

Usakos Needy Children Support Organization

ABOUT USAKOS

UNCESO was established by the founding parents Izaak and Marianne Izaaks in 2004 as a Namibian non-profit, non-governmental organization that today supports around 35 vulnerable, socially deprived children, many of them orphans, from age 6 to 15. It is the vision and mission of UNCSO to support these children, to give them a chance to escape the vicious circle of poverty and to empower them to become stable members of society. We therefore build our programme on the four pillars of

1. Giving the children a daily meal,
2. Supporting them in their education through homework assistance, tutoring, covering their school fees and provide their school uniforms, school books and stationary,
3. Extra curricular activities (arts, craft, music, drama, sports) and counselling to empower them and let them discover themselves and their talents,
4. Actively involving, counselling and supporting their parents and foster parents through house visits and parents evenings.



Education, food, empowerment and parent involvement – the four pillars of UNCSO

NEW DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE END OF 2009

By the beginning of the year UNCSO moved from the ground of the Elifas #Goseb Primary school to the grounds of a local church. There was no rent, however, the electricity and water bill was to be covered through UNCSO. This moving held the advantage that the preparation of the children's food can now be carried out in the centre, as well as the use of the church's refrigerator allows storage of the food at the centre. Previously all cooking and storage had taken place at the Izaak family's private home, which meant great efforts of transporting the food to the centre. In September, however, the school offered us new rooms in which cooking and storage is possible as well. **We are happy to take this offer of the school and are currently moving there.** The rooms are big enough to cook, store the food, run the programme and extend the programme through our long envisioned needle workshop. Working directly at the school of most children moreover holds the advantage that the cooperation with the school to support the learners is much more vivid. Staying there moreover reduces costs in regards to the electricity and water bill at the church centre. Moreover UNCSO is glad to report that all except for one of **the oldest students passed their final exams at primary school and moved on to high school.** The one who did not pass is staying with us for another year, repeating the last grade and hopefully passing this year. With several children's successful transition to high school, the **programme was able to take in more kids.** Our aim became to primarily take in the youngest children from grade one and two. This way we will be able to accompany them through their entire primary school

time, thereby detecting problems in their learning at an early point and trying to solve these problems together with the children to increase their chances to a successful education and future. Moreover UNCSO started to take in children from the Erongosig Primary school, instead of just supporting children from the Elifas #Goseb School.

Other news is that UNCSO is more and more **involving parents of the children into the programme**. This year some of the children's mothers are helping out the cook Aunty Lena in the kitchen with the preparation of the food. UNCSO's aim is to more and more pass the programme on into the parents' hands, so that if one day the founding parents will not be able to run the project anymore, its sustainable local continuation is granted through the management of the children's parents.



A visit from CAFO (The Church Alliance for Orphans), of which UNCSO has become a member

In 2010 UNCSO is furthermore happy to report that **two researchers** saw in us a fruitful basis to conduct field studies contributing to child protection. We were first visited by Prof. Dr. Jörg-Achim Weber from the University of Applied Science Leipzig, who conducted research on vulnerable children and HIV/Aids. Since September Jana Merkelbach is visiting us, a

previous intern who came to conduct research

for her Master thesis on resilience as a form of child protection. Certainly UNCSO always makes sure that the research is carried out under child-friendly conditions. We also had the honour to be visited by CAFO (The Church Alliance of Orphans) management whom we became a member.



Christmas farewell party 2009 and of

Last but not least UNCSO so far held **two special events** in 2010. The first was the typical Namibian braai (a Barbeque) which we organised for the children in the nearby riverbed. It was a joyful and special evening for all, the children, the volunteers, the cook Aunty Lena and Programme Manager Marianne Izaaks. UNCSO moreover organised a special parent-child evening: All children built masks and prepared a little mask-ball show for the parents. The aim of this successful evening was to motivate more parents to get more actively involved in the programme.

VOLUNTEERS

Since 2008 UNCSO is supported by volunteers from Germany. They have become a most essential part of the programme, without who much would not be possible. Since the beginning of 2010 our volunteers so far were Kati Wagner, Lena Esser, Katja Lehmann, Britta Klimmek and Laura Kasperek.

For the time of their internships the volunteers stay with the children in the centre from 12h to around 16h and help with handing out the food, homework, additional educational activities and extra curricular activities. Often volunteers are shocked about the learning difficulties some of the children face; some



The kids with the current three volunteers and a researcher

can e.g. not read and write properly in grade 5. Therefore it's not just doing homework quickly to go out and play, but education is a priority on the agenda of the volunteers. This education can take many different shapes though. It can be homework, it can be a text that is dictated to the children to practise writing, it can be playful math tasks, it can be drawing and discussing pictures to learn new English vocabulary or a little competition game to learn the ABC. Moreover, the volunteers come up with extra curricular activities to support the children



A child and a volunteer enjoying their time together

in discovering and developing talents and build up self-esteem, such as sports and the different arts. However, the most moving experience for practically all volunteers are the house visits: Seeing the difficult situations in which the children grow up without enough to eat, often no proper bed in little shacks that are neither protect from the hot sun, nor from the cold nights or rain, often with abusive and alcoholic parents, often without parents at all, always exposed to the threat of serious diseases. Many volunteers wonder how the children can stay this smiling throughout their day. However, it is the bonding at the centre combined with seeing the true conditions the children live in that make the time of the volunteers with UNCSO unforgettable in so many

ways, teaching an important life lesson, and encouraging the volunteers to keep supporting UNCSO long after their time here.

We wholeheartedly thank all our present and previous volunteers for their efforts and initiative!

UNCSO COOPERATING



During a house visit

In the children's lives their situation among their family and their situation at school is what takes up most of the children's days. To sustainably support the children, UNCSO sees it as crucial to keep in close touch with both. The contact with the families is mainly provided through the house visits. Programme Coordinator Marianne Izaaks has gotten to know the children's families and a relationship of mutual trust has developed. The families approach Marianne with their problems, Marianne discusses the learning progress of the children at the centre with them and often addresses critical issues she got to

know through the children empathically, as e.g. violence at home. There are moreover parent evenings as well as all parents have Marianne's cell phone number and physical address to contact her any time. Keeping in touch with the parents thereby composes a crucial element of UNCSO: We trust that instead of taking the children out of their home situation, their culture and the people they love, we would rather support this network they live in for them to eventually help themselves. Therefore we encourage more and more parents to actively get involved in running the programme with us, so that some day the parents can take it over entirely.



Programme Coordinator Marianne Izaaks
at the Elifas #Goseb Primary School

UNCESO moreover maintains close contact with the children's schools. The teacher's inform us about particular problems of children. An example of the cooperation with a sad background is when one child was kicked out of her home by an alcoholic parent and ran away, the school searched for this child together with UNCESO to help the child.

SUPPORTERS

This year UNCESO had some donators from Germany, Namibia and the strong support of our previous volunteers. Some raised funds at their school or among friends, others motivated parents to donate, some parents supported us through their companies.



New donations coming in



In-kind donations

Homepage, clothes, new school backs,
stationary, clinical material, books,
handcraft material

We wholeheartedly thank everyone for their kind donations to support our children in giving them a chance for a brighter future!

FUTURE PLANS

As said in the above, one vision of UNCSO is to keep encouraging more and more parents to engage in the programme. Part of this is the idea that a needle-workshop is created. Here parents shall be able to learn needle-work, produce material and thereby produce an income for them as well as for UNCSO. This will moreover grant an opportunity for youth who dropped out of school to get involved in something and make a living.

However, to realise our vision and to strengthen the support of the neediest children of Usakos, we need your support. Helping the children of the programme does not take a lot: Spreading the word about internships at UNCSO and motivating friends or family to come, collecting old clothes, books, stationary, handcraft material – everything children like and need to playfully learn and with – or a kind monetary donation. All will do so much for the children - it is only in our united efforts that we can give these children a chance for a brighter future.

We wholeheartedly thank you for staying a supporter of our ideas and visions!



For any donation, please contact Ingrid Pfannkuchen: ipfannkuchen@web.de



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