

## Catholic AIDS Action

The sub-Saharan Republic of Namibia borders on the Atlantic Coast along with its land borders of Zambia, Angola, Botswana and South Africa. Its capital and largest city is Windhoek a diverse city of 400,000. Namibia has a population of 2.6 million people and the basis of its economy is agriculture, herding, tourism and mining. Well-known geographical features include the Kalahari Desert and the Coastal desert, one of the oldest deserts in the world. Its sand dunes, created by strong onshore winds, are the highest in the world. Namibia is the driest country in sub-Saharan Africa.

Namibia is one of the few the countries in the world to specifically address conservation and protection of natural resources in its constitution.



*CAA worker on a family care visit, playing with the baby at the same time as assessing her overall health*

Namibia is considered one of the most free and democratic countries in Africa with a government that protects basic human rights and freedoms. SWAPO (derived from the territory's old name, now used only as an acronym), the ruling party, has adopted a zebra system which ensures a fair balance of both genders in government and equal representation of women.

Namibia ranks as one of the most affected HIV and AIDS countries in the world. Most people do not know that they are infected, which means that the disease continues to spread. Catholic AIDS Action (CAA) has grown to be one of the largest and most effective civic society organizations responding to HIV and AIDS nationwide and is implementing its community-based interventions across the country.

Thirty trained volunteer groups now provide nationwide home-based family care to people infected with HIV and AIDS. Another thirty-five groups work on income-producing products, living programs for people who are already infected, peer support and outreach. Its prevention program has graduated over 4,000 youngsters in a ten-week UNICEF-sponsored course. CAA has also established national standards for training and supervising home-based care, as well as care of needy orphans.

Specific services include:

- Family-centred care and support services
- Treatment adherence counselling
- Program for retention of beneficiaries in the continuum of treatment and care
- Soup kitchen services and After School Program Activities
- HIV and AIDS education and information and prevention targeting young adolescents, particularly girls
- Care and support to destitute orphans and vulnerable children
- Voluntary HIV testing and counselling (by community outreach and door-to-door modalities)
- Beneficiary linkage to clinical, social and psychological care and support services.\

CAA services are available to all, irrespective of religion, race or background, with a preferential option to the poorest and neediest.

