

Stories From the Field

TSUMEB, NAMIBIA AND TECUMSEH, ONTARIO



WHAT Were the Challenges?

In post-apartheid Namibia, government decentralization meant that municipal governments had to do more with less. In Tsumeb, a mining town of 20,000 located near the Etosha Game Reserve in northern Namibia, the local government was struggling to provide basic essential services, with no money left over to help the community's needy or support local businesses. Organizations such as the Women's and Children's Centre, a shelter for victims of abuse, and the Tsumeb Chamber of Commerce and Industry relied heavily on government funding and faced closure due to lack of money and volunteers.

HOW Did Tecumseh Help?

Beginning in 1994, and over the next 13 years, representatives from the Town of Tecumseh, Ontario, worked with their counterparts in Tsumeb — local government, businesses and service organizations — encouraging them to pool their resources to achieve common goals. Through FCM's Municipal Partnerships Program, Tsumeb community leaders visited Tecumseh. There, they learned how to raise funds, create an administrative structure for non-profit organizations, support local business development associations and motivate volunteers. Tecumseh council members, municipal experts, and business and community leaders helped them apply what they learned to the Namibian context. Tecumseh's well-organized volunteer networks also went to work for Tsumeb, raising funds to help the town's most disadvantaged citizens: women, children and seniors.



Tecumseh firefighters speak to schoolchildren in Tsumeb.



The Women and Children's Centre for the abused and disadvantaged has undertaken a community education plan on issues of violence against women and children.



Tsumeb, Namibia.

WHAT Were the Results?

With guidance from the Tecumseh region's Windsor Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, the Tsumeb Women's and Children's Centre defined its role and built strong relationships with the police force, the hospital, social workers and other community agencies. The Centre's volunteer base increased and enough funds were raised to staff the centre around the clock, establish a small medical clinic and launch a community awareness campaign on violence against women and children.

The Tsumeb Chamber of Commerce and Industry put its administrative house in order. It created a vision and mission statement to enable black and white business people to work together to promote local commerce and bring prosperity to their community.

With support from the Tecumseh Lions' Club, the Tsumeb chapter of the community service organization was reinstated. Now racially integrated, and with men and women participating equally, it has spearheaded several

large-scale projects in Tsumeb, including the construction of the Nomtsoub Old Age Home. The Tecumseh Fire Department and Rotary Club refurbished a fire truck and equipment to donate to the community. Two firefighters from Tecumseh also travelled to Tsumeb to provide training on prevention, maintenance and firefighting techniques.

This renewed sense of community and increased volunteer engagement changed the relationship between Tsumeb's municipal officials and residents. Witnessing the surge of support for these projects, the Town Council decided to donate the building site for the Nomtsoub Old Age Home and provide much-needed office space to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In 2007, Tecumseh and Tsumeb received FCM's Outstanding Volunteer Cooperation award (Institutional Category). Their long-standing partnership and its lasting effects demonstrate that municipalities have an important role to play in Canada's international development efforts.

About FCM International

Through its international programs, FCM provides ways for Canadian municipalities to engage with their counterparts around the world, to contribute knowledge, and to foster cooperation across a global network of local governments.

Our development initiatives bring partners together to find solutions to practical problems, help deliver basic services, promote economic growth, and encourage citizen participation.

FCM gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada, provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). To find out more about the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' 25 years of international municipal development, visit FCM.ca.

