



MILLENNIUM  
CHALLENGE CORPORATION  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OSHANA  
REGIONAL  
LIBRARY



EVALUATION BRIEF | APRIL 2016

## BUILDING LIBRARIES IN THREE REGIONAL HUBS IN NAMIBIA

### Construction and technical assistance tasks were partially completed

### Program Overview

MCC's \$295.7 million [Namibia Compact](#) (2009-2014) funded the \$138.5 million Education Project, including the \$20.8 million Regional Study and Resource Center (RSRC) Activity. The RSRC Activity built libraries in three regional hubs, as well as provided technical assistance and training based on the [theory](#) that expanded community access to information, training resources, and study facilities would improve educational and professional outcomes.

MCC commissioned the Technology & Social Change Group at the University of Washington Information School to conduct an independent interim performance evaluation of the RSRC Activity. Full report results and learning: <https://data.mcc.gov/evaluations/index.php/catalog/120>.

### Key Findings

#### ☰ Activity Outputs

- › The overarching components of the RSRC Activity were both implemented before the compact closed: three regional libraries were constructed and MCA Namibia (MCA-N) and its contractors provided assorted technical assistance and training to RSRC staff.
- › Within those components, specific implementation results were mixed. By compact closeout, four tasks were complete. However, five tasks were incomplete, though in most cases the Compact delivered some of the planned support.

#### 📄 Implementation Successes

- › The main factors facilitating the success of the activity were a continuity of relationships between the implementing partners and other stakeholders, the persistent lobbying of implementing partners to maintain project momentum, the allocation of additional tasks to IREX (the contractor that provided technical assistance), and the general public and official goodwill towards the RSRC concept.

#### 🕒 Implementation Challenges

- › The three largest factors inhibiting the success of the activity were: low capacity of local industry and workforce, construction delays, and proportionately limited personnel resources.

## Evaluation Questions

This interim performance evaluation was designed to address the following questions:

1. To what extent were the RSRC implementation activities completed by the end of the Namibia Compact?
2. What factors facilitated or inhibited completion?



**Helvi Nangombe, a librarian at Ohangwena Regional Library, an MCC-funded resource center in Ohangwena Region, Namibia.**

## Detailed Findings

### Activity Outputs

At a high level, both RSRC components – construction and technical assistance – were completed: RSRC construction finished before the compact closed, overcoming substantial construction delays, and MCA-N and its contractors provided assorted technical assistance and training, the scope of which grew in response to the increasing apparent needs of the Ministry of Education (MoE). Technical assistance and training activities were designed to assist RSRC staff to administer library programs, and included supporting community information needs assessments; developing a staffing plan, supporting hiring efforts, and training staff; supporting collections; building relationships with key stakeholders; and developing the plans for operations and service delivery.

### Implementation Successes

There were a number of factors that facilitated task completion. First, RSRC Activity management was particularly successful in generating an inclusive consultative process. Stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation communicated a clear sense of value attached to the RSRC concept at community, regional, and national levels. Management also brought IREX on board to address capacity issues and lobbied for

### Tasks Completed by Compact Closeout:

- IT and Equipment
- Management
- Mobile Library
- Service Delivery
- Community Needs Assessment
- Staffing
- Facilities
- Collections
- Relationship building

### The Main Factors Facilitating Activity Success:

- Relationships between implementing partners and other stakeholders
- Persistent lobbying of implementing partners to maintain project momentum
- Allocation of additional tasks to IREX
- Public goodwill towards the RSRC concept

better compensation rates for librarians to improve recruitment prospects. MCA-N's lobbying on behalf of the libraries may have helped institute long-sought changes that could help public librarianship become a more attractive profession in Namibia. Finally, the provisions made by MCA-N to hedge against foreign exchange losses instead led to budget gains. This was mostly an unintended outcome, but it represented a significant boon to the activity.

## 🕒 Implementation Challenges

The three largest inhibiting factors were: low capacity of local construction industry and workforce, construction delays, and limited leadership from the government. The first two issues were largely related. The construction industry lacked the capacity to carry out the volume of work

required to build the facilities, requiring contracts to be rebid and construction delays of over a year for each RSRC. This challenge was exacerbated by the impending closure of the compact, which compressed the timeline for other activities such as training, a community needs assessment, and equipment testing. Furthermore, limited personnel resources within the government inhibited the leadership of the activity. Despite significant effort and dedication to the activity, the MoE did not have the capacity to administer the RSRC Activity at the level expected by MCA-N, mostly due to the MoE's personnel shortage. Thus, MCA-N had to fill the gap in providing overall leadership for the RSRC Activity.

### The Three Main Implementation Challenges



Low capacity of local construction industry and workforce



Construction delays



Limited leadership from the government

## MCC Learning

📖 A master plan with a clearly defined list of targeted goals is instrumental in identifying the tasks to be completed, setting a timeline, and determining that the same vision is shared by all key stakeholders.

📖 Implementing partner agreements between the MCA and the implementing entity should be required to clarify and ensure the necessary leadership within the partner government.

📖 A designated infrastructure lead within each relevant project team is vital for creating integrated work plans. Infrastructure projects require relationship-building with government entities in order to be effective. Without an infrastructure lead within each project team, it is hard to create integrated work plans and manage relationships appropriately.

📖 Future compacts should require maintenance strategies from the client-user early in the project to ensure clear lines of responsibility and dedicated funding.



## Evaluation Methods

Within the two overarching components of infrastructure and technical assistance, nine task areas were identified for evaluation from a variety of planning documents. The evaluation used qualitative methods to assess whether or not each task was completed, including informant interviews, document review, and field observations.

In total, 23 interviews were conducted with 24 out of 27 stakeholders, which included MoE officials and staff, MCA-N and MCC staff and contractors, who were selected for their experience and expertise; role in the planning, implementation, or ongoing operations of the RSRCs; and to ensure balanced representation across the universe of relevant stakeholders and the three relevant regions. The document review process served to determine the plan for the RSRCs, how it changed over time, and to verify interview data. Document types included the compact agreement, implementing partner agreements, concepts documents, due diligence reports, feasibility studies, project documentation, and technical assistance reports. Data collection occurred in March and April of 2015.

The document review process served to determine the plan for the RSRCs, how it changed over time, and to verify interview data. Document types included the compact agreement, implementing partner agreements, concepts documents, due diligence reports, feasibility studies, project documentation, and technical assistance reports. Data collection occurred in March and April of 2015.

## Next Steps

Two additional rounds of data collection are planned. Results from the first round will be available in 2017. A final report is expected in 2018.



**The Oshana Regional Library is an MCC-funded resource center in Oshakati, Namibia. Under the Namibia Compact's Education Project, MCC is constructing many regional resource and study centers like the one seen here in underserved areas in an effort to improve educational and professional outcomes.**