

**The Information Needs for Poverty Eradication in  
the Context of the Millennium Development Goals  
(MDGs) at Grenwell Matongo in Katutura,  
Windhoek,**

Research Findings and Conclusions of a Study of the City of  
Windhoek/Finnish Project

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November 2007

## **Executive Summary**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the eradication of poverty are two concerns that are widely supported by the Namibian Government, the United Nations and bilateral agencies. However within Africa, not much research has been done on what role libraries and community information resource centres can play towards meeting the goals of the MDG programme and the eradication of poverty. The City of Windhoek, through the Vantaa-Windhoek project, which addresses among others, promotion of culture of reading and enhancement of access to development information to communities in informal settlements. Both partners were keen to establish the information needs situation of the community to fight poverty and deprivation.

Thus this report presents findings from the study carried out at Grenwell Matongo, Katutura, Windhoek, on information needs for poverty eradication in the context of MDGs. Focus group discussions were conducted with three groups consisting of young females, young males, and adults respectively. In addition, participants participated in drawing Venn diagrams on various aspects of their information needs and use behaviours when dealing with poverty issues.

The participants described the high levels of poverty in their community, and the low levels of hygiene and sanitation. There was recognition that education for children is important to overcome poverty. Poor facilities for homework at home, low parental support because of low level of education and hunger among learners make learning difficult. Gender relations are marked by alcohol related violence and rapes. The rates of HIV/AIDS and TB infections were thought to be high but kept secret because of fear of stigma. There were serious environmental problems in the community because of the use of inflammable fuel sources such as paraffin and candles in the corrugated iron shacks.

The community information centre in the settlement is used intensively by young people to obtain educational information and for study facilities. Adults however, indicated that they only use the community information centre marginally, mainly for photocopying and literacy classes purposes. Recommendations are made on how to address the identified information needs of the community and capacity building in the context of MDG and poverty eradication.

Overall the youth appeared to have a richer information environment with more sources and channels for accessing and sharing information compared to adults in the community, some of who appeared isolated disempowered and complained that no one listened to them.

The key recommendations from this study include the following: Capacity building through the creation of a broad based information centre committee to provide advice and direction; expanding the range of information provided to the community, more facilities, expanding the size of the information centre to enable it to undertake more responsibilities, and introducing skills based and discussion forums into the information dissemination strategy. The need to network with other development agencies was also recommended as a way of providing support for the work being done at the centre.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Acknowledgements	4
<b>1. Background and Literature Review</b>	<b>5</b>
1.2 Introduction	
1.3 Background to the study	
<b>2 Research Design .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Methods	
2.2 Research procedures	
<b>3. Presentation of Findings .....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Extreme poverty, hunger and livelihoods	
3.2 Primary, secondary and non formal education	
3.3 Gender relations	
3.4 Mother and child health matters	
3.5 HIV/AIDS and TB	
3.6 Environmental degradation	
3.7 Networks and ICTs	
3.8 Grenwell Matongo community information centre	
<b>4. Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>43</b>

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the City of Windhoek and Vantaa Local Authority of Finland for making funds available to implement this study. The City of Windhoek Community Development Division staff for facilitating the execution of this small scale study to look into this important question of information needs for achieving the MDGs.

The individuals who helped with the finalization of this research project are many but I would like to single out for special mention the following:

City of Windhoek staff: Mr Ben Alcocks – Manager, Community development Division; Mr G. Mayombelo, Strategic executive of Economic Development and Community Services; Mrs Trudy Geises – Project Coordinator, Community Development.

We would like to express our appreciation to the community members of Grenwell Matongo, both the adults and young people who spared their time and came to the focus group discussions and Venn diogramme discussions. More especially, we thank Meme Hilda Amunyela, for her dynamism and leadership skills in the community. We thank the staff of the Grenwell Matongo Community information centre, Boyce Sakeus and Taimy Shaanika who assisted in identifying some of the young people who participated in the Focus Group Discussions.

We are also grateful for the facilitation and active involvement of the Vantaa Public library staff through the City of Windhoek. In particular, we thank Marjatta Lahti for her interest in the project. We could not have been able to collect the data without the excellent services of UNAM information and communication studies student research assistants: David Matsiveru, Booyesen, Wilhelm Uutoni, Asteria Uuyuni, Elisa Michael, Beuty Matongo, and Tumaini Mchombu.

To all, we say *Tangi Unene!* Thank you very much!

Kingo Mchombu, November 2007

# **1. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This is an exploratory research project aimed at investigating community information needs to meet Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) programme goals, focusing on poverty eradication and survival information needs and the information use patterns of a community in a City of Windhoek and Finnish libraries supported project.

The need for poor urban communities in Africa in general and Namibia in particular such as Grenwell Matongo to engage in poverty eradication programmes to achieve MDGs is pertinent and for that reason, knowing the current use, and possibilities of community information services is essential to address the needs of poor communities in various Windhoek communities and it could help to redesign and reaffirm the present community information strategy as presented by the City of Windhoek/Finnish project.

To achieve this, the research is determined to investigate the channels and media from which the community acquires information related to all the goals of the MDG programme.

The community's information use patterns to accessing information from news and events, employment and survival information, health care, education, community development projects, community library, shelter and sanitation and various other areas identified by the community itself are therefore going to be investigated. The collected data will enable this study to make recommendations on how to enhance the flow of information to address issues of poverty eradication, deprivation and economic development at Grenwell Matongo community. We hope these findings will also provide insights into how the needs of other poor urban based communities elsewhere in Namibia can be provided with access to capacity building information and knowledge to address basic human needs.

## 1.2 Background to the study

The reduction of poverty and optimizing human capabilities is a concern for all Third World countries and Namibia is no exception. Several key policy documents of the Government of Namibia have the reduction of poverty as an important priority goal (Namibia 2005). The National Development Plan 2 for Namibia also reaffirms the governments commitment to reduce extreme poverty in the country as Namibia moves towards Vision 2030. Vision 2030 key aim is to turn Namibia into an industrialized and knowledge based economy by the year 2030. Hence understanding how communities access and use information to address poverty eradication, and other MDGs is important as it will strengthen grassroots information services for the achievement of Namibia's long term vision.

Internationally, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has identified four capabilities for human development: healthy and long lives, access to knowledge, access to adequate resources for a decent standard of living, and opportunity to participate in the affairs of a community (UNDP 2006). Its not only the second capability which is centred on information and knowledge but all the other capabilities have information and knowledge implications too. For example better knowledge widens peoples opportunities for better health through employing preventive strategies more effectively. Similarly knowledge provides opportunities to improve income generation and to enhance interaction and participation in civic affairs in the community (Mchombu and Cadbury, 2006:3)

The World Bank (1999) has identified information and knowledge as vital resources in human development and overcoming poverty and other forms of deprivation. The report points out that knowledge has become as important as the other factors of production such as land, capital, and labour.

Education and the libraries are capable of reaching out to all potential beneficiaries with skills and adequate amount of information. But as argued by Gericke, the library can only

play a role in development and education if it provides services to all potential user groups in the community. She also asserts that the capacity of local communities to cope with daily problems of economic and social change...depends heavily on access to and use of information (Gericke, 1997). Unfortunately most African public libraries have tended to provide information support only to a small section of their population – the highly educated and elite groups in urban areas (Durrani, 1993)

The need to treat information as a public good has been identified by Evans who noted that an access to information and knowledge constitutes a global public good and is essential to the advancement of education, science, culture and communication, for empowerment, to the promote cultural diversity and to foster open governance (Evans, 2004).

Therefore this research attempted to discover how Grenwell Matongo community members use various channels and media to access information in some of the above-mentioned areas, including the use of the community information centre, to address their development needs and poverty eradication aspirations.

As this study focuses on the communities and their use of information in addressing poverty eradication, a closer identification with the communities in question is crucial. The Windhoek communities tend to be fragmented into social classes based on ethnic, racial, and even political affiliations that need to be taken into account to be able to create information services that cater for the entire population. According to Gericke, new approaches are vital in achieving this. These include identifying the needs of different ethnic groups as well as working with community and voluntary associations to promote and develop services (Gericke, 1997).

The challenge as stated by Morris, is to provide equal opportunities for all and that implies a commitment to rendering services without discrimination on the grounds of race and gender...or to help everyone achieve their full potential...Equal opportunities is also an important element in redressing the political and social imbalance that has existed



for so many years and through this to empower the disadvantaged communities (Morris, 1992).

Information is an essential ingredient in community development and community development is an essential factor in working towards participatory democracy.

Peter Lor argues that access to information is of cardinal importance to satisfy daily coping needs, ensure a competitive economy, promote education and life long learning, democracy and nation building (Lor, 1996).

Similarly, Harris also states that the capacity of local communities to cope with economic and social change depends heavily on access to information and if communities are not well informed, other policy measures will fail (Harris, 1992).

Some communities are still disadvantaged in terms of information access thus require an improvement of the existing information environment model to fit into an appropriately redesigned and new model.

But as noted by Coleman, there is need for a change of approach when using the term “disadvantaged”. He cautions that it is not people who are disadvantaged but communities experience disadvantage because of our (information professionals and activists) failure as service providers to offer them the same standard of service as other users (Coleman, 1992: 308).

Therefore it is the public and community librarians’ challenge to employ all possible methods for the creation and repackaging of information in both printed and multimedia form (Poller, 1995). However, as warned by Zaaïman, information centres should strive for the cooperative model – which incorporates full participation, consultation and involvement of the communities targeted (Zaaïman, 1988).

Similarly, a recent study (Mchombu and Cadbury, 2006:18) established that it is possible to design community libraries and information centres to reduce poverty and deprivation

and promote literacy. However a successful strategy for delivery of development information should include:

- empowerment of the community through their full participation to articulate their needs;
- local information delivery that is accessible to communities, which can only be realized through significant government support for the sector;
- close cooperation with other agencies delivering services to poor and marginalized communities, including government agencies; and
- incorporation of indigenous knowledge resources of the community in the community exchange strategies.
- A trained and proactive information facilitator who can stimulate a good flow and exchange of development information;
- Information gaps of the poor must first be identified and appropriate information assembled if it exists, and repackaged if it does not exist.

Moreover, knowledge of the multilingual and multicultural society to be served and new attitudes and social skills, as it is the case in Windhoek, are necessary to deal with cultural and language barriers in communicating with various individual information users. Wessels and Machet (1993) note that the widespread presence of illiteracy, absence of a reading culture, general ignorance as to what material and services are available in libraries, and dominance of an oral tradition among the black population affect the use of traditional libraries. The urbanization of large numbers of poor and uneducated (*sic*) people is also a universal phenomenon which the public library has to deal with (Gericke, 1997).

Some of the factors, pointed out by Fairer Wessels can be seen as a hindrance to the effective use of community information centres. It is noted by Wessels that illiterate people overwhelmingly make use of personal sources of information such as family and friends to cope with the needs of daily living and personal social networks are important sources of information for daily living. Even literates first rely on oral communication

and then resort to impersonal sources of information. But he advises that illiterate and semi literate people need an information middle-person who is part of the community and whom everyone knows, someone that can give information verbally, and package information that is easy to understand on various topics (Fairer Wessels, 1990). However, it is possible to view the state of illiteracy and the dominance of oral communication as an opportunity for tailor made information services based on audio-visual and interpersonal communication strategies, rather than an insurmountable problem (Mchombu, 2007)

There has been many other studies and reports on information needs and information use behaviour patterns for disadvantaged groups, such as Grenwell Matongo community, Katutura, Windhoek. The mass media has been identified as one such information system. News and public events can provide information and the community itself is made of people who are both news consumers and daily news makers. The mass media can also provide information to an individual but to extract relevant information on health care education for instance s/he needs a certain level of education to enable him/her to easily comprehend terminologies used. Information when misunderstood is misleading and therefore worthless (Poller, 1995).

Extension services in health, agriculture and community development have all been identified as forming another information system for disadvantaged groups. As noted above by Wessels (1990) they tend to use the two step information flow model with the extension agents serving as information transfer go-between the community and the information sources needed to address development issues (Mchombu, 1993; Chambers, 1993). It has been noted as well that extension agents often lack a proper place to store the extension literature and they operate in a fragmented way because different government departments run their own extension services without much coordination (Mchombu, 1993).

Libraries and community information centres have been identified as yet another information system to serve disadvantaged communities. Most of the services from this

category have tended to concentrate on the better off urban areas rather than poor urban and rural communities (Aboyade 1984; Giggey 1987; Mchombu and Cadbury, 2006). Zaaiman, (1988) Kempson (1985) and others have noted the need for community involvement if the community information service is to address their information needs. The need for a community information officer to coordinate the information transfer/exchange process has also been identified.

A few writers have written on the role of libraries and the MDG programme, both from developing countries and the developed world. Azebuike (2006), for example, has recognized the importance of access to information and knowledge and the capacity to innovate as important in the achievement of the fight against poverty. He concludes that without the achievement of the MDGs, the information society will not materialize for developing countries. Forsyth (2005), writing from the perspective of a developed country, Australia, accepts that the libraries have an important role to play in the achievement of the goals of the MDG programme but concludes that most of the goals have been achieved in developed countries except goal number seven concerned with environmental sustainability.

### **1.3. Research problem Statement:**

The brief review of existing literature reveals that although there are many reports/papers on information support for the poor communities in Africa, very few studies provide practical answers on how to provide development information for poverty eradication and meeting the MDG programme goals. Further, the strong emerging awareness that information and knowledge are a key resource to alleviating poverty is seldom supported by action research studies which clearly indicate how the various aspects of information needs for poverty eradication, information sources and providers, the information use behaviour of the urban poor, and the supporting infrastructure and infostructure can all be brought and woven together to design a community development information system that adequately and efficiently addresses the development information needs of the poor to overcome poverty, deprivation and other human development challenges.

#### **1.4 Purpose of study:**

This study will investigate the current use patterns of information by selected communities in the project area for the purpose of addressing poverty eradication and other development goals. The data gathered from this study will be used to redesign or reaffirm the existing community information strategy of the City of Windhoek/Finnish project. It therefore aims at collecting data on development information needs of the community as well as the current community information centre strategy and match these two aspects. Towards that end, the community information use patterns will be investigated including the use of interpersonal and media channels to access information from various sources including news and events, education, health care, income generation, poverty eradication, environmental degradation, community development projects and other areas identified by the community itself.

#### **1.5 Research objectives:**

1. To investigate the community perception on poverty and survival strategies
2. To explore the extent to which the community have access to resources including information and knowledge, and other resources, which address poverty and development needs.
3. To identify sources of development information for the community in health, formal and adult education, income generation and other pertinent areas.
4. To critically assess the current usage patterns, relevance, and adequacy of resources and facilities at the Grenwell Matongo community information centre
5. To identify gaps and weaknesses in the information service network from the communities' perspectives for better services
6. To make recommendations on how the information centre strategy could be effectively implemented for the benefit of the communities in Katutura to address poverty eradication and development needs in accordance with Namibia's Vision 2030 and MDGs.

## **1.6 Research questions:**

1. What is the community perception of poverty and appropriate survival strategies?
2. To what extent does the community have access to resources including information and knowledge, and other resources, which address poverty and development needs?
3. What are the major sources of development information for the community in health, formal and adult education, income generation and other pertinent areas?
4. What is the current usage patterns, relevance, and adequacy of resources and facilities at the Grenwell Matongo community information centre?
5. Where are the gaps and weaknesses in the information service network from the communities' perspectives for better services?
6. To what extent does the existing community information centre strategy of the City of Windhoek/Finnish project need to be modified?
7. How effectively does the information centre strategy facilitate and assist the communities in Katutura to address poverty eradication and development needs in accordance with Namibia's Vision 2030 and MDGs.

## **2. RESEARCH DESIGN:**

### **2.1 Methodology**

The research had a multistage design in order to establish i) an assessment of community information and knowledge needs for development ii) Discussions with stakeholders on the types of interventions and redesign of the community information centre strategy. The study which will use a participatory communication for development research design combines data collection and capacity building. The main research methods for the community information needs study component will be:

- i) Focus Group Discussions (FGD)
- ii) Chapati or Venn Diagramming

Briefly, the FGD combines group interviews and in-depth discussions which is ideal when a community is providing data on a subject on which they may not be familiar. Chapati or Venn diagramming is a process of listing and ranking groups with communication systems and information sources, in order to show the relative importance of different sources and channels to community development. **Reference**

## **2.2 Research procedures**

The study used a qualitative study design based on two data collection instruments, the first was a Focus Group Discussion guide and the second was Venn Diagramming guideline. Both instruments sought to find out the existing situation with regards to the different MDGs areas from participants. The Windhoek Municipality's department of community development facilitated access to community leaders and young people who formed focus groups for the study.

The group of young females had six active members, throughout, though at times, there were additional young females who dropped in and stayed for a while before moving on. Their ages ranged from 15 to 22 years old, and they had education ranging from grade 9 to 11. The interviews were conducted in English.

The young males group had six active members, though there were times when the number was swollen by individuals who were curious and wanted to join the discussion. The ages ranged from 16 to 35 years old. Their levels of education ranged from grade 9 to university level.

The adult group had six members as well, 3 females and 3 males. The original idea had been to have two groups, male and female separately, but because of difficulties in getting enough participants, it was decided to combine the two. Their level of education ranged from grade 1 to 7. The interviews were conducted in the Oshivambo language.

A total of three focus group meetings were held in afternoons, in the last week of July and first week of August. Third and fourth year and one senior student in the Department of information and communication studies were trained to administer both the focus group instrument and Venn diagramming instrument. The findings are reported in the following section of this report.

### **3. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

The Focus Group discussions sought to collect data from participants on the following MDGs core areas, in relation to participants general perceptions, their information needs, and the information channels and sources which can be used to access the required information.

#### **3.1. Extreme poverty, hunger and livelihoods**

The question was aimed at discussing how the community perceived poverty, hunger and livelihoods at Grenwell Matongo community. There were several follow up questions, including, causes of poverty, survival strategies, and whether the groups felt people had enough power to change their lives, and their vision of the needed to be done to change the poverty situation in the community.

The focus groups were in agreement on the high level of poverty and hunger in Grenwell Matongo. From the group of young males it was said by several members that “the situation is very bad” Basic amenities such as water, electricity, and toilets were said to be absent. “People end up using the open space at night as toilets” because of this situation. The group of adults, also agreeing with the high level of poverty and noted that: “here people sleep on empty stomachs. Young women go into prostitution because of lack of alternative means to earn a living. One adult member said people on medication “drink the medicine on empty stomachs which causes death because of poverty”.



The root causes of poverty were perceived in terms of several things, lack of education, one's behaviour, and unemployment and the social and economic structures which made it difficult for the poor to break out of poverty. The male youth group, for example, saw poverty as caused by lack of education as well as skills; rapid urbanization without adequate resources, and drinking and laziness of individuals. The social economic structures also were mentioned as a cause because it is not easy for the poor to have access to resources easily. The adult group identified unemployment due to old age as it becomes difficult to get a job if one is old. Also lack of information on how to start and run small businesses profitably, as well as excessive drunkenness in the community. However, among the youth it was mentioned that "getting drunk is often the only way to reduce stress and frustration". Corruption of officials who take away resources earmarked for the poor was also identified as a cause of poverty.

The community used different survival strategies to cope with poverty. The adult groups identified running small business as the main strategy such as selling fruits, sweets, traditional beer, vegetable, firewood, old bottles, and *kapana*. The young adult males while in general agreement with the above strategies; also added cheap manual labour, and crime such as house breaking, shops lifting, and prostitution, as well as begging.

Responding to the question on what people can do to break out of poverty, the responses indicated that there were four things that could be done – government to come up with programmes to address poverty, setting up small businesses, creating more employment opportunities including farming, and increasing amenities in the community. The government, it was said by the youth groups, could do several things, including taking the plight of the poor seriously, encourage people to go back to rural areas and do farming, and old people to change their 'mind set' to stop the belief that 'because we were colonized, the government should do things for us'. Breaking out of poverty was also seen by the adult group in terms of having more basic amenities in the community such as public toilets, a health centre, and clean water. The issue of government and its dominant role was also dominant in the discussions from the adult group.

The things government could do was listed as: build houses for the poor, loans to start small businesses, build an open market for people so sell there things, and employ community members in self help projects and provide food assistance.

On the issue of power and what the community would change if it had power, many suggestions came from the discussions. The main consensus from the adult and young males groups was that poor people are powerless and too weak to change their own situation. Some of the statements were: ‘we cant do anything without assistance’; ‘no one has power unless empowered’; ‘people who are hungry cant think straight’. ‘People don’t know anything because they are hungry’. Poor people do not have power because a beggar will never be allowed to speak to the master’; ‘no one respects the poor’. The young males and females groups, however, while sharing similar sentiments of powerlessness in their community, had a slightly more optimistic perception of the power in their community to affect change. “They have power but it is limited as authorities can decide not to act in their favour’; ‘the source of power is personal commitment. People are allowed to demonstrate and draw attention to things which are not going well’.

The feeling of helplessness, however, was no inhibiting when the groups were asked to discuss the things they would change if they had power. The youth male group suggested that they would like houses built for people, infrastructure for sports improved and a vocational training centre as well as a health centre. The adults group wanted a place for baking bread, an industrial parks for small businesses to operate from, play ground for children, and theatre for music and drama. The adults group also pointed out that ‘we have knowledgeable people in our community and they need to be brought together to bring employment to our community’. The adult group discussions led to identification of several resources the community could use to fight poverty: the Goreangab Dam, nearby, has water which could be used to irrigate crops, as well as fishing; we could harvest the wild grass and make baskets, bags and sell. The adult group however recognized that they need to learn and acquire new knowledge and skills to be able to do these new things’.

### **3.1.2. Information needs to eradicate extreme poverty, hunger and improve livelihoods.**

The group discussion was aimed at finding out the different kinds of information poor people need to cope/overcome poverty and for the community to mobilize itself to address its problems and challenges. The adult group suggested there is need for both information and advisory services to be able to implement the ideas for the betterment of the community. They specified there is need for information on: small businesses and income generation opportunities; television and video shows on practical information on how to eradicate poverty; and self employment; and agricultural knowledge so that can work on farms and start agricultural projects. The young males group suggested that their greatest need was for employment information, and it was suggested that all job adverts should be in a data base so that each person could see the qualifications needed so they can apply if they qualify. Financial information and skills were identified as important in order to know where to get loans and how to manage finances. Hygiene information was also identified especially for those selling foodstuffs. According to the youth group, the main problem is that although information is very important, poor people do not know where to get such information.

Multiple channels were identified during the discussion for accessing information on poverty eradication. The male youth group identified radio as the main channel for such information. Newspapers were ruled out because ‘most people do not have money to buy newspapers’. Television was seen as potentially good as people can ‘see and hear’ at the same time. However, most residents in the community have no television because of lack of electricity, so the usefulness of television was questioned by other youth. The need to have information in local languages was identified as important as most people do not speak English. The adult groups, in contrast, were dismissive of radio and television in the present format, as useful channels for accessing information to eradicate poverty. The main reasons given were that radio has too much music and entertainment and there are few programmes which are educational and development oriented. Television also was said to provide mostly political information.

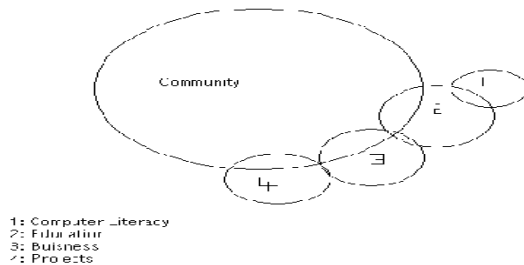
The local language sections of the *New Era* and the *Namibian* were seen as potentially useful if they could provide information content related to poverty eradication. The fact that many community members were not fully literate was seen as a major barrier in accessing useful information in newspapers and other publications. Another channel of potential value identified was public meetings. However, it was said that most of the community leaders do not call such meetings ‘because they have nothing of value to share with the community’. The Grenwell Matongo community information centre was also mentioned but it was concluded that it offers mostly educational information, in English, and has little information on small businesses and development matters. However, the young males and females thought this could be addressed by setting a development information section in the community information centre to compliment the educational materials currently available.

The groups also drew Venn diagrammes on the main channels for accessing poverty eradication information.

**Venn diagrams showing main channels/sources used to access information which helps to overcome poverty:**

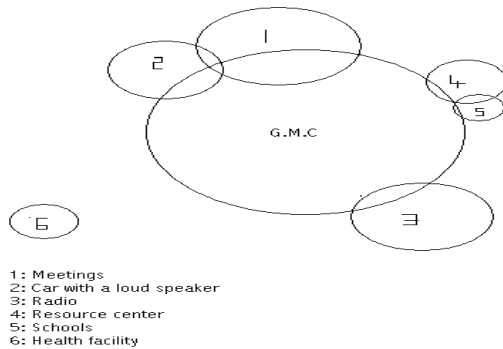
**Adults**

Question 1



The Venn diagram of the adult group shows that they regard education (2), small and informal business (3), and income generating projects (4) as the most important channels/sources of information for overcoming poverty. Computer literacy (1) had a small circle indicating it was perceived as peripheral and of least importance.

## Young Females:



In contrast to the adults, the young females had more sources/channels of information in the Venn diagram, the most important being meetings (1), the second source was identified as Radio (3) and third is a van with a loud speaker (2) which is driven around to broadcast new and event related information to township residents. This was followed by the community information resource centre (4) . Of lesser importance are schools and health centre. The noteworthy channel here is the van with loudspeaker which did not come out during the focus group discussions, but was only identified during Venn diagram discussion and drawing.

### 3.2 Primary, Secondary and non-formal education.

The discussions in this section focused on several issues: school attendance levels, places for acquiring literacy, and problems children face in pursuing their education. All the groups agreed that there are three primary schools near the settlement where children from Grenwell Matongo attend school, with high drop out rates because of various reasons. The young females group pointed out that attendance in schools was not always good because of the environment in the community. Some of the factors identified were: parent who cannot afford to pay school fees and other charges levied by schools, teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, and skipping classes by some learners as parents cannot check on them nor do they attend school meetings. The young males group said that most children had no one to help with home work at home as parents had low levels of education. The conditions at home were also not conducive to learning as the ‘shacks’ were small and had no electricity or space to do homework or do some reading. Some

children had lost either one or both parents and were living with relatives who did not always care about their education. The adult group mentioned the problem of children who have to go to school with 'an empty stomach' because of poverty which makes learning difficult.

### **3.2.1 Information needed to support education**

The adult group identified the following areas where information was needed to support education in the community: 'parents need information so that they can read notices about what is happening at school e.g. parents meetings'; 'elders need information to know how to read and write so that they can check their children's work at school'; 'children get most of their information from teachers but they also need to be informed by parents'. The young females group, apart from also endorsing the need for parents to get information which will enable them to support the education of their children, mentioned several other areas in which information was needed: information on best self study methods, parents need information on how to treat the children during exam times because 'parents do not care at all'. The library needs to have enough materials to support education of children in the settlement. Careers information was also identified by the girls group to 'see which subjects are needed for which career so that children can select the right subjects' for their future careers. The function of the Grenwell Matongo community information centre was rated as important by the girls because 'most of the houses in the community don't have facilities like tables, chairs, and electricity because not everyone can afford to pay for electricity so candles and other forms of lighting are use'. The adults also stressed the importance of a place for studying in the community because 'in the houses there are no tables or chairs and houses are too small. Electricity is only in the street, we don't have electricity in our houses we use only candles'.

### **3.2.2 Information channels used to access educational information**

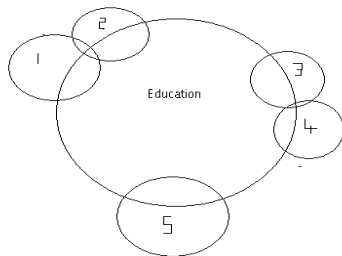
The young males group identified several channels they use to access educational information. The principal one was school teachers, and friends and relatives, as well as the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL).

Two mass media channels were also identified as a useful source by young males: TV Africa, and the Friday issue of the *Namibian* newspaper. The community library was also mentioned as a useful channel for educational materials and reading space. The young females group, identified the Community library as the main source of educational information and wanted application forms for institutions of higher learning and vocational education to be available. School meetings were also seen as important. Relatives who are attending institutions of higher learning and vocational training centres were an important source of information, as well as newspapers, radio and teachers. In the venn diagram discussions, the several sources were identified as important for education information by adults and young females.

**Venn diagrams showing the main sources and channels of information to support education.**

**Adults**

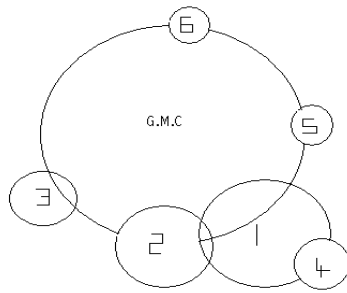
Question 2



- 1: Library
- 2: After school classes
- 3: Cinemas
- 4: Vocational training
- 5: Parent participation

The two main sources and channels of educational information identified in the Venn diagramme by adults were Teacher Parent Associations (PTA) (5) and the community information centre – library (1). The same sources/channels were also identified by young females, schools as the most important (1) followed by the community information centre – library (2).

## Young Females



- 1: Schools
- 2: Libraries
- 3: Nancol
- 4: Tertiary institutions
- 5: Friends
- 6: Parents

### 3.3. Gender Relations and Equality

The question was aimed at discussing gender relations in the community, instances of inequality and instances of domestic violence and rape. The group of girls saw gender relations in terms of distribution of power in society, social relations, employment and decision making roles. Whereas the adult group pointed out that gender relations differ between urban and rural areas, women having less power in rural areas than man, while in urban areas both men and women are equal. Men in the adult group saw gender relations differently from women. Women in the group of adults pointed out that there were problems in gender relations but men thought there were no problems - women were just being difficult. There was, however, general agreement that ‘all people in the community are hungry’. Men thought that women tended to have small businesses and had more money while men were doing odd jobs and were poorer. The male had other views as well, such as: ‘women are divorcing nowadays because they are educated and this makes them their own bosses and they don’t want to honour their marriages’; ‘the problem we face is that women cant control themselves’; Women in the adult groups had different views:’ ‘men threaten us too much because they do everything, but if a man gets paid you will not get anything from that pay as a wife’; ‘men don’t want to support their women and families’; ‘women are not given an opportunity to continue with their literacy classes by their husbands because of house duties and the need to care for family and husbands’.



The girl group shared similar views and it was noted by one participant that because of inequality women have to do a lot of chores both at home and in their survival economic activities so that in the end ‘women become exhausted playing the dual role of care take and breadwinner’. The young males thought that women just ‘wanted to control men and because of human rights they like to run to the police station and report their husbands on little things, who are held for a few hours then they are out’.

**Table 1**  
**Perceptions on gender**

Young males	Young females	Adults
<p><b>Gender relations and equality?</b>            Women do not like men who talk bad about them.            One said relations are good.            Women want to control men they want them to buy everything in the home            They respect each other.            “How one views the issue of gender depends on how one is brought up.”            Man has the power to make decisions.            Because of human rights – women run to inform police in case of abuse.            It is good to report but at times it is bad.            Man should not cook. Respect should be the norm – all should cook</p> <p><b>Being a man?</b>            Man is in control and is the protector of the family – but they are not protecting as they go to drink. Family money is not benefiting the family.</p>	<p><b>Gender relations and equality?</b>            All group members agreed that there is inequality amongst men and women socially and economically - it is a very bad thing. They said women become exhausted of just playing the role of the care taker and would also like to help out.</p> <p><b>Being a man?</b>            It means being the breadwinner, superiority, educated and solution to most of the problems.            Gamble a lot and consume too much alcohol.</p>	<p><b>Gender relations and equality?</b>            “man goes to work while women don’t”            “Women are more into small businesses”</p> <p><b>“People should be equal”</b>            Educated women divorce because they fail to submit to their husbands.            “women can’t control themselves”            “Man threaten us too much because they do every thing but if they get paid the wife will not get anything”.            “Women are not given opportunity to continue their literacy classes. Their duties are to make water and food available to their husbands”</p> <p><b>Being a man?</b>            Men are leaders, give examples, give orders, take care (provide) and control of the women and children and discipline them</p>

## Perceptions on gender continued

**Table 2 Perceptions on gender continued.**

Young males	Young females	Adults
<p><b>Being a women</b> Bear children and look after them. Always in the house. Gets money from men. They have lots of responsibilities. All indicated if by choice they would not want to be women</p> <p><b>Who has most power? Why?</b> Men have power. He puts rules in his home -because the women joined the family through lobola. All agreed authority should be shared. They should talk and agree.</p> <p><b>Acts of violence</b> Happens month ends when men and women are drunk. Happens due to extra-marital affairs. Rape is not un heard of.</p>	<p><b>Being a woman?</b> Being at home taking care of the household. An indoor person doesn't go out much because of possible dangers for her. To earn respect from others Being a hardworking and single parent. A business woman, selling <i>kapana</i> and other products. Being a house maid, baby sitter. Being an educated and independent women (aspiration)</p> <p><b>Who holds most power? Why?</b> Men! It is a traditional belief and a cultural influence. Women are powerless and have a low self-esteem. Men are the educated ones and are breadwinners. Lobola gives them power.</p> <p><b>Acts of violence?</b> It is not that much. Most of the victims don't report the cases. But domestic violence is more prevalent in the community. Some of the incidences are reported but takes forever to be solved; therefore people become discouraged to report such cases.</p>	<p><b>Being a woman?</b> "If God give you a caring man, then you are lucky". "Women are caring, and do most of the house hold work". "Women build and support the house - children" "If a house does not have a women it is not a house" "Some man suffer because of their wife, they are not given food, they go to bed with out food"</p> <p><b>Who hold most power?</b> "Man has power from creation". "But man has lost love because women come from their ribs they are supposed to love them". "In town it is hard to tell who hold most power"</p> <p><b>Acts of violence?</b> "Violence is on the increase. "women talk too much causing men to slap them" "married couples do not go through counseling hence they claim to be raped by their husbands" "The law should not get between married couples" Laws are not effective and need to be explained. "Due to poverty parents give in their daughters for marriage". Prostitutes use drugs and when drunk they are raped because men may not have money to pay and fear to be reported then they kill them. "Traditional healers ask women for sex to get healed" or to sleep with their own children to get healed from AIDS. This is madness. "People are telling themselves lies about witch craft and such things to make couples to fight one another".</p>

The two boxed-in text refers to statements made by the three groups of respondents concerning gender relations (table 1 and table 2).

Overall it is clear there are gender problems in the community and in some cases, girls/women also supported the view that women deserve to have less power than their male counterparts.

### 3.3.1 Information needs on gender relations and inequality

The information needs identified by the girl group were as follow: ‘information on how to support each other financially and socially; education on the rights of men and women and respect for those rights; where to go when women are raped as they are shy and don’t want anyone to know about it; information is also needed on how to cope with the trauma and emotions of rape. The young males identified the need for workshops on gender equality. The adult group identified the information on laws on gender and rape to be made available in all languages.

**Table 3: Information needs on gender relations**

Young males	Young female	Adults
<p><b>Information needs</b></p> <p>There is a program on gender equality on radio and TV. Ministry of Gender and Equality should use workshops, Drama and live play. Women report to police but after a few hours those offenders are out.</p>	<p><b>Information needs</b></p> <p>Where to get money and issues of gender equality.</p> <p>Include issues of gender equality in school curricula.</p> <p>Parents need to be educated on their rights - those rights should be respected and valued.</p> <p>Information on where to go and what to do. Raped women are shy to report as everyone will know about it and they will be stigmatized.</p> <p>Information on why it is the right thing to report.</p> <p>Information is needed on how to go through the trauma.</p>	<p><b>Information needs</b></p> <p>“Equality can not come because people cohabit just because men like these women but they don’t love them. And because there is no community of property in these relationships, women are insecure”</p>

### 3.3.1 Channels used for accessing gender information.

The girl group identified the radio as the most useful channel, followed by the community information resource centre ‘because this is where young people gathering take place’. Another channel identified was parents but it was said ‘they are not useful because they never discuss gender related matters with their children’. The police station was also dismissed because ‘it is too slow and it is never friendly’.

In contrast, the adults did not rate radio very highly for gender information because ‘the programmes are too short and don’t explain very well and this causes confusion’; newspapers were also not deemed useful because ‘they are written in English and not all people can read them’.

The conclusion of the adult group, therefore, was that ‘there is no useful information coming through the channels’. The young males identified workshops on gender relations as the most useful channel followed by radio. Others mentioned were: radio, community library, and neighbors. However because of illiteracy, books were deemed not useful.

Table 4

Information channels and how flow of gender information can be improved.

Young males	Young females	Adults
<p><b>Information channels, how the flow of information can be improved?</b></p> <p>Radio, neighbors, books – library</p> <p>Most useful is the radio.</p> <p>Books not useful because most of the people can not read.</p> <p>The authorities should hold workshops – Ministry of Gender take responsibility for social awareness</p>	<p><b>Information channels, how the flow of information can be improved?</b></p> <p>Community resource centre, Radio, TV, Police and parents. Radio is the most useful as majority have radios. The resource centre is also useful because most young people come here. Parents are the least useful because they never discuss gender related matters with their children. The police is not that useful because they are not friendly. People should gather and discuss gender related issues not only when matters get out of control. The ministry should distribute gender related information in local languages. The women and child protection units should be brought closer to the people. The law enforcement agencies should be trained on how to handle gender related cases.</p>	<p><b>Information channels, how the flow of information can be improved?</b></p> <p>“There is no information”</p> <p>The radio programs are too short.</p> <p>Issues are not well explained instead there is confusion. Newspapers are written in English and not all people can read them.</p> <p>“We need government committee on equality to go out to the community and explain the law in local languages”.</p> <p>“Gender laws should be taught in schools”. “People who are not well informed are the one that cause problems”. “the causes of violence need to be identified then things will improve”</p>

### 3.4. Mother and child health matters.

The situation of mother and child health in the community was regarded differently by the different groups. While the adult group said it is not possible to tell on health status of individuals and ‘only doctors can tell’, some in the group thought that child mortality is on the increase, and teenage pregnancies are also on the increase. The adult group, however, noted improvements in family planning. The practice of girls getting family planning advice without parental consent was roundly condemned by the adult group. The girl group, in contrast, noted that the need of family planning information, also noting there were serious health problems such as: ‘increase in malnutrition and child mortality’; ‘unhygienic living conditions which lead to diseases’; ‘polio in children because they like to play in unhygienic conditions’; ‘sexually transmitted diseases’; ‘TB’; ‘smoking and alcohol abuse by expecting mothers which causes lung and heart diseases among children’. The statement indicates some gaps in the knowledge of how polio spreads, and the causes of lung and heart diseases among children.

#### 3.4.1 Information needs for mother and child health

There were two camps among the adult group members on the need for family planning information. Some expressed the need for family planning information but others thought that only grown ups should get this information and not teenagers. The girl group, however, wanted more information on family planning, Ant retroviral medication, how to keep the environment clean, and methods of breastfeeding and child care for mothers. Mothers should also get information on pre-natal and neo-natal care.

**Table 5**

**Information needs for mother and child health**

<b>Yong males</b>	<b>Yong females</b>	<b>Adults</b>
<b>Different types of information needed?</b>	<b>Different types of information needed?</b>	<b>Different types of information needed?</b>
Adverts (e.g posters informing more about prevention methods	Information on how to prevention, ARV’s, methods of breastfeeding and importance of cleanliness. How to keep their children healthy especially babies.	“We need more information about
<b>Is there a need for family</b>	<b>Is there a need for family planning?</b>	

<p><b>planning?</b> Yes there is a need. To prevent unwanted pregnancies, lady may be too young.</p> <p><b>Need of information on child vaccinations?</b> -Yes, as some people may not know the purpose of vaccinations</p> <p><b>Adequate information on prenatal and neo-natal care?</b> -they do have enough information</p>	<p>Yes, then people would know which family planning method is best to use and how to use it correctly.</p> <p><b>Need of information on child vaccinations?</b> Yes, there's a great and urgent need because most of them are not educated.</p> <p><b>Adequate information on prenatal and neo-natal care?</b> No, they don't because most of them heavily rely on their traditional beliefs. Young mothers need information – they don't have any experience at all need this information</p>	<p>family planning for elders not by children and young adult”</p> <p>“It is parent responsibility to take care of their children”</p> <p>“Christians believe that it's murder to practice family planning”</p>
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### 3.4.2 Channels for accessing information on mother and child health

The adult group stated that health information for mother and child health was only available to those who visit the health centres, which make it difficult for men to get this kind of information. According to the adult participants the health centre closest to the Grenwell Matongo community is at Wanaheda (next suburb to Grenwell Matongo) and has only a few nurses who can only do visits during polio vaccinations. The girls group, however, were aware of many more sources of health information compared to the adults. The girls group mentioned the following sources: health facilities, desert soul booklets, television, radio, newspapers, parents, and books in the community information centres. Radio and the Clinic were cited as most important; newspapers were cited as least useful because of price and the fact that there is no space available to report on health matters, except when they become a news item.

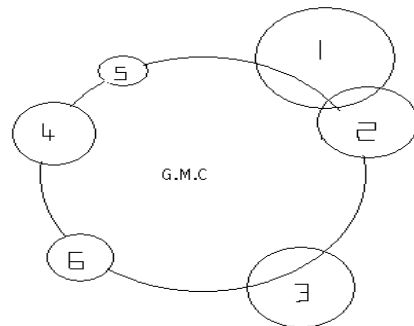
**Table 6**

**Channels for accessing information on mother and child health.**

<b>Yong males</b>	<b>Yong females</b>	<b>Adults</b>
<p><b>What are the main channels of information?</b> Radios, Newspapers, Clinics, Televisions, Books</p> <p><b>Do they all mothers get information?</b> Yes they do, to a very large extent. Radio-to person- to other people. Friends and family may be sources of information</p> <p><b>Occurrences of unwanted pregnancies? -</b> Not really</p> <p><b>Who needs family planning information?</b> Sexually active people</p> <p><b>Most useful channels? Not useful channels? Why?</b> Radio is most useful. Television, is not useful because few people have tv. Books, are not useful due to high illiteracy rates.</p> <p><b>Improving flow of information?</b> Build more Health centers, and prevent long distances that are traveled by residence.</p>	<p><b>What are the main channels of information?</b> Clinics, Desert Soul booklets, Television, Radio, Newspapers, Parents, Books from the library</p> <p><b>Do they all mothers get information?</b> No, not all of them.</p> <p><b>Occurrences of unwanted pregnancies?</b> Yes, it does but not that much.</p> <p><b>Who needs family planning information?</b> Young people in relationships, Men and young boys and Parents. All Sexually active people.</p> <p><b>Most useful channels? Not useful channels? Why?</b> Radio is most useful - everyone has access. Clinics are useful because people visit more often. The desert soul booklets are not that useful – they are few are not available on a frequent basis. Newspapers are the least useful - only report when it becomes a news item and not everyone can afford it.</p> <p><b>Improving flow of information?</b> Discuss mother and child health related matters more frequently. Need to build local health facilities and train people from the community to become health promoters.</p>	<p><b>What are the main channels of information?</b> “I haven’t seen any”</p> <p>Information is only available at clinics and hospitals, counselors and radios</p>

## Venn diagrams on the main sources of information on mother and child health.

### Young Females



- 1: Health facilities
- 2: Radio
- 3: Relatives
- 4: Schools
- 5: Television
- 6: Community library

The prominence of health facilities in disseminating health information comes out clearly in this Venn diagram (1) by the young females, followed by relatives (3) and radio (2). Significant difference to the statements above is the indication of relatives as an important source of information on health by girls group.

### 3.5. HIV/AIDS and TB

The adult group thought that there were high levels of HIV/AIDS infection in the community; however stigma ensures that it is kept secret by affected individuals and families. A participant pointed out that there are many because he sees them in counseling programmes. The young males also agreed that there could be many who are infected because of low use of condoms, prostitution was rife, and as one participant noted “N\$ 50 you can satisfy your sexual desire”. Other factors in the environment of Grenwell Matongo which could contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS mentioned were: poverty, drinking places *shabeens*, laziness and behaviour of the youth. The girl group like the young males was not quite sure of the extent of HIV/AIDS in the community but also noted similar factors which could contribute to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, adding multiple partner’s relationships, peer pressure, *sugar daddies*, and ignorance



about how both HIV and TB spread in the community. As one of the girl discussant put it:

*“Peer pressure among young people where they influence each other to have sex with people older than themselves. Sugar daddies can support them financially”*

The adult discussants suggested there is high unemployment and poverty. As a survival strategy people have set up small businesses. One in particular could also fuel the spread of HIV//AIDS. One participant had this to say: “out houses are all bars and everyone is welcome. We need separate places for bars”

**Table 7**

**Responses on HIV/AIDS and TB**

<b>Young males</b>	<b>Young females</b>	<b>Adults</b>
<p><b>Extent of HIV/AIDS?</b> ‘It is a big problem - it is killing people’. Breadwinners are dying. You may not know - it is confidential. Yes! Many are in danger of being infected you can tell by the behavior and also many young people are pregnant which means they are not using contraceptives. Some use pills and not condoms. TB is a big problem - difficult to give statistics.</p> <p><b>How does it spread?</b> Unprotected sex, prostitution by paying \$50 you can satisfy your sexual desire.</p> <p><b>Places that help spread the</b></p>	<p><b>Extent of HIV/AIDS?</b> Extent unknown as most people suffer in silence because they are afraid of stigmatization. All group members said that they would judge the extent by the activities people are engage in socially. The poor living standards force people to engage in too much consumption of alcohol which leads to unprotected sex. “The extent of TB is high because of the activities people engage in”. “Yes there are many people who are in danger, because of air pollution in the area, the use of paraffin, fire wood and alcohol consumption” “Smoking tobacco and cigarettes, drinking home brewed alcohol e.g. <i>tombo</i>”.</p> <p><b>How does it spread?</b> Having unprotected sex, lack of knowledge on contraceptives, mother to child transmission, polygamy, unfaithful partners and ignorance about the disease, contributed by traditional beliefs and lack of understanding about the disease.</p>	<p><b>Extent of HIV/AIDS?</b> “AIDS is very bad you can say almost every on have it” a health promoter and HIV counselor said. “We have many people who are infected with HIV/AIDS, I know this because I see so many people in counseling programs”</p> <p><b>TB</b> “It is hard to tell but this disease comes with AIDS” “TB is worse in this community because I see people at the clinic being given TB tablets”</p> <p><b>Places that help spread the disease include:</b> “Bars and night clubs” “From bars people end up having unprotected sex”</p>

<p><b>disease include:</b> Drinking places HIV is spread (shebeens)</p> <p><b>Extent of STD infections?</b> STDs – same extent with HIV but you may not know.</p> <p><b>Structures which encourage the spread of HIV/AIDS</b> Things which encourage spread of HIV – poverty, laziness. Lodges – Penduka lodge.</p>	<p><b>Places that help spread the disease include:</b> Bars/shebeens, Night clubs, Shanty places, Prostitution places</p> <p><b>Extent of STD infections?</b> “There is an average rate because the majority of the people are aware and well informed about STDs”</p> <p><b>Structures which encourage the spread of HIV/AIDS?</b> Peer pressure to have sex with older people “sugar daddies” they provide financially” “Religious or traditional beliefs, e.g. Ovambo culture men believe that using a condom degrade their manhood.</p>	<p><b>STDs</b> “The STDS are worse” “People hide it you can not really know”</p> <p><b>What encourage the spread of AIDS?</b> “Because people don’t have jobs” “Poverty and unemployment” “Our houses are all bars and every one is welcome” “We need separate places for bars”</p>
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Table 7 indicates the perceived factors concerning the HIV/AIDS situation in the community and what causes the spread of the disease.

### 3.5.1 Information needs for prevention of HIV/AIDS and TB

The girls group pointed out different types of information which are needed to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and TB: how to practice safe sex, abstinence, contraceptive use, and the importance of being faithful to one partner. Another category of information which was highly rated is the need for patients to go for treatment for both TB and get ARVs if they are HIV positive ‘rather than stay at home’. The girls group also identified several types of information for those who are infected: emotional and psychological support, stigma, appropriate diet and how and when to take medication. The adult group was not clear cut about the information needs to stop HIV and TB from spreading, other than saying that the available information is out of date, and needs to be renewed once every three years, because people need to be well informed. Aids does not spread through handshakes, those who discriminate are not well informed’. The young males agreed that there was a great need for more information on both HIV and TB prevention. The group identified the following topics: how the virus spreads, abstinence, and behaviour change information, use of condoms, diet, where to get treatment, and the problems of alcohol abuse for infected persons, consistent use of medication, positive living, and to avoid superstitious beliefs.

**Table 8**

**Responses on information needs for prevention of HIV/AIDS and TB**

Young males	Young females	Adults
<p><b>Different kinds of information to stop HIV/AIDS?</b> How people get virus and what to do. Need to be told to abstain Stop ignorance – is contributing to HIV. Infections – level have not gone down</p> <p><b>Information needed to stop the spread of TB? STDs?</b> What is needed is for people to change their behavior. Some people take condoms but they don't use them. -cement affects (coldness) When and how to get medication Keeping the place clean</p> <p><b>Information for infected people and their relatives?</b> -How to behave when infected. -food they need to eat and exercise -Where to get treatment -Abstain from alcohol -Need to be told that infection does not mean death hence should not kill themselves. -People need to know aids is real and is not incurable. Some belief in witches another man gave away his car and money because a sangoma had promised to cure and others sleep with young girls.</p>	<p><b>Different kinds of information to stop HIV/AIDS?</b> How to be faithful to one partner. How to practice safe sex. Practical demonstrations on how to use a condom properly. The importance of abstinence. Different methods of contraceptives, and risks involved”</p> <p><b>Information needed to stop the spread of TB? STDs?</b> Dangers of smoking and consuming too much alcohol. How to reduce the spread of STDs Why it is important for a patient to go for treatment. The symptoms of both TB and STDs. People should also be informed properly that there are other diseases that lead to HIV/AIDS.</p> <p><b>Information for infected people and their relatives?</b> Information is needed on psychological counseling, so that both relatives and the infected person know how to handle the matter psychologically’ Family need more and better education on ways HIV can spread and ways it doesn't. Information is needed on motivational and emotional support for those that are infected. Those who are infected need more information on how to lead a normal life. Families need information on why it is important not to discriminate those that are infected. How to provide a healthy diet for the infected person is of importance to the family. Those who are infected should be given an opportunity to participate in family matters so that they can have a sense of belonging. Infected people should be well informed on how and when to take their medication, and why it is important to have a person he/she can trust to remind them.</p>	<p><b>“People need information and advices through meetings”</b> “Information is there but it is outdated, and need to be repeated after every three years” “People need to be well informed” “Educate people about the spread of HIV/AIDS” “We need to take care of the infected and the family of the infected need to be supported through counseling” <b>Are people ready?</b> “AIDS does not spread through handshakes” “Those who discriminate are those who are not well informed”</p>

### 3.5.2 Channels of information to access information on HIV/AIDS and TB prevention

The adults group identified public meetings as an important channel for accessing HIV/AIDS and TB information. Other sources identified were : the Government, Namibia Red Cross, AIDS Care Trust, Catholic AIDS Action, Anna Mary Association.

**Table 9**

**Responses on channels of information to access information on HIV/AIDS and TB**

Young males	Young females	Adults
<p><b>Information channels on HIV/AIDS prevention?</b> Posters, Radios, Televisions and Newspapers</p> <p><b>Useful channels?</b> Radio</p> <p><b>Less useful? Why?</b> Books, due to the high illiteracy rate</p> <p><b>How channels can be improved?</b> More posters in informal settlements, and should be easily understood and protected from vandalism. Radio and television shows should take into account time factors. Workshops where people will sit and listen</p> <p><b>How the flow of information can be improved?</b> Workshops, and community meetings</p> <p><b>How residents get information on security and safety?</b> Through radio and newspapers</p>	<p><b>Information channels on HIV/AIDS prevention?</b> Radio, Television, Magazines, Health Centers and Books</p> <p><b>Useful channels?</b> Radio, television and Health Centers - majority of the people have radios. Images on television remain in their minds and they visit health centers more often.</p> <p><b>Less useful? Why?</b> Books and magazines - most people are illiterate.</p> <p><b>How channels can be improved?</b> Build Health centers closer to the people. More programs on radio.</p> <p><b>How the flow of information can be improved?</b> Bring information closer to the community Should be included as a lesson in Schools. Employers should inform their employees.</p> <p><b>How residents get information on security and safety?</b> From the police station</p>	<p><b>Information channels on HIV/AIDS prevention?</b> Government, organization such as Catholic AIDS action; AIDS care trust, Anna Mary association and RED Cross”</p> <p><b>Useful sources</b> Red Cross and AIDS Care trust”</p> <p><b>Useless sources</b> Volunteers are sometimes not useful. The do not have money to travel.</p> <p><b>How the channels can be improved?</b> Counsel those that are infected. Build more support groups. Volunteer counselors to be employed and paid for the work. NGO’s must extend their assistant to training</p> <p><b>Safety and security</b> There is a mobile police station in GM. “We see police man and city police every times”.</p>

The young females identified radio, television, magazines, and health centres and books in the community information centre among the useful channels. Books and magazines were ranked lowest because of high illiteracy rate in the community.

### **3.6. Environmental degradation**

The girls and young males groups thought that the environment issues in the community were not ideal because of the following factors: the condition of housing is poor, mostly made of corrugated iron sheets, and garbage collection is not effective creating problems of cleanliness and littering in the community. The main source of energy is firewood, gas and candles. The adults agreed with all above points but added other problems such as: houses are too small, no running water, toilet or electricity. Clean water is available from the community stand pipes in the mornings and evenings only. The main source of energy is candles and paraffin which often causes fires in the shanty town. One participant had this to say: *'the candles are burning our houses and many people are burnt and die daily. The fire brigade is needed here and should be available every time'*. A slight exaggeration but reflects the frustration felt by all respondents.

#### **3.6.1. Information needs to combat environmental degradation**

The young males identified information needs on how to keep the environment clean, dangers of stagnant waters in the community, and alternative construction materials which are cheap but effective. Also information on the Shack Dwellers Association which assist with construction of houses by giving loans. The adult group also identified the need for information on cheap building materials, information from the municipality officials on how to build in planned spaces rather than haphazardly, how to manage finances and plan to build gradually. It was mentioned by the adult group also that 'men need to be educated to stop urinating everywhere in front of children as this sets a bad example'. The girls group identified similar needs but added the need for knowledge and building skills for people to build own houses, and the need to teach how to keep the environment clean in schools.

### 3.6.2 Channels of information on environmental degradation

The girls group identified several channels through which information on environmental matters reaches the community: the municipality through public meetings, nurses give talks on cleanliness, and radio (in a general way).

**Table10**

**Channels of information on environmental degradation.**

Young males	Young females	Adults
<p><b>Information channels on environmental degradation?</b> Newspapers (eg Advert of cutting down tree's is illegal)</p> <p><b>Which of these channels is the best? Why?</b> Television, as not everyone has N\$3 to buy a Newspaper Radio Newspapers considered to be the best, although television also very important</p> <p><b>How to improve the flow of information?</b> Municipality should use posters, to show that people can't just cut down tree's as they want Community leaders should be assigned different duties and functions and so therefore be responsible for improving the flow of information to residents</p> <p><b>Information to build own houses?</b> Residents meetings (e.g.. Shack Dwellers Federation) are held every Sunday, under nearby tree's, usually after church Community leaders usually chair these meetings They inform residents how to go about building houses of their own. Residents are encouraged to save at least N\$20 /month until the amount of N\$7000.</p>	<p><b>Information channels on environmental degradation?</b> Nurses, who do house to house visits and discuss environmental issues with the people Meetings with the community Radio, only in general</p> <p><b>Which of these channels is the best? Why?</b> Meetings as people interact face to face</p> <p><b>How to improve the flow of information?</b> "Having meetings more often" "The municipality should come up with restrictions that can prevent people from damaging the environment"</p> <p><b>Information to build own houses?</b> Information from the municipality. Cooperatives, Advertisements Banks who provide house loans.</p>	<p><b>Information channels on environmental degradation?</b> No channels. When a councilor sees dirt, he ask volunteers to clean. Information should be made available at information centers. No information about building houses</p>

The young males mentioned environmental adverts in newspapers, radio and television. They called upon the municipality to put up posters on maintaining a clean environment and community leaders to hold public meetings on maintaining a clean environment.

The adult group said there was little information on the environment that is why the location is dirty, and there is no useful information on how to build houses cheaply. The Community information centre was called upon to supply this type of information

### **3.7 Networks and ICTs**

#### **3.7.1 Networking and ICTs use**

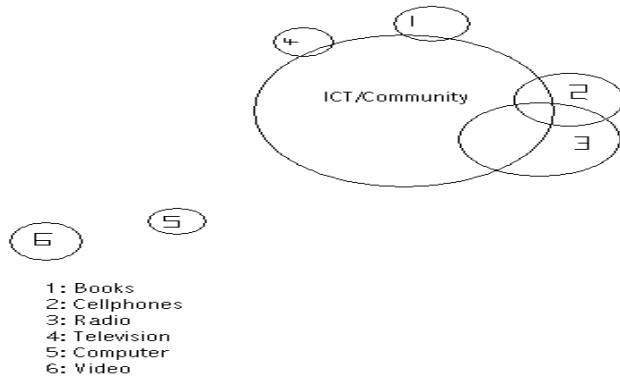
The question was aimed at finding out whether strong networks still exist between the urban residents and rural areas, and secondly perceptions on the use of ICTs. Respondents indicated there are strong contacts with relatives in rural areas through cell-phones, and traveling there often. In the adult group the women said they go often while the men don't because *'people don't send money because most men don't have a room in the north. Some men don't send any money because they spend it on alcohol and prostitutes'* It was explained that the government provides elders with a monthly pension the amount is believed to be enough. However the adult group also said they receive foodstuff often from the rural areas from relatives. The girl group also had regular contact with the rural areas and carry out farming during school holidays. The ownership of radio and cell phones was high while ownership of television and landline phones was low. Most of the group members only saw a computer in the Community information centre and would like to learn how to use it.

The venn diagram discussion yielded the results presented below.

## Venn diagram showing the importance of ICT tools

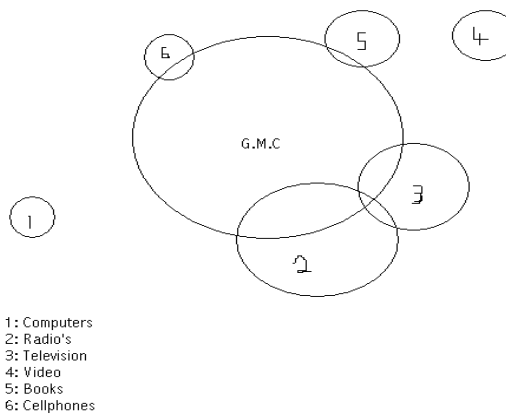
### Adults

Question 6



The most important ICT to the adult respondents as revealed in the Venn diagram is radio (3) followed by cellphones (2). In contrast however the young males, below, viewed radio as number one, followed by television. Interestingly computers scored the lowest for both groups because it is a new medium to all the respondents of Grenwell Matongo.

### Young males



### 3.8 Grenwell Matongo community information centre

All the focus groups were also asked questions about the Grenwell Matongo Community information centre. Most of the adult group members have used the Centre to make photocopies but not for reading purposes. The girls group all said they have used the information centre for reading purposes and their brothers and sisters have also done the



same. They use the Centre for studying, internet searches, reading, photocopying, meeting friends, and borrowing books. The young male groups also have used the centre for similar purposes.

**Table 12**

**Responses on Grenwell Matongo community information centre continued.**

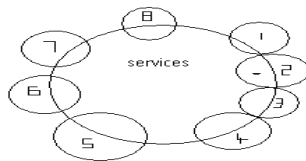
Young males	Young females	Adults
<p><b>Have you used the community information center?</b>            Yes a lot of times, as well as some members of the family            Use it and still using it</p> <p><b>What did they use it for?</b>            For the internet, photo copying, reading, research and reading            Newspapers</p> <p><b>What services does it offer?</b>            Photocopying, Internet, Quiet environment to read and study, Access to computer (for typing, internet etc.)            Faxing and Newspapers</p> <p><b>What else would you like the community information center to do?</b>            Have more up to date material            More seating space. Have an teacher to advice learners. Need for more staff.</p> <p><b>Would you like games? Which games would you like to have?</b>            Yes - Chess, Soccer, Volleyball, Tennis, Drama</p>	<p><b>Have you used the community information centre?</b>            “Yes, brothers and sisters as well”</p> <p><b>What did they use it for?</b>            For studying purposes, internet, research, reading the newspaper, photocopying, meeting friends and borrowing books</p> <p><b>What services does it offer?</b>            “Duplication, typing, borrowing books, study space and providing information”</p> <p><b>If some of the services we have discussed today were to be offered would you attend such activities?</b>            “Definitely yes”</p> <p><b>What would you like the Community information Centre to do?</b>            “Get more books, so that we can access more information”            “Expand the centre and get more computers”            “Provide more information on issues pertaining to the community”</p> <p><b>Would you like game? Which games would you like to have?</b>            “Yes, sports such as volleyball, tennis, soccer, netball, cards, draft, snake and ladder basketball and cultural games”</p>	<p><b>Community center</b>            All used the centre to make copies</p> <p><b>If people would attend the discussed activities</b>            “Yes”            “We will use it because our people travel long distance to use facilities from other community,            so if facilities are provided then we are sure we will use them”            “Why the community don’t come to the centre is because it has no enough facilities e.g. computer classes”</p> <p><b>What the center should do.</b>            Offer business studies, Computer and Driving classes.</p> <p><b>Games and other activities</b>            Yes! We will participate.            Provide traditional dance, cinemas, rugby, and soccer. “If you give facilities, then people will use them”</p>

Suggestion on how the Grenwell Matongo community information centre can help in overcoming poverty varied among the groups. The young male group suggested more up to date materials, expansion of the premises for people to use especially during exam times, and hiring a teacher to give both information and homework advice to community members. The games they would like to see in the Centre were: chess, soccer, volleyball, tennis and drama. The girls group had similar suggestions but also added the need for more computers, cards, draft, snake and ladder, and more information concerning the community and its problems. The adult group expressed the need for business classes, computer classes, and driving school/classes and cinema/video shows on farming.

**Venn diagram of different types of service Grenwell Matongo Community information centre should provide.**

**Adults**

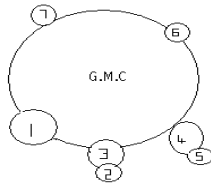
Question 8



- 1: Play Ground
- 2: Library
- 3: MPYC
- 4: SME's
- 5: Pension point
- 6: Hospitle
- 7: Police station
- 8: Fire Brigade

The Venn diagram indicate a slightly different ordering in terms of the types of services the adult members of the focus group would like Grenwell Matongo centre to provide from the young males group: For the adult group, first is a pension point (5) i.e. a place for old age pensioners to get their monthly allowance, second is small business information centre (4), and third is library (2). Whereas the young males would prefer first photocopying services (1), second reading place (4) and third computers (3).

## Young males:



- 1: Photocopying
- 2: Internet
- 3: Computers
- 4: Reading
- 5: Lending books
- 6: Telephone and fax services
- 7: Entertainment

### 3.9 Summary

The findings of this study show that participants face high levels of poverty in their community, and low levels of hygiene and sanitation. There was recognition that education for children is important to overcome poverty. Poor facilities for homework at home, low parental support because of low levels of education and hunger among learners make learning difficult. Gender relations are marked by alcohol related violence and rapes. The rate of HIV/AIDS and TB infections were thought to be high but kept secret because of fear of stigma. There were serious environmental problems in the community because of the use of inflammable fuel sources such as paraffin and candles which often led to fires in the corrugated iron sheet shacks, with frequent loss of life. Overall the youth appeared to have a richer information environment with more sources and channels for accessing and sharing information compared to adults in the community, some of who appeared isolated, disempowered and complained that no one listened to them because they are too poor.

The community information centre in the settlement is used intensively by young people to obtain educational information, study facilities and socializing. Adults, however, indicated that they only use the community information centre marginally, mainly for photocopying and literacy learning purposes. Recommendations are made on how to address the identified information needs of the community and capacity building in the context of MDG and poverty eradication.

The key recommendations from this study include the following: Capacity building through the creation of a broad based information centre committee to provide advice and direction on the community information strategy; expanding the range of information services provided to the community, more facilities, expanding the size of the information centre to enable it to undertake more responsibilities; and introduce skills based and discussion forums into the information dissemination strategy. The need to network with other development agencies was also recommended as a way of providing support for the work being done at the centre.

### **3.9 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The three focus discussion groups, though not entirely representative of the whole Grenwell Matongo community had many ideas on the various issues concerning information use to address the MDG programme goals in Namibia. Overall the young people appeared to have more awareness of information needs and channels. Quite often, some of the adult group members were not aware of information flows on the various development concerns under discussion. One explanation for this difference is the presence of barriers created by illiteracy, powerlessness, and language problems because most of the information flowing to the community was in English – a foreign language.

One way to overcome barriers to the flow of information is to provide information literacy skills in the adult literacy programme operated from the information centre as well as provide user education programmes for both adults and young people.

#### **1. Extreme poverty, hunger and livelihoods**

The focus group members perceived the high levels of extreme poverty in their community as caused by two main factors, firstly is individual behaviours and second is socio-economic structural blockages. Various suggestions were made on behaviour change requirements to deal with individual behaviour. Not surprisingly, the suggestion to break out of the socio-economic structural blockages saw government (and City of

Windhoek) as the dominant players and enablers in their role of policy formulators. There was a high level of helplessness and voicelessness many of the adult group members.

### **1.1 Recommendations**

i) The organizational capacity of the community need to be built up by creating a broad based committee for the information centre to provide advice and direction to address the needs of the community and create a platform for dialogue with government, municipality, political officials and among members of the community on how to tackle problems and opportunities of development in the community.

ii) The type and range of information provided needs to expand to include: employment information, small business opportunities, and financial information.

iii) The size of the information centre is small and needs to be expanded to incorporate a development information centre concept which will cater mainly for adults while the present library unit also need expanding to cater for the large number of young people who use it.

## **2. Primary, secondary and non formal education.**

Education for children, literacy and skills acquisition were regarded as important by all discussants. Poor facilities for homework at home, and low levels of parental support, and hunger among the learners are the key issues which emerged during the discussion. The need to provide more textbooks and educational materials was cited by most discussants.

### **2.1 Recommendations**

i) The focus of the information centre is educational in nature, but this role needs further strengthening by expansion of the type and range of information provided to include: a larger textbook collection, careers information, a learning centre approach which would ensure some study carrels and group discussion corners, and some assistance with

homework for the young children whose parents are unable to give them any form of assistance because of their won low levels of education

ii) The computers appear to be heavily used but mainly for email and playing games. Some training on conducting internet searches and an indication of useful websites or book marking of useful websites, for homework would be of great help to the young people attending schools and doing their homework in the centre.

### **3. Gender Relations and Equality**

The gender relations are characterized by perceived dominance of men over women, role of women not fully recognized, and alcohol related violence and rape occurrences in the community.

#### **3.1 Recommendations**

i) The Centre, with the assistance of the municipality and its partners, should hold regular workshops and discussion forums on gender equality and violence against women and children.

ii) The information centre should have gender law and domestic violence materials, in all local languages.

iii) Information about rape and what the victim should do should be available in the centre

### **4. Mother and Child Health Matters**

This area seems better served than other areas investigated in this study. However, the levels of child malnutrition and hygiene, and transmission of mother to child of STDs and HIV could be higher than indicated from the focus groups. Men seemed by passed in the flow of information on mother to child health matters.

#### **4.1 Recommendations**

- i) The information centre should strengthen its materials in the following areas: family planning, vaccinations, and mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS.
  
- ii) The information centre should organize talks on mother and child health matters, and HIV/AIDS in the community.
  
- ii) A TV and video combination unit would be excellent for viewing developmental videos followed up by discussions forums by community members on various development issues in the community

#### **5. HIV/AIDS and TB**

The extent of HIV/AIDS and TB in the community is presumed high although stigma related secrecy makes it difficult to tell the actual extent of infections. Low use of condoms, poverty-driven soft prostitution, high alcohol consumption and wide spread poverty are all factors which may fuel the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS and TB. The adult group appeared to have difficulties accessing HIV/AIDS prevention information.

##### **5.1 Recommendations**

- i) There need to acquire information posters on HIV/AIDS, and health information booklets (in local languages and English).
  
- ii) There is also need for information on poster format and booklets on the importance of compliance with prescriptions of ARVs and TB medication.
  
- iii) The information centre needs to network with government departments and NGOs which are active in the area of HIV/AIDS in order to acquire their information materials and get resource persons to come to give talks at the Centre.

## **6. Environmental Degradation**

The community faces several environmental challenges the most prominent being the corrugated iron building materials used to build shacks which are small and lack electricity, water, and toilet facilities. The main sources of energy are candles and paraffin which have caused many fires in the community with loss of life.

### **6.1 Recommendations**

- i) Information is needed on how to keep the environment clean and the dangers of littering and poor hygiene.
  
- ii) Information about the Shack Dwellers Association should be widely available, at the information centre, to provide an opportunity to residents who want to improve housing in the area by working through the self help building scheme.
  
- ii) Information on alternative building materials to corrugated iron sheets and plastic sheets should be made available to the community so they can plan to build different dwellings.

## **7. Grenwell Matongo Information Centre**

The information centre is used intensively by young people for educational purposes, internet access, as well as a place to meet and socialize. In contrast, the adult usage of the centre is limited to those making photocopies and literacy classes. The centre is too small for the large number of young people who rely solely on it for homework and class work after school hours.



## **7.1 Recommendations**

i) The space of the centre is too small given the large number of users it has to provide space for reading, literacy, and internet access. Expansion of the centre would go along way to address the space problems but also some of the new services which the focus group suggested e.g. development information section, video viewing section, and facility where young and old alike can play games and network for information sharing.

ii) A request for training and skills building in the community was expressed many times by the adults. Apart from holding classes on simple things like knitting for women? handcrafts, workshops could also be held on other skills areas identified in this study.

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