

VDK – SPEECH WAD REVIEW

Over the period of 13 years of WAD's involvement in the training and upliftment of the rural poor, we have witnessed the profound impact which training had on people who believed that they were destined to die in the unworthy misery of poverty.

WAD's empowerment training, aimed at the rediscovery of themselves as worthy human beings with potential to change their situation of hopelessness, assisted thousands of Namibian women and men to face poverty eradication head on.

This could only come about when the destitute rural poor came to the realisation that they do have what it takes to fight poverty.

For many fellow Namibians who were not exposed to the hardships of abject poverty and the way in which it erodes away people's self-confidence and their sense of self-worth, it may be hard to imagine that poverty can be accepted by the poor as irreversible.

It is especially hard for any trainer to rejuvenate the spirit of people once it has been broken down by poverty to the point where they believe nothing can be done to change their situation.

The restoration of a sense of self-worth and a trust in their own abilities to actually believe that their destiny can be changed by their own efforts, call for dedicated training and guidance.

WAD can recall numerous instances where people preferred to rather be the passive recipients of Government or donor assistance instead of employing own effort to address their poverty.

WAD has also been frankly told that missionaries and churches were assisting for years with donor aid and why should that be changed to require people to start own income generating ventures

Those people saw the foreign aid which WAD receives to train people, as instead being meant as direct monetary assistance for them.

It has unfortunately become an imbedded mindset in some regions of the country that poverty alleviation is the sole responsibility of Government. People who uphold such beliefs are not interested in training and the work of WAD.

In other regions of the country however, our training courses are totally over subscribed by people who are prepared to walk several kilometers per day with babies on their backs to attend skills training classes.

Those are the people who miraculously change their world of poverty into one of comfortable living in which a high priority is to send their offspring to school.

It is in the attitude of such people and their achievements to beat poverty that WAD finds its uncontested proof of the power of training to beat poverty and to uplift the broken spirits of people.

WAD's announcement in early 2007 that it has solicited N\$2 million for the training and upliftment of 4000 unemployed Namibians, should be seen as the tangible manifestation of its dedication to the cause of developing people to be able to care for their own needs.

It has always been WAD's view, with full support from its Board of Directors, that the unemployed people of Namibia should be freed from the clutches of poverty and dependency by way of training and initial kick start assistance, to walk the way to their own self-sustainability, themselves.

WAD has always taken strong issue with the imbedded culture of providing monetary and or material handouts to poverty stricken people, instead of empowering them through training – an asset that would outlast the value of money.

Besides, only providing money or material donations has the tendency to entice people to go for this easier option instead of coercing an individual's faculties to indulge in more honourable ways of earning a living.

With exactly this in mind WAD embarked upon a project to train a number of erstwhile commercial sex workers, now known as “the kings daughters” to acquire various skills with which they could compete in the labour market.

35 of them successfully completed their training and graduated with certificates of attendance.

Many of them have already found permanent employment and some have started income generating ventures, eg. needlework and cake and bread baking projects.

Personal testimonies of those ladies provide compelling proof of how our training set them free from their former socially unacceptable career to pursuing a more honourable livelihood.

In order for WAD to extend its services to more communities in the country, the organisation is in the process of opening, with the generous assistance of NAMDEB, a training centre in Keetmanshoop, in the Karas region.

It is known that although the South of Namibia processes great wealths of a diverse nature, unemployment is rife.

This is partly because of a deeply entrenched handout mentality among inhabitants which dates back to the time of missionaries but also because of the general underdevelopment of the treasures of the region, poor scholastic preparation of school leavers for careers, harsh climatic conditions etc.

A combination of factors cause the economy of the South to be underdeveloped .

Our training centre will largely focus on school leavers after Grade 12 and drop outs, to equip them with marketable skills to enter the job market or to start own income generating ventures.

Although much energy and resources are spent on poverty alleviation, WAD continuously have an eye on the holistic picture which may impact on poverty in general.

In view of the afore, said WAD coopted strategic partners to embark upon very worthwhile projects namely:

1. Determining the root causes of violence against women and girls in Namibian Society.
2. The Anti-Corruption Song Competition

In the first of these projects WAD teamed up with the University of Namibia(UNAM) and the Ministry of Safety and Security, to do an in depth research study and interviews with convicted perpetrators of violence against women and girls.

The purpose of the research was to ascertain what the root causes were for men to commit violence against women and girls.

This ground breaking research indicated misuse of alcohol as the major cause of violence against women and girls.

For the second project above WAD joined forces with the Anti – Corruption Commission (ACC) and a couple of prominent sponsors to launch a choir competition based on music and lyrics written by Mrs Veronica de Klerk.

Participating choirs had to emulate the presentation of the model choir but could present an own interpretation of the song within certain limits.

The lyrics presented a strong anti-corruption message while the melody had a contagious rhythm.

The public could participate in the judging of the participating choirs and 40 000 people sent in SMS's.

The choir competition was televised by the NBC and viewed country wide.