A Collaborative, Entrepreneurial Path to a Brighter Future

The Namarula Educational and Harvesting Centres Project (Namarula) is an expansion of the Namib Desert Jojoba initiative of the Jojoba for Namibia Trust (JFN). As with JFN, Namarula supports disadvantaged Namibian women in their quest for a better life by training them in the sustainable cultivation of marketable crops. The project’s primary cultivars are marula and mongongo, trees that thrive in Namibia’s dry climate, and whose oil enjoys high demand from the global cosmetics industry. The Namarula project emphasises health, the common good, and entrepreneurialism that has the potential to transform the livelihoods of Namibia’s marginalised citizens. Its collaborative approach fosters relationships of trust among stakeholders, including established and aspiring farmers.

The Julius Baer Foundation is supporting the implementation of two educational harvesting centres, located in the Kavango West and Ohangwena communal regions of northern Namibia. Both sites have received the Ceres certification for organic harvesting. The centres are to be fully owned and operated by members of these communities and will form a crucial link in the natural resource production/value chain. The demonstrated commitment of participants has ensured a promising start. An indication of the project’s importance has been its endorsement by one of the region’s traditional leaders, the Chief of Kamata, who has dedicated 15 hectares of land for plantations and storage, processing, and training facilities.

Expected Outcomes

- Namarula will contribute to the fulfilment of Millennium Development Goals for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality, and ensuring environmental sustainability.
- 1500 rural women will develop the knowledge and skills to improve their livelihoods.
through the cultivation and processing of indigenous plants that are highly valued for their nutritional content and as the basis of marketable products.

• Namarula participants will learn to make their enterprises more climate resilient, productive, and commercially viable, with secured international markets and three new fair-trade agreements.

• Six workshops will focus on acquiring a practical knowledge base for a sustainably healthy lifestyle, thus increasing income and food security.

• Two new educational harvesting centres will be designed, constructed, and integrated into the communities of Kavango West and Ohangwena as important collaboration hubs.

Wealth Inequality in Namibia

In 1998, the Namibian government unveiled a Poverty Reduction Strategy that examined:

• how to foster more equitable and efficient delivery of public resources, in the context of its commitment to regional decentralisation for poverty reduction countrywide;

• how to accelerate equitable agricultural expansion, including consideration of food security and other crop development options; and

• options for non-agricultural economic empowerment, including an emphasis on informal and self-employment options.

Nonetheless, as of May 2019, the Namibia Vulnerability Assessment Committee reported that 290,000 people – over 10% of the national population – were spending more than 75% of their income on food and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. 85% of consumption-poor households in Namibia are in the rural, primarily northern and north-eastern communal areas. The gap in average rural and urban income and living standards compels migration to informal settlements on the outskirts of almost all urban centres in the country, and poverty continues to be concentrated among historically disadvantaged groups.

Facts and figures: Namibia

• Namibia has a population of 2.5 million, a 30% unemployment rate, and 29% poverty rate.

• 44% of Namibian households are headed by women, for whom the poverty rate rises to 32%.

• The overall poverty rate rises to 37% in rural areas.

• Mining accounts for ~10% of GDP, but provides 50% of foreign exchange earnings.

• Agriculture accounts for ~6% of GDP; more than half of Namibians are subsistence farmers.

• Additional key economic sectors include manufacturing and tourism.

• The wealthiest 10% of Namibians receive nearly 50% of all income annually.

• With a Gini index of 59.1, Namibia is the second most unequal country in the world.

Find more information about Jojoba for Namibia Trust here: www.namibdesertjojoba.com

“For every challenge we face – unemployment, poverty, wealth inequality – education and knowledge transfer are major components of the solution.”

Bruce Rauner, American businessman, philanthropist and politician