

SDGs covered by
this initiative: **1, 11**

DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

PROVIDING DIGNIFIED LOW-COST HOUSING

The need for affordable, safe and dignified housing in Namibia is one part of the housing crisis in the country. The pressure on urban areas has become ever more acute as urbanization rates continue unabated – the most vulnerable being those of lower income levels. The result is the proliferation of informal settlements – and the resultant socio-economic consequences.

The growth of informal settlements at most major towns and cities is estimated to be between 8% and 15% annually. This percentage is likely to double over the next 15 years if not addressed through effective policies and programs. Contemporary initiatives do not adequately and effectively address this situation. Dangers associated with these settlements are severe, including but not limited to inadequate sanitation leading to the spread of rare and infectious diseases, increased crime, floods and fire hazards.

Development Workshop Namibia (DW Namibia) is an NGO that specializes in urban development with the specific objective of addressing sustainable urban development and urban poverty reduction through planning, tenure and housing. It is designed to support local authorities in the planning, surveying and servicing of low-cost land allocated for low-cost housing.

DW Namibia, supported by B2Gold through the NCE (see page 15 for more details on the NCE) and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD), have been working to deliver affordable land for housing to the urban poor. The model is to partner with a municipality

that willingly provides the land. DW Namibia then plans, surveys and installs minimal services (e.g. water points and on-site sanitation). Titled and minimally-serviced plots are then sold on a cost-recover basis. This allows the original funding to be deployed again for other beneficiaries, making the system financially sustainable.

B2Gold currently supports DW Namibia in three localities, namely Okahao, Oshakati and Karibib, through partnership agreements with each town council. To date, more than 800 residential erven (i.e. registered lots) have been pegged. In Okahao and Oshakati, 415 families will soon receive serviced land. In Karibib, 280 families will benefit and an additional 500 have registered as beneficiaries.

The program aligns well with the work being done by the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia – a build-together low-cost housing program also supported by B2Gold. The Federation has successfully built solid brick and mortar houses for a fraction of the cost charged by conventional construction companies.

The combination of low-cost semi-serviced erven and affordable brick and mortar houses is seen as a solution in the informal housing crisis. DW Namibia has influenced national land and housing policy through proactive engagement with relevant government stakeholders. This project, focused on providing low-cost housing to marginalized people, is making an important social impact in the country.

