

# 2022 ANNUAL UPDATE



## PLAY FOR ALL



“Early Childhood  
Development for the  
best start in life”

**Play for All** is an early childhood development /education programme, supporting ECD centres (kindergartens) and families in southern Africa with an objective to provide the opportunity for every child to have the right start in life. We focus on impact with low overheads and high efficiency. In order to be systematic and respond to national priorities, we work in close collaboration with relevant government ministries and local international development agencies such as UNICEF and the EU, and we partner with the private sector. We recognise that for any programme to succeed, sustainability is key. **Play for All** puts emphasis on mentoring and empowering educators, parents and community leaders to be the champions of ECD in their communities.

The **Play for All** objective is to reach all children growing up in underprivileged communities in southern Africa in both urban and rural settings.

All children have a right to quality education, including early childhood education. This right is enshrined in Namibia's constitution and international conventions, and is a cornerstone of SDG4. Early childhood education is especially important, as it provides the foundation of a child's development. When a child enjoys good quality education in the early years, they have a better chance to thrive and reach their full potential.

Millions of children growing up in the slums (informal settlements) or poor areas, around the world are burdened with socio-economic challenges that traps them into poverty for decades to come. In socially and economically unequal societies like Namibia and other countries in Southern Africa, early childhood education has an important role to play to break cycles of inequality. It can provide a boost to children from disadvantaged, marginalized and poor communities, supporting them to fulfil their developmental potential, resulting in improved learning and higher lifetime earnings.



Informal settlements (slum/township) in Windhoek, Namibia

## OVERVIEW

The programme is currently active in 6 towns across Namibia, including Windhoek, Karibib, Omaruru, Katima Mulilo, Oshakati and Opuwo. It is benefiting over **250 ECD centres** in informal settlements (slums), with some **8,676 children**.

**Play for All** works systematically with relevant government ministries and institutions, international development agencies such as UNICEF and EU and private sector. This multi-sectoral approach is collaborative and ensures the programme’s activities are aligned with the national and international agenda of a strong early learning foundation and the UN Development Sustainable Goals. The Transforming Education Summit hosted in New York in 2022 found weakness in foundational learning to be one of the main drivers of the crisis in global education outcomes. We are directly addressing this challenge through our **Play for All** programme.

### Play for All intervention areas

1. Educarer (ECD teacher) training courses.
2. Provision of learning and teaching materials to under resourced centres.
3. ECD centre improvements, such as construction of toilets or playgrounds through a grant mechanism to ECD centres.
4. Parents engagement to improve the support to children at home.
5. Provision of supplementary feeding.

## ACHIEVEMENTS – DURING 2022

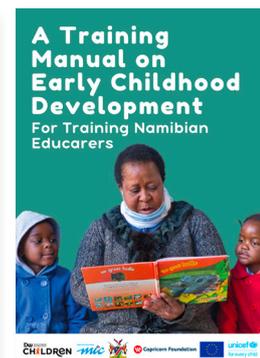
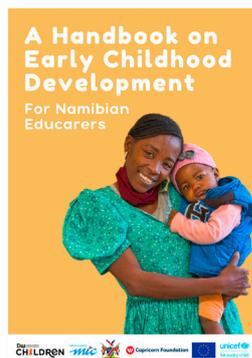
### 9-WEEK TRAINING COURSE FOR EDUCARERS

**The challenge:** ECD educarers (teachers) in informal settlements are untrained/ undertrained and not familiar with child-centred, play-based practices which allow them to best foster the children’s development.

**Improving educarer skills and knowledge is essential to improve the quality of early childhood education being offered.**

**Play for All** developed a 9-week training course which is aligned with the national ECD curricula for educarers at ECD centres in informal settlements. Every week includes one day of interactive class- based training, homework, as well as practical exercises that the educarers can apply in their respective centres.

**296 educarers** completed the training during the past year, including 282 women and 14 men. These educarers teach a total of 3,505 children. The training uses hands on and interactive manuals and resources.



### ECD CENTRES SUPPORT VISITS

**The challenge:** ECD teachers often work in isolation, with limited opportunities for continuous professional development, guidance and self-reflection. This results in them not modernizing their practices or adapting their lessons to children’s needs and interests, and often feeling under supported and unmotivated.

As part of the educarers training, the **Play for All** team conducts scheduled visits to ECD centres to provide on the ground support to the educarers. These visits are important to follow up on trainings, assist educarers with classroom organization and get feedback for continued improvement of assistance provided by the programme. The regular visits to individual ECD centres provide support and assist educarers to:

- > Employ age-appropriate learning through play pedagogy.
- > Improve the quality of stimulation that the children receive.
- > Improve interactions between educarers and children.

During 2022 **108 support visits** were conducted and **270 hours spent with educarers** in their classrooms. Monitoring and self-assessment tools were developed and are used to track the centres progress, as well as for individual teacher reflection to identify areas of good practice that can be shared, and where additional help and learning is needed.

**DEVELOPING AND DISTRIBUTING TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO ECD CENTRES**

**The challenge:** Access to teaching and learning materials is a serious challenge for ECD centres in informal settlements, rural, and low-income areas. This includes lack of access to children’s story books, and especially books that are representatives of the children’s world and experiences. This results in educators limiting their activities for children based on lack of resources, and children growing up with poor foundational literacy skills and no love for reading.

During the past year **Play for All** developed, adapted and distributed various teaching and learning materials benefiting ECD centres and children across Namibia.

Over **47,000 children’s books** were printed and distributed of which 4 of these books, totalling 19,500 printed copies, are developed and published by Development Workshop Namibia specially for the **Play for All** programme.

**100 Library boxes** were set up and distributed to ECD centres

Several readathons were held around the country. Attended by parents, children and educators. Stories were read to children and every child attending received a story book to take home.

**8,033 children** benefited from story books distributed across the country. Additionally more than **9,000 children’s story books** were distributed to children in collaboration with partners.



Toilet built at an ECD centre.

**IMPROVED ENVIRONMENT- ECD CENTRE PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS**

**The challenge:** By their nature ECD centres in informal settlements and poor areas do not have the financial capacity to provide a learning environment that is safe and conducive for children. This is also often influenced by the circumstances of the residential areas they are established and the lack of basic services such as; limited access to water, lack of sanitation, no electricity and prevalence of violence.

**Play for All** – supports ECD centres to address some of the challenges through **ECD centres improvements grants**. The grants helped to

set up outdoor play areas, new class rooms, provision of toilets, or other improvements identified by the centre that can improve teaching and learning and/or safety and wellbeing.

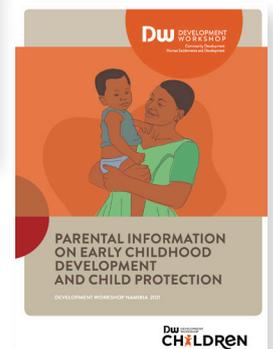
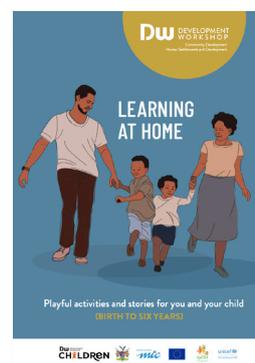
To date **51 ECD centres** have benefited from the centre improvement support. This includes:

- 10 new and improved classrooms
- 9 playgrounds
- 39 new toilets of which 15 are built by our sanitation programme as part of the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach.

**PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

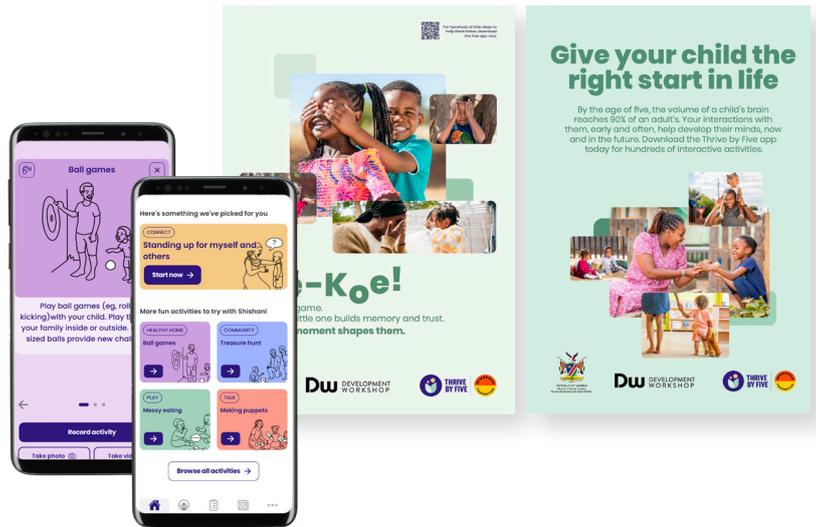
**The challenge:** Child development and learning starts at home, and parents have the most important role to play in supporting their child’s optimal development. However, there is still a lack of understanding about the importance of parental involvement in children’s lives, the role of parents to support child development, and the importance of nurturing and non-violent care. In informal settlements parents also tend to work long hours, with long commutes which limits their opportunities for involvement in their children’s lives, and parents are under huge socio-economic strains.

**Play for All** engages with parents through parents’ workshops, discussing the importance of holistic child development, positive discipline, conscious parenting, responsive and nurturing care. The workshops are designed to be conscious of parents limited free time, and are sensitive to local customs, championing positive child rearing practices which also addressing harmful ones.



During 2022, **113 workshops** were facilitated with 2,322 parents attended workshops across Namibia.

In partnership with the Minderoo Foundation and the Ministry of Gender Equality Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, Development Workshop Namibia facilitated the implementation of the Thrive by Five parenting content & App. The parenting content is focusing on providing parents with information and tips to promote early stimulation of the children so that they thrive by the age five. To ensure that the parenting content reaches all parents it is disseminated in various media and platforms such as printed booklets, flyers, radio channels and social media.



Children receiving their meal at a centre.

**SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING AT ECD CENTRES**

**The challenge:** Food security is a crisis in Southern Africa, which has been exacerbated by climate change, loss of employment through COVID and food cost inflations linked to the war in Ukraine. As a result, many children do not receive the nutrition they need during their early years resulting in one in four children under 5 in Namibia being stunted, which has huge repercussions on brain development and lifelong health and wellbeing.

**The Play for All intervention:**

DWN has been implementing a cash-based supplementary feeding program to ECD centres in the informal settlements of one town (Omaruru) in Namibia since August 2021. The programme worked with 10 ECD centres and 253 children. Children received one meal and a piece of fruit daily. The educators, parents and local government partners reported an improvement in children’s wellbeing. Children were reported to be happier and more engaged and the schools have seen a drop in absenteeism.

Since the launch of the feeding program **45,100 meals** were served.

Twin Hills Trust our funding partner for this very crucial activity has committed to expand the funding to another town (Karibib). For 2023 a total of 20 ECD centres and approx. 600 children will be benefiting from this program.

**OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS:**



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