



Welcome to the BIG Coalition Presentation!!!

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Arebbusch Lodge, Windhoek



Where it all started

- President Pohamba's own appointed Namibian Tax Consortium (NAMTAX) in 2002:
 - To maximise tax collection.
 - To look at poverty reduction measures.
- Pohamba didn't like the universal BIG idea by NAMTAX:
 - "People will become lazy."
 - Work till your sweat turns to blood.



Civil Society Gets Involved

- Formed a BIG Coalition of Namibia (lobby group) to advocate for the implementation of a universal BIG.
- The Coalition is by voluntary association.
- Campaign headed by the Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia during Bishop Kameeta's reign.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church Desk for Social Development headed the campaign but handed over secretariat role to Economic & Social Justice Trust in 2020.



Universal BIG Pilot Study

- Pohamba-led government was playing hard to get.
- Coalition carried out a pilot study with which to convince government.
- Otjivero/Omitara Dam settlement ideal spot with 100 residence/former farm workers.
- Coalition fundraised for pilot study.
- All residents below 60 years received N\$100 BIG ppm, no conditions attached.
- Pilot study carried out 2008-2009 – first of its kind in the world.



THE CALL FOR A
UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME GRANT (BIG)
is supported by

ELCRN Desk for Social Development
Breaking the Wall of Silence (BWS)
Association Emblem Namibia
Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN)
//Naosan /Aes (Movement of Landless People
Southern Africa Refugee Protection





Coalition Set-up

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Content Creators	Campaign Ambassadors	Social Media Champions	Task Managers

NUST BIG SOCIETY	TRIAMPHUNT BIG SOCIETY	UNAM BIG SOCIETY
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WhatsApp Group	Coalition Meetings when needed
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Role of Coalition

- On behalf of the Coalition, ESJT to carry out advocacy activities that create more awareness & gain grassroots support e.g.,
 1. Lobby politicians (meetings e.g., LPM, PDM).
 2. Public meetings in various towns (Coast, South, East – Northern regions remaining).
 3. Social Media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter).
 4. Media relations: BIG Coalition is a thought leader (27 newspaper articles, 27 radio mentions, 8 television).
 5. Protest art exhibitions – BIG art exhibition at Frans Nambinga Art School.
 6. Events e.g., Int'l BIG Week, Int'l Day of Social Justice etc.
 7. Petition both online and hardcopy.



Fast forward

- Government continue to ignore the universal BIG Pilot Study results.
- Fast forward:
 - President Geingob supported pilot study by donating money (± N\$4,000).
 - Became president in 2015 - declared 'war on poverty' & "Nobody in this house must be left out."
 - Established a Poverty Eradication Ministry headed by BIG Coalition chairperson – Bishop Kameeta.
 - Heard Bishop say BIG would be implanted in 2019 at a church gathering in Germany. Nothing happened.



Relaunch #NoOnesLeftOut Campaign

- Promises were not kept and the Coalition **relaunched** the campaign in 2020.
- Carried out various activities to continue exerting **pressure** on government.
- In 2020, Harambee Foodbank and marginalized people feeding programmes were **converted** into N\$500/month/household (only for those in receipt of the above-mentioned programmes – 50,000 (2% of the population)).
- President Geingob:
 - “How can rich people also get BIG?”
 - “Government has no money.”



Challenges

- More members needed.
- More support needed but many CSOs limited capacity to mobilise grassroots support.
- Not widely accepted/understood by policy makers – lack of political will and support (promotes laziness and irresponsibility).
- Not widely known and understood by general public – resistance.
- Need more petition signatures.



Thank You!



Contact Economic & Social Justice Trust on behalf of BIG Coalition of Namibia
+264 (0)81 561 5191 contact@bignam.org | campaign@bignam.org
www.bignam.org @basicincomegranthamibia



Results continue...

- Child malnutrition reduced from 42% of to 10% in 6 months.
- Half of school-going children didn't attend school regularly. Non-attendance dropped by 42%.
- Drop-out rates fell from almost 40% to nearly 0% in a year.
- Residents visited health clinic regularly:
 - Clinic income increased fivefold from N\$250/month to about N\$1,300.
- Crime reduced – as reported by the local police station – fell by 42% while stock theft fell by 43% and other theft by 20%.
- BIG freed women from the pressure to engage in transactional sex to some extent.



Otjivero Pilot Study Results...

- Effects of pilot project were scientifically evaluated.
- An international team of experts guided and evaluated the research throughout.
- Household poverty dropped from 76% to 37% within one year.
- Economic activity/self-employment increased from 44% to 55%.
- This finding contradicts critics' claiming BIG leads to laziness and dependency.



BIG is affordable (exhaust all options)

- Bolivia, Mongolia and Zambia are financing universal old-age pensions, child benefits and other schemes from taxes on mining and gas.
- Eliminate illicit financial flows which makes us lose N\$10 billion annually by cracking down on tax evasions.
- Costa Rica and Thailand reallocated military expenditures for universal health.
- Algeria, Mauritius, Panama among others have complemented social security revenues with high taxes on tobacco.



Affordability continues...

- Egypt created an Economic Justice Unit in the Ministry of Finance to review expenditure priorities (curb wastage and corruption – N\$10 billion lost to #Fishrot).
- Government will recover part of BIG expenditure almost immediately through VAT - recipients will use the money to purchase goods/services on which VAT is levied.
- An investment in human development which will improve the Namibian society at large in terms of reduction of costs in other government programmes e.g., health, justice system etc.



Affordability continues...

- Managing debt.
- Increase tax revenues: Namibia has no capital gains tax, estate duty, inheritance tax or donation tax (tool for addressing inequality).
- Use SACU revenue: dedicate a portion of SACU revenues to finance BIG = compensation for the higher prices that all Namibians pay because of customs duties on imports.

