

CHANGE General Report



CHANGE

Report for the year ended 2011

CHANGE - General Report 2011

This report provides an overview of activities at the CHANGE offices, Unit 6 and 10, Tal Terrace, Wecke Street, Central Business District.

CHANGE opened its offices on the 11th of January after the festive season holidays.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CHANGE is an independent Non Government Organisation (NGO) actively involved in uplifting Namibian communities and contributing to economic and social development by re-integrating ex-offenders into society. Our organization is not only dealing with ex-offenders, it is also open to members of the community who come from disadvantaged backgrounds or adverse social conditions.

The task has thus been very difficult as Namibia has a great number of unemployed people and companies are reluctant to employ ex-offenders and semi-illiterate members of CHANGE.

HIV/Aids, poverty and unemployment continue to be the major challenges for the whole of Namibian society. Ex-offenders face these and many other challenges, including:

1. Families and the community-at-large reject ex-offenders after release and often they have no one to turn to for shelter, food and employment.
2. They are generally unfamiliar with the requirements of commercial enterprises.
3. Past and present family and social problems were and are counterproductive in their daily activities.

Our intention is to prevent recidivism of ex-offenders by promoting zero-tolerance towards crime and providing "a culture of care" in the reintegration process.

TARGET GROUP

CHANGE aims to provide much needed training to ex-offenders and volunteers in the field of practical and commercial enterprises to enable them to become self-employed.

CO-OPERATION WITH WVTC and KAYEC

2011, no students were taken to the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre due to the changes in their intake programmes. Our members at WVTC had difficulties with the trainers who seemed to change their timetables and exams without prior notification.

However, 3 members from CHANGE all ex-offenders were taken to KAYEC to be trained in various: i.e Plumbing, Household Electrical Engineering and Motor Mechanics.

All of them excelled in their training and 1 student received a Toolbox as token of his hard work and being the best overall student for the year at KAYEC's graduation ceremony

CHANGE ACTIVITIES

Apart from members at WVTC and KAYEC external trainings CHANGE office offers daily sessions in the following areas:

- Basic Computer Skills and on request Advanced Computer Science
- Basic English Communication Course
- Fashion Design and Tailoring
- Life skills Up-Grading Course
- Entrepreneurship Skills

Apart from the training courses, counselling sessions are provided to members in need. Our counsellors are called in should the need arise and counselling sessions are provided to family members as well. Serious cases are referred to psychiatrists and psychologists.

JUSTIFICATION

95% of all the training recipients are motivated to become self-employed or work in the public or private sector after graduation from CHANGE. We help members to find job placements after they finish their training with CHANGE.

Expertise gained here will hopefully enable them to contribute as meaningful members of society to a better life. By meeting our goals and objectives our members will be able to sustain themselves and their families.

BACKGROUND TO PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Hanns Seidel Foundation has provided funding for all these programme activities as from 2004 onwards.

Computer Training Programme

The computer training programme commenced in 2001 and is running to date. 1012 students have received certificates so far in this course.

CHANGE's Computer Tutor is a product of this program and went through training with the WVTC after he completed the course at CRIS – back then it was called Criminals Return Into Society. He is still offering classes since 2006.

The Basic Computer Course has three intakes per year. Computer training for the first intake started on the 11th of January.

82 students registered for both day and evening classes of which 46 passed their exams and they graduated on the 24 of November this year. 23 students found jobs outside Windhoek and this led them dropping the course without completion.

Life skills upgrading course

The Life Skills Upgrading Course was introduced in 2001/2002 with volunteers offering to share their expertise. The focus was to prepare our trainees for the job market, build their self esteem and to assist them in dealing with the challenges of daily life.

More than 855 students have benefited and were counselled. Ex-offenders released from Windhoek Central Prison, Walvis Bay and Oluno Prison likewise received counselling for post-traumatic stress disorder in the past 5 years. The program has been expanded to include other destitute CHANGE members, recovering drug addicts and sex workers. 52 members participated in training sessions during 2011.

Every second month CHANGE has Open House meetings on a Friday morning focusing on topical issues, i.e. substance abuse, domestic violence, escalating crime etc. Since 2002 we had up to seventy participants per session. In those sessions public speaking is being promoted and often dramas, poems or testimonies are delivered.

Basic English communication course

Due to the recognition of member's poor written and spoken communication skills in English, the Basic English Communication Course was introduced in 2004.

It is obligatory for members with poor language skills to undertake the course in addition to other courses that are conducted in English. 9 students attended the Basic English Communication Course which is held in the afternoon from 2pm to 3.30pm.

Entrepreneurship course

Most of our ex-offenders face additional hurdles such as the quest for employment. Rejection and stigmatisation due to their criminal record may present setbacks in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The objective of the course is to enable them to write a business plan, to consult with relevant authorities and to start a small business in a professional manner.

Both our Computer participants and Fashion Designing trainees attended a Business Awareness Workshop which was held by IMLT staff, and the participants were able to continue with a Business Simulation for another week.

From the evaluation and feedback, the program is a huge success and CHANGE indicated to the facilitators to have the course as permanent fixture which is held annually to all outgoing students.

Fashion Designing and Tailoring

620 people have been trained since the programme was introduced in February 2004. The programme has one diploma intake and two certificate intakes per annum depending on how many students are enrolling. 47 students managed to complete their training in the certificate level and 18 completed their diploma course.

Most of the students trained have managed to purchase their own equipment and they are working from home sewing and selling clothes. Some have managed to secure jobs in some of the clothing companies.

Students who attended the Entrepreneurship Training programme conducted by the IMLT training officers are saying the program coming in very handy especially now that they running their own small businesses.

HIV/Aids awareness campaign

Since its inception, CHANGE provides its members with relevant information on the pandemic. Condoms and femidoms but however we have realised that femidoms are becoming popular though they are available at our offices. Members can submit to voluntary HIV testing at the New Start Centre, which also provides counselling, while CHANGE counsellors are called in on request to provide couple counselling as well.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare provide new assignments of condoms every 4 months – if available. On a bi-annual basis, we invite local experts to hold special counselling sessions with our members and again this year we had another representative from PeaceCo who held a one day workshop with our members on HIV/Aids.

Anti-crime campaign

The annual Anti-crime campaign is held at the end of August. Members of the Namibian Prison Service, the Namibian Police, faith-based organisations, churches and the judiciary address our members on the promotion of zero-tolerance towards crime. The session is obligatory for all members and other community members are invited to participate as well. Last and this year we had a representative from legal Shield who came and held a half a day workshop with our members. Also students had a 1 week workshop with the NID members on Corruption which they were taught and made aware of the effects of corruption in our society.

PROBLEMS

The following problems were identified during training:

1. Since we moved to our new premises in town most students have been having difficulties with transport costs and this has led to some of them dropping out before finishing their course.
2. Many students have poor language skills and find it difficult to follow the tutor's instruction.
3. Ex-offenders who have been in prison for a long time are semi-illiterate, a problem we are trying to solve with Namibia literacy trust so that they can give us the right material for training our members who are illiterate.
4. Some members are on the books of CHANGE despite not being actively involved in any activities or training. A reason might be that many of them reside in remote areas.
5. Members who find jobs during training quit their courses and pursue the job offers.

OBSERVATION

Despite problems mentioned, the majority of our trainees are happy with their training and are serious to start a new life. Families that have gone through counselling are better equipped to deal with their daily problems.

Outstanding Activities for 2011

- Mevoline Hauraka started her own clothing line which is specialising in denim Herero dresses and its proving to be a success.
- Paulina Magano Shigwedha got a job at one of the Lodges in Mariental where she sewing and repairing beddings and curtains for the lodge.
- Tjimbinaje Kanambunga entered the Herero Dress competition and she is one of the finalists to complete again next year for the grand title.
- Sonia Kii Tjipuna was encouraged by her husband to undertake the Designing course and as from the August this year both of them are renting a shop opposite Soweto market in Katutura. She completed her Certificate level this year and next she will proceed with Diploma level.
- Paulus Nepembe a former student got a tender from UNAM to clean the university's buildings as from the 2nd of January next year, after he wrote a project proposal which he was assisted by the IMLT staff.
- Nathaniel Nafuka our member who attended training at KAYEC received a tool kit worth N\$8000.00 from Cymot after he came top of the class during his training

- Sagaria Itembu got employed with Edgars Wernhil and he is working as a Systems Supporter for all the tills for the shop.
- Gothard Hoxobes also a former trainee got employed with P.C Centre as from July this year and he passed his 3month training probation on fixing Apple Computers

FUNDING

Salaries for our tutor salaries are sponsored by Hanns Seidel Foundation, First National Bank is supplementing the overhead costs. Furthermore HSF signs responsibility for our Computer training programme, Life Skills training, Basic English Communication course and Entrepreneurship course.

GRADUATION

CHANGE Graduation Ceremony, a yearly event, was held on 24th November at the Goethe Institute:

- ❖ 47 students graduated in the Computer Training Programme
- ❖ 52 students in Fashion Designing and Tailoring
- ❖ 6 students received their certificated in basic English Communication
- ❖ 62 received certificates for attending the Business Training Course provided by IMLT.

In early April CHANGE celebrated its 10years of existence and on this day 8 students from the Computer Training Course also received their certificates as well as 7 from the Fashion Designing group. The Fashion Designing programme also received an over lock machine from the Hanns Seidel Foundation on that day. The event was held at the HSF Hall on the 14^h of April 2011

PLAN OF ACTION FOR 2012

CHANGE focal point and absolute priority will be as all the years before, to provide training to our new members and to assist graduates in finding job placements on the limited job market countrywide.

CHANGE will assist members who completed their training in the Fashion Designing and Tailoring to acquire the small grants that are being offered to underprivileged women with skills by the KHOMAS Regional Council.

CONCLUSION

CHANGE is proud to say that our programmes are an overwhelming success and this gives us hope and strength to continue with these programmes. Most people who have undertaken our courses have managed to secure employment whilst most of them have managed to purchase their own equipment and are now self-employed.

*Submitted by CHANGE Tutors
05 December 2011*