

# *Relief through cash*



Impact assessment of the emergency cash grant  
in Namibia

*Claudia & Dirk Haarmann*



# *Relief through cash*

## **Impact assessment of the emergency cash grant in Namibia<sup>1</sup>**

July 2015

Claudia & Dirk Haarmann

**ISBN 978-99916-842-7-7**

---

<sup>1</sup> This research project has been made possible through the funding of ELM, BftW, and LWF. The financial support is hereby gratefully acknowledged. We would also like to thank Herbert Jauch for his crucial comments and proof reading.



# Table of Contents

---

Table of Contents .....	I
Abbreviations .....	II
Executive Summary .....	III
Section 1: Introduction.....	5
1.1. The situation in Namibia in mid-2013 .....	5
1.2. The response by the Lutheran churches .....	11
Section 2: Concept and Implementation.....	15
2.1. Introduction.....	15
2.2. Framework.....	16
2.3. Registration and Implementation .....	21
Section 3: Impact assessment .....	33
3.1. Methodology.....	33
3.2. Household characteristics .....	35
3.3. Case studies .....	37
3.4. Food security and Nutrition.....	49
3.5. Utilisation and self-assessment of impact .....	51
Section 4: Government support .....	55
4.1. Distribution of food aid.....	55
4.2. Amount and kind of food aid .....	55
Section 5: Lessons .....	57
5.1. Management, administration and finances.....	57
5.2. Communication & Networking.....	60
5.3. Follow-up with advocacy and lobby work .....	61
Literature .....	62

# Abbreviations

---

BftW	Bread for the World
BIG	Basic Income Grant
CCN	Council of Churches in Namibia
ECG	Emergency Cash Grant
ELCIN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
ELCIN-GELC	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia - German Evangelical Lutheran Church
ELCRN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
ELM	Evangelisch-Lutherisches Missionswerk in Niedersachsen
LSC	Local Steering Committee
LUCSA	Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
NRCS	Namibian Red Cross Society
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TARA	Theological Institute for Advocacy and Re- search in Africa
UCC-NELC	United Church Council – Namibia Evangelical Lutheran Churches
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

# Executive Summary

---

During the 2012/2013 summer months, the precipitation deficits varied between 20% and 90%, which resulted in one of the worst recorded droughts in Namibia. According to government 36% of the population (755,000 people) became food insecure during the period between March 2013 and March 2014. Therefore the President declared a state of emergency, and asked for a joint relief effort from the local and international community.

Modelled on the Basic Income Grant Pilot in Otjivero, the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia implemented a joint emergency cash-grant programme. The cash grant was universally paid in four communities in four regions reaching 6,000 people. The cash grant was calculated on a per capita basis and similar to the BIG only people who already received a universal old age pension or other government grants were excluded. Furthermore, individuals who earned a taxable income above N\$ 50,000 per annum were excluded. However, their household members still qualified for their cash grant.

This impact study analysis data from two of the four communities, where a baseline and impact household survey and case studies were conducted. The study further draws secondary source like government data and reports.

The impact of the cash grant was very visible and provided a crucial lifeline for the communities. It has carried people through a very difficult period of time. Many people related that they would have died of hunger and despair without the grant. During the baseline, nearly two thirds (63%) indicated that they lacked sufficient food either daily or at least once a week. After the implementation of the cash grant more than three quarters (77%) reported that with the grant they never lack food during the month. The grant first and foremost ensured food security for the households and enabled people to have a variety of food and a more balanced diet. Spending on food accounted for about 60% of the money received.

Before the payment of the grant, 2/3 of people had never had (or only once a week) sugar with their porridge. In contrast, the grant enabled nearly everybody to add sugar on a daily basis.

Before the grant, 75% drank tea or coffee only once a week or less half of the people drank tea or coffee daily after the introduction of the cash grant.

Chicken, fruits and vegetables were completely missing from the diet of the people interviewed before the ECG. After six months with the ECG half of the people still did not have this as part of their diet, but the other half reported to eat chicken, fruits and vegetables once a month or bi-weekly.

Interestingly, people used the remaining 40% of the money to meet health related expenditure, to invest in schooling and some even in farming (buying seeds, paying for ploughing (after the donkeys had died), buying fodder etc.).

More than half the people saw a direct positive change in their subsistence farming situation through the cash grant.

80% of people reported positive enhancements regarding schooling and education through the cash grant.

In contrast, Governments drought aid programme concentrated on giving in kind food aid. Looking at the two communities covered in this impact assessment, 35% of households did not receive any food aid in the month prior to the assessment. For those households, which did receive the food aid only 10% received 12.5 kg maize meal per person per month. 50% only got 5.8 kg and a quarter only 2.5 kg per person per month. Calculating on the mere per capita energy intake required, 18 kg per person of maize meal would be the minimum required according to UN.

Furthermore, the UN warns that a balanced diet is needed to avoid severe malnutrition. In the sample only 9% of people received fish, a negligible 2% of people got beans and none received oil besides their maize meal rations from government.

The experience with the in kind drought relief by government on the one hand and the emergency cash grant on the other hand, changed the perception towards a universal cash grant to an almost unanimous support. While before the implementation, about 60% gave preference to cash over food aid or fodder for the animals, after five months of receiving the grant, this figure rose to nearly 95%.



# Section 1: Introduction

---

The purpose of the report is to firstly provide an overview of the background, concept and the practical implementation of the emergency cash grant of the Lutheran Churches in Namibia during the drought of 2013/2014. Secondly, the report assesses the impact of the grant based on quantitative and qualitative data. Last, but not least, it formulates lessons for other churches and actors in the region to respond to similar emergencies.

## 1.1. The situation in Namibia in mid-2013

Namibia experienced one of the driest seasons on record during the 2012/2013 summer months. The precipitation deficits varied between 20% and 90%.

This lack of rain had a severe effect on crops, pasture and water availability throughout 2013 and in the beginning of 2014.

***Namibia experienced one of the driest seasons on record during the 2012/2013 summer months.***



**Photo 1: A borehole in a dry riverbed in Kunene providing water for people and animals.**

It led to a very low or no harvest at all for communal and commercial farmers. Most subsistence households had exhausted their own food production by July 2013. Overall millet (mahangu) production decreased by 45% and maize production by 36%. Therefore, the availability of millet for consumption and as seeds for planting on markets and in subsistence farming households was severely reduced.

The stories of the subsistence farmers in July 2013 revealed a picture of hopelessness:

## Introduction



**Photo 2: A young herder in Kunene looking for grazing for his cattle**



**Photo 3: The herder did not have any food and therefore no fire was lit in the morning**

In Onanghola (Omusati region) the owner of a small shop / bar reported how the previous day



**Photo 4: Shop in Omusati**

she had cooked food to sell it in her bar. However, the children from the adjacent homestead had seen this and stole the pot from the fire due to hunger.



**Photo 5: Outside kitchen where the theft took place**

Theft due to hunger had been rife. If someone was seen preparing food, others were drawn near.

## *Introduction*

In Ongongo many animals - the livelihoods of the Ovahimba communities - were lost due to the drought as shown in photo 6:



**Photo 6: Goat died because of the drought**

The drought situation in Namibia triggered a doubling of maize import from South Africa and a reliance on markets for food. While maize was largely available for sale, lack of income for many households prevented sufficient nutrition.

The Government assessed that a total of 36% of the population or 755,000 people became food insecure during March 2013 and March 2014. (Office of the Prime Minister 2014:7)<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the drought led to fast diminishing pasture, especially in the already over-stretched communal farming areas. There are no hard statistics available on the number of livestock which died. However, according to the report of the households in the impact assessment the situation was dire.

**36% of  
the popu-  
lation  
(755,000  
people)  
became  
food inse-  
cure)**

---

<sup>2</sup> Please note that this is the draft report of the Office of the Prime Minister. Numbers might still change and quotes are done under reservations.

## *The situation in Namibia in mid-2013*

Traditional cattle posts were abandoned to find food and pasture further away. Herders related the search for grazing as a daunting task, since the soil was literally bare and only stones, dust and a few shrubs remained. There was little hope to find grazing anywhere within reach. The outlook on the future was bleak:

*“We watch helplessly how our animals are slowly going to die especially with the coming summer heat.” (Herder near Sesfontein, July 2014)*



**Photo 7: A recently abandoned cattle post. Location: 50km north of Sesfontein - Kunene region**

Water availability for communities and for livestock were stressed due to water tables in boreholes and riverbeds becoming low.

Due to this devastating situation the President of Namibia declared a state of emergency in May 2013, asking for national and international assistance to support in the implementation of drought relief efforts.

The Government decided to support those in need with mainly maize flour, the staple food in Namibia and tried to distribute it to households on a monthly basis.

## 1.2. The response by the Lutheran churches

After the declaration of the state of emergency, the Lutheran churches in Namibia jointly appealed for international help at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the global communion of Lutheran Churches, and the ACT Alliance, a coalition and co-ordinating body of churches and affiliates active in the humanitarian sector.

In Namibia, the situation of the Lutheran Churches is complex as there are three different Lutheran Churches due to historical reasons:

- **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN).** This is the biggest Lutheran Church with a membership of about 700,000 people and mainly located in the North of the country. The church grew out of the work of the Finnish Mission.
- **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN)** has about 420,000 members, is mainly active in the central and Southern region and grew out of the work of the Rhenish Mission.
- **The German Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCIN-GELC)** is comparatively very small with only about 5,000 nearly exclusively German-speaking Namibians. Its roots lie in the German speaking congregations of the Rhenish Mission during colonial times, who then formed an independent church during the apartheid era.<sup>3</sup>

The three Churches are in unification negotiations since the early nineties when Namibia became independent. In 2007, they formed the United Church Council of the Namibia Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC) as a forum to discuss common matters and to take the unification process forward.

---

<sup>3</sup> See also <http://www.lutheranworld.org/country/namibia>

## *The response by the Lutheran churches*

During the drought, in a historically rare sign of unity in action, the three Lutheran Churches embarked on a joint effort to bring relief to the people affected.

An initial assessment by the Churches and the LWF in different regions and communities across the country showed the extent of suffering, especially in terms of hunger and food security as outlined above. The interviews with the people concerned revealed a more complicated picture than merely lack of food. The fast diminishing grazing for the animals and consequently dying of livestock, the depletion of seeds for the next ploughing season due to hunger and the additional financial pressure on households, resulting in difficulties to pay school and clinic fees painted a picture of hopelessness and despair in many communities. The people affected highly appreciated their Government's support in form of maize flour, but indicated clearly that food aid is not nearly enough. First of all, they could not sustain yourself from maize flour and secondly, it did not address most of the other dire consequences of the drought.

What were the options and factors for the churches in this situation?

Traditionally, the churches implemented soup kitchens and food parcels where only some vulnerable households were chosen by the church to receive support. This was highly targeted and not much different from the Government's support.

As a second option, the churches had some innovative experience in poverty alleviation. Since 2004, the ELCRN together with a coalition of churches and other non-state actors spearheaded the campaign for a Basic Income Grant (BIG) and implemented the world-wide first pilot project.

The BIG pilot project was implemented in a community of 1,000 people Everybody got a grant of N\$ 100,- (about €9,- ) per person per month for two years. The impact of the BIG within the first year was quite impressive as reflected in several indicators: Malnutrition dropped from 42% to 10% for children under the age of five, food poverty was reduced from 76% to 16%, payment of school and clinic fees increased hugely,



## *Introduction*

school drop-outs were drastically eliminated, poverty related crime fell by 42% and very interestingly, small business in the village developed and earnings by 300%, indicating local economic development (Haarmann, Haarmann and et al. 2009).<sup>4</sup>

In recent years, cash grants have become more popular amongst governments and international aid organisations. The concept of cash grants is in fact a simple one. A cash grant is the provision of money to a household or individual. Cash grants can be made conditional, e.g. the recipients needs to fulfil certain conditions or tasks, like community work, taking you children to school and for immunisation etc. or the money can be given unconditionally. They can be targeted according to certain criteria like age, income, geographic area or they can be given universally to everybody. The differences in set-up depend on various factors like goal and aim of the programme, financial resources, practicality and underlying concept.

At the same time, there is still a lot of resistance in the development field to the use of cash grants in general. The main argument being that people should not receive money for 'nothing', but rather should be helped through tailor-made programmes. Giving people money could apparently lead to dependency and laziness.

The Namibian Government has so far been divided on the Basic Income Grant. This is a bit surprising as Namibia has a number of grants for vulnerable groups, e.g. disability grants and maintenance grant and the regionally unique and successfully implemented state-funded universal pension for every citizen above the age of 60 years. The experience of cash grants and their impact on poverty alleviation is hence evident in the Namibian context. At the same time, there is resistance towards an extension of grants to other groups or to the use in emergency situations.

Nevertheless, the campaign and pilot project for a Basic Income Grant in the last couple of years have

---

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed assessment of the BIG pilot project and more information on the campaign, visit [www.bignam.org](http://www.bignam.org).

### *The response by the Lutheran churches*

yielded huge interest and plenty discussions in Namibia and overseas, but no decisive support from the higher political leadership yet.

**Modelled on the BIG Pilot the three Lutheran churches implemented a joint emergency cash grant.**

In this situation, it was by no means clear what the churches would do regarding the drought. In an exciting and politically potentially risky move, the churches decided, despite the reservation of government, to implement an emergency cash grant modelled on the BIG.

By doing so, the churches affirmed their role as notable and independent partners of Government. This is an important shift in paradigm in an environment where the churches are battling to find their role vis-à-vis the state after the liberation struggle.

The next section explains the concrete concept applied for the emergency cash grant and describes the practical implementation.

## Section 2: Concept and Implementation

---

### 2.1. Introduction

The idea of the emergency cash grant (ECG) in Namibia was to provide relief to affected individuals and households through an unconditional monthly cash transfer for the period of the drought. The cash grant aimed to increase the purchasing power to enable people to meet their needs for food and non-food items and to assist in the recovery of their livelihoods.



**Photo 8:** A young boy during the registration process. Every household registered received the sticker for identification purposes

The appropriateness of a cash grant in the given situation depended on mainly two factors. Firstly, the possibility to deliver the cash grant to the beneficiaries in a cost-effective manner. Secondly, the beneficiaries needed to have access to markets to use the cash to meet their needs.

## *Framework*

In the Namibian situation both factors were affirmative. Namibia has a long history of paying out cash grants in urban as well as rural areas via a smart card system, either in cash or into a savings account of the national post office service. This system could be relied upon for the ECG as it had proven to be reliable and cost-efficient. At the same time, Namibia has in most parts of the country a good and relatively well-maintained infrastructure, ensuring access to markets in bigger centres by consumers of rural villages, but likewise access to villages by local traders.

## 2.2. Framework

The framework for the Emergency Cash Grant was modelled on the BIG whereby an unconditional grant of N\$ 100 per person per month was paid for a set period of time to a selected group of people. Further, the following points had to be considered:

### *Scope*

The number of people had to be limited due to financial and logistical constraints. The budget allowed for the support of about 4,500 to 6,000 people. Since an emergency like a drought affects nearly everybody in a subsistence or pastoral community it was decided to focus on four entire communities instead of targeting only a few households in many different communities. This is also in line with the idea of a universal grant, fostering social cohesion in a given community instead of exclusion, division and stigmatisation.

The four communities were selected by applying a mechanism of geographic targeting.

***The cash grant was universally paid in four communities in four regions reaching 6,000 people.***

## *Geographic targeting*



**Photo 9: Extremely dry and dusty landscape in Kunene in July 2013**

The targeting was based on the following criteria:

- Rural area
- Clearly demarcated area (no artificial separation and division of community)
- Currently no support from other aid organisations (besides the government food aid)
- Worst affected area, (e.g. area did not receive any rain)
- Manageability of pay-out (preferable post-office or similar infrastructure in the area)
- Functioning market (people can use the cash to buy basic food items, without having to spent all the money on transport)

The final selection was done by the team consisting of the three Churches, the LWF and TARA based on the above criteria.

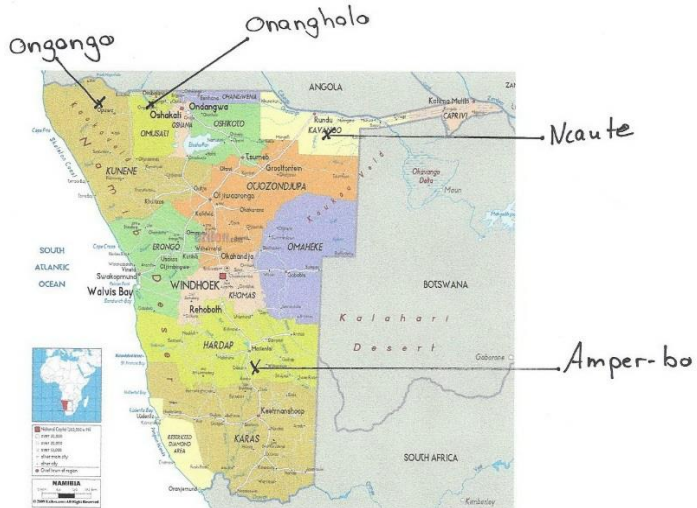
## Framework



**Photo 10: Drought stricken cattle in Omusati in July 2013**

The four communities selected were located in four different regions:

- **Ongongo** in Kunene
- **Onanghola** in Omusati
- **Ncaute** in Kavango East
- **Amperbo** in Hardap.



## *Concept and Implementation*

The villages Onangholo and Ncaute are part of ELCIN, the Western Diocese and Eastern Diocese respectively. Ongongo and Amperbo are part of ELCRN.

In addition to the selection of villages, a few individuals per community, who were not in need of the grant, were excluded, based on self-reporting and self-assessment.

### *Self-reported income targeting*

Within the community two groups of people were not included for the payment of the grant. The selection depended on self-reporting and honesty since neither administrative records nor detailed research results were available. The criteria for exclusion were simple and straight forward and the emphasis was on excluding those, who do not need support rather than selecting among the poor and vulnerable. Most importantly, only individuals were excluded and not entire households:

1. **Exclusion of individuals based on income:** A person who had permanent employment /self-employment with a taxable income (annual > N\$50,000) E.g. teacher, nurse, police, commercial farmer etc. was not an intended beneficiaries and should not register for the drought relief. However, the household members of a taxable income earner was still eligible for the ECG.
2. **Exclusion of recipients of government grants:** Recipients of government grants were excluded as beneficiaries, since they already receive a monthly cash grant higher than the drought relief payment, e.g. this excludes pensioners, war veterans, orphans etc. While recipients of government grants are excluded as beneficiaries, their household members still qualify, e.g. a grandmother looking after four grandchildren, could still be a recipient of the four benefits of the grandchildren. (See the concept of primary-caregiver below.)

*The cash grant was calculate on a per capita basis for everybody. Only people who received a universal old age pension or other government grants or individuals earning above a taxable income of N\$ 50,000 per annum were excluded.*

## *Framework*

### *Per capita pay-out*

The pay-out was calculated on a per capita basis which meant that the cash was meeting the greatest needs – e.g. bigger households (often the poorer households) received a higher amount in total. The advantage of the per-capita method vis-a-vis a household grant is the incentive for people to pool their income and benefit from economies of scale rather than to break-off of family / household structures into smaller units to receive more grants.

### *Identification*

For the purpose of identification the following documents were accepted:

- Identification Document (ID) / Passport
- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Card
- ID Application
- Voters Registration Card

### *Payment of cash-benefit of minors (<21 years)*

The cash for beneficiaries, who are minors, was paid to the primary care-giver. The primary-caregiver is the person, who looks after the child. By default this is the biological mother but could be any other person in whose care the child is, e.g. grandmother, aunt, father etc. The programme encouraged a gender bias by targeting female care-givers, thereby empowering women in the households.

The primary-caregiver had to live within the selected community and had to be registered with a valid identification document (see above). The person did not have to be a beneficiary her- or himself (e.g. grandmother receiving a pension).

### *Duration*

The cash grant was paid monthly for a period of nine months from September 2013 to May 2014.



*Amount*

The per capita benefit was N\$100 per beneficiary per month.

## 2.3. Registration and Implementation

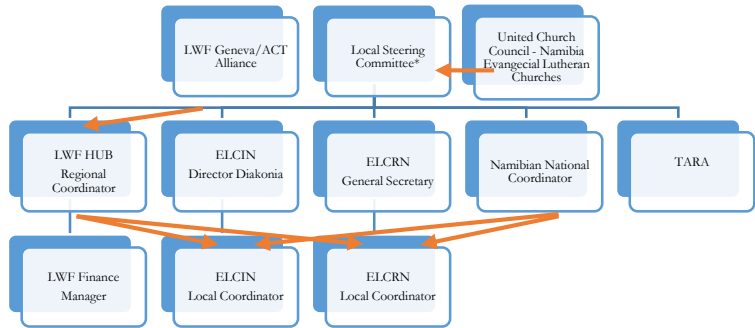
*Management*

The drought relief programme of the churches was led and administered by a team of people representing the various stakeholders involved. Essentially, it was a programme of the United Church Council – Namibia Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC) in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) which requested funding from the ACT Alliance. A Local Steering Committee (LSC) consisting of the various stakeholders oversaw the implementation whereas the day-to-day management was placed in the hands of a National Coordinator and the LWF Hub Team Leader for Southern Africa. The ELCRN and ELCIN employed a local coordinator each for the practical implementation. These two churches also provided logistical and administrative support and administered the finances for the individual programmes in the respective churches. The overall financial administration was done by the LWF’s Hub Finance Manager.

TARA was responsible for the technical and practical setup of the ECG, including the design and concept, the registration, the data administration and the impact assessment. TARA was an integral part of the LSC.

The chart indicates this organizational set-up of the programme.

## Registration and Implementation



### **\*Members of Local Steering Committee:**

- Bishops of ELCIN and ELCRN and ELCIN-GELC
- ELCRN Acting General Secretary, ELCRN Finance Director, ELCIN Director of Diakonia,
- Namibian National Coordinator
- TARA
- LWF Hub Regional Coordinator, LWF Finance Administrator (when in Windhoek)

The ELCRN and ELCIN local coordinators attended the meetings when they were in town and presented monthly reports.

TARA worked within this structure to setup the implementation of the ECG:

## Registration



**Photo 11: Registration in Amper-bo, briefing and sending out of teams.**

The registration of beneficiaries required to record all the members of each and every household in the chosen communities, to check their identification documents and to determine eligibility. The following terminology is important to understand how the process worked:

A **beneficiary** is an individual entitled to a cash grant as determined under the drought relief programme, e.g. children and adults in the selected communities and not receiving any government grant.

A **recipient** is a person receiving a cash payment either as a beneficiary or as a procurator:

- an adult receiving his/her own cash grant
- an adult receiving his/her cash grant plus the grants of his/her dependants
- an adult (e.g. pensioner) receiving the grant on behalf of a minor (grandchildren).

The number of **registered people** refers to all people recorded in the communities, beneficiaries plus household members who are not eligible, e.g. pensioners or other grant recipients or people earning above

## *Registration and Implementation*

the tax threshold. The number of registered people indicates the total number of people benefiting directly as beneficiaries or indirectly as members of a household where beneficiaries live.

### *Registration process*

In addition to the full-time staff of TARA, LWF, and the local co-ordinators, a team of researchers had been trained to assist with the registration and the subsequent impact assessment. This team consisted of about 25 researchers. The training of the research team involved two days each for registration and for the impact assessment respectively. The local researchers were fluent in local languages and assisted with translation.

Part of the research team were TARA trained researcher from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. The inclusion of these researchers served two purposes: On the one hand to show solidarity within the region, on the other hand to provide a learning experiences for the churches in the LUCSA region.



**Photo 12: Registration in Kunene**

## *Concept and Implementation*

A short questionnaire had been developed by TARA to collect the administrative data and to register the beneficiaries and recipients. This questionnaire included the baseline data for the research.

### *Household registration vs. Central registration*

TARA led the registration in three of the four villages, namely Amperbo, Ongongo and Onangholo. The process in each of the villages started with a community meeting informing people about the drought relief programme clearly stipulating the targeting criteria and the intention of the programme in all local languages.

After the community meeting, TARA applied a household registration approach whereby teams of two researchers went from house to house to register the people in their own space. This ensured the privacy and dignity of the people registered, avoided stigmatisation and enabled women participation by not depending on their coming to a central registration point.



It enabled the researcher's team to more easily register the women of the households as recipients for the grants instead of the men. This gender bias was intended as various research indicated that female recipients of grants tend to use the money

for the benefit of the entire household and especially for the children. Furthermore, the research team got to know the beneficiaries themselves and could collect reliable research data. A sticker was attached to each house in order to identify the household already visited and the household received a copy of the registration papers as proof of registration.



**Photo 13: Sticker attached to door of registered household**

If people were not at home, the house was marked, given a registration number and a questionnaire form opened. The name was normally obtained with the help of the community leaders. During subsequent visits, these households were registered to ensure that as far as possible nobody was left out.

The LWF Hub Coordinator was responsible for the registration of Ncaute. There a central registration approach was applied. This meant that instead of the research teams going out to interview and register the beneficiaries in their households, they were asked to come to a central point and were interviewed with an ad hoc committee (including traditional leadership) present.

Based on the reports from the researchers and the data received, the central registration created a number of serious problems:

- Central registration has its merits in certain circumstances (e.g. refugee camps). It is faster

and uses less resources for the registration team. However, a cash grant needs to be safeguarded against developing into a stigmatizing welfare exercise. The privacy and dignity of the people in their own space should be respected especially in terms of disclosure of their own financial situation. The cash grant should be seen as a right of the people and empowerment of the women in the households rather than welfare administered through the local leadership, which strengthens male dominated hierarchies, stigmatizes and is disempowering.

- Data collected at village level rather than in the households is not credible for research purposes. The mere presence of traditional leadership, neighbours etc. during registration is likely to have an effect on the answers given by individuals and will make baseline and impact assessment questionable.
- The data turned out to be biased, not only for research purposes but more importantly, for identifying beneficiaries. The data indicated very few recipients of government grants contrary to widespread research results about the high take-up rate of especially old-age pensions throughout Namibia. Researchers observed that at the central registration people above 60 supposedly not receiving the government pension recite the same story, “*as if people had rehearsed*” their answers. This is even more puzzling, since many of the elderly seem to have IDs readily available and hence could easily apply and receive their government pension.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, some very unusual household structures were recorded e.g. an all-male household with seven person out of which five are small babies and children, with no woman present to receive the grant.

---

<sup>5</sup> An analysis of the percentage of people eligible for the ECG in the communities confirmed these observations. In the other three villages about 80% of people registered were eligible. In Ncaute, this figure rose to 97%.

## *Registration and Implementation*

- Subsequent visits to the community seemed to indicate that only some but not all people came to the central registration point. The reason might have been a lack of transport and / or poor communication. This would at best have resulted in an arbitrary selection of beneficiaries, at worst it had opened up the process for favouritism. Traditional authority or other people who happened to receive the information about the registration might have used their knowledge to inform family and friends to come to registration, leaving others behind. But even assuming that no intentional favouritism occurred such a process was biased towards those with better access to information and higher mobility at the expense of the extremely poor in the remoter areas of the community

All of these points reveal the disadvantages of central registration.

Complicating matters further, there was miscommunication between the LWF Hub coordinator and the local researchers resulting in the registration of beneficiaries in other villages originally not chosen for the programme. This posed two serious problems. Firstly, there was no proper selection of beneficiaries as only people who made it to the central registration point were registered. This is obviously not a fair process. Secondly, the programme developed a bias in terms of numbers towards Kavango, while the original assessment and planning had decided the opposite: The needs assessment established that Kavango region, where Ncaute is located, has high rates of chronic poverty, but was not as severely hit by the drought as Kunene and Omusati. Therefore, it was intended to only support a small community for the cash grant intervention.

The following table shows the number of registered people and individual beneficiaries (i.e. people eligible for the ECG) in the four communities:



<b>Place</b>	<b>Number of People Registered</b>	<b>Number of Beneficiaries</b>
<b>Amperbo</b>	710	590
<b>Ongongo</b>	977	790
<b>Onangholo</b>	2477	2020
<b>Ncaute</b>	1499	1459
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5663</b>	<b>4859</b>

The entire registration was only possible because of the enormous commitment and hard work of the young local researchers, the local coordinators and the TARA team from the regions who braced the extreme conditions of cold and hot weather, dust and rain, long working hours and basic tented accommodation.



**Photo 14: The registration team**

The same research team was used in all four communities to benefit from the synergies available for the fastest possible registration.

### *Confidentiality*

Confidentiality of the selected location was of utmost importance before the registration. If the location had become known before the registration an influx might have made registration and implementation impossible and unaffordable.

The researchers were bound to an oath of confidentiality regarding the collected personal data.

### *Pay-out system for the grant*

The Namibia Post Ltd (NamPost), a parastatal, is the national postal operator, providing postal and courier services, but also banking and money transfer services. NamPost operates an affordable savings account using a smart-card with fingerprint identification. The NamPost savings accounts are already used by Government for the payment of social grants and in addition the BIG in Otjivero was also paid via their accounts.

Given these positive experiences with the NamPost service and realising that alternative service providers would be far more expensive, the drought relief programme entered into a partnership with NamPost to pay the ECG. NamPost provided their services at a substantially reduced cost as part of their social responsibility towards the Namibian people. This commitment made it possible to pay-out the cash professionally in the rural areas so that the scarce resources reached the people in need with only a minimum of administrative costs.

NamPost employed two different methods of paying the grant:

- **Pay-out via a smart-card based on fingerprint identification:**

## Concept and Implementation

In Amperbo and Onang-holo, every recipient receives a Nam-Post Savings



Account. The cash grant was deposited into the account and the recipients were able to access the grant via his or her smart card at the Nam-Post office or directly at shops equipped with a NamPost pay-point.

- **Cash-pay-out via voucher system:** In Ongongo and Ncaute, NamPost paid out cash to the recipients once a month. The pay-out was based on the list provided by the project and was be reconciled every month by NamPost.



**Photo 15: Cash pay-out in Kunene**

The local co-ordinators of the churches were trained in data-base administration. Together with NamPost they administered the first enrolment and administration of the data in the field in Amperbo in September

### *Registration and Implementation*

2013. The data-base and the automatic update for NamPost proved to be up and running and was used as such in all four communities for the duration of the programme.

## Section 3: Impact assessment

---

An assessment accompanied the cash response intervention to document the changes in the lives of the beneficiaries and to assess its effectiveness in comparison to other interventions.



**Photo 16: Training for impact assessment study**

The original questionnaire for the registration and baseline was repeated and adjusted to collect the relevant data for the impact assessment.

TARA supervised the data collection and conducted the data entry, data cleaning and data analysis.

### 3.1. Methodology

The ECG was paid out in four communities. Due to the nature of an emergency intervention with tight timelines and resource constraints the impact assessment collected data only in two of the four communities,

## *Methodology*

namely Onangholo in the Omusati region and Ongongo in the Kunene region.

The rationale for this selection was:

- Omusati and Kunene were worst affected by the drought.
- Onangholo was the biggest community with over 2,400 people registered.
- Ongongo was only the third biggest community with about 1,000 people, but the data collection was more reliable than in Ncaute. As pointed out earlier, the registration process and baseline data collection in Ncaute did not adhere to the necessary research standards. The baseline data was thus negatively affected, especially in terms of sampling and representation. The breach in confidentiality during the collection process rendered the answers less trustworthy for further analysis and for the impact assessment.
- In terms of composition and characteristics, Amperbo is most comparable to Otjivero, the location where the BIG pilot was conducted. In order to establish evidence from as diverse communities as possible, Onangholo and Ongongo were the best option.

The impact assessment draws on two main sources of data:

Firstly, qualitative interviews were conducted during the time of registration in August / September 2013. This was before the first pay-out of the ECG and then in February 2014, when the initial appeal of support was supposed to end. Additionally, qualitative interviews were conducted in Onangholo in November 2013. These were carried out by a group of TARA researchers and church leaders from Southern Africa. In Ongongo an additional set of interviews were carried out by TARA in December 2013.

Secondly, a time-series consisting of a baseline and impact assessment household survey was carried out. The baseline was collected during the registration in August / September 2013 before the first pay-out. The follow-up impact assessment was done in February

### *Impact assessment*

2014, when the initial support phase came to an end and pay-outs had been implemented for five months.

The impact assessment was based on a random sample out of a total population of 3,467 people in the two communities, with 990 in Ongongo and 2,477 living in Onangholo. During the registration process, a sample was drawn by selecting every third household in Ongongo and every sixth household in Onangholo for the baseline questionnaire and the same households were then visited during the subsequent impact. Thus the sample consisted of a total 95 households capturing 857 people.

In the sample, 78% of the people received a cash grant. This is representative of the overall picture of 81% of registered people qualifying for the grant in the two communities.

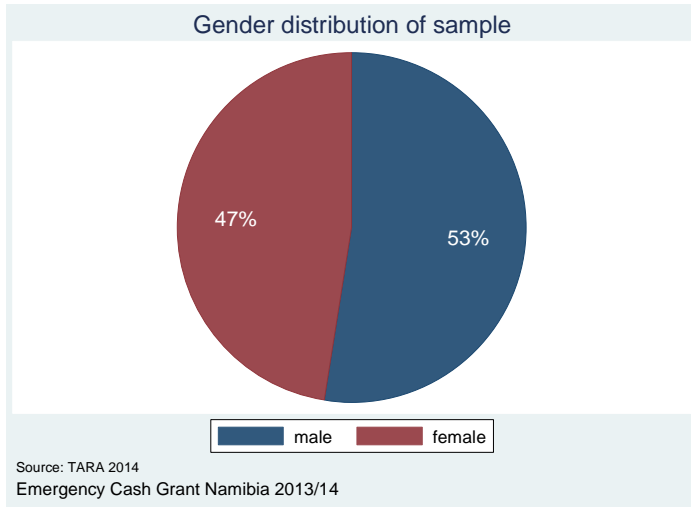
	Number of people			Number of HH
	popula-tion	sample	impact	popula-tion
<b>Ongongo</b>	990	368	388	83
<b>Onangholo</b>	2 477	430	469	392
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 467</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>475</b>

## 3.2. Household characteristics

### *Gender*

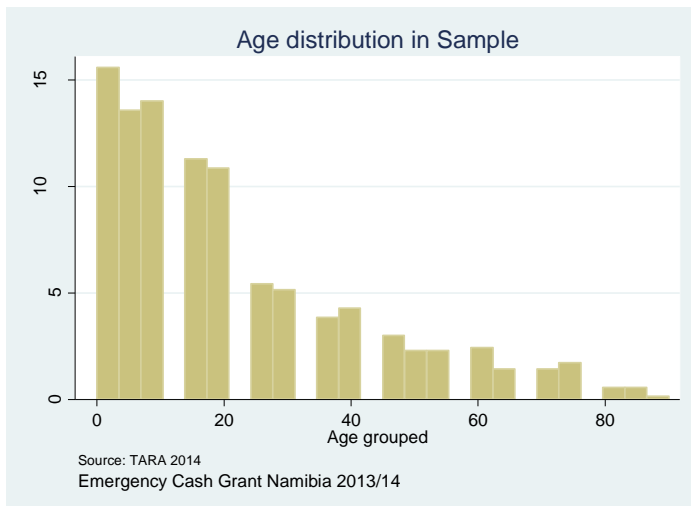
The gender distribution of the sample consisted of 53% males and 47% females.

## Household characteristics



## Age distribution

The age distribution corresponded with the national pictures of a young nation with a preponderance of younger people.

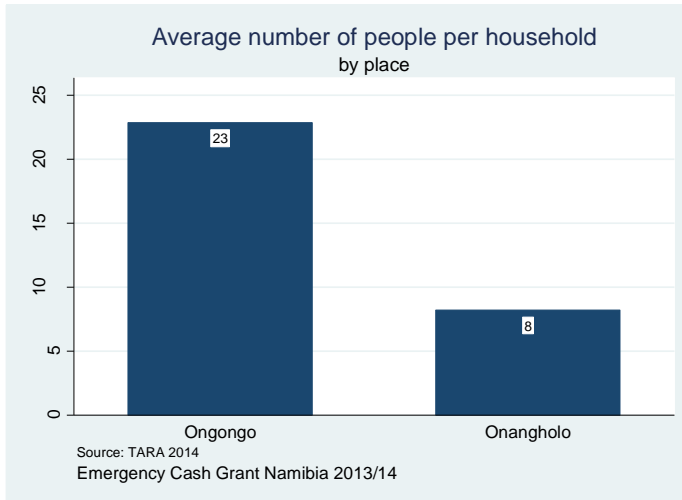




## *Impact assessment*

### *Household size*

The average number of people per household differed substantially between the two communities. In Ongongo, a traditional polygamist pastoral community, the average household counted 23 people. In contrast, the households in the mainly subsistence farming community of Onangholo consisted of eight people.



### **3.3. Case studies**

The case studies and pictures of this sections aim to bring to life the experiences of the beneficiaries with the ECG during the drought.

#### *Headwoman from Ongali at the time of the introduction of the ECG*

As one of the community leaders, the drought relief team worked closely with Mrs Hortensia Shindingendi.



**Photo 17: Headwoman from Ongali**

In August 2013, before the introduction of the grant, her description of the situation of her family and her community was devastating: Normally, their life is sustained by harvesting millet/mahango. The seeds are then stored in home-made storage containers throughout the year and every morning, the women stamp the seeds into flower for the consumption needs of the day. The picture below shows the mahango pounding place of Mrs. Shingindeni:



**Photo 18: Mahango pounding place**

The picture already indicates that it has not been used for quite a while. The headwoman explained:

*“The last time we stamped mahango was in December 2012, as there is nothing left to stamp. We have no seeds left, because the last time we planted nothing grew as the rains did not come. Now we have nothing left and we have to buy food and seeds.”*



**Photo 19: Field during the winter months**

Mrs. Shindingeni highlighted the importance of the cash programme to continue during the rainy season to enable the residents to buy seeds for the planting season.

*Pensioner Paulina Aikali from Onavivi (27 November 2013)*

Paulina Aikali lives with twelve people in her household. Paulina has two sons and six daughters. One daughter lives with her in the household and another daughter (Maria Tresia Shongola) lives with her own family in the homestead adjoining to hers. “*Some of my daughters are working in Windhoek, my sons [are] in Okahandja as farms workers. They stay together with their partners but only come home in Christmas time with meat only*”, she said. They do not send any money for their children.

Her daughter, who has two children, and Paulina’s eight grandchildren stay with her. The youngest is a girl of 19 months, the eldest grandchild is 21 years old and still attends school. The oldest receives the cash grant by himself since he is over 21 years.



**Photo 20: Paulina Aikali with one of her grandchildren**

Paulina receives a pension of N\$ 600. Up until September this was the only income in the household. In addition to the twelve people in her own homestead, she used to support the household of her daughter next to hers, since her daughter and her son in law depend on casual work and their farming produce. During the drought they could not find jobs nor were they able to produce any crops.

The livestock was severely affected by this drought. Paulina had seven cattle, three donkeys, thirteen goats of which only five survived. *“We had tough times at times there was no meal to eat, the pension is not enough to feed us.”* She related that the children were so weak that they were sleepy during the day and could not perform in school.

Since September 2013, she receives N\$700 through the emergency cash relief in addition to her pension. Her daughter with her two children and the adult grandson receive another N\$ 400 through the ECG programme. This brings the household income to a total of N\$1700 (cash grant + pension).

Paulina spent this money on food (N\$300) as well as school fees of N\$60 a year per child from grade eight to twelve. Emma, the daughter, assisted by buying

### Case studies

clothes, shoes and transport for children to school, which amounted to N\$300.

While the grant enabled them to buy food and ensure the education of the children, she is focused to on getting back to grow her own food again:

*“I wish it can rain. I would plant seeds of mahangu, beans, maize.”* She explained that she still has some mahangu seeds from the harvest in 2009. She has sown seeds in the previous year but they did not grow and the other seeds the household consumed because of hunger.



**Photo 21: Seeds saved for planting since 2009**

In order to supplement her own seeds, she intended to buy additional seeds on the market. *“10 kg cost her N\$ 30,”* she said.

Paulina explained that the grant has given her household a sense of hope and relief. In terms of the children she related: *“Now they are strong again and therefore I need the grant to continue so that they stay strong for the ploughing session.”* They can now eat and the children go to school.

*Maria Tresia Shongola from Onavivi (27 November 2013)*



**Photo 22: Maria Tresia Shongola (front right) with children and husband Jonas (left)**

In the village of Onavivi (part of Onangholo), Maria Tresia and Jonas Shongola live with their five children in their homestead. Normally, they relied on subsistence farming and some casual jobs in brick-laying to cover their needs. Since the drought, they had had no harvest and five of their ten goats have died and the remaining are very weak. Mrs. Shongola related that since the drought started they had many days without any food. *“Before the grant the situation was very bad. There were days where we had no meal, we would sleep without food for some days,”* Only through the assistance from her mother, who receives an old age pension of N\$ 600 per month and who lives nearby were they able to survive. Tresia explained: *“I used to go to my mother to ask for assistance from her pension grant of NS 600, which I know is not enough.”*

## Case studies

After two months of receiving the cash grant from the churches, the situation changed dramatically: Mrs. Shongola explained that they then had enough money to supplement the maize flour they got from the government, with nutritious food like oil, fish and vegetables. In addition, they bought clothes and paid the school and exams fees for the children.



**Photo 23: Ploughing together**

Besides the material improvement, the family was in a hopeful and upbeat mood. The whole family had started to plough their field and waited for the rain, when we arrived at the homestead. Although they did not yet have any seeds, because they had eaten them out of hunger before and at the market they were sold out, they believed they would get them in time. *“We never had seeds since 2009, and up to date we seriously are short of mahangu seeds. We went to the open market and to [the ministry of] agriculture in Outapi to buy them but currently they are sold out.”* They said they would use the cash grant money to buy them as soon as they were available again.



## *Impact assessment*

### *Agriculture with ECG*

Despite buying seeds for the planting season, the ECG also supported households in the actual process of planting.



**Photo 24: Ploughing of field with hired donkeys**

Many donkeys died during the drought or were too weak to plough the fields. The emergency cash grant enabled homesteads to hire these donkeys from the neighbouring village to plough the field.

### *Animal husbandry – with the ECG*

In Ongongo, home to a pastoral community, the focus of many people was to bring at least some of their animals through the drought. The photos below tell the story of a herder who used the ECG to buy fodder for a few of his animals so that they can survive the drought.

*Case studies*



**Photo 25: A herder explaining the situation of his animals**



**Photo 26: Fodder was bought for this cow from the cash grant to get it through the drought**

*Albertina Palastus (27 November 2013)*

Albertina Palastus is a single mother, living with her children and extended family in a 17 members' household. The drought has killed all but one of her 12 cows, and two of her three donkeys. Albertina said they had to reduce the number of meals from three to one per day. With the implementation of the cash grant, they could afford to have two meals per day. They also bought fodder for the one cow and the donkey and hoped to get them through this difficult period. Her hope was that the cow would bear calves as it would be very expensive after the drought to buy cattle again. The cash grant was also spent on school fees and uniforms. She had also already brought new mahangu seeds.



**Photo 27: Bag of mahangu seeds for planting season**

Normally, the fields are ploughed with the help of donkeys. However, as the donkeys were too weak, she and her family had to plough the fields by hand.

*Case studies*



**Photo 28: Albertina Palastus attending to her field**



**Photo 29: Field of Albertina Palastus and first sprouts**

The first small sprouts were visible after the first rain and gave them a lot of hope.

### 3.4. Food security and Nutrition

#### Food security

The impact assessment recorded a dramatic improvement in food security for the households. During the 2013 baseline, nearly two thirds (63%) indicated that they lacked sufficient food either daily or at least once a week. Only 11% reported no lack of sufficient food.

This situation was turned around through the implementation of the ECG. During the assessment only 2% and 6% voiced lack of food daily or weekly respectively, while more than three quarters (77%) indicated that they had no shortage of food.

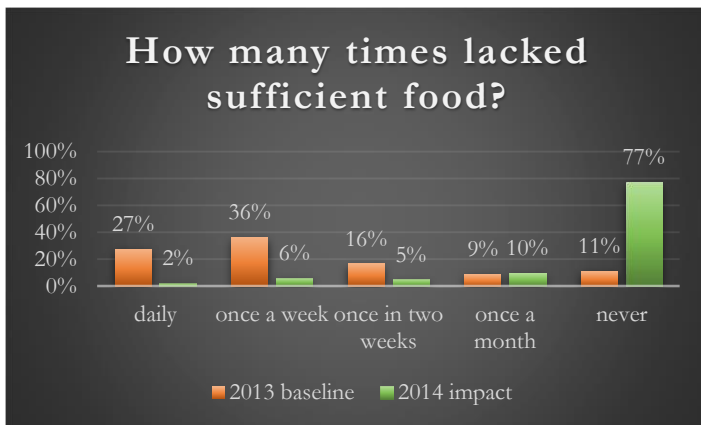


Figure 1: Food insecurity

#### Coping Strategies

The most common coping strategies during the drought was to reduce meal size or to skip meals all, followed by selling of small livestock, asking help from relatives or friends and taking credit from local shops.

**Before the introduction of the cash grant two thirds lacked food daily or at least once a week. With the cash grant three quarters never lacked food during the whole month.**

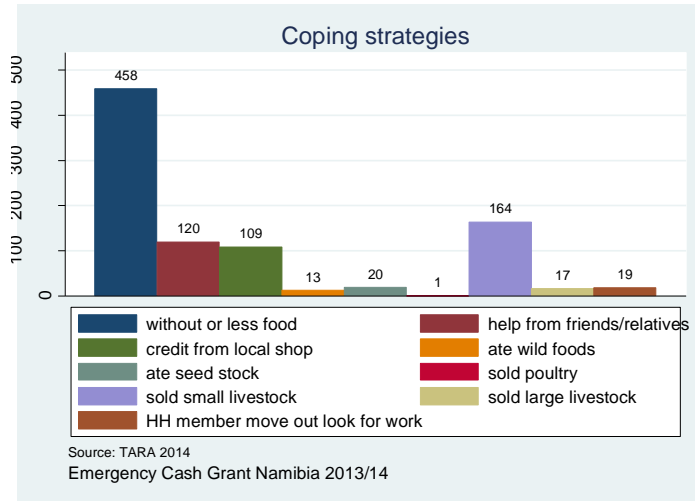


Figure 2: Coping strategies during food insecurity

### Nutrition

During a prolonged drought one expects a worsening of the food situation and the diet of the affected households over time. Therefore, the baseline and the impact assessment asked the households to report on the consumption of certain food items to monitor the developments in this area.

The case studies as well as the quantitative data prove the effectiveness of the ECG in not only mitigating the negative impact of the drought, but in achieving a certain level of food security and even improving the quality of the overall diet.

### Porridge

The baseline recorded maize porridge as the daily and stable food of the majority of people – mostly without any other sustenance. However, there were some households who only had porridge sporadically once a week or bi-weekly or even not at all, pointing to a dire situation of hunger. With the introduction of the ECG all households could afford porridge every day.

**Despite the ongoing drought nutrition improved substantially with the cash grant.**

## *Impact assessment*

### *Sugar*

Before the payment of the grant, 2/3 of people had never or only once a week sugar with their porridge. In contrast, the grant enabled nearly everybody to consume sugar on a daily basis.

### *Tea and coffee*

The consumption of tea and coffee developed similarly: Without the grant, 75% drank this only once a week or less to never, whereby half of the people drank tea or coffee daily when they received the cash grant.

### *Chicken, fruits, vegetables and cool drinks*

Chicken, fruits and vegetables were completely missing from the diet of the people interviewed before the ECG. After six months with the ECG half of the people reported to eat this once a month or bi-weekly.

### *Fish and red-meat*

The consumption of fish and red-meat improved as well. After the introduction of the ECG half of the people consumed this once a month.

## 3.5. Utilisation and self-assessment of impact

The assessment collected information on the concrete usage of the grant and of the affected people's view.

## Usage

**Spending on food accounted for about 60% of the money. 40% were spent on clothing, transport, savings, educational expenditure etc.**

In line with the results on improved food security and nutrition, people prioritised the grant towards food expenditure. However, despite the dire food shortage during the drought, this only accounted for about 60% of the money. The remaining 40% were spent on various other items. Most prominently featured clothing, transport and savings (!), followed by educational expenditure on stationary and school fees as well as toiletry.

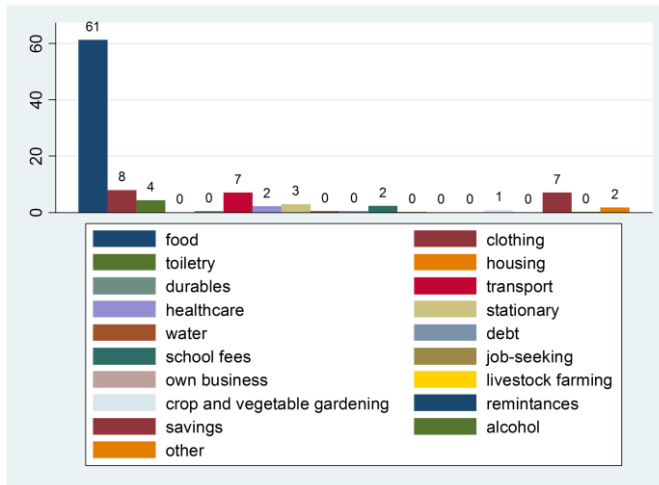


Figure 3: Usage of cash grant

## Improvement in various areas

The research gave the affected people the opportunity to assess the changes in their living conditions resulting from the grant:

Over 90% of people reported an improvement in their food and health status. Kopomake Tjjahura pointed to the relation between food security, health status and need for transport money:

*We can buy the food and if someone is sick we can afford transport to take such a person to the clinic.*



## Impact assessment

More than half the people saw also direct positive changes in their subsistence farming situation. Jacob Alweendo focused on this aspect, when he related that:

*We are not forced to use our thin and powerless donkey to plough with but instead can hire the tractors to plough our fields.*

Benyamen Mupopya testified about food security and about the positive spin-offs in education:

*We have enough food in the house and even the children can go to school with full stomachs*

Benyamen Mupopya is part of the 80% of people who reported positive enhancements in the area of schooling and education through the ECG.

In a patriarchal society, the grant managed to support and enable vulnerable groups like single mothers:

*The ECG saved me during the drought as also because I am a single mother and (before) I could not afford school, hospital and the money helped. (Roswitha Namulo)*

Regarding income, the grant obviously raised the total household and individual income substantially. Some people also managed to make advances in self-employment activities:

One example is Aini Endjala who used the money to open a small fish take-away. Once a week, she buys fish with the money from the cash grant and then prepares the fish and sells it to the people in the surroundings, as a small business to improve her income.

**More than half the people saw a direct positive change in their subsistence farming through the cash grant.**

**80% reported positive enhancements regarding schooling and education.**



**Photo 30: Aini Endjala with son Festus.**

### *Support of cash vs. other programmes*

The experience of having a grant during the drought increased the support for cash compared to other forms of drought relief. Before the implementation, about 60% gave preference to cash over food aid or fodder for the animals. After receiving the grant for five months, nearly 95% of respondents indicated their preference for cash grants.

**After having received the cash grant for five months 95% said that this was the best drought relief.**

## Section 4: Government support

---

The impact assessment also enquired about government's food aid programme within these two communities. Unfortunately, a very erratic and inconsistent picture of delivery and quantity of food aid emerged.

### 4.1. Distribution of food aid

In Ongongo, the distribution seemed to be working well as nearly 90% of people received maize meal. In contrast, Onangholo fared far worse as only about 50% reported receipt of the aid. This is surprising as Onangholo lies in a more populated region which received higher quantities of aid and is located near a provincial town and thus far easier to access by road.

In both communities combined, 35% of households did not receive food aid and this poor coverage left many residents exposed to hunger.

### 4.2. Amount and kind of food aid

Another aspect is the kind and the quantity of food aid. Additionally to the maize, only 9% of people received fish, a negligible 2% of people got beans and none received oil.

***In the sampled communities government's food aid did not reach 35% in the previous month.***

### *Amount and kind of food aid*

**Government nearly exclusively distributed maize. 50% only received 5.8kg and 25% only 2.5kg per capita per month.**

The amount of maize per person also differed substantially. Only 10% received 12.5 kg per person per month. 50% only got 5.8 kg and 25% received only 2.5 kg per person per month.

According to guidelines developed by UN agencies (United Nations 2004), the mean per capita energy requirement in an emergency is 2,100kcal/person/day. Calculating on maize-meal alone, a person would need to consume an amount of 18 kg per month to meet this minimum requirement.<sup>6</sup>

However, normally, different food commodities are combined to meet these energy needs. Protein, for example, should make up about 12% of the diet. Micro-nutrients, like Vitamin C, are highly necessary to avoid nutritional deficiencies. Maize-meal on its own is therefore inappropriate to provide the necessary components.

It is clear that the food aid of government was not able to provide neither the quantity nor the quality of food required to provide people with an acceptable level of energy intake.

---

<sup>6</sup> 100g of maize-meal gives 350kcal, therefore 600g are needed per day and 18kg (600g \*30 days) per month.

## Section 5: Lessons

---

The drought relief of the Lutheran Churches in Namibia in cooperation with the LWF and the ACT Alliance was an exciting and successful project. The programme brought relief and hope to thousands of people across the country. It carried communities and individuals through the drought and enabled many to start afresh with the beginning of the rainy season. The impact assessment (see previous section) provides a compelling case for the usefulness of a universal cash grant as a crucial intervention for poverty eradication.

Neither the churches in the Southern Africa region nor the LWF had ever implemented a cash grant in an emergency situation before, which made this the first emergency relief of its kind. Furthermore, the joint relief effort was a unique and important experience for the three, still divided, Lutheran Churches in Namibia. In a rare sign of unity of purpose the three Churches joined hands and implemented the programme together through the structure of their common Church Council – the United Church Council – Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC). The programme serves as an encouraging example and a learning experience for other Churches in the region to become involved in emergency, relief and development operations. It amplifies the potential and importance of churches in this area. The following section therefore summarizes the strengths and the challenges of this unique set-up of executing a church-based emergency relief programme. It is hoped that the Namibian ECG can be used as an important learning tool.

### 5.1. Management, administration and finances

The management of the programme brought together various national and international stakeholders (see

page 21 *Management*). The LWF and the ACT Alliance offices in Geneva provided the international institutional capacity for appeal and fundraising procedures. The local churches in Namibia coordinated and implemented the various components of the relief effort, relying on their existing church and social programming structures as well as employing coordinators. TARA added the expertise for the design, set-up and implementation of the cash grant. The regional LWF Hub office in Zambia had oversight and coordination functions for the financial and administrative aspects.

The programme clearly benefitted from the different expertise and structures of the various stakeholders. The network of the international organisations (LWF & ACT) was instrumental in raising the necessary financial resources from partners across the globe. The local churches in turn provided the much needed local knowledge and infrastructure to reach the people affected by the drought.

Nevertheless, the set-up created a number of challenges in the financial and administrative sphere at times hampering a smooth implementation and absorbing valuable time and finances.

One of the main problems was the timely disbursement of financial resources for implementation of the cash grant as well as for the field work and the salary of the local coordinators. Several times, pre-financing had to be arranged via TARA to avoid cancellation of necessary activities. Especially in an emergency programme such a situation should be avoided.

Obviously, the financial administration of such a programme is complex and the requirements to adhere to international standards of accountability and transparency are high. However, this should not stand in the way of implementation. In practice, the set-up resulted in various financial managers being sent from Geneva or Zambia to Namibia for a certain period of time to handle the finances. The project had three different finance administrators from three different countries and two hand-overs which did not go smoothly, adding additional workload for the new administrators. In addition, each finance administrator

## *Lessons*

had to familiarize him or herself with the project, the various activities, the local counterparts and was not continuously present in Namibia. This often resulted in the financial manager not being on top of recent developments and activities, causing cash requests not being submitted on time, consequently delaying implementation. The finance manager did often not follow-up on budget allocations and corresponding expenses, resulting in overspending and the reporting did not provide a true reflection of the various expenses according to programme activities. Besides the financial aspects, the situation put an unnecessary strain and frustration on the people responsible for the programmes. This is especially detrimental as an emergency programme relies on commitment of the staff and it is of ultimate importance to keep them motivated. Such a situation should be avoided in future projects and a system needs to be developed to put more responsibility and oversight into local hands.

The project set-up required a close working relationship between international and local staff. After some time, it became clear that differential treatment between the two groups created tensions and was detrimental to a good working relationship. One example was the questions of acceptable accommodation, expenses for full board versus cheaper self-catering options and the amount of per diems. While the local staff agreed to sleep in tents during field trips to save costs, this was later not done by the international staff. Hence, clear guidelines on acceptable accommodation ranging from tourist lodges / B&B to sleeping in tents as well as eating out in restaurants would help to avoid tensions and a sense of double standards being applied.

An added financial and developmental consideration are the high expenses for paying and repeatedly flying in international staff. From a developmental point of view, the building up of local capacity would be a more sustainable approach and would better prepare the local churches for their next engagement.

## 5.2. Communication & Networking

The lesson from the Namibia drought relief is to ensure a high level of communication and networking with other actors in the field in order to use the scarce resources in the most effective way and avoid duplications.

In Namibia, the Office of the Prime Minister served as coordinating mechanism and the UN tried to pull together the various UN agencies and other actors as well. Nevertheless, there was a lack of communication and networking with other stakeholders implementing emergency responses in Namibia, namely the Council of Churches (CCN); the International Red Cross and the Namibian Government.

At the beginning of the project, when the ACT appeal was developed and finalised, meetings and to share information and planned activities with various actors were held. It was agreed that the need in Namibia was great and hence responses should be co-ordinated to reach as many people as possible and not to have interventions at the same sites. However, that was not carried through with follow-up meetings and the Churches never became formally part of the meetings of the Office of the Prime Minister. In retrospect, the Churches should have lobbied stronger to be recognised as actors and acknowledged as such.

In addition, the lack of co-ordination even between CCN and the Lutheran churches resulted in the selection of the same community for a cash grant intervention by the Lutheran Churches and as a site for a soup kitchen by the Council of Churches. In this instance, the duplication could have been avoided through the intervention of the respective implementers and the headman of the said village. Such situations should not arise as they are likely to create conflicts amongst the affected communities.

Co-ordination meetings need to be aware of the extreme pressure on personnel during implementation in an emergency. Meetings therefore should be short, effective and meaningful for all participants.



### 5.3. Follow-up with advocacy and lobby work

During the first appeal the cash grant intervention was accompanied by supporting the communities through advocacy, disaster preparedness and psychosocial support training in order to ensure a long-term strategy. This was meant to include the four villages as well as others.

Unfortunately, there has been no advocacy strategy at community level or at the national church level. Given the vulnerability of Namibia towards droughts, the programme would have been important to enable communities to demand from local, regional and national government that their plight is attended to. The cash grant serves as an example how to effectively and quickly assist in an emergency.

The current national budget provided ample opportunity for a national advocacy campaign from the side of the churches involved (UCC-NELC).

A follow-up of the emergency preparedness plans at community level would have been crucial. The question is: How can it be assured that the skills learnt from the training reach the communities and can have an impact there?

Likewise, the psychological effects of the prolonged drought and the uncertainty of the future are immense. For example, people in Ongongo are desperate regarding the future and several individuals threatened to commit suicide. They would not be able to see their children die of hunger and would rather die before them. Thus there is an urgent need to provide both economic and psychological support.

Finally, an emergency programme puts a lot of pressure on time and human resources for immediate short-term relief. Nevertheless a long-term view and strategy for concerted efforts on community and national level is needed. The short-term cash grant merely provides the opportunity to find a lasting solution to the underlying poverty in Namibia.

## Literature

---

- Haarmann, Claudia, Dirk Haarmann, and et al. 2009. *Making the difference! The BIG in Namibia.* Basic Income Grant Pilot Project Assessment Report, April 2009, Windhoek, Namibia: Desk for Social Development.
- Office of the Prime Minister. 2014. *Draft Report Drought Relief. 1st March 2013 - 31st March 2014.*
- United Nations. 2004. *Food and Nutrition Needs in Emergencies,* Geneva.



# Relief through Cash!



UNITED CHURCH COUNCIL  
NAMIBIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCHES  
UCC-NELC



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

Department  
for World Service

member of **act Alliance**



EVANGELISCH-LUTHERISCHE KIRCHE  
IN NAMIBIA (DELK)  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELC)



## Emergency Drought Relief - Namibia 2013/14