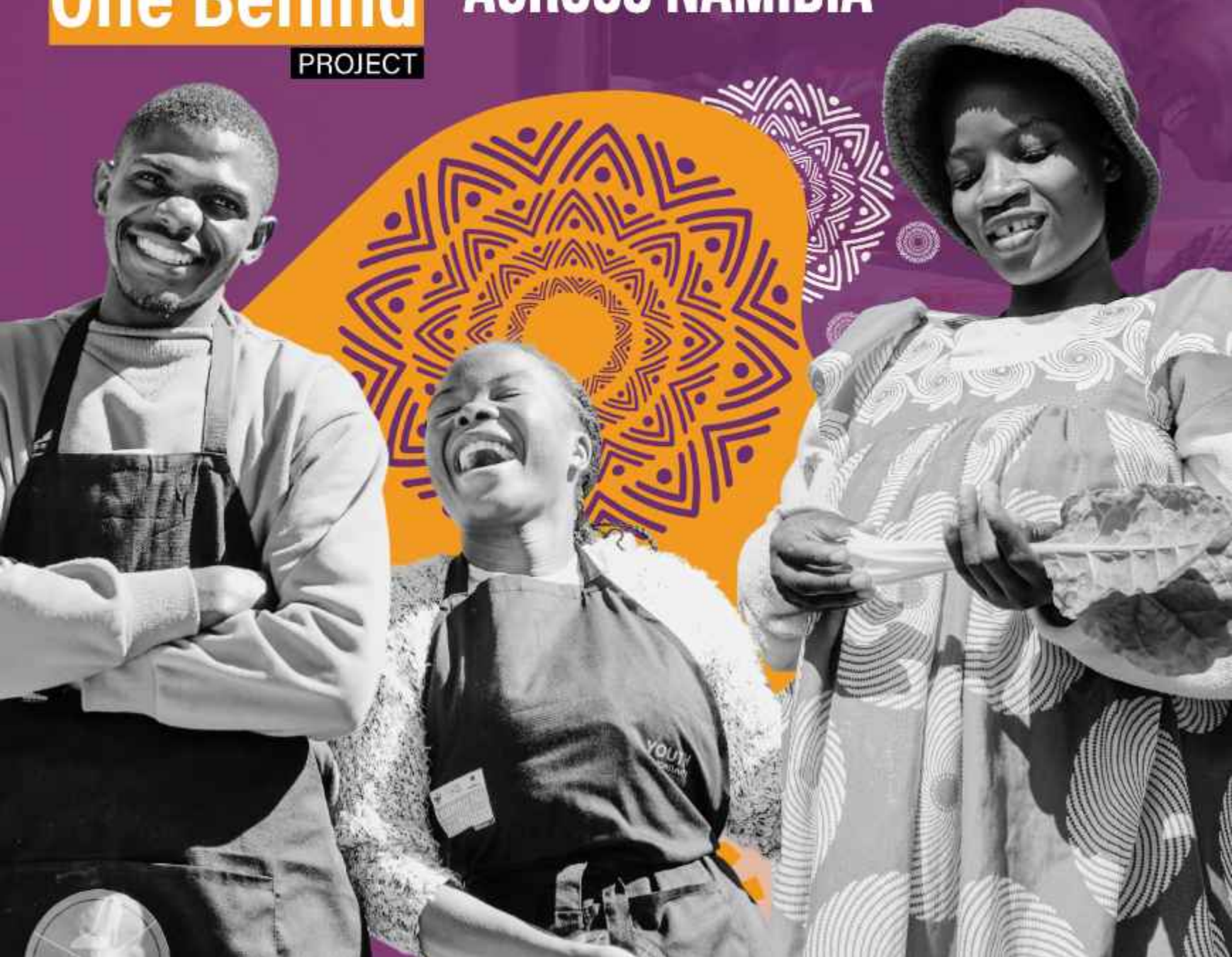




Leaving No One Behind

PROJECT

STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION ACROSS NAMIBIA



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From
the People of Japan

FOREWORD

It is with profound honour and commitment that I present the forward to this book, which chronicles the transformative journey of the "Leaving No One Behind" (LNOB) Project. The LNOB Project was conceived during a critical period in the last quarter of 2021, with the primary aim of addressing the urgent needs of Namibia's most vulnerable populations, particularly women and adolescent girls. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing challenges, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive and immediate interventions in sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV).

Japan's support for this project aligns seamlessly with our Country Development Cooperation Policy for Namibia, which emphasises sustainable and inclusive economic and social development. Under this policy, we prioritise poverty reduction and livelihood improvement, particularly in rural areas. The LNOB Project is a direct embodiment of these priorities, ensuring that marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, and out-of-school youth, are not left behind.

Since its inception, the LNOB Project has been implemented through a collaborative network of regional organisations and community structures. These include Namibian government ministries of health, gender, education, youth, and safety, along with civil society organisations such as the One Economy Foundation, Namibia Planned Parenthood Association, Regain Trust and the Society for Family Health. This multi-faceted approach ensures a broad and effective reach across the Khomas, Omusati, Oshana, Kunene, and Zambezi regions.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the LNOB Project is witnessing the tangible impacts it has had on individuals and communities. Japan's commitment to this initiative extends beyond mere funding. Our approach ensures sustainability by embedding components that allow beneficiaries to continue their projects independently. Over the past eleven years, Japan has funded 24 projects through the Japan Supplementary Budget Projects (JSBP), in collaboration with various UN agencies, amounting to over NAD 320 million. This continued support underscores our long-term dedication to Namibia's development.

H.E. Mr. Hisao Nishimaki
Ambassador of Japan to Namibia

The Leaving No One Behind Project is more than just an initiative. It is a beacon of hope and resilience. It embodies the spirit of partnership between Japan and Namibia, striving to restore dignity, empower the vulnerable and build a brighter more inclusive future for all.

**H.E. Mr. Hisao Nishimaki
Ambassador of Japan to Namibia**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In Namibia, like in many parts of the world, the most vulnerable populations often face the harshest realities. Women, young people, persons with disabilities, and those living in rural or marginalized communities encounter challenges that hinder their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. The Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) project was born out of the urgent need to address these inequalities, and to remind the world that development is not complete unless it reaches the most isolated and underserved.

At the heart of this project is the belief that sustainable development must be inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all. LNOB has mobilised communities, fostered partnerships, and leveraged resources to break down the barriers that prevent the full participation of all people in society. From providing sexual and reproductive health services to promoting gender equality and empowering youth, the LNOB initiative has tackled critical issues that lie at the core of human dignity and sustainable development.

This book is more than a documentation of the project's milestones; it is a celebration of the resilience, courage and hope of those who have been impacted by LNOB project. It brings to light the stories of women who have reclaimed their rights, young people who have found their voices, and communities that have been strengthened by the realisation that inclusivity benefits everyone.

As you read through these pages, I invite you to reflect on the profound changes that occur when we ensure that no one is left behind. The journey of LNOB is far from over, but its success thus far reinforces the idea that a brighter future is possible—one where every individual, regardless of who they are or where they come from, can thrive.

On behalf of UNFPA Namibia, I extend my deepest gratitude to the partners, stakeholders, and communities who have embraced this vision with us. Together, we are building a future where everyone matters, and no one is left behind.

Erika Goldson
UNFPA Namibia Representative



On behalf of UNFPA Namibia, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Government and People of Japan, our implementing partners, stakeholders and communities who have embraced this vision with us. Together, we are building a future where everyone matters, and no one is left behind.

Erika Goldson
UNFPA Namibia Representative





OVERVIEW

The **Leaving No One Behind Project**, “Building Back Better from COVID-19: Restoring Dignity and Reshaping the Future for Women, Girls, Men, and Boys while Mitigating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Negative Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Outcomes,” is funded by the Government of Japan. This initiative serves as a critical post-COVID-19 recovery effort in Namibia.

The project aims to ensure that women, girls, boys, and men from target regions, particularly the most marginalized groups—such as persons with disabilities, homeless individuals including those living on the streets, pregnant and lactating mothers, refugees and migrants, and sex workers—are empowered to overcome the effects of COVID-19 through improved livelihoods, GBV prevention and response support, and increased access to life-saving sexual and reproductive health services.

NAMIBIA'S CHALLENGES



Over
1000
Reported rape
cases annually



19%
Teenage pregnancy



28% Girls
29.5% Boys
Adolescents justify
beating as acceptable



46.1%
Youth unemployment



42%
Secondary school
completion (Girls)



43%
New HIV infection
amongst adolescents
and young people



PROJECT OBJECTIVES



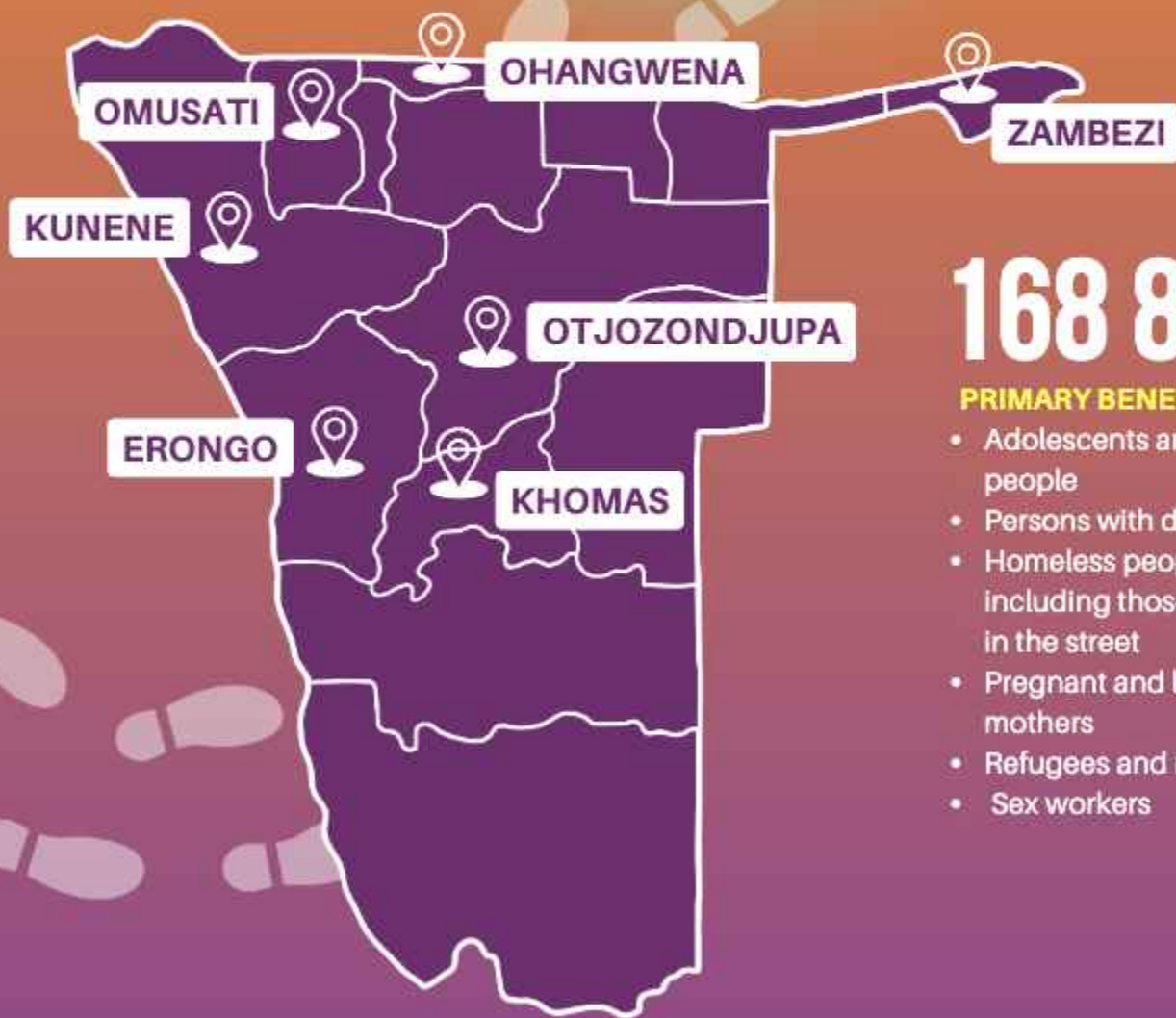
To improve livelihoods through skills development and support to restore and create a positive impact on the lives of young boys and girls

To develop life skills, build self-esteem and expand level of response service for communities with Mental Health and Psychosocial Services (MHPSS)



To increase access to essential lifesaving sexual reproductive health (SRH) and GBV prevention and response and maternal health services with the focus on vulnerable communities

TARGETED REGIONS AND BENEFICIARIES



168 810

PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES

- Adolescents and young people
- Persons with disability
- Homeless people including those living in the street
- Pregnant and lactating mothers
- Refugees and migrants
- Sex workers

THE SHOE LAUNDRY

The Story of Tidy Tekkies



Photo: ©UNFPA Namibia

In a world where opportunities can feel scarce, Secilia Iyambo (19), Hilma Imene (22) and Lazarus Ndiilenge (27) are three youth entrepreneurs who have found a unique way to take a step toward success—one freshly polished shoe at a time. Secilia recalls the day they were selected. “I didn’t believe it at first. Winning that training week felt like a dream,” she says, beaming. “It was the first time I thought, ‘Maybe I can actually do this.’” Lazarus agrees, remembering his excitement when he found out he’d be joining the program. “I was nervous, but mostly excited. I’d never been given a chance like this before.”


At first, it felt overwhelming, but once we started working together, everything clicked. We were learning on the job, and every day was a new experience.

Secilia Iyambo

The training week, led by One Economy Foundation and funded by the Government of Japan with support from UNFPA, brought together 16 young people from different regions across Namibia. They were given hands-on training in shoe cleaning, customer service and business management. “I didn’t know anything about running a business before this,” Hilma laughs. “But by the end of the week, I was ready to open my own shop!” Winning the training was only the beginning. As part of their prize, Lazarus, Secilia and Hilma received start-up kits filled with the tools they needed to set up their own shoe-cleaning businesses. They joined forces to form Tidy Tekkies, a small business with big dreams, based at the #BeFree Youth Campus in Katutura, Windhoek.

The container-based facility was soon bustling with activity, transforming from a simple workspace into a thriving hub where the team could share ideas, troubleshoot and lean on each other for support. Lazarus shares that it wasn’t just the technical skills that made a difference but also the sense of team work. “We all come from different places and backgrounds, but we’re united by a common goal. We’re not just Tidy Tekkies, we’re like family now.”

Tidy Tekkies attracts clients ranging from police officers and students to athletes and local professionals. For Lazarus, the respect and recognition they’ve earned is one of the most rewarding parts of the job.



“ We want people to
see our work, to know
that we’re serious
about what we do. ”

— Hilma Imene

**“People see us as
business owners now.
It’s not just about making
money, it’s about
earning people’s trust.”**

Lazarus Ndillenge

Miina Shakela, Program Coordinator for the One Economy Foundation, shares the deeper mission behind the Shoe Laundry. “Our goal was never just to teach shoe cleaning,” she explains. “We wanted to show these young people that they have the power to change their lives. Tidy Tekkies is proof of that.” As the business grows, the team is exploring ways to reach more customers. “We’re getting better at sharing our journey online,” says Hilma. “We want people to see our work, to know that we’re serious about what we do.” For the Tidy Tekkies founders, the initiative was a gateway to new ambitions. Lazarus dreams of expanding their services beyond Windhoek, while Secilia envisions teaching other young people the skills she’s learned. “One day, I’d like to train other young people, to give them the same chance I got,” she says. Hilma sees Tidy Tekkies growing beyond just a business. “I want us to be a symbol of hope, to show that if we can do it, anyone can.”

Ambassador of Japan to Namibia, H.E. Mr. Hisao Nishimaki highlights the broader impact of the project. “This initiative is about giving young people a chance to shape their own futures. Every shoe they clean is more than just a polished pair; it’s a step away from poverty and toward independence.”

With every customer, every clean shoe, and every post on social media, Lazarus, Secilia, and Hilma are walking toward a future they’re building for themselves. Tidy Tekkies is more than a business; it’s a vision of what’s possible when young people are given the chance to shine.



Photo: ©UNFPA Namibia



KAZETJINDIRE ANGELIKA MUHARUKUA

MATERNITY WAITING HOME



For Twahandjana Kamati, pregnancy has always been challenging. Living in Namibia's Kunene region, she has had to travel far to access healthcare. Each time she became pregnant, the Kazetjindire Angelika Muharukua Maternity Waiting Home in Opuwo gave her a safe place to stay.

"When I fell pregnant again, I knew I would return to this facility," Ms. Kamati says. She has delivered all three of her children with the support of the maternity home. "None of those births have been complicated. I gave birth via the Maternity Waiting Home and no child has been harmed. That's why I've been coming back and will continue coming back."

Ms. Kamati says the home lets her rest, something she cannot do at home. "Here at the maternity waiting home, I don't have those types of responsibilities. This facility is important because when you are here, you are able to rest. At home, you don't get any assistance." The home offers essentials like mosquito nets.


Recently, support from the Government of Japan helped equip the home with fridges, stoves, tables and chairs. These items have improved living conditions for the women. The caretaker at the home says these resources make a big difference. "The majority of women did not have any livelihood support while residing in the maternity waiting home," she explains.

"Some pregnant women from rural areas, like me, find it difficult to find housing in town and go to the hospital for regular antenatal checkups. Being able to stay here has taken that stress away."

— *Ms. Twahandjana Kamati*

The maternity waiting home, supported by UNFPA Namibia, provides shelter and care for women like Ms. Kamati. Located in Opuwo, it welcomes mothers-to-be from across Kunene, including women from the OvaHimba tribe, many of whom must travel long distances to get help.

The addition of sewing machines has also given women a chance to learn new skills. These small opportunities help mothers focus on their health and prepare for childbirth.

A young girl with short dark hair stands in front of a bright red building. She is wearing a purple dress with a small white floral pattern and a white beaded necklace. To her left, a large purple circular graphic contains a quote. In the foreground, the back of a person wearing a blue and white patterned shirt is visible. To the right, another person in a black dress with large floral prints is partially seen. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

The donation of mosquito nets and sewing machines will protect pregnant women residing in the home from malaria, while also providing opportunities to learn new skills and techniques.

— *Ms. Twahandjana Kamati*

The maternity waiting home is part of a larger effort to improve maternal health in rural Namibia. Honourable Dr. Esther Utjiua Muinjangu, Namibia's Deputy Health Minister, highlights the role of family support. "We encourage Namibian fathers and men to send their spouses to the maternity home to ensure the safe delivery of babies and reduce the maternal and neonatal mortality rates in the region," she says.

For Ms Kamati, the maternity waiting home is a lifeline. "There is care here," she says. Her gratitude reflects the importance of this facility for women who might otherwise face pregnancy alone. By providing a safe space, the maternity waiting home ensures more mothers can deliver their babies safely.







We encourage Namibian fathers and men to send their spouses to the maternity home to ensure the safe delivery of babies and reduce the maternal and neonatal mortality rates in the region.

**Honourable Dr. Esther Utjiua Muinjangué
Deputy Minister of Health of Namibia**



FOCUS FM

0.68



“

This equipment isn't just an asset for the station, it's an investment in our community. With this donation, we can bring the mic to the people, wherever they are, so their stories and concerns can be heard firsthand.

Chruschey Snyders

”

Focus FM is a young radio station in Windhoek that has made it its mission to connect, inform and give a voice to the Namibian people—especially those in places where news and resources don't always reach.

It's not just what Focus FM broadcasts that sets them apart—it's how. With a commitment to cover topics often missing from mainstream media, Focus FM has become a rare and critical platform for addressing sensitive issues like gender-based violence (GBV), sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and mental health.

However like many community-driven organisations, Focus FM faces some unique challenges. Its ambitions to engage Namibians from all corners were limited by equipment and resources. That's where the LNOB project came in.

Focus FM was invited to participate in capacity-building training through a partnership between UNFPA and UNESCO. This training equipped Focus FM's presenters and staff with the skills to address delicate issues in their programming.

In July 2024, the LNOB initiative went a step further by providing Focus FM with a range of new equipment, valued at over N\$237,000. The donation includes portable microphones, a generator and sound systems, which means Focus FM can now move beyond the city and take its broadcasts directly to communities.

For Station Commander Chruschey Snyders, this is much more than a technical upgrade. "This equipment isn't just an asset for the station; it's an investment in our community," Snyders said at the handover ceremony. "With this, we can bring the mic to the people, wherever they are, so their stories and concerns can be heard firsthand."

Namibia is a country where traditional media doesn't always reach everyone and the voices of those in distant areas are often left out of national conversations. With the new equipment, Focus FM now has the power to travel to rural communities and broadcast live from places that mainstream stations overlook.

According to Focus FM Radio presenter Johannes Orr, the ability to broadcast from the field has made a difference. "We can finally meet people where they are," he explained. "Sometimes, all we need to do is listen. And now, with the equipment, we're able to bring those voices straight to the airwaves."

Focus FM's staff understand that covering sensitive subjects, like GBV or SRHR, isn't about providing ready-made solutions but creating a platform for community members to share their ideas and even offer their own solutions. With portable microphones and a mobile generator, the station can now take its show on the road, heading to towns, villages and even the most remote parts of Namibia to meet listeners face-to-face.



Photo: ©UNFPA Namibia

In areas where radio remains one of the most trusted and accessible media sources, Focus FM's expanded reach has the potential to redefine what it means to be part of a national conversation.

This equipment lets us engage directly with our audience, wherever they are, and that's essential for a station like ours.

— Johannes Orr

As the station moves forward with its new capabilities, it's clear that Focus FM is no longer just a radio station—it's a public platform where Namibia's diverse voices and stories have a place to be heard.



LIDAR

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



I joined the Lidar development workshops with no skills, just a desire to support my daughter. Learning to bake has given me a business idea, and I'm hopeful. I've also learned about my rights as a woman. The training has opened my eyes.

— Elnet Nanes



Photo: ©UNFPA Namibia

In Central Katutura, the Lidar Community Foundation is quietly changing the lives of young mothers and vulnerable women.

Through the “Leaving No One Behind” (LNOB) project, the foundation is helping women build skills that improve their livelihoods. Serley Khaxas, Founder of Lidar, explains the project’s mission: “We’re here to provide economic empowerment for women facing serious barriers. Many of the women we are providing skills training to left school early and struggle to provide for their families.”

The development workshops take a practical approach, focusing on skills like financial literacy, baking, driving and job readiness. “Most of the beneficiaries are women who have faced issues like gender-based violence or long-term unemployment,” explains Khaxas. “We want them to feel capable of creating new opportunities for themselves. In just three weeks, 40 vulnerable women completed skills training covering material like baking, sexual health education and gender-based violence.”

28-year-old mother of two, Enginie Seibes, describes her journey: “Before joining the development workshops, I felt lost. I had two young boys and no way to support them. Through the workshops I learned how to bake, cook and even drive. These are skills I never thought I’d have.”

The results are encouraging. “We secured full-time jobs for 11 women, and 10 received their learner’s driver licenses,” notes Lidar Community founder Serley Khaxas. “These results mean real change for these women and their families.”

Another beneficiary, 27-year-old Elnet Nanes, shares her experience: “I joined the training days with no skills, just a desire to support my daughter. Learning to bake has given me a business idea and I’m hopeful. I’ve also learned about my rights as a woman. The training has opened my eyes.” Nanes’ story is common amongst Namibian mothers. “I thought I was alone in my struggles,” she says. “But now I know I’m part of a community. We support each other.”

The beneficiaries are appreciative. Seibes reflects, “I want to thank the Government of Japan and UNFPA for believing in us. Because of their support, we are no longer just surviving. They’ve given us tools to build better lives.”

While the progress is promising, Khaxas says more work is needed. “Namibia has one of the highest unemployment rates, especially among young women. We need more partnerships with businesses to provide jobs and internships for our graduates. We have a long way to go, but with continued support, we can reach more communities,” Khaxas says.

A young woman with dark skin and braided hair is speaking into a silver microphone. She is wearing a dark jacket. In the background, another person is visible, looking on. The image has a warm, slightly blurred background. A decorative orange graphic consisting of many thin, curved lines is in the bottom right corner.

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA SIMULATION LAB

On the University of Namibia (UNAM) campus, a new Simulation Lab—known as the SimLab—is changing how social work students are preparing for the real world. Through hands-on training, the UNAM SimLab is equipping social work students with practical skills that will prepare them to serve in communities facing high levels of social and mental health challenges.

"Social workers are vital to Namibia's communities," says Dr. Clifford Hlatywayo, UNAM lecturer and a leader in the lab's development. "But they need practice, not just theory. The SimLab provides an essential space for them to gain experience." Using visual and situational learning methods, the SimLab enables students to refine their skills in a safe setting.

The establishment of the SimLab was made possible through a generous donation of equipment such as projectors, microphones and learning materials from the Government of Japan. "Our goal is to equip Namibians with skills that benefit both individuals and entire communities," shared Japan's Ambassador to Namibia.

The SimLab also houses research resources, serving as a hub of information accessible to students and the community. The project, focused on addressing inequities worsened by COVID-19, prioritises health and well-being for marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities, young people, and women affected by gender-based violence.

With the simulation lab I believe I can rehearse as much as I want. I can put a certain theories into practice in the lab before I go to the community members. The lab creates a platform where we can get guidance from other students and the lecturers on how to improve the implementation of social work theories in Namibia.

— *Diana Iiyambo (UNAM social work student)*



Photos: ©UNFPA Namibia



MEDICAL EQUIPMENT HANDOVER

On July 29, 2024, a wide-ranging donation from Japan gave a substantial boost to healthcare and education for Namibian girls and women. The donation, valued at over N\$220,000, included essential sanitary pads to benefit 6,000 adolescent girls, as well as medical equipment to strengthen maternal healthcare in rural areas.

The Minister of Education, Arts, and Culture, Hon. Anna Nghipondoka, emphasized that “this is a significant step toward addressing the challenges girls face due to period poverty. It will help ensure that menstruation doesn’t become a barrier to education.” A 2021 assessment revealed that 14.2% of Namibian girls miss school due to menstrual pain, lack of sanitary products, and discomfort.

In addition to supporting school attendance, Japan’s donation also included vital healthcare equipment for maternal and reproductive health services, including 67 bed screens, eight gynecological couches, six physician scales, 15 cardiotocography (CTG) machines, three mobile ultrasound scanners with printers, and six Doppler fetal heart rate monitors. This equipment will support hospitals in the Zambezi, Kunene, and Ohangwena regions, where access to specialized care can be limited.

Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right. This donation will help improve health outcomes for women and girls across the country.

— Erika Goldson

Japan’s Ambassador to Namibia, explained Japan’s broader goal in supporting Namibia’s health infrastructure. “Japan is committed to helping Namibia build health systems that ensure no one is left behind,” he stated, underscoring Japan’s dedication to providing resources that promote community well-being. The donated medical supplies will be especially impactful in Namibia’s rural areas, where maternal health challenges remain significant despite recent improvements.

Though Namibia has reduced maternal mortality from 450 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 215 in 2020, rural healthcare services continue to face hurdles in offering comprehensive care.



Since 2022, the LNOB project has allocated USD 700,000 toward livelihood support, life skills, mental health, and SRH services, including the provision of medical equipment and a Mobile Clinic Van valued at N\$3.8 million.



A close-up photograph of a person's hands using a pipette to transfer a liquid sample from a test tube into a small, white, disposable container. The container is placed on top of a grey, ruggedized electronic device. A label on the device reads "Leaving No One Behind PROJECT". The background is blurred, showing the person's legs and the outdoor setting.

REVOLUTIONISING HEALTHCARE

IN REMOTE AREAS OF NAMIBIA

In the remote region of Kunene where harsh weather conditions and long distances often separate communities from essential services, healthcare delivery is getting a boost from an unexpected source: drones.

Kunene's big terrain and challenging roads make it difficult for healthcare workers to reach remote communities quickly, however a new initiative is bridging the healthcare gap for some of the country's most isolated clinics by using drones to deliver medical supplies.

For many residents, particularly new mothers and those needing urgent care, long journeys to clinics can delay vital services like maternal health support, contraception, and HIV prevention.

This is where the UNFPA's partnership with Namibian Drone Services (NDS) steps in. Their project completed in July 2024, is testing how drones can reduce delivery times by up to 70%—bringing essential medical supplies to clinics such as Otjiu and Ongongo in a fraction of the usual time.

Nurses at these clinics have already seen how timely deliveries make it easier to respond to emergencies and improve healthcare for women, families, and communities.

The drones, capable of traveling up to 90 kilometres from Opuwo State Hospital, are now bringing supplies like contraception and HIV prevention tools right to clinic doors, helping address urgent needs faster than ever before.

Drone delivery is also proving cost-effective. Namibia's poor rural roads can strain vehicles and drive up maintenance costs, while drones offer a more affordable way to reach remote areas.

As UNFPA and NDS look to expand the project, plans are underway to use larger drones with increased payloads to serve more regions. This initiative blends technology and healthcare in a way that could redefine access for communities across Africa.

By bringing supplies where they're needed most, Namibia's new drone project highlights how digital innovation can make healthcare accessible for all, regardless of location.



SNAPSHOT OF LNOB PROJECT RESULTS

12 000

Vulnerable girls who are the furthest (informal settlement/ remote rural areas) are offered menstrual sanitary pads.

5 290

SRH commodities delivered through innovation (drone) in one focus region.

155 260

People (men and women, boys and girls) receive key messages on SRH and GBV prevention and response including migrants, refugees, and persons with disabilities, and including through the media.

5 290

Men and boys engaged in positive masculinity, women's empowerment and equitable gender relations in five targeted regions (Karas, Erongo, Kunene, Kunene and Kunene).

7 549

GBV survivors, other vulnerable groups benefit from life skills and psycho-social support in six regions.

12 529

People (adolescents, youth, women men) including migrants refugees persons with disabilities and sex workers, reached through mobile SRH and GBV services.



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