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Implemented by:



Road Construction – Namibia

Ways out of Poverty

Namibia is a large but sparsely populated country. The road transport network has not yet been developed nationwide, making it difficult for some people to take part in social and economic life. Major deficiencies exist particularly in the poverty stricken northern regions. The need for an expansion of the road infrastructure is nowhere as urgent as here. The German Technical and Financial Cooperation have been engaged in the rural areas of the northern regions since Namibia's independence in 1990. With its financial contribution, more than 930 kilometers of roads have been constructed through labour-based techniques and the involvement of local SMEs. This has enabled an economic and social development in the villages scattered around the roads: Incomes have risen, more children are going to school and the people increasingly use the better accessible social infrastructure.

Context

The Namibian roads sector is characterised by an extensive road network of more than 48.000 km, spread throughout the sparsely populated country. The average population density is around 2.6 people per km², compared with 230 people per km² in Germany. Due to the resulting long distances between the individual market players, the local economy particularly depends on a well-developed road network. Until Namibia's independence in 1990, the road transport network was characterized by an unbalanced and one-sided transport infrastructure towards South Africa. As a consequence, the central northern regions, also referred as 4-O-regions (Ohangwena, Oshana, Oshikoto und Omu-sati), are the most underserved both in terms of general

road transport connectivity, as well as in rural accessibility. The absence of rural transport infrastructure isolates the local population and contributes directly to poverty. With poor access to locations of basic social and economic activities, rural life stagnates and development prospects remain limited. The expansion of the road network to previously disadvantaged rural areas has therefore high political priority for the Namibian government.

Project approach

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), KfW Development Bank is supporting Namibia in breaking the isola-

Project name	Labour-based road construction I - VII
Commissioned by	The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Country/Region	Namibia Central North
Lead executing agency	Recipient: National Planning Commission Project executing agency: Roads Authority





Labour-based road construction in the central North of Namibia
Source: KfW Büro Windhoek

tion of rural areas by financing the construction and rehabilitation of district roads in the densely populated northern regions. The objective of the project is to create access to transport and thus to local markets, health-care and education facilities and to promote rural employment during implementation by the use of labour-intensive construction methods. The project also aims to reduce the vulnerability of the mainly poor regarding extreme weather conditions by building all weather rural roads with foot-bridges or drainages. The principle is that labour-based works should produce roads of quality, equal to the capital intensive road construction and generate employment. The contractors are required to recruit local workers from the villages and settlements along the planned infrastructure project through recruitment notices via the Regional Councils and local radio stations. Beyond that they are also required to grant a certain portion of the construction contracts to local small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The project further provides capacity building for SME contractors through external trainers commissioned by the Roads Authority (RA). Due to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the flood affected northern regions, KfW requires the inclusion of HIV awareness workshops as part of the training for site staff at the labour-based road construction. The projects also seek to improve important factors for successful implementation of labour-based road construction, such as appropriate maintenance systems, good governance, sufficient staffing and institutional capacities. Since the full-scale implementation was launched in 1996 with the assistance from the KfW, six phases have already been implemented while the seventh phase is currently in preparation. So far, 819 kilometers have been built, which in

turn allowed more than 7.000 people to receive a temporary income.

Impact

The programme supports the Namibian government in achieving the goals set out in the fourth National Development Plan, which mentions the reduction of regional disparities and the improved access to socioeconomic services as sub goals. This way the programme contributes to a variety of Sustainable Development Goals. It strengthens the adaptability of the local population to the negative effects of climate change (SGD13: Climate Action, SDG9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure). All year access to schools improves the learning situation of students (SDG4: Quality Education) and improved access to health facilities increases the rate of births attended by skilled personnel and thus reduces maternal and infant deaths (SDG3: Good Health and Wellbeing). Besides, the labour-based construction of roads creates employment (SDG1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger), strengthens local entrepreneurs (SDG8: Decent Work & Economic Growth), promotes gender equality (SDG 5) and thus reduces regional disparities in Namibia (SDG10: Reduced Inequalities). Moreover the share of female site workers in labour-based road works is typically around 30 %. Women profit significantly from improved road infrastructure since they can now participate in income-generating activities. Finally, the project also has a positive impact on the prices for local transport and consumer goods as it leads to a higher degree of market openness and weakens local monopolies.



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