Improving civic participation of the Youth in Namibia through the use of mobile phones and engagement through a Study Circle program in schools
1. INTRODUCTION

“The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice.”

(Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

(Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

In November 2009, Namibia took part in celebrating the 20th year of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). One of the core principles of the CRC is to ensure the state’s devotion to the best interest of the child, which can be realised through ensuring the rights of all children and youth to participate in all activities that matter in their lives. In ratifying the CRC, Namibia accepted an obligation to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the enumerated rights—including by adopting or changing laws and policies that implement the provisions of the Convention or Protocol.

Geared towards the Millennium Development Goals, some national focus and policies directly address issues pertaining to children and the youth of Namibia, amongst others achieving universal primary education (Goal 2) through various national strategies in support of educational mechanisms. Although the primary school enrolment rate stands at 92%, since 2003 enrolment has been on a downward trend, which the target of 99% by 2012 being difficult to meet. The youth literacy rate of 93% has not experienced much progress.

Despite legislation making primary education compulsory, the enrolment rate in Namibian schools is only 82%, with some regional and gender differences. In addition, there is the problem of drop-out at all levels in all regions. In each grade the drop-out rate varies between 10% and 1%. There is an especially high drop-out rate in grades 1, 5 and 10. Thus, even though Namibia manages to keep up a high level of children starting in school, it has a problem with school leavers.

As much as the Namibian Government is committed to improve access to and quality of basic education and despite all previous efforts and above mentioned successes, the education system is still showing serious weaknesses regarding coverage and provision of education, and in particular with respect to the quality of education. The quality of teaching and the performance of learners is still unsatisfactory, especially in urban and rural poverty areas. It is estimated that at the end of grade 6 only 25% of learners have acquired sufficient competencies in the learning areas of English and Mathematics.
Only 40% of all learners pass grade 7 without repeating a year. On average, 13 school years are needed to pass the final examinations for grade 10. At the overall national level, only 25.9% of learners reached the minimum level of mastery in reading literacy and a meager 7.6% reached the desirable level. Almost 40% of the teachers do not have senior secondary school qualifications, and 28% of those teach without formal pedagogical qualifications.

Since Independence, Namibia introduced various measures to decentralise the provision and delivery of education services. The process of public sector reform as well as to introduce strategies to improve the quality of education planning and management are still ongoing and at times very tedious. However, in the context of the decentralisation of public services the education sector as the largest public sector is having a leading role. In terms of the Namibian Government’s Decentralisation Policy, recruitment and transfer of teachers as well as timely and adequate budget planning and administration will be decentralised to the 13 Regional Councils.

Presently, the Ministry of Education is implementing a holistic and comprehensive strategy for the education sector, the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP). As a reform programme for the next 15 years, the ETSIP is aligning the entire education system towards the needs of the 21st century and Namibia’s Vision 2030.

In an effort to gather views on educational priorities of children and the youth as well as their opinions on the way forward, a project using Interactive Voice Response methodology conducted in 2009 by the NID, UNICEF and the SADC-PF included education as a topic in view to receive an indication of the youth’s perception of education provision and their view on what is needed to improve learning and education in Namibia. Respondents gave their opinions on issues such as measures to improve the quality of education, to improve the school environment, to improve the quality of teaching and to prevent learner dropout.

These very tentative activities, however, needed to be intensified in order to ensure that data obtained may feed into the design of future strategies for the education sector. The youths of school-going age need to be enabled to take on a much more proactive advocacy role in this process by interacting with policy shapers. Such advocacy can be designed much more specifically having more data on perceptions of education-related issues at hand to be obtained from youths countrywide.

Young people have been adept in interacting with new technologies such as mobile telephony, by not just as being consumers but by actively engaging themselves through connecting and socializing with each other, collecting and disseminating information, exercising autonomy and creativity. The mobile phone has been identified as one of the most accessible ICT tools in Namibia, especially for the young generation. The combination of the use of mobile phones and youth participation is an innovative
approach to raise the voice and opinions of the born-free generation for the betterment of the society and environment that surrounds them. This new initiative recognizes the CRC and the fundamental rights of protecting and nurturing the best interests of children and young people of Namibia, and also encourages and upholds the right of children to participate and have a say in decisions that affect them.

Therefore, in order to specifically gather the opinions of this “born free” generation in Namibia about educational issues, UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID) executed a project aimed at expanding the knowledge of young people on their rights for education, through civic participation in the democratic process. In view of the popularity of mobile phones amongst the youth, which provide great opportunities for young people to contribute their voices and opinions about what they see as important in their lives today as active participants and citizens of Namibia, a mobile based platform was set up to gather opinions of the youth on a range of matters affecting them. The program had the following specific objectives:

- To encourage young people to participate in opinion polls in realizing the rights of young people to participate in democratic decision making process;
- To collect ideas from young people on how to attain Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals and other education related goals enshrined in Vision 2030;
- To encourage public debate on educational issues raised by the youth;
- To ensure that the youth knows how to channel their concerns on education to the appropriate authorities;
- To compile a report on young people’s priorities and opinions on educational matters, to be discussed in Children’s Parliament 2011 and other suitable platforms.
- To encourage young people to advocate for their rights for education to the duty bearers and the public

These objectives were pursued through the following interrelated activities:

2. INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE OPINION POLL

2.1 Design of the poll

An Interactive Voice Response (IVR) opinion poll was designed, set up and conducted between 26th May and 17th June 2011 to capture the youth’s expectations from political leaders and priorities with regard to educational issues.
A number of problematic education related issues in this regard were identified according to which the poll questionnaire content was designed. Issues were broadly categorized according to National Development Policies and the Millenium Development Goals relating to education, such as for example enrollment issues, causes of drop outs, repetition rates, teacher absenteeism, quality of education and issues relating to the hostel environment. The questionnaire was developed jointly by the NID, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education with content input by a selection of secondary school learners. It was translated into Oshiwambo, Otjiherero and Khoekhoegowab and was subsequently conducted in four languages. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a selection of learners to ensure that there was not too much information, that menus were not too long, that the voice prompts were easy to understand and that the questionnaires had been translated correctly.

The technical expertise for this project was made possible by the IT expertise from the Namibian company Mobipay with technical support by Text To Change – a Ugandan organization that has made significant contributions in using mobile phone technology for development projects.

The opinion poll was supported through promotional activities that encouraged the youth to take part in the poll. One page print advertisements announcing the poll (refer to Annex A) were run in three local newspapers on 27th May and again one week later. Bulk SMS’s announcing the poll were sent out on 1st June and 8th June 2011, while principals of secondary schools in Namibia were contacted by the NID and requested to announce the poll in their school. Informational flyers were also distributed. Incentives for participation consisted of 9 vouchers for school materials of N$1,000 each.

An email address (listenloud4education@gmail.com) was also set up in case any learner would want to make additional comments. However, few learners chose to make use of this option and no really meaningful comments were received.

2.2 Participation

Overall, a total number of 6,620 calls were received over the three-week period during which the program was conducted. Of these callers, a total of 3,668 (55%) valid responses up to the last question were received, while 45% of all callers (2,952) dropped out sometime during their call. A possible explanation of the high number of callers who terminated their call before the end of the questionnaire could be that the questionnaire might have been a bit too long. The drop out rate was especially high during the first week at 68% which may indicate that callers were not familiar with the polling procedure. It would therefore be imperative in future polls of this kind to ensure sufficient promotional activity in support of the poll ahead of time. The drop out rate then fell to 34% in week 2 and 32% in the third week, this may indicate that callers were
getting more accustomed to the IVR project, possibly due to increasing promotional activity in support of the poll.

**Chart 1: Total number of callers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Calls received</th>
<th>Calls to final question</th>
<th>Call dropout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>1,630</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,497</td>
<td>2,338</td>
<td>1,599</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The greatest participation in the poll was registered during the second week, with a total number of 2,497 callers. During the last week of the poll, 2,338 callers participated, while participation during the first week was lowest at 1,385.

In similar fashion to the previous *Listen Loud* poll of 2009, 54% of calls received were from female callers, while 46% came from male callers.

It was unfortunately not possible to determine rural vs. urban participation, or the regional origin of callers. However, a proxy in this regard could be the languages that callers preferred during their calls. Callers were provided with four choices of languages that they could have their call processed in. Over the total program period, the majority of callers (46.9%) chose the English language, while 41.2% chose Oshiwambo. Only 7.1% of all callers chose Otjiherero, while 4.8% chose Khoekhoeegowab as language medium. The relatively high drop out rate of total callers may in part be due to language difficulties of non-Oshiwambo speaking callers with the English language. Hence, it would probably be fruitful to include all local languages in future projects of this kind, which could widen the scope of similar programs and could also provide interesting analyses segregated by language.

The largest segment of callers (27%) indicated that they were not at school. From callers who are at school, grade 12 enjoyed the highest participation with 12%. In terms of education sector, participation of learners was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Sector</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education:</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Secondary Education:</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Secondary Education:</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Results

20 issues that are commonly referred to as being problematic and that were compiled and pre-tested jointly with a selection of learners were included in the questionnaire, and callers were asked whether these 20 issues were a problem at their school through simple yes/no responses. Topics were grouped into two sections, callers could choose which of the two sections to respond to. Section one covered issues about teachers, activities and services at school, while section 2 covered issues relating to the school and hostel environment as well as safety issues. Callers had the option to, after having answered questions of one section, call again and answer questions of the other section. 61.5% of all callers chose to respond to questions covered under section 1, while 38.5% of callers preferred to respond to section 2.

Poll results were publicized in two major daily newspapers on Friday, 24th June 2011 (refer to Annex B). Furthermore, poll results were distributed and publicly displayed at a national conference on education entitled ‘Collective Delivery on the Education Promise: Improving the Education System for Quality Learning Outcomes and Quality of Life’. The objective of the conference was to bring together stakeholders to provide an in-depth analysis of Namibia’s education system at all levels – pre-primary, primary, secondary, vocational and lifelong learning – in order to understand the underlying causes of the problems in the education system. The conference was held from 27th June to 1st July 2011.
Summarised responses to the ten questions grouped into **Section 1** were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do your teachers speak understandable English?</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are your teachers always on time for class?</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do your teachers always ensure that everyone understands the subjects?</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do your teachers generally know their subjects well?</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are you satisfied with your Life Skills class contents?</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does your school provide sport and cultural activities after school?</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you think your school prepares you well for your future?</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are there enough textbooks for every learner in your school?</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Does your school support learners to prevent them from dropping out?</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you know that you can be exempted from payment of the School Development Fund if your family cannot afford to pay?</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summarised responses to the ten questions grouped into **Section 2** were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are there tables and chairs for all learners in your class?</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are there enough working toilets at your school?</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is your school clean?</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In the hostel of your school, is there a bed for each learner?</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In the hostel of your school, is there enough food for each learner?</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Have you ever been hit by a teacher at school?</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you know who to report to about a teacher who has a romantic relationship with a learner?</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do you feel safe at your school in general?</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Is there a school counselor at your school to talk to about your problems?</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you walk long distances every day to get to your school?</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A more detailed analysis of data for each one of the topics in the poll is explained by way of the following charts:

**Chart 3: Do your teachers speak understandable English?**

![Chart 3: Do your teachers speak understandable English?](image)

English, being the official language in Namibia, is the medium of instruction in schools as from Grade 5. As in Namibia a total of 13 vernacular languages are spoken, most teachers only speak English as a second or third language, which has often been blamed for exacerbating the quality of teaching. However, in total, according to 78% of respondents in this poll, the issue of English seems not to be a problem.

**Chart 4: English skills of teachers by sector**

![Chart 4: English skills of teachers by sector](image)
Respondents from Junior Secondary grades seem to have the biggest problem with the English language skills of their teachers, with 35% of respondents indicating that this is a problem, compared to 15% for Junior Secondary and 8% for Senior Secondary grades. This may largely be explained that learners are taught in their mother tongue until grade 4, learners from Primary grades may therefore also not be proficient enough in English to be able to recognize this as a problem, while senior secondary learners may be fluent in English so that possible deficiencies in the language skills of their teachers might not be too problematic.

**Chart 5: Are your teachers always on time for classes?**

![Chart showing the percentage of students who think their teachers are always on time for classes. 61% say yes, and 39% say no.]
It seems to be mainly in junior secondary grades where the punctuality of teachers is a problem, as demonstrated in Chart 6:

**Chart 6: Lack of punctuality of teachers by sector**

![Chart 6: Lack of punctuality of teachers by sector](image)

**Chart 7: Do your teachers always make sure everyone in the class understands the subjects?**

![Chart 7: Questionnaire results](image)
Chart 8: Do your teachers generally know their subjects well?

Chart 9: Are you satisfied with your Life Skills class contents?
It is especially on junior secondary level that respondents were not satisfied with their Life Skills class contents:

**Chart 10: Unsatisfactory responses to Life Skill class contents by sector**

![Pie chart showing unsatisfactory responses by sector]

**Chart 11: Does your school provide sport and cultural activities after school?**

![Bar chart showing responses to school activities]

Yes: 76%
No: 24%
Chart 12: Do you think your school prepares you well for your future?

![Bar chart showing 66% Yes and 34% No]

Especially girls feel that school prepares them adequately for the future:

Chart 13: Respondents indicating that school prepares them adequately for the future segregated by gender

![Pie chart showing 55% Yes for girls and 45% Yes for boys]
**Chart 14: Are there enough textbooks for every learner in your school?**

The majority of respondents indicated that there are not enough textbooks for every learner in their school.

The biggest problem with regard to shortage of textbooks is in the secondary grades:

**Chart 15: Shortage of textbooks by sector**
Chart 16: Does your school support learners to prevent them from dropping out?

The majority of learners who took part in the poll indicated that they didn’t know that they can be exempted from payment of the School Development Fund if their families could not afford to pay.

Chart 17: Do you know that you can be exempted from payment of School Development Fund if your family cannot afford to pay?
**Chart 18:** Are there tables and chairs for all learners in your class?

Where there are not enough tables and chairs, this seems to mainly affect the higher grades:

**Chart 19:** Shortage of tables and chairs by sector
Chart 20: Are there enough working toilets at your school?

Callers who felt that there aren’t enough toilets at school were evenly spread between boys and girls.

Chart 21: Is your school clean?

The proportion of girls and boys who felt that their school was not clean was evenly split.
Chart 22: In the hostel of your school, is there a bed for each learner?

It seems that in many cases, there are not enough beds for learners in the hostels.

The majority of respondents who felt that there are not enough beds are boys, this may indicate that this shortage is more common in boys hostels.

Chart 23: Shortage of hostel beds by gender
**Chart 24: In the hostel of your school, is there enough food for each learner?**

The proportion of boys and girls who felt that there was not enough food in their hostel was evenly spread.

**Chart 25: Have you ever been hit by a teacher at school?**

Corporal punishment is not allowed in schools, yet 55% of respondents reported that they have been hit by a teacher in school.

Of those who indicated that they have been hit, the lowest segment (28%) was from primary grades, while secondary grades accounted for the remainder in equal proportions.
Surprisingly, about half of these respondents (49%) who indicated that they have experienced corporal punishment in schools were girls.

Chart 27: Do you know who to report to about a teacher who has a romantic relationship with a learner?
Chart 28: Do you feel safe at your school in general?

Chart 29: Respondents regarding safety at schools segregated by gender
Chart 30: Is there a school counselor to talk about your problems at your school?

There seems to be a shortage of school counselors, as 53% of respondents indicated that they do not have a counselor to talk to about their problems.

Chart 31: The absence of counselors is most dire on primary level
Chart 32: Do you walk a long distance every day to get to your school?

Namibia is a large country with a very low population density in most parts. Therefore in some regions, schools are still very far away for some people and transportation is not provided. Plausibly, parents sometimes refuse to send their children on a several hour walk to school each day and it is hard to enforce compulsory school attendance in such a big country. Special problems occur to the few left nomad people in Namibia, for travelling Himba and San people, it is often impossible to send their children to school without giving them away to a school home, which many refuse.

As in other sectors, transportation remains an essential problem in Namibia, since the technical basics for e-schooling are not given for 99% of the people in need.

Half of respondents indicated that they have to walk a long distance to school each day, this may be subjective, however as it gives not indication of how far they have to walk. Junior Secondary learners represented the highest portion of learners who felt that they have to walk long distances to school.
3. TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND TRAINING TO SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SELECTED REGIONS TO ADVOCATE ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES THROUGH STUDY CIRCLES

In order to ensure the civic involvement of the youth of school going age, specific support was provided to assist the youth to advocate on education related issues of concern to the relevant authorities. The “Study Circle” method of participatory teaching was used in this process.

The Study Circle methodology is based on the premise that a participatory democracy must be built on continuous dialogue between people. This non-formal adult participatory education tool emphasises the development of dialogue between the participants of study circles and encourages the participants to discuss solutions and to ask questions. As the work of the Study Circles is based on the concept of equality among the participants, democracy and democratic principles are essential. As democracy depends on people’s willingness to be involved and to take responsibility, the most important aims of Study Circles are to learn how to be involved and take responsibility, participate and contribute ideas and to have the willingness and ability to influence. Within the Study Circles, the motivations for groups of people who share a common interest are to support the development of democracy, the involvement in the voluntary sector and the commitment to their community.

The following four schools in each of the two regions (Hardap and Ohangwena) were chosen for such support based on historic participation in NID programs:
Ohangwena region
Haimbili Haufiku Secondary School
Eenhana Senior Secondary School
Omuwewondjaba Combined School
Omhaanda Combined School

Hardap region
Mariental Secondary School
Empelheim Secondary School
//Orseb Secondary School, Gibeon
Groot Aub Secondary School

In each school, one Study Circle of up to ten scholars was established during visits by the NID during the month of February, when the program was being launched in these schools. IVR questionnaire content was also developed and tested jointly with learners from these schools to ensure that the design of topics is adequate and relevant. Another visit to the schools in both regions by NID’s trainers Ms. Naita Hishoono and Ms. Naomi Kisting was used to explain the study circle concept with learners, provide training on advocacy skills and discuss some issues of concern that learners would want to advocate on to their regional educational authorities through their study circles.

The training on advocacy for learners followed the following agenda:

- What is advocacy
- What advocacy is not
- Identifying an issue
- Planning the campaign
- Conducting research
- Developing an objective
- Identify resources and assets
- Co-opt allies
- Identify target audiences
- Development of clear messages and tactics for clear communication
- Presentation and negotiation skills
- Management of risks
- Advocacy campaign tools
- Compiling a timetable
- Evaluation of campaign

Participants were taught how to prepare a briefing document suggesting solutions to the problem in interaction with fellow learners, discussing this document with the principal and parents, and obtaining their support to the solution for the problem before it is taken up with the Educational Regional Director. The importance of maintaining open relationships with these was emphasized. Learners were taught that
this process can then be supported by preparing informational leaflets and self-made posters to be distributed in schools, drawing up a petition, writing letters and following up, managing relationships and using the community media if appropriate.

A training manual that was developed by the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), with NID and USAID support, *Advocacy in Action*, was used as training guide, while supplemental advocacy training material entitled *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines*, which was developed by CARE International, a global organization active in poverty reduction programs.

Study circles were requested to prepare an advocacy campaign on an issue affecting them to be evaluated during a subsequent visit to their school by the NID.

These visits to each school took place upon the conclusion of the IVR opinion poll during the week of 20th – 24th June 2011, during which schools were also briefed on the poll results.

### 3.1 Problems identified

Specific issues raised as problematic during the first visits at the eight schools in the two regions by topic were as follows:

**a) Study materials**
- Shortage of exercise books and at times learners have to buy them themselves
- Laboratory is not sufficiently equipped with materials, old chemicals
- Books in the library are few and some information offered is outdated
- There are no practical experiment conducted in labs during the normal class and learners only use it during exams
- Chemicals are outdated in the lab
- Not enough textbooks and exercise books
- Not enough material in the laboratory
- The learners share textbooks (4 learners per textbook)
- Lack of school materials, e.g. books, chairs and tables
- Not enough equipment in the laboratory
- No study materials in geography and physical science

**b) Hostel**
- Hostel beds are not enough as three students share one single bed, the school and the hostel have a capacity of 600 learners and currently accommodates +1,300 learners
- Not enough cupboards to store personal belongings in the hostel
• Shortage of water in the hostel
• Hostel food is not enough for all learners as 95% of the learners from the school are in the hostel (+- 1300 learners for a school that should accommodate 600 learners)
• Need a different diet/ food menu as hostel food is not cooked hygienically
• No geysers and heaters in the school and hostel for winter colds
• Overcrowding of learners in the hostel
• Learners contribute N$50 at the beginning of the year for hostel mattresses but the mattresses are old, learners wonder where the money goes to
• No electrical plugs in the hostel there is only one that is used for ironing and if learners are found using it for personal reasons e.g. boiling water the kettle gets repossessed by the teacher
• Hostel needs new refrigerators and new kitchen equipment since at times food served to learners is rotten
• No hostel
• There is only NBC and One Africa at the hostel we need other TV-channels

c) Toilets
• Unhygienic sanitary stations
• Lack of toilets/ sanitary facilities

d) School building and environment
• Lack of tables and chairs
• No school hall
• Lack of classrooms
• Learners need a clean environment to learn in, school grounds are dirty
• Lack of tables and chairs
• Overcrowded classrooms (50 learners per class)
• Lack of classrooms
• Lack of entertainment facilities at school
• Noise pollution during exam times, the schools proximity to shebeens is destructive
• Need proper sports ground and equipment

e) Quality of teachers and teaching methods
• Teachers at times do not use the allocated 45 minutes to teach subject as they prefer talking about their personal life during this time
Principal leads with authoritarian style, doesn’t respect students, practices favoritism, nepotism and corruption at school, principal hardly listens to learners views

Lectures need a different teaching method as the current one offered by some teachers doesn’t stimulate the minds of the learners

Teachers lack authority in teaching e.g. instead they tend to walk out of class when learners are making noise

Lack of fairness on the teachers side on the way they treat students (some student are given preference over others)

Need alternative teaching methods as at time the learners have one teacher teaching one subject e.g. English, life science, biology and all of this classes will follow each other and students remain seated in one class for 135minutes and thus after 90minutes the students hardly concentrate as they are tired

Teachers hardly do revision to make their student understand, even if the learners ask for clarification they just move on to the next topic

Teachers must use decent language when they are talking to learners

Some teachers at times use their cell phones in class whilst conducting a lesson and thus disturb the learners

Learners are at times chased out class when they didn’t correctly answer a question or received low marks in a test

Teachers manipulate learners

Teachers should use different teaching methods (one sided and boring)

Teachers need to explain in details as learners at times hardly understand

Lack of communication between learners and teachers

Learners need help on how to concentrate and study and remember lessons

At times the students doing the higher level do not get food as the allocated time of other learners interferes with theirs

\textit{f) ICT}

The school has computers however no computer teacher, so classes are not conducted anymore

Lack of ICT tools

No computer teacher

There is no technology at school i.e. computer- and physics laboratory

\textit{g) Uniform}

Parents have no money to buy school uniforms

Learners are sent back home if they don’t have the correct school uniform

\textit{h) Affordability}
• Affordability of school and hostel fees is a challenge
• Learners can’t write exams as they can not afford to pay school- and exam fees
• Learners do not know what happens to the school fees as no development reaches the school
• School fees are too high for parents to afford
• Not enough money for stationary
• Not enough money to contribute to school fees

i) Distance & transport
• Distance to the school is far even though there is a school bus it is not utilized
• Transport problems
• Learners would appreciate bicycles or a school bus for transport to and from school
• No school bus for transporting learners to and from home and school
• Gates are locked when your late, as they walk a long distance to reach school and at times they are late
• Student needs to be released at least at 10 am in the morning on long weekends-Fridays so that they can go home early as they leave far away from the school premises

j) Language
• Not enough teachers for Oshikwanyama-language
• Learners tease each other on the English-language barrier and thus intimidate other learners
• Problem with the usage of the English language
• The need of school dictionaries in English and Oshikwanyama combined

k) Corporal punishment
• Corporal punishment still practiced at school
• Corporal punishment still practiced at school(teachers use the fist to discipline learners)

l) Curriculum & Extra Curricular
• Not enough different field of studies are offered
• Sport code not offered at School (“the principal doesn’t respect sports”)
• No debate in classes
• No after-school study-time provided
• No field trips done
• No field trips
• Learners would like to re-introduce the schools newsletter
• No matrix farewell since 2007
• No science club
• No farewell parties for grade 12 (Matriculates, H/IGCSE)
• No transport for extra school activities
• There is no implementation of extra mural activities like Aids club, and youth groups etc....

m) Students discipline
• Disturbance by others students during class
• Theft at school (among learners stealing others stationary)
• Learners are bored in class, disturb lesson as they can’t concentrate

n) Food
• There is a feeding program provided by the government at school but students have to pay money in order to receive the pap, and at times they cant afford it
• Learners have to contribute N$15 for the GRN-schools feeding program, even if they don’t eat the pap the have to pay as this is said to contribute to the wages of the ladies cooking the meal, the food is provided for free by GRN but learners are made to pay
• Feeding program provided but when learners cant afford to pay they have to ask their parents to come and cook in order for them to eat

o) Other
• Not enough time to do homework as lights in the hostel are switched of at 9 pm
• Ambulance needed to take learners to hospital, as the learners representative council (LRC) have to carry sick learners on their back to take them to the hospital
• Public telephones are not working at times and learners are not allowed to come with cell phones to school, thus they cant reach parents in times of need
• Learners not allowed to leave school premises to buy needful things during the week
• Students clean the school premises without proper cleaning equipment
• Learners at times need to clean the school whilst they ought to be in a class
• Learners have lots of responsibilities at home and thus they hardly have time to study
• Learners have to leave their books at school as they do not have proper school bags to protect their stationary from rainy weather
• Rain water/mud, lakes/floods at times tend to block the path to school and thus the school uniform gets soaked
### 3.2 Results achieved

After having received advocacy training and assistance on what they could do about these problems, learners reported back as follows during the last visit to the schools:

**a) Ohangwena region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hambili Haufiku Secondary School</th>
<th>Rauna Dumeni (18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I went to address the issue of sharing beds in the hostel. I spoke to the hostel superintendent and he promised to take up the issue with the Education Ministry. A week later sufficient beds were then delivered to our hostel. From 80% of the students that had to share beds now only 20% have to share. The learners that still have to share beds are the ones that don’t have a mattress because only very young learners received mattresses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Erastus Haimbodi (18) | I followed up on the issue of insufficient textbooks with our Physics teacher. The teacher promised to speak to the principal. I haven’t received feedback so far. |

We learners also wrote a letter to the principal that our computer lab needs computers however we didn’t receive any feedback yet. Please also not that 90% of the learners are scared of the principal since when approached by students shouts them down, shouting “what do you want” and thus acts very scary. As a learner once feels discouraged to address issues with him and thus problems are ignored. Thus his laws of communication are contradictory.

| Loide Hamukwaya (17) | The Learners Representative Council, LRC took up the issue of jerseys with the superintendent of the hostel. The principal used to reprimand students who are wearing the “wrong” school jersey. The superintendent of the hostel then explained to the principal that some students couldn’t afford to buy “proper” school uniform due to financial constraints from the family. After that talk the principal stopped that practice of asking learners to take out their jersey and throwing it on the floor as well as the practice of reprimanding learners for wearing the “wrong jersey”.

The LRC also intervened with the hostel superintendent
regarding unhygienic food conditions. Since then the quality and hygiene of food preparation has improved and fewer learners get diarrhea.

Petrus Hatupopi (17)
We informed the principal that the school lacks chairs and tables. The principal then ordered new tables and chairs and they just arrived last week. We even received more tables and chairs then what we can make use of at present.

Selma Hangula (19)
Grade 12 learners didn’t have a farewell functions since 2006. We took up the issue with Mrs. Shivute who is the school rep for entertainment. After we advocated and clearly highlighted what it means to the learners she approved that the grade 12 can have farewell functions at our school again.

Elifas Matheus (19)
I spoke to the hostel superintendent about the unhygienic conditions of the hostel sewage system. So far I haven’t received any feedback.

Suggestions to the Ministry from the learners at HHSS:
• the MoE should talk to the school management to demand to stop abusing their powers
• the school is in dire need of a suggestion box, this box should be emptied every Friday by a representative of the Education Directorate, this process should be like the election process, the suggestions should then be implemented together with the directorate the school management and the LRC
• cellphones should be allowed in the hostel again as this is our only means to contact our families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eenhana Senior Secondary School</th>
<th>Rauha Jason (18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The issue of exercise books has been solved since everyone in grade 12 has now enough exercise books.</td>
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</table>

Ndlimeke Kantondokwa (19)
The grade 12 advocated being able to go on field trips. Now the school has organized for us during August school holiday to travel throughout Namibia. Our parents have to pay only N$550,- per child for one week.
Learners also asked for a well-equipped science lab to be built in the school. Up to date we are still waiting for feedback. We also still have to pay for the school porridge that is actually subsidized by the GRN. We are also still waiting for our school to be build a hostel.

**Helvi Nghihafa (18)**
Learners advocated to have a farewell function for the grade 12. The school management has approved.

**Lovisa Ndove (18)**
Our school has received desks and chairs which are now sufficient for each learner. We also complained that we would like to have a school tie with our uniform. The school now sells ties for N$50, not many students can afford that though.

**Hendrina Petrus (17)**
After NID gave us the Advocacy session we advocated for sports lessons. We succeeded since our school now teaches Physical Education, PE, like football, netball, volleyball and basketball.

**Hileni Nghifikepunye (18)**
The level of communication between the learners and the teachers has really improved in our school since last May, since NID visited us. In the past we used to fight and argue a lot with our teachers while trying to resolve issues. Now we can discuss issues peacefully with our teachers.

**Samuel Hamutenya (18)**
We advocated for a suggestion box in our school. This request has been granted. Now learners throw their complaints in the suggestion box. For example the subject Life skills wasn’t taught but now it’s taught in our school. The suggestion box is emptied every Friday and the recommendations are followed up and taken serious. This has improved the communication between learners and teachers and the whole school tremendously.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Omutwewondjaba Combined School</strong></th>
<th><strong>Varde Paulus (18)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I spoke to the principal about the lack of summary on the topic of the day by teachers. He must have discussed it with the teachers since they now summarize the subject at the end of the class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Helena Kavela (23)**
Last month we started an English Club. This club wants to help learners with improving their vocabulary and general English language skills; we read together and assist each other with our homework. So far 60 learners from our school joined the club.

**Andreas Timotheus (17)**
Since I spoke to the principal about the lack of text books in entrepreneurship we have now all received the text books.

**Josef Lukas (18)**
We went to the LRC to discuss that the school has no computer, the LRC then spoke to the principal and now the school has a computer. However it is still not used by the learners.

**Ismael Martin (16)**
We discussed with the LRC to clean the school yard. Now after school classes the whole school is involved in cleaning the yard.

**Nghixulifua Elia (18)**
We followed up with the principal when we would receive our text books. Now most grade 12 students have them and don’t have to share text books anymore.

**David Amiya (16)**
I spoke to the LRC about the dirty environment in our school. Now every Friday the learners are all cleaning the school yard.

**Hamalwa Samuel (17)**
Corporal punishment is still practiced in our school even though we spoke to the LRC. The principal would use his fist to discipline learners.

**David Shilongo (17)**
We spoke to our teachers about the lack of transport to school tournaments. The school now provides learners with transport to the school.

**Omhaanda Combined School**

Laimi Shindume (16) and Cecilia Muma (17)
Most of us learners who took part in the Advocacy session of NID spoke to our parents to allow us time off work to be able to do our homework. Now our parents give us a chance to study. We also received the Kwanyama text books we had requested.

*Upon asking the learners from other schools why the Omhaanda Combined School did so little advocating for their*
issues and none in the school the learners from Eenhana Senior Secondary School informed that the learners are probably afraid of authority and thus still afraid to address their needs with the school.

b) Hardap region


During the advocacy workshop conducted with these study circles, strategies were discussed to jointly tackle problems instead of each Study Circle going their own way. As two of their members, Giovanni Brits from Mariental Senior Secondary School and Chalet Bampton from //Oaseb Senior Secondary School, were members of the Children Parliament, they were requested to table problematic issues directly during the next session of the Children’s Parliament. Giovanni Brits as the Speaker of the Children’s Parliament was also requested to address some of the problems in his presentation he gave during the national conference on education that was held in the week of the 27\textsuperscript{th} June to 1\textsuperscript{st} July 2011.

The Study Circles of these three schools discussed the following problems to be addressed by Giovanni and Chalet as Members of the Children’s Parliament:

1. Teenage pregnancies: Learners are aware about learners who are in romantic relationships with the teachers but they don’t know how to address it.

   Proposed solution: Teachers who impregnate learners should be permanently suspended.

2. Sheebeens: There is nothing that the learners can keep themselves busy with after school or at weekends. Therefore they are turning to the shebeens and night clubs.

   Proposed solution: The age restriction for attending a shebeen should be looked into because there are learners older than the restricted age of 18 who by virtue of the age are free to visit a shebeen although they are schoolgoing. All learners should be provided with identity cards provided by the school which should carry daily.

3. Hygiene: Learners felt that their schools are dirty and unhygienic.
Proposed solution: A clean-up campaign involving the learners of all local schools should be conducted.

Giovanni, in his capacity as Speaker of the Children’s Parliament, held meetings with the Mayor of Mariental, Alex Kamburute, the CEO, Paul Nghiwirepo, the Governor of the Hardap region, Hon. Hanse-Himarwa and the Regional Educational Officer, Mr. S. Scholtz. His meetings were two-fold: To report back on the Children’s Parliament session where he was elected as Speaker for the next 3 years and to discuss the abovementioned problems encountered in schools. The clean-up campaign was proposed as a first step to involve the community and the learners.

Subsequently, one of the study circle members was tasked to visit business people for financial support. Those who were approached by then responded positively.

It was also decided by the Study Circles that the possibility of establishing a Junior Town Council for Mariental, that could assume the responsibility for ongoing programs for the youth, should be investigated. Study Circles were advised by the Mariental Town Council to prepare a proposal and budget for submission before the next Council meeting. Meetings with the different school principals were initiated, while the Study Circles were invited by the Regional Council to submit a detailed proposal with a small budget for all of their planned activities before the next meeting for consideration.

### 4. PRIZEWINNERS

In order to provide an incentive for people to participate, a total of nine vouchers for schoolbooks were given as prizes to nine callers selected randomly. The winners were:

Henio Kihupo (13)
Auas Primary School, Katutura

Kamunue Johannes (23)
Namcol

Petronella Garises (11)
Kilimanjaro Primary School

Udochi Nwagbaso (16)
DHPS

Michelle Kambirongo (19)
Acacia SSS
5. CONCLUSION

This has been the second project in Namibia using the IVR methodology. The involvement of Mobipay, a local service provider, to whom technical assistance has been provided by a foreign service provider, Text to Change, has contributed significantly to eliminating some of the technical hiccups that had been experienced during the first survey in 2009. The IVR methodology can be used fruitfully in future NID projects and surveys. It has, however, been realised that surveys of this nature need to be supported by extensive promotional activity, as participation got underway slowly and was less than during the 2009 poll.

The timing of the poll was excellent in that results could be presented at the national conference on education in the last week of June 2011.
NID-personnel involved in the various programs have been performing their respective tasks well. The working relationship between the NID and UNICEF has been excellent throughout. I wish to especially thank Ms. Kana Ohara and her colleagues dealing with the NID for their professional assistance, advice and professional working relationship at all times. We are looking forward to the continued fruitful cooperation between UNICEF and the NID.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the entire NID staff for the conscientious and diligent way in which they perform their respective tasks, and the NID’s Board of Directors for their support.

Theunis Keulder  
-Executive Director-
Annex A

Listen Loud Press Ad and Flyer
Annex B

Announcement of results