



BEN NAMIBIA NETWORK CONFERENCE

27-29 July | Ongwediva



Produced by:

Supported by:





TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT



Five years ago, in 2004, when Michael Linke first arrived in Windhoek, he had only a backpack, a set of bicycle tools, and one objective: to deliver one container of bicycles to home-based care volunteers in Northern Namibia. He thought he would stay here for one year and, after that, move on back to his 'normal life'. He soon noticed there were not too many bicycle mechanics in the country, and that delivering bicycles wouldn't be an obvious task if there was no service provision to make the bicycles stay on the road. His objective started to take new and more challenging shape. He decided to establish a network of bicycle mechanics in the country.

I was in Mozambique working with another bicycle project when he told me this story. Honestly, it sounded crazy. How come he wants to establish a network of *containerised bicycle workshops* throughout the country? He wanted workshops in Windhoek and in all of the larger towns, but not only this... he also wanted workshops deep in the villages. He wanted men and women working, boys and girls cycling to school, home based care providers extending their range. And he wanted to train people in bicycle mechanics and in entrepreneurship skills. I wasn't sure if that was for real... his ideas sounded too far from reality.

Five years later, on 27 July 2009, I counted all the people in that conference room in Ongwediva. There were 51 people, out of whom 47 were bicycle mechanics, and 23 of those mechanics were women. The mechanics were from 23 bicycle workshops, from all the 13 regions in Namibia. Only one of these workshops wasn't established directly by BEN Namibia (that was Mr Elephant's Bicycle Garage from Swakopmund), but has been an active partner. So you see... I didn't trust him five years ago, and here I am, looking at all these people and thinking back on Michael's crazy plan. That was, definitely, not delirious. That was a vision made true.

After three days in the conference with so many vigorous discussions, questions and good laughs, I feel proud of all of us. BEN Namibia is not a small office in Windhoek anymore – BEN Namibia is a network with so many active partners! Yes, there are challenges we need to address. We need to sort out the re-supply of bicycles with Bicycles for Humanity and other groups overseas. We need to engage with partners as Cycles Wholesale and the Group Purchase Scheme to have better procurement systems. We need to have more training. We need to know all the other bicycle workshops in the country so we can constantly co-operate. But the good news is: we are part of one big family! And together, we can make it.

Michael unfortunately couldn't spend much time with us because of illness, couldn't count for himself all the 51 people in that room. No need to say, he is so proud of all of you, and so happy that his vision is now everybody's vision.

On behalf of BEN Namibia and on behalf of Michael, I would like to thank you all for being part of this. Tangi unene. Pandu. Gans-Gans. Okuhepa. Luitumezi. Baie dankie. Obrigada. Keep the good work and the good spirits.

Clarisse Cunha Linke



THIS REPORT



This report is for all the participants of the BEN Namibia Network Conference. The objective of this document is to remind you of all the important aspects of the conference so you can share the new ideas with other team members.

What you will find in the report:

- List of all the participants present at the conference (pages 5-6)
- Participants' expectations at the beginning of the conference (page 8)
- Marketing skills (page 10)
- Community relations (page 12)
- Alternative income generating schemes (page 13)
- Management issues, human resources and financial performance (page 14)
- Group Purchasing Scheme (page 18)
- Ordering from Cycles Wholesale (page 20)
- Re-supply of second-hand bicycles (page 21)
- Inter-BEC trading (page 22)

We have also attached:

- A complete contact list so that you can communicate with other BECs
- A form about the Group Purchasing Scheme – your BEC needs to send this back to BEN Namibia
- Price list from Cycles Wholesale
- Updated copy of the monthly report template, in case you are still using the old one
- A CD with: power point presentations made during the conference and photos



●●● PARTICIPANTS ●●●

Clemens KASHUUPULWA Bicycle (Okatana)

- Erwin Aupa
- Bertha Namene

DEEP—Disability Economic Empowerment Project (Oshakati)

- Moses Tolata
- Michael Shaemange
- Hannah Rosenberg

Disability Resource Centre (Keetmanshoop)

- Edward Kandovazu
- David Hughes

Family Hope Services (Windhoek)

- Elizabeth Queen Mulilo
- Matheus Wilhelm

Good Samaritans (Rehoboth)

- Alice Vries
- Sylvanus

House of Love (Rundu)

- Martin Asser
- Gertrude Kambuda

Joy Centre Bicycle Shop (Otjiwarongo)

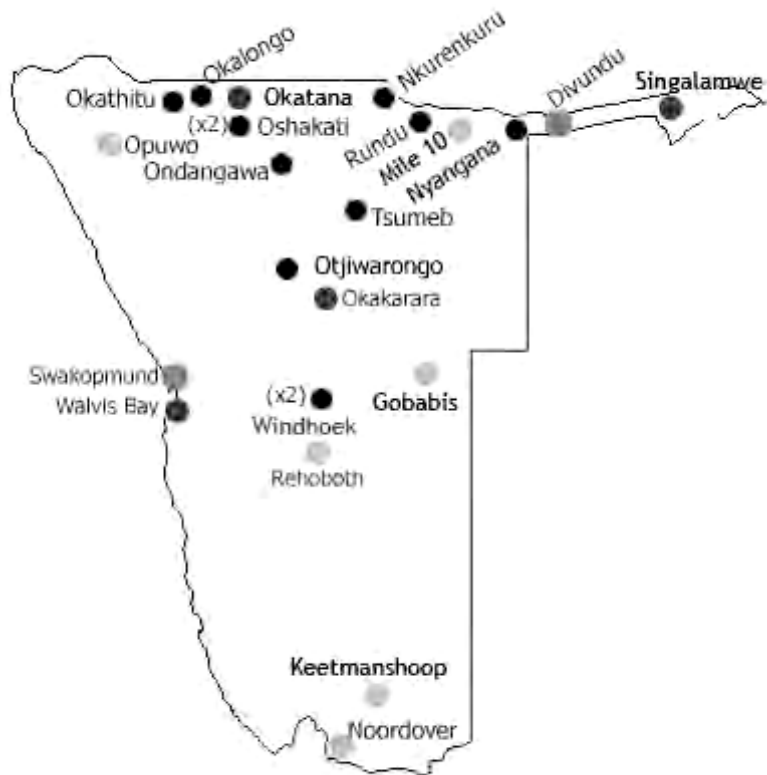
- Doreen !Auxas
- Sylvester Xoagub
- Hans Hoxobeb

Kings Daughters Bicycle Shop (Windhoek)

- Susanna Freedericks
- Sara

Lifeline/ Childline BEC Project (Ondangwa)

- Rauna Nakale
- Andrews Paulus



Makveto Bicycle Shop (Divundu)

- Erasmus Makveto
- Ludwig Museih

Mile 10 CAA

- Laurinda Andreas
- Emedia Mulezi

Mr Elephant Bicycle Garage (Swakopmund)

- Mr Elephant

Okathitu BEC Project (Okathitu)

- Hilya Ekandjo
- Ndapewa Philitus

Opuwo Tolain (Opuwo)

- David Sakaria
- Kakujewa Ngombe

Rejoice Bicycle and Repair Project (Gobabis)

- Waltrudis Reed

Sebastian Kamwanga Bicycle Project
(Nyangana)

- Michael Muraghuli
- Clementine Mbambu

Singalame Shine Bicycle Shop
(Singalamwe)

- Cecilia Mate
- Ascmo Kwandu

Steps for Children (Okakara)

- Elton-John Hepundjua
- Assaph Kandjeo
- Darius Tjeriko

TKMOAMS (Oshakati)

- Erastus Toivo
- Helalia Shipinge
- Edward Mwangi

TOV Bicycle Workshop (Tsumeb)

- Meriam Sakeus
- Florida Gaeses

Tuyoleni Bicycle Project (Okalongo)

- Martha Sheetekela
- Rauha Heita

Uukumwe Bicycle Shop (Nkurenkuru)

- Markus Kasoma
- Beatilda Kasanga
- Sarah Buffie

Welwitchia Bicycle Shop (Walvis Bay)

- Jonas Josef
- Sandra Fredricks



●●● EXPECTATIONS ●●●

What did participants expect to gain out of the conference?

**learn more | share | understand better
networking | make friends
be empowered | help reduce poverty in our communities**

learn more...

- about other BECs
- from other BECs
- from mistakes made by others
- management and marketing skills
- mechanical skills
- leadership skills
- how to deal with customers
- how others utilise their income
- about BEN Namibia

share...

- ideas, knowledge
- information
- mistakes, successes

understand how to...

- set up a BEC
- deal with second-hand bicycles that are so different from one another
- have ongoing supply of parts
- have direct access to bicycles
- expand/improve the project's strategy, i.e. wheelchairs

Opening note with wise words

The BEN Namibia Network Conference was privileged to have an opening speech from the Honourable Governor Mr. Clemens Kashiupulwa. The Governor highlighted the contribution organisations like BEN Namibia provide to the communities and people of Namibia, considering it:

- Is gender friendly, with nearly 50 per cent of the participants at the conference being female;
- Provides a healthy, sustainable and affordable form of transport for communities;
- Promotes the use of bicycles to youths and children;
- Strengthens the work of organisations that care for people living with HIV/AIDS;
- Generates income for volunteers.

The Governor encouraged the participants to take care of their projects and learn how to maintain them in a sustainable way.







MARKETING



Why are we marketing?

- To develop and expand our customer base.
- To be known in the community.
- To persuade people to come to our business.

The most important thing you need to know is: your customers!

- Are they children, youth, elders?
- Do they want second hand or new bicycles?
- Do they want mountain bicycles or road bicycles?
- How much will they pay?
- Where do they want to shop?
- Can they access your store?
- How can you encourage them to buy your bicycles and services?

The 5 P's of marketing

1. **People:** income, age, gender, education, culture.
2. **Product:** what makes your product different.
3. **Place:** establish your project where people go.
4. **Price:** the lowest price is not always the right price, the highest price could destroy your business.
5. **Promotion:** ensuring that your customers know about your shop and your products.

Remember... attracting new customers is the key concept and every business needs to “spend money to gain money”.

A good advertisement has...

- Name of your business
- Type of Services
- Location
- Why should people come to your business
- When can they come (opening times)
- Prices
- Contact details
- Clear deadlines



What did conference participants say about different media?

Type	Advantages (Good)	Disadvantages (Bad)	Comments
Radio	Most people have access to radio Easily understood	Need electricity or batteries Transport costs	Some argued it was too expensive or a waste of time
Newspaper	Cheap adverts on free/ local newspapers	Illiterate people are excluded Can be expensive Not everyone reads free newspapers	
Word of mouth	Free of charge People can ask questions Reach everybody	Misinformation Slow	
“Mr/Mrs Advertise”	Bring customers to the business Discounts for those who come in as a result	Costly Unreliable Safety concerns	Mr Elephant pays someone to cycle around Swakopmund promoting his business
Posters/ Signboards	Initial cost	Stolen or Damaged	Many BECs have used this form of advertising
Events	Get community involved	Could be costly Take a long time to organise	This can show community members how useful or important bicycles can be





COMMUNITY RELATIONS



What is special about the BECs?

1. Job creation for community members.
2. Percentage of income allocated to CBO or community projects:
 - Distribution of school bags,
 - Complementing project's budgets,
 - Savings account for CBO,
 - Assisting with money for food for beneficiaries.
 - You know what is the best for your community.



The project and you

That is a reciprocal relationship...

- The BEC influences on personal lives.
- Our commitment to the BEC influences all aspects of the community, i.e. health, care provision, transport needs.
- We all have talents and gifts to bring to the project, stay focused on the opportunities that arise.

What are the problems BECs face when operating in the communities?

Different scenarios were discussed by the participants considering problems faced by BECs. The focus was the relationship with customers and with the partner organisations of each project. Participants played four skits in order to identify problems and potential solutions.

Some problems raised	Some solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many mechanics • Lack of communication • Disrespect, arrogance • Poor work ethics, corruption • Poor management (customer care, division of work, product knowledge) • Unmotivated staff • Lack of ownership of project • Disregard for the tools • Lack of responsibility • Disconnection between office and workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communication • Respect and work ethics • Incentives for workers • Reward systems for the mechanic who fixes or sells the most bicycles • Respect for customers • Enough tools for each mechanic • Clearly defined roles • Yet the members need to be flexible to fill the shoes of those who are absent • Problem solving/conflict resolution

●●● GENERATING INCOME ●●●

Throughout the Conference we discussed how BECs can generate income. BEN South Africa gave a few examples of alternative methods and during the finance management session we looked at other options BECs could use to generate income.

- Projects for schools – get funding from local council.
- Township Tours – opportunity for BECs situated in towns with tourism, such as Windhoek, Walvis Bay, Tsumeb.
- Servicing tour operator bicycles – there are several tour operators in Namibia that cycle in all parts of Namibia.
- Sell bicycles to companies/farms.
- Hosting event days
- Taxi services
- Rent bicycles
- Fix and sell wheel chairs
- Bicycle wash service
- Bead work (i.e. TKMOAMS)
- Sewing clothes for the community
- Renting rooms to customers (i.e. Okathitu)
- Charging phones with solar panels (i.e. Okathitu)
- Training community members on computer skills (i.e. Okathitu)
- Think about extra ways your BEC could get income and remember that funding could be available from the government.





MANAGEMENT ISSUES



Roles needed for a successful BEC:

Admin

- Record keeping.
- Communicating with other BECs and partners.

Planning

- What needs to be done in the next few months?
- Order spare parts.
- Prepare for events or sale promotions (advertising).

Organising

- Organising each staff member and ensuring that everybody knows their role and what to do if somebody is absent.

Staffing

- Each staff member should have their role and know what they have to do.
- There must be some flexibility so that if a member is absent other members know what to do.

Directing

- A member needs to direct the BEC so that everything runs smoothly.
- They should have good leadership.

Controlling

- Ensuring high quality performance so that the customers are satisfied

Budgeting

- A member needs to be in charge of the budget to ensure that finance is available to pay salaries, spare parts and order new bicycles.

Human Resources -- challenges faced by BECs:

1. Employee absenteeism
2. Employees backgrounds
3. Employees stress and conflict
4. Poor motivation and team development
5. Poor management
6. Productivity improvement
7. Sales effectiveness
8. Employee illness/alcoholism
9. Mechanics quitting
10. Theft of tools and bicycles

Remember...

These are daily challenges for any organisation and an important component of management. Each one of us needs to think constantly about our challenges and be committed and willing to find solutions.



Financial performance

Most projects have been functional for some time, and have had either profit or loss monthly. BEN Namibia compiled the figures you send us monthly in your reports to show the progress of each BEC in the last six months. Here are some important notes for you to understand to make good use of your financial data:

What is profit?

Income minus (-) your expenses

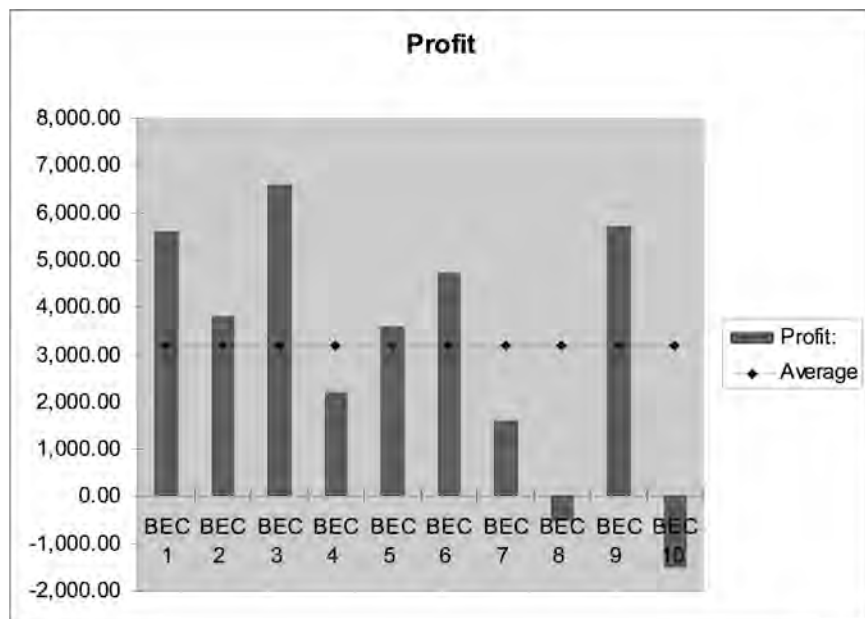
If expenses are higher than income then you have a loss.

What is average?

The total for all BECs represented as one BEC.

So here is one example.
Let's imagine the final figure of 10 BECs in one specific month:

BEC 1 – N\$ 5,600
BEC 2 – N\$ 3,800
BEC 3 – N\$ 6,600
BEC 4 – N\$ 2,200
BEC 5 – N\$ 3,600
BEC 6 – N\$ 4,700
BEC 7 – N\$ 1,600
BEC 8 – N\$ -500 (Loss)
BEC 9 – N\$ 5,700
BEC 10 – N\$ -1,500 (Loss)



Here we can see that the total profit for all BECs (add all the numbers) was N\$ 31,800. Therefore, the average profit is the total profit N\$ 31,800 divided by 10 BECs. So the average profit in that specific month is N\$ 3,180.

You can see from the graph above that:

- BEC 8 and BEC 10 have made a loss. Their expenses have been higher than their income.
- BEC 1, BEC 3 and BEC 9 have done very well.
- BEC 2 and BEC 5 have made a profit above the average.
- Although BEC 4 and BEC 7 have made a profit below the average, they have still done well.

If your BEC's income is **more** than the average, or more than N\$ 3,180 then you have done well.

If your BEC's income is **less** than N\$ 3,180 then you need to look at why your profit is less. Are your expenses too high compared to the average? Was that a difficult month with flood, for example?

This is an example of how the information your BEC sends BEN Namibia can be used to determine the progress of your BEC. More importantly than sending it to BEN Namibia, however, is to make sure that you have your information compiled monthly and that you analyse it, so you can make informed decisions about how to run your business.

We did not spend much time discussing salary expenses...

But we would like to make a note about it.

From the reports generated by BEN Namibia, the salary expense varied quite a lot. Some BECs spend a variable percentage of their income on salaries, for example 10% or 15%. Therefore if the BEC's income is N\$ 6,000 they will spend about N\$ 600. If their income increases to N\$ 10,000 then their salary expense could also increase to N\$ 1,000.

Other BECs will spend the same each month. That is okay, but you must make sure that you plan for this. In the rainy months your BEC may be closed and so you must make sure that you have money saved from the good months to pay the salaries.



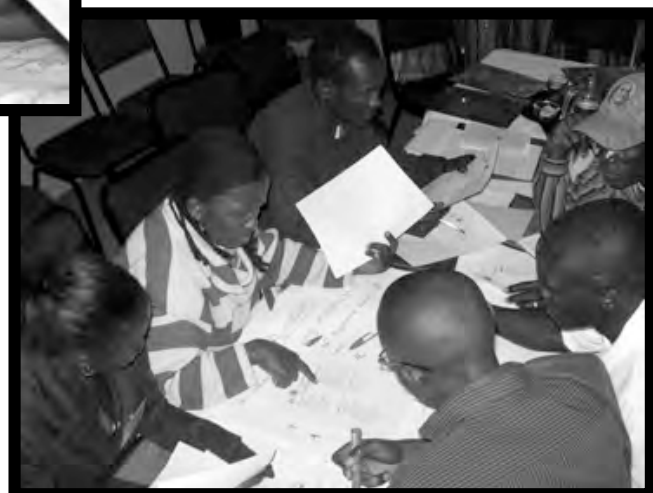
●●● GROUP PURCHASE SCHEME ●●●

The Group Purchasing Scheme (GPS) has been set up by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to help small businesses purchase stock cheaply. BEN Namibia has been in a dialogue with them in order to be able to order tools and parts for all the BECs through GPS. For that, each and every BEC, as a member of BEN Namibia, has to say if they accept or not enter into this agreement with GPS. If all the members do accept, BEN Namibia will sign a cooperative agreement and all the partners will benefit.

How does it work? Each BEC will send to us their order so that they can have enough stock for 3 months, 6 months, or a year. GPS will compile all the orders and have a final big order for the whole network. Each BEC will pay for what they have ordered and receive the products they ordered.

The benefit of this scheme is that buying together means that you can purchase the supplies very cheaply, but you need to buy for 3 month, 6 months or a year. The BECs need to decide together how regularly they want to purchase supplies.

Attached to this report we are sending you a form so you can tell us if you want (or not) BEN Namibia to sign a cooperative agreement with GPS. Please remember to fill out the form and send it to BEN Namibia.





Step 1:

Write down what stock you need. Refer to the catalogue that Damien gave you, and to the pricelist from Cycles Wholesale that is attached to this report.

Step 2:

Fill out an order form for Cycles Wholesale. Be very specific on quantities and parts. It is very good if you can identify the codes for the parts from the catalogue or the pricelist. This way there is no chance you will receive the wrong part!

Step 3:

Email or fax the order to Cycles Wholesale, to Damien. Do not forget to put your contact details so they can contact you back.

Step 4:

Receive the quotation from Cycle Wholesale.
If they do not have stock you can place a 'Back Order'. This means as soon as Cycles Wholesale receives the stock they will send it to you. If you want them to do this write B/O on the form and proceed to step 5. If you want Cycles Wholesale to call you when they have the stock call Damien and tell him and then proceed to step 5.

Step 5:

If you can afford to purchase the stock send the quotation signed to Cycle Wholesale. This way you are confirming your order.

Step 6:

Pay for the order.

Step 7:

Fax the proof of payment to Cycles Wholesale. Once payment has been recognised, Cycles Wholesale will send the stock to your BEC or it will be ready for collection in Windhoek. If it has to be sent to you, make sure you arrange with them (for example, what is the best courier to use).

CYCLES WHOLESale
Po Box 1487 – Windhoek
45 Edison Street, Southern Industrial
Tel: 061 233081, 233082, 233083
Fax: 061 238 861



RE-SUPPLY OF BICYCLES



BECs need to re-supply bicycles. This can be done in a number of ways. BEN Namibia has been involved in engaging Bicycles for Humanity chapters to send containers with top-up bicycles. However, there are costs in this operation: shipping, customs clearance, in-country transport. There are several options to make it happen, you can either pay the whole costs (can be around N\$ 89,000) or you can try to find a Bicycles for Humanity donor interested in covering part of the costs. For example you might need to pay customs clearance and transport costs. The costs will always vary depending on whether or not your container has to go under inspection. The destination of the container will also impact the transport costs. Some BECs have been sharing containers, which is a very good and affordable solution.

This is one of the reasons why BEN Namibia has always emphasised the importance of being in touch with the donors involved in your project. It can happen by e-mail, post, and/or fax. BEN Namibia is committed to assisting you to establish these relationships. Get in touch with us and let's move in this dialogue!





INTER-BEC TRADING



BECs can communicate between themselves and sell bicycles and extra spare parts to other BECs. For example, at the conference we spoke about how the Welwitchia Bicycle Workshop in Walvis Bay has extra saddles that they can sell to other BECs if they are interested in making more business. Likewise, new BECs might want to create some extra space and sell a few of their un-furbished bicycles to other BECs.

BECs can also share ideas and train each other. If one BEC needs assistance they can contact a nearby BEC to help them.

The bi-monthly newsletter will hopefully be a good way for BECs to advertise stock they want to sell. Make sure you contact BEN Namibia each month with the products you would like to sell to other BECs and at what price.



TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE IT.

