Evaluation of counselling services in schools in Namibia

June 2010
Acknowledgements?

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We also acknowledge the work of the team who did the evaluation report lead by Dr. Tania Vergnani along with Elzan Frank, Cynthia K. Haihambo Ya-Otto and Dr. John Mushaandja.
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### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ARSC</td>
<td>Assistant Regional School Counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Ed</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>BETD</td>
<td>Basic Education Teachers’ Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATS</td>
<td>Division Diagnostic, Advisory and Training Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEAL</td>
<td>Diploma in Education: African Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETSIP</td>
<td>Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAMU</td>
<td>HIV and AIDS Management Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>KSD</td>
<td>Kinetic School Drawing</td>
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<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>NESE</td>
<td>National External School Evaluation</td>
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<td>NIED</td>
<td>National Institute for Educational Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphans and vulnerable children</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMU</td>
<td>Programme Management Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>PQA</td>
<td>Directorate of Programme and Quality Assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>RACE</td>
<td>Regional AIDS Committees for Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISE</td>
<td>Regional Internal School Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Regional School Counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRSC</td>
<td>Senior Regional School Counsellor</td>
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<td>UNAM</td>
<td>University of Namibia</td>
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Executive Summary?

This report presents the findings of a UNICEF funded research project commissioned by the Ministry of Education of Namibia to evaluate counselling services in schools. The research focused on three regions of Namibia, namely, Khomas, Kunene and Oshana. It aimed to assess: The nature, quality and quantity of psycho-social support provided to learners by their teacher counsellors; learners’ perceptions of the counselling they receive; the training of teacher counsellors; and the monitoring and management systems for counselling services in schools.

A multi-method approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodology was used to obtain the data. This comprised desk research; consultation with a wide range of key stakeholders at national, regional and school level; self-completion questionnaires for secondary school learners, teacher counsellors and regional and assistant regional school counsellors; individual and/or focus group interviews with learners, teacher counsellors, school principals, school board members, hostel superintendents, regional and assistant regional school counsellors; and the use of kinetic school drawings followed by a classroom lesson and a group discussion with the younger learners. In order to ensure that ‘rich’ data were obtained, qualitative research methods predominated and the views of the learners were fore-grounded.

Findings?
The psycho-social circumstances of many learners in Namibia are dire. Learners report being exposed to a range of adversarial circumstances both at home and school that negatively influence their lives. These include pervasive poverty with the accompanying problems of hunger, inability to pay school fees, uniforms and other necessities needed for school; problems at home that include abuse, alcoholism and neglect; negative experiences at school that range from a poor to absent teaching and learning environment, widespread corporal punishment and bullying, fellow learners who display a range of negative behaviours, and lack of motivation and alienation from the school system. With the exception of a few teachers, schools generally did not present as “units of social support” providing “pastoral care and guidance”.

Despite the often adverse conditions it appears that in many instances the teacher counsellors are providing a much needed service, which has been a helpful experience for many learners. The concept of counselling and the need for such a service is overwhelmingly supported by the learners. However, in some instances unsuitable teachers are appointed as counsellors. Where the teacher counsellors are liked, found to be empathic and trusted, their service is used and appreciated. If they are not trusted, treat the learners with disrespect and are seen as incompetent, they are not used by the learners. In all the primary schools in this study, the learners identified at least one teacher counsellor as "somebody
you can talk to if you have a problem” and in secondary schools the majority of learners said they would see a teacher counsellor if they had a problem.

The model of having teacher counsellors at each school in Namibia is thus promising. Many teacher counsellors provide understanding and compassion, despite significant resource constraints and limited support. The presence of teacher counsellors at schools makes a positive difference.

Problematic is the fact that teacher counsellors are appointed on a voluntary basis, have to do their counselling work in addition to their normal teaching load, and receive no remuneration or formal acknowledgement for their work. In addition they do not have adequate space available to counsel learners.

Providing regional in-service training for the teacher counsellors using regional and assistant regional school counsellors is appropriate given the resource constraints in Namibia. This training provides a good introduction to counselling and has sensitised teachers to the psycho-social needs of the learners. Many teacher counsellors, as a direct consequence of the training, act as advocates for the children and the majority mentioned a positive shift in their perception of learners.

Due to resource constraints, not all teacher counsellors receive all available training, there is often no follow up and long time periods can elapse between the training of the different courses. Areas in which teacher counsellors need further training relate to working with sensitive issues (e.g. grief and loss, HIV/AIDS and the many issues around sexuality), and how to work with different development stages and cultural issues.

The current counselling training offered by the RSCs/ARSCs is based on the simple model of ‘listening well’. This is powerful in helping teachers to develop greater understanding and compassion, but it is not sufficient to sustain and enhance resilience and psycho-social competence in both learners and teachers.

Teacher counsellors often feel unsupported in their roles. Principals, who are the key to management and leadership in schools, are not adequately informed about counselling and thus do not support and supervise teacher counsellors effectively. Many are not skilled in positive disciplinary and classroom practices, often resulting in a school ethos (including classroom conditions) that acts as an additional stressor to learners, undermining both resilience and effective education. School boards do not function well in all schools, but in about half the schools they at least meet regularly. In many cases, members of school boards interviewed were not aware of the work and mandate of teacher counsellors. The cluster system for counselling does not function well due to work overload of the teacher counsellors, scheduling of the cluster meetings, distance and transport problems and no form of acknowledgement for attending cluster meetings.
Monitoring of the delivery of school counselling services is problematic at all levels of the system. The monitoring that does occur is not well-coordinated and fragmented, depending mainly on statistics provided by the teacher counsellors themselves. Although regional school counsellors do manage some monitoring, they do not have sufficient access to schools due to time constraints, limited human resources and logistical restraints. Not having a car or petrol money renders it impossible for a regional school counsellor to effectively monitor counselling. Regional Directors, inspectors and school principals do not play any meaningful role in monitoring as they are not sufficiently sensitized to the functions and requirements of school counselling and their role in this regard has not been clarified. Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the counselling service rendered by the teacher counsellors is inadequate at all levels.

School-community partnerships and whole school approaches to helping solve the problems of the learners are rare. Circles of support, which could help address this problem, are often not functional.

The current system of providing counselling services in schools in Namibia is a promising model, which merits greater resource allocation at all levels of the system. The impact and sustainability of this service will depend on ongoing commitment to provide improved training, continuous monitoring, evaluation and support, and improved communication and collaboration structures between the different key stakeholders. This is dependent on sustained and committed resources being made available from the Ministry of Education (MoE). If this is accompanied by a serious commitment by the Government of Namibia to address the pervasive poverty-related issues, the detrimental teaching and learning culture in the schools as identified by the learners themselves and the other problems raised by this research, the approach could make an even more significant contribution to addressing the psycho-social needs of Namibian children.

**Recommendations?**

**Teacher Counsellors**
- The current model of having trained teacher counsellors in each school should be continued and better resourced and supported.
- Teacher counsellors must be allocated dedicated time and suitable private spaces for counselling.
- Long-term at least one teacher counsellor per school should be employed on a full-time basis. In the interim, the life skills teachers should be trained as teacher counsellors and allocated enough time to fulfil this role.
Selection of teacher counsellors

- Criteria for selection need to be clearly defined by DATS head office (in consultation with the RSCs and ARSCs) and communicated to principals and inspectors.
- Learners should be allowed to provide input on the selection of teacher counsellors.
- Gender should be taken into account, with provision made for the selection of both male and female teacher counsellors.

Pre-service training

- Guidance and counselling should become a core component of all pre-service teacher training courses.

- A training forum should be set up between UNAM, NIED, DATS and relevant NGOs. This should meet regularly to evaluate current training content and investigate ways of improving the pre-service education of all teachers. Special attention should be paid to pro-social discipline, the ABC of resilience and fostering a whole school approach to addressing the needs of learners.

In-service training in counselling by RSCs/ARSCs

- Training of teacher counsellors should be reduced to three years in-service training.
- Teacher counsellors who successfully complete all training should receive a certificate in school counselling. UNAM, NIED and DATS should liaise in this regard.
- The courses on Basic Counselling for Learners and The Process of Counselling should be continued. They should also be considered for inclusion in pre-service training.
- The training in Bereavement Counselling for Learners and the Guide Pack: Counselling Guidelines for Specific Difficulties should be revised according to the guidelines in the section on pre- and in-service training.
- A developmental perspective should be added to all manuals. Primary school and secondary school teacher counsellors should attend differentiated courses that can assist them with specific skills pertinent to the developmental stages and concomitant difficulties of learners.
- Training in group work and positive classroom and counselling practice should be added to the training.
- Training in the scope of practice is urgent. This includes a section on ethics. The training should include how to report back to principals, the school board and to colleagues.
- DATS should implement an improved system of documenting training needs of teacher counsellors.
- UNAM and NIED should be encouraged to develop accredited short courses especially aimed at enhancing school counselling skills. Ideally these should be

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1 See section on pre- and in-service training for more detailed recommendations regarding content of the manuals.
available on a regional basis and/or use a blended learning approach (using a mixture of face-to-face sessions with on-line tutored courses).

- Explore the possibility of outsourcing some of the training of teacher counsellors to relevant NGOs (e.g. Phillipi Trust).
- Expanding the work of the Star school programme to other regions and schools.
- Funding for training teacher counsellors should be allocated in the annual MoE budget. This could then be matched by donor funding. Long-term the training cannot be sustained by donor funding and a more sustainable solution needs to be sought. Regional multi-disciplinary team/clusters of experts from social work, education, religion, relevant NGOs and donor agencies should be established to discuss training needs and pool/share expertise.
- DATS should conduct a regular audit of the training needs of teacher counsellors to serve as the basis for upgrading their skills.
- All training manuals should be made available to the inspectors and Regional Directors.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- Continued training of the same teacher counsellors over a period of three years should allow for an evaluation of skills.
- Regional school counsellors must have access to transport (including fuel) if they are expected to monitor and provide support to teacher counsellors.
- Regional External School Evaluation in the area of counselling should be strengthened and enhanced.
- A clear and transparent system of the reporting format and procedure for school counselling needs to be developed and workshopped with all the parties involved.
- A capacity-building workshop in monitoring and evaluation facilitated by experts should be held with relevant stakeholders (i.e. DATS staff, RSCs/ARSCs, inspectors, Regional Directors of Education). This should link closely with looking at the scope of practice of school counsellors.
- Teacher counsellors should regularly present their work at school board meetings.
- Parents should also be sensitized by the teacher counsellors and the principal about counselling in parents’ meetings.
- The role of inspectors in monitoring counselling should be clarified. Guidelines for inspectors should be drawn up by DATS.

**Training of Regional School Counsellors and Assistant Regional School Counsellors**

- RSCs/ARSCs should be actively assisted to attend suitable workshops and upgrading of qualifications should be encouraged and acknowledged.
- ARSCs and RSCs should be offered the same training opportunities.
Principals

- Principals should be trained in the following four inter-related areas:
  
a. Pro-social disciplinary procedures in order to develop the school into a supportive social unit. As part of this they need to be helped to understand the negative impact of corporal punishment on learners.

b. The ABC of Resilience. The knowledge and skills to promote experiences of autonomy, belonging and competence in their schools, is indispensable if principals are to oversee the building of capacity in their schools.

c. The concept and scope of practice of school counselling and how to monitor the success of counselling in their schools.

d. How to facilitate a whole school approach to addressing the needs of learners, fostering a health promoting school environment and as part of this facilitating school-community partnerships

- Principals must be held accountable for the implementation of policies/laws in their schools (e.g. those relating to corporal punishment, school development fund, OVC, sexual harassment of learners by teachers). This should be part of the Performance Management System at school level.

Hostels

- Train all hostel superintendents/matrons in how to refer, crisis management, basic counselling skills and issues relating to confidentiality (ethics).
- Improve collaboration between the hostel superintendent, school management, teacher counsellors and school board on issues related to counselling.
- Hostels need to be better resourced (including providing enough food to the learners).
- MoE should conduct an audit of all school hostel facilities and set up a task team to address problems identified problems.
- Teacher counsellors should be given preference for accommodation in hostels.

Cluster system

- Regional office should allocate adequate financial resources need to be to fund transport and subsistence costs for attending counselling cluster meetings.
- Counselling cluster facilitators should get some form of recognition for the work they do. This should be based on monitoring and an evaluation of their input by the RSCs/ARSCs.
Assistant Regional Counsellors
• Assistant Regional School Counsellors positions should be made permanent and funded by the MoE.
• Differences in the roles and responsibilities of RSCs and ARSCs should be clearly defined and form part of their job descriptions.

Induction of RSCs/ARSCs
• All RSCs and ARSCs should be thoroughly inducted into their new roles by both DATS and the Regional Education Offices. A system of mentoring and possibly shadowing experienced RSCs should be introduced.

Mentoring, supervision and support
• Mentoring, supervision and support need to be improved at all levels of the system:
  o RSCs/ARSCs need to have ongoing mentoring, supervision and support. The capacity of DATS to deliver this should be strengthened.
  o Teacher counsellors need better mentoring, supervision and support. One possible way of addressing this is to free up some of the time of the RSCs and ARSCs from training by outsourcing some of the training to suitable NGOs and/or UNAM and NIED. Clear national guidelines are needed to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Leadership and management
• Leadership and management in schools need to be strengthened to provide a supportive environment for school counselling.
• A workshop including all the key stakeholders should be held at school level to identify counselling needs and how to support them. This should result in an action plan, with identification of roles, responsibilities and resources needed.
• Clarify the relationship and responsibilities of DATS and HAMU needs to be in a workshop using an outside facilitator.
• The Sectoral Steering Committee needs to be revived and should meet regularly.
• On a regional level, the different roles and responsibilities of RACE officials and RSCs/ARSCs need to be clarified.
• The current code of conduct for teachers (Amendment of Regulations made under the Education Act (No 15 of 2004) Code of Conduct for Teaching Service) needs to be reviewed in light of the findings of this research. It also needs to be implemented and monitored. A stakeholder task team, comprising representatives of teacher unions, MoE officials, and pre- and in-service training institutions, needs to be established to address these issues. This task team should also look at facilitating the development of anti-bullying policies.
Systemic Factors/conditions

Nutrition

- School feeding should be given high priority and addressed at the highest level possible.
- More nutritious food should be supplied to the learners
- School feeding should be extended to secondary school learners
- Schools should be encouraged to establish food gardens where climatic conditions are favourable.

School environments

- Schools need to be better resourced. The MoE should ensure the availability of essential basics such as desks, electricity, water, sufficient toilets, and enough beds in the hostels.
- Educational resources (text books, suitable teaching materials) should be ensured.
- Teachers need to be teaching in their classrooms and principals should ensure that teaching and learning is taking place in their schools. This should also be enforced by the inspectors.
- NGOs and international organisations should be approached to donate books, posters, and other material to individual schools.

Fostering partnerships – building circles of support

- RSCs and ARSCs, principals and teacher counsellors should receive supplementary training in how to foster school community partnerships and build circles of support.
- Local directories of available referral services (similar to the one on Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse) should be developed and made available to all schools and regional offices. These should complement the newly developed set of posters by DATS.
Section 1: Introduction?

This evaluation was commissioned by the Ministry of Education in Namibia (MoE), with support from UNICEF, to evaluate the school counselling programme in Namibia. In terms of the Education Sector Policy for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (Ministry of Education, 2008), learners at all schools should have access to psycho-social support, provided by teachers who have been trained as teacher counsellors. With the financial support of the Global Fund, training and support systems have been implemented to build capacity in schools with the aim that schools should operate as “units of social support” providing “pastoral care and guidance” (Ministry of Education, 2005). This evaluation provides an assessment of the counselling services provided at schools, of the pre- and in-service training in counselling, and of the systems that have been created to provide support and monitoring of counselling services.

The evaluation was commissioned for three of the thirteen regions in Namibia: Khomas, Kunene and Oshana. Considering the financial limitations that prevented the evaluation from being conducted in all thirteen regions, these three regions were sampled by the Ministry of Education as representative of national, cultural and sociological characteristics of all other Namibian regions.

To date there has been no systematic evaluation of the counselling services provided to learners in schools in Namibia. Existing literature revealed that most studies that included the element of counselling in schools assessed this from the perspective of orphans and vulnerable children, and not the entire learner population (Ashton, Haihambo, Nuujoma-Kalomo, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2008). There was thus a limited evidence base for taking decisions about the further delivery and funding of an effective and integrated service.

This report presents an overview of the research methodology, key findings and evidence-based recommendations for stabilising and improving the current system of counselling services in schools in Namibia.

Research Aims?

The research aims to review and evaluate counselling services in schools in three areas of Namibia, Khomas, Kunene and Oshana, in order to make recommendations for the improvement and monitoring of the school counselling programme in Namibia.

Research Objectives?

The main research objectives include:

- To evaluate the psycho-social support provided to learners by teacher counsellors in schools
• To evaluate the quality of in-service training provided to teacher counsellors

• To evaluate the current monitoring and other support services that underpin the effective delivery of counselling services
Section 2: Methodology

This evaluation made use of a multi-method approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods. As the focus of this research was on ensuring that we gather ‘rich’ data, qualitative research methods predominated. The voices of the learners, as the recipients of the counselling services, were given prominence in the report. Triangulation of data across sets of data was pursued after the statistical and thematic content analyses of each method had been completed.

The following data collection methods were utilized:

- Literature reviews
- Documentary analysis
- Questionnaires (comprising both open-ended and closed questions)
- Individual interviews
- Focus group discussions/interviews
- Informal interactions
- School kinetic drawings
- Structured classroom lesson followed by a group discussion (primary schools)

Population

The population for this evaluation comprised all primary and secondary school learners, teachers and other education officials receiving or rendering counselling services through the Ministry of Education, both in rural and urban settings in the Khomas, the Kunene and the Oshana education regions. In addition, it comprised teacher training institutions in Namibia that train teachers in guidance and counselling.

Sampling

The school sample comprised 20 schools, of which 2 were used for the pilot study (only in the Khomas region), and 18 for the main evaluation in the Khomas, Kunene and Oshana regions (6 schools per region), and included both rural and urban schools. In each region three secondary and three primary schools were selected through purposive sampling (Baker, 1999; Patton, 2002). The sampling was informed by the situation of particular schools at the time prior to, or during data collection.

Each school sub-sample comprised:

- The principal or acting principal,
- Teacher counsellors (teachers who render counselling services),
- Members of the School Board (where available)
• Learners: In secondary schools we targeted grade 11 learners and in the primary schools, grade 6 learners.  
• Hostel superintendent where available (at schools with hostels)

The national and regional education official sub-sample consisted of:

- Key informants at the Ministry of Education Head Office
- An information-rich person from DATS (Diagnostic and Advisory Services)
- An information-rich person from HAMU (HIV and AIDS Management Unit)

The teacher educator sub-sample comprised:

- National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) Officials – Relevant curriculum developers
- Guidance and Counselling Lecturers at the University of Namibia (UNAM) as well as the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Education
- Guidance and Counselling Lecturers and the Deputy Rector at the former Windhoek College of Education
- Guidance and Counselling Lecturers and the Rector at the former Ongwediva College of Education (now University of Namibia Centre – Ongwediva Campus).

In addition to the above, a national group of regional and assistant regional school counsellors was accessed at the National Planning and Development Workshop in Swakopmund in November 2009. At this meeting the following respondents completed questionnaires and participated in focus group and/or individual interviews:

- Regional school counsellors
- Assistant regional school counsellors
- Senior school psychologists from DATS head office

| Table 1: Sample of RSCs/ARSCs and senior school psychologists surveyed |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
|                                | Male | Female | TOTAL |
| Senior regional school counsellor | 1   | 3    | 4    |
| Regional school counsellor     | 3   | 6    | 9    |
| Assistant regional school counsellor | 2   | 4    | 6    |
| DATS head office staff members | 1   | 2    | 3    |
| TOTAL                           | 7   | 15   | 22   |

2 In one secondary school we used a grade 12 class as the school only had grade 11 and 12 learners and in one junior secondary school we used grade 9 class instead of the grade 6 class.
Completed questionnaires were received from the following regions: Caprivi, Omaheke, Oshikoto, Erongo, Ohangwena, Khomas, Oshana, Karas and Kavango.

Table 2: Overview of schools selected in each region and sample per school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type and location</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Khomas Secondary school Urban</td>
<td>Questionnaire – grade 11 (n =28) Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n = 5 ) Interview: School principal Teacher counsellors Learners School board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Khomas Secondary school Urban</td>
<td>Questionnaire – grade 11 (n = 30) Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n = 2 ) Interview: School principal Teacher counsellors Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Khomas Junior Secondary school (grades 7-10) Rural</td>
<td>Questionnaire – grade 9 (n =30) Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n = 5) Interviews: Acting principal (Head of Department) Teacher counsellors School Board member Focus group: learners who had been counselled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>Khomas Primary school Rural</td>
<td>Kinetic school drawing – grade 6 Classroom lesson – grade 6 Group discussion – Learners grade 6 Questionnaire teacher counsellor ( n = 1) Interviews: School principal Teacher counsellor Hostel superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 5</td>
<td>Khomas Primary school Rural</td>
<td>Kinetic school drawing – grade 6 Classroom lesson – grade 6 Group discussion – Learners grade 6 Questionnaire teacher counsellors (n = 3) Interviews: School principal Teacher counsellors Learners counselled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 6</td>
<td>Khomas Primary school Urban</td>
<td>Kinetic school drawing – grade 6 Classroom lesson grade 6 Focus group – Learners grade 6 Questionnaire teacher counsellors (n = 3) Interviews: School principal Teacher counsellors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 7</td>
<td>Kunene Secondary school Urban</td>
<td>Questionnaire – grade 11 (n =30) Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n = 3 ) Interviews: School principal Teacher counsellors</td>
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</table>

Note that names of schools are not provided in order to ensure confidentiality.
| School 8 | Kunene Secondary school Urban | Questionnaire – grade 11 (n =20)  
Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n = 2)  
Interviews: School principal  
Teacher counsellors  
Hostel superintendent  
School board member  
Focus group: learners who had been counselled |
| School 9 | Kunene Secondary school Urban | Questionnaire – grade 11 (n =30)  
Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n = 3)  
Interview: School principal  
Teacher counsellors  
Learners who had been counselled |
| School 10 | Kunene Primary school Urban | Kinetic school drawing – grade 6  
Classroom lesson – grade 6  
Questionnaire teacher counsellors (n = 2)  
Focus Group – Learners grade 6  
Interviews: School principal  
Teacher counsellors |
| School 11 | Kunene Primary school Rural (mobile school) | Kinetic school drawing – grade 3 & 4  
Classroom lesson – grade 3 & 4 (multi-grade teaching)  
Questionnaire teacher (only one teacher) (n =1)  
Interviews: School principal of all the school units in the Kunene region |
| School 12 | Kunene Primary school Urban | Kinetic school drawing – grade 6  
Classroom lesson – grade 6  
Group discussion grade 6  
Questionnaire teacher counsellor ( n =3)  
Focus group – Learners who had been counselled  
Interviews: School principal  
Teacher counsellors  
School board member  
Hostel superintendent |
| School 13 | Oshana Secondary school Urban | Questionnaire – grade 10 (n =29)  
Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n =23)  
Interview: principal  
Teacher counsellors  
Learners |
| School 14 | Oshana Secondary school Rural | Questionnaire – grade 12 (n =31)  
Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n = 2)  
Focus group Learners grade 12  
Interview: School principal  
Teacher counsellors |
| School 15 | Oshana Secondary school Urban | Questionnaire – grade 11 (n = 23)  
Questionnaire teacher counsellors ( n = 5)  
Interview: School principal  
Teacher counsellors |
All instruments, methods and questions were piloted using one secondary and one primary school in the Khomas region. These schools were excluded from the final sample.

**Data collection instruments and tools?**

The research tools used in this evaluation comprised questionnaires, document analysis, interviews (key-informant and focus group interviews), a standardised classroom lesson eliciting narratives), and the Kinetic School Drawing.

**Desk review/Document analysis?**

A literature review was conducted including international and African literature for the purposes of (a) identifying key issues and debates relating to school counselling services in schools in African and other contexts; (b) to locate this research within the context of existing knowledge and practice, and (c) learn from others around the world. Articles and other relevant documents were accessed through electronic and desk literature searches using the keywords: ‘schools’, ‘counselling services’, ‘evaluation’, ‘assessment’, ‘psycho-social support’.

This was followed by an extensive desk review to identify the current situation in terms of the delivery of counselling services to learners in Namibia (including the, current monitoring and other support systems that aid the effective delivery of counselling services), in-service training in counselling provided to teachers, as well as all other relevant documents and studies. Key-role players in the Ministry of
Education were consulted to provide an overview of the counselling services as well as access to relevant documents. Key persons in the Directorate of Diagnostic and Advisory Services (DATS), the HIV and AIDS Management Unit (HAMU) and NIED were also approached to provide information and available documentation.

Available documents addressing psycho-social services rendered to learners in the Namibia education sector were reviewed, analyzed, compared and assessed for relevance to the topic under review.

The desk review was conducted against the background of the regions to be evaluated. The findings from the documentary analysis were used to inform the development of the different qualitative and quantitative methods and the analytical procedures linked to these. The desk and literature review acted as a framework for the research and analysis

**Interviews?**

Both key informant interviews and focus group discussions were used to solicit data from key respondents at Ministry of Education head and regional offices, school principals, teacher-counsellors, hostel superintendents and matrons (where available), school board members (where available) and learners as well as lecturers involved in the training of teachers. The following interviews were conducted:

- One preliminary, fact-finding focus group interview with Head Office officials at the beginning of the evaluation process.
- Three interviews with regional and assistant regional school counsellors from the Khomas, Kunene and Oshana regions (one per region) at the national planning workshop in Swakopmund
- Three focus group interviews/discussions with Regional School Counsellors and Assistant Regional School Counsellors at Swakopmund
- Nine focus group interviews with grade 10 or 11 secondary school learners (three per region).
- Four focus group interviews with School Board members
- Four key informant interviews with hostel superintendents/matrons
- Informal interactions whereby we asked informal questions about pertinent activities that we observed taking place in a school. For example, when we observed a principal carrying a stick, we wanted to find out whether he or she used it for corporal punishment
- Eighteen focus group discussions with teacher counsellors
• Individual and/or focus group interviews with guidance and counselling lecturers involved in training of teacher at the University of Namibia, Ongwediva and Windhoek Colleges of Education\(^4\). Interviews were also conducted with relevant Heads of Departments, Deputy Deans as well as the Rector at Ongwediva College.

• Fact finding interview/s with relevant role players at NIED.

• Fact finding interviews with relevant role players from the Global Fund

• Interview with the Executive Director, National Council for Higher Education & Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Training

• Interview with the Deputy Director of HAMU

The individual interviews and focus group interviews were audio-taped, transcribed verbatim and where necessary translated.

**Questionnaires?**

The following questionnaires were administered during this evaluation:

- A self-completion questionnaire comprising both open-ended and closed questions was completed by all regional and assistant regional school counsellors and senior school counsellors present at the national planning workshop in Swakopmund.

- One class of grade 10 or 11 from each of the secondary schools that participated in the study completed a questionnaire assessing their perception of the availability, usage and quality of counselling services in their school.

- One self-completion questionnaire was completed by all the teacher counsellors in the sampled schools. This assessed their views on the services they rendered, challenges and opportunities, their needs and suggestions for improving the service.

**Primary School Learners?**

**Children\'s drawings (Kinetic School Drawing)?**

The Kinetic School Drawing was used as the first class activity to orientate the children toward the next task (talking about experiences at school). The Kinetic School Drawing is an effective way of assessing children’s interactions with relevant school figures and important relationships at school (Andrews & Janzen, 1988; Prout & Celmer, 2006; Prout & Phillips, 1974). This is a particularly useful technique with

\(^4\) The colleges of education have since been incorporated into UNAM
younger children. The technique was piloted during the pilot study and proved to be effective in Namibian primary school settings.

The drawing was done individually and in silence with the researchers observing. This allowed the learners an experience of individual expression where there are no ‘right answer’ and helped them experience the presence of the researchers as warm and non-judgemental. With young children it is usually necessary to consciously structure the process of opening up. The drawings were conducted under the supervision of a registered clinical or educational psychologist. One of the researchers was always available to translate to the children’s mother tongue or lingua franca in a particular setting. Cultural aspects and exposure of learners to the activity of drawing were considered and learners were put at ease through the presence of someone who explained the process to them in their language, at their developmental level.

For the analysis of the drawings, we included the drawings of two grade 6 classes located within middle class suburban communities, as a comparative sample. All the drawings were workshopped with two external Educational Psychologists who have experience in working with children’s drawings. Although the drawings were clustered in school groups, the external psychologists had no information about the specific schools. Drawings were coded, using numbers. For analysis, the main scoring categories defined by Burns and Kaufmann (1972) were used, namely; actions, distances, barriers and position; physical characteristics of the figures and styles (the latter reflecting the organization of the figures on the page)

**Classroom lesson?**

The KSD was followed by a classroom lesson. Pictures of a boy and girl depicting four different conditions were combined with standardised questions to elicit learners responses (The activities were: neutral sitting, a child looking worried, a child looking scared, a child playing with a ball looking relaxed – see Appendix B). The classroom lesson was followed by an informal discussion with the whole class.

In three primary schools an additional focus group was held with learners who had been counselled. This was unfortunately not possible in the rest of the schools as teachers had either misunderstood the request, brought learners whom they thought needed counselling, or the teacher counsellor was absent and could not identify learners. School and classroom observation also informed the findings. Typically we looked at the presence of teachers and learners in classes, the physical conditions in classrooms, the informal relationships between learners and staff, and the functionality of school feeding programmes.
Comment?
The KSD, classroom lesson and informal discussion delivered surprisingly consistent findings. With the exception of one primary school\(^5\), all learners participated eagerly and were well-disciplined. In none of the schools was it necessary for the researchers to ask for discipline in any form. Learners appeared thirsty for stimulation, complying with requests and where appropriate, working quietly and focused. Learners were keen to participate in the lesson as well as during the discussion afterwards.

Data analysis?
The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires was coded, entered, cleaned and then computed using SPSS. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic content analysis, with the aid of a coding system based on the specific areas of focus of this study. Triangulation of the data across the different methods was then conducted by the research team. The findings from this triangulation will then be shared through the dissemination of a draft of this Research Report to key role players.

Trustworthiness of data?
The traditional questions of validity, reliability, credibility, authenticity, and general trustworthiness of the research were addressed in various ways in this study. These included:

- Clarifying and fine-tuning the research questions and focus, the development of the research instruments, and the research process, with UNICEF and key role players in the Ministry of Education.
- Piloting all the research instruments to ensure validity of data being collected;
- Triangulating the data analyses across the varied qualitative and quantitative methods used;
- Sharing the findings of each of the research methods, as well as the synthesized and critical analysis of the research as a whole, with UNICEF and key role players in the Ministry of Education for the purposes of authenticating the findings.

Ethical Considerations?
The evaluation was firmly grounded in ethical practice, which entailed the following undertakings:

1. That all the participants’ rights to privacy were respected
2. Confidentiality was respected
3. Participation was voluntary and anonymous

\(^5\) In one rural primary school in the Oshana region, learners appeared afraid to speak. Despite being offered translations in Oshiwambo, the class looked at the researchers with frightened faces and stiff bodies. The principal and HOD walked around with plastic pipes, in the classroom next door we could hear a learner being beaten. It became clear to both researchers that these learners were too intimidated to contribute meaningfully to the classroom lesson and the discussion afterwards.
4. Safety was guaranteed

5. A trusting environment was secured

6. Cultural values were respected and research processes were, as far as possible, adjusted to accommodate cultural diversity

The research process was not pursued at the expense of the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

All participants involved in the study were protected through anonymity, except where specific institutions are named with permission of the respondents.
Section 3: Learners’ experiences of counselling?

One of the major objectives of this evaluation was to determine the nature and degree to which learners in Namibian primary and secondary schools accessed counselling services offered by their teacher counsellors. In this section the experiences of the learners are documented. These were obtained from self-completion questionnaires and focus group discussions with the secondary school learners and kinetic school drawings, and a structured classroom lesson followed by a discussion, with primary school learners. The experiences of the primary and secondary school learners are documented separately. Recommendations emerging from these findings are to be found in section 9 of this report.

1. The Experiences of Primary School Learners?

Synopsis?
In general, primary school learners did not know what was meant by the term “counselling”. However, in all the primary schools the learners identified at least one teacher counsellor as “somebody you can talk to if you have a problem.” Girls were more willing than boys to approach a teacher for help.

Teacher counsellors in general played a prominent role in providing compassion and support. They often acted as advocates for the children. This was especially noted in one of the schools identified as highly dysfunctional, where the teacher counsellors intervened in the staffroom practice of shaming learners in front of teachers.

Our findings show that many of the primary school learners are exposed to hunger and neglect. The dearth of caring, compassion and educational stimulation in their daily lives was conspicuous, preparing them for a future as uncaring and under-stimulated adults, who will have few sustaining experiences to draw on in their future relationships with the children in their care, and little recourse to constructive problem-solving when faced with the vicissitudes of life. With the exception of a few teachers, primary schools, generally did not present as “units of social support” providing “pastoral care and guidance” (Ministry of Education, 2005).

1.1 Common Stressors

Finding 1: The basic needs of primary school learners are not being met. Schools and homes are often adversarial settings.

The most common problems named by grade 6 and 7 learners during the classroom lesson at all the primary schools we visited were:
1. Hunger: In all schools “hunger” was the first problem that was mentioned by the learners.

2. Being beaten: by parents, teachers, and other children. In nearly all the schools “being beaten” was the second most frequent problem mentioned, followed by “having no money.”

3. Lack of resources for school: Having no money for food, school clothes, school fees, hostel fees, school books, and stationery.

4. The death, or fear of death or illness of a mother or parent and/or self.

Below is a transcript of a class lesson with a grade 6 class in a rural primary school. The class named the girl in the picture Maria. For more examples of lessons with primary school learners see Appendix B.

Researcher: What is happening here?

Learners: She is angry, she is hungry, she is sad, she thinks, she is afraid

Researcher: What makes children like Maria feel angry?

Learners: When she is hungry. When teachers beat her. When her mother beats her. When other children beat her. When nobody will help her. When children take her food. When children take her school books.

Researcher: What makes children like Maria feel sad?

Learners: When she is lonely. When she has no friends. When she has no food. When there is no water at school. When her mother dies. When other children do not want to share their food with her.

Researcher: What makes children like Maria feel afraid?

Learners: If she has no money for a school uniform. When she has failed a test. When she thinks that her parents will beat her. When she thinks that she may die.

Schools are often adversarial settings.

The lack of stimulation in primary schools was striking: many classrooms were devoid of any efforts to provide an aesthetic, calming, pleasing, warm, or stimulating environment (at times this was in marked contrast to the principal’s office; which would have curtains, ornaments and pictures). The classrooms were not only empty of anything that could provide a containing environment (e.g. a nice poster, an encouraging message), they also did not contain any educational material (e.g. maps, lesson material). Desks and chairs were
broken, floors had holes in them and were strewn with litter, the windows were often dirty and/or broken. It seemed as if a lack of care was pervasive; passed down from the top to the bottom.

Extra-mural activities in primary schools were limited; soccer for boys and here and there netball for girls were the only available activities. School grounds generally offered no structures that would enhance the school experience: no playground equipment for young learners, no sport facilities for the older ones. A ball was regarded as a scarce resource.

The most adverse conditions were observed in primary schools; the best schools visited during this consultation appeared to be secondary schools. Three primary schools we visited appeared highly dysfunctional. In one urban school in Kunene not a single teacher could be found in a classroom although there were learners in the classes. The researchers walked around the school at three different time intervals to check and the situation remained the same. In two rural schools, one in Khomas and one in Oshana, more than half the classes were without teachers and learners appeared to wander in and out of classes as they pleased. Of the teachers in classes, some were reading magazines or shouting at learners.

These environments present as (additional) stressors in the lives of young children, adding a hard and under-stimulating school environment to the daily adversities of poverty and hunger.

**Finding 2:** In all primary schools, learners named illness or death of a parent (usually mother) as well as fears about becoming ill or dying themselves as a problem.

Being affected by death or illness was usually brought up towards the end of the lesson. This probably occurred as learners then felt emotionally safe to bring up this topic. This was confirmed by learners: Asked if they often worried about home in the classroom, was met with a consistently positive response.
What makes learners at this school feel sad/angry/upset/worried/scared? (feeling named by learners)

- When our mothers are sick
- If someone dies
- Scared that I will die (said softly by a female learner at the back of the class, her hand held up firmly)
- If a mother dies
- (We are worried) that we will become ill
- If a parent has to go to hospital

The above experiences of learners highlight the importance of training for positive classroom practice and the need to train teachers how best to communicate with and contain young learners. Learners will share and open up when the conditions are conducive. When conditions are adverse, they will act out emotions in destructive ways.

It is further of vital importance that teachers – and teacher educators - understand that for learning to take place, a learner’s mind needs to be a) open to receive information (this may sound simple, but sufficient research evidence exists that a stressed mind limits exploration), and b) that strong feelings such as grief and fear can be contained in a conscious manner in the classroom to allow learning and teaching to take place. Classrooms that are visually appealing and in which the day starts with an activity that helps both learners and teachers focus on the task at hand (e.g. prayer and song and/or a short mood enhancing activity like a short positive statement about self), will go a long way to facilitate a transfer from negative to positive emotions in both learners and teachers.

1.2 Learners’ experience of teacher counsellors?

Finding 3: Sensitive and empowered teacher counsellors are perceived by learners as helpful. Insensitive teacher counsellors can do harm. In all the primary schools visited at least one teacher counsellor was identified as a potentially helpful resource by learners. However, many teacher counsellors are not perceived by learners to be helpful or approachable.

In all the schools visited, learners identified a maximum of two teachers whom they felt they would approach if they had a problem. One of the teachers was always a teacher counsellor. As most schools have two to four identified teacher counsellors, this means that many teacher counsellors do not function effectively. When a teacher counsellor is identified as a teacher whom learners will go to with a problem, the response is very positive. Common reasons given for not going to a teacher counsellor were: a) the teacher
using the personal knowledge about the learner to shame the learner in front of peers or teachers, b) lack of confidentiality, c) lack of availability and d) dislike.

Across schools, learners stated that they saw the teacher counsellor only once or twice. Only in one school (rural, Khomas region), did learners mention an ongoing relationship with a teacher counsellor. The majority of learners who had received counselling (at all the primary schools), stated that they were satisfied that they had been helped. Examples of ‘help’ was in the form of being encouraged (e.g. not to leave school), of being given practical advice how to deal with a situation (e.g. changing own behaviour so as not to aggravate a situation) or practical, social work type interventions (e.g. being taken to hospital or placed in a hostel).

Finding 4: “Counselling” mostly takes place in the form of encouragement, providing advice, and/or a practical intervention. In the majority of cases, counselling sessions were limited to one or two sessions.

Examples of typical responses by teacher counsellors as described by learners:

- She tells you what not to do
- She asks questions and then takes over to solve
- She asks others not to do things
- Tell us we must not do this and this
- She speak to me in a nice way (when the learner felt discouraged)
- By talking to them and try to motivate them
- Telling us not to give up
- By talking to them and try to motivate them
Examples of practical interventions: One by teacher counsellors?

A grade 6 learner presented with problematic behaviours; sleeping in class, and beating other learners. The teacher counsellor discovered that the learner was being badly beaten by an older sibling at home, and had many household chores. The teacher counsellor visited the home and managed to form a relationship with both boys. "We don’t confront, you make friends. At first he (older brother) denied ... Later he agreed. ... Both stopped the beating. ... After that meeting we are good friends."

A learner who had been badly burnt with hot water at home was taken to hospital by the teacher counsellor. The social worker was called in.

A learner complained to a teacher counsellor about a pain in the leg. The teacher counsellor called the learner to the toilet (only private space), "It was a relative. We asked the parents: What are you going to do? They said: Nothing. I said: If you don’t go to the police, I will. Then they went."

Comment: It is our opinion that teacher counsellors who offer help own the process, and that, given the realistic constraints under which they operate, these interventions are feasible and sustainable.

Finding 5: When counselling is ongoing, learners display more sophisticated reflections about the link between emotions and behaviours. Longitudinal research has shown this capacity to be a resilient and protective factor which can facilitate the capacity to cope when in duress, and predict more sensitive parenting in adults.

In two of the primary schools, where counselling seemed to be strong and effective, learners spontaneously elaborated on their answers, providing evidence of richer and more complex reasoning; with evidence of Reflective Functioning. In these schools, a relationship between the teacher counsellor and learners was established and the learners met with teacher counsellor over a period of time. This was not, however, necessarily in the form of counselling sessions, but rather via discussion during regular extra-curricular activities like the AIDS club, which was run by the teacher counsellor.

It was noticeable in the focus group discussion with learners who had interacted with this teacher counsellor over time, that reflections were more in-depth and problem statements richer and more nuanced. The teacher counsellor, a mature woman who is also a Head of Department (HOD), plays a prominent role in the school, where she has set up a drama group and a choir. She exhibits the skills of a trained school counsellor and is an exception to the rule. The school, situated in a rural settlement area, is marked by adult (and increasingly

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6 Through the attribution of thoughts and feelings, reflective functioning enables the individual to see their own and other people’s actions as meaningful. This ability underlies the capacities for empathy, for emotion regulation, impulse control, self monitoring, and the experience of self agency. There is accumulative evidence that maltreatment impairs reflective capacities, and that the absence of reflective functioning exaggerates the antisocial and self-destructive response.
learner as well as teacher alcoholism), and many complaints about parents “drinking the grant money”. Of the problems they encountered at school, the first problem mentioned by the group of learners was, “teachers are drunk at school”.

The following are extracts from translated transcripts of interviews with learners from the above school that illustrate the success of counselling:

If you have a problem and you don’t know what to do, then you drink (this statement by a learner shows knowledge of the causal link between state of mind and acting out behaviour)

(What we have learnt to do in counselling): When you come from school you must make a time-table; then you know what to do; first you clean the house and then you do your homework (said with confidence), and you stay at home and such things. If you have a problem you can go to somebody whom you trust en talk about it, and this will solve your problems. For most children there is nobody who cares about them, and the only solution is drinking.

Researcher: What do you find good about counselling?

There’s always a solution
There’s always a discussion
To solve your problems. I had a problem in our house and I did something that was not right, and I went to talk to her (teacher counsellor), and she advised me, and helped me right.
My problems do not get bigger
You can go ahead with your life and do better things. You can make better choices
There is always a better choice to be made

In the morning, when you go to school, you are not yourself, your attention is not with your schoolwork, maybe you are assaulted at home, and then you get to school and have to go home again afterwards. Most children tend to run away from the problem; there are a number of children here who have run away because of that problem. Also you are being abused at home, and now you have marks on your body and when you get to school the children break you down. Then you don’t feel like going to school anymore. This is why some children commit suicide.

Finding 6: Teacher counsellors who are positively identified by learners tend to be proactive: They approach a learner upon hearing about a problem from another teacher or having noticed that something is amiss themselves. It is rare for a learner to approach a teacher counsellor on own initiative.

When asked to provide examples of counselling, the primary school learners would, as a matter of course, describe being approached by a teacher counsellor:
She saw that I was not happy
Another teacher told her about me
He asked me what was wrong
He called me after school and asked me why I was often late for school
I was sleeping in class, and she asked me why I was sleeping
She called me to the book room and asked me about my problem

**Comment:** In the primary school (latency) phase externalising would be expected behaviour of learners. During latency age children generally act out their problems rather than speak to adults about them. Children at this age often avoid speaking to adults about problems, especially when they are afraid of being blamed or beaten and where speaking to adults about problems is not part of a normal routine. Boys generally tend to externalise distress, with conduct problems being common signs of unhappiness. Girls, in general, tend to internalise problems, with physical complaints and tiredness being a common feature. Both boys and girls act out problems by being passive (typically coming across as demotivated) and/or through active avoidance (procrastination, running away)  

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, no date) found in its research that causes for serious acting out include the following: (The words parents and home can be substituted with the words teachers and school for the purposes of this research)

- weak bonding with parents, caused by parents being physically or emotionally unavailable to the child
- impotent parenting as manifested by failing to watch over children, by being excessively strict, or by providing harsh and inconsistent discipline
- a home environment that exposes children to violence and supports and models aggressive and violent behaviours
- gender: From approximately the age of four years, boys were found by the NIMH study to be more likely than girls to engage in aggressive, acting out behaviours.

**Finding 7: More girls than boys make use of counselling services. Gender should be taken into account when planning counselling.**

In the primary schools, more girls than boys were prepared to speak to a teacher counsellor about a problem. In one grade 6 class, only one boy was prepared to speak to a teacher counsellor about a problem. In a school where one teacher counsellor is male, and also described positively by the learners, the majority of boys in the class said that they would approach him if they had a problem. This should be taken into account in the training, as research shows that boys prefer a problem-solving approach to an emotion-focused approach.

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1Worldwide research shows that approximately 50–60% of primary school boys are referred for externalising problems (problems of conduct), compared to approximately 30% of girls. Latency-age girls tend to identify positively with female teachers: This was supported by the school drawings. This would make it easier for girls to approach a teacher counsellor – the majority of teacher counsellors in this survey were female. For an overview, see Carr (2006).
approach\(^8\), and that latency aged boys identify strongly with male figures (this finding is supported by the KFD, where the majority of boys drew themselves with a male teacher). Ironically, the male teacher counsellor was described by the girls: *Mr A only helps boys and says bad things to girls.*

**Finding 8: Learners are punished by both parents and teachers when they act out on stressors.**

Harsh punishment was pervasive, and according to the learners, meted out for problems beyond their control. For instance, learners would be beaten, shamed in front of others or sent away for not having the right school clothes or school books, for not having money for school related fees, or sleeping in class as a result of hunger, fatigue or illness.

In response to the question: What do grown-ups do when children like X (the name given by the learners for the child/ren in the picture) are angry/sad etc (the feelings given to the child by the learners), learners gave two types of responses:

**What do grown-ups do when Sarah/Kevin is sad or angry?**
- *Beat her or shout at her.*
- *Beat her.*
- *Beat him.*
- *Do nothing*

Most children do not tell teachers if they have problems, because they get beaten by the teachers if they talk about their problems. *We try to solve our problems by ourselves.*

**What learners wanted:**
- *The teacher can call in the parent and they can talk to the parent in the presence of the child.*
- *They can buy her food* (notice assumption that hunger is the cause)
- *They can talk friendly to her*

\(^8\) The current training of the teacher counselors is more emotion focused.

**1.3. Resilience and Coping?**

**Finding 9: Primary school learners have little recourse to constructive coping skills. They do not normally approach adults for help, and most feel helpless in the face of adversity.**

In response to the question, “What do children do when they are sad/angry/worried/feeling sick”, learners’ responses typically did not reflect approaching adults for help. The majority of responses reflected inadequate coping responses, marked by passivity or avoidance or attempts at self-soothing. This question was followed by another: “Are there grown-ups that the learners at this school can go to for help? “ Neighbours and friends were the first
choice of most learners. When there was more than one teacher counsellor at a school, at least one teacher counsellor was mentioned. Learners never named more than two teacher counsellors. When asked how these people can help the learner, the responses were practical when it came to neighbours and friends, such as buy or give food or a present, or take to the hospital. When a teacher counsellor was involved, the response would be counselling orientated, for example, give advice and encouragement.

In general, negative or passive coping (exchanging sex for money for food, crying or doing nothing, kill self) was combined with avoidant coping (playing to forget, stay away from school). Learners also named as consistent problems that other learners stole their food or school books; hence anti-social coping also takes the place of constructive alternatives. Examples of attempts at self soothing were restricted (drink water, sleep).9

Researcher: What can Maria do to feel better?

Learners: Pray, cry, go and play to forget, go home, drink water, sing, sleep, nothing.

9 Resilient individuals tend to use active coping strategies that are characterized by solving problems, seeking social support and attempting to alter stressful situations.
**Finding 10: Positive experiences at school were mostly restricted to non-classroom activities e.g. play, sport, music or socialising with peers.**

In only two schools, learners spoke about positive learning experiences and extra-mural activities were named (choir, drama, the HIV club, when a lesson is ‘!na’). These findings were confirmed by the kinetic school drawings, where positive activities were rare and usually in the form of wishful activities such as gardening with a teacher (at a school that had no garden), being surrounded by books (at a school which had not a single teacher in class, and where the lack of resources, including books, was conspicuous).

Research shows conclusively that people who cope (when faced with stressors that are within their control), focus on problem-solving when in distress or faced with a problem. Non-copers become emotion-focused under the same circumstances. Individuals, who try to avoid the problem or become passive, cope least well. A sense of personal control is a central factor in achievement motivation as well as resilience. An emerging perspective about the development of resilience is that individuals’ ability to bounce back from stressful situations is developed in the process of coping with day-to-day developmentally appropriate stressful situations. Active coping seems to play a significant role in the process of developing resilience.

**The Kinetic School Drawings?**

The Kinetic School Drawing (KSD) technique was developed to evaluate the child’s functioning within the school environment, specifically related to the teacher and classmates/peers. As with all children’s drawings, these KSD’s immediately portray the trust they present to the onlooker into an inner reflection.

For this research 242 drawings from primary school learners in the three regions, excluding the pilot school, were received. Drawings by girls were in the slight majority: 128 drawings were by girls, 114 by boys. Although we received 26 drawings from the mobile school (Kunene region), these were excluded from the analyses as all the learners were in lower primary grades. The comparative sample consisted of 79 drawings (41 girls, 38 boys). The categories *actions, distances, barriers and position, and physical characteristics of the figures and styles*, showed regular consistencies in our sample. We added the category *overall impression* as all three psychologists brought this up spontaneously.

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**Learners’ responses to the question: What do you do at school that makes you happy?**

- Playing with friends
- Play soccer (netball was also mentioned. However many schools offered only soccer for boys)
- Passing a test
- Listening to music makes me happy and makes me forget about my problems and pain
- Singing
In general, actions were missing. Passively standing was a salient feature of the drawings. A teacher with a stick in hand was a recurrent theme. Standing apart is common. The self figure is nearly always separated from other figures. An intriguing finding is the left placement of the self figure. (This is an indicator of low self-esteem. It can also point towards depression). The lack of a baseline (or ground) is noticeable. Compared to the comparison group, where a baseline was commonly drawn, the absence of grounding in the research group was even more conspicuous.

The self figures were noticeably immature. Strong gender identification occurred in all the drawings. This is in line with the developmental stage of learners. With boys physical aggression was apparent, and combined with identification with male teachers, who were mostly depicted negatively. Incomplete figures were evident, pointing towards anxiety and difficulties with identification. Teacher figures were most often incomplete.

The following drawings provide us with a picture of learners’ experience of the school environment. Compare the drawing on the left from our sample to the drawing on the right from a well functioning middle class school. More examples of drawings can be found in Appendix C.

The following are the summarised comments of the external Educational Psychologists Andries Olivier and Welma Wehmeyer, on the drawings:

*What was striking about the drawings was a feeling of detachment or social distance between the main figures/characters that were often drawn with no clear grounding. The overall impression was of emptiness and vulnerability. A poignant sense of hope prevailed.*

*This is often attributed to significant anxiety or uncertain self-development in research (see for example Koppitz, 1969 and Tielsch & Jackson Allen, 2005). Similarly placement of figures was characterised by a feeling of incompleteness, mostly through large open space (empty drawings). Extreme left placement of the self was also noted, together with a tendency to*
place figures in rows, facing the front. Human figures in general were more characteristic of an earlier developmental phase (infantilised).

Gender differences were noted, especially signs of aggression (extent of line heaviness, body gestures, size of figures) in boys’ drawings, and less teacher-learner interaction. A sideways profile of the self was also more prominent among boys. Indicators of corporal punishment (canes, flogging, negative facial expression) hinted at a prominent theme throughout. Gender-role identification was clearly visible in all the drawings.

As a measure of the development of socialisation in children, there are signs that these children are feeling lost in the school system. This can also partially explain the infantilised portrayal of the self, as most of the children were above the median age for their grade group.

A significant finding however was that one could sense a feeling of hope in these drawings – even if only through wish-fulfilment – which can open the doors for change, and communicated a readiness, even a longing, to learn.

Conclusion?
The capacity to be comforted and supported is integral to general health: To view counselling as an encapsulated healing facility would be erroneous; similar to providing medicine or vaccines or health advice in a system that does not have access to adequate health and safety measures (e.g. in the absence of clean water supplies, medication against cholera is bound to fail).

For psychological health to be advanced, the social system has to be “sufficient” for such improvement to take place. Three basic conditions are necessary for psychological health to exist - these are as true for teachers as they are for learners:

1. Material conditions such as adequate nutrition, sufficient sleep and an effective learning environment. If inadequate, they act not only as physical barriers to learning, they also induce stress and reduce the human capacity to develop psychological resilience.

2. The availability of healthy and constructive alternatives: Without access to games, play, activities in nature, sports, the arts (dance, drama, music, arts and crafts), interesting learning materials and study skills, energy cannot be channelled into life-enhancing activities.

3. Psychological conditions such as basic trust, inner motivation, resilience, effective distress management and coping skills are well-researched cornerstones of psychological health. It is vital that principals as well as teacher counsellors are well-informed about realistic, practical ways in which these can be built into the school environment.
The availability of a caregiver when faced with distress underlies our capacities for both basic trust and hope. If an adult is consistently available when a young child is in distress, the child learns that adults can be trusted, and that, next time, somebody will be available too. They also experience that, when in distress, they can be soothed, and that they belong to a group that can adequately support persons in distress. This provides for the development of both hope and trust; internal expectations that are vital to the individual capacity to cope under duress and to have faith in relationships. Teacher counsellors (and positive classrooms) can play a vital role by providing learners with exactly such experiences – of safe, consistent and reliable recourses. Research into programs that aim to support children who face extreme stressors (e.g. children in refugee camps and in war zones), demonstrate that the most effective programs support the development of active coping and the perceived availability of social support networks.

2. The experiences of secondary school learners?

Synopsis?
Secondary school learners report being exposed to a range of adversarial circumstances both at home and school that negatively influence their lives. These include pervasive poverty with the accompanying problems of hunger, inability to pay school fees, uniforms and other necessities needed for school; problems at home that include abuse, alcoholism and neglect; negative experiences at school that range from a poor to absent teaching and learning environment, widespread corporal punishment and bullying, fellow learners who display a range of negative behaviours, lack of motivation and alienation from the school system. It is against this background that the teacher counsellors struggle to provide a counselling service for learners.

Despite the often adverse conditions it appears that in many instances the teacher counsellors are providing a much needed service, which has been a helpful experience for a number of learners. The concept of counselling and the need for such a service is overwhelmingly supported by the learners. However, they complain that in some instances the wrong teachers are selected as counsellors. Where the teacher counsellors are liked, found to be empathic and trusted, their service is used and appreciated. If they are not trusted, treat the learners with disrespect and are seen as incompetent, they are not used by the learners. Learners were able to give a range of useful suggestions for improving the counselling service in their schools that ranged from the appointment of more and full-time counsellors, giving them a say in the choice of the counsellors, introducing peer support groups, ensuring a safe and separate space for counselling and improving communication between learners and teachers.
Results?

2.1 Common stressors?
The research revealed a number of common stressors that secondary school learners were exposed to across the three regions surveyed.

Finding 11: Schools are also adversarial settings for secondary school learners

Similar to the findings among the primary school learners, the school often remains a negative and adversarial setting for secondary school learners. The analysis of the learner questionnaires revealed that five of the seven most frequently cited personal problems related to the school.

School behavioural problems

School behavioural problems were the most frequently cited problems across all schools in the Kunene and Oshana regions and in two of the three Khomas secondary schools. These included problems relating to lack of discipline, fighting, lack of respect for other learners and/or teachers, general bad behaviour, breaking school rules, swearing, not listening to teachers, coming late, not doing homework, absenteeism/bunking, vandalism, jealousy, stealing, throwing papers around, breaking the school down, making a noise in class, abusing other learners, swearing, and making a noise in class. These problems appear to be particularly severe in the Oshana region and one section of the Kunene region. In two schools in the Oshana region between 36% and 50% of all personal problems mentioned by the learners relate to school behavioural problems. The focus group interviews highlighted the pervasiveness of bullying in the majority of the schools we visited. This problem is not being effectively addressed and is not prioritised by school counsellors or school management.

What these responses highlight is that teaching and learning is being eroded in many schools due to the problematic conditions in the classrooms. In classrooms where there is not an atmosphere conducive to learning, every learner becomes vulnerable. Addressing these sorts of problems is beyond the competencies and duties of a teacher counsellor. Many of the cases that the teacher counsellors are required to address are systemic problems related to the adversarial conditions in the schools.
Lack of Basic Resources in Schools?

The second most frequently cited problem related to lack of resources in schools. This included lack of grade 11 and 12 classes, no school bus, insufficient classrooms, no hall, not enough chairs, no laboratory, no entertainment venues, not enough teachers, lack of facilities to study, not enough textbooks and in some schools having to buy their own textbooks, no sport fields, no computers, dirty classrooms, broken school fences, broken tables and chairs, no water to drink, lack of toilets. Lack of adequate resources at school was most frequently mentioned by learners in the Kunene and Oshana regions, with over 50% of all problems mentioned relating to this area in one particular school in Kunene. The lack of adequate basic resources compounds and also contributes to the behavioural problems in schools. In addition, poor hostel conditions further exacerbated this problem. Learners mentioned problems like inadequate food, hunger, broken hostels, broken toilets, broken water pipes and no hot water, no electricity, insects and particularly mosquitoes in the evenings in the study halls or rooms, lack of mosquito nets, not enough study time, overcrowded sleeping rooms (22 in one room), not enough mattresses (sleeping three to a mattress), shortage of materials in the hostels, bad treatment by the workers, too much noise when they have to study at night, not enough time to sleep or being forced to go to sleep immediately after sunset.

Negative Teacher Behaviour?

This potent mix is further enhanced by the negative behaviour of teachers. Approximately 10% of all personal problems mentioned related to the behaviour of teachers. These included corporal punishment, calling learners stupid, yelling at learners, not encouraging learners, not marking homework, coming late to school, no

There is no water to drink in school (Female, 16, urban secondary school, Oshana)

No toilets, we go at the bush (Male, 17, urban secondary school, Oshana)

Some of our classes does not have lights (Female, 17, urban secondary school, Oshana)

And sometimes they can't take it anymore and try to leave school when teachers are having a problem with them (Female, 17, rural secondary school, Khomas)

Send home because of school funds. Teachers say to us stupid idiot. Beaten when you don't have money. Teachers yelling at us. (Female, 16, rural secondary school, Khomas)

Teacher give us homework and not marking it. Teacher biting (Beating) us at school. Teacher comes late to school. (Male, 16, rural secondary school, Khomas)

Some teachers do not come to every lesson. Some teachers don't write summaries. Some teachers use to beat learners even though learners do not understand the subject. (Female, 18, urban secondary school, Oshana)
negotiation/communication with learners, not supporting learners, learners scared to speak to teachers, abusing learners, blaming learners for things they did not do, teachers not believing in learners’ capabilities, favouritism, being rude when they have a bad day, corruption, lazy teachers, teachers who don’t come to lessons. In addition the focus group discussions revealed that some teachers were drunk, others sexually approached learners or insulted them.

Corporal punishment is endemic in the schools and was a frequently mentioned problem in the learner focus groups. We personally observed incidences of corporal punishment, despite it being denied by many teachers, teacher counsellors and school principals. In some schools learners are too terrified to ask to go to the toilet and are beaten for the slightest infringement. There appears to be a limited ability to discipline constructively in schools.

Other problems?

All of the above problems are compounded by poverty related problems (such a hunger, inability to buy school uniforms, inability to pay school fees). Learners cite cases where they are forced to pay for school books, have to travel long distances to school and then arrive late, for which they receive corporal punishment or are locked outside.

Learning problems, such as not being able to read, not understanding school work, concentration and study problems, failing, and problems understanding English were also mentioned. Poor understanding of English is particularly problematic in the Kunene and Oshana regions where learners also complained of teachers who had a poor command of English and whom they found difficult to understand.

**Finding 12: The secondary school environment generally does not promote resilience in secondary school learners**

In all the secondary schools visited, learners reported that learner representative councils functioned only marginally, and had no real impact. Schools appeared to function in terms of an authoritarian model, with learners expected to behave as subordinates. This does not prepare learners for effective adulthood in which they can function as confident decision-makers. Research on resilience has shown conclusively that three key factors promote resilience: consistent experiences of

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10 Denial was most prevalent in the Khomas region. In the Oshana and Kunene regions corporal punishment was more openly admitted and defended.
autonomy or self-determination, 2) belonging and 3) competency (also called the ABC of resilience) (Ungar & Lerner, 2008).

Learners often expressed frustration at the lack of self-determination, at not having a say, not being taken seriously, not having their needs met and not being consulted. Secondary school principals did not seem to see it as their role to promote autonomy in secondary school learners. In addition, a school environment marked by broken desks, empty walls, minimal extra-mural activities, adverse systems of disciplinary control and poor relationships between teachers and learners cannot promote a sense of belonging. Poor teaching precludes experiences of competency, as does the limited opportunities for extra-mural activities. Too often sex and alcohol seemed to be the only extra-mural options available to the learners.

Finding 13: Homes and the community are also adversarial settings for many of the secondary school learners

Hunger was a pervasive problem for most of the learners interviewed in all the regions surveyed. Those living in hostels were often the worst off. In many instances learners told of being sent to board with family members or strangers in order to be closer to their schools. Many of these learners spoke of physical and emotional abuse and not getting enough to eat. In addition, a number of learners are exposed to physical and emotional abuse and neglect at home. Some learners complained of having to undertake too many responsibilities at home, fighting with parents, alcoholic parents, and not getting along with their parents or caregivers. Interesting is that less than 5% of the problems mentioned related to alcohol, drugs, smoking and teenage pregnancy. Although according to statistics, large numbers of learners are affected by HIV and AIDS, only 2% of the problems they mentioned related to ill-health, bereavement and/or HIV/AIDS. This is far less than one would have expected given the number of learners classified as OVC and the HIV and AIDS statistics for the country. The fact that so few learners mentioned this problem is probably indicative of the pervasive extent of stigma and discrimination that silences learners. This will also mean that these learners are far less likely to try and access help including counselling.
Table 2: Personal problems mentioned by learners according to school and region? (as percentage of total problems mentioned per school) (n = 282)\(^{11}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<td>School</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural problem Khomas</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners unmotivated Khomas</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning problem Kunene</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg. behaviour of teachers (incl. corporal punishment) Oshana</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources in the school</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostel-related problems</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Learners’ experiences of teachers and counsellors?

Finding 14: Secondary school learners value teacher counsellors who are perceived as empathic and trustworthy. Most learners were able to identify at least one teacher counsellor whom they viewed positively.

Encouragingly most secondary school learners had a positive opinion about the value of counselling in their schools and in cases where the learners were positive about the teacher counsellor, they commented that they were able to help them with their problems.

Finding 15: About a quarter of secondary school learners have seen a teacher counsellor and are satisfied with the service provided.

Approximately a quarter of the sample had spoken to a teacher counsellor over the past year and found it helpful. Only 7% had found it unhelpful and 68% had not spoken to a teacher counsellor. Although the majority of learners had not seen a teacher counsellor, a percentage of nearly 25% is high: Teacher counsellors at schools cannot be expected to cope with such a high percentage, especially given that they carry a heavy teaching load. Again there were significant differences in the responses according to school, rather than according to region as can be seen from the tables below. This confirms the finding that if teacher counsellors are experienced and seen as empathic and trustworthy

\(^{11}\) Note that these are only some of the main problems mentioned. Learners mentioned such a range of problems that only the main ones are depicted in this table.
they are utilised. In cases where the teacher counsellor is not approached or described as not having time to see the learners, the service is not utilised and viewed negatively.

Table 3: Did you speak to the teacher counsellor at your school? (in % 282) ?

| Did not speak to a teacher counsellor | 68.2% |
| Spoke to a teacher counsellor and it was helpful | 24.8% |
| Spoke to a teacher counsellor and it was not helpful | 7.0% |

Table 4: Responses to question: In the past year, did you speak to the teacher counsellor about a problem?” according to school and region (%) ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Khomas</td>
<td>Kunene</td>
<td>Oshana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not speak to a teacher counsellor</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke to a teacher counsellor and it was helpful</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke to a teacher counsellor and it was not helpful</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finding 16: In the secondary schools, more boys than girls spoke to a teacher counsellor

More boys than girls have been to see a teacher counsellor in the past year and they also appear more willing to approach a teacher counsellor if they have a problem in future. This is an encouraging finding, given the opposite tendency found in most counselling literature which indicates that generally girls are more willing to see a counsellor than boys (see Fox & Butler, 2007).

Table 5: Responses to question: In the past year, did you speak to the teacher counsellor about a problem?” according to gender (%) ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did not speak to counsellor</th>
<th>Spoke to a counsellor and it was helpful</th>
<th>Spoke to a counsellor and it was not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Responses to question: Would you go and see your teacher counsellor if you had a problem? according to gender (%) ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 Note that in the case of the Oshana schools large numbers of respondents answered that they 'did not know' for this question: school 7 = 57%; school 8 = 33.3%; school 9 = 42.9%. This explains the lower percentages for these schools in the table.
Finding 17: A number of learners either did not know that there was a teacher counsellor in their schools and/or could not identify the teacher counsellor.

A number of learners did not know who the teacher counsellors were in the school or even that there were teacher counsellors in the school. This indicates a problem related to introducing the teacher counsellors, and informing learners about their services and roles. This appears to be a particular problem in the school that only offered two grades (senior secondary school/grades 11 and 12). The ‘newcomers’ often did not know who the teacher counsellor was or the availability of such a service.

Of the total sample of learners who completed the questionnaire, 44% did not know whether there was a teacher counsellor in their school and a further 2% said there was no teacher counsellor. This varied from school to school (see Table 7 below) and was especially problematic in Oshana. However this could be due to language difficulties as many of the learners struggle with English, particularly in the Oshana and Kunene regions.

Table 7: Is there a teacher counsellor in this school? (according to school and region) (n = 282)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Khomas</th>
<th>Kunene</th>
<th>Oshana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a way of addressing this problem, learners suggested that the counsellors be introduced to the school at regular intervals, that learners should be informed about the service they offer and actively encouraged to speak about their problems to the counsellors.

Finding 18: Teacher counsellors are sometimes experienced negatively by learners. When teacher counsellors are not liked and/or trusted by the learners, their service is not utilised.

Learners made a range of negative comments about the teacher counsellors, indicating that sometimes an unsuitable person is selected. Learners complained that some of the teacher counsellors treat them with disrespect, punish them unfairly if they come with problems, judge them, mock them and talk about their problems to other learners and teachers. Further complaints were that the teacher counsellor was too busy to deal with their
problem, confirming the views of most stakeholders that the teacher counsellors are overloaded and need more dedicated time to do counselling. In some cases learners felt that the counsellors discriminated against them based on their tribal affiliation or their gender.

Table 8: Main reasons cited for not liking the teacher counsellor? Total sample (n =282) 13?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative characteristics of teacher counsellor</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality issues</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher counsellor seen as incompetent (unable to help with problems of learners)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too busy/does not have time to solve problems of learners</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks too many questions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Main reasons cited for not liking the teacher counsellor according to school and region (%)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khomas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kunene</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oshana 14</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative characteristics of teacher counsellor</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher counsellor seen as incompetent (unable to help with problems of learners)</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too busy/does not have time</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finding 19: Main concerns about going to see a teacher counsellor related to confidentiality, negative reaction from the teacher counsellor, and perceived lack of competence.

The main concern raised by almost a third of the learners about going to see a teacher counsellor related to confidentiality. This is also commonly reported in other literature in the United Kingdom and elsewhere (see Fox & Butler, 2007; Howiesen & Semple, 2000). Young people are often concerned about confidentiality, even if this is not necessarily based on fact as can be seen from the following quotes:

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13 Note that these are not the full range of reasons given by the learners. Only the most frequently cited reasons are depicted in this table.

14 Note that in the case of the Oshana schools large numbers of respondents answered that they ‘did not know’ for this question: school 7 = 57%; school 8 = 33.3%; school 9 = 42.9%. This explains the lower percentages for these schools in the table.
Apart from the overriding concern relating to confidentiality, further concerns related to how the teacher counsellor would react to their problem. Learners feared that they would not be taken seriously, would be ridiculed or could be punished.

Table 10: What would worry you about going to see the teacher counsellor? (n = 282)\(^{15}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality issues</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher will react negatively to the problem</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher counsellor is not competent – will not be able to help</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher counsellor will not have time</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher counsellor will not take the problem seriously</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finding 20: Counselling as a concept and service is valued by the secondary school learners and they would like to have a good counselling service at their schools

Despite the negative views expressed about specific teacher counsellors, it is encouraging to note that 71% of the total sample said that they would go to a teacher counsellor if they had a problem. Two thirds of the respondents felt that going to a teacher counsellor would help them solve their problems and 11% recognised that talking about their feelings to someone they could trust was a good thing.

Table 11: Responses to question: Would you go and see your teacher counsellor if you had a problem? According to school and region (%)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Khomas</td>
<td>Kunene</td>
<td>Oshana(^{16})</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{15}\) Only the main problems mentioned are depicted.

\(^{16}\) Note that in the case of the Oshana schools large numbers of respondents answered that they ‘did not know’ for this question: school 7 = 57%; school 8 = 33.3%; school 9 = 42.9%. This explains the lower percentages for these schools in the table.
These results indicate that across all regions the majority of learners would go and see a teacher counsellor if they had problem, provided that the teacher counsellor was a person that they could trust and liked. This appears to contradict the view expressed by some of the key stakeholders that counselling was not viewed as culturally appropriate or that it was less supported due to the fact that people were not used to or did not want to consult a counsellor for problems in regions such as Oshana. It is rather the competence and availability of the individual counsellors in the schools that appear to determine the current and future use of this service (see Table 12).

**Learners’ suggestions for improving the counselling system?**

Learners offered a wide range of suggestions for improving the counselling service in the schools. The question was deliberately framed in very general terms, “what do you think can be done at your school to help learners with their problems”, and did not directly mention the word counselling. The answers however showed that the majority of learners appear to value the importance of a counselling service and the majority of responses related to the improvement of such a service. The table below depicts the most frequent suggestions offered by the learners.

**Table 12:** What do you think can be done at your school to help learners with their problems (%) (*n* = 282)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select the right people as counsellors/better counsellors</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve communication between teachers and learners</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appoint more counsellors</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce peer counselling/support groups</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners should go and see the counsellor when they have problems</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appoint a counsellor - we have no counsellors</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The suggestions made by learners included:

*Appoint soft, considerate, thoughtful teachers for learners to confide in. A learner won’t go to a strict, mean and rude teacher with their problems (Female, 17, urban school, Khomas)*

*They must choose a teacher that has a good relationship with the learner so that they can feel free to talk about their problem (Male, 19, urban school, Khomas)*
Select better counsellors?
The most frequent suggestion made by learners regarding ways to improve the counselling service was to appoint more suitable teachers as teacher counsellors. The learners clearly felt that in many of the schools there were problems with some of the teacher counsellors. They wanted the teachers selected as teacher counsellors to be empathic, trustworthy and seen as fair and impartial.

Allow learner input in the selection of the teacher counsellors?
Finding 21: Learners feel that they should have a voice in the selection of the teacher counsellors

A useful suggestion made by some learners was that the learners should be consulted in the selection of teacher counsellors. They would like to be part of the process and would like to select teachers whom they liked and trusted.

Improve the training of teacher counsellors?
A further suggestion either made directly or implied in the responses was that the teacher counsellors needed to be better trained and have more expertise. Some of the learners felt that the teacher counsellors would not be able to help them with their problems either because the problems were viewed as being too 'serious' for the teacher counsellor to deal with and/or because the teacher counsellor just did not have the necessary skills and competence.

Introduce peer support groups?
Finding 22: Learners would like to have peer support groups and/or peer counselling in their schools

Many of the learners felt that they would like to have some sort of peer support groups in their school. They felt it would be easier to share their problems with other learners, particularly those with similar problems rather than adults.

Provide a private space/classroom for counselling?
A common complaint was that there was no appropriate space available for counselling learners. Learners requested separate rooms or spaces for counselling. Ideally counselling should take place in a separate space that allows for confidentiality. With the exception of one school we visited, there was no such space available. The counselling that did take place was offered in the staff room, in quiet corners in corridors, outdoors or in a classroom without privacy of curtains. This is not conducive for learners to share their problems. Having counselling sessions in the staff room...
is particularly problematic, given the common fears expressed by learners about the lack of confidentiality and the fear or being ridiculed or punished by staff.

Provide choices – more than one teacher counsellor and both genders?
Learners felt that they should have a choice regarding the teacher counsellor and a number of learners suggested that both male and female counsellors should be selected.

Provide more and full time teacher counsellors?
Finding 23: Learners would like teacher counsellors to be more available and have more time for them. Many of them suggested that the teacher counsellor be appointed on a full-time basis.

A common suggestion was that there was a need for more counsellors and that they should be appointed on a full-time basis – i.e. they should not also be class teachers and/or teach other subjects. Some of the learners felt that they did not want to speak about their personal problems to a teacher who would also be teaching them in other subjects.

Improve communication between learners and teachers?
Finding 24: Teachers need to get to know the learners better and also to learn more about their problems. Many learners feel that the communication between teachers and learners needs to be improved

A common complaint of learners was that there was little or bad communication between

There should be two counsellor teacher at the school which is male and a female who respect and care for us (Female, 16, urban secondary school, Kunene)

I suggest the government (ministry of education) should employ more counselling teachers because they really mean a lot and they are very helpful. We are in dire need of people like this (Female, 18, urban secondary school, Khomas)

the learners and the teachers. This meant that the teachers did not really know or understand their problems. In addition it was felt that teachers sometimes only communicated with some learners, ignoring others. In one school problems relating to tribalism/racism were raised and learners felt that the teachers, teacher counsellor and principal favoured learners who belonged to the same tribe as they did, discriminating against other learners.
Make more use of outside organisations and specialists?
Finding 25: In schools where the Star School Programme operates, learners speak very positively about the Star coaches and appear to go to them for help with solving their problems.

In some instances learners favour the use of outside organisations and counsellors as these are seen as more neutral, better qualified and more approachable. In cases where the Star School Programme operates, learners appear to be particularly positive about the qualities and the expertise of the coach. In fact in some instances, learners appear to prefer going to the Star School Coach than to the teacher counsellor.

The Star School Programme is a Southern African project aimed at mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS by reversing the numbers of those infected and affected, empowering youth with information and skills that will protect them from becoming infected. It was launched in Namibia in September 2007, and since then has been implemented in 11 schools, mostly in the Khomas Education Region.

Teacher counsellors in the Khomas region praised the Star Programme. The youths facilitating and delivering the programme in schools were not only mentioned as a great support by teacher counsellors, but many learners revealed that they waited for them and discussed their personal problems with them. It could be important for the Ministry of Education to consider adopting the Star Schools Programme approach as an integrated part of school counselling, in addition to already existing Life Skills programmes such as My Future is My Choice and Window of Hope.

Conclusion?
Learners in secondary schools are faced with a huge number of challenges that include factors related to negative teacher behaviour, poorly resourced schools, a lack of a school culture that fosters any form of self determination and autonomy and no extra-mural activities. These are compounded by factors related to poverty such as hunger, lack of money to pay school fees and HIV and AIDS. Despite these enormous challenges, a number of teacher counsellors are succeeding in providing a service that is valued and requested by the learners in the secondary schools. The number of secondary school learners who had consulted a teacher counsellor was encouraging. Generally learners had a positive view of counselling and expressed the need for a counselling service. More male than female learners had used the service.
Learners made a number of relevant suggestions for improving the current counselling service in their schools. The positive views expressed about the concept of counselling and the fact that a number of learners report being helped by the teacher counsellor is a good reason for continuing to support and strengthening the current system. It has, however, grave shortcomings and these include the fact that teacher counsellors do not have dedicated time to do their counselling work, a lack of suitable physical space for counselling, and unsuitable teacher counsellors who lack the skills to understand and/or deal with learners' problems.
Section 4: The Views of the Teacher Counsellors?

In the following section we present the views of the teacher counsellors relating to their role, training, support provided, challenges experienced as well as their recommendations for addressing key problem areas.

Synopsis?
Many of the teacher counsellors are managing to provide much needed support and help to learners with problems in their schools. In general, they are passionate about their work and were selected because they like to help and are seen as empathic and approachable. A minority of teacher counsellors are in the post because they have a lighter workload or were nominated by their principals or other staff members, without necessarily wanting to do the work.

There was consistency regarding the difficulties teacher counsellors faced in both urban and rural primary and secondary schools. These related to:

- Lack of understanding of a shared vision for counselling among stakeholders in schools and in the education system.
- Lack of support structures for counselling (space, work load, resources, etc.).
- The double-role of full-time teacher and teacher counsellor.
- Insufficient training.
- Lack of time to attend training workshops and cluster meetings.
- Inadequate support from stakeholders (teachers, school management, regional school counsellors, parents, communities).

Teacher counsellors mentioned a number of areas in which they lacked the specific skills necessary to counsel learners. These included dealing with sexuality, HIV positive learners; issues of confidentiality and disclosure; sexual abuse, attempted and threatened suicide, dealing with cultural beliefs and practices. Generally teacher counsellors felt supported by the RSCs and ARSCs, but problems were experienced especially in remote rural areas. The cluster system is not functioning adequately mainly due to transport problems and finding time to attend meetings.

Contextualizing the Teacher Counsellor in the Namibian Education System?

In the current Ministry of Education system in Namibia, a teacher counsellor is a teacher in a primary or secondary government school who has been entrusted with the responsibility of rendering counselling or any type of psycho-social support to learners within a school-setting.

Teacher counsellors are appointed by school management based on their characteristics, subject areas or workload. The position of the teacher counsellor is voluntary in nature and
although it is expected of each government school to have teachers performing this role, the position is not on the official staff establishment.

The counselling rendered by teachers follows a para-professional model, as the teachers are not qualified counsellors and are not registered with the psychology association. They are primarily teachers with a full teaching load and other related responsibilities. Counselling is an additional duty that is treated in the same way as extra-curricula activities such as sport and recreation activities, remedial as well as faith-based activities.

Each school is expected to appoint two or more teachers to serve as teacher counsellors. Once appointed, they are expected to attend training organized by Regional School Counsellors as well as Senior School Psychologists of DATS, a division in the directorate PQA in the Ministry of Education. In some training workshops, qualified experts in certain specialization areas are appointed by DATS to present aspects of the training. A cascade approach is used, with the trained teacher counsellors expected to pass on the training content to other teachers at their schools, and especially to members of the counselling support group, who have not yet attended any of the five sets of training offered by DATS. In addition, they are expected to directly or indirectly influence school principals regarding psycho-social needs of learners and handling other issues that are likely to result in emotional and behavioural difficulties of learners.

**Reasons for assuming teacher counsellor’s role?**

Teacher counsellors who participated in the current evaluation were asked to explain reasons why they became teacher counsellors.

**Finding 26: Most teacher counsellors took on the role because they were committed to helping learners and cared about their well-being.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To educate the nation about life and help guide the next generation to a better future</td>
<td>Khomas rural primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I am a born-counsellor. Counselling is almost second nature to me. People normally come to me and disclose their problems. I also believe that boys want to discuss their issues with men</td>
<td>Khomas rural primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a teacher counsellor helps me to help learners help themselves, and this gives me great satisfaction</td>
<td>Khomas rural secondary school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some teacher counsellors, however, revealed that they became teacher counsellors either due to a lower workload or because they were already doing something that could easily be linked to a counselling function such as being the Life Skills teacher or working on an HIV and AIDS related programme.
I became a teacher counsellor simply because I had a lower load. I needed to fill the load. (Khomass, urban primary school)

If you are a Life Skills teacher, you become an automatic member of the counselling support group (Teacher counsellor, Kunene urban secondary school).

The principal saw the way I was handling learners’ issues and suggested that I become part of the counseling support group (Teacher counsellor, Kunene urban primary school).

I was a facilitator for HIV and AIDS programme when counselling was introduced at the school. I then automatically joined counselling, because the two programs go hand in hand (Teacher counsellor, Kunene urban primary school).

I was selected by the principal when I first joined the school in 2001. When trainings started, the principal recommended that I attend. I do not know why he selected me” (Teacher counsellor, Oshana rural secondary school).

I was nominated in 2007 to assist TC’s because we had dangerous learners that year who were doing drugs. So I came on board and the learners listened to me (Teacher counsellor, Oshana rural secondary school).

Some of the teacher counsellors who landed in this role due to the trust their school principals had in them, rarely counselled any learners as they were neither approached by learners, nor did other teachers refer learners to them.

Key challenges and successes?

Finding 27: Committed teacher counsellors in many cases are succeeding in offering psycho-social support to learners.

There is no doubt that some teacher counsellors, especially those who are committed to this task, offer much needed psycho-social support to learners. Some teacher counsellors carry out duties of social workers, lawyers, religious leaders and psychologists. They identify learners’ emotional needs; listen and are trusted by the learners. They are also able to offer ongoing support, despite their heavy workload.

In one particular secondary school in the Khomas region, the consultants witnessed how a former learner handed an expensive gift to her former teacher counsellor, thanking her for the role she played in her life during the difficult time she went through almost right through her secondary school phase.
Finding 28: In some cases teacher counsellors struggled to support learners. This was sometimes due to an unsuitable person being appointed as a counsellor and/or because learners did not make use of the services offered.

The research, however, also revealed contrary experiences to those just described. Some teacher counsellors, who described themselves as passionate and/or who had been identified by the school principal as a teacher who would be able to address learners’ psycho social needs, did not necessarily reach out to learners or treat them with love and care. There were reports by learners of them being verbally abusive; or treating their problems without necessary sensitivity and confidentiality (refer to previous section).

Lack of trust or belief in counselling by learners?

There were also cases in which teacher counsellors revealed that although they had the skills and were ready to counsel learners, learners did not trust them and did not disclose their problems to them. One teacher counsellor attributed the lack of trust to learners’ cultures and also parental influence:

The learners do not trust us. Some parents claim that we teach their children about sex and turn children against the teachers.

Culture prescribes that we don’t talk about sex with learners, yet pregnancy are occurring even in our school which is a primary school. In this one case, we learned through the nurse that the particular learner is pregnant. When we heard rumours about her pregnancy, we tried to get information about that from her, but she would not accept. But then she opened up with the nurse! (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban primary school).

The lack of trust for the teachers in general, including teacher counsellors, cannot only be linked to lack of teacher skills, but to other factors in the school. Learners’ prior experiences of fear or betrayed trust in a school setting for example, can contribute to a lack of trust between learners and teacher counsellors. Parents who tell their children not to discuss private, domestic issues with outsiders (including teacher counsellors), also contribute to learner reluctance to confide in the teacher counsellors. Some learners associate being called to come and see a teacher counsellor with having done something wrong and as a result, they rarely come for counselling sessions.

Lack of suitable space and time to do counselling and lack of appreciation and acknowledgment for the role of counsellor?

Finding 29: Lack of suitable space and time for counselling are key challenges. Teacher counsellors would like to be appointed on a full-time basis and/or have their other workload reduced to make time for counselling activities.
Finding 30: Because counselling is voluntary and done in addition to regular teaching it is often not valued and rewarded.

We are overloaded. There is no space for counselling. You have to walk through a class with someone who is crying to get to the ‘office’ at the back of a class which I use for counselling (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban secondary school).

How am I protected? How am I protected? (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban secondary school, referring to conflict situations in which they often find themselves in the line of their duties).

We don’t have space for counselling. Sometimes you have to walk around with a child on the school ground while counselling. We do not always get the support we need (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban primary school).

We all have 35 periods. And children cannot stay after school. They will get into trouble with guardians for coming home late. They will also miss the group they are walking with, and some children really come from very far. Sometimes when children have difficulties and find themselves in difficult situations, we miss classes. Last week I drove around from office to office with a child who was really in a bad space. This child would not go home after school. She would instead follow me wherever I go. I realized this is serious. You use your own petrol. Sometimes counselling goes beyond the school. The other day I found a woman, the mother of one of my children at school, at my home when I returned from school. I ended up driving her to where I thought she could get help. At the end of the day, your scripts have to be marked, your classes taught and your marks submitted (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban primary school).

Currently the work of the teacher counsellor is voluntary and done in addition to regular teaching. This seems to contribute to the subordinate status given to counselling in many schools.

We are not valued! Teachers get praised and shown appreciation for academic achievements. What about us? Don’t we do good work? We help learners overcome serious situations, and what do we get? (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban secondary school)

We are not acknowledged as a body that can make any contributions. You may know about a particular learner’s circumstances. The next thing you hear is that the learner has been expelled. Teacher counsellors should at least be given a say in disciplinary hearings (Teacher counsellor, Kunene urban secondary school).
Teacher counsellors explained at length the difficulties they experience trying to be both teachers and counsellors. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of dedicated space for counselling; lack of support from school management, more emphasis and value being placed on academic subjects than counselling and lack of a common understanding among staff members and learners of the objectives and approaches used in counselling. In the light of these difficulties, almost all teacher counsellors called for schools to appoint full-time teacher counsellors and/or to reduce the other workload of the teacher counsellors.

The lack of acknowledgement of the role of teacher counsellor is further exacerbated by teachers who undermine the work being done by the teacher counsellor:

A teacher can just shout at a learner on whom you have spent a lot of work gaining their trust and ensuring them that school is safe. And there goes all your hard work!

Finding 31: Teacher counsellors often feel helpless to intervene in creating a better school environment. They feel powerless to address corporal punishment, bullying, sexual harassment and the use of inappropriate language against learners even though they are aware it is taking place.
The school environment plays an important role in the emotional well-being of both learners and teachers (Armstrong, 2006). Most of the schools we visited were found to be promoting practices that are not only harmful to the emotional well-being of learners, but also go against the current counselling approach that is supposed to be implemented. They also are contrary to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for the Teaching Services (Ministry of Education, 2004).

Corporal punishment, bullying, sexual harassment and inappropriate language used against learners among themselves or by teachers are common in many school environments. In some schools corporal punishment was administered without consideration of the ministerial guidelines and it was accepted as the norm. What was disturbing was the helplessness of teacher counsellors and of principals to act against these practices, even where the education and other policies were clear and known to all role players. Such helplessness is demonstrated by the manner in which principals and teachers were aware of the abolishment of corporal punishment, yet they looked on as other teachers continued to use this as a disciplinary measure. The evaluators observed situations where learners were bullied by other learners and teachers with little action being taken either by schools and/or teacher counsellors.

**Finding 32:** Teacher counsellors are more aware of problems arising from family and other circumstances external to the school system than those arising in the school. They appear to be less able and/or willing to identify problems within the school system.

What is clear from the responses of the teacher counsellors is that they were more aware of problems arising from family circumstances than those from the school system. At the same time, teacher counsellors were less able to identify problems within their school pedagogy or classroom practices.

**Finding 33:** Teacher counsellors are powerless and unable to protect learners against disciplinary committees. The problem is further exacerbated by a lack of coordination between school management and counselling committees.

In many cases, teacher counsellors felt powerless to protect the learner in a confidential manner against disciplinary committees. School management believed that uniform disciplinary measures were safer than treating cases on merit, as this system could introduce room for exploitation by learners who do not necessarily need differentiated treatment. The lack of coordinating structures between school management and the counselling committees further exacerbated this problem. This reflects the lack of equity in the system, as well as a lack of institutionalized acknowledgement of counselling in general. This often results in a misunderstanding of the teacher counsellor’s role. In several cases teacher counsellors reported being perceived as “protectors” of learners and promoters of learner misbehaviour.
Dealing with cultural issues?

**Finding 34: Teacher counsellors often struggle to deal with cultural issues.**

A number of teacher counsellors found it difficult to deal with culturally-related issues. These included lack of support for the concept of counselling from parents, parents wanting corporal punishment to be used, customary practices that compromise schooling and practices relating to death and bereavement. Teacher counsellors often found themselves caught between the culture of the surrounding communities and their own.

In the Kunene region, respondents were of the opinion that contemporary counselling (used by the Ministry of Education) is far removed from cultural realities, as one respondent explained:

> A culture that likes counselling is a culture that consults. But our culture commands! It is not about how you feel, but what your father decides. Marriage is not about whom I love, it is about what my father decides. If I want to marry from another tribe, I will first be given a traditional wife even if she is a child at this school. That will be my "symbolic wife". Then I can go marry whoever I want to marry (School Board member, Kunene primary school).

From this perspective, a teacher-counsellor can advise a learner to first complete school and consider marriage afterwards, but if the learner is already given to a man as a wife, the husband has the final say over whether or not the particular learner will remain in school.

One learner told us that she could not sleep as she was approached by an image at night telling her to commit suicide. Another learner also woke up with her hair cut mysteriously on side. The counselling manuals cannot help us here. We need the intervention of culture. We had to call in the parents and it is the parents who took the lead, telling one another to remove their ‘things’ from the school. Before that parents’ meeting, we tried everything. Pastors came to pray but learners continued falling as if attacked by demons. Some of these things are just difficult for us to handle! (Teacher counsellor, Oshana rural secondary school)

Dealing with legal and confidentiality issues?

**Finding 35: Teacher counsellors need more training regarding legal issues, including the issue of confidentiality**

A number of teacher counsellors found difficulty dealing with legal issues, particularly related to sexual abuse and rape. The quote below clearly illustrates the dilemma sometimes faced by teacher counsellors:
One learner revealed sexual abuse, and it ended up in court. Who protects me in such cases? In the interest of the child, we advised the child to seek help from the relevant state office and the parents felt that we have encouraged the learner to report them (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural secondary school).

Dealing with issues related to confidentiality was a further problem:

We make an oath of secrecy. Sometimes it becomes difficult to protect a learner if the principal or other teachers do not know what you know. And because other teachers do not always treat confidential information safely, learners beg with us not to reveal information (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural primary school).

Suggestions for making their job less stressful?

When asked for suggestions on how to make their job less stressful, teacher counsellors made the following recommendations:

- Each school should have a full-time counsellor and a social worker. In addition to a full-time counsellor, all other teachers should be sensitized to get involved so that every teacher can serve as support for learners in need of emotional support.
- Workshops should be held a week before school starts, or a week after school closes so that teachers attend without fearing to missing classes.
- Government should appoint a full-time school counsellor for each school, but teacher counsellors should not be done away with. They should support the school counsellor, but not carry the whole burden of counselling: finding social workers, following-up on grants, finding placements for children etc.
- Principals should attend counselling training so that they understand and support teacher counsellors better.
- Counselling training should be integrated in teacher-education curriculum to avoid long absences from work for counselling workshops.
- Regular visits and information from the school counsellors. “Sometimes we feel isolated. When they come, they should not only come and look into files. They should give mentoring support” (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural primary school).
- Training of school management in counselling will ensure that in future, management will take counselling more seriously.

Two major findings emerged from this discussion:

Almost every teacher counsellor suggested that schools be allocated a full-time school counsellor who will be freed from academic teaching and only focus on counselling. The current teacher counsellor system should be maintained, but with a lower teaching load so
that the rest of the teacher counsellors support the school counsellor but not having the responsibility of processing forms, doing referrals and following up cases and many more.

Secondly, there was a high demand for school management to receive the same training that the teacher counsellors receive, especially the foundational courses so that they are able to support the teacher counsellors.

Comment:

These findings were consistent across all sets of respondents and all regions. It was surprising to note that where various stakeholders were aware of the challenges of the teacher counsellors, there were minimal actions to try and assist them. It is possible that the interviews and discussions for this evaluation enhanced awareness and understanding. In some cases, school principals and school board members indeed promised that they were now in a better position to support the teacher counsellors in future.

Job Satisfaction?

Finding 36: Teacher counsellors found their work rewarding and important.

Teacher counsellors were asked to reflect on aspects of their job as teacher counsellors they found rewarding. Many found job satisfaction, especially in instances where they have succeeded in finding solutions for learners’ problems:

When we see positive changes, we are happy (Khomas urban primary school).

The happy endings. One of our children has been suffering from the age of three years. Now at the age of 15, we succeeded in finding help for her. Also, the girl that fell and hurt herself badly...We managed to get her into a shelter. She even came to show me a picture of the housemother. I will never forget the smile on that little girl’s face, and the thankfulness that I took her out of hell! (Khomas urban primary school).

When I seen an improvement in the learners I have counselled (Khomas rural secondary school).

The majority of teacher counsellors mentioned a shift in their perception of learners and felt that the role of the teacher counsellor in schools was very important.

Comment:

It was good to note that, despite the endless list of frustrating factors teacher counsellors mentioned, they all mentioned something they found rewarding in their job. Not only did their words provide proof of the joy they felt, but their body language also confirmed this. The majority derived pleasure from helping solve learners’ problems.
The fact that teacher counsellors continued to be excited about the positive outcomes of their work demonstrate that they are keen to continue counselling, and will be able to do it better, especially if their working conditions are improved.

**Functioning of the Cluster System?**

**Finding 37: Teacher counsellors experienced that the cluster system for counselling is not working.**

The cluster system was intended to serve as a support group for teacher counsellors. Cluster meetings should allow teacher counsellors to share experiences, difficult cases and learn from one another how to address particular problems of learners and their own. Ideally at such meetings, the RSCs or ARSCs should be present and advise teacher counsellors regarding the issues they raise.

Despite the good intentions on which the establishment of clustering was based, the cluster system for counselling in the all the regions we surveyed either did not function at all or at the most only partially. Two main variables seemed to have affected the smooth running of counselling clusters:

- Transport and distances to be covered to attend cluster-meetings.
- Time and facilities to organize and attend cluster-meetings.

Clusters have elected cluster facilitators for counselling. A cluster facilitator is normally a teacher counsellor in one of the five to seven schools that form a particular cluster. With the support of the regional school counsellor, the cluster facilitator is expected to organize a cluster meeting at least once per term. In most cases, the cluster facilitator is also the most senior teacher counsellor in his or her school, and is often also a member of school management. The responses indicate that the cluster facilitator plays a key role in the successful functioning of the cluster.

In the Khomas region most teacher counsellors reported that the cluster system for counselling was not operational. The evaluation also took place at a time when clusters in the Khomas region have recently been re-grouped and many had not yet had time to organize their first meetings under the new arrangement. Respondents provided information based on their prior experiences with the clusters and did not think that things would be different under the new arrangements. Respondents reported that the school counsellors for the Khomas region were very supportive and organized funds for meals during cluster meetings, but the fundamental

**Some schools that are cluster-centres have all the facilities and can access psychologists and other professionals easier. That is why they think they have nothing to gain from being in the same cluster with other under-resourced schools. To me this is actually a matter of culture!**
challenges of transport coupled with long distances between schools, and the burden of cluster facilitators to fit cluster meetings into their already busy schedules remained limiting factors.

These are some responses of teacher counsellors when asked about their participation in cluster meetings:

Clusters only work in primary schools. In secondary schools, it is difficult. (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban secondary school).

For me to be able to attend a cluster meeting, I have to leave the school early, missing on the last three periods. Then finding transport to come back is a problem (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural primary school).

Why can’t the cluster meetings be held during school time? After school and during holidays are private time.

In the old cluster, we tried but it did not work. I was also a cluster facilitator. You spent a lot of time inviting people and running around organizing. Then the last day or two, people start to send in apologies. And some obviously do not want to share their experiences with us, and they think they have nothing to learn from us (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban primary school).

Cluster meetings are a waste of time. Some schools just do not turn up. The times in which meetings are organized are difficult for people to attend. The examination-driven system makes it difficult for one to leave your classes to attend a cluster meeting. Clusters should just be done away with.

Finding 38: The cluster system has the potential to be a very important support for the teacher counsellors.

However, in the few cases where the cluster system does seem to be functioning, the responses demonstrate its advantages. Much seems to depend on the convenor of the cluster.

Ms G represents us. All facilitators come together and discuss problems at schools. It is a good system. It helps teacher counsellors to know what others are experiencing and how they solve them (Principal, Khomas rural primary school).

We are a cluster-center. We had a very vibrant convener, but she resigned. We hope to find someone to take over where she has left off.” (Principal, Khomas urban secondary school).

“Our cluster-facilitator is very helpful. She directs and guide us were needed. We work together and plan meetings and form support groups. She also brings me in touch with other teacher counsellors who can help with issues she cannot help me with” (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural primary school).
Support from regional school counsellors and assistant regional school counsellors?

Finding 39: Teacher counsellors are generally satisfied and appreciate the support given to them by the RSCs/ARSCs. However particularly in the more remote areas, this support needs to be improved.

In the majority of cases, regional school counsellors and assistant regional school counsellors were appreciated and were reported to have played a supportive role to the teacher counsellors.

The regional school counsellors are our main contact with the Regional Office. When we call them or inform them about a problem, they come to the school and help us find solutions”. (Teacher counsellor focus group discussion, Khomas rural secondary).

Ms B is helping us with the establishment of our income-generation project. (Teacher counsellor focus discussion group, Khomas rural secondary school).

The Regional Office, especially the school counsellors do listen to us, but sometimes the whole system is paralyzing. We had a child in a really desperate situation. Our regional office listened, but could not do anything. I pursued the case further until I found help from the social worker of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban primary school).

They always come when we call them to provide necessary support to clients. They also give support to clients (Teacher counsellor, Oshana urban secondary school).

However, in some cases teacher counsellors report not receiving the help needed from the RSCs, particularly in the more remote regions:

I have never approached Regional School Counsellors, and they have also not approached me. (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban secondary school).

She teaches me good counselling skills at workshops, but she never visits the school. Once I have come here in the mountains, I am on my own. I want to see her here (Teacher counsellor, in a one teacher mobile school in Kunene).

In most cases, respondents knew their Regional School Counsellors and valued their services. However, they wished for more regular advisory visits. They also felt that RSCs needed to spend more time with them, and provide mentoring to them.
Conclusion?
Teacher counsellors rate the service that they render highly and find their work rewarding and meaningful. It is also clear from the focus group discussions that many of them are transferring skills learnt during training into classroom practice.

All teacher counsellors complained about the lack of time for counselling on the school time-table. The majority are frustrated by the absence of an appropriate space for counselling. Hardly any counselling takes place after school. This seemed to be in line with a general absence of after-school activities. Hence teacher counsellors either assumed that counselling should take place during school hours, or did not think that learners would stay after school for counselling. One way of addressing the lack of time for counselling in the current curriculum would be for it to count as an extra mural activity. However for this to work, extra-mural activities should be part of the general school environment.

It is not unusual for learners to approach another teacher for assistance. Subject or classroom teachers are frequently indicated as the preferred person to approach. This is understandable, given that the learner has direct contact with the teacher; if a positive relationship develops, it is only natural for a learner to approach such a teacher. This does not mean that teacher counsellors should not be identified and provided with training, but rather that the monitoring of the services provided by teacher counsellors is essential to ensure that a) the system of providing psycho-social support in a school is functioning adequately and b) that, if need be, a teacher counsellor can be replaced by another teacher who is a more natural fit to the position.

Teacher counsellors often feel unsupported in their roles. The cluster system is not functioning well, principals do not understand their roles adequately, school governing bodies are also not supportive and in some instances they are inadequately supported by the RSCs and ARSCs. Virtually no case study discussions, mentoring or supervision of their counselling sessions is currently taking place.

The teacher counsellors identified a number of areas that they struggle with and in which they need further training. These include school-related problems, dealing with bullying, corporal punishment, relationship with disciplinary committees, cultural issues and issues related to confidentiality, sexuality and HIV and AIDS.
Section 5: Views of the Regional and Assistant Regional School Counsellors?

This section will describe and discuss the findings from the questionnaires and interviews with the Regional School Counsellors, Assistant Regional School Counsellors and senior school psychologists working in the DATS office.

Synopsis?
The RSCs and ASRCs generally are a dedicated team, who try their best to both train and support the teacher counsellors with limited resources. Some have extremely large areas to cover with large numbers of schools, struggle with transport and are also expected to deal with individual cases referred to them, provide feedback to the teacher counsellors, provide individual support if possible and do monitoring and evaluation. Most are passionate about their jobs and continue to work under great pressure with limited resources, both financial and human.

Challenges highlighted by this research relate to work overload, insufficient support from regional and head offices, insufficient pre-service counselling training, the need for more regular in-service training, a poorly functioning cluster system, need for a greater focus on building local and regional support networks as well as the need for mentoring and monitoring.

Role and functions of the Regional and Assistant Regional School Counsellors?
Regional School Counsellors in Namibia are appointed by the Ministry of Education. Their primary duties as DATS representatives at regional level entail teacher counsellor training and support, dealing with individual cases referred to them by the teacher counsellors; doing scholastic and emotional evaluations and hearing screening. As NIED representatives they are responsible for life skills and learning support. As SPS representatives they are responsible for the establishment and support of special classes, special units and special schools. As Regional Office representatives they also fulfil other tasks such as disciplinary inquiries.

In order to assist the Regional School Counsellors with their workload, 13 Assistant Regional School Counsellors have been appointed on a contract basis in each region. These posts are currently fully funded by the Global Fund.

The job description of the Regional School Counsellors includes the following responsibilities:

- Interpretation and compliance of the Public Service Act, Education Act, Public Service Staff Rules and other relevant Acts and Regulations.
- Implementation of Special Education policy and programmes in the region.
- Controlling the distribution and utilization of psychometric test material.
• Organizing and delivering professional development workshops.
• Acting as liaison officers between the Ministry of Education (all divisions) and NGO’s and other line Ministries sharing the special education interest.
• Facilitating assessments of individual or groups of learners.
• Providing individual and group therapy.
• Identifying and addressing the training needs of life skills, special education and counselling teachers.
• Implementing projects and programmes of the Ministry of Education regarding special programmes such as those of HIV and AIDS, orphans and children living in difficult circumstances.

Research Findings?

How qualified are the RSC’s and ARSC’s? ?
Finding 40: The majority of RSCs do not have adequate pre-service training to prepare them for their role as regional school counsellors.

Finding 41: ARSCs sometimes have a different range of skills to RSCs. These complement the skills of the RSCs.

The RSCs have a variety of pre-service training. Most of the senior regional and regional school counsellors have extensive teaching experience, with 5 having been teachers, 7 heads of departments in schools, one an education officer, one a school principal, and two lecturers at colleges of education. Of those with teaching experience only three had five or less years of experience, 8 had between 6 and 15 years experience and 5 more than 15 years of teaching experience. Less than half of this group however had any life skills and/or guidance teaching experience.

Most of the ARSCs on the other hand do not have an educational background and held previous positions ranging from a pastor, ARV counsellor, social worker to a United Nations volunteer. The difference in background of the RSCs and ARSCs is a potential strength as their different qualifications and skills can be complementary. In practice, however, this sometimes also gives rise to misunderstandings.
and rivalry between the two groups that is fuelled by differences in their employment status and the funding of their posts as well as a lack of clear job descriptions.

Very few of the RSCs and ARSCs appear to have adequate pre-service training in counselling. A few have specialized training in learning difficulties and special needs, but there is generally very little specialization and no core competencies in counselling. There is an assumption (if one examines the requirements for the post, namely psychology 111) that having had psychology at third year level will provide basic counselling skills, which is not necessarily the case. None of the regional, senior regional or head office staff mention any specialized training in either training adults or development of counselling curricula. Training skills are only mentioned by some of the assistant regional school counsellors, although one can assume that having been in a teaching or lecturing post will have provided a number of the respondents with some hands-on experienced in training/teaching.

**How do the ARSCs and RSCs rate their own competencies?**

*Table 13: Responses to: Rate yourself as honestly as possible on each of the following: (n = 22)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling skills</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Management skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Referral skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spec. knowledge on b. problems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Spec. knowledge on e. difficulties</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spec. knowledge on l. difficulties</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spec. knowledge on HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with OVC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with sexual abuse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Finding 42: RSCs and ARSC need to have more training in a number of key areas including monitoring and referral, learning difficulties, HIV/AIDS, OVC and dealing with sexual abuse.*

Interesting to note from the above table is that almost a third of the RSCs and ARSCs only rated themselves as average in the areas of monitoring, referral, knowledge of learning.
difficulties, specialised knowledge of HIV and AIDS, dealing with OVCs and sexual abuse. This implies that they need additional training and could have difficulty training and supporting teacher counsellors in these areas. The greatest confidence was shown in the areas of training skills, communication skills, management and counselling skills. Having training skills, but not relevant expertise in the field they are training in, seemed common and is reflected in the responses above.

**Views on support needed to become more effective in their work as Regional School Counsellors?**

In response to a question on the support they needed to enable them to become more effective regional school counsellors, a range of suggestions were made. These cluster into four areas. Firstly many of the regional school counsellors felt that they needed more professional training and the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications and skills. This substantiates the comments made previously about the qualifications not being adequate for the job they are expected to fulfil. Areas mentioned were more training in counselling, dealing with suicide, learning problems, HIV and AIDS disclosure, and psychometric testing. Respondents felt that they needed support to obtain additional qualifications – suggestions included being given study leave as well as acknowledgement for improving their qualifications and skills.

A second cluster related to transport and other resources. RSCs and ARSCs need cars to be able to make regular school visits. Transport appears to be a big problem in most areas. In addition, respondents mentioned needing more money to conduct training, provide refreshments and to transport participants to training venues.

A number of respondents stressed the crucial importance of having full time counsellors and/or life skills teachers appointed at schools. The need for better support for the teacher counsellors at school from school management was also mentioned.

A fourth frequently cited need was for more assistance in terms of having another regional school counsellor appointed. Respondents felt that they were so overloaded that they were not able to attend adequately to cases referred to them nor get to other important aspects of their jobs.
Induction of RSCs and ARSCs?

Finding 43: Most RSCs and ARSCs either did not receive any or received insufficient induction into their positions.

The responses to a question regarding the kind of induction/orientation they were given on appointment as a RSC or ARSC revealed that most of the respondents felt they had not received sufficient induction into their positions.

- A few RSCs have been inducted at head office, lately the existing RSC inducts the new appointee (Head Office)
- None - started on my own and put up everything on my own. Whether right or wrong, it has not been clear to me. (SRSC)
- No induction were given to me apart from giving me the keys to the office (Head Office)
- Nothing; was introduced to all the staff and then left with the information on the computer of the VSO (RSC)

The responses above highlight how poor the induction to their jobs was for most of the RSCs and ARSCs and even for some of the DATS head office staff. Only two ARSCs and one RSC felt that they had been introduced thoroughly to their jobs by their RSCs or the previous person in their post.

To remedy these shortcomings most respondents felt that they needed workshops and training before starting their work or on appointment as RSCs/ARSCs. Some suggested having an orientation week while others suggested that the "person who was holding the post if available could indicate to the new regional counsellors where she stopped. If not available, the supervisor in charge should do induction (Head Office)." Another respondent felt that the induction should not only happen prior to starting their jobs, but that they should have regular workshops. One respondent even suggested "national workshops at the beginning of the year and mid year". A number of the responses confirmed our prior finding that the RSCs and ARSCs often do not have sufficient counselling skills for their jobs:

- All newly appointed RSC to receive an induction training on counselling (RSC)
- By having a proper training or induction workshop for counselling (ARSC)
- New appointee should be given a proper detailed induction and should preferably work with another RSC for one month before starting in own region (RSC)
Perceptions of available regional support?

Finding 43: The RSCs often do not make optimal use of community and other resources. They have a limited view of their role and support possibilities, operating predominantly within the MoE system.

No support in ………Region except the inspectors and principals who are trained to give support and they sometimes do not give support because of their work schedules (Head Office)

Financial support from Global Fund – also providing an assistant. Regional M & E support – financial is limited. (RSC)

Transport and sometimes S & T if I have to do visits or trainings for many days out of regional office into very far remote areas (SRSC)

Services by our line-ministry (MG&CW) and units (WCPU) are difficult to mobilise

In response to a question on what regional support is available to them in their roles as ARSCs/RSCs, it was interesting to note that if support was mentioned at all it appeared to be limited to line ministries, regional offices and transport. Noteworthy is how support appears to be defined – there is no mention of NGOs, faith based organizations, the community, social workers. This could be indicative of a general lack of training and vision in the potential of networking.

The school counsellors including head office staff, appear to have an isolated view of their role. According to their responses they work within the school system and there is a limited view of the availability and potential availability of external support systems. Contrast this to the richer response of an assistant regional school counsellor, who comes from a different background and training about the support available to her: Women and Child Protection Unit. MGECW; Psychologist, Social Services, New Start, Faith-based Organisation, ELCAP, CAA, MoE

On the other hand, there are also indications that some of the services that should be available are not operating ideally. The problem is exacerbated by breakdowns in communication between DATS and HAMU, internal political turf battles and the current reporting structure. On a regional level there appears to be a lack of clarity regarding the roles of the RSCs/ARSCs and RACE officials.

The responses to the question, "What other programmes/support is available in your region that complement school counselling?", were surprisingly limited and confirm the responses to the previous question. Only one respondent mentioned RACE, two mentioned feeding programmes, one mentioned a faith-based organisation and one a pastor. Even respondents who worked in areas where there were larger towns or cities, mentioned very few resources. This indicates a need for further training and capacity building in networking
and making use of and accessing available community resources. It also illustrates the importance of having people at regional level who have these skills.

Also apparent from the responses is the lack of vision and the paucity of assistance (whether real or perceived) that is available. A number of responses mention only transport – others refer only to line ministries – and some feel there is little or no support. Mentoring and psycho social support for the ARSCs and RSCs was also identified as a problem: Psycho-support for RSC & ARSC & teachers working with OVC non-existent – no supervision/mentoring service (RSC).

**Circles of Support:**

The idea of “circles of support” was introduced officially through the Education Policy for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (Ministry of Education, 2008).

**Finding 44:** Circles of support are not operating in most regions. Only one region felt they were operating quite well. The role of the school management and cluster facilitator is important in facilitating the process.

**Finding 45:** The RSCs and ASRCs could play an important role in facilitating a well-functioning referral and support system in their region

Only one respondent felt that circles of support operate well, whereas most respondents felt that they either did not operate at all or not very well. Five respondents did not know whether there were any circles of support in their regions.

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When specific problems are detected, they are referred to the relevant circle of support i.e. MGECW, hospital, clinic – they initiate specific programmes and invite education where possible (SRSC)  

Circles of support are dependent on the community under the leadership (and outreach capacity) of the principal and cluster facilitator for counselling (HO)  

No formal circles of support are established. The office of the RSC has good relationships with paediatric ward at the hospital, WCPU, the prosecutors at court, social workers in MGC and NIHSS and with NGOs dealing with children (RSC)  

At some schools and communities it works reasonably well. The important factor is an involved, supportive principal who takes part actively. Lack of support from school management and work overload limit counselling and circles of support (RSC)

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The main reasons given for circles of support not functioning were that teachers do not have the time and are too busy with other work, as well as the lack of support from school management. Where they are operating better, the role of the school principal and cluster facilitator is highlighted. In the region where the RSC reported that they operate well, they
operate more informally with the RSC facilitating the process. This illustrates the potential of the RSC to help facilitate networking between organisations and available community resources.

Functioning of the School Cluster System?
All schools in Namibia are grouped into about 260 clusters which in turn have been grouped into inspection circuits, usually with 5–7 clusters per inspection circuit. The circuit inspectors form the link between the regional education offices and the clusters. Cluster management committees, which are made up of all the principals in each cluster are supposed to share and resolve problems. Each cluster has a cluster centre, which is the focal point of contact and co-ordination between schools in the cluster. “They serve as in-service training centres, and cluster centre schools ought to provide examples of good educational practice and management” (Dittmar et al 2002: 23). Within each cluster there are various subject groups and teacher counsellors form one such subject specific group. Each subject group is co-ordinated by a subject facilitator, usually supported by an advisory teacher. The counselling committee in each cluster deals with emotional and social issues that affect the performance of learners (Dittmar et al 2002: 27).

Finding 46: In most regions the school cluster system for counselling is not functioning very well. This is mainly due to lack of transport and money for subsistence and meals. In addition there is a lack of any form of formal acknowledgement for work as cluster facilitators.

The cluster system was conceptualised, among other functions, to provide support to the teacher counsellors. If it functioned optimally, it would be an excellent help for the work of the RSCs and ARSCs. The feedback from the RSCs and ARSCs reveals problems with the school cluster system. There are conflicting reports as to how well it operates depending on who is reporting, the region, distances between the schools and resources available. In some regions, reports on its success differ according to whether the ASRC or RSC is giving feedback. The counselling cluster system was reported to be working best in the Karas region, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund areas and in Erongo, Caprivi and Omaheke regions. In Khomas it seems to depend on the cluster facilitator. The three respondents from Oshana expressed differing views on its success ranging from that it is functioning very well to not at all.
Even in cases where respondents report that the cluster system works well, when they were asked to mention challenges, a large number were mentioned. Transport to the meetings is the main problem, also work overload, lack of any form of compensation for the teachers, and no recognition of work done as cluster facilitators. Where the RSC office takes an active role in organizing the meetings (e.g. in Khomas) the system seems to work better.
Meeting the Training Needs of the Teacher Counsellors?

Finding 47: RSCs and ARSCs are unable to meet all the training needs of teacher counsellors due to lack of funds, limited capacity in terms of staff numbers, work overload and lack of expertise.

Generally the regional offices are not able to meet the identified needs of teacher counsellors in their regions – transport for extra training courses is cited as a major need. Lack of funds and a complementary dependence on donor funding for any extra support are further reasons why major training needs are not being met. Additionally limited capacity in terms of time and/or expertise of regional counsellors to meet the training needs was mentioned. Even at Head Office level, one of the staff members mentioned that he/she would not be able to meet the identified additional training needs due to lack of expertise. Thus although additional training needs of the teacher counsellors are known at regional office level, in most areas little if anything is or can be done at present to meet these needs. Some
respondents felt that outside organizations/ experts should be brought in to meet these needs.

| Minimal extent because I also sometimes lack knowledge to deal with some of the above-mentioned cases (Head Office) |
| We try to support teachers but outside assistance is needed (RSC) |
| We are not, we simply train them to provide counselling (SRSC) |
| We give them ideas and ask them to report back (RSC) |
| Partially – RSCs are totally over-extended (Head Office) |
| Our regional office cannot meet training needs, limited budget always an excuse (RSC) |

At DATS Head Office level, the training needs of teacher counsellors inform the development of new courses and training manuals. However as resources are thinly spread throughout the regions, teacher counsellors often have to wait for a long time to attend their next training course, without any ongoing support or back-up. Due to the workload of the regional school counsellors, the distances they have to cover and the number of schools they have to attend to, it is unlikely that these needs are being met to any degree. The failure of the cluster system to operate optimally in the area of counselling [in some areas it hardly operates] exacerbates the problem.

**Suggestions for Improving the Pre-service Training of Teacher Counsellors?**

There was overwhelming agreement that the best way to ensure that teacher counsellors have a core basic knowledge of counselling is to include it as a compulsory component in the pre-service training of all teachers. Some respondents suggested that there should be a specialisation area in the B.Ed degree, focusing on school counselling.

**Suggestions for Improving In-service Training of Teacher Counsellors?**

The RSCs and ARSCs came up with a range of suggestions on how to improve the in-service training of the teacher counsellors. There was general acknowledgement that more training needed to be offered more regularly to the teacher counsellors and that RSCs lacked the capacity to provide this. Suggestions included bringing in outside experts, offering the training at cluster level, include personal motivation and self-development in the training,
accrediting the current training and ensuring that those who have successfully completed all the training courses get some form of acknowledgement by the MoE.

Suggestions for improving qualifications of RSCs and ARSCs?

Introduce courses (part time) not only on main campus. The majority of RSC are in the regions and they should get those courses in their places or else to attend such courses in Windhoek for a certain period of time. The division DATS should commend staff members to certain institutions to upgrade their qualifications. (SRSC)

Regarding their own qualifications and training, RSCs and ARSCs felt strongly that they should be afforded the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications, as well as for staff development. They felt that they should get some form of study leave, subsidisation for furthering their studies and that the option of offering relevant courses on a regional basis should also be considered.

Monitoring of school counselling?

Finding 48: Monitoring of the work of the teacher counsellors by the RSCs and ARSCs is problematic and fragmented. This is due to lack of expertise, work overload and transport problems.

The RSCs and ARSCs were asked to comment on the monitoring of school counselling in their regions. The responses revealed that the monitoring system is not working optimally, although schools are supposed to feedback every term (i.e. three times a year). They complete a form on psycho-social support rendered to learners. However some RSCs complain that the schools often do not keep adequate and/or accurate records. Direct monitoring appears to be done by the RSCs via school visits. Given their workload and the distances to schools, this means that they are often not able to visit all the schools. Most report that they try to visit the schools once a trimester. In some cases the inspectors apparently also help with monitoring. However, proper monitoring needs to be ongoing; the school visits are sporadic, and thus cannot provide an accurate record of what is happening throughout the year unless the teacher counsellors keep accurate records. Where the cluster system is working, the case discussions are seen as a monitoring tool. As indicated in the previous discussion about the cluster system, this happens irregularly in only a few regions.

Not good – most schools do little or nothing. The reasons cited are that they are overloaded with teaching. Monitoring happens via school visits. (RSC)

Only during school visits but there is always a problem with transport for RSC. At school level the H.O.D. monitor their work but because of a lack of knowledge it seldom happens. (SRSC)
Schools are also supposed to submit best practices, which should then be submitted to the Global Fund. However we found the Global Fund records of best practices sorely lacking, indicating that these either are not being documented and/or are not reaching the Global Fund offices. Heads of Departments at the schools are also supposed to help with monitoring the work of the teacher counsellors, but again this is problematic as most do not have the appropriate expertise and others are just not motivated to do this properly. According to one member of the Head Office staff, a further monitoring source should be the “NESE evaluators, where they cover the key area ‘school as a social unit’”.

**Evaluation of School Counselling?**

_Finding 49: Evaluation of the quality of service provided to the learner is in many cases non-existent. There is no systematic and regular evaluation of the quality of service provided to the learner by either the RSCs or DATS Head Office staff._

Whereas at least some monitoring of the school counselling appears to be carried out by RSCs/ARSCs, the evaluation of the quality of the services provided is more problematic. The responses to the question on how school counselling in their regions is evaluated indicated that most RSCs see evaluation in terms of submitting the trimesterly reports, their school visits and referrals to the regional offices. However none of these methods systematically evaluate the services provided to the learners. One respondent felt that the evaluation was part of the role of the Global Fund. A few RSCs and ARSCs mentioned that they based their evaluation on their findings during their school visits, but in most cases this appears to comprise looking at the school records, rather than process notes kept by the teacher counsellors. One respondent mentioned a questionnaire completed by learners as recipients of the service and another interviews with learners and teachers. Another method cited was the type and number of cases that were discussed at cluster meetings. However given the poorly functioning cluster system in many of the regions and the lack of hard evidence regarding actual learner questionnaires, interviews and feedback, we conclude that evaluation of the quality of the service provided by the teacher counsellors is not being done to any meaningful extent by the RSCs and ARSCs. The question that needs, however, to be posed is whether this should be part of the role of the
RSCs and ARSCs, given their huge workload and also their vested interest via the training they offer to the teacher counsellors.

Evaluation is apparently also not seen as part of the functions of DATS head office staff. The responses of the Head Office staff either acknowledge that it is not happening adequately and/or that is the responsibility of the National External Standard Evaluators (NESE).

**Challenges faced by the RSCs and ARSCs?**

*Finding 50:* RSCs and ARSCs feel unsupported by their Regional Offices. They battle to get adequate and reliable transport and there is sometimes little understanding and support for their role.

**Lack of support:**

- Lots of travelling in unreliable cars, working with a very incompetent and uncooperative transport division. No real interest by anybody in the Regional Office about the work done out in the region – “you do too much training”. Lack of emotional support to RSC and ARSC. Referrals and client load bigger than the capacity of 2 people (RSC)
- Lack of support from other colleagues, inspectors, educational officers etc (Head Office)

The above quotes clearly illustrate some of the challenges faced by the RSCs and ARSCs. As they report to the Regional Office, it is very important that their role is understood and supported. This is often not the case. One of the results of this is that virtually every respondent complained that they had to battle to get transport to visit schools; others mentioned that they were criticized for spending “too much time on training”. The lack of support was also evident on other levels. Respondents mentioned lack of support from parents, other staff and that there was “a negative attitude toward counselling – people do not believe in the programme.”

*Finding 51:* Lack of human and financial resources are the biggest challenge to the RSCs resulting in work overload and impacting on their ability to deliver necessary services to the schools.

**Work overload?**

A number of respondents cited work overload as a key challenge and this particularly impacted on their ability to attend to individual cases referred to them. It also means that they are often not able to visit all the schools and/or clusters in their region.
Work overload also resulted in some regions not being able to meet their annual training targets. Some counsellors said that they were unable to complete all the schools in one year and had to extend their training to the following year.

**Funding and resources?**
Lack of adequate resources, both financial and human, is an ongoing challenge. This results in competition for available transport, lack of transport, lack of funding to pay subsistence and travel costs for teacher counsellors. It also means that monitoring and evaluation is not happening in the schools and that RSCs struggle to deal with individual cases referred to them.

**Counselling is often not happening in the schools despite the training of teacher counsellors?**
A further challenge is that although teacher counsellors have been trained, sometimes very little counselling takes place in schools. This is due to teacher counsellors having a heavy teaching load, lack of acknowledgment of the importance of counselling and lack of support by school management for the teacher counsellors.

**RSCs versus ARSCs?**

**Finding 52: The differences in status between the RSCs and ARSCs sometimes leads to feelings of anger and resentment and compromises the service being offered.**

A further problem identified in both the questionnaires and the focus group interviews was the difference in status of the RSCs and ARSCs, resulting in feelings of resentment, anger and powerlessness that compromises the service offered. The fact that ARSCs were excluded from the master OVC training offered by DATS head office to the RSCs, despite Global Fund offering to pay their expenses, has led to feelings of anger and resentment and of being treated ‘differently’ and as ‘inferior’. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that ARSCs are appointed on a contract basis without benefits, have to report to the RSCs and in some cases are better qualified than the RSCs. In some regions the relationship between RSCs and ARSCs is good, in others it is problematic.
ARSCs also reported that the RSCs are “always fighting us” for resources such as training and overseas trips. “They don’t share information with us about training because they feel threatened”. “There is a hidden agenda in the system not to train us”. In many instances ARSCs do not feel supported by the RSCs, and a feeling of rivalry rather than collegiality predominates. ARSCs felt they had no platform to express their grievances and that speaking about RSCs would endanger their contract posts.

**Suggested Solutions?**

The RSCs and ARSCs made the following suggestions for solving some of the challenges they experience in their roles:

- Provide information on counselling to all stakeholders – educate everyone in the MoE! “Counselling programmes in radio and TV to make everyone aware of the importance of counselling” (HO)
- Make better use of networking and other resources both at the school and regional level
- Give acknowledgement and respect for the work they are doing
- ARSCs – include them in all training “to be equally treated where training and other involvement is concerned"
- Provide transport – purchase vehicles for regional offices – provide dedicated transport for RSCs
- Appoint full-time teacher counsellors, who should also be responsible for Life Skills.
- Make counselling and Life Skills a field of specialisation at pre-service teacher training then “RSC would concentrate on value-adding (specialisation) training, mentoring and monitoring” (HO)
- SDF to be accessible to ensure proper school management
- “Grievances of RSCs should be attended to and responded to - we feel unsupported”.
- School counselling profession must be clearly defined and teacher counsellors should be members of a specific organisation (SRSC)
- Regional budgets should be improved to cater better for school counselling
• Division special education should have a separate budget
• Appoint more RSCs in each region (at least 2)
• ARSCs should be permanently appointed
• Limit outside activities e.g. NESE
• “Hire a mentor/supervisor to RSC and ARSC” (RSC)

Conclusion?
The system of having regional and assistant regional school counsellors is worthy of further support. The majority of RSCs and ARSCs are a dedicated and passionate group, doing excellent work given their very constrained resources. What the research clearly indicates is that this system needs to be strengthened and further capacitated. Additional human and financial resources are needed to make it function optimally. Currently due to the lack of adequate resources, RSCs and ARSCs are not able to train as many teacher counsellors as frequently as is needed. The system of follow-up, supervision and mentoring of teacher counsellors needs to be strengthened and improved. Some monitoring of the work of the teacher counsellors by the RSCs and ARSCs is taking place, but this is not systematic and regular and not all teacher counsellors are being reached. The counselling cluster system, which should act as a support for the work of the RSCs and ARSCs, is not working in many areas, particularly the least resourced rural areas where transport is a huge problem. Evaluation of the quality of the services provided by teacher counsellors is not taking place. The RSCs and ARSCs should be given the support and opportunity to upgrade their own qualifications and skills. They also need improved support and understanding from the regional offices to whom they report.
Section 6: The Role of Leadership and Management?

Synopsis?
Good leadership and management is a crucial prerequisite for delivering an effective counselling service in schools. The role of school principals in this regard is crucial. The research highlighted the fact that principals often deny adverse conditions that affect learners in the schools, rather focusing on conditions external to the schools. Principals require training in constructive discipline practices. National guidelines in this regard need to be developed and enforced. They play a key role in the selection of the teacher counselors and in some instances pick unsuitable teachers. There are conflicts of interest between counselling and disciplinary systems in the schools. Most principals appreciated the work done by teacher counsellors. Many principals recognized that teacher counsellors needed support and monitoring, but reported either not being able to provide adequate support and monitoring due to practical constraints and/or lack of necessary expertise.

Hostel superintendents are often the only person available to provide psycho-social support to learners in hostels where they have to fulfill a care-giving role. Better co-operation between teacher counsellors and hostel superintendents/matrons is needed. Hostel superintendents need training in referral, crisis management and empathic listening.

Neither school governing bodies nor inspectors play any meaningful role in supporting and monitoring counselling activities in schools.

Coordination of the counselling services needs to be improved from the highest level in the MoE right down to the individual schools.

The Importance of Supporting Teacher Counsellors?
A key to delivering effective counseling services is good leadership and management. In this section we focus on the role of principals, school governing bodies, and hostel supervisors.

A key role of good management is to ensure that the teacher counselors are supported adequately in their roles. Research indicates that teachers involved in counselling are particularly in need of a well functioning support system and also need to be integrated into the school, rather than isolated (Spratt, Shucksmith, Philip & Watson, 2006). Counselling in schools works best when it is backed by whole school support.

An enabling environment for counselling should consist of three main cornerstones: emotional/psycho-social support for the teacher counsellors (incentives and encouragement, participatory sharing, showing interest, pledging support, reduced workload), creation or availing physical structures (counselling room, office space) and inclusion of counselling into other school programmes. Without these cornerstones, teacher counsellors will continue to feel isolated and under-valued.
Role of the School Principals?

Literature stresses the key role that leadership and a supportive school culture have on facilitating the development of an enabling school environment (Dalin, 1994; Davidoff & Lazarus, 1996; MacGilchrist, Reed & Myers, 2004). "Good leadership" and especially the support of the school principal is a crucial factor in the effective delivery of school counselling programmes. In addition, the principal plays a key role in influencing the job satisfaction of teacher counsellors. Teachers, teacher counsellors and counselling support groups report to school principals, who are their immediate supervisors.

The consultancy team interviewed seventeen out of eighteen principals. Eight were secondary and nine were primary school principals. There were five female principals heading primary schools, with none heading secondary schools.

Finding 53: Principals are aware of the adverse conditions that learners face outside of school, but tend to deny adverse conditions at school.?

Principals reported problems which ranged from the living conditions of learners (who often did not stay with parents, but boarded with extended family members, other families or in hostels), being affected by AIDS, general poverty, and lack of support and commitment of caregivers. Most of the problems of learners were attributed to national and or regional socio-economic factors. Principals reported large number of OVC in schools. According to the OVC register of a secondary school in the Khomas region; in 2010 a total of 861 of 1 061 learners were OVC. In 2009, a primary school in the Oshana region recorded 190 orphans out of a total of 689 learners.

The transcripts on the right and below are typical of the difficulties reported by secondary school principals. This principal, like many, came across as caring and committed, but seemed unaware that the school itself could be an alternative environment for learners, or that it could act as a stressor. Different from most principals, he was honest about failures in the school counselling system. The school counselling system was weak at this school - this is not true for most schools - however, what the excerpt highlights, is the principal's lack of knowledge about counselling,

Asked about problems at school, a principal responded:

- Mostly discipline. They are not committed to education and lack self control
- Coming from poor backgrounds; you can see this immediately in the lack of tidiness, complaints of food and not being punctual. Sometimes their clothes are dirty because there is no water or no soap, or the mother is not here. They do not have inside discipline.
- The smaller background issues lead into their school problems
- School fees: many go through without paying. I refer to the Social worker at the hospital for grants, and to the gender desk.
- The school provides exercise books to those who cannot afford. I negotiate clothes from the female teachers; from their boyfriends or husbands. Then I take them to a lady who sews to make them fit.
and his concomitant inability to address the failure of counselling at his school. The latter is true for nearly all principals we interviewed.

**Teacher-counsellors:** This year I put two on the calendar- two additional ones have been trained, but there is not time on the calendar for four. I chose them: the regional school counsellor came to the school and asked me to nominate four; I asked for volunteers. Who is willing?

**Referral procedure:** teachers should write and forward learners to teacher-counsellors, either through the principal or directly. There is weak communication. The teacher counsellors are weak and lazy. They should write monthly reports; the last 12 months they did not write one report. It is also my fault. I should check them more, I never control Life Skills. I never ask to see their preparation. It is my fault. Because of this they see it as a free, resting period. The whole chain in counselling is weak: from the principal to the HOD to teachers to learners.

**Cluster:** never happens!

**Does he think counselling is good:** Oh yes, we should all have training. The children here, they come from very poor backgrounds. On second thoughts, no, the principal should not receive counselling training. How would he discipline learners? It would be difficult. One has to go by rules if you are a principal.

**Specific needs?** Feeding programme. Sexuality; grade 8 girls are sexually active. We need help with this.

**Hunger and Poverty are pervasive problems?**

Principals reported that learners came to school hungry. They were unanimous that the feeding programme was crucial, and should be extended to secondary school learners, as hungry learners struggled to concentrate and became sleepy in class. Many learners did not have money for school fees, school books or to pay hostel fees. This often led to frustration, and in some schools, to harsh disciplinary measures, including being refused entry into the school.

**Finding 54: Principals differ in their responses to learners’ needs: Some take action to assist learners, others respond punitively.**

Principals require training in this regard? Are required.

There were principals who went out of their way to help poor learners. They gave them money to go to hospital or took them to hospital, looked for accommodation for those who needed it, did not make school uniform compulsory, and exempted poor learners from paying school development funds, even if they had not applied for exemption as per government policy. In all three regions, there were principals who reported that they sought financial support for the poor learners. They approached charity organizations such as Catholic AIDS Action or FAWENA to buy school uniforms and pay school development fees for the poor learners.
However, schools also abused learners. In one secondary school learners were excluded from school if they did not wear full school clothing. Learners were forced to buy expensive exercise books, or to partake in activities (a fine of N$20 – a small fortune to some learners- was levied for non-participation). Some male teachers make sexual propositions to female learners, many of whom are already vulnerable. Accounts of teachers shaming learners in front of other learners were common, as were accounts of verbal abuse. Corporal punishment was pervasive, despite being officially abolished in 1990. According to the principals many parents supported corporal punishment and asked teachers and principals to beat their children if they misbehaved. The consultants saw principals and teachers carrying sticks and rubber pipes as they walked around the school premises. In the Kunene and Oshana regions, there were principals who acknowledged administering corporal punishment to learners.

On the day of our visit to a primary school outside Oshakati in the Oshana Region, a teacher scratched a learner’s face to the extent that there was blood on the young girl’s face. At this school the principal and HOD walked around with rubber tubes, ready to beat a learner stepping out of line.

In many of the schools visited, corporal punishment was openly acknowledged. It is our view that corporal punishment will continue to exist where no feasible alternatives exist, and where classroom practices and poverty-related conditions feed into conduct problems.

Given these realities, it is imperative that principals are skilled to work with staff (including teacher counsellors) to facilitate a more caring and constructive school environment.

Finding 55: The majority of principals are not well informed about the nature of the work of school counsellors, and do not have the required knowledge to evaluate the services (or lack of services) provided by teacher counsellors. They also do not monitor counselling activities?

Some principals indicated that they had attended some training in counselling, but all principals stated that they needed more training for them to be able to supervise teacher counsellors.

Principals need to be knowledgeable about counselling so that they can understand what teacher counsellors are doing and be able to help them ... I cannot supervise effectively somebody doing something I do not understand ... I need to know the process of counselling (Secondary school principal, Oshana region)
Finding 56: Principals nominated or asked teachers to select teacher counsellors. Counselling was allocated mainly to female teachers with less workload or those who taught Life Skills.

In most cases principals first asked teachers to volunteer to work as teacher counsellors. However, when no teachers were willing to volunteer, principals nominated/requested teachers to fulfil this function. Some principals considered counselling as an extramural activity to be assigned to teachers with a lower workload. Learners, parents and school board members were not involved in the selection of teacher counsellors. Principals listed the following as some of the criteria used in the selection or nomination of teacher counsellors:

- trustworthiness
- trained in counselling or prepared to undergo training
- friendliness
- active listening
- seniority and teaching experience
- compassion
- kindness
- care
- ability to control emotions
- experience of working in HIV/AIDS programmes
- religiousness
- enjoying and interested in working with children
- teaching Life Skills

Although principals did not list gender as one of the criteria, the majority of the teacher counsellors nominated by principals or selected by fellow teachers were female. Principals reported that the majority of learners were comfortable consulting with female teacher counsellors. There appeared to be an underlying assumption in many cases that female teachers were more caring and compassionate than male teachers.

Some boys, however, confided to the researchers that they felt more comfortable discussing their issues with a male teacher. In schools where the Star facilitator was male, boys preferred to discuss their problems with this male role model rather than with the female teacher counsellors.

Finding 57: There were no school counselling policies, but common referral procedures were followed.

Finding 58: There is a conflict of interest between the counselling and disciplinary systems.

Schools did not have policy (guidelines) on counselling or clear job descriptions for school counsellors, but they had common referral procedures. While learners could consult teacher
counsellors when they had problems, it was usually teachers who identified learners who had problems and referred them to the teacher counsellors, either directly or indirectly. Indirect referral took place when teachers first referred learners to the principal or disciplinary committee, who, in turn, referred the learners to the teacher counsellors when they could not solve the problem or presumed that the problem needed counselling. Learners, who constantly posed disciplinary problems despite disciplinary actions, were referred to teacher counsellors. If teacher counsellors were unable to counsel the learners successfully, they referred them to outside professionals such as a social worker or RSC, depending on the nature of the problems. Only a few schools had access to social workers, and the cluster system was reported to be either non-existent or not active.

On the question why teacher counsellors were not members of the disciplinary committee, an urban primary school principal in the Khomas region said:

Our [principal’s and disciplinary committee’s] job is to discipline those [learners] who do not abide by the school rules, and this includes punishment. You cannot be a disciplinarian and saviour at the same time. Teacher counsellors are saviours. If they become members of the disciplinary committee, learners would fear them and would not be open to them when they [teacher counsellors] counsel them … It is just right that the teacher counsellors are not part of the disciplinary committee.

Whilst many principals appreciated teacher counsellors in their schools, some of them felt that ‘problem’ behaviour warranted punishment, not counselling.

I don’t believe in counselling. I am not clear about counselling. These children of today are rude [she raised her voice]. If I had power I would have advised that we just use corporal punishment. I beat my own children [at home]. I don’t care if my child reports me to the police … Bereavement, sickness and poverty require counselling. Rudeness requires disciplinary action (school principal, rural primary school, Oshana)

Most principals indicated that they referred learners to teacher counsellors only if the presumed misbehavior persisted despite disciplinary actions taken against the learners. Identifying children who needed counselling was a challenge to both principals and teachers. Thus, counselling was often considered as one of the last options.

**Finding 59: Principals generally felt that teacher counsellors were doing good work?**

The majority of principals interviewed were positive about the work and impact of the teacher counsellors. Most principals noticed changes in learners after the intervention of the teacher counsellors. Using his own niece as an example of a changed learner after counselling, an urban secondary school principal in the Oshana region said: “Yes, they are
doing a good job. Teacher counsellors counselled my own niece [who abused alcohol and was violent] and she changed. I observed the change in her behaviour not only in school but also at home.” One principal observed that, compared to other teachers, teacher counsellors understood learners’ problems better.

Sometimes however teacher counsellors are viewed by other staff as being “just there to defend misbehaving learners”. They felt that disciplining rather than counselling was the solution to problem behaviour.

**Common challenges to the teacher counselling system?**

The principals identified the following challenges to the teacher counselling system:

1) Teacher counsellors did not have time for counselling. Despite the fact that many learners were facing problems, no time was allocated to counselling. Schools focused attention on academic performance at the expense of attending to psycho-social support of learners.

> The Ministry [of Education] is examination and result oriented. Schools are compared in terms of examination results ... Attending to counselling services takes away time that could bring the school closer to winning the trophy (urban secondary school principal, Khomas Region)

2) Citing a teacher counsellor in his school, another secondary school principal in the Khomas region explained that people do not understand that learners had social problems that needed to be addressed first before attending to improving their academic performance:

> Our children are coming from broken homes. They come here perplexed and they need someone to pick them up! ... Maybe this call does not come from the right mouth [of teacher counsellors]. People do not understand what learners are going through. Teachers do not understand. We work as if we are robots working with robots.

Reporting about the same challenge, another urban secondary school principal from the Oshana Region said:

> The Ministry of Education does not really help the schools much with counselling services ... There is too much emphasis on science and technology while the human spirit of learners is neglected ... The ministry employs teachers to teach all these subjects, but it does not appoint full time school counsellors
Comment: Although this response represents a realistic perspective (the main aim of schools is education), principals seemed to lack skills in managing schools as multi-varied environments. Although the majority of secondary schools appeared to be functioning adequately (a rough measure: teachers and learners were in classes, teaching appeared to be taking place), in primary schools teaching was often noticeably not taking place (classrooms without teacher were common, teachers were found reading magazines in class, rote learning predominated rather than learner-centred learning approaches. Many learners had no stationery or school books).

3) Principals felt that teacher counsellors did not have enough time to do counselling. They had the same work load as other teachers. It was not unusual to find a committed teacher counsellor, especially in primary schools, not having any off periods during the week. It was difficult for them to get time to do counselling during working hours. Principals considered counselling as an extra mural activity to be done after school, but this was not always practical: “Often in the afternoon after two, it is not possible to keep the child behind, because the child is also tired or hungry and has to cover a long distance to go back home,” explained one rural primary school principal.

4) Schools do not have adequate and suitable space for counselling. Only one school in the Oshana region reported having an office for teacher counsellors where they do counselling, the rest did not have any specific place reserved for counselling. Teacher counsellors “counselling learners in classrooms in the presence of other learners, staff rooms in the presence of staff members, store rooms, and even under trees”. The lack of space was attributed to a general lack of classroom and office spaces in schools; and counselling was one of the activities that had to be sacrificed.

Support provided to teacher counsellors
All principals indicated that they provided administrative support on request by teacher counsellors and this was confirmed by the responses of the teacher counsellors. They gave them access to the school telephone when they needed to call parents, regional school counsellors or other service providers; provided them with stationery; signed official letters teacher counsellors wrote; and facilitated and coordinated meetings of teacher counsellors and parents or service providers such as police and regional school

I feel I am also part and parcel of teacher counsellors ... They come and give me the feedback, and rely on me to give the final say. We do it together (Primary school principal, Oshana)

The principal, the hostel matron and I work as cohesive group. We are all always here. The hostel matron is also a member of the school board. Everybody knows what is happening. That is our strength (Teacher counsellor)
counsellors. In some cases the principal actively supported the teacher counsellors in helping solve serious cases.

Teacher counsellors relied on RSCs for professional support. While principals suggested that teacher counsellors needed more in-service training, they expressed concern that the regional workshops were held away from the schools, and required teacher counsellors to be away from school for days, negatively affecting teaching. According to one of the primary school principals in the Oshana region: “I don’t send all four to the training. How can you send all? Who will attend to teaching? You send one and that one will come and train others.”

To be honest, I do not think our school board is aware that they have a role to play here (Teacher counsellor, Oshana region).

They [parents] never attend meetings. They are always busy attending to their household chores (Teacher counsellor, Kunene rural primary school).

The support of parents and their representatives on the school board, cluster and school inspectors was seen to be minimal or non-existent. Most school boards were not aware of what the teacher counsellors were doing as no counselling issues were discussed at their meetings. They were mostly involved with disciplinary problems, and school principals usually decided on the issues that would serve at school board meetings.

In some cases, however, when requested, members of school boards were happy to talk to learners about their behaviour/problems, motivate them to value education and report problems to the teacher counsellors.

Parents did not visit schools regularly and were not well informed of the school programmes. Parents were, however, regarded as key stakeholders whose support was crucial. Principals generally agreed that information on counselling needed to be shared with the parents to enable them to help and support teacher counsellors. There was a need for an awareness campaign and change of mindset. Traditionally, elders “talk” to the “children” (anyone who is younger than an elder) in villages when they had social problems. These “talks” were more in the form of guidance. Traditional elders believe that the “children” should be guided (instructed/told) what to do. Traditionally, punishment was the common way of responding to problems.

A common problem was parents who did not turn up at school when teacher counsellors needed them for more information about the behaviour of their children; and when they did come they did not necessarily support the teacher counsellors. There were learners in one secondary school in the Oshana region who “saw things” while they were asleep. Learners were scared. When parents were called to the school, they came and took their children home. The principal said: “They [parents] take their children. They don’t disclose
what they are going to do with them [children]. Sometimes when they bring them back there is no improvement [learners start seeing things in their sleep again]." There was a general feeling among all principals that team work among stakeholders should be improved.

According to the principals the cluster system was good on paper, but it did not work. Some clusters did not have cluster facilitators for counselling, and the few that were there were not active. Principals attributed this to lack of incentives. Cluster facilitators for counselling were not paid for the service they provided. Inspectors of education were aware of what teacher counsellors were doing, but were not directly involved. They referred schools to the RSCs for support.

**Finding 60: Some principals recognised that teacher counsellors needed de briefing, support and encouragement.**

Some principals were sensitive to the stress related to the work of the teacher counsellors and called for supportive systems for these teachers. They acknowledged that they had to deal with many sensitive and at times heartbreaking problems, which they had to keep confidential. "They were walking with learners' problems in their hearts, problems they are not saying to anybody", said sympathetically by one secondary school principal in the Oshana region. They also had to convince follow teachers, principals, parents and other stakeholders to support the wellbeing of learners with problems.

_I feel there is a need for the provision [of counselling] to include ... teacher counsellors. They give counselling to learners, but the problem I see is that there is nobody to counsel or encourage them_ (Primary school principal, Kunene)

**School Boards?**

The Education Act (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 2001) stipulates that a school board should comprise of representatives of parents, teachers, and, in case of a secondary school, representatives of learners. The consultancy team interviewed school board members from eight schools in all three regions, three secondary and five primary schools. Four schools were from the Oshana region, two from the Kunene region and two from the Khomas region.

**How schools and school board handled problems of learners**

**Finding 61:** Taking disciplinary actions against learners who are giving problems is seen as the first and best option to solve the problems. The school and parents do not distinguish between problems requiring disciplinary actions and those needing counselling.

**Finding 62:** School board members generally do not know what counselling is and do not provide adequate support to teacher counsellors.
School board members reported that learners giving problems were referred to the 'disciplinarians' (the principal or disciplinary committee), who took disciplinary actions against the 'offenders’. Some problem cases were referred to the school board if the school could not resolve them. Usually recommendations were made for suspension or expulsion when a learner had committed a major offence and 'did not want' to change. School board members were aware that some learners were referred to the Star School Coach and to teacher counsellors, but were not clear about counselling. When asked “Have you ever come across problems warranting counselling?” a well educated school board member said: “No. We have never had such cases [i.e. requiring counselling] ... Maybe we have not made good analyses of the problems.”

When asked whether he thought that teacher counsellors were effective, a school board member in the Kunene Region said, “I do not know, because I do not know their roles. School board is not informed about the existence of teacher counsellors and about their roles. When I got the invitation to this interview, I called the principal to try and understand who the teacher counsellors are and what they do."

According to school board members, teacher counsellors do not get enough support from parents and the school board. This is due to a lack of interest and low level of education of parents and also not knowing enough about the role and function of school counselling. School board members from the Oshana and Kunene regions summed up the reasons for lack of support by parents and made suggestions for improvement:

They have little interest in some of these school activities. It is just not important to them. They see it as trivial. They do not even come to meetings ... And many of the school board members are not educated. There is a need for training for school board (School board member, Oshana)

I am chairperson of the school board, I was supposed to know the teacher counsellors’ role, but I do not know. How can I support if I do not even know what they [teacher counsellors] do? (School board member, Kunene)

A further problem related to differences in conceptions of counselling in traditional communities, where counselling was about giving advice rather than discussing a problem. “Our culture commands. It is not about how you feel, but what your father decides,” stated a school board member in the Kunene region.
Hostel Superintendents

Hostels superintendents are a key group in helping meet the psycho-social needs of learners in hostels. Their views and needs are, however, often ignored. We therefore included them in this study. Data were collected from five hostel superintendents, one from the Kharas region, two each from the Kunene and Oshana regions.

**Finding 63:** Although not trained as counsellors, many hostel superintendents assume a care-giving role.

**Finding 64:** Hostel superintendents need training in referral procedures, crisis management and empathic listening skills.

Hostel superintendents who participated in the study deemed counselling very necessary. They felt that learners in hostels experienced a number of problems for which they needed counselling. Hostel superintendents acted in loco parentis, and this meant they had to sometimes act as “hostel counsellors”. Only in one school was there a teacher counsellor staying in the hostel who rendered services to the learners in the hostels. In the other four schools this job was done by the hostel superintendents themselves.

Hostel superintendents reported having to deal with a large range of problems. These varied from medical (e.g. epilepsy, asthma, allergies), alcohol abuse particularly over weekends, sexual relationships, teenage pregnancy, HIV, smoking and drug abuse to other behavioural problems (e.g. attention seeking behaviour). All hostel superintendents reported also having to deal with shortages of food, basic necessities such as enough tables, chairs, beds, and lack of transport for learners to get medical help if needed.

All hostel superintendents interviewed referred to discipline as one of the major problems of learners. While some connected discipline problems to other issues in learners’ lives, many viewed it as an individual issue that should be corrected by ways of punishing offenders.

Hostel superintendents revealed that they were guided by their personal philosophical convictions in solving learners’ problems. According to one of the superintendents:

*I try to find out why they do certain things. I talk to them and make jokes and make them comfortable ... I live an exemplary life and that way I make sure that they trust me and can come to my house anytime. My wife also accepts them when they knock for help.* (Hostel superintendent, Kunene urban secondary school).

His response further reveals his understanding of the lack of systemic support for counselling and his empathic understanding of learner problems. Hostel superintendents like this can play an important role in helping address the psycho-social problems of the learners:
The hostel guide makes reference to counselling, but if all stakeholders are not moving in the same direction [support each other] ... it does not help. Some people see “problems” when they see learners [experiencing problems] and don’t see learners as people who need to be moulded into responsible adults [Hostel superintendent, Kunene urban secondary school].

Two of the respondents were in agreement that counselling was not well-integrated in the Ministry of Education activities and there was no system in place to categorize learner’s problems as either counselling problems or disciplinary problems. There were often misunderstandings or differential approaches to learners’ problems among the various stakeholders. Principals sometimes wanted to punish learners without any consideration of the root causes of the problems:

I suspended two girls from the hostel, because there are specific actions expected of you for specific learners’ behaviours. But then I accommodated them at my house because I had an understanding of their needs. Although I had to apply government regulations [to suspend from the hostel] I knew that throwing them to the streets will be more harmful (Hostel superintendent, Kunene urban secondary school).

Finding 65: There is very little collaboration between hostel superintendents and teacher counsellors.

It was clear from the data that there was very little link between hostel superintendents and teacher counsellors. There was no evidence of collaboration between school management, school boards, hostel superintendents/matrons and teacher counsellors in schools as far as counselling was concerned. In most schools, the four functioned as separate entities and if they happened to share a platform and discuss issues of common concern, it was merely by chance.

When asked if they had discussed some of their problems with teacher counsellors, a hostel superintendent from the Kunene region reported:

Somehow, the two groups just do not work together, yet we deal with the same learners. Problems get to teacher counsellors by chance. Otherwise, we do not really know what the teacher counsellors are doing and how they can help. We only meet as staff. And if someone happens to share something that concerns you, you take it further. I must say, there is no relationship between the hostel management, school board and teacher counsellors. (Hostel superintendent, Kunene urban secondary school).
The same respondent reported that some hostel superintendents benefitted from having teacher counsellors or Life Skills teachers living in the hostel.

Hostel superintendents were able to forge their own links with other community resources. They often relied on hospitals which they reported welcomed them and gave them advice on how to deal with some of the medical and psycho-social problems. Parents only got involved when the problem persisted and their children had to be suspended from the hostel.

**Role of Inspectors?**

*Finding 66: Inspectors do not play any meaningful role in monitoring counselling activities in schools*

Inspectors of education are a category of education officials based at the regional education offices or at inspection circuits. According to teacher counsellors, inspectors focused mainly on management factors and were only indirectly involved in counselling. When inspecting (monitoring and evaluating) schools, inspectors of schools may report on counselling problems, and submit their reports to the regional director. The regional director then brings problems concerning counselling to the attention of regional school counsellors. Sometimes inspectors of schools, regional school counsellors, advisory teachers and other education officials constitute what is called a Regional External School Evaluation. This team visit schools to monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes of the Ministry of Education. However, the focus of these visits is rarely on counselling.

**Role and Functioning of HAMU?**

The HIV and AIDS Management Unit (HAMU) is a division in the Ministry of Education that is responsible for planning, coordinating and overseeing activities related to HIV and AIDS. Generally, the division aims at reducing the transmission of HIV, mitigating the social and economic impact of AIDS on the Namibian education system at all levels. Specific activities of the division include:

- Sensitising and empowering employees, learners and students of the education and training sector to make informed decisions by providing information and knowledge on HIV and AIDS and other related underlying issues.
- Ensuring that curricular and co-curricular Life Skills, sexual health and HIV and AIDS education prevention programmes are in place in all educational institutions for all learners and students; making teaching and learning materials on HIV and AIDS available; establishing and implementing the workplace programmes; training teachers and educators on skills-based HIV and AIDS education.
- Ensuring that all OVC of school-going age receive support so that they benefit from education. The support includes ensuring that OVC attend school and are not deterred from participation in formal education through school development fund or
other material contributions requested by school; that feeding programmes for OVC and counselling are in place.

Regional AIDS Committees for Education (RACE) have been established to ensure that the activities are implemented in the regions and that they are adequately monitored and reported. HAMU works closely with the Namibia Global Fund Programme. Global Fund provides funds for various activities of HAMU. The HIV/AIDS Management Unit (HAMU) coordinates those activities in schools funded by the Namibia Global Fund Programme. These include care and support provided to OVCs through the education sector. HAMU currently monitors one indicator that is of relevance to this report, namely, the number of OVC receiving care and support (OVC1). This is split into two separate indicators, namely, learners receiving psycho-social support in schools and learners receiving school feeding.

**Role and function of DATS?**

Administratively, Regional School Counsellors report to the Regional Director of Education through the Deputy Regional Director, who is their immediate supervisor. Professionally, they report to the Division Diagnostic, Advisory and Training Services (DATS) in the Directorate Programme and Quality Assurance at the Head Office of the Ministry of Education in Windhoek. In order to function optimally it is dependent on good communication and collaboration between Regional and Deputy Regional Directors of Education and DATS.

**Relationship between DATS and HAMU?**

In order for optimal provision of psycho-social support to OVC in schools, there needs to be a close working relationship between DATS and HAMU. Our interviews with various key role players in both organisations reveal that this has not been optimal since 2005. This hampers the sharing of crucial information, provision of services and monitoring and evaluation. There used to be a Sectoral Steering Committee that met regularly, but has not met recently. It is important that this be revived. It is also clear from our interviews that the structure of reporting is problematic. HAMU reports directly to the Permanent Secretary, while DATS reports to the Director: Programmes and Quality Assurance, although both are divisions within the same directorate.

We suggest a workshop between DATS and HAMU employees, facilitated by an external expert, to improve relationships, iron out misunderstandings and relook at reporting structures and role allocation between the two divisions. It is also important that roles and responsibilities of RACE officials and RSCs/ARSCs are better coordinated at a regional level to avoid duplication and overlap of services.

**Conclusion?**

It is essential that more attention is paid to strengthening leadership and management in the schools in order to provide a supportive environment for school counselling services. The school principal and school board are crucial in this regard. Good leadership and
management can help support the teacher counsellors with the necessary resources, help them build on their assets and strengths and create a supportive environment for counselling. In order to do these school wide structures and cultures that support teacher counsellors need to be established. Another key role of leadership is to ensure that there is a coordinated and integrated support service for learners with problems and that there are guidelines and comprehensive strategies to back these up. Teacher counsellors need support to help them cope with the demands of their jobs. It also needs to be remembered that this becomes even more crucial in school contexts where there are limited support services, high levels of poverty and accompanying high levels of learner support needs.

Strong parent-teacher bodies potentially have a crucial role to play in supporting counselling systems in schools. However, in the schools we visited there was very little evidence of such support. Parents were mostly absent - either through death (high numbers of orphans), distance, illiteracy and/or poverty. This is a very realistic restraint. Conceptualising systems that rely on high parent involvement is realistically flawed under circumstances such as these.

Our research highlighted that there are clashes between the approaches of disciplinary committees and teacher counsellors, that parents and school boards have little understanding of counselling. Principals support teacher counsellors to some extent and are aware of the problems they face. However they admit that they need to know more about counselling in order to better fulfil their management role. Hostel superintendants often have to assume a care giving in the hostels and our research highlighted shortcomings in the relationship between the hostel superintendants and the teacher counsellors.

In those schools we visited, where there appears to be a breakdown in the culture of teaching and learning, the breakdown of leadership and management is an important contributing factor to their dysfunction (see Christie, 1998). In order to change this culture, urgent attention needs to be paid to establishing effective management systems and structures, with the MoE playing a much more hands-on role. Current policies need to be enforced and monitored.

Partnerships and collaboration between all the key role players and stakeholders at a community, district, regional and national level is important to support the current system of counselling in schools. Currently this is often fragmented, uncoordinated and under-utilised. Inter-sectoral collaboration needs to be improved and the relationship between DATS and HAMU needs to be prioritized in this regard.

Allocating sufficient budgetary resources to enable current leadership and management structures to play the supportive role needed is crucial. Without these, teacher counsellors and RSCs and ARSCs will continue to struggle to get necessary transport, the cluster system is unlikely to function, and monitoring and evaluation will be compromised.
The data reveals clearly that the agenda of counselling is not shared by various stakeholders within the education sector and that each section is treated as a separate box. This fragmented approach seriously limits the degree of support and cohesiveness of the total services learners receive from the system as a unit. There is a need for an information-sharing and sensitization workshop including all these stakeholders, at which counselling will be discussed in-depth and expected support identified. It could also be helpful to put counselling of learners on the agenda of stakeholders’ meetings so that all stakeholders are informed and involved. For schools that have special circumstances such as in regions that are vast and where distances and the accompanying transport needs are realities, support should be provided to the teacher counsellors at a local level instead of them waiting for regional school counsellors to visit every school. Some RACE officials and inspectors, if provided with the necessary skills, could serve as a support system to teacher counsellors who are isolated from other sources of support.
Section 7: Pre-service training?

Synopsis?
Current teacher counsellors received inadequate pre-service training in counselling. They have to thus rely on the in-service training provided by the RSCs/ARSCs. These training courses have been very well received and are highly rated by the teacher counsellors. However not all teacher counsellors have received all the training courses, there are long gaps between courses, and there is little mentoring and follow-up after the training. There is no evaluation of practical skills of the teacher counsellors.

The new B.Ed degree at the University of Namibia (UNAM) has a greater focus on counselling and one will have to assess its impact when the first graduates from this programme become teachers in 2011. The recent merging of the previous colleges of education with UNAM provides a window of opportunity for including a greater counselling component in the new curricula.

Teacher counsellors made a number of suggestions for improvement of the training courses offered by the RSCs/ARSCs. These included holding the training during school holidays, allowing more time for the training, providing more opportunities to practice core skills and providing follow-up in the schools. There are gaps in the content related to dealing with sexuality, HIV and AIDS, cultural issues, and specific behavioural disorders. Expert review of the training manuals and content suggested that specifically the manual on Counselling Guidelines for Specific Difficulties should be revisited.

DATS, UNAM and NIED need to work together more closely in curriculum restructuring. There are valuable parts of the DATS training that could be included in the pre-service training of all teachers. It is also important that the pre-service training addresses the identified needs in the schools, and prepares all teachers to at least understand the basic concepts of counselling, to be able to identify and refer learners who need help, and have a basic understanding of the needs and circumstances of the learners in their classes, many of whom are OVC.

Pre-service training of teacher counsellors?
The current national teacher education curriculum is delivered through two main programmes namely the Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (BETD) offered by Colleges of Education and the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) offered by UNAM. Basic education (grades 1 - 10) school teachers usually do the BETD and senior secondary school teachers the B.Ed. From 2011, the Colleges of Education will merge with UNAM. This means that the current BETD will be phased out and a new B.Ed (primary) introduced in 2011. This provides a window of opportunity to include more counselling issues in the new curricula. The current University of Namibia curriculum which was recently reviewed and implemented in 2007 – 2009 will be phased into the Colleges of Education, now campuses of the University of Namibia. All teachers will follow this curriculum through the Bachelor of Education
(Primary), Bachelor of Education (Science), Bachelor of Education (Secondary) as well as the Bachelor of Education (Inclusive Education, to be implemented in 2011).

The following describes the inclusion of guidance and counselling courses in the teacher-education curriculum. It has to be kept in mind that most of the primary school teacher counsellors in the sample pursued the Basic Education Teachers’ Diploma (BETD). On the other hand, the secondary school teacher counsellors pursued the Bachelor of Education Degree (Secondary). The curriculum for the B.Ed has been restructured recently and this restructured curriculum will be discussed below. None of the current teacher counsellors have completed the new B.Ed curriculum. The first contingent of B.Ed students under the new curriculum will complete their studies in 2010 and start teaching in 2011.

Counselling courses covered in the current Basic Education Teachers’ Diploma?

In the BETD curriculum, guidance and counselling courses are covered by the integrated course: Education Theory and Practice, mainly in term two of the second year. The theme is titled: Individual Differences and Children with General Learning Difficulties. The expected learning outcomes are specified as follows:

Students should be able to:

- Understand their own approaches to learning/ preferential learning styles.
- Understand the nature and range of diversities found in the classrooms.
- The roots of individual differences or variations.
- Classification of peoples’ thinking and learning styles and their implications to teaching and learning.
- Reveal their knowledge of categories, characteristics and causes of learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Demonstrate positive attitudes and sensitivity towards learners’ needs.
- Plan, design and use appropriate teaching methodology, material and management styles.
- Provide compensatory, remedial teaching and use effective behavioural modifications techniques.
- Practice using the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) used in Namibian schools (Ongwediva College of Education, 2009/ 2010).

Some of the topics that have direct bearing to guidance and counselling are:

Common errors in human inquiry (week 2); The problems of culture, traditions, beliefs and authority of experts (Week 2); the role of classroom observation within critical inquiry and reflective practice; principles and techniques underlying effective classroom observations; stages and processes of conducting classroom observation (action research); learners with special educational needs and the meaning of learners with special educational needs. The latter is the core for identification of learners with special educational needs, including
psycho-social needs. Various categories of special needs are identified (medical model) and emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as the "disadvantaged learner" are some of the themes. It was not clear from the year plan how much time was spent on these themes and to what depth they were discussed. What was however clear was the fact that students were provided with skills to identify signs and symptoms of difficulties amongst learners, and how learners could be assisted.

Views of Teacher Counsellors on their BEd Pre-service Training?
When asked about courses that equipped them for counselling learners, most teacher counsellors did not mention any pre-service courses, and those that referred to them when prompted indicated that there was little connection between their pre-service teacher education training and their current role as teacher counsellors. Only two respondents indicated that they consulted their college notes when confronted with certain counselling problems.

At College, I did critical inquiry and I have learned to observe and identify learners with learning problems (Teacher-counsellor, Oshana rural primary school).

In my pre- and in-service training, I have learned that the needs of learners are not written on their faces. As a teacher, one has to use all your senses to pick them up (Teacher-counsellor, Kunene urban primary school).

The Bachelor of Education Degree?
The Bachelor of Education has been subjected to continuous revision over the years. During all phases of the Bachelor of Education, counselling has been included to some extent in the curriculum. The latest version of the Bachelor of Education programme was designed to lead the education sector to the goals set by the Namibian government, namely that the education system should be guided by four cornerstones namely access, democracy, quality, and equity. This programme was rolled out to first year students in 2007 and the first cohort will only be in the field in 2011. Prior to this programme, counselling issues were handled in every year through various courses. In the first year, Issues in Education addressed issues such as teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, children living in difficult circumstances and children rights. Students were exposed to causes, identification and intervention strategies. Later, the compulsory core curriculum course (compulsory for all first year students irrespective of faculty of studies) was implemented. This course consists of three modules: HIV and AIDS, Gender and Ethics. These modules provide an important base of understanding that can be applied to counselling.

In the second year, Human Development and Learning carried various aspects of counselling and guidance. In the third year, students did Guidance and Counselling and in the fourth year both Guidance and Counselling and Inclusive Education addressed counselling skills and knowledge. In the curriculum that most of the current teachers have pursued, it was
assumed that they had sufficient theoretical information about guidance and counselling (University of Namibia, 2007). However, an evaluation conducted by the Department of Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education in 2009 revealed that the courses were too theoretical and crowded. The students indicated that they wished that there were more opportunities for them to have practical experiences of counselling (Department of Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education, 2009).

Counselling Courses offered in the new Bachelor of Education (2007– to date):

The revised Basic Curriculum Framework for the Bachelor of Education degree contains the following guidance and counselling courses and modules. They are presented here according to year of study:

Table 14: Guidance and counselling courses in the current B Ed degree at UNAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Social contemporary issues</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Human development and learning</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction to inclusive education</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction to guidance and counselling</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Introduction to guidance and counselling</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Guidance &amp; counselling (elective)/ Inclusive education (elective)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>Non credit bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Career specialisation: Inclusive Education/ Guidance and Counselling/ Educational Management/ Educational Technology</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Faculty of Education Prospectus 2010:28).

This Bachelor of Education programme includes practical sessions related to counselling and is offered on both full-time and distance modes.

Many of the guidance and counselling modules available at undergraduate level are also available at postgraduate level.

In theory many of the topics of importance to counselling appear to be covered. However it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to make a detailed assessment of the content covered and experiences of the students. It is important that all pre-service teachers receive a basic overview of counselling and learn how to identify learners who need counselling. It is also important that they learn how to refer and work as a team linking school–community and regional resources. However it is beyond the scope of any basic pre-service teacher education degree to ensure that every student is a counsellor. Thus the specialisation area
becomes important and this is offered as an elective in the revised B.Ed, which is encouraging.

**Teacher-counsellor qualifications?**
The majority of the teacher counsellors sampled for this evaluation had a Basic Education Teachers’ Diploma (BETD). This is a three year diploma programme offered by colleges of education. The programme prepares teachers to teach learners from Grades 1 – 10, while the teachers for Grades 11 and 12 are trained by the University of Namibia. On 1 April 2010, the colleges of education merged with the University of Namibia and from 2011 will be offering the B.Ed.

**Finding 67:** The most prevalent qualification of teacher-counsellors in the sample was the BETD followed by the BED and DEAL. The majority of teacher counsellors felt that their pre-service education did not help them in their role as a teacher counsellor. The content of the pre-service curriculum was seen as too theoretical and superficial.

**Finding 68:** Most teacher counsellors used the knowledge and skills obtained from the DATS courses rather than what they had learned in their pre-service education. They felt that the DATS courses were relevant and useful.

**Finding 69:** The restructured B.Ed has a greater emphasis on counselling and offers a specialisation area in guidance and counselling. We are not yet able to assess the impact of the new course on teacher counsellors’ skills and expertise as teachers who have pursued this curriculum are not in the field yet.

The majority of teacher counsellors sampled for this evaluation indicated that they did not tap from their pre-service teacher training for counselling knowledge and skills and that it was not a good enough foundation for rendering counselling services to learners. Those who elaborated on this point argued that the content of the tertiary education curriculum was too theoretical and superficial. They found the courses offered by the Regional School Counsellors to be much more relevant and useful.

**In-service training of teacher-counsellors by the Regional and Assistant Regional School Counsellors?**
The Regional and Assistant Regional School Counsellors offer training to teacher counsellors once they have been appointed into these roles. The following courses are offered:

1. Basic Counselling Skills
2. Processes of Counselling
3. Counselling for special difficulties
4. Bereavement Counselling
5. Identification of, and OVC Support
The training-workshops often take place at the beginning and at the end of the year. However, some of the teacher counsellors and principals complained the attending the course meant taking time off from other teaching duties during term time and this was problematic.

It was difficult for the evaluators to ascertain which teacher counsellors had received training in which modules. It appears at least that every teacher appointed as a teacher counsellor was prioritized for the Basic Counselling Workshop. However we could not ascertain whether every teacher counsellor had received this training. Teacher mobility, which was very prevalent, complicated the monitoring of the training of teacher counsellors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Khomas</th>
<th>Kunene</th>
<th>Oshana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No of schools</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>52 + 43 units (mobile schools)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No of clusters</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fully trained teacher counsellors (ie 3 courses - Basic Counselling Skills, Bereavement Counselling and Process of Counselling)</strong></td>
<td>158</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools with no teacher counsellor</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher counsellors only trained in Basic Counselling Skills</strong></td>
<td>117</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher counsellors trained in Bereavement Counselling only</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher counsellors trained in Process of Counselling only</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher counsellors trained in Basic Counselling Skills &amp; Bereavement Counselling</strong></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher counsellors trained in Basic Counselling Skills &amp; Process of Counselling</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher counsellors trained as cluster facilitators for counselling</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table presents the teacher counsellor training conducted between 2004 and 2009 by the RSCs and ARSCs in the Kunene, Oshana and Khomas regions. It shows that teacher counsellors have received a variety of combinations of training and this differs according to region. It does, however, appear from the above figures that one or more teacher counsellors have received training.

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17 Source: DATS
counsellors in each school have received at least the basic counselling skills course and that a large number, particularly in the Kunene and Khomas regions, appear to have been fully trained (i.e. have attended all 5 training courses). Problematic is the fact that not all teacher counsellors have received all training courses, the long gaps between training courses with little follow-up and mentoring in between courses.

**Teacher counsellors’ perceptions of the counselling training offered by RSCs/ARSCs?**

**Finding 70:** Teacher counsellors were very positive about the training offered by RSCs/ARSCs

For the overwhelming majority of the respondents, these training courses were an eye-opening experience and many reiterated that the courses changed the way they viewed children in general as well as their responses to learners’ challenges. The following quotes attest to the value of the courses:

> These are wonderful courses. We could have benefitted more if the timing of the trainings was good. We would like to go into further depths. We are now able to understand things and know how to handle learners with particular problems. Before these courses, I only saw that all learners were the same. I could rarely identify a problem. Now, I look at a learner and can tell that something is wrong. Mostly when I call in a learner and ask if they are OK, I find that indeed, there is something bothering them. (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural primary school).

> The courses were good. They gave me a deeper insight of what counselling is, and what is expected of me (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural primary school).

> The counselling workshops made me sensitive to children’s needs. They make you a better teacher. You no longer assume that a child is just lazy. You always go beyond the child’s answer!" (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural secondary school).

> The training is good. It gave me a holistic idea of learners’ needs. The problem is only that, it is not difficult to get hold of the regional school counsellors after the training. You can imagine: one [regional school] counsellor for this big region. Even if they want to be there for us, it is impossible. That is why I think that all teachers should be counsellors so that we do not have to put pressure on the regional school counsellor (Teacher counsellor, Kunene urban primary school).

> It was good. It helped me not only to identify problems, but also to solve many of their problems. I used to just see a learner as a learner and did not care with their psychological well being. I first did the Basic Counselling. That one did not really move me much although it was good. But bereavement counselling really was an eye-opener. Processes of Counselling also helped me a lot as it showed me how to establish a conversation. It helped me to be empathetic and try to help learners cope especially with death (Teacher counsellor, Oshana rural primary school).
The majority of teacher counsellors were very positive about the courses and felt that they should continue to be offered to all incoming teacher counsellors, as they provided a totally different perception of learners and their challenges. The courses also provided teacher counsellors with skills that enabled them to identify and address learners' challenges.

The value of the counselling courses and manuals cannot be over-emphasized. Given the fact that pre-service counselling courses were not found useful by many, as they were done at a time student teachers were not preparing to become teacher counsellors, these in-service training courses should be retained as a strong foundation for preparing teacher counsellors for their task. However, gaps in the organization and content of the current courses need to be addressed.

**Identification of gaps and suggestions for improvement in the training? courses offered by RSCs/ARSCs?**

**Gaps in the organization of courses?**

Although they highly valued the training received from the RSCs/ARSCs, teacher counsellors indicated that there was room for improvement:

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*We need more days, more time and more experienced facilitators. At one of the trainings we got the impression that facilitators were not prepared. They ran around finding things and did not seem to have planned the process through and through. Many of the scenarios used were not sensitive to our culture and realities. There was no evaluation done (Teacher counsellor, Khomas urban secondary school).*

*Schools are academically driven and are rewarded for academic achievements. Schools are compared in terms of Grade 10 and 12 results. As a result, other activities like counselling are neglected. Attending counselling courses while teaching is going on takes away time that could bring us closer to the trophy! (School principal, Khomas urban secondary school).*

*They give various courses with a lot of information in a few days. Then you don’t have time to practice before you move on to the next course. They should consider doing one area thoroughly and empower the teacher fully before doing a next course. Actually, the courses should not be done in one week. More time is needed to enable one time to apply. (Teacher counsellor, Khomas rural secondary school).*

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The above responses were shared by an overwhelming majority of respondents who identified three major challenges regarding the organization of the counselling courses:

- Quality of the organization of the workshops.
• Time that interfered with teaching time. Some found the courses too short and suggested that they be extended to at least three weeks, but not within teaching time.
• Lack of practical exposure.
• Lack of follow-up opportunities.

Gaps in the course content?

They need to train us on how to deal with various types of learners because it is frustrating if one does not know how to deal with learners with their unique characteristics” (Teacher-counsellor, Khomas rural).

Basic counselling is not enough. We need broader insight. With the current training, you always need to consult the manuals. Your hands are cut off somewhere. (Teacher-counsellor, Khomas rural primary school).

We need more practical guidelines on how to handle issues like bullying and bereavement. (Teacher-counsellor, Khomas rural primary school)."

We need follow-up courses to discuss problems encountered. The Cluster was meant for this kind of follow-ups, but it does not work. Time and transport make it difficult for clusters to function. And cluster-facilitators are teachers, teacher-counsellors and cluster facilitators (Teacher-counsellor, Khomas urban primary school).

Finding 71: Teacher counsellors need more information and skills on how to address specific problems eg drug abuse, self-destructive behaviour, special needs, preventive counselling, bullying, bereavement, and rape.

While most teacher counsellors thought that the content was excellent, especially Basic Counselling and Processes of Counselling, they felt that they needed more time to internalize the content as well as practice in the presence of experts. Teacher counsellors also felt that they needed to be updated on newer methods, and that they needed more specialised training to deal with specific problems. These included:

• Training on how to handle learners using drugs.
• Training on severe behavioural disorders such as self-destructive behaviour.
• Training on supporting learners with differentiated needs.
• General tips on how to support children in general, before they develop problems that call for counselling (preventive guidance and counselling).
• Basic counselling skills which are culture-sensitive.
• How to help children cope with domestic violence.
• More practical guidelines on how to handle bullying, suicide attempts, bereavement and rape.
**Addressing the Issue of Culture?**

**Finding 72: The issue of culture is not adequately addressed in the training courses**

A number of teacher counsellors felt that the issue of culture should be addressed in greater depth in their training courses. They felt that the examples used should be relevant and include real situations across all Namibian cultures, especially in cases of bereavement counselling. In some cultures, learners are not involved and are not given full information about sickness and death of family members. They should be counselled differently.

*Presenters should not pretend that only children of certain ethnic groups experience certain problems. Sometimes some presenters refer to situations in a manner that reveals that they think certain problems only affect certain learners.* (Teacher counsellor, urban primary school, Kunene)

In the Kunene region, respondents were of the opinion that contemporary counselling (used by the Ministry of Education) is far removed from cultural realities, as one respondent explained:

*A culture that likes counselling is a culture that consults. But our culture commands! It is not about how you feel, but what your father decides. Marriage is not about whom I love, it is about what my father decides. If I want to marry from another tribe, I will first be given a traditional wife even if she is a child at this school. That will be my "symbolic wife". Then I can go marry whoever I want to marry.* (School Board member, Kunene primary school).

From this perspective, a teacher counsellor can advise a learner to first complete school and consider marriage afterwards, but if the learner is already given to a man as a wife, the husband has the final say over whether or not the particular learner will remain in school.

It was recommended that school counselling address harmful cultural practices and make learners aware of the potential impact of these in their lives. Respondents felt the need for a platform where communities and schools can sit together and discuss what and how school counselling should be handled without offending people’s cultures.

**Expert Review of Manuals and Training?**

In the following section we present our comment on seven training manuals used as the basis for the training of the teacher counsellors. The comments on the manuals also reflect recommendations to address weak points in the training.
The first three manuals are:

1. Basic Counselling for Learners: Teacher Manual
2. Training Manual for Facilitators: The Process of Counselling
3. Training Manual for Teachers: The Process of Counselling

These manuals provide basic guidelines and activities related to the process of counselling. They are used to provide elementary training in counselling to teachers who also act as counsellors at schools. Core principles in counselling are clearly stated; the manuals are consistent in the guidelines given, and the basic principles as well as exercises related to them, are repeated across manuals. The repetitions, in general, serve to support the principles underlying counselling. The activities have been selected to enhance self-esteem and resilience, and to assist in the processes of problem-solving and self-determination. The selection has been made carefully; the activities are well-structured and easy to do, at the same time they will neither over-burden teachers nor be out of the learners’ reach. The manuals reflect background knowledge of counselling and resilience. The manuals are clearly meant as a general guideline to counselling, with clear baselines for effective counselling, and a variety of activities that can be used to facilitate support of learners. The authors of the manual are to be congratulated for putting together simple resource materials that reflect general good practice.

The next three manuals, namely, Bereavement Counselling for Learners: Facilitator Manual; Bereavement Counselling for Learners: Teacher Manual and Guide Pack: Counselling Guidelines for Specific Difficulties contain some excellent sections, but we recommend revision of sections of these manuals (see comments below).

Recommendations to address gaps in the training and manuals?

Basic Counselling for Learners: Teacher Manual?

The manual is simple, yet effective. However, three days training in basic counselling skills, which should equip one to do basic counselling, is over-ambitious. The training should be extended to five days. This will allow for day four to be spent on practice (role plays, watching a DVD of somebody like Carl Rogers, exploring life-enhancing activities in counselling). Day five should be dedicated entirely to ethics and scope of practice. This should include a section on when and how to refer. The last section, (Guidelines for a Counselling Support Group at a School, & administrative documents), is structured to take place on the afternoon of day three. This section contains the practical guidelines for counselling at school, and requires a separate day.

Ethics and scope of Practice: Issues such as a learner complaining about the behaviour of another teacher (e.g. proposing to the learner), rape by a relative, or when a

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18 This is currently problematic as teachers do not like travelling over weekends and the Ministry has to pay ‘overtime’ for travelling over weekends. Therefore workshops have to currently be scheduled for four days each (communication from Dr. Fourie, DATS)
teacher counsellor is aware of abusive practices at school are tricky issues that require wisdom and level-headedness. Teacher counsellors are bound to be faced by these matters at school. It is recommended that an experienced professional is brought in to discuss these matters during the course.


- It is recommended that the training takes place over five days. Day four should be spent on group work practice, day five on enhancing coping and resilience in practice.
- The manuals contain many activities, all of them sound. As one teacher noted; “it will take me a life-time to go through them all.”
- How does one decide what to do when? Some guidelines should be given.
- The activities in this manual are ideally suited for group work. Working in groups is an effective way to enhance resilience. It also appeals to learners above the age of eleven, for whom belonging to a peer group represents an innate need. The activities can be successfully combined with activities from the resilience sector in the Bereavement manual. Example: Develop an after-school club. Limit numbers and scope (e.g. eight learners from grade 9 or 10, running for one semester), in which a teacher counsellor goes through a series of activities week by week. The activity box can be used for this purpose. Activities 3, 4 & 5 from Specific Difficulties (Peer Pressure Substance Abuse, bullying) are ideal for group work.
- Specific activities should be marked by the convenors of the manual to ensure that the activities are suitable for groups, and do not require sensitive information to be shared.
- Ethics should be an integral part of this training.
- After school clubs should count as an extra-mural activity.

**Bereavement Counselling for Learners: Facilitator Manual and Bereavement Counselling for Learners: Teacher Manual**

The information on resilience is appropriate and well-informed. The *Guide for Teachers and other Adults at School for Action response* (p.6) is excellent. The material on bereavement itself is, however, insufficient. The manual highlights resilience rather than bereavement. Although resilience is vital, and should inform all the courses (as it does), the manual on bereavement focuses insufficiently on the reality of bereavement, as well as the impact of traumatic loss on both learners and teachers. Given the reality of OVC, and the necessity of counselling support at schools, the manual should be revisited in order to include more focused information.

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19 As mentioned in the previous footnote, this is currently problematic. However, if teacher counsellors already have to travel to attend a course, it would be better to keep them for an additional day. This will need to be arranged by the MoE and negotiated with the teachers concerned.
and activities on loss, bereavement, and post traumatic stress disorder from all cultural backgrounds. Three examples:

1. Bereavement issues are different at different developmental stages. Young children, tend to blame themselves and to feel guilty, whereas an adolescent learner may become aggressive or passive-aggressive; two very different dynamics that require different approaches. In the young child the feelings of fear and abandonment can be overwhelming, in the adolescent a loss of hope is often combined with high-risk behaviours in an effort to self-soothe and/or act out disturbing thoughts and feelings.

2. Research shows that early loss predicts depression later in life. It also shows that cognitive restructuring is the most effective treatment tool for depression. Simple cognitive restructuring techniques are easy to learn and to apply.

3. Nightmares affect most children touched by trauma. Research on children in refugee camps and war zones show that continuous nightmares serve to reinforce traumatic related memories, as well as day-time functioning (intrusive thoughts and negative day-time mood following a nightmare of the previous evening). Skilling teacher counsellors to work with nightmares can assist learners to work through trauma and grief, and also assist in better focus during school hours. As teachers, like learners are affected by trauma, teachers can apply the same principles to their own nightmares. It is recommended that a professional person who has experience of working with nightmares related to trauma with children and adolescents, should present this part of the course.

In schools where death occurred prior to the evaluation, the trauma was clearly detectable in the discussions with learners and teachers. This demonstrates the importance of intensive bereavement counselling, especially when one takes cognizance that some learners experienced death repeatedly in their families. Cultural bereavement and mourning processes need to be included in the bereavement counselling content and training and teachers should be aware of cultural diversity in this regard.

**GuidePack:Counselling Guidelines for Specific Difficulties?**

This manual is a weak link in the chain, and should be revisited. The *Summary of Basic Aspects of Counselling* at the start is excellent (also Do’s & Don’ts). However, the activities are not well-structured and seem random. Difficulties that are addressed like bullying, substance abuse and peer pressure are addressed at an individual level, but the difficulties addressed, and the activities related to them, are minimal. The majority of difficulties in the manual are difficulties that are better addressed at a whole school level, and some guidelines about whole school approaches should be included. Where teacher counsellors are not empowered to
affect whole school policies, the individual interventions should be revisited to develop more resourceful interventions.

Specific comments:
On a technical point: On the Genogram three lines are indicated as very good. This actually reflects an enmeshed relationship. Intrusive parenting, especially if combined with high levels of criticism, is a well–documented predictor of adult pathology. The section on Sculpting (from psychodrama) and the Balint group should be taken out. It is neither useful, nor ethical to present one page summaries of advanced group therapy skills.
Crisis Intervention: Important steps have been left out. Below are guidelines that should be included in the section on crisis management. This can also be used with suicide.
Focus on the here and now, especially when there are flashbacks, or frightening behaviours have occurred. (Where are you now? Look at my eyes, what colour are they; feel the carpeting on the floor, what colour is it etc).
Talking about feelings (p21). “Encourage the learner to talk about overwhelming feelings”. This is not recommended. Rather contain the learner’s feelings. Name the feelings for the learner. “I can see that you are feeling devastated, I know that this has been very frightening, but you are safe now. You are here. You are safe here” (it is often important to repeat safety or similar concepts.)
Once a learner has been stabilised, ask them to identify one person (preferably another learner in school) who can support them. Ask the learner if s/he would like you to call the person in now, or would they prefer to talk to that person themselves. Ask the learner to identify any additional person who could act as support (preferably an older person outside school, can be a sibling or other family member). Have an agreement with the learner that when s/he feels upset about the incident during break or after school hours, s/he will contact this person. If no such person is identifiable, get learner to agree to an activity that will be supportive, e.g. Singing a comforting song and visualising your room (identify beforehand with learner), praying to an ancestor and placing objects (could be sticks, stones) in a pattern etc. It is important that the session ends on a practical & positive note.

We would suggest that the following issues be included in the manual: depression, suicide, cognitive-behavioural interventions and preventing burn-out.

Identification and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in schools in Namibia: Training Manual for Facilitators and Manual for Teachers

The manuals reflect a concerted effort to provide summarised information which can skill teachers in the identification and support of a vast range of difficulties. These include the identification and support of OVC, barriers to learning, child development,
cooperative partnerships, legal responsibilities and protection, and ethics. The DATS team and its collaborators on these manuals are to be congratulated for managing to provide a synopsis of vital information in the space of 125 pages. This is an admirable feat. The legal section, and the wide-ranging information offered, generally provide a commendable overview.

The following comments should enable better facilitation of OVC, and should be taken into account when the training of the facilitators takes place:

The number of OVC at schools is simply too vast for teachers to address at an individual level. As the manual itself points out, about one third of children under the age of 18 are orphans. This does not mean that teachers or teacher counsellors should not be skilled to help individual children, but that the impact and influence of positive classroom practice, including the appearance and atmosphere of a classroom, the availability of stories and music, and small acts of kindness, should be emphasized. This aspect is, unfortunately completely lacking in the manuals.

In addition, the guidelines which emphasises parent involvement should be realistically re-assessed (e.g. section 6.3). How many parents are realistically available to learners? Given the practical conditions of learners in Namibia, is it true that “nobody knows children and young people as well as their parents do”? Or that “Parents are usually the only continuous factor throughout a learners’ life”? The sections on parents and on resilience are weak points in the manual.

The language use is often unnecessarily technical, and may, ironically, act as a barrier to learning. Combined with the use of definitions (rather than practical examples), technical language hinders real-life understanding. Example: "Sensory development, dealing with the organ systems underlying the sense and perception . . . includes . . . the coordination and integration of perceptual input from these systems by the central nervous system." (p. 44) The information on Erikson and Piaget is presented in such an ad hoc way that the information will probably remain obscure and may easily be misunderstood, if at all.

Generally the activities are very good. Ironically, they do not take into account different learning styles, thus do not demonstrate what the trainers ask teachers to do. More introverted teachers will probably be overwhelmed by all the group activities. Little space is made for reflective thinkers. Individual activities are absent.
The section on Resilience in children (3.3) is not sufficient. Enhancing resilience in our schools (including teachers) is a core function of support. The information in this section has been shortened to the extent that it is not useful. The section does not supply activities nor are vital concepts unpacked. What is meant by “meaningful contact” or “a sense of trust and stability” (p. 49), and how do we achieve, or undermine, these in our schools?

Ethics: the emphasis on “the best interests of the child” is good. It should be supplemented by activities that address real day-to-day challenges that teachers face. The one activity assesses teachers’ knowledge of the values enshrined in the constitution (e.g. democracy, justice, liberty). In real life, ethics is mostly about a conflict between interests (e.g. the school board asks personal questions about a learner, a learner complains about the inappropriate behaviour of the school principal or an HOD, etc). The section on ethics is too vague and generalised: A teacher counsellor facing a real dilemma will struggle to find guidance in this section. It is recommended that real life scenarios are workshopped so that ethics become real and practical.

**General:** Supplements to the basic manuals should be developed that address different age groups. It is recommended that three different supplements to each manual are compiled, namely lower primary, upper primary, and secondary school. An additional chapter on whole school support should be added to each manual. Examples: Specific times, e.g. at the start of the year, Easter, Christmas time, historical days and so on can be used for whole school activities that address all learners’ needs for belonging and nurturance. A remembrance day, when all those who have passed on are remembered through poetry and song can also be introduced. Cultural traditions can be included on such days to enhance and foster a sense of belonging.

A counselling support group for learners can also be developed in this way. Such a group can serve to enhance teacher and learner quality of life at school; if the activities are chosen to include creative activities, for instance, drama, art and music, both teacher and learner will be enriched and enlivened by the activities. In this way the needs for support, empowerment and enlivenment can be achieved.

**Summary and further recommendations?**

It is recommended that the present courses, each with its relevant manual, remain the basic introduction to school-based counselling. Special difficulties like the difficulties surrounding the reporting of sexual abuse and confidentiality issues (e.g. what if a learner complains to the teacher counsellor about the bullying behaviour of another teacher?), are not addressed. These, and others, are vital concerns that affect the majority of teacher counsellors, and should be adequately addressed. A section on
developmental stages and whole school activities should be added to each manual. The manuals on bereavement and specific difficulties should be revisited.

Teacher counsellors should be able to receive a Certificate in School Counselling on completion of all the modules. For this purpose five additional supplements/manual be developed:

1. Counselling Primary school learner
2. Counselling Secondary school learners
3. Cognitive restructuring
4. Positive counselling and classroom practice. One of the best ways to combat teacher burn-out is to weave joyful activities into everyday teaching and counselling.
5. Coping with distress. A wealth of information on distress management exists. It is possible that DATS personnel do not have sufficient knowledge in this regard. It is recommended that they receive training in Attachment and Coping research.
6. Supporting learners with special educational needs: Although special needs and inclusive education is the responsibility of the Division Special Programmes and Schools of the Ministry of Education, many teacher counsellors reported finding it difficult to deal with learners with special learning needs or who face barriers to learning that develop into emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is therefore recommended that DATS, in cooperation with DSPS discuss the parameters for supporting learners with barriers to learning and how they can be supported without being stigmatized or isolated. Alternatively, a manual can be developed or the existing teacher-educators’ material developed by the Department of Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education and UNESCO should be revised and availed to teacher counsellors.

Role of NIED?
The National Institute of Educational Development (NIED) focuses on in-service teacher training. Current training of principals is done under the Directorate of Quality Assurance (PQA) but according to a personal interview with the Development and Research Officer of NIED, NIED and the PQA could collaborate in offering counselling training workshops to principals at a regional level. A new course is currently being developed by NIED as an induction course for newly appointed teachers and they hope to get funding for it. Qualified teachers will be trained to mentor new teachers in schools, facilitated by the principal. The mentor teachers will all get a course on guidance and counselling. The course could also have a module on vulnerable learners, which would be a good way of ensuring that all new teachers understand their needs.
The interviews with NIED staff, however, revealed that NIED does not have enough resources (both financial and human) to do all the in-service training needed.

**Conclusion**

Most of the teacher counsellors have not received adequate pre-service training and depend on the in-service training provided by DATS via the RSCs and ARSCs. These courses are highly rated by the participants, but the expert review revealed that some of the course manuals need to be reviewed. The basic counselling skills component is highly commended and is suitable for inclusion in pre-service teacher training courses. However training of teacher counsellors by DATS is not systematic enough. Not all teacher counsellors receive all the training, there are long gaps between the training courses, there is little follow up and assessing of practical skills.

The newly introduced B.Ed degree has a larger focus on counselling and one will have to ascertain to what extent this impacts on the teacher counsellors’ skills once they enter the system. The restructuring of the BETD degree that is part of the merger process of the colleges and university provides an opportunity for introducing a greater focus on counselling. The proposed teacher mentoring system and training by NIED also offers the potential of ensuring that all new teachers have a basic grounding in counselling. NIED and PQA could offer regional principal training workshops that focus on their role in ensuring that there is a good counselling service in their schools.

It is important that DATS liaised more closely with the training institutions. It is suggested that a curriculum committee is set up comprising representatives from UNAM, DATS, NIED and also NGOs who do counselling training (e.g. Phillipi Trust) to evaluate and address the needs of the teacher counsellors and also to monitor the impact of the new curricula.

RSCs and ARSCs should be given the opportunity to upgrade their skills and DATS should discuss the possibility of developing short distance learning and/or blended courses that are accredited and offered on a regional basis by both UNAM and NIED.
Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation?

Without good monitoring, the ability of programmes to understand whether activities are taking place as designed is severely limited. Without good evaluation, the ability of programmes to understand the impact of activities is seriously weakened, hampering efforts to learn from experience and improve programming in the future. Where resources are limited, the inability of programmes to provide clear evidence of impact may reduce their ability to access the recurrent funding needed for activities to continue (UNICEF, 2009:xix)

The following section provides a summary of current practices related to monitoring and evaluation of the counselling services in schools.

According to a document by Fourie (2008:5) monitoring and evaluation of counselling services in schools is done through the following structures and procedures:

1. Teacher counsellors are monitored through school visits by Regional School Counsellors, Assistant Regional School Counsellors, Inspectors of Education and during National External School Evaluation

2. Cluster meetings also serve a monitoring function

3. Schools, clusters, regions and head office have to keep statistics of training and support activities and learners counselled

4. Reporting on Best Practices

The Programme Management Unit (PMU) verifies data and checks whether quarterly targets are met. The forms go to the Global Fund, which compiles annual reports. DATS has to request forms and statistics from the Global Fund as they are not forwarded to them automatically. (Personal communication: Dr. S. Fourie, DATS)

Not good – most schools do little or nothing. The reasons cited are that they are overloaded with teaching. Monitoring happens via school visits. (RSC)

Only during school visits but there is always a problem with transport for RSC. At school level the H.O.D. monitor their work by because of a lack of knowledge it seldom happens. (SRSC)

Not well, due to long distance. Communication problems (RSC)
1. Supervision and monitoring of teacher counsellors

Finding 73: Current supervision and monitoring of teacher counsellors by RSCs/ARSCs and DATS head office is inadequate.

Adequate and regular supervision of teacher counsellors is especially important when teacher counsellors do not have adequate training, as is the case in Namibia. This type of supervision has been found to be essential to help address the commonly experienced problems among teacher counsellors (Page, Petrzak & Sutton, 2001).

The current system of monitoring and evaluation is not functional. The practice of being monitored through visits by “Regional School Counsellors, Assistant Regional School Counsellors, Inspectors of Education and through National External School Evaluation” (Fourie, 2008) may be well conceptualised, but it is not functioning at present. This is mainly due to capacity constraints on the part of Regional and Assistant Regional School Counsellors, who have neither the logistical support, nor sufficient training to fulfil these tasks adequately. No evidence of support or monitoring by inspectors, or by the National External School Evaluation was found.

In addition, it is also clear that currently the principals are often also not monitoring the work of the teacher counsellors as illustrated by the following quote from a school principal:

The teacher counsellors are weak and lazy. They should write monthly reports; the last 12 months they did not write one report. It is also my fault. I should check them more, I never control Life Skills. I never ask to see their preparation. It is my fault. Because of this they see it as a free, resting period. The whole chain in counselling is weak: from the principal to the HOD to teachers to learners (School principal)

2. The Cluster System

As was discussed in the previous chapters, cluster meetings work inadequately at a primary school level, and not at all at a secondary school level. Some primary school clusters in urban areas manage to meet on occasion. In the rural areas this is not feasible. With secondary schools the cluster system for counselling hardly functions at all. Without the active support of the principal, and without logistical support, this practice is not feasible.
3. Keeping statistics of training and support activities, and learners’ counselled

Finding 74: Record keeping at school level is inaccurate and depends on the commitment of the individual teacher.

At school level, without the supervision of principals and scheduled visits by regional school counsellors, this system is erratic, and dependent on the individual commitment of teacher counsellors. In practice, this system was found to be functioning where an individual teacher counsellor was probably committed or where a counselling support group was highly functional. Many teacher counsellors kept erratic records, while others did not counsel learners, so did not need to keep records. In other cases the teacher counsellors were not clear as to exactly what records they should keep.

“Teacher-counsellors were under the misunderstanding that only counselling cases which had been referred to them should be indicated on the Monitoring Report Form. They had various counselling cases of learners who approached the teacher-counsellors themselves but it was not indicated on the monitoring form” (Ministry of Education, Hardap, 2008)

For record keeping to be sustained, teacher counsellors have to experience that this practice fulfils a practical function, and is taken seriously at a higher level. The same argument holds true for the keeping of best practices: teacher counsellors have to experience the functionality of such a practice.

Because the system is not accurate at school level, all statistics kept at regional and head office levels are also probably questionable and/or incomplete. We managed to get some statistics from the Khomas regional office. In Kunene the Regional School Counsellor had just resigned and there was no replacement yet, making it impossible to access statistics at the regional level. The Oshana RSC was also not available during our visit to the region. Regarding the statistics available at the HAMU head offices, we were unable to ascertain to what extent there was actually over- or under-reporting and/or double counting. For instance figures for OVC are collected three times a year, but it is impossible to ascertain whether the second trimester figures include the first trimester figures or are new OVC. What is apparent is that one cannot total the three trimester figures and that the same OVC might or might not be included from one trimester to the next. The figures available were mostly focussed on the OVC register and at times counselling was not separated from other needs of OVC. It was also difficult, given the packaging of variables, to separate psycho-social support of learners who were not necessarily covered by the OVC definition.

A data audit done by the Global Fund on the figures for OVC 1 and LSE (Life skills education) reported that:
“Performance on the above discussed indicators has surpassed the end of grant targets in the earliest quarters of the Namibia Global Fund HIV/AIDS Round 2 grant, with HAMU-MOE being the major contributor to the super performance”

However they also report that there was some double counting confirming our difficulties cited above. We strongly agree with their conclusion that: “Solving such a problem needs to start from the primary source of data (at schools), and then work it upward to the national level. There should be proper reporting systems that need to be well established, maintained an understood by all persons involved in the monitoring and reporting of the two data sets (OVC and LSEs)”.

4. Documenting best practices

Finding 75: Documentation of best practices is rare

The documentation of best practices is clearly not happening in any systematic way and if it takes place at all, this is sporadic. We struggled to get best practices from the RSCs and ARSCs at the national planning meeting in Swakopmund, despite a written request to bring these to the meeting. Most regional school counsellors reported the number of workshops they have offered or facilitated as best practices. For many who work under difficult circumstances characterized by lack of transport and limited access to funding, these training workshops were commendable efforts. However, these targeted teachers. Practices focussing on successes of counselling learners were difficult to come by.

At the HAMU offices, we could not find any systematic documentation of best practices and were referred to the regional offices. As described above, we were unable to speak to either the Oshana or Kunene RSCs during our visits to the regions. This is a pity as there are clearly many examples of really good work being done by some of the teacher counsellors yet these are not being adequately documented.

Conclusion?

Monitoring and evaluation is crucial for understanding the impact of the counselling programme and improving the delivery. Monitoring of the counselling services delivered in schools is happening to some extent, but is inadequate and depends on the data delivered by the teacher counsellors. If this is inaccurate then all figures will be inaccurate. Evaluating the quality of the service delivered by the teacher counsellors is not taking place. The cluster system is not functioning well. Inspectors do not appear to be monitoring counselling services.

Monitoring of the numbers of teacher counsellors trained is taking place by the RSCs and ARSCs but there is inadequate evaluation of the quality of the training. In addition a better tracking of the training received by each teacher counsellor is needed.
Statistics collected by HAMU are probably not accurate as they are dependent on statistics provided by the teacher counsellors. Documentation of best practices is fragmented and inadequate.

Supervision and mentoring of the teacher counsellors in the schools is absent. In order to improve the system of monitoring and evaluation it is essential that all role players understand its purpose, and that the school principals and inspectors play a more leading role. Currently the RSCs and ARSCs are so busy delivering training that they do not have the capacity to do the necessary monitoring, supervision and evaluation.
Section 9: Summary of Main Findings and Recommendations

Summary of main findings:

- The concept of having teacher counsellors in every school in Namibia is impressive; the fact that this has largely been achieved deserves applause. In addition, the regionally based in-service training of teacher counsellors is also bearing fruit.

- Teacher counsellors are managing to help learners in many instances and this is valued by learners. This is happening despite significant resource constraints and limited support.

- Learners value the concept of counselling and would like the service to continue.

- The in-service training they receive from the RSCs and ARSCs provides a good introduction to counselling and is highly rated by the teacher counsellors. Not all teacher counsellors receive all the available training, there is often no follow up and long time periods elapse between the training of the different courses.

- There are shortcomings in the current system. These relate to monitoring, supervision and evaluation, not allocating enough resources (both material and human), sustainability of the current system without donor funding, the lack of a culture of teaching and learning in many schools, the pervasive poverty and impact of HIV.

- The pre-service training of current teacher counsellors is inadequate. Teachers who will complete the ‘new’ B.Ed degree will only qualify from 2010, so we were unable to assess its impact.

- Shortcomings in the current system of management and leadership make it difficult to implement a good and sustainable system of counselling in schools. Principals, who are the key to management and leadership in schools, are not adequately informed about counselling. This means that they cannot supervise teacher counsellors effectively. They are not skilled in positive disciplinary and classroom practices, often resulting in a school ethos (including classroom conditions) that acts as an additional stressor to learners, undermining both resilience and effective education. It is difficult for teacher counsellors to provide an effective service under these conditions.

- Inspectors do not play any meaningful role in monitoring school counselling activities and are inadequately informed about counselling and the role they should play in this regard.
• School governing bodies do not adequately support and understand the role of the teacher counsellors.

• The counselling cluster system is not functioning in most areas.

• Monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of counselling services offered by the teacher counsellors is weak. Some monitoring is happening, but this is not well-coordinated and fragmented, depending mainly on statistics provided by the teacher counsellors themselves. Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the counselling service rendered by the teacher counsellors is inadequate.

• School-community partnerships and whole school approaches to helping solve the problems of the learners are rare. They need to be strengthened and improved.

The impact and sustainability of the school counselling service in Namibia will depend on systemic commitment to provide improved training, continuous monitoring, evaluation and support, and for improved communication and collaboration structures between the different key stakeholders. This is dependent on sustained and committed resources being made available from the MoE.

**Primary school learners:**

The basic needs of primary school learners are not being met. Schools and homes are often adversarial settings. Death and illness of a parent (usually a mother) as well as fears of becoming ill or dying are common problems. Hunger and poverty are pervasive.

Sensitive and empowered teacher counsellors are perceived by learners as helpful. Insensitive teacher counsellors can do harm. In all the primary schools visited at least one teacher counsellor was identified as a potentially helpful resource by learners. However, many teacher counsellors are not perceived by learners to be helpful or approachable.

“Counselling” mostly takes place in the form of encouragement, providing advice, and/or a practical intervention. In the majority of cases, counselling sessions were limited to one or two sessions. Given the realities of learners and teachers, this may constitute a feasible response. Teacher counsellors can be capacitated during training to optimise this form of intervention (e.g. being well-informed about grants and building an effective network)

When counselling is ongoing, learners display more sophisticated reflections about the link between emotions and behaviours. Longitudinal research has shown this capacity to be a resilient and protective factor which can facilitate the capacity to cope when under duress, and predict more sensitive parenting in adults.

Teacher counsellors who are positively identified by learners tend to be proactive: They approach a learner upon hearing about a problem from another teacher or having noticed that something is amiss. At primary school level it is rare for a learner to approach a teacher counsellor on own initiative.
More girls than boys make use of counselling services in the primary schools. Gender should be taken into account when planning counselling. Learners are often punished by both parents and teachers when they act out on stressors. Primary school learners have little recourse to constructive coping skills. They do not normally approach adults for help, and most feel helpless in the face of adversity.

**Secondary school learners**

Schools are also adversarial settings for secondary school learners and are generally not conducive to promoting resilience. Opportunities for self-determination are few, experiences of self competence limited, and the school environment is often not conducive to promote a sense of belonging. Homes and the community are also adversarial settings for many of the secondary school learners.

Secondary school learners value teacher counsellors who are perceived as empathic, trustworthy and approachable. Most learners were able to identify at least one teacher counsellor whom they viewed positively. About a quarter of learners have seen a teacher counsellor and report satisfaction with the service provided. More boys than girls spoke to a teacher counsellor.

Some learners either did not know that there was a teacher counsellor in their schools and/or could not identify the teacher counsellor. Some teacher counsellors are experienced negatively by learners. When they are not liked and/or trusted by the learners, their service is not utilised. Main concerns about going to see a teacher counsellor related to confidentiality, negative reaction from the teacher counsellor, and perceived lack of competence.

Counselling as a concept and service is valued by the secondary school learners and they would like to have a good counselling service at their schools. Learners would like teacher counsellors to be more available and have more time for them. Many of them suggested that the teacher counsellor be appointed on a full-time basis. Other suggestions for improvement of the service included allowing learners to have a voice in the selection of the teacher counsellors, establishing peer support/counselling groups, a better system of introducing both the teacher counsellors and the value of counselling to the learners and improving communication between teachers and learners.

**Regional and Assistant Regional School Counsellors**

The majority of RSCs and ARSCs are committed to their work, and take their roles seriously. The system of having RSCs and ARSCs is a good way of delivering services regionally, however, it needs to be strengthened in order to operate optimally. Regions have too few RSCs and ARSCs for the number of schools that they have to serve, and cluster facilitators for counselling are often either non-existent or not active. Currently the bulk of the work of the RSCs appears to be related to training of the teacher counsellors. They do not have
enough dedicated time for attending adequately to cases referred to them, monitoring or evaluation, mentoring and follow-up in the schools.

Teacher counsellors rate the training presented by the RSCs/ARSCs very positively, especially the basic counselling skills courses. However the RSCs and ARSCs are unable to meet all the training needs of teacher counsellors due to numbers of teacher counsellors who need training, lack of funds, lack of transport, limited capacity in terms of staff numbers, work overload and sometimes lack of expertise. Most of the RSCs and ARSCs would like to have opportunities to upgrade their qualifications and skills.

The selection of regional school counsellors is sometimes problematic. Relevant experience and expertise is not always taken into account. RSCs and ARSC need to have more training and capacity building in monitoring and referral, learning difficulties, HIV/AIDS, OVC and dealing with sexual abuse. Most RSCs and ASRCs either did not receive any or received insufficient induction into their roles.

The RSCs and ARSCs have the potential to facilitate a well-functioning referral and support system for learners with problems in their areas. However, they sometimes struggle to make optimal use of community and other resources. They have a limited view of their role and support possibilities, operating predominantly within the MoE system and are not building and making use of wider circles of support. The cluster system, which was envisaged as a support system is not functioning.

Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the teacher counsellors by the RSCs and ARSCs is problematic and fragmented. This is due to lack of expertise, work overload and transport problems. RSCs and ARSCs often feel unsupported by their Regional Offices. They battle to get adequate and reliable transport and there is sometimes little understanding and support for their role.

Lack of human and financial resources are the biggest challenge to the RSCs resulting in work overload and impacting on their ability to deliver necessary services to the schools.

The relief brought about by the appointment of ARSCs was appreciated by most RSCs. Although there were reported cases of overlaps in duties; differences in status and benefits, and lack of coordination, it was suggested that the Ministry of Education assures that ARSC are retained and issues causing conflict and discomfort between the two groups are addressed.

**Teacher Counsellors**

The training in counselling skills has sensitised a significant number of teacher counsellors to the needs of learners. It has also managed to increase teacher counsellor empathy for learners. The psycho-social circumstances of many learners are dire (including the school environment). Many teacher counsellors provide understanding and compassion under
very difficult conditions. **The presence of teacher counsellors at schools makes a positive difference and the approach should be continued, strengthened and supported.**

Areas in which teacher counsellors need further training relate to working with sensitive issues (e.g. grief and loss, HIV/AIDS and the many issues around sexuality), and how to work with different development stages. The majority of teacher counsellors were unclear about scope of practice, and struggled with ethical considerations. Difficulties around sexuality, and problems with other teachers, were problems raised by nearly all teacher counsellors. Despite the availability of a reference guide for domestic violence and sexual abuse, teacher counsellors did not know how to handle cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse, rape, and incest. Rape and sexual abuse are particularly problematic issues when teacher counsellors live in the same community as learners. Many of the teacher counsellors also had problems dealing with cultural issues (early marriages jeopardizing learners’ access to education; distribution of orphans in families; difficulties of monitoring how OVC lived in host families; parental preference of corporal punishment as opposed to the counselling approaches, etc).

Many teacher counsellors, as a direct consequence of the training, were motivated to make social work type interventions and act as advocates for learners. Little (if any) real counselling takes place; most interventions are practical and/or focused on motivating learners not to become disheartened. Given the level of training as well as the circumstances, this is realistic and practicable. A potential conflict of interest exists between the disciplinary committee and the counselling committee. The referral process, and the management of misconduct, is in urgent need of revision.

Teacher counsellors tend to see learners problems as arising from external factors (problems at home, being the most common). The training has sensitised them to these factors. However, many learners’ problems stem from, or are exacerbated by systemic factors (poverty, the school ethos, negative teaching practices, the lack of extra-mural activities and power in their own lives). Teacher counsellors require input into realistic and empowering responses to systemic factors, especially related to the school environment itself.

Good teacher counsellors make a difference, ineffective and uncommitted teacher counsellors do nothing or may even make things worse. Unfortunately ineffective teacher counsellors form about half the body of those who were trained.

**Principal**

We could not identify positive disciplinary practices in any of the schools. Punishment in the form of corporal punishment or harsh activities (e.g. weeding in the sun) was the norm. Often the reasons for misbehaviours were due to external factors, e.g. poverty, hunger, having to look after animals or younger siblings, or poor teaching. This was rarely taken into account. Harsh disciplinary practices do not allow for the development of pro-social skills and do not demonstrate effective problem-solving skills.
Principals have little understanding of counselling and thus do not feel that they can adequately monitor and supervise counselling activities in their schools.

**Recommendations?**

**Teacher Counsellors**

- The current model of having trained teacher counsellors in each school should be continued and better resourced and supported.
- Teacher counsellors need to have dedicated time available and also suitable private spaces for counselling.
- Long-term at least one teacher counsellor per school should be employed on a full-time basis. In the interim, life skills teacher per school should be trained in basic counselling and process of counselling and be allocated enough time to fulfil a counselling role.

**Selection of teacher counsellors**

- Criteria for selection need to be clearly defined by DATS head office (in consultation with the RSCs and ARSCs) and then communicated to principals and inspectors.
- In secondary schools learners should be allowed to provide input on the selection of teachers counsellors.
- Gender should be taken into account, with provision made for the selection of both male and female teacher counsellors.

**In-service training in counselling by RSCs/ARSCs**

- Training of teacher counsellors should be reduced to three years in-service training.
- Teacher counsellors who successfully complete all training should receive a certificate in school counselling. UNAM, NIED and DATS should liaise in this regard.
- The courses on Basic Counselling for Learners and The Process of Counselling should be continued. They should also be considered for inclusion in pre-service training.
- The training in Bereavement Counselling for Learners and the Guide Pack: Counselling Guidelines for Specific Difficulties should be revised according to the guidelines in the section on pre- and in-service training.
- A developmental perspective should be added to all manuals. Primary school and secondary school teacher counsellors should attend differentiated courses that can assist them with specific skills pertinent to the developmental stages and concomitant difficulties of learners.
- Training in group work and positive classroom and counselling practice should be added to the training.

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20 See section on pre- and in-service training for more detailed recommendations regarding content of the manuals.
Training in the scope of practice is urgent. This includes a section on ethics. The training should include how to report back to principals, the school board and to colleagues.

A forum should be established for meeting on a regular basis between UNAM, representatives of the previous colleges and NIED to look at ways of ensuring that both the pre-service and in-service training of teachers matches the needs in the schools. DATS representatives should have input into curriculum development in the fields of guidance and counselling at both UNAM and NIED. Relevant NGOs such as Phillipi Trust could also be part of this forum.

A better system of documenting training needs of teacher counsellors needs to be implemented.

UNAM and NIED should be encouraged to develop accredited short courses especially aimed at enhancing school counselling skills. Ideally these should be available on a regional basis and/or use a blended learning approach (using a mixture of face-to-face sessions with on-line tutored courses).

The possibility of outsourcing some of the training of teacher counsellors to relevant NGOs (e.g. Phillipi Trust) should be explored.

Expanding the work of the Star school programme to other regions and schools should be investigated.

The MoE should allocate dedicated funding for training teacher counsellors. This could then be matched by donor funding. However long-term the training cannot be sustained by donor funding and a more sustainable solution needs to be sought. In this regard a system of regional multi-disciplinary team/clusters of experts from social work, education, religion, relevant NGOs and donor agencies should be established to discuss training needs and pool/share expertise.

An annual audit of the training needs of teacher counsellors should be conducted by DATS, in collaboration with the regional school counsellors, and serve as the basis for planning future courses

Pre-service training

- Guidance and counselling should become a core component of all pre-service teacher training courses

- A training forum should be set up between UNAM, NIED, DATS and relevant NGOs. This should meet regularly to evaluate current training content and investigate ways of improving the pre-service education of all teachers. Special attention should be paid to pro-social discipline, the ABC of resilience and fostering a whole school approach to addressing the needs of learners.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Continued training of the same teacher counsellors over a period of three years should allow for an evaluation of skills.
Regional school counsellors must have access to transport (including fuel) if they are expected to monitor and provide support to teacher counsellors.

Regional External School Evaluation is inadequate in the area of counselling and should be strengthened and enhanced.

A clear and transparent system of the reporting format and procedure for school counselling needs to be developed and workshopped with all the parties involved.

A capacity-building workshop in monitoring and evaluation facilitated by experts should be held with relevant stakeholders (ie DATS staff, RSCs/ARSCs, inspectors, Regional Directors of Education). This should link closely with looking at the scope of practice of school counsellors.

Teacher counsellors should regularly present their work at school board meetings. Teacher counsellors do not have to be present at the whole meeting, but one teacher counsellor from the counselling support group can be allocated a time slot during the school board meeting to present the work that counsellors do at the school.

The parents should also be sensitized by the teacher counsellors and the principal about counselling in parents’ meetings.

Training of Regional School Counsellors and Assistant Regional School Counsellors

- All RSCs/ARSCs need compulsory training in workshop skills before they are allowed to present training.
- RSCs/ARSCs need to be given time off work to attend suitable workshops and upgrading of qualifications should be actively encouraged and acknowledged.
- ARSCs and RSCs should be offered the same training opportunities. Making distinctions between RSCs and ARSCs leads to dissatisfaction and affects work climate.

Principals

- Training of principals is an urgent priority. This should include the following four inter-related areas:
  
a. Training in pro-social disciplinary procedures in order to develop the school into a supportive social unit. As part of this they need to be helped to understand the negative impact of corporal punishment on learners.
  
b. Training in the ABC of Resilience. The knowledge and skills to promote experiences of autonomy, belonging and competence in their schools, is indispensable if principals are to oversee the building of capacity in their schools.
c. Training to understand the concept and scope of practice of school counselling as well as how to monitor the success of counselling in their schools.

d. Training on how to facilitate a whole school approach to addressing the needs of learners, fostering a health promoting school environment and as part of this facilitating school-community partnerships

- Principals need to be held accountable for the implementation of policies/laws in their schools (e.g. those relating to corporal punishment, school development fund, OVC, sexual harassment of learners by teachers, ). This should be part of the Performance Management System at school level.

- The current code of conduct for teachers (Amendment of Regulations made under the Education Act (No 15 of 2004) Code of Conduct for Teaching Service) needs to be reviewed in light of the findings of this research. It also needs to be implemented and monitored. A stakeholder task team needs to be established to address these issues. It should comprise representatives of teacher unions, MoE officials, and pre- and in-service training institutions. This task team should also look at facilitating the development of anti-bullying policies.

**Hostels?**

- Hostel superintendents need training in how to refer, crisis management and empathic listening skills and issues relating to confidentiality (ethics).
- There should be better collaboration between the hostel superintendent, school management, teacher counsellors and school board on issues related to counselling.
- Hostels need to be better resourced (including providing enough food to the learners). There is an urgent need for an audit of all school hostel facilities and a task team needs to be set up by the MoE to address problems in the hostels.
- Teacher counsellors should be given preference for accommodation in hostels.

**Cluster System?**

- Additional financial resources need to be made available to fund transport and subsistence costs for attending counselling cluster meetings.
- Counselling cluster facilitators should get some form of recognition for the work they do. This should be based on monitoring and an evaluation of their input by the RSCs/ARSCs.

**Assistant Regional Counsellors?**

- Assistant Regional School Counsellors positions should be made permanent and funded by the MoE.
- Differences in the roles and responsibilities of RSCs and ARSCs should be clearly defined and form part of their job descriptions.
Induction of RSCs/ARSCs

- All RSCs and ARSCs should be thoroughly inducted into their new roles by both DATS and the Regional Education Offices. A system of mentoring and possibly shadowing experienced RSCs should be introduced.

Mentoring, Supervision and Support?

- Mentoring, supervision and support need to be improved at all levels of the system:
  - RSCs/ARSCs need to have ongoing mentoring, supervision and support. The capacity of DATS to deliver this should be strengthened.
  - Teacher counsellors need better mentoring, supervision and support. One possible way of addressing this is to free up some of the time of the RSCs and ARSCs from training by outsourcing some of the training to suitable NGOs and/or UNAM and NIED. However, clear national guidelines are needed to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Leadership and Management?

- Leadership and management in schools need to be strengthened to provide a supportive environment for school counselling.
- Workshop including all the key stakeholders should be held at school level to identify counselling needs and how to support them. This should result in an action plan, with identification of roles, responsibilities and resources needed.
- The relationship and responsibilities between DATS and HAMU needs to be addressed via a workshop using an outside facilitator.
- The Sectoral Steering Committee needs to be revived and should meet regularly.
- On a regional level, the different roles and responsibilities of RACE officials and RSCs/ARSCs need to be clarified.

Systemic Factors/conditions

Nutrition:

- School feeding should be given high priority and addressed at the highest level possible.
- More nutritious food should be supplied to the learners
- School feeding should be extended to secondary school learners
- Schools should be encouraged to establish food gardens where climatic conditions are favourable.
School\textsuperscript{a}nvironments?

- Schools need to be better resourced. The MoE should ensure the availability of essential basics such as desks, electricity, water, sufficient toilets, and enough beds in the hostels.

- Educational resources (text books, suitable teaching materials) should be ensured.

- Teachers need to be teaching in their classrooms and principals should ensure that teaching and learning is taking place in their schools. This should also be enforced by the inspectors.

- NGOs should be approached to donate books, posters, and other material to individual schools.

Fostering\textsuperscript{a}n partnerships?–\textsuperscript{b}uilding\textsuperscript{a}circles\textsuperscript{b}of\textsuperscript{a}support?

- RSCs and ARSCs, principals and teacher counsellors should receive supplementary training in how to foster school community partnerships and build circles of support.

- Local directories of available referral services (similar to the one on Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse) should be developed and made available to all schools and regional offices. These should complement the newly developed set of posters by DATS.
References?


NIMH (no date). Child and adolescent violence research at NIMH. http://mentalhealth.about.com/library/rs/blviol.htm - accessed 10/05/2010


Appendix? A: Examples of classroom lesson presented to primary school learners?

A) Classroom lesson: urban primary school?

Note: All names of teachers and schools have been removed to maintain anonymity.

Notes on school:

We arrive at 9.00am, and the principal is wary; who are we and why are we there?

The school ground is a mess: they seem to be digging up the central area with heaps of sand everywhere. We do not ask, and the principal does not offer any information. Learners mill around, congregating in classroom doors as well as outside, and it is not clear whether this is teaching time or break. The official count of learners is 800; on this day there could not have been more than 400 (being generous) at school.

The office area is neat and tidy, with decorated interior. The secretary has a modern computer, printer and copier. The staffroom has two tables with pretty tablecloths. I count 11 chairs (the staff complement is 26). The notice board has a few official notices, all from the education dept; neatly pinned. Some are from 2000. There are no internal staff notices, except for a “winter sport time table” (We are in the middle of summer). The staff toilets are clean, if sparse. The principal has a pleasant-looking office with a flower arrangement. S/he also has a large notice board with official notices from the dept; and a number count of learners.

By contrast the classrooms are manifestly dirty and void of any decoration or educational material. In the majority of classrooms the walls are completely bare. The chairs are broken, lacking backs, windows are dirty (it is difficult to see through some of them). Walking around, peering into windows, I could not find a single classroom with one book in it. I could not find a classroom with a teacher in it either. (Finding not a single teacher in a classroom surprised me, so I went at three different times, but without success). Oddly, the learners are in the classes; joking, lying on their arms, lolling in chairs. Outside, learners enter and leave the two school gates in a constant stream throughout the morning. There are no bells or sirens, and time it seems, is arbitrary. Except for the end of day, which happens suddenly, at once at 12.30 - without a bell or siren?

If learners come to school in school uniforms, and are in classrooms does this mean that they are “at school”?

Classroom lesson: Grade 5?

The principal introduces us (31 learners, but is seems less, because they are so tiny; they have the bodies of thin seven year olds, some are paper thin). S/he is strict in her attitude towards them, remarking when they stand up that they sound like goats and sheep. She tells them that we are visitors and want to know about their problems; “Your emotional problems, not your problems with teachers being harsh.” Then it is immediately break (the principal seemed to have forgotten - I notice an increase in learners outside, and the learners tell me that it is break). Not one learner owns a watch, and two learners own rulers. They are all, for the rest, without any stationary, books or satchels.
Outside a few learners are eating vetkoek, a few have energade bottles. The majority have nothing. One child eats an apple.

KSD: The learners are back in class quickly. After I explain the KSD in English and Afrikaans, they draw quietly, completely focused. Not a sound is heard; learners are bent over their drawings (see video clip). After 20 minutes I set a time limit of ten minutes, because it seemed as if they would easily draw for much longer.

Figure 1: Examples of the pictures used in the classroom lesson

Lesson on emotions: They name the girl Sara. She lives underneath a tree or on the streets, and likes to clean house, to write, to learn and to play with dolls. I show them the picture of Sara looking worried. They immediately identify her emotions as sad, angry, wants to fight, wants to cry, and hungry. When I ask why she is angry, a slip of boy (he looks no older than 7 but must be 11) says, “because of what people do to her”. When I ask about this, the class responds, “teachers beat her, learners beat her.” I ask what she does then: “she wants to stay out of school, she wants to go home.” What do grown-ups do when they see that she is angry/sad. I point out to them how close these emotions are to each other, and that they are linked. They agree readily. I speak a mixture of English and Afrikaans, often repeating myself. Their English does not seem adequate. What do grown-ups do when Sarah is sad or angry? Beat her or shout at her. This is said without humour. It is their reality. I show the picture of Sara being afraid at night. They volunteer being afraid of the dark, of sleeping alone and of thunder. They appear scared of my question. I add pictures of the boy, whom they name Mario. What makes children like Sara and Mario to be afraid and worried? When parents fight all the time, when they are “sweared at”, when they are hungry, and worried about
school. Are many learners in this school often hungry? Sudden absolute silence. They all look at me, making no sound. Is this a taboo at this school? How come they are so uncomfortable to speak about this? I ask; do learners at this school not speak about being hungry? They just look at me with big eyes. What do children like Sara and Mario do when they are sad, and worried and afraid? "They stay away from school." They don’t want to go to school." What do grown-ups do when they notice children like Sara or Mario being worried and sad and afraid? "Beat them, shout at them." One girl volunteers; sometimes an adult helps them. I ask if there is an adult at this school that help learners when they are unhappy. They name one female teacher (who is a teacher counsellor at the school). They all agree that she listens to them, and helps them by saying “good things that help”. No other teachers are volunteered and I do not ask, as I do not want them to offer a name to try and please me. I ask if they agree that saying good things helps, but shouting and swearing and beating doesn’t. They chorus, yes. To their apparent surprise I point out that they might consider one day doing the same with their children.

We look at the playing picture of the boy and the girl next and they offer with joy, playing netball, baseball, volley ball and soccer, and with dolls. I want to end with the world cup, but they appear not to be informed; one boy knows about Brazil, the rest do not know. They offer names of countries like Namibia, Botswana and Angola. These are countries bordering; as far as my knowledge goes, they do not have teams playing in the world cup.

It is sad to leave them, as they are now alive and eager, participating and being “taught”. They are on full alert, eyes focused on me, and so keen to be stimulated it breaks your heart. When we take out the apples, they shout out with joy. The fact that they each get one apple, one pencil and one ruler; a reason to rejoice.

Classroom Lesson: Rural Primary School.

The Grade 6 Class had 22 learners of which 10 were boys and 12 were girls. Four (4) pictures were presented to the learners to explain what they see in the pictures and why.

Picture 1: (Boy under a tree)

A boy was sitting under a tree. Learners were under the impression that the boy lives under the tree. Others said that the boy lives in the forest, while others said he lives in the village.

What is the boy doing?

Learners were of the opinion that the boy was listening to birds singing, while others argued that he was resting, getting some fresh air, or that he liked the green tree because it is beautiful.

What does the boy like doing?

Learners said that the boy liked sleeping, while others said he was looking at animals (admiring animals). Some were of the opinion that the boy was hiding from someone (maybe his father who wanted to beat him up). Others said that the boy was hunting.

Picture 2: Boy looking sad
Learners pointed out immediately that the boy was sad, bored, angry, missing the forest, worried, that he does not like to stay inside (indoors). One even said that his window was dirty, that is why he was sad. Some said the boy is hungry, lonely, scared of his mother, his mother said a word that made his heart sore, while others said that he was sad that people were killing each other in the village. He does not have friends and there was a robbery in the village.

**What can he do to make him feel better?**

He can sing, eat a fruit, walk around the forest, play with others, get a good friend and not a bad friend, listen to music, get a good mother and behave himself.

**Are there grown-ups to make him feel better?**

Yes. An uncle, grandmother, grandfather, father, whole extended family, sister

**What will they do to make him feel better?**

They will talk to him, they will play soccer with him, they will tell him stories, they will buy him gifts, we will walk with him to school, we will teach him how to drive a car.

**PICTURE 3 (Scared)**

The boy is scared, he is dreaming of ghosts, the wind is blowing strongly and it is cold, he hears terrible sounds, he does not want to sleep alone, he hears footsteps and gunshots, he is scared of the dark, he hears people fighting. His mother is fighting with the neighbours; he hears stones being thrown on the roof, he is dreaming of his family, his parents are fighting, he is not getting love from his family, it is raining hard, he sees somebody through the window

**What does the boy do when he is scared?**

He prays. He reads the BIBLE. He ignores it.

**Are there people he can go to for help?**

Yes, he can go to other children. He can go to the Pastor, teacher or police, or even to a village counsellor.

**What makes children scared at school?**

Graves scare children. Ghosts scare children. Being killed scared children or seeing other people being killed. They get scared if beaten by teachers. Children get scared when teachers shout at them.

**Bullying**

**Are there bullies in school?**

Yes, there are bullies in school. Big boys bully small children. They take food from small children and beat small children.

**What does the bully feels after doing that?**
A bully feels he is the boss and that everyone is scared of him.

**What do children do when they are bullied?**

Most children do not talk about being bullied. Those with guts go to counsellors. Bullies get suspended and sometimes teachers beat them. They get punished and sometimes get sent home for a whole week. There are no girl bullies at school.

**PICTURE 4 (Playing soccer)**

The boy is happy. He is playing soccer and feels like a man. He is singing. He is eating, taking a bath, washing and playing. He is watching movies, listening to music and is driving a wire car. He is playing with his friends and driving his father's car. He is dancing and swimming. Girls play Netball and they also play with dolls.

**What makes you happy?**

Maths and Science makes me happy. Listening to music makes me happy and makes me forget about my problems and pain. Singing makes me happy too.

**What problems are you having in school?**

We do not have school uniforms and there is no money to pay for our school fees, because our parents are unemployed. Our parents do not give us love. Some of our parents live very far from school. We get too little food and only eat once a day. Big boys cut our shoes and clothes out of jealousy. Because they cannot have what we have, they destroy our clothes and shoes by cutting them into pieces. Children steal our money. Teachers beat us and take away our books.

**Do teachers help?**

Yes, they do help. Ms X and Mr Y help us with our problems. Most children do not tell teachers if they have problems, because they get beaten by the teachers if they tell them about their problems. We try to solve our problems by ourselves. Girls go to counsellors, but boys do not really go to counsellors. Mr Y only helps boys and says bad things to girls.

**What changes do you want to see happening in the school?**

Bullying **MUST** stop. Teachers must stop beating learners. Teachers must stop shouting and saying bad words to learners.

**Where do you come from to attend school?**

Learners come from different farms.

**Pregnancy:**

There were two (2) reported cases of pregnancies at school

**Alcohol**
There is a problem with drinking and smoking in school. Learners get money from their parents, but they spend it on drinking alcohol and smoking. Smoking and drinking alcohol is not allowed in school and learners get disciplined if caught. We want a school bus and a swimming pool.

**The Class Party**

The class is going to have a party (the highlight of their year), but because 11 of the learners did not pay their fees, they are not allowed to attend the class party. Most learners' parents do not work or they live far away from school, thus they cannot contribute the requested N$20-00. The learners who could not attend the party were really extremely disappointed, a girl was crying for not being able to attend the class party (indicative of a lack of understanding of emotional needs of the learners by the teacher counsellor, who was arranging the party?)

**C) Classroom lesson: rural primary school.**

Note: lesson was done in Afrikaans as learners were more fluent in Afrikaans than English. All names of school and teachers have been removed to ensure anonymity.

**General notes on school:**

Op die pad tussen A en B lê 'n klein skooltjie langs die pad. Jy ry op die grootpad langs die landerye en shebeens verby, verby verskeie vloedvlaktes, en dan op 'n vloedvlakte, langs 'n klein kerkie, lê.skoel A. Dis 'n netjiese skooltjie, al is die speelgronde net sand en die hokkies daar vêr (en spooel die toilette nie). Die sand langs die klaskamers is netjies gehark. As ons halfege daar aankom , is al die kinders in hul klaskamers. Ons hoor juffrouens en menere klasgee; ons hoor 'n klas hardop tel:one hundred and one, one hundred and two, one hundred and three, one hundred and four. 'n Ander juffrou probeer verduidelik wat is “future tense”

Die waarnemende hoof neem ons na die personeelkamer/kantoor. Dit is die laaste kamer in die ry van “prefabs”. Tafels met bont plastiek tafeldoeke staan los van mekaar rond. In die agterste hoekie, waar ‘n tafel vol boeke staan wat gemerk moet word, is daar bemoedigende tekens (so met ‘n zig-zag sker uitgesny), “Counselling corner”. Die waarnemende hoof, ‘n vrou, met bril en selfoon wat hang om die nek (hier is geen sekretaresse nie- hierdie is die ‘skoolfoon’), is vriendelik en toeganklik,

We meet the four teacher-counsellors, of whom two have done some of the training courses.


**Classroom lesson:**

Die dogterjie op die prentjie noem hulle Maria. Sy woon in die bos. Daar is nie veel waarvan sy hou om te doen nie: sit lees, dink, slaap. Dalk het sy maagpyn.

Op die tweede prentjie lyk Maria effens bekommerd (dis die idée). Ek vra hulle wat gaan hier aan:
(Deurentyd steek hulle gretig hande op. Party praat so saggies, dat ek op my hurke by die taftjies gaan sit, my kop vooroorgebui, om te kan hoor. Hulle gee nie om as iemand reeds die antwoord gegee het nie; hulle sê weer dieselfde; want so kry elkeen ’n beurt om gehoor te word. Ek plak mettertyd die prentjies van die seuntjie op - as ek begin praat van “children like Maria)..

Sy is kwaad. Sy is honger. Sy is hartseer. Sy dink. Sy is bang,

Wat maak haar kwaad? As sy honger is. As onderwysers haar slaan. As haar ma haar slaan.

As ander kinders haar slaan. As niemand haar wil help nie. As ander kinders haar kos afvat. As ander kinders haar skoolboeke afvat.

Wat maak haar hartseer? As sy alleen is. As sy nie vriende het nie. As sy nie kos het nie. As daar nie water by die skool is nie. As haar ma doodgaan. As ander kinders nie hul boeke wil deel nie.

Wat maak haar bang? As sy ’n toets gedop het. As sy dink as sy huis toe gaan gaan haar ouers haar slaan. As sy dink sy gaan dalk doodgaan. Donderweer. Slange.

Wat kan sy doen?

Bid, huil, gaan speel om te vergeet, dans, niks, sing.

Is daar groot mense wat haar kan help, en hoe kan hul help?

Vriende, een kind sê haar ma kan vir haar kos maak. Een kind noem haar ouma wat kan kosmaak, pa kan iets koop. Die meeste noem vriende, een suster, een broer.

En onderwysers? .......... kan help (’n manlike onderwyser wat ook ’n teacher-counselor is).

Kan mens na .......... gaan by die skool. Die meerderheid sê ja.


Wat is vir Maria lekker om by die skool te doen? Wat maak haar bly by die skool?

Netbal te speel, met haar vriende te speel, as sy ’n toets deurkom. Niemand noem ’n skolastiese aktiwiteit of ’n spesifieke klas nie.

Cynthy deel appels en lineale uit. Ons vra of hulle vir ons kan sing.

Hulle huier nie vir ’n oomblik nie. Daar is ook nie eens ’n bespreking nie. ’n Paar val eenkant in, en almal sing twee maal ’n pragtige lied deur.
Appendix B: The Kinetic School Drawings

The Kinetic School Drawings was used as the first class activity to orientate the children toward the next task (talking about experiences at school). The Kinetic School Drawing (KSD) technique was developed as a variation on the Kinetic Family Drawing by Burns and Kaufman, to evaluate the child’s functioning within the school environment, specifically related to the teacher and classmates/peers. As with children’s drawings, these KSD’s immediately portray the trust they present to the onlooker into an inner reflection.

The KSD is an effective way of assessing children’s interactions with relevant school figures and important relationships at school. This is a particularly useful technique to use with younger children. The technique was piloted during the pilot study and proved to be effective in Namibian primary school settings.

The drawing was done individually and in silence with the researchers observing. This allowed the learners an experience of individual expression where there are no ‘right answer’ and helped them experience the presence of the researchers as warm and non-judgemental. With young children it is usually necessary to consciously structure the process of opening up.

For the analysis of the drawings, we included the drawings of two grade 6 classes located within middle class suburban communities, as a comparative sample. All the drawings were workshopped with two external Educational Psychologists who have experience in working with children’s’ drawings. Although the drawings were clustered in school groups, the external psychologists had no information about the specific schools. Drawings were coded, using numbers.

We received 242 drawings from primary school learners in the three regions, excluding the pilot school. The comparative sample consisted of 79 drawings (41 girls, 38 boys).

For analysis the main scoring categories defined by Burns and Kaufmann (1972) in Merrell (1999) was used, namely:

*Actions, distances, barriers and position, physical characteristics of the figures and styles (the latter reflecting the organization of the figures on the page).*

We added the category *overall impression* as all three psychologists brought this up spontaneously.

What to look for in the Drawings

**What is happening?** e.g. standing, lying under a tree, watching, crying, etc. Look carefully!

**Where is it happening?** Are there any indicators of a positive environment?

- Positive indicators:
a. Positive nature: sun shining, trees, mountains that do not look threatening, flowers, water tap, etc (nature has to look positive. Children can also use nature to tell about a negative experience, e.g. dark cloud, harsh rain etc)

b. Positive school environment: sports fields, positive messages on a classroom wall, music, gardening etc.

Description of Environment:

Persons

The self figure: In the Namibian drawings the self figure has a dot •, above the head. Indicators of positive self experience: The figure is:

- fully drawn (including hands and feet/shoes)
- shows clear gender identification, with an effort made to show clothes. Efforts made with elaboration (e.g. pictures on clothes, laces on shoes, etc)
- has a positive facial expression
- is engaged in a positive activity
- is grounded, that is, beneath the figure some type of “ground” is drawn (can be grass, a playground, a mat)
- central placement (does not have to be completely central, but child has to be 'central', strong sense of “I”)

Note of warning: A figure which is encapsulated (boxed in, or drawn with a line separating self from others), is not grounded. This is a sign of a child either distancing itself or feeling isolated.

Negative self experience:

- Incompletely or sparsely drawn figure
- Little elaboration on the figure (that is clothes not elaborated on),
- Negative facial expression
- Separateness from others
- Small for size
- Extreme side placement on paper
- Shaky lines
- Infantilised picture (child looks much younger than chronological age)
- Aggressive body: this can be seen in the stance and the display of weapons, fists, etc.
- Defeated body stance: head hanging down, shoulders hanging down,
- Disempowered/helpless stance: no arms, no hands and or no feet.
- No grounding

Teacher: In the Namibian drawings the teachers is marked with a t above the head.

Indicators of a positive teacher figure: The figure is:

- Larger than the children, but not threatening
- Positive facial expression
- Positive gender identification, often mirroring the child’s clothes
Positive gender identification; i.e. shows positive female or male actions.

Figure completely drawn

**Negative teacher experience:** Figure is:

- Incomplete (indicates that child disassociates from figure, is uncomfortable to draw the figure)
- Threatening
- Engaged in a negative activity
- Has negative facial expression
- Empty eyes or missing features (no face, no mouth, no body)
- Encapsulated

**Friend figure:**

**Positive indicators:**

- Girls: closeness, mirroring clothes, engaged in positive activity, fully drawn, clothes elaborated, positive facial expression.
- Boys: actively involved. With boys competitive activities with peers are common. Participation in an activity a more common indicator than closeness. With boys closeness can be indicative of ‘facing’ a combined threat if combined with negative facial expressions.

**Negative indicators:**

- Girls: Separateness from peer. Strong indicator of lack of support.
- Boys: Non-engagement - strong indicator of lack of support and positive male role models.
Kinetic School Drawing: Instructions

I’d like you to draw a school picture. Put yourself, your teacher and a child from class, or two in the picture. Make everyone doing something. Try to draw a whole person and make the best drawing you can. Remember, draw yourself, a teacher, and a child from your class or two, and make everyone do something.

Notes on normative drawings from a well-functioning middle class suburban school:

- Figures are fully drawn
- Action takes place, and is positive or joyous
- The figures are grounded: they are placed on grass, or a line, or a mat
- The self figure shows a positive expression and presents itself proudly
- Peers are supportive with girls and supportive or competitive with boys
- Teachers are supportive and/or facilitating
Middle class school used as comparison: Show of power between learners and teacher: learners show themselves as more powerful, with rebellious energy. The teacher is drawn of the same size and age as the learners. Teacher seems powerless. Self figure appears confident and “uitdagend” (challenging). Friend applauds. Note the energy of the car.

Middle class school used as comparison: Good grounding. Natural features (sun, moon, clouds, grass) typical of positive experience of world. Difference in height appropriate – positive identification clear. (note also eye movements) Expressions and activities positive. Note closeness of peer; this indicates support.
Middle class school used as comparison: Note grounding, action. Appropriate height difference self and teacher. Self figure forward placement and completeness plus expression and action shows positive self image, sense of power and achievement. Supported by natural features. Competition with peer typical in boys of this age.

Middle class school used as comparison: Self figure central. Joyful, exuberant action, peer as appreciative audience. Teacher drawn smaller than self, with clothes and hairstyle of the learners. Viewed as peer? Teacher placed in a marginalised, but supportive role. Note of encouragement on the wall. Note movement in the picture.; learner is clearly stimulated.
Namibian school: Note the floating school building and figures (lack of grounding), the shaky lines (insecurity and ambivalence), the separation of the teacher with a barrier, the expression on the faces, the sad expression of the self figure, as well as the hint of aggression in the self figure.

Namibian school: Note the floating figures, the placement at the top (empty spaces). The expressions give a sense of dependency and helplessness (as if beseeching the viewer). The self figure identifies with the teacher (mirroring images), but short arms, small hands and feet reinforce sense of powerlessness. Separateness strong indicator of lack of support. No action.
Namibian school: Again the figures are separate, and the placement is high up, with emptiness defining the space. The expression of the teacher is angry, the self figure appears to be crying. Notice the left and side placement; strong indicators of low self esteem and lack of security. The friend is far away and has no arm, she looks worried. The picture tells a story of lack of support, of lack of power and of sadness- and of a teacher, who although feminine, is harsh and unsympathetic.

Namibian school: Lack of grounding and non-action (standing in space). The self figure is shaded, indicating conflict. The expression of the self figure is serious, eyes somewhat masked. The learner figures appear young (more like little girls about grade 2). The teacher, to the far right is incomplete and, apart from clear feminine features, no face, no right hand and no legs. The picture tells a story of lack of support, connection and action.
Namibian school: Extreme left placement, with most of the paper empty. No action. Incomplete teacher figure; only a head and neck with neutral expression. Self figure carries gun. Aggressive eyes. Friend separate, but indentified with learner (clothes are mirrored). No grounding. Only head means learner dis-identifies with the teacher.

Namibian school: Note the expression on the teacher’s face. By now we have the familiar left placement, but here of a peer (?), who appears adult and large - much more so than the teacher. The self figure is only a head, and looks disheartened. The peer is presented as strong and competent (note the large shoulders and head and the firm feet), whereas the self has no body: an indicator of pathology.
Namibian school: A self that is halfway out of the picture (indicates wish to escape; note also the direction of his eyes). Buttons often indicate helplessness /dependency. The peer seems mirrors the self figure, but is more "present", although the facial expression is not positive. The teacher has no features to identify with: a sign of avoidance.

The teacher, a woman, was erased and replaced, possibly by the figure to the far left. The learner and the teacher are confused in the drawing, they appear the same, like twin figures, one without hands but aggressive shoes, the other with a cane. The one with the cane stands firm but placement indicates wish to step out, to not be part of this. The other is looking at him. The rest of the space is empty. No action apart from threat.
Typical picture with self placement on far left, eye movement out of the field, incomplete teacher figure, emptiness, supportive figure identified with learner but is not close and has no hands. No grounding, no context, no constructive energies/activities.

Namibian School: A confrontation? The action is corporal punishment. The teacher figure has power (note details in clothing). No context and no grounding. Supportive figure (friend) not drawn. The self is leaning forward; in his right hand he has a knife.
Namibian school: The figures are the same size, the teacher looking like a peer, but with no hands, and a defeated expression on her face. Note her empty eyes. The self figure is large, but boyish in his stance, with a worried expression. Note the rounded shoulders.

At a school that we identify as strongly dysfunctional, where we could not find a single teacher in class the entire day, where books or any educational material in classes were absent, the windows so dirty, we had to peer into classrooms, and broken desks defined a classroom, a girl makes a wishful drawing.
Appendix C: Examples of focus groups held with secondary school learners?

Example 1:?
It is a hostel school, with only one learner (child of a teacher) not in the hostel. The majority of teachers reside in the hostel. It is an impressive school in the sense that the buildings are attractive, freshly painted, the school has facilities like a staffroom, printing room, offices etc. A big staffroom with one table for every two teachers; teachers mark in the staffroom. Also on the notice board they have grade 10 results of 2009, a programme for staff, and a graph on learners who have lost parents- a normal" school, as one would expect it. Yet as you walk around, three classrooms have learners with no teachers in them (the school has about five classes in all, so this is a lot). The grade 12 class is overflowing, with 39 learners cramped into small desks and chairs.

Two hostels 128 each (one still to be completed). Currently very overcrowded; 22 girls in a bedroom.

You have 288 learners in a hostel designed for less than have that number.

Interview with learners: 7 grade 12 learners; three girls, four boys. These are not learners who have been counselled (the t-c said none were counselled in 2009). I selected the seven on an ad hoc basis from the group of 39 grade 12’s (I just walked down the aisle and picked out a few). There are fewer girls, because they appeared underrepresented in class, and I did not want to skew the questionnaire by removing too many.

The learners are impressively dressed in neat clothes, clean and in a good condition. They speak easily, and do not require much prompting.

Main areas of complaints

- Lack of textbooks; having to share with grade 11’s
- Teachers: especially an English teacher, who does not prepare, is defensive, always late for class (so that only ten minutes can take place, and then she gives you an exercise to do), responds to criticism in an immature fashion: “if you don’t like it you can leave”, “I am the one who has the certificate not you” (when they correct her English). Also one maths teacher who struggles to do the sums, and then says, “I will give you the answer later”. Some teachers do not speak English well.
- Having to wash teacher’ cars.
- Number of learners in class (39) affects concentration
- Hostel: overcrowding, food not being managed well - if you are at the back of the queue you can just get Oros and bread; the quality of the food- lots of rice, macaroni & sweet potato. No lockers. Two working toilets for a 100 girls.
- Lack of Autonomy: three learners in the group complained that they did not apply for this school; and (perceived) that they had no choice. In class they cannot sit where they like, but
are placed, if they complain they are told that they have no choice. Because of the overcrowding in their classroom and hostel rooms, studying is difficult; their suggestion that a percentage of learners should be allowed to study on their own, was turned down.

- We just feel like going away. We just don’t know what to do. You don’t have any rights, and are not respected. You just keep quiet.

- I just tell myself I am a brave girl, but it hurts me seriously.

- I ask about bullying/ bad teasing: they are adamant it is not a big problem (possibly as this is an older age group; generally by grades 11-12, it has subsided). Newcomers are exploited, “they will take advantage of you.”

- Corporal punishment is not practiced; punishment takes the form of weeding, sweeping, cleaning toilets, etc.

- HIV: We cannot speak about it. If you argue, then the other child will insult you by saying, your mother is dying of AIDS. In 2009 New Start did AIDS testing at the school. Others cannot know your status, because of the overcrowding, if others know about it, it will be a big problem.

- The school has an AIDS Awareness Club, which was run by the boy who died in 2009. The biology teacher has taken it over: he is a very good teacher. He is an excellent teacher.

- X group came in 2009 and was appreciated: raised awareness of HIV through drama, was clearly appreciated by this group of learners. Other: My future is my choice.

- Finances: lack of finances. Exams are costly; parents not having money to pay examination fees.

Counselling: they do not know what the term means, and asks for an explanation. They cannot identify a teacher counsellor. When I ask whether they would speak to the two appointed teacher-counsellors, they are certain that they will not. Of the female teacher counsellor (who also teaches Phys ED) they say; “when you ask for a ball in the afternoon, so that we can play a game, she doesn’t even want to give it you – how will we go to her with a problem”. About the male, they just shake their heads; no.

They then talk about teachers who, if you talk to them about a personal problem, raises it in the classroom. It is not clear whether this is a referral to the male teacher (or both or none of above)

There is one you can talk to: the teacher, female, who teaches development studies. All agree.

She has good manners. She has a good attitude. She likes being with us. She never talks about your personal problems in class

One maths teacher you can also talk to.

Life Skills: the principal talks to them about study skills and career choices. They think he does a good job. They have received no input on problem-solving skills or managing distress (“what to do when you are upset”).

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Positives

The principal

He is very good. He is even a good reader. He does not use abusive language to learners. He is good in solving problems. The majority of teachers take side, he does not.

He tells teachers to go to classes and teach. He comes to our classes, he visit. He is always on time.

The development studies teacher, she is very polite.

One biology and one maths teacher

Example 2?

20 teachers about 500 learners. Acting-principal; previously an HOD at the school who claims to be unaware of our visit, and has to meet with politicians, including someone from the Ministry of Health on the day of our visit. We ask him to phone when he has time, even in the afternoon. He does not phone. The next day (with the assistant) I go to the school and manage to get an interview with him. The same HOD who was sitting around the office, chatting what seemed like the entire day before, is still (!) in the office chatting with the secretary.

Two teacher counsellors

The school has no working toilets (not even for staff). The toilets “are being renovated” (not on the two days that I was there).

The school grounds are desolate- no plants etc –

Interview with learners?

Six learners. I discover that one girl is 22 and in grade 10. In 2009 she had a baby. She is an AIDS orphan; currently staying in the hostel. She is tiny and I have to wonder how the baby fitted into such a body. But she is a confident and outspoken young lady, positive about the second chance she got to stay at school. She was going to leave school, she spoke to the teacher counsellor; he sent her to the social worker at the State Hospital who convinced her to stay and arranged for her to be in the hostel. Presently she is concerned about funding, as she is too old to qualify for the child grant herself. (I discover later, upon enquiry, that a child qualifies as long as s/he is still at school).

A boy, aged 21, in grade 9. He makes a good impression; is neatly dressed, well-spoken. He comes from a rural village. He struggles to find a family member who can provide financial assistance. During the December holidays he went to Angola to look for family there, one male relative helped him with school fees, but he has no money to buy books etc. He is adamant that he wants to finish school; his English is comparatively good (he translates for the boy next to him), and he answers thoughtfully. I recommend to him that he contacts the social worker at the State Hospital, as she seems to be a good resource, having encouraged the previous learner to stay at school

Comment: before the learners came into the room, they were given a lecture in Oshihirero (interesting since there are notices everywhere about “speak only English”). They came in, and upon
inquiry initially reported “no problems. “No hunger” etc. I pointed out to them that certain problems like bullying occurred at all schools all over the world; it just differed how much. One girl said that, maybe 10 % of learners were hungry. Another girl then burst out at this: 10 %? It is 90%! After this the atmosphere changed, and the following conversation took place

The learners could identify the teacher-counsellors, 5 had been to see ms.X (one in 2007). One saw her twice, one three times, three once. One saw mr .Y once. The teacher counsellors introduced themselves at the first assembly of the year. The learners who saw ms .X felt comfortable, and thought that she was good, and had helped them. One reported that she (ms .X) had heard from somebody else that he wanted to leave school. She called him to the store room, and convinced him to stay. (The reason that he wanted to leave was because of lack of finances). Did they trust her? “Of course”.

- The principal is too strict (we were already wondering about this, as even teachers were whispering)
- Poverty
- No toilets: There are no toilets, learners have to leave the school ground to go to the bushes. If they are late, they are punished
- Hunger
- Dangerous sexual practices
- No books apart from text books. One girl expressed a desire for novels. In all the schools that we have visited thus far, I have not seen a single book other than the learners’ textbooks.
- No science equipment
- Language problems
- The way newcomers are treated (this is only the second week of school)
- Policy around parental involvement
- The principal is too strict (school uniform/poverty/school books/parents)

We have to wear the full school uniform, even the school jersey. Otherwise we are sent away. Even if you come with the wrong jersey, it is confiscated, and they don’t give it back. (With such poverty this seems criminal). Sometimes when learners cannot afford the right clothes, this results in them not coming to school. Without the right uniform you are not allowed to attend school at all.

The anger in their voices is noticeable. I ask: Are many learners angry at this school? All six learners in unison: YES

We are forced to buy expensive black exercise books.
To be exempt from school fees, parents have to be involved. Some of us do not have parents. Many of our parents live far away (I am aware that many learners are in the hostel or orphans, and also that many are staying – in dire poverty- with relatives in the village).

• **Hunger**

The hostel: the young man (21) explains that young men eat more than girls (true), yet they all get the same food, that they are constantly hungry. Also that the food is not nutritious enough (he is absolutely right)

*The food that we eat are too few for us. We just eat the same foods.*

For dinner we have 4 slices of bread with jam at 6.00. Sometimes we get peanut butter and sometimes an egg. After that we have study. By the time we go to bed, we are hungry. Breakfast at 6.00 (for some reason that always fails me, boarding school children have to get up at 5.00) consists of bread & jam again or sometimes porridge. By the time you go to school you are already hungry.

Learners can buy fatcakes (vetkoek) for N$ 1 in town. I bought one, but could not eat it because it was really oily. Nutritional value? I doubt any.

• **Dangerous sexual practices:** Ms. X talks to them about sex. She also runs an AIDS club; anybody can belong to it. They perform dramas, and songs. Two learners in the group belong to the club. They state that they enjoy the activities.

Yet, dangerous sexual practices are common. Especially with alcohol so readily available in town (I am not exaggerating if I write there are a million broken beer bottles lying around the town) Drunk adults are everywhere, music blaring.

• **Language problems:** teachers do not pronounce English properly. Learners should be forced to speak only English. One boy is upset that learners speak their own languages on the playground. He feels there should be a policy to force them to speak English

• **Bullying/Corporal punishment**

The learners were adamant that little corporal punishment took place. Punishment takes the form of weeding the grasses or picking up litter. Does it work? It works; you work in the hot sun- it works. Otherwise you have to wash walls. Little beating, also by learners. Most bullying took the form of taking away money for food/forcing newcomers to buy fatcakes for them.

What about sexual pressure? Girls participated in sex when they were too young. The girls are forced to marry older men- some at school are already married. The group did not think it was really a problem that young girls were forced into sex; rather that the girls themselves participated from too young an age. Often from grade 8.

**What is good about your school?**
They state with pride that one learner in grade 10 came first in the region. That there is good communication between certain teachers and learners. That it is the best school in the area. Soccer is good: they have won cups. The girls wish that they could play netball, but there is no facility. The English teacher is good. The school has a debating club to improve English.

One student remarks; I have really developed since I have come to this school.

By this he means his English. The ability to speak English has become, in their minds, a type of magic that can change their worlds for the better. They make me feel sad with their hopes, but maybe . . . the young mother with her confidence; if the young man is given an opportunity . . .
Appendix D: Group feedback from the National Conference on the Evaluation of Counselling and Psychosocial Support for Learners at Schools in Namibia

Windhoek: 1st and 2nd June, 2010?

A National conference on the evaluation of counselling and psychosocial support for learners at schools in Namibia was held for key stakeholders in Windhoek on the 1st and 2nd of June, 2010. At this meeting the main findings and recommendations of this report were presented to key stakeholders. Participants were divided in 5 groups to discuss and present recommendations on the following topics: (1) Training and Development (2) Systemic matters (3) Leadership and Management (4) Monitoring and Evaluation (5) Fostering partnerships. The feedback from each of these groups is summarised below.

Pre-and-in-service training?

- The following people need to be trained:
  - master trainers at UNAM, colleges and the Regional School Counsellors.
  - All future teachers need basic training in counselling, scope of practice, and peer counselling
- Teacher counsellors in the schools need training on scope of practice
- Teacher counsellors need training on how to train and mentor peer counsellors (group felt that the teacher counsellors would have to be responsible for peer counselling in their schools)
- Inspectors as well as other people in the regional office need to be trained on pro-social discipline and pro-social teaching
- Principals, school board members and hostel superintendents also need training on pro-social discipline and pro-social teaching and especially how to address the issue of corporal punishment.
- UNAM and colleges should a core module on counselling in all courses as well as specialisation at 4th year level in the BETD. DATS has offered all of their training manuals fo UNAM for use in their courses. The specialisation area of guidance and counselling in 4th year should be more practical.
- There is a need for a specialised post-graduate diploma in management, which should include a component on pro-social discipline and whole school discipline. This course should be a pre-requisite for becoming a principal. Current principals should be allowed to upgrade their qualifications via distance education courses.
- There is also a need for a post graduate specialisation in guidance and counselling and/or psychology for teachers/teacher counsellors. They should be encouraged to do a post-graduate diploma. If they attain a post-graduate diploma they should be seen as equal to a HOD.
Leadership and Management?

- There should be full-time posts for teacher counsellors.
  - In the short-term utilise the life skills teacher and release them from all other subjects., make them responsible for counselling. Equip them with basic counselling skills. Make it part of the ETSIP programme.
  - Long term: create a full-time teacher counsellor post
- Explore the possibility of introducing peer counsellors into schools. One of the ways of doing this would be to make use of out of school youth to come to schools and talk to learners
- There needs to be a dedicated space for counselling. Principals must be encouraged to provide such space in their schools.
- DATS and RSCs should sensitise all inspectors and regional office staff on counselling needs. Should happen immediately.
- In order for school management to provide support to the counselling support group and teachers by management, the teacher counsellors should prioritise the sensitisation of principals and school management. This needs to be included in their plans of action.
- Training manuals need to be provided again to schools that do not have them. Inspectors also need to be provided with copies of the training manuals as well as invited to all relevant training for the teacher counsellors.
- Inspectors as well as the Regional Directors of Education need to be given exact information on what they need to monitor regarding counselling in the schools and how to do this. DATS needs to stipulate what they need to monitor.
- All hostel superintendents and matrons need to be trained by the RSCs in basic counselling skills.
- Establish dedicated counselling support groups in the hostels to help deal with problems in the hostels. Community members should be part of these groups.
- Teacher counsellor should be co-opted onto the school management in order to provide feedback to the management on counselling related issues and raise awareness. If they do not form part of the school management, they should be called in by school management to give regular feedback on counselling matters.
- Learners need to be informed about their rights and about what to do when corporal punishment is meted out.
- Survey needs to be done on corporal punishment – why do they allow corporal punishment in schools?
- Teacher unions need to be part of solution of addressing the issue of corporal punishment in schools.

Systemic Issues?

- Need to establish a special task team under PQA to look into:
  - bullying
  - hunger
  - hostel issues
  - corporal punishment
- Bullying:
- short-term: create motivational committees in schools to sensitise teachers, introduce teacher counsellors, establish peer groups to address bullying, introduce visual materials during life skills periods to address issue of bullying, counsel both bully and victims.
- Long-term: need to develop anti-bullying policies; establish task team that includes learners to address bullying

- Corporal punishment:
  - short-term:
    - needs to be a directive from PQA to all schools; school principals and inspectors to ensure adherence;
    - teachers and principals need to sign undertaking when they are appointed; need for a conference on bullying.
    - Empower schools with alternative discipline strategies.
  - Long-term:
    - in-service training needs to train all teachers on pro-social forms of discipline.
    - DATS should develop poster campaign to address issue of bullying.

- Hunger:
  - short term:
    - need to enforce proper distribution methods as food is not always delivered on time. We need to ensure that learners entitled to it should benefit.
    - Community hostels should be provided with more than just the current one meal a day.
  - Long-term:
    - need to review the status of community hostels and take more responsibility - eg register them.
    - Feeding for secondary school learners needs to also be addressed.
    - Need to mobilise communities, especially the business people in these communities, as well as foster regional initiatives to address these issues.
    - There needs to be closer collaboration between the MoE and Ministry of Gender to address the issue of what happens when learners go home.
    - Task team needs to be established to review nutritional value of food.

- Hostels:
  - Inspectors and hostel superintendents should address issue of vandalism in the hostels.
  - Work with small NGOs and BTCs to train learners in the hostels to be handymen in the school.
  - Matrons and superintendents need to be trained in counselling.
  - Need to establish parent evaluation committee to talk about issue of hostels (short term).
  - Long term need to increase budgets for hostels.
  - Try and establish food gardens linked to the hostels and schools

- Special education needs:
  - build ramps for people with wheelchairs. This needs to be enforced.
Fostering and Monitoring

Teacher counsellors:
- counselling support groups need to be revived
- need to intensify training for existing teacher counsellors (esp rape and suicide).
- Need to start rolling out learning support group training.
- Identify most disadvantaged schools – and channel resources to them.
- Encourage schools to get patrons from communities and in this way raise funds for the schools

Monitoring and Evaluation?

- Short term: there is an urgent need to sensitisate principals and inspectors on m&e. DATS should work together with HAMU in this regard.
- Existing m&e tools need to be improved to avoid duplication and omission of information. The tools need to be simple and easy to administer.
- Feedback needs to be given to the schools and regional offices on the m&e results
- The roles and responsibilities of inspectors and principals need to include m&e. M & E should form part of their job descriptions.
- Long-term: In-depth training is needed on m&e for inspectors and school principals
- Create new positions through EdSIP
- The monitoring of counselling should be part of PMS (performance management system) for school principals
- MoE needs to make provision for taking over the posts of the ARSCs
- Indicators – need to relook at them and expand them
- Training on monitoring and evaluation cannot be done by the RSCs and ARSCs as they do not have the skills to do this. The Directorate should do this, or identify someone suitable.

Fostering partnerships, networking and collaboration?

- Need to map the agencies and their resources for each region
- Quarterly forum (OVC forum is already in existence) – revive existing forums
- Establish data base of all agencies working in the region – existing documents from Lifeline etc – but not made available to schools, NGOs – they need to be distributed.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of agencies. This will combat duplication and foster integration of services.
- School counsellors need to have directories of services available in their regions
- School counsellors can summarise their own circles of support from the available directorate – make own school based directorate
- Establish a central point of communication between Line Ministries and NGOs where people can meet. One such platform could be the PEACE centre which has started training people dealing with counselling in schools.
- Lifeskills teachers and teacher counsellors need to be counselled and supported. Bring psychologist on board who can be assigned just to the school counsellors. Or use an NGO for this.
- Training of teacher counsellors needs to be accredited and recognised.
- Make better use of people in the community – e.g. business community – and invite more key roleplayers to get involved in the schools. Use platforms like churches, school board meetings to address importance of counselling and empower community to accept counselling as a normal practice. Use NGOs to reach out to the community.
- Identify one specific person in the Ministry who should be the link to NGOs. There should also be specific people in the regional offices who are the links to NGOs.
- Process of getting permission to work in schools should be streamlined and speeded up.
List of participants: National Conference on the Evaluation of Counselling and Psychosocial Support for Learners at Schools in Namibia

Windhoek: 1st and 2nd June, 2010

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<tr>
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<td>Boys Ben</td>
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<td>Hardap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>David Fritz</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
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<td>UNAM – Rundu College of Education</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Programme Management Unit / DSP Global Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Botma Connie</td>
<td>Chief: Special Protection for Vulnerable Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Haingura Basilius</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>NANTU – Teachers Union</td>
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<td>Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Sam Aune</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Yisa James</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Mackrill Chanville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Van Der Ross Nolan</td>
<td>Education Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Shemuketa Havelinus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Taniseb Charlton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Namene Vistorina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Muchila Cavin</td>
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Caprivi

Otjozondjupa

Teachers Union of Namibia (TUN)

UNICEF

UNESCO

City of Windhoek - Khomas

City of Windhoek - Khomas

EMIS - Head Office
Appendix E: Strategic Plan for Improving Counselling Services in Schools in Namibia Based on Key Recommendations?

The following is a strategic plan for the improvement of counselling services in schools in Namibia based on the key recommendations in this report. The plan is based on the following objectives:

1. Improving the counselling service offered by the teacher counsellors in schools
2. Improving the leadership and management of counselling services in schools
3. Improving the monitoring and evaluation of counselling services
4. Improving the pre-and in-service training of the teacher counsellors
5. Improving the school environment
6. Addressing hunger

Each of the above objectives is broken down into strategies and activities, which are rated on a timescale. For each activity, outputs/indicators are defined and major cost drivers over and above the ministry budget are indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Short-term Year 1</th>
<th>Medium term Year 2-3</th>
<th>Long-term Year 4-5</th>
<th>Significant cost elements (over and above normal expenditure)</th>
<th>Outputs/Indicators</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1: Improving counselling service in schools</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Appoint a full-time teacher counsellor in every school</td>
<td>1.1.1 Life-skills teachers receive training in Basic Counselling &amp; Process of Counselling skills</td>
<td>Funding for training of life skills teachers</td>
<td>All life skills teacher complete training in Basic Counselling &amp; Process of Counselling Skills</td>
<td>School principals Inspectors RSCs/ARSCs – possibly use NGOs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.2 Appoint at least one full-time teacher counsellor per school</td>
<td>One additional post per school</td>
<td>One full-time teacher counsellor per school</td>
<td>MoE</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Ensure only suitable teacher counsellors are selected</td>
<td>1.2.1 Review guidelines for selection of teacher counsellors</td>
<td>Printing of guidelines for each school. Distribution of guidelines</td>
<td>Revised guidelines for selection of teacher counsellors</td>
<td>DATS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.2 Learners have input in teacher counsellor selection</td>
<td>In each school, system established for learners to have input into teacher counsellor selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Provide suitable space for counselling</td>
<td>1.3.1 Provide private space for counselling</td>
<td>Suitable space in all schools for counselling</td>
<td>Principals/Deputy principals/HODs/Inspectors to assist</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 Allocate time for counselling</td>
<td>1.4.1 Teacher counsellors allocated time for counselling during school hours</td>
<td>Each teacher counsellor has at least two hours per week available during school hours to do counselling – Directive from MoE in this regard</td>
<td></td>
<td>MoE; principals, inspectors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective 2: Improve leadership and management of counselling services in schools</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.1 Sensitise key role players to function, requirements for counselling</strong></td>
<td>2.1.1 All school principals, inspectors and regional directors attend sensitisation workshop</td>
<td>Funds for regional workshops</td>
<td>Action plan with identification of roles, responsibilities and resources required</td>
<td>DATS, PQA, RSCs/ARSCs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.2 Improve relationship between DATS and HAMU</strong></td>
<td>2.2.1 DATS and HAMU clarify roles, responsibilities and relationship</td>
<td>Improved working relationship between DATS and HAMU</td>
<td>DATS, HAMU</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.3 Revive Sectoral Steering Committee</strong></td>
<td>2.3.1 Sectoral steering committee meetings revived</td>
<td>Regular meetings of Sectoral Steering Committee</td>
<td>HAMU</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.4 Clarify roles and responsibilities of RACE officials and RSCs/ARSCs</strong></td>
<td>2.4.1 Hold regular regional meetings between RACE officials and RSCs/ARSCs</td>
<td>Regular regional meetings between RACE officials and RSCs/ARSCs – roles and responsibilities clarified</td>
<td>Regional Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.5 Implement Code of Conduct for Teaching Service in all schools</strong></td>
<td>2.5.1 Key stakeholder workshop to discuss implementation of Code of Conduct</td>
<td>Funds for workshop</td>
<td>Action plan with identification of roles, responsibilities and resources needed to implement code in all schools</td>
<td>MoE – Inspectors, Regional Directors, NESE, DATS, UNAM, NIED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.6 Strengthen role of principals</strong></td>
<td>2.6.1 Principals trained in concept and practice of school counselling and role in m &amp; e</td>
<td>Funds for regional training workshops for principals (could be same workshops as 2.1.1)</td>
<td>All principals sensitised to concept of school counselling and their role in m &amp; e</td>
<td>Inspectors, Regional Directors, RSCs/ARSCs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.7 Ensure all new RSCs/ARSCs are inducted into their roles/jobs</strong></td>
<td>2.7.1 All new RSCs/ARSCs to be inducted into their jobs</td>
<td>All RSCs/ARSCs thoroughly inducted into their posts</td>
<td>DATS, Regional Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.8 Appoint ARSCs on a permanent basis</strong></td>
<td>2.8.1 ARSCs permanently appointed</td>
<td>Salaries for 1 ARSC per region</td>
<td>One ARSC per region appointed</td>
<td>MoE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.9 Clear job descriptions for ARSCs and RSCs</strong></td>
<td>2.9.1 Job descriptions for ARSCs and RSCs</td>
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<td>DATS, MoE</td>
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</table>

**Objective 3: Improve monitoring and evaluation of counselling services**
### 3.1 Revise M & E system

#### 3.1.1 Scope of practice for teacher counsellors defined and communicated
- **Scope of practice defined and communicated**
- **DATS, outside expert**

#### 3.1.2 Capacity building workshop on M & E (focus on teacher counselling)
- **Funds for workshop**
- **DATS, HAMU, Regional Directors, Inspectors (?)**

### 3.2 Strengthen counselling cluster system

#### 3.2.1 Provide travelling and subsistence costs for cluster meetings
- **Funds for travelling and subsistence costs for attendance of cluster meetings**
- **Regular counselling cluster meetings take place**
- **MoE, Regional Directors**

#### 3.2.2 RSCs/ARSCs facilitate cluster meetings
- **Funds for transport to cluster meetings**
- **RSCs/ARSCs focus on strengthening cluster meeting system**
- **Regional Directors, RSCs/ARSCs**

### 3.3 Strengthen capacity of DATS to mentor and evaluate work of RSCs/ARSCs

#### 3.3.1 Strengthen capacity of DATS head office to supervise and mentor RSCs/ARSCs
- **Training workshop using outside expert/s**
- **DATS head office staff skilled to mentor and supervise RSCs/ARSCs**
- **DATS head office staff External expert/s, Psychology Society**

### Objective 4: Improve pre- and in-service training of teacher counsellors

#### 4.1 Ensure Guidance & Counselling is core component of pre-service training of teachers
- **Training forum established and meets regularly**
- **UNAM, NIED, DATS, relevant NGOs**

#### 4.2 Develop specialisation area in school counselling at UNAM
- **Certificate/Diploma courses developed**
- **UNAM, DATS**

#### 4.3 Accredit current DATS training courses
- **Accreditation of DATS training by recognised institution**
- **DATS, NIED, UNAM and other relevant institutions**

#### 4.4 Revise DATS training manuals
- **All manuals have additional section that includes developmental perspective and ethics**
- **DATS, outside expert**

#### 4.4.1 Revision of all manuals to include developmental perspective and ethics
- **Funds for expert help with revision of manuals**
- **Outside expert, DATS**

#### 4.4.2 Revision of Bereavement counselling manual
- **Funds for expert help with revision of manuals**
- **Outside expert, DATS**

#### 4.4.3 Revision of Counselling Guidelines
- **Funds for expert help with revision**
- **Outside expert, DATS**
### Evaluation of counselling services in schools in Namibia

#### 4.5 Outsource some of training of teacher counsellors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidelines for Specific Difficulties</th>
<th>Printing of manuals</th>
<th>Specific Difficulties revised</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.5.1 Some of training outsourced to suitable NGOs</td>
<td>Funding to pay NGOs</td>
<td>Some of training outsourced. RSCs/ARSCs have more time available for m &amp; e and support</td>
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#### 4.6 Improve skills and capacity of RSCs/ARSCs to deliver training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSCs/ARSCs should receive training in monitoring, referral, knowledge of learning difficulties, specialised knowledge of HIV and AIDS, dealing with OVCs and sexual abuse</th>
<th>Funding for additional training</th>
<th>RSCs/ARSCs skills and competence improved in monitoring, learning difficulties, HIV and AIDS, dealing with OVC and sexual abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding to upgrade schools and meet basic needs (eg water, desks, electricity, toilets)</td>
<td>All schools have basic resources</td>
<td>MoE</td>
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</table>

### Objective 5: Improving the school environment

#### 5.1 Provide basic resources to schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School needs identified and prioritised. Prioritised list of most needy schools.</th>
<th>MoE, Regional Directors, Inspectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit of school needs conducted</td>
<td>MoE, Regional Directors, Inspectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic resources provided in all schools</td>
<td>MoE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships forged with communities, private sector and NGOs to assist in meeting basic needs</td>
<td>Regional Directors, RACE officials, NGOs, RSCs/ARSCs</td>
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</table>

#### 5.2 Establish operational circles of support in all schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools have posters/learning materials</th>
<th>Regional Directors, Inspectors, in partnership with international organisations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training of RSCs/ARSCs, principals and teacher counsellors in building circles of support</td>
<td>Inspectors, Principals, Regional Directors, RSCs/ARSCs</td>
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</table>

#### 5.3 Introduce/strengthen extra-mural activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each school and regional office has regional resource directory</th>
<th>Partnership between various government ministries, NGOs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra mural activities eg Star School Programme, sports programmes, etc strengthened</td>
<td>Relevant NGOs, MoE</td>
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### 5.4 Train Principals, Regional Directors and Inspectors

| 5.4.1 Regional training of principals, Regional Directors & inspectors in pro-social discipline, ABC of resilience etc | Funding for regional workshops/trainings | All principals, Regional Directors, Inspectors trained in pro-social discipline, ABC of resilience and whole school approaches to meeting needs of learners | External experts, relevant NGOs |

### Objective 6: Address hunger in schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.1 Ensure all vulnerable learners have access to school feeding</th>
<th>Additional funding for extending school feeding programme</th>
<th>School feeding extended to include secondary schools</th>
<th>MoE, Funding agencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1 Extend school feeding to secondary schools</td>
<td>Improved nutritional quality of school feeding</td>
<td>MoE, nutritional experts</td>
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<td>6.1.2 Enhance nutritional quality of current food provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.1.3 Ensure school feeding reaches all vulnerable learners</td>
<td>Additional funding to extend school feeding programme</td>
<td>All hungry learners have access to school feeding programme</td>
<td>MoE, Regional Directors, Inspectors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 6.2 Encourage establishment of food gardens at schools | 6.2.1 Establish food gardens at schools (where climate allows) | Funding for training and equipment, seeds | Increase in number of schools with food gardens | MoE, NGOs, communities |

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