

**Remarks**  
**USAID/Namibia Director, Gary Newton**  
**Launch of six new books for Namibia's Primary Schools**  
**"WRITING FOR KIDS" Project**  
**16:00 – 18:00, 18 May 2006**  
**NAMPOWER Conference Center**  
**Windhoek**

- Honorable Elia Kaiyamo, Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the National Library Council of Namibia
- Students, Teachers, Authors, Artists, Graduates of the adult literacy program;
- Friends and colleagues from the Academy for Educational Development (AED) and the BES III project – the Best BES yet!
- Chairperson of the BES Project Steering Committee and Director of Educational Programs Implementation, Mr. Charles Kabajani;
- Director of Ceremonies and Acting Director of the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), Madam Hertha Pomuti,
- Distinguished guests

It is a pleasure to join you today at this, the official launch of the second set of the excellent series of new readers developed under the "Writing for Kids" project.

In January 2005, I had the pleasure to attend the launch of the first set of readers.

On that occasion, I mentioned that I have a special interest in children's books. I love reading them – and, 34 years ago, when I was a college student, I wrote and illustrated a children's book. It was great fun to do, but alas, it was never published -- and hardly ever read!

These books, by contrast, will be widely read because they are excellent. I read each one of them with great interest. They tell touching, topical and important stories, are beautifully illustrated, and attractively designed and presented.

All the stories are instructive, entertaining and hopeful:

... in *Kaushiwetu's decision*, with the help of her grandmother Kuku Gwandengu, Kaushi makes the right decision to stay away from a "hawk" of a man, one Mr. Shoombe, a cuca shop owner, who's trying to entice her. The last illustration is great, it shows Kuku Gwandengu envisioning Kaushi as a university graduate! I'm sure she will be someday.

... in *Saving Ndavulwa*, a book-loving 10-year old, who has no parents, and whose toe sticks-out of his worn shoes, is abused by an Aunt whose "... voice (is) loud enough to wake a sleeping crocodile." With support from a caring teacher and a neighbor, Ndavulwa becomes stronger and more confident. The last illustration is wonderful, it shows Ndavulwa being congratulated by his teacher for earning the best Grade 4 results at his school!

... in *Kaume remembers his mother*, a young man who has lost both his parents, and as a result, is being teased by his classmates for being an orphan, is helped by a perceptive and caring teacher to pursue his love of animals and story-telling to the point where he gains confidence and is seen by his classmates as an interesting and entertaining kid.

... in *Mbaita* and the giant a clever monkey and then a kind stranger come to the aide of Mbaita and rescue her from a truly scary looking giant with red eyes, no front teeth and an enormous belly.

... in *Luboni, the stepchild* the love between a father and his daughter prevails over a wicked stepmother and her lazy and nasty daughters.

... and, in *Inheritance*, a wise village elder mediates a conflict over inheritance that is about to tear an otherwise wonderful family apart; tradition and fairness are balanced, and flexibility, reason and love-of-family win out in this book with a happy and hopeful ending.

The “Writing for Kids” project is good for all concerned:

- Young readers sharpen their reading skills on books they can relate to and at the same time learn important life lessons from.
- Teachers strengthen their ability to write for children and learn how to use books effectively in the classroom.
- Art students polish their skills at communicating with young learners visually through clear, creative illustrations.
- And, local publishers pass-on editing skills to upcoming Namibian editors – and beef-up their bottom line with more business.

We are especially pleased to note that Standard Bank supported the costs of printing one of the six books: tangible evidence of the kind of public-private partnership needed in the education sector. Thank you, Standard Bank.

US AID acknowledges the fundamental importance of readers and textbooks to learner performance. That is why we worked with different institutions and groups over the past three years to provide more than 50,000 books to Namibian schools.

US AID support for this “Writing for Kids” activity and the BES project is in the context of our long-term bilateral assistance relationship with the Ministry of Education.

US AID provided approximately N\$304 million for education in Namibia from 1991 through 2005. Subject to the availability of funds, a standard USG caveat, USAID plans to provide N\$97 million between 2006 and 2010 in support of the Government’s new Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP).

It has been an honor and privilege for the USG to be able to assist such a talented and committed group of students, educators and artists.

It’s a pleasure being associated with an initiative to increase the availability of books written and illustrated by Namibians for Namibians.

Congratulations to all concerned.

Happy Reading!