



## Responding to the needs for literacy training at Navachab Mine

A comprehensive Human Resources planning process, designed to determine skills needs and provide input into the setting of career development paths, was implemented at Navachab Mine in Namibia during 2007. The mine, which has 362 permanent employees (567 including contractors), is situated some 10km south-west of Karibib, 170km north-west of Windhoek, the Namibian capital.

One of the issues addressed during the intervention was the need for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), and it became evident that some 20% of employees could derive benefit from ABET training at one of the four levels recognised by the Namibian national adult education framework (see box).

Overall, 45 employees indicated a willingness to participate in the ABET programme, implementation of which was facilitated by the mine in partnership with the Namibian Ministry of Education. Patrick Chizabulyo, Training and Development Superintendent, was charged with driving the process.

The first classes were held in March 2007. Spouses of employees, and other community members, were invited to participate, and some 55 learners are currently enrolled in the programme. Both morning and evening classes are held, to accommodate shift work rosters. Morning classes are held in local municipal facilities, while evening classes are held at schools in Karibib.

The Ministry of Education arranged training for the five ABET facilitators, who were drawn from the local community. Facilitators are paid N\$1,400 per month, contributed in equal shares by Navachab and the ministry, which also supplies core learning material. Navachab also pays rental for the municipal venues used for morning classes, and provides additional learning material. The mine has appointed a dedicated training officer, Colin Isaacs, to liaise with the facilitators, whose responsibilities (apart from teaching) include record keeping, and formative and summative assessment (measuring pre- and post-learning competence) of learners' progress.

The first Achiever's Award ceremony was held on 6 September, to coincide with World Literacy Week. Certificates of academic achievement were presented to the learner in each class who had made most progress, while all other learners received a certificate of encouragement recognising their commitment and participation.

The award ceremony, held at the Karibib Community Centre, was attended by the Regional Director of Education, the Regional Education Officers, Navachab Managing Director Gerry Arnat, the ABET facilitators, and the ABET learners and their spouses. One of the learners, Thomas Xoagub from the mineral resources department, commented: "This is a much-needed programme, making it possible for employees to further their careers by entering a trade after graduation."

The Ministry of Education in Namibia co-ordinates the national adult education programme as follows:

**Stage 1:** *Lower primary:* reading and writing an indigenous language, arithmetic.

**Stage 2:** *Lower primary:* advanced reading, writing and arithmetic.

**Stage 3:** *Lower primary:* introduction to English and mathematics.

**Stage 4:** *Upper primary:* introduction to history, science and life skills.

On successful completion of the four-year programme, participants qualify for entry into recognised vocational training programmes such as learnerships.