AGDS Annual Report
Presented at the Annual General Meeting on 1 November 2025

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“AGDS stands for the German language and culture in Namibian education and community life.”

With these words from the AGDS mission statement, I welcome you here today in the foyer of the Deutsche Höhere Privatschule Windhoek and warmly invite you to the Annual General Meeting of the AGDS.

It is unfortunate that the number of DaM learners continues to decline. However, over the past year we have witnessed how many doors the German language has opened for Namibian learners, providing them with future prospects. This makes it worthwhile to continue advocating for the German language and, with it, for the AGDS, and to support its work.

I would like to supplement my annual report with images from the past financial year in order to provide insight into how the AGDS Executive has continued to implement the strategic objectives adopted at the strategy meeting in November 2022.

We have particularly noted how important the role of German schools in rural areas is in preserving German society, community, and culture. These schools are not only places of learning for teachers and children, but also meeting points for the German community. They host cultural and social activities such as bazaars, Oktoberfest celebrations, football events, hiking days, church gatherings, and farmer community meetings. Without these schools, there would be no central meeting places for the German community in rural areas.



Strengthening cooperation remains a key priority for the AGDS, which is why we continue to promote and support educators and teachers. In February 2025, another online professional development course, ***Deutsch für den Schulstart***, offered by Heidelberg University, was held. A total of 28 participants from our member schools and the Kindergarten Network from across Namibia took part.

In **April 2025**, the **DHPS** hosted an **internal teacher training workshop**. The AGDS supported participating teachers from across Namibia by covering catering and travel costs. Our sincere thanks go to the DHPS.



The **PSS** is planning a **professional development programme** for all teachers of AGDS member schools in Windhoek and Swakopmund in **June 2026**. We welcome this initiative and are happy to support it.



Each year, the AGDS also hosts the **Dieter-Esslinger-Pädagogik-Tagung**, which serves as a platform for professional exchange, training, and networking. This conference is well attended by AGDS member schools, the Kindergarten Network, and PASCH schools, and is a highlight of the AGDS calendar. Our special thanks go to the Mopane Trust, whose generous donation will co-finance this conference for the next four years.

The conference, with its diverse and engaging programme, is prepared by the Pedagogical Advisory Board, whose members ensure a smooth and successful event. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all of them for their selfless commitment. We would also like to once again thank the Goethe-Institut for its financial support, which has contributed significantly to the success of the conference.

The revision of the AGDS bursary programme has resulted in bursaries now being awarded only to students who wish to study teaching at primary level and/or who are able to teach German as a mother tongue (DaM).



The shortage of German teachers at primary school level cannot be resolved quickly, particularly because German as a mother tongue (DaM) was not taught as part of teacher training at UNAM in recent years. We are therefore extremely grateful to Dr Gerda Wittmann for her efforts at UNAM to revive a German-language teacher training programme. This enables us to once again promote German in primary teacher education (Grades 0–3).

This year, one student has already begun studying primary teaching with German at UNAM, and we have another applicant for 2026. Many thanks for this important progress.

In this context, we would also like to highlight the excellent cooperation with the Goethe-Institut, which focuses primarily on the DAF sector, while the AGDS concentrates mainly on the DAM component. This trusting partnership is of immense value to both institutions.

Until our move to the DELK community offices, the Goethe-Institut kindly provided office space for the AGDS. We are very grateful to have been able to use these premises until April 2025.

Although the move was only across the street, relocating furniture and countless boxes of documents was a considerable effort. We thank the DELK for their generous offer and for ensuring a smooth transition. The new office, including a storage area for our files and access to a conference room, has greatly facilitated Karin's work. The daily 10 a.m. coffee break with the DELK team also gives us a very warm sense of welcome. Thank you!

During this year's **Dieter-Esslinger-Pädagogik-Tagung** in Otjiwarongo, DAM and DAF teachers from both secondary and primary schools met separately. This meeting served to discuss the structure, value, and content of AGDS projects, as well as the project calendar for 2025/2026. The Executive greatly appreciates this input, as Board meetings are not the appropriate platform to define project content and schedules. We rely on teachers to evaluate existing AGDS projects and to propose new ideas.



The **2025 Kultur Fest** took place in March at the Otjiwarongo Private School under the theme *In the Footsteps of Richard the Lionheart*.

The **Horst-Kreft-Lesefest** was hosted by the Otavi Private School on 27 September 2025.



Our sincere thanks go to the host schools. The children thoroughly enjoyed the events, and the schools had the opportunity to present themselves and build friendships.

On 13 September 2025, the DHPS, together with the AGDS, invited school principals and heads of German departments from all schools offering DaM instruction to a joint meeting. We were pleased that this long-anticipated meeting finally took place and that representatives from schools across the country were able to attend. Various challenges were discussed, including cooperation, mutual support, shared curricula, and joint textbook orders, all of which would help maintain or raise educational standards and allow learners to transfer between schools, particularly with regard to qualifications.



The concept of supporting kindergartens clearly demonstrated that German as a mother tongue must be encouraged from an early age. The Kindergarten Network provides an opportunity to connect all German-speaking kindergartens in Namibia. Kindergartens can exchange ideas, support one another, and participate in training programmes financially supported by the AGDS.

Questions surrounding multilingualism in the home and in kindergartens concern not only educators but also parents of young children. For this reason, the AGDS and the Kindergarten Network initiated a series of discussion groups on multilingualism this year.

The first **Family Festival 2025** took place on 12 April at Hooves & Gardens, approximately 25 km south of Windhoek. The event was organised by the Kindergarten Network and supported by the AGDS. Stalls were hosted by various kindergartens, the Goethe-Institut, the 5th Windhoek Scouts (Cubs), and the AGDS. Visitors were able to learn about the different institutions and participate in a variety of activities.

Providing information about kindergartens, schools, and qualifications has become increasingly important, and the AGDS has taken on the task of informing parents. We connect, inform, and support all educational organisations that offer German as a subject.

Networking has become essential in today's world. We are proud that our website, **www.agdsnamibia.com**, has been used regularly for over a year. It provides a platform connecting all member associations with schools and kindergartens, as well as our partners, and also serves as a promotional tool for professional development opportunities. Our sincere thanks go to Sonja Bartlewski and Karin for keeping the website up to date.

We are grateful for our contact with Ms Lena Gronbach of Africademics. The *Namibia to Germany* programme has generated great interest among Namibian school leavers, and two additional candidates began their training in September 2025. We have also included the *Careers for Future* programme by Ms Friederike Schmidt von Wühlisch on our website.

A close partnership with the DNEG, under the presidency of Mr Frode Hobbelhagen, offers training opportunities and bursaries in both Namibia and Germany. The Hornhues Foundation, represented by Dr Hornhues, finances bursaries in the German Department at UNAM. This close cooperation is also made possible by the fact that Karin Rothkegel has been working a number of hours for these organisations this year and is remunerated accordingly. We are very grateful for Karin's strong network. Thank you!

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the many individuals who have contributed to preserving our mother tongue in this country for nearly 70 years through voluntary work, financial support, and great personal commitment. This includes not only members of the local German-speaking community, but also the ambassadors of the Federal Republic of Germany to Namibia and their staff.

We thank **all donors** for their generosity, with special thanks to Mr H. Friedrich for his generous monthly donation. We would also like to acknowledge those who contributed donations of N$500 or more during the past year—while emphasising that every contribution is deeply appreciated.

- Bernd Esslinger
- Deutscher Schulverein Lüderitzbucht
- Rolf Adrian
- Renate Hilbert
- Helge Friedrich
- H.-G. Engelhard
- Todo Garbade
- Monika Cording
- E. Neuburg
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- GH von Hase
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- F. Moormann
- U.D. Voigts
- H. G. Röschlau
- J. Sievers
- Michael Langmaak
- W. Hailwax
- A. Diener
- Reiner Jagau
- G. Heger
- A. Röbke
- H.E. Geiger
- Anton von Wietersheim

As an association dependent on members and donations, we can only finance our projects and objectives with your continued support. We therefore encourage you to promote AGDS membership and to share our website **www.agdsnamibia.com**, and to follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see the opportunities the AGDS creates for German in Namibia.

A very special thank you goes to the entire Executive Committee, who have taken on the extensive task of implementing the AGDS strategy this year with great dedication, without remuneration, and with much heart and commitment. So much has been achieved thanks to their efforts. I am proud of how we, as a team, are able to present the AGDS today.

Ms Sylvia Schlettwein and Dr Gerda Wittmann are stepping down from the Executive this year and will not stand for re-election, although they will continue to support the AGDS. I would like to sincerely thank them for their valuable contributions.

During the reporting year, the Board held two ordinary meetings, with preparations carried out by the elected Executive in cooperation with the AGDS office under the leadership of Karin Rothkegel. The Executive met four times and focused on the AGDS statutes. At today's Board meeting, it was decided that no changes will be made to the constitution.

At this point, I would like to thank all Board members for the excellent cooperation and the trust placed in me over the past twelve months. I would also like to extend special praise and thanks to Karin Rothkegel for her swift and dedicated work.

Finally, I would like to thank our long-standing partners—the German Embassy in Namibia, the Goethe-Institut, and UNAM—for their years of support. In particular, my thanks go to Mr Florian Seitz and Ambassador Dr Hutter, together with Cultural Officer Ms Clarissa Judmann and Ms Silke Bergemann (Economic Cooperation and Development). At the Goethe-Institut, special thanks go to Ms Ingrid Barth for her close cooperation and for her valuable work in the field of DAF/DAM.

I would also like to thank the media and broadcasters for their objective reporting, which we greatly appreciate.

Thank you very much for your attention.

