

Chapter 8

Bilateral development co-operation 1991 - 2006

About 55 million euro was spent on bilateral development cooperation between 1991 and 2005. Rural water supply, education, environment, support to ex-combatants and good governance were sectors and subjects in which the two countries co-operated productively. In 2003 the Dutch government decided to reduce the number of partner countries for bilateral aid. As a result, the programme in Namibia was wound up by the end of 2005. Considerable Dutch support through multilateral agencies, regional programmes and NGO's will continue. Dutch policy, much more than Namibian preferences was responsible for major changes and the eventual disappearance of the bilateral programme.



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President Sam Nujoma inspects water project

President Sam Nujoma visits the site of the Oshakati-Omakongo water pipeline in March 1992. Among the officials accompanying the president are the director general for Water Development (with necktie) Pedro Maritz. The lady in the group is Cornélie van Waegeningh, at the time head of the Dutch development co-operation office. Development of drinking water facilities was the first priority sector in the bilateral co-operation programme between Namibia and the Netherlands. Photo by Hans Goetze, DWA.



Community participation in water development

The project strategy for the water supply schemes included community contributions by helping to dig the trenches for the pipes. It also included the operation of the new systems through water point committees. An important part of the projects was the training of these committees and of technicians. Photo by Hans Goetze, DWA.

An overview of 15 years of bilateral aid

Dutch bilateral development involvement in Southern Africa began in the 1960s in Zambia. The Netherlands government has generally supported the newly independent states with the reconstruction of their infrastructure, institutions and societies following years of armed liberation struggle. Angola and Mozambique were aided after 1975 and Zimbabwe from 1980 onwards. After supporting the anti-apartheid movement for decades through non-governmental channels until 1990 in Namibia and until 1994 in South Africa, the regime changes in Windhoek and Pretoria opened the way for official Dutch support.

Namibia at independence in 1990 was a popular country among donors: the latest to be decolonised, with a modern and firm constitution, in a region where apartheid was showing cracks but was nonetheless very much prevalent. According to the going standards, Namibia was a lower middle-income country. This picture of relative affluence was marred however by an income distribution which was extremely skewed. Rich Namibians live in the globalized first world whereas the mass of poor Namibians live in a fourth world of their own. Most donors arrived in Namibia with the message that they were happy to join in a transition from apartheid to a democratic society, but that they would be around for that transitional period only. Over time poorer countries would regain priority.

In February 1992 the Netherlands opened a development co-operation office in Windhoek. It was agreed with the National Planning Commission that during the transition period the Dutch would support the creation of access to basic services, in particular rural water supply and basic education for adults. These sectors have effectively formed the core of the Dutch programme around which other activities such as environmental projects and co-operation with the Universities developed. Over time, the character of the programme shifted from the financing of construction activities and equipment to capacity building and institutional development.

From the outset the relationship was based on Namibian 'ownership' of projects and programmes. The Na-

mibian authorities managed the implementation of the development activities to which the Dutch contributed. On the basis of a proven track record Namibia was one of the first countries in which a successful transition was achieved from project aid to sectoral budget support.

Developments in the bilateral aid programme had to follow the general policy shifts in Dutch development co-operation. While these at first had facilitated the opening and build-up of a significant programme in Namibia, around the turn of the century successive governments carried through significant cutbacks.

In 1998 the Dutch Government reduced bilateral development relations from a varied group of eighty countries to a core group of about twenty countries and about forty countries with a limited co-operation programme. The criteria applied were: national income and need for aid, sound socio-economic policies and proper governance arrangements. The review had an impact on the partner countries in the Southern African region. Only Mozambique and Zambia remained in the core group. Angola had always been relying on emergency aid and Zimbabwe got access to the good governance programme. A special development relationship with South Africa was established.

Despite its many poor, it was clear from the outset that Namibia, due to its score on the first criterion, would also be relegated to the category where only limited co-operation in the form of a programme for good governance would continue. It implied that the sectoral budget support programmes in rural water supply and education were to be phased out. Also the programme for ex-combatants was to be discontinued. With a new zeal, identification was started for activities to be supported under the Good Governance programme. Annual expenses of € 1.5 million were projected for activities both with government and civil society.

In 2003 a new Dutch government carried out further reviews and reduced the number of countries to be supported by the Netherlands even more. South Africa was promoted to the list of core-countries, while the special Good Governance programme to which Namibia and Zimbabwe had access, was discontinued. Middle-income countries like Namibia were removed from the



Visit from Harare

Dutch ambassador Wim Wessels from Harare (right), who was also accredited to Namibia, joined Windhoek head of mission Cornélie van Waegeningh on a visit to the water committees in the North in 1993. Mr. Wessels is welcomed by the committee members of the Ongongo-Okalongo scheme. Photo by Hans Gompelman.

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The taps are not always flowing...

The water point is tested. The maintenance of the water schemes proved a difficult challenge that required long-term support and training. The complications were partly caused by repeated reorganisations and policy changes in the water department. Photo by Hans Gompelman.

list of countries that classified for structural bilateral development aid. An exit strategy was implemented during 2004 and 2005 to close the Dutch programme effectively by mid 2006.

This article focuses on bilateral relations and does not take into account the activities funded by the Netherlands from regional budget lines. Nor is Dutch support through the multilateral system (United Nations, European Commission, African Development Bank etc.) and through Dutch NGO's included in the description below. It also means that these forms of Dutch support will continue after the bilateral project has ended. Other chapters pay attention to co-operation between universities and municipalities, often with direct or indirect government funding.

Over the years, total external assistance for Namibia has been at a level of five per cent of GDP. In 2004, EU and member states contributed € 91.9 million. The USA contributed US\$ 33 million in that year.

During the period 1990-2006 the Netherlands has contributed an amount of nearly US\$ 80 million to development in Namibia (about € 55 million), with as main components rural water supply (€ 20 million) and education (€ 15 million) and from 2002 – 2005 governance (€ 5 million). All Dutch development assistance was offered in the form of grants.

As was indicated earlier, over time the priorities in the programme of co-operation followed the political and policy changes mainly in the Netherlands and to a lesser extent in Namibia. The sequence of the various subjects in this chapter - from rural water supply, education, environment, ex combatants, good governance and HIV/AIDS - mirrors these developments.

In a summary like this, only major trends and programmes can be highlighted. Many other contributions to improve the infrastructure and service delivery in Namibia, a diverse spectrum from the support to postal services to the supply of a tugboat for the harbour of Lüderitz, cannot be described in detail. The same goes for the technical assistance that has been provided by many organisations, both over longer periods and in the form of short backstopping missions.

Rural water supply

At independence 60% of the population, concentrated in the northern part of the country, had no access to safe water supply. The Namibian government is committed to have this figure reduced to 10% by 2010, and as far as the basic infrastructure is concerned, it has taken important steps to reach that target. The Netherlands co-operation has funded investment activities and assisted with the institutional reorganisation of the sector.

During the years 1992-97 Dutch assistance funded investment projects of drinking water and irrigation in northern Namibia. The Ogongo-Okalongo and the Os-hakati-Omakango rural water schemes were constructed in the Cuvelai river basin. The works on the Calueque dam in the Kunene river implied even activities in war-torn Angola. The works were realised by the Directorate of Rural Water Supply with Dutch technical assistance.

This aid modality of providing financial assistance with increasing own allocation margins for the Directorate and limited technical assistance worked well. Over time it was felt that the Namibian government provided a case for programme rather than project aid. Policies were in place, administrative procedures were sufficient, and in this sector there was implementation capacity over and above financial resources. This resulted in offering subsectoral budget support for the first time at the end of 1997. The consistency of government input and increased programme performance served as main monitoring criteria.

During these years the government sector went through a number of institutional re-organising exercises during which the quality of the existing capacity had to be maintained and the services had to be extended at the same time. In the early years of independence, the Department of Water Affairs underwent firstly a number of changes away from colonial arrangements. Service delivery in the whole country had to be brought together in comprehensive systems under central control to overcome the effects of segregation. Then, the system had to be decentralised to achieve sustainable management of the drinking water supply systems based on cost recovery policies. The decade saw a systematic ex-



On the site of the future Jan Ligthart Centre

Site meeting at the future Jan Ligthart Centre at the Rössing Foundation complex in Khomasdal. The construction and equipment of this adult learning centre was part of the co-operation in education. The picture was taken in 1995, when construction started. From left to right are David Godfrey, director Rössing Foundation, a staff member of the architect's office, Len le Roux of Rössing Foundation, Matthijs Everard and Cornélie van Waegeningh of the embassy, David Macharia of the Ministry of Education and the architect Kerry McNamara. Photo courtesy of Cornélie van Waegeningh.

ercise to develop a legal and institutional framework for the water sector. In 1997 the Community Based Management Programme, a 10-year effort to decentralise responsibility for water supply, came into effect.

Local responsibility by Water Point Committees also found its drawbacks and limitations. An environmental study in 1998 showed that supply of water in communal areas, intended for human consumption and other uses at household level, was 'leaking away' to cater for the needs of herds of cattle. This resulted in tightening the budget support to the Directorate's Community-based management programme and in renewed efforts to enforce environmental criteria. Yet, animal husbandry is the mainstay of society and as a result cattle wealth is considered a priority in economic as well as in social terms. Water became increasingly a potential source for conflict. Coordinated efforts to increase institutional capacity and leadership at all levels proved to be very important factors in the cooperation over time.

After 10 years of cooperation in Rural Water Supply it can be concluded that a substantial contribution was realised in basic infrastructure for water supply. Equally important, from the perspective of sustainability, is that the management and maintenance of the local systems was transferred to water users committees. This means that the end user is in control and is less dependent of central government institutions for the supply of this important service.

Education

At independence adult basic education was an important priority for Namibia's government. Literacy skills are considered a crucial ingredient to build a sustainable democratic society, and a target was set of 80% adult literates within the decade.

In 1994 the Dutch joined the Swedish SIDA, the main sponsor in this area. The Netherlands committed to the programme for five years, with the option of an extension of another five years. As in the Rural Water Supply-sector, Dutch involvement consisted of two parts: infrastructure and institutional development. The 'hardware' part consisted of the construction of a

training centre for adults at the Rössing Foundation's premises in Khomasdal. This centre carries the name of Jan Ligthart, a Dutch educationist.

The 'software' part consisted of support to the National Literacy Programme of Namibia. The adult literacy curriculum was designed in three phases for the lower primary levels, with the Dutch assisting in capacity building and development of learning materials for the intermediate phase.

The Dutch input was supported by external review and advisory missions, with a joint Namibian-Dutch membership and led by Namibian publisher Jane Katjavivi. It was found that the programme, through its literacy promoters and district literacy organisers, did reach the target groups. The diversity of languages and the limited translating capacity, however, did make the development of learning materials a complicated affair.

An evaluation conducted in 1999 was critical with regard to programme performance, but the 80%-target was declared accomplished (although any definition of literacy is debatable). On this basis attention of the programme could now shift to the upper primary levels as well as to the concept of lifelong learning.

Over time, the Dutch had also developed a parallel interest for the formal education system. In 1993 the Namibian government had published its policy paper, 'Toward education for all'. This paper singled out four priorities -access, equity, quality and democracy- that remain basically unchanged in 2006. Throughout the years, the government has dedicated a substantial part of its budget to basic education, in 2004/2005 still over 23%. In 1996 minister Pronk visited Namibia and approved the broadening of Dutch support for basic education from the adult (informal) to the regular formal education system.

Dutch development assistance has looked for possibilities to assist in the north where the bulk of the population lives. One aspect hampering the delivery of education in that area was the inherited backlog in both quality and quantity of physical infrastructure. A first contribution in this connection was made 1997 for teachers' housing. As in the water sector successive



Europe visits Dutch projects

A visit to projects financed by the European co-operation. On the right is Hanja May-Weggen, a Dutch member of the European parliament, next to her is Spanish ambassador to Namibia, Germán Zurita Y Sáenz de Navarrete. They are listening to the welcoming committee. Photo courtesy of Cornélie van Waegeningh.

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Welcoming the visitors

This is the way European visitors are welcomed in the north of Namibia. Photo courtesy of Cornélie van Waegeningh.

contributions to the infrastructure programme proved a stepping-stone to subsectoral budget support, which in this case had two interesting characteristics. The process was handled by the Ministry of Basic Education, and the donors involved co-ordinated their contribution. Furthermore, the major part of the assistance, from Sweden and the Netherlands, was channelled through the State Revenue Fund. The British DFID managed its funds, for technical assistance, separately.

In 1999 a Presidential commission was tasked with producing a review and recommending the way forward. The commission, with a broad-based membership and an open working method, delivered its report to president Nujoma. Main conclusions were that the policy of creating access had been successful and now the focus should shift to issues of equity and quality.

In November 2000 new agreements between Namibia and the Netherlands were signed, committing an amount of N\$ 64 million in support of the Education sector programme. Based on the various main divisions of the ministry's budget and a draft strategic plan, financing gaps were identified. Physical infrastructure remained the major component, with additional support for adult education, teacher training and the application of a focus on marginalised children. As to institutional strengthening provisions were made to support the strategic planning exercise and policy formulation efforts.

In Basic Education, the same problems were encountered as in Rural Water Supply. The implementation of the physical infrastructure programmes was sufficiently routine to absorb the additional funds, but in the areas of capacity building and policy strengthening output was rather disappointing. Monitoring and reporting on the basis of regular internal procedures proved to be difficult as well.

Because of the reorientation of Dutch policy to Namibia the support for the education sector had to be phased out. After March 2002 the programme continued to be supported by SIDA, and the EC took the place of the Netherlands as budget supporter.

Both in Namibia and in the Netherlands mixed feelings remained about the departure of the Netherlands from the education sector. Developments in the Netherlands' budget and the creation of the concept of silent partnerships in education made it possible to consider renewed support, even without an embassy in Windhoek to monitor the programme.

During 2004 a major appraisal of the education sector (ETSIP) in Namibia was done with a view to achieve the necessary fundamental overhaul in a comprehensive manner. This programme can form the basis for harmonised donor support to an integrated education sector. The Netherlands decided to re-enter the education sector as of 2006, if a silent partnership could be worked out with the EC.

Continued support on a substantial scale is recognition of the fact that the problems of the education sector in access, equity and quality are enduring and that the Namibian Government takes the difficult but fundamental decisions to tackle these. It will take a major prolonged effort however to envisage Namibia as a Knowledge Economy, as foreseen in the longer term plans of the Government's Vision 2030.

Environment

In a smaller way, but worth highlighting, Dutch development money has been provided for projects in support of sustainable use of the Namibian environment. Capacity was developed to produce environmental profiles.

Initial support was given to a project to develop an environmental profile of the Caprivi Region of Namibia. The Caprivi Profile was produced and has proven a highly successful instrument, both in printed and digital format. It is being used both within the country and as part of transboundary planning. Work on this profile allowed Namibian scientists to build their capacity to handle large productions, based on Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

The Caprivi profile was followed by a second one, of the north-central part of Namibia, which was also financed

by the Netherlands government and done with virtually no external technical support. This product was even more advanced than the Caprivi profile and set international standards for environmental profiles. On this basis later additional profiles were made of the Okavango region and the eastern (Otjozondjupa and Omaheke) regions.

Other innovative small-scale projects were supported through the Namibia Nature Foundation and newsletters by Desert Research Foundation of Namibia were facilitated. The Dutch Commission on Environmental Assessment (MER) assisted the formulation of sector-specific guidelines for environmental assessment. For the Water Sector a Water Decision Makers' Guide was facilitated together with the Swedes.

Ex-combatants

In 1995 Namibia raised the issue of reintegration of ex-combatants in the economy. For a vocal minority this was still a persistent problem, with potentially political connotations. The Netherlands and the European Commission agreed to assist, but it turned out to be an issue more of study and debate than of robust interventions at the operational level. At the end of 1997 support was agreed to the construction of latrines at rural schools by building-teams of ex-combatants, but by 2000 the programme had to be suspended due to lack of progress. As a result of a government recruitment campaign in 1999 the dwindling supply of unemployed ex-combatants had made the programme in some ways redundant as well.

In 2002 a final effort was started to put the outstanding balance of funds to good use, while the EC-funds were at last released, in support of a more generally defined employment programme. A Multipurpose Youth Centre was built and equipped at Eenhana.

Even during the 1990s support to ex-combatants was already seen as an essential element of reconciliation, peace building and the achievement of national unity. In that sense the programme was a forerunner of the later Governance-programme. Within this Governance programme support to the psychosocial care for ex-

combatants by the PEACE Centre was financed (which confirmed the fact known from other conflicts that it takes generations to overcome the effects of armed struggle).

Good governance

As was indicated in the introduction, from 2000 to 2005 Namibia has had access to funding from the 'Human Rights and Good Governance Programme' (Governance-programme for short) of the Netherlands Development Co-operation Budget.

In theory, the Namibian Constitution with its separation of powers, its protection of fundamental human rights, its constitutional organs, gender equality and the principles of state policy embodied in the Constitution provide a suitable framework for good governance. In practice there are however limitations arising from Namibia's historic legacy, which warrant institutional strengthening of the social environment as the core domain to enhance good governance in Namibia. As a result the programme concentrates in Namibia on the support to selected public services and elements from civil society on the interface between state and civil society.

In the public domain, oversight institutions were targeted for support. Together with other likeminded donors like Sweden and Finland, programmes were developed with the Electoral Commission of Namibia and the Office of the Ombudsman that had the purpose to effectively reach out to broad sections of the population. From 2000 to 2004, covering a number of elections, the ECN was supported in the execution of voter registration and voter education activities. The Office of the Ombudsman was assisted in the execution of a capacity building project that aims at not only strengthening the central organization, but specifically enables the Ombudsman to establish regional offices in Oshakati and Keetmanshoop to improve accessibility. A human rights training programme for the Namibian Police aims to disseminate Human Rights concepts to the rank and file and their immediate supervisors and to reduce violations of human rights in the delivery of service by the Namibian Police.



Eenhana Multi-purpose Youth Resource Centre

The construction of this centre is an example of the flexibility of Dutch aid. When the implementation of projects for ex-combatants of the liberation war was not depleting the funds made available, it was decided to switch part of the money to pay for the construction of this centre, which was completed in 2005. Photo Royal Netherlands Embassy.

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From Condor to Condom

One of over one hundred small embassy projects. This project entailed transport for Ombetja Yehinga, one of the many non-governmental organisations fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Namibia. A used Toyota Condor was made available and colourfully decorated by the Dutch artist Helene Verwey. Henceforth it was known as the Toyota Condom. Photo Royal Netherlands Embassy.

For the support to civil society the central theme is the improvement of access to information as a means for empowerment. The ulterior goal is to build a sustainable democracy with evident Namibian roots. Expressions of local culture are used as building bricks of identity and national unity. The programme focuses on organisations that work on the raising of awareness and participation in rural areas.

Among the organisations that were supported priority was given to advocacy for human rights issues. Direct or indirect support was given to the fundamental human rights, gender rights and the rights of lesbian, gay, bi- and transsexual people. Organisations combating violence against women and children, considered a national curse in Namibia, were supported.

The organisations involved were assisted in carrying out in depth Institutional Sector and Organisational Analyses, which not only improved their performance but also were instrumental in attracting additional sponsors for their activities.

Throughout the years the Netherlands Embassy at Windhoek has also supported cultural activities in Namibia. Namibians often used to demonstrate a low opinion of the products of their own culture, compared to those of foreign origin. This tendency was compounded by the ethnic divide and rule policy of the apartheid regime. Collective self-confidence can be strengthened by the development of an own, cultural life. The programme intended to help bring about a Namibian society that respects the ethnic diversity of the country, minorities and the diversity of possible expressions of culture. Where strengthening of the cultural identity helps reconciliation and democratisation. Where culture functions as cement for this fragile society, where democratic principles still have to take a firm Namibian root.

A contribution was made to the National Art Gallery of Namibia for upgrading the collections and their management by providing training courses, facilitating the purchase of Namibian artworks, provision of basic equipment and infrastructure, with a view of bringing local art closer to the people. Likewise, the College of the Arts was enabled to develop the production and

distribution process of student work and multi-media products. The capacity of the Media Arts Technology Studies department to produce and distribute various media products was upgraded in the process.

Governance, decentralisation and local democracy are encompassing themes. Capacity building, the operational capacity of government and the fight against corruption are major challenges. Participation and the macroeconomic and cultural framework within which the activities take place, require a comprehensive approach. Concentration on certain themes and the cross-cutting character of the issues imply that donor coordination is of utmost importance. More on this theme is said in the next section of this chapter.

Donor coordination

Led by the European Commission, 'Europe' is the dominating development partner of Namibia. Although regular EU-meetings are held on Development Co-operation, the main co-ordination work is done at sector-specific level with the limited group of partners involved in a sector, including also the multilateral agencies. On special occasions, for instance when requesting technical assistance in the preparation of the second National Development Plan (NDP II), the National Planning Commission approached the EU as a whole.

For the Education sector the Education Sector Policy Advisory Group (ESPAG) has developed into a regular platform for exchange and coordination shared by the Government and its partners. The European Commission co-ordinates the budget support for the sector with Sweden and the Netherlands (as of 2006) as silent partners.

With regard to HIV/AIDS in Namibia the government and its partners adhere to the three Ones ("one agency, one plan, one monitoring system"), which guide interventions in this area. The Netherlands participates in the Partnership Forum, that brings together in quarterly meetings the government, the multilateral and bilateral donors, and representatives of the NGO- and business communities. This participation can lead to representation to other bodies in this area like from

Official Netherlands Development Assistance to Namibia, 1991-2004, annual disbursement US dollar x1000

| 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.40 | 2.62 | 10.31 | 6.71 | 7.17 | 5.01 | 8.09 |

| 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 9.74 | 7.48 | 3.15 | 4.94 | 4.78 | 2.94 | 4.15 |

Source: OECD/DAC, International Development Statistics on line

2004 – 2006 to NACCATUM, the country co-ordinating mechanism for the Global Fund on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The Netherlands policy to limit the number of core-countries for development co-operation made it difficult to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic affecting the whole region. Therefore, a regional programme was established, which was at first run from the Dutch embassy in Harare and later from Pretoria. The programme includes nine countries, among them Namibia. Financial support is made available to NGO's and UN-agencies, which run programmes in most of these nine coun-

tries. In 2006 a programme was started at SADC-level in which Namibia will participate.

A separate group in which the Netherlands participates is Partners in Democracy, which includes USAID and UNICEF and pursues a light but useful coordination mechanism.

In the execution of the Governance programme a very close co-ordination and harmonisation developed among the embassies of Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands. Basket funding was achieved in many shared activities. Several activities were funded through a silent partnership with Finland.

