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# InformedED Website Competition Report



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# InformedED Website Competition Report

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## **ACRONYMS**

<b>AED</b>	Academy for Educational Development
<b>CATT</b>	Computer Assisted Teacher Training
<b>CRHCS</b>	Commonwealth Regional Health Community Secretariat
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development, UK
<b>ECSA</b>	East, Central and Southern Africa (formerly CRHCS)
<b>FAWE</b>	Forum for African Women Educationalists
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>MHETEC</b>	Ministry for Higher Education, Technology, and Employment
<b>MBESC</b>	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture
<b>NIED</b>	National Institute for Education Development
<b>PDA</b>	Personal Digital Assistant
<b>SARA</b>	Support for Analysis and Research in Africa
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The InformED Website Competition, a national website competition in Namibia, was planned and implemented in 2001-2002. The competition was funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and carried out by the Academy for Educational Development's Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA) and LearnLink projects and their partners in the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture (MBESC), and a local education and technology NGO, SchoolNet Namibia. The competition involved teams of school-aged youth using web-based media as tools to develop and convey health messages to other Namibian youth related to HIV/AIDS. The underlying purpose of the competition was to encourage school children to use computers to develop marketable skills such as familiarity with information and communication technologies, marketing, and project development.

Overall, 37 teams representing all but one (Rundu) of the country's seven education regions chose to apply and 18 of these teams submitted an initial website for judging. From the initial 18 reviewed sites, 11 teams resubmitted their websites for the final stage of the competition. These schools included two private schools from mid-sized towns in Namibia, Tsumeb and Karibib; and nine government schools representing all of the original six regions. Two regions, Ondangwa West and Katima Mulilo, had more than one school

represented in the competition. In the end, the government school from Ongwediva (Mweshipandeka Senior Secondary School) won the grand prize.

### Main Results

The InformED Website Competition yielded the following important results:

- **Learners Became Producers Rather than Consumers of Educational Materials.** The learners did all of the underlying research, wrote poems, drew pictures and scanned them into their sites, and demonstrated that they could find data from multiple sources and create a context that other youth could understand. Learners conducted interviews with a wide range of people, including prostitutes, people in bars, their peers, family members, Ministry of Health officials and clergy members. In the end, learners showed an in-depth knowledge and understanding of issues related to youth and sexuality in Namibia.
- **InformED Modeled Learner-Centered Education Pedagogy.** Learner-centered education is the national education policy in Namibia. InformED modeled this by requiring learners to do their own research, develop their own projects, and explain to others the results of their research and learning in a very hands-on process that emphasized project management skills.
- **Six Learner Websites Were Published on Namibia's National Education Website.** Six of the 11 websites from the final competition are published on Namibia's national education website (<http://www.edsnet.na/InformED/InformED.htm>).
- **Schools Received Educational Technology.** Each of the 11 teams that contributed a website to the national competition received a digital camera for its school. The first and second place winners received a complete multimedia package computer system including a printer, a scanner, a digital camera, web authoring software, and Internet connectivity provided by SchoolNet Namibia. This proved to be an innovative way to offer incentives and distribute technology to schools that are most likely to use it effectively.
- **The Competition Winners Represented Namibia at an International Conference.** The winning team traveled to Gaborone, Botswana to attend a conference on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Education in March 2003. The team met the Namibian High Commissioner to Botswana, spoke on a youth panel on HIV/AIDS education, and presented their website to conference participants including the World Bank, DFID, Imfundo, USAID, and African education leaders.

## **Obstacles**

Despite these positive outcomes, the competition did not achieve the objective of creating a single, high-quality website that Namibian youth could access to learn more about HIV/AIDS. In addition, while the original competition organizers had envisioned the youth and sexuality topic to be the first of many yearly website competitions, the competition ended after the first year. It is possible that these issues could be remedied, particularly if there is local ownership in the project (e.g., from a local NGO). The competition project also had to overcome a loss of leadership from LearnLink; once the project ended in March 2002, day-to-day guidance was provided by an unpaid volunteer, who had other responsibilities and had not been involved in the initial competition design and planning. Moreover, no additional human resources were available to continue working with the winning team to enhance its final design and incorporate pieces of the other team's work to create a more robust and useful final website.

## **Other Lessons Learned**

- **The Competition Should Be Led by One Organization and Coordinator** who understands and champions the competition to the ministry of education, and helps to mobilize more schools and students to participate. The coordinator should also be capable of effectively soliciting funds for competitions in successive years.
- **Institutionalize the Model through Multiple and Continuous Sources of Funding** so that it can continue beyond the first year of competition to perhaps address a different topic and potentially reach more learners.
- **Good Facilitators Are Crucial to the Model's Success**, as they helped learners work together to conceptualize their sites, guided them in research, and assisted with the technical aspects of building a website. Developing mechanisms to better compensate facilitators for their work or better enable them to dedicate the time necessary to fill this role effectively could undoubtedly expand participation in such activities.

- **Technology Can Be Used to Excite Youth to Actively Participate in their Learning.**

Although part of the excitement was related to the competition model and the possibility of winning prizes, many learners were excited by the opportunity to develop technology skills.

- **The Competition Yielded Diverse Skill Development for Students**, as they broadened their knowledge of youth and sexuality in Namibia, developed and shared positive social marketing messages targeted toward their peers, developed project management skills, enhanced their communication and presentation skills.

With more time, additional funding, and an eye toward lessons learned, similar competitions could likely be established with even greater life spans, greater participation, and better outcomes and final products. That this project achieved many positive outcomes while challenged by inconsistent leadership, modest funding, and very little publicity and training is testament to the potential power of the concept.

## BACKGROUND

### The **InformED Website**

**Competition** was Namibia's first national website competition. InformED was initially conceived as a mechanism through which technology provided to the education system could be leveraged to support the development of higher-level thinking and production skills. The idea for the competition grew from discussions between USAID's LearnLink project and Ministry of Education staff about ways to maximize the impact of technology in schools by encouraging youth to use the computers to develop marketable skills including the use of information and communication technologies, marketing, and project development. The initial competition involved youth using web-based media as a tool to develop and convey health messages to other Namibian youth in the era of HIV/AIDS. The competition was funded by USAID and carried out by the Academy for Educational Development's SARA and LearnLink projects and their partners in the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture (MBESC), and a local education and technology NGO, SchoolNet Namibia. The competition was planned in 2001

and implemented in 2002. This report provides the background, detailed information about project implementation, information on outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations for replicating such an activity elsewhere.

### **Namibia: HIV/AIDS**

Since the late 1990s, Namibia has had one of the world's highest rates of HIV/AIDS prevalence. At the time InformED was being developed, Namibia's prevalence rate was among the five highest in the world, along with its southern African neighbors Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, and Malawi. In 2002, the estimated adult (ages 15-49) prevalence rate for HIV/AIDS in Namibia was 22 percent.<sup>1</sup> Addressing HIV/AIDS in Namibia is hampered by the residual inequality in the country's healthcare system and the country's extreme economic inequality. On the other hand, the spread of HIV/AIDS throughout the country has been facilitated by factors including a recent history of pre-independence armed conflict, traditional societal gender inequality, traditional sexual practices, fairly high levels of teenage pregnancy,<sup>2</sup> historical

labor practices including all-male mining camps, urbanization, and a robust transnational commercial transportation system. HIV/AIDS rates in Namibia tend to be higher in urban areas, particularly those with access to the major transnational transportation routes (Walvis Bay, Windhoek, Oshikati, Ondangwa, and Katima Mulilo). Nevertheless, some rural communities have also been hit hard by HIV/AIDS once the epidemic was introduced.<sup>3</sup>

### **InformED Partner: USAID/ Namibia**

USAID has operated a mission in Namibia since the country's independence in 1990. At the time InformED was being implemented, USAID/Namibia had four strategic programming areas and one special objective focusing upon mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS nationwide. The five strategic programming areas were Economic Development (Strategic Objective 1., Basic Education Support (Strategic Objective 2., Natural Resource Management (Strategic Objective 3., Democracy and Governance (Strategic Objective 4., and Health (Strategic Objective 5. In addition,

<sup>1</sup> Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, Namibia. Online. Available: <http://www.unaids.org/en/geographical+area/by+country/namibia.asp>. Accessed September 18, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> In 2002, Namibia had the 43rd highest teen pregnancy rate of 78 live births for 1,000 women between the ages of 14 and 19. UNFP, State of World Population 2003. Online. Available: [http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator\\_detail.cfm?Country=NA&IndicatorID=127](http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?Country=NA&IndicatorID=127).

<sup>3</sup> Goveia, Jeffrey J., Education and the Epidemic: The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Basic Education in Namibia, A Masters Degree Professional Report, The University of Texas at Austin. Online. Available: <http://www.edsnatna/Resources/NIEDDocuments/PRAIDSJG.PDF>. Accessed September 18, 2005.

the mission was working to develop ICT as a cross-cutting focus for all of its programming areas. Also at the time, USAID/Namibia management was encouraging each Strategic Objective team to develop activities that supported the other Strategic Objectives and the country strategy goal of “Strengthening...Namibia through the social, economic and political empowerment of Namibians historically disadvantaged by apartheid.”<sup>4</sup> USAID/Namibia’s involvement in InformED came through its support to two global USAID initiatives, LearnLink and SARA, both implemented by AED. USAID/Namibia also served as a coordinating partner, particularly after the LearnLink project in Namibia was completed in March 2002.

### **InformED Partner: Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture**

The idea for InformED grew out of discussions between MBESC officials at the National Institute for Education Development (NIED) (in Namibia) and LearnLink staff based at NIED and in Washington, DC. The MBESC is one of two Ministries in Namibia responsible for education. The other Ministry, the Ministry for Higher Education, Technology, and Employment Creation Training (MHETEC),

focuses primarily on higher education, while the MBESC focuses on education for grades 1 through 12. This includes responsibility for the recurrent and capital costs associated with providing education to approximately 550,000 students through approximately 1,600 schools including 533 that offer at least some secondary school grades<sup>5</sup> (grades 8 through 12).<sup>6</sup>

In addition to its administrative responsibilities, the MBESC also develops curriculum for primary and secondary schools and the country’s four teacher training colleges. These curriculum development responsibilities are covered by NIED, which manages all programming related to both in-service and pre-service teacher training and approves all official learning materials used in Namibian schools. Administrative management and staffing of the country’s teacher training colleges is directed by the MHETEC. NIED, often referred to as Namibia’s education think tank, served as the home for USAID’s LearnLink project in Namibia.

Under NIED’s leadership, the LearnLink project was encouraged to help the MBESC explore ways through which technology could be used to encourage learner-centered education and its accepted policy of encouraging social constructivism.

It was through these discussions, particularly with NIED that the idea to develop a website competition first emerged. At the time, NIED and LearnLink staff believed that USAID funding used to develop a website competition focusing on social marketing issues and developing marketable ICT skills could assist the agency in developing cross linkages among several of its program areas. In particular, they thought the competition could link basic education to business development and, depending upon the contest topics, between HIV/AIDS, environmental issues, and democracy and governance.

### **InformED Partner: SchoolNet Namibia**

At the same time LearnLink and NIED staff were discussing the idea of a national website competition, LearnLink was also discussing similar issues with one of its Namibian partners, SchoolNet. SchoolNet Namibia is a local not-for-profit organization whose mission is “youth empowerment through Internet.” SchoolNet originally grew out of a different competition, Insect@thon, that had teams of Namibian youth compete against each other in electronically cataloging insect records for the National Museum of Namibia. This competition

<sup>4</sup> United States Agency for International Development, Strategic Objectives – USAID/Namibia. Online. Available: <http://www.usaid.org/na/project.asp?proid=2> Accessed September 18, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Due to the rapid expansion in schooling after independence, many Namibian schools are out of phase, meaning that the school does not yet have all grades needed to complete a phase of schooling. The Namibian school phases are lower and upper primary (grades 1 through 4 and grades 5 through 7 respectively), and junior and senior secondary (grades 8 through 10 and grades 11 and 12 respectively). Other schools, particularly those in smaller communities, are called combined schools and include both primary and secondary school grades, normally up to grade 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture, EMIS Education Statistics 2002. Online. Available: <http://emis.edsnet.na/AEC2002/Table0102.htm>. Accessed September 18, 2005.

succeeded in eventually electronically cataloging the Museum's entire insect collection.

SchoolNet's involvement in the competition was crucial in several ways. First, SchoolNet was largely responsible for providing computer technology and Internet to educational institutions throughout Namibia. At the time of the competition, this included approximately 200 schools and four teacher resource centers that had been connected by SchoolNet using funding provided by USAID through LearnLink. Second, SchoolNet's experience in managing youth technology competitions, including Insect@thon and later a small-scale, by-invitation-only website competition focused on domestic violence, was considered crucial to the success of InformED. Third, SchoolNet had significantly more website development experience than any other partner. SchoolNet's executive director had first entered the ICT field by providing support to African museums to develop websites that would allow them to advertise their collections online. As such, he has great expertise in designing websites for low bandwidth environments. Finally, it was thought that SchoolNet could be the lead organizer if the competition became an annual event. SchoolNet's executive director, during initial

discussions about the project, expressed interest in supporting a national website competition.

### **InformED Partner: Academy for Educational Development**

With the idea partially developed by and supported by both NIED and SchoolNet, LearnLink staff formally presented the idea to USAID/Namibia for consideration as an activity to be undertaken as part of a possible extension and expansion of LearnLink activities in Namibia. As this expansion never materialized, the idea was shelved for several months.

Toward mid-2001, the USAID/Namibia Mission director contacted the LearnLink resident advisor to see if LearnLink or AED would be interested in developing an HIV/AIDS website targeted at Namibian youth. Given the amount of funding suggested for the project (\$60,000) the resident advisor advised USAID that using expert designers to produce an effective website would be difficult. He suggested that a more learning-oriented goal might be to see whether the targeted youth themselves could develop websites in a way that was more engaging to other youth and spoke to youth in their own language. He encouraged the Mission Director to review the brief proposal already submitted to USAID for funding a website development competition. He

suggested that the competition's first topic could focus on youth speaking to youth about HIV/AIDS and that \$60,000 may be a sufficient amount of funding, when added to the organizational capacity of NIED and SchoolNet Namibia, for the first year's competition.

Toward the end of 2001, USAID/Namibia sought support from USAID's Africa Bureau in Washington. The Africa Bureau offered support through its Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA) project. As such, USAID was willing to provide approximately \$60,000 to fund a national website competition for youth in Namibia with a content focus on HIV/AIDS. SARA's support came from three African content area specialists who assisted in the initial project design effort. In addition, AED through LearnLink in Namibia offered its resident advisor and local project staff to organize the initial design effort and to provide initial administrative, marketing, and organizational support. As the LearnLink project in Namibia was not being extended, this support was only available until the project's conclusion at the end of March 2002.

### **InformED Team**

With NIED, SchoolNet, USAID, and AED all on board to support the project, USAID and NIED set

up a team to implement InformED. The team's composition underwent two significant changes throughout the life of the competition. The first group was the team brought together to design the competition. This group included representatives from LearnLink Namibia, NIED, SchoolNet Namibia, USAID Namibia's Basic Education team, and three content experts provided through SARA support: an HIV/AIDS coordinator, an ECSA Communications Officer, and a Communications Officer from the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Other LearnLink Namibia staff provided additional coordination and research support. This team met for a three-day planning meeting in November 2001 where the initial mission, goals, objectives, rules, and procedures for InformED were developed. After this point, SARA's support for the competition ended. From November 2001 through the end of March 2002, activities were largely directed by Learnlink Namibia and NIED with support provided by USAID. Recognizing that Learnlink Namibia would no longer be available to support the competition after the end of March, USAID requested that SchoolNet be given a larger role in implementing the project. As such, the final phase of the competition was implemented with guidance and support from SchoolNet and NIED. In addition, day-to-day

competition support was provided by two NIED staff members, (a World Teach volunteer and an assistant librarian) and a VSO volunteer from SchoolNet.

A complete summary of competition partners and InformED team members is available at Appendix E.

### **PHASE I: COMPETITION PLANNING**

Work to develop the competition began in earnest with a planning meeting held at NIED in November 2001. The meeting was attended by representatives from NIED, LearnLink Namibia, USAID Namibia, and the three content area specialists provided by SARA. At this three-day meeting the planning team developed the competition goals and objectives, set the competition schedule and judging guidelines, and formulated the competition rules and regulations. The team also worked to move the competition theme from an initial focus exclusively on HIV/AIDS to a larger focus of issues regarding youth and sexuality in the HIV/AIDS era. Based on advice provided particularly from ESCA's HIV/AIDS coordinator, the team concluded that this approach would be less threatening to those involved and would provide a more holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing issues that lead to unsafe sexual practices of youth and young adults. The planning team

also felt that youth needed to know more than just how HIV/AIDS is contracted and spread. Rather, they needed information on life skills and how to negotiate and respond healthily to the realities of their budding curiosity about relationships and sexuality.

Along with the competition's thematic focus on youth and sexuality, competition organizers were also interested in the prospects for developing ICT and marketing skills among the participants and felt that the competition could provide interesting opportunities to demonstrate learner-centered education and project-based learning to educators within the Namibian education systems. As such, from the MBESC perspective the competition had three goals of near-equal importance: informing youth about issues of sex and sexuality in the HIV/AIDS era, promoting learner-centered education, and developing ICT and marketing skills among youth.

In designing the competition, the planning team proposed the following six objectives to govern the design and evaluation of the competition:

To foster teams of youth capable of...

- Developing and demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of issues related to youth and sexuality in Namibia;ttt

- Developing and delivering positive and effective messages targeted toward their peers;
- Developing and demonstrating the skills necessary to produce creative and effective websites;
- Acquiring project management skills;
- Developing communication and presentation skills;
- Developing at least one high-quality website to provide Namibian youth with positive and helpful messages related to youth and sexuality in the HIV/AIDS era.

In addition, the planning team set forth the following assumptions, beliefs, and principles that would guide InformED's implementation:

- The voices of youth are the most valuable voices to use when developing messages for other youth;
- Namibian youth have the capacity to develop high-quality websites;
- In the process of developing websites, youth will gain valuable skills and understanding related to teamwork, project development, research, analysis, marketing, message development, salesmanship, and information technology (IT);
- While only one team will be chosen to develop the final website, all participants will be considered "winners" and benefit from increased skills and knowledge; and
- Competition and incentives are

valuable tools for motivating youth to develop skills and understanding.

One InformED innovation that differentiates it from other website competition models was its explicit emphasis on building business and marketing skills among the participants. As such, InformED modeled the process organizations would undertake in hiring a marketing or technology firm to develop a website. To be specific, student teams were first asked to submit initial website concept designs or "mock ups" to InformED judges, the best of these concept sites advanced to a second competition round and teams were given both technical and content feedback on how to improve their designs. This second phase was modeled after the best and final round frequently undertaken by firms hiring consultants. The planning team believed this approach had the following advantages:

- It models for youth the "real world" processes of bidding for a consulting contract;
- It encourages an iterative process of refining a concept incorporating client feedback according to explicit criteria; and
- It allows the participants multiple chances to improve their final design to develop sites of sufficient quality to be useful to address the competition's theme.

Along with the planning team's desire to have a successful first competition, many participants on the planning team expressed hope that the competition on youth and sexuality would be the first of many yearly theme-based InformED Website Competitions that will focus upon other topics of relevance and importance to youth such as the environment, health, and democracy and governance.

## PHASE 2: COMPETITION MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT

After the initial planning meeting, LearnLink's Resident Advisor and NIED's WorldTeach Volunteer and Deputy Director worked together to raise awareness about the competition. The three traveled to each of Namibia's seven Ministry of Education regional offices to ensure that regional education officials had access to the information about the competition and understood the rules and procedures. Regional Ministry officials in each office were asked to distribute competition packets including enrollment forms and competition rules and regulations to all schools with secondary grades (grades 8 through 12) in their region. The regional officials agreed to coordinate transportation for their schools selected to advance to the national competition held at NIED.

### The information packets distributed included the following information:

*1. Competition Schedule and Deadlines.* It was necessary to clearly and explicitly define and establish the competition schedule and deadlines. As can be seen in the schedule below, Ministry of Education officers were given six weeks to distribute and collect registration forms. Depending on when schools learned about the website competition, they had roughly three months to

develop their first draft websites. Once all the school teams sent their websites either on diskettes, CD-ROMs, or via email to NIED, NIED's World Teach volunteer and Assistant Librarian spent a few weeks reviewing websites and providing written feedback to student teams via email. Teams had one month to respond to the feedback and submit their final website. Each school was only allowed to submit one website. A copy of the competition schedule is included as Appendix B.

*2. Explicit Information on School Teams and Facilitators.* To participate in the InformED Website Competition, applicants had to form a team. Teams were mandated to have 3 to 5 (including both females and males) secondary school students and either 1 or 2 facilitators. Eligible team members needed to be currently enrolled in the same secondary school and could represent either government or private schools in Namibia. While schools could develop more than one team, only one team could represent a school in the national competition. This provision was put in place to prevent the possibility of overwhelming the judges with concept sites.

In addition, InformED told students that they, without assistance from their facilitators, were responsible for:

- The overall design of their websites;

- Gathering materials needed to help develop their websites;
- Conducting all research necessary to develop their websites;
- Conducting all interviews;
- Selecting and/or developing all content for their websites (e.g., graphics, messages, songs, poems, essays, games); and
- Conducting all typing and coding necessary to complete their websites.

To ensure that team facilitators were not IT experts and that they were trusted community members already working with youth, only teachers, librarians, school employees, or staff members of non-profit youth organization working with learners in grades 8 through 12 were allowed to serve as team facilitators. The team facilitators were also required to check e-mail frequently to ensure that teams could remain in timely contact with InformED.

Facilitators were allowed to assist teams in the following ways:

- Instructing students about the use of various hardware and software used in developing websites;
- Ensuring all team members' parents or guardians were aware of and approved of their child's participation in InformED;<sup>7</sup>
- Ensuring team registration forms were complete and submitted on time;

<sup>7</sup> InformED planners felt that this was a very important consideration given the sensitivity related to developing websites about issues such as sex, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS.

<sup>9</sup> Nine of these teams came from the same schools, Gabriel Taapopi Senior Secondary School in Ongwediva. According to competition rules, only one team per school could submit a website for judging. The reasons for the other non-submissions are unknown.

- Providing guidance and encouragement to their team;
- Giving regular help and assistance to the learners they agreed to coach;
- Helping teams create and keep to a development schedule;
- Editing errors in spelling, punctuation, general writing style, citations; and
- Critiquing site content and design.

### 3. Evaluation Criteria & Points.

InformED established the following categories for evaluation: Content Quality (35 points), Presentation and Layout (30 points), Technical Quality (15 points), and Overall Quality (20 points). InformED awarded up to five (5) points if teams incorporated local languages into their website.

There was also a possibility to earn five (5) more points if school teams provided a convincing written rationale to the judges for why their team had difficulty accessing technology.<sup>8</sup> Those teams that advanced to the final round of judging gave an oral presentation that could add an additional ten (10) points to their final score. The teams participating in the competitions were given explicit access to the evaluation criteria at the beginning of the competition. The specific details of the evaluation criteria provided to participants are included in Appendix B.

### 4. Rules Regarding Website Content.

To anticipate possible complications, the InformED organizers explicitly



**InformED Competition Winning Team and their facilitator taking a well-deserved break from the agenda of the SchoolNet Africa Conference in Gaborone, Botswana.**

shared contest rules with all teams prior to starting the competition. A copy of these rules is included in Appendix C.

### 5. Competition Prizes & Incentives.

With the help of USAID/Namibia and SchoolNet Namibia, InformED organizers secured prizes and certificates for participants and their schools. These prizes were provided as incentives and tangible rewards for participating in the competition. As such, InformED encouraged sponsors to provide prizes that excited and motivated youth. These included IT prizes for winning schools (e.g., computers, computer equipment, software), IT prizes for individual team members (e.g., digital cameras, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA),

exciting software), scholarships, T-shirts, certificates, and trophies. In addition to the technology prizes, the Grand Prize also included a trip to an international “ICTs and Education” conference.

In the end, 37 teams representing all but one (Rundu) of the country’s seven education regions chose to apply and 18 of these teams<sup>9</sup> submitted an initial website for judging. It was unclear as to the reason why no schools from the Rundu participated. It could have been that the forms were never distributed, but this was never determined.

<sup>8</sup> InformED organizers included these five extra points to address inherent inequities within the competition since it was open to government and private schools and there are clear differences in access to resources between some government and private schools as well as between rural and urban schools in Namibia

### **PHASE 3: COMPETITION IMPLEMENTATION**

The final phase of the competition, implementation, is probably the most difficult to do well under the best circumstances. In the case of InformED, though, implementation was even more difficult due to the completion of the LearnLink project in Namibia and the departure of the LearnLink resident advisor. Although never part of his official responsibilities under LearnLink, the resident advisor was still the person most responsible for coordinating competition activities up through the end of March. In anticipation of his departure, USAID met with both SchoolNet and NIED to ensure that the competition would conclude successfully and remain on schedule. Both groups assured USAID that it would, but nobody explicitly assumed responsibility for overall competition coordination. The roles formerly held by the resident advisor and his staff were largely and informally delegated to NIED representatives.

Fortunately, competition participants were not affected by this lack of internal coordination. The competition, in the end, did largely stick to its schedule. Websites were submitted by schools, although this process was somewhat hampered by a lack of technological capacity at the schools and at NIED. Several teams found the process of sending

copies of their websites to NIED to be quite difficult. Still, the websites did eventually arrive and the NIED representatives reviewed them and provided initial feedback on how to strengthen the sites according to the project criteria. In general, the initial websites tended to suffer from a few minor technical flaws such as broken links, but many suffered greatly from issues of plagiarized or incoherent content, and no proper citation of sources. All this information, though, was conveyed to the teams to enable them to revise their sites and resubmit them for consideration for participation in the finals to be held at NIED.

From the initial 18 reviewed sites, InformED received resubmissions from 11 teams. As the original competition design stated that the final competition round would include eight teams consisting of the winning team from each of the seven education regions and the winning team representing all private schools in the country, the InformED implementation team, in consultation with USAID, decided to invite to the final competition at NIED all of the teams that chose to resubmit their sites. These schools included two private schools from mid-sized towns in Namibia, Tsumeb and Karibib; and nine government schools representing all of the original six regions that participated in the competition. Two regions,

Ondangwa West and Katima Mulilo had more than one school represented in the competition.

The Education regions paid for the team's transportation to the competition and NIED provided lodging as it has its own conference facilities including rooms for lodging conference participants. NIED also provided two judges to evaluate the educational value of the sites. USAID provided funds for meals and snacks as well as funding for most of the prizes, including a digital camera for each school invited, a choice of software or peripherals provided to winning schools, and a full multimedia computer system provided to the second place and grand prize-winning schools. USAID also provided funding for the grand prize-winning team members to participate in an education and technology conference in Botswana and gave each team member a digital camera. SchoolNet provided competition judges and an HIV/AIDS content specialist as well as SchoolNet T-shirts and caps to all participants.

In the end, the government school from Ongwediva won the grand prize after they had five points added to their score for their written submission describing the difficulties their team had experienced in attaining access to



**InformED Competition Grand Prize Winners in Botswana with Soule, Komen, Bishop, NIED representatives, and the Namibian High Commissioner to Botswana.**

technology. Without this provision, one of the two private school teams would have won the competition. In May 2003, the winning team from Mweshipandeka Senior Secondary School, accompanied by their teacher facilitator and the SchoolNet Executive Director, attended a SchoolNet Africa ICT and education conference in Gaborone, Botswana. One team member sat on a panel about website competitions and the entire team presented its website development story to conference attendees. The team was also interviewed about their thoughts, as students, about ICTs and education and was able to meet youth representing other African nations. The team enjoyed other outings that included meeting the Namibian High Commissioner to Botswana and lunch chaperoned by a Namibian High Commission staff member.

## **Challenges Encountered, Results, and Lessons Learned**

Many, but not all, of the InformED Website Competition objectives were achieved. Among the greatest challenges encountered was overcoming the loss of leadership provided by LearnLink. Once the project ended in March 2002, day-to-day guidance was provided by an unpaid volunteer, who had other responsibilities and had not been involved in the initial competition design and planning.

Furthermore, no group had offered to support monitoring and evaluation costs for the competition, meaning that the student, teacher, and parent observations from the project were never elicited or compiled after the competition ended. Similarly, none of the implementing partners chose to dedicate human resources or additional funding to continue



**InformED Competition Winning Team member discusses the use of ICT for HIV/AIDS on panel discussion with NGO heads, and Ministry of Education and World Bank officials.**

with the competition in future years. This may have been the result of NIED realizing that it was not organizationally capable of running such a competition on a yearly basis and of SchoolNet Namibia refocusing its efforts solely on providing hardware, software, connectivity, and basic training to schools, effectively leaving the field of competitions and training.

Finally, as a result of the leadership void left when no implementing partner assumed responsibility for the competition after LearnLink closed, no additional human resources were available to continue working with the winning team to enhance its final design and incorporate pieces of the other team's work to create a more robust and useful final website. The website currently provided online is merely the final version the school provided before being invited to participate in the final competition. As a result, the objective of "developing at least one high-quality website to provide Namibian youth with positive and helpful messages related to youth and sexuality in the HIV/AIDS era" was never achieved even though the final websites from the six finalist teams are currently available online. This would have required the assistance of an instructional website designer, though, and funding for this position was never made available.

Despite these challenges, the InformED Website Competition had the following important results:

*1. Learners Were Producers Rather than Consumers of Educational Materials.*

Because learners conducted all of the research necessary to develop their websites, they became educational materials producers. Learners showed tremendous creativity and resourcefulness in conducting interviews with a wide range of people. The interviewees ranged from prostitutes, people in bars, their peers, family members, to Ministry of Health officials and clergy members. They wrote poems, drew pictures and scanned them into their sites, and demonstrated that they could find data from multiple sources and create a context that other youth could understand. Learners demonstrated that they met the first objective of the competition because they showed an in-depth knowledge and understanding of issues related to youth and sexuality in Namibia.

*2. InformED Modeled Learner-Centered Education Pedagogy.*

Learner-centered education is the national education policy in Namibia. InformED modeled learner-centered pedagogy by requiring learners to do their own research, develop their own projects, and explain to others the results of their research and learning. The participants were engaged in a very hands-on process. With the help of

facilitators, most of the 11 teams that advanced to the competition's final round demonstrated that they had developed some project management skills—the fourth objective of the competition. For example, learners not only spoke about different ways they organized each other to get the work done on the websites, but it was clear during the question and answer session with the judges that the learners had anticipated questions ahead of time and delegated responsibilities to certain team members to answer certain questions.

*3. Six Learner Websites Are Published on Namibia's National Education Website.*

A total of 55 learners participated in the final round of the InformED Website Competition (eleven teams of five learners). Six of the 11 websites are published on Namibia's national education website (<http://www.edsn.net.na/InformED/InformED.htm>). The content of the six websites that are currently online demonstrate that the learners did considerable research and put thought into the topics of youth and sexuality, even though the websites are not necessarily of high quality from a technical standpoint.

*4. In Exchange for Producing Educational Content, Schools Received Educational Technology.*

Eleven teams contributed websites to the national competition, and each team received a digital camera for its school. The first and second place winners received a complete multimedia

package computer system including a printer, a scanner, a digital camera, web authoring software, and Internet connectivity provided by SchoolNet Namibia. The technology was not a donation: learners earned technology for their schools in exchange for producing educational materials. This is an innovative way to approach offering incentives and distributing technology to schools that are more likely to use it effectively.

*5. The Competition Winners Represented Namibia at an International Conference.*

The winning team of five learners (4 girls and 1 boy) along with their teacher from northern Namibia traveled to Gaborone, Botswana to attend a conference on ICTs and Education in March 2003. While in Botswana, the learners met the Namibian High Commissioner to Botswana, spoke on a youth panel about HIV/AIDS education, and presented their website to conference participants representing organizations such as the World Bank, DFID, Imfundo, USAID, and African leaders from a range of ministries of education. This was the first time the students presented to an international audience. Preparing their presentation helped them enhance their communication and presentation skills and the Botswana experience furthered their understanding of issues related to youth and sexuality in Namibia.

The following are lessons learned from the competition:

*1. The Competition Should Be Led by One Organization and One Coordinator.* A national website competition needs at least one person responsible for providing overall guidance and coordination for competition activities. This person should understand and champion the competition by selling its vision to the ministry of education as a whole and to individual ministry staff who can help mobilize more schools and students to participate. Further, if the competition has any hope of continuing beyond the first year, this coordinator should also be capable of effectively soliciting funds for competitions in successive years. Ideally, this champion should be located in an organization that feels ownership of and pride in the competition and is therefore willing to free the organizer's time sufficiently to provide technical guidance to facilitators, oversee logistical aspects of the competition, undertake ongoing fundraising, and communicate effectively with principals, parents, and donors who may have questions about the competition. In Namibia, SchoolNet would likely be the best example of such an organization as it has much of the expertise needed to run the competition: ICT knowledge, donor contacts, and a specific ICT and education mission. It is unfortunate that SchoolNet's vision has moved

away from supporting activities that encourage specific creative uses of technology in education.

*2. Institutionalize the Model through Multiple and Continuous Sources of Funding.* A great amount of effort and funding went into developing the Namibia model only to see it fail to fulfill its promise to continue beyond the first year's competition. By seeking multiple and ongoing sources of funding as well as designating a single person and organization responsible for the competition, this activity could take place again with a different topic and potentially reach more learners. The initial project concept was to appeal to donor groups interested in single issue competition to fund each successive year of the competition. While USAID/Namibia was interested in funding the youth and sexuality theme, it might make sense to seek different sources of funding for environment, human rights, democracy and governance, and other health-related themes. Nevertheless, to allow the competition to maintain a single organizer, at least one single, multi-year source of funding would likely need to be developed to cover the ongoing costs of organizing the competition from year to year.

*3. Good Facilitators Are Crucial to the Model's Success.* InformED organizers realized during the various project phases how important the team facilitators

were to InformED's success. Team facilitators helped learners work together to conceptualize their sites. They guided learners in implementing research and assisted with the technical aspects of building a website. Facilitators often allowed learners to use their personal digital cameras or laptops to work on the sites. Facilitators were also the main point of contact between teams and InformED organizers.

InformED learned that the most successful facilitators were people who did not have significant responsibilities occupying their time during evenings and weekends. Volunteer teachers from the WorldTeach Program, teachers living at boarding schools, and teachers with designated computer responsibilities were the best facilitators. Based on feedback from facilitators, they reported spending up to 10 hours per week helping learners. Many teachers in developing country contexts simply did not have the time and resources that are useful for effectively supporting a competition team. Developing mechanisms to better compensate facilitators for their work or better enable them to dedicate the time necessary to fill this role effectively could undoubtedly expand participation in such activities.

*4. Technology Can be Used to Excite Youth to Actively Participate in their Learning.* One obvious competition outcome was the 55 young people

excited about a topic that may not have particularly excited or interested them before the competition. Part of the excitement was related to the competition model and the possibility of winning prizes. Still, others were excited by the opportunity to learn how to use technology and develop technology skills. While this was never formally studied, it was obvious from the participant's presentations that they highly enjoyed using the technology and demonstrating what they had done with it.

*5. The Competition had Good Results.*  
By looking at the competition websites on the Namibian Educator's

website, it is obvious that the competition participants gained fairly in-depth knowledge and understanding of issues related to youth and sexuality in Namibia. The websites also demonstrate that learners can develop positive social marketing messages targeted toward their peers and share them creatively. In addition, these students also developed project management skills and enhanced their communication and presentation skills; this was illustrated during the final competition phase as well as at the Botswana Conference. Although it would be difficult to summarize all the costs related to this competition,

the \$60,000 initially pledged by USAID undoubtedly leveraged some substantial cost-sharing on the part of the Ministry of Education, the individual competition teams, and SchoolNet Namibia. With more time, additional funding, and an eye toward lessons learned, similar competitions could likely be established with even greater lifespans, greater participation, and better outcomes and final products. That this project achieved many positive outcomes while challenged by inconsistent leadership, modest funding, and very little publicity and training is testament to the potential power of this idea.

## **SUMMARY**

The InformED Website Competition had several admirable outcomes including at least 55 participants who conducted HIV/AIDS research, designed and made initial modifications to HIV/AIDS websites, and presented their works to a panel of education, IT, and HIV/AIDS experts. It also demonstrated that youth can take an active role in developing their own knowledge of important topics of social relevance and that they can develop skills to share this knowledge with their peers. It also demonstrated the possibility of using ICTs, the competition model, and incentives to engage some youth and their teachers. The InformED model demonstrated that there is added value to staging competitions of this type in phases where youth are explicitly provided feedback on their designs. This innovation helps ensure that youth learn lessons through the process, that their technical, presentation, and

content development are critiqued by evaluators in a thoughtful manner, and that these youth are allowed to modify and improve their designs based upon the feedback. It should be noted that this added step is time-consuming and adds additional burden to the work of competition coordinators. Nevertheless, as the revised websites all showed dramatic improvements, particularly along the lines of the recommendations provided by evaluators, it is evident that this added step was valuable.

Despite the positive outcomes, the competition did not achieve the objective of creating a single, high-quality website that youth could access to learn more about life skills for youth and issues about HIV/AIDS. In addition, while the original competition organizers had envisioned the youth and sexuality topic to be the first of many yearly website competitions, this competition ended after the first year. It is possible that these

issues could be remedied both in Namibia and elsewhere. The biggest issue in Namibia was a lack of local ownership. Had the project idea originated with a local NGO with the interest and capacity to manage a yearly competition, the first year competition would have likely been more successful and the local NGO could have used this initial success as a method to market the competition to USAID, local ICT businesses, and other potential donors. With all this said, it should be recognized that this competition model and its ICT linkages both have their limitations and that all youth and teachers will not be attracted to these types of interventions. Still, this model has the potential, given greater publicity, to raise the profile of a specific issue, potentially develop valuable resources created by youth and for youth, and help a number of youth develop ICT, marketing, and content development skills.

## APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL FOR HIV/AIDS WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION

### Background

USAID/Namibia's HIV/AIDS strategy is designed to focus on youth and labor. As part of its youth strategy, USAID has established a close working relationship with Ministries of Higher and Basic Education and with their affiliate institution, the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED). Another more recent focus of the mission is the development of IT as a cross cutting theme throughout its programming areas. Recent successes achieved by the mission's programs include the launch of an interactive Parliamentary website ([www.parliament.gov.na](http://www.parliament.gov.na)) that encourages access to Parliamentarians by civil society and individuals and the opening of four computer centers that will serve the education community in historically disadvantaged areas of Northern Namibia. The latter project, the Computer Assisted Teacher Training (CATT) project will also be launching a website ([www.edsnet.na](http://www.edsnet.na)) to support the Ministry of Basic Education's efforts to expand and improve its delivery of in service professional development. Drawing upon its recent successes in developing high quality websites within Namibia, the mission has been researching methods of supporting its HIV/AIDS efforts through the use of IT. In this

regard, it hopes to assist Namibia in developing a highly accessible and user friendly website. While many agents could be employed to develop such a site, it is doubtful whether any existing professional group within Namibia could be successful in developing messages that would appeal to and engage a large portion of the Namibian target audience. Indeed, contracting a professional IT group or social science organization for this effort would surely be expensive and would likely fail to meet the objectives of creating a non-threatening interface with messages that target a broad spectrum of Namibians and Namibian youth.

Another route for creating a high quality, social marketing website would be to engage the target audience directly in its creation. One particularly suitable group in this regard is secondary school students. Using secondary school students brings many advantages. As already mentioned, they form a very large portion of the target audience, and, therefore, have a great understanding of what messages would be effective in reaching their peers. Further, their young age and enthusiasm allow them to quickly develop the IT skills necessary to develop the websites. Youth website competitions worldwide consistently showcase the talent of

young website development teams (see [www.thinkquest.org](http://www.thinkquest.org) for sample copies of student websites.) Finally, if developed as a school-based competition, the cost for developing the site would be considerably lower than the cost of paying a professional organization while providing additional support to other objectives within the mission portfolio.

The school-based idea also provides an added benefit in that the teams who develop the sites can then be used as focal points for other HIV/AIDS initiatives in their regions. USAID/Namibia, in fact, envisions the HIV/AIDS website competition as the kick off activity for a larger, yearlong initiative to address HIV/AIDS issues within schools. The winning website will not only serve as a general means to address HIV/AIDS issues within Namibia, but will also serve as the information centre for the year's activities which could include competitions and activities including essay writing, student research and research projects, games, art competitions, drama competitions, etc. These further activities and competitions would provide additional encouragement for students and community members to continue to access the site and would help ensure that the site remains dynamic and active.

## **Proposed Activities**

*Planning Conference (November/December 2001)...* The first activity envisioned is a planning session for both the yearlong focus on HIV/AIDS in education and planning for the HIV/AIDS website competition as the kickoff event. As the Namibian school year begins in January, it would make sense for this initial planning meeting to take place before the close of the last term or sometime in late November or early December. This meeting could be held either in Windhoek or in Okahandja. Topics of discussion should include development of a calendar of activities and events, development of guidelines and rules for the website competition, developing clear expectations for website content and messages, planning for the kickoff events for the HIV/AIDS competitions in the regions, development of information packets for the teams participating in the competitions, developing criteria and a system by which the websites will be evaluated, and finalizing plans for how to host the winning website(s).

*Kickoff Events in Regions (late January 2002)...* Rather than bringing the regional teams into Windhoek or Okahandja, separate kickoff events could be held in all seven education regions (the events for Windhoek, Ondangwa East, Ondangwa West, Rundu, and Katima Mulilo could be held at sites currently hosting

LearnLink computer centers). These events will also be used to publicize the yearlong campaign as well as serve as the initial information sessions for school teams interested in competing in the website competition. Sessions will focus on information on the basic rules and guidelines for the competition, expectations for the websites, basic information about HIV/AIDS, thoughts on effective social marketing, and assistance in locating information on website development. Teachers will also be given basic training on facilitating the project-based learning process.

*Regional Website Competition Judging (late March 2002)...* One team from each region will be selected to compete in the national competition to be held at NIED. Each of these teams will win a prize, including a chance to present their website in the national competition held at NIED.

*National Website Competition (early April 2002)...* The national competition will be held at NIED with the teams representing all seven education regions. The teams will be expected to not only demonstrate their websites, but also to formally present their designs to the judging committee. The judging committee, after the final presentations, will be given the opportunity to question the teams on their design. The oral presentations will be judged along with the technical designs, ideas, and content of the sites. This event could

also be used as an opportunity to mentor the regional teams on their presentation skills and train them to be HIV/AIDS activists in their communities and regions. While it is possible that only one team will win this competition, efforts should be made to make all the teams feel like winners. The final website, in fact, could include portions of (or totally incorporate) the other websites. Further, the final website can contain recognition and pictures of all the regional teams.

*Publication of Winning Website(s) (late April 2002)...* During the month of April and during the April school holidays, the winning team(s) will work closely with the organizing committee to finalize and publish the website. The website will need to be online in time for the beginning of the second term so that educators in the regions can be prompted to visit the site to learn about the remaining activities for the year and to begin to plan how to work with their classes and learners to be involved in these activities. As previously mentioned the site will hopefully include information, games, lesson plans, competitions, and activities related to HIV/AIDS.

*Website Continuously Updated and Other Activities Posted and Monitored (Remainder of the School Year)...* Once the website is posted and the remaining activities are listed on the website, frequent updates will

be made to keep the site fresh and keep users visiting the sites. Updates could come in many forms including announcements of upcoming activities, posting new information to resource boards, chat and discussion rooms, online games, and interactive question and answer sections. Other ways to keep users coming back to the site could include versions of the popular “Where’s Waldo” concept where learners are prompted to search for pictures or other pertinent information on the site or scheduled online events such as opportunities for question and answer sessions with local celebrities and opinion leaders.

### **Expected Outcomes/ Deliverables**

1. The development of at least one high quality website that provides easily accessible and understandable HIV/AIDS information to a broad spectrum of Namibians and Namibian youth.
2. The development of a yearlong calendar of activities that focuses on highlighting HIV/AIDS action and awareness in the education sector.
3. Training of at least seven teams of Namibians in HIV/AIDS awareness, social marketing, and website development. These teams will be used throughout the year to make school presentations, add to the

website, and help serve as regional student advisors for HIV/AIDS activities.

4. MBESC and NIED teachers and staff will be trained to work with learners to develop websites.
5. Report on lessons learned that would be useful to help other countries within the region to develop similar projects.
6. Proposal for the creation of a yearly social marketing website development competition (InformED) to be sponsored by NIED, SchoolNet/Namibia, and interested local and international governmental and non-governmental organizations

## APPENDIX B: INFORMED COMPETITION SCHEDULE

- March 1 to April 12, 2002: Registration forms accepted by Regional Education Officers.
- April 12, 2002: Deadline for registration forms delivered to Regional Education Officers.
- March 15, 2002 to June 14, 2002: Research and development of websites.
- June 28, 2002: Deadline for submission of websites to Regional Education Officers.
- July 26, 2002: Selection of regional website competition winners.
- July 26, 2002: Judges' comments released to regional winners.
- July 26 to August 30, 2002: Regional winners continue with website development in response to judges' comments.
- August 30, 2002: Deadline for re-submission of website to Regional Education Offices.
- September 4, 2002: Final regional websites due at NIED.
- September 2002: National website competition held at National Institute for Educational Development. National winners announced.
- September to October 15, 2002: National competition winner works with InformED to finalize their website and prepare it to be published online.
- October 18, 2002: Winning site published online and GRAND PRIZE and traveling trophy awarded to the winning team.

## APPENDIX C: JUDGING GUIDELINES

Any website could receive a score of 100 points. Scoring for the sites were based upon the following judging criteria and total possible points awarded according to each criteria area. In addition to the criteria mentioned below, an additional five (5) points would be awarded to teams that incorporated local languages into their website. Similarly, another five (5) points would be awarded to teams that provided a convincing written rationale to the judges for why their team had difficulty accessing technology.<sup>10</sup>

### *Content Quality (35 points possible)*

The Content Quality section asked judges to evaluate the websites based on the quality of their content. In evaluating the websites, judges were asked to consider the following questions and incorporating some of the outlined themes:

- Is the content accurate and correct? In other words, are the facts and information correct? Are there only minimal errors in presentation, grammar, spelling, and analysis? Does the website properly cite all of its sources?
- Is the content presented thoroughly? To be considered complete, the websites had to address all of the following topics related to youth,

sexuality, STDs, and HIV/AIDS.

- Relationships (e.g., benefits of relationships; types of relationships; rights, responsibilities, and respect necessary to ensure positive relationships; how to be assertive, etc.)
- Love (e.g., what is it, how it affects relationships, etc)
- Beliefs and values (e.g., what are they, are they changing, how do they effect relationships, etc.)
- Sex and sexuality (e.g., what is it, how it relates to relationships, who has it, how to decide when it's appropriate, how to refuse it if you don't want to have it, etc.)
- Pregnancy (e.g., how do you get pregnant, how do you prevent it, what are its consequences to young people, etc.)
- STDs (e.g., what are they, how are they transmitted, how to protect themselves from getting them, etc.)
- HIV/AIDS (e.g., what is it, what does it do to a person's immune system, how is it transmitted, how can you prevent it from spreading, common myths and beliefs about it, how do you positively interact with people who have the disease, what are their needs and concerns, how can youth decrease

the stigma, prejudice, and harmful judgments of people with HIV/AIDS, etc.)

- Is the content presented in a creative manner? (e.g., through games, puzzles, stories, poetry, artwork, pictures, creative messages, etc.)
- Does the content effectively and positively speak to youth? (e.g., is it fun and exciting, will young people want to visit the site, does the message answer young people's questions while leaving them with a positive outlook for the future, etc.)
- Is the content clear and understandable? (e.g., will other young people be able to easily understand the message, is the language simple while still being correct, etc.)

### *Presentation and Layout (30 points possible)*

Presentation and Layout asked the judges to evaluate sites based on the artistic and visual qualities of the websites. In evaluating the websites, teams were aware that judges were going to consider the following questions when assessing their sites:

- Is the site easy to view? (e.g., are the colors easy to see, are the fonts easily read, do colors match, are the colors coordinated, etc.)

<sup>10</sup> InformED organizers included these five extra points to address inherent inequities within the competition since it was open to government and private schools and there are clear differences in access to resources between some government and private schools as well as between rural and urban schools in Namibia.

- Is it visually creative and engaging? (e.g., does the layout invite users to explore the site, is the layout visually exciting, etc.)
- Does the presentation enhance the message? (e.g., do the colors and layout match the website’s message and content, are the colors and layout consistent, do the colors and layout help the user understand the site, do the colors, layout, and graphical elements aid in the presentation of the message, etc.)
- Does it include multimedia elements? (e.g., pictures, graphics, drawings, etc.)

*Technical Quality (15 points possible)*

The technical quality section asks judges to evaluate the websites based on of their technical qualities. In evaluating the websites, judges will be asked to consider the following questions:

- Is the site easy to use? (e.g., is it obvious how to navigate through the site, is it easy to know what the site has to offer, is it consistent in its presentations, etc.)
- Does the site function properly? (e.g., do all of the links work, do graphics show up, does the site work well on different systems, do different functions and/or tools work, is it reliable, does it load quickly, etc.)
- Does the site demonstrate new,

creative, and/or interesting uses or applications of technology? (e.g., are their interactive elements, games, or uses of technology beyond basic HTML, etc.)

- Does the site use technology to encourage others to interact with each other, share information and ideas, etc.?

The technical quality section considered the resources available to the teams in developing their websites. As many as five bonus points were awarded to teams that did not have easy access to technology. Teams wishing to be considered for these bonus points had to submit a short essay describing what technology is available at their school (e.g., access to power, computers, Internet, e-mail, etc.), where they did most of the work on their website (e.g., other schools, libraries, learners’ or teachers’ homes, how close is it to their school how do they get there, etc.), and what equipment and facilities were available to them (e.g., scanners, cameras, Internet, e-mail, printed resources, computers, software, etc.)

*Overall Quality (20 points possible)*

The overall quality section asked judges to evaluate websites based on their overall effectiveness. In evaluating the websites, judges were asked to consider the following questions:

- Which website is most effective in conveying its message (why and how)?
- Which website is most likely to engage Namibian youth?
- Which website does the best in combining all of the above-mentioned elements into an effective whole?

*Oral Presentation (10%)—National Competition Only*

In the national competition, the regional winners were asked to prepare a five to ten minute presentation defending their site to the judging panel. After their presentation, judges had an additional five to ten minutes to ask the teams questions about their designs.

## APPENDIX D: COMPETITION RULES

Student teams and facilitators signed forms agreeing to these rules:

- **General.** All materials in each website must be suitable for use with learners in Grades 8 to 12. All registration, documentation, websites, and other communication submitted to InformED must be written in English. Web pages may be in both English and one or more other language(s). If other languages are used, users should be able to easily switch between the languages.
- **Changes in Team Membership.** If one or more members of a team should be unable to continue to participate for any reason, the teams must inform InformED officials. InformED shall determine the appropriate steps to be taken.
- **Copyright Laws.** Websites must adhere to all Namibian copyright laws. Teams must properly cite all information used on their site
- **Ownership of Intellectual Property.** All websites submitted to the national competition become the exclusive property of NIED (InformED's sponsor) at the time of submission. NIED has the exclusive right to make the website (in whole or in part, modified or not) available for any purpose.

NIED reserves the exclusive right to publish the websites (in whole or in part, modified or not) online whether on its website or on the website of a third party. Finally, NIED reserves the right to distribute the websites (in whole or in part, modified or not) in any format it chooses. Websites submitted to the national competition may only be displayed where NIED chooses. No other entity (including the school submitting the site) may display the site without NIED's expressed consent. If desired, winning schools are allowed and encouraged to make links from their websites to the winning websites.

- **Modifications to InformED Guidelines.** InformED reserves the right to modify the guidelines to the extent that it believes it is appropriate to enable the program to be carried out most effectively. Participants will be informed of any significant changes to the guidelines via e-mail as well as through postings made on the InformED website.
- **Extensions of Program Deadlines.** InformED reserves the right to extend any program deadline, and will post any such changes on the InformED website and will inform

teams via e-mail.

- **Guidelines for Submitting Websites.** Websites must be submitted to the Regional Education Officers in an acceptable electronic format. Acceptable formats include diskettes, zip disks, or CD. Teams should take care to make certain that their sites work properly from these formats as the judges will not have time to repair submissions.
- **Disqualification.** InformED officials may disqualify a team if they are of the opinion that the team did not follow all InformED rules.
- **Finality of InformED Decisions.** All decisions by InformED are final.

## APPENDIX E: COMPETITION PARTNERS AND INFORMED TEAM MEMBERS

Figure 1: Competition Partners and InformedED Team Members

Implementation Partner	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
	<i>Competition Planning</i>	<i>Competition Marketing and Development</i>	<i>Competition Implementation</i>
<b>NIED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alfred Ilukena, Deputy Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alfred Ilukena, Deputy Director</li> <li>• Heidi Soule, WorldTeach Volunteer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alfred Ilukena, Deputy Director</li> <li>• Elbe Boshoff, Assistant Librarian</li> <li>• Heidi Soule, WorldTeach Volunteer</li> </ul>
<b>USAID Namibia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matthew Goagoseb, Program Assistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tina Dooley Jones, Technical Director</li> <li>• Matthew Goagoseb, Program Assistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tina Dooley Jones, Technical Director</li> <li>• Matthew Goagoseb, Program Assistant</li> </ul>
<b>SchoolNet Namibia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joris Komen, Executive Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joris Komen, Executive Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joris Komen, Executive Director</li> <li>• Ceiran Bishop, VSO Volunteer</li> </ul>
<b>AED / LearnLink</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeffrey Goveia, Resident Advisor</li> <li>• Todd Malone, Training Specialist</li> <li>• Perien Boer, Deputy Director for Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeffrey Goveia, Resident Advisor</li> </ul>	
<b>AED / SARA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bannett Ndyabangi, HIV/AIDS coordinator, ECSA</li> <li>• Adam Msilaji, Communication Officer, ECSA</li> <li>• Lornah Murage, Communication Officer, FAWE</li> </ul>		

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