enrolling children in the local primary school.

A noteworthy development in the pre-school’s outreach is their involvement in the TB ward at the local hospital. Once a week two of the assistants spend the morning among up to 20 San children who have been admitted for TB treatment. Apart from this, community outreach from the school seems to be restricted by their focus on ECD as being about ‘school readiness’. Registration information is limited to the age and language group of the child and employment status of the parents. Information about the child’s health status, other siblings and perhaps social problems encountered by the parents would provide a more holistic picture of the children’s home environment and assist in planning follow-up outreaches into the community. However, it should be noted that when there is a specific problem affecting a child, efforts are made by the staff to visit the family in the afternoons. Other networking activities include informal contacts with at least four other kindergartens in Epako township.

6.5.2.3 Conclusions

Judging by the group of bright-eyed, satisfied children with happy faces and full stomachs at the end of the morning, it would seem that within the parameters that the pre-school has set itself, the staff are doing a good job, to the best of their ability. The project’s objectives are being met. The value of this particular programme for the San community in Epako is clear. Consolidation, which aims for sustainability, is now necessary.

Besides these very positive aspects, there are a few specific areas that could to be developed; staff development and training need to be strengthened; the curriculum made more culturally appropriate; parental involvement increased; buildings utilised and community outreaches planned in an expansion of their vision of ECD to meet the diverse and never growing needs of a peri-urban squatter community. The following recommendations attempt to expand on these aspects and translate them into more practical applications.
6.5.2.4 Recommendations

- Parental involvement in the pre-school should be made a priority in order to maximise the chances of parents being empowered to claim their children’s right as they move into the formal education system after one or two years of pre-school. The more positive contact San parents have with the pre-school, the more confidence they will gain. Inviting parents to tell traditional stories or teach simple traditional crafts could involve them more. Or, making the school office a resource/information centre could encourage parents to have more contact. Informal literacy classes could meet a need and at the same time provide a forum for parents to share fears and concerns about education and other issues.

- Follow-up procedures on children leaving the pre-school should be developed and not left to chance. Increased parental involvement and contact with the pre-school will make this easier and ensure that all children are registered for Grade 1 at their choice of primary school. Guidance on registration procedures, including planned visits to the school as well as assistance with uniforms where necessary, would facilitate this difficult transition for parents and children.

- The On the Way Centre should consider developing a simple ECD newsletter in San languages for distribution in the communities they work in. It could start with translating some of the articles in the NECD NGO Association combined with pictures of positive childcare practices in those communities. In this way would involve parents and at the same time help create and stimulate an interest in a reading-learning culture, perhaps prior to the start of a literacy campaign.

- An expansion of the present pre-school programme should be considered. Using the same facilities, the ECD initiative could be extended to groups for mother/father and baby (0-3 years) or mother/father and young children (3-5 years) groups once a week around a theme such as language development, nutrition and parental rights and responsibilities. ‘Guest’ speakers, such as community health workers, could be invited to talk to the parents on relevant topics.

- The pre-school’s outreach could also be increased through a simple, well-planned child-to-child programme. In such a programme the pre-school children could be taught songs and games around a particular theme such as hygiene and then encouraged to share them with their siblings at home and San friends in the community.

- Linkages with the local primary school should be strengthened and developed further with visits being made to the school by the staff, children and parents during the last term to assist in the transition to formal education. This opportunity would allow San parents to gain confidence in the formal setting and encourage them to consider early registration of their children.

- Child and family profiles containing information on health status, vaccinations, siblings could be developed to provide valuable information to be used in planning outreaches as well as reflecting a more multi-sectoral approach to ECD.

- Linkages with NGOs working in Epako township should be strengthened. Health Unlimited are currently preparing to begin working in Epako through training of selected community-based persons on health issues. These community mobilisers could, as suggested elsewhere, be trained in ECD issues in a programme similar to the Family Visitors (GRN/ACORD) training course. They would also benefit from visiting kindergartens to learn more about the ECD issues. The kindergartens could enrich their community outreach by having contact with these informed mobilisers who will be working in the communities where these young children live.

- The potential in linking the material needs of the pre-school to the Centre’s income generating activities; the woodwork and sewing projects should be explored. Low-cost and culturally appropriate teaching aids and materials such as jigsaws or soft toys could be produced for the pre-school and perhaps even sold to others kindergartens in the neighbourhood.

- In the area of curriculum development, the pre-school staff and other interested stakeholders should take cognisance of evidence that San children often have an innate artistic ability. Many teachers are said to have commented on San children’s exceptional art skills. This is confirmed by the success of the Kuru Development Trust and the Gqaina School where San children have won international and national prizes for their artwork. Providing them with an enabling environment
where they can gain confidence and self-esteem should be a guiding principle in developing an appropriate curriculum.

- The On the Way Centre should begin to network more closely with other ECD facilities in the Epako area. This type of networking could provide a much needed support system and sense of solidarity among ECD workers. This is exactly the kind of networking that the NECD NGO Association would like to foster at the regional level. Creating a forum for the exchange of information and ideas at the neighbourhood level would not only help improve relations between ethnic groups but also give the San an equal footing among other groups striving for similar objectives.

6.5.3 Donkerbos & Sonneblom Community-Based Kindergartens

6.5.3.1 Background

Donkerbos & Sonneblom are part of a re-settlement project, which lies some 200 kilometres north of Gobabis. The two communities lie three kilometres apart. They are 30 kilometres from the nearest gravel road and 60 kilometres from the nearest shop.

In 1992 WIMSA began assisting these San communities. They now have two solar pumps and are working towards a self-sufficiency project. In 1998 a community building was built half way between the two settlements. This community building has recently begun to be used as an ECD centre. Two San women, selected from the communities were given a basic two-week training in ECD, facilitated by the On the Way Centre in Gobabis. Since then they have apparently been running the kindergarten centre for up to 50 children from both communities. This community-based initiative had very few materials and requested assistance via UNICEF for help in acquiring some basic equipment, teaching materials and two donkey carts.

6.5.3.2 Current Status

- Basic equipment and teaching materials were acquired for the kindergarten. The kindergarten is a well constructed building and situated in a clean enclosed area. The main constraint for the functioning of the kindergarten is food. When drought relief food is available the children attend the kindergarten daily but as soon as it is finished parents with draw their children and keep them at home. The distance from each community to the kindergarten does not encourage parents to send or take their young children on empty stomachs.

- The donkey carts and mules have not yet been purchased as it was felt the timing was inappropriate. A history of mistreatment of the project mules by the community led the project community to decide to delay the purchase of more animals.

- An ECD Committee was selected by the community. It consists of two members from Donkerbos and one from Sonneblom. Although they have been selected, the Committee members need training and guidance in coming to terms with their roles and responsibilities. Up until now their roles have included responsibility for checking the kindergarten register, which should record attendance of children and teachers. On the basis of this register the kindergarten teachers receive their salary. The same Committee also oversees the attendance of the teachers and children in the Informal Grade 1, which is run by three teachers under the auspices of the MBESC.

- A Family Visitors (FVs) programme, supported by the DCD, has been running in Donkerbos and Sonneblom since 1999. The two FVs originally selected by the community are still working in the programme. A recent evaluation of the FVs roles and impact in the community revealed that they have both been effective in their roles of advising parents on child rearing practices (Intervention 3: Family Support Strategies).

- Health Unlimited, an NGO based in Gobabis, has recently selected Donkerbos and Sonneblom as new sites for their community-based health programme. The initiative is welcomed by the communities who selected 13 members to be trained as Community-Based Resource Persons (CBRPs). They have already undergone one weeks training which took place in the communities and the newly certified CBRPs are very visible in the communities being easily identified by their
yellow caps. However, during the community meeting where childcare practices were discussed, the CBRPs were not noticeably any more verbal than other members of the community.

6.5.3.3 Conclusions

During the last few years, the communities of Donkerbos and Sonneblom have received an increasing amount of attention from external development and church organisations. Yet, one of the major constraints to development in the communities is a chronic lack of food security. This has adversely affected the kindergarten programme, which does not run at all when there is no food available. Even though the FVs programme is also affected during times of food shortage, the programme seems to have been more effective in terms of impact. From this evidence, it could be conclude that in these circumstances a FVs programme which brings ECD into the home environment, strengthening the parent’s capacity to care for their young children in exceptionally difficult circumstances, is a better long-term investment for the family and the communities.

6.5.3.4 Recommendations

- As suggested in the recommendations for Corridor 17, affirmative action is urgently needed to break the deadlock around the issue of food supplies for this kindergarten and others in Omaheke region. This critical situation is preventing many marginalized children, and particularly San children, from benefiting from ECD initiatives, which may well assist them in adjusting to the formal educational setting in primary school. As stated earlier, this issue needs to be persistently brought to the attention of the Regional authorities that are in a position to plan drought relief and school feeding programmes. An interim plan of action, which targets ECD initiatives like this one, should be a priority of the EMC project (UNICEF/OST), which is presently in its start up phase.

- The ECD Committee should be encouraged to take responsibility for coordinating all the ECD activities in the communities. Its function should not be limited to overseeing the attendance of the kindergarten teachers but should also include supporting the FVs. When the kindergarten is closed due to shortage of food the committee should encourage the FVs to visit more families and arrange for them to meet with small groups of parents and children in their respective communities. Educational materials and toys from the kindergarten could be used during these meetings to stimulate the children’s interest. ECD Committee members should be given the opportunity to participate in a basic ECD training course.

- Following on from recommendations made for Corridor 17, the training of the CBRPs on ECD issues should be planned immediately. This would be an effective way of reinforcing the work that the FVs have been doing in the communities. The training could include the specific knowledge and skills that is already being given to ECD Family Visitors (Intervention 3: Family Support Strategies and Intervention 7: Total Child Family Visitor’s Programme). Again discussions held with Health Unlimited suggest that this recommendation is very feasible and would serve to strengthen linkages and foster a multi-sectoral approach to ECD. Responsibility for the training should be shared between Health Unlimited and the DCD as a joint venture.
INTERVENTION 7:

THE TOTAL CHILD FAMILY VISITORS PROGRAMME

EVALUATION REPORT
Bernard van Leer Foundation / UNICEF

Prepared by:
Catherine A Remmelzwaal
March 2001
INTERVENTION 7:

THE TOTAL CHILD FAMILY VISITORS PROGRAMME

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7.1 Introduction and Background

The Total Child Programme began in 1997 when a group of teachers and parents from five schools in Aminuis District of Omaheke Region, asked the British NGO ACORD to assist them in identifying causes and solutions to the problems that they perceived as their children’s misbehaviour. In direct response to this request ACORD, together with the Aminuis communities, began the process of piloting a participatory methodology through which all stakeholders would analyse the socialisation process of children and establish dialogue resulting in community action.

The need to incorporate an early childhood perspective was recognised early on in the participatory research process and it soon became apparent that the programme would need to take into account the early childhood socialisation processes of the family and community. It was not until June 2000 that ACORD proposed to pilot a Family Visitors (FVs) programme that would investigate, together with parents and guardians, the community-based socialisation processes in early childhood. The original proposal suggested that the objective of the programme would be to explore with parents and guardians the socialisation processes and stimulation practices in early childhood development and assess which of these lead to ethnocentric and sexist behaviour patterns and investigate ways of reducing them (ACORD, 2000).

Aware of the Government’s own FVs pilot programme, which had been running in four regions since 1999, ACORD explored the possibility of integrating this experience into the Total Child model in Aminuis. Following discussions with UNICEF, MWCW and MBESC it was agreed that all the stakeholders would jointly support the implementation of the Total Child FVs programme. This joint initiative would take the form of training, the development of methodology and materials as well as monitoring and supervision of the FVs. ACORD received funding from UNICEF in June 2000 for the specific purpose of training Total Child FVs, which began in September 2000.

7.2 Evaluation Objectives

The overall objective of this evaluation is to assess the degree to which the Total Child FVs have acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote community and family based processes that focus on the socialisation of children and their caregivers towards human rights and the protection of children.

More specifically the evaluation seeks to:

- Explore and assess the extent to which the Total Child FVs have been trained and supported to develop their roles and responsibilities in terms of establishing community based initiatives that focus on the early socialisation of children
- Measure the impact of the FVs programme on childcare practices at the community and family level
- Review the methodology notes and training modules, developed during the training of the FVs, which are to be incorporated into a new FVs Training Manual

7.3 Methodology and Approach

The evaluation of the FVs began with a broad desk review of relevant reports and documents relating to the Total Child programme in Aminuis. A series of interviews with Windhoek based ACORD staff and staff at the MWACW, led to the design of interviews and questionnaires for data collection during a two-day field visit to Aminuis. During the field visit methods of observation, semi-structured interviews with four FVs and four ACORD field staff as well as focus group discussions with Tswana, San and Herero households across two communities, were employed. Further interviews took place with the consultants and the MWACW staff member responsible for facilitating the training sessions of the FVs as well as developing the methodology and training modules.

The parallel evaluation of the Government’s FVs programme, which took place around the same time (Intervention 3: Family Support Strategies), opened up a discussion about the intrinsic value of comparing the two programmes. In view of the fact that ACORD and the MWACW had officially entered
a partnership through the joint implementation and monitoring of the Total Child FVs, a decision was made to highlight certain aspects of both programmes for comparison and analysis during the evaluation. Table 7.1 highlights the main differences between the two programmes, while the text provides a more detailed analysis. Conclusions and recommendations refer mainly to the Total Child FVs programme.

The main limitation of evaluating the Total Child FVs programme was initially thought to be the difficulty in assessing the impact of the programme at the community level when it had only been running for six months, and when the main focus has been on the training of the FVs. However, a preliminary review of the programme showed that the FVs were very much an integrated component of the overall Total Child programme. Therefore, an assessment of their current and potential impact at the community level would not be problematic.

7.4 The Family Visitors Programme

7.4.1 Selection Process

The Total Child FVs were initially selected by the Aminuis communities after being given guidance and support by the Total Child animators who met with them to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the FVs. In some communities at least, this process has clearly increased their sense of responsibility towards the FVs and ownership of the initiative. Although the criteria for selection were not restrictive in terms of age or experience, gender and ethnic sensitivity were encouraged. In all, 31 FVs were initially selected; 15 males and 16 females. Such a policy of gender equity was not employed during the selection of the Government's FVs, resulting in the selection of only 3 males out of the 16 FVs. Currently, only one out of the three remains in the programme.

All four of the FVs interviewed had completed Grade 10 at school. Their average age was 25 years. The rest of the FVs, with the exception of one married woman from Corridor 13, are all under the 30 years of age. The married woman resigned from the FVs programme after the fourth training session, apparently because she had to move to another community that was not involved in the Total Child programme. Compared to the Government FVs, the Total Child FVs are very young. Although the attrition rate of the younger FVs in the Government programme has been high, it is too early to say that age negatively impacts the sustainability of the Total Child FVs pilot programme.

The high attrition rates of FVs in the Government programme were mainly due to the need to seek paid employment. The initial assumption that kindergarten teachers would make ideal FVs, did not prove to be entirely correct. Several FVs, who also worked in kindergartens, found they became overloaded with responsibilities and dropped out of the programme. This poses the question as to whether employed persons should be selected as FVs. Interviews with the Total Child FVs revealed that in some communities the FVs are already involved in teaching each morning in a kindergarten or running literacy classes. These individuals then carry out their duties as FVs in the afternoons visiting on average three households four days per week. The fact that none of the FVs are married means that presently there is little conflict of interest between their different roles. Even those with children rely on their families to take care of them. According to the female FVs interviewed, this would not be the case if they were married, as their responsibilities in the home would have to take priority over their roles as FVs. It is clear that in both programmes employment and marital status have an impact on the effectiveness of the FVs role.

7.4.2 Training

The initial proposal for the training of the Total Child FVs set out a programme of ten workshops to be attended by 31 FVs and 5 Total Child staff. The themes and responsible agents for each workshop were worked out between ACORD and the MWACW. Compared with the five weeks of training given to the Government's FVs, it seems to be far more dynamic and extensive. Table 7.2 gives the contents of the training courses as workshop themes, names the responsible agents and indicates if the FVs have completed the training.
# Table 7.1 Comparison of Family Visitors Programmes of the MWACW & the Total Child Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>MWACW</th>
<th>ACORD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>To build on parents’ existing knowledge, skills and practices to strengthen early childhood development in the home in eight selected communities</td>
<td>To explore with parents and guardians the socialisation and stimulation practices in early childhood development and assess which of these lead to ethnocentric and sexist behaviour patterns and investigate ways of reducing them</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To train Family Visitors to visit and interact with families using five themes</td>
<td>To create a consciousness of contradictions between traditional-cultural systems and taboos and the reality that children face being institutionalised or ‘adopted’ into an extended family at an early age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To identify positive cultural ECD practices</td>
<td>To help adults recognise adultist practices, identify the ways in which these create vulnerabilities in children and explore means of developing communication between adults and children that affirms, prepares and protects children whilst not undermining the adult’s role in protection and guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To share essential health messages with at least 20 families in each community during the pilot phase</td>
<td>To provide carers with information and skills in preparing children for school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Start up Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Participants</strong></td>
<td>16 from 8 communities</td>
<td>31 from 15 communities</td>
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<td><strong>Male/Female</strong></td>
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<td>15 male, 16 female</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Regional location of the Communities</strong></td>
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<td>Aminuis Constituency, Omaheke</td>
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<td><strong>Community Experience Prior to Family Visitor Project</strong></td>
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<td>Initial PRA in 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Action Plans, based on limited ECD options between 6-12mths after PRAs</td>
<td>In depth, integrated and process orientated PRA over a period of 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection Process</strong></td>
<td>Communities with help of the CAs</td>
<td>Communities with support from the Total Child Animators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Training</strong></td>
<td>3 x 2 weeks over 5 months</td>
<td>10 x 5 days over 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content of Training in Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Self- Awareness and Communication</strong></td>
<td><strong>ECD</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Understanding Families</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Exclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Working with Communities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Counselling and Redirecting Children’s Behaviour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Health, Nutrition &amp; ECD</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rights and Responsibility</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Home Visiting Roles; approaches to families, leaders and committees</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Record Keeping and Planning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Life skills and Alcohol</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>STDs and HIV/AIDS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Orphan Care,</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Child Protection Awareness</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>First Aid &amp; Traditional Birth Attendance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Incentives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uniforms, shoes, materials + N$100 after initial training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Follow-up Visits</strong></td>
<td>Sporadic – averaging 1 visit in 3-4mths</td>
<td>36 planned support visits to each village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 x per month</td>
<td><strong>Transport for training</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intensive follow-up as the FV establish their roles and embark on activities</td>
<td>Community perception of FVs as ‘ACORD’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Supervision and Monitoring**</td>
<td>CLOs and CAs – confusion over roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>Confronted with practical needs such as hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most did not receive any training</td>
<td>Lack of capacity in some key area – training incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roles &amp; Expectations</strong></td>
<td>Visit 3 families per day – 30-40 mins for 4 days per week</td>
<td>Lack of regular incentives are a potential problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitate occasional community meetings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep records on a daily, weekly &amp; monthly basis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liaise with CAs and CLOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incentives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>NS 150 after each training, uniform, bags, caps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constraints</strong></td>
<td>Isolated and marginalized Communities where ECD is not seen as a priority</td>
<td>Transport for training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of transport resulting in poor supervision</td>
<td>Community perception of FVs as ‘ACORD’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low motivation and high attrition rates due to lack of incentives and attraction of paid employment</td>
<td>Confronted with practical needs such as hunger</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of capacity in some key area – training incomplete</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of regular incentives are a potential problem</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.2 Training Programme for Total Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Themes</th>
<th>Responsible Agents</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling and Redirecting Children’s Behaviour I &amp; II</td>
<td>ACORD</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
<td>MWACW</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Social Exclusion</td>
<td>ACORD</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights with Responsibility</td>
<td>ACORD</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visiting Roles and Responsibilities</td>
<td>MWACW</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Skills and Alcohol</td>
<td>MWACW</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDs and HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>MWACW</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphan Care</td>
<td>MWACW</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling III</td>
<td>ACORD</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection Awareness</td>
<td>ACORD</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid and Traditional Birth Attendance</td>
<td>MWACW</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between September and December 2000, four out of ten workshops were run at venues either in Gobabis or Windhoek. Comments on the content and outcomes of these four workshops are given below.

**Counselling and Redirecting Children’s Behaviour I and II**

The first of these workshops covered personal development through self-awareness using a very powerful experiential methodology. The second used the same methods to provide the FVs with basic skills in counselling and redirecting of children’s behaviour so the FVs are equipped to respond sensitively and appropriately to children in difficulties and offer advice to families. These two workshops were facilitated by two consultants commissioned by ACORD to design and facilitate tailor-made workshops according to the needs and capacity of the Total Child FVs.

One of the consultants, who is a Child Psychologist, provided much of the technical input for these sessions. The second consultant, a sociologist and experienced facilitator, provided the dynamic necessary for the implementation of the experiential methodology. This innovative and highly creative approach, allowed for the necessary flexibility in adapting both materials and pace of the course to suit the needs of the participants who differed in their backgrounds and responses. The same consultant has provided all the written materials for compiling a Family Visitors Training Manual, complete with illustrations and details of facilitating techniques.

Interviews with the FVs in Aminuis clearly demonstrated that both these workshops were beneficial to all participants, involving real personal growth and challenge for the FVs and the ACORD staff members who attended.

**Early Childhood Development**

This workshop exposed the FVs to the basic principle of early childhood development and care. It covered topics such as the physical, cognitive and emotional development of children between 0-6 years old as well broader topics of nutrition, health and childcare. The workshop was basically a condensed version of the two-week ECD training given by the DCD to ECD workers.
When asked to evaluate this training course, the FVs who were interviewed said they enjoyed the course and had gained a lot of knowledge about early childhood development and care. Unfortunately, they were not given any handout materials during this course. If this had been developed from the ECD Training Manual, it could have made excellent reference material. Neither did they receive any teaching materials in the form of ECD manuals and posters, which are available (Intervention:8 Material Development) and would enhance the impact of their discussions with families.

There is some evidence to suggest that the broader concept of ECD has not yet been entirely internalised by the ACORD staff. While the Coordinator clearly has an expansive view of ECD, it cannot be assumed that all staff members share this. As ACORD moves into a new phase of human rights approach to community development, with early childhood development as a catalyst, it will be necessary for ACORD field staff to feel confident in the area of ECD.

Social Exclusion

This workshop, using visualisation techniques, provided the FV with the opportunity to begin to understand the systemic nature of social exclusion as an infringement of human rights that can increase vulnerability in children. It aimed to develop critical enquiry and analysis skills in the FVs in order for them to develop strategies that take account of the nature of social exclusion through personal action, community action and advocacy towards protecting children and empowering children and their caregivers. This workshop, conducted by ACORD staff, built on the experiences that the FVs had already had in their communities during the PRA process, which focussed on the effects of social exclusion as experienced by each community.

The original training schedule had planned for the FVs to complete the rest of the training workshops by May 2001. However, the schedule has been considerably delayed and no workshop has taken place yet. The main reason for this delay is thought to be that the original schedule did not take cognisance of the extended holiday period in Namibia, which in reality means many people are not available for work or training before February. Other reasons are related to the acute shortage of transport that ACORD has had since December when they lost the use of a second car due to fatal accident in which three FVs died and one ACORD staff member was seriously injured. The repercussions of this accident should not be underestimated. ACORD has already facilitated group counselling among the FVs who survived. The FVs interviewed were obviously shaken by the experience and by the loss of fellow colleagues, but at the same time expressed a strong desire to continue with training as soon as possible.

7.4.3 Methodology and Material Development

A review of the ECD Training Manual by ACORD early in 2000, revealed that the material focused on the cognitive, emotional and physical development of the child with little consideration being given to the socialisation process. Discussion between ACORD, UNICEF, the MWACW and the MBESC led to the acknowledgement of the fact that there was a need for the introduction of early childhood socialisation into the training of FVs. ACORD agreed to integrate its methods and materials into a training programme and to develop a manual for FVs. It was proposed that the materials should first be tested with the Total Child FVs and that an impact assessment should be made by the MWACW before the materials were finally published.

The consultant, currently working on the development of materials for the socialisation aspects of the FVs Manual, expects to complete all the modules by April 2001. Although the individual modules are currently in draft form, they reflect a high standard of work and manage to encompass both the methodology and the material content in a very user-friendly and attractive manner. The MWACW, MBESC and UNICEF have yet to assess the modules. It is not clear what materials the DCD will draw on to cover some of the remaining modules, such as orphan care, which they still have yet to present in the remaining training sessions of the FVs. Further assistance from the consultant may be needed to develop or standardise other materials for the FVs Manual.

To its credit, ACORD clearly recognised the importance of having facilitators at the national level who could train FVs for the DCD and ECD workers using the new facilitation methods. When the MWACW requested that they should train some of their staff in these methods ACORD agreed, even though funding had not been secured. ACORD accepted the challenge of guiding a group of 18 people,
comprising of regional CLOs from the MWACW and National Trainers from the MBESC, through a series of six Facilitation Workshops.

The first of these workshops have taken place and focussed strongly on the use of experiential methodology in the facilitation process. Responses from the participants at the end of the first training session were extremely positive. The six workshops aim to develop broader facilitation skills in the participants so that they can develop their own materials and design their own workshops on a range of topics from ECD to orphan care. The importance of this training in the whole scheme of building capacity within the Ministries, as well as strengthening and expanding the national programme of FVs, should not be underestimated.

7.4.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Although the initial proposal clearly defines certain roles and responsibilities of the Total Child FVs, there is also a degree of flexibility, which allows for the FVs to develop their role according to the needs of their particular communities.

During interviews, the Total Child FVs defined their own roles rather specifically, limiting them to working with young children in the communities and with the matrons at the school hostels. Working with young children in the communities is, of course, open to interpretation and means that the FVs could become involved in a range of activities from home visiting to the running of community based kindergartens.

The community perception of the Total Child FVs and their roles differs, even within each community. Generally, the FVs are perceived as being ‘hardworking’, ‘assets’ and ‘helpful’ to their communities. They are appreciated for their role in bringing back new information to the communities and are seen as ‘adding’ to the communities’ knowledge. Yet some families, particularly the poorer ones, felt that the role of the FVs should include more than just passing on knowledge. These families challenged the FVs role, telling them they should not just come to talk, but they should also bring food with them. In communities where there is real hunger, this type of reaction is quite normal and the Government FVs experienced this often. Acknowledgement of this chronic problem is no solution. The ACORD Total Child programme has never focussed on short-term welfare related needs of the community, but rather on the strategic needs, which lead to the long-term goal of social transformation. As community resource persons, the FVs may, in time, feel the need to respond to the practical needs of the communities and use their referral skills to advocate for other aspects of community development.

While some community members viewed the FVs as ‘community workers’ or ‘resource persons’, others saw them clearly as being ‘ACORD Staff’ who will continue the work of ACORD animators in the community when the ACORD office relocates to Gobabis. The root cause of this misconception is difficult to identify. It may be the result of misinformation or an expression of the communities’ unwillingness to allow ACORD to physically withdraw. Whatever the cause, this confusion surrounding the identity of FVs, it is not limited to the community as the FVs themselves expressed some real doubts as to their identity. They wanted to know if after their training they would have the opportunity to become paid ACORD staff members. Their own identity seems to be blurred by their raised expectations and will need to be dealt with explicitly.

There is clear evidence of a strong correlation between the role of the FVs and the community’s expectations of setting up of community-based kindergartens. This was not an expected outcome of the Total Child FVs programme. Some communities have, however, set their own expectations with regard to the FVs running kindergartens simply because they have had training in ECD. In Hukus for example, where there is no building yet for the kindergarten, the FVs have already taken on the role of gathering the children together for at least two mornings a week in order to do different activities with them. The community is planning to set up an ECD committee and build a kindergarten so that the FVs can teach the child there on a regular basis. Presently, there does not seem to be any conflict between the two roles taken on by the FVs but it may well be different in practice.

The FVs, who were interviewed, generally had an air of self-confidence and seemed to have a mature approach to their roles as FVs. There were, however, areas of their work that they felt they needed further guidance in, such as dealing with marriage problems and supporting parents with disabled children in the community. Considering they have only had four out of ten training sessions, this acknowledged lack of capacity in these young FVs is understandable. However, knowledge and even counselling skills may not help certain sensitive situations, especially where advice from a young person
may not be culturally appropriate or acceptable. Presently, ACORD staff provides support in overcoming these issues, but in the future the FVs may have to build up their own network of support through contacts with respected elders or even church members in the community who can advise and support them.

The Total Child programme started as a community initiative, which involved both parents and teachers. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the FVs also focus on issues around the school environment. This strong linkage between the FVs and the school as an institution provides the programme with a potential sustainability that is clearly missing in the Government's FVs programme. Visits to the schools demonstrated that ACORD has successfully established open and trusting relationships with the staff and pupils in the schools. The impact of this is measurable through evidence of changed attitudes and behaviour in relationships between teachers and learners.

The Total Child FVs are clearly developing their role as school-community liaisons. The objective of this role is to create close links between the FVs, the school Matrons and school Principals in order to reduce the trauma and vulnerability of young children leaving home to live in an institutional environment. During the third term of school year 2000, the FVs organised pre-reception days for children from their villages who were due to start school in January 2001. The children were shown around their prospective school and hostel by other learners and then introduced to the teachers, the Principal and the Matron. The children were apparently so enthusiastic about their visits they could hardly wait to start school in January.

Interviews with the FVs revealed that their main contact person at the school is the Matron who is responsible for the children's welfare in the hostel. So far the level of contact between the FVs and the teachers in the schools seems to be minimal. This is perceived as being due to the workload of the teaching staff who are always 'too busy'. Yet, the FVs provide the Total Child programme with the opportunity of connecting the child's two most formative environments; the home and the classroom. This connection needs to be strengthened through creating forums for dialogue between the FVs and the teachers. The real challenge for the FVs will be to develop these relationships and then create strategies whereby they encourage the families they visit to also get involved in the schools in order to advocate for quality care for their children and reduce the negative perceptions of the school staff and the institutional environment.

So far, the Total Child FVs are seen to be fulfilling their roles in providing a service to their communities in counselling and advising families on ECD issues as well as linking the communities with the schools. Other roles, yet to evolve, include the development of community journals as well as becoming outreach community workers for the Directorate of Community Development.

7.4.5 Structures

The School Board training, which ACORD will shortly introduce into the Total Child Schools, will provide another opportunity for the FVs to encourage communication between the school and the communities. ACORD plans to use and adapt materials, which have been designed and tested in the northern region of Namibia. Other relevant structures that are presently being established by ACORD staff, with assistance from the FVs, are ECD committees. It is hoped that these committees will simulate and oversee community based ECD activities with guidance from the FVs who have already had basic training in ECD issues. The ECD committees will also be encouraged to advocate for assistance from the Government at the regional and national level. This will be done through electing committee members to represent the communities via the structures set up by the NECD NGO Association. The fact that an ACORD staff member has recently been elected to the Executive Committee of the NECD NGO Association reinforces the importance of establishing strong linkages. This network system also has the potential to provide Total Child FVs with a sustainable support system through linkages with other ECD caregivers and FVs at the regional and national level.

While ACORD staff members are fully aware of the NECD NGO Association's plan for regional structures, there is less awareness of the existence, at least in theory, of regional Government structures in relation to ECD. Interviews revealed that contact with local Government extension workers is minimal and contact with councillors at constituency level is non-existent. Within the Government's policy of decentralisation, the Regional Councils are responsible for the establishment of Regional Development Committees, which in turn are mandated to set up sectoral committees including an ECD Committee. This committee should comprise of the CCLO from the regional DCD as well as
representatives from ECD Committees at the Constituency level, which in turn should represent the ECD Committees at the community level. These avenues for networking and advocacy on ECD issues have clearly yet to be explored.

7.4.6 Incentives

With regard to incentives, the Total Child FVs have so far received N$150 after each of the four training sessions they attended. They were also presented with shoulder bags and training suits, which bear their own names and their title ‘Family Visitor’, as well as caps. Due to the change in the training schedule, the FVs have effectively not received any form of incentives during the last three months while they have been actively carrying out their duties. While this is unfortunate, it is also realistic in the sense that when the training is complete, there are no plans on the part of ACORD or the MWACW, to continue with any kind of incentives for the FVs.

This is, of course, based on the assumption that the FVs are a highly motivated group of individuals who are willing to give their time and energy on a voluntary basis. While this expectation of them may have been made clear to them on recruitment, reality is often very different and already the FVs interviewed are beginning to question how long they can realistically be expected to volunteer their services for nothing. With little hope of them becoming paid ACORD staff, it is almost inevitable that these young people will, at some point, begin to look elsewhere. In the Government FVs programme the main reason for the high attrition rate, notably among the youngest recruits, was due to the economic pressure to find paid employment. While cash incentives are unlikely to materialise for the FVs programme at large, the question as what kind of incentives, beyond refresher courses, could be feasibly employed to maintain commitment to the programme, remains problematic for both ACORD and the MWACW.

7.4.7 Monitoring and Supervision

Supervision and monitoring of the FVs by ACORD field staff has been ongoing. Until recently, one or two ACORD staff members were appointed to live in the school hostels belonging to the five schools in Aminuis District that are part of the Total Child Programme. This provided clear structures of supervision and monitoring of the six FVs in each set of three communities connected to each school. In turn, this has allowed for the establishment of a close mentoring relationship between individual members of ACORD field staff and FVs. This supportive relationship was reinforced by the fact that ACORD staff attended the training workshops with the FVs. There is clear evidence that ACORD staff have to date played a very supportive role in encouraging and advising the FVs. This is in sharp contrast with the almost total lack of support given to the FVs by extension staff in the Government’s programme.

In the original proposal drawn up between ACORD and the MWACW, it was stated that the national staff of the Ministry would visit the Total Child FVs in January and March. No visits have yet taken place. Furthermore, the CLO based in Gobabis who was responsible for the ECD training input, has yet to do a follow-up visit. In short the MWACW, beyond a week of training input, has not fulfilled their other responsibilities in terms or monitoring the FVs. This suggests that the MWACW have yet to partake fully in the ownership of this pilot. This raises concerns about the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the Total Child FVs when ACORD eventually hands over full responsibility of the FVs to the MWACW. There is no doubt that the same constraints that have negatively impacted the Government’s FVs programme, namely lack of staff, budgets and transport have again negatively affected input by the DCD staff in Gobabis. Unless structural changes take place, the supportive relationship between the Total Child FVs and the MWACW will exist on paper only. Cognisance should be taken of the fact that the DCD has always mandated to deal with the practical need of communities through mobilising communities to start income generating and ECD activities, so their staff members are not yet trained to deal with the more strategic issues which the Total Child Programme is attempting to address.

7.4.8 Impact on the Attitudes and Behaviour of Families

The Total Child FVs programme has effectively, only been running for six months. By any conventional standards, this is an extremely short time frame within which to carry out an impact assessment. However, this evaluation has taken into consideration that prior to the introduction of the FVs
programme in September 2000, all of the Total Child communities have been exposed to an expansive process of participatory research, critical enquiry and analysis which has lead to an understanding of social exclusion in terms of racism, ethnocentrism, sexism and adultism.

The overall impact of the Total Child programme has been evaluated on several occasions. Generally, the feedback has shown that the programme has been successful in creating an enabling environment for dialogue between adults and children about sensitive issues in the communities. Attitudinal shifts are reported and although behavioural change is said to be much slower, there are clear examples at individual, family and institutional level that indicate that a conscious effort is being made to reduce the use of negative power in relationships.

On the basis of this knowledge, the present evaluation focussed an assessment of the current attitude and behaviour in relation to early childhood care practices, as found in three ethnically different communities in Aminuis district. At this stage, it is impossible to say if the positive practices recorded are a result of the overall Total Child programme or the FVs programme. It is impossible to separate the two processes. In order to add another dimension to what would have been a purely descriptive assessment, two ‘control’ groups, which are non-Total Child communities, provide a comparison between the responses to the same evaluation questions (Annex 7.1). Both of these communities have been exposed to the Government’s FVs programme since 1999, but only one of them is located in Omaheke Region.

An analysis of the data shows that all the communities practice a mixture of traditional and modern child rearing practices. On one hand, traditional methods of using urine or breast milk for dealing with children who have sticky eyes are common in all communities. On the other hand, immunisation is a widely accepted practice and has seemingly been internalised by all the communities. This may well be the direct outcome of a series of aggressive immunisation campaigns by the Government. However, the level of understanding as to why immunisation is necessary was found to be extremely poor in all communities and even among FVs themselves.

A major constraint expressed by all the communities was the lack of food, particularly in the San communities. Likewise, in every community questions posed about nutritious food for children exacted exasperated responses and calls for assistance in feeding their children. However, it is interesting to note that even in the poorest San community visited, there were no explicit signs of malnutrition among children between 0-6 years old.

While there is cross-cultural agreement on the importance of play for children as a pleasurable activity, there is little evidence of real understanding that stimulating early childhood play can positively impact later learning. Cultural differences are clearly seen in the nature of parent-child relationships. While Herero culture believes that praising a child makes him too proud, both San communities strongly expressed the need to raise the child’s self-esteem through physical and verbal encouragement.

Difference in the responses between Total Child and non-Total Child communities in relation to the more strategic issues of redirecting children’s behaviour and understanding of children’s rights, clearly cannot be attributed to differences in cultural and traditional belief systems. In both non-Total Child communities, the response to a minor misbehaviour was to beat the child, whereas the Total Child communities responded in a more controlled manner believing that talking to the child would lead to better behaviour. Although the sample is extremely small, it is interesting to note that the two San communities differ drastically on this strategic issue while agreeing in almost all other areas.

Perhaps the most striking differences between the Total Child and non-Total child communities centre on the issue of children’s rights. In both non-Total Child communities, which have not been exposed to the ACORD training on ‘Understanding Rights and Responsibilities’, the understanding of children’s rights ranged from having no rights at all to having the simple, banal right to play. Yet in all three Total Child communities the same question exacted a rich response, demonstrating a broad understanding of children’s rights which ranged from practical rights of food and shelter to more strategic issues of decision-making and respect.

7.5 Conclusions

The Total Child Family Visitors programme began as a pilot in July 2000. The programme aimed at integrating the early socialisation methods of the Total Child programme into the existing MWACW ECD
training programme. Although the pilot was not modelled directly on the Government’s own FVs programme, which had been running since 1999, there are some similarities between the two programmes. This evaluation has compared some aspects of the two programmes in order to heighten awareness of the constraints and opportunities likely to be encountered in the anticipated expansion of the programmes.

An evaluation and comparison of the impact of the two programmes provided conclusive evidence. Total Child communities that have been exposed to a process of critical enquiry and analysis, as well as training in redirecting children’s behaviour and children’s rights, are more likely to engage in positive child rearing practices than those communities which have not. FVs who have undergone the same experiences as the communities are more likely to understand the needs of these communities and use their newly acquired skills in ECD to affirm positive practices and add appropriate knowledge accordingly. The type and content of the training undertaken by the Total Child FVs so far has provided a very important dynamic and although it is early days it may prove to be one of the key differences between the two programmes. The ongoing development of the methodologies and materials used to facilitate this dynamic type of training is essential not only for the present group of FVs, but also for future FVs in the expansion of the programme nationally.

Current motivation levels among the Total Child FVs were found to be extremely high and can be attributed to the high quality of training they have so far undertaken and the close mentoring relationships that they have had with the ACORD field staff. This form of supervision and monitoring has clearly had a positive effect. The challenge for the ACORD staff will be to maintain these levels of motivation from a distance once they have relocated to Gobabis. Although the training schedule for the FVs has been interrupted, it will shortly be resumed. Presently, training in itself is an incentive for the FVs but once training is completed other incentives may well be necessary.

Compared to the FVs in the Government programme, the Total Child FVs are a very young group of people. Although initial contact with some of the FVs suggests that they are quite mature for their age, cognisance should be given to the high attrition rate of young people in the Government’s FVs programme. Experience suggests that middle-aged people have more staying power as volunteers and are less likely to leave their communities for economic reasons. While it is too early to say that this will inevitably affect the Total Child programme, it is clear that stability of this sort will increase the programme’s chances of sustainability.

The FVs who were interviewed were obviously well informed about their roles and responsibilities within the community and have so far taken them seriously. Their roles as school-community liaisons are considered to be very important. Community expectations of the FVs so far, tend to focus more on their role as community workers and welcome their home visits. With the growing demand for formal community based ECD centres, there is a danger that they will become torn between being kindergarten workers and community resource persons. The establishment of ECD Committees in the communities should enable them to remain ECD facilitators rather than teachers, allowing them to develop their more strategic roles as agents of change in the community.

7.6 Recommendations

- New forums for encouraging dialogue between the FVs and the teaching staff, not just the hostel Matrons, should be explored in order to promote a stronger relationship between the different ‘ecosystems’ in which the young child does, or will operate. Forums such as joint workshops and discussion groups for teachers and the FVs could be used to promote a closer working relationship and a better understanding of the conflicting, or complementary, interests that are at work in these different environments. Another idea could involve FVs offering assistance in the classrooms, perhaps for reading activities among the lower grades, for a few hours once a week. This linkage between school and the community could be further developed with FVs encouraging individual parents from their communities to accompany them.

- Resource materials, such as posters and ECD manuals that are currently available, should be supplied to the FVs to give a visual perspective to their messages to families and other members of the community. A resource centre should be set up and equipped, either at the ACORD office or, if possible, at community-based kindergartens. Resource materials should be supplied via the regional or national DCD office. Materials, especially posters, should be made robust enough for
regular usage and travel, by laminating them. Where necessary, they could also be reduced in size so that they can fit into the shoulder bags of the FVs.

- The question of incentives for FVs should be reviewed by both the MWACW and ACORD. The introduction of training in a range of small-scale livelihood projects, together with a small, one-off capital investment for each FV, should be considered. These could range from sewing machines for a sewing project, to sacks of wheat flour for a bread-making outlet. These income-generating projects should not interfere with the role of the FV in the community. The amount of training and mentoring already invested, suggests that the programme would do well to pre-empt a high attrition rate as experienced in the Government's FV programme.

- Further training should be given to ACORD field staff to specifically broaden their knowledge base on ECD issues, so that they can engage parents fully in dialogue about these issues with confidence while assessing the impact of the FVs. ACORD would do well to consider developing its own in-house expertise on ECD issues. This would help counter the shortage of capacity at the advisory and evaluation level of ECD and provide a much need pool of expertise with a pragmatic rather than an academic approach.

- Capacity building, in terms of monitoring, evaluation and report writing skills, for FVs and field staff from ACORD and the DCD, would enhance the quality of the FVs programme. Workshops that aim at a simplifying and demystifying report writing and draw out simple measurable indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes are needed. The same consultant, who is facilitating some of the FVs training sessions and developing the FVs Manual, is presently running report-writing workshops. An extra module on monitoring, evaluation and report writing skills should be developed to accompany the FVs module.

- The partnership between ACORD and the MWACW in relation to the Total Child FVs pilot programme, needs to be clarified so that each partner knows what their roles and responsibilities are and what is expected of them. A joint work plan, drawn up between the Ministry and ACORD giving a time frame, activities and outcomes, clearly stating who the responsible agents are, would help to increase the degree of shared ownership and responsibility for the pilot programme.

- Joint visits by the MWACW and ACORD staff to both Total Child FVs and selected Government FVs programme sites, should be arranged immediately. These visits should promote a better understanding of the differences between the two approaches. This should serve to enlighten each partner on where each is coming from and their future vision. Particular attention should be paid to the structures for monitoring and supervision of the FVs, leading to a discussion about the need for simple, measurable indicators in both programmes. Cognisance should also be given to an assessment of the type of impact that the two approaches have promoted in relation to community based early childhood care and development. The success of the scaling-up process of the Government's FVs programme at the national level is to some degree dependent on the promotion of this mutual exchange, through which they should be able to achieve a greater clarity of vision. ACORD will benefit from the exchange in that its potential facilitation role in the scaling up process will be more realistically clarified.

- CLOs and CAs in Omaheke Region should be encouraged to participate in all the training sessions facilitated by ACORD staff and consultants, especially if they are expected to take responsibility for monitoring and supervision of the FVs. It is unrealistic to expect them to take responsibility, if they do not understand the strategic concepts underpinning the Total Child programme.

- The objectives of the Total Child programme in Aminuis have clearly been to meet the strategic needs of the community. However, the introduction of FVs as resource persons could provide the communities with the means of advocating for other aspects of community development. As agents of change, the FVs could be encouraged, without compromising the objectives of the programme to meet the strategic and practical needs of the communities. By using their newly acquired skills of referral and advocacy, the FVs could be encouraged to network with other NGOs and Government extension workers in the region in order to gain assistance. For example, Health Unlimited and Oxfam, both active in the region, could assist in health and income generating activities respectively, without the danger of undermining the more strategic long-term goals of the Total Child Programme and thus promoting a truly holistic approach to development.
Before attempting to establish a parallel networking system of ECD Committees, ACORD should explore the Government's structures and plans for establishing ECD Committees in Omaheke Region. Although progress in this region has not been remarkable, other regions such as Omusati have effectively established, trained and mobilised ECD Committees. More importantly, NGOs with an interest in ECD in the region, are working together within these structures. The DCD in Omaheke Region is understaffed and due to this and other constraints they could well benefit from ACORD's experience and motivation for setting up effective ECD Committee structures. The DCD are already working very closely with other NGOs in the region such as Health Unlimited. This may well be an ideal opportunity for ACORD to strengthen their working relationship with DCD, which, after all, is the official coordinator of ECD activities in the region.

The establishment of community-based ECD Committees should be promoted together with a broader complementary view of the concept of ECD. Kindergarten buildings should not necessarily be seen as the one and only option for ECD activities in the community. The ECD committee should be encouraged to explore culturally appropriate alternative approaches, which could be facilitated by the FVs to complement their home-visiting programmes. Members of the committee should be willing to undertake training in ECD issues.

The introduction and adaptation of training materials for the School Boards should be monitored with the view to re-adapting the material and methods to train the ECD Committees. As a prelude to this happening, the FVs could attend the School Board training sessions so they will already have some insight into how an institutional body can work effectively for the good of the whole community.

ACORD should begin networking with other Family Support programmes in the region. If possible, the Bernard van Leer Foundation should consider inviting ACORD to their regional workshop on Family Support, June 2001, in Cape Town. Although their FVs programme is still quite new, there is much in terms of their human rights approach, innovative training and mentoring, that they could share to the benefit of others. Their vision of scaling up the Total Child programme through working together with the MWACW would also be of interest to NGOs who are considering scale up their own programmes.
### Annex 7.1 A Comparison of Family Responses to ECD Related Questions in Total Child Communities and Non-Total Child Communities

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<tr>
<td><strong>Sample of Evaluation Questions</strong></td>
<td>Parents fail to take their child for vaccinations - what do you think may happen?</td>
<td>If your child begins to talk loudly and never seems to listen, should you be worried?</td>
<td>Your child has a high fever, what should you do?</td>
<td>Name three nutritious local foods you can give to your child</td>
<td>What do you think your child learns through playing?</td>
<td>Your child throws dirt into the drinking water, how do you respond?</td>
<td>Saying ‘Well done!’ too often to your child makes them too proud - True or false?</td>
<td>Your child has sore, sticky eye, what should you do?</td>
<td>You see that your neighbour’s child is often badly bruised, what should you do?</td>
<td>What rights do Children in Namibia have?</td>
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<td><strong>Total Child: San Community</strong></td>
<td>The child will get sick</td>
<td>Beat the child for being disobedience</td>
<td>Bathe the child in cold water</td>
<td>Maize meal porridge, oil and pumpkin</td>
<td>Don’t know why but they just like to play</td>
<td>Talk to the child and tell him he has done wrong</td>
<td>Encourage the child with words</td>
<td>Wash eyes with breast milk</td>
<td>Talk to the neighbour and the child</td>
<td>The right the sleep, eat, drink, play and be clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Child: Tswana Community</strong></td>
<td>The child will get sick with polio</td>
<td>The child could be mentally disturbed or deaf</td>
<td>Use a wet cloth to cool him down</td>
<td>Cabbage, tomatoes, maize meal</td>
<td>Builds up love between children and gives pleasure</td>
<td>Smack the child’s hand to let him know he has done wrong</td>
<td>It gives pleasure to the child if you praise him often</td>
<td>Wash eyes with babies urine</td>
<td>Sit with the family and talk to help solve the problem</td>
<td>The right to health, shelter, to invite/visit friends</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Child: Herero Community</strong></td>
<td>The child will get polio and be disabled</td>
<td>The child is deaf</td>
<td>Cover with a wet cloth</td>
<td>Milk, cabbage, maize porridge</td>
<td>Parents show their love by letting them play</td>
<td>Sometimes scream at the child for doing wrong or just talk to him</td>
<td>Praise makes him proud - it is better to talk only about the wrong things he does</td>
<td>Wash sticky eyes with urine and red eyes with blood from cuts made above the eyes</td>
<td>Some neighbours you can approach others you can’t interfere with</td>
<td>The right to education, shelter, food and to be recognised at home for the role he plays in the family</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MWACW: San Community</strong></td>
<td>The child will get polio as well as coughs and colds</td>
<td>The child is either abnormal or he is deaf</td>
<td>Grind the leaf of a common indigenous tree and smear it on the child</td>
<td>Maize meal and pumpkin</td>
<td>Playing makes a child clever - they learn as they play in the sand</td>
<td>Beat the child</td>
<td>It is good to encourage the child with praise</td>
<td>Clean the eyes with breast milk or babies urine</td>
<td>Take action against this immediately</td>
<td>Children have no rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MWACW: Nama Community</strong></td>
<td>The child will be disabled or may die</td>
<td>The child is mentally sick or deaf</td>
<td>Put in a cold bath or smear him with fried ostrich egg that is first ground and put in vaseline</td>
<td>Potatoes, pumpkin &amp; tomatoes</td>
<td>The child gets exercise and learns to socialise</td>
<td>Beat the child and/or chase him away</td>
<td>False, it is good to say ‘well done!’</td>
<td>Clean the face &amp; eyes with fresh urine from a baby’s nappy</td>
<td>First talk to them &amp; then go to the social worker or police</td>
<td>No rights except the right to play</td>
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INTERVENTION 8:

MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

EVALUATION REPORT

Bernard van Leer Foundation / UNICEF

Prepared by:
Catherine A Remmelzwaal
March 2001
INTERVENTION 8:

MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

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8.1 Introduction and Background

There is no doubt that an increased awareness of the need for quality ECD programmes has resulted in an increased demand for ECD materials. There is clear evidence of a direct correlation between the increase in the number of ECD facilities and a demand for materials on ECD issues. In October 1999, over 500 National ECD Policy booklets and 2,000 ECD Programme Guidelines were reprinted and distributed throughout the country. Yet, this alone has not satisfied the acute ‘hunger’ among ECD caregivers for information of all kinds. This very practical need is being increasingly expressed through different channels and cannot be ignored.

Fortunately, the increased demand for new materials has coincided with the development of new supply channels, namely the mailing system of the NECD NGO Association. Assisted by a consultant from the Capacity Building Team, the Association now has an established mailing list, which allows them to distribute bi-monthly newsletters and other materials related to ECD issues. This essential networking role of the NECD Association has shown that it has tremendous potential for reaching ECD facilities throughout the whole of Namibia. Its role in reaching all members of civil society, in all communities, even where there are no ECD centre-based facilities has yet to be explored.

A demand for new types of printed materials is reflected in the expanding need for those working with children to know more about topics such as HIV/AIDS and Children’s Rights. One of the greatest areas of demand is experienced at the community level where Family Visitors have voiced their need for training in HIV/AIDS counselling together with appropriate back-up materials.

An expansion of the concept of ECD and of the issues that need to be covered in training and in parental programmes has resulted in the need for fresh, more dynamic materials covering areas of social transformation that had not been covered before. These crucial issues have come to the forefront within ECD as a direct result of UNICEF’s new focus on a human rights approach to programming. One of the main catalysts, for developing practical implementation strategies and materials, has been the NGO ACORD. In an agreement with UNICEF in 1999, ACORD proposed that it would develop new ECD training materials for Family Visitors in collaboration with the MWACW. These materials would encompass a human rights approach to early childhood development, focusing on early socialisation for the protection of the child through empowerment, affirmation and communication.

The range of ECD materials available includes an array of posters, booklets and training manuals. An assessment of some of these materials was carried out in 1998. A UNICEF consultant was assigned to review existing materials in the light of the concerns expressed by marginalized communities during the Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs). In order to do that, the consultant looked at how the materials were being used and the type of information given.

Although the review of the available materials clearly showed that many concerns of the targeted communities were not being addressed in the materials, it was suggested that new materials should not be developed until the existing ones had been fully exploited. Recommendations were made for the revision of some materials to include additional information and language translations. Two years later, it is clear from an initial review of the materials that very few of these suggestions have been taken up in terms of implementation. The reason for this could well have been that the materials were now being fully exploited. On the other hand, it was also possible that the users and the beneficiaries of the materials are not fully aware of their availability and/or they do not have access to them.

8.2 Objective

The overall objective of this evaluation was to assess the appropriateness and impact of the materials and to examine the degree of usage and impact at different sites from training institutions to the community and household levels.

8.3 Methodology

An initial desk review of the ECD materials available to date indicated that a descriptive review alone would not provide answers to more pertinent evaluations questions. It was, therefore, decided to take a selection of the materials on field trips in order to gain some insight into the perceptions of regional government staff, ECD workers, Family Visitors and household members on their usage,
appropriateness and impact. In order to facilitate this, a framework for evaluation, with accompanying questions and assessment weightings, was drawn-up to cover clarity, relevance, flexibility and impact assessment.

In the next section a brief summary of the findings is given for each set of materials, followed by recommendations. General conclusions and recommendations have also been included.

8.4 Selected Materials

8.4.1 Posters  
UNICEF/CLASH

1. Children Need Approval and Encouragement
2. Make a Difference in Your Children’s Lives
3. Communicating with Your Child
4. There are Other Alternatives to Beating
5. Help Your Child to Think and Talk

Summary

Along with the flipcharts, these posters were found to be the most utilised materials by regional CLOs and CAs. It was not really clear how often these posters were used with the communities for mobilisation purposes. There is, however, an acute shortage of posters at the regional level. In some regions, where some distribution had occurred to kindergartens and Family Visitors, these posters had been placed where they were easily seen by the communities and there was evidence of them stimulating discussions. Where the scenarios are depicted in clear picture form it made them more flexible and meant they could be used in discussions about other related topics. Preference was given to having posters in the mother tongue language even in the communities where most people were illiterate. It was suggested that children coming home during the holidays could read them to their parents.

Recommendations

- Reprints of the series of posters should be made. Sizes of the reprints should vary. A3 prints should be laminated and used for small group discussions or for home visiting in the Family Visitors programme. A simple A3 size storage case would be useful and motivating for more extensive use.
- Distribution to the regions should be made on a proportional basis with guidelines given on how to use the posters for facilitating discussions.
- Where possible posters should be in the mother tongue of the community they are targeting and be as culturally appropriate as possible.

8.4.2 Our Community’s Young Children  
MBEC, MRLGH, UNICEF

Summary

This high quality, stand-alone flip chart is the most popular of the materials among the CAs and CLOs. It relies heavily on pictorial representation and is especially useful in small or larger groups. The discussion points on the back of each panel are clearly set out and easy to understand in most cases. The pictures are clear and can be used with literate and illiterate adults. They allow for flexibility and could be used for a number of different messages. The pictures demonstrate a balanced gender awareness showing male and female caregivers and gives scope for discussion on gender roles. The whole series attempts to reinforce simple good practice, much of which is already being used by parents. It provides material for affirmation and reinforcement of good child rearing practices among parents and communities. The main criticism concerns the last section of the chart where there is a clear bias towards centre based rather than community based ECD facilities. The Family Visitors programme could have benefited from using these charts. Unfortunately, they were never given copies to take back to their communities. Although no supplies of the charts were found at the regional level, a stockpile of the flip charts was discovered in an obscure cupboard at the national level.
Recommendations

- The pictures on the chart could be transferred to produce simplified booklets, with or without messages in local languages, which could be distributed to parents via community kindergartens or Family Visiting programmes.
- Worksheets in the form of colouring pictures or a simple quiz could be produced from the chart and distributed after teaching sessions.
- To promote further ownership, parents and children could be asked to design their own posters, highlighting best practice around different themes.
- A national or regional competition organised through ECD Committees, for the design of posters by communities which convey relevant messages on a range of ECD issues could be launched as part of a communication strategy.
- Copies of the flip charts should be immediately distributed to the Family Visitors in the pilot regions.

8.4.3 Helping Your Child Develop
MBEC, MRLGH, UNICEF

Summary

Some of the pictures and information in these high quality booklets come from the flip chart Our Community's Young Children. However, it is not a success as there is too much dense text making it difficult to read, even for literate adults. Although one or two copies of this booklet were seen in the regions in DCD offices, they are far from being extensively used.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that this booklet should not be reprinted in its present form.
- Messages and some pictures could be useful at the community level in a revised smaller booklet.

8.4.4 ECD National Policy
1996, MRLGH

Summary

Given the fact that this document contains the National Policy on ECD, it is hardly surprising that the language is formal and, therefore, rather exclusive. The print is rather small and really only suitable for literate and educated audiences. Slight changes to the document are thought to be needed in order to up-date the information in it. For example, some of the Ministry's names have now changed. Other changes needed to up date the document include additional information and data on the impact of the AIDS epidemic as well as the increase in the number of orphans. The Namibian National ECD Policy has recently been projected as being one of the three most dynamic and advanced ECD policies in Sub-Saharan Africa, together with the national policies of Ghana and Mauritius. The process by which the policy was developed is presently being studied, but the actual content is not under review. A review of the contents has not yet been planned.

Recommendations

- Future reprints of this document should be considered only after changes to the Ministry's names have been made in the text and the organogram.
- A summary of the document in Afrikaans and local languages should be considered to make it more widely accessible and user-friendly.
- In order to maintain the present leading position of the Namibian National ECD at the international level, and its relevance at the national level, it is suggested that UNICEF should begin to facilitate a process of reviewing the policy in order to update its contents and revitalise interest in this forward looking document. Such a review could provide a much needed focus and rallying point for the National ECD Committee.
8.4.5 Guidelines for Establishing Early Childhood Centres

1998, MRLGH

Summary

These official guidelines were drawn up by a team of ECD professionals from the MRLGH, the MBESC and UNICEF. While the team obviously tried hard to get a balance between producing a formal publication and an informative document, the format and the prescriptive language do little to make it user-friendly. A closer scrutiny of the document by various stakeholders before its reprint would have been advisable in order to omit some outdated information and even to reassess the contents in terms of its message. Although 2,000 copies were recently printed, evidence of its circulation and use was only found in urban ECD Centres. In rural and peri-urban squatter areas most ECD workers in informal facilities were unaware of the guidelines although some had applied for registration of their facilities via the regional DCD offices. Discussions about the document with various stakeholders revealed that, while it does include some useful information, it is rather too formally presented. The ambiguity of some of the messages in the guidelines concerning the provision of quality childcare was also seen as an area for concern.

Recommendations

- Guidelines, which pertain to the quality of ECD facilities and childcare, need to be carefully scrutinised in order to ensure that messages about quality are not ambiguous. The language used should avoid a prescriptive tone and take care that definitions of ‘quality’ are locally appropriate and not an imposition of universal standards.
- Guidelines for ECD workers are essential and very much in demand, but need to be made available in a more accessible user-friendly form. Pamphlets and posters, on the topics of quality control, registration, and how assistance can be sought should be designed and translated into Afrikaans and local languages in order to reach the target group who are duty bearers in providing quality care for young children.
- Guidelines of this nature should not be circulated in isolation but could be part of a campaign to raise awareness of the need to enhance the quality of care for children.
- Platforms for ‘dialogue’ on the subject of quality should be sought out. The NECD-NGO Association’s newsletter could run a series of articles on the topic promoting interest in the guidelines and registration with the MWACW among its members.

8.4.6 Workshop Ideas for ECD Trainers

2000, Trainers’ Manual, MWACW & MBESC

Summary

The reprinting of this extensively used ECD training manual has been clearly appreciated. Updated and with new materials covering topics such as setting up of ECD committees, as well as a new module on AIDS, most of the materials are aimed at ECD workers in centre or home-based facilities. It is considered, by both the Top-level Trainers and the national trainers involved in training at the regional level, to be an excellent basic training resource. As training of ECD workers is presently only taking place at a very limited number of venues, the impact of this manual is very limited. In 2000 the MBESC, which is responsible for the training of ECD workers, trained 167 ECD workers across the seven educational regions.

As a direct result of UNICEF’s innovative programme to encourage the collective care of orphans in ECD programmes, the HIV/AIDS Module: ‘Children Affected by HIV/AIDS’ was developed. A UNICEF consultant was hired to produce a module on ‘Children Affected by HIV/AIDS’. This was done through a participatory process involving a range of people with a broad experience of ECD and even medical training. The end product is thought to reflect a consensus of opinion among the people consulted. The module is generally thought to have reached its objectives in producing material that will help to dispel fears associated with AIDS orphans. The design and layout of the module is in keeping with the original training manual. The module was pre-tested by the national trainers and incorporated into the training manual for use in the training courses for ECD workers and Family Visitors. Due to a delay in printing, the module has not yet been widely used. The role-plays contained in the module have, particularly
been very useful in opening up a debate about this sensitive subject. Trainees have responded positively and have learned how to handle difficult situations that might arise at their own ECD facilities.

Recommendations

- A training manual of this kind should be viewed as a ‘work-in-progress’ with additional notes and ideas being informally added on a continual basis by those using the manual. These ideas could be integrated into the manual at a later reprint.

- An evaluation of the status of ECD training within Namibia, which is currently under consideration, should take full cognisance of the impact of the training manual with a view to assessing its relevance and usage, particularly at the regional level.

8.4.7 Training Manual for Family Visitors
MWACW/MBESC/UNICEF/ACORD (In Progress)

Summary

The initial manual was designed in a workshop by the Top-level trainers and assisted by the national trainers from the DCD. It was actually an adaptation of the themes already being used in the ECD Workers Training manual. Two years later the proto-type of the manual is now in the process of being reviewed. Additional training materials are being added to expand the scope of the Family Visitors training to include material previously tested as the Total Child (ACORD) socialisation modules. The facilitation methods used in the ACORD training sessions are more dynamic than most conventional methods. It was, therefore, suggested that the manual should first be tested through the training of the Aminuis Family Visitors and the impact assessed by the CLOs and MWACW staff, before the materials are finalised for publication. This means that the manual will not be finalised until after the last workshop in May 2001.

Recommendations

- No usage should be made of the materials in the revised manual until the national and regional staff of the MWACW have undergone thorough training in the facilitation techniques and the Total Child methodology.

- Site visits to the Aminuis Family Visitors, to assess the impact of the training by staff from MWACW, should focus on identifying simple measurable indicators, which will assist them in setting up structures for supervision and monitoring.

8.5 General Conclusions

The evaluation process has revealed that there is a wealth of information on ECD and related issues, which if fully utilised, could impact the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of duty bearers for the provision of childcare. Presently, there is no comprehensive listing or organisational structure at the national or regional level, which gives an overview of the materials currently available. Access to, and availability of the materials at the community level remains problematic. Most of the materials are classed as resource material and are not user-friendly at the community or household level. Guidelines tend to be overly prescriptive and fail to take cognisance of cultural diversity of childcare provision.

In their present form, most of the materials are not suitable to be used as handouts to parents and families in the Family Visitors programme. CLOs and CA s at the regional level do not have access to all the materials available and neither do they all make use of existing materials. They rarely carry materials with them when they visit the communities, because apparently, there is no time to discuss ECD issues.
8.6 General Recommendations

- The simple law that regulates the concept of demand and supply need to be applied to any future communication strategy that aims to improve childcare practices among ECD caregivers and parents. The success of such a communication strategy should, inevitably, result in a demand for more materials. The rapid increase in a demand for materials can, therefore, be correlated with an increase in the number of ECD facilities and family support programmes. Cognisance of this should be given in the planning stages of the new GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation.

- A low-cost catalogue of all the ECD materials available should be created, giving samples of posters, summaries of relevant documents, videos and an indication of where they can be located. Materials could be organised according to type or by subject. This would provide all the stakeholders with an overview of the materials available and encourage distribution and usage.

- Regional Resource Centres should be set up to ensure access to and to deal with the increasing demand for materials. These could be housed with an NGO (possibly one that is a focal point for the NEDC-NGO Association at the regional level), a community-based kindergarten or the home of a Family Visitor at the constituency level. A list of the materials stored in the resource centre should be kept up-to-date and used as a basis for ordering more from MWACW or UNICEF and also be distributed to individuals and groups in the communities who are involved in ECD.

- All ECD related workers at the community level such as Family Visitors, home-based caregivers and ECD Committee members, should be encouraged through the regional DCD offices to have access to newsletters and other materials from the NEDC-NGO Association through direct membership or some sort of affiliation. The present membership, which stands at 450 members, is only a fraction of the potential membership.

- Packs of suitable materials, focusing on specific target groups and themes, could be prepared and made available for distribution during all training sessions. The use of local languages should be a priority. Training in effective use of these materials should also be given. Resizing and laminating of appropriate materials to be carried in suitable holders, would allow for more effective use, easy carrying and increase durability.

- Further support should be given to the new supply channels created through the monthly mailings to regional ECD facilities by the NEDC-NGO Association. Efforts to produce relevant and up-to-date articles in their newsletter covering themes such as father’s involvement, HIV/AIDS and Children’s Rights are being made by the Association. The move towards out-sourcing of articles for the newsletter, with editorial rights remaining within the organisation, will not only ensure continued input but also reap the benefits of involving the many stakeholders in ECD who have a wealth of experience to share.
INTERVENTION 9:

TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

EVALUATION REPORT

Bernard van Leer Foundation / UNICEF

Prepared by:
Catherine A Remmelzwaal
March 2001
INTRODUCTION 9:  TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

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9.1 Introduction and Background

In order to create and maintain an enabling environment in which UNICEF’s ECD initiatives are implemented, technical and administrative support is required. During the last ten years of UNICEF’s Programme of Cooperation with the GRN in the area of ECD, this objective has been embodied in the position of ECD Project Officer. The roles and responsibilities of this position were initially clearly defined in order to ensure the successful implementation of the ECD programme. During the present GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation (1997-2001), funding was requested by UNICEF from donors to support the continuation of this key position. For various reasons, between May 1998 and February 1999 the position of ECD Project Officer remained vacant. However, at the end of 1998 funding was secured from the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the position was filled at the level of ECD Assistant Project Officer, by Judy Matijla in February 1999.

Before moving to UNICEF, Ms. Matijla had worked for several years in ECD with the Children’s Desk at CCN. Therefore technically, the new ECD Assistant Project Officer was considered to be very competent. Finding someone of this calibre, and with this valuable experience in ECD was considered an asset for the UNICEF ECD programme. In the short term, this technical competence meant she could go straight into her assignments without a great deal of time being spent on induction or close mentoring. This was obviously a major benefit for the UNICEF office early in 1999 when several supervisory positions were, for various reasons, vacant. Although the appointment was made as an ECD Assistant Project Officer, there was no ECD Project Officer to report to. That position was, and still is, vacant. To complicate issues further, the post of Education Project Officer was also vacant, meaning that the Assistant Project Officer had to report directly to the Programme Officer. Fortunately, the Programme Officer at the time, had a keen personal interest in ECD issues and was willing to give a generous amount of his time, when possible, to assisting the ECD Project Officer.

A straight analysis of this situation would normally conclude that UNICEF’s staffing structures were clearly inadequate to provide enough internal support to the ECD Assistant Project Officer. While there is an element of truth in this, in reality the Programme Officer was well able to counter this shortfall in technical supervision and support mechanisms. In fact, much of the progress made in the ECD programme over the last two years, particularly in the area of new ECD initiatives, has to be credited to the Programme Officer’s input. Other positive spin-offs from this situation meant that, while the ECD Assistant Project Officer had to learn the UNICEF ‘ropes’ very quickly, she perceives herself as having gone from ‘strength to strength’. In all, she was probably exposed to more decision-making about project implementation than her position would normally allow or call for. Following a series of short-term contracts, which left the ECD Assistant Project Officer somewhat frustrated and unsettled in her work, UNICEF has recently offered her a one year contract, which she feels places her in a more secure position and will enable her to be more settled and effective.

Under the new UNICEF Programme of Cooperation (2002-2005), the position of ECD Assistant Project Officer will no longer be in the Education Programme as this programme is being phased out. In future, ECD will come under the Young Child Health, Care and Development Programme. This means that the position of ECD Assistant Project Officer will be directly supervised by the Section Chief, ECD Officer. Although the current Health Project Officer does not have very much direct experience in ECD, he is already being exposed to various ECD issues as the previous Programme of Cooperation phases out and the new one is phased in. While the impact of these changes on the role of the ECD Assistant Project Officer, can only be speculated on, an assessment of the current position would seem timely.

9.2 Evaluation Objective

The overall objective of this section of the evaluation is to assess the current role of UNICEF Assistant ECD Officer as reflected in both formal expectations, and in the changing perceptions of the position as held by the UNICEF’s partners and various ECD stakeholders.

9.3 Methodology

The methodology for evaluating the technical and administrative support afforded by the UNICEF ECD Assistant Project Officer proved to be a very process orientated one. The opportunity to attend the GRN/UNICEF’s Annual ECD Review in November 2000, provided an ideal introduction to the roles and functions of the UNICEF ECD Officer as well as and an opportunity to gain some insight into her working
relationships with some of the key stakeholders who were present. Thereafter, regular contact with the ECD Assistant Project Officer allowed for close observation of her role in the office situation and in the external working environment. Unfortunately, it was only possible to coordinate one field trip together as office bound duties took priority and transport constraints made it difficult for her to join other trips.

Other sources of data collection included semi-structured interviews and participatory exercises with the Project Officer and other relevant key informants in the UNICEF office and outside. Secondary sources of information were sought in sample annual and quarterly reports and the original job description from which a framework for the analysis was drawn up. The analysis highlights the constraints and opportunities faced by the current ECD Assistant Project Officer in fulfilling these functions. The conclusions and recommendations attempt to provide strategic and practical ways of increasing the effectiveness of this position within the context of all the ECD interventions presently being evaluated.

### 9.4 Profile and Analysis

The role of the ECD Assistant Project Officer has been defined in the terms of reference of this evaluation as being to liaise with all project partners, provide technical support, allocate funds with supervision and administer the day-to-day running of the project. A more official description of the roles and responsibilities of the position, drawn from the original job description, is summarised in Table 9.1.

#### Table 9.1 Profile of the UNICEF ECD Assistant Project Officer’s Position

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<tr>
<th>ALLOCATED % OF TIME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF TASKS</th>
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| 25%                 | ▪ Undertake ongoing visits to project sites, assess local conditions and resources and monitor UNICEF inputs  
▪ Communicate with local counterparts on project feasibility and effectiveness including the flow of supply and non-supply of assistance |
| 15%                 | ▪ Undertake follow-up action on programme implementation activities and prepare relevant reports  
▪ Draft changes in programme work plans if required |
| 15%                 | ▪ Evaluate and analyse financial and supply reports  
▪ Liaise with Operations section to ensure follow-up |
| 15%                 | ▪ Draft relevant sections of reports  
▪ Maintain integrated M&E Plan  
▪ Prepare necessary research or data collection |
| 5%                  | ▪ Collect and analyse data for Situation Assessments  
▪ Analyse programme/project planning, management, monitoring and evaluation  
▪ Prepare and analyse programme implementation reports and evaluate against established programme recommendations and plans of action  
▪ Report outcome of analysis and propose corrective action |
| 10%                 | ▪ Assist in the preparation of country programme recommendations  
▪ Draft necessary PROMS transaction and submit relevant reports |
| 10%                 | ▪ Select and compile training and orientation material for implementing partners, donors and media representatives |
| 5%                  | ▪ Attend technical cooperation meetings, prepare notes and undertake follow-up action related to programme implementation including donor and media visits |
The importance allotted to ‘undertaking ongoing visits to project sites’ is very clear. Yet, in reality this has not been reflected in the Assistant Project Officer’s priorities or practice. While, during 1999, several field trips were undertaken to familiarise herself with various ECD initiatives and to take part in the Mid Term Review process, only three field trips were undertaken in 2000. An analysis of why so few monitoring and assessment trips were made during the course of 2000, reveals that priorities were set by UNICEF’s internal programme cycle which demanded participation in an endless stream of meetings leading up to the development of the new Country Programme Strategy.

No doubt, the necessity of attending these meetings is justifiable. It is even written into the Project Officer’s job description that she should ‘assist in the preparation of country programme recommendations’. Yet, the cost of them to the ECD programme should not be underestimated. The Assistant Project Officer’s omission to carry out field assessments and monitoring exercises in 2000 has, unfortunately, had a negative effect on several initiatives including the Family Visitors pilot programme, which needed most attention and realignment during 2000. While funding was specifically for the training of the FVs, the output of this initiative was the fruits of the FVs work in their communities. Close monitoring and supervision of this pilot was essential mainly because the capacity of the DCD at the regional and national level was clearly insufficient. Realism must, however, reign in these situations. The Assistant Project Officer can only be in one place at a time, so choices have to be made. Some public relations events, such as the visit of UNICEF’s Executive Board in 2000, obviously could not be put off. Being Chairperson of the Staff Association, is another role that the Assistant Project Officer has taken on. Although this is something she obviously enjoys doing, it does take time and involves having to sit in on various committee meetings. Clearly, priorities have to be set, but cognisance needs to be given to the trade-offs involved in order to avoid feelings of being ‘torn’ between other responsibilities and periods of decreased effectiveness in the ECD programme.

Perhaps even more crucial for the effectiveness of the ECD Assistant Project Officer’s role than field visits, is ‘communication with local counterparts’. Coming from the experience of working in an NGO environment into a UN agency, has its advantages and disadvantages. Naturally, the current ECD Assistant Project Officer is well able to identify, with the NGO perspective, on issues such as work ethics, organisational culture and accountability. This gives her the advantage when working with UNICEF’s NGO partners. There is clear evidence that she has been able to develop a healthy working rapport with several NGO partners.

There is no doubt that individual partners do have varied expectations of what technical assistance from the ECD Assistant Project Officer should involve. Some are definitely easier to please than others. Within the MWACW expectations are based partly on previous experience and partly on the pressing needs of the moment. Compared to the Government, UNICEF has always had a high turnover of staff. Over the years there have been at least four different ECD Project Officers each bringing something different to the partnership. Current staff at the Directorate of Community Development (DCD) feel they need the kind of Technical Assistance that involves a close mentoring relationship. They would prefer regular phone calls to faxes and ‘drop-in’ visits to formal round table meetings. However, UNICEF’s internal pressures and priorities have, during the last year, left the ECD Assistant Project Officer with little time to provide this mentoring type of technical assistance beyond assisting with annual action plans. Furthermore, cognisance must also be given to the fact that partnerships involve two way relationships and efforts must be made and initiatives taken by all partners in order to maintain good working relationships.

Any reluctance by the ECD Assistant Project Officer to acknowledge capacity gaps or facilitate a strengthening process, is partly due to an identified programme weakness in UNICEF’s current Programme of Cooperation. The Mid Term Review in 1999 identified capacity building and assessment as neglected areas. The lack of inbuilt capacity assessment and capacity building agendas in programmes means that there is little guidance for the ECD Assistant Project Officer on the capacity building aspect of technical assistance. Apart from commissioning a document on Capacity Building Frameworks, there seems to have been little input to date, in terms of awareness raising or staff development on this important issue.

Another area of programme weakness that could be said to impact the Assistant Project Officer’s effectiveness is in the area of monitoring and evaluation. While she is tasked to ‘analyse programme/project planning, management, monitoring and evaluation’ there is little evidence of confident engagement in this task beyond annual reports. To her credit though, the ECD Assistant Project Officer was found to be currently teaching herself about logical frameworks as a tool for planning and monitoring. Considering the wide usage of the logical framework within UNICEF, it was surprising
to find that formal staff training in its use is not given. UNICEF has only recently appointed a full-time Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. Presently his work focuses on establishing indicators for the new GRN/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation. Besides which, he acknowledges that, unfortunately, he does not have the capacity to train staff in monitoring and evaluation techniques.

When asked to define her role, the ECD Project Officer referred to herself as an ‘adviser,’ which is very different from her previous role as ‘implementer’ at CCN. The role of implementer is a very practical one, where day-to-day involvement in project details is necessary. Whereas, the role of adviser is a more strategic one with some daily administrative routines, but it is less about doing and more about supporting partners. An advisory role necessitates ‘stepping back’ into a more objective position to assess and analyse the overall dynamics of the ECD programme and developing strategies to align them with the original vision.

While the ECD Assistant Project Officer is perceptive enough to realise the difference between these roles, reality often gets in the way and the practical ‘implementer’ in her, takes the lead role. In fact, evidence indicates that many of her strengths lie in the efficient administrative support that she provides for the programme. She is particularly stringent and meticulous when dealing with budgets and is well able to fulfil her task of ‘evaluating and analysing financial and supply reports’. To her credit, she treats each UNICEF partner equally and expects the same kind of transparent accountability from all of them. She scrutinises budgets and the liquidation of advances with an eye for detail and is not at all hesitant about querying things that are not clear. Report writing skills, on the other hand, do need some attention, as there is a tendency to be descriptive rather than analytical. When prepared, she is confident ‘attending technical cooperation meetings’ but she should be prepared to take a more strategic role in facilitating meetings that are sometimes necessary to break deadlock situations.

9.5 Conclusions

When UNICEF appointed a new ECD Assistant Project Officer in February 1999, they were fortunate to recruit someone who had a broad technical knowledge as well as a positive work experience in early childhood development and care programmes. Coming from the NGO sector, she brought with her a natural empathy and an ability to work closely with NGO partners involved in UNICEF funded initiatives, as well as with the broader constituency of ECD caregivers at the community level.

In spite of the lack of available supervisory staff in the Education programme in the current GRN/UNICEF Programme for Cooperation (1997-2001), the Assistant Project Officer felt she was able to go from ‘strength to strength’ due to the interest and input from, the then, Programme Officer. A key area of strength lies in her administrative capacity to deal with the day-to-day running of the ECD projects. She has proved to be particularly stringent and meticulous when dealing with budgets and the liquidation of advances, having a good eye for detail. She treats each UNICEF partner equally and expects the same level of transparency from all of them.

The ECD Assistant Project Officer managed to undertake field trips to almost every region during her first year. These enabled her to familiarise herself with a variety of UNICEF initiatives being managed in the regions by both Government officials and NGOs. Unfortunately, during her second year the Project Officer only managed three field trips. This was mainly due to demands made on her time by events in UNICEF’s internal programme cycle. This somewhat skewed prioritisation of her duties in 2000, inevitably had a negative impact on the progress made by some partners who failed to closely monitor and realign their programmes without the necessary technical assistance and support.

Three main constraints to the effectiveness of the role of current ECD Assistant Project Officer were identified during the evaluation. The first being communication. In contrast to relationships with NGOs partners, the Assistant Project Officer has, during the last year, experienced some difficulties in maintaining open communication channels with the DCD, mainly due to conflicting expectations. The second area is related to the ECD Assistant Project Officer’s restricted experience in strategic approaches to capacity assessment and strengthening. The third constraint is viewed as being the need for further skills training in setting up systems for monitoring and evaluation of UNICEF funded ECD initiatives.

Overall, the evaluation concluded that the role of UNICEF’s ECD Assistant Project Officer is an extremely valuable one in maintaining personal contact, as well as providing technical support at the important interface between UNICEF and its partners in promoting coverage and quality of early childhood care and development.
9.6 Recommendations

- Trade-offs between the role the ECD Assistant Project officer and internal demands, made during the UNICEF programme cycle, should be minimised. Quarterly and annual work plans should realistically reflect all demands made by events in the programme cycle as well as disturbances caused by UNICEF’s internal bureaucracy and public relations events such as the visits from the Executive Board. This should then be relayed to all of UNICEF’s partners so that they in turn can be realistic in their expectations of the ECD Assistant Project Officer’s capacity and availability.

- Field visits for appraisals and assessments, as well as monitoring and evaluation, should be systematically integrated into the annual work plan of the ECD Assistant Project Officer in collaboration with individual partners. The purpose and the expected outcome of each field trip should be clearly stated. Preparations and arrangements for transport should then be made well in advance. As a rule field trips should be made together with one or more partners. A report format stating objectives, a situation analysis and follow-up activities would help, both the Assistant Project Officer and partners alike, to focus on important issues that need to be covered during monitoring visits. This would also encourage the Assistant Project Office to develop a more analytical style in her more detailed back-to-office reports.

- UNICEF should review its relationships with its partners on a regular basis. Strategic ways of building bridges and fostering open partnerships should be sought continually. Where possible UNICEF staff should be given opportunities to attend workshops on conflict resolution in order to strengthen their own capacity to deal with situations that pose potential blockages to programme progress. Other ideas could include a joint retreat for selected partners, facilitated by a communications expert, to foster a better understanding of expectations and management styles. UNICEF would then be perceived as a catalyst, bringing partners together to create a forum for dialogue.

- Efforts should be made by the ECD Assistant Project Officer to strengthen channels of communication between UNICEF and its partners. This can be done by making herself more accessible to partners; by being proactive in follow-ups, by making regular phone calls to partners that need more support and contact, passing on information via an electronic mailing list where appropriate and where possible delivering documents or invites to partners in person rather than faxing them, to name but a few. These efforts, to build up effective partnerships, are well worth the investment of time.

- A major future challenge for the ECD Assistant Project Officer lies in developing strategies that support UNICEF’s new channels of funding for regional programmes as a result of decentralisation. This will require new skills in establishing strong vertical linkages with the regional DCDs and ECD Committees, without allowing the national level partners at the MWACW to feel that they are being undermined or bypassed in the strategic decision making process.

- UNICEF should reassess the guideline document ‘Framework for Capacity Building’ (MTR, 1999), and begin to integrate the concepts of capacity assessment and capacity building agendas within each programme. The importance of having a capacity building component in each programme may need further explanation among staff. The ECD programme, in particular, would benefit from this strategic development as the Assistant Project Officer would become more aware of capacity building needs among partners and be able to facilitate the necessary response.

- Evaluation and monitoring mechanisms need to be developed at the programme and project levels to ensure that each intervention has realistic and measurable indicators that are understood and accepted by all partners. These indicators, while being flexible, should become a baseline point of reference for UNICEF and its partners. The ECD Assistant Project Officer would benefit from using clear measurable indicators during field trips and for report writing. User-friendly formats for monitoring and evaluation purposes could be developed from these indicators to be shared with partners who perhaps lack the capacity to develop their own monitoring systems. The Assistant Project Officer should be offered some level of mentoring from the newly appointed Monitoring and Evaluation Officer who has experience in working with logical frameworks and should be encouraged to work towards skill transfer at least on a one-to-one basis.
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