School Sports for Development Programme launched

05 February 2016; HARDAP - The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service, Sportstec and UNICEF have launched a School Sports for Development programme, aimed at reinvigorating and strengthening the Physical Education (PE) curriculum and the School Sports Programme. Sports equipment and attire for netball, volleyball, rugby, cricket, football and PE activities, were presented to the 11 participating pilot schools during the launch event.

The delivery of PE and school sports in schools will be strengthened using the Sports for Development approach, which entails using the vehicle of sport to promote healthy life styles through dissemination of critical messages on HIV prevention, dangers of unsafe sex, teenage pregnancy and violence, as well as instilling leadership skills. This will help move sports from the margins of school activities, where it is relegated because of being a non-examinable subject.

“The launch of this programme is an opportunity to deliver quality education which is optimal and holistic in giving children the skills they need to succeed in Namibia and beyond,” said Hon. Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, Minister of Education, Arts and Culture. “Literacy and numeracy are part of that, but confidence, discipline, and determination as built up through sport, are equally important.”

Statistics indicate numerous social and economic ills faced by young people in Namibia, most of which hamper their positive and successful transition to adult life. More than 25% of children and young people live in poverty, while alcohol and drug abuse and unemployment also impinge on young people’s development. The Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Namibia 2013, also highlights that less than 50% of girls complete grade 12.

“The critical life lessons which children can learn while playing sport, such as teamwork, the satisfaction of achieving a goal, time management, discipline, responsibility and accountability are invaluable for their personal growth and the development of their communities,” said Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service, Hon. Agnes Tjongarero.

The School Sports for Development programme in Namibia is building on from the successful implementation of the Galz and Goals programme, a Sports for Development Programme for adolescent girls implemented by the Namibia Football Association with the support of UNICEF, GIZ and SCORE.

Since 2008 significant achievements have been made in instilling knowledge and skills among Namibia’s young girls, which have led to positive behaviour with regards to minimization of HIV, teen pregnancies and alcohol and drug abuse.
“Sport is an important instrument through which UNICEF’s mandate to promote the rights of children, is fulfilled,” said UNICEF Representative, Micaela Marques de Sousa. “It is an important catalyst to drive and enhance change for children through the breaking of barriers, promotion of participation, altering of attitudes and including the excluded.”

The successful roll out of the School Sports for Development programme will soon see sport become more accessible in a safe and inclusive manner throughout Namibia’s schools.

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