

MEETAH CHEETAH

Otjiwarongo is the Cheetah capital of the world thanks to the efforts of the Cheetah Conservation Fund which is engaged in efforts to save the cheetah. The cheetah is the world's fastest land mammal and can reach speeds of 70 mph. The *MEETAH CHEETAH* Campaign is drawing attention to the plight of the cheetah and at the same time boosting tourism, community development and stimulating city-to-city cooperation. The Otjiwarongo Town Council extended an invitation to the Mayor of Toronto to help launch the Meetah Cheetah campaign, when they learned about his Moose is Loose campaign.

OTJIWARONGO MUNICIPALITY PROFILE



Otjiwarongo Local Authority Council is committed to building an integrated, safe, healthy and prosperous town with effective service delivery, through partnerships based on co-operative governance and equity.

PROFILE OF NAMIBIA

Population (millions):	1.8
Percentage urban population:	31
Annual population growth rate (%):	1.8
Estimated number of orphans:	67,000
HIV prevalence rate (%):	23.3*
Life expectancy at birth:	44.7
Annual income Per capita (US\$):	1026.61***
Poverty rate (%):	34.5
Population existing on less than US\$150/annum (%):	67 ****
Adult literacy rate (%):	82.0

Data Source, unless otherwise indicated: UN Human Development Report, 2002

UNAIDS

* Otjiwarongo Municipal Council

** UNDP

*** Assoc. for Local Authorities in Namibia (2001)

PROFILE OF OTJIWARONGO

Location: Otjiwarongo, which in the Otji-Herero language means 'beautiful place', is strategically located on the TransCaprivi Highway making it the major gateway to the northern regions in Namibia.

Elected Council Members: 7

Municipal Services: *water supply, sewage and sanitation, electricity supply, waste collection and disposal, road and rail infrastructure, street lighting and cleansing, motor vehicle registration, traffic control, parks, gardens and recreation facilities, community services and social welfare.*

Municipal Annual Budget (US\$ millions):	4**
Population:	28,000**
Orphans:	500**
HIV prevalence rate (%):	18 *
Employment rate (%):	45**
Unemployment rate (%):	17**
Not active rate (%):	37**
Poverty rate (%):	60+**

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ALLIANCE OF MAYORS AND MUNICIPAL LEADERS ON HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA

The Alliance is a network of local government authorities and mayors

The overall goal of the Alliance is to promote actions that contribute to limiting the spread of HIV and alleviating the social and economic impact of the epidemic on communities in Africa. The Alliance works in partnership with government, civil society organizations, the private sector, community leaders and international organizations.

Alliance of Mayors' Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level (AMICAALL) - is an action program that translates the goals of the Alliance into concrete actions in cities and towns.

National Chapters of the Alliance have been launched and program activities initiated in the following countries:

Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Namibia, South Africa,

Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Benin, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique have expressed interest in joining the Alliance.



“We must be humble enough to listen and understand; and courageous enough to guide and lead” – Ernest N’Koumo Mobio, Coordinator of the Alliance.

IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS

Namibia ranks among the five countries in the world most heavily affected by HIV/AIDS, with an overall estimated adult prevalence rate of 23.3%. AIDS has become the leading cause of death in the country (National Development Plan, 2001). Namibia also has one of the highest proportions of orphans in the world. Life expectancy has fallen from 61 in 1995 to 52 in 1998. It is expected to further decrease to less than 40 years by 2010. The socio-economic impact of the epidemic in Namibia is profound and pervasive with further devastation predicted if effective action on a sufficient scale is not taken to mitigate the epidemic.

TACKLING HIV/AIDS ON MULTIPLE FRONTS

Mayors and Municipal Leaders Engage

In November 2001, the Namibian Chapter of the Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS in Africa was launched. Under the auspices of the Association for Local Authorities in Namibia (ALAN), a public declaration was made recognizing the crisis and urging local action. This declaration was endorsed by all 44 local authorities. An AMICAALL action plan was then prepared and adopted. Programs are underway in most local authorities, with Otjiwarongo being one of the champions.

Municipalities are feeling the impact of HIV/AIDS in many ways:

- Reduced life expectancy
- More sick people are further burdening already stretched health services
- Increased poverty and hunger
- Rapid rise in numbers of orphans, child-headed households and children living on the streets in need of care and support
- Threats to productivity, decreasing revenue and higher costs for businesses
- Drop in school attendance

The local authority institutions themselves are affected in many ways, such as:

- Capacity to deliver services is compromised
- Ability of people to pay property taxes, service charges, etc
- Increase in demand for burial spaces and cemeteries

- Change of focus in policy – housing, public health, social responsibility
- Challenges of ensuring equitable access to services
- Added responsibilities as an employer
- Managing changing community dynamics

How to cope with the extensive and painful losses of human life and how to manage the social and economic losses are critical questions now facing all too many societies in Africa.

A spectrum of actions is required: from prevention to care and support to treatment, to programs of assistance to those surviving the death of family members, through to policies and programs which address the broader social and economic development implications of the epidemic.

Leadership, commitment and action are needed from all levels of government and civil society.

Community-based action is critical. The involvement of Local Government is essential because national HIV/AIDS policies cannot be fully implemented from the center.

OTJIWARONGO MUNICIPALITY: WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Listening and Learning

The Municipality has embraced the responsibility to lead the town in the local response to HIV/AIDS. Wide ranging consultations have been carried out with communities, service providers, non-profit organizations, community based organizations, people living with HIV/AIDS and other key stakeholders to assess the needs, prioritize and plan based on the local realities. The challenges and needs identified by this process were:

- Support to extended family units, and other community support structures with the responsibility of caring for the increasing numbers of orphans and vulnerable youth in the town
- Support and care for those who are affected and infected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic

- Support to increase awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS and to expand prevention efforts
- Support to growing number of orphans and vulnerable children/young people
- Greater access to care, support and treatment for people and families living with HIV/AIDS people in the Municipality

Responding to Community Needs and Realities

The municipality's strategic response to the challenges of HIV/AIDS is anchored in the establishment of a Multi-purpose Center in the town. The new Center will offer a range of services to vulnerable young people, HIV/AIDS affected households and the larger community, including:

- After school study, youth development and recreational activities
- Temporary boarding facilities for orphans who do not have any immediate family member support
- Training of community counselors
- HIV/AIDS awareness and education for community at large
- Material support to affected families (food, clothing, school fees)
- Referral services

Funding for the new center was facilitated by the UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme and the Dutch Foundation STOP AIDS NOW.

To address a gap in the current response to orphans and vulnerable young people, Otjiwarongo is one of three towns in Namibia that has developed an SOS program (Skills, Opportunities, Self-reliance) with support from the UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme and ORT IC, an international non-governmental organization specializing in vocational training and youth development. Under this program orphans and vulnerable youth will be able to access vocational training and other support to enable them to live better lives. Partnerships with the private sector are also being pursued to provide young people with internships, placements and mentors.