



# BEST Programme

## Progress Report



*Bicycles For Humanity*



**Bicycles For Humanity Melbourne, October 2019**





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MELBOURNE • AUSTRALIA



Bicycling Empowerment Network  
Namibia

Funding from the Intrepid Foundation has enabled Bicycles for Humanity (B4H) Melbourne and its partner organisation BEN Namibia to support its bicycle distribution work in disadvantaged Namibian communities.

**Since October 2018, BEN Namibia has:**

**Provided comprehensive mechanic training to shops in Opuwo and Windhoek.**

These existing shops had experienced difficulties with previous staff moving on to other work. BEN provided training in mechanics to new participants at these shops, resulting in their workshops returning to operating normally once more. A total of 10 participants were trained over a total of two months.



*BEN Namibia first began working with Eden Cloete 11 years ago. A former street kid, Eden got into cycling through a partnership between BENN and a local homeless youth support centre in his home town, Otjiwarongo. Although the support centre closed down, Eden's passion for bikes continued, and so did his relationship with BENN and Bicycles for Humanity. Now he runs the town's only bicycle repair shop, and refurbishes and sells second hand bicycles provided by B4H Melbourne, earning a living for himself and his young family, as well as giving back by supporting local kids with bicycles. The BEST Programme is helping Eden grow his business.*



### **Provided ongoing business training to shops in Opuwo and Windhoek**

To complete the training at these shops and prepare them for reopening, each group of 5 participants was provided with two weeks' training in business skills, as well as ongoing support in reopening their shops. A meeting between participants and the host organisation was also facilitated to ensure the smooth operation of the shops.

### **Provided mechanic training to 10 youth in Omakange Village,**

These youths were part of a group of 45 recipients of bicycles in a ride to school project aimed at assisting with access to education. One barrier to the sustainability of the project has been the lack of repair services. The youth now have a set of tools and basic repair skills. One lead mechanic will receive advanced training in November 2019.



*B4H Melbourne and BEN Namibia have provided thousands of bicycles to children over the years to help them travel to and from school more easily. With support from the BEST programme we have been able to provide another 155 bicycles from Melbourne to school children in the past 12 months. They were delivered in three locations: The DRC Community in Swakopmund, Katima Mulilo and Omakange Village in the Kunene Region. In Omakange, which is a long distance from our nearest partner bicycle shop, we have also provided mechanic training to enable the students to maintain their own bicycles. One of the older students, who shows particular aptitude, will be provided with extensive mechanic training in November 2019 to enable him to start his own bicycle repair business.*





## *How much difference can a bicycle business really make?*

The SEPO bicycle shop was founded in a partnership between B4H Melbourne, BEN Namibia, and a local men's HIV/AIDS awareness project in 2010 in a village on the outskirts of Katima Mulilo, a city in the far northeast Zambezi Region of Namibia, which has Namibia's highest rate of HIV/AIDS infections at 22 percent.

Apart from spreading vital awareness about HIV among men in the region, the project also supports around 130 orphans and vulnerable children with a regular feeding programme, and has constructed a kindergarten to provide basic education, whereas previously children had to travel 10km to reach the nearest kindergarten.

The shop's manager, Moses Musukibili, has also coordinated with the Ministries of Health and Education to register all the local children and monitor their health and educational outcomes. The data collected clearly shows improvements in educational outcomes and health since the project began.

The shop has recently begun manufacturing cement bricks for local builders to purchase for construction projects. The income further helps fund the orphan support programme.

The SEPO bicycle shop has addressed severe malnutrition and huge educational disadvantage for children in the village. For B4H Melbourne and BEN Namibia, projects like SEPO remind us of the value of our work, and that it is about so much more than just bicycles.

The BEST Programme has enabled us to provide business development support to SEPO.





**Fabricated 10 solar electric bicycle ambulances for delivery through its partner shops**

These ambulances will assist with emergency medical transport in areas surrounding our bicycle shops. The shops will provide maintenance services for the ambulances, and excess solar charging capacity will be used to create revenue through, for example, phone charging for a small fee. This revenue will be used to fund maintenance of the ambulances. The ambulances are due for delivery in November 2019.

**Delivered 110 bicycles to school children**

Assisted partner shops in Swakopmund and Katima Mulilo to deliver a total of 110 bicycles to school children in local communities, to facilitate travel to school. Our partner shops were funded to pay for their work in delivering these bicycles. Most of these recipients are orphans and vulnerable children.

**Made support visits to shops in Outapi, Oshakati, Ondangwa, Otjiwarongo, Linyanti, Singalamwe, Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and Katima Mulilo**

In addition to comprehensive trainings delivered, these visits provided an opportunity to see progress and address challenges with participants. These visits were welcomed by the shops and encouraged them to revive and continue their work.



*Mechanic training at the Kaoko Bicycle Shop in Opuwo. As a result of our work over the last 14 years, Namibia has more women working as professional bicycle mechanics than any other African country.*



*Some of the 155 children who received bicycles to travel to school in Namibia over the past year.*

**Provided ongoing general support for all the shops**

In addition to the visits, ongoing general support was provided to all the shops. Answering their questions, whether related to their shops or general questions to help improve their shops. This support helped them address concerns and encouraged participants to continue their hard work.

BENN has made resupply deliveries of 1,020 bicycles to shops in Katima Mulilo, Bunya, Linyanti, Singalamwe, Nkurenkuru, Bunya, Nyangana, Makveto, Outapi, Ondangwa, Okatana, Okalongo, Rundu, Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund.

**Assisted a partner shop with physical relocation**

One successful partner in Nkurenkuru has purchased land for a permanent base for its shop, but has for some time been unable to physically relocate its container to the new premises. In July BEN Namibia assisted the shop with a new shipping container at its new location, as well as relocating its existing container. The shop is now established, rent free, at its new premises.