

National Survey

Clusters in Namibia:

A review of progress over 11 years, and the way forward



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Abbreviations

BEP	Basic Education Programme
BES	Basic Education Support
CCP	Cluster Centre Principal
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MoE	Ministry of Education
NANTU	Namibia National Teachers' Union
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NIED	National Institute for Education Development
PQA	Programme Quality Assurance
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
TRC	Teachers' Resource Centre

Summary

The system of school clusters started in 1996 as way to enhance education management and planning. Since then, demands for the system have led it to spread progressively and voluntarily from region to region. The main function of clusters has been in giving teachers and principals a structure that provides support, sharing, problem-solving and collaboration. These collegial benefits have special value in such a sparsely populated country where most school staff members are isolated from professional support. Many aspects of implementation have been flexible, which has allowed space for innovative applications of the system.

This report provides a review and roadmap for the future of the cluster system in Namibia. It also meets some of the requirements of the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), which introduces reforms to attain better returns for Namibia's investment in education. ETSIP emphasizes the important role of clusters in attaining these objectives, and provides guidelines and resources to strengthen and formalise the cluster system. The report also provides a response to growing demands by school staff and regional education staff for the cluster system to be formalised. The cluster system has been supported most vigorously by the Basic Education Programme (BEP), which is now drawing to a close. The report thus also provides a concluding statement of support to the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Three broad methods were used to gather information. First, senior staff of the MoE and other relevant organisations were consulted during May and June 2007. Second, information was gathered from most Cluster Centres using a survey questionnaire. Third, information was assembled during workshops in each of the 13 regions. These were attended by Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs), Regional Directors, Regional Education Officers, Education Planners, Inspectors of Education and Advisory Teachers.

The experimental, voluntary and spontaneous nature of implementation has provided many lessons to guide the operation of clusters in the future. One important lesson is the need for structures, guidelines and systems which foster the operations of clusters, rather than simple regulations or procedures. The key element is collaboration, and it this that requires guidance and facilitation. Circumstances in and among Namibian schools vary greatly, and the cluster system therefore needs to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate this diversity.

The 280 clusters in the country each consist of between 5 and 10 schools located as close together as possible. Primary and secondary schools are usually grouped in separate clusters in urban areas where schools are generally large and close to each other, whereas there is usually a mix of phases in rural areas. Cluster Centres are selected on the basis of several criteria: their accessibility to the schools in the cluster, their facilities and phases, and location in relation to other services. The Centres are points through which services and resources are channelled from circuits to schools and back again, serving as local nodes of support and activity, and facilitating decentralization. The Cluster Centre Principal needs to be a committed manager, with a vision extending to all schools in the cluster and the local community. Clusters are supported and monitored by an Inspector of Education at the Circuit Centre.

Clusters have functioned most effectively where Cluster Centre Principals, Inspectors of Education and Regional Directors have given firm leadership and established clear communication lines and responsibilities. Many cluster-based groupings have developed. For example, Circuit and Cluster Management Committees work to solve and improve management issues. Cluster subject groups are used for syllabus and policy interpretation and the joint preparation of schemes of work, lesson plans, assessment schedules and examination papers. A Subject Facilitator normally facilitates each subject group. Other cluster-based committees include ones concerned with school boards, HIV/Aids, sport, cultural events, fund-raising and discipline.

Clusters provide many non-monetary incentives such as status, confidence and career opportunities. Teachers and Principals are also now less isolated, rapidly sharing and solving problems together. Their workloads are often reduced, as are those of Inspectors. The flow of information, statistics and materials to and from schools is more efficient.

The greatest weaknesses of the cluster system stem from inadequate support, mainly in terms of leadership, resources for materials, equipment and staff, and for financial incentives for Cluster Centre Principals. There is also an important need for formal guidelines and policy.

As a result, the report makes several recommendations on how support, procedures and policy should be provided. Should the MoE adopt the recommendations made in the report, the following decisions and activities should be pursued:

1. Review and adopt the Ministry of Education Policy on Clusters, which is presented here in draft form.
2. Review and adopt the job descriptions suggested for Cluster Centre Principals.
3. As recommended, approve and budget for compensation for Cluster Centre Principals in the form of an allowance amounting to 10% of their annual salary.
4. Review and adopt the suggested role descriptions for Subject Facilitators.
5. Strengthen Advisory Services and decentralize them to circuit level to promote much closer functioning between Advisory Teachers and clusters.
6. Following suggested minimum standards for Cluster Centres, provide the Centres with necessary buildings, equipment and furniture.
7. As recommended, appoint an additional teacher and cluster-based secretary at each Cluster Centre.
8. To strengthen and facilitate cluster operations, Regional Offices should allocate funds for materials and supplies, travel and training.
9. Within the context of clusters, rationalize the management of small schools and abolish posts of principals at these schools.
10. Promote the further use of clusters to improve the implementation of programmes, for example the evaluation of national standards, relief teaching and information technology.
11. Compile a Manual of Operations for the Cluster System, and disseminate information and policy guidelines on clusters to all stakeholders.

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The predominant purpose of this review comes from requirements stipulated by the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) of the Ministry of Education (MoE), as described below. However, there are two other reasons for producing this report and the recommendations contained therein. One is the growing demand from school staff and Inspectors for the cluster system to be formalised, thus moving the system beyond voluntary implementation.¹ The second reason is that the report provides a closing contribution and review of support for clusters provided by the Basic Education Programme (BEP) over the last 11 years. This German-funded Programme comes to a formal end on the 31st of July 2007.

The school cluster system was set up initially in 1996 to improve the efficiency of education management and service delivery. Since then and through its informal implementation throughout Namibia, the system has proven its worth beyond efficiency, making substantial contributions to the broad national goals of access, equity and quality in a number of ways. Clusters now provide mechanisms for control, support and assessment, as well as frameworks for school planning and development.² They create networks for schools to increase the flow of learners through the school system, while improving the quality of teaching through collaborative support systems. Opportunities emerge for better learning and school performance through the spirit of competitiveness that comes from collaboration. Regional Education Offices can use clusters for monitoring and evaluation, and for implementing programmes. Clusters enhance decentralisation by promoting local decision-making and empowerment, while offering possibilities for parent and community participation in education.

¹ For example, on 7 September 2006 participants in the Khomas Region workshop commented:

- There is a need for a programme of advocacy of the cluster system to build a common vision and enthusiasm. This could be achieved in workshops for principals and teachers where the need for mutual support, ownership and understanding could be developed.
- Participation in the cluster system will be enhanced by financial incentives, both for Cluster Centre Principals and Subject Heads. Financial incentives and the appointment of competent people will enhance the functioning of centres. There is a need for self evaluation to assess and improve performance.
- There is a strong need to create jobs and ranks of Subject Heads for people who provide advisory and supervisory services to teachers of the same subjects in the cluster. This would also provide more opportunities for teachers within their career paths, which might then go from Teacher to Subject Head to Head of Department to Deputy Principal to Principal and then Cluster Centre Principal.
- Greater support is needed from the Regional Office, especially from Advisory Teachers at cluster meetings of subject groups.
- Clear-cut guidelines should be established for Advisory Teachers to contribute to subject groups.
- There is a need to develop specific strategies to promote the use and services of Subject Heads within clusters.
- Formal, mandatory job descriptions should be compiled for Cluster Centre Principals. There is a need for training and development at managerial levels.

² The Presidential Commission on Education and Training in 1999 recommended (volume 1, page 25) that “wherever possible, schools should be associated in clusters of eight or less schools to set up more localised systems of support and management”

ETSIP proposes reforms to attain better returns for Namibia's considerable investment in education, while effectively supporting development goals, including a transition to a knowledge-based economy. Present outcomes indicate a low quality of learning achievements. For example, Namibia ranks the lowest of any country in the SACMEQ test in mathematics and English reading at the primary level. Furthermore, disadvantaged groups have inadequate access both to inputs and outputs, and these inequalities hinder poverty eradication and the reduction of social disparities. Inadequate outputs at senior secondary level result in skilled labour shortages, thus limiting economic growth. The ETSIP initiative emphasises that the most effective way to address the skills shortage is to increase the throughput and completion rates of learners, while reducing the recurrent and capital costs per learner through more efficient use of teachers and facilities. One of the key elements of the first phase of ETSIP implementation is the need for improving the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of general education. Strategic Objective A specifies improving system quality and relevance as a priority component, while Component 2 of this Objective focuses on teacher development. It further formulates a wide range of activities with respect to the cluster system, which is recognised as an important tool towards reaching ETSIP's objectives. ETSIP therefore provides motives and resources to strengthen and formalise the cluster system. In turn, clusters offer a framework to enhance the implementation of ETSIP.³

Inputs cited in the ETSIP document relating to clusters include formalising and institutionalising the cluster system by developing national and operational policies for the clustering of schools. Other activities include the development of operational guidelines, the provision of additional staffing, job descriptions for Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs), grading and salary structures for CCPs and other Principals, and upgrading facilities at Cluster Centres to provide teacher development and support. These aspects are addressed in the pages ahead, which also present a review of the functioning, strengths and weaknesses of clusters.

³ ETSIP proposes to improve student learning by setting performance targets for levels of achievement to which school managers and teachers will be held accountable (*Annex 1: ETSIP DLP Operation Policy Matrix, General Education, Objective 5*). To achieve this, ETSIP proposes:
“... (a) clear definition of skills and competencies that learners must acquire at each level, ensuring consistency with competencies proven to be critical for effective functioning in a knowledge based economy;
(b) strengthening of educators to ensure that they can effectively facilitate the acquisition of set skills and competencies;
(c) increasing the provision of books and instructional materials to support educators in their facilitation of student learning;
(d) improving of student assessment and system evaluation to ensure that we can verify when learners have acquired set skills and competencies; and if the system is effective at facilitating this acquisition;
(e) strengthening managers' and teachers' accountability for system effectiveness and learner acquisition of set skills and competencies.”

ETSIP expects that these quality improvement measures will lead to improved internal efficiency, i.e. learner attainment of competencies, reduced drop-out rates, reduced repetition, better throughput, and reduced Grade 10 push-out rates. The cluster system will need to show concrete results in terms of ETSIP's requirements if it is to contribute to the goals of the first phase to strengthen the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the general education and training system.

This report places emphasis on structures, guidelines and systems which *foster* the functioning of clusters, rather than regulating or controlling functions. The key element is collaboration, which enables principals and teachers to work more professionally and with greater job satisfaction, ultimately improving the learning of school children. Collaboration needs to be demand-driven, rather than simply satisfying obligations to collaborate. And so while Namibia will have a formal system of school clusters – and every school will belong to a cluster – details of the day-to-day functioning of the cluster must be left to school principals, teachers, Advisory Teachers and Inspectors.

Flexible systems of operation are needed for another reason. Circumstances in and among Namibian schools vary greatly, some schools being close to each other, others remote or difficult to reach. Some schools have little to offer their partner schools, while others have experience and resources to be shared. Standards, expectations and openness vary between schools as well. The cluster system thus needs to be sufficiently flexible to include – indeed embrace – this diversity, in each situation serving as many needs as possible.

2. METHODOLOGY

Three broad methods were used to gather information for this report. First, senior staff in the Ministry of Education (MoE), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and Namibian National Teachers' Union (NANTU) were consulted during May and June 2007 (see Appendix 1). Second, survey questionnaires were distributed to all Cluster Centres throughout the country (Appendix 2). A total of 247 or 88% of all Cluster Centres returned completed forms, from which information was compiled in a database for analysis. Third, workshops were held in each of the 13 regions. These meetings were attended by 93% of all Cluster Centre Principals, and many Regional Directors, Regional Education Officers, Education Planners, Inspectors of Education and Advisory Teachers.

The surveys and workshops were conducted during two phases: Kavango, Caprivi, Erongo and Khomas during August and September 2006, while the remaining nine regions were covered in May and June 2007. The synthesis of information gathered during this study was facilitated by the authors' combined experience over the past 11 years, designing the composition of every cluster, formulating procedures, evaluating and synthesizing information for various reports and books. In addition, information was gleaned from recent research by Pomuti (in preparation) and Uirab (2006).

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The cluster system has evolved over the past 11 years, initial implementation having started in the Rundu Education Region (Kavango Region) in 1996. The use of the concept of clustering has remained voluntary and demand-driven, even though the system has been promoted as the structure for the management of many aspects of education. This voluntary implementation has allowed space for innovative applications of the system, but has also required the use of personal time, money and transport on the part of principals and teachers using the system.

The Basic Education Programme (BEP) supported the initial development and structure of the system, with the Rundu Regional Office taking increasing ownership of the system as its benefits became apparent. It should be noted that the goal of the first phase of BEP was the development of better management and planning practices which could serve as models for other regions. The clustering of schools was thus initially developed through the Inspectorate system, with a focus primarily on management and planning to increase the flow of learners from one phase of schooling to the next.

Benefits of the system in Rundu led the Education Regions of Katima Mulilo (now Caprivi), Keetmanshoop (now Hardap and Karas) and Khorixas (now Erongo and Kunene) to request support from BEP to develop their own clusters. Baseline studies for these regions were completed in 1999, the studies making recommendations on the schools to be grouped in each cluster and the grouping of clusters into circuits. Implementation in the Rundu, Katima Mulilo, Keetmanshoop and Khorixas Education Regions was supported by BEP through the provision of regional advisors and other support staff, and material and training inputs. The cluster system also evolved in different ways in each region according to local needs, constraints and opportunities.

Steps to implement the cluster system in Ondangwa East (now Ohangwena and Oshikoto) and Ondangwa West Education Regions (now Oshana and Omusati) were initiated in May 2000, and recommendations for the composition of clusters and circuits were finalised in July 2001. The USA-funded Basic Education Support (BES) project funded the planning and development of clusters in these two Education Regions. A similar study in the Windhoek Education Region took place early in 2002 to plan clusters in what now comprise the Omaheke, Otjozondjupa and Khomas Regions.

Two somewhat different approaches were adopted during the baseline studies. The first approach was used in Rundu, Keetmanshoop, Khorixas Regions and in part of Katima Mulilo Region. All schools in these regions were visited to assess their relationships with nearby schools, their development needs and potential as Cluster Centres. Draft recommendations were then tabled at consultative meetings of Inspectors and senior regional management staff. Changes suggested at the meeting were incorporated into a set of final recommendations. A second approach was used in part of Katima Mulilo Region and in Ondangwa West, Ondangwa East and Windhoek Regions. Schools were not visited on an individual basis, but several rounds of meetings were conducted during which Inspectors, regional management staff, regional councillors and other participants considered how to group schools into clusters. Cluster Centres were also selected and circuits delineated.

Why has Namibia implemented clusters so comprehensively, while no other country has developed and maintained such a system to the same extent? There are probably three, somewhat related reasons for this, and all are consequences of Namibia's arid environment and small, sparsely spread population. First, most schools are small. For example, 20% of all schools have three or fewer teachers, while over half (54%) have 10 or fewer teachers. Second, and as a result of the small size of schools, most teachers work in professional isolation as the only people teaching that subject in their school. For instance, 83% of schools that offer Grade 7 mathematics have only one Grade 7 mathematics teacher. Third, most schools are located in rural areas where they are geographically isolated from regular support services. In essence, the system meets a

range of management and professional needs by offering a framework of support and collaboration to solve problems resulting from these three conditions.

4. THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF CLUSTERS

There are a total of 280 clusters in the 13 regions, as shown in the following table:

Region	Number of clusters	
Caprivi	20	<p>What is a cluster?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cluster is a group of schools, geographically as close and accessible to each other as possible. • Each cluster usually consists of between five and ten schools. • One school in each group is selected to serve as the Cluster Centre. • The Cluster Centre is accessible to the schools in the cluster, has adequate facilities, and is preferably positioned at a development centre where other social and commercial services are available. • A Cluster Centre sets good examples for management and teaching practices. • The principal of the Cluster Centre is a committed manager, with a vision that can extend beyond his or her school to the needs of all schools and the community in the cluster. • Clusters are supported and monitored by an Inspector of Education at the Circuit Centre. • Clusters are grouped into circuits, while circuits are grouped into regions.
Erongo	10	
Hardap	11	
Karas	9	
Kavango	57	
Khomas	12	
Kunene	14	
Ohangwena	35	
Omaheke	8	
Omusati	44	
Oshana	22	
Oshikoto	28	
Otjozondjupa	10	
Total	280	

Primary and secondary schools are usually grouped in separate clusters in urban areas where schools are generally large and close to each other. By contrast, it has often not been possible to have separate secondary and primary clusters in less populated rural areas where there are few secondary schools among a predominance of primary schools. While these rural primary and secondary schools may not always collaborate fully on aspects of teaching, links between primary and secondary schools remain essential. For example, joint planning between secondary and primary schools may lead to compensatory teaching in the primary grades if learners are inadequately prepared for entry into secondary grades. Many secondary schools have also forged cross-cluster links to secondary schools in other clusters for purposes of collaborating on matters concerned with the curriculum. Private schools are clustered with government schools, and many private schools have been particularly supportive towards less-advantaged schools.

Schools in a cluster should be as near to each other as possible to maximize the chances of meeting regularly. However, distances preclude close contact between schools in many parts of the country. Feedback from the regional review workshops indicated that many teachers and principals use their own money and transport to ensure that management and subject meetings happen, assisting each other so that even those from distant schools can attend meetings. In Kunene Region, the Ondao mobile school units have been integrated into clusters where they have closer links than with their parent head office in Opuwo. For those Ondao units still unable to effectively participate in cluster activities due to long distances and poor road conditions, efforts have been made by many clusters to remedy this. For example, teachers and principals get together for subject and management meetings in Opuwo the day before school starts each trimester.

Cluster centres

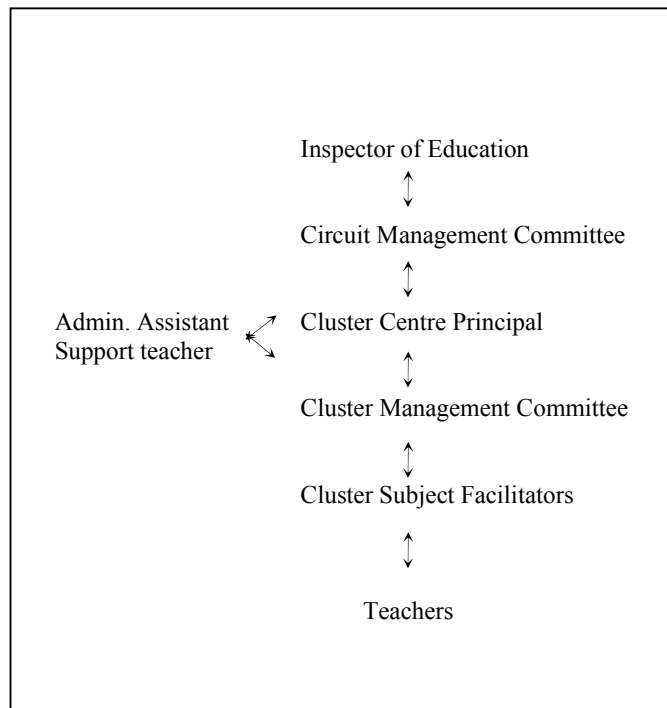
Several criteria have been used to select Cluster Centres, although some factors have been more important than others, depending on local circumstances and the potential of different schools to function as Centres. The criteria considered most frequently are:

- Accessibility to other schools in the cluster
- Quality of facilities at the school
- Quality of management at the school
- Potential for growth and development
- Curriculum offered, with preference given to schools that offer higher grades
- Location in villages and towns that are likely to develop and to which teachers and principals would be likely to travel, for example for shopping or health or banking services.

Cluster Centres have increasingly consolidated their function as central points through which services and resources are channelled from circuits to schools, and through which schools give feedback to circuits. In some respects they fulfil functions that Teachers' Resource Centres (TRCs) do in larger urban areas, with the important advantage of being accessible to far more schools than the limited numbers reached by TRCs. Cluster Centres provide information, services and facilities for the use of all schools in the cluster, and serve as contact points for Advisory Services. They are channels through which statistics, schedules, orders and other information move between schools and the circuit office. Where Cluster Centres have good meeting facilities and committed management, they are used as resource centres by teachers in the cluster, as well as meeting centres for extra-mural community activities, thus serving as important local hubs of support and activity. In this respect, the Centres have contributed to the process of decentralization, devolving authority and decision-making powers to local operational levels. Their placement at development nodes has also facilitated regional planning.

Cluster structures, roles and committees

A variety of structures have been developed and found useful by clusters over the past 11 years. The following schematic diagram, as provided by participants at the regional workshop for Karas and Hardap on 21 June 2007, is typical of the lines of communication established for clusters.



Cluster functioning has also been most effective where communication lines and the roles and responsibilities of people at different levels have been made clear. Good examples of how this has been achieved in certain clusters and regions are given in Appendix 3. The most active clusters are generally those benefiting from solid leadership provided by *Inspectors of Education* who also have important monitoring and supervisory roles to ensure efficient functioning. Clusters have operated well where:

- Inspectors have made sure that Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs) are well-informed about their roles,
- Inspectors work with, and guide CCPs in planning, organising, delegating, controlling and monitoring cluster activities and staff,
- Inspectors forge links between clusters and the Regional Office, and arrange access to Advisory Services,
- Inspectors explore new strategies for clusters, often by networking across circuits and regions.
- The *Circuit Management Committee* is active, providing space for the exchange of ideas, experiences and information relating to the administration of schools in the circuit. These committees are convened by Inspectors and attended by CCPs and perhaps other senior staff.
- Clusters have adequate resources.

The primary function of a *Cluster Centre Principal* is to promote teamwork and collaboration, and to enhance the management of schools. Furthermore, in monitoring and evaluating the quality of cluster activities and standards within schools, CCPs extend quality assurance beyond their own schools to all members of clusters. Feedback from the review workshops indicated that some CCPs have not fully immersed themselves in their roles due to the lack of a formal mandate, while others have gone ahead and been accepted as leaders in their clusters.

Other functions include planning at cluster level, moderating schedules, convening meetings, liaising with Inspectors about cluster issues, mediating in cases of misunderstanding or frictions among cluster members, facilitating training within clusters, and representing the Inspector in his/her absence.

Cluster Management Committees have evolved into management structures where all school principals in the cluster share information and address teaching and learning problems in a collaborative way. This forum is chaired by a CCP and has been used for:

- planning cluster activities
- preparing school development plans
- rationalising Grade 1 intakes between schools
- developing common policies, for example on discipline and school fund contributions
- organising resources to be shared, such as libraries, text books, furniture and teachers
- organising cultural and sports events between member schools
- arranging community participation through school boards.

Soon after clusters were first formulated, groups of teachers from different schools began to meet in their clusters and collaborate within their subject areas. The practice began in Caprivi from where it spread across the whole country, and *Cluster Subject Groups* are now active in most clusters where they are usually facilitated by a *Subject Facilitator*. While logistical difficulties may hamper the functioning of subject groups, evidence suggests that the benefits of subject groups are significant. The alternative means isolation, a lack of stimulation, fewer resources and heavier workloads for teachers. The main functions of subject groups have been in:

- helping interpret syllabi and subject policies
- developing common schemes of work, lesson plans and teaching aids
- selecting text book resources
- preparing common schedules and papers for tests and examinations
- moderating test and examination results
- analysing learner achievement
- organizing peer teaching.

While Subject Facilitators play important roles in contributing towards these functions, all the regional review workshops also regarded the Facilitators as crucial for purposes of teacher induction, training and evaluation, and linking teachers with Advisory Teachers.

A range of *other committees* and groups have been established in clusters to serve various functions. These include committees to promote and co-ordinate programmes and activities concerned with HIV/Aids awareness, sporting and cultural events, fund-raising for clusters, and disciplinary matters, for example. These cluster-based committees are particularly helpful in rural areas where schools are small and isolated. The main advantages are that resources are pooled and considerable healthy competition is generated; neither would have been possible or easy in the absence of clusters. This kind of spirit has led to awards being presented to schools and learners who perform best in sporting, debating and academic competitions, for example.

OUTapi Circuit

Teaching and learning activities

2.2. Functions of Cluster Subject Groups.

- Organise Subject meeting
- Share ideas and information on the subject
- draw up same scheme of work
- set up Cluster based Exam
- Share ideas on assessment criteria.
- Design teaching and learning materials
- Advice CCP through principal on textbook to be ordered
- Share idea on appropriate technology they should apply
- Review quality teaching by looking at exam results.

How Subjects groups can improve quality scheme of work and assessment in clusters.

The Ibis School Board Support Project (Circles of Support) and GTZ-Basic Education Programme (BEP) both used the cluster system as a means of training the school boards of all schools in Namibia. Inspectors and CCPs were trained initially. CCPs then trained the school boards in each school.

Subject groups

1. Functions : Planning

- Schemes
- lessons.
- Exam papers

- Identify subject needs & problems and address. (solve).
- Interact with CCP./AT.

2. Quality

- Use same scheme.
- Write cluster exams.
- Interaction – best outcomes.
- Uniform CASS (manuals with tasks, tests and investigations.)
- Reports & Statistics (CCP to distribute & store).

3. Internal Exams

- Cluster exams : Aug / Dec.
- (exclude external exams).

5. LESSONS LEARNT

Many lessons are available from the past 11 years of experience, as well as from information provided during the regional workshops (Appendix 5-16) and the survey of clusters (Appendix 2). Before going into the details of these, some general points need to be made. First, the experience reported here is home-grown, based on events in some 280 clusters, from thousands of cluster meetings involving thousands of people over many years. These are people working in Namibian schools across the whole socio-economic landscape of the country, and in all types of schools. The cluster system has thus essentially developed as a Namibian experiment, not one imported from Germany, or any other donor country, or from experience elsewhere in the world.

Second, the cluster system has been implemented with mixed success. In some regions, circuits and clusters there has been much more activity than in others, and levels of activity and use of clusters has sometimes changed in the same place. Third, the quality of leadership has undoubtedly been the most important factor to influence levels of activity and success. The most vibrant, productive clusters are those in places where Regional Directors, Regional Education Officers, Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Cluster Centre Principals have given greatest support, either as an overall management team or as individual managers and leaders. Clusters led by weak CCPs in areas with indifferent external management have largely been dormant.

Fourth, while clusters started off as a system to improve management and planning, those applications have often been overshadowed by uses that improve teaching and standards of learning. Most of these more professional benefits have come about as a result of subject groups which were created by clusters themselves, and thus independently of external advice or pressure. The Secretary General of NANTU made this clear, saying “the main function of a cluster is to co-ordinate teaching and learning among schools”.

Fifth, it is clear that clusters provide many non-monetary incentives which encourage cluster activity. For example, the status, confidence and career opportunities of Cluster Centre Principals and Subject Facilitators are enhanced. Teachers and Principals now feel less isolated, they communicate more readily with peers, and their workloads are often reduced. Inspectors now have much easier jobs, since they do not have to communicate with or visit every school in their circuit. People now make better use of their time and obtain greater job satisfaction. It is these kinds of incentives, together with good leadership, that have enabled the cluster system to grow and continue working over all these years.

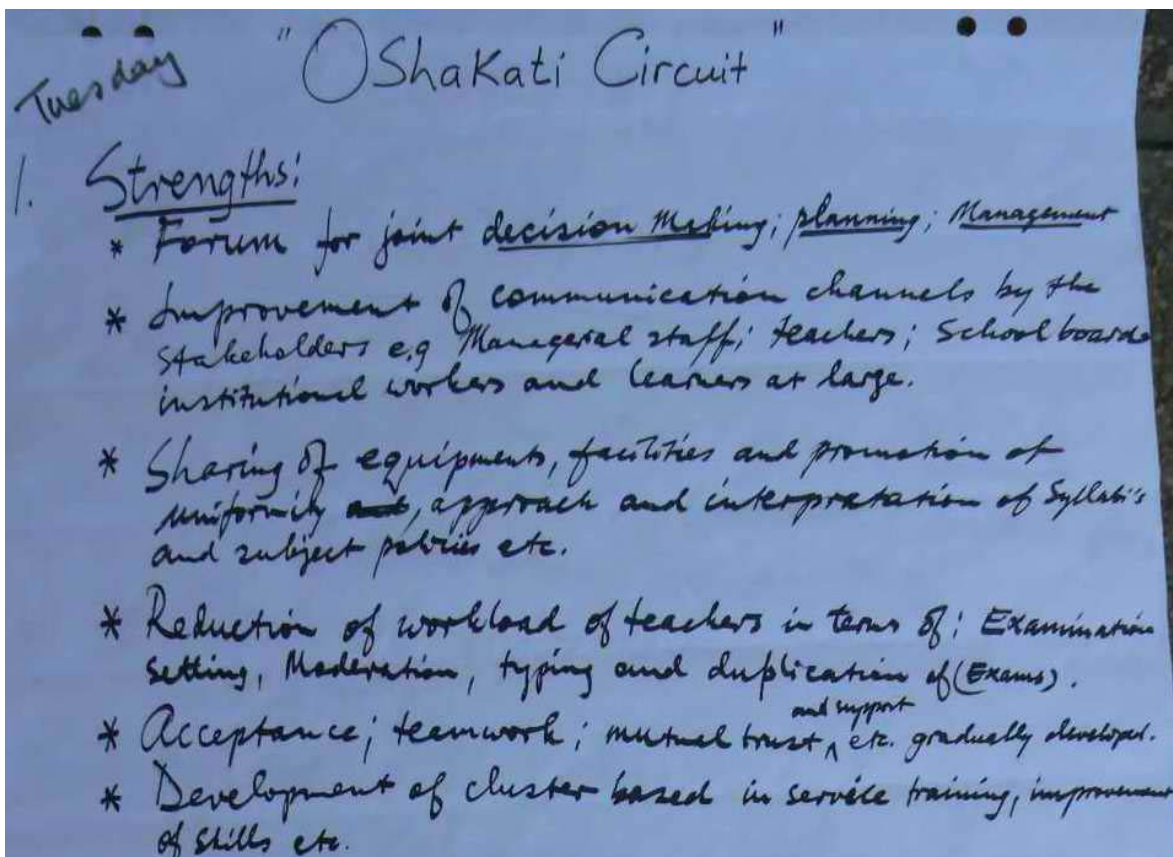
Caprivi: For many years this region was hailed as foremost in its vibrant implementation of the cluster system. That has changed in the recent past, as reported by participants at the regional workshop in Katima Mulilo on 16 August 2006:

- Subject facilitators are not armoured to do the training; they are not qualified enough. Schools should appoint the right teacher who has “full knowledge” of the subject content, who can make a good subject facilitator to strengthen cluster centre activities.
- Cluster Centre Principals should check that subject training is really taking place and should oversee all training
- The raising of funds is difficult. We are trying hard, but where there is no money, there is no activity, no development. Activities can not only depend on private initiatives. The MoE should provide the necessary financial framework.
- Commitment and dedication is declining in Caprivi. Cluster Centre Principals, Teachers, Advisory Teachers and Inspectors should improve their commitment towards cluster activities. At present, cluster activities take place, but need to be improved
- Regional Director, Advisory Teachers and Inspectors of Education should be encouraged to be part of workshops on cluster development activities to sensitize them on the importance of cluster centre activities/development
- The flow of information/communication between Regional Office, Circuit Offices and Cluster Centres must improve
- Head Office/Regional Office should increase their general support for clusters to develop, for example through material, financial and motivational support.

Orange River Cluster, Karas:

This cluster was formed in 2006 when a larger cluster was split due to unrealistic distances. The split was proposed by a Principal who justified the selection of his school in Noordoewer as cluster centre on the basis that he would get support for the cluster from the private schools at Oranjemund and Rosh Pinah. He has since established active subject groups with inputs from the teachers at the private schools. He has sponsorships from the mines and the businesses along the Orange River to improve the cluster centre.

Oranjemund Private School arranges for its teachers to travel to the Cluster Centre in Noordoewer to assist with subject meetings.



Finally, what was striking about the regional workshops was the overwhelming affirmation of the validity of the cluster system. Each workshop produced material reflecting the many ways in which clusters are used to the benefit of education (Appendix 5-16). The same was true of written responses given in the survey questionnaires (see Appendix 2).

Applications

Clusters have led to improvements in the *management of schools* because, for example:

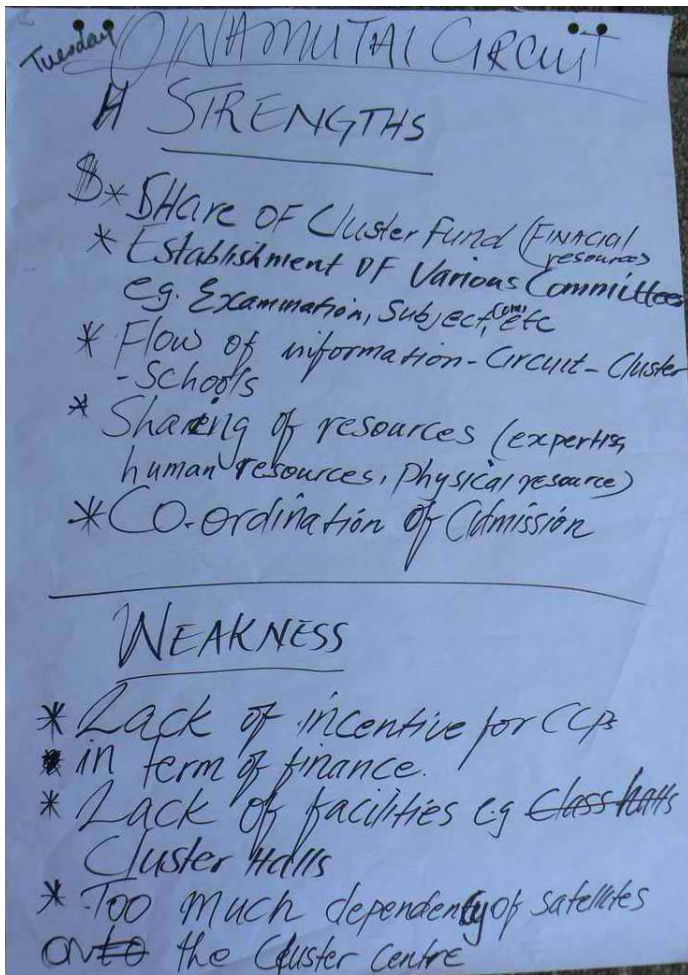
- Weaknesses in schools are less likely to go unnoticed and unsolved.
- Principals share their problems, and solve them by making joint decisions or learning from each other's experience in dealing with those problems,
- Leadership provided by Cluster Centre Principals strengthens conditions in member schools.
- Information, statistics and materials flow between schools and Inspectors and Regional Offices more rapidly and reliably.
- Principals spend less time away from their schools.
- Cluster Centres are local centres of excellence, providing local examples of good practice.

Improvements to *teaching and learning* have occurred because:

- Clusters have enabled the setting of similar, elevated standards of teaching and assessment across all schools.
- Teachers benefit from their collaborative interpretation of syllabi and subject policies.
- Teachers jointly prepare schemes of work and tests and examinations; thus, for example, a class of learners no longer depends on just one teacher's interpretation of the syllabus, and his or her assumption of what skills are to be achieved by the class.
- Examination and test results are moderated between schools.
- Teachers share materials, teaching techniques and experience.
- Teachers benefit from professional support and training channelled through clusters by Advisory Teachers and others.

The *working environment* for teachers, principals and inspectors has improved because:

- People can work together in areas of professional interest, thus getting collegial support and greater confidence.
- As a result of joint decision-making and problem solving, clusters elevate local empowerment, ownership and accountability.
- Workloads are reduced; thus, for example, teachers share or rotate the setting and duplication of test and examination papers.
- Clusters provide a framework to reach schools more efficiently and for the implementation of regional and national policies and programmes.
- Resources, information, expertise and experience are shared for the benefit of all.
- Performance is improved as a result of competition between schools within a cluster.



Challenges / Weaknesses (Areas to improve on)

- Distances between schools
- Finances: Insufficient funding for transport, resources. lack of staff at school level.
- Availability of R.O. staff, expertise / resource persons at schools
- Lack of proper planning from the part of CCPs, clusters, subject interest groups, subject leads etc.
- Not all cluster have mission & vision statements
- Lack of Innovation, motivation, positive attitude & ownership

School Visits by Cluster Centre Principals, reported at the Erongo Region workshop on 5 September 2006

All CCPs together with the Circuit Inspector target a circuit and visit all individual schools with the specific task of doing class visits and checking managerial issues. A report on each school is forwarded to every school. All involved discuss the report in a meeting with all principals of the schools visited. Recommendations are made regarding:

- subject teaching and learning issues
- management issues

The school visits are seen as support mechanism, and not as a control mechanism. It was stated that follow-ups on recommendations are still weak. There is consensus that this will be the responsibility of the Inspector and Advisory Teachers.

Weaknesses of the cluster system (Otjozondjupa Region workshop on 31 May 2007)

Problems that cannot really be changed:

- Distances between different schools.
- Regular meetings are not always possible because of expensive transport.
- Time: Distances to travel limit the quality and quantity of time spent.

Problems that can be changed:

- Lack of communication systems e.g. fax, telephone, photocopy machines
- Insufficient advisory services
- The fact that advisory services are not decentralised to circuit level
- No additional budget allocation
- Load on the cluster centre

Recommendations

- Additional budget allocation to CC schools (allowances, telephone/fax, etc.)
- Bringing back deputy principal post at cluster centre to assist CCP
- Job descriptions for CCP and subject facilitators
- Proper line of authority.

M. Uirab (2006) investigated clusters in the Erongo Region as a model for effective school management, and noted the widespread practice of common testing and examination in clusters, which is seen as a primary benefit by teachers and principals. While there was less evidence of common management practices, his research demonstrated that most principals in Erongo ranked the cluster system highly in terms of sharing of resources and staff collaboration. He suggests that clustering is becoming a “cornerstone in the Namibian education sector, and can make significant contributions to the lives of many schools in the country” (Uirab 2006:92).

Participants at the regional workshops were asked for ideas on what *further* improvements clusters can make to quality education. The following are the main recommendations:

- increased networking to share views, opinions, and methodology on what works, and what the pitfalls are in teaching strategies.
- promoting literacy in the 3 ‘R’s, as well as in science.
- having cluster competitions, debates, essays, science quizzes, fairs and teacher conferences.
- arranging for newly qualified teachers to start as assistant teachers to learn from experienced teachers, thus developing their skills in a practical way.

Weaknesses

The greatest weaknesses of the cluster system have been focused around:

- Inconsistent leadership. While it is easy to criticize those who have not provided management to use clusters effectively, some mitigation is in order. For example, CCPs, especially those who head large, very busy schools, have to weigh priorities between devoting their time and energy to their own schools against helping other member schools. It is also clear that some management staff, especially senior managers in regional offices, have yet to be convinced of the potential of clusters. These people have provided little support to the system. It is hoped that such inconsistency will diminish once the MoE formally adopts the cluster system, both as policy and in terms of minimum procedures to which all management staff must abide.
- A lack of resources, especially for materials, communication, staff assistance and transport, all of which are needed for clusters to function effectively. Recommendations made later in this report (page 24) seek to solve these problems.
- A lack of incentives. While the non-monetary incentives have done much to sustain the cluster system, they do not provide sufficient compensation for the substantial additional responsibilities and workloads that are expected, especially from Cluster Centre Principals. Again, recommendations made below (page 22) should provide useful incentives to ensure that Cluster Centre Principals are both fairly rewarded and can be held to their obligations.
- An absence of formal guidelines and policy. This is certainly a problem, which will be solved by the MoE’s adoption of policy and procedures. However, many clusters have been functioning effectively within the so-called ‘policy vacuum’, and have developed their own guidelines and procedures to make best use of cluster frameworks (see the examples in Appendix 3).

Herta Pomuti, the Director of the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), is presently engaged in research concerning the impacts of cluster subject groups on teaching outputs. Her results indicate the potential of the cluster system to achieve high standards through a competitive framework, but she has encountered many obstacles to effective functioning. These include power struggles between Cluster Centre Principals and Principals of member schools, poor skills and confidence among some Subject Facilitators, the negative attitudes of some teachers, and a lack of inputs by Advisory Services. Pomuti emphasises the need for ‘buy-in’ from key implementers to solve some of these problems. Cluster Centre Principals need clear lines of responsibility as well as management skills to build a team approach, a framework to get people together as well as a management system. Furthermore, Inspectors need to delegate more responsibility to CCPs, but are often not willing to do so. Subject groups need greater clarity on their purpose, roles and responsibilities, and support from Advisory Services. She suggests that NIEDs role in promoting continuous professional development will increasingly facilitate Advisory Services support to subject groups and teachers.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Policy on clusters

Clusters have functioned over the past 11 years in the absence of any formally approved policy, and the ETSIP programme makes the firm recommendation that this omission be corrected. An important requirement of the policy – and any regulations, procedures, job or role descriptions arising from the policy – is that the policy sets firm, minimum parameters for the functioning of clusters, but then also creates sufficient latitude for all schools to use clusters to best advantage. A healthy balance must therefore be achieved between formality and flexible implementation in the full knowledge that cluster activity will vary from region to region, from cluster to cluster, and from school to school.

The draft presented here is brief in the belief that the policy should be limited to the key objectives of clusters and principles of operation. More detailed guidelines, as recommended elsewhere in this report, should be included in a ‘Manual of operations’ (see page 31). The following draft policy is recommended.

Title: Ministry of Education Policy on Clusters:

Introduction

The Ministry of Education adopts the system of school clusters as formal structure for the management of education, and for professional support to teachers. Every school in Namibia will be a member of a cluster of schools. This requirement holds for all schools, whether private or government, that offer any components of the formal Grade 1 to 12 curricula. Clusters, in turn, are grouped into circuits, each of which is led by an Inspector of Education.

Overall purpose

Clusters provide a framework for collaboration between schools and teachers. The nature of cooperation will vary according to local circumstances, but will always be guided by requirements to:

- Improve teaching and learning
- Enhance the professional performance of teachers and principals

- Enhance the overall management of education
- Reduce the isolation of schools and teachers
- Achieve greater levels of equity and sharing between schools
- Achieve greater levels of decentralized decision-making, ownership and accountability.

Composition of clusters

A school cluster is a group of schools, geographically as accessible to each other as possible, linked together for management and teaching purposes. The composition of each cluster will be determined by the local Regional Education Office, ideally after extensive consultation with Principals, Inspectors of Education, Advisory Teachers, Education Planners, Regional Councillors and other relevant stakeholders. Most clusters will consist of between 4 and 10 schools, taking into consideration such factors as the size of schools, distances and the curricula offered. Allocations should aim for different clusters to have relatively similar numbers of teachers and learners. For example, greater numbers of small schools may be grouped in some clusters, whereas other clusters would consist of a smaller number of large schools. Primary and secondary schools should ideally be placed in separate clusters so as to maximize potential collaboration and exchange between member schools.

The Regional Education Office may review and amend the composition of clusters to take into account changing circumstances. However, every effort should be made to maintain stability in the membership and functioning of each cluster from year to year.

Cluster Centres

One school in each cluster will be appointed as the Cluster Centre, which will be maintained and developed as the Cluster Centre for as long as circumstances permit. The Cluster Centre will serve several roles, most notably in providing local examples of good practice, in being a central meeting venue at which most cluster activities take place, and in providing appropriate services to schools that are members of the cluster. It is thus expected that staff from member schools will travel to the Cluster Centre to attend meetings, and to deliver or fetch materials, equipment and information. To facilitate and encourage Cluster Centres in performing their functions, the Ministry of Education will give high priority to their development and to equipping them with appropriate facilities, budgets and services.

Cluster Centre Principals

The Principal of each Cluster Centre will be appointed as the Cluster Centre Principal, with appropriate recognition, training and remuneration. He or she will have a formal leadership role in the cluster, thus playing an important function in supporting, promoting and co-ordinating all activities among the schools that make up a cluster. The office of the Cluster Centre Principal will form the link between member schools and the Inspector of Education. While the Cluster Centre Principal is the most senior, authoritative staff member in a cluster, he or she will not be involved unnecessarily in the day-to-day affairs of each school, which will be the clear responsibility of the Principal or delegated head of each member school. It is desirable that all the Cluster Centre Principals be members of a Circuit Management Committee, which is convened by the Inspector of Education. Likewise, the Cluster Centre Principal is encouraged to form a Cluster Management Committee of all Principals of member schools.

Other groupings

In recognition of the central function of clusters being frameworks for alliances among schools, Inspectors, Advisory Teachers, Cluster Centre Principals and other Principals and leaders will promote the functioning of a variety of groups and structures within each cluster. These groups, often known as committees, will engage themselves in a collaborative focus on appropriate tasks, goals or issues. In the case of cluster-based groups formed to improve learning of specific subjects, one teacher may be appointed as Subject Facilitator. Subject Facilitators will be nominated by the Cluster Centre Principal in consultation with the Principals of member schools, with the nomination being approved by the Inspector of Education or an Advisory Teacher. School boards are to be informed of the roles of schools in the cluster system, and should be encouraged to use clusters to enhance community interest in education.

6.2 The role of the Cluster Centre Principal (CCP)

One of the goals of the ETSIP programme is to have the position and role of Cluster Centre Principals officially recognised. In pursuit of this aim, the following comments are offered, which are followed by recommended job descriptions for these positions.

Functionally, Cluster Centre Principals should focus on teamwork, providing examples of good practice, leadership and vision for the whole community served by all member schools. A great deal is therefore expected from Cluster Centre Principals. While it is not recommended that the MoE now create promotional posts for CCPs (see page 22), Regional Directors and Inspectors should ensure that only the most suitable people are appointed as Principals of Cluster Centres. Since schools nominated as Cluster Centres will be developed to perform this role permanently, any serving Principal of such a school who is not up to the task of being a CCP should be replaced by a more competent leader.

With the exception of small satellite schools (or campuses, see page 28), Principals of cluster member schools will retain full responsibility for their schools. Thus, the appointment and local presence of Cluster Centre Principals will not in any way excuse other Principals from their duties and the immediate leadership that they should provide to their schools from day-to-day.

Recommended job description for Cluster Centre Principals:

The CCP provides leadership over all schools in the cluster by:

1. Developing shared goals with Principals and other stakeholders in the cluster, and by promoting vision and policies for the cluster.
2. Leading the way in the setting up of good management practices in terms of human resources, financial, physical and administrative practices.
3. Playing a guiding, supporting and co-ordinating role, helping Principals to solve problems and encouraging participation.
4. Involving Principals and other stakeholders in cluster activities.
5. Assisting with the induction of new Principals.
6. Advising and mentoring members of the cluster management and assisting with evaluation of schools.
7. Ensuring the appropriate distribution of resources and materials.

8. Convening meetings of Principals, usually in Cluster Management Committee meetings, and promoting contact between schools.
9. Participating in Circuit Management Committee meetings to share information, solve problems, promote his or her cluster and seek advice from other members of this Committee.
10. Ensuring a smooth, rapid flow of information to and from schools, and through communication lines linking the cluster, circuit and regional offices.
11. Supporting the professional development and support of staff in the cluster.
12. Promoting the formation and activities of subject groups.
13. Promoting the image of the cluster to the community.
14. Raising funds for cluster activities.
15. Serving as the public relations officer for the cluster.
16. Presiding over the election of school board members.
17. Arranging conferences for teachers and other staff members.
18. Initiating new projects and developments.
19. Resolving conflicts in collaboration with the Principals of member schools.
20. Conducting job interviews and making recommendations on staff appointments.
21. Promoting the equitable apportionment of resources between schools in the cluster.

6.3 Compensation for Cluster Centre Principals

Given the responsibilities expected of Cluster Centre Principals, it is fair and reasonable to expect that they be remunerated at levels above those of other Principals. This idea was echoed firmly and repeatedly by participants at regional workshops, and was reported many times in the survey of clusters (Appendix 2). Moreover, the ETSIP programme stipulates that additional compensation be offered to CCPs. What compensation would be appropriate?

A logical solution would be to create a new post for Cluster Centre Principals, to which a higher salary would be linked. However, senior staff in the office of the Public Service Commission are of the firm view that the introduction of such a new post could only be possible several years from now, since it would have to form part of a completely revised grading structure for the teaching profession. In terms of the work programme of the Public Service Commission, investigations into this revision might only begin in 2009 and could only be implemented a minimum of two years after that, i.e. possibly on four or five years from now.

To circumvent waiting that long, it is recommended that the MoE should pay Cluster Centre Principals an allowance of 10% more than their present notch or grade. The payment of this allowance would remain valid for as long as a person performs the task of Cluster Centre Principal, and would not be payable if the person moves to another position. The Public Service Commission may then consider making the position of Cluster Centre Principal a promotion post when it revises the grading structure for teachers some years from now.

While an allowance of 10% is considered to be fair monetary compensation, it should be recognised that Cluster Centre Principals enjoy other incentives. Their social standing, reputation and experience are enhanced, thus offering them better chances as candidates

for promotional posts. In addition, the provision of secretarial/clerical services and an additional teacher (see page 24) would ease some of the additional burdens that Cluster Centre Principals now carry.

6.4 Subject Facilitators

As described earlier in this report (page 12), perhaps the greatest benefit of clusters has come from the activities of subject groups, many of which are led by Subject Facilitators. In certain respects, Subject Facilitators and Cluster Centre Principals are equivalent, the former leading professional activities in clusters and the latter being responsible for management aspects. Unlike Cluster Centre Principals, however, a cluster often has several Subject Facilitators, one for each major subject. Some clusters have arranged that the function of Subject Facilitator be rotated between teachers.

Given the value of collaborative activities performed by subject groups, it is recommended that the role and position of Subject Facilitators be recognised more formally than has happened, that Subject Facilitators be officially appointed and recognised, and that certain incentives be provided to encourage their work. Nominations for teachers to be Subject Facilitators should come from the Cluster Centre Principal, and be approved by Inspectors or Advisory Teachers. These appointments should be reviewed annually, thus allowing for rotation when needed.

Recommended role description for Subject Facilitators:

1. Convening and chairing subject group meetings.
2. Designing and preparing activities for subject meetings to stimulate teachers.
3. Co-ordinating common class teaching and learner assessment procedures.
4. Promoting the development of similar standards of teaching and assessment among schools in a cluster.
5. Assisting teachers to interpret the syllabus and draft schemes of work.
6. Supporting and monitoring subject teachers and identifying training needs.
7. Providing guidance and induction to newly appointed teachers.
8. Liaising with Advisory Services to obtain their assistance.
9. Liaising with the Cluster Management Committee and other relevant cluster groups.

Incentives for Subject Facilitators

Many of the jobs to be done by Subject Facilitators will need to take place after normal teaching hours, and ways need to be found to encourage their extra efforts and the leadership expected from them. It is thus recommended that Subject Facilitators be exempted from most - perhaps all - extra-mural duties, that they be nominated for training courses, and that their leadership roles be publicly acknowledged. As with Cluster Centre Principals, the Public Service Commission may later consider making the position of Subject Facilitator a promotion post.

6.5 Advisory Services

In light of the value of clusters for professional development, raising standards of teaching and assessment, and improved learning (see page 16), there is particular value in promoting Advisory Service support for cluster-based activities. In addition, linkages

between Advisory Teachers, subject groups and Subject Facilitators offer the opportunity for these services to become much more effective than they are now. This is because contact between one Advisory Teacher and a subject group would benefit several teachers and schools simultaneously.

This is very unlike the current situation in which few teachers ever benefit from Advisory Services support because the number of Advisory Teachers in any region is small. Indeed, there are so few Advisory Teachers that these services are widely perceived as ineffective. The opportunity to change this comes from having Advisory Teachers work effectively with groups of teachers rather than individuals. It is strongly recommended that Advisory Services are mobilised to change their working methods to target cluster-based subject groups. This should be done proactively, with Advisory Teachers initiating contact with cluster-based subject groups, rather than being invited to individual schools.

With the welcome exception of the lower primary phase, most Advisory Teachers are now specialist advisors for particular subjects. Efforts should be made to encourage a more generalist approach so that they offer support to several subjects. That, too, would again mean that Advisory Teachers could serve a greater number of teachers in more schools. Finally, efforts should be made to bring these services closer to schools by basing Advisory Teachers at Circuit offices or Circuit Centres, as they are increasingly being called. This recommendation is in line with ETSIP requirements (see page 6).

Within this new context of cluster-based services, the following role for Advisory Teachers is envisaged:

- Providing advice and guidelines on subject areas
- Supporting and training Subject Facilitators
- Monitoring and supporting cluster subject groups
- Co-ordinating and facilitating workshops
- Monitoring the correct placement of teachers in clusters
- Attending to in-service training needs
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, assessment and curriculum implementation

6.6 Development of facilities and services at Cluster Centres

Adequate and appropriate resources are needed at Cluster Centres for them to play their role in supporting member schools (see page 10). This point is clearly acknowledged in the ETSIP programme, which requires that cluster centres be developed or upgraded. What facilities and resources are needed at cluster centres, however? Answers to that question solicited at the regional workshops may be considered in four components: staff, buildings, equipment and furniture, and funds.

Staffing

Over and above the position of Cluster Centre Principal, it is recommended that a School Secretary and one additional teacher be appointed for the cluster and be based at the Cluster Centre. The main responsibilities of the additional teacher will be to ease or entirely relieve the teaching duties of the Cluster Centre Principal, and to act as a relief teacher for schools in the cluster. In addition, the additional teacher could assist with some of the administrative tasks of the Cluster Centre Principal. The Cluster Secretary would be additional to any secretarial staff employed by the school in its own right. At

this stage of development of the cluster system, it is recommended that the post of Secretary be a 25-hour per week post. He or she would be responsible for scheduling cluster activities, copying and disseminating information and materials, stock control, bookkeeping, typing and duplicating cluster-based test and exam papers, filing and any other appropriate secretarial work that concerns the cluster.

It is also recommended that the MoE use existing staffing norms to create and allocate the new Cluster Secretary posts to Cluster Centres. In terms of the Public Service Management Circular No. 25 of 2001, the number and nature of secretarial posts is based on learner numbers. For example, a school with between 401 and 600 learners qualifies for one 25-hour and one 40-hour per week Secretary. By pooling the total number of learners in a cluster or by transferring secretarial posts between schools, it should be possible to ensure that a cluster-based Secretary is appointed.

Depending on how the new staffing norms for teachers – as stipulated by ETSIP – are applied, it may also be possible to appoint the additional cluster-based teacher on the basis of pooled or total learner numbers within a cluster. Other possibilities include applying a formula of norm + 1 teacher to cluster centres, or applying the norm while excluding the Cluster Centre Principal from teaching duties. A post for an additional teacher may also be created as a result of the MoE's strategy to increase the availability of relief teachers (see page 26), and through the use of clusters to rationalise subject choices and Grade 1 admissions (see page 31).

Buildings

The MoE has already developed plans for Cluster Centre modules, each of which covers an area of 58 square metres and is now estimated to cost N\$175,000. Each unit consists of a fairly large meeting room, and three separate rooms which may variously be used for storage, secretarial office space, duplicating equipment etc.

Several of the modules have been built in 2006 and 2007, and some schools already have adequate space to accommodate the needs of cluster centres. From results of the cluster survey (see Appendix 2), it is estimated that these new modules are required at about two-thirds of all cluster centres, which means that about 190 cluster centre modules should be built at a total present cost of about N\$33 million.

It is recommended that the MoE continues to provide the modules as rapidly and aggressively as possible, making use of ETSIP and any other capital donor development funds that are available. There is always a strong contest between competing priorities for those funds, but the great motive in allocating funds to a cluster centre lies in the way they benefit a whole community of schools, teachers and learners.

Equipment and furniture

Each Cluster Centre requires various items of furniture and equipment to offer its services properly: chairs, tables and desks, flipchart stands and chalkboards. In addition, it is recommended that two desktop computers and printers and software be provided, together with one small and one heavy-duty or high volume photocopier. The total cost for this equipment and furniture is estimated to be N\$60,000 per cluster centre. Again, some cluster centres are already equipped with these resources. If 190 new Cluster Centres are thus equipped, the total cost amounts to N\$11.4 million.

Of all cluster centres, 43 and 66% do not have lines or equipment for telephones and faxes, respectively. Since communication between schools is so vital, the MoE should arrange for these services to be installed at those cluster centres lacking telephones and faxes.

Funds

The Erongo and Khomas Education Regions took the bold, innovative step of allocating a sum of N\$10,000 annually to each cluster. These funds are used to help cover many of the additional costs that a Cluster Centre has to bear on behalf, and for the benefit of member schools and their teachers and learners. These include telephone and fax charges, costs of copying examination and test scripts and some travel costs. The funds have several benefits: clusters can embark on activities boldly and readily without first having to worry about paying for them, or raising funds; the funds represent a 'vote of confidence' by the Regional Office in the Cluster Centre, indeed the cluster system; and, of course, a variety of beneficial cluster-based activities can actually be implemented.

It is strongly recommended that MoE introduces the same allocations to all clusters in all regions. While we urge that additional funds be made available from the MoE budget, some of the cluster-based funds could be obtained by small cuts to the budgets for each school. For example, part of the budget for materials and supplies could be allocated from the regional budget to each cluster, as applied in Erongo and Khomas. Allocations from budget votes for travel and training could also be made directly to Cluster Centres.

Cluster Centre Principals and other senior staff should also attempt to raise support from local businesses. Quite a number of clusters have been doing this in recent years. Their success is partially based on the fact that they are soliciting funds that are intended to benefit many schools, rather than just one school and its particular community of learners. Some clusters have also raised funds from teachers and learners, each teacher contributing N\$100 while an extra N\$1 per learner has been collected through the school fund. Several thousand dollars have often been raised in this way, again making cluster activities much more possible, effective and positive.

6.7 Relief teaching

High rates of HIV/AIDS among teachers have prompted concerns about the need for relief teaching, and ETSIP requires the MoE to develop a strategy to improve the deployment of relief teachers. Doubtless, several innovations and strengthened activities will be needed to achieve such an improvement, but clusters may contribute in at least two ways.

First, relief teaching could be arranged by and through Cluster Centres. For example, a school that needs a relief teacher could make its request to the Cluster Centre. Assuming that the CCP approves the request, he or she could then arrange for a relief teacher to report to the school at short notice. This would require that the CCP be given delegated authority to appoint relief teachers, and that each cluster would have a panel or list of people who could be deployed for relief purposes. The main benefit of such a cluster-based system is that relief teachers could be made available much more rapidly than if requests for relief first have to go through Inspectors and/or Regional Offices for approval and implementation.

Second, if the MoE appoints an additional teacher at each Cluster Centre (see page 25), that person could function as a relief teacher under certain circumstances. These might include instances when relief is required for short periods, and the schools requiring relief are sufficiently close for the additional teacher to reach them easily. However, the additional Cluster Centre-based teacher would only be useful if he or she was adequately equipped to provide relief teaching or supervision. Thus and for example, a person trained as a Lower Primary teacher could offer relief to Grades 1, 2 and 3 classes, but probably not for a Grade 12 Mathematics teacher.

6.8 The use of clusters for the National Standards Evaluation Programme

The MoE has recently embarked on a programme to evaluate how well schools match up to a set of national standards and performance indicators. Much of the focus now is on evaluation, and less so on remedial measures to improve conditions where standards are not met. Two methods of evaluation have been adopted. The first is by an external team of relatively senior MoE officials paying inspection visits to schools over a period of several days. The team then compiles an extensive report for each school. It is expected that it will take several years before all schools have been examined by the teams. The second method is a self-evaluation conducted by schools during a process where school staff members compare conditions in relation to requirements set out in a document listing minimum standards and performance indicators.

It is recommended that both evaluation processes would benefit by involving clusters. For purposes of external evaluations, it would be useful if the team included the Cluster Centre Principals of those schools being evaluated. Reports from the external evaluations should also be sent to Cluster Centre Principals (including, of course relevant Inspectors, Regional Education Officers and Directors), with the recommendation that immediate steps be taken to rectify the most serious weaknesses. This recommendation is partially based on the assumption that the most rapid improvements are likely to be made by, and through the cluster system. Cluster Centre Principals would therefore make vital contributions if they are involved and encouraged to contribute to the evaluation process.

Perhaps the most useful way of using clusters to raise standards would be to replace the self evaluation process with an evaluation conducted by all Principals within a cluster. This would provide more objective results than those coming from an individual Principal and his or her staff. Moreover, all the Principals in a cluster would be exposed in a collaborative fashion to the standards that need to be met, the strengths and weakness of each of their schools, and activities needed to resolve the most glaring problems. In essence, the evaluations and remedial measures would gain greatly from local involvement and ownership.

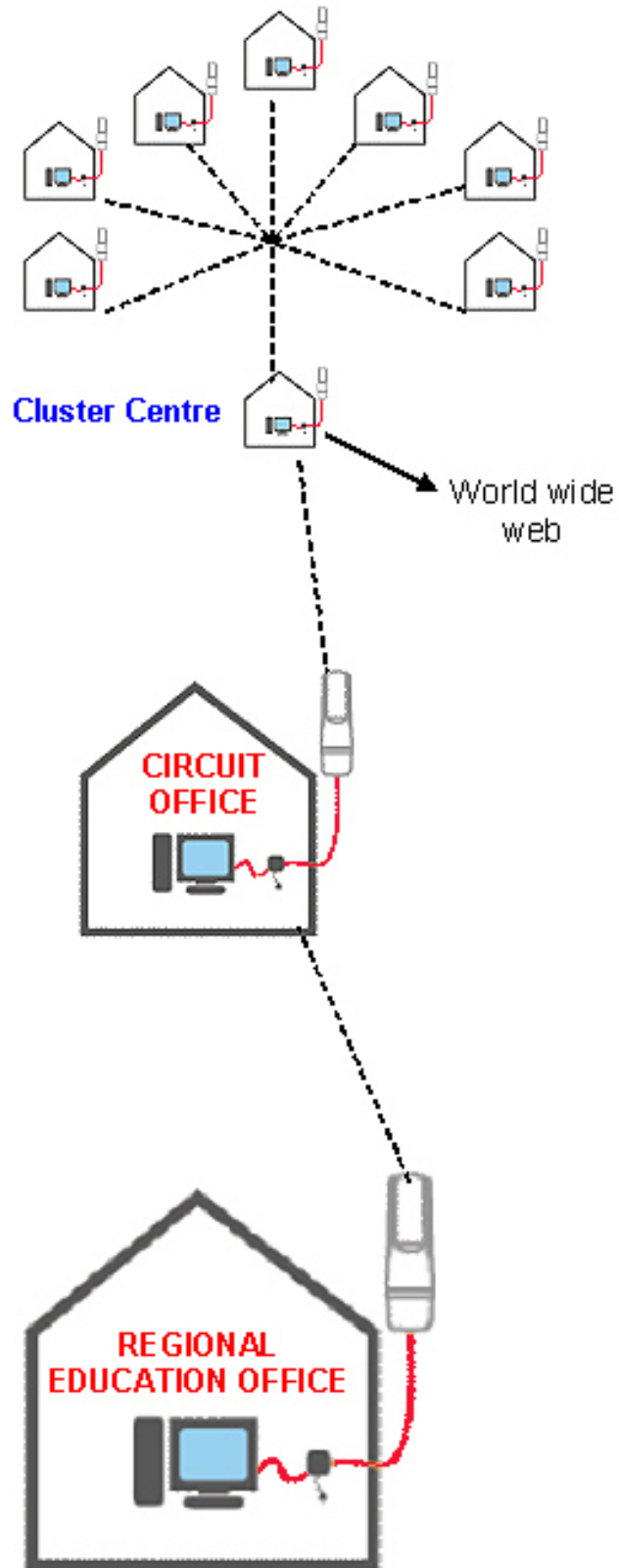
6.9 Clusters and computer networks

More and more companies and even private homes use computer networks, both to link their office, staff and members and to link their organisations to the outside world using the internet. This is all possible because networks are rapidly getting cheaper and easier to install and use. Computer networks are a technical achievement that enable and improve communication between separated offices and people. Clusters, on the other hand, are a social achievement that likewise enable and improve communication. What

remains is to now bring the technical and social networks together. One immediate gain from this would be in solving many of the logistical problems of clustering due to large distances, poor roads and transport costs (see page 18).

There are many other gains. Computer literacy would increase. Information and statistics could be transmitted between Cluster Centres and member schools with no delay. The same would be true for schemes of work, lesson plans, audio-visual aids, test and examination scripts, answer papers, mark schedules and attendance records, for example. The best teachers could broadcast their lessons via video live to learners grouped in classes across the cluster, and the learners could interact live with that teacher. Exactly that kind of teaching and interaction is already happening among some groups of schools in South Africa and elsewhere (see, for example: www.ulwaziproject.co.za and NEPAD's e-Schools Initiative). Through such a local network, all schools could then be linked to the worldwide web, the Circuit Offices, Regional Offices and the MoE Head Office.

Learning should improve if good teachers broadcast their lessons to many classes simultaneously. The logical possibility also arises that the ratio of learners to teachers could increase dramatically, thus cutting costs. Although these potentials may seem far-fetched, they are now within easy reach. The technology is readily available and comparatively cheap. Moreover, the social networking enabled by clustering provides



the groundwork and environment for schools to use computer networks to enhance communication and share information. The biggest challenge will be to persuade people to use these electronic networks.

To begin bringing these social and electronic networks together, it is recommended that several clusters be provided with computer networks on an experimental basis. These should not be networks for relatively well-endowed schools in urban areas, but rather between rural schools where lessons from the experiments could be more readily extended to other schools that are likewise constrained by isolation and the many other factors that limit teaching and learning.

6.10 Clusters and the management of small schools

Every registered school in Namibia is managed independently (and in isolation) by a Principal, irrespective of the school's size. Thus, large schools with 30 or 40 teachers have a Principal as do those with only one or two teachers. However, the appointment of Cluster Centre Principals as local area managers now creates the potential for very small schools to be managed as satellite campuses, and thus without relatively highly paid Principals. In fact, just that system has worked amongst the Ondao satellite or mobile schools in Kunene and the Nyae Nyae Village Schools in Otjozondjupa. The only difference between the Ondao and Village campuses and the hundreds of other small schools in Namibia is that the latter have been registered as independent schools.

The question of whether all schools should have Principals of equal standing also arises from considerations of equity and financial constraints. Specifically, is it fair and cost-effective to pay all Principals the same?⁴ Almost everyone consulted during this study agreed that this was not fair, and that a more equitable system of salary levels being tied to levels of responsibility is needed.

The recommendation made here is the MoE takes advantage of the management structures offered by the cluster system by changing the status of very small registered schools to being satellite campuses within a cluster to be treated in the same way as the Ondao and Nyae Nyae schools. People who are currently appointed as Principals of small, registered schools would continue working and hold their salaries as personal. They would, however, not be replaced once they left the teaching service.

What level or threshold should be adopted to distinguish between a satellite campus and a registered, independent school with its own Principal? This is a hard question to answer because any almost any threshold could be argued as being arbitrary. One way of looking at the issue is from the view of established norms for school managers. These dictate that management assistance, in the form of a Head of Department (HOD), is allocated once a school has eight teachers. One of the eight would be a Principal, one a Head of Department and the remaining six are teachers. Thus, one out of four teaching staff is a manager. If this principle and ratio is applied to the question above, registered schools should have four or more teaching staff, one of whom would be the head of the school.

⁴ Prior to the introduction in 1994 of provisions from the WASCOM Commission, salaries for Principals were partially determined by the number of learners in a school. Factors of school size were then abandoned so that the same salaries were paid to all Principals of primary and junior secondary schools, while Principals of senior secondary schools were paid a higher salary.

Schools having three or fewer staff would then be treated as satellite campuses, and it is this formula that is recommended here.

One teacher in a satellite school could be nominated and appointed as a senior teacher to provide routine supervision from day-to-day. The position could be rotated to spread the workload among teachers. We do not recommend that additional compensation be offered to senior teachers, but they could benefit from other incentives, such as those suggested for Subject Facilitators (see page 23). The additional teacher appointed at the Cluster Centre could also be assigned duties, as needed by these small schools, in much the same way as the HODs assist the Principal of the Ondao mobile schools to ensure they remain functional.

Substantial costs would be saved if the system of small schools being treated as satellites were to be introduced. For example, 317 or 20% of all registered schools in Namibia had three or fewer staff in 2005. The difference between \$86,124, as the annual average salary of a teacher, and \$130,593 paid to a newly appointed Principal, amounts to \$44,469 per year. Multiplying this for 317 small schools yields a minimum cost reduction of \$14,096,673. Savings of several more million dollars would result from reduced proportional spending on pension, health and housing benefits.

The move to have small schools managed as satellites within clusters would add further impetus to the more general question of equating salaries for all school management posts to levels of responsibility. This matter should be investigated when the Public Service Commission re-examines grading levels for the entire teaching profession (see Appendix 4). An important point to be reiterated is that the cluster system allows for more collaborative management and greater checks and balances, all of which allow for management systems being made more congruent with levels of responsibility.

6.11 Cost implications

Implementation of many of the recommendations made here will require additional spending by the MoE. There are now 280 clusters in Namibia, and that number will probably grow slightly in the next few years. We have thus assumed a total of 290 clusters for purposes of exploring most financial implications of the cluster system.

As for capital development costs, it is estimated that approximately \$44,650,000 would be required to build and equip 190 Cluster Centres. This is based on the assumption that the remaining 100 schools serving as Cluster Centres now have more or less adequate facilities.

Capital expenditure	No. clusters	Unit cost	Total
Buildings	190	\$175,000	\$33,250,000
Furniture and equipment	190	\$60,000	\$11,400,000
<i>Total</i>			<i>\$44,650,000</i>

Recurrent costs are estimated in the table below. The greatest expenditure is for the additional teacher to be based at each Cluster Centre. However, if that teacher is also used for relief teaching, at least part of the cost is not directly attributed to the cluster system.

Additional recurrent costs	No. clusters	Unit cost	Total
Support for materials, transport, communication	290	\$10,000	\$2,900,000
Allowances for Cluster Centre Principals	290	\$15,000	\$4,350,000
Additional teachers	290	\$80,000	\$23,200,000
Secretarial staff	200	\$50,000	\$10,000,000
<i>Total</i>			<i>\$40,450,000</i>

Savings in recurrent costs	Number	Unit cost	Total
Fewer principals	317	\$44,469	\$14,096,673
Fewer Inspectors	13	\$165,000	\$2,475,000
<i>Total</i>			<i>\$16,571,673</i>

The total added cost due to the improvements recommended in this report amount to \$40,450,000, while savings of at least \$16,571,673 could be achieved as a result of further implementation of clusters. Much of this is due to the realignment of very small schools as satellites within clusters, but significant cuts in expenditure will be achieved as the cluster system becomes more entrenched and fewer Inspectors are needed. It is recommended that one Inspector manage seven clusters at a minimum. This means that 290 clusters would require supervision by 42 Inspectors, 13 less than the 55 Circuit Inspectors now employed across the country.

The magnitude of other savings achieved through the cluster system cannot be estimated now, but some of these will be substantial. The biggest of these will come from improved achievement, which will result in reduced repetition and fewer classes and teachers. Other significant savings can be obtained by rationalising subject choices and admissions between schools in a cluster so that there are fewer small classes offering the same subjects. While this may only be done for select subjects in certain grades, the principle of rationalising subject choices and fields of study between member schools also offers the overall opportunity of increasing the ratio of learners to teachers to achieve staffing norms required by ETSIP

6.12 Manual of operations for clusters

Implementation of the recommendations made here will do a great deal to further implement the cluster system. However, it is also recommended that the MoE produce a manual of operations, which should be widely distributed and circulated so that all participants are clear about what the system requires and what it offers. The manual should be fairly concise so that it is easy to consult and read.

The document would essentially represent an elaboration of the Ministry's policy on clusters (page 19), thus describing the key and mandatory elements of the system, but also going to some length in showing the range of possible applications offered by cluster frameworks. The compilation of such a manual should be easy and rapid, since much of the necessary material is already available in this report and several other documents (see Appendix 1).

6.13 Conclusions

To conclude the report, we hope that readers and the MoE will be enthusiastic about the potential of the cluster system and its implementation. Our personal experience in working with clusters spans the last 11 years, during which we have been actively advocating the system. Our support of the system has, however, not been without reservation. There were many occasions when we cautioned ourselves, adopting critical, pessimistic or negative standpoints to check the merits of the system to be certain of our advocacy. Those cynical views, however, usually crumbled when we visited active clusters, listened to reports from Inspectors and Cluster Centre Principals, or analysed the results of the survey done for this study. Likewise, the examples given in Appendix 3 reveal great commitment to purpose, planning and procedure. As a general rule, people found to be positive about clusters were those who had experience of working within them or observing them in action. Pessimists, by contrast, were always people who lacked that first-hand experience.

Our intentional critical perspectives were also prompted by a need for prudence, stemming from the question: why should Namibia adopt clusters as a country-wide system to manage schools when no other country has done the same? As argued elsewhere, we submit that there are sound reasons of geography and demography that predispose Namibia to clusters (see page 8). By contrast and definition, widespread clustering would be less applicable in most other countries.

A recurrent theme in this report is the idea that clusters are a framework, one that enables the staff of schools to work together, and one that allows the broader management of the MoE to engage with groups of schools. Clusters thus provide structures for the implementation of many programmes, many of which are now in place. Other programmes should or will use the frameworks offered by clusters in the future, for example programmes to promote and monitor continuous professional development, and the implementation of staffing norms.

Clusters will also serve as entry points for resources and facilities that cannot be placed in all schools, at least for the time being as a result of financial constraints. An example is information and communication technology (ICT) where member schools can benefit from access to the internet through a local area connection. That will also give schools direct, immediate access to library, teaching and other information resources far beyond those now available in Teacher Resource Centres (TRCs) because the schools will be have a connection to the world wide web. These kinds of opportunities and innovations will do much to boost the teaching of science and mathematics, the two subjects now considered to need most attention.

Much of the development of clusters has been led by the Basic Education Programme (BEP) of GTZ over the past 11 years. This was certainly true of the initial development work in each region, although the Basic Education Support (BES) project of USAID provided funds for that work in Oshana, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshikoto. BEP also provided on-going support in several regions, especially in Caprivi, Kavango, Oshana, Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshikoto, Kunene and Erongo. Lower levels of assistance were provided to Khomas, Omaheke and Otjozondjupa, while implementation of the cluster system was largely left to the Regional Offices and Inspectors in Hardap and Karas.

As the BEP support draws to a close, many people have asked from where ongoing support for clusters will come? Who will become the ‘mother’ of clusters? From discussions in many workshops and with a variety of people at Head Office, it becomes clear that leadership will be needed – and will be provided – at two levels. At the central Head Office, leadership will come from the Directorate of Programme Quality Assurance (PQA), while at the regional level supervision, promotion and monitoring of clusters should be the responsibility of the Regional Education Officer (REO). These are the people directly in charge of all Inspectors and Advisory Teachers, and it is thus logical that they take charge of all aspects of cluster functioning.

The other major improvement which will give more certainty and structure to the system will be the adoption of policy, incentives and job descriptions. All these will bring greater clarity to the roles and obligations of all concerned. It is also to be hoped that all senior staff of the MoE will embrace the system of clusters in Namibia. Quite simply: the more everyone puts into clusters, the more they will get out. Most significantly, more will be achieved by Namibia in terms of equity, efficiency, quality and public participation.

6.13 Steps for the future

Should the MoE adopt the recommendations made here, the following decisions and activities will have to be pursued:

1. Review and adopt the Ministry of Education Policy on Clusters.
2. Review and adopt the job description for Cluster Centre Principals.
3. Approve and budget for compensation for Cluster Centre Principals in the form of an allowance amounting to 10% of their annual salary.
4. Review and adopt the role description for Subject Facilitators.
5. Strengthen Advisory Services and decentralize them to circuit level.
6. Provide the necessary buildings, equipment and furniture to Cluster Centres.
7. Appoint an additional teacher and cluster-based secretary at each Cluster Centre.
8. Regional Offices allocate funds to clusters for materials and supplies, travel and training.
9. Rationalize the management of small schools and bring posts of Principals at these schools to an end.
10. Promote the implantation of programmes and initiatives through clusters, for example NESE, relief teaching and ICT rollout.
11. Compile a Manual of Operations for the Cluster System.

Appendix 1. People consulted and references

World Bank (ETSIP)

M Marope

Head Office

A Ilukena

J Ellis

J van Wyk

C Kabajani

G Ensele

B Gouws

G Tjipueya

L Kapenda

H Pomuti

T Nghyoonanye

S !Naruseb

N van der Ross

C Mutjila

R Dengene

G Byleveldt

AP Nangolo

S Simataa

Mr Kampungu

Public Service Commission

B Kukuri

D van Zyl

E Maritz

NANTU

S Haingura

D Murunga

Others

J Komen - Schoolnet

T Seefeldt – Khomas Region

References

- Dittmar F., Mendelsohn J. and Ward V. 2002. *The school cluster system in Namibia – framework for quality education*. Published for Ministry of Education, Namibia and GTZ
- Mendelsohn, J. and V. Ward. 2001. *A review of clusters of schools in Namibia*. Produced for Ministry of Education, Namibia and GTZ.
- Pomuti, H. (in preparation). Ph D dissertation entitled: *An analysis of the relationship between cluster-based school management and improved teaching*.
- Uirab, M.J. 2006. *Clustering as model for effective management of schools in Namibia*. Master's Dissertation in Education (M.Ed.), University of Potchefstroom.
- Ulwazi E-Learning Partnership: *First Progress Report on the Mamelodi Broadband E-Learning Pilot Project*. August 2004

Appendix 2. Questionnaire Survey Results

The following tables provide the most relevant results obtained from the questionnaire sent to all cluster centres. Questionnaires returned by 246 of the 280 clusters.

1. The average number of different activities occurring each year. The figures are most reliable for visits by Inspectors and Advisory Teachers, whereas the other figures are an absolute minimum. This is because inappropriate wording was used in the questionnaire for the remaining activities.

Activity	Events per year
Visits to Cluster Centres by Inspectors	1.7
Visits to Cluster Centres by Advisory Teachers	1.1
Visits to schools by Cluster Centre Principals	2.0
Circuit management meetings	1.6
Cluster management meetings	2.0
Teacher training sessions	0.7
Subject meetings	1.2
School board meetings	0.7
Other meetings	0.8
Other activities	0.9

2. Numbers and percentages of Cluster Centres having various resources which would be value and importance in terms of the services they offer the cluster.

Resources in Cluster Centres

	Present (%)		Absent (%)	
Computers for staff	114	47%	129	53%
Telephone	138	57%	105	43%
Fax	82	34%	161	66%
Internet connection	56	23%	187	77%
Duplicators	116	48%	127	52%
Cluster meeting room	81	33%	162	67%

3. The questionnaire asked the following seven questions, numbered A, B, C etc and shown in bold. The questions were open-ended, which meant that Cluster Centre Principals wrote down their responses using their own perspectives and wording. Their responses were thus not solicited or prompted by options that could be ticked. The figures given below are the number of Cluster Centre Principals that independently gave the same response or information. For example, 161 Cluster Centre Principals reported improved lesson preparation and the sharing of ideas and resources, as given in the first line of Table A.

A. What major changes are there in teaching/classroom practices?	No.
Improved lesson preparation, sharing ideas and resources	161
Networking, team building, peer coaching	80
Uniform schemes of work, tests and exams	99
Improved standards and methods of assessment	41
Shared syllabus interpretation	36
Improved methods for learner-centred education	42
Teachers' dedication improved	20

B. What major changes are there in school management practices?	
More efficient/ coordinated/ participative management	204
Improved communication between/ within schools	82
Coordination of activities/ combined problem solving	78
Improved planning – statistics, finance, schedules, timetables	54
Desire to perform better, competitive spirit	36
Improved HIV/AIDS awareness	14
C. Are there any changes in confidence or morale of teachers?	
Mutual support/ sharing/ openness	143
More committed – punctual improved attendance	67
Teamwork/ peer coaching	80
More involved in school programs	20
Benefit from exchange programmes, learning from each other	37
D. What can be done to facilitate the use of clusters for teacher training and development?	
Definite instructions on authority/responsibilities of CCP	39
Guidance/ support/ firm communication lines – REO, Inspectors, ATs	38
Equip clusters with infrastructure/ facilities/ staff	168
Cluster finances/ travel allowances/ transport	96
Training/exchange visits for teachers/ principals	96
Improve cluster planning/ follow up to ensure implementation	36
Promote subject groups/ in-service-training	41
E. What are the major weaknesses of the cluster system?	
Inadequate facilities – buildings, communications, resources, equipment	184
Long distances between schools/ transport problems	127
Insufficient funds for cluster activities	91
Uncertainty of role of CCP/ lack of remuneration	44
Insufficient staff allocation to cluster centre	49
Heavy workload of CCP	38
Some schools not cooperating	28
Some teachers not attending subject group meetings	30
Lack of support/ communication lines from REO, Inspectors, ATs	44
F. What kind of information is disseminated through the cluster system from Inspectors to Cluster Centres and then to schools?	
Circulars/ statistics/ information	224
Arrangement of meetings/ workshops/ training	99
Staffing norms/ transfers/ promotion/ appointments	29
Textbook/ stationary orders	25
G. What kind of information is disseminated through the cluster system from schools to Cluster Centres and then to Inspectors?	
Promotion schedules/ statistics/ textbook inventory/ staffing needs	206
Cultural/ sports programs, school action plans, minutes, exam coordination	85
Questions resolved on staffing norms/policies/ passing requirements/ staff problems	86

Appendix 3. Examples of plans, policies and procedures developed by different clusters and regions

This and the following 7 pages are from the Year Planner developed by the Quiver Tree Cluster in Karas Region.

QUIVER TREE CLUSTER LOGO



SYMBOLISM

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Quiver tree | Characteristic tree of the South of Namibia where the cluster is situated. The tree symbolize the hardiness and endurance of our people and the members of the cluster. The tree is in harmony with nature and adapted to the region, it therefore also symbolize the harmony and acceptance between member schools in the cluster. |
| Rising sun | It symbolizes the brightness of a better future in education that we strive to achieve through clustering. |
| Q | Symbolizes the name of the cluster (Quiver tree Cluster), but also a trade mark for quality in education that we strive for. |
| Ring | Symbolizes the unity and co-operation between member schools. |
| Motto | "Unite for quality education" brings together and embodies all the main elements in the logo. |

MEMBER SCHOOLS

ECS
J.A. NEL
KPS
LUDERITZ
OOSTERHEIM
P.K. DE VILLIERS
SCHMELLENVILLE
ST. THERESE
SUIDERLIG

MISSION STATEMENT

Based on the Cluster system, the Professional and Personal Capacity of member schools and staff members are improved and the member schools are managed with improved efficiency and effectiveness.

AIMS

The Cluster will continually strive to develop professional and personal capacity of member schools through:

- Personal and professional management skills development
- Mental capacity building and skills development
- Relationship and communication skills development
- Personal mission and goal setting skills development
- Development of professional and personal stress management skills
- Development of counselling and supportive skills
- Capacity building in the community

Development of efficiency in management of schools

BEP PROGRESS OVERVIEW

BEP BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT is implemented by GTZ as a result of an educational development agreement signed between Germany and the Namibia.

BEP Co-ordinator of Project in Namibia: **Mr. Fritz Dietmar**
Co-ordinator in Hardap and Karas Region: **Mr. Awasman.**

BEP 1

"The quality of planning and management capacities of the Rundu education authorities has been improved and can serve as a model for other regions."

Started April 1995 end August 1999.

BEP 2

"As a result of a Project Progress Review Mission, MBESC and several Regional Education Offices requested GTZ:

- To continue with the support in Rundu Region
- To expand to Katima Mulilo, Keetmanshoop and Korixas Regions
- To intensify the support at MBESC Head office in terms of strategic planning, decentralization process and efficiency."

Started August 1999 and will end July 2003.

BEP 3

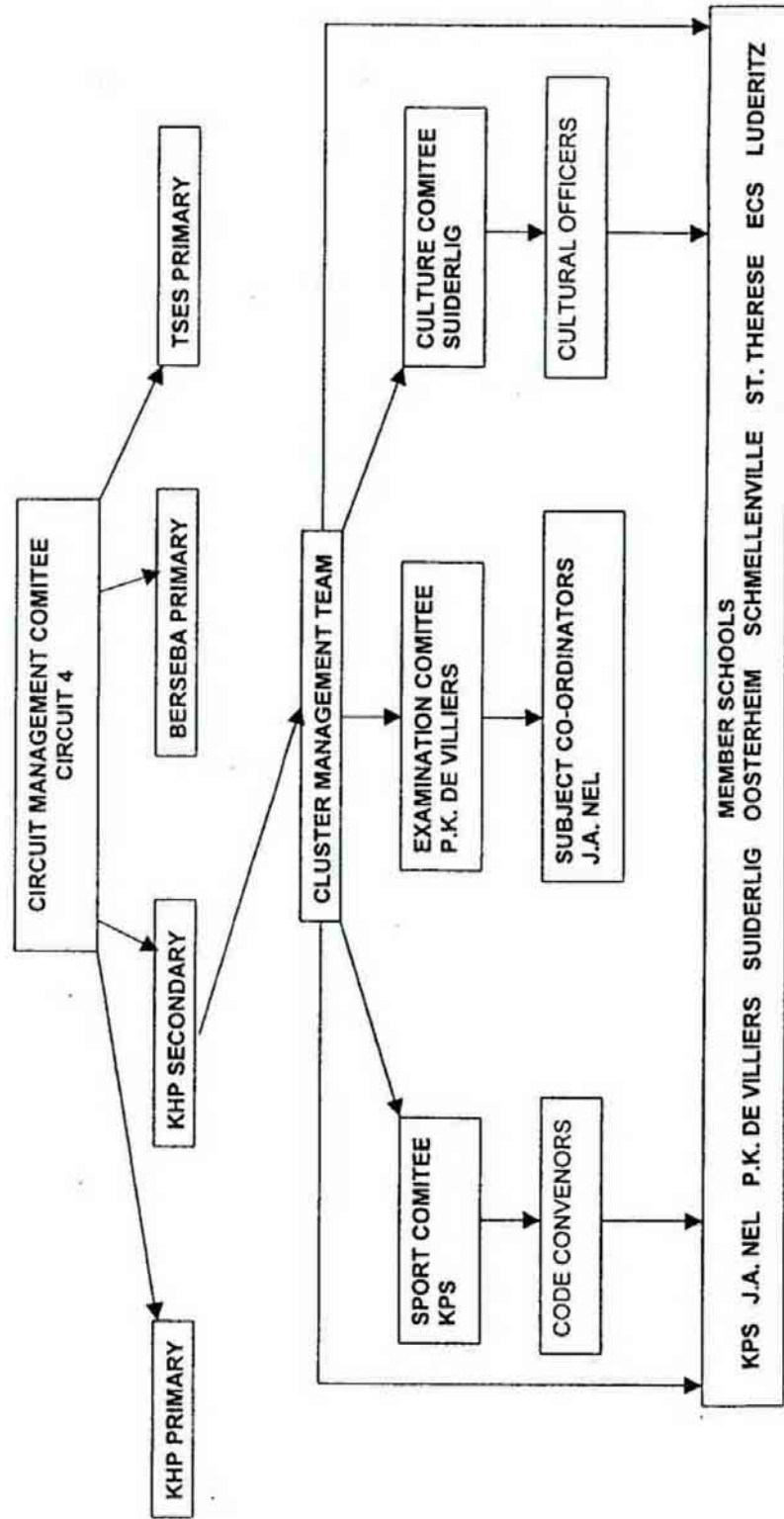
"In the light of the decentralization policy our planning should be geared toward expansion and orientation in all 13 political regions. This will then be in line with our decentralization process. The kind of assistance will be varied, based on region specific needs."

Start August 2003 and will end July 2007.

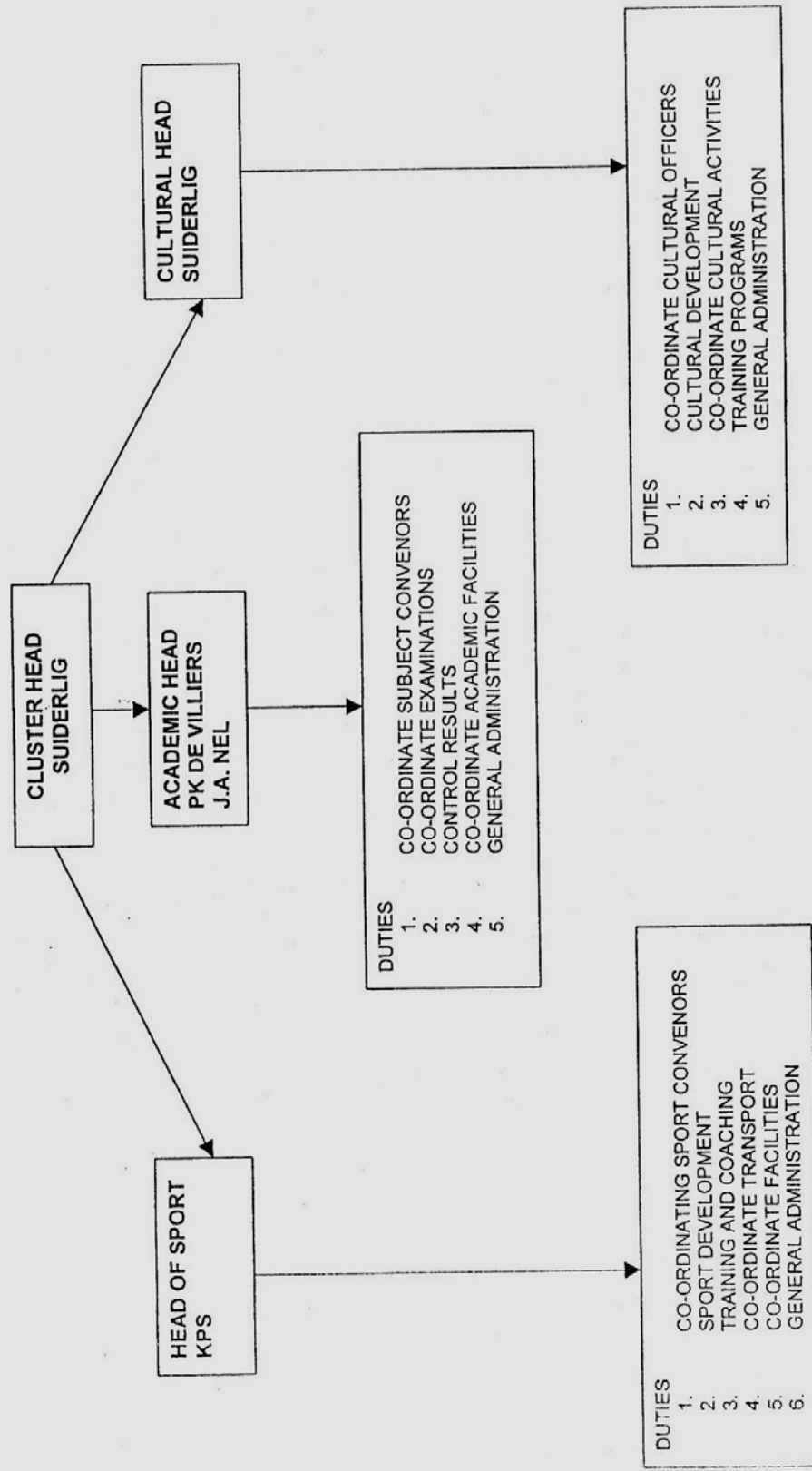
MBESC GOALS:
DEMOCRACY, QUALITY, EFFICIENCY, EQUITY, ACCESS

"Learners benefit from the better quality and provision of Basic education."

ORGANOGRAM 1
 WORKING RELATIONS IN KEETMANSHOOP SECONDARY SCHOOL CLUSTER



**ORGANOGRAM 2
DISTRIBUTION OF DUTIES IN CLUSTER**



SUMMARY OF DUTIES IN THE CLUSTER

DUTIES OF CLUSTER HEAD

1. Serves on Circuit Management Committee, chaired by Circuit inspector.
2. Chairperson of Cluster Management Team
3. Prepares and present reports on Cluster activities.
4. Contact with Regional BEP Co-ordinator.
5. Assists Circuit Inspector in duties to be performed.
6. Promotes Educational Development.
7. Inform and co-ordinate implementation of policies.
8. Develop relationships and improve communication between member schools.
9. Address socio-economic problems in the cluster.
10. Develop support base and infra structure of the cluster.
11. Promote Cluster activities and implement proper planning strategies for the cluster.
12. Develop and keep a system for Cluster statistics.
13. Develop and keep a resource base for cluster.

DUTIES OF ACADEMIC HEAD

1. Chairperson of the Examination Committee. (P.K. DE VILLIERS)
2. Convenor and co-ordinator of Subject convenors. (J.A.NEL)
3. Co-ordinate Cluster examinations.
4. Control of examination results.
5. Co-ordinate Academic facilities.
6. Assist in General Administration of Academic matters.

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

1. Chairperson Academic head. (P.K. DE VILLIERS).
2. Members, a Senior Staff member from each of the member schools.
3. Duties:
 - 3.1. Draw up Cluster examination timetable.
 - 3.2. Control moderation of Cluster examination papers.
 - 3.3. Co-ordinate and distribute Cluster examination papers.
 - 3.4. Arrange for copying of Cluster examination papers.
 - 3.5. Analyze Cluster examination results and suggest possible remedial action.

SUBJECT CONVENORS

1. Co-ordinator Academic head.(J.A. NEL).
2. Subject convenors appointed for each of the following subjects:
 - 2.1. English
 - 2.2. Afrikaans
 - 2.3. Khoekhoegowab
 - 2.4. Mathematics
 - 2.5. Physical Science
 - 2.6. Biology
 - 2.7. Life Science
 - 2.8. History
 - 2.9. Geography
 - 2.10. Natural Economy
 - 2.11. Development Studies
 - 2.12. Home Science
 - 2.13. Needlework and Clothing
 - 2.14. Child development
 - 2.15. Accounting
 - 2.16. Business Management
 - 2.17. Computer Practice
 - 2.18. Woodwork and Technical Drawing
 - 2.19. Economics
 - 2.20. Typing and Office Management
3. Duties:
 - 3.1. Serve as Subject specialist and advisor in the circuit.
 - 3.2. Implement standardized Schemes of work in Cluster.
 - 3.3. Co-ordinate setting and moderation of Cluster examination papers.
 - 3.4. Assist in distribution of subject policy and implementation there of.
 - 3.5. Inform and advise on new developments in the subject.
 - 3.6. Implement training programs to raise standards of teaching.

- 3.7. Promote subject interests in the cluster.
- 3.8. Develop human resource potential in the cluster.
- 3.9. Implement training in assessment and marking.
- 3.10. Chair meetings of subject clusters at least once per term.
- 3.11. Submit reports to Academic Heads on Subject cluster activities.
- 4. Criteria for Subject convenors:
 - 4.1. Must be an experienced subject teacher.
 - 4.2. Recommended as bonus experience in marking and assesment.
 - 4.3. Could serve or have served on Curriculum Panel.
 - 4.4. Must be willing and co-operative.
 - 4.5. Must be resourceful, open and good communication skills.

LIST OF CONVENORS FOR 2005:

A. LANGUAGES:

AFRIKAANS: J.R.GALANDT (R.O.)/MS S. KLEINHANS (SUID)
 ENGLISH: MS J. MAGERMAN (R.O.)
 KHOEKHOE: A. BLOODSTAAN (SCHM)

B. MATHEMATICS: J.E. NARIB (J.A.N.)

C. PHYSICAL SCIENCE: R.S. SMITH (SUID)

D. LIFE SCIENCE/BIOLOGY/AGRI:

BIOLOGY: C. ADRIAANSE (P.K.)
 LIFE SCIENCE: MS C. BEUKES (J.A.NEL)
 AGRI: J.GAROE (J.A.NEL)

E. GEO/NAT.ECON./DEVST:

GEOGRAPHY: D. WILLIAMS (SUID)
 HISTORY: J.HYMAN (R.O.)
 DEV STUDIES: MS V. VAN DER ZALM (SUID)

F. ACC/BMAN/ECON:

ACC: MS S. SAMEULS (ST.THER.)
 BMANAGEMENT: MS D. STEENKAMP (R.O.)
 ECONOMICS: MS E. GALANDT (SUID)

G. TYPING: MS J. NARIEB (PK)

H. HSC/NW/CHILD:

HSC/CHILD: MS M. MAAS (R.O.)
 NW: MS M. MAAS (R.O.)

I. HW/TECH: P.SCHOLTZ (SCHM.)

J. COMP: H.J. SWARTZ (SUID)

DUTIES OF HEAD OF SPORT:

- 1. Chair person of Sport Convenors. (KPS)
- 2. Initiate and Co-ordinate Sport Development.
- 3. Initiate the organizing of Training and Coaching Clinics.
- 4. Co-ordinate transport.
- 5. Co-ordinate facilities.
- 6. Assist in General Administration of Sport Matters.

DUTIES OF HEAD OF CULTURE:

- 1. Chair person of Cultural Officers. (Suiderlig)
- 2. Initiate and co-ordinate Cultural events.
- 3. Initiate training and development in Culture.
- 4. Assist in General Administration of Cultural events.

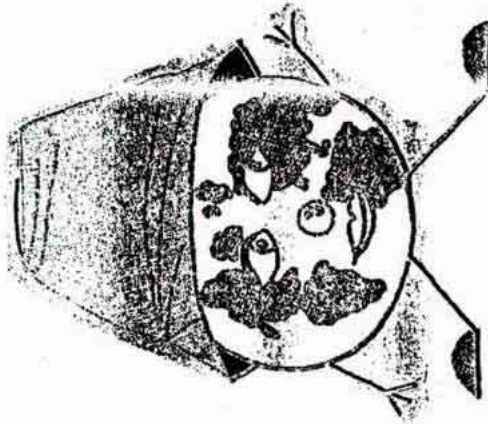
QUIVERTREE CLUSTER
YEAR PLANNER 2005

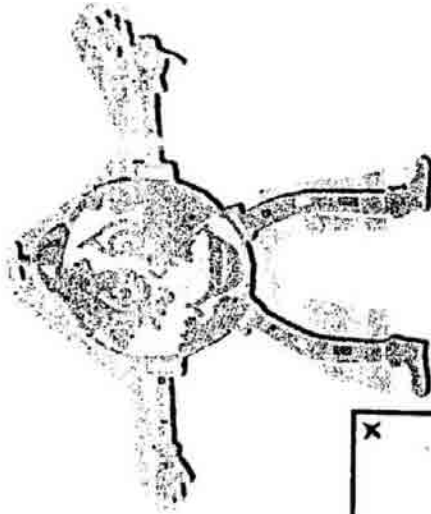
TERM 1

DATE	ACTIVITY	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE
"13/01/05	SCHOOL STARTS FOR TEACHERS		
	TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR SUBJECT CONVENORS	TRC	R.S. SMITH
"14/01/05	TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR SUBJECT CONVENORS	TRC	R.S. SMITH
"08/02/05	15TH DAY STATISTICS		
	SUBMIT FINAL SUBJECT ALLOCATION TO CLUSTER HEAD.		
"11/02/05	FIRST ROUND OF SUBJECT CLUSTER MEETINGS	TRC	SUBJECT CONVENORS
"12/02/05	FIRST ROUND OF SUBJECT CLUSTER MEETINGS	TRC	SUBJECT CONVENORS
"20/02/05	SUBMISSION OF MINUTES	J.A.NEL	CONVENORS
"25/02/05	CLUSTER PRINCIPALS MEETING	LUDERITZ	C. JANTJIES
"18/03/05	INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS	ALL SCHOOLS	PRINCIPALS
"29/04/05	SCHOOL CLOSES FIRST TERM		

TERM 2

DATE	ACTIVITY	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE
"30/05/05	SECOND ROUND OF SUBJECT CLUSTER MEETINGS	TRC	SUBJECT CONVENORS
"31/05/05	SECOND ROUND OF SUBJECT CLUSTER MEETINGS		CONVENORS
"04/06/05	MS QUIVERTREE	KEETMANSHOOP	SUIDERLIG
"10/06/05	SUBMISSION OF MINUTES	J.A. NEL	CONVENORS
"16/06/05	CLUSTER PRINCIPALS MEETING	TSES	P. KRUSE
"06/05	DAY OF AFRICAN CHILD CELEBRATIONS	ALL SCHOOLS	PRINCIPALS
"05	SCHOOL CLOSES SECOND TERM		





TERM 3

DATE	ACTIVITY	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE
"05/09/05	THIRD ROUND OF SUBJECT CLUSTER MEETINGS		
"06/09/05	THIRD ROUND OF SUBJECT CLUSTER MEETINGS		
"18/09/05	SUBMISSION OF MINUTES	J.A. NEL	CONVENORS
"22/09/05	CLUSTER PRINCIPALS MEETING	BETHANIE	G. CUPIDO
"28/09/05	DAY OF NAMIBIAN CHILD	ALL SCHOOLS	PRINCIPALS
"05/10/05	TEACHERS DAY		
"07/12/05	SCHOOL CLOSES THIRD TERM		

Positive thinking won't let you do anything, but it will let you do everything better than negative thinking will.

When we do more than we are paid to do, eventually we will be paid more for what we do.

The following are performance standards established for clusters in the Erongo Region

MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR CLUSTERS

	Activity	Minimum standard	Responsible Person(s)	Yes/No
1.	Circuit management meeting	Once per trimester	IE	
2.	Cluster management meeting	Twice per trimester	CCP	
3.	Subject group meeting	Once per trimester	Subject convener	
4.	Cluster examination	Gr.5 Gr.6-Dec. Gr.8Dec Gr.7-Aug. <i>Gr.9-Dec. & 10-Aug.</i>	Subject convener	
5.	CCP's school visits in cluster	Each school to request CCP for at least 1 visit	Principals in cluster.	
6.	CCP's cluster visits	1 in 1 st trimester 1 in 2 nd trimester	IE's & CCP's	
7.	Professional development workshop for CCP's	Once/Year	IE's	
8.	Cluster team-building activity	Once/Year	CCP's	
9.	Circuit/cluster fundraising function	Once/Year	IE & CCP's	
10.	Cluster finances	Fund to be in place	CCP	
11.	Cluster year Program	End Sept. <i>completed for next year.</i>	CCP	
12.	Cluster Development Plan	Every 3yrs. <i>status 2006.</i>	CCP & cluster principals	
13.	Report on cluster activities	End of every trimester	CCP & cluster principals	
14.	Cluster priority list (renovations & capital project)	End 2 nd trimester	CCP & cluster principals	
15.	Monitor timetabling of schools	Submit in 1 st week to CCP	Principal in cluster	
16.	Monitor subject allocation/work distribution at school	Submit in 1 st week to CCP	Principal in cluster	
17.	Monitor schools subject year planners	Submit in 1 st week to CCP	Principal in cluster	
18.	Facilitate distribution and/or collection of information	15 th day stats, monthly report, AEC, annual order	CCP's	
19.	Monitor schools CA	Discuss at every CMC meeting.		
20.	General parent meeting	Once/Year <i>in each major town.</i>	IE's & CCP's	

This and the following 9 pages are from the policy document produced by the Swakopmund Primary Cluster

Cluster Policy for Swakopmund Primary Schools

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Preamble

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution, input and comments from the following persons.

- 1) Mr. W. Greeff for compiling the draft.
- 2) The Regional Office (Inspector and Advisory Service) for their input.
- 3) Mr. Thys Spangenberg (G.T.Z.) for the comments and donations.
- 4) Comments from the Cluster Management.

Let this policy document serve as guidelines for all the stakeholders in the cluster.

To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination, but to travel with a different view.

The Goal for 2005 – “Improving Learner Performances through quality service by all.”

This objective should be our vision for the years to come.

Yours in Education

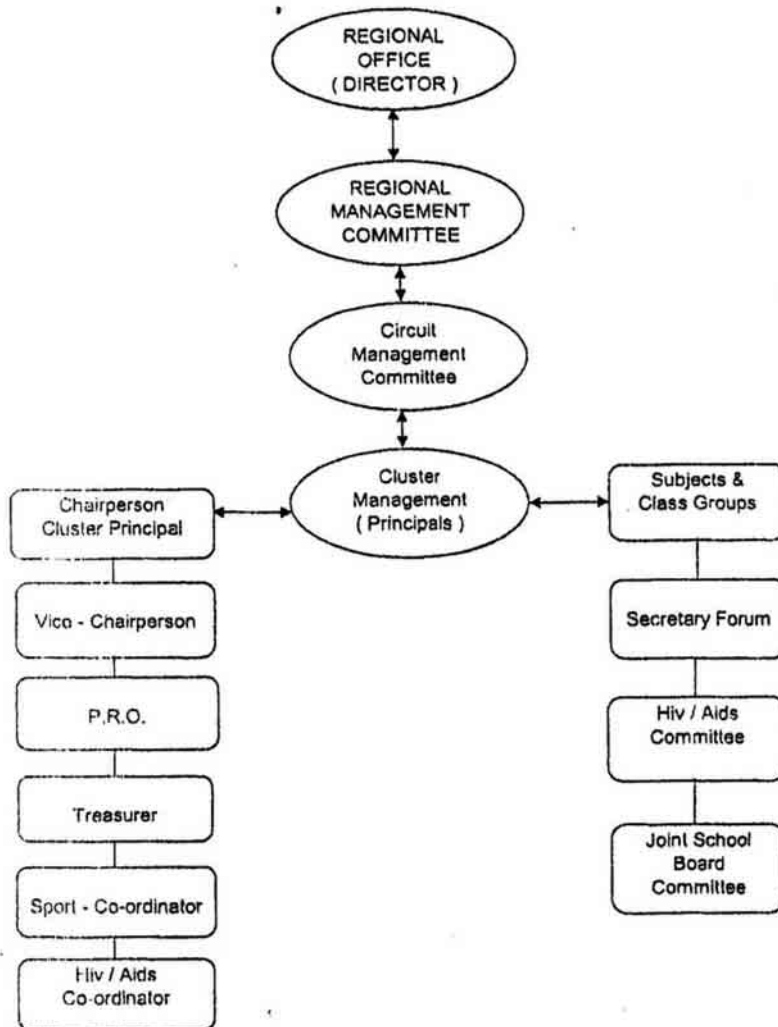


A.T. Jantjies
Cluster Principal & Management

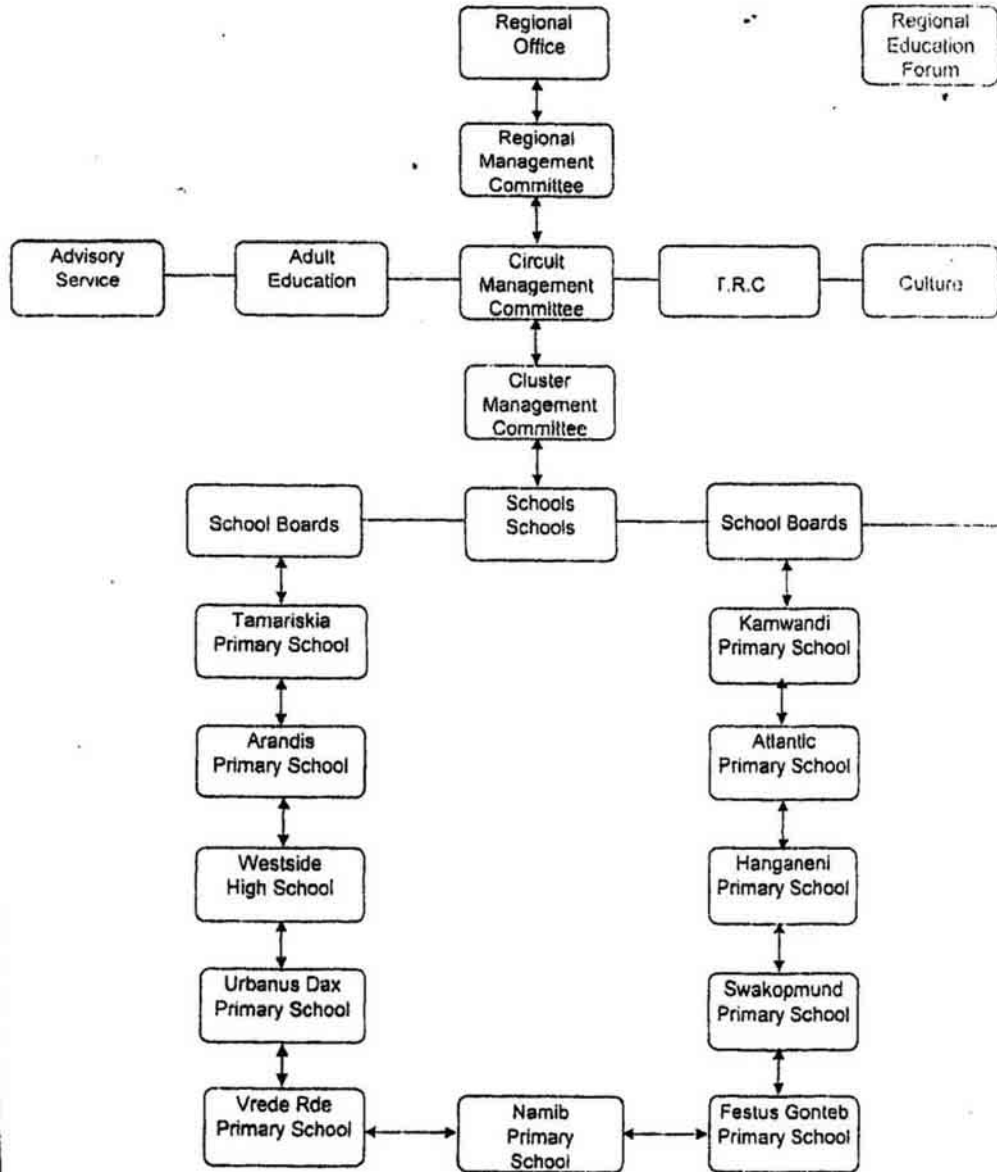
3.

ERONGO EDUCATION REGION

3.1 SWAKOPMUND PRIMARY SCHOOL CLUSTER ORGANOGRAM



3.2 SWAKOPMUND PRIMARY SCHOOL CLUSTER STRUCTURE



Introduction

The Education Act provide a legal basis for schooling in Namibia. The Act clearly sets out the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders in education. The 10-year plan for Educator Development provides all teachers, teacher educators and education managers with numerous access to opportunities to acquire additional knowledge and skills.

Through the cluster system it is possible for these opportunities to develop. By partitioning the circuit into manageable groups, Clusters provide the regional council administrators with a framework for managing and planning education. The clusters also provide a logical framework for planning other regional services. The Cluster allows more management decisions to be made at local schools and clusters, thus contributing to decentralization. The cluster system is a support structure, which provides the basis for better management of quality education within all the schools throughout the circuit. It enhances communication and improves teaching by sharing resources, experience and expertise among staff and provides a platform to facilitate administration and professional support. Tamariskia Primary School is selected to serve as the cluster centre which should set a good example for management and teaching practices.

1. The Swakopmund Primary School Cluster Centre

1.1 The cluster centre is the focal point for contact, co-ordination and cooperation between the schools in the Cluster.

1.2 The cluster serves as in-service training & information centre.

1.3 The following documents are available at the Cluster Centre.

a. Education Act and Regulations	b. Towards Education for All
c. Manual for Primary School Principals	d. Staffing Norms
e. Hostel Guide	f. Labour Act
g. Report on Presidential Commission	h. Strategic Plan: 2001 to 2006
i. Copy of National Constitution	j. Copy of National Anthem
k. Code of Conduct	l. Public Service Act
m. Billing System	n. Staff Rules and Procedures
o. The School Cluster System in Namibia	

1.4 The following information is available at the centre.

- a. Line of command
- b. Cluster map
- c. Subject Files
- d. Cluster logbook
- e. GTZ-BEP file
- f. Statistical Information about cluster schools
 1. Number of teachers per school
 2. Number of learners per school

6. A Cluster Centre Principal

The following can be seen as responsibilities of the CCP

- ▲ Co-ordinates and promotes activities in the cluster in collaboration with other principals in the cluster.
- ▲ The principal also forms links between schools and the circuit and regional education office.
- ▲ The principal/facilitate provides training to principals on aspects of management and leadership, office administration, financial management, and education planning.
- ▲ Draws up year plans and a budget in collaboration with other principals.
- ▲ Organizes, attends and chairs cluster management meetings.
- ▲ Initiates subject and examination committees in the cluster.
- ▲ Receives and controls educational statistics from cluster schools (monthly report, (AEC, 15 day) before forwarding to the inspector.
- ▲ Attends to the needs of physical facilities in the cluster. Draws up a priority list for the cluster.
- ▲ Assists with the induction of newly appointed principals.
- ▲ Sends in trimester cluster activities report to Inspector of Education.
- ▲ Acts in the absence of the inspector.
- ▲ Sees to the collection and distribution of materials and statistics. (Orders for stationery and textbooks)
- ▲ Does the training of School Boards.
- ▲ Ensures that correct channels of communication are followed by staff throughout the cluster.
- ▲ Promotes the efficient and equitable allocation of teachers.
- ▲ Advises schools on how class groups should be arranged so that teachers and classrooms are used effectively.
- ▲ The cluster principal can stand in for the inspector when he/she is away from his/her offices, allowing the office to remain open and the principal to gain experience in this kind of work.
- ▲ Visits schools to establish whether support or guidance are needed.
- ▲ Sends minutes of subject group meetings and cluster management meetings to Inspector.

7. Cluster Management Committee

A Cluster Management Committee is a forum where teaching and learning problems in school may be addressed. The Principal of the cluster schools under the leadership of the Cluster Centre Principal form the (Management Committee). The principal responsible for the managing of the cluster in the spirit of its set vision of MBESC and mission of cluster.

7.1 The Responsibilities of the Cluster Management Committee:

- ◆ To serve as a forum where principals exchange information and their experience.
- ◆ To discuss and resolve relevant issues close to their sources.
- ◆ To allow for planning for the cluster. To ensure that school boards function properly and that community participation is encouraged.
- ◆ To act as a co-ordinator over the subject and class groups.
- ◆ To market the schools and the cluster.
- ◆ To keep the cluster financial books and matters on a sound level.

7.1.1 The Cluster Management Committee consist of the following members:

- ◆ Cluster Centre Principal as Chairperson
- ◆ Vice Chairperson
- ◆ PRO
- ◆ Treasurer
- ◆ Aids Committee Co-ordinator
- ◆ Secretary
- ◆ Principals of Cluster schools
- ◆ Head of Departments in case of a combined school like Westside High and Atlantic Primary School.

Meetings:

- ◆ A cluster meeting is held 3 times per term.
- ◆ The committee meets each month.
- ◆ The cluster principal gathers agenda points from the principals.
- ◆ The committee also draws up a action plan, development plan and a year planner for the cluster.
- ◆ The HOD is involved in the meetings to ensure the passing on of information down.

7.1.2 The following are the aims of holding a cluster meeting:

- ◆ To define and discuss policy
- ◆ To discuss problems and possible solutions.
- ◆ To facilitate joint planning and subject strategy.
- ◆ To provide renewal through an exchange of ideas.
- ◆ To disseminate ideas and information.
- ◆ To work with the Subject Adviser by setting standards and goals.
- ◆ To draw up action plan, development plan one a year planner.

7.1.3 The Finance of the Cluster Fund (Finances)

- ◆ The Treasurer – elected by the Management Committee will do the upkeep and recording of the books.
- ◆ To adhere to the Cluster Financial Policy.
- ◆ The Treasurer should set a Budget for the period January till November.
- ◆ Table Trimester Financial Report.
- ◆ The School's contribution of N\$1-00 per learner will go towards travelling and finance possible internal workshops.

7.1.4 The Secretary of the Cluster

- ✖ The Administrator of the cluster and reports to the cluster centre principal.
- ✖ Filing, typing, mailing, fax of minutes of the management committee and subject-class group meetings to the relevant stakeholders.
- ✖ To copy work for the cluster.
- ✖ Taking of minutes at cluster management and convenor meetings.
- ✖ Disseminate cluster question paper to schools a month before the examinations.

7.2 CLUSTER GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

7.2.1 Subject and Class Groups

- The Cluster provides frameworks for a range of groups or committees to be formed to support various needs.
- The formation of subject groups to support various needs.
- To bringing teachers together in goal-oriented groups dealing with teaching and professional development issues.
- Encouraging teachers to share experiences and skills, and to strive for improvement.
- Fostering culture of sharing, openness and mutual support.
- Providing a Framework for in-service-training.
- Providing a framework for advisory teaching service.
- Encouraging teachers to compile common schemes of work.
- Meetings at least once a trimester.
- All the members of schools must attend the cluster meeting.

7.2.2 Subject Convenor/ Chairperson

- Each subject group in a cluster is usually co-ordinated by a subject convenor should be supported by an advisory teacher.
- Can check that teachers have relevant teaching materials and monitor the extent to which they cover the syllabus.
- Can liaise with examination committees on the setting of question papers, help moderate papers and check on how each school is progressing.
- Arrange subject group meetings.
- Design and prepare activities for cluster meetings to facilitate teaching.
- Undertake support visits to schools in consultation of Advisory Service.
- Encourage initiative from other teachers, supporting them in designing and implementing tasks.
- Positions may be rotated on a 3 yearly basis.
- Liaise with Advisory Teacher on subject and professional Development of teachers.
- Must send minutes of subject & class group meetings to Cluster Centre Principal.
- Work close to and report any problems, achievements and successes to improve co-operation with the subject co-ordinator/(principal)
- The meeting is chaired by the subject or class group facilitator.
- The chairperson is in control and takes charge of the meeting.
- Must be impartial at all times.
- Must exercise self-control and self-discipline.
- Must encourage positive discussion.

Agenda

- Must be handed out in advance to each teacher in order for them to prepare for the for the meeting.

Aim of Agenda:

- To ensure that important matters are not overlooked.
- To ensure that no unnecessary discussions take place.
- To ensure that meetings are conducted in an amicable way.
- And therefore finish on time.

Requirements of Agenda:

- * Must be brief.
- * Must be clear.
- * Must be specific and to the point.

Elements of Agenda:

- * Opening and Welcome
- * Attendance register
- * Minutes of previous meeting
- * Matters arising (from previous meeting)
- * New matters
- * Extension to the agenda
- * Adjournment

Minutes:

Aim of Agenda

- ❖ Official documentation of meeting
- ❖ To be kept in cluster file as reflection of the procedure of the meeting.

Requirements need to:

- ❖ Be clear and to the point.
- ❖ Needs to be a correct and honest reflection of the procedure of the meeting.
- ❖ Reflect exact wording of important decisions taken.
- ❖ See that tasks allocated must be fully minted.

7.3 Examination Committees

- ❖ Will be formed from Subject Group members and must represent each school.
- ❖ Advisory Teachers must be invite to serve on committee as chairpersons.
- ❖ The committee co-ordinate the setting, duplication, marking and feedback to subject meetings.

Grade	Time Frame
5	End of Year Cluster Paper
6	August & End of Year – Cluster Paper
7	August – Cluster Paper

- ❖ Cluster secretary will distribute the question papers.
- ❖ Questionpapers should be type by the group and forwarded to the secretary.
- ❖ The subject groups should at the next meetings, moderate answer scripts and compile a report.

7.4 Secretary Forum

Objective of this forum is to improve on the quality of administration in school.

- To bring secretaries together in good goal-oriented group to strive for professional development.
- To share experiences and skills, and to strive for improvement.
- Forster a culture of sharing, openness and mutual support.
- To share good practices to streamline administrative duties at schools.
- To identify needs in their working environment.
- To set objectives for yourself and with you're individual principals.
- To meet on this level/forum to interact.

Meeting procedures

- Meetings will be held once a trimester.
- Can rotate venues to accommodate all schools.
- Election of portfile after 3 years.
- **The following positions are applicabile.**
- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

7.5 HIV/Aids Committee

Objectives

- ✦ To streamline and foster relationship between schools.
- ✦ Share experiences and skills to inform all learners about the .
- ✦ Organize Awareness campaign in schools and if possible in the community.
- ✦ Organize Tours and HIV/Aids week.

Meeting procedures

- ✦ Will be held on a trimesterly basis
- ✦ Agenda and minutes should reach member as soon as possible.
- ✦ Position as the chairperson will be elected on a 3 year rotation basis.
- ✦ All schools submit agenda points and make other contributions.

7.6 Joint School Board

Objectives

- ✦ Channel educational information concerns to the Regional Education Forum.
- ✦ Share experiences on education matters, fundraising and community projects.
- ✦ Look into common problems and shortings and where possible to address it, and to come up with solutions.
- ✦ Elections of position on a 3 yearly basis.
- ✦ Give feedback to respective schools on their own – and the Regional Education Forum activities.

Appendix 4. Future staff structure possibilities

In this report, it has been recommended that the formal roles of both Cluster Centre Principals and Subject Facilitators be recognised, and that people be appointed to perform these functions. It was further recommended that a 10% allowance be paid to Cluster Centre Principals in recognition of their clearly defined functions, as well as their additional workload and responsibilities. Additional compensation was not, however, recommended at this stage for Subject Facilitators. The main reason for this cautious approach was that more time is needed to be certain about their roles and permanence. It was also not clear at this stage how many Subject Facilitators could be appointed. For example, would a Facilitator be necessary for every subject offered by a number of teachers in a cluster, or would one Facilitator be adequate for several related subjects. We recommend that the MoE investigate and consider these aspects in the near future.

Once the Public Service Commission begins to revise the Personnel Administration Measures for the teaching profession, it is recommended that the following be considered:

1. That promotion posts for Cluster Centre Principals be created.
2. That the creation of promotion posts for Subject Facilitators be considered.
3. That the post of Subject Facilitator be made equivalent to that of Head of Department (HOD) since the two positions are arguably identical in terms of function and responsibility. In fact, the same title could be used.
4. That a promotional notch for Subject Heads be considered to allow for a lower level of management for teachers who have leadership abilities and/or exceptional teaching skills. Subject Heads could provide leadership for subjects taught by small groups of teachers in a cluster, whereas Subject Facilitators would manage larger groups of teachers, perhaps using the same formula now applied for the creation of HOD posts, i.e. 7 teachers per Subject Facilitator/HOD..
5. That the creation of these posts and promotional notches be used to create clearer career paths for staff that specialise or focus on teaching as, for example:

*Teacher → Subject Head → Head of Department/Subject Facilitator →
Principal or Education Officer → Senior Education Officer*

For those wishing to pursue a career having more of a management focus, the following could apply:

*Teacher → Subject Head → Head of Department/Subject Facilitator →
Principal → Cluster Centre Principal → Inspector → Senior Inspector*

6. Finally, that different payment notches be re-introduced for Principals of schools of different sizes so that Principals of larger schools are paid in accordance with their greater responsibilities.

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education

Welcome and official opening

Mr. D. Lupalezwi, Regional Education Director, welcomed the MoE-representatives, all participants and facilitators and officially opened the workshop.

Mr. Andreas Schott, also welcomed the participants on behalf of GTZ-BEP. He informed plenary that the workshop is part of the ETSIP-baseline study on level and size of each of the 270 schools serving as cluster centres; grade, level and responsibilities of the individual 1320 cluster school principals; the activities carried out and available resources at each of the cluster school / cluster centre & other relevant aspects.

Research units supported by GTZ-BEP and RAISON are collecting information from all regions via

- a) the distributed questionnaires on cluster review 2006
- b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, and if possible Advisory Teachers and Education Planners
- c) Consultations with senior head and regional office staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE.

Mr. Fritz Dittmar, RAISON, presented the programme proposal, which had been approved by the workshop participants

Background information**INPUT 1**

- ▶ **National Survey on the School Cluster System in Namibia 2006 within the framework of ETSIP (Power Point Presentation & hand-out)**

INPUT 2

- ▶ **ETSIP Component 2 – Teacher professional development and incentives, including ETSIP - Matrix (hand-out)**

One Advisory Teacher had already gone through the ETSIP document, but all Cluster Centre Principals had never seen the document or extracts before and they were not aware of the intentions and impacts. They requested clarification on the abbreviations:

E = Education

T = Training

S = Sector

I = Improvement

P = Programme

The Cluster Centre Principals expressed some interest in getting more detailed information about ETSIP in general and to what extent the cluster system is incorporated.

19. Component Description of ETSIP states:

“The main delivery mechanism for in-service teacher development will be a reformed and strengthened cluster system of schools, which presently involves 250 schools serving as cluster centres. A national policy on the cluster system has been drafted and will

be finalised in 2006. Roles of cluster principals and subject facilitators are formulated in the policy and incentives worked out in line with responsibility.”

The participants realised that the intention of ETSIP regarding teacher development is to **reform** and **strengthen** the Cluster System by proposing the logical activities, inputs, outputs and indicators step by step. (ETSIP-Matrix)

-
- The reform approaches will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools Cluster policy and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system, the grading of schools and the size of clusters.
- The strengthening will lead into the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will affect the job descriptions of Principals and their accountability, and will target the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals according to their level of responsibilities.

Presentation and collection of questionnaires

The MoE requested all Cluster Centre Principals to complete a questionnaire on the Cluster Review 2006 in each cluster during a meeting of all Principals in each cluster to ensure that the information collected represents as many people as possible, and also captures the full extent of activities in each cluster. All information reported on activities and events that took place in the specific cluster should have covered the school year 2005, and the 1st and 2nd terms of 2006.

In Caprivi it was reported that:

- the Regional Education Office distributed the questionnaires to the 5 circuits and 20 cluster centres and made arrangements for the workshop in Katima Mulilo.
- Cluster Centre Principals were requested to present their completed questionnaires as circuit-specific groups, attending to the following questions
 1. *Did all Cluster Schools fill the questions during a meeting of all Principals in your cluster?*
 2. *Are the questionnaires complete?*
 3. *Where there any specific problems during the process of completing the questionnaires?*
 4. *Are the any items worth discussing in plenary?*
- Speakers for the circuit-specific groups mentioned that that not all the Cluster Centre Principals completed the questionnaire during meetings of all principals. They stated that there was no problem in completing the forms and that there is nothing to be discussed in plenary.
- Out of 20 clusters 15 delivered the questionnaire at the workshop in Katima Mulilo on the first day, while the 5 outstanding questionnaires were submitted the following day to the facilitators.
- A first check regarding the completeness resulted in the need to add some minor additional information.
- **All (100%) questionnaires are available for analysis.**

How well is the cluster system functioning?

What are the major strengths of the system?

What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?

Results of the circuit-based group work

	What are the major strengths of the system?	What are the most serious weaknesses?
<p>KATIMA CIRCUIT</p> <p>&</p> <p>BUKALO CIRCUIT</p> <p>Due to the poor attendance both circuits had to work together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Electricity - Improved communication - Establishment of committees - Subject area discussion / meetings - Circuit-based work schemes - Functions of school board - Training on staff development - Appointment and transfers of personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transport facilities • Lack of recognition for cluster centre principals • Education Forum not supportive • Shortage of additional personnel in cluster • Lack of infrastructural facilities in some cluster centres • Lack of incentives for cluster centre principals • Imbalances in composition of clusters • Lack of materials • Lack of professional commitment by Cluster Centre Principals, Inspectors of Education and Regional Office Management
<p>CHINCHIMANE CIRCUIT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cluster management meets every term on issues, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + textbook/stationary orders + exam results reviews + action plans + transfers/appointments of teachers + culture and sports activities + HIV/AIDS campaigns - Circuit exams for grades 7,8,9,10 - Sense of belonging to a particular cluster/circuit is very strong - Networking among some teachers is being done at circuit/cluster levels - Principals meeting every term - Subject group meetings at circuit/cluster levels - School visits by both: Circuit Inspector and CCPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport problems for both Circuit Inspector and CCPs = big circuit • Poor attendance at times • Poor/ inadequate resource supply to schools e.g. copier papers and textbook/stationary • Poor resource delivery to schools, e.g. mail and other resources • Emergency meetings at times because of transport problems • Individually worked-out action plans given to CCPs to implement • Information meetings – school based problems are sidelined as a result • Communication problems • CCP's overloaded • No incentives for CCP • Lack of support from ATs • No meeting space at some Centre schools • No IT at centres at schools

NGOMA CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - infrastructure (buildings) - Willingness to support cluster system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial resources (meals, accommodation, remuneration cluster heads) • Communication (telephone, fax) • Transport • Annual floods • Physical resources (duplicating, stationary, solar, generator)
SIBBINDA CIRCUIT	<p>The cluster system is working well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of committees, e.g. exams and culture - Regular meetings, e.g. Circuit – and cluster meetings, Principal’s meetings - Infrastructure: Cluster- and Circuit Offices - Flow of information, e.g. from schools to the circuit and back - Average performance 2005 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-grade teaching (teacher: learner ratio) – untrained teachers • No electricity • Shortage of water • Shortage of accommodation • Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Poor roads + Poor communication lines + One cluster – no office (Mayuni)

Comment: **The most serious weaknesses are almost identical in all circuits.**

The Cluster Centre Principals strongly appreciated that the following problems may be addressed by the implementation of ETSIP:

Weaknesses mentioned	ETSIP: planned sub-activities
Workload of principals	<i>Provide 2 additional staff to cluster centres by creation of new posts/internal transfer</i>
Remuneration of Principals / incentives	<i>Grade and compensate cluster centre principals and satellite school principals in accordance with levels of responsibilities (new)</i>
Lack of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry our needs analysis /survey of resources/facilities at existing clusters - Provision of teaching and learning resources; facilities and equipment to 250 cluster centres

The other weaknesses are mainly generally due to infrastructural problems, such as poor communication lines, lack of transport, lack of electricity and water, and annual floods.

The opportunity was used to address the following aspects:

- Lack of recognition for Cluster Centre Principals
- Lack of professional commitment by Cluster Centre Principals, Inspectors of Education and Regional Office Management
- Education Forum not supportive

What can be done to solve problems and improve the system?

- What aspects of cluster activities need emphasis or further development?
- How do Cluster Centre Principals raise funds? (best practices)

- How can cluster centres really do a good job and serve as local centres of good practice?

Comments by participants

- ▶ *Regional Director, Advisory Teachers and Inspectors of Education should be encouraged to be part of workshops on cluster development activities to sensitize them on the importance of cluster centre activities/development*
- ▶ *The flow of information/communication between Regional Office, Circuit Offices and Cluster Centres must improve*
- ▶ *Head Office / Regional Office should increase their general support for clusters to develop, for example through material, financial and motivational support.*
- ▶ *Funds are needed to run the daily activities of the cluster. Teachers should be encouraged to raise funds that will cover their transport*
- ▶ *The raising of funds is difficult. We are trying hard, but where there is no money, there is no activity, no development. Activities can not only depend on private initiatives. The MoE should provide the necessary financial framework.*
- ▶ *Commitment and dedication is declining in Caprivi. Cluster Centre Principals, Teachers, Advisory Teachers and Inspectors should improve their commitment towards cluster activities. At present, cluster activities take place, but need to be improved.*
- ▶ *Colleges of Education should deliver proper training of teachers. There is awareness that the CCPs are responsible for teacher development in the clusters. Teachers at present do not perform as expected. They attend workshops, but the contents do not reach the classroom. They do not implement what they have learned during courses/workshops as they do in other regions.*
- ▶ *Subject facilitators are not armoured to do the training; they are not qualified enough. Schools should appoint the right teacher who has "full knowledge" of the subject content, who can make a good subject facilitator to strengthen cluster centre activities.*
- ▶ *Cluster Centre Principals should check that subject training is really taking place. He / she should oversee all trainings*
- ▶ *The problem of teachers attitudes (e.g. no lesson preparation) and behaviour might be solved by teacher licencing. Self-development is not to be seen. "A TV for sports is more important than a dictionary for teaching!"*

How can schools be graded into cluster centres, ordinary schools and satellite or extension schools?

What criteria or levels should be used to differentiate between full schools and satellite campuses (perhaps extension schools)

INPUT 3

- ▶ **Graph: Number of schools with different numbers of teachers**

INPUT 4

- ▶ **Circular: Formal Education 8/2002: Guidelines for the rational development of government schools and expansion of grades at existing schools /**

Contributions by workshop participants

- ▶ *Satellite schools are schools under the jurisdiction of a bigger school and do not have principals*
- ▶ *There should be clear job descriptions of for a School Principal who also has to manage one or more satellite schools*
- ▶ *The former system of the P 1, P 2 should be brought back to address the irrational salaries of the principals*
- ▶ *Small schools should be either closed down or be down-graded*
- ▶ *Head Office should investigate the status of the schools and down-grade some combined schools and Junior Secondary schools with low enrolment to reduce the mushrooming of schools*
- ▶ *The learner: teacher ratio of 40:1 will not cure the problem of schools but rather contributes to the collapse of the system*
- ▶ *Due to the geographical environment and the low population density, small schools must close down.*
- ▶ *The only possibility to provide access for all will be the establishment of primary hostels in disadvantaged areas*

What are the core responsibilities of Cluster Centre Principals?

If Cluster Centre Principals should be paid according to their levels of responsibilities, updated job descriptions need to be formulated, as required by the following ETSIP activities.

c. Draw up personal job descriptions for cluster/satellite school principals and subject facilitators to use time effectively (on-going)	Establish working group to develop job descriptions	Job descriptions developed, discussed and approved by management	Job descriptions adopted and utilised
i. Prepare drafts of personal job descriptions for individual cluster centre/satellite school principals and subject facilitators	110 Circuit inspectors/advisory teachers in consultation with 250 cluster centre/ 1320 satellite school principals and subject facilitators to draw up the job descriptions	Draft personal job descriptions developed for consultation with staff members concerned	

INPUT 5

- ▶ **Guidelines for school principals (MoE 2005) – The role of cluster centre principals**

- ▶ Cluster centre principals co-ordinate and promote activities in the cluster in collaboration with other principals in the cluster.

- The cluster centre principals also form links between schools and the circuit and regional education office.

The cluster booklet outlines in brief the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principals. Similar responsibilities are listed in the recently published “Guidelines for Principals” (Ministry of Education, 2005). The circuit-based groups were given this list as a basis for their discussions. They were requested to confirm, offer alternations, change or add aspects of their work.

Cluster Centre Principals can	Comments by workshop participants
<i>provide general leadership and supervision of all activities in the cluster</i>	In general confirmed ...and also supervise other school principals and the staff of such schools ...yes, this includes supervision of other principals movements and able to ...reprimand where possible ...agreed, but transport should be provided
<i>visit schools in the cluster to offer support and solutions</i>	In general confirmed ...yes, but transport and finance ...agreed: This activity needs transport ...agreed, but transport should be provided
<i>promote the formation of subject groups to improve the teaching and examination of all subjects</i>	In general confirmed ...strongly agreed
<i>act as deputies to the circuit inspector, filling in during his or her absence</i>	In general confirmed
<i>organise the functioning of the cluster management committees</i>	In general confirmed
<i>ensure that correct channels of communication are followed by staff throughout the cluster</i>	In general confirmed
<i>promote efficient and cost-saving approaches to the ordering and distribution of supplies, including helping to collate, submit and follow-up on orders</i>	In general confirmed
<i>distribute, explain, collect and discuss statistical questionnaires</i>	In general confirmed
<i>promote the efficient and equitable allocation of teachers</i>	In general confirmed
<i>advise schools on how class groups should be arranged so that teachers and classrooms are used effectively</i>	In general confirmed
<i>pass on training that they receive to all principals in the cluster</i>	In general confirmed
<i>promote community participation</i>	In general confirmed

by ensuring that school boards function properly, that community members value schooling and that communities respond to discipline problems at their schools	
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At what levels should Cluster Centre and other Principals be paid in relation to their responsibilities?

Will there be any major implications of setting Cluster Centres and their Principals at levels senior to those of the other schools in a cluster?

Are there issues that we have not anticipated if the system is formalized and Cluster Centres and their principals take on management and other functions?

INPUT 7

- ▶ Remuneration according to responsibilities (PowerPoint Presentation & hand-out)

INPUT 8

- ▶ Salary structure for teaching staff in 2006 (hand-out)

Contributions by workshop participants:

- ▶ Cluster Centre Principals and Inspectors of Education opted for the topping-up allowance for the Cluster Centre Principals for their additional responsibilities. (*"If you revise the scales it will be the hell of a job for the MoE. A topping-up allowance would be easier!"*)
- ▶ A Cluster Centre should have a deputy principal or HOD to assist when the CCP is away from school. CCPs should have less teaching periods than other principals. An additional teacher would be better than a clerical assistant.
- ▶ Additional administration staff (clerk/secretary): When creating these posts they should be defined very clearly, with exact job descriptions. These people would have lighter workloads than a full-time secretary, and a half-day or even 3 days a week post could be considered.

Summary of findings and region-specific recommendations

- **Cluster Centres (and the respective Cluster Centre Principals) in a reformed and strengthened Cluster System as the main delivery mechanism for teacher development (ETSIP) need to perform in excellently**
- At this stage the Caprivi Region experiences problems with the implementation and development of clusters. Previously, Caprivi excelled as the region in Namibia with the most active and progressive clusters. This decline in performance should be investigated.
"Is your cluster centre falling into the category of "a local centre of good practice".? If yes, please stand up and tell us why!"nobody stood up!
"Why is it not so?".....the problem areas did not receive full attention. The good results I once had are not sustained.
- The circuit-specific presentations on weaknesses and strengths clearly reflect that the Cluster System is not functioning as it should in Caprivi Region. It looks like that the vibrant spirit of Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors has been lost. Most participants gave the

feeling being disillusioned and there seems to be a severe lack of general motivation and mistrust.

- There is a general willingness to “support” the cluster system, but they gave up the ownership, and vision seems to have disappeared.
- The Cluster Centre Principals feel that they are left alone, that they are not supported and that their work lacks recognition.
- It was mentioned by workshop participants that there is a lack of professional commitment by Cluster Centre Principals, Inspectors of Education and Regional Office Management and that the Education Forum is not supportive. A more detailed investigation must follow
- What can be done to solve the problems? The following statements from the workshop suggest answers:
 - *Regional Director, Advisory Teachers and Inspectors of Education should be encouraged to be part of workshops on cluster development activities to sensitize them on the importance of cluster centre activities/development*
 - *The flow of information/communication between Regional Office, Circuit Offices and Cluster Centres must improve*
 - *Head Office / Regional Office should increase their general support for the cluster to develop through material, financial and motivational assistance.*
 - *Cluster Centre Principals, Teachers, Advisory Teachers and Inspectors should improve their commitment towards cluster activities. At present, cluster activities take place, but need to be improved.*
 - *Individually worked-out action plans should be given to CCPs to implement*
 - *Communication problems require solutions.*
- Newly appointed principals, cluster centre principals, circuit inspectors and other education authorities at Regional Office need proper training in management (administration) and professional leadership (attitude and accountability)
- ETSIP envisages the improvement of teachers’ and school managers’ **accountability** for student learning. There is demand to set performance targets and to hold school managers accountable for meeting their targets. (Annex 1: ETSIP DLP Operation Policy Matrix, General Education, Objective 5)
- The Regional Education Director administers, manages and controls the Regional Education Office and performs such functions under the supervision of the MoE-Permanent Secretary. He needs to be addressed by ETSIP officials to get Caprivi ready for ETSIP implementation.

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education

Welcome and official opening

Mr. M. Jacobs, Regional Education Officer, welcomed the MoE-representatives, all participants and facilitators and officially opened the workshop.

Mr. T. Spangenberg also welcomed the participants on behalf of GTZ-BEP. He informed plenary that the workshop is part of the ETSIP-baseline study on the levels and sizes of the 250 schools serving as cluster centres; the grading levels and responsibilities of the individual 1320 cluster school principals; the activities carried out and available resources at cluster centres and other relevant aspects.

Research units supported by GTZ-BEP and RAISON are collecting information from all regions via

- d) The questionnaires on cluster review 2006
- e) Regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, and if possible Advisory Teachers and Education Planners
- f) Consultations with senior head and regional office staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE.

Mr. Fritz Dittmar, RAISON, presented the proposed programme for the workshop.

Background information**INPUT 1**

- ▶ **National Survey on the School Cluster System in Namibia 2006 within the framework of ETSIP (PowerPoint Presentation & hand-out)**

INPUT 2

- ▶ **ETSIP Component 2 – Teacher professional development and incentives, including ETSIP - Matrix (hand-out)**

Comments by workshop participants:

- *We have learned that there is something like an advocacy programme. Is it already in full swing or is it still an issue at MoE and Directors level?*
- *We need to get more information on the concept of ring fencing financing.*
 - *Mr. J. Awaseb, Regional Education Director, stated that according to his information in terms of the activities in the programme and matrix ETSIP is funded for at least 3 years.*
 - *When will the money be released from ETSIP accounts to carry out the proposed activities in order to strengthen the system?*
 - *Will there be region-specific (circuit-, cluster-specific) budget lines as far as ETSIP-finances are concerned?*
- **The reduction of the budget share for teachers' salaries will have a strong impact on the number of teachers in the education system. Via licensing the number of teaching staff will be reduced.**
- **The proposed learner:teacher ratios to increase the efficiency in teacher utilisation will create major problems.**

- *From comments made by delegates to the NANTU Congress in Rundu at the end of August, the Union will demand a much lower ratio. It seems that 40:1 will not be accepted by the Union*
- *EPI has started to work on the scenario if the proposed learner teacher ratios are to be fully implemented.*

The Cluster Centre Principals expressed severe interest in getting more detailed information about ETSIP in general and to what extent the cluster system is incorporated.

19. Component Description of ETSIP states:

“The main delivery mechanism for in-service teacher development will be a reformed and strengthened cluster system of schools, which presently involves 250 schools serving as cluster centres. A national policy on the cluster system has been drafted and will be finalised in 2006. Roles of cluster principals and subject facilitators are formulated in the policy and incentives worked out in line with responsibility.”

The participants realised that the intention of ETSIP regarding teacher development is to **reform** and **strengthen** the Cluster System by proposing the logical activities, inputs, outputs and indicators step by step, as outlined in the ETSIP-Matrix

- The reform approaches will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools, cluster policy and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system, the grading of schools and the size of clusters.
- The strengthening will lead into the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will affect the job descriptions of Principals and their accountability, and will target the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals according to their level of responsibilities.

Presentation and collection of questionnaires

The MoE requested all Cluster Centre Principals to complete a questionnaire for the Cluster Review during a meeting of all Principals in each cluster to ensure that the information collected represented as many people as possible, and also captured the full extent of activities in your cluster. All information reported was to cover activities and events that took place during the 2005 school year and in the 1st and 2nd terms of 2006.

At the workshop it was reported that:

- the Regional Education Office distributed the questionnaires to the 2 circuits and 10 cluster centres and made the necessary arrangements for the workshop in Swakopmund.
- Not in all clusters the Cluster Centre Principals completed the questionnaire during meetings of all principals as a result of examinations and the early closure of schools. No problems in completing the forms were reported
- Out of 10 clusters 6 delivered the questionnaire at the first day of the workshop in Swakopmund
- The 4 outstanding questionnaires were submitted during the second day, probably without the consultation of the other principals.
- A first check regarding the completeness of the questionnaires resulted in the need to add some minor additional information.
- **All questionnaires for Erongo are available for analysis.**

**How well is the cluster system functioning?
 What are the major strengths of the system?
 What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?**

Results of the circuit-based group work

	What are the major strengths of the system?	What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?
OMARURU CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dissemination of information is very fast and also easy. - Leave applications - Sharing exam papers: Rise in the standard of question papers and people became familiar with each other; common exam papers - Visit of Cluster Centre Principals to other schools - Performing schools make use of techniques and methods: use of IT and websites - Establishment of subject facilitators; learner centred method - Compensatory teaching - Conducting of workshops easy on cluster level - Learn as principals from one another (administration, financing, management) - Plenary session at the regional level; CCPs involvement - Professional development of teachers – NIED - Model lessons presented by an experienced teacher - Joint parent meeting - The REO provides extra budgetary provision for Cluster Centres (N\$10,000/year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cluster facilities (transport, duplicating, computers, internet, furniture) • In 2 cases: loyalty to CCPs • Validity of question papers (system of moderation) • Common papers are not a true reflection – results output • Examination reports to be implemented in all grades • Question papers not up to standard • Control mechanisms (question papers) • Change in personnel

SWAKOPMUND CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ownership of the system - Experienced and qualified teachers - Sound working relationship between Regional Office and Cluster Principals/Principals - Contributing factor towards success - Subject groups (meetings 3 x per trimester – learn from one another; teacher development is taking place) - School visits by Cluster Principals: teaching development - Resources / facilities are available - Cluster Centre Principals are motivated and dedicated - Sound communication between Principals and Regional Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no follow-up for recommendations made during school visits • Lack of funds for transport to attend cluster activities (all towns) • Bring all relevant programmes under the cluster, e.g. RACE, counselling and support groups, school feeding, hostels, life skills in the whole region • Lack of advisory services in some subjects • Last minute arrangements: changing of dates, planning from Regional Office (instructions) • Lack of commitment from some teachers to attend activities of some subjects esp. non-promotional • Lack of induction for new appointees (CCPs, R.O. staff) • Teaching load of Cluster Centre Principals has increased
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Final comments:

- Much of the potential of the cluster system has been activated as delivery mechanism for improving quality and encouraging teacher development.
- The Cluster System is functioning well in Swakopmund Circuit, but it would work even better if some weaknesses could be addressed by ETSIP. The role of Advisory Teachers needs to be clarified and strengthened, especially with respect to clusters.
- The Cluster System is functioning well in Omaruru Circuit; there is a dedicated Inspector playing a serious role, which has to a sound professional relationship between R.O. and the Cluster Principals in the Circuit.

The Cluster Centre Principals and all other participants strongly appreciated that the following problem areas mentioned will be addressed by ETSIP implementation, for example:

Weaknesses mentioned	
<p>Lack of facilities (transport, duplicating, computers, internet, furniture)</p>	<p>ETSIP: planned sub-activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out needs analysis /survey of resources/facilities at existing clusters - Provision of teaching and learning resources; facilities and equipment to 250 cluster centers <p>Planned inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgetary provision for 250 cluster centres <p>Planned out-puts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey of resources/facilities at existing clusters carried out and recommendations submitted to EMT for approval - Meeting venues; computers, internet and network

	connection; workshop equipment, materials like duplicating facilities, flip charts, audio-visual aids provided and are operational.
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What can be done to solve problems and improve the system?

- What aspects of cluster activities need emphasis or further development?
- How do Cluster Centre Principals raise funds? (best practices)
- How can cluster centres really do a good job and serve as local centres of good practice?

■ **What aspects of cluster activities need emphasis or further development?**

1. Question papers:

- The procedures of setting exams is different in both circuit due to the different infrastructure
- *Standards: Common scheme of work within the cluster - decide at beginning of the year*
 - *Moderation: Subject advisors can ask someone to assist*
 - Teachers from different schools should set the papers*
 - All teachers + AT come as cluster group together and decide (on paper / moderate*
 - First meeting:- year planning: decide on questions, write the paper, send the draft to AT, AT goes through and sends it to principal, to teacher, typing*
 - Every teacher must follow the agreed scheme of work*
 - Regional Office will finally monitor*
 - *Making of question papers:*
 - Discuss previous papers in order to improve them (responsibility of ATs)*
 - External markers can be utilised (e.g. grade 10 teachers who go for marking)*
 - Miniworkshops for teachers how to mark*
 - First make sure that all schools in a cluster make use of a good moderation System (any control system must be in place)*
 - *Policy on exam papers: We should not be too prescriptive – guidelines instead of a policy will do*

2. No follow-up for recommendations made during school visits

Who should do the follow-up

The report is a school report, not a teacher's report

Inspectors and ATs must follow up on recommendations (accountability line)

3. Bring all relevant programmes under the cluster...

CCPs must initiate the above mentioned programmes

School feeding is an issue of the individual school, not the cluster

ATs must be informed about the cluster programmes, so that they can take off Counselling and Support Groups

4. Lack of Advisory Services in some subjects

The posts in Maths and Science will be filled

All subjects will not be covered by ATs

Capable teachers from school will assist

If NIED trains ATs, how does the information pass to the school – workshops at NIED are not for self-enrichment

- *via cluster meetings*
- *via mini-workshops*

*Minimum: AT visits each cluster once per year (transport)
Ideal: AT visits each cluster twice per year (first and follow-up)*

Trained ATs send circulars out on planned workshops

5. Last minute arrangements; changing of dates

The problem starts at Head Office (requirements on short notice)

H.O. believes that the H.O. requirements are always of high priority

It is not the norm; R.O. will try to improve

6. Lack of commitment from some teachers

Non-promotional subjects (life skills, CSG)

Address letter to principal and convenor

Principal must take over the responsibility

If the school is serious with all subjects the teachers will also be

7. Lack of induction for new appointees

It is getting attention already at R.O. (two levels: School level – Management level)

Draft documents are already available

8. Teaching load of CCPs

Should be discussed during the session about the job descriptions

- How do Cluster Principals raise funds?
 - Dancing events at school
 - One N\$ per child
 - Learners dress casually once per term and pay N\$1
- How can Cluster Centres really do a good job and serve as local centres of good practice ?
 - The CCP must be a dedicated, hardworking leader
 - He/she must be empowered by workshops, meeting and the R.O.
 - The cooperation between the principals must be good
 - The CCP must set a good example in his/her own school

It was noted that the Erongo Region has established a set of Management Performance Standards for Clusters, which clearly list all activities and responsibilities.

How can schools be graded into cluster centres, ordinary schools and satellite or extension schools?

What criteria or levels should be used to differentiate between full schools and satellite campuses (perhaps extension schools)

INPUT 3

- ▶ **Grading of schools: Power Point presentation**

INPUT 4

- ▶ **Circular: Formal Education 8/2002: Guidelines for the rational development of government schools and expansion of grades at existing schools**

Contributions by workshop participants

- ▶ *There are tremendous contradictions in the various documents e.g. Guidelines (Circular 8/2002, staffing norms, ETSIP wording, etc.*
- ▶ *There is an urgent need to clarify the misunderstandings*
- ▶ *There should be clear limits set by the MoE, and which need to be compulsory in all regions*

- ▶ *The new staffing norms may limit quality*
- ▶ *Geography, facilities and principal will determine the choice of the cluster centre. The choice of a Cluster Centre is a regional task, which may need to be approved by the MoE*
- ▶ *Multi-grade teaching is not quality education*

What are the core responsibilities of Cluster Centre Principals?

The cluster booklet outlines in brief the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principals. Similar responsibilities are repeated in the recently published “Guidelines for Principals” (Ministry of Education, 2005).

If Cluster Centre Principals should be paid in future according to their levels of responsibilities, up-dated job descriptions need to be formulated, as required by ETSIP.

c. Draw up personal job descriptions for cluster/satellite school principals and subject facilitators to use time effectively (on-going)	Establish working group to develop job descriptions	Job descriptions developed, discussed and approved by management	Job descriptions adopted and utilised
i. Prepare drafts of personal job descriptions for individual cluster centre/satellite school principals and subject facilitators	110 Circuit inspectors/advisory teachers in consultation with 250 cluster centre/ 1320 satellite school principals and subject facilitators to draw up the job descriptions	Draft personal job descriptions developed for consultation with staff members concerned	

INPUT 6

▶ Building a successful school of high quality

Results of group work: OMARURU CIRCUIT

- School visits take place to monitor whether improvement takes place, as well as effective teaching and learning
- To see that staff development and InSet takes place
- Communication takes place through right channels and act as communication link
- Motivate and encourage staff members towards the school development plan
- Accountability and information sharing (15th school day statistics, summarize monthly and term reports)
- Responsible for Cluster Management Meetings (year programme to be compiled)
- Formation of subject groups with facilitators
- Represent inspector in his or her absence
- See that school boards function
- Proper control on facilities and resources
- Fundraising activities
- Checking of promotion schedules
- Set priority list for renovations
- Question papers – monitor the setting, moderation and distribution

Results of group work: SWAKOPMUND CIRCUIT

- Establishment of a Cluster Centre in the school
- Draw up a cluster year planner
- Budget of cluster fund to be drawn up
- Subject groups to be set up and convenors chosen
- Facilitating of own cluster
- Cluster meetings with principals
- Monitoring of cluster secretary
- Dissemination of R:O. information to cluster schools
- School board Training /Principals Training / Teachers Training arranged
- Cluster visits to other clusters
- Implementation of good practices and methods
- Facilitating of enrolment of learners
- Furnishing of monthly reports
- Facilitate cluster exam papers

At what levels should Cluster Centre and other Principals be paid in relation to their responsibilities?

Will there be any major implications of setting Cluster Centres and their Principals at levels senior to those of the other schools in a cluster?

Are there issues that we have not anticipated if the system is formalized and Cluster Centres and their principals take on management and other functions in the local settings of clusters?

INPUT 7

- ▶ Remuneration according to responsibilities (PowerPoint Presentation & hand-out)

INPUT 8

- ▶ Salary structure for teaching staff in 2006 (hand-out)

Contributions by workshop participants:

At what levels should Cluster Centre and other Principals be paid in relation to their responsibilities?

- There are about 270 clusters and Cluster Centre Principals at present
- Hostels do not receive enough attention
- Why does the ETSIP document read Cluster Center Principals /Satellite school Principals according to level of responsibilities (is this a indicator for the possible down-grading of principals that are not cluster centre principals)
- Proposal: 30% on top of the actual salary. A counter proposal suggested 50%, and was followed by a lively discussion.
- Link the percentage to the job description – workload! Size of cluster can be defined later
- Some external evaluation is necessary, to see if CCPs are doing their jobs (monitoring)
- Remuneration is related to responsibilities
- Reduce the workload? CCPs should not take over all tasks!
- Salaries must still be in the framework of the structure for the whole teaching service.

Will there be any major implications of setting Cluster Centres and their Principals at levels senior to those of the other schools in a cluster?

- Cluster Centre Principals tasks are not covered by job descriptions of principals
- In terms of the Labour Act a principal cannot be forced to act as CCP
- There will be always jealousies when money is involved
- When it comes to the self evaluation through the National Standards the CCP will have to take a leadership role within the cluster

Are there issues that we have not anticipated if the system is formalized and Cluster Centres and their principals take on management and other functions in the local settings of clusters?

- When the post is advertised it must be mentioned that it is a CCP post!

Summary of findings and region-specific recommendations

- Under present circumstances the cluster system is functioning very well in the two circuits in Erongo Region
- The Regional Office is thoroughly committed in its support for the cluster system. Its budgetary support to Cluster Centres is the best example, and one that is likely to make an important contribution to the function of clusters.
- Much potential has already been activated improve management and teaching in the classroom.
- Different approaches are used in the urban and rural circuit
- Cluster planning must address the issue of hostels carefully. Learners at hostels are neglected in many respects. Improvements to hostels will improve the situation in the classroom.
- **Best Practice: School Visits by Cluster Centre Principals:**
 - + All CCPs together with the Circuit Inspector target a circuit and visit all individual schools
 - + Specific task: Class visits & checking managerial issues
 - + A school-specific report on each of the schools is forwarded to each school
 - + All involved discuss the report in a meeting with all principals of the school visited
 - + Recommendations are made regarding
 - subject / teaching / learning issues
 - management issues
 - + The school visits are seen as support mechanism, and not as control mechanism
 - + It was stated that follow-ups on recommendations are still weak. There is consensus that this will be the responsibility of the Inspector (management component) and Advisory Teachers (teacher development; teaching in the classroom)
- There is already a good foundation and link into the ETSIP – objective 5 (Policy Actions for Sub-Programme 2:
- In terms of reductions to the overall workload of CCPs; they should not feel responsible for all issues. If all other officers would take their work as seriously, it will automatically be a relief for the CCPs. Incentives, such as a reduction in teaching load should be considered.
- CCPs should concentrate more on ETSIP activities in future.
- When it comes to the self evaluation through the National Standards, the CCP will have an important role within the cluster

**WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES
under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education****Welcome and Official Opening**

The workshop was opened by Mr G. Kleinhans, Education Planner, who welcomed and introduced all participants. He handed over to Mrs C. Mostert, REO of Karas Region, who explained the purpose of the workshop and emphasised the significance of decentralisation of decision-making powers to grassroots levels through the cluster system. She encouraged participants to share their experiences of what works in clustering and what is not working. She called for an effort towards ensuring clustering has a positive effect at school level.

The Director of the Hardap Region, Mr Boys, pointed out the value of clusters in bringing people together, and in entrenching good leadership through appointing the best candidates as CCPs. He highlighted the cluster centre as a centre of excellence where people meet to help each other, share ideas, then take back what they gain to their own schools.

The meeting was attended by the, 20 cluster centre principals, two Inspectors, four Advisory Teachers, one Education Planner, one Teacher Resource Centre Manager, one Regional Education Officer, in addition to Mr N. van der Ross (EMIS), Mrs V. Ward and Dr J. Mendelsohn (RAISON).

Introduction

Dr J. Mendelsohn pointed out that the cluster system has evolved independently of a mandate by the Ministry of Education, growing from a pilot study into a system implemented region by region according to demand as benefits were observed. The cluster system has been recognised as an appropriate vehicle for school management and professional development, thus it has been included in ETSIP (Education Training Sector Improvement Programme). Since independence the emphasis in education has been on access, while now quality is the focus, and has the potential to be enhanced through clusters. He explained that the reform approach inherent in ETSIP will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system. The intended strengthening of the cluster system will address the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will investigate the job descriptions of principals and their responsibility, and will make suggestions about the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs). In formalising and institutionalising the cluster system, a framework should be established that provides firm guidelines yet remains flexible to allow for innovation. It should be led by needs in clusters and should promote collaborative work. Towards this end, a cluster survey report is being compiled through a partnership between MoE, GTZ and RAISON, facilitated by a representative steering committee. Information is being gathered from all regions through:

- a) questionnaires to cluster centre principals;
 - b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Education Planners;
 - c) consultations with senior head office and regional staff, teacher unions, etc.
- Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE in July 2007.

Mrs Ward and Dr Mendelsohn introduced the tasks to be considered by the circuit groups.

Task 1: How well is the cluster system functioning within your regions?

Cluster Centre Principals were grouped into those from Karas and Hardap, while staff from the two Regional Offices met in a third group to report on the following:

What are the major strengths of the system?	What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff learn from each other, support each other • Ideas and experiences are shared • Reduces isolation • Greater motivation among staff • Standards between schools are equalised. • No longer “not my school, not my problem”. Rather lift all schools up. • Lesson plans, schemes, evaluation are standardised. • Teachers more confident about their work because it is planned in groups • Teachers feel empowered, no longer isolated • Communication is improved • Improved interaction between, staff, learners, management and communities • Limited resources (financial, human) are shared • Improved capacity building (decision-making) at cluster level • In-service training for new/unqualified teachers • Breaking ‘island syndrome’ of some schools • Improved facilitation and streamlining of communication between schools higher levels • Improved cost effectiveness • Enhanced implementation of national programmes eg. HIV/Aids, ETSIP and NESE • Easier access to subject-specific services through subject facilitators • Better access to management and leadership skills through CCPs • Sharing of skills between schools, eg. Secretaries trained in filing • Regional Offices more informed of needs at schools • Access to more experts, officials and resource persons at schools and RO • Cluster system makes it possible to recognise and develop excellent leadership skills • It promotes effective representation of schools and clusters at circuit, regional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of time to perform cluster activities • Increased workload – principals should not have teaching duties • Lack of human resources to support cluster activities • Vast distances between schools • Lack of funds for transport and communication • Lack of support staff • High staff turnover eg rural work conditions – wasted training inputs • Lack of equipment eg photocopiers • Composition of clusters hampered by distance • Mix of secondary and primary schools not useful • Cluster centres have added financial burdens • Lack of planning by CCPs and subject facilitators • Many clusters have no vision and mission statements • Lack of innovation, motivation, positive attitude and ownership • Some schools withhold information /resources. Poor communication • Clusters may be dominated by one school or personality • CCPs require training • The authority of the CCP is not always recognized or clarified • Subject meetings are too narrow in scope, often focusing only on exams • Teaching time is wasted, often as a result of long travel times • Professional jealousy arises when schools or staff refuse to share information or resources, often to stay ahead of other schools and staff • Lack of support from REO – in planning, information dissemination, finances, telephones, transport, IT • Meetings can be disruptive to school programmes – low staffing norms • Subject meetings not always have positive results – no proper planning, superficial - need activity-based activities.

<p>and national levels (voice for many)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork is increased, eg. sport and culture activities at cluster level • Sponsorship easier to justify if the cluster is being sponsored rather than individual school • Better parental involvement • Learners interact across cluster, have more friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much pressure from above without consultation • Poor resources and facilities at schools; RO should assess needs at schools, put in basic resources, then see schools competing for quality outcomes
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Task 2: What is needed for the cluster system to work more effectively?

TASK 2.1: PERSONNEL

What staff members are required to improve cluster functioning?

- REO - co-ordination
- Circuit Inspector - inspection

At cluster centre:

- CCP
- Administration assistant – stock control, bookkeeping, check timetable and budget, secretarial work, filing, schedule activities, dissemination of policies
- Lifeskills/counselling co-ordinator
- Additional permanent teacher – norm +1

Subject facilitators at schools

What are the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principal?

- Co-ordinate cluster activities
- Link between RO and schools
- Chair Cluster Management Committee meetings
- Member of interview panel in cluster
- Ensure quality teaching takes place at all schools
- Ensure implementation of government policies
- Leads/co-ordinates cluster
- PR of the cluster
- Co-ordinate professional development in cluster – motivate, ignite fire
- Plan / schedule year programme/vision/mission/strategies
- Fund-raising
- Visit schools in cluster
- Assess and communicate needs
- Monitor and evaluate quality of cluster activities, standards within schools eg. Permanent appointments, school boards (election and training), extra-curricular activities
ie. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Responsibilities of principals in cluster: communicate and collaborate, inform CCP of activities, mutual agreement and support.

What should the functions be of Subject Facilitators?

- Attend, facilitate, organise subject cluster meetings
- Liaise between ATs, CCPs and teachers
- Subject development: teacher training, recommendations for subject improvement
- Head moderator for subject
- Keep subject statistics

- Distribute subject information and material eg. textbooks
- Link subject to CCP and AT
- Assist with material development
- Liaise with CCP for speakers, trainers, presenters
- Assess training needs and facilitate training

What incentives/payments should be made to the CCP and Subject Facilitators?

CCP

- Grading according to Public Service Commission (status acknowledgement)
- Monetary – allowance
- Travel/S&T allowance
- Telephone/fax allowances
- Catering allowance – meetings, workshops
- Cluster vehicle / car allowance
- Improved career paths
- Exposure opportunities eg. Exchange programmes at regional, national and international levels budgeted by MoE
- Certificates of recognition

Subject facilitator

- Grading according to Public Service Commission (status acknowledgement)
- Monetary – allowance
- Travel/S&T allowance
- Exposure opportunities eg. Exchange programmes budgeted by MoE
- Certificates of recognition

TASK 2.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

What are the functions of cluster subject groups?

- Needs assessment, standardisation, implementation of subject policies, evaluation, analyse statistics (eg. assessment results)
- Hold regular meetings of academic, cultural, extramural nature
- Identify subject needs and problems – address them
- Share resources
- Plan, prepare contextual subject policies, lessons, schemes of work, question papers, teaching aids
- Peer teaching and coaching
- Organise subject file for cluster, eg minutes, resources
- Plan year programme
- Give feedback to CCP, AT – Trimesterly report
- Liaise with other clusters
- Develop cluster in line with National Standards – set attainable targets

How else can subject groups be used to improve schemes of work and assessment across clusters?

- Give examples of other schemes of work, consult syllabus, then training
- Use generic scheme of work prepared in cluster, considering learners' environment
- Consult national standards

In terms of continuous assessment (CA):

- Know booklet 'Towards improving continuous assessment in schools'
- Ensure each teacher knows subject-specific policy according to syllabus
- Give training and implement national CA policy
- Develop and implement uniform assessment plans for specific subject (manuals with tasks, tests and investigations)
- Monitor and evaluate dates of CA in schools: liaise with CCP

- Ensure each school has School-based Assessment Team (senior staff of school) for monitoring, guidance
- Use self-evaluation instrument to improve areas of need identified by teachers
- Exchange CA ideas: projects, tests, presentations, topic tasks, investigations

In terms of examinations:

- Set test items: first training
- Develop question paper bank
- Know syllabus requirements
- Set dates for internal tests
- Appoint examiner and moderator
- Training in marking and standardisation
- Exchange papers amongst schools for marking
- Organise, with help of CCP, administration of examinations
- Reports and statistics – CCP to distribute and store

What internal exams can be standardised within clusters?

April – tests. August and November – exams all subjects, apart from external exams

In what other ways can clusters improve learning?

- Network – share views, opinions, methodology
- Implement compensatory teaching and remedial work
- Promote literacy in three Rs; utilise libraries
- Demonstration lessons; visit each other’s classrooms
- Exchange resources; develop materials
- Watch videos and analyse
- Discuss what works, pitfalls in teaching strategies
- Share workable solutions to curb disciplinary problems
- Organise motivational talks
- Focus on extensive reading and vocabulary expansion
- Motivate learners through positive feedback: formative assessment
- Establish an ‘Academic Advancement Committee’
- Cluster competitions, debates, essays, science quizzes, fairs
- Develop PASSION for subject

TASK 2.3 SUPPORT SERVICES

What are the functions of Inspectors in relation to clusters?

- Supervise CCPs – evaluate, support, advise
- Ensure that clusters are functioning well
- Management support
- Presiding officer for school board elections
- Distribute relevant information to CCPs
- Link with other regions – new strategies for clusters
- Co-ordinate AT visits

What are the functions of Advisory Teachers?

- Make links with cluster subject facilitators - advise and evaluate
- Distribute subject information and materials
- Research
- Ensure subject policies implemented
- Help with planning
- Teacher support – evaluation and recommendations

What is the role of the TRC?

- Support with duplicating facilities
- Support with teaching aids, internet access
- Provide resources: subject policies, syllabi, schemes of work

What lines of communication and delegation are needed?

Be available, open door policy, prompt feedback

Inspector

Admin Assistant
Support teacher

CCP

Cluster Management Committee

Cluster Subject Facilitators

Teachers

Closure

Final words of encouragement were offered by Mr Boys, Regional Director of Hardap Region. He emphasised the need for introspection so that individual performance is improved. He called for the energy generated from this workshop to be put into new ideas and resources, using this exercise as a programme of action while changes are awaited. The workshop was closed by Mr Kleinhans (Education Planner).

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES
under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education

Welcome and official opening

Mr. Someno, Regional Education Officer welcomed the MoE-representatives, all participants and facilitators and officially opened the workshop. He informed plenary that the Regional Director, Mr. A. Dikua, had been called to Head Office to attend a meeting on National Standards, but that he will be back on Wednesday to join the workshop.

Mr. A. Schott, also welcomed the participants on behalf of GTZ-BEP. He informed plenary that the workshop is part of the ETSIP-baseline study on the levels and sizes of the 270 schools serving as cluster centres; the grading levels and responsibilities of the individual 1320 cluster school principals; the activities carried out and available resources at cluster centres and other relevant aspects.

Research units supported by GTZ-BEP and RAISON are collecting information from all regions via:

- g) The questionnaires on cluster review 2006
- h) Regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, and if possible Advisory Teachers and Education Planners
- i) Consultations with senior head and regional office staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE.

Mr. Fritz Dittmar, RAISON, presented the proposed programme for the workshop.

Background information

INPUT 1:

- ▶ National Survey on the School Cluster System in Namibia 2006 within the framework of ETSIP (PowerPoint Presentation & hand-out)

INPUT 2:

- ▶ ETSIP- Component 2 – Teacher professional development and incentives, including ETSIP-Matrix (hand-out)

Comments:

The Cluster Centre Principals expressed great interest in getting more detailed information about ETSIP in general and to what extent the cluster system is incorporated. Most of them had never seen the document or extracts before.

19. Component Description of ETSIP states:

"The main delivery mechanism for in-service teacher development will be a reformed and strengthened cluster system of schools, which presently involves 250 schools serving as cluster centres. A national policy on the cluster system has been drafted and will be finalised in 2006. Roles of cluster principals and subject facilitators are formulated in the policy and incentives worked out in line with responsibility."

The participants realised that the intention of ETSIP regarding teacher development is to **reform** and **strengthen** the Cluster System by proposing the logical activities, inputs, outputs and indicators step by step. (ETSIP-Matrix)

- The reform approaches will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools Cluster policy and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system, the grading of schools and the size of clusters. Changes, if necessary, will have to be accepted.
- The strengthening will lead into the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will affect the job descriptions of Principals and their accountability, and will target the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals according to their level of responsibilities.

Presentation and collection of questionnaires

The MoE requested all Cluster Centre Principals to complete a questionnaire on the Cluster Review 2006 in each cluster during a meeting of all Principals in each cluster to ensure that the information collected represents as many people as possible, and also captures the full extent of activities in each cluster. All information reported on activities and events that took place in the specific cluster should have covered the school year 2005, and the 1st and 2nd terms of 2006.

In Kavango it was reported that:

- the Regional Education Office distributed the questionnaires to the 9 circuits and 58 cluster centres and made arrangements for the workshop in Rundu-Ekongoro.
- The Cluster Centre Principals completed the questionnaire during meetings of all principals in the various clusters.
- Out of 58 clusters, 55 delivered the questionnaire at the workshop in Rundu. The outstanding 3 questionnaires were handed to RAISON at a later stage.
- All workshop participants agreed that without the functioning Cluster System such an exercise would not have been possible in such a short time.
- A first check regarding the completeness resulted in the need to add some minor additional information.
- No major problems with the questionnaire were encountered.
- **All (100%) questionnaires are available for analysis.**

How well is the cluster system functioning?

What are the major strengths of the system?

What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?

The circuit-specific presentations on weaknesses and strength clearly reflect that the Cluster System is functioning to a certain extent in Kavango. Cluster Centre Principals were enthusiastic and proud of the variety of activities carried out.

Results of the circuit-based group work

	What are the major strengths of the system?	What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?
BUNYA CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools are not working in isolation (team work) - Quick flow of information - Reduces the workload of the inspector - Reduces the government costs on transport - Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs) are being equipped with inspectorate duties - Through the cluster system teachers activities are more coordinated than before (e.g examinations, subject coordinators, facilitators) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport (distances) • Workload of the CCPs • Facilities (telephone, computers, faxes, proper administration blocks, duplicating facilities, laboratory room and equipment, office chairs) • Additional staff (secretaries, relief teachers, institutional work) • Lack of incentives <p><u>Comment:</u> Due to the above mentioned problems or weaknesses the cluster system is not functioning to potential</p>
KANDJIMI CIRCUIT	<p>The cluster system is functioning very well in terms of the following set-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information dissemination - Training and support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Class visits + CCP cluster monitoring + Staff development - Sharing resources - Planning - Distribution of infrastructural resources - Examinations - Cluster scheme of work - Central marking - Grade 10 circuit holiday camp - Circuit and cluster funds - Cluster Management Committee Meetings (13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy (gap) during support of CCP • Disadvantages to own school during absence • Overload of CCP • Lack of incentives • Lack of transport • Lack of support equipments and facilities

MPUNGU CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem solving at Cluster Centres - Moderation of promotion schedules to ensure proper implementation of promotional requirements - Channel of communication is followed - Subject group meetings & mini workshops - Unified schemes of work - Staff development and acquisition of skills, e.g. problem solving, training of examiners and moderators - Team work, e.g. school board elections and training - Cluster- and circuit-based examinations and formation of circuit examination committee - Centralised marking of grade 7 end of year examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low attendance of meetings due to poor transport infrastructure and long distances • Poor basic communication facilities hampering effective communication • Less school visits by CCP to sister schools due to heavy teaching load • Low quality of education due to lack of resources, e.g. duplicating machines, photocopiers, computers.
MUKWE CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking within schools - Support of satellite schools - Self-evaluation - Enhancement of teacher performance through subject meetings and workshops - Improvement of managerial skills by leading others - Easier to work in small groups in order to identify problems and be able to solve the problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of physical facilities, e.g. staff rooms, classrooms, electricity, photocopy machines. • Shortage of human resources • Financial implications
NCAMAGORO CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication point - Reduction of transport costs - Distribution of teaching and learning materials - Training Centre, Workshop, Seminar, Subject Meeting and Co-Planning - Duplicating of question papers - Data collections - Dissemination of information - Verification of documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of equipment • Distances • Transport • Lack of conference room • Overloading of CCP

NCUNCUNI CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good communication from REO-Circuit-Cluster-Satellite Schools - Regular CMC-Meetings - Different committees established, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Exam Committees + School Exchange Programme + Subject Committees + School Improvement Programme + Annually Teachers Conference + National School Feeding Programme + Staff Development Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources: human and material • Distances between schools • Transport problems • Low turn up • Poor infrastructures: Roads, school buildings, no conference venues • Workload for Cluster Centre Principals
NDIYONA CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services are closer to the stakeholders - Closer supervision of schools - Communication brought teachers together and cut isolation - Promotes parental involvement - Problems are solved easily without relaying to the circuit solely - All learners are exposed to one exam question paper - Schools are involved in decision-making (renovations, new constructions, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of human resources • Lack of space for cluster activities • Poor roads • Lack of facilities • Lack of transport • Workload cluster Centre Principals <p><i>Comment: Why should we give him a computer, if he doesn't have a chair?</i></p>
RUNDU CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting place - Uniformity in Preparations Scheme of work Exams - Development of cluster plans - Collection of data - Ordering of textbooks, stationary and furniture - Cluster marking exam scripts and moderation - Development fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport problems and distance • Cooperation and attitudes • Communication channels • Conference centre • Security • Budget • Staffing • Remuneration

SHAMBYU CIRCUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working relationship of Principals has improved - Teamwork has improved among teachers and principals, e.g. subject meetings - Exchange programmes have been encouraged, e.g. information from Circuit Office are forwarded fast and responded - Solving of minor problems is handled on cluster level - Cluster marking of examination has been introduced to ensure the standard level of marking - School board election is conducted to ensure the uniformity of procedures and information - The Cluster Centre reduces the burden of the individual school and also cuts the time and cost efficiency, e.g. the analysis of exam and data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor attendance due to the lack of transport and financial problems • Distance from school to school especially in the inland • No cluster rooms for meetings • Shortages of facilities, e.g. computer, photo-copy machines, internet connection, workshop equipment, electricity, telephone lines • No budget/money for cluster activities, e.g. transport allowance • No cluster secretaries • Cluster Centre Principals work load
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Comments:

The most serious weaknesses are almost identical in all circuits. The Cluster Centre Principals appreciated that the following problems will be addressed by ETSIP implementation, for example:

Weaknesses mentioned	ETSIP: planned sub-activities
Workload of principals	<i>Provide 2 additional staff to cluster centres by creation of new posts/internal transfer</i>
Remuneration of Principals	<i>Grade and compensate cluster centre principals and satellite school principals in accordance with levels of responsibilities (new)</i>
Lack of facilities	<p>Carry our needs analysis /survey of resources/facilities at existing clusters</p> <p><i>Provision of teaching and learning resources; facilities and equipment to 250 cluster centres</i></p>

Most other weaknesses are generally related to infrastructural problems, for example:

- Long distances / poor road conditions
- Lack of transport
- Lack of electricity

What can be done to solve problems and improve the system?

- What aspects of cluster activities need emphasis or further development?
- How do Cluster Centre Principals raise funds? (best practices)
- How can cluster centres really do a good job and serve as local centres of good practice?

Comments by participants

1. *The issue of satellite schools contributing to a big number of schools in a cluster, e.g. 9 schools in a cluster – suggestion is to split large clusters.*
2. *Cluster Centres need more support from the inspector, advisory teachers and regional office to become centres of good teaching practices*
3. *Activities in the cluster, e.g. training, cultural activities should not only take place at Cluster Centres but rather rotate to all the schools in the cluster*
4. *Cluster Centres should use subject specialists within the cluster from various schools in the cluster to be subject facilitators, to train others*
5. *Advisory teachers must be encouraged to work together with the cluster centre principals*
6. *In-service training to be organised in cluster centres with the support of Advisory Teachers*
7. *More training of cluster centre principals is needed in administration and finance matters*
8. *A Cluster Centre school should not be discontinued when its principal retires or goes on study leave, but rather be allowed to continued by appointing a capable principal*
9. *Inspectors must assist cluster centre principals with government vehicles to ensure visits of other schools in the cluster*
10. *Cluster Centres must draw up cluster development plans to be forwarded to the Inspector's office*
11. *Cluster Centres should try to establish cluster funds by encouraging principal, teachers and schools to contribute*

What are the minimum requirements for facilities at Cluster Centres to improve the quality of education and teacher development and to ensure that they set good examples, serving as local models of good practice?

Presentation of circuit-based group work results:

All 9 circuits reported on requirements for facilities, teaching and learning materials and staffing. The nine reports were almost identical in listing items such as:

- duplicating facilities
- photocopiers and paper
- telephone and fax machines
- stationary
- conference rooms

There were no suggestions regarding teacher development and the quality of education. However, the ETSIP-Matrix provides for:

d. Upgrade cluster centres to provide effective in -service training/teacher development and support

- (i) Carry out needs analysis /survey of resources/facilities at existing clusters

- (ii) Provide teaching and learning resources/facilities to cluster centres
- (iii) Develop norms and standards for providing resources and facilities to clusters/centres

How can schools be graded into cluster centres, ordinary schools and satellite or extension schools?

What criteria or levels should be used to differentiate between full schools and satellite campuses (perhaps extension schools)

- INPUT 3**
- ▶ Graph: Number of schools with different numbers of teachers
- INPUT 4**
- ▶ Circular: Formal Education 8/2002: Guidelines for the rational development of government schools and expansion of grades at existing schools /

Contributions by workshop participants

Cluster Centre Schools

- The Ministry policy on Cluster Centre Schools should be the determining factor
- Accessibility of the cluster centre school to the other schools is important
- Schools picked up as a cluster centre should have competent principals
- A Cluster Centre school should have higher grades than the other schools
- Such a school should have at least 40 learners per teacher
- Cluster Centre should be a good example to other schools that form a cluster (good leadership, good management, good teaching practices, etc.)
- Cluster Centres should be seen as having potential for becoming Senior Secondary schools
- Should be at a point of development to access other types of infrastructure, e.g. electricity, water, banking, etc.
- Should already have reasonable infrastructure in terms of physical facilities and qualified teachers

Satellite Schools

- A satellite school does not have a principal
- A satellite school should have less than 35 learners
- A satellite school should be less than 5 km from the “mother school”
- Close a satellite school if supervision or a number of learners do not serve the purpose.
- This is perceived as counterproductive against the policy of providing “access” to education/teaching

What are the core responsibilities of Cluster Centre Principals?

If Cluster Centre Principals should be paid according to their levels of responsibilities, updated job descriptions need to be formulated, as required by the following ETSIP activities:

c. Draw up personal job descriptions for cluster/satellite school principals and subject facilitators to use time effectively (on-going)	Establish working group to develop job descriptions	Job descriptions developed, discussed and approved by management	Job descriptions adopted and utilised
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i. Prepare drafts of personal job descriptions for individual cluster centre/satellite school principals and subject facilitators	110 Circuit inspectors/advisory teachers in consultation with 250 cluster centre/ 1320 satellite school principals and subject facilitators to draw up the job descriptions	Draft personal job descriptions developed for consultation with staff members concerned	
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INPUT 5

► **Guidelines for school principals (MoE 2005) – The role of cluster centre principals**

The cluster booklet outlines in brief the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principals. Similar responsibilities are listed in the recently published “Guidelines for Principals” (Ministry of Education, 2005).

The circuit-based groups were given this list as base for their discussions. They were requested to confirm, offer alternations, change or add aspects of their work.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Cluster centre principals co-ordinate and promote activities in the cluster in collaboration with other principals in the cluster. ► The cluster centre principals also form links between schools and the circuit and regional education office. |
|--|

Additional activities mentioned

- Checking and moderation of promotional schedules
- Coordination of examination activities within the cluster, e.g. collection and distribution of question papers
- Decision making on up-grading and down-grading of schools

Cluster Centre Principals can	Comments by workshop participants
<i>provide general leadership and supervision of all activities in the cluster</i>	In general agreed ...some activities
<i>visit schools in the cluster to offer support and solutions</i>	In general agreed ...when the CCP is invited to intervene ...distance and transport problems ...if transport for CCP is available ...not properly due to distance and transport problems
<i>promote the formation of subject groups to improve the teaching and examination of all subjects</i>	In general agreed ...coordinating the meeting
<i>act as deputies to the circuit inspector, filling in during his or her absence</i>	In general agreed ...Yes, when the CCP is tasked to do so by the Inspector
<i>organise the functioning of the cluster management committees</i>	In general agreed ...plan, organise and monitor the functioning
<i>ensure that correct channels of communication are followed by staff throughout the cluster</i>	In general agreed
<i>promote efficient and cost-saving approaches to the ordering and</i>	In general agreed ...and materials as well

<i>distribution of supplies, including helping to collate, submit and follow-up on orders</i>	
<i>distribute, explain, collect and discuss statistical questionnaires</i>	In general agreed
<i>promote the efficient and equitable allocation of teachers</i>	In general agreed ...Subject Advisors are entitled to allocate with the consultation of the inspector and the specific school principal ...done on circuit level ...but staffing norms have a negative impact ...yes, but so far we do not have the mandate to allocate teachers
<i>advise schools on how class groups should be arranged so that teachers and classrooms are used effectively</i>	In general agreed ...depends from school to school within the cluster and the number of learners allocated
<i>pass on training that they receive to all principals in the cluster</i>	In general agreed
<i>promote community participation by ensuring that school boards function properly, that community members value schooling and that communities respond to discipline problems at their schools</i>	In general agreed ...yes with the help of other principals within the cluster

At what levels should Cluster Centre and other Principals be paid in relation to their responsibilities?

Will there be any major implications of setting Cluster Centres and their Principals at levels senior to those of the other schools in a cluster?

Are there issues that we have not anticipated if the system is formalized and Cluster Centres and their principals take on management and other functions?

INPUT 7

- ▶ Remuneration according to responsibilities (PowerPoint Presentation & hand-out)

INPUT 8

- ▶ Salary structure for teaching staff in 2006 (hand-out)

Contributions by workshop participants:

- *ETSIP mentions 1320 satellite schools. Clarify the term “satellite” with ETSIP programme manager. Clear definitions needed.*
- *Additional staff to Cluster Centres- discussed at MPCC meeting. Idea welcomed, but question of funding. Directors requested to submit submission to HO about number needed at Cluster Centres*
- *Is it only secretary? What about teaching staff to minimize load of CCP? Submission already made, just looking into staffing norms – EPI*

- *What about small inland clusters? Will they also benefit in the same way as bigger clusters. Conflict arises where broad goals of education clashes with efficiency matters*
- *What is the definition of “small” or “big” schools? Ministerial point of view states that norms for schools indicate 35 learners for primary schools and 30 for secondary grades. Schools need to have 55 learners to qualify for a principal’s post*
- *Grading of Principals – those at big schools are paid the same as those in small schools whereas they have more responsibilities*
- *Feeling is that schools with secretaries do not need additional ones. Rather more teaching staff.*
- *However, secondary schools really need two secretaries. Combined and primary schools can manage with one.*
- *Contradiction with policies and staffing norms:*
 - *present salary scale: If CCPs be paid more according to responsibilities, will there be more structures or is it a topping-up?*
 - *Suggestions: **Specific allowance across the board for principals that are at different scales/levels***
- *Do not talk about salaries as it will include all principals, but additional allowances for Cluster Centre Principals*

Additional region-specific findings and recommendations

- Before the cluster system can be strengthened, it should be reformed to ensure that the Clusters and specifically the Cluster Centres fulfil the requirements regarding quality education and teacher development.
- There is a need to split some clusters in order to have more Cluster Centres.

Example from Mpungu Circuit – Katopekomugoro Cluster: The Circuit Inspector suggested to split the cluster into two in order to shorten the distances. The three southern schools (Etare JP, Kwaki JP and Bravo Mankupi JP) could form a new cluster. However, according to ETSIP requirements none of these 3 schools now has the potential to become a Cluster Center.
- The Cluster System reform approach should seriously consider combining some small clusters in which there are very few learners. For example, there are too few teachers to share subject related experiences.

Example from Ndiyona Circuit – Cumagashi Cluster. The Cluster Centre Cumagashi offers Grades 1-7 and has a total of 102 learners. There is multigrade teaching 1-3 / 4-7. Cumagashi has 3 satellite schools, with total enrolment figures far below the staffing norms and guidelines (11, 18 and 32 learners). A fourth satellite school has been closed already by the Regional Office.

Example from Ndiyona Circuit – Kanjara Cluster. The Cluster Centre Kandjara has a total of 82 learners. There is multigrade teaching 1-2 / 3-4/ 5-6). There is even a bigger school nearby, which is Dosa with 92 learners. Kandjara has 3 satellite schools, with enrolment figures far below the staffing norms and guidelines (9, 13 and 20 learners). Another satellite school has been closed by the Regional Office.

In these cases, and there will be more, these schools do not qualify for being Cluster Centres and should become ordinary schools belonging to another cluster. As an ordinary school they could still have their satellites, but it needs to be seriously

considered to close the tiny “schools” that are contributing negatively to the overstaffing situation.

A detailed analysis of the completed questionnaires will achieve more clarity about the situation and options.

- There is a dilemma between the broad goals access and efficiency. The need to close schools is pedagogically always hurting. It is recommended that RAISON together with EMIS shall work out the worst-case scenario around the fully implemented learner:teacher ratio (1:40) as approved by ETSIP.

Closing

The Regional Education Director, Mr. A. Dikua, officially closed the workshop.

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education

Welcome and official opening

Ms. T. Seefeldt, Regional Education Officer, welcomed the MoE-representatives, all participants and facilitators from GTZ- BEP and RAISON and officially opened the workshop.

Mr. A. Schott, also welcomed the participants on behalf of GTZ-BEP. He informed plenary that the workshop is part of the ETSIP-baseline study on the levels and sizes of the 250 schools serving as cluster centres; the grading levels and responsibilities of the individual 1320 cluster school principals; the activities carried out and available resources at cluster centres and other relevant aspects.

Research units supported by GTZ-BEP and RAISON are collecting information from all regions via:

- j) The questionnaires on cluster review 2006
- k) Regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, and if possible Advisory Teachers and Education Planners
- l) Consultations with senior head and regional office staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE.

Mr. Fritz Dittmar, RAISON, presented the proposed programme for the workshop.

Background information

INPUT 1

- ▶ **National Survey on the School Cluster System in Namibia 2006 within the framework of ETSIP (Power Point Presentation & hand-out)**

INPUT 2

- ▶ **ETSIP Component 2 – Teacher professional development and incentives, including ETSIP - Matrix (hand-out)**

The Cluster Centre Principals expressed interest in getting more detailed information about ETSIP in general and to what extent the cluster system is incorporated.

19. Component Description of ETSIP states:

“The main delivery mechanism for in-service teacher development will be a reformed and strengthened cluster system of schools, which presently involves 250 schools serving as cluster centres. A national policy on the cluster system has been drafted and will be finalised in 2006. Roles of cluster principals and subject facilitators are formulated in the policy and incentives worked out in line with responsibility.”

The participants realised that the intention of ETSIP regarding teacher development is to **reform** and **strengthen** the Cluster System by proposing the logical activities, inputs, outputs and indicators step by step, as outlined in the ETSIP-Matrix

- The reform approaches will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools, cluster policy and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system, the grading of schools and the size of clusters.
- The strengthening will lead into the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will affect the job descriptions of Principals and their accountability, and will target the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals according to their level of responsibilities.

Presentation and collection of questionnaires

The MoE requested all Cluster Centre Principals to complete a questionnaire for the Cluster Review during a meeting of all Principals in each cluster to ensure that the information collected represented as many people as possible, and also captured the full extent of activities in your cluster. All information reported was to cover activities and events that took place during the 2005 school year and in the 1st and 2nd terms of 2006.

It was reported at the workshop that:

- the Regional Education Office distributes the questionnaires to the 3 circuits and 12 cluster centres and made the necessary arrangements for the workshop in Windhoek.
- Not in all clusters the Cluster Centre Principals completed the questionnaire during meetings of all principals as a result of examinations and the early closure of schools. No problems in completing the forms were reported
- Out of the 12 clusters, 10 delivered their questionnaires at the workshop.
- Arrangements were made to submit the 2 outstanding questionnaires through GTZ-BEP to RAISON.

How well is the cluster system functioning?

- **What are the major strengths of the system?**
- **What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?**

Results of the circuit-based group work

	What are the major strengths of the system?	What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?
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WINDHOEK CIRCUIT 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharing e.g. information resources; principals are not isolated 2. Support 3. Subject grouping 4. CCPs empowered 5. Cluster exams at primary level 6. Support and improvement of management skills, e.g. time-tabling, scheduling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Absence of induction training for new CCPs 2. Lack of financial support and human resources from R.O. 3. Difficulties in reaching teachers in double session schools 4. Transport and communication – farm schools 5. Lack of job description for CCP 6. Short notices instructions to CCPs 7. Initial promises have not been kept 8. Clusters should be revised
WINDHOEK CIRCUIT 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qualified and committed principals 2. Established subject groups 3. Regular subject group meetings 4. Regular monthly cluster meetings 5. Regular Circuit Management Meetings (1x term) 6. Cluster exams in some subjects 7. Well equipped schools as cluster centres 8. Great support by Circuit Inspector 9. Interaction between Principals creates a positive, productive attitude and atmosphere 10. Not in isolation any longer 11. Professional development takes place 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial management and administration needs to be revised 2. Not all principals and teachers are positive about “owning” the system 3. No clear career paths for teachers and principals within the cluster system 4. Lack of involvement and support R.O. (academic support); ATs 5. AT support needed on subject level 6. Time constraints and additional pressures because Principals are teaching 7. Merits of cluster system not clear to principals 8. Transport to visit schools 9. Financial burden on School Development Fund

WINDHOEK CIRCUIT 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharing of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subject and managerial knowledge /problems - resources, materials 2. Communication: quick and effective; get to know colleagues 3. Quick dissemination of information 4. Minimisation of isolation of managers and teachers 5. Strengthening of inter-school relationships (professional and social) 6. In-service training esp. PS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased workload of SS-principal and teachers 2. Slow response from cluster schools regarding important information /feedback 3. Cluster Centre has too much responsibility – other schools expect too much; lack of team work 4. Misperception on CCP role 5. Lack of professional guidance to teacher facilitators 6. Lack of AT support 7. Exclusivity of some schools not accepting reform /change 8. Lack of planning and coordination 9. Lack of extra (support) staff 10. Lack of financial support 11. Implementation of policy issues not through CCP 12. Subject teachers do not feel equipped / confident to address other teachers 13. Lack of (financial) support to subject heads / subject group leaders 14. Groups of teachers for in-service training are too big 15. Advocacy lacking
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What can be done to solve problems and improve the system?

- What aspects of cluster activities need emphasis or further development?
- How do Cluster Centre Principals raise funds? (best practices)
- How can cluster centres really do a good job and serve as local centres of good practice?

Comments by participants in plenary discussion

1. *There is a need for a programme of advocacy of the cluster system to build a common vision and enthusiasm. This could be achieved in workshops for principals and teachers where the need for mutual support, ownership and understanding could be developed.*
2. *Participation in the cluster system will be enhanced by financial incentives, both for Cluster Centre Principals and Subject Heads.*
3. *There is a strong need to create jobs and ranks of Subject Heads for people who provide advisory and supervisory services to teachers of the same subjects in the cluster.*

4. *This would also provide more opportunities for teachers within their career paths, which might then go from Teacher to Subject Head to Head of Department to Deputy Principal to Principal and then Cluster Centre Principal.*
5. *Greater support is needed from the Regional Office, especially from Advisory Teachers at cluster meetings of subject groups.*
6. *Clear-cut guidelines should be established for Advisory Teachers to contribute to subject groups*
7. *There is a need to develop specific strategies to promote the use and services of Subject Heads within clusters*
8. *Formal, mandatory job descriptions should be compiled for Cluster Centre Principals.*
9. *There is a need for training and development at managerial levels.*
10. *Only competent school managers should be employed.*
11. *The post of Cluster Centre Principal should be a promotion post for which people apply.*
12. *With respect to ideas on how cluster centres can work well, and as examples of good practice:*
 - *Financial incentives and the appointment of competent people will enhance the functioning of centres.*
 - *There is a need for self evaluation to assess and improve performance.*

How can schools be graded into cluster centres, ordinary schools and satellite or extension schools?

What criteria or levels should be used to differentiate between full schools and satellite campuses (perhaps extension schools)

INPUT 3

- ▶ **Grading of schools: PowerPoint presentation**

INPUT 4

- ▶ **Circular: Formal Education 8/2002: Guidelines for the rational development of government schools and expansion of grades at existing schools**

Contributions by workshop participants

Satellite schools

- *Agreed that these should be located on separate premises. They should not have a principal, and they should be managed by the 'mother' school.*
- *A satellite school could be upgraded to the status of a full school once it enrolls enough learners, but it is not clear what the threshold number of learners should be.*

Ordinary schools

- *It was noted that many urban schools are very large, some having more than 1,200 learners. Consideration should be given to splitting these large schools into smaller management units.*

Staffing norms

- It was noted, with considerable debate on the implications, that the new staffing norms stipulated by ETSIP will be 1:40 learners in primary grades and 1:35 secondary learners.

What are the core responsibilities of Cluster Centre Principals?

The cluster booklet outlines in brief the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principals. Similar responsibilities are described in the recently published “Guidelines for Principals” (Ministry of Education, 2005).

If Cluster Centre Principals should be paid in future according to their levels of responsibilities, up-dated job descriptions need to be formulated, as required by ETSIP in the following components:

c. Draw up personal job descriptions for cluster/satellite school principals and subject facilitators to use time effectively (on-going)	Establish working group to develop job descriptions	Job descriptions developed, discussed and approved by management	Job descriptions adopted and utilised
i. Prepare drafts of personal job descriptions for individual cluster centre/satellite school principals and subject facilitators	110 Circuit inspectors/advisory teachers in consultation with 250 cluster centre/ 1320 satellite school principals and subject facilitators to draw up the job descriptions	Draft personal job descriptions developed for consultation with staff members concerned	

Circuit-based group work (participants were divided into three groups)

Cluster Centre Principals can	Comments by workshop participants
<i>provide general leadership and supervision of all activities in the cluster</i>	Need to specify activities, and add the need for advocacy
<i>visit schools in the cluster to offer support and solutions</i>	To acquaint himself with cluster schools, but also depends on the availability of funds and transport, and on requests from schools
<i>promote the formation of subject groups to improve the teaching and examination of all subjects</i>	Yes, but need to foster the agreement of principals and teachers. Also needs support from the Regional Office and Advisory Teachers.
<i>act as deputies to the circuit inspector, filling in during his or her absence</i>	Yes, but to advise and support. Alternatively, Advisory Teachers could deputise.
<i>organise the functioning of the cluster management committees</i>	General agreement, and meetings should be at least once per term
<i>ensure that correct channels of communication are followed by staff throughout the cluster</i>	General agreement, but difficult for Cluster Centre Principals to enforce
<i>promote efficient and cost-saving approaches to the ordering and distribution of supplies, including helping to collate, submit and follow-up on orders</i>	Participants in two groups disagreed, while those in one did agree
<i>distribute, explain, collect and discuss statistical questionnaires</i>	General agreement

<i>promote the efficient and equitable allocation of teachers</i>	Too vague and many participants disagreed with this
<i>advise schools on how class groups should be arranged so that teachers and classrooms are used effectively</i>	General agreement
<i>pass on training that they receive to all principals in the cluster</i>	General agreement
<i>promote community participation by ensuring that school boards function properly, that community members value schooling and that communities respond to discipline problems at their schools</i>	General agreement with this, but more so in rural areas. This is difficult to do in urban areas.

Additional comment: Cluster Centre Principals should only be appointed after having had 5 years of experience as a principal

At what levels should Cluster Centre and other Principals be paid in relation to their responsibilities?

**Will there be any major implications of setting Cluster Centres and their Principals at levels senior to those of the other schools in a cluster?
Are there issues that we have not anticipated if the system is formalized and Cluster Centres and their principals take on management and other functions in the local settings of clusters?**

INPUT 7

- ▶ Remuneration according to responsibilities (PowerPoint presentation & hand-out)

INPUT 8

- ▶ Salary structure for teaching staff in 2006 (hand-out)

At what levels should Cluster Centre and other Principals be paid in relation to their responsibilities?

Suggestions from the workshop:

1. Cluster Centre Principals should be freed from their teaching responsibilities. This was the strong view of most participants, especially among principals from primary schools. However, many secondary school principals view their teaching responsibilities as important and part of their job satisfaction.
2. Cluster Centre Principals should receive an allowance, perhaps as a '13th cheque', and this should be in line with the new licensing policy of the Ministry.
3. There is a need to grade the salaries of principals according to the number of teachers in their schools, and the same could be considered for the salaries of Cluster Centre Principals, taking into account the cumulative number of teachers in all the schools of a cluster.
4. Again, additional remuneration should be given to Subject Heads, possibly through an allowance.

Composition of circuits and clusters (mapping)

The workshop was informed by staff of the Regional Office that there are now 28 private schools opened in Khomas Region; 19 of these are new schools. In addition there will be 5 new government schools, but these have yet to be registered by EPI and EMIS.

It was generally agreed that many of the clusters in the Khomas Region should be revised, including the possible creation of several new clusters. This is because many of the clusters are too big, especially considering the large number of teachers in most schools.

Staff of the Regional Office agreed to begin a process of revision of the clusters as soon as possible.

<p>WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education</p>
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Welcome and Official Opening

Mr. van Niekerk, acting Regional Education Officer for Kunene Region, welcomed the Ministry of Education representatives, participants and facilitators, and apologised for the absence of the Regional Director. He particularly emphasised the key role of the Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs) in sustaining of the cluster system, and he acknowledged the significant support from GTZ in implementing the system. Two representatives of the Cluster Survey Steering Committee, Messrs Muchila (PAD) and Tjipueja (NIED) were also welcomed.

In addition to Mr Thys Spangenberg and the BEP/GTZ team, and Ms Viv Ward (RAISON), the meeting was attended by 15 Cluster Centre Principals, three Inspectors (acting), the Education Planner, three Advisory Teachers, the TRC Manager, one principal and a teacher-researcher.

Mr Thys Spangenberg welcomed the participants on behalf of GTZ-BEP and outlined the ETSIP (Education Training Sector Improvement Programme) baseline study which generated the present research project. He explained that the reform approach inherent in ETSIP will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools cluster policy and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system. The intended strengthening of the cluster system will address the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will investigate the job descriptions of principals and their accountability, and will make suggestions about the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals.

Ms Viv Ward explained that a cluster survey report would be compiled through a partnership between MoE, GTZ and RAISON, facilitated by a representative steering committee.

Information would be gathered through:

- a) questionnaires to cluster centre principals;
- b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Education Planners;
- c) consultations with senior head office and regional staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE in July 2007.

Mr Spangenberg and Ms Ward introduced tasks that the circuit members would engage in.

Task 1: How well is the cluster system functioning within your circuit?

	<p>What are the major strengths of the system?</p>	<p>What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?</p>
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<p>Circuit 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common question papers • Training of school boards, teachers • Subject group meetings • Circuit and Cluster Management meetings • Networking • Sharing of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transport • No regular cluster meetings in some clusters • Voluntary participation: system does not address the issue of non-participation of schools in the common exams in clusters • Lack of funds • Lack of communication facilities • No well-established libraries in cluster centres • Regional Office (RO) support lacks authority (system fails to ensure authority) • Non-attendance of RO staff at cluster meetings • Ondaio Management and CCPs – no real co-operation (meetings not held, do not visit units on a regular basis, do not attend cluster meetings, do not support with transport for cluster meetings)
<p>Circuit 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing ideas with cluster meeting • Compiling of cluster question papers has led to improved standard of teaching • Common scheme of work • Improvement in communication in clusters • Improvement of teamwork among teachers within the cluster • Ondaio teachers confidence is developed • Sport participation developed within clusters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NB Lack of clarity in terms of policies and regulations for proper carrying out of activities • Lack of resources eg equipment (duplication machines) • Transport not available • No accommodation and travelling allowances • Heavy CCP teaching load • Lack of communication – no telephones in some clusters • Lack of financial support • Vastness of far west - Difficult for Ondaio units to participate in cluster activities • No cluster secretaries/support staff • No visits/support from advisory teachers and inspectors • The duty stations of inspectors not all within the circuit • Lack of advisory teachers in region
<p>Circuit 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster structures are in place • Meetings take place • Workshops have been conducted • Common question papers • Teachers are networking • Common schemes of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance from cluster centre • Financial constraints • Cluster centre not fully resourced with hotocopier/fax, etc, human resources, office space, transport • Workload of CCPs • Delegation of responsibility/tasks not very clear (correct channels) • Too much reliance on a few motivated teachers to do the syllabus interpretation and schemes of work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCPs are fully accepted in clusters • Induction and subject meetings lead to more confidence • Schools contribute to cluster funds 	
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Task 2: What do we need for the cluster system to work?

The following information was gathered from the three circuits and is presented here as a summary of the participants' ideas.

Task 2.1 Personnel

Cluster Centre Principal (CCP); One group suggested an extra HOD (management); Three groups suggested extra secretary (administration); One group suggested extra computer teacher (teaching/learning); Two groups suggested cluster subject facilitators for each cluster. One group suggested having an additional teacher to relieve the CCP teaching load.

CCP: -Acts as link between inspector and schools

- Coordinates cluster program activities
- Ensures standards
- Provides general leadership
- Should be a competent person
- Familiarises himself with ministerial policies
- Deputises inspector
- Should be inspector of that cluster

HOD:- Deputises CCP and act as CCP in his/her absence

- Ensures that subject groups are established and functioning well in cluster
- Distributes (in co-operation with the secretary) and collect information to and from cluster schools
- Promotes community participation – school/boards function well, communities respond to discipline problems at their schools
- Ordinary teaching.

Secretary:

- Receives, files, distributes information
- Types cluster exam papers
- Finance administration

Computer Teacher

- Teach teachers and learners computer skills, paid from the ETSIP budget

Cluster subject facilitator

- Calls subject meetings
- Co-ordinates subject matter
- Advisory teacher at cluster level

Compensation: The groups agreed as follows:

CCP: higher scale/grading than normal principals, or allowance

Secretary: ordinary secretary half day

Additional Teacher or HOD: according to salary scales

Subject facilitator: allowance

Task 2.2 Teaching and learning activities

The following information is a summary of the groups' findings:

Functions of cluster subject groups:

- Meet from time to time to discuss subject related issues
- Draw schemes of work for their subjects
- Share teaching experiences and problems
- Production of teaching aids
- Select the subject facilitator for the cluster

To improve quality of schemes of work and assessment across cluster:

- Tap from the individual subject teachers knowledge and skills
- Collect schemes of work and question papers from outside regions and adapt topics etc. to suit the cluster in own region
- Training in setting standard question papers
- Ensure adherence to scheme of work and syllabi
- Suggest improvement on the standard question papers
- Ensure provision of resources: sharing

To improve teaching and learning:

- Demonstration lessons – afternoon sessions
- Through mentoring (cluster and regional levels)
- Support from Advisory Teachers
- CCPs can delegate the supervision of subject areas to principals in the cluster
- Subject facilitators are co-ordinated by principals in each subject area

Standardised internal exam/tests/CASS across the cluster

Grades 7, 10, 12:

April: cluster level

August: circuit/regional level

November: national examinations

Other grades:

April: school level

August: cluster level

November: circuit/regional level

Task 2.3 Support Services

Functions of inspectors:

- Regular visits to cluster centre
- Visits to cluster schools that experience difficulties in teaching and learning attend cluster meeting once per year
- Facilitate transport and communications in clusters
- Be involved in management training
- Assist in implementing programs for the cluster – workshops, meetings, etc.
- Ensure that vacancies in the clusters are filled on time – also make follow ups on teachers who are appointed and do not receive salaries for a long time

Functions of advisory teachers:

- Attend cluster meetings according to an already drawn up program
- Provide assistance for identified subject needs
- Visit schools in cluster

- Be involved in workshops – especially with the identifying and organizing subject facilitators
- Support subject teachers and facilitators
- Attend subject group meetings
- Assess and monitor teaching practice
- Conduct training
- Quality Audit (teaching/learning)

Functions of TRC:

- Training and meetings venue
- Support clusters and schools
- Assist with production of teaching materials
- Assist in duplicating common question papers and the safe keeping
- Assist in the dissemination of information from RO/HO/NIED to schools
- Library support–block book loans from NIED

Particular sections promoting cluster functioning:

- Programme Quality Assurance (PQA), Planning and Development (PAD)
- NIED; Advisory Services; TRC; Inspectorate; REXO

Points raised during feedback and plenary discussions:

It became clear that CCPs experience their mandate as leadership figures differently. Several CCPs felt that they need formal structures to be in place before they can really assume leadership roles, whereas as others said that they are accepted by the principals in the cluster as having leadership as well as guiding functions. Inspectors noted that at present CCPs are operating on goodwill, and putting in additional effort voluntarily. Therefore they are hesitant to encourage CCPs to fully embrace leadership roles before formalisation of the system. Several participants mentioned that the lack of clarity on cluster policy and regulation is retarding the full use of the system. However, the point of the balance between flexibility and structure was raised. Functions need to be clear but left open to spontaneity and innovation.

There was much emphasis on the benefit of teacher induction and mutual support, especially in relation to teachers in remote areas who now are included in clusters. Teachers from Ondau PS who are able to participate in cluster meetings are no longer perceived as second class teachers in a different school structure, but are supported and accepted within clusters. However, where distances are problematic, teachers remain isolated. The three HODs who have been appointed to the Ondau PS are based in Epupa and travel out to their allocated schools mainly to deliver food and materials. Time for teaching support is very limited. Furthermore there is no co-ordination between CCPs and these Ondau HODs in terms of information distribution or planning for meetings. Circuit 3 ensures that all principals and teachers meet in their respective management and subject cluster groups each trimester the day before the learners arrive. This ensures that there is at least one contact session each trimester for planning and information dissemination.

Subject groups were seen as helpful in getting every teacher working at the required minimum pace, as all teachers have to get through the whole scheme of work by the time the common exam is due to be written. Schemes of work are mostly done on a regional scale, to ensure good standards in syllabus interpretation across the region. Teachers are both pressured and supported in implementing schemes of work. As they attend meetings and share ideas, they learn new ways of doing things, and understand policy requirements better.

Reference was made to the high cost of running education services in this region due to the dispersed nature of the schools and the poor condition of roads. The regional budget is allocated according to the 'per capita' formula, which means that the low learner population limits the funds. Regional funds for transport and S&T are constantly in backlog. Thus cluster meetings are mostly made possible through individuals making their private cars available. Some clusters contribute towards transport costs from cluster funds, but these funds are quickly used up in areas with large distances between schools.

The question was raised as to what clusters are doing to ensure that schools are complying with national standards. It was suggested that the cluster system could be strengthened through being linked to the implementation of national standards. Schools could do their self-evaluation, and then share findings within their clusters. This would assist schools to prepare for external evaluation, and would also allow for support in implementing action plans. The national standards instruments could be used to evaluate teachers on an ongoing basis. Needs within clusters and the region could be pinpointed and acted on through ongoing reference to national standards.

Concern was expressed that while teachers are benefiting from clustering in many areas, there is not much evidence that learners are benefiting, as examination results remain poor. Furthermore, parents are remaining remote from the education of the learners. Most of the energy in clustering is seemingly targeted at principals and teachers, while learners and parents are not being engaged in networking processes.

The Way Forward and Closure

Mr. van Niekerk commended the CCPs for their commitment and for reaching into their own pockets to make clustering possible in the Kunene Region. GTZ was thanked for spearheading the clustering process. The Ministry of Education would now be expected to support and consolidate the work that has started, and to promote the networking, sharing process that is already bearing fruits in the region.

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES
under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education

Welcome and Official Opening

The workshop was opened on behalf of the Regional Director by Mr J. Haihambo (School Counsellor), who welcomed all the participants. He read a speech prepared for the opening by Mr J. Udjombala, the Regional Director.

In addition to the BEP/GTZ officials (Mr Thys Spangenberg and Mr Dennis Nandi), Ms Loide Kapenda of NIED and Dr John Mendelsohn (RAISON), the meeting was attended by 33 cluster centre principals, six Inspectors, three Advisory Teachers, and one School Counsellor.

Introduction

Mr Thys Spangenberg outlined the ETSIP (Education Training Sector Improvement Programme) baseline study which generated the present research project. He explained that the reform approach inherent in ETSIP will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system. The intended strengthening of the cluster system will address the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will investigate the job descriptions of principals and their accountability, and will make suggestions about the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs).

Dr John Mendelsohn explained that a cluster survey report would be compiled through a partnership between MoE, GTZ and RAISON, facilitated by a representative steering committee. Information would be gathered from all regions through:

- a) questionnaires to cluster centre principals;
 - b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Education Planners;
 - c) consultations with senior head office and regional staff, teacher unions, etc.
- Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE in July 2007.

Mr Spangenberg and Dr Mendelsohn introduced the tasks to be considered by the circuit groups.

Task 1: How well is the cluster system functioning within your circuit?

The six circuits (Ondobe, Ohakafiya, Eenhana, Okongo, Ohangwena and Endola) met in group sessions and reported the following:

<p>What are the major strengths of the system?</p>	<p>What are the most serious weaknesses of the system, and, what improvements could be made?</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cluster system has been well-implemented and fully-embraced • There is good communication between CCs and Circuit Offices, leading to better flow of information • Common schemes of work and exams have been formulated • In-service, learner representative councils (LRC) and school board training has been facilitated by the cluster system • Orphan and vulnerable children projects are implemented through clusters • Subject groups meet to exchange ideas and experience • Management skills have improved • There are greater levels of participatory planning, management and co-operation • Cluster committees now organize sports and examinations • Problems are often solved locally rather than having to be referred to higher authority • Cluster management meetings are used to interview and recommend appointments for HODs • Salary payments are received more rapidly through delivery at CCs • Statistics are assembled and checked in clusters • Staff no longer have to travel long distances to circuit offices • Facilities and resources are now shared and more available to schools through their cluster centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of transport available for people to meet, visit and monitor each others' schools • Road conditions hamper the movements of people to meet for cluster activities • Lack of meeting venues, store rooms • Lack of facilities (furniture, telephones and facsimile machines, computers, photocopiers for example), • Lack of materials • Lack of staff (additional teachers and secretaries) for cluster activities • CCPs do not have a mandate to supervise colleagues and make decisions on staff transfers, disciplinary matters etc • CCPs have heavy workloads, and cannot do all the work they should be doing • The demarcation of some clusters has been poor, and needs to be revised • Secondary schools have been mixed into primary school clusters • Financial resources available for cluster activities are limited; funds should or could be made available by the MOE, from school funds, private sector sponsorship, the school board and contributions from teachers and principals • Lack of financial incentives for CCPs • Poor support from the regional education office • Need for training of CCPs and Subject Facilitators • Need for electricity at CCs
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Task 2: What is needed for the cluster system to work more effectively?
TASK 2.1: PERSONNEL

What staff members are required to improve cluster functioning?

- At cluster centre: clerks, cleaners, security guards, secretaries, drivers and vehicles (especially in areas where schools are far apart)
- Additional teachers to allow CCPs to focus fully on management

- Cluster Subject Facilitators
- Two-way radios, especially in areas where schools are far apart

What are the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principal?

- Manage and supervise the cluster and its activities
- Provide general leadership and supervision of all cluster activities
- Be the Chairperson of Cluster Management Committee
- Take and/or recommend disciplinary measures for staff and learners
- Check promotion schedules
- Promote formation of subject groups
- Promote sound communication
- Act as Inspector in his/her absence
- Hold subject group meetings
- Promote community participation in cluster activities
- Visit, monitor and support schools
- Provide a linkage between schools and circuit office
- Co-ordinate and plan activities within cluster: job interviews, management meetings
- Approve applications for leave
- Collect mail and salaries for distribution to satellite schools
- Preside over the elections of school board members

What should the functions be of the other staff members?

- Additional teachers will reduce the workload of the CCP
- Secretary: filing, control cluster funds, dispatch and delivery of mail, materials, statistics forms, arranging venues for cluster activities, responding to queries about cluster activities, typing, telephoning, typing exam papers and schemes of work

What payments should be made to the CCP and staff members?

- Paid at T4D level
- Given allowance of the 10% of their salary
- Given allowance of the 5% of their salary
- Compensation would cover the costs of CCPs travelling to satellite schools

TASK 2.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

What are the functions of cluster subject groups?

- Identify and select Subject Facilitators
- Overall co-ordination of subject-related issues
- Compile schemes of work
- Compile common lesson plans
- Work towards improved schemes of work and assessment
- Monitor the implementation of syllabi
- Advise teachers on interpretation and implementation of syllabi
- Conduct workshops to formulate schemes of work based on policies, syllabi and assessment needs
- Identify needs and weaknesses, and seek solutions
- Initiate debates on subjects and issues requiring clarity
- Organize in-service training
- Allow teachers to share ideas
- Promote a culture of sharing and mutual support

- Invite national examiners and markers to coach subject groups on standards and quality of assessment
- Share answer scripts for the marking of examinations
- Organize common, cluster assessments or examinations

How can cluster Subject Facilitators be selected?

- By subject groups

How else can subject groups be used to improve schemes of work and assessment across clusters?

- Formation of twinned schools between ‘good’ and ‘poor’ schools
- Organize debates between schools
- Organize quizzes between schools
- Organize subject competitions between schools
- Peer observation of teaching by colleagues
- Use clusters to place teachers appropriately
- Identify teachers’ training needs and provide appropriate training
- Organize meetings of subject heads and HODs each term
- Use clusters to moderate marked scripts
- NIED to provide guidelines on what should be taught each term in each subject; thereafter, subject groups will compile detailed schemes of work
- Radio conferencing of schools at cluster centres

What internal exams can be standardized within clusters?

- April tests for subjects and grades examined nationally in Grade 4, 7, 10 and 12
- All Grade 5 and 6 examinations
- All examinations in all grades that are not already held regionally or nationally
- Final examinations in all subjects that are not assessed regionally or nationally

TASK 2.3 SUPPORT SERVICES

What are the functions of Inspectors in relation to clusters?

- Co-ordinate and oversee the implementation and smooth running of cluster activities
- Convene and chair circuit management meetings of CCPs
- Provide clusters with support
- Advise CCPs on administrative matters
- Settle disputes among staff in clusters
- Collection and distribution of information, documents and materials from the RO to CCs
- Visit and monitor CCs and other schools
- Preside over elections for the school board members of the CC
- Interview applicants for posts of school principal
- Receive reports from clusters
- Train CCPs on financial matters
- Cluster planning

What are the functions of Advisory Teachers?

- Train Subject Facilitators
- Provide training to teachers in clusters
- Assist with the interpretation of syllabi and monitor continuous assessment

- Draw-up and provide schemes of work
- Provide advice on time tables
- Provide syllabi
- Conduct workshops for subjects and issues requested by clusters
- Moderate cluster and circuit examination results
- Monitor the correct placement of teachers
- Resolve subject-related problems
- Co-ordinate the setting of regionally-based exams
- Draw up training programmes for new teachers
- Analyse exam results and propose improvements
- Train Subject Facilitators
- Standardize assessment across clusters

What lines of communication and delegation are needed?

Regional office – circuit office – cluster centre – school – school board – learners (both ways)
 Senior AT – AT’s – CCPs – School Principal (both ways)

Which sections at Head Office and Regional Office should supervise and promote cluster functioning?

Head Office

PQA
 NIED (subject issues)

Regional Office

Advisory Services
 Inspectorate
 Planning

Closure

The meeting was closed by Ms M. Nghihalwa-Amoono (Advisory Teacher), who expressed her gratitude to all participants for their attendance and contributions.

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES**under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education****Welcome and Official Opening**

Mr. de Jager, Inspector of Education, welcomed the Ministry of Education representatives, participants and facilitators, and introduced all participants.

Dr. Kamupingene, Regional Director, officially opened the workshop, expressing deep appreciation for the various contributions of the GTZ-BEP over the years. He outlined the expansion of the cluster system through the regions, highlighting the importance of sharing expertise, knowledge and ideas with colleagues as the principal driver of the system. In Omaheke the cluster system is well accepted and has matured, breaking isolation between schools and educators, and having the space to do this in unique ways. He emphasised that Omaheke has been constructively assisted by GTZ until now, but is ready to go ahead even though the project is terminating. He challenged the CCPs at the meeting to strive for improved national ranking through sharing and encouraging principals and teachers in their clusters to work hard towards improved results.

In addition to Mr Thys Spangenberg and the BEP/GTZ team, and Ms Viv Ward (RAISON), the meeting was attended by two cluster survey steering committee members, Mr van der Ross (EMIS) and Ms Kapenda (NIED), 8 Cluster Centre Principals, two Inspectors, two Advisory Teachers and the TRC Manager.

Mr Thys Spangenberg welcomed the participants on behalf of GTZ-BEP. He explained that the MoE is now fully responsible for the cluster system, and that being familiar with Omaheke Region he is confident that it will continue to operate effectively due to the commitment of the stakeholders. He outlined the ETSIP (Education Training Sector Improvement Programme) baseline study which generated the present research project. He explained that the reform approach inherent in ETSIP will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools cluster policy and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system. The intended strengthening of the cluster system will address the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will investigate the job descriptions of principals and their accountability, and will make suggestions about the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals.

Ms Viv Ward explained that a cluster survey report would be compiled through a partnership between MoE, GTZ and RAISON, facilitated by a representative steering committee.

Information would be gathered through:

- a) questionnaires to cluster centre principals;
- b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Education Planners;
- c) consultations with senior head office and regional staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE in July 2007.

Mr Spangenberg and Ms Ward introduced the tasks that the circuit members would engage in.

Task 1: How well is the cluster system functioning within your circuit?

	What are the major strengths of the system?	What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?
Circuit I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared exam papers for all subjects at JS level, and four subjects at PS level • Subject committees for different subjects to discuss syllabi, schemes of work and textbooks • Moderation of schedules • Training of SRC – involving learners • Improved communication and planning between schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of equipment • Lack of financial support • Shortage of ATs • Transport problems– long distances between schools • Lack of commitment of subject facilitators –no job description • Subject facilitators get trained at NIED but do not bring feedback to subject groups • Ownership of the cluster not realised fully by all principals in cluster • CCPs review mock exams but do not come together to discuss outcomes of exams
<p>Circuit II <i>Comment:</i> <i>Cluster system is functioning well with all basic structures in place.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cluster management meetings</i> • <i>Circuit management meetings</i> • <i>Subject groups</i> • <i>Common schemes of work</i> <p><i>On a scale of 1-5, this circuit rates itself at 3</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster centres function as meeting places • Involvement of the staff members • Positive support from REO, circuit inspectors, advisory teachers • Improved communications between schools • Cluster activities, for example sports and culture • Relationships across clusters are important, for example, JS schools meet together across clusters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport – distances between schools (Eiseb PS 300km from nearest school) • Financial constraints- many marginalised learners, too poor to pay. Struggle to raise funds. • Lack of equipment and personnel at Cluster Centres • Lack of subject expertise: ATs; subject facilitators. • Lack of co-operation of some teachers • Lack of support from parents and school boards –partly due to lack of info from schools • No job description for CCP

Task 2: What do we need for the cluster system to work?

In considering personnel requirements, ways to attain quality teaching and learning, services/leadership and facilities, the points raised by the two groups can be summarised as follows:

2.1 Personnel at Cluster Centre

- Cluster Centre Principal remunerated through 10% allowance
- Secretary to assist with cluster administration, half day MoE secretary post
- Additional teacher to take up the teaching responsibilities of CCP
- Institutional worker/driver, to assist with transport to meetings.

2.2 Improving quality in teaching and learning

- Cluster subject groups ensure full implementation of subject policy
- Subject facilitator in cluster co-ordinates subject administration, ie. syllabi, schemes of work, assessment, unified lesson preparation and planning, demonstration lessons
- To improve the quality of schemes of work, moderation is necessary by subject specialists after compilation by group
- Standardising internal exams
 - August grade 10 exams (already standardised across circuits)
 - August grade 7 and grade 12 exams (envisaged in 2007)
- Other ways to improve teaching and learning
 - correct placement of teachers
 - subject related inter-cluster activities eg. Science week
 - cluster level effort recognition in form of awards.

2.3 Services and Leadership

- The function of the **CCP** would be to co-ordinate activities of the cluster centre together with the principals in the cluster. This position was seen as a balance between monitoring and supervising while maintaining a guiding and advising role. Functions include planning at cluster level, moderating schedules, convening meetings, liaising with Inspectors about cluster issues, mediating in cases of misunderstanding or frictions among cluster members, facilitating training on cluster level, representing the Inspector in his/her absence.
- The **Inspector** is seen as playing a guiding, supporting role, in collaboration with the CCP. Emphasis was placed on training and induction of newly appointed CCPs and principals, as well as sharing and dissemination of information.
- **Advisory teachers** train facilitators and offer guidance in specific subjects with regard to syllabus, schemes of work and subject policy. In the Omaheke Region there are only two ATs, one for Lower Primary and one for English. Mr Esau, English AT, explained that his major inputs are in the subject area of English, but he encourages cross-curricular teaching, and also assists subject groups of other subjects to solve problems that they present. He is thus a generalist AT in many of his functions.

Lines of communication and delegation:

Head Office

Regional Office - Director

Inspectors/Advisory Teachers TRC
Cluster Centre Principal
Principals
Subject facilitators
Subject teachers Subject groups
Learners - SRC

Particular sections promoting cluster functioning:

Head Office: Programme Quality Assurance (PQA), Planning and Development (PAD)
NIED; Advisory Services; TRC; Inspectorate; REXO

Task 2.4: Facilities

A properly equipped cluster centre requires the following:

Buildings: Offices
Store rooms
Conference room
Library
Toilets
Equipment: Desks and chairs
Computers (with internet access)
Printer and overhead projector
Fax and telephone
Duplicating machine/photocopier
Cluster vehicle
Materials: Duplicating paper
Science equipment (kit)
Materials for workshops eg. flipcharts
Funds: Separate vote on regional budget for:
telephone calls/fax/internet
transport
maintenance of facilities and equipment

Both groups agreed that Cluster Centres should be well equipped centres with acceptable meeting spaces, basic office and meeting equipment, communication and duplication facilities, sufficient materials to support teaching and learning activities in the cluster. They discussed the issue of cluster funding and suggested that clusters should have a special vote on the regional budget to ensure that funding is directed at cluster centres. Schools could augment these funds through fund-raising activities.

Points raised during feedback and plenary discussions:

Concern was expressed that formalising the cluster system could undermine some of its inherent spontaneity. For example, it was seen as a blessing in disguise that there has not been a job description for CCPs during the formative stages of the cluster system. There has thus been space to expand and experiment with different ideas and practices. In proposing structures at this stage we need to be careful not to dismiss the inputs of people in the field, and not to thwart spontaneity with top-down directives. Flexibility could be sacrificed through rigidly structured policy.

On the other hand, the hesitancy about applying new policies was noted as partly due to the lack of structure in the cluster process. For example the policy of compensatory teaching is not yet fully implemented. Monitoring implementation should be a cluster function, with CCPs helping principals and teachers understand the policy. But not all CCPs are secure in their mandate to assist with this process, neither are all CCPs fully familiar with such policies.

Ms Kapenda of NIED highlighted the acceptance of the cluster system as the vehicle to promote professional development. She explained that the cascade approach of training subject heads and expecting them to share information is not always effective. Through the cluster system, ATs can now have all the teachers in a cluster to a group training session, thus having face to face contact with each teacher.

The point raised by Circuit 1 on the inclusion of learners in the communication line deserves some attention. There is a danger that the benefits of clustering remain limited to educators, and fail to reach the learners. By incorporating the SRC, followed by learners, in the communication line, Circuit 1 has acknowledged the importance of involving all levels down to the learners themselves. Clustering provides opportunities for learners to network and compete within and between schools. They need to be aware of the cluster schools in terms of collaborative and competitive activities.

The Way Forward and Closure

Great interest was expressed in the process of formalisation of the cluster system, as improvements are evident in management practices and teacher collaboration in this region, in spite of shortcomings. The meeting was closed by Mr. de Jager.

<p>WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education</p>
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Welcome and Official Opening

The workshop was opened by Honourable A.J. Kanyenye-Aluvilu, Regional Councillor for Anumulenge responsible for education in Omusati.

In addition to the BEP/GTZ officials (Mr Thys Spangenberg and Mr Dennis Nandi), Ms Loide Kapenda of NIED and Dr John Mendelsohn (RAISON), the meeting was attended by 40 cluster centre principals, seven Inspectors, one Senior Inspector, seven Advisory Teachers, one Management Advisor, one School Counsellor, one Education Officer and one TRC Manager.

Introduction

Mr Thys Spangenberg outlined the ETSIP (Education Training Sector Improvement Programme) baseline study which generated the present research project. He explained that the reform approach inherent in ETSIP will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system. The intended strengthening of the cluster system will address the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will investigate the job descriptions of principals and their accountability, and will make suggestions about the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs).

Dr John Mendelsohn explained that a cluster survey report would be compiled through a partnership between MoE, GTZ and RAISON, facilitated by a representative steering committee. Information would be gathered from all regions through:

- a) questionnaires to cluster centre principals;
- b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Education Planners;
- c) consultations with senior head office and regional staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE in July 2007.

Mr Spangenberg and Dr Mendelsohn introduced the tasks that the circuit members would engage in.

Task 1: How well is the cluster system functioning within your circuit?

The eight circuits (Okahao, Ogongo, Onaanda, Onesi, Outapi, Tsandi, Okalongo and Elim) met in group sessions and reported the following:

<p>What are the major strengths of the system?</p>	<p>What are the most serious weaknesses of the system, and, what improvements could be made?</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to create a platform for school board members to meet and collaborate • Cluster funds have been established by charging N\$1 per learner • Administrative buildings have been provided to some clusters • Ideas are shared on: school management, subject management and in-service professional development • Uniformity has been created on: examination and assessment activities, schemes of work, and lesson preparation • Teachers' skills have improved by sharing expertise • Support is provided to new principals • Subject Facilitators are exposed to managerial responsibilities • Parents accept greater ownership • Circuit management has been strengthened • CCPs can deputise for Inspectors • The work load of Inspectors has been reduced; no longer visit all schools, many problems no longer reach them • Clusters have been used to arrange: national events, sports tournaments (e.g. soccer and netball), cultural events, cluster tests in April • Communication between schools is enhanced • Resources are shared, e.g. photocopies and text books • Assessment of learners has improved as a result of uniform exams, tests and mark schedules • There is improved co-operation and positive attitudes between CCPs, school principals and teachers helping each other • Subject Facilitators alleviate the shortage of Advisory Teachers • Problems are solved locally at cluster level rather than being referred to Inspectors • Teachers are transferred within clusters to solve problems of teacher shortages • Scheduled meetings are held • CCPs are committed • Information flow through CCs is improved and more efficient • Service delivery is closer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of budget for clusters • Lack of physical accommodation • Lack of transport • Lack of office equipment, ICT and materials • Lack of electricity • Lack of security • Lack of support staff • Newly appointed CCPs need to be trained • Distances between schools can be excessive • High expenditure by CCPs • The workload for CCPs is excessive • There is a need for teachers' conferences or workshops • More Advisory Teachers are needed to reach clusters • Some CCP are incompetent, lacking managerial skills • Some cluster school principals are ignorant of the system and their responsibilities • Need greater clarity and guidelines on policy for clusters • Poor attendance at cluster activities • Lines of command do not work effectively • Functions of various committees are apparently not clear • CCPs do not provide enough support to cluster schools • The job description of a CCP is not clear
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting systems from and to the circuit work smoothly • Clusters have developed and implemented their schemes of work • Subject Facilitators have been identified • CCPs become part of circuit decision-making • Teachers have been united through sports and cultural events • Cluster management systems are in place • Uniformity in dealing with disciplinary problems has been achieved • CCs are distribution centres for stationery • Mini-workshops on subjects have been held • The involvement of school boards and community members has strengthened the system • New principals are trained by CCPs • Teachers develop ownership over their schools and resources • Travel time and costs are reduced • Time spent on setting exams is reduced 	
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Task 2: What is needed for the cluster system to work more effectively?

TASK 2.1: PERSONNEL

The following points summarise the work of the groups:

What staff members are required to improve cluster functioning?

- Cluster Centre Principal
- Additional teacher to allow CCP to focus fully on management
- Cluster Subject Facilitators
- HOD
- Deputy Principal
- Competent cluster secretary
- Cleaners
- Security guards
- Clerical assistant

What are the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principal?

- Plan, control, monitor and organise cluster annual programme and activities
- Co-ordinate educational programmes
- Evaluate and monitor performance of satellite schools
- Provide necessary assistance to satellite schools
- Act on behalf of Inspector
- Assist and support the Inspector
- Chair Cluster Management Committee
- Provide a linkage between schools and circuit office
- Promote the image of the cluster to the community
- Make recommendations on staff appointments

- Facilitate implementation of ministerial policies
- Preside over the elections of school board members
- Conduct job interviews
- Preside over conference of teachers, HODs and Institutional Workers
- Officiate at various cluster meetings
- Serve as the public relations officer for the cluster
- Initiate new projects and development
- Monitor and review developmental activities
- Support professional development of staff
- Resolve conflicts
- Ensure that resources are distributed equitably
- Provide feedback on progress to satellite schools
- Facilitate the setting of policy guidelines for clusters

What are the functions of Subject Facilitators?

- Identify training needs
- Induct newly appointed teachers
- Set-up exams together with Advisory Teachers
- Facilitate the setting of exams
- Do classroom observations
- Interpret the syllabus for teachers
- Assist in drafting schemes of work
- Interpret subject policies
- Link teachers with Advisory Teachers
- Moderate cluster exams
- Prepare materials
- Compile subject reports
- Organize subject meetings
- Organize quizzes
- Analyse subject needs
- Report to CCPs and colleagues on progress (and failures)
- Train teachers through workshops
- Monitor subject activities

In a plenary discussion, it was widely agreed that clusters should nominate Subject Facilitators and that the nominations should be considered and approved by Advisory Teachers (Note: this would contribute to getting Advisory Teachers more involved in school, subject and cluster matters).

What incentives should be provided to CCPs and Subject Facilitators?

- Give allowance of 10%, 15% or 20% of their salary
- New or additional salary notch for CCPs and Subject Facilitators
- Pay Subject Facilitators S&T
- Provide CCPs with airtime or telephone credit
- Provide a circuit-based vehicle for the use of CCPs
- Provide no allowances, but supply CCPs with computers, mobile telephones, copiers, stationery etc, funds for workshops, travelling allowances

TASK 2.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Functions of cluster subject groups

- Identify needs and weaknesses
- Help solve teaching problems
- Promote good teaching methods

- Interpret the syllabus and subject content
- Interpret subject policy
- Help interpret requirements for schemes of work and assessment
- Arrange subject meetings at school and cluster level
- Facilitate the setting and moderation of exams and tests
- Interpret syllabi so as to draw up common schemes of work
- Decide on teaching material to be used
- Offer remedial teaching
- Set-up common schemes of work, teaching methods and tests
- Discuss and formulate subject policy
- Set-up activities for continuous assessment
- Set-up formats for lesson preparation
- Discuss challenging issues
- Discuss external exam reports
- Advise CCPs on text book orders
- Review quality teaching as shown by exam results
- Train on making teaching aids from local materials
- Nominate examiners and moderators for cluster exams
- Organize subject competitions, including science fairs

Examples of improvements to teaching and learning made by subject groups through schemes of work and assessment

- Ensure that schemes of work and assessment are according to syllabi
- Help teachers understand contents of syllabi
- Invite experts for assistance, training and to demonstrate lessons
- Tap expertise in the community for extra-curricula activities
- Invite prominent community members to encourage teachers and learners
- Moderate term exams
- Cluster competitions
- Subject meetings
- Identify problem themes and topics
- Review and evaluate appropriate time frames for teaching
- Review and amend standard assessment questions
- Interpret policy on continuous assessment
- Common April exams
- Evaluate standards of assessment
- Sharing resources
- Having subject meetings
- Classroom observations
- Co-teaching and peer observation
- Training to target and solve identified problems
- Sharing experience
- Sharing teaching aids
- Create teaching aids from local materials
- Create resource rooms
- Guest speakers
- Establish a sound forum for school boards
- Team preparation and co-operation
- Use demonstration lessons
- Award well-performing schools and learners
- Encourage parental involvement
- Establish and support feeding programmes for vulnerable children
- Training other teachers on assessment
- Run regular refresher courses on management and leadership for principals

- Establishing common schemes of work
- Creation of moderation committees
- Exchange programmes
- Exchanging marking scripts
- Exchange teaching aids between schools
- Exchange personnel between schools
- Twinning between schools within a cluster
- Through adherence to national standards of performance
- Through study of syllabi and guidelines
- Arrange teachers' conferences
- Award scholarships to successful teachers
- Create partnerships or links with other schools
- Decide on number of projects, tests and homework tasks to be done each term
- "Localize" the syllabus in relation to the local environment

What internal exams can be standardized within clusters?

- August and November
- From Grade 5 to 10 in April and August
- All non-external exams, depending on available resources at the cluster centre
- At the end of every term
- Grade 10 and 12 in August, and others at the end of the year
- Common theme tests
- April exams

In a plenary discussion, it was stated that common April "tests" might be preferred because they are less formal than the August and November "examinations", and that clusters may lack typing and duplicating facilities that are normally used to print the more formal August and November exams, which were also often arranged for all schools in a circuit and even the region. However, it was also agreed that cluster-based assessments could be used in April, August and November.

TASK 2.3 SUPPORT SERVICES

What are the functions of Inspectors in relation to clusters?

- Visiting and advising clusters
- Monitoring and supporting cluster system
- Recruit qualified teachers
- Work with CCPs to plan, organize, delegate, control and monitor cluster activities
- Ensure that vacancies are filled on time
- Ensure that schools have facilities, materials, text books, furniture and equipment
- Ensure that CCPs are well-informed
- Monitor CCPs' activities
- Attend to serious problems
- Guide CCP duties through management meetings
- Provide guidance on ministerial policies
- Provide linkage between clusters and REO
- Support and advise CCPs on management and administration
- Co-ordinate professional activities
- Attend to reports from clusters and provide feedback
- Decentralize activities to clusters

- Chair Circuit Management Committees
- Ensure proper lines of communication
- Ensure policies are implemented
- Ensure equal high standards between clusters in a circuit
- Ensure that all clusters have adequate resources
- Monitor cluster programmes

It was noted in a plenary discussion that Inspectors should do much more to support clusters and CCPs, especially now that the cluster system has reduced their workloads considerably.

What are the functions of Advisory Teachers?

- Provide advice and guidelines on subject areas
- Identify Subject Facilitators
- Attend cluster workshops and assist where necessary
- Keeping contact with subject groups and Subject Facilitators
- Facilitate curriculum implementation
- Train Subject Facilitators and teachers
- Monitor assessments
- Monitor curriculum implementation
- Evaluate relevant teaching materials
- Do lesson observations
- Advise Subject Facilitators and subject groups
- Co-ordinate professional development activities
- Report on cluster progress to the REO
- Visit schools regularly each term
- Place Advisory Services in circuits
- Assist Subject Facilitators to organize cluster meetings
- Moderate exams
- Do lesson demonstrations
- Assist teachers having particular problems

In a plenary discussion, it was claimed that Advisory Teachers only visit schools in response to invitations from schools. This was noted as being unfortunate, and that they should be much more proactive, and work hard at supporting subject groups and Subject Facilitators.

Closure

Mr D. Nandi closed the meeting, thanking all participants for their contributions.

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES
under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education

Welcome and Official Opening

The workshop was opened on behalf of the Regional Director by Mr A. Aipanda (Deputy Director), who welcomed all the participants and stressed the importance of clusters and this workshop.

The meeting was attended by 22 cluster centre principals, four Inspectors, 10 Advisory Teachers, two Education Planners and two School Counsellors, and one Regional Examinations Officer, in addition to the BEP/GTZ officials (Mr Thys Spangenberg and Mr Dennis Nandi), Ms Loide Kapenda of NIED and Dr John Mendelsohn (RAISON).

Introduction

Mr Thys Spangenberg outlined the ETSIP (Education Training Sector Improvement Programme) baseline study which generated the present research project. He explained that the reform approach inherent in ETSIP will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system. The intended strengthening of the cluster system will address the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will investigate the job descriptions of principals and their responsibility, and will make suggestions about the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs).

Dr John Mendelsohn explained that a cluster survey report would be compiled through a partnership between MoE, GTZ and RAISON, facilitated by a representative steering committee. Information would be gathered from all regions through:

- a) questionnaires to cluster centre principals;
- b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Education Planners;
- c) consultations with senior head office and regional staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE in July 2007.

Mr Spangenberg and Dr Mendelsohn introduced the tasks to be considered by the circuit groups.

Task 1: How well is the cluster system functioning within your circuit?

The four circuits (Oluno, Onamutai, Eheke and Oshakati) met in group sessions and reported the following:

<p>What are the major strengths of the system?</p>	<p>What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing schools together • Offer opportunities to share resources, e.g. expertise, human resources and physical resources • Provide ways of sharing information, e.g. on management skills, subjects • Cluster Management meetings each month • Various committees have been formed • Cluster funds are shared • The flow of information has improved • The admission and placement of new learners is co-ordinated (reported in 7 clusters) • Provides a platform for circuit management • Year programmes are set • School managers can meet • Professional development needs are identified • Sport and cultural events are organized • Standards are set for academic performance • Uniformity is achieved in the interpretation of syllabi, subject policies and promotion of learners • Workload of teachers is reduced in terms of setting, typing, moderating and duplicating exam papers • Gradual development of teamwork, mutual trust and support • Development of cluster-based in-service training and skills improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of facilities, e.g. equipment and cluster meeting rooms • No funds to run cluster system • Financial burdens are placed on CCs • Communication is a problem • Lack of electricity • Shortage of staff, e.g. secretaries • No remuneration for CCPs • No clear job descriptions for CCPs • Satellite schools become too dependant on cluster centres • Excessive workloads on CCPs • Lack of additional support staff, e.g. teachers and support people • Lack of appropriate expertise • Cluster system has not been institutionalized; there is no guiding policy • Satellite school principals have not been adequately trained in the system • Lack of transport and logistical support • There are misconceptions among teachers about the system • CCPs have to use their own resources (transport and phones)
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What improvements can be made?

- Cluster funds should be compulsory
- Cluster centres be equipped with adequate facilities, e.g. cluster rooms, labour-saving devices
- Electricity should be provided
- CCPs should be compensated for their additional responsibilities
- The MoE should subsidise cluster activities
- Additional teaching and support staff should be provided
- There should be regular training of cluster teaching staff
- Reduce teaching loads of CCPs
- Two-way communication between circuits, CCs and satellite schools needs to be improved

Task 2: What is needed for the cluster system to work more effectively?

TASK 2.1: PERSONNEL

What staff members are required to improve cluster functioning?

- Secretary/
- Cleaner
- Caretaker
- Clerk
- Additional teacher or HOD
- Use additional staff to reduce the teaching load of the CCP to 12%, compared to the current 25%

What are the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principal?

- Co-ordinate cluster activities
- Plan cluster activities
- Provide link between circuit, cluster schools and community
- Assist Inspector in circuit management
- Monitor, control and supervise cluster activities
- Lead planning, control, monitoring, organising and evaluation of all cluster activities and events
- Convene meetings
- Visit and advise satellite schools
- Attend Circuit Management meetings and report to satellite principals
- Inform Inspector on cluster needs and activities
- Act as Inspector when needed
- Participate in staff recruitment, e.g. interviews
- Promote staff development

What should the functions be of Subject Facilitators?

- Plan and co-ordinate subject activities:
 - o workshops and meetings
 - o common exam setting
 - o common schemes of work
 - o in-service training
 - o moderation of exam questions
- Provide link between Advisory Teachers and teachers
- Co-ordinate subject activities
- Advise teachers on academic matters
- Attend workshops which lead to improved subject performance
- Help implement reforms and subject policies
- Conduct class visits
- Conduct needs analyses
- Moderate marked scripts

What incentives/payments should be made to the CCP and Subject Facilitators?

- Reduce teaching loads
- Provide allowances to CCPs and Subject Facilitators
- Provide training to CCPs and Subject Facilitators
- Additional 5% salary
- Provide cell phone allowance
- Provide laptops to CCPs

TASK 2.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

What are the functions of cluster subject groups?

- Set standards for each subject

- Produce cluster-based policies, e.g. on homework
- Produce calendars for subject activities
- Organise subject meetings
- Co-ordinate and monitor to ensure uniformity in teaching and learning
- Identify problem areas
- Ensure that syllabi are followed and interpreted correctly
- Maintain constant contact with the relevant Advisory Teacher
- Share teaching methods
- Design and share teaching materials
- Analyse results and strategise
- Bring teachers together to share problems
- Identify the training needs of teachers
- Arrange mini-workshops for teachers
- Set and moderate cluster exams

How can cluster Subject Facilitators be selected?

- By subject groups

How else can subject groups be used to improve schemes of work and assessment across clusters?

- Draw up uniform schemes of work
- Set common tests and exams
- Draw up common work sheets
- Analyse assessment results
- Arrange the twinning of schools
- Peer teaching and coaching
- Team planning of lesson plans
- Common development of study tips
- Use external exam markers for each subject group
- Monitor implementation of schemes of work, lesson plans and continuous assessment
- Conduct class visits
- Decide on or suggest appropriate sequences for the presentation of topics, and the relevance of topics to each other (for example, teach about fish and water in the first term when the oshanas are full of water)
- Monitor adherence to cluster homework and assessment policies
- Co-operative planning
- Bringing teachers and learners together, e.g. at conferences and award ceremonies
- Establish subject clubs
- Arrange visits by panels, consisting of CCPs and Subject Facilitators
- Arrange for the best learners from each school to compete against each other
- Establish classes of excellence in each cluster
- Invite role models to motivate learners
- Organise Learner-Parent days
- Provide study tips
- Organise extra-mural activities, e.g. debating
- Invite experts to demonstrate lessons
- Use expertise within the cluster to assist other teachers with subject content
- Monitor the pace at which syllabi are covered
- Evaluate exam results and recommend ways to make improvements

What internal exams can be standardized within clusters?

- All Grade 5 to 9 or 12 exams in April, August and November
- All subjects in August and December, except for nationally-assessed subjects

TASK 2.3 SUPPORT SERVICES

What are the functions of Inspectors in relation to clusters?

- Ensure ministerial policies are implemented
- Conduct school visits
- Identify the physical and human resource needs of schools
- Conduct in-service training
- Convene circuit management committee meetings
- Serve as a resource for clusters
- Provide continuous professional development for CCPs
- Interpret policies, the Education Act and circulars
- Advise and support CCPs
- Strengthen CCs
- Supervise and monitor cluster activities
- Ensure clusters are run efficiently
- Liaise between schools, communities and the REO
- Identify and recruit competent CCPs
- Conduct school board elections at CCs
- Disseminate information
- Implement the cluster system
- Provide reports to Regional Directors

What are the functions of Advisory Teachers?

- Train Subject Facilitators in subject management, co-ordination of subject-related issues and planning
- Advise and support Subject Facilitators
- Monitor implementation of the curriculum
- Encourage and support teachers
- Render assistance on subject-related matters
- Assist cluster examiners in setting and moderating assessments
- Monitor teaching and learning
- Draw up subject policies
- Help interpret syllabi
- Offer in-service training
- Conduct school visits
- Advise principals on curriculum implementation
- Analyse assessment results
- Assist in interpreting syllabi and assessment policies
- Conduct workshops
- Report on subject performance to Regional Directors
- Identify competent Subject Facilitators
- Advise on appropriate text books
- Nominate the best teachers for awards

What lines of communication and delegation are needed?

Regional office – circuit office – cluster centre principal – school principal – HOD – teachers
– learners (both ways)

The CC is at the centre of the communication hub which connects the circuit office, satellite schools and Advisory Teachers

Inspectors delegate to CCPs and then to school principals

Which sections at Head Office and Regional Office should supervise and promote cluster functioning?

Head Office: PQA (consisting of Advisory Services, Inspectorate, Special Education),
Planning, Examinations and NIED
Inspectorate and Advisory Services

Regional Office: PQA and Planning

Head Office should co-ordinate the implementation of the cluster system nationally

Closure

The workshop was closed by Mr J. Nghifikwa (Education Planner).

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES
under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education**Welcome and Official Opening**

The workshop was opened on behalf of the Regional Director by the Deputy Director, Mr A. Strúwig, who welcomed all the participants. He stressed the value of clusters in reducing inequities, and further urged all cluster centre principals to evaluate their goals and performance. Having a firm policy on clusters would be an important achievement, but the true test would lie in how the cluster framework would be implemented.

In addition to the BEP/GTZ officials (Mr Thys Spangenberg and Mr Dennis Nandi), Ms Loide Kapenda of NIED and Dr John Mendelsohn (RAISON), the meeting was attended by 25 cluster centre principals, four Inspectors, one Senior Inspector, 10 Advisory Teachers, and two School Counsellors, one Planner, one Education Officer, one HIV Officer, and one Deputy Director.

Introduction

Mr Thys Spangenberg outlined the ETSIP (Education Training Sector Improvement Programme) baseline study which generated the present research project. He explained that the reform approach inherent in ETSIP will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system. The intended strengthening of the cluster system will address the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will investigate the job descriptions of principals and their accountability, and will make suggestions about the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs).

Dr John Mendelsohn explained that a cluster survey report would be compiled through a partnership between MoE, GTZ and RAISON, facilitated by a representative steering committee. Information would be gathered from all regions through:

- a) questionnaires to cluster centre principals;
 - b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Education Planners;
 - c) consultations with senior head office and regional staff, teacher unions, etc.
- Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE in July 2007.

Mr Spangenberg and Dr Mendelsohn introduced the tasks that the circuit members would engage in.

Task 1: How well is the cluster system functioning within your circuit?

The five circuits (Oshgambo, Onyaanya, Onthinge, Omuthiya and Oshivelo) met in group sessions and reported the following:

What are the major strengths of the system?	What are the most serious weaknesses of the system, and, what improvements could be made?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster management meetings held 2x per term to review cluster activities, do joint planning and provide for co-operative learning • Cluster development funds have been established to transport learners to sports events and purchase equipment for clusters (enhanced buying power) • Used to create a platform for school board members to meet and collaborate • Clusters are used to establish uniform systems and amounts for the payment of school fees • Clusters are used to establish uniform disciplinary measures • The quality of education has improved due to common exams, cross-teaching and joint planning • Equity in management and teaching is improved • Enable teachers to share ideas, expertise and needs for improvement • Teachers are empowered by recognition and responsibility • Twinning has helped teachers gain experience and insight • Common tests in Grades 5 to 10 introduced • Documents are shared • Sense of ownership enhanced • Competitive spirit created • Teamwork and professional development is encouraged • Problems are often solved locally rather than having to be referred to higher authority • Reduced workload of Inspectors • Reduced transport distances and costs • Facilities and resources (e.g. old exam papers, duplicating machines and text books) are shared and now more available to schools • Services are brought closer to people, e.g. delivery of mail, workshops and subject meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of transport available for people to meet, visit and monitor each others' schools • Lack of clarity on availability of funds from REO for cluster activities • Lack of meeting venues, store rooms • Lack of security for facilities at cluster centres • Lack of office equipment • Lack of communication facilities, e.g. internet, telephone, transport • Lack of staff (additional teachers and secretaries) for cluster activities • Lack of ATs and Subject Facilitators • CCPs do not have a mandate to supervise colleagues and make decisions on staff transfers, disciplinary matters etc. • Cluster activities disrupt teaching and learning • Lack of guiding policies for CCPs • Some principals have 'bad' attitudes towards CCPs • CCPs lack expertise to manage and oversee cluster schools • CCPs have heavy workloads, and cannot do all the work, including teaching, that they should be doing • The demarcation of some clusters and their CCs has been poor, and needs to be revised • Financial resources available for cluster activities are limited; funds should or could be made available by the MoE, from school funds, private sector sponsorship, the school board and contributions from teachers and principals • Lack of financial incentives for CCPs

Task 2: What is needed for the cluster system to work more effectively?

TASK 2.1: PERSONNEL

The following points summarise the work of the groups:

What staff members are required to improve cluster functioning?

- Competent CCPs
- Cluster-based clerks or clerical assistants, cleaners, security guards
- Handyman
- Competent secretaries
- Additional teacher to allow CCPs to focus fully on management
- Cluster Subject Facilitators
- HIV facilitators/mentors
- Administrative HOD/Deputy Principal
- Extra-mural facilitator

What are the core responsibilities of the Cluster Centre Principal?

- Manage, guide, co-ordinate and supervise the cluster and its activities
- Monitor cluster activities
- Plan cluster activities
- Chair Cluster Management Committee
- Support cluster schools
- Participate in Circuit Management Committee meetings
- Approve or endorse orders from cluster schools
- Assure quality teaching and learning
- Visit, monitor and support schools
- Provide a linkage between schools and circuit office
- Conduct interviews
- Arrange staff transfers: teachers, cleaners and secretaries
- Approve applications for leave
- Provide in-service training
- Co-ordinate infrastructure development planning for the cluster
- Distribute materials to satellite schools
- Preside over the elections of school board members
- Any other work delegated by the Inspector

What should the functions be of Subject Facilitators?

- Assist Advisory Teachers
- Conduct training workshops
- Organise cluster workshops
- Ensure availability of teaching and learning materials
- Be a mentor to other teachers
- Be a 'multiplier' for Advisory Teachers
- Co-ordinate cluster examinations
- Moderate cluster exam papers
- Serve on cluster examination committee
- Interpret and monitor interpretation of syllabi
- Monitor activities at cluster schools, including continuous assessment and homework
- Conduct lesson observations
- Attend regional workshops
- Impart knowledge to teachers
- Co-ordinate subject meetings
- Provide a link between REO and cluster schools
- Write and submit reports to REO on subject performance
- Plan and co-ordinate subject-related activities
- Visit other schools on request

What payments should be made to CCPs and Subject Facilitators?

- Allowances for communication (airtime) and transport (petrol)
- Reduce teaching load

- Do away with prescribed teaching obligations for CCPs to teach promotion subjects at exit levels
- Study leave on a 50:50 basis
- Given allowance of the 25% of their salary

TASK 2.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Functions of cluster subject groups

- Help with the interpretation of syllabi and policies
- Formulate schemes of work
- Formulate year plans
- Formulate lesson plans
- Formulate standard marking schemes
- Attend appropriate workshops
- Set and moderate cluster examinations
- Set assessment criteria
- Develop a common understanding and interpretation of syllabi
- Promote and create new ways of using teaching and learning materials
- Attend workshops
- Analyse exam results
- Arrange peer teaching and coaching clinics
- Plan subject teaching
- Promote the sharing of experience and knowledge on syllabus interpretation, assessment and teaching methods
- Identify needs for training and materials
- Produce and distribute teaching materials
- Interpret policies and ensure implementation

Examples of improvements to teaching and learning made by subject groups

- Prevent cheating in mock exam results
- Joint interpretation of syllabi
- Team, peer and exchange teaching
- Compare progress in use of scheme of work
- Put in place systems to analyse results
- Planning and drafting of schemes of work
- Sharing of teaching resources
- Cluster awards
- Use of shared audio-visual materials
- Set and moderate common exam questions
- Organise debates between schools
- Organise quizzes between schools
- Develop common schemes of work
- Train teachers on implementation of schemes of work
- Set common tests and examinations
- Monitor assessments in relation to syllabus requirements
- Help change teaching strategies as a result of classroom observations
- Organise subject competitions between schools
- Peer observation of teaching by colleagues
- Use clusters to moderate marked scripts
- Arrange competitions and reward achievers, e.g. in reading and listening in primary schools, and essays in secondary schools
- Promote debating activities
- Use of interesting teaching strategies
- Employ strategies to motivate teachers and learners
- Make use of appropriate teaching aids

- Encourage community interest and involvement

What internal exams can be standardized within clusters?

- August exams for Grade 5, 7, 10 and 12, and end of year exams for other grades
- All April, August and November exams and tests

Task 2.3 Support Services

What are the functions of Inspectors in relation to clusters?

- Facilitate implementation of cluster programme
- Monitor cluster activities
- Collection and distribution of information, documents and materials from the RO to CCs
- Disseminate information
- Visit and monitor CCs and other schools in consultation with CCPs
- Provide advice and guidance
- Attend cluster meetings on request
- Facilitate/co-ordinate in-service training
- Manage circuit activities
- Ensure correct placement of staff
- Monitor and assist implementation of policies and curriculum
- Encourage twinning of schools
- Visit CCs at least once per term
- Preside over elections for the school board members of the CC
- Train CCPs on cluster activities

What are the functions of Advisory Teachers?

- Co-ordinate regional examinations
- Facilitate and moderate setting of exams
- Moderate cluster and school examination results
- Conduct research and assessment
- Monitor implementation of subject policies through individual and panel visits
- Monitor curriculum implementation
- Provide training in continuous assessment (CASS)
- Moderate continuous assessment (CASS)
- Disseminate latest information on subjects
- Visit schools and clusters
- Train Subject Facilitators
- Train cluster teachers in collaboration with Subject Facilitators
- Provide training, support and guidance to teachers in clusters
- Draw-up and provide schemes of work
- Advise Subject Facilitators and subject groups
- Monitor subject group activities
- Materials development
- Preside over school board elections

What lines of communication and delegation are needed?

Regional office – circuit office – cluster centre – school – school board – parents.school community (both ways)

Delegation: Inspector ->CCP -> Cluster school principal -> HOD -> Senior teacher -> teacher

Which sections at Head Office and Regional Office should supervise and promote cluster functioning?

Head Office

PQA

NIED (subject issues)

Planning

Regional Office

PQA (Advisory Services and Inspectorate)

Planning

Special Education

Examinations

RACE

Finance and Personnel

Procurement/transport

In both REO and HO, Inspectorate to liaise with Planning

Closure

The workshop was closed by Mr T. Ndakunda (Senior Inspector). He thanked GTZ/BEP for its support and for arranging this workshop. He noted the need for formalisation of clusters to ensure that everyone takes the system seriously, and also the need for everyone to work hard within existing resources to make the system a success for the benefit of learners and future generations.

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND CLUSTER ACTIVITIES
under ETSIP Sub-Programme No 2: General Education**Welcome and Official Opening**

The workshop was chaired by Mr Hoeseb, Inspector of Education (Grootfontein Circuit), who welcomed all the participants. All participants introduced themselves. The Regional Director, Ms F Caley, then addressed the group, emphasising that while this would be the final workshop supported by GTZ, it was not a closing down of clusters, but a new beginning. She mentioned that she had been in Kavango when it became the first beneficiary of the cluster system. It had been the region with the worst education standards, and since clustering was introduced has steadily improved its national ranking. Otjozondjupa, on the other hand, was late in joining the cluster process. She acknowledged GTZ for helping at a difficult time to reach schools to provide access to education. She emphasised the important role of Inspectors and CCPs in attaining Vision 2030, developing the most important resource, educating the people of Namibia. She expressed appreciation for their hard work, and encouraged them to use clusters to share expertise between schools.

In addition to Mr Thys Spangenberg and the BEP/GTZ team, and Ms Viv Ward (RAISON), the meeting was attended by a cluster survey steering committee member, Ms L Kapenda (NIED), Mr P Oosthuizen (GTZ), 7 Cluster Centre Principals, one principal, two Inspectors, the Education Planner, two Advisory Teachers and the TRC Manager.

Introduction

Mr Thys Spangenberg outlined the ETSIP (Education Training Sector Improvement Programme) baseline study which generated the present research project. He explained that the reform approach inherent in ETSIP will have impacts on the development of the national and operational policy for the clustering of schools and the formalisation and institutionalisation of the system. The intended strengthening of the cluster system will address the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilities, and equipment to all Cluster Centres. It will investigate the job descriptions of principals and their accountability, and will make suggestions about the remuneration of Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs).

Ms Viv Ward explained that a cluster survey report would be compiled through a partnership between MoE, GTZ and RAISON, facilitated by a representative steering committee. She acknowledged the presence of Ms Kapenda who represents NIED on the steering committee. Information would be gathered from all regions through:

- a) questionnaires to cluster centre principals;
- b) regional workshops consulting all Cluster Centre Principals and Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Education Planners;
- c) consultations with senior head office and regional staff, teacher unions, etc.

Based on the information and findings, recommendations will be made to the MoE in July 2007.

Mr Spangenberg and Ms Ward introduced the tasks that the circuit members would engage in.

Task 1: How well is the cluster system functioning within your circuit?

	What are the major strengths of the system?	What are the most serious weaknesses of the system?
Circuit I (Otjiwarongo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation and support • Sharing of information • Feeling of belonging, not alone with problems • Cluster members encourage each other – motivation to work harder • Improvement of standard and results • Vacancies, short-listing and interviews of candidates on cluster basis • CCPs help with teacher interviews in remote areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of empowerment CCPs and school board. Their decisions may be overridden because authority not established • Finances – transport - communication • Control of activities • Availability of equipment and material • Human resources • Lack of official policies and job description
Circuit II (Grootfontein)	<p>Positively accepted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully embraced by schools and teachers • Expertise on schemes of work • Knowledge is shared • Improvement in communication <p>Properly managed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings are scheduled regularly • Resolutions taken at meetings are implemented and output evaluated regularly • A sense of uniformity is reached by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Schemes of work -Lesson planning/preparation -Tests, tasks and exams • Openness to ask! • Isolation has been broken down • Sport and cultural events brought the schools together • Allocation of human resources (transfers) more streamlined, with understanding of needs of whole cluster • Within the circuit we can transfer teachers to help each other 	<p>Problems that cannot really be changed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distances between different schools. • Regular meetings are not always possible because of expensive transport. • Time: Distances to be travelled limit the quality and quantity of time spent. <p>Problems that can be changed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication systems e.g. fax, telephone, photocopy machines • Insufficient advisory services • The fact that advisory services are not decentralised to circuit level • No additional budget allocation • Load on the cluster centre <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional budget allocation to CC schools (telephone, fax, etc) • Bringing back deputy principal post at cluster centre to assist CCP • Job descriptions for CCP and subject facilitators • Proper line of authority

Task 2: What do we need for the cluster system to work?

Task 2.1: Personnel

The following points summarise the work of the two groups:

Personnel needed for clusters to work

- Inspector of Education
- Advisory teachers (ATs)
- Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs)
- Deputy Principal or additional HOD for Cluster Centre

- Principals, HODs, Subject Heads, Phase Heads, Cluster Subject Facilitators

Responsibilities of CCPs

- Run own school
- Co-ordinate all cluster activities (manage lead, guide, control, plan...)
- Accountable to Inspector
- Member of Circuit Management Committee
- Chair person of Cluster Management Committee
- Distribute information
- Arrange cluster exams (papers, dates, analysis)
- Guide and assist principals in cluster
- Monitor and guide the activities of facilitators on cluster level.
- Act as an Inspector of Education in absence of Inspector

Functions of other staff members

- Deputy Principal/HOD at cluster centre
 - Assist the principal in managing the academic environment in the school.
 - Supervise HODs, teachers and staff members at cluster centres in absence of CCP
- Subject Facilitators
 - Report to the CCP on activities
 - Plan and co-ordinate activities with subject groups
 - Solve subject related problems e.g. in-service training needs of teachers and provision of subject materials (equity)
 - Ensure schemes of work drafted in cluster
 - Ensure uniformity in tasks, tests, exams in cluster

Compensation

1. Transport – Car Scheme (CCP, Inspectors, ATs)
2. Salary of CCPs one notch/level above ordinary principals
3. Facilitators – one notch/level above ordinary teacher but below HOD
4. Deputy principal salary in between HODs and Principals

Task 2.2 Teaching and learning activities

Functions of cluster subject groups

- set cluster subject policy
- textbook selection
- draw up cluster exam papers
- co-ordinate inservice training on cluster level
- set up goals
- draw up scheme of works
- moderate exam papers and answer papers
- moderate CASS marks, to ensure correlation with exam marks

How can cluster facilitators be selected?

- Subject teachers meet in cluster and select the facilitator per subject

OR

- Principals in cluster meet, have statistical data on teacher qualification experience, performance in subject and teaching experience. They select by way of consensus
- All schools should be represented

How can subject groups help to improve quality of schemes of work assessment?

- Group participation in drawing up schemes of work and assessment /uniformity
- Assist colleagues to come on par with other teachers
- Cluster-to-cluster collaboration to eventually have a common schemes of work at circuit and regional level
- And finally the circuit and regional exam should be same standard
- Identify well staffed school in cluster to be used as in-service training school
- Newly qualified teachers to be on one or two years probation
- Identify learners to become math teachers

What internal exams to standardize

- August: cluster/circuit/regional Exams (all grades: 5-7 and 8-10)
- End of year: All grades that do not sit for external exams (not lower primary)

Implementing national standards

- Training on evaluation tools and settings a school development plan and PAAI (Plan of action for academic improvement)
- Set cluster performance indicators per subject
- Measure themselves against NSPI (national standards performance indicators)

Task 2.3 Support Services

Functions of Inspectors

- Guidance (interpreting acts and policies) and support
- CPD (Continuous Professional Development)
- Monitor cluster functions (activating system)
- Accountable for cluster system in circuit
- Control, supervise, delegate and evaluate, chair the Circuit Management Committee
- Must play a role in the section of cluster centre

Functions of Advisory Teachers

- Monitoring quality of PQA at both school and cluster level and in-service training needs
- Assessment in close collaboration with HODs and cluster facilitators
- Co-ordinate and facilitate workshops
- Make sure about provision in budget for training and transport and meals accommodation
- Do class visits
 - o For advice purposes
 - o Lesson planning
 - o Lesson practice and time management
 - o Report on visits

Role of TRC

- Provide space for meetings
- Provide teaching facilities (on request)
- Can be a cluster centre
- Provide assistance in making teaching aids
- Carry-out needs assessment (schools) for in-service programmes
- Link between RO – NIED – DNEA
- Set up local TRCs across the region (Ensure provision of materials and other resources)
- Liaise with cluster and circuit management to identify training needs
- Implement training at circuit level

Lines of communication

Head office – regional office – circuit office – cluster centre – school

Groups noted: Bureaucratic lines of communication may hamper timely intervention to address problems

Sections at HO and RO to promote cluster functioning

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| - HO | - RO |
| o PAD | * Inspector OE, Main drivers for cluster activities |
| o PQA | * Planners |
| o NIED (subject issues) | * Advisory Services |
| | * TRC |

Points raised during feedback and plenary discussions:

A major advantage of clustering was noted as being that several schools are drawn together in meetings thus exposing participants to a range of viewpoints. In subject groups, teachers get feedback and realise their strengths and weaknesses. The professionally isolated teacher is a thing of the past. The “camaraderie of clusters” was noted as another major development, where different teaching levels and management levels get to work together on issues of mutual interest, and become mutually supportive in the process. The additional effort invested by CCPs, in spite of the frustrations, was put down to the dedicated nature of many teachers who look beyond the economics of their job to the contribution they can make to education. CCPs as the ‘heart’ of the cluster system, were recognised for their commitment to

networking for more effective teaching and learning practices. However the point was raised that while principals and teachers are growing through the cluster system, they are not sufficiently engaging learners. There remains a top-down delivery of education, as teachers hone their skills but deliver lectures rather than being really learner centred. Through improved lesson planning teachers are better prepared than previously, but learning is not yet happening.

On the point of authority of the CCP, the point was made that CCPs make recommendations which are often overridden by the inspector, or argued by the teacher when it concerns transfer. The response may be that the CCP “is not an inspector”, thus the CCPs mandate is unclear as they are on the same job level as principals. The Regional Director confirmed that CCPs are empowered to make recommendations, referring them to the inspector who informs the regional office. The Circuit Management Committee is seen as a platform for recommendations, chaired by the inspector, and decisions made there would be supported by the Director as long as they are well motivated. Thus procedures need to be made official through the Circuit Management Committee. One suggestion was to relieve CCPs of teaching duties, implicitly elevating the position to a superior management level.

Clear promotion lines need to be created, and are possible through the cluster system:

A management career path would be:

- Teacher → Subject Head / Phase Head → HOD → Principal → CCP → Inspector → REO

A teaching career path would be:

- Teacher → Subject head → Cluster subject facilitator → Advisory teacher → Senior AT

Secretaries would also have a promotion path, from school secretary to cluster secretary.

Career paths would promote competition and improve performance, especially where increased compensation is offered.

An example of dealing with the problem of distances to subject meetings is the practice of teachers getting regional office permission to come to cluster centres from remote areas for the whole day. They thus have time to observe the classes of experienced teachers during the morning and to attend the subject meetings in the afternoon. The Nyae Nyae school units remain a problem though, as distances are great, teachers in the area are unqualified and ATs are unable to schedule visits. To uplift the standards of teaching, the suggestion was made that newly qualified teachers should start as assistant teachers on a probation basis, learning from experienced teachers, thus developing their skills in a practical way, and being better equipped for the posts that they apply for. Where schools with secondary grades in smaller towns are grouped with primary schools, there are initiatives whereby they meet across cluster for subject meetings with other secondary grade teachers, while remaining in the geographical cluster for management purposes.

The Way Forward and Closure

The way forward entailed translating the day’s deliberations into concrete recommendations, resulting in policies that would enhance teaching and learning at all levels. The Director emphasised that CCPs, as the ‘heart’ of the cluster system, working in teams with teachers and support services, are in a process of moulding and producing worthwhile citizens for the nation.