



Overview on the development of Minimum Standards for Residential Child Care Facilities

**At the occasion of the official launch of the Standards
17 July 2009, NCH**

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare being tasked among others with the responsibility of ensuring the overall wellbeing of children, also has the responsibility to ensure that the rights of children are protected and upheld at all times and that in all service provision, quality care is of paramount importance. This has led to the development of Minimum Standards of Care for children in residential facilities.

My task is to give you an overview of the process undertaken in the development of these standards. I will attempt to do just that.

The development of the Minimum Standards of Care for RCCF is a result of a consultative and participatory process with many of the people involved in alternative care in Namibia. Many of who are also present here today, including children and young people.

The process that was spearheaded by two consultants, in collaboration with staff from Head Quarters of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, started in July 2008 until November 2008.

Several consultative workshops were held during that period with social workers and policy makers from line ministries such as the MOHSS(who also had guidelines for RCCF which were implemented by organizations such as SOS and Christ Hope International), MOJ, MOE and the LAC. Field visits were also undertaken to residential facilities in the regions of Khomas, Erongo, Caprivi, Kavango and Otjozondjupa. Child participation was integrated in all stages of the standards development.

Interviews, focus group discussions and workshops took place with the management of facilities, (national directors and principals), caregivers and children.

The workshops with caregivers paid specific attention to issues concerned with caring for children, covering admission and initial decision-making period, while children are being cared for, in relation to leaving care and after care arrangements.

In three facilities, separate workshops were held with children (in the regions of Caprivi, Otjozondjupa and Khomas). In total 100 children participated in these workshops organized on the basis of age:

- 7-12 years group-who expressed themselves mostly through drawings and games,**
- 13 – 18 years group – who were very much vocal, and the**
- 19 + age**
- group who played the advisory role based on their experience especially on issues of transition to adulthood and leaving – care.**

The input from the field visits led to the preparation of a quality standards framework which was then discussed in a two-day workshop held in August 2008, where a range of stakeholders including RCCF managers, caregivers, young people, representatives from different Ministries most of whom were regional principal social workers. These people worked in groups to develop the standards and the guidelines on how to achieve these standards.

Later, the consultants together with the Control Social Workers of the Ministry further refined the draft document which was then presented to, and discussed at a three-day workshop held between October 22 and 24, 2008 at Heja Lodge outside Windhoek. This workshop was attended by most MGECSW regional social workers and key representatives of Namibian NGO's involved in the provision of alternative care. All comments made during this latter workshop have been incorporated in the final version of the Minimum Standards for Residential Child Care Facilities in Namibia now available and soon to be launched.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the visuals of what I have just presented.....

I thank You