

## The Perivoli Schools Trust Early Child Care and Education: messages for early years training, programming and policymaking in Namibia

Prof. Janet Ananias - University of Namibia (UNAM), Dr Emma Leonard - University of Namibia (UNAM)  
Dr Elizabeth Ngololo – University of Namibia (UNAM) Dr Victoria Sharley – University of Bristol

### About the research

This research study explores the lived experiences of those involved with the Perivoli Schools Trust (PST). The PST provides training for Educарers who care for and provide education to children aged 0-6 years old, in all of Namibia's 14 regions. This study responds to identified needs for evidence from the Perivoli Schools Trust approach to inform and strengthen the future expansion of existing ECD policy and programming for children aged 0-8 years - under the Integrated Early Childhood Development Service Framework (IECDF) produced by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (2017). The study comprised 86 adult participants (interviews, talking circles) and 15 observations of practice.



### Policy Recommendations:

- The principle of using locally available materials in the development of educational activities should be expanded and endorsed at a national level for all early years' education provision, under the MGECW's 'Curriculum Framework for Children in Namibia'
- Principles of, and curricula content on environmental education should be formally embedded in the 'Curriculum Framework for Children in Namibia' through the National Unit Standards for Educарers.
- Principles of the PST approach should be adopted by teachers in pre-primary and primary level educational settings, to promote a smooth and natural transition for children from early years' learning into class-based education under MGECW's Integrated Early Childhood Development Framework (IECDF) in Namibia.
- The PST modules should be reviewed and aligned to the MGECW's National Unit Standards for Educарers in Namibia which is registered at level 4 on Namibia's National Qualification Framework, and then integrated in the MGECW's Curriculum Framework for Children in Namibia with a view to accreditation.
- The PST Training Programme should expand existing modular content to further improve children's health and educational outcomes whilst protecting the natural environment. Dissemination of new modules should be achieved by utilising the PST's existing large-scale national network of Educарers.

## Key findings

**The PST Educarer Training Programme** is an innovative and creative 2-year early years training programme for Educarers consisting of 16 modules which foregrounds the importance of play-based learning for children aged 0-6 years old. Educarers, Primary School Teachers and Community Members report an increase in the rate of children's development when they have engaged with the PST approach, compared to children who have not attended provision where PST activities are employed.

Core principles of the PST approach include:

- the sustainable use of waste materials to construct educational resources class-based learning, recycling and reusing waste to keep materials 'in use' in communities and out of landfill sites for as long as possible.
- a focus upon green education and developing children's understandings of their relationship with, and love of, the environment through practical activities which support children's development.

## Acknowledgements

The project was delivered by an independent cross-institutional team comprised of researchers from the University of Namibia and the University of Bristol, UK. The project was funded by the Perivoli Foundation. We would like to thank everyone who participated in this study, in particular we would like to share our appreciation to the children who welcomed us to their Early Years Centres. we would like to thank the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture (MEIYSAC), and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGEWCW) as key stakeholders in the study, both Ministries have supported the research project from conception to completion.

### Contact the researchers

Prof. Janet Ananias – [jananias@unam.na](mailto:jananias@unam.na)  
Dr Emma Leonard – [eleonard@unam.na](mailto:eleonard@unam.na)  
Dr Elizabeth Ngololo – [engololo@unam.na](mailto:engololo@unam.na)  
Dr Victoria Sharley – [vicky.sharley@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:vicky.sharley@bristol.ac.uk)

“ You are making toys and whatever, but then you don't find bottles on the street thrown so it keeps the environment clean ” Educarer

“ just to create materials out of waste material, I believe with poverty, it's going to help us a lot. We don't need to go buy things, we don't need to have money for our children to be educated, or for them to know what we want to teach' ” PST Staff Member

“ There is a difference between the Perivoli, those that have experienced the Perivoli approach versus those that haven't because I always gets feedback from the [primary] teachers say those kids tend to be smarter and they do things on their own, they can write their names, and the teachers are always amazed at where the children come from, so they tend to ask 'where did you do your kindergarten? ” Educarer

“ The programme shows them [Educarers] how by just using recyclable waste materials, bottle tops, yoghurt cartons, pieces of cardboard, bits of string, you name it, they're able to come up with activity centres, we call them 'Corners'... there might be a toyshop or a nursery box, nature corner...and the idea is to show to the nursery school teacher that it's okay to let the children play and to move from corner to corner according to their desires and interests... some activities stimulate their cognitive skills like the toy shop where they're using different coloured bottle tops to buy items from the shop and they're counting and measuring and identifying colours. ” PST Staff Member

### Further information

[pstproject.blogs.bristol.ac.uk](https://pstproject.blogs.bristol.ac.uk)

Sharley, V., Ananias, J., Ngololo, E., and Leonard, E., (2025). Technical Report- The Perivoli Schools Trust Early Child Care and Education Model: exploring lived experiences and wider social impacts in Namibia. University of Bristol and University of Namibia (UNAM)