



Edu Circles Kit



for **Learner Stakeholders**
in Education
in Namibia



Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
2019



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PREAMBLE:

Understanding learner agency in our schools

If learners care for each other and you want to find solutions to the issues you face in your school, you need to have 'agency'.

This means that you have to have confidence in yourselves and in your ideas, and you have to know that you can rely on the support of others – your friends, your teachers, your parents and local and school leadership (principals and heads of departments).

To make those connections with your wider community, those who are involved in Edu Circles must participate in social and political activities which give you a voice for speaking to strangers and in spaces outside your familiar circles.

This isn't always easy, because authority figures can be intimidated and schools often discourage learners from speaking openly to management, so it can be hard to be taken seriously. But, in order to strengthen your school, you need to strengthen your self-confidence, and you need to trust that others will respond appropriately to your requests. You need emotional resilience when faced with people who will not listen or who are not interested in changing their ways.

At first, you will need the support of adults to be of service to others. The act of helping your peers will have the direct benefit of improving your own self-esteem, and your improved self-esteem will make it easier for you to show the school (and yourself) what your meaningful contribution can be. Involvement in an Edu Circle can be its own motivation – or in other words, this involvement makes you want to be even more involved.

In Namibia and around the world, there is a lot of proof of the following:

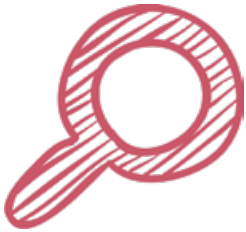
- Learner agency is an important part of a school's effort to improve its performance.
- When learners feel respected and included in key decisions, they work harder and are more committed, in turn making the jobs of the teachers and principal much easier.
- Learners, if given the chance, are an important resource that can help the school to develop.



Quality Education: Our shared responsibility!

Edu	An animated learner character who speaks to learners and encourages them to do things that will make them happy, healthy and perform well in school.
Barriers to learning	Things that stand in the way of a child being able to learn effectively, such as bullying, corporal punishment, poverty, drugs, alcohol, lack of a library.
Brainstorming	A group discussion on ideas and issues, aimed at producing results.
Bi-election	An election to fill an Edu Circle position that becomes vacant due to the departure of a member during a term of office.
Candidate	A learner seeking election onto the Edu Circle.
Charities	Organisations set up to help people in need without making any profit.
Charter	A document drawn up by the school to guide the establishment and operation of its Edu Circle. It is collectively signed, owned and observed by all stakeholders at the school, and all of them have access to it. It must be displayed in public spaces in the school, and can be made available to individual stakeholders upon request and where convenient.
Community dialogue	Interactive engagement and communication between an Edu Circle and members of the community to jointly find solutions to challenges facing the school.
Mentor	A teacher at the school who guides the Edu Circle and coordinates its activities. This teacher is chosen by learners or by school management in consultation with learners.
Mind map	A diagram used to represent information. The central idea is placed in the middle and related ideas are joined to the central idea with arrows or lines. It is often the result of brainstorming.
National standards and performance indicators	Government standards that determine how schools should function.
Problem Tree	A graphic tree that stakeholders use to identify problems facing learners at the school. The main problems are written on the main branches and the consequences of those problems are written on connected twigs. Its direct opposite is the Solution Tree, on which proposed solutions to the problems are represented.
Quorum/quorate	The minimum number of office holders (normally 50%) who must be present for a meeting. If fewer than this number are present, the meeting cannot be held. For Edu Circles meetings, at least 50% of the members must attend. In other words, if more than half of the members do not turn up, the meeting cannot take place.
Role model	A person looked up to by others as a good example to be imitated.
Stakeholder	A person, organisation, community or other entity with an interest in the school's activities, examples being learners, teachers, parents, businesses, churches and NGOs.
Social bond	Strong ties and good relationships between and among stakeholders in the school.
Social entrepreneurship	The implementation of solutions to social problems facing learners in a school and community.

Introduction



The Kit

This Kit is designed for the training of learners who have been elected to their school's Edu Circle, as well as the learners in the LRC and the prefects. It is a resource that should guide the establishment and operation of the Edu Circle(s) in your school, and is designed to be easy to use.

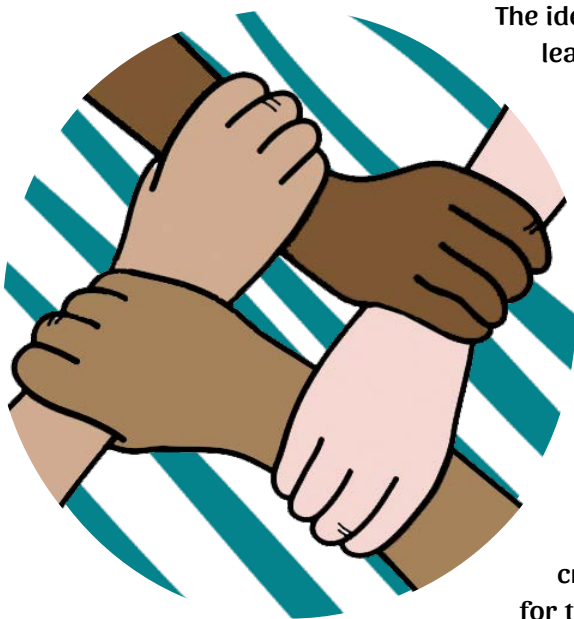
Background to Edu Circles

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) wants to encourage learners to be involved in the governance of their school. Learners being involved in school governance processes is part of the Social Accountability and School Governance (SASG) Programme.

The SASG aims to increase parental, community and private sector engagement with schools, so that all take responsibility for making sure that all learners are taught well and learn. A key pillar of the SASG is strengthening learners' capacity to meaningfully participate in school governance.

Through engagement in school activities under the motto "*Do Like Edu*", learners are encouraged to effectively participate in the decision-making processes in their school. Edu is an animated learner character who encourages schools to establish Edu Circles and promotes the "*Do Like Edu*" platform (see <http://dolikeedu.mobi/>) for learners to live happier lives and do better in school.

An Edu Circle is a group of learners who meet regularly to talk about issues that affect their ability to learn and participate in school activities.



The idea of Edu Circles came from the realisation that many learners have both the ability and passion to contribute to making their school a better school.

Edu Circles are encouraged to take what Edu calls the "**10 Steps to Success**", and to encourage the other learners to do the same. These 10 steps have proved likely to make learners *happy and healthy, and better able to learn*.

DREAM ◊ **THINK** ◊ **READ** ◊ **LISTEN** ◊ **SPEAK**
◊ **CARE** ◊ **PLANT** ◊ **MOVE** ◊ **CLEAN** ◊ **PLAY**.

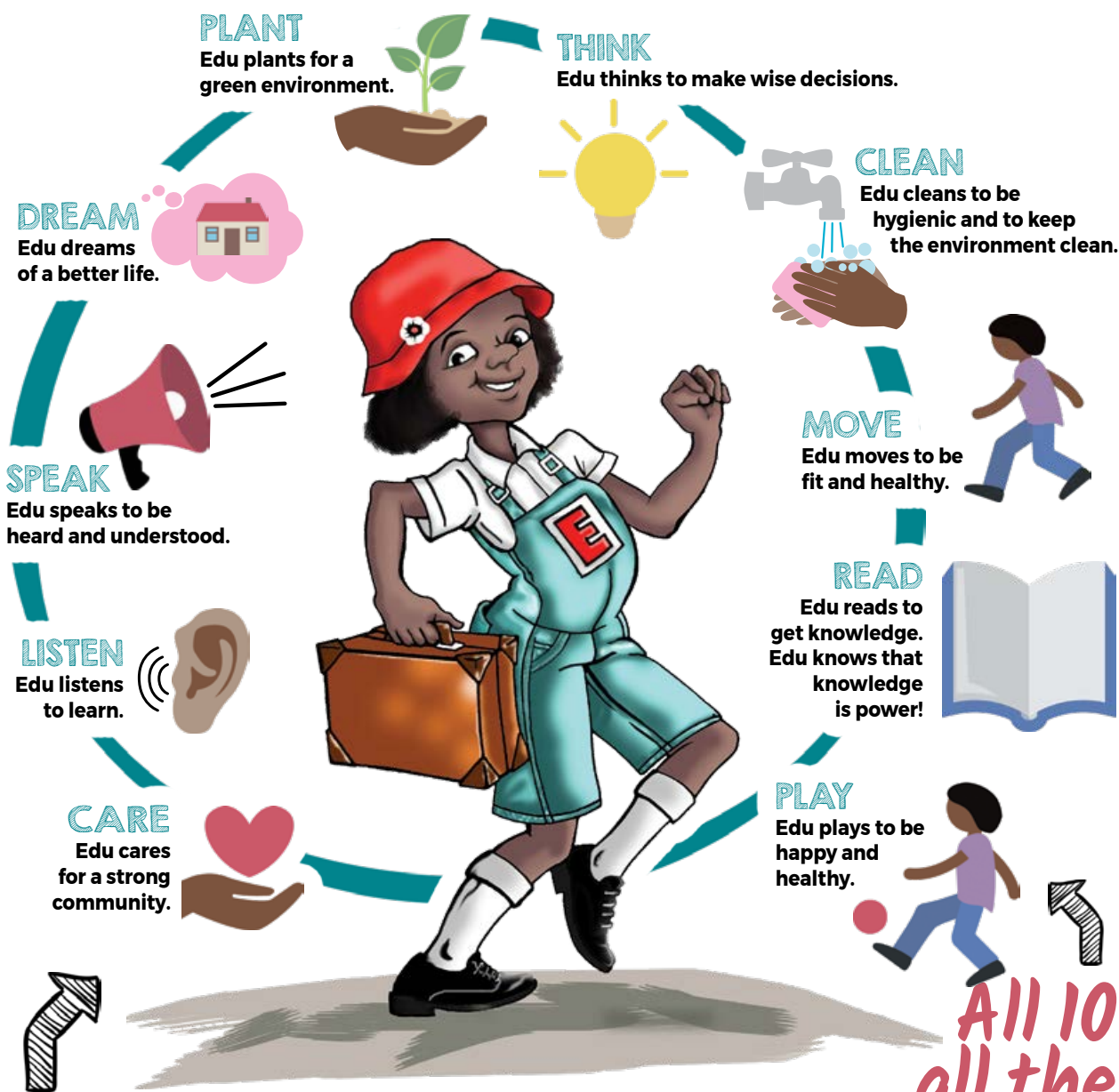
These 10 steps will help the Edu Circle members to grow in confidence and to play an active role in creating a healthier and happier schooling environment for themselves and others.

Join Edu in making Namibia's schools great!



Start Caring

Take 10 steps



10 steps to success

All 10
all the
time



What is an Edu Circle?

Now, let's talk about what an Edu Circle is.

An Edu Circle is ...

- a committee of learners which increases learner involvement in problem-solving, decision-making and, more broadly, in the governance and leadership of the school;
- elected by the learners as a true representation of the learner body in the school.

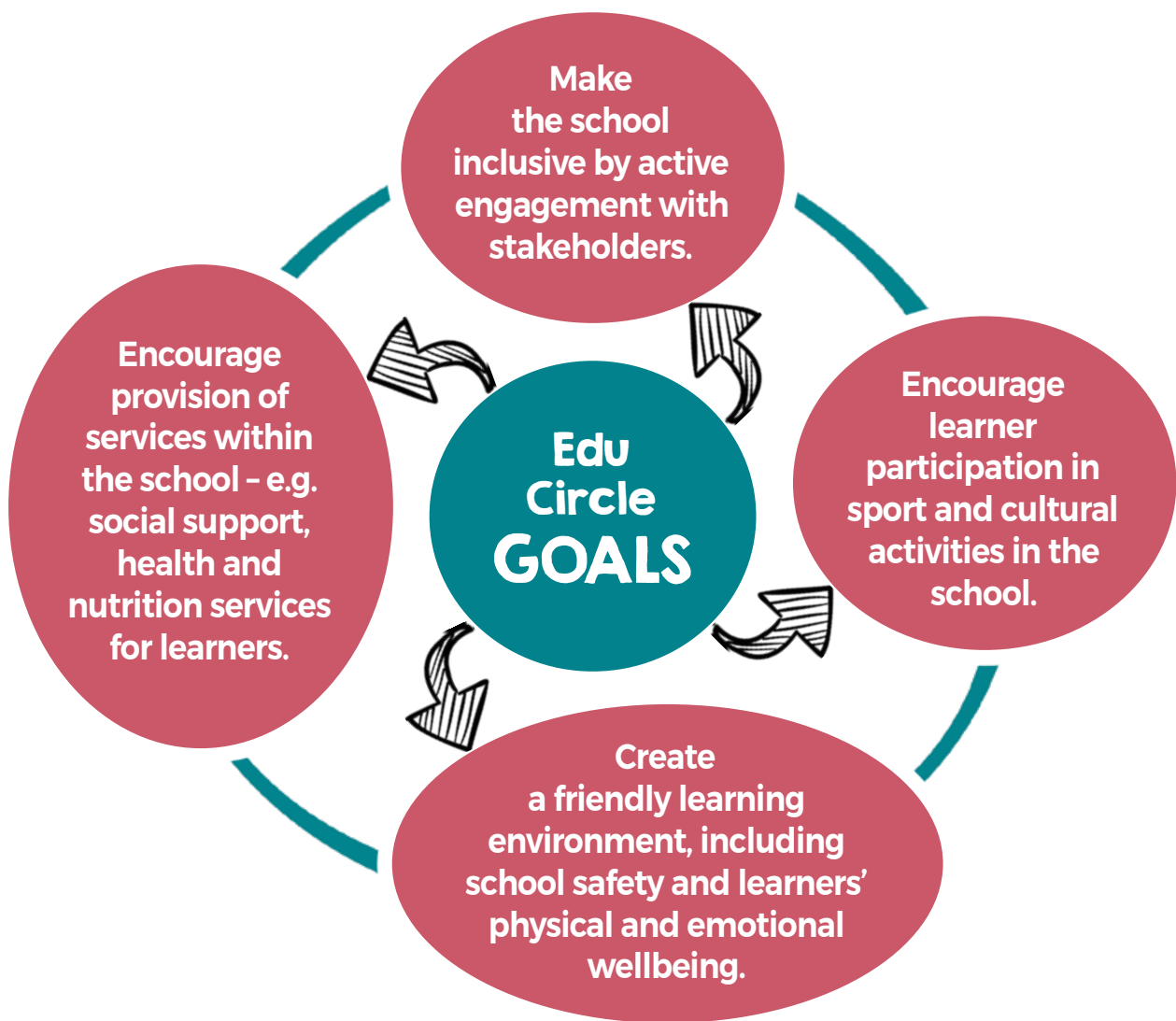
The Circle aims to ...

- provide the learners with a platform for meaningful involvement in school decision-making processes; and
- empower learner-driven school improvement programmes.

The Circle's objectives are to ...

- have empowered learners who are able to pro-actively improve their schools;
- strengthen social bonds and accountability to the benefit of the school and all learners; and
- eliminate social barriers that negatively impact on learners.

But, what is your Edu Circle meant to do in your school?
Let's look at what you are expected to do in your Edu Circle and school.



Where does the Edu Circle fit within the system?

Edu Circles are made up of learners who want to make their school a better place. Your school's Edu Circle should not stand alone. It should link to the LRC, school clubs and other programmes in your school.

What the Edu Circle is, and what it is not

The Edu Circle **IS**:

- a group of learners who are elected by and accountable to the learners in the school;
- a structure through which learners can find a voice in the school; and
- a way to solve a problem.

The Edu Circle **IS NOT**:

- in competition with the LRC, prefects or School Board - it supports and adds to the work of these structures; or
- a structure that can be used to upset the principal or teachers, or School Board or LRC.



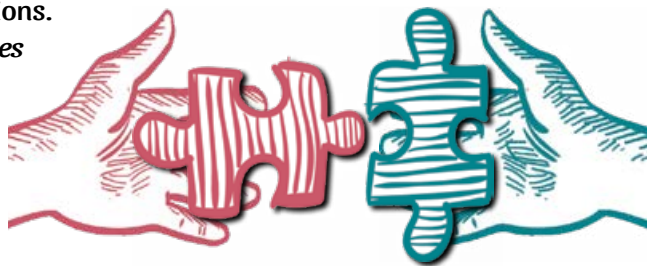
Role of the Edu Circle

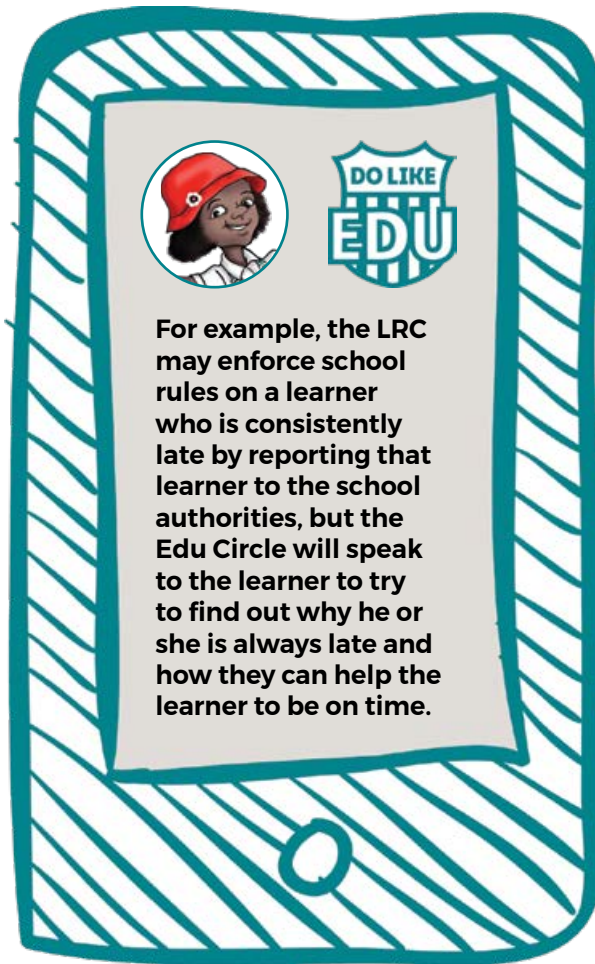
A question you might be asking is, “*but isn’t that the role of the LRC or our prefects and head boy and head girl?*” The table below shows the differences between the LRC and the Edu Circle in a school which has both.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE LRC AND THE EDU CIRCLE	
Role of LRC	Role of Edu Circle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Serve the best interest of both school and learners. ● Be the bond between learners and school management. ● Help enforce school rules. ● Provide sport, cultural and social activities for learners. ● Improve learners’ health and welfare. ● Perform tasks that the principal asks it to perform. ● Establish and give tasks to sub-committees led by LRC members. ● Improve and maintain the school environment and facilities. ● Promote school-cleaning campaigns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make sure that learners enjoy their rights. ● “Do Like Edu” by identifying problems that affect learners, both at school and in the community - e.g. an unclean environment, bullying, learning spaces and resources. ● Establish learners’ clubs like study groups and groups for debates, cultural activities and campaigns. ● Campaign for projects that deal with the needs of learners. ● Speak to the school stakeholders in the interest of learners. ● Help to improve and maintain the school environment and facilities. ● Provide sport, cultural and social activities for the learners. ● Improve learners’ health and welfare. ● Help learners to understand and follow school rules.

You will have noticed these three main differences:

1. LRCs have a more traditional role in the schools, including supporting teachers on issues of lateness and discipline.
2. The way that the Edu Circle meets and the sorts of things it discusses, with a focus on solving problems that learners face in school, mean that it works differently to the LRC.
3. The LRC and Edu Circle have overlapping functions. Both “*Provide sport, cultural and social activities for learners*” and “*Improve the health and welfare of learners*”. This does not mean that the two are competing and can’t work together. They should collaborate when planning and carrying out these functions.





So, although they do some of the same things, they have different ways of doing those things. The LRC is focused mainly on maintaining order and discipline so that the school runs smoothly, while the Edu Circle is more interested in the learners' rights and wellbeing, and increasing learner participation in decision-making.

Even though the two groups play different roles and focuses, the Edu Circle could be part of the LRC. One way to join the two is to make the Edu Circle a sub-committee of the LRC. This means that some LRC members will be members of the Edu Circle. Otherwise, they can remain separate but meet regularly to help each other to solve the challenges faced at the school. You, the Edu Circle members, together with the managers of your school, should decide what works best for your school.

Now we'll look in detail at the sorts of things that the Edu Circle should do. Overall, you are:

- 1) *identifying issues* in your community which prevent learners from learning properly;
- 2) *voicing your concern* about these issues; and
- 3) *developing programmes* to address the issues.



What are the activities of Edu Circles?

Edu Circles perform a lot of activities, which are informed by the challenges that learners at the school face. These are broadly represented below as *Categories of Activity*, *Practical Activities* and the *Calendar of Activities*. Note that the lists are not exhaustive, so you can add as many more as your school needs.



Practical activities for your Edu Circle

There are a number of practical activities to make the categories presented above come to life. The information below is just an example. Your Edu Circle will decide on the kind of activities you want to do.

Fundraising

- Fundraise by washing teachers' and community members' cars. You could do this once every term.
- Run extracurricular activities such as sport and cultural events, and set up stalls where Edu Circle members sell awareness bracelets, ribbons, badges, etc.
- Hold a Valentine's Day raffle, and sell valentine cards - which may be made by learners.
- "Brick" fundraising where members of the community are asked to donate a brick or a monetary equivalent towards building a structure that the school may need.
- Hold "Bring and Buy" sales where learners and community members can sell their unwanted possessions. You could charge a small fee for each person who wants a stall.

Motivation by role models

- Invite 'Edu' to perform at the school.
- Invite local health professionals to the school to talk to learners about comprehensive sexuality education, gender-based violence, relationships, caring, etc.
- Invite local policemen/women to come and talk about substance abuse and crime and how to prevent these, and your responsibilities as community members.
- Invite a successful and respected person (preferably young, so learners can relate to his/her life story) to talk about having a positive lifestyle and your potential as a young people in Namibia.

Events

- Organise events and activities for commemoration days such as Independence Day, the Day of the African Child and International Human Rights Day - see the next page for more ideas.
- Organise activities for international calendar days such as World Water Day, World Environmental Day, World Health Day, World Aids Day and Valentine's Day.
- Organise school dances, dramas, poetry, debates, story-telling sessions, comedy shows, etc. For these you could raise funds by charging a small entrance fee.

Calendar of events and activities

Your Edu Circle should draw up a calendar of events and activities to be undertaken for national and international days, commemorations and other celebrations. Use the table on the next page as an example. You can identify as many special occasions as you like. Then prioritise those that you would be able to do something for during your term.

The plan should be discussed with school stakeholders for approval and support.

The calendar forms part of your annual programme of activities.



Benefits of being in your school's Edu Circle

Are you wondering if there are any benefits to being part of the Edu Circle? Yes, there are MANY:

Membership of an Edu Circle ...

- boosts confidence, critical thinking and self-esteem;
- promotes a sense of responsibility, honour and service among learners;
- develops leadership qualities and social entrepreneurship;
- builds a body of conscious and responsive learners;
- builds community confidence in learners' ability to solve problems;
- builds a sense of community with the other learners in the Edu Circle;
- changes people's perception of learners as problem-bearers and problem-makers to problem-solvers.
- is fun and rewarding!

EDU CIRCLE CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Event	Date	Activity
Valentine's Day	14 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get learners to write valentine cards to their teachers, peers, members of the family and any other person they care about. ● Organise competitions for the most beautiful cards. Some of the cards may be sold during events that involve fundraising. ● Organise meetings and invite social workers, NGOs or people recognised in the community to come and talk about child-friendly schools, caring communities, responsible sexual relationships, etc.
Independence Day	21 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobilise learners to make national flags and distribute to locals as a symbol of national civic duty. On the flags, they can write messages about the rights of children
World Water Day	22 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that there is a talk on the importance of water during the school assembly ● Mobilise learners to sign a 'declaration' to use water sparingly
World Health Day	7 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organise health talks in schools: invite health professionals or NGOs to come and talk about sexual health, substance abuse, hygiene, nutrition and environmental health. ● Ask the local clinic and businesses to donate and distribute sanitary towels for girls.
Africa Month Africa Day	1-31 May 25 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organise performance arts and creative arts exhibitions and encourage learners to wear traditional costumes. ● Organise movies that tell Africa's stories, for showing in the afternoons after school. You could charge a small fee for learners to watch.
World Environment Day	5 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organise a cleaning campaign in the school and community. ● Show videos about environmental problems such as pollution, single-use plastic waste, degradation and desertification.
International Day of the African Child	16 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organise movies that tell stories about African children. ● Organise art exhibitions. ● Organise story-telling and debating events or competitions.
Arbour Week	1-7 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start an "Each Learner Plants a Tree Campaign." This could involve the school planting a number of trees, or encouraging every learner to plant at least one tree at home with their family.
Global Handwashing Day	15 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobilise learners to wash their hands using soap. ● Create posters that would promote handwashing at their school.
World Aids Day	1 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite NGO/local health professionals to advise learners and to provide promotional materials such as posters. ● Encourage learners to write postcards bearing AIDS messages.
International Human Rights Day	10 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show videos of historical tragedies such as the massacre of Herero and Nama people between 1904 and 1908, and videos of the liberation war. ● Show videos about child rights, child soldiers and slavery. ● Organise story-telling sessions.



Setting up your school's Edu Circle

Now that you know what an Edu Circle is all about, you will probably want to set one up in your school. This section tells you how to do this.

How do you
set up an
Edu Circle at
your school?

Before you get started, you need to know what issues you want to try to fix in your school. To find out what are the main issues, you should have a meeting with the different stakeholders in the school, such as teachers, learners and parents.

What is a
stakeholder?

The term 'stakeholder' means all people who have an interest in school education and an interest in the success and wellbeing of the learners in your school. Stakeholders have an important role to play in improving the learning in your school. So, it is important to recognise them and the help they can offer. This can make a big difference in improving your school.

The first step in setting up an Edu Circle is to work out who its stakeholders will be – a task called a '**stakeholder analysis**'. This analysis will map out and help you to understand who you can work with in the school to improve the school, and who you should partner with in the community for your school-improvement endeavours. There are different ways to do this analysis. One way is a **mind map** and another way is a **table**. Examples are provided on the next page to guide you.

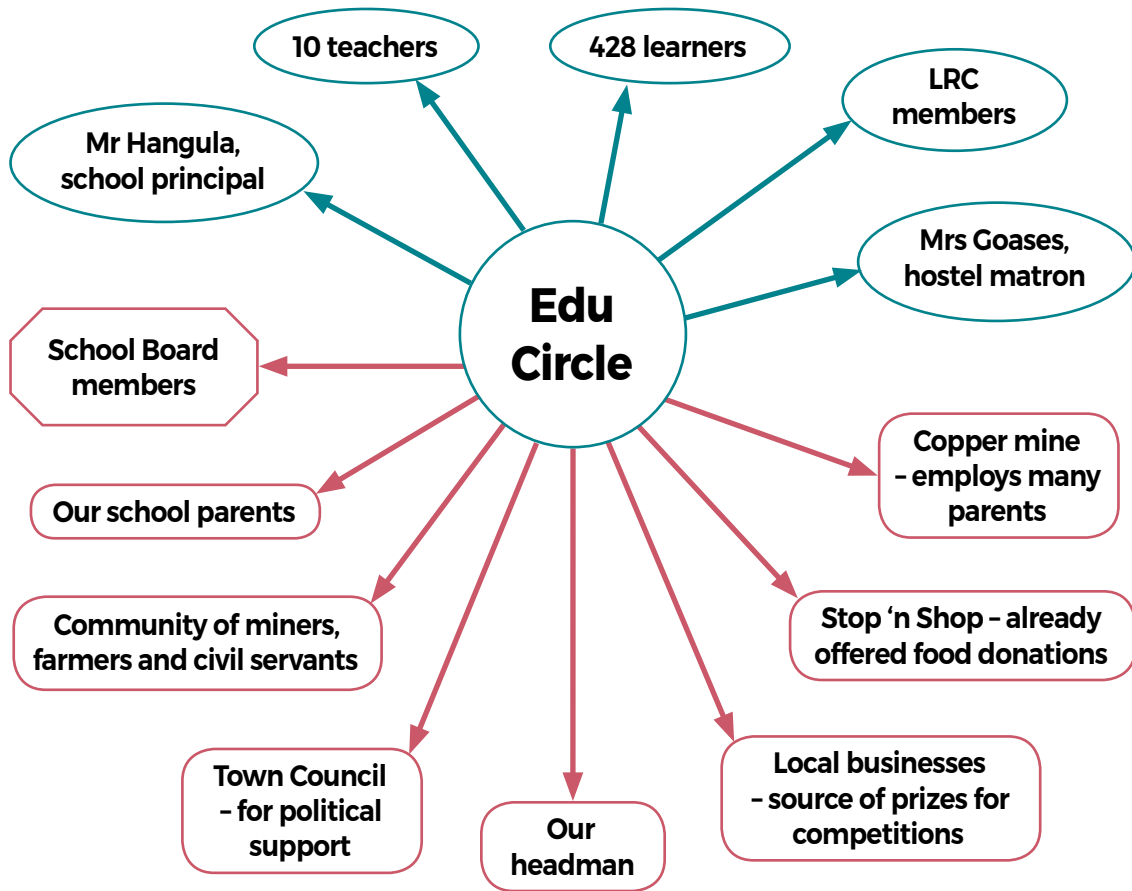
Mind map

Think about who the stakeholders of your school's Edu Circle could be. In your group, on a large sheet of paper, write the heading of your mind map at the top, "Edu Circle" in the centre, and the stakeholders around the centre, using the top part of the map for the stakeholders in the school, and the bottom part for those in the community. Draw lines out from the centre to each stakeholder. Your map should look something like our example for a pretend school named Omeya School.

Table

Draw a table like our example on the right. In the top row of each column, write the key stakeholder categories, then list the key stakeholders in each category. There may be some overlap, with some stakeholders being in more than one category. You will end up with something like our example.

Omeya School Edu Circle Stakeholder Mind Map



CATEGORIES AND LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS	GOVERNMENT	SCHOOL	COMMUNITY	PROGRAMMES
	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture	School Board	Local Businesses	<i>Star for Life</i> <i>My Future My Choice</i> etc.
	Regional Officials	LRC	Local Charities	Sports
	Cluster-level	School Manager	Local church/mosque	Clubs
	Regional Education Forum	Teachers	Local Council	
	Other Ministries	Clubs	Traditional Leaders	
Unions				
Professional Associations				
Parents				
		Youth organisations		

Now that you have identified the stakeholders of your school's Edu Circle, you might be wondering what their roles and responsibilities are. Here is a brief explanation of what is expected of them:

Learners

All learners in the school have the right to approach members of the Edu Circle to help resolve issues which are stopping them studying properly. This could be for many reasons, such as lack of textbooks, being the victim of bullying, a particular teacher appears to be victimising certain learners, or some problem outside the school, such as noise from the shebeen or drug pushers at the school gates.

LRC Members

In secondary schools, the Edu Circle needs to define its role in relation to the LRC, so that they support each other and don't duplicate activities or fight! The Edu Circle could even become a sub-committee of the LRC to reduce conflict or overlap.

School Management

The principal and other school managers should create space for the Edu Circle to be elected freely and operate freely. They can advise it and ask for support, but they cannot try to control its work.

Teachers

All teachers have the right to know about the school Edu Circle, and all should know which learners were elected to the Edu Circle. Teachers DO NOT have the right to control or influence the elections for the Edu Circle. Once elected, the teachers can approach the Edu Circle with concerns about the barriers they face in their teaching and barriers that their learners face. The Edu Circle should try to solve these problems with the school authorities.

School Board

The members should be made aware of the Edu Circle, the responsibilities it has and how they can help it. They should be ready to assist the Edu Circle to solve problems it has identified, when an Edu Circle member or school management ask them to help. The Edu Circle should meet with the learner representatives on the School Board (in secondary schools), and make use of this representative to take issues to the Board.

Community Members

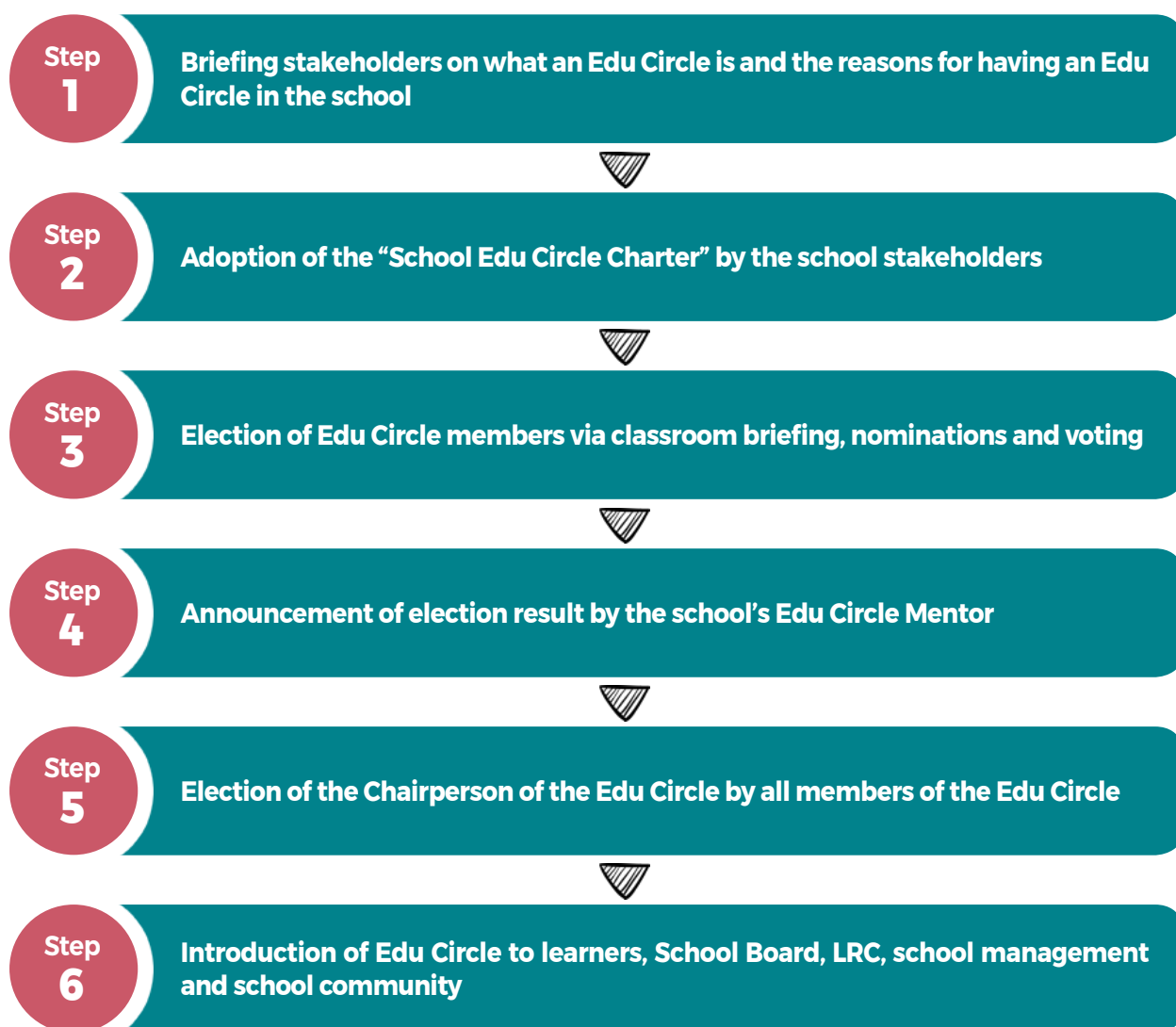
The community in which the school is situated should be aware of the Edu Circle and its responsibilities. This should include the parents of the learners as well as local business. Community members should be ready to assist the Edu Circle to solve problems it has identified, when an Edu Circle member asks them to help. School management should introduce Edu Circles to the community members through parent meetings and school events.

All of the stakeholders that you have identified need to be informed about the Edu Circle and what its responsibilities are. This can be done in different ways:

1. Announcement and introduction of Edu Circle in school assembly.
2. Teachers should be informed during staff meetings.
3. Holding a meeting or an event with the parents and the community members, in which members of the Edu Circle can be introduced. This is often best done as part of a bigger meeting between the school and the parents and community members. In this meeting, the parents and community members must also be informed about the rights and responsibilities of the Edu Circle.
4. A newsletter informing the parents.
5. 'Word of mouth', which means spreading the message through established local community channels. For example, learners and community members conveying messages to their fellow residents.
6. A WhatsApp group and/or similar social media platforms.

Step-by-step process for establishing an Edu Circle

As Edu Circle members, you are expected to play a leading role in keeping the Circle and its activities going. To play this role, you need to know how Edu Circles are set up. This diagram shows you how:



STEP 1. Briefing the Stakeholders

Your Regional Education Office or your school will inform the existing stakeholders in your community about the Edu Circle and the Social Accountability and School Governance (SASG) Programme before the Edu Circle is set up, to get all members of the school community to support it. They will need to understand what the Edu Circle is for before they can give their support.

It is also important that you tell your parents and guardians about the Edu Circle, and tell them that the main purposes of Edu Circles are to 'give learners a voice' and to encourage learners to take responsibility for solving some of the problems in the schools.

If your school's LRC or prefects are already doing some of the things that the Edu Circle will be doing, then your school's management will decide how the two groups will work together, or will split tasks between them to avoid confusion. Stakeholders can and should help you to shape the way that the Edu Circle is established in your school.

STEP 2. Developing and adopting an 'Edu Circle Charter'

Your school should have an 'Edu Circle Charter' which describes how the school will set up its Edu Circle and how the Edu Circle will operate. An example of an Edu Circle Charter is provided at the back of this Kit. You can use this example to help your school to develop a Charter that suits the school's own needs. The content of the Charter should be clear, and the Charter should be inclusive (meaning it should not leave anyone out or be only for the benefit of a few). The Charter should be supported by posters and leaflets, and any other materials that your school might want to develop and use.

You can be quite flexible in deciding what to include in your Edu Circle Charter. Only the following 5 points **MUST** be included:

- Members of the Edu Circle must be elected and not selected.
- No teacher or non-learner has a vote in determining who will be in the Edu Circle.
- When any learner leaves the Edu Circle, his/her place must be filled by a learner from the same grade and of the same sex as quickly as possible.
- The Edu Circle must meet at least twice every month.
- The Edu Circle must focus on challenges that learners are facing in their schooling – not only classroom performance challenges but all kinds of challenges.

The Charter should explain the structure (composition) and the election of an Edu Circle. Before the Charter-drafting process starts, the Edu Circle Mentor should explain the nomination and election procedure so that the drafters clearly understand it.

Let's look now at the structure and election of an Edu Circle:

- **Structure (composition) of an Edu Circle**

In secondary schools, an Edu Circle should have 8 members, with each of the 4 grades (Grades 8 to 11) represented by 2 learners – 1 boy and 1 girl. If there is more than 1 class per grade, then all of the classes should come together to nominate and elect 1 boy and 1 girl to represent the whole grade group. For example, Grade 9a, Grade 9b and Grade 9c would together elect 1 girl and 1 boy to represent all three classes.

However, with the new curriculum, junior secondary schools (Grades 8-9) and senior secondary schools (Grades 10-11) will need to set up their Edu Circle in a way that makes sense for the size of the school. This could mean having 4 members (2 boys, 2 girls) per grade, which still makes an Edu Circle of 8 members.

Primary schools should have 2 learners (boy and girl) for each grade from Grade 4 to Grade 7 as members of the Edu Circle. This would also make an Edu Circle of 8 members.

Combined schools can go for different options. Either you could have two Edu Circles – one for the primary grades (4-7) and one for the secondary grades (8-10) – or you could have just one Edu Circle for the whole school from Grades 4 to 10. The single Edu Circle would be large, with 14 members, which is not ideal.

- **Eligibility for election to the Edu Circle**

Whatever the type of school, all learners from Grades 4 to 12 should be eligible for election to the Edu Circle – including LRC members. Members who served in the outgoing Edu Circle from the previous year can also be elected to the new Edu Circle. We suggest that any learner can be elected for only two terms of office, to give other learners a chance.

- **Term of office of Edu Circle members**

Members should be elected every year, at the beginning of the school calendar year.

STEP 3. Election procedure

1. Nominating and volunteering

Each class must nominate a certain number of learners for the Edu Circle. Then the grade selects one girl and one boy from those nominated to represent the grade on the Edu Circle. Nominees may accept or refuse the nomination. In the event that all nominees refuse, at least four interested learners may be invited to volunteer by a show of hand. Then the grade chooses between these volunteers. If this doesn't work, the school may consider other forms of democratic process which suit your context. The one '*golden rule*' is that the members of the Edu Circle must NOT be selected by teachers or the principal. Also, learners should not be forced into Edu Circles, if they are not participating willingly, there will be no benefit for them and the learners they represent.

2. Voting

Round 1: Voting for class candidates (per class)

Learners will vote for 2 members (1 boy, 1 girl) per class. If there is only one class per grade, then the boy and girl who get the most votes are automatically elected to the Edu Circle. The Edu Circle Mentor should quickly and transparently (openly, in front of everyone) count the votes and announce the results in each class. If there is more than one class in the grade, the top male and female candidates in each class automatically qualify for grade-level voting.

Round 2: Voting for grade representatives (in the Edu Circle)

All representatives of classes will convene to elect the two grade representatives. The successful candidates will vote for, or discuss among themselves and propose, two representatives (boy and girl) to represent the grade in the Edu Circle.

3. Election of the chairperson and deputy

The Mentor should help the newly elected members of the Edu Circle to hold a meeting immediately. In this meeting, the members should elect the Edu Circle Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson. They could nominate at least four members to contest for these positions. *Your school may consider a different number of nominees.* Secret voting will then begin, and the nominees for the two positions should be eligible to vote. The two candidates who obtain the two highest numbers of votes become the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson respectively. LRC members elected to the Edu Circle are eligible to vote, but LRC members *cannot BE* the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.

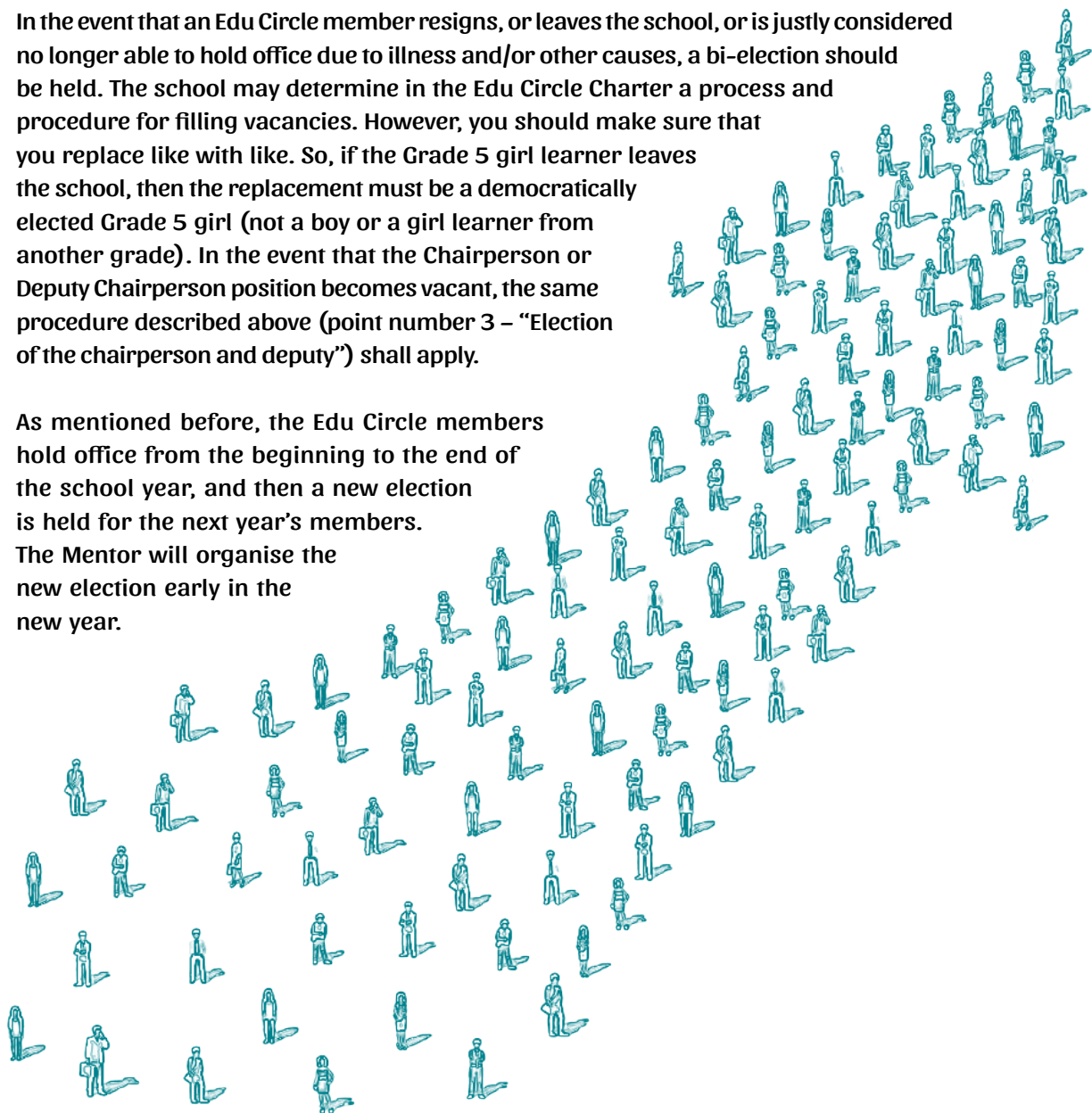
4. Introduction of the Edu Circle to Stakeholders

The school management will introduce the newly elected Edu Circle to your school community.

5. Replacing members of the Edu Circle

In the event that an Edu Circle member resigns, or leaves the school, or is justly considered no longer able to hold office due to illness and/or other causes, a bi-election should be held. The school may determine in the Edu Circle Charter a process and procedure for filling vacancies. However, you should make sure that you replace like with like. So, if the Grade 5 girl learner leaves the school, then the replacement must be a democratically elected Grade 5 girl (not a boy or a girl learner from another grade). In the event that the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson position becomes vacant, the same procedure described above (point number 3 – “Election of the chairperson and deputy”) shall apply.

As mentioned before, the Edu Circle members hold office from the beginning to the end of the school year, and then a new election is held for the next year’s members. The Mentor will organise the new election early in the new year.





Identifying an Edu Circle Teacher-Mentor in your school

Edu Circles work much better if guided by a teacher who is committed to the idea of learner involvement in school governance and solving problems faced in the school. Not every teacher is strongly committed to learners playing such a role, and not every teacher is prepared to assist learners to do so. We call a teacher who has this commitment an “Edu Circle Mentor”, or simply “the Mentor”.

The school management nominates the Mentor, but before this happens, the management should clearly explain to the Edu Circle what the role of the Mentor is, and the Edu Circle should be given the opportunity to choose their preferred teacher.

The teacher preferred by the Edu Circle does not have to agree to being the Mentor. If that teacher is not available for the task, the management should let the Edu Circle know this, and should then propose an alternative approach, such as the one described below – which is the typical alternative approach.

The management team could ask the teachers who among them is willing to volunteer for the role of Mentor. Before any teacher is asked to volunteer, it is important that the role is made clear to all of the teachers, and that all understand the vision and purpose of the Edu Circle. No teacher can be forced to volunteer, because the Mentor HAS TO BE truly interested and committed.

The management should then tells the Edu Circle which teacher has volunteered, and allow for any discussion that the members might need to reach agreement. Once reached, the agreement must be confirmed with all stakeholders at the school.

What makes a good mentor? Edu tells you in the message on the right.





Consulting stakeholders

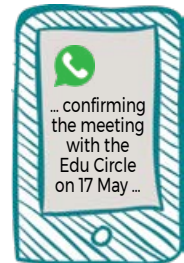
Now that your Edu Circle is set up, you can engage with learners in your school and with the local community. Edu Circle members need to tell both the learners and the community that the Edu Circle is there to make the school function better and to assist learners to reach their full potential, so any challenges that learners face should be brought to the Edu Circle. If the challenge involves the community, then the Edu Circle will meet with the community to help solve the problem. Meeting the community members may not be so easy, so here are some tips to help you.

Steps for consulting stakeholders

Your Edu Circle should follow these steps for all consultations with any of your stakeholders:

Dear Nurse Veld

We, the members of the Noordhoek Combined School Edu Circle, kindly request a meeting with you to take forward our partnership ideas. ...



Step
1

Have a clear plan for what the consultation is aiming to achieve.



Step
2

Make an appointment to meet the stakeholder - by letter, phone, email or word of mouth.



Step
3

Hold the meeting at a convenient time and in a convenient place for both the Edu Circle and the stakeholder.



Step
4

Have an agenda (a list of things that the members want to talk about) and a list of decisions that they want to take before going into the meeting.



Step
5

Record what has been agreed in the meeting, and send the stakeholder a copy of these decisions.

Agenda for meetings



As a member of an Edu Circle, you will be involved in many meetings – of the Edu Circle itself and with stakeholders. When you are meeting as an Edu Circle, you do not need a big agenda. Below on the left is an example of an agenda for an Edu Circle meeting, which you can change to make it suitable for your school. We recommend assigning names to each agenda item so that everyone knows what they are responsible for reporting on.

Meetings with stakeholders are more formal, so be very sure of what you want to talk about, and be sure to keep a record of what was said. An agenda for such a meeting could look like the second example below.

If you find the task of setting an agenda a bit too much to handle, your Mentor will help you.

Noordhoek Combined School Edu Circle Meeting Agenda

Date of meeting:

Present:

(List of the members present)

Agenda:

1. Welcome (Chairperson)
2. What did we decide last meeting? (Anna)
3. Have we implemented those decisions? If so, how? (John)
4. What new things must we discuss?
 - a. Valentine's Day anti-GBV campaign (Mary)

Agenda for Noordhoek Combined School Edu Circle Meeting with Mrs Veld, Nurse at Tsumeb Clinic

Date of meeting:

Present: (List of the people present)

Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Why did we call the meeting? (Make a separate list of the things you want to find out from the nurse and decisions you want her to take. Do not share this list with the nurse!)
3. Brief explanation of what the Edu Circle does
4. Services we need from the clinic
5. Action points and time frames
6. Way forward

After each meeting, the member who has taken notes (a task that all members should share, with a different 'secretary' for each meeting) should write a brief record (called 'minutes') of the meeting, stating the date, who was present, what actions were agreed on, and when the next meeting will be held. The minutes of all meetings should be kept in a file. It is also good practice to send the people with whom you met a brief email or SMS/WhatsApp message thanking them for meeting with you and saying what you agreed and when the agreed actions will be taken. This ensures that later there is a record of the meeting and what was agreed. People are more likely to do what they said they would do if they know it was recorded.



What should your Edu Circle focus on?

The Edu Circle is meant to help the school to address challenges and solve problems that prevent learners from gaining the full benefits of schooling, and which prevent learning. It is also meant to undertake activities that improve the school experience for all learners. There are many ways to find out what challenges learners face and what the Edu Circle can do to address those challenges to help the learners. You should have a way to both collect and analyse information and ideas to ensure that you identify and also find solutions to the challenges. This can be done through a single process or by separating the identification and analysis into two activities. Here are two ideas:



SUGGESTION BOX

Place a box where it is accessible to all learners. Make sure its top is closed, with just enough space for the learners to put pieces of paper into it, but too small to pull the papers out, so that the suggestions put into the box cannot be removed, except by the Edu Circle members. The learners should be told about the box at assembly, and should be encouraged to post suggestions of things that they want the Edu Circle to assist with. Learners should be told that when they ask the Edu Circle to do something, they must explain how this problem is stopping them working properly. It is a good idea to provide an example when presenting this. You could say, *“One problem could be lack of a maths teacher for Grade 8s, the effect of which is that Grade 8s will fall behind in their maths,”* or *“bullying of younger learners by older learners leads to the younger learners being afraid to come to school and being unable to concentrate in school.”*

BRAINSTORM

The Edu Circle (and if possible the LRC) should meet, and list on paper all the challenges that they know learners face in attending and doing well at the school. Once all the challenges have been listed, their impacts should be written alongside them. It is best to do this as a diagram on flip-chart paper, if possible. Give everyone in the Edu Circle (and LRC) a chance to have their ideas heard. Note all the ideas, discuss each one, and then note down the ones you agree are the challenges that learners in your school experience.

How to use a Suggestion Box

In your Edu Circle’s first meeting, take all submissions out of the Suggestion Box. Use the information and ideas to list all challenges facing learners in the school, and to identify the roles of the different stakeholders. In schools which have an LRC, the Edu Circle could engage the LRC in brainstorming the list of challenges.

For the brainstorm, you can use the templates called “**Mapping Challenges – Form 1**” and “**Mapping Challenge – Form 2**” (see below and next page). Add as many challenges as necessary.

This brainstorm and mapping exercise should help your school to develop an Edu Circle programme and approach.

After identifying the challenges, the Edu Circle should pick two or three priorities to focus on during its year in office. This prioritisation helps to ensure that the impact of the Edu Circle is not diluted by too many focuses or by trying to do too much. These priorities can be selected based on the resources available and the skills of the Edu Circle learners, as well as the skills available in the community to assist in solving the problems. List the resources and skills in “**Mapping Challenge – Form 2**”.

NB: Your school may use a different approach to mapping the challenges, or may use these mapping templates with changed headings.

Mapping challenges

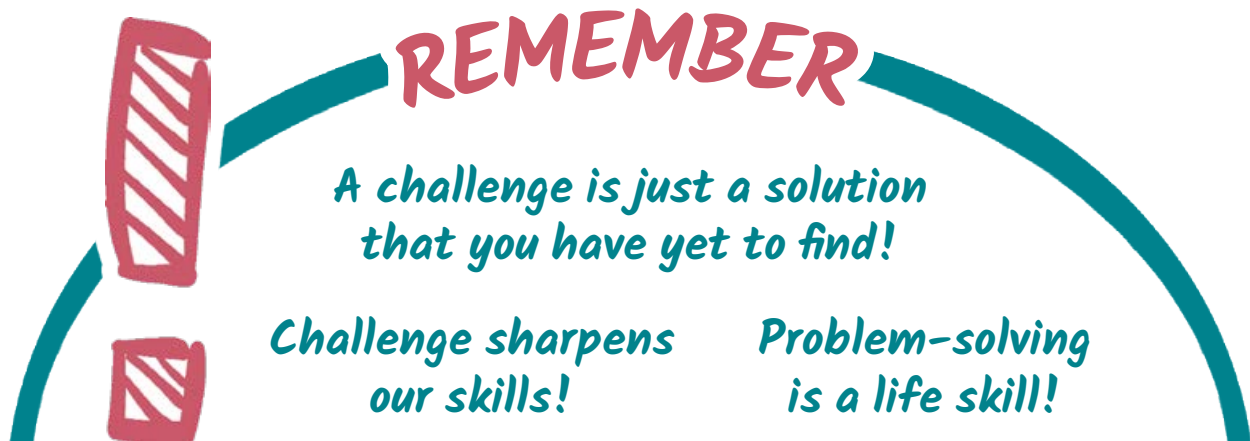
Mapping Challenges - Form I

Challenge	How does it affect learners?	What can be done to solve the problem?	What is the role of the Edu Circle?	What is the way forward?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Mapping Challenges - Form 2

Challenge	Actions required to solve problem	Responsible member of Edu Circle	Date for completion of action	Resources required	Stakeholders who can assist
1.	(i)				
	(ii)				
	(iii)				
2.	(i)				
	(ii)				
	(iii)				
3.	(i)				
	(ii)				
	(iii)				

Once you have decided which two or three challenges to prioritise, your main aim throughout your year in office should be to address these challenges (i.e. solve the problems). In addition, you should try to assist (within your capacity) any fellow learner who is facing a problem, as well as provide support to school clubs and other school activities which advance learning in the school.



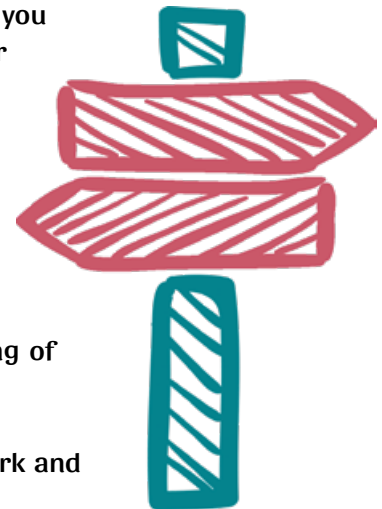


Training of Edu Circle members

The training of Edu Circle members should be tailor-made, so that you talk about and deal with issues that are common in the particular school and community. Therefore, the training provider must work with your school and other schools in your community to understand your school's context, culture and traditions, and who your stakeholders are.

The training should be informed by your needs as the Edu Circle members, and the needs of the school community as a whole. However, there are some general topics that should be covered in the training of all Edu Circles, as shown below.

The training should be interesting and exciting, with limited paperwork and presentations.



Elements required in training programmes for Edu Circle members

INTRODUCTION TO THE EDU CIRCLE			
What are Edu Circles?	What are the Edu Circle' roles and responsibilities?	In what ways are the Edu Circle and LRC different?	
▼			
KNOWING YOURSELF			
Knowing yourself - your character, strengths and weaknesses	Community awareness	Cultural awareness	
▼			
SCHOOL RULES			
School rules	Prevention of bullying and all forms of violence	Child rights	
▼			
SKILLS FOR EDU CIRCLE			
Communication skills and assertiveness	Stakeholder engagement and management	Public speaking	Negotiation skills

Know yourself and the school rules

The facilitator will distribute copies of the table below, and will explain to the Edu Circle members that this exercise is meant to help them to profile their personalities and promote their awareness about themselves, their community and culture.

The facilitator will give the following instructions:

1. Each learner must individually indicate the things they like or dislike by ticking the relevant box.
2. You cannot tick both 'LIKE' and 'DISLIKE' in the same row.
3. You can leave a box blank if you neither "LIKE" nor "DISLIKE" something, or do not consider something to be either a "STRENGTH" or a "WEAKNESS", but you should fill in as many as you can.
4. You can add items if you want, but all new items must relate to the 'personality test' idea of the exercise.
5. When the exercise is finished, you will divide into pairs to compare your answers with your partner.

You will have at least 10 minutes to tick all the boxes and discuss your answers with your partner. After the allocated time, the facilitator should invite two volunteers (boy and girl) to read out their partners' 'likes' and 'dislikes.' This should take 5 minutes at most. However, the time can be based on what the facilitator deems reasonable.

	ACTION / BEHAVIOUR / PRACTICE	LIKE / STRENGTH	DISLIKE / WEAKNESS
SELF-AWARENESS	Coming to school every day		
	Arriving at school on time		
	Doing all my homework		
	Meeting new people		
	Listening to other people		
	Helping other people		
	Telling people stories		
	Helping people who are sick		
	Sharing my food with other learners		
	Being with my family		
Eating in class			
COMMUNITY AWARENESS	The community is kept clean		
	Parents help to clean the school		
	People going to church/mosque		
	Teenagers are allowed in shebeens		
	Children do chores at home after school		
CULTURAL AWARENESS	Parents help their children do their homework		
	Girls clean and wash dishes at home		
	Boys look after cattle and goats		
	Parents give more money to girls		
	Parents give more money to boys		
Pregnant girls are allowed to go to school			

Planning for your school

The training facilitator will arrange the learners in small groups of five, depending on the size of the group being trained, and then will distribute copies of the table below. The facilitator will explain that the exercise is meant to help Edu Circle members to understand the importance of school rules and what they can do to promote their rights and a child-friendly learning environment. Learners must tick “AGREE” or “DISAGREE”, and where necessary, elaborate under the column headed “WHY?”. The facilitator must make it clear that this is an example which doesn’t necessarily say exactly what any particular school’s rules are. The exercise should take about 10 minutes to complete.

SCHOOL RULES	AGREE	DISAGREE	WHY?
Homework must be done every day when set.			
Girls are allowed to wear make-up.			
All children must wear the school uniform.			
Learners can drink and eat in the classroom.			
Learners must not destroy school property.			
Learners must be on time for classes and school activities.			
Learners can use their cellphones in class.			
Learners must not disrespect any person at school.			
Teachers and learners can smoke in school.			
Older children can take food from young ones.			
Teachers can beat children who don’t do their homework.			

After the allocated time, the facilitator will invite two volunteers (boy and girl) to report on the work of their respective groups. Not all groups should report. After this reporting, the facilitator must remind the group about the stakeholder engagement process, which includes talking to the principal, and making a presentation in an LRC meeting or a School Board meeting.



Communication and interactive ICT platforms

Running your school's Edu Circle without linking with learners doing the same thing in other schools can be lonely. Communication is at the heart of everything we do, and this is true for you and your Edu Circle. The more you communicate with learners in your own school and with Edu Circles in other schools, the more likely you are to run a successful Edu Circle.

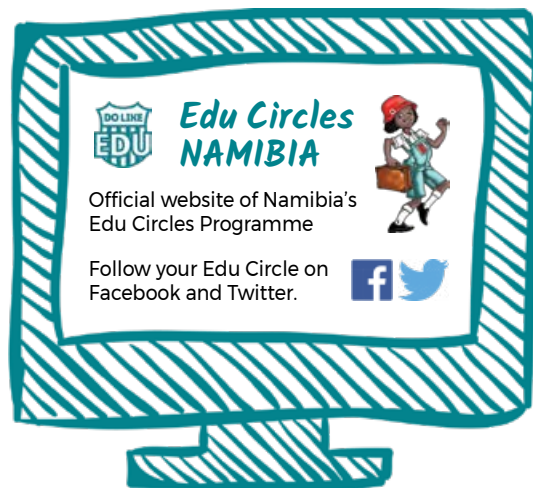
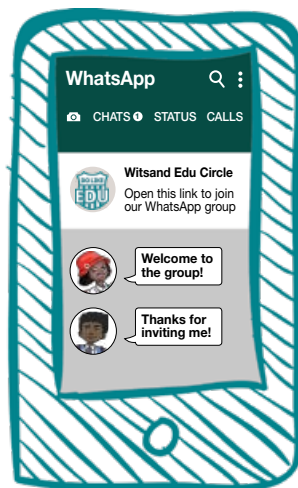
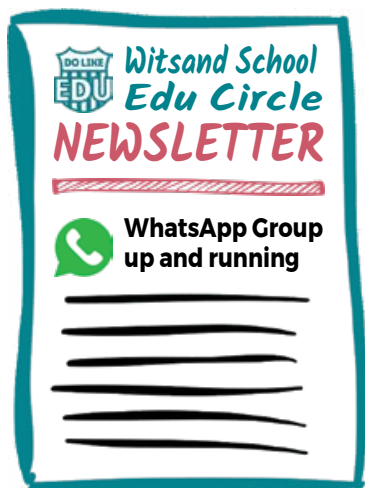
"ICT" stands for Information and Communication Technologies

- *But how can you communicate with members of Edu Circles in other schools?*
- *How can you ask the Regional Education Office for assistance if you need it?*
- *How can your Mentor get assistance with an Edu Circle challenge which she/he cannot solve?*

You have many options. You can use the platforms listed on the next page to share experiences, ideas and solutions to problems, and thereby build a network of activism across participating schools.

Should ICT resources be a challenge, work with your Mentor to come up with solutions that work for the Edu Circle and the school.





Newsletter

Does your school have a newsletter? If so, cover Edu Circle activities in the newsletter regularly. The newsletter should be circulated electronically to parents, community organisations, development partners and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). If your school doesn't have a newsletter, then why not set one up for the Edu Circle? It is sure to get other learners and your parents talking about what you are doing!

Email

You should set up your own Edu Circle email address which can be used by your school's learners to express their concerns for the Edu Circle to consider and for you to spread your voice and reach your stakeholders.

WhatsApp Group

If you have cellphones, you should set up a social network on whatever platform you like using most. A WhatsApp Group would work well. The WhatsApp Group could include Mentors in the region and the relevant regional MoEAC officials. The WhatsApp Group will facilitate communication between various Mentors and the regional officials. If you don't have access to cellphones, get your Mentor to link with other Edu Circles.

Facebook and Twitter accounts

The Regional Edu Circle Coordinator can open and manage a Facebook account and Twitter account. Interested learners should be encouraged to participate in these networks.

Website

The MoEAC might consider setting up an independent Edu Circle website, linked to relevant websites which can be accessed by all stakeholders, including learners. This can be linked to "Technology 4 Development" activities and the "Do Like Edu" online platform.

Get resources to inform and inspire!



Your Edu Circle may need sources of information and inspiration for carrying out some activities. Many materials of all kinds are available on the websites of the MoEAC, MGECW, MoHSS and many stakeholder organisations, and from the MoEAC National Resource Centre.

If you need guidance to resources that could help you in planning and organising a particular activity, ask your Mentor for a start.

For example, **ANTI-BULLYING POSTERS (2017) - set of 5 posters**



Selected materials produced by Edu Circles can be added to the national collection!



School Edu Circle Charter

Following is a **SAMPLE** Charter that Edu Circle stakeholders can use for drawing up their own Charter to suit the specific realities of their community.

EDU CIRCLE CHARTER

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

NAME OF CIRCUIT: _____

NAME OF REGION: _____

INTRODUCTION

We have adopted this Charter as a guide for the establishment and operation of an Edu Circle in our school. More importantly, this Charter provides a step-by-step roadmap for the election of our Edu Circle members, and the principles underpinning the procedure and process that we have adopted. Stakeholders involved in the development and adoption of this Charter have demonstrated huge interest in, and commitment to, the welfare of our children. All agree that this Charter brings us together to work as a collective towards the realisation of our goals.

This Charter is neither a policy nor a law, but rather it is a framework, which owes its conception to programmes being implemented by government, namely the Social Accountability and School Governance (SASG) Programme and the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP). This Charter provides a framework which is intended to support not only the Edu Circle but also the existing systems and processes in our school.

This Charter is not cast in stone, and shall be reviewed by all stakeholders annually to ensure that it remains relevant to the contextual realities of our community. This document has been contextualised so that it is correct for our school.

UNDERSTANDING OUR EDU CIRCLE

<p>An Edu Circle is ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a committee of learners which increases learner involvement in problem-solving, decision-making and, more broadly, in the school governance and leadership; • elected by the learners as a true representation of the learner body in the school.
<p>The Edu Circle aims to ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide the learners with a platform for meaningful learner involvement in school decision-making processes; and • empower learner-driven school improvement programmes.
<p>The Edu Circle's objectives are ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have empowered learners who are able to pro-actively improve their schools; • strengthen social bonds and accountability to the benefit of the school and all learners; and • eliminate social barriers that negatively impact on learners.

EDU CIRCLE GOALS

Our Edu Circle has four main goals:

1. To actively engage learners in the school and with stakeholders to advance learner interests and solve learner concerns.
2. To generate a friendly learning environment in which learners are safe and where their physical and emotional wellbeing are secure, so that they can achieve to the best of their abilities.
3. To provide, as part of the SASG, services within the school for the learners, such as health, nutrition and social support services.
4. To increase learner participation in sports and cultural activities in our school.

STRUCTURE OF THE EDU CIRCLE AT OUR SCHOOL

<p>Composition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Edu Circle is composed of learners from Grades __ to __. Each Grade elects two representatives – a boy and a girl.
<p>Election of Edu Circle members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members are elected by their peers without any external influence by the school authorities. The process is open and transparent, and all learners are encouraged to participate. • Our school elects its Edu Circle annually, at the beginning of each school year.
<p>Supervision and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Edu Circle is supervised by our Edu Circle Mentor – a teacher at the school who has volunteered his/her time and is supported by other teachers and management. • All of our school's stakeholders are receptive to the ideas presented by our Edu Circle and support the Edu Circle's activities.

OUR EDU CIRCLE STAKEHOLDERS

All of our local stakeholders have expressed their commitment to supporting activities of our Edu Circle. We are fully receptive to the stakeholders' ideas, and will act on them to ensure that they achieve the agreed goals. Our main stakeholders are ... (please compile your own list of stakeholders - even naming the people concerned if you want):

Local government and education governance structures	This includes the Regional Council, the Mayor, the Regional Governor and the Traditional Authorities.
Community structures	Businesses, individual professionals, faith-based organisations and faith-based centres (churches, mosques, etc.), NGOs, CBOs, charities, caregivers, ... <i>(school to add relevant ones).</i>
School-based stakeholders	Learners, LRC, Parents, Teachers, School Board, School Managers and Regional Education Forum (REF).
Government ministries	MoEAC: Head Office, Regional Education Directorate, School Inspectorate. Other ministries: Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) and Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW).

ELECTING OUR EDU CIRCLE

Step 1	Through established procedures at our school, the management will brief the stakeholders on what an Edu Circle is and the reasons for having an Edu Circle in our school. Briefing will continue throughout the term of office of our Edu Circle.
Step 2	Adoption of the Charter by the school stakeholders. This will also apply during the review of this Charter. This Charter will at all times be accessible to all stakeholders, including all learners in the school.
Step 3	Election of Edu Circle members via classroom nominations and voting. Our school is committed to respecting the learners' right to elect their representatives without being influenced by teachers. The election of Edu Circle members will be held every year at the beginning of the year.
Step 4	Announcement of election results by our Edu Circle Mentor. We are committed to observing a transparent, free and fair process. Stakeholders will be informed of the results at assembly and through communications with parents and the School Board.
Step 5	Election of the Edu Circle Chairperson by all members of the Edu Circle. We observe the learners' right to elect their Chairperson and Deputy without external influence.
Step 6	Introduction of Edu Circle to learners, School Board, LRC, school management and school community. The school embraces the Edu Circle as one of our stakeholders. We support each other towards attaining our goals of learner happiness and success.

ELEMENTS UNDERPINNING OUR EDU CIRCLE

Here at our school, we believe the following:

- Learners are aware of the challenges that negatively impact on their educational, health and social wellbeing.
- With proper supervision and support of all key stakeholders, learners have the capacity to resolve them through our Edu Circle.
- Community and stakeholder involvement in the design and operation of our Edu Circle is crucial, and their support of the Circle's work is essential.
- Authorities must not hand-pick members of our Edu Circle.
- Learners have the right to choose their own representatives.
- Teachers or non-learners must refrain from determining Edu Circle membership and activities.
- The school is committed to providing ongoing support and in-service training for our Edu Circle.

ADOPTED AND SIGNED BY:

School Board Chairperson: Date:

LRC President / Head Boy & Head Girl: Date:

School Principal: Date:

Edu Circle Chairperson: Date:

WITNESSES:

NAME:

Constituency: Signature: Date:

NAME:

Constituency: Signature: Date:

NAME:

Constituency: Signature: Date:

As highlighted in UNESCO's Happy Schools Framework, a conducive school environment leads to the results described below.

The Happy Schools Criteria



People



Friendships and Relationships in the School Community



Positive Teacher Attitudes and Attributes



Respect for Diversity and Differences



Positive and Collaborative Values and Practices



Teacher Working Conditions and Well-being



Teacher Skills and Competencies



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



Process



Reasonable and Fair Workload



Teamwork and Collaborative Spirit



Fun and Engaging Teaching and Learning Approaches



Learner Freedom, Creativity and Engagement



Sense of Achievement and Accomplishment



Extracurricular Activities and School Events



Learning as a Team Between Students and Teachers



Useful, Relevant and Engaging Learning Content



Mental Well-being and Stress-Management



Place



Warm and Friendly Learning Environment



Secure Environment Free from Bullying



Open and Green Learning and Playing Spaces



School Vision and Leadership



Positive Discipline



Good Health, Sanitation and Nutrition



Democratic School Management

Source:

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Happy Schools Framework", Bangkok, 2016, p. xiii.

- Learners, staff members and parents are safe, included and accepted.
- All members of the school community demonstrate respect, fairness and kindness in their interactions, and build healthy relationships, free from discrimination and harassment.
- Learners are encouraged and given support to be positive leaders and role models in their school community – for example by speaking up about issues such as bullying.
- Learners, principals, staff members, parents and community members engage openly and actively in ongoing dialogue.
- Principles of equity and inclusive education and strategies for learners and staff related to prevention, intervention and awareness-raising on bullying are reinforced across the curriculum.
- The learning environment, instructional materials and teaching and assessment strategies reflect the diversity of learners.
- There is a sense of pride in the school, and of being a member of the school.
- Education is valued and the role of the school is respected.
- Every learner is inspired and given support to succeed in an environment of high expectations.



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

EDU CIRCLE KIT
for Learner
Stakeholders
in Education
in Namibia



unicef 
for every child