

Press release - November 2008

Waldorf School Windhoek: school and practical training go hand in hand

Windhoek/Namibia (ipo). Currently Namibia's capital city is confronted with more than tenfold the number of applicants as opposed to available vocational training places. In addition applicants are poorly, or not at all prepared for practical training due to the fact that existing school curricula lack practical career orientation as they are mainly academically orientated. The Waldorf School Windhoek (WSW) – established in 2000 – is in the initial stages of creating a school and centre for vocational training in response to this particular problem. The envisaged result: a steady - and increasing - flow of young Namibian adults who are better equipped to take up their place in a developing and evolving economy.

More than half of the current 230 learners of the WSW hail from the previously disadvantaged population group. The school's selection criteria for taking up learners is based on performance, aiming towards a strong class and learner profile with a distinct will to learn, combined with efficiency and social competency.

Apart from an excellent academic education – that already includes much practical training in accordance with the international Waldorf concept – learners of the WSW will, as of 2010, be exposed to craft and agricultural training over and above their normal school education. This will contribute towards increased recognition of practical careers, as well as being a factor towards building up a stronger middle class in Namibia.

Lessons and vocational training will run parallel in the school. The typical Waldorf education concludes with grade 12 (twelve years), and at the end of the 13th school year the students will acquire the Namibian school-leaving qualification (NSSC). Meeting the qualification requirements in turn facilitates a university education. As from 2010 – parallel to NSSC – all students will be able to obtain a trade certificate in accordance with the Namibian Training Authority (NTA) qualification levels 1 – 4 by enrolling for the additional obligatory courses (during this 13th year):

- Hospitality & Tourism
- Joinery & Cabinet Making
- Arts & Craft
- General Maintenance

Over the medium term the selection will be complemented by the following subjects: metal fabrication, auto mechanics and nursery/pre-primary education. This will enable every WSW school leaver to obtain a dual secondary school-leaving qualification, whereafter a university education or extended vocational training can be taken up.

The seed idea for developing agricultural training for Namibia had its beginning many years ago on the Farm Krumhuk, some 25 km from Windhoek. With this project the initiators want to “open up the perspective for agriculture in Namibia and make available qualified people to the farming profession”, explains Andreas Fellner, headmaster of the Agricultural Training Centre Krumhuk (ATC- Krumhuk).

Aris, the former country hotel, is where ATC – the force behind the development and setting-up of practical agricultural training – had its beginning. This locality will also become the future quarters of this association, comprising mainly active farmers. The agricultural training will take place on a terrain of 150 hectares where a small school farm will be erected. This is where most of the activities required of a Namibian farmer can be learnt. Tuition will mainly be given by experienced farmers, so that the practical orientation is at all times maintained. Initially there will

be space for a maximum of 32 WSW students aged between 16 and 21. From these a small number will also be trained in Hospitality.

A two-year planning and application period had paved the way for Waldorf School Windhoek and ATC-Krumhuk now having been afforded the approval to go ahead with the official “BMZ Project“. This exemplary project is being supported and administered by three essential partners: the German Federal **Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** under the direction of federal minister Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, the German Embassy in Windhoek, as well as the German body responsible for the project “**Freunde der Erziehungskunst**“, (“Friends of Waldorf Education” support initiatives for a free education world-wide and have actively promoted Waldorf education and freedom within the education system since 1971/ a body that looks after the training and financial needs of more than 1500 Waldorf schools world wide.) Dr *Nana Goebel*, heads this organisation from their offices in Berlin. Under her leadership the project is being supported by all involved with much courage, tremendous effort and engagement in honorary capacities. The third partner playing a decisive role is the WSW “**Kuratorium**”, all of those members reside in Germany: Ms Ilse Lang, Dr. Konrad Schily, Dr. Hans-Hermann Leimbach, Mr Charles de Picciotto, Ms Marion Würth and Mr Bernhard Stöhr.

The entire project comprises a total amount of 666,667 Euro, of which the BMZ will provide about 500,000 Euro, while the board of trustees of WSW will provide the remaining 166,667 Euro. The term of project is anticipated at 24 months, encompassing erection of two workshop buildings with 6 specialised areas on the premises of the School Windhoek in Avis-Windhoek, as well as the extensions and alterations of the formal country hotel Aris into a training centre for agricultural instruction.

With this combination of academic and practical training the Waldorf School Windhoek yet again sets standards for a promising future orientated education in Namibia. Particularly for those Namibian children and youth, who hail from families with a weak financial background, such an educational training can pave the way into a self-determined future, breaking out of the vicious cycle of poverty towards a life that renders a contribution towards the community and at the same time fostering a friendship of the cultures.

Spokespersons for the press:

Mr Hans-Peter Seeger, manager

Ms Nicola Brodie, press correspondent and public relations officer

Mr Andreas Fellner, headmaster of ATC- Krumhuk

Waldorf School Windhoek

P.O. Box 90326

Windhoek, Namibia

Tel +264 (61) 24 24 99

Fax +264 (61) 24 33 54

Email:office@waldorf-namibia.org

Internet: <http://www.waldorf-namibia.org>