

NAMIBIA

Parental Participation in the Child Education: A pilot study at Etunda Combined School in Omusati Region

Martha Amutenya, Simeon Kavila, and Evaristus Modestus.

1. Introduction

“Education will be seriously reformed only after we move it from a matter of “importance” to a matter of “Life and Death” for both society and the individuals themselves” Martin Haberman

According to the Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child article 18, “Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child.” The responsibility vested in parents and other primary caregivers is linked to the requirement that they act in children’s best interest as first educators in the home set up. The earlier in a child’s educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects. Parent’s participation is the ingredient that makes the difference in the education of the child. By meaning child education in this project it regards the participation of parents in the child education both at school and home.

Etunda Combined School is a rural school, situated 56 Km West of Outapi (Regional Capital city of Omusati Region). The school is located in a formal disadvantaged and marginalized community of (Ovawambo, Ovatwe, Ovandongona, Ovahimba and Ovadhimba tribes). Before Namibian independence (21 March 1990), there has been no schools at the surrounding Etunda community. This has rendered the parents not to see the value of education by not being involved in the child’s education at home or participate in the learning at school. Their live hood depends on subsistence farming activities such as Crop and Livestock farming.

Over the years, Regional Internal School Evaluation (RISE), results analysis and Principal Trimester Report had revealed a poor performance, which is attributed to

non-parental involvement. RISE is a Regional program designed to assist schools in holistically evaluates the implementation of both Curricular and extra activities in the school, with the view to assist schools to be effective the development and improvement plans. This pilot project meant to increase parents' involvement in the child education in order to improve the school performance.

2. Frame of Reference

In 1990, Namibia ratified the convention on the Rights of the Child where the roles and responsibilities of parents on the Child's Rights are stipulated. The Supreme Law of Namibia (Namibian Constitution article 15 sub article 1 states that "Children shall have the right from birth to subject to legislation enacted in the best interest s of children, as far as possible the right to know and be cared for by their parents". This is in line with CRCs' provision, protection and participation of the child in the Namibian school education system. While article 20 sub article 2 states that " Primary education shall be compulsory and the state shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining state schools at which primary education shall be provided free of charge".

This resulted in the introduction of Universal Education for general education grades (0-12) in 2012. The Education Act 16 of 2001 section 16 (sub- section 1) states that "There is, for every state school, established a school board to administer the affairs and promote the development of the school and learners of the school". According to Section 18 (sub section 2) of Education Act made the provision that school parents must constitute the majority of members of a school board to be in charge of the school education affairs. This has greatly empowered the Namibian parents to participate in the child Education and own the school. In line with the latter, an Implementation handbook on the school board responsibilities had been developed with the aim of guiding parents in the child education.

Despite all the legal frameworks ratified and enacted by the Namibian government, particularly in schools the disciplinary cases, monitoring of children work, school developmental plans are still done at school with no parents' participation. This project will be piloted at Etunda Combined School and intends to enhance parental participation in the child education.

3. Purpose

The aim to pilot this project of change is to educate parents on Child Rights Conventions (CRCs) in order to actively participate in their children's education and to create CRCs awareness in the Etunda Community (parents, civic leaders etc). The purpose of this project is also to create good relations between teachers, parents and learners at schools. Moreover, in the long term perspective it will also improve learners' performance. What we would like to highlight is the need for a change on these three topics:

- Parents meetings – from problem oriented and initiated by School management to parents initiated/ driven meetings (School board).
- Parents School visit (individual) – today only by school invitations - tomorrow frequent voluntary parents school visits on academic & social progress of the child.
- School development plans- today only done by Staff members - tomorrow *school* development plan to be a joint exercise including parents, staff members and learners.

Target groups and Stakeholders

The main target groups are the parents: The stakeholders are divided into three groups: *Stakeholders 1:* School management, Learners Representative Council (LRC) & Civic Leaders (Councilors, Headman, Religious Leaders).

Stakeholders 2: Inspector of Education, Chief Inspector & Regional Director of Education.

Stakeholders 3: Ministry of Gender, Child Abuse protection, Ministry of Health & School Counsellors. See APPEDICES 2, Regional CRC Planning.

4. Methodologies (Activities)

Team Namibia upon finishing phase 1 & 2 in Sweden carried an awareness campaign on the following stakeholders:

1. October 2014, Acting Director was given an overview on the CRC and the objectives of the program plus the Convention. The purpose for this activity is for him to understand and also to get support in carrying out the implementation of the program. Acting Director appreciated the program and gave us the permission to go on as planned for the program.
2. October 2014, the next stakeholders visited were the Inspector of Onesi Circuit where Etunda Combined School is situated as a piloting school project and the school principal.
3. October 2014, Furthermore, Team Namibia visited the school project to sensitize school Principal & management, teachers, school board members and learners. They accepted the objectives of the program and indicated their willingness towards the program.
4. November 2014, the other meeting was conducted with traditional leaders, church leaders to get support from them as they are the most custodian of this project to influence and mobilise other stakeholders. On the same day Team Namibia carried an interview with some school board members, some teachers, parents and learners in order to see their understanding when it comes to CRC. This gave us the way to plan for the training as was planned and also this interview was meant to find out the importance of parental participation in the education of their children.



Interview Session taking place

5. February 2015, Next activity Team Namibia carried out was to conduct a training workshop for 60 parents which presented 50% of parents who are having children at Etunda Combined School. Apart from the principal of Etunda Combined School, the team have included the principal of Onawa S.S and Onesi S.S as the team want these schools to link, in promotion and advancing the Child rights in their communities plus to sustain CRC program.

During the training, participants were given an overview of the program, with the emphasis on the 3Ps (Provision, Protection & Participation). Furthermore, the team divided the participants (parents) in groups of 10 in order to give scenarios of a picture of a child who lacks provision, protection and participation within Etunda school community. The aim of this activity was for the facilitators to see if parents understand the 3Ps as they were eluded during the overview session. When parents gave their feedback, they demonstrated good understanding of the 3Ps, and were free to participate in discussions openly.

Discussions after each presentation were done by parents and facilitators. On the same training, parents were given information regarding children's rights and grants (money from government to OVCs & Vulnerable children) which was incorporated

with the Ministry of Gender. They were also informed about where to report cases of abuse and misuse of government grants for children. Parents were however asking questions as well as giving their views regarding the abuse of children in their communities.

Moreover during this training, parents were given time to discuss in their groups and later to present on barriers to parental involvement in the education of a child. The following are some of the points raised by the parents:

1. Language and cultural difference between parents and teachers.
2. Parents think they have nothing to contribute- they don't understand the value of education towards their children.
3. Long distance to the school- sometimes they are old.
4. Socio- economic problems- poverty etc



CRC Change Agents introducing 3Ps to the Parents and carrying questionnaire session with members of the clubs



Figure: Photos from the Training of Parents

5. CRC project implementation at Etunda Combined School

5.1 Parents meeting at school.

Trained Parents held a briefing meeting for those parents who did not attend the training. The briefing was successful to an extent that a decision was taken to establish CRC clubs in the school as follows.

- **Cuca shop Club:** This club is focussed on preventing and protecting learners from being abused in selling (Child Labour) and consuming alcohol. The club is made up of five parents who are tasked to educate other parents, learners and business community (Cuca Shop owners) against child abuse.
- **Academic Club:** This club is focussed on the learners academic performance at various levels (Primary and Junior Secondary phases). The club is made up of parents, teachers, learners and School Board members. This club established a program to carry out regular school visits to motivate teachers and learners to work hard. It also act as a forum to identify issues affecting learners and communicate them to the relevant authorities such as Principal, Inspector of Education and Directors. The club also give support (school feeding) and guidance to Child Headed Families.
- **Late coming Club:** This club is focussed on controlling the late coming of both teachers and learners to school. This club is made up of parents and teachers and report to the Principal and School Board committee.
- **School Safety Club:** This club is made up of parents and focused on maintenance of the school infrastructure and properties. This club had managed to solicit funds towards erecting a new school fence.

The CRC clubs steered the implementation of Etunda CS “CRC” project.

5.2 Change Agents’ Support Visits

Several support visits were carried out by Change Agents in order to facilitate and sustain the change project in the school as indicated below:

1st visit: March 2015, was carried out by Mr. Evaristus Modestus to make a follow up on the contacted workshop and give guidance on the implementation of workshop outcome.

2nd Visit: April 2015, was done by Mr. Simeon Kavila to observe the implementation and provide assistance to the CRC clubs (Parents).

3rd Visit: July 2015, was carried out by Ms. Martha Amutenya and Simeon Kavila to observe the progress and provide further guidance to the parents.

4th Visit: September 2015, was carried out by the Country Mentor – Ms. Lena Andersson accompanied by Change Agents, Senior Education Officers, Inspector of Education and the two networking schools (Onawa SS and Onesi SS). The purpose of

the Mentor's visit was to assess CRC implementation and provide assistance to education stakeholders where necessary. In the same visit more CRC information was disseminated by the mentor.

5th Visit: January 2016, was carried out by Change Agents in order to assess the impact of CRC project implementation with reference to academic performance of learners at Etunda CS. It was established through academic result analyses that the parental involvement in the Child education had greatly improved the school academic performance from 44% (2014) to 75% (2015). See inseted school academic performance for 2015 academic year.



Mentor's Visit

SUBJECT	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	TOTAL	A-D %
Oshindonga	0	3	3	9	5	0	0	0	20	75.0
English	0	0	1	2	7	9	1	0	20	15.0
Mathematics	3	5	4	5	3	0	0	0	20	85.0
Agriculture	0	4	3	5	1	0	0	0	13	92.3
Accounting	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	7	71.4
Geography	0	4	6	8	2	0	0	0	20	90.0
Enterpreneurship	1	2	5	10	1	1	0	0	20	90.0
History	2	3	6	7	2	0	0	0	20	90.0
Life science	0	3	7	8	2	0	0	0	20	90.0
Physcal science	0	2	6	10	1	1	0	0	20	90.0

6th Visit: February 2016, was carried out by the Honourable Ester Anna Nghipondoka:- Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Culture. The Deputy Minister; s vist was prompted by school drastic academic improvement of 2015 academic year as indicated in the table above. The Deputy Minister also wanted to establish from the project target groups (Parents, Teachers, Learners and School Management members) as to how the Change project has assisted the school to improve the academic results. She also wanted to find out as to what exactly transpired at the school and how can this project be expanded to benefit other schools in Namibia. Finnally, she gave a motivational message to all education stakeholders at gathering and encourage them to do more; so that Etunda CS can become a CRC model school.



Deputy Minister photos



Deputy Minister: Hon. Ester Anna Nghipondoka's (centre) visit to Etunda CS in February 2016

6. Conclusion

We wish to conclude that parental involvement in the child education is crucial in ensuring the child's rights through provision, protection and participation, and is proven that this will eventually enhance the child;s academic performance at school.

7. Way Forward

Since we are the last batch in the tender of the programme we are looking ahead and together with the other Namibian Change Agents, we are determined to expand and sustain CRC activities in Namibia through the following activities:

Networking

Local Network and National Network: This is one area where Change Agents would work together, strengthen communication to assist each other in ensuring successes of the existing projects within the various regions of the country through:

1. deliberating on issues affecting CRC in Namibia.
2. monitoring and evaluate completed and ongoing projects.
3. organizing CRC related events such as workshops, conferences, and competitions.

Continental Network: The Change Agents believe that it is important to always refresh their knowledge and understanding on CRC related issues. As such networking with other African Change Agents is important, hence the need to bring together all other African Change Agents. This platform will enable Namibian Change Agents to learn from the success stories of other CRC participating countries in order to improve in such areas.

International Network: CRC is a Global issue, and there are countries who have successfully implemented the concept. We therefore have a strong desire to go beyond the shores of Africa by way of bringing together Change Agents and mentors to Namibia to share experiences and their success stories.

8. List of references

- Country's State Reports
- CRC Implementation handbook
- Batch 21 participants consultations on their own Countries practices
- Results analysis and 15 Days statistics
- Parents meeting minutes
- MDGF document
- Grants and school policies
- Education Act
- The Constitution
- CRC Ratification
- State Reports'

Appendix 1

OUTCOME		Time
A holistic understanding and implementation of CRC at Etunda Combined School is created.		
1.1 OUTPUT		Time
1. Awareness of CRC is raised among the parents, teachers, learners and civic leaders at Etunda Combined School.		
1.1.a Activity	Indicator	
<p>Give feedback to the Regional Director and explain the importance of project change in CRC.</p> <p>Convene Program Quality Assurance meeting (PQA) members to introduce the pilot project and sensitize them about CRC.</p> <p>Briefing the Inspector and Etunda Combined School Principal on the CRC change project implementation plan.</p> <p>Meeting with parents, School Management (principal, Head of department, senior teachers), teachers, LRCs and Civic leaders to introduce them to the project.</p>	<p>Permission is granted to carry out the project at school.</p> <p>PQA members showed sense of understanding and support for the project</p> <p>Support given to carry out the project at school.</p> <p>Participants showed a sense of belonging and cooperation in the change project</p>	November 2014
1.2 OUTPUT		
Awareness is raised among team 21 about the current situation on parental involvement at Etunda Combined School		
1.2.a Activity		
<p>Interviewing 6 parents with more than one child at the school.</p> <p>Handing out questionnaires to 50% of parents to collect adequate data on parental involvement to prepare for the parents workshop.</p> <p>Collection of statistical data on parental participation in the child education.</p> <p>Observation of practical application of CRC at the School</p>	<p>Parents shared their experiences.</p> <p>50 % of parents responded to the questionnaire.</p> <p>The data collected is easy to access from the school.</p> <p>Team 21 is welcome to make observations.</p> <p>Availability of completed observation forms/ tools.</p>	January 2015

1.3 OUTPUT		
Parents participate in child's Education at Etunda Combined School, especially in parents initiated/ driven meetings and frequent voluntary parents School visits on academic & social progress of the child		
1.3.a Activity	Indicator	
1st workshop (to parents and other stakeholders, LRC, School management and Civic leaders) on the importance of CRC and to explain the responsibilities of parents and other stakeholders.	Workshop attendance is high. A report is to be written.	February 2015
1.3.b Activity		
2nd: Workshop for parents on implementation and establishment of School CRC clubs and associations (consist of parents, teachers and learners) to sustain the project at school.	Parents show interest, being active and participate in the workshop.	March 2015
1.4 OUTPUT		
School development plan is a joint exercise including parents.		
1.4.a Activity	Indicator	
Hold a follow up meeting on the plan of action and programs for clubs and associations.	Meeting attendance is high and parents show that they would like to take action and responsibility.	March 2015
1.4b Activity	Monitoring	
Hold monitoring & evaluation meetings on project activities focusing on parents' participation through clubs and association as per plan of action and programs.	Meeting attendance and M &E report	
1.4c Activity	Indicator	
Thanks giving ceremony (awards and prizes) for parents' participation in the child education at Etunda C. School.	Awards and prizes are appreciated by the parents.	
Identification of change agents at school level for CRC sustainability.	Identified change agents feel proud.	
Refresher workshop for the parents with the mentor to consolidate CRC activities at the school.	The mentor understands the change taken place at Etunda Combined School.	
Create networking between change agents at Regional and school level.	Network plan of action and programs (meetings, workshops) is asked for.	

Henry Ford said “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. But working together is a success”.

CRC Activity	Target Group	Timing	Resources	Facilitation	Progress
Meeting 8H30-11H50 12H30-14H30	Inspector of Education(Onesi Circuit), School Principal, Staff members and School Board members (parents)	22 October 2014 22 October 2014	Transport	Batch 21 Batch 21 & Circuit Inspector	Done Done
Meeting 14H00	Top management (Director, Deputy Director and Chief Inspector).	28 October 2014	Transport, Computer and overhead projector	Batch 21	Done
Meeting 9H00	Regional Management Members	03 November 2014	Copies	Batch 21	Done
Meeting 9h00, 11h00 & 14h00	Councilor, Headman, and school learners	12 November 2014	Transport	Batch 21 and School Principal	Done
Meeting 10h00	Parents for Etunda School	19 January 2015	Transport	Batch 21	Done
Questionnaires & Interviews	Parents	30 January 2015	Transport	Batch 21	Done
Workshop 1	Parents	17- 19 February 2015	Transport for Facilitator, Meals for parents and stationeries.	Batch 21, Ministry of Gender representative, Councilor, and head man.	Done

Appendix 2

REGIONAL CRC PLANNING 2016 OMUSATI REGIONS



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

<i>TIME</i>	<i>Etunda C School Parents workshop on the implementation & awareness of the Child Rights Convention</i>	<i>FACILITATOR</i>
17-19 Feb. 2016		
08:30- 09:20	1. National Anthem & Inspirational Song 2. Prayer	Martha Amutenya (CRC Change Agent)
9:20- 10:00	1.Welcoming & Opening Remarks 2.Introduction of the participants and presenters	Evaristus Modestus (CRC Change Agent)
10:00- 10:30	Analysis of the objectives of the CRC programme and for the workshop	Kavila Simeon (CRC Change Agent)
11:00- 13:00	Presentation on 3Ps & discussions	All Facilitators
14:30-15:00	Groups Activity: Provision	All Participants
15:00-16:00	Presentation on Child's Rights & Protection	Ministry of Gender
WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2015		
08:30- 9:00	Recap for Day 1	Martha Amutenya
9:00- 10:30	Discussions & Presentations on barriers to Parental involvement in Education of a Child	Parents & Facilitators
11:00- 13:00	Children's needs and how to use the support granted	Ministry of Gender
14:30-16:00	Group Activity: Protection & Participation	Kavila Simeon
THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2015		
08:30-09:00	Recap of Day 2	Martha Amutenya
08:30-10:00	Formation of CRC Clubs	Facilitators & Ministry
10:00-12:00	Summing up & way forwards	ALL