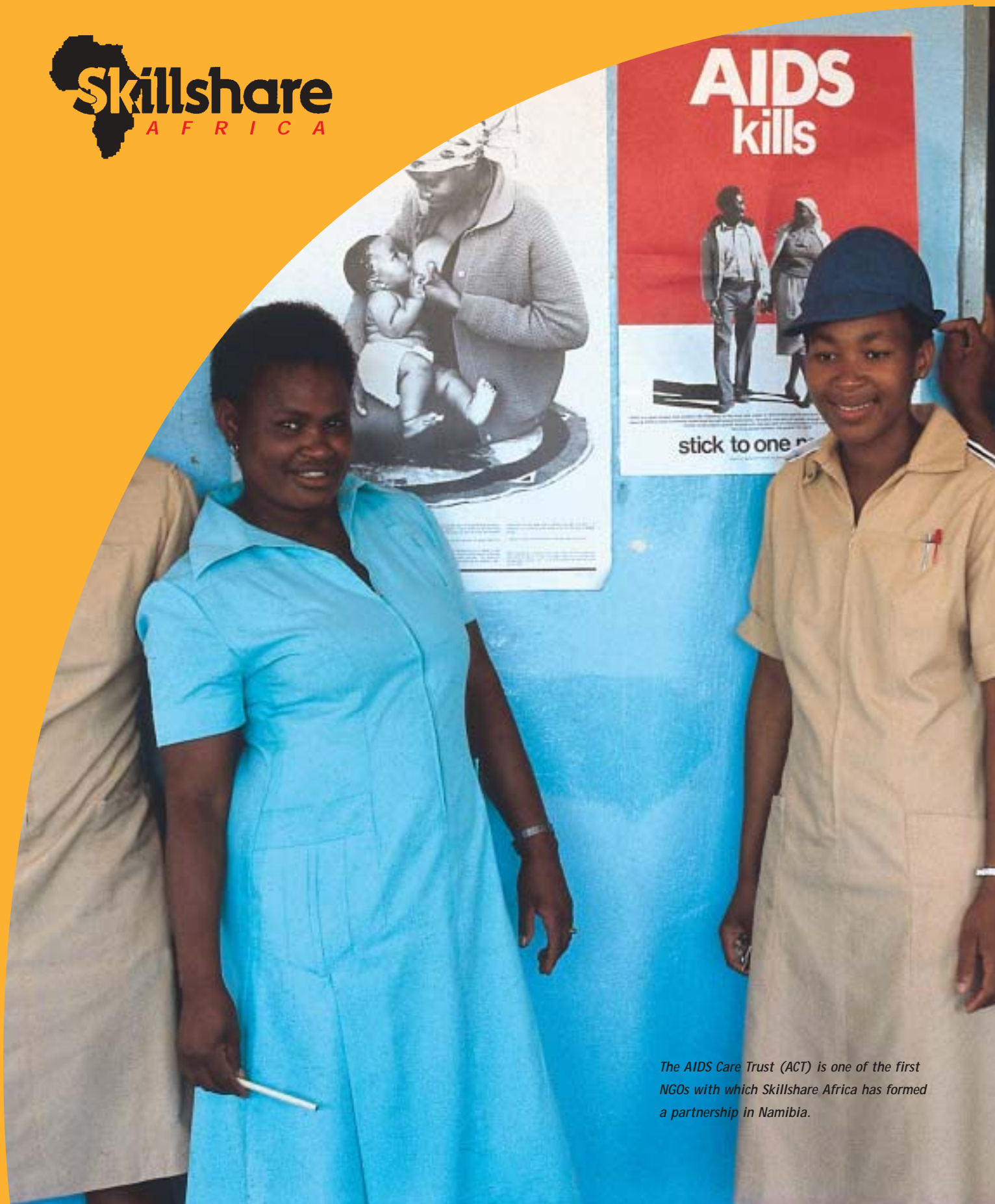


Skillshare Africa's programme in southern Africa

Namibia Country Plan 1999-2004



The AIDS Care Trust (ACT) is one of the first NGOs with which Skillshare Africa has formed a partnership in Namibia.

Statement of purpose: Skillshare Africa works for sustainable development in partnership with the people and communities of southern Africa. We do this by sharing and developing skills, facilitating organisational effectiveness, and supporting organisational growth.

Values

We have identified overall values which will guide our work. Skillshare Africa:

- recognises the right of people and communities to determine and develop their own future.
- is committed to organisational and individual development.
- believes working in partnership is central to effective economic and social development.

Strategic objectives

We have identified five key strategic objectives:

- to assist the reduction of poverty, improve living conditions and create long-term sustainable livelihoods through support for the development process both regionally and in each country where Skillshare Africa operates.
- to develop broad-based partnerships with organisations in southern Africa, working jointly with them to identify their needs in relation to skills and organisational development.
- to identify varied and innovative ways in which the needs of partner organisations can be met within the context of the evolving needs of the region, drawing on and learning from examples of good programme practice.
- to widen understanding and awareness of the importance of international development work through the building of a broader constituency.
- to develop and diversify our resource base, in terms of organisational, human and financial resources, leading to an enhancement of our activities.

Skillshare Africa has developed a new Corporate Strategy setting out our statement of purpose, values and strategic objectives for the five-year period 1999-2004.

At the same time, individual Country Plans are being developed for Skillshare Africa's programmes in each of the countries we work with in southern Africa.

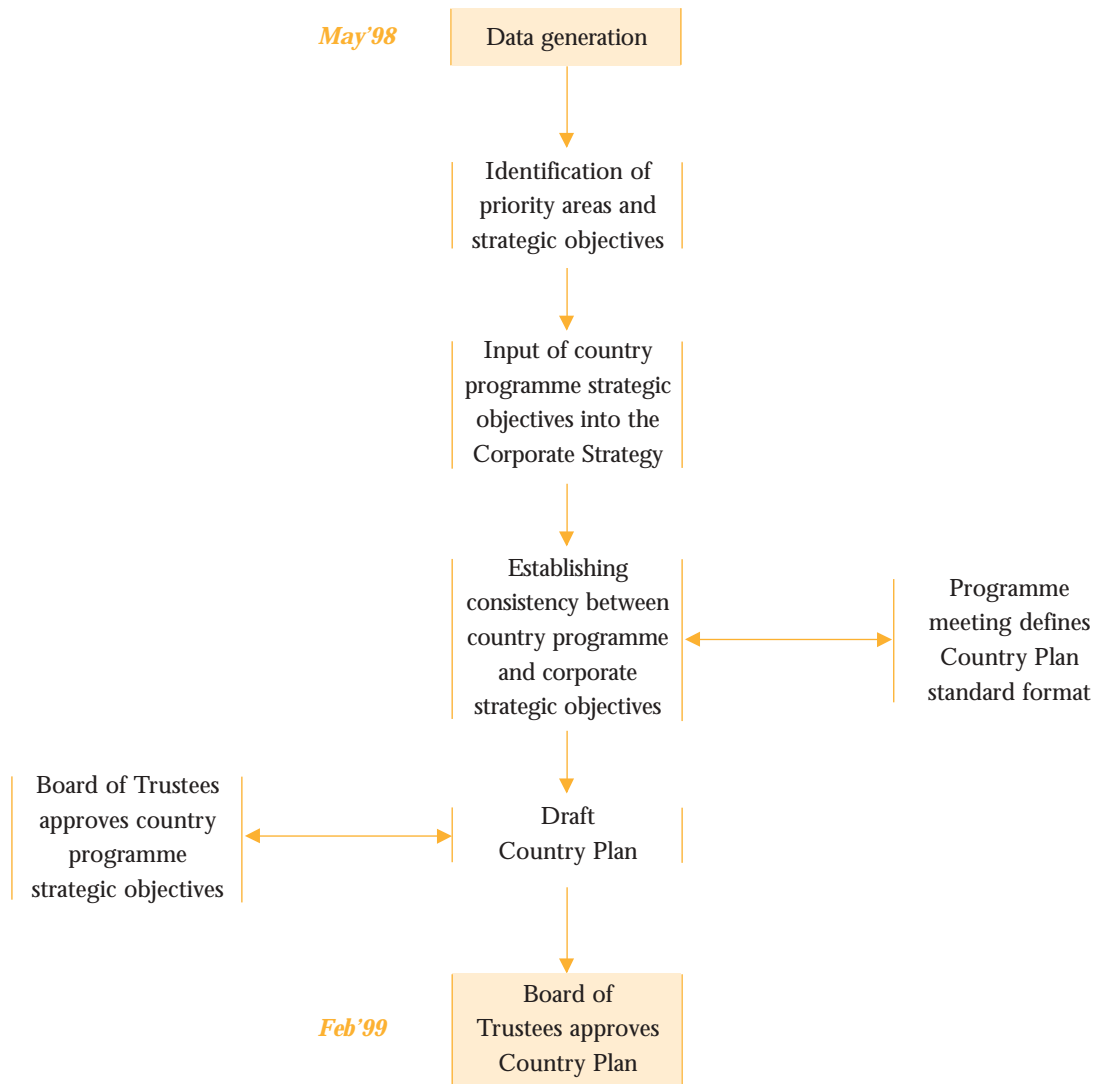
These plans interpret our broader corporate objectives as more specific programme strategic objectives that identify the contribution we will be making in those countries.

Each plan also puts the particular development needs of that country in context, as well as giving background information to Skillshare Africa's involvement.

The development of the new Country Plans has been a process of review and consultation involving the participation of people connected to Skillshare Africa both internally and externally in each country. Participants have included Skillshare Africa's Country Office staff, Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) members drawn from the local community, programme partners and serving development workers.



Namibia Country Plan Development Process



Country context

The dimension of human development

According to the United Nations Development Programme (Human Development Report 1997), Namibia ranks 79th out of 174 countries in terms of per capita gross domestic product (GDP), qualifying as a 'middle-income' country. However, Namibia performs much worse in the Human Development Index (HDI) ratings, components of which are life expectancy, adult literacy, access to primary health care, education and water, and household income. Severe regional inequalities in Namibia exist in the social economy, with the Khomas and Ohangwena regions having the highest and lowest per capita incomes of NS 11,359 and NS 1,070 respectively.

Khomas region, and especially the nation's capital Windhoek, boasts superior education, health and social indicators. Life expectancy at birth is 67.5 years, considerably higher than the national average of 61 years. This is partly a result of current and past regional health expenditure and, overall, reflects a high concentration of finance, services and human resources.

The most populous regions are Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Okavango and especially Otjikoto, Omusati, Oshana and Ohangwena in the northern part of Namibia, near the Angolan border. Karas and Hardap in the south and Kunene in the northwest are the least populous regions, and the most underdeveloped in terms of services and human resources.

Windhoek has become a magnet for rural-urban migration, with an annual population growth rate of 5.4%. In a recent study of popular perceptions of social delivery in Windhoek, respondents put housing as the number one development priority.

Currently, Namibia has a housing backlog of some 50,000 units. Many migrants form squatter settlements on the periphery of Windhoek or move into already desperately overcrowded houses with friends or relatives. Class/ethnic zoning characterises all urban centres including Windhoek, where the city council made a decision to demolish all *Katutura* (former 'black location') squatter settlements before December 1998.

Although the imbalance in regional development can be largely attributed to the former colonial administration's policy of ethnic fragmentation, regional spending patterns still favour relatively better developed areas, with the poorest regions trailing far behind in terms of human development. Compounded by drought, the rate of internal migration is set to accelerate in the future, forming zones of considerably lower development levels within the otherwise most developed regions.

Differences in human development of Namibia's total population of 1.6 million (population census 1991) also correspond to language, gender and urban/rural divides.

Language

Afrikaans, English and German speakers are the most privileged in terms of education, health and income, with other language groups relatively more deprived. The San people are the most deprived of all Namibians in terms of socio-economic status, as well as cultural and political influence, and constitute part of the underclass together with the unemployed, some domestic workers and the rural peasantry.

Gender equality

The challenge of engendering human development is real in Namibia. Available data on education shows a picture of past neglect, but also of significant achievements in respect of gender equality. Since independence, female enrolment in basic education has increased sharply, with female literacy rates rising to the point where they now exceed male literacy rates in the 35-39, 45-49 and 55-59 age groups (Namibia Human Development Report 1996). This trend is mirrored at tertiary level, with women now accounting for over 60% of students at the University of Namibia.

Women are still under-represented in the traditional male domains of economics, politics and science, occupying only 22 national leadership positions out of a total of 192. However, the passing of the Married Persons Equality Act in 1996 was an important legal and symbolic milestone on the road towards greater gender equality. On the negative side, recorded incidences of abuse against women and children are rising throughout the country.

Rural-urban divide

People living in rural areas are relatively deprived in terms of income, education and health care compared to those in urban areas. There are few employment opportunities beyond subsistence agriculture, leading to lower income levels and a lower standard of living compared to urban households.

Although government policies have changed since independence, spending patterns continue to perpetuate existing inequalities. For example, the allocation of funds to the regional councils of Khomas, Hardap and Okavango in per capita amounts for the period 1993-1995 ranged from N\$ 200 in Khomas to N\$ 22 and N\$ 8 for Hardap and Okavango respectively. Such imbalanced expenditure undermines rural development and fuels the rural-to-urban migration problem.

Unemployment

Since independence, the social dimensions of under-employment have become far more pronounced. One of the most critical problems is rising unemployment and the seeming national indifference towards it. In May 1995, unemployed former combatants from the war of independence took to the streets in protest. As a result, the government, somewhat belatedly, revised its former policy of promoting development brigades in favour of a micro-project approach and the upgrading of skills.

The government also established a social integration fund for former combatants. Unfortunately, the execution of the majority of the proposed projects has been less than successful.

The high levels of unemployment and under-employment potentially pose a serious threat to the social and political stability that Namibia has enjoyed since independence. It is estimated that unemployment rose from 12% in 1975 to over 30% in 1990, around at which level it has since remained. Employment creation was one of the development goals set out at independence, being a key objective of the First National Development Plan (NDP 1).

Health issues

The spectre of HIV/AIDS, together with tuberculosis and malaria, poses a major health problem. The relationship between HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) in Namibia is, as yet, uncertain with current estimates ranging from 6 to 30% of TB patients being infected with HIV. With a perinatal (relating to the period from about three months before to one month after birth) transmission rate of 25 to 35%, AIDS among children is also becoming a national problem. Namibia is currently among the three countries worst affected by HIV/AIDS in the world.

Infection rates are almost equal among men and women, and most infections are within the economically active group of 25 to 45 year olds.

At the start of 1997, the number of HIV/AIDS cases was officially estimated at 108,000, representing nearly 7% of the total population, whereas the most recent (1998) United Nations AIDS Country Report puts the figure at 150,000 (comprising 70,000 men, 75,000 women and 5,000 children). Almost 20% of Namibian adults aged between 15 and 49 are infected with HIV, and the number of children orphaned by AIDS is projected to soar to over 20,000 by the year 2000.

Development targets

The first six years following independence witnessed a period of transition to, and the partial consolidation of, democracy. This process has altered government policy objectives, which now centre on improving human development nationally, especially for those previously disadvantaged. The First National Development Plan identifies education, agriculture, health and social services, employment creation and poverty alleviation as primary development objectives for the period 1995-2000. It is within this context that Skillshare Africa has developed its programme strategy in Namibia for the period 1999-2004.

Background to Skillshare Africa in Namibia

Skillshare Africa has been working in southern Africa in support of sustainable development since 1990, having grown from the overseas programme of International Voluntary Service (IVS), an organisation whose involvement in long-term development commenced in the 1960s.

Skillshare Africa currently works in six countries in southern Africa, namely Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.

We opened our programme in Namibia in 1998 and partnerships have been established with the Ministry of Local Government to support the strengthening of local authorities, and with non-government organisations (NGOs) such as the AIDS Care Trust, the YWCA and the Namibia Rural Development Project.

Skillshare Africa's country programme strategic objectives

General

In 1990, as a newly independent country emerging from decades of colonial domination by the apartheid regime in South Africa, Namibia attracted greatly increased support and technical assistance from a number of development agencies from many different countries, including the provision of both unpaid skilled volunteers and highly paid consultants. Some of these agencies had started operating in Namibia during the final 'colonial' years, but most began work soon after independence.

Therefore, when Skillshare Africa began researching the possibility of opening a programme in Namibia, models of cooperation were considered in comparison with the ways in which other international development agencies were already working in Namibia.

Our programme in Namibia was also opened at a time when we were beginning the process of redefining our corporate strategic objectives and taking a new and more holistic approach to our ways of working with partner organisations.

During the next five years we will:

- *widen knowledge of Skillshare Africa's potential contribution as an international development agency with clear and relevant objectives and which strives for sustainable development.*

Empowerment of disadvantaged groups

Various women's groups exist in all 13 regions of the country with different levels of activity and resources. In most rural regions, women lead the majority of households and are the principal providers for the family through, for example, setting up income-generation enterprises. One problem is that a lack of business skills can often cause such enterprises to fail. Skillshare Africa believes it necessary to address women's empowerment and rural development as linked issues.

In urban areas, violence against women and children is a major problem. The Women & Child Abuse Centre is a government project that provides assistance and support for victims of abuse. Currently, the Centre is setting up regional 'clinics' within existing hospitals, although a drawback is that the majority of staff are police officers with no specialised training in counselling. Skillshare Africa has established a partnership with the Woman & Child Abuse Centre and is looking to assist by providing specialised staff to train social workers as well as to raise public awareness on issues related to abuse.

Cooperation is also being explored with the government's Social Services Department, possibly with a view to expanding income-generation projects to include urban women, especially teenage mothers.

Skillshare Africa is also establishing partnerships with the YWCA, which has extensive programmes aimed at teenage mothers and unemployed school-leavers, and a peer-counselling programme for HIV/AIDS education.

During the next five years we will:

- *support the empowerment of women by assisting NGOs involved in education and awareness-raising programmes on women's rights.*
- *assist NGOs working to promote human rights and equality through education, public information and advocacy campaigns.*
- *assist NGOs and government institutions in education and awareness-raising programmes concerning violence against women and children, and in providing counselling and support to victims of abuse.*

HIV/AIDS

There is a huge disparity in Namibia between estimated HIV infection rates and the number of deaths officially caused by AIDS. Until the scale of the problem becomes undeniable, with ever increasing numbers of people becoming too sick to work and in need of care, the natural tendency seems to be to understate the real statistics.

Unfortunately, this is reflected by the level of official measures taken to combat the rising infection rates, and to provide proper care for HIV/AIDS patients and support to the people primarily responsible for caring for them.

The government, within the structures of the Ministry of Health and Social Services, has a National Aids Control Programme (NACP) which mainly concentrates on prevention strategies, publicity and awareness-raising campaigns in Windhoek. However, some NGOs are running projects in the rural areas, especially in the Caprivi region and in the mining towns, where the infection rates are highest.

The AIDS Care Trust (ACT) was one of the first Namibian NGOs with which Skillshare Africa formed a partnership. Set up to meet a number of urgent needs and, at the same time, address the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS, the ACT has four key functions: home-based care, counselling, training for carers, and public education and awareness raising.

Skillshare Africa's partnership with ACT is aimed at providing assistance in ways that will help make an effective contribution to addressing the HIV/AIDS problem.

During the next five years we will:

- *support organisations concerned with the provision of care and counselling for people infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS, within the framework of the national strategy to combat the AIDS pandemic.*
- *assist organisations involved in HIV/AIDS education and awareness-raising programmes, so helping to decrease infection rates and improve the quality of life for those infected.*

Education, training and employment

Every year approximately 26,000 students complete Grade 10, but the number of places available to study for Grades 11 and 12 (equivalent to A-level) is only 12,000. This means that the majority of teenagers have to find an alternative to an A-level education. There are four colleges and a number of semi-formal community-based programmes that offer vocational training in Namibia. In Windhoek, the Namibia College for Education (NAMCOL) offers vocational courses as well giving students excluded from the state education system the chance to study for Grades 11 and 12 part-time at affordable prices.

NAMCOL is a parastatal engaged in the process of becoming totally independent from the government. The college recently acquired premises to start a new vocational training centre, and Skillshare Africa has established a partnership with NAMCOL aimed at providing assistance in designing relevant training programmes and in ensuring the centre's sustainability. The aim is to develop the centre to address the needs of young people and the unemployed, as well as of the community as a whole.

During the next five years we will:

- *assist in building the capacity of vocational training institutions to provide technical training, and to enhance the quality of training through skills development.*
- *assist appropriate organisations in the provision of education and vocational skills training to disadvantaged groups, including young people, the unemployed and the disabled.*
- *improve employment prospects for disadvantaged groups, including their potential for self-employment, by supporting vocational training institutions in the design of training programmes to provide technical skills for the disadvantaged.*

Local state - Decentralisation

The government's National Decentralisation Programme is running concurrently in all 13 regions. Due to unequal levels of development and income distribution, some regions have relatively strong local government with the infrastructure and institutional capacity to take over functions from central government. In other regions the process of decentralisation calls for capacity building and the rehabilitation of infrastructure.

Skillshare Africa has been assisting the government by providing a project advisor to work closely with regional councils and local authorities to address training needs and so help ensure the successful management of regional development.

During the next five years we will:

- *support the implementation of the government's national decentralisation programme through assistance in skills development.*
- *contribute to the development of previously underdeveloped areas of the country and promote rural job creation by assisting the government in building the capacity of local authorities.*

Rural development

As mentioned previously, rural development and women's empowerment call for linked strategies since women lead the majority of households in rural areas.

Local and international NGOs tend to offer direct support to small-scale income-generation initiatives in rural areas that are relatively easy to set up. However, 'commercial ventures' of this type can multiply very quickly and may create a situation where they start competing with each other, raising issues of viability and sustainability within a limited market.

Skillshare Africa is establishing a partnership with the Namibia Rural Development Project (NRDP), an organisation with good links to rural communities and which is in a position to play a major role in their development.

During the next five years we will:

- *sustain rural communities through support for development programmes concerned with the creation of livelihoods and improving living conditions in rural areas.*
- *assist rural development programmes aimed at improving economic and social conditions in underdeveloped regions.*
- *reduce poverty and improve the status of women in society by assisting NGOs and government institutions involved in income-generation programmes aimed at improving living conditions for poor women in rural and urban areas.*

Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the Country Plan will, throughout the five-year period, be regularly monitored against the strategic objectives defined, as well as at the level of specific programme activities with partner organisations. This will be done using the appropriate systems already in place or creating the necessary systems for this purpose.

The Country Plan will also be evaluated at the mid-term point, after two and a half years, and at the end of the five-year period. These evaluations will look at the impact of the programme at the level of the beneficiaries, in relation to the strategic objectives and long-term partnerships with programme partners.

The strategic objectives will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated, if necessary, according to changes in the country's needs.

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