

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
held 13 May 2023,
at Otjiu-West Conservancy Office

New community campsite and craft shop,
Otjiu-West Conservancy, Opuwo Rural
Constituency, Kunene Region
November 2023



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1. INTRODUCTION

This project proposes a campsite and craft shop at Otjiu-West to improve community livelihoods by creating a beautifully designed and practical facility to attract tourists.

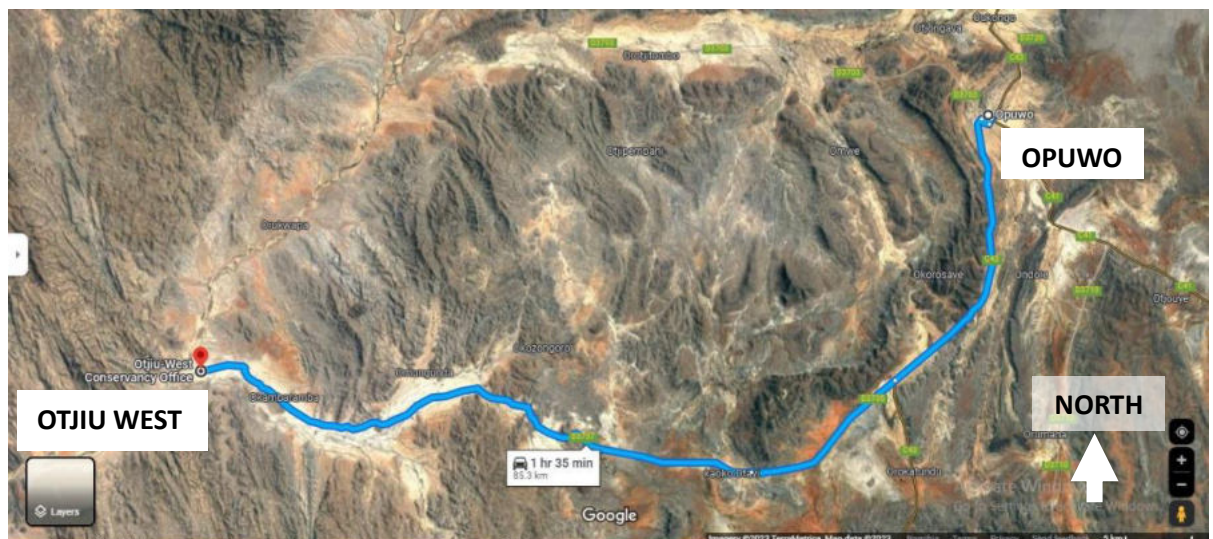
2. BACKGROUND:

Otjiu-West has very limited opportunities for employment, most youth have no formal education, and unemployment is thus high. The management committee responsible for overseeing the conservancy and community forest operations have identified a few development initiatives to help tackle the effects of high unemployment, such as a marketing facility for arts & crafts and a community camp site for tourist use, to provide short- and long-term employment and generate income for other future development initiatives.

Tourists pass by Otjiu-West on their way to either Opuwo or further northwest of the Kunene Region, making the crafts shop and community campsite viable, especially with some further arts and crafts skills development.

3. STAKEHOLDERS:

- Primary: Otjikaako Traditional Authority, Otjiu West Conservancy & Management Committee, IRDNC (implementing agency), SSC (funders)
- Secondary: NACSO, Opuwo Rural Constituency, Kunene Regional Council, Opuwo Town Council, MURD, MAWLR, MEFT.
- Tertiary: NTB, NCE, EHRA.



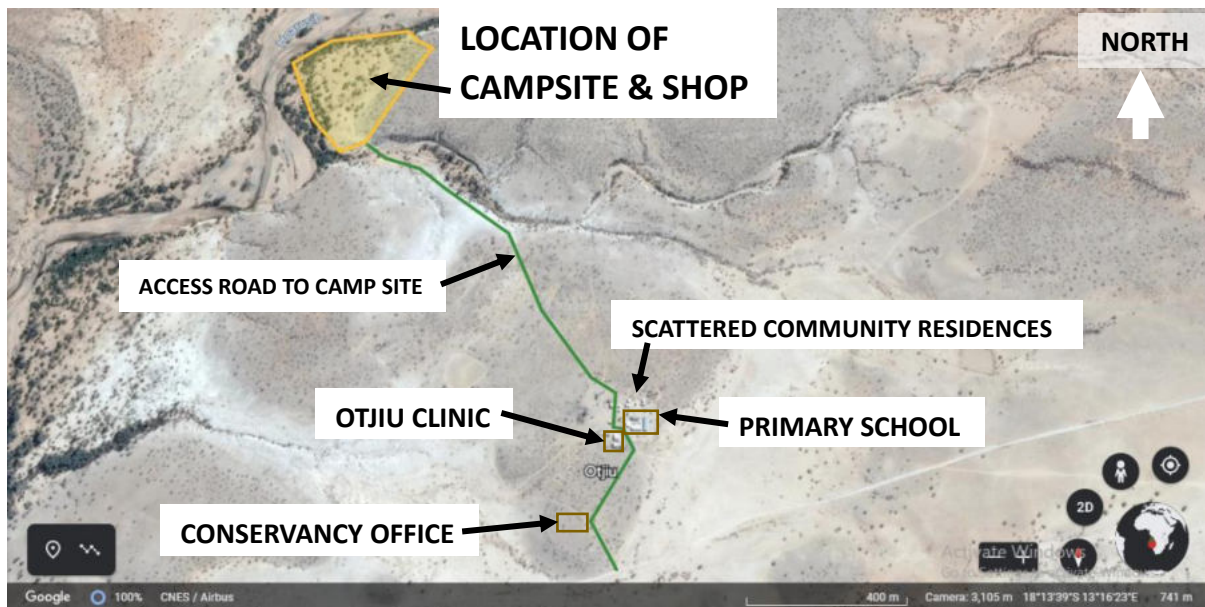
Otjiu-West in relation to Opuwo:

4. SITE DESCRIPTION:

Location and surroundings

Otjiu West village with its primary school, Clinic, Conservancy Office, and various dwellings lies approximately 85km west of Opuwo Town. The proposed site for the craft shop and

camping is northeast of Otjiu-West village, bordered by the Hoarusib River along the north and west, and the Otjiu River on the south. To the east is a series of hills.



Campsite and Craft Shop location

Site Access

From Otjiu West, the site is accessed by an existing vehicle track through the village, leading northwest to a gap in the hills where the Otjiu River flows through to meet the Hoarusib. The last access is through the riverbed and soil erosion dongas.

5. MINUTES FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The minutes contained below are brief points on the discussions held in a meeting with the management committee members, community members and individual youth community members. Facilitated by Nina Maritz Architects and IRDNC team members on **13 May 2023** at **Otjiu West Conservancy Office**.

5.1 Community's story

1. The community of both Ovahimba and Ovaherero, say their generations have occupied the area for well over 200 years and due to their nomadic culture, they moved around the area in search of water and grazing areas for their livestock.
2. Currently and for the past few years, low rainfall and drought has really been making their way of living difficult and forcing them to consider other ways of sustaining themselves such as through employment

5.2 Overall intention / belief

1. To generate collective income
2. The management committee together with the community members believe that having infrastructures like a craft shop and campsite means access to an opportunity for some kind of employment whether it be in the management of the facilities or

through the making and selling of crafts to/for tourists both on site and in Opuwo Town

3. A lot of tourists use the main gravel road enroute to Purros or to Opuwo but overnight at another campsite up the road from the site.

5.3 Staff to be employed

1. They haven't yet discussed this thoroughly in terms of who will be employed and how money management would work, but they envision the staff employed will be from the community
2. Positions considered are receptionist, manager, security person, cleaner or alternatively just a receptionist and security person

5.4 Types of crafts being made in the community

1. Small volumes of crafts
2. Herero / Himba dolls
3. Calabash bowls, utensils
4. Wooden carved utensils, bowls, small animal figures (determined by access to timber)

5.5 Types of crafts that could also be made in the community with access to resources and skills upgrading

1. Jewellery & beadwork: necklaces, bracelets, and anklets using various materials such as shells, beads, leather, copper
2. Leatherwork: bags, belts, sandals, and pouches
3. Wood carving: sculptures, figurines, utensils, and bigger bowls (determined by access to timber)
4. Weaving: baskets and mats using natural fibers such as grasses, reeds, and palm leaves
5. Pottery: handcrafted clay pots, bowls, and vessels for food preparation (determined by access to clay soil)
6. Small textile cloths or animal hide decorative sheets (determined by access to animal hide)

5.6 Other activities to consider other than what was mentioned in the brief

1. Tuck-shop at the reception selling a few refreshments such as cold drinks, firewood, toilet paper, some palm fruits, chips, sweets
2. Sundowner tower or deck on the south and eastern hill borders of the site
3. Swimming pool for tourist use and paid use by community members
4. Stargazing
5. Tourists can pay to experience traditional dances
 - a. a craft welding session with craft makers
 - b. a wedding or hunting experiences
 - c. short guided nature hikes with show case of medicinal plants or picking of Mopane worms during season
 - d. storytelling
 - e. living museum

5.7 Interests in skills upgrading

1. Community members are interested in engaging with craft development programmes for craft skills upgrading (in fact one of the community members has done training at COSDEC Opuwo)

5.8 Other infrastructural notes

1. If the budget allows, they would like to fence the site along the boundary of the leasehold for security purposes especially against some wild animals (this item needs permission confirmation)
2. Cellular reception is a problem in the area but they were informed that a cellular network tower will be erected nearby in July of this year
3. Sign boards in town and enroute to the site with the campsite receptionists' number for visitors to call and enquire
4. They prefer that a new road straight to the site from the main road be constructed so visitors don't go through the community settlement to get to the campsite. But also, the existing road to the site, needs be made good.

5.9 Thoughts on the craft shop

1. The idea for the lockable rooms is that they are
 - a. storage rooms for the craft makers materials and surplus crafts
 - b. but also, craft making rooms/workspace for onsite craft making
2. They are flexible on the display area set up but request
 - a. one big table displaying the variety of crafts
 - b. one sales person (a craft maker that would be trained for this purpose)

5.10 Thoughts on the use of dry toilets for the campsite

1. They preferred installation of flushing toilets with a septic tank because they feel the site is downhill, may be too rocky underground and too close to the nearby river

5.11 Materials and construction methods, they are familiar with

1. They build their houses using
 - a. Tree poles, grass, sticks, mud and cow dung
 - b. Rock and cement (using locally found rocks that they consider strong)
 - c. Brick and cement
 - d. Corrugated metal sheets
2. No gabion or sandbag construction experience
3. They also are not aware of recyclable materials in abundance that can be sourced from for build purposes. But recon Agra store might have cardboard boxes

5.12 Available skills in the community for constructing the facilities

1. few qualified builders (underwent training at a VTC, COSDEC, NamWork)
2. few unskilled builders
3. a lot of bricklayers
4. 2 or 3 electricians
5. 2 plumbers

5.13 Notes to the Architects

1. The community would like to be properly briefed on the drawing plans before construction begins so they can monitor quality and ensure that what is designed, is indeed what is being built.
2. The community members would like the road routes to the site to also be indicated on the drawings

End of minutes.