

# Drought Relief Bulletin

Civil society drought relief efforts –  
who is planning what and where

July-August 2019

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This is the first edition of the Drought Relief Bulletin, an initiative of the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE). The purpose of this Bulletin is to improve communications between and create synergy among institutions supporting or carrying out drought relief efforts in Namibia. It will also summarise research and reports on drought relief efforts in Namibia and other parts of the world to introduce new relief methods and elucidate lessons learned by practitioners. The Bulletin will be produced once every two months and each edition will focus on different aspects of drought relief.

This Bulletin is distributed to relevant government departments and the corporate private sector. Both governmental and non-governmental drought relief efforts can benefit from greater communication and understanding of the objectives, mechanisms and focal areas of their respective efforts. Furthermore, the government has called on the private sector to contribute to drought relief during the particularly severe drought currently being experienced. The details provided here will therefore be of interest to private companies wanting to heed government's call for support.

Readers are encouraged to share this Bulletin with other institutions or interested parties, such that the Bulletin expands to include as many drought relief projects in Namibia as possible. Contributions to the Bulletin in the form of details about relief projects in Namibia or reports on previous drought relief efforts (or efforts from other parts of the world) can be sent to the Bulletin editor, Gail Potgieter at [gailsfelines@gmail.com](mailto:gailsfelines@gmail.com).

## About the Namibian Chamber of Environment

The Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) is an umbrella association of 63 organisations working in the environmental sector. NCE aims to support and represent its members on all issues relating to the environment. Rather than doing fieldwork itself, NCE looks to support the efforts of others with a view to creating and adhering to best practice standards. The NCE recognises the importance of addressing social needs at the interface between the environment and society, and drought relief falls into this category.

## Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE)

### About NCE drought relief

NCE has initiated a drought relief project at the request of the private sector in response to the government's recent call for financial assistance. Consequently, the drought relief project will seek to channel funds to NCE members that work in areas that have experienced severe drought. Based on the rainfall patterns and resultant rangeland condition following the recent wet season, NCE decided to focus on northern Erongo and the Kunene Region.

Besides channelling funds into projects in these areas, NCE will take a strategic approach to drought relief that will improve responses to drought in future. This includes funding research into drought relief efforts both in Namibia and elsewhere to highlight best practices and lessons learned. NCE will also promote communication and synergy between different civil society drought relief efforts in Namibia, particularly through publishing the *Drought Relief Bulletin*.

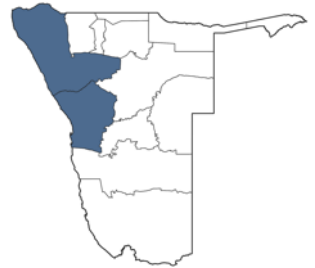
### NCE drought relief priority areas

The key priority areas for NCE are:

- Initiate a research programme that includes fieldwork in drought affected regions of Namibia and extensive literature reviews of drought and disaster relief efforts in other parts of the world. The research will help to identify effectiveness of different types of drought and disaster relief programmes.
- Publish the *Drought Relief Bulletin* to improve communication lines among civil society institutions, inform them of the latest research results and ensure that potential private sector donors and government institutions are aware of these efforts.
- Support members of the NCE to deliver drought relief in Namibia. The initial phase will focus on northern Erongo and the Kunene Region through the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) and Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC).



### Focal Areas



### Quick Look

*Target demographics: Whole communities living within communal conservancies.*

*Programme funding and focus: Currently have N\$1 million; focus on communication and research, channelling funding to ground organisations.*

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## The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)

### About ELCIN drought relief

The Evangelical Lutheran church in Namibia (ELCIN) is the biggest church in the country with more than 840 000 members. The ELCIN Department of Mission, Diakonia and Social Services (DMDSS) is an arm of the church mandated to coordinate and implement diakonia (helping and serving the poor) and social services in the church.

The vision of the ELCIN DMDSS is: *To create a just society through provision of services which empower communities to be self sustainable.* In 2013-2014, ELCIN implemented a drought relief project using US\$ 600 000 received from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The ELCIN DMDSS requires additional funds to implement a similar drought relief project for 2019-2020, as the country is now faced with severe drought.

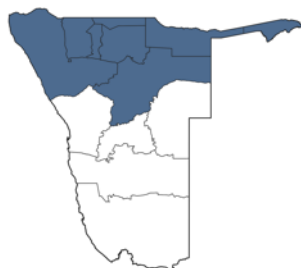
### ELCIN drought relief activities

ELCIN implements the following activities as part of the drought relief programme:

- Provide cash to vulnerable households to improve their food security and meet basic needs.
- Diversify livelihoods through a grant of N\$100 per person per month, which increases the income of households according to the number of people they have registered. These households can spend their money on needs they prioritise.
- Provide psychosocial support through local churches in response to social problems that may be exacerbated by drought relief grants. Cash distribution could lead to alcohol abuse and/or gender-based violence when women are the cash recipients. We have trained our local pastors, deacons, assistant deacons and volunteers on psychosocial support to help prevent or reduce these problems.
- Strengthen the resilience and capacity of affected communities to respond to disasters by providing emergency/disaster preparedness training for pastors, deacons and community members. Our national and international partners provided the training, which we used to prepare our communities.
- Build advocacy capacity within communities such that they can approach government for service provision related to the drought (e.g. broken water pumps, lack of dams). ELCIN raises awareness among community members to know their basic rights, which empowers them to advocate for these services in future.



### Focal Areas



### Quick Look

*Target demographics: Whole communities identified as most vulnerable to drought according to baseline information.*

*Programme funding and focus: Approximately N\$150,000 required per community of 150 households; cash grant to individuals.*

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## Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC)

### About IRDNC drought relief

IRDNC is a non-governmental organisation that supports communal conservancies in the Kunene and Zambezi Regions. Their main focus is to link socio-economic development and nature conservation in Namibia's rural areas. They do this by building capacity among conservancies to develop tourism potential and use their natural resources sustainably.

The IRDNC's planned drought relief project is designed to inject cash income into drought-affected communities by creating short-term employment opportunities related to tourism and conservation projects.

### IRDNC drought relief activities

The proposed employment opportunities for drought-affected communities are:

- Cleaning waste sites and litter collection at selected villages. Solid waste disposal is a key challenge in rural villages without municipalities. Those employed for this task will 1) collect solid waste around existing dump sites; 2) build waste holding units using local materials; 3) raise awareness about the reduce-reuse-recycle concept.
- Clearing of game count roads and wildlife monitoring sites. Conservancies in the Kunene Region conduct annual game counts from roads traversing their areas, but these roads deteriorate over time and can make game counts difficult. Those employed for this task will clear roads used for game counts of obstructions.
- Infrastructure support and cleaning water points. Water points used by people, livestock and wildlife may become contaminated or filled with sediments and debris. Those employed for this task will 1) clean the water points by removing debris etc.; 2) patch water channels with concrete where required; 3) construct new water channels or install water pipes; 4) construct new water holes away from settlements for wildlife use.
- Accessing potential tourist attractions and developing hiking trails. Some conservancies have not realised their full potential for tourism due to lack of tourist access to key sites via roads or hiking trails. Those employed for this task will 1) develop or establish 4x4 tracks and hiking trails; 2) build picnic sites and game viewing hides; 3) prepare rudimentary campsites.



### Focal Areas



### Quick Look

*Target demographics:*  
*Unemployed youth; elderly women and men.*

*Programme funding and focus:*  
*Total budget is N\$2,715,042, supported partially through NCE funding. Plan to employ 300 people on short-term projects during the drought period.*

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## Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)



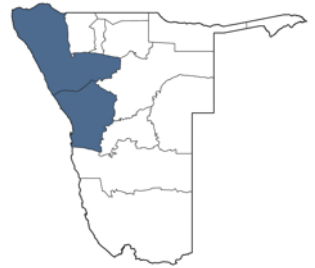
### About NNF drought relief

The Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) supports communal conservancies in the Erongo and southern Kunene Regions. These areas are among the hardest-hit by drought in 2019, and therefore require extra support. Conservancies already have management structures in place for paying out money for damages caused by human-wildlife conflict and distributing other social and financial benefits to their members. NNF will therefore use their existing relationships with conservancies to work towards a drought relief mechanism aimed at the most vulnerable households in these areas.

### NNF drought relief plans

NNF has contacted six target conservancies (Tsiseb, Ohungu, Sorris Sorris, Doro !Nawas, //Huab and Üibasen Twyfelfontein) and asked them to identify suitable candidate households for drought relief. They plan to contact another three conservancies (//Audi, !Koro !goreb, Otjimboyo and ≠Gaingu) in the near future. The actual mechanism for delivering relief will be discussed with the conservancy managers and committees to determine what is most feasible and effective.

### Focal Areas



### Quick Look

*Target demographic: Whole communities living in communal conservancies.*

*Programme funding and focus: Funded through NCE, relief mechanism to be determined with conservancy management.*

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## Namibia Red Cross Society

### About NRCS Drought Relief

The Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS) is a national humanitarian organization, established by an Act of Parliament, Act 16 of 1991 following Namibia's independence, as a National Society auxiliary to public authorities. It has a network of nine Regional branches, although it works in ten regions. The NRCS provides support directly to vulnerable communities, using specific community-based approaches and methodologies to identify the most vulnerable.

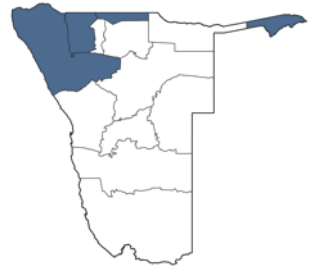
### NRCS drought relief priority areas and activities

The NRCS has been assigned responsibilities in Namibia's National Drought Response Plan as declared by the President of Namibia on the 6th of May 2019 based on the prevailing conditions within the country. These include:

- Support with Food Distribution Logistics: We activated 30 volunteers to assist with the loading and off-loading of food items at warehouses identified by the Directorate of Disaster Risk Management/Regional Councils in Omusati, Ohangwena and Kunene regions. The volunteers will be available from June 2019 – March 2020.
- Nutrition Surveillance: We started consultations with the Ministry of Health and Social Services regarding the need for nutrition surveillance and supplement support to children under five, pregnant and lactating mothers. The NRCS plans on mobilizing volunteers in the regions with the highest incidences of malnutrition to carry out the surveillance.
- Mobilized funds for safe water access through water point rehabilitation (including protecting of wells and springs), provision of water purification tablets, jerry cans and hygiene promotion activities targeting 3,000 households in the Kunene region. It will run from June – December 2019. In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and the Kunene Regional Council, funded by USAID.
- Mobilized funds for food security support through a British Red Cross/Spanish Red Cross/Namibia Red Cross consortium in the Sibbinda constituency of the Zambezi region targeting 600 households. The intervention will focus on providing cash to drought affected small-scale crop farmers; the last disbursement allows farmers to buy seeds for the next crop season. In partnership with NamPost. The project will run from July – Dec 2019.



### Focal Areas



### Quick Look

*Target demographics: Women, children and people living with physical and mental health challenges.*

*Project funding and focus: Funded by international donors, projects for July-Dec 2019 targeting 3,000 households in Kunene and 600 households in Zambezi.*

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## United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

### About UNICEF drought relief

UNICEF is currently providing technical expertise to the Government and has reprogrammed US\$ 527 000 (of which US\$ 400 000 for Health and Nutrition, US\$ 100,000 for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and US\$ 27,000 for Protection) to ensure the optimal use of the available funds. UNICEF is therefore working with key Government Ministries and non-governmental organizations.

### UNICEF drought relief priority areas and activities

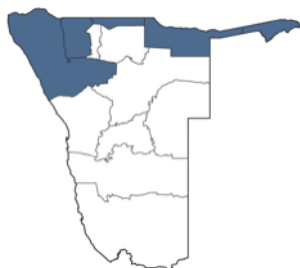
The key priority areas UNICEF will support government to address are:

- Health and Nutrition
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
- Protection, particularly the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

These priority areas will be addressed through the following activities, in support of the Ministry of Health and Social Services:

- Mitigate the effect of drought by reducing avoidable illnesses and deaths.
- Initiate monitoring and surveillance for drought, waterborne, zoonotic and other public health concerns.
- Implement a community-based approach to address stunting in high prevalence districts, and to integrate nutrition activities into the social protection system.
- Implement low cost high impact interventions for maternal and neonatal health in high burden volume hospitals.
- Procure essential life-saving WASH items to reduce/avoid the incidence of waterborne, zoonotic and other public health concerns linked to the drought.
- Organise training of School Health Teams and Community members on Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach and Hygiene promotion for behaviour change, and accelerate the elimination of Open Defecation in the most vulnerable communities.
- Awareness-raising on child protection risks during drought and the setting up and strengthening of community-based mechanisms.
- Monitor cases of abuse in the community as a result of the drought.

### Focal Areas



### Quick Look

*Target demographics: People living with HIV, children under five years, pregnant and lactating women.*

*Programme funding and focus: US\$ 527 000 reprogrammed for drought relief purposes; provides technical expertise and support for government programmes.*

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# The Lutheran Churches' Emergency Cash Grant project (2013/14).

*This is a brief summary of the report by Haarmann & Haarmann (2015) for the United Church Council – Namibia Evangelical Lutheran Churches on their drought relief project implemented during 2013-2014. The full report can be found here: (<http://www.bignam.org/Publications/>).*



*Photo © Dirk Haarmann*

## Scale of the project

The project focused on four communities selected from four regions of Namibia. It reached 4,859 beneficiaries living near the rural villages of Ongongo (Kunene), Onangholo (Omusati), Ncaute (Kavango East) and Amper-bo (Hardap). The selection of villages was kept confidential until after the initial registration, to prevent immigration from neighbouring communities.

## Selection of beneficiaries

Each beneficiary was entitled to N\$100 per month; adults who cared for child beneficiaries (mothers or grandmothers) were registered as recipients on behalf of the children. Where possible, the registration teams selected women as the recipients of the grants on behalf of their families.

People who earned taxable income or already received government social grants (e.g. pensions) did not qualify for this emergency cash grant, although they could receive the grant on behalf of dependent children. Besides these exceptions, everyone in the selected communities was eligible for receiving the grant. The reason for not further limiting recipients within these communities was to avoid creating division or stigma within the target communities.

## Registration and implementation

The registration team first held a community meeting to announce the project, but the actual registration was done from house to house by pairs of registrars. In one village, a central registration process was conducted, but this was less effective. The team found that central registration led to more dishonest responses to eligibility questions and unfairly favoured community members who knew about the project and were able to reach the registration point.

Subsequent to registration, the cash grants were channelled through NamPost via the Smartcard account system or cash delivery to local post offices. NamPost provided a discount for their services,

enabling more money to reach intended recipients. The donors were from international organisations associated with the Lutheran Church, which complicated the financial management procedures, but also allowed an exchange of ideas and methods between Namibia and other countries.

## Results

Following five months of implementation, a research team evaluated the impact of the cash grant by conducting follow-up questionnaires with a random sample (798 people from 475 households) of recipients from two of the target communities (Ongongo and Onangholo).

Their results reveal that the grant was used primarily for food, although some health, education, clothing and farming-related costs were also covered through the grant. Before receiving the grant, 63% of respondents reported lacking food daily or once a week, this dropped to 11% after the grant was implemented. The provision of cash also allowed them to expand their diet by supplementing the government-provided maize with items such as sugar, meat, fish and vegetables.

By providing cash, rather than food or livestock fodder, the project allowed recipients greater flexibility in deciding how to relieve their households during drought. This included buying seeds for the next planting season (having eaten them in times of hunger), hiring donkeys to plough fields (their own donkeys died) and starting micro-enterprises to generate more income. Before the project was implemented, 60% of respondents preferred cash to in-kind relief, this figure grew to 95% after implementation.

## Suggestions for other drought relief projects

- Aim to relieve whole communities, rather than specific sectors within communities, to avoid social divisions.
- If funds are limited for specific communities, avoid disclosing which communities are selected prior to registration.
- Where possible, women should be selected as the recipients of cash grants on behalf of their households.
- Registration should be done confidentially and from house to house, rather than at a central location in a public space.
- The NamPost Smartcard system worked well for delivering cash benefits.
- Cash grants, rather than in-kind support, improve standards of nutrition and allow households greater flexibility in their response to drought.
- Financial management and administrative structures between the donors and implementing institutions must allow for efficient disbursement of funds.
- Further work is required to build capacity within communities to lobby government to deliver drought relief effectively, provide psychosocial support to vulnerable people, and to prepare communities for future droughts.



Photo © Dirk Haarmann

## **Namibian Chamber of Environment**

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