

Regional Assessment of the Status of the San in Southern Africa

An Assessment of the Status of the San in Namibia

James Suzman

Legal Assistance Centre



REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF THE SAN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

REPORT SERIES • Report No. 4 of 5

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF THE SAN IN NAMIBIA

James Suzman



LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE (LAC)

Windhoek • April 2001

© Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) 2001

Any part of this publication may be reproduced for educational or academic purposes, on condition that the authors, the publisher and the financial contribution of the European Community to the *Regional Assessment of the Status of the San in Southern Africa* are acknowledged.

First printed April 2001

Printed by John Meinert Printing, Windhoek

Photographs courtesy of the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa, Silke Felton and James Suzman

Publisher's contact details:

Street address: 4 Körner Street, Windhoek

Postal address: PO Box 604, Windhoek, Republic of Namibia

Telephone: (+264) (+61) 223356

Fax: 234953

E-mail address: legal@iafrica.com.na

Web site: <http://www.lac.org.na>

ISBN 99916-765-61-1

PREFACE

At the 22nd Session of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly held in Windhoek in March 1996, a resolution was passed recognising the “special difficulties encountered in integrating hunting and gathering peoples in agricultural industrial states”, and calling for “a comprehensive study of the San people ... in the light of international conventions”. To this end it was decided that a study titled *A Regional Assessment of the Status of the San in Southern Africa* would be conducted, with funding from the European Union (EU).

With a view to implementing the project, the EU commissioned Prof. Sidsel Saugestad at the University of Tromsø to prepare an inception report incorporating a broad work plan and budget. This report was revised in Windhoek in late 1998 by the implementing agency, the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), and implementation commenced following the exchange of contracts between the LAC and EU in January 1999. A project co-ordinator was formally appointed in the same month, and a total of ten researchers were contracted to conduct the research and prepare a report on their findings. The outcome of the study is a series of five reports. The first in the series serves as an introduction to the study as a whole. The second, third and fourth are country-specific reports on the situation of San in South Africa, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe (combined in one volume), Botswana and Namibia. The fifth is the outcome of a specialist consultancy commissioned as part of the study to focus on gender issues in relation to San.

The study as a whole was made possible by a contribution from budget line B7-6200/98-13/ENV/VIII of the European Community (EC). All opinions expressed in the study report series are the opinions of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the EC, nor of the LAC.

James Suzman
Study Co-ordinator

Windhoek
January 2001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great many people assisted me both in conducting the research and in producing the final version of this report, and I am extremely grateful for their time and effort.

I wish to thank particularly Silke Felton, Matthias Brenzinger, Karin Rousset and David Naude for their extensive assistance during the research phase.

A special word of thanks is also due to the organisations which I approached for various forms of assistance while conducting the research and also while writing up the report, namely: the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA), the San Traditional Authorities in Namibia, the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDNF), Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), the Ombili Foundation and the Government of Namibia line ministries referred to herein.

Of course I am greatly indebted to the many San communities whose warm welcoming and willingness to co-operate made my task a pleasant rather than arduous one.

I am very grateful to the staff at the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) for the administrative assistance and moral support they rendered throughout the study period; to the members of the study advisory group for their guidance and assistance throughout; to Pierre du Plessis, William Hofmeyer and Perri Caplan for polishing up all the draft texts and producing print-ready reports; and to the EU delegation in Namibia for helping to ensure the smooth running of the entire project.

James Suzman

CONTENTS

FIGURES AND TABLES	x
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xi
MAPS	
Map 1: The regions of Namibia.....	xiii
Map 2: Distribution of San speakers in Namibia	xiv
Map 3: The communal and commercial farming areas of Namibia	xv
Map 4: San resettlement areas in Namibia.....	xvi
 SUMMARY	 xvii
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 San in Namibia	2
1.1.1 Who are the San?.....	2
1.1.2 Demography and population.....	4
1.1.3 Historical overview.....	5
1.2 The dynamics of San marginalisation	6
1.2.1 Dependency	6
1.2.2 Popular stereotypes	8
1.2.3 Culture and society	9
1.2.4 Social problems	9
1.3 Conclusions	10
 CHAPTER 2	
THE COMMERCIAL FARMS	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 From German settlement to independence	11
2.2.1 Farming areas into which San were incorporated as farm labourers.....	12
2.2.2 Generational farm workers	13
2.2.3 The social organisation of farm life: <i>baasskap</i>	14
2.2.4 The breakdown of generational farm labour patterns – 1975 to 1990	14
2.3 Social and cultural transformation	15
2.3.1 The breakdown of traditional social groupings and institutions	15
2.3.2 Gender and transformation.....	15
2.4 San in commercial farming areas: independence onwards	16
2.4.1 Broader socio-economic and political change: mobility and insecurity	16
2.4.2 Impacts on San.....	19
2.4.3 Current living and working conditions of San farm workers	20
2.5 Conclusions and recommendations	23
2.5.1 Incentive schemes for farmers.....	23
2.5.2 Effective implementation of resettlement policy, prioritising generational farm workers	24
2.5.3 Urban areas and economic diversification.....	24
2.5.4 Working conditions.....	24
 CHAPTER 3	
SAN MINORITIES IN HERERO, OWAMBO AND KAVANGO COMMUNAL AREAS	25
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 History	26
3.2.1 Pre-colonial relations between San and others.....	27
3.2.2 Formation of “native reserves” – 1923 to 1980	28
3.2.3 The Odendaal Commission	28
3.3 San in communal areas – 1990 to the present	30
3.3.1 Paternalism	30
3.3.2 Labour in communal areas.....	30
3.3.3 Mobility.....	32

3.3.4	The breakdown of traditional social organisation.....	32
3.3.5	Farming.....	33
3.4	Area profiles	33
3.4.1	The “4 ‘O’ Regions” (former Owamboland).....	33
3.4.2	The eastern communal areas: former Hereroland.....	35
3.4.3	Kavango communal areas.....	36
3.5	Conclusions and recommendations	37
3.5.1	Capacity.....	38
3.5.2	Land and relations with traditional authorities.....	38

CHAPTER 4

“BUSHMANLAND”.....		39
4.1	Introduction	39
4.2	Demography	40
4.3	Historical overview	40
4.3.1	Tsumkwe.....	41
4.3.2	The Odendaal Commission.....	41
4.3.3	The SADF and the settlement of West Tsumkwe.....	41
4.3.4	Military withdrawal and the Nyae Nyae Farmers Co-operative.....	42
4.4	Development support since independence	42
4.4.1	Development support in East Tsumkwe: the NNC and NNDFN.....	43
4.4.2	Development support in West Tsumkwe: ELCIN and the MLRR.....	44
4.4.3	The Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation.....	45
4.4.4	The Nt̄a Jaqna Conservancy and Omatako Valley Rest Camp.....	46
4.5	Livelihood	46
4.5.1	Dependency.....	47
4.5.2	Food security.....	47
4.5.3	Employment.....	48
4.5.4	Pensions.....	48
4.5.5	Farming.....	49
4.5.6	Hunting and gathering.....	49
4.6	Politics and representation	50
4.6.1	Traditional authorities.....	50
4.7	Land and land access	50
4.8	Conclusions and recommendations	51
4.8.1	Food security issues.....	52
4.8.2	Capacity issues.....	52

CHAPTER 5

THE CAPRIVI.....		53
5.1	Introduction	53
5.1.1	Demography.....	54
5.2	History	54
5.2.1	Kxoe and others.....	55
5.2.2	The South African Defence Force.....	55
5.3	Development since 1990	56
5.3.1	MLRR/ELCIN intervention.....	56
5.3.2	MLRR intervention.....	58
5.3.3	The IRDNC LIFE Programme.....	58
5.4	Livelihood	59
5.4.1	Agriculture.....	60
5.4.2	Hunting and gathering.....	60
5.4.3	Employment.....	60
5.4.4	Pensions.....	61
5.4.5	Food aid.....	61
5.5	Current issues	61
5.5.1	Traditional Authorities in West Caprivi: the Mbukushu, Mafwe and Kxoe.....	61
5.5.2	Land and land use.....	63
5.5.3	Refugees.....	65
5.6	Conclusions and recommendations	68
5.6.1	Land and leadership.....	68
5.6.2	The Namibian Defence Force and Special Field Force.....	68
5.6.3	Support for community-based natural resource management.....	69
5.6.4	Food security and economic diversity.....	69

CHAPTER 6

GOVERNMENT, POLICY AND NGOs	70
6.1 Introduction	70
6.2 Government, policy and San	70
6.2.1 Conferences, meetings and GRN commitments.....	71
6.2.2 Nation-building and policies on minorities	71
6.2.3 Recognition as “indigenous”	72
6.2.4 UN Covenants and Conventions.....	72
6.2.5 Human rights	73
6.2.6 Non-ethnic policy	73
6.2.7 Affirmative action	74
6.3 Policy and poverty	74
6.3.1 Welfare.....	75
6.3.2 Aid and the dependency dilemma.....	76
6.4 Policy and the San	76
6.4.1 Policy design	77
6.4.2 Lack of material resources	77
6.4.3 Human resource problems	77
6.4.4 Participatory development.....	77
6.5 NGOs and San	78
6.5.1 Results and process	78
6.5.2 Networking and advocacy	79
6.5.3 NGO coverage and co-operation	80
6.6 Conclusions and recommendations	81
6.6.1 Action plan for poverty reduction	81
6.6.2 Participatory development.....	81
6.6.3 Dependency on GRN resources	81
6.6.4 Co-operation with NGOs and CBOs.....	81

CHAPTER 7

LAND AND RESETTLEMENT	82
7.1 Introduction	82
7.1.1 Landlessness in Namibia	82
7.1.2 San desires for land reform	84
7.1.3 Exclusive resettlement	84
7.2 Land reform in Namibia and San	84
7.2.1 Ancestral claims to land	85
7.2.2 National Land Policy	86
7.2.3 Land reform in the communal areas.....	86
7.2.4 Land reform and the commercial farming areas.....	88
7.3 Resettlement in Namibia	89
7.3.1 Resettlement policy.....	90
7.3.2 San and resettlement.....	91
7.3.3 San resettlement areas	92
7.4 Life after resettlement	93
7.4.1 Livelihood.....	94
7.4.2 San-MLRR relations in resettlement facilities	96
7.4.3 Housing and infrastructure	97
7.4.4 Tenure and security	99
7.4.5 Social problems in resettlement facilities.....	100
7.5 Conclusions and recommendations	100
7.5.1 Resettlement	101
7.5.2 The Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act and policy objectives	101
7.5.3 Adequate landholdings.....	101
7.5.4 Communal areas	101
7.5.5 Resettlement projects	101

CHAPTER 8

POLITICS, REPRESENTATION AND TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP	104
8.1 Introduction	104
8.2 San participation in mainstream politics	104
8.2.1 National politics	105
8.2.2 Regional and local government	105

8.2.3	Political alienation and consciousness	105
8.2.4	Traditional leaders	106
8.3	Historical overview of San leadership and political organisation	106
8.3.1	Pre-1990 San political organisation	107
8.3.2	The breakdown of traditional authority structures	108
8.3.3	Independence	108
8.4	The Traditional Authorities Act	108
8.4.1	Culture, tradition and the Traditional Authorities Act	109
8.4.2	Assessment of San claims to constitute "traditional communities"	109
8.4.3	San traditional authorities: problems and challenges	110
8.5	Conclusions and recommendations	111
8.5.1	Political participation	112
8.5.2	Political representation	112
8.5.3	Traditional authorities	112
8.5.4	GRN structures	112
CHAPTER 9		
HEALTH		113
9.1	Health and tradition	113
9.2	Sickness and disease	113
9.2.1	Tuberculosis	114
9.2.2	Malaria	114
9.2.3	AIDS	114
9.2.4	Pneumonia	115
9.2.5	Gastro-intestinal problems	115
9.2.6	Trauma	115
9.2.7	Teenage pregnancy	115
9.2.8	Alcohol abuse	116
9.3	Health services	117
9.3.1	The Ministry of Health and Social Services	117
9.3.2	Transport	118
9.3.3	Communication and co-operation with medical staff	118
9.4	NGOs and Health	118
9.4.1	Health Unlimited	118
9.5	Food security and food aid	119
9.5.1	Hunger	119
9.5.2	Food aid	120
9.6	Conclusions and recommendations	121
9.6.1	Community healthcare	121
9.6.2	AIDS programmes	121
9.6.3	Clinics and health services	122
9.6.4	Alcohol abuse	122
CHAPTER 10		
EDUCATION		123
10.1	Introduction	123
10.1.1	Apartheid education	124
10.2	Impacts of lack of education on San	124
10.2.1	Vulnerability	124
10.2.2	Inability to secure non-menial jobs	125
10.3	San and schooling in Namibia	125
10.3.1	Poverty	126
10.3.2	Cultural issues	126
10.3.3	Transport and boarding	127
10.3.4	Punishment	127
10.3.5	Negative attitudes of other students	127
10.3.6	Problems with teachers	127
10.3.7	Payment of fees	128
10.3.8	Mother-tongue education	128
10.3.9	Teenage pregnancy	129
10.4	Adult education	129
10.5	Education policy and San	130
10.5.1	The Intersectoral Task Force on Educationally Marginalised Children	130
10.5.2	Policy implementation	131

10.6	Conclusions and recommendations	132
10.6.1	Flexibility in policy.....	132
10.6.2	Language development.....	133
10.6.3	Coverage.....	133
10.6.4	Status of the uneducated.....	133
CHAPTER 11		
	NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND TOURISM	134
11.1	Introduction	134
11.2	Tourism and San in Namibia	134
11.2.1	Tourism options for San.....	135
11.2.2	Policy framework.....	136
11.2.3	CBNRM benefits and constraints.....	137
11.3	Natural resources and non-timber forest products	139
11.3.1	Policy framework: the Forestry Act.....	140
11.3.2	Devil's Claw.....	140
11.3.3	Other options involving indigenous flora.....	141
11.4	Conclusions and recommendations	141
11.4.1	Conservancies.....	141
11.4.2	Natural resource exploitation.....	142
CHAPTER 12		
	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	143
12.1	Integrated multi-sectoral development	143
12.2	Key areas for intervention	144
12.2.1	Development and empowerment.....	144
12.2.2	Education.....	145
12.2.3	Land access.....	145
12.2.4	Leadership and representation.....	145
12.3	Stakeholders' roles	146
12.3.1	The role of GRN.....	146
12.3.2	The role of NGOs.....	146
12.3.3	The role of San CBOs and traditional authorities.....	146
12.3.4	The role of donors.....	146
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	147
	APPENDICES	155
APPENDIX A		
	Speech by President Sam Nujoma at the <i>Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations</i>	155
APPENDIX B		
	Resolutions of the <i>Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations</i>	157
APPENDIX C		
	Resolutions adopted at the <i>Second Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations: Common Access to Development</i>	161
APPENDIX D		
	Field research locations.....	163

FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Human Development Index by language group – 1996 and 1998	1
Figure 1.2: San populations – 1921 to 1991 (with mean)	4
Figure 1.3: Human Poverty Indices by language group – 1997/98	9
Figure 2.1: Number of San living in commercial farming areas relative to San population growth and overall decline in farm employment in Namibia – 1951 to 1991	16
Figure 10.1: Literacy and enrolment of San and other language groups	124
Figure 10.2: San enrolment in schools in 1981-1998	125

TABLES

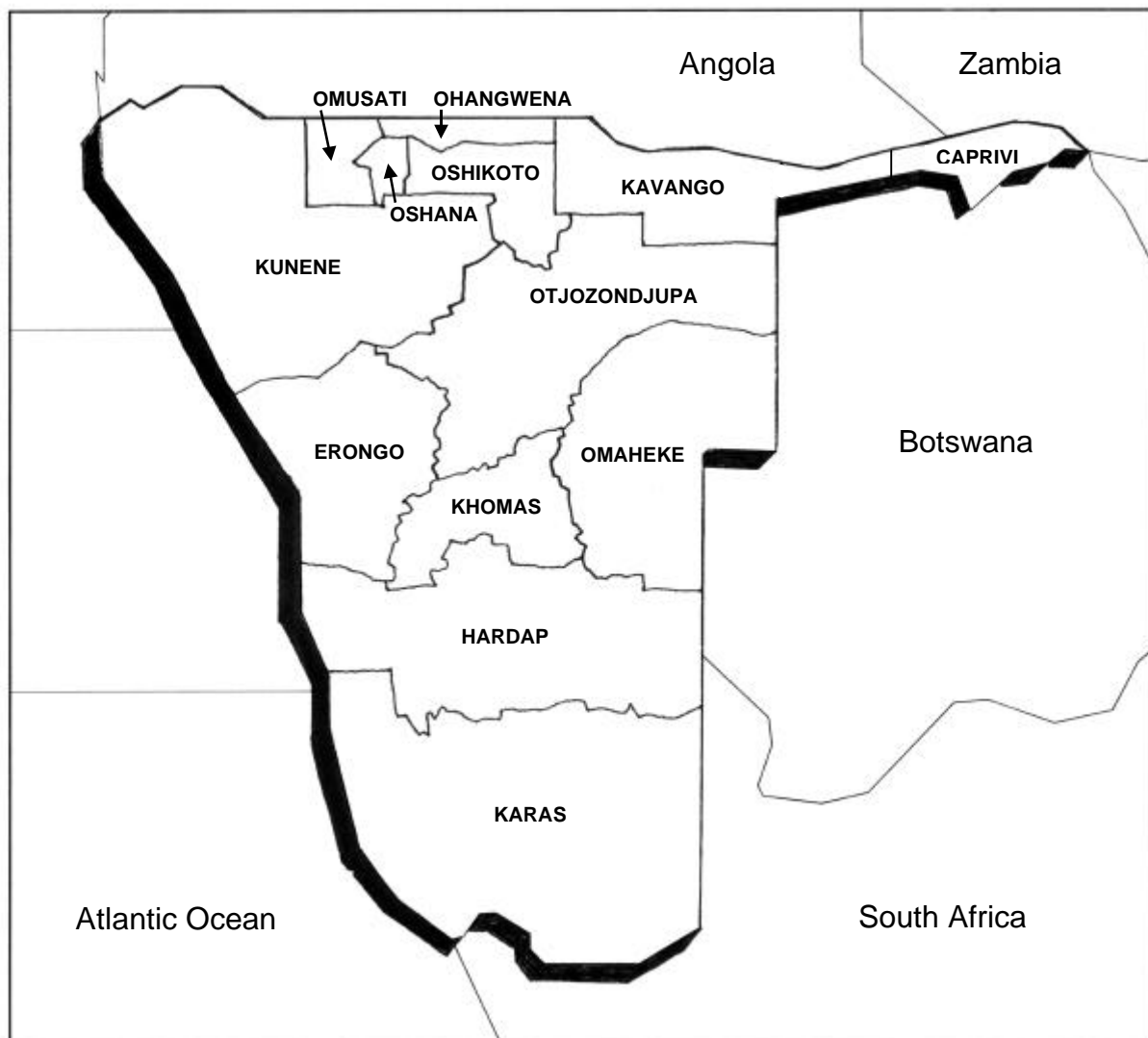
Table 1.1: San languages and dialects by location in Namibia.....	3
Table 1.2: San populations by area – 1971 to 1991.....	6
Table 1.3: Key socio-economic indices by language group – 1998	7
Table 2.1: Growth in number of commercial farms in SWA/Namibia	12
Table 2.2: San populations on farms in 1984	14
Table 2.3: Major settlement areas of unemployed San generational farm workers	20
Table 2.4: Farm workers' wages (N\$/month)	22
Table 3.1: Major San populations in communal areas (excluding the Caprivi and former Bushmanland)	26
Table 3.2: San language groups which lost land after the Odendaal Commission	29
Table 4.1: Place of origin of residents in East and West Tsumkwe	40
Table 4.2: Seasonal ranking of food sources in former Bushmanland.....	47
Table 5.1: Major San settlements in West Caprivi	54
Table 6.1: San CBOs in Namibia (2000).....	79
Table 6.2: NGOs involved in San affairs.....	80
Table 7.1: Resettlement facilities with predominantly San populations in 1998.....	93
Table 7.2: Crop outputs in San resettlement areas in 1997/98.....	94
Table 10.1: San in schools in 1994 and 1998.....	126
Table 10.2: Number of schools accommodating San learners in 1981, 1994 and 1998	128

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

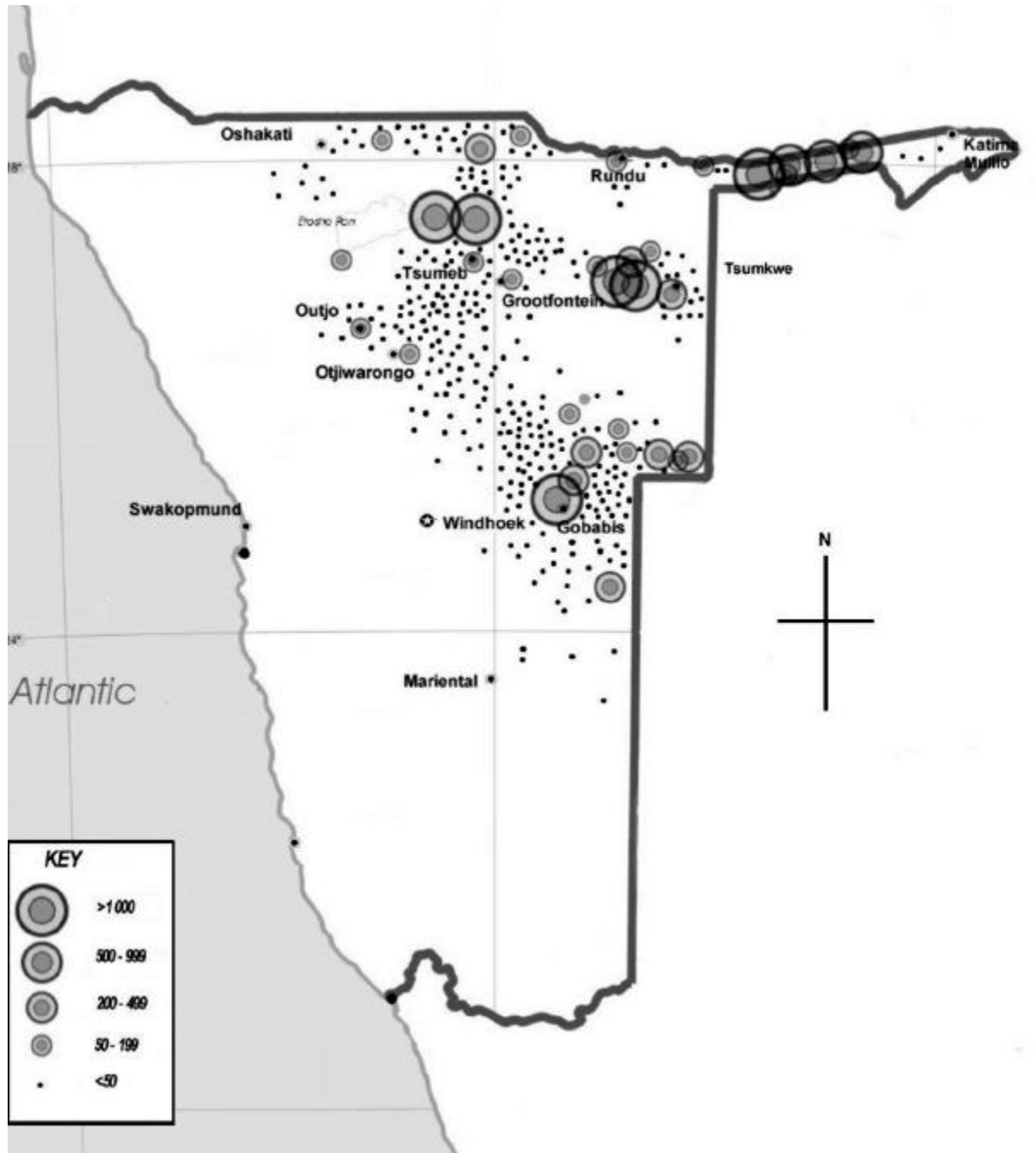
ACP	Africa-Caribbean-Pacific
ALRA	Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CASS	Centre for Applied Social Sciences
CBNRM	community-based natural resource management
CBO	community-based organisation
CBT	community-based tourism
CGGP	Community Game Guard Programme
CLA	Communal Lands Act
CRIAA SA-DC	Centre for Research-Information-Action for Development in Africa – Southern Africa Development Consulting
CRMP	Community Resource Management Programme
CSO	Central Statistics Office (now Central Bureau of Statistics of the NPC)
DEA	Directorate of Environmental Affairs
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment Shortcourses
EC	European Community
ELCIN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
EMU	Emergency Management Unit
EU	European Union
FAA	Forças Armadas Angolanas (Angolan Armed Forces)
FFWP	Food for Work Programme
GOB	Government of Botswana
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
HDI	Human Development Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRDNC	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
ITFEMC	Intersectoral Task Force on Educationally Marginalised Children
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
LIFE	Living in a Finite Environment (Programme)
MBEC	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
MLRR	Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
MOHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MP	Member of Parliament
MRLGH	Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing
NAMCOL	Namibian College of Open Learning
NDC	Namibia Development Corporation
NDF	Namibian Defence Force
NDP1	First National Development Plan
NDTF	National Drought Task Force
NEPRU	Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NHIES	Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey
NISER	Namibian Institute for Social and Economic Research
NLP	National Land Policy
NNC	Nyae Nyae Conservancy

NNDNFN	Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia
NNFC	Nyae Nyae Farmers Co-operative
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development
NPC	National Planning Commission
PTO	Permission to Occupy
RADP	Remote Area Development Programme
RAEIR	Retrospective Assessment of the Environmental Implications of Resettlement in Namibia
SADF	South African Defence Force
SFF	Special Field Force (Namibia)
SFP	Schools Feeding Programme
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SSD	Social Sciences Division (of the Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre at UNAM)
SWA	South West Africa
SWAA	South West Africa Administration
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TAA	Traditional Authorities Act
UN	United Nations
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UNTAG	United Nations Transition Assistance Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	village development committee
VGFDPP	Vulnerable Group Food Distribution Programme
VSP	Village Schools Project
WIMSA	Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

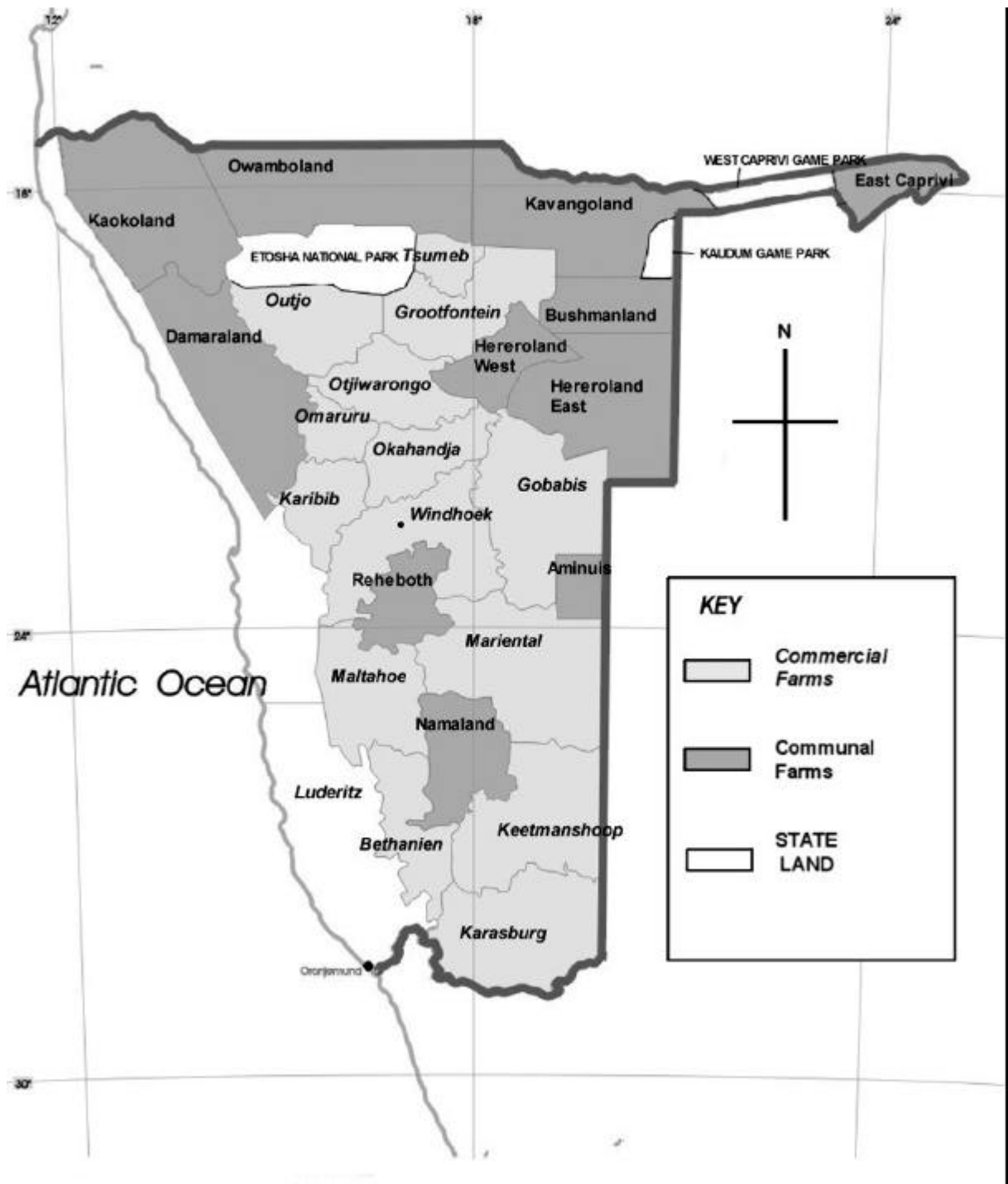
Map 1: The Regions of Namibia



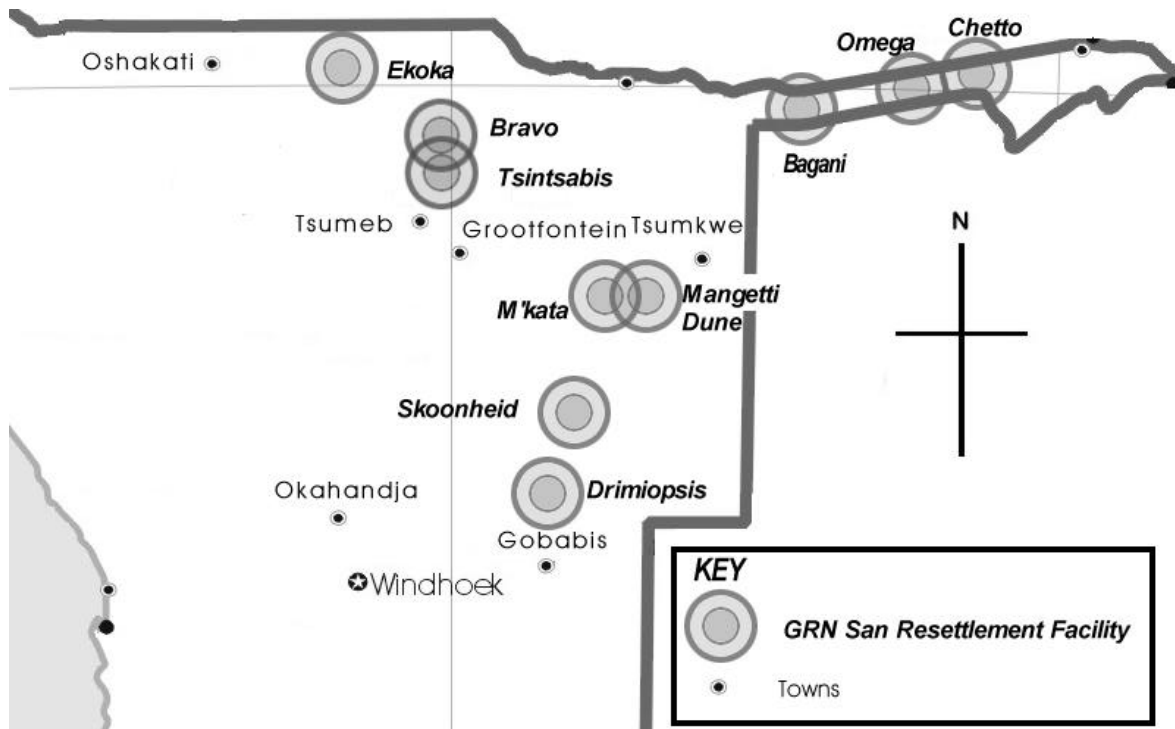
Map 2: Distribution of San speakers in Namibia



Map 3: The communal and commercial farming areas of Namibia



Map 4: San resettlement areas in Namibia



SUMMARY

Introduction

- Namibia is home to between 30 000 and 33 000 San, who comprise less than 2% of the national population. As a language group they are conspicuously disadvantaged vis-à-vis all other language groups in Namibia on almost every available socio-economic indicator. Their Human Development Index (HDI) (1998 figures) of 0.279 is considerably below the national HDI of 0.77, while their Human Poverty Index (1998 figures) of 59.9 is also considerably higher than the national average for Namibia, which is only 26.9.
- Landlessness, a lack of education, social stigmatisation, high mobility, extreme poverty and dependency conspire to prevent San from breaking out of the self-reproducing cycle of marginalisation in which many feel they are trapped.
- The per capita income of San is the lowest among all language groups in Namibia. The majority of San in Namibia lack access to any independent means of subsistence, and a sizeable proportion of them have no direct cash income. San consequently consider pensions, food aid and other forms of welfare as being vital for survival. In addition, they generally have to pursue a variety of economic strategies for income generation, as rarely is any single strategy sufficient for satisfying their basic needs over an entire year.
- Food security is a major problem and as many as 70% of Namibian San are dependent on erratic state-run food-aid programmes. Pensions are the only form of cash income for a large number of San households. Hunger is therefore a common feature of San life, and San in poorer areas sometimes go for several days without food. Others depend primarily on piecemeal work, for which they are often paid with food or alcohol. No San depend entirely on hunting and gathering.
- The fact that San life expectancy is some 22% lower than the national average is indicative of their poor nutritional and health status. San are particularly vulnerable to poverty-related diseases such as tuberculosis. In addition, high levels of alcohol abuse, domestic violence, crime, apathy, depression and boredom have arisen in San communities.
- Dominant stereotypes of San are almost uniformly negative. Perceptions of San social inferiority are so widespread that they clearly influence policy and its implementation.

Socio-spatial distribution

San populations are distributed throughout the north and east of Namibia. Contrary to popular belief, only a small proportion of San live in the area formerly known as “Bushmanland” (today the eastern part of the Otjozondjupa Region). The majority live in commercial farming areas and communal areas in which they form small minority populations.

Farms

- Close to half of all San in Namibia are themselves generational farm workers or members of generational farm-working families. Generational farm workers typically retain no land or residence rights outside of the farms on which they work. The recent decline of 40% in agricultural sector employment has thus left many San and other (mainly Nama/Damara-speaking) farm workers unemployed and homeless. Informal San settlements in places such as Oshivelo and Gobabis have grown considerably as a result of layoffs on commercial farms.
- Although much improved since the demise of apartheid, conditions for San on farms remain extremely harsh. In tandem with the over-subscription of the farm labour market, the extent of their material dependency on farmers leaves them in a very weak bargaining position. As a result, San

tend to be very poorly paid and they tolerate sometimes appalling living and working conditions. Although considerably less frequently so than during the apartheid era, San are still occasionally the victims of brutal treatment at the hands of farmers.

Communal Areas

- Just over 50% of San live in communal areas. Only around 10% of Namibia's San population live within the Tsumkwe District of the Otjozondjupa Region (formerly "Bushmanland"), the only area to which San are granted "customary rights" to land under existing law. Over a quarter of the San population live in communal areas (formerly Hereroland, Kavango and Owamboland) in which they constitute small, highly marginalised minorities. Material and social conditions for these San are often worse than in commercial farming areas. San in these areas tend to be more mobile and to rely on welfare and a broad range of opportunist economic strategies such as piecemeal work, begging and gathering in order to survive.
- Large numbers of San live on the peripheries of larger settlements in communal areas where they work just enough to secure enough alcohol for the day. In areas like former Hereroland, San have been known to sell their own as well as their families' food provided through welfare in return for alcohol.
- Apart from through the small Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR) projects in the Ohangwena Region, small minority San populations in communal areas have not benefited in any meaningful way from development programmes undertaken since independence.

Tsumkwe District

- San living in the Tsumkwe District are the exception in that they have retained adequate access to land. In East Tsumkwe (i.e. Nyae Nyae) the Ju/'hoan San have a well-established community-based organisation (CBO) and are the beneficiaries of a number of additional initiatives led by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In West Tsumkwe the San population is made up principally of indigenous !Kung-speaking communities and !Kung (Vasekele and Mpungu) migrants from either the Kavango in Namibia or Angola.
- Being largely culturally homogenous and part of a self-identifying sociolinguistic community, the Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae have a relatively stable social structure and strong sense of tradition and identity. By contrast, although operating under a single traditional authority, the San populace in West Tsumkwe is comprised of a diverse set of self-identifying communities. Moreover, they lack the NGO support that the Nyae Nyae communities are able to access and have struggled to establish a strong CBO. Their community institutions are consequently weaker and their institutional capacity is comparatively limited.
- Despite these problems, San in the Tsumkwe District maintain a relatively secure foundation for future development by means of retaining adequate access to land and having had their traditional authorities officially recognised by the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN).

West Caprivi

- Approximately 4 000 Kxoe-speaking San – popularly referred to as "Barakwena" – live in West Caprivi, the core area of their traditional migration territory. In the decade preceding independence, the South African Defence Force (SADF) established several bases in the area, to which large numbers of cash-starved Kxoe were recruited. Despite the South West Africa People's Organisation's (SWAPO's) assurances of their safety in the run-up to independence, close to 1 000 Kxoe chose to relocate to South Africa along with the SADF.
- After independence, the new SWAPO-led GRN, in collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), established a large resettlement programme in West Caprivi with a view to transforming the Kxoe into self-sufficient subsistence farmers. Following a negative evaluation of the largely unsuccessful programme, ELCIN pulled out in 1995. The programme is now managed exclusively by the MLRR with considerably diminished human and material resources.

- NGO support has come principally from Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), which has been working with the Kxoe to establish the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Programme in West Caprivi.
- Development efforts in West Caprivi have been seriously impeded by conflicts over land rights and traditional authority issues. The GRN has refused to recognise the mandate of the Kxoe Traditional Authority and their customary rights to land in West Caprivi. This has resulted in Kxoe populations feeling alienated and highly insecure. In 1997 the Kxoe Traditional Authority filed a court application against the GRN to resolve these issues. In response, the GRN agreed not to relocate San communities near Popa Falls as it had planned and referred the matter to a judicial commission (which has yet to sit) on the traditional leadership issue.
- At present an estimated 1 500 San refugees from West Caprivi are residing in Botswana. Although most of them moved there in immediate response to the recent extension of the Angolan conflict into West Caprivi, the refugee crisis must be seen as a direct result of the widespread insecurity over land and leadership issues prevailing among San in many parts of southern Africa. The Kxoe refugees allege that they have been subject to a number of serious human rights abuses committed variously by UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), the FAA (Forças Armadas Angolanas, i.e. Angolan Armed Forces), Namibia's Special Field Force (SFF) and the Namibian Defence Force (NDF). The fate of the Kxoe refugees remains uncertain.
- The recent increase in military activity in West Caprivi has effectively suspended development initiatives there and damaged short- as well as medium-term prospects of the CBNRM project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the resettlement scheme managed by the MLRR.

Land rights and tenure

- At present, fewer than 15% of Namibian San retain *de jure* rights to land. The majority of the San population are consequently highly mobile, spatially unstable and economically dependent.
- The few San who retain adequate access to land are in a considerably better position than those who do not, because they have a suitable foundation from which to address complex developmental problems. The high mobility and dependency of the majority of San in Namibia make the implementation of programmes or projects on their behalf very difficult.
- The apportioning of the country into freehold commercial farms, "tribal" communal lands and wildlife conservation areas by the colonial Government of South Africa meant that by 1970 fewer than 1% of the San population retained even limited *de jure* rights to the territories they traditionally occupied. Close to half of them lived on freehold land owned by white farmers on whom they depended for employment that enabled them to retain basic residential rights. Other areas in which San lived had been allocated to other "non-white groups" or transformed into national parks or game reserves. Only the small Ju/'hoan-speaking population living in what is now Nyae Nyae (or East Tsumkwe) were granted a San "homeland", namely Bushmanland, although they were denied even the limited autonomy granted to other non-white Namibians residing in their so-called homelands.
- Despite having been identified as one of the principal groups intended to benefit from the purchase of commercial agricultural farmland under the mandate of the Agricultural Land Reform Act (ALRA), fewer than 500 San have in fact benefited from the programme. Moreover, contrary to both the letter and spirit of the Act, the San who have been resettled have been given inadequate land and denied the tenure rights that the Act confers on recipients. The Communal Lands Bill currently under discussion looks unlikely to protect or expand land rights for San in communal areas in which they are minorities.

Education

- During the apartheid era few San were offered even the limited formal education granted to other non-white Namibians. As a result, only an estimated 20% of Namibian San are literate.

- Since independence the provision of formal education to San has proved to be an uphill battle. Their high mobility, economic insecurity, social prejudice and problems with cultural adaptation have contributed to the relative lack of success of attempts at providing a formal education to San. Despite the efforts of the GRN and NGOs, school attendance levels for San of school-going age are below half of the national mean. Taking into account current enrolment and dropout levels, it is likely that a large proportion of San will remain illiterate for the foreseeable future.
- Having noted these problems, the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) stands out among GRN organs for having adopted innovative and imaginative programmes vis-à-vis San and other educationally marginalised groups. This is reflected in the progress they have made, and MBESC figures indicate that around twice as many San attend school now as did ten years ago.
- Although government policy provides for mother-tongue education during the first three years of formal schooling, mother-tongue learning materials and teachers proficient in San languages are in short supply. At present, only Ju/'hoan speakers participating in the Village Schools Programme in Nyae Nyae have access to mother-tongue learning materials. No mother-tongue education materials are available for any other major San languages spoken in Namibia.

Government policy

- GRN statements regarding San and the issues affecting them have generally been positive. Indeed soon after independence the GRN demonstrated that it had a sophisticated understanding of the problems of San social and economic marginalisation and the challenges that must be faced in San development (see GRN 1992). The GRN consequently committed itself to granting San “special attention” and prioritisation in the development and land redistribution process (see Chapter 7 and Appendices A, B and C).
- Despite having made an unambiguous commitment to addressing the “dire plight” of the San, the GRN has not been able to effect any meaningful change in their collective status. This is partly a consequence of the fact that the GRN has not developed any coherent policy framework for dealing with San-related issues and problems.
- The GRN is not party to any international agreements specifically addressing the rights of indigenous minorities, and moreover it does not accord the category ‘indigenous’ – as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) or United Nations (UN) – any explicit status in policy. In practical terms the GRN has certainly made no moves to afford San any special status either as an indigenous minority or, far more importantly in the Namibian context, on the grounds of their socio-economic status relative to others.
- Few San outside of the NGO sector feel that they have any real say regarding their future or the direction their development should take. In almost all GRN-run projects, a paternalistic top-down approach has been pursued. As a result these projects have failed to deliver in terms of empowerment, participation and effective capacity-building.
- For various reasons the GRN has been unable to give practical effect to positive policy statements, and in a number of instances has failed to adhere to stated policy or to the letter of the law when dealing with San populations. In respect of both resettlement initiatives and traditional authority issues, San have to date been denied the rights determined by the law.
- The key line ministries tasked to deal with San and San-related issues have lacked both the human and material resources required to fulfil their policy mandates effectively. This problem has been most marked in the MLRR.
- Despite the presence of two strong and relatively high-profile San NGOs in Namibia – the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) and the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN) – NGO involvement in San affairs has been limited. However, NGO-led initiatives have been relatively successful since, unlike GRN-led development projects, in which little emphasis has been placed on community participation, capacity-building and empowerment, NGOs have focused on these factors as prerequisites for community development.

Representation

- Many San feel alienated in the “new Namibia” partly because they are under-represented in government structures.
- San are a minority in Namibia and (from a demographic perspective) should expect to have one or two representatives in the National Assembly, but no more. Far more realistic arenas in which San may achieve better representation are regional or local elected government bodies in areas of the country where San constitute more than very small minorities.
- Major political parties have made efforts to have at least token San representation in their ranks, and consequently there have been San Members of Parliament (MPs) in all Parliaments since independence. However, all San MPs have hailed from the high-profile but relatively unrepresentative Nyae Nyae population and are largely unknown to the majority of Namibian San.
- Despite constituting a numerically significant populace in some regions of Namibia, San have no representation in local and regional elected bodies.
- Despite this clear under-representation, the GRN has only granted official recognition to two of the six San traditional authorities in Namibia. The grounds for not recognising the remaining four are unclear. Provisions of the Traditional Authorities Act stipulate that all “traditional communities” in the country are entitled to formal representation by recognised traditional leaders. The GRN’s persistent refusal to recognise the unrecognised San traditional authorities has not only demoralised the four communities in question, but has also seriously impeded the development of stronger and more effective community structures among them.

Community-based natural resources management

- Some Namibian San communities have benefited from legislation devolving user rights over wildlife to communities which form conservancies. They have also benefited from programmes aimed at the sustainable use of some natural resources, for example Devil’s Claw. However, because so few San communities retain *de jure* rights to land or secure access to natural resources, only a small number of them are likely to benefit from CBNRM initiatives.
- Despite the scale of donor support for CBNRM initiatives, the income drawn from them at a household level in participant communities is minimal. San participants in Namibia’s longest-established communal-area conservancy remain highly dependent on food aid for their survival and are often undernourished in its absence. To ensure the sustainability of these programmes, greater emphasis must be placed on other means to ensure food security and generate income.
- San have also benefited from programmes aimed at the sustainable exploitation of some key natural resources such as Devil’s Claw. Further options for the sustainable exploitation of other natural resources should be investigated, particularly in bio-diverse areas such as West Caprivi.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Given the scale of San marginalisation and all its subtle complexities, it is inevitable that significant change can only occur in the longer term, and only if appropriate measures are taken. The various constituents of San structural poverty are currently too deeply entrenched to lend themselves to any simple solutions. It follows that any substantial interventions should be long-term and supported by an appropriate policy framework.
- San development should be a priority because a continuing failure to address their needs will lead to even higher levels of economic dependency, alienation and marginalisation – in all probability rendering the problem considerably less manageable in the future.
- Problems experienced with existing initiatives clearly indicate that any measures taken should be grounded in the principles of participatory development and seek to empower San within a flexible framework. Given the extent to which the status of San is a function of the uneven power relations that have prevailed between them and their neighbours for much of the 20th century, empowerment should be recognised as being critical to San development.

- One possible course of action that must be considered as a means of meaningfully improving the status of San is the establishment of an integrated multi-sectoral development programme in which San participate at all levels and which is grounded in the principle of affirmative action.
- The lack of material and human resources available to the GRN suggests that any initiatives undertaken should seek the collaboration of the NGO sector and funding from donors.
- A failure to meaningfully address the issues of access to land and rights over natural resources will have the potential to constrain other practically all other interventions.
- The issue of food security must be addressed as a priority, as a failure to do so is likely to lead to greater welfare dependency. Since food security can only be achieved in the long term, provisions should be made to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to support San through welfare services in the short and medium term.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are 30 000 to 33 000 San living in Namibia. The diverse communities that make up Namibia's San population are settled throughout much of the north-east of the country and constitute just under 2% of the national population. Once primarily reliant on hunting and gathering, by March 1990 when Namibia attained political independence from South Africa, the San population (or language group) had become a highly dependent, impoverished and marginalised minority one, which was considerably worse off than any other in the country in terms of a broad range of socio-economic and development indicators.

In subsequent years the first (non-racial) Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) has undertaken some laudable initiatives to improve the situation for San, but with few positive results. Political changes have created an environment better suited to addressing San-related issues than was the case in the past. However, taking into account broader economic developments over the past two decades, in several important respects many Namibian San are (arguably) worse off as they enter the new millennium than they were immediately prior to independence. Indeed, according to UNDP data, San constitute the *only* Namibian language group whose human development and poverty indices have deteriorated since this data was first disaggregated in 1996 (see Figures 1.1 and 1.3).

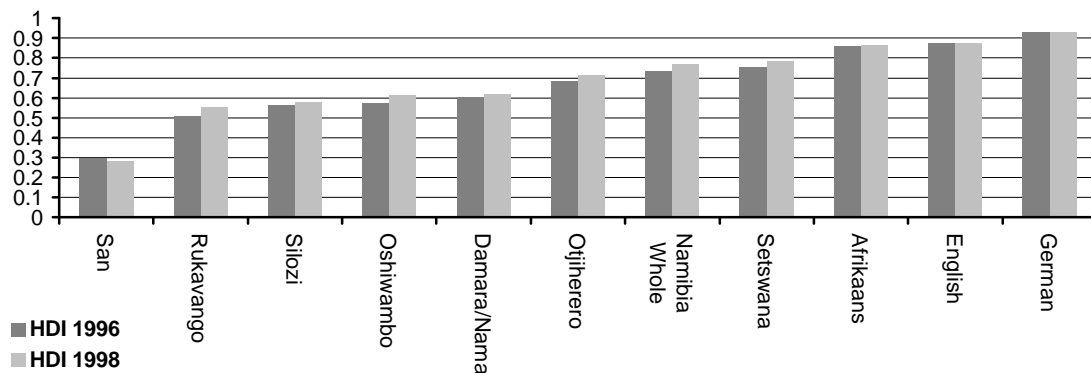


Figure 1.1: Human Development Index by language group – 1996 and 1998

Source: UNDP 1998¹

As Figure 1.1 indicates, San are considerably worse off than all other language groups in Namibia, and the following findings of this assessment corroborate the UNDP findings:

- Despite almost universal dependence on the agricultural sector, only around a fifth of Namibian San have *de jure* rights to land. Large numbers of San are consequently highly mobile and spatially unstable, lacking in security of tenure and economically dependent. The majority of them are also extremely vulnerable in terms of food security, with as many as two-thirds of them dependent on (free) food aid.
- Very few San have adequate access to schooling. Despite the efforts of the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) in particular, attendance levels are below 50% of the national mean, while literacy levels are below 20% of this mean. Only a small proportion of San have attended school and a negligible number of them have completed their formal education at school level. Consequently the majority of San are neither literate nor numerate.

¹ The HDI is calculated from data relating to life expectancy, school enrolment, adult literacy and per capita income (see UNDP 1998).

- Per capita income among San is the lowest in the country. The majority of San lack access to any independent means of subsistence. A sizeable number have no direct cash income and are almost entirely dependent on a single, declining sector of the economy.
- San life expectancy is some 22% below the national mean, indicating their poor nutritional and basic healthcare status. In addition, various serious social problems have arisen within San communities, including alcohol abuse, high levels of domestic violence, crime, depression and apathy.
- Many San feel alienated in the “new Namibia”, in part because as a group they remain under-represented in government structures. Although they have some representation in the Council of Traditional Leaders and the National Assembly, they have no effective representation in elected local and regional government bodies.
- Few San outside of the NGO sector feel that they have any real say regarding their own future or the direction that their development should take. In almost all GRN-run projects for San, a highly paternalistic top-down approach has been pursued, with the result that these projects have had a poor success rate and have failed to empower the beneficiaries.
- The dominant perceptions of San are mostly negative, and San complain that they are confronted by prejudices towards them and discriminated against on a daily basis.

The interplay of these factors means that many San feel trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle of social, economic and political marginalisation. Given the scale of this problem, it is clear that special initiatives will have to be implemented to reduce the gap between San and other peoples in Namibia. The success of any such interventions will be contingent on the adoption of a suitable policy framework that is cognisant of the causes of San marginalisation and the factors that reproduce it. If capacity-building and meaningful empowerment are not central features of interventions on behalf of San, they will most likely remain a dependent underclass heavily reliant on state resources.

1.1 San in Namibia

The popular image of San as isolated, leather-clad foragers and hunters is far from the truth. Lorna Marshall (1976) noted that even in the 1950s only a small minority of San still lived as largely isolated hunter-gatherers. Later in the 1970s the anthropologist Richard Lee estimated that only around 5% of San still hunted and gathered as their primary mode of subsistence (Lee 1993). By the time the South African Defence Force (SADF) established a major presence in northern Namibia in the 1970s and 1980s, the number of San living by “traditional” means was statistically negligible. At present hardly any San rely entirely on hunting and gathering and most, if not all, are at least indirectly dependent on the cash economy and commoditised exchange of labour.

Archaeological, genetic and historical sources all suggest the presence of human populations in Namibia from as long ago as 8 000 BC. Furthermore they suggest that most of the peoples currently classified as San are the direct genetic, linguistic and cultural descendants of the prehistoric populations of the area. Notwithstanding their common heritage, San in Namibia hail from a number of socio-linguistically diverse peoples who articulate discrete identities and histories (see Table 1.1).

1.1.1 Who are the San?

The process of identifying San as a social category or class is highly problematic, not least because many of the people whom we now consider and who consider themselves to be San did not share a common identity in the past. The category “San” or “Bushman” was in fact imposed from outside on the diverse indigenous inhabitants of southern Africa following the in-migration of pastoralist and agrarian Bantu-speaking societies, and later white colonials.

San identity is fluid and highly context-bound in its definition. The groups which currently identify themselves as San characteristically speak either Khoe or San languages, depended until recently on hunting and gathering as their primary mode of subsistence, and share what Barnard (1992) refers to as

Table 1.1: San languages and dialects by location in Namibia

San language	Dialect group	Region
!Kung	!Kung (//HengaKxausi and Omatoko !Kung)	Otjozondjupa Omaheke Kavango
	Mpungu OvaKwankala	Kavango Omusati, Oshana, Oshangwena, Oshikoto ("the 4 'O' Regions")
	!Xu (Vasekele)	Otjozondjupa Kavango Caprivi
	Ju/'hoansi	Otjozondjupa Omaheke
	Omaheke Ju/'hoansi (‡Au//eisi, Makaukau and Auen)	Omaheke
!Xo	N//usan	Omaheke
Khoe	Nharo	Omaheke
Kxoe	//XoKxoe //OmKxoe BugaKxoe BumaKxoe	Kavango and Caprivi
Hai//om (Koekhoegowab)	Keren	Oshikoto Kunene
	Kwankala	Kavango Oshikoto
	!Kung-Hai//om	Kunene Oshikoto

a common deep structure. Most critically though, what they have in common is that they were constituted by other groups, both black and white, as belonging to a distinct class or race. Thus, while some groups are incontrovertibly San in terms of self-definition and definition by others, there are other groups for whom application of this label is less straightforward. For example, census data for the former Outjo District suggests that a substantial proportion of people who classified themselves (or were classified by others) as San (Hai//om) in 1981 found it politically expedient to reclassify themselves as Damara in 1991 (see Table 1.2).

San collective identity

While Namibia is now officially a non-ethnic state, there still remains a strong continuity between ethnic identity and socio-economic or political class. Despite living in different areas, speaking different languages or dialects and articulating discrete identities, most San share a common underclass status. Where San speakers once identified themselves primarily by their local group identity (e.g. "Ju/'hoansi", "Nharo", etc.), all-encompassing labels such as "San" or "Bushmen" are now ascendant. This reflects a newly evolving sense of collective identity that draws as much on their shared marginal socio-economic status and shared perceptions of alienation and disenfranchisement as it does on their common socio-linguistic, economic and genetic heritage.

One aspect of San collective identity that is unambiguous is their status as an "indigenous" minority (see Saugestad 1998). The majority of San (and some Khoe) speakers in Namibia are distinguished from others by the absence of a migration mythology. Unlike Namibian Bantu groups, who construct histories involving great migrations from Cameroon and Central Africa, the San claim to be autochthonous to Namibia, with their creation mythologies situated (in most cases) very explicitly in the areas in which they currently live.

The fact that the majority of San have been farm labourers in commercial farming areas for several generations has added further fuzziness to the concept of San collective identity. Other generational farm labourers identify very strongly with San speakers in these areas and in a number of instances consider themselves to be San. This is clearly illustrated in the Omaheke Region, where a number of local

generational farm labourers of Damara ancestry living in resettlement areas consider the San traditional authority as the one that best represents their concerns. In this way rural underclass status is sometimes mobilised as one of the defining features of San identity.

1.1.2 Demography and population

Prior to 1991, census data for San was conspicuously incomplete and speculative. While the recent 1991 Population and Housing Census is undoubtedly the most thorough and complete in Namibia's history, the quality of its data is somewhat marred in the San case by problems of definition (see Widlok 1999).

Despite its unreliability, this data clearly suggests that contrary to popular beliefs regarding the imminent extinction of San peoples, population numbers have been rising throughout the last century, albeit at a somewhat slower rate than for the total Namibian population.

Where they relied primarily on hunting and gathering, San population levels remained stable and attuned to environmental constraints. In areas such as Nyae Nyae, where San relied on hunting and gathering until comparatively recently, the size of the population remained fairly constant until the substantial external interventions of the 1960s and 1970s (See Chapter 4 herein).² However, for much of the last 50 years the majority of Namibian San have been directly dependent on and integrated into the colonial political economy, and their population has climbed accordingly.

The "Brand Report" team (Marais et al. 1984) calculated a population growth rate of 2% per annum for the entire San population over the last century. Although a positive growth rate, it is significantly lower than the current national rate, estimated at just over 3% – this being indicative of the gap in living standards between San and the majority of Namibians (CSO 1994).

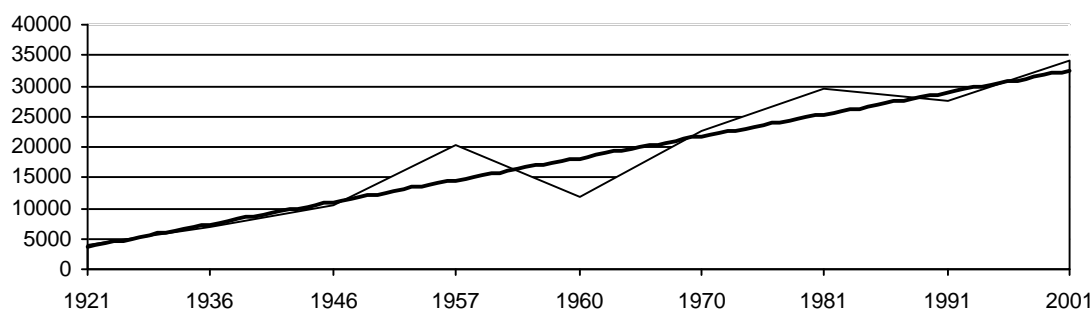


Figure 1.2: San populations – 1921 to 1991 (with mean)

Sources: Marais et al. 1984; CSO 1994 (1991 census data)

The large fluctuation in the San population as enumerated in the 1981 and 1991 censuses points to some of the difficulties in establishing precisely the numbers of San in Namibia. The variation over these years can be ascribed to identity switching, different ethno-linguistic identification criteria in each census (Widlok 1999) and the emigration of several thousand !Kung and Kxoe to South Africa prior to independence. Other complications include the recent escalation of the Angolan war and the refugee exodus it precipitated.³ The current population estimate of 30 000 to 33 000 San in Namibia is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate these variables.

² The Marshalls reported a net population growth rate among foraging San in Nyae Nyae of around 0.3% in the 1950s – a figure that indicates the extent to which the conditions imposed by hunting and gathering demanded a stable population for sustainability. Currently population growth rates in Nyae Nyae average at 2% per annum (Wiessner 1998: 9).

³ Given the situation in the north of Namibia it is difficult to assess the number of San who have crossed into Namibia from Angola. Brenzinger (2001) suggests that there are very few San left in Angola after the latest offensives. Similarly, the presence of Angolan soldiers in West Caprivi resulted in a large number of Kxoe fleeing to Botswana in January/February 2000.

1.1.3 Historical overview

The ancestors of many of Namibia's contemporary Khoe and San peoples were once the sole occupants of much of the region. They typically lived in small, flexible and dispersed groups located in areas with sufficient natural resources to make settlement viable. For the most part these groups hunted and gathered, developing a formidable knowledge of their local environs and how to exploit them, but on occasion they also traded with one another (and later with others) in addition to raising livestock. Evidence suggests that for the last two millennia or so San have practised a mixed economy of hunting and gathering interspersed with spells of pastoralism. Significantly, they went without any livestock whatsoever for very long periods and never developed the "cattle culture" that is almost ubiquitous among other peoples in the region.

Bantu-speaking peoples arrived in Namibia in significant numbers around 500 years ago. This large-scale in-migration of Bantu speakers saw a significant displacement of local peoples, such that by the late 19th century and the advent of white colonialism, only a proportion of San populations – spread mainly through the east of the country – remained functionally autonomous of the new arrivals. This process of land dispossession established a pattern that remains a leitmotif of relations between San and Bantu speakers today.

Popular mythologies hold that when Bantu migrated into San areas, San for the most part acceded to their domination and were slotted into the new political economies as serfs, clients or slaves. In many instances and places where San groups came into sustained contact with others, this is clearly true – insofar as the traditional social organisation of most San groups was not geared towards sustained wars of resistance against aggressors. However, in other instances San were sufficiently organised to hold Bantu groups at bay until the arrival of the technologically superior white hunters, settlers, soldiers and administrators. Additionally, in several areas it is clear that San and Bantu migrants lived side by side comfortably with few resource conflicts or violent clashes.

The most powerful agents of San marginalisation in Namibia were the successive white colonial administrations that governed the country for most of the last century. Although German colonists were often ruthless in their dealings with San, the fact that they had their hands full pacifying Otjiherero- and Nama-speaking groups meant that many San escaped the excesses of that particular regime. It was really only after the Union of South Africa took over the administration of South West Africa (SWA; today Namibia) that San came to find themselves at the sharp end of the colonial enterprise. In particular, San were to suffer great losses as a result of the SWA Administration's land policies, so that by the mid 1970s fewer than 3% of them retained even limited *de jure* rights to land anywhere in the country.

Thus, notwithstanding the belated establishment of Bushmanland in 1971, the colonial experience of San speakers was different in some important ways from that of most other non-white Namibians. Whereas most others were granted "homelands", San outside of Nyae Nyae were denied the privilege and most areas in which San speakers traditionally lived were subsumed in either commercial farming areas, "homelands" assigned to other "ethnic" groups, game reserves or national parks. At the time Bushmanland was established, less than 3% of all Namibian San lived there (See Table 1.2).

By 1990 the majority of San in Namibia lacked rights to land and resources, were materially dependent on others and desperately poor with little or no access to channels of empowerment. In addition, the manner of their subordination to the colonial political economy and the socio-cultural trauma precipitated by this process led to San communities developing a large number of social problems, which they were poorly disposed to cope with or to regulate. At independence San could be said to fall into five distinct but fluid socio-spatial categories:

- San living in commercial farming areas (Chapter 2);
- San living in resettlement areas (Chapter 7);
- San living as minority populations in communal areas (i.e. Kavango, former Owamboland and Omaheke communal areas) (Chapter 3);

- San living as majority populations in communal areas (i.e. in former Bushmanland) (Chapter 5); and
- San in game reserves and protected areas (i.e. in West Caprivi) (Chapter 4).

Table 1.2: San populations by area – 1971 to 1991

ENUMERATION AREA	# SAN 1991	# 1981	# 1971
Commercial farming areas			
Omaheke (Gobabis District)	4 132	4 837	5 212
Otjozondjupa (Grootfontein District)	3 878	4 461	3 815
Outjo District	487	1 827	1 347
Oshikoto (Tsumeb District)	3 838	3 506	3 888
Otjiwarongo District	291	444	0
Other commercial districts	295	844	890
<i>Total San population in commercial farming areas</i>	<i>(47.5%) 12 921</i>	<i>15 908</i>	<i>15 152</i>
Communal areas (San majority)			
Tsumwke District (former East Bushmanland)	3 350	2 245	459
Eastern Kavango and West Caprivi	3 471	2 738 ⁴	92
<i>Total San in communal area majority populations</i>	<i>(25%) 6 821</i>	<i>4 983</i>	<i>551</i>
Communal areas (San minority)			
"4 'O' Regions" (former Owamboland)	1 684	2 790	1 814
Otjozondjupa (former Hereroland West)	654	627	219
Kavango	2 434	2 672	3 778
Omaheke (former Hereroland East)	2 431	1 734	711
<i>Total San in communal area minority populations</i>	<i>(26.5%) 7 203</i>	<i>7 823</i>	<i>6 522</i>
Other communal areas	284	727	561
TOTAL SAN IN COMMUNAL AREAS	7 487	8 550	7 083
Other areas (urban, etc.)	284	0	0
TOTAL SAN POPULATION	27 229	29 441	22 786

Source: Marais 1984; CSO 1994 (1991 census data)

1.2 The dynamics of San marginalisation

Although living conditions for the majority of Namibians have improved tangibly as result of positive developments since independence, San communities have made very little progress. Most significantly, the majority of San in Namibia remain almost entirely dependent on cheap labour exchange in an economy where employment in the agricultural sector is declining and where there is little other employment available for unskilled workers in rural areas. Economic dependency, political marginalisation, negative perceptions of others, low self-esteem, cultural and adaptive problems, social trauma and poverty all combine autocatalytically to reproduce San marginalisation and dependency. To be sure, some ambitious external interventions have been undertaken in an attempt to break this cycle of dependency (the most significant of which has been the ambitious resettlement programme initiated and managed by the MLRR (see Chapters 4, 5 and 7)), but these have not been uniformly successful.

1.2.1 Dependency

At the Indigenous People's Consultation held in Shakawe, Botswana, in 1999, San community leaders resolved that the issue of dependency must be dealt with and that projects which foster San dependency should not be pursued or supported. While this resolution represents an important first step in fracturing the dependency that is now so deeply ingrained in contemporary San life, it will take many years of

⁴ While the national census of 1981 posited a total of just over 2 500 people living in West Caprivi, according to the "Brand Report" (Marais 1984: 3.2.2) the total was 5 015 by the mid 1980s.

appropriate economic and social development to make a real impact. San dependency is multi-dimensional and represents a socio-political condition as much as an economic reality.

Namibia has a highly skewed income distribution – so much so that statistics suggest it is one of the most unequal in the world (UNDP 1999). With a Gini coefficient of 70% and 5% of the population managing 50% of the wealth, relations of economic dependency operate at all levels of the economy (ibid.) Inevitably these relationships are most marked at the lowest end of the scale, where the impacts of insecurity are more immediate, obvious and damaging. For the San, the prevailing conditions of landlessness, in tandem with a lack of education, means that the extent of their dependency and economic vulnerability is greater than that of other language groups (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Key socio-economic indices by language group – 1998

Language group	Life expectancy	Life expectancy index	Literacy %	School enrolment	Education index	Income N\$	Income index
Afrikaans	67.2	.703	91	91	.91	13 995	.960
Damara>Nama	56.6	.560	63	80	.687	2 404	.57
English	66.9	.698	97	93	.957	21 708	.965
German	75	.833	100	92	.973	30 459	.986
Oshiwambo	61.3	.605	64	91	.73	1 707	.386
Otjherero	64.1	.652	58	77	.643	3 077	.747
Rukavango	55.9	.515	56	81	.643	1 652	.372
San	48.1	.385	23	21	.223	1 315	.283
Silozi	56.6	.527	73	86	.773	1 692	.382
Setswana	61.7	.612	70	81	.737	5 326	.909
Namibia whole	61	.609	66	83	.717	3 608	.887

Source: UNDP 1998

San economic dependency was affected over the last century through widespread loss of land and access to natural resources. During the colonial period the majority of San came to be progressively more dependent on white farmers, military structures and salaries, or the patronage of communal-area farmers. When they came to be integrated into the colonial economy, they did so almost exclusively on other people's terms. Consequently, few San have developed the skills to participate effectively in this political economy at anything but its lowest level.

San dependency has increased since independence as a result of changes in the commercial farming sector, rural population growth and continuing low levels of formal education. The SADF's withdrawal and the consequent disappearance of military salaries in 1990 hurled San populations in the former Bushmanland and West Caprivi into an economic void. In addition, a substantial decline in agricultural employment over the past two decades has rendered several thousand San homeless and jobless, and the post-independence land grab in some communal areas has radically reduced economic opportunities for San in those areas. The net result has been that the growing San population has become increasingly reliant on a cash-strapped GRN to help meet their basic needs.

Without secure employment there are very few economic or residential options available to San in commercial farming areas. Few San have independent access to land, fewer still have marketable skills outside of the declining agricultural sector, and natural resources are too thin on the ground to sustain people satisfactorily. Consequently, large numbers of San depend on a variety of unreliable sources for their sustenance. The most important is food aid, which is only delivered sporadically, has been known to be "lost" *en route* and is barely adequate even when it reaches its destination. Data provided by the Emergency Management Unit (EMU) indicates that between 17 000 and 22 000 San currently depend on GRN food aid and that the Cabinet has directed that San should be supported indefinitely by food for work programmes and other welfare schemes (see Chapters 6 and 9).

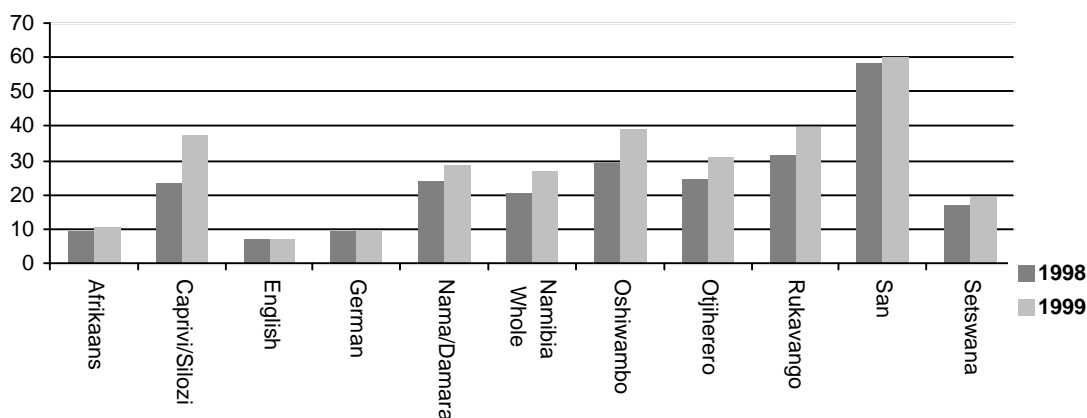


Figure 1.3: Human Poverty Indices⁵ by language group – 1997/98

Source: UNDP 1998

Perhaps the critical distinction that can be made between the status of the majority of San and other rural poor is that few San have any independent access to land outside of their workplaces and hence when unemployed cannot engage in subsistence farming to support themselves. Those among the growing San population who cannot find employment on farms must seek a living by other means in the communal farming areas, townships, resettlement areas and villages in which they live.

1.2.2 Popular stereotypes⁶

A major problem that San have to contend with is their popular stereotype. The majority of the numerous labels used to refer to them (including “San” and “Bushmen”) are etymologically pejorative and evoke a whole series of negative associations. San are widely regarded to be “incapable”, “unreliable”, “drunken”, “primitive”, “childlike” and hence incapable of making adult decisions on their own. But more positively, they are also widely believed to be “technically gifted”, “artistic”, “clever”, “skilled hunters” and “powerful healers”.

In their dealings with the GRN at the national, regional and local levels, other than through the right to vote in elections, San have little direct input in matters determining their own future. This is justified informally by claims that the “childlike” San are “not always sufficiently advanced” to make competent decisions on their own behalf.

There is also a more insidious side to such attitudes, in that they sometimes reduce San lives and welfare to a status of secondary importance. Thus, for example, when five San starved to death in the Caprivi Region in 1998 (partially due to food aid delivery problems), a GRN official reportedly commented that “to them [San] it is a natural thing that at this time of year people should die of hunger” (*The Namibian*, 12 November 1998).⁷

Tied to the negative image others have of San, the latter themselves often express negative views about “blacks” and “whites” alike. San hold “whites” to be “aggressive, greedy, cheating, clever, obsessive, violent, uncompassionate and unreliable”, and “blacks” to be “exploitative, jealous, uncaring, dishonest

⁵ The HPI is calculated from data relating to life expectancy, illiteracy, children’s health, access to safe water, access to healthcare and poverty (see UNDP 1998).

⁶ There is a large and ever-growing body of literature concerning popular stereotypes of the San and the role of these in their social marginalisation. As regards Namibia, useful texts include Gordon & Sholto-Douglas (1999), Gordon (1992) and Suzman (2000).

⁷ The GRN arranged emergency food supplies for the Caprivi following newspaper reports of these deaths.

and self-seeking”.⁸ These beliefs fuel San anxieties about others with whom they have to live. Indeed, a long history of exploitation and maltreatment by others has left San wary to the extent that they often view everyone’s motives and actions with suspicion.

The fact that others continue to have a largely negative image of San and San have a low image of others does little to help the process of nation-building pursued by the GRN. Such perceptions are unlikely to change unless San start to see tangible improvements in their lives. There is presently a growing perception among many San throughout the country that the GRN has little genuine concern for their welfare.

1.2.3 Culture and society

That San and others express predominantly negative stereotypes about one another is partly a function of different cultural outlooks and the inability of all parties to overcome their ethnocentrism.

Although it is impossible to pin down a common San “culture”, many San have a very different world view to that of other Namibians. This world view is partially shaped by the trauma of colonialism and the fact that San have been forced to adapt to an immensely different world to that which their “traditional” social, economic, political and cultural organisation was attuned. As a result, all Namibian San have to varying degrees been forced to challenge their core constructions of the universe. This is a slow, difficult and stressful process. Consequently, San tend to interpret events differently, express different values and have different ambitions to others. Even on the commercial farms where San have worked for several generations as dependants of the colonial economy, the specific conditions of their marginalisation compelled them to adapt their social organisation, world view and economic strategies so as to survive as an underclass. In other words, San became extremely adept at coping with the conditions of extreme poverty and domination under which they lived. This difference in cultural outlook, and more importantly the reluctance to make allowances for it or view it in a positive light, contributes directly to San economic and political marginalisation. Thus, while most San are presently culturally and educationally ill-equipped to cope with many of the demands of modern life, few others are prepared to concede to San the space to dictate the form and pace of their own development, or to cope with the trauma of transformation on their own terms.

Many of the less successful San projects have floundered because their management structures have not been sufficiently flexible or participatory to accommodate the different outlook of San. This has proved to be the case in some GRN-run initiatives where little or no cultural sensitivity has been demonstrated. This failure to make allowances for differences in outlook and the complexities of the process that San are currently undergoing has led to misunderstanding, conflict and the squandering of scarce resources. Although several GRN extension workers and officials working with San have developed excellent relationships with them, many others appear conspicuously inept in this regard and have proved unable to move beyond ethnocentric interpretations of San behaviour.

1.2.4 Social problems

As with many other indigenous peoples throughout the world, the trauma of poverty and adjusting to life in the 20th century has resulted in San developing a host of social problems, the most prominent of which is alcohol abuse. San have no tradition of alcohol consumption and hence few social institutions which regulate it as an activity. Of the numerous incidents of domestic violence, fighting and petty crime, the overwhelming majority are committed by people who are drunk.

While alcohol abuse and related problems should be seen as a symptom of the harsh manner of their inclusion in the colonial political economy, these problems have developed a momentum of their own and have unquestionably weakened social structures, community institutions and capacity.

⁸ San construct varying stereotypes of German-, Afrikaans- and English-speaking whites, in the same way that they construct varying stereotypes of Oshiwambo, Otjiherero and Setswana speakers.

1.3 Conclusions

The scale and nature of the problems faced by San do not lend themselves to easy solutions. Efforts undertaken thus far by the GRN and various NGOs have not made significant progress in reducing San marginalisation or poverty and it is clear that greater efforts will be necessary to effect any meaningful change to their collective status in the future.

Even if an appropriate policy framework is adopted and more direct, participatory and sensible GRN, NGO and donor interventions are set in motion, San structural poverty is so deeply ingrained that the fate of San in Namibia ultimately depends on the success of the Namibian economy as a whole. Countries which have best catered for indigenous minorities in recent years have been those in which the majority of the national population enjoy first-world living standards and hence can afford to be charitable. At this stage any programme for San can at best seek to reduce the vast gap between San and other Namibians by means of reducing the number of San who depend directly on GRN aid, charity and piecemeal work.

In the following three chapters I examine the status of various San groups in Namibia in relation to their geographical location and economic activity, paying particular attention to the groups living in commercial farming areas and communal areas in which they constitute minorities. In subsequent chapters I examine their status at the national level in terms of the key issues of land, leadership, education, government policy, natural resource management and health.

CHAPTER 2

THE COMMERCIAL FARMS

2.1 Introduction

Despite sometimes appalling living and working conditions, the predominantly white-owned commercial farms of Namibia have provided the work places, homes and main source of subsistence for around half of Namibia's San population for much of the 20th century.

Commercial farming is intimately tied to the colonial history of Namibia. With almost half the country divided into some 6 337 commercial farms which contribute on average 6-10% of the GDP, it is not only the single largest form of land use in Namibia, but also the principal form of economic activity for a large number of Namibians (see Adams & Werner 1990). The establishment of these farms earlier in the 20th century resulted in many people losing access to land which they once considered to be their own. Unlike many others whose land was also parcelled out to whites as freehold commercial farmland, San were not granted "homelands", "reserves" or customary rights elsewhere in Namibia, but instead were absorbed into the commercial farms as a largely landless, itinerant and dependent underclass.⁹

Over a period of no longer than three decades, many !Kung, Nharo, Hai//om, !Xo and ǀAu//eisi (the latter being Omaheke Ju/'hoansi) found themselves living and working on land "owned" by white settler farmers. By independence, 1 696 San worked on commercial farms and around 12 921 San (47.45% of the total Namibian San population) lived within primarily white-owned commercial farming areas (CSO 1994).¹⁰ As such, from a socio-economic perspective, farm-working San, or more appropriately San living in one way or another in commercial farming areas, comprised the largest group of San speakers in Namibia.

Over the past two decades in particular, a substantial decline in formal employment in agriculture has left many San and other generational farm workers homeless, forcing them into the peripheries of larger settlements and villages, communal farming areas and urban fringes. It is difficult to establish precisely the numbers of San affected by these changes, but indications are that they run into the thousands. Having no means of income, no land for basic subsistence agriculture and few marketable skills, these San are perhaps in the most difficult and insecure situation of all people in Namibia.

Those San who have retained their jobs and the associated right to reside on farms are in a better position than in the past because they are now protected by new labour and social security legislation. Still, even they remain structurally vulnerable insofar as they are faced with the prospect of homelessness should they lose their jobs. This vulnerability also significantly weakens their ability to negotiate conditions of employment on farms and consequently San farm workers remain considerably lower paid than others.

2.2 From German settlement to independence

San in many areas were initially not unwelcoming to early white settlers – the bulk of whom arrived between 1900 and 1930 under encouragement from the German and (after World War I) South African

⁹ San are neither the only nor the majority group of generational farm workers. The majority of generational farm workers are Damara speakers.

¹⁰ According to the "Brand Report" (Marais et al. 1984), the population of San living in commercial farming areas was 25% higher in 1981, with 15 918 (51%) of the total population of 29 441 San living in those areas.

administrations. Oral histories and archive records suggest that initial contacts between San and white settler farmers were relatively unproblematic: San were helpful to the farmers, who were unfamiliar with the dangers of western Kalahari life, and the farmers were generous with scarce commodities such as sugar, salt and tobacco (see Gordon 1992 and Suzman 1997). However, it soon became apparent that the white settlers desired absolute control over natural resources and a stable supply of cheap labour to ensure the success of their farming operations.

In some areas, for example the northern Omaheke, San attempted to drive off these now troublesome settlers (see Sylvian 1999, Gordon 1992 and Suzman 1997). However, the guns and horses of the white farmers and the special police patrols dispatched to tame “wild Bushmen” soon alerted San to the resources that settlers could muster and convinced them of the futility of resistance. Thus San came to be farm workers on land that not long before was almost exclusively theirs.

Table 2.1.: Growth in number of commercial farms in SWA/Namibia

Year	Commercial farms	Area (000 000 ha)
1904	458	4.8
1913	1 331	13.4
1938	3 305	25.6
1960	5 216	39.0
1970/71	4 842	36.0
1991	6 337	32.3

Sources: Gordon 1992: 202; Kakujaha-Matunda & Kavazeri 1997: 1

Throughout the colonial period, policy was aimed at securing an adequate and cheap labour supply for the farms, and it was widely believed that once “tamed”, San would make useful and diligent labourers. To this end the colonial authorities encouraged farmers to entice San onto their farms and to keep them there by force if necessary (see e.g. Gordon 1992: 137-140). However, the small San population was nowhere near adequate to fulfil the nascent colony’s agricultural labour requirements. A perpetual cry of labour shortage necessitated the establishment of a formal contract worker system to draw in labour from the “native reserves”. On a less formal level this led to the practice of “man-stealing”.¹¹ While many San came to terms with their new lives as farm labourers, others attempted to escape. But farmers were reluctant to lose labour once it had been secured and went to some lengths to retain or retrieve it. San in the Omaheke speak of armed missions undertaken by farmers to capture “escaped” or new San labourers throughout the colonial period. In her survey of Namibian farms in the 1970s, Gebhardt (1978) noted the practice of kidnapping and holding San children captive to ensure San obedience on some of the farms.

2.2.1 Farming areas into which San were incorporated as farm labourers

Because San were not bundled into a “native reserve” but rather were expected to remain in commercial farming areas as labourers, the current socio-linguistic distribution of San in commercial farming areas remains similar to their distribution before colonialism (see Map 3).

Grootfontein District

Settlement in the Grootfontein District was rapid after the Herero War of 1904-07, and by 1913 some 173 farms had been surveyed and occupied (Gordon 1992: 54). Many of these farms intruded into the lands of the Omatako !Kung along the Omatako *omuramba*,¹² and into the Hai//om lands to the west.

¹¹ It was not unusual for teams of farmers to dispatch themselves northwards and eastwards where they would contrive to capture or con San speakers into returning with them to their farms. The renowned ethnographer Lorna Marshall, for example, records the presence of such missions many hundreds of difficult kilometres from the white farms in the Nyae Nyae and Gam areas of what are now the Otjozondjupa and Omaheke Regions. This practice played a significant role in emptying the Etosha National Park of its Hai//om population between the 1940s and 1960s (see Gordon 1992, Marshall 1976, Suzman 2000 and Sylvian 1999).

¹² The *omarambas* (an Otjherero word) are dry river valleys which are depressions between sand dunes, and which contain more fertile soils and unique vegetational combinations (Botelle & Rohde 1995).

Although after 1976 the Nyae Nyae area was protected as a “reserve” for its small Ju/'hoan population, this did not prevent them from working on white farms, and in mines and other industries. The historical record is replete with stories of white farmers heading up into Bushmanland in pursuit of cheap labour. These labour expeditions relied primarily on subtle forms of persuasion such as promises of copious supplies of tobacco, but occasionally they resorted to more forceful means. Many Ju/'hoansi currently working on farms in the Omaheke and Otjozondjupa Regions claim that either they or their immediate ancestors were “kidnapped” and forced into farm labour (see Gordon 1992).

Gobabis District

Commercial farming in the Omaheke began early in the century and settlement proceeded apace until the early 1930s, by which time the commercial farming block (Rietfontein notwithstanding) had taken on more or less the shape it has today. Like most Namibian farms, Omaheke farms are large (averaging at around 6 000 ha), and their creation resulted in the majority of Namibia's Ju/'hoan-, Nharon- and !Kung-speaking populations being transformed into a farm labour force, with the remainder trekking north-eastwards into Hereroland or Botswana (Suzman 2000). By 1971 over 5 000 San lived within the Gobabis commercial farming block (See Table 1.2).

Tsumeb, Etosha and Outjo

Despite the Hai//om having been strong enough and organised enough to force the German colonial authorities to sign treaties with them (see Gordon 1992: 49-52), their lands were steadily brought under state control towards the end of the 19th century and a large proportion of the Hai//om were forced into farm labour.

For the Hai//om living in what was to become the Etosha National Park, integration into the farms came later. When Etosha was declared a game reserve in 1927, it was initially thought that the Hai//om living there would serve a useful function in the park's maintenance as well as add to its attraction value. Things changed in 1953 following the publication of a report by the Commission on the Preservation of Bushmen, which urged the expulsion of the Hai//om from Etosha because they had become “beggars” and kept livestock (ibid.: 163). The majority were removed from the park area and sent to work on white farms. The few Hai//om who remained were resettled at permanent camps in the park and were used by the Department of Wildlife for labour. By the 1960s, Wildlife Department labourers and their dependants notwithstanding, all of the estimated 500 Hai//om that once lived in Etosha had been relocated.

2.2.2 Generational farm workers

Those San who lived and/or worked on commercial farms and came to be materially dependent on white farmers form a significant proportion of Namibia's “generational” farm labour force. Generational farm workers (as opposed to migrant workers) are those who characteristically retain no independent land or residence rights outside of the farms on which they are employed, and are thus almost entirely dependent on their employers to satisfy their most basic needs.

For much of the 20th century it was common for farmers to retain entire families or kin groups in their service and by the 1970s it was not uncommon to find farm labourers whose families had lived and worked on a single farm for several generations. In 1995 the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) and the Social Sciences Division (SSD) of the Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre at the University of Namibia (UNAM) conducted a farm survey, and found that 90% of their San respondents were the children of farm workers (see Devereaux et al. 1996).¹³

¹³ The logic behind the development of the generational farm labour pattern is explained in the 1948 “Report by the SWA Commission into Agricultural Policy” (SWAA 1948: 75), in which it is claimed that “the employee becomes really useful when he has worked on the same farm for a sufficient period to know the conditions thereon through the seasons, the animals with their progeny and parentage of all ages and, above all, when master and servant have gained mutual trust and confidence In his dilemma to achieve this result the farmer resorts to resident family labour or to ‘labour farms’.”

The generational labour system encouraged farmers to be relatively relaxed about San “squatting” on their farms, and up until the mid 1980s over 200 farms were home to populations of more than 30 San (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: San populations on farms in 1984

District	# Farms with San workers	# San		
		<30	30-50	>50
Tsumeb	134	94	28	12
Gobabis	381	343	33	5
Grootfontein	447	430	15	2
Outjo	191	185	4	2
Otjiwarongo	81	80	1	0
Total	1 234	1 192	141	81

Sources: Gordon 1992; Marais et al. 1984: 3.2

2.2.3 The social organisation of farm life: *baasskap*

Because they were thought to be different to other “natives”, San farm workers were usually treated differently on white farms. In her study of farm labour in Namibia during the 1970s, Gebhardt (1978: 168) noted the following:

Most farmers ... preferred Owambo labourers to other labourers for their steady routine type of work. Before the strike they were regarded as “reliable” and “disciplined”. They were preferably employed in the farmer's house or in the garden with cattle and sheep. San [Ju/hoansi] are regarded as “intelligent”, “agile” and “technically able”. The Damara are “servile”, “submissive” and “diligent”... Hereros are least liked by the farmer for their arrogance.

The fact that San were politically disorganised, supplicant, dependent and largely uneducated meant that farmers could get away with treating them very poorly. During the colonial era a significant proportion of San on farms were only paid in kind, and they received inadequate rations, lived in inadequate housing with no access to sanitation, and were routinely beaten.

The frequent beatings and other forms of corporal discipline meted out to San farm labourers were often justified by claims that it was not possible to reason with the “childlike” San. Similarly, the widespread refusal of farmers to provide San workers with decent (if any) housing, sanitation, cash wages and other perks was justified by the explanation that “Bushmen” had no need for such things. So, despite being considered “less able” than other farm workers, San were often the workers of choice because they generated returns that far outweighed the marginal capital outlay required to retain them.

By the 1960s many San had become skilled farm labourers in their own right, and were furthermore regarded as having a unique aptitude for certain specialised farm tasks. Indeed, despite having no formal education (see Chapter 10), San living in white farming areas substituted many of their traditional skills in favour of skills more appropriate to their circumstances: livestock management, fencing, building, engineering and gardening skills.

2.2.4 The breakdown of generational farm labour patterns – 1975 to 1990

Between 1975 and 1990 the agricultural labour market was transformed as the one-time problem of labour shortages became a problem of oversupply (see section 2.4 below). This led to the collapse of generational labour as an institution as many farmers (despite the fact that they paid workers poorly) claimed that they could no longer afford large numbers of workers and dependants “squatting” on their farms. From this time on, incrementally larger numbers of farm workers and their dependants found themselves quite literally “on the road”, since after being dismissed they found that they had nowhere

to go. Some gravitated towards communal areas where they sought a livelihood working for communal farmers, whereas others attached themselves to kin on other farms while seeking new employment.

2.3 Social and cultural transformation

2.3.1 The breakdown of traditional social groupings and institutions

Although the practice of employing farm labourers from the same families over several generations helped to maintain the integrity of San social and kinship groupings up to a point, subsequent changes in agricultural sector employment patterns meant that by independence, San on farms maintained few of their traditional social or spatial arrangements. Critical cultural and socio-political institutions for regulating behaviour and social organisation all but disappeared, and much of their “traditional” ritual life became contextually redundant.

Because farmers effectively controlled residence rights on their farms, people from different San socio-linguistic groups became neighbours in farm labour compounds. San also found themselves sharing living space with a variety of others, including migrant and seasonal workers from the “homelands”. This process resulted in San on farms partially redefining the parameters from which they drew their social identity. In the Omaheke Region for example, where a diverse number of San linguistic groups found themselves working side by side and under similar conditions, a “Bushman” or “San” identity came to be dominant (see Chapter 1).¹⁴

2.3.2 Gender and transformation

Among hunting and gathering San, women secured up to 80% of a band’s nutritional needs. In line with their pre-eminence as gatherers, women enjoyed a relatively egalitarian relationship with men. However, the implicit focus on males in farm work and the consequent loss of economic leverage enjoyed by San women resulted in a qualitative shift in San gender relations in commercial farming areas.

Where gender relations were once explicitly egalitarian and balanced, male San today occupy a far more prominent position due to their primary breadwinner status. This gender division was further entrenched as a result of San partially adopting the social conventions of their colonisers, among whom gender roles were neatly demarcated and highly stratified. From the point of view of many Afrikaans farmers, as Renee Sylvian (1999) noted in her recent study of women on Omaheke farms, San women were caught in the double whammy of being subject to dominant stereotypes not only of race but also of gender.

San women employed on farms were expected to perform work “appropriate” to their gender, such as doing laundry, looking after children, cooking, cleaning and gardening. As Sylvian (*ibid.*) has demonstrated, San women on farms often do more work during the day than their male counterparts and are paid less for it. In the “Brand Report” (see Marais et al. 1984: Table 18), wages for male San workers were reported to range from R30 to R60 per month, and for female workers from R2 to R30.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that incidents of domestic violence and wife-beating among San are higher in the farming areas than elsewhere, and certainly substantially higher than they were in the past. That more San women now find themselves at the knuckled end of their husbands’ or lovers’ fists can be partially ascribed to the fact that San women are among the few groups on which San men can take out their frustrations.

¹⁴ Like many other Namibians dependent on the colonial economy, most San living on farms are multilingual. In the Gobabis area it is not unusual for San men to speak four or five different languages. A further consequence of this multilingualism has been changes in San languages themselves. The Ju/’hoan spoken by the largest proportion of Omaheke San, for example, borrows heavily from Khoekhoegowab (Nama/Damara), Nharon and Afrikaans.

2.4 San in commercial farming areas: independence onwards

In the decade since independence some progress has been made in improving the legal position of all workers on commercial farms in Namibia, but little has been achieved that has tangibly improved the lives of San workers. Taking into account broader issues concerning access to land, prevailing power relations and the conceptualisations behind them, San on farms constitute a large, diverse and marginal community, almost entirely lacking the means to challenge their status in any effective way.

2.4.1 Broader socio-economic and political change: mobility and insecurity

The most alarming recent development for San living in commercial farming areas has been the decline in employment on commercial farms, which is now down to pre-1950 levels despite the rural population having more than doubled in the intervening period (see Figure 2.1).

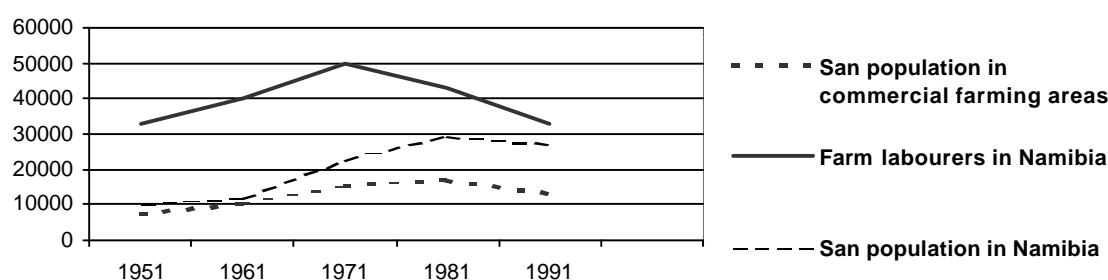


Figure 2.1: Number of San living in commercial farming areas relative to San population growth and overall decline in farm employment in Namibia – 1951 to 1991

Sources: CSO 1994; Gordon 1992; Marais et al. 1984. Note: Figures for some years are extrapolations from trends.

Over the last 30 years the number of farm workers employed in Namibia dropped some 36% from a peak of about 50 000 in 1970/71 to a low of 32 613 in 1991 (Devereaux et al. 1996: 7).¹⁵ This is also evinced by the 16% decline between 1981 and 1991 in the total number of San living in commercial farming areas (see Table 1.2). By the mid 1990s, according to the National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (CSO 1996), a total of only 2 313 San constituted 6.4% of the agricultural labour force. In the absence of statistical data it is difficult to speculate on the extent of the decline over the last five years, although the rapid growth of settlements such as the Gobabis *plakkersdorp* (squatter town) and Oshivelo suggests that the number of San unable to secure a living on commercial farms continued to rise steadily throughout the 1990s.

These changes have inevitably impacted hardest on the most vulnerable segments of San society: the old, the infirm, the very young, women and the disabled – none of whom are of much use to commercial farmers. Moreover, circumstances off these farms are toughest for these vulnerable people, though the relatively efficient pension service has meant that in some instances the elderly have become the primary providers in their households.

The key shifts in commercial agriculture that resulted in these changes were as follows:

- The increasing commercialisation of agriculture and the readjustment of the sector to free-market constraints, resulting in:
 - an increase in safari lodges and guest farms;
 - a net decline in permanent jobs and an increase in short-term seasonal work; and
 - the demise of apartheid legislation and the passing of the Labour Act (No. 6 of 1992).
- Demographic factors relating to rapid exponential population growth and the impact on the economy as a whole which has resulted in:

¹⁵ As suggested by the trend in Figure 2.1, it is likely that this number has dropped further since 1991.

- over-subscription and increased competition in the farm labour market; and
- increasing competition in the general job market.

The decline in state support for commercial farmers

Following independence the GRN reduced direct state support to the predominantly white commercial farming sector. Where commercial farmers were once propped up and sustained by seemingly endless state subsidies, they now rationalised their operations in terms of, albeit still partially protected, market forces. In 1995 the implementation of GATT and WTO forced Namibian commercial cattle ranchers to compete internationally for markets, and as the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU) made clear in 1998 (NEPRU, *Viewpoint* No. 19):

It cannot be expected that the financial situation of commercial farmers will change markedly for the better – they operate in highly protected markets with above world market prices. Trade liberalisation will put further pressure on prices ... which could result in farmers no longer being competitive.

Due to the need to be competitive, the trend on most farms in recent years has been towards having a smaller, more “professional” workforce with farmers making more use of seasonal or casual labour when additional muscle is needed. On the one hand this has resulted in better wages and greater autonomy for some San farm workers, many of whom are after all highly skilled, having literally been born into the job. On the other hand it has also resulted in a far less stable labour market, with farmers hiring and firing workers at a rapid rate. Additionally, since the farm labour market is radically oversubscribed, negotiating power remains squarely in the hands of employers and farmers can easily satisfy their labour requirements for a marginal capital outlay.

The extent of San dependency denies them a strong position from which to negotiate terms and conditions of employment with farmers. The SSD/LAC survey of farms found that only two of the 25 San respondents interviewed had actually negotiated these with their employers (Devereaux et al. 1996: 30).¹⁶ Should a San farm worker not accede to the terms and conditions offered – or in some cases imposed – by the farmer, he (and occasionally she) will be without a job, home and livelihood. This imbalance in bargaining power has further implications insofar as once they are recruited, workers are in no position to contest their status. Should they not please their boss, the results are usually predictable. As one San farm worker in the Omaheke Region explained:

On the farm, you are not on your own [independent of the *baas*]. If the owner says, “Do this ...” and you complain, or you don’t do it, then you are in the road ... Before independence, if you complained, or were lazy, you had to be careful because the Boer could just hit you or fuck you up.

Similarly, as another San farm worker explained:

If you don’t get word that there is work for you at a specific farm, then you must just walk from farm to farm and ask. But at every farm you get the same reply: “No work here, no work here, no work here.” And what can you do? Fuck all! I had cattle and goats but they were stolen by people in the reserve and now I must just stay here and struggle.

Rural population growth

One reason for the increasingly high levels of unemployment among generational farm workers has been the rapid rise in the national rural population. The population growth rate in Namibia is very high, and since independence it has averaged at between 2.5% and 3.5% per annum. With the economy growing slower than the population, the rate of unemployment has increased steadily from 19% in 1991 to 34.8%

¹⁶ According to this survey, a total of 149 of the 345 farm worker respondents claimed to negotiate terms with their employers (ibid).

in 1997 (NEPRU, *Viewpoint* No. 18).¹⁷ To place this in perspective, the number of people employed in the agricultural sector today is close to 1946 levels (SWA 1948: 77) – a time when the national population was some 30% of its current size and white commercial farmers were perpetually frothing over labour shortages.

The growth in numbers of guest and safari farms

The loss of subsidies following independence convinced many farmers to attempt a more commercially sustainable regime of land use, namely a tourism-oriented one. Over the past decade, in excess of 150 farmers have cleared out most of their domestic livestock, reintroduced wildlife and built guest lodges. Although the operation of guest farms and lodges is labour-intensive, there is little need for the unskilled labour of the San, unless (as is sometimes the case) they themselves constitute part of the attraction (see Chapter 11). For the most part, the jobs available on such farms require “tourist-friendly staff” and specialised skills that few San have. The LAC/SSD survey found that no San were employed on any of the small sample of guest farms surveyed (Devereaux et al. 1996: 41).

Casual or seasonal labour

Because farmers have rationalised their workforces so much over the past decades, seasonal or casual labour has to be taken on during certain labour-intensive periods of the year. The SSD/LAC survey found that there were on average six seasonal male workers per farm.¹⁸ During periods when additional labour is sought, farmers now often go to local resettlement areas where labour is cheap and almost always available.

The Labour and Social Security Acts

During the colonial period white farmers relied as much on favourable labour-supply conditions as they did on state subsidies. The absence of legislation effectively protecting the rights of farm workers, as well as pass and vagrancy laws which restricted mobility, and the de facto devolution of disciplinary powers over workers to farmers, all underwrote the economic and political security of the commercial farming community. Ironically this state of affairs also protected the status of generational farm workers: farmers could afford to allow far larger numbers of workers and their dependants to reside on their farms because there were few costs involved and substantial benefits in terms of cheap labour. It furthermore encouraged the paternalism that is so closely tied to the survivability of the generational labour system.

Recognising the urgent need to place labour relations on a more equitable footing after independence, the GRN passed the Labour Act in 1992, and in doing prescribed a set of minimum conditions relating to working hours, housing, leave and remuneration practices.

Although these minimum conditions did not place undue pressure on farmers, they did convince some (especially those with large numbers of workers and dependants) to substantially reduce their workforces. Fearing that they would not be able to afford full compliance with the Act, farmers started to lay off workers and to limit the numbers of dependants allowed to live with them. Indications are that this process commenced just prior to independence.

Similar problems occurred following the promulgation of the Social Security Act (No. 34 of 1994), in response to which farmers reportedly laid off workers so as to avoid what they regarded as the excessive bureaucracy associated with having large numbers of formal employees.

¹⁷ Things look worse when viewed in conjunction with figures relating to underemployment. The Ministry of Labour estimated that around 60% of the labour force is either unemployed or underemployed (NEPRU, *Viewpoint* No. 12).

¹⁸ There are no accurate figures available to ascertain seasonal worker numbers prior to this. Seasonal labour plays the most significant role on farms engaged in intensive activities such as cultivation.

Farm purchases and resettlement

Since independence the MLRR has been charged with the task of purchasing farms for resettlement purposes. Between 1991 and 1998 the MLRR purchased some 51 farms, with the result that 300-400 jobs have been lost. In the Omaheke Region for example, the MLRR purchased 10 farms on which San once lived and worked, totalling in excess of 50 000 ha. To date San have been resettled on only one of these farms, most of which is now occupied by Herero settlers (see Chapter 7).

Labour choice

Given the over-abundance of farm labour in Namibia, San have become increasingly less desirable as employees. Many farmers claim that San are often less reliable, less capable, less educated and more troublesome than other farm workers. In addition, farmers complain that social problems such as alcohol abuse and domestic violence are often more severe among San farm workers than among others, thus necessitating greater levels of supervision and inconveniencing the employer. This thinking reflects the recent trend among farmers to employ workers who have formal qualifications or who have attended school.

As a consequence, especially on farms where farmers seek a professional, reliable and low-maintenance workforce, San (unless they have a good reputation) are rarely offered more than casual or seasonal work.

2.4.2 Impacts on San

The decline in agricultural sector employment impacts most severely on generational farm workers, because few generational farm workers have the education, institutional support, social networks or capacity to find employment elsewhere. This lack of capacity is particularly marked among San, who remain in a considerably worse position than many other generational farm workers in terms of pursuing alternative sources of livelihood.

San settlement in commercial farming areas

The decline in the number of San living and working on farms is mirrored in the rapid growth of San populations in resettlement camps, around villages and towns in communal areas, and in urban townships such as Epako near Gobabis. Equally conspicuous is the town of Oshivelo (on the border between the Tsumeb commercial farming district and the "4 'O' Regions" constituting former Owamboland), which is now home to an estimated 1 000 San, the majority of whom moved there during the last eight years. Informants in Oshivelo reported a slow but steady growth in the San population there over the last five years, as fewer and fewer San are able to find or retain work on the surrounding farms. As a Hai//om San councillor from Oshivelo pointed out:

At the end of every month when people are paid off at the farms, there are always one or two or three families that come to Oshivelo to stay. But there is no space here; there is no life

Development efforts in the Tsumkwe District and WIMSA-assisted projects such as the Sonneblom/Donkerbos initiative notwithstanding, living conditions in most of the San settlement areas (see Table 2.3) are extremely poor. Boredom or apathy, hunger, poverty and resentment lead to domestic violence and drunken brawling. In addition, the levels of malnutrition and sickness among San are very high and food security is always an issue. In places like Oshivelo where space is limited and people must live cheek by jowl, these problems are particularly conspicuous.

Table 2.3: Major settlement areas of unemployed San generational farm workers

Region	Settlement area
Omaheke	Otjinene Epukiro Pos 3 Epukiro RK MLRR Skoonheid MLRR Drimiopsis MLRR other farms Gobabis (Epako) Aminuis Korridor 17 Sonneblom/Donkerbos
Otjozondjupa	Grootfontein Tsumkwe Omatako Okakarara Former East and West Bushmanland (various settlements)
Oshikoto	Bravo Plaas 6 (Mangetti) MLRR Tsintsabis Oshivelo Outjo

Urbanisation

Because of various vagrancy and influx control laws operative under the apartheid system, San rarely lived in urban areas even after farm layoffs began during the 1970s. Since independence, however, San dismissed from farms have become a permanent fixture in some urban areas. This process has been most evident in the Epako township near Gobabis, where according to municipal authorities there were *no* “informal” settlers before 1992. Since then the squatter settlement has grown to accommodate 7 000 people, of whom perhaps 75% are former generational farm workers and 10-15% are San.¹⁹

The emergence of “urban” San poses a whole new series of challenges, as few are equipped with skills that are marketable in urban areas, thus few are adept at making a living in such places. Partially in order to minimise risk, San in urban areas have retained strong contacts with kin still on farms and in resettlement areas, which they utilise as strategic resources to draw on when urban life gets tough (see Sylvian 1999).

Given continuing rural population growth and declining employment levels in the agricultural sector, it seems inevitable that more and more San will move to urban centres such as Gobabis, Outjo and Grootfontein in years to come. Conditions in these areas are very insecure and are exacerbated by the fact that urban squatters are not entitled to state food aid. In Gobabis for example, only a small proportion of San are formally employed (mainly as domestic servants for whites in town) and most survive by doing piecemeal work for other township residents and squatters. In Sylvian’s assessment of San households there (1999: 366-370), she indicates that they are noticeably the worst off, with an average income half that of other squatters and food security difficulties akin to those of San in communal areas.

2.4.3 Current living and working conditions of San farm workers

Despite the net decline in the commercial farming sector, many San are still employed on farms. Perhaps the most significant step that the GRN has taken to date with regard to their status was the ratification of the Labour Act and Social Security Act which outline minimum conditions for farm workers. Provisions in both of these Acts cover issues relating to working hours, leave and holidays, safety conditions, hiring and dismissal procedures, housing, sanitation and union representation.

¹⁹ The Gobabis Municipality’s Health Department estimates that 600-700 households reside in the squatter area and puts the average number of people resident in each shack at between seven and ten (Smit pers.comm.)

Many farmers have made significant efforts to abide by both the spirit and (notwithstanding financial constraints) the letter of these Acts. Despite this, life for San and others working on commercial farms remains extremely difficult, and this difficulty is compounded by the economic insecurity that is now an intrinsic part of life for generational farm workers.

At present it seems unlikely that future changes in the agricultural sector will do much to decentralise economic authority and power from farmer to workers. Furthermore, many commercial farmers still believe that San are inferior or at least “different” to others in their employ, and this belief manifests in the paternalistic relationship obtaining between farmers and San workers in many areas. Some farmers talk quite literally of having to “*staan pa*” (“stand father”) for their workers and paint their paternalism in charitable terms. As one farmer pointed out:

We do so much for these Bushmen on our farm, but it is difficult because they do not appreciate our efforts to help them. Whenever they fight or get sick, we must look after them and take them to the clinic. My wife even runs a small clinic here on the farm and teaches the Bushmen about cleanliness and hygiene ... but they forget that if it was not for us they would have nothing; they would still be in the bush living like animals.

Good farmer, bad farmer

In much the same way that farmers classify workers according to “ethnic” stereotypes, farm workers classify their employers. Thus, for example, farm workers claim that it is usually better to work for German-speaking rather than Afrikaans-speaking farmers, as the latter are thought to be more likely to abuse, cheat or mistreat a worker. In each major farming area there are a few farms generally known to be “good”, where employment is highly sought after. As a Hai//om man explained:

The life on our farm is good: we have good houses with windows, water and electricity ... The farmer feels for us because we look after everything for him. My father has been there now for many years, and there is big trust between him and the farmer. Those that work there stay there.

These farms are the exception rather than the rule, and many San still employed on commercial farms complain bitterly of unfair and unacceptable treatment. But one feature of farm life that has changed since independence is that of violence perpetrated by farmers against workers. San report a substantial decline in the frequency of beatings and other forms of corporal discipline since independence – such that it no longer remains a major talking point.²⁰ Where being beaten was once a normal occurrence, it is now rare enough to be “news”. As one San man explained:

They used to hit, but not so much now. Now if the farmer is cross with you, he will swear at you but won't always hit you. If he is very cross then you are just in the road [fired].

To be sure, beatings and other forms of physical punishment have not disappeared altogether. In 1996 for example, a particularly brutal case was brought to the attention of the LAC, involving a farmer in the Gobabis District who had repeatedly physically abused his workers over a period of several years. More recently, a well-established German-speaking farmer had the following to say:

[I do not] worry about what this Government is saying, but if a Bushman who is working for me does something wrong, then I will hit him. It is no good to explain to a Bushman that he mustn't do something wrong; he won't understand, but if you hit him, then he will know.

Housing and sanitation

Prior to independence, housing for San farm workers was conspicuously worse than for others. Farmers justified this by arguing that “Bushmen”, being *bush-men*, were happy to rough it in ad hoc shelters.

²⁰ During the colonial period, the corporal disciplining of San and other farm workers by the whip or other means was widely practiced and was informally approved of by local police and other officials. In the Omaheke for example, few adult San who worked on white farms before Independence had not received a beating from farmers.

The LAC/SSD farm survey found that only 56% of San workers interviewed had been provided with housing, whereas 80% of all workers had been provided with housing. Despite offers of low-interest loans for staff housing and a legal obligation to provide workers with housing, sanitation and small-scale farming rights adequate to meet their “reasonable needs” (Labour Act, section 38(1)(b)), farmers have been slower to address the needs of San than those of other farm workers.

Wages and rations

Agriculture is the lowest-paid sector in the Namibian economy and to this extent the least desirable, but those dependent on employment in this sector have few better options. The CSO Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey (NHIES) conducted in 1993/94 found that the average income of farm-working households was N\$681 per month, this being less than 50% of the national average of N\$1 433 per month (CSO 1996). Similarly, the NHIES reported that some 63% of farm-working households were “poor”, and that a further 16% lived under conditions of absolute poverty.²¹ As much as there are many individual farm workers from other linguistic groups who find themselves in the same precarious economic position as San, the latter are conspicuously the poorest, with their average wage being lower than half the average received by all farm workers (see Table 2.4).

In the past, as I noted earlier, because farmers argued that San could neither understand cash nor use it sensibly, they were usually paid for their services “in kind” (Suzman 1995a). In her survey during the 1970s, Gebhardt (1978: 162) noted that many San received no cash payments whatsoever. Similarly, the “Brand Report” published in 1984 (Marais et al. 1984: Section 7) noted an average per capita income of R5 per month for San farm workers and their dependants. Nowadays farmers are more likely to pay San workers cash wages in addition to or in lieu of rations. All San interviewed in the 1996 SSD/LAC survey claimed to receive cash wages, though these were on average 65% lower than the wage received by other farm workers (Devereaux et al. 1997: 70). Many farmers maintain that San are not capable of handling a cash wage properly, thus for their own good they should be provided with only a proportion of their monthly wage in cash. One farmer captured sentiments that are widely held:

If you give a Bushman R200 then tomorrow it is gone and he is drunk and his family will not see food He does not understand money.

A San farm worker explained how he understood things (Suzman 1995: 24):

We don't think about pay because we mustn't. The employer can say that he can give you only N\$40 or N\$50 and you must just say yes. If you don't say yes then you can just go and look for another place [to work].

Table 2.4: Farm workers' wages (N\$/month)

All farm workers	San farm workers	All workers (all economic sectors)
681	130	1 433

Sources: Devereaux et al. 1996; CSO 1996

San frequently complain of being ripped off by unscrupulous farmers. Despite the formalisation of payment procedures since independence, many San feel that because they are illiterate and unaccustomed to cash, farmers can manipulate payment ledgers with impunity (Suzman 1995: 51). While accusations of this sort of trickery levelled against farmers are rarely true (San are understandably often suspicious of white farmers), there are doubtless instances in which they are valid.

²¹ The NHIES classifies those households spending in excess of 80% of their incomes on food as “absolutely poor” and those households spending 42% of income on food as “poor”. In the case of farm workers the fact that the system of food rations remains central to payment practices means that in real terms these figures are likely to be higher.

Labour relations, complaints and the Labour Act

The ratification of the Labour Act in 1992 and the appointment of regional labour inspectors provided means for farm workers to appeal against violations of the labour code. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that only a small proportion of valid complaints are taken to the labour inspectors. San often find it difficult to trek all the way to the nearest labour office (which in some cases is located several hundred kilometres away), and most of them also find the complaint process both intimidating and difficult. According to the LAC/SSD survey report (Devereaux et al. 1996), while almost all farmers had a good understanding of the Labour Act, their workers on the whole did not. On most farms, farmers are consequently the local “authorities” on labour legislation – a state affairs that empowers them hugely vis-à-vis their workers. There is also little doubt that some farmers’ preference for San labour stems from the fact that they are aware that San labourers are less likely than others to complain about perceived infringements of the labour code.

Because few San are aware of their precise legal rights, they usually lodge complaints only when they “feel” they have been wronged (see Suzman 1995: 49-53). Regardless of their exact nature, complaints are often reduced to “unlawful dismissals” and settled informally with the inspector mediating between the farmer and the complainant. In most instances the situation is resolved after the farmer pays one month’s salary to the complainant as compensation.

Additionally, workers rarely lodge complaints while still employed on a farm, and only in rare circumstances will a worker be prepared to forfeit the little security s/he has on the farm in return for what is likely to be a paltry sum paid as compensation for dismissal. The vast majority of complaints against farmers are therefore lodged only after the worker has already been dismissed.

2.5 Conclusions and recommendations

As the foregoing sections make clear, the economic status of San who depend for their livelihood on the declining agricultural sector is precarious. This is an extremely difficult situation, as very few San currently have skills that are marketable outside of this sector. Taking into account the pace of economic growth and the unemployment rate in Namibia, it is unlikely that any simple solution to this problem can be found in the short term. Short-term interventions should therefore be aimed at alleviating immediate food security problems, reducing the flow of workers and dependants to urban areas, upgrading informal settlements, providing essential services and establishing alternative sources of income, even if only by means of implementing public cash-for-work projects.

Longer-term initiatives should be aimed at preparing San to diversify economically and weaning them off dependence on agricultural sector employment. Such initiatives should aim to ensure that San and other generational farm workers are better placed to access formal education and vocational training programmes (Chapter 10).

2.5.1 Incentive schemes for farmers

The possibility of setting up incentive schemes enabling farmers to improve the situation for San and other rural poor in the commercial farming areas should be investigated. Incentives could be offered to farmers who:

- allow more dependants to remain on farms, thereby stemming the flow to urban areas;
- adopt labour-intensive rather than technology-intensive farming methods;
- support rural development on farms by encouraging income-generating projects; and
- offer vocational training and formal education to workers and their dependants.

2.5.2 Effective implementation of resettlement policy, prioritising generational farm workers

It is recommended (as discussed in more detail in Chapter 7) that steps be taken to ensure that San and other generational farm workers are targeted more effectively for resettlement in commercial farming areas, and moreover that the resettlement schemes be expanded. At present this is the best available option to reduce the extent of urban migration and economic insecurity in both the short and long terms, insofar as it will provide improved security as well as a subsistence base and a “home” for San in the commercial farming areas.

The pace of commercial land reform in Namibia has been slow, and thus far certainly inadequate to meet even the limited needs of unemployed generational farm workers. Steps will have to be taken to ensure firstly that the process of land acquisition is speeded up, and secondly that landless generational farm workers are the principal beneficiaries of the land redistribution process. A failure to deal with this issue could lead to the sort of land reform chaos that has so damaged Zimbabwe’s international standing.

2.5.3 Urban areas and economic diversification

Because it is such a recent phenomenon, very little detailed information exists on the extent and form of San urbanisation. It will be necessary at some stage in the near future to conduct a more detailed assessment of the status of San in urban areas to gauge the extent of the problem and assess the workability of potential interventions.

The limited opportunities currently available to San in urban areas highlights the extent to which education remains a critical area for intervention. If the agricultural sector remains incapable of supporting the growing San population in the commercial farming areas, then economic diversification is imperative. In the short term, measures should be initiated with a view to increasing the skills base of generational farm workers and establishing suitable projects for San to participate in. Long-term efforts should aim to ensure San access to formal education, one option in this respect being to offer incentives to farmers who establish farm schools for the children of generational farm workers.

Simultaneously, as noted above, incentives should be offered to farmers who provide in-service training to equip workers with skills not exclusively applied in doing farm work – on the strength of which farm workers may be able to seek employment in other sectors of the economy.

2.5.4 Working conditions

At this stage little can be done to directly improve conditions for workers on commercial farms. Farmers retain the upper hand in labour relations, while workers in an oversubscribed marketplace have no firm position from which to negotiate better conditions without recourse to the law. The idea of a minimum wage has been proposed, but is likely to be rejected, since farmers would in all likelihood reduce their labour forces in response. While a number of measures can be adopted to ensure that farm workers are better informed of their rights and how to exercise them, ultimately the structural arrangements of the social economy maintain power very firmly in the hands of farmers and landowners. If workers were better informed of the provisions of the Labour Act, it would of course increase their capacity to police matters more effectively themselves.

CHAPTER 3

SAN MINORITIES IN HERERO, OWAMBO AND KAVANGO COMMUNAL AREAS²¹

3.1 Introduction

The German colonial administration dispossessed San of their traditional territories not only by claiming them for white farmers, but also by displacing other “native” populations onto them. From the early days of German rule, native populations were moved from the territories they inhabited into “native reserves”, some of which were located in areas that had heretofore been the permanent home of San only. Growing populations confined to these reserves eventually forced the resident San to seek a living on their spatial and economic peripheries.

San populations were integrated into the dominant society in a few areas in which native reserves were established, but this was not the norm. In most cases San were denied the right to participate equally in the political, economic and social orders established in the reserves. Although there were significant differences in the way that San were treated in areas ceded to Oshiwambo, Otjiherero and Rukavango speakers severally, in each area San ultimately came to constitute a dependent and peripheral underclass.



San resettled at the innovative Sonneblom/Donkerbos project in the Omaheke Region

²¹ Additional research for this chapter was conducted by Silke Felton of CASS at UNAM.

At present in excess of 10 000 San from a number of different linguistic groups live scattered throughout Namibia's northern and eastern communal areas. Outside the area formerly known as "Bushmanland", (see Chapter 4), the most significant San populations are found in the predominantly Oshiwambo-, Otjiherero- and Rukavango-speaking communal areas (see Table 3.1), where despite numbering over 7 000 individuals, they constitute small minority populations. Only in the Omaheke Region (former Hereroland East), where San make up 10% of the total population, can they be regarded as a numerically significant minority.

Although conditions are generally poor for San in these areas, some progress has recently been made at the local level and some traditional authorities have demonstrated their willingness to accommodate San needs and desires. In Mpungu in the Kavango Region, the local traditional authority in association with a newly formed San CBO (i.e. the West Kavango San Project Committee) has allocated 10 San families land on which to farm, and has also offered them assistance with their farming activities. Similarly, the Mbanderu Traditional Authority in the Rietfontein Block area of former Hereroland East has allocated San living in the area a substantial portion of land on which to establish a community-based project. With support from WIMSA, some real progress has already made through this initiative in terms of improving living standards and capacity, and reducing spatial mobility and insecurity.

In terms of poverty, education, organisation and capacity, as well as ability to negotiate and represent group or individual interests, San living in communal areas are very badly off. Few have access to land and most are dependent on other communal-area residents for food, alcohol and other necessities. A large proportion of San in these areas are undernourished, many are malnourished and almost all go hungry from time to time. Social problems relating to boredom and apathy, depression and the trauma of social change are marked, and exacerbated by excessive alcohol consumption and associated violence. Furthermore, San in these areas who are not attached to patron households or who reside in outlying areas usually live in squalid conditions on the peripheries of large settlements.

Table 3.1: Major San populations in communal areas (excluding the Caprivi and former Bushmanland)

COMMUNAL AREA	# SAN 1981	# SAN 1991	TOTAL 1991 POPULATION	% OF TOTAL 1991 POPULATION
4 'O' Regions (former Owamboland)	2 790	1 684	233 302	0.7
Otjozondjupa (former Hereroland West)	627	654	19 441	3.36
Kavango	2 672	2 434	136 219	1.786
Omaheke (including Aminuis; former Hereroland East)	1 734	2 431	25 408	9.6
Total	7 823	7 203	416 361	1.729

Sources: Marais et al. 1984; CSO 1994

3.2 History

From the point of view of most Bantu-speaking peoples living in Namibia during the early and mid 20th century, the diverse San groups spread throughout the country typically lacked the hallmarks of 'civilisation': they had no cattle, were unaware of the virtues of agriculture, did not live in 'proper' homesteads and appeared to lack any notion of centralised social or political organisation. San were therefore often associated with the 'wild' and uncultured space of the 'bush' and all its discursive referents of mystical power and danger.²² Additionally, in the case of many of the San peoples of the Kalahari basin (e.g. !Kung, Nharo, †Au//eisi, G/wi), their distinctive racial characteristics were taken as important indices of difference, and many Bantu speakers construed San to constitute a socially inferior manifestation of humankind.²³

²² Even though "witchcraft is not a Bushman thing", as Mathias Guenther has demonstrated, in some areas San medicines and the skills of San trance healers are highly respected by their Bantu neighbours and provide one of the few sources of income for San healers.

²³ I have described these relations here in very general terms. For a more detailed description of these relationships, see Wilmsen (1989), Gordon (1992) and Suzman (2000).

Because of this, San were only rarely permitted or invited to participate as social equals in communal-area life. Moreover, the progressive loss of their resource base in these areas meant that hunting and gathering became increasingly less viable, with the result that most San living in communal areas were integrated into the local political economies on terms set by others. Their limited options for independent subsistence required that they sold labour to secure a livelihood, often attaching themselves as menial workers to individual households, or squatting on the fringes of larger settlements. Those unable to sell labour sometimes turned to begging, prostitution and theft.

3.2.1 Pre-colonial relations between San and others

Although the precise extent and frequency of contact is the subject of some debate,²⁴ there is no doubt that San have been in contact with Bantu speakers for a considerable time. Some exceptions notwithstanding, for the most part it appears that up until the 20th century these contacts were infrequent and sporadic.²⁵ Indeed, in all communal areas where San now constitute minorities, older San informants recalled that the permanent settlement of Bantu speakers occurred largely during their lifetime.

It is useful for heuristic purposes to divide pre-colonial interactions between San and others into three broad categories of relationship: patron-client, cohabitation and conflict. All three categories manifested wherever San came into sustained contact with Bantu speakers, though different categories prevailed in different areas at different times.

Patron-client relations

San often served as serfs or clients in the households of the various Bantu with whom they came into sustained contact. Patron-client relationships took a variety of forms, ranging from virtual serfdom or slavery to consensual symbiosis. In some cases San were “owned” by Bantu masters, who claimed rights over whole families as alienable property that could be loaned out or even given away. Among others, Herero and Tswana speakers saw this mode of relations, viz. inferior San subordinated to superior Bantu, as reflecting the “natural” order of things.²⁶

Although these relationships were heavily weighted in favour of the patrons, for their part the patrons were obliged not only to feed and support their clients materially, but also to represent them, care for them and protect them when necessary.

Often these relationships were marked by goodwill and mutual recognition of mutual benefit. In these circumstances relations were voluntary, with San often utilising them as a seasonal risk-minimisation strategy when veld resources were scarce and hunting was difficult. Bantu households recognised the benefits of having San clients and realised that the labour and assistance they offered generally far outweighed the marginal outlay required to support them. Over time, as populations in these areas grew and the natural resource base diminished, San stayed for increasingly longer periods with their patrons, until their relationships became permanent. In some cases the relationships between San and their patrons were constructed according to kinship models, and San were integrated into patron households as junior kinsmen or women.

²⁴ See Wilmsen (1989), Solway & Lee (1990) and other literature pertaining to the Kalahari debate for a more detailed assessment of the contact question.

²⁵ Although it is likely that not all San – especially in the remoter areas of the Kaukaveld – participated in trade with their neighbours, all San benefited from trade as items procured through it (such as iron) found their way along paths of reciprocal gift exchange to even the most isolated of groups.

²⁶ One Herero historian explained it this way: “*Omungure* is an old word from when Hereros found Bushmen and Damaras and went to catch them and make them work for nothing ... If they were ill or would not work, they would be killed and that is why we [Mbanderu/blacks] lost this country to the whites; it was a punishment for killing *omungure*.” (See Suzman 2000 for a considerably more detailed discussion of this.)

Cohabitation

In several instances where San and Bantu lived in close proximity, they neither competed for resources nor interfered with one another. In the Oshiwambo-speaking areas in northern Namibia in particular, San and others managed to live quite peacefully together, with differing (non-competitive) land-use strategies and few resource conflicts (Gordon 1992: 172-174).

Conflict

Notwithstanding the good relations that prevailed between San and their neighbours in some areas, in others conflict was common. In the Omaheke, for example, San battled both Herero and Tswana groups for control of key resources well into the second half of the 20th century (ibid.; Suzman 2000). Although conflict was most frequent and violent between Otjiherero speakers and San, it was also a feature of life in Oshiwambo- and Rukavango-speaking areas, where San “bandits” did much to destabilise the efficient flow of migrant labour southwards by ambushing and robbing labour trains (see Gordon 1992: 124-126).

3.2.2 Formation of “native reserves” – 1923 to 1980

The doctrine of separate development pursued by the South West Africa Administration (SWAA) required that certain areas be set aside as “native reserves” to accommodate Namibia’s various non-white ethnic groups. These areas, known later as “communal lands”, were envisaged to provide “homelands” for each of these groups. Because of the colonial administration’s desire to keep reserve populations poor (Werner 1998), a different pattern of land tenure was developed for the reserves: lands were to be administered as common property by the traditional or “tribal” authority of the relevant area. Restrictions on the types of activity that communal-area residents could undertake compelled many of them to seek work outside the reserves on white farms and in industries.

In some cases, for example in northern Owamboland, reserves were established on the traditional lands of the applicable people. In other cases, for example in parts of Hereroland, Kavango and Owamboland, control over land was ceded to people who had only the loosest historical claims to that land. Land occupied by San was seen as appropriate for this purpose since San were not seen to “own” it. Indeed, it was thought (erroneously as it turns out) that because San were nomadic, they would simply move away when others settled in these areas. In the case of Hereroland it was hoped that the Herero reserve would serve as a buffer zone between the “wild bushmen of the Omaheke” and the white settler farmers.

The native reserves and homelands were to find their final shapes following the implementation of the Odendaal Commission’s recommendations during the last 25 years of colonial rule.

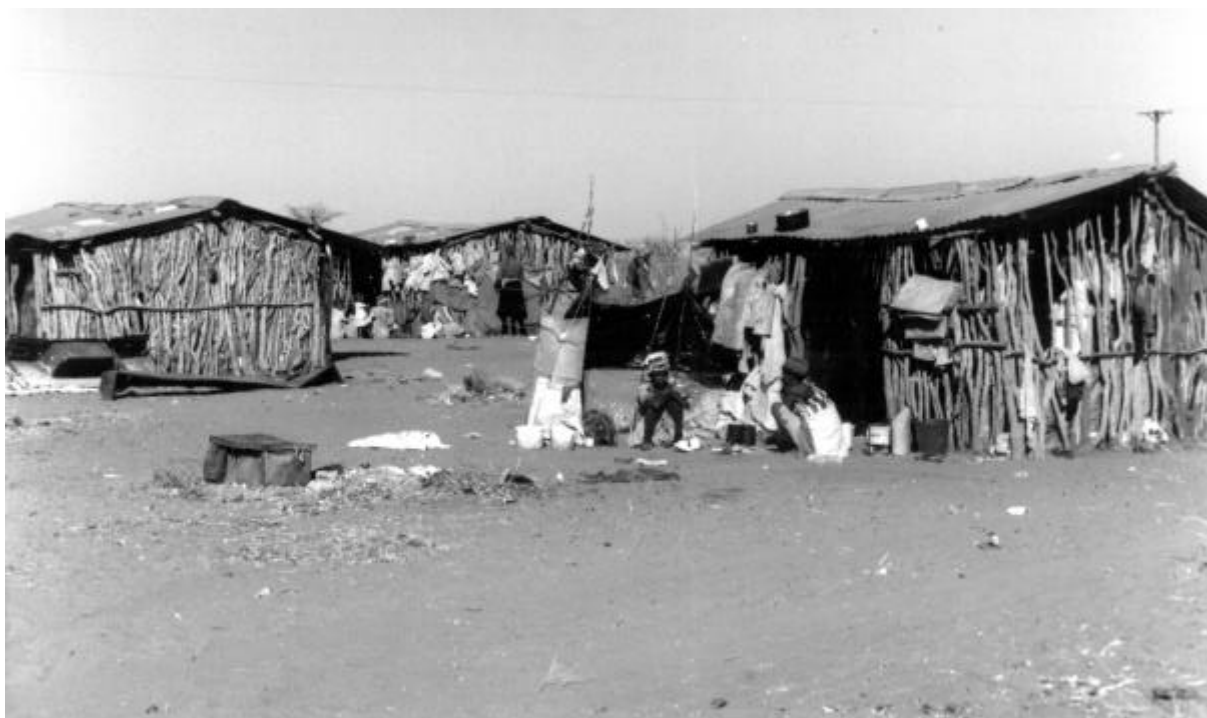
3.2.3 The Odendaal Commission

The Odendaal Commission sat in 1964, and most of its recommendations were implemented between 1968 and 1972. The Commission’s mandate was to provide a blueprint for applying apartheid’s homeland policy in Namibia. This policy was based on two core premises: firstly that (black) Africans should be regarded as “foreigners” in the white areas of SWA and permitted to enter these areas only to provide services to whites, and secondly that certain areas should be set aside and reserved for specific ethnic groups which in turn would be entitled to a degree of self-governance.

On the basis of the Commission’s recommendations, most areas in which San still retained a degree of economic and political autonomy were incorporated into the homelands of other language groups (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: San language groups which lost land after the Odendaal Commission

Ju/'hoansi	While the creation of Bushmanland went some way to secure Ju/'hoan territorial integrity, the demarcation of its borders cut the Nyae Nyae area in three. The northern part of Nyae Nyae was incorporated into Kavango, with the Kaudum area eventually being proclaimed a national park and its resident San communities being relocated to the military bases at Aasvoëlnes and N//homa in Central Bushmanland (see Map 4). The southern part of Nyae Nyae was incorporated into Hereroland East, which was extended as far as Gam. This resulted in numerous Ju/'hoansi moving further north into Bushmanland and others drifting south to seek labour on white farms or Herero settlements.
Hai//om	Although most Hai//om lived in and around the area that is now Etosha National Park and the Tsumeb and Outjo commercial farms, significant populations of Hai//om became disenfranchised through the expansion of Owamboland into their territories north of Etosha. However, as will become clear, San living north-west of Etosha in the Ngandjera area have largely been integrated into Ngandjera society (Felton 1997). Small numbers of Hai//om also found themselves living in southern Kavango.
Mpungu/Kavango !Kung	The Mpungu/Kavango !Kung traditionally occupied a wedge of land stretching southwards from the Angolan border to the Owambo <i>omuramba</i> ²⁷ near Tsintsabis. This entire area was split and incorporated into Kavango and Owamboland respectively. While low population densities and small numbers of migrants meant that San retained a degree of autonomy in the southern parts of these reserves, in the northern parts most !Kung became cheap labourers attached to Kavango households and living on the peripheries of larger settlements.
‡Au//eisi (Omaheke Ju/'hoansi)	Despite the fact that much ‡Au//ei land fell within the boundaries of commercial farms around Gobabis, large areas of their territories remained intact until they were incorporated into Hereroland. After its founding in 1923 the Epukiro Reserve was extended periodically. After Odendaal, all traditional ‡Au//eisi territories in the eastern Omaheke as far north as Gam came under the control of the Herero/Mbanderu Traditional Authorities. By independence none of the Omaheke's estimated 6 000 San speakers retained <i>de jure</i> rights to land.
Nharo	Although the bulk of the Nharo population lived across the border in Botswana, Nharo territory traditionally extended into the central and southern Omaheke in Namibia. For the most part their territory in Namibia was incorporated into commercial farms, and the remaining areas into Hereroland East, the Korridor and Aminuis.
Southern !Xo	Like the Nharo, the majority of southern !Xo lived and still live in Botswana, however those living in Namibia found their traditional territories incorporated into Aminuis and the Korridor and placed under Herero or Tswana control.

**The "Bushman Location" at Epukiro Post 3 in the Omaheke Region**

²⁷ See p.12 fn.12 herein for definition.

3.3 San in communal areas – 1990 to the present

Since 1990 there have been significant developments in most of Namibia's communal areas, especially in those of the more populated northern regions. However, the status of San living in these areas is little improved. Notwithstanding the establishment of resettlement facilities in the Ohangwena Region, very few developments in these areas either benefit San directly or go to any significant lengths to address the root causes of their problems. This is partly due to the fact that in all these communal areas, San are small, inarticulate minorities constituting from 0.5% to 10% of the total population (Table 3.1).

Many of the problems that San are currently encountering in communal areas result from changes in the local economy and demography. Growing communal-area populations with aspirations of greater wealth have placed increasingly greater pressure on natural resources in these areas. In addition, the communal areas are comparatively underdeveloped economically, to the extent that there is very little scope for the waged employment on which landless San in commercial farming areas depend.

In terms of dependency and access to independent means of subsistence, most San in communal areas currently occupy a very similar socio-economic position to those in the commercial farming areas, and similarly rely primarily on labour exchange to secure a livelihood.

3.3.1 Paternalism

San remain subject to the paternalism of other communal-area residents. Metaphors of San as "children" are frequently mobilised, on the one hand with a view to explaining their current plight, and on the other to justify their continued status as de facto social minors. There is very little acknowledgement on the part of dominant groups in the communal areas of their agency in the marginalisation of local San communities. A Kavango farmer, echoing a widely held sentiment, explained:

But these [San] are my people; they are from my father's place near Samagaigai. We have always looked after them since we were there, because they cannot look after themselves. These people are my children; I look after them.

3.3.2 Labour in communal areas

Due to the extent of San dependency on others in communal areas, labour exchange is the most important economic strategy available to them. In predominantly Owambo communal areas, the role played by San labour during colonial times was relatively unimportant, but in Hereroland and to a lesser extent Kavango, San and other minority labour was critical to the relative economic success enjoyed by households there.

Part of the economic rationale behind the reserve system was to encourage primarily "native males" to seek work in "white" areas, where their labour was needed to sustain industry, mining and commercial agriculture. In addition to placing greater emphasis on the role of women in the maintenance of the domestic economy, the migration of male labour to white areas created a labour vacuum in the reserves, which San and other rural poor were expected to fill.

By independence San still provided a reservoir of cheap labour in communal areas, but they were in an even more vulnerable position than before due to their increasing numbers. The growing population of San in these areas who were not employed by wealthier farmers on a full-time basis relied increasingly on short-term contract work or casual labour to secure an income.

It is important to note that many San have lived in communal areas because they would not tolerate life on white farms. Despite (usually) better material conditions, many San have found life on white farms repressive and demeaning and thus have chosen instead to live under materially worse but socially more enlightened conditions in communal areas.

Piecemeal work

Piecemeal work is the principal economic strategy pursued by San in larger communal-area settlements, villages and towns. Payment is usually in the form of food or alcohol. If cash payments are made, they are usually very small, the “standard” rate being N\$1-10 per day.

Those employing San in a piecemeal capacity often explain why they do so in terms of charity, arguing that if they didn’t give work to San, the latter may starve. An Otjiherero-speaking shebeen (informal bar) owner in Hereroland explained:

You can just say “Hey, Bushman! Get up and go and get me some water and I will give you porridge,” and he goes because what else can he do? He is hungry.

Many San, particularly those in larger towns, villages and settlements prefer piecemeal work because the option exists to be paid in alcohol, food or cash. In some villages, for example Otjinene, some San only work enough to get drunk, which is useful since much of the piecemeal work offered to them is offered by shebeen owners.

Contract labour

San with marketable skills such as fence-building and farm engineering frequently gain employment on a contractual basis. For the duration of a contract labour term San are usually fed and maintained by their employer, who often deducts the costs incurred in feeding them from the agreed payment. San often complain of having been ‘ripped off’ in these circumstances, arguing that their employer overcharged them for food and transport. In some instances San have discovered that they were indebted to their employer at the conclusion of a contract, and moreover that they were expected to work off their debt.

At the conclusion of a contract San labourers usually return to larger settlements where they engage in piecemeal work until something else comes along.

Formal employment

In all communal areas, but most notably in Hereroland East, several commercially-minded communal farmers formally employ San as farm workers. The work offered is similar to that offered on commercial farms, and although payment levels are slightly lower, the comparative ease of the working relationship makes formal jobs on communal farms popular. Significantly though, even in areas with high numbers of suitably skilled San, non-San in the same labour market are often given these jobs.

San are sometimes very poorly paid while formally employed in communal areas. Their employers often rationalise this in the same way that white farmers do, claiming, for example, that San are not capable of managing money properly. As one Herero employer explained:

It’s not us that make the Bushmen poor. They are poor because they are stupid. They do not know about money or these things. If they have money they just go down to the shebeens and spend it to get drunk like they always do. It is their way. They do not know anything else.

Patron-client / household-based labour

Despite political and economic changes since independence, patronage remains a common feature of life in the communal areas. Many San individuals and families are attached to specific households for whom they work. Often these are not wealthy households and consequently they cannot afford to pay San dependants a real wage, so the very existence of these relationships hinges entirely on the extent of San material dependency and poverty. One San male client for a Herero household in Epukiro Post 3 described a typical day for such a client:

I did all the livestock work for him and the fencing, but I never got any money, just food that I ate at their fire. During the day I'd do lots of different jobs and when I was finished, then they'd give me *tombo* [alcohol]. Later I'd be drunk and then I would go and sleep, but I had to wake up early, around six in the morning, to make the fire. Then after this his wife would wake up and we would make the coffee before I would start to work again ...

While most San view such an arrangement as one of the few economic strategies available to them, their patrons often construct the relationship in more charitable terms. Where these relationships once endured for a long time, they are now more often than not short-lived, with San rarely staying in any one place for longer than a year at a stretch. Significantly though, several informants claimed that it is easy for them to return to households in which they have worked even after a long period of absence, while others claimed that they return to the same households on a regular seasonal basis. As with the patron-client relations of old, patrons today are generally expected to maintain their clients and to support them in respect of special needs. For richer patrons this will sometimes involve not only feeding and clothing the clients, but covering their children's school fees, helping them with medical problems, looking after the elderly among them and so on.

Many patrons today claim (as commercial farmers do) that they cannot afford large numbers of dependants. Moreover they complain that the presence of San who are unable to feed themselves places them in the position of feeling forced to render the necessary support despite limited resources. As one woman in Kavango explained:

If I don't look after these people then they will have nothing. Even the old one is not getting a pension and he will die if he does not eat my food.

Particularly in poorer areas like Kavango, San clients are sometimes considered to be more of a burden than their labour is worth. In some instances the patron-client relationship has gradually broken down to become one of preferential piecemeal work, meaning that clients are given first choice when small jobs are available, but no long-term support.

3.3.3 Mobility

San in the communal areas are mobile. Although most have a place which they regard as their primary base, few have a permanent home. Many communal-area residents who have "employed" San in the past grumble about their unreliability, instinctive "nomadism" and tendency to disappear without warning for a month or two during the year. San usually describe their mobility in terms of "visiting" family or friends. As Renee Sylvian (1999) has argued, San maintain kin links and sharing networks as an adaptive response to poverty. When "visiting", an individual can expect to draw on the resources of the household he or she is visiting. Frequently San will visit people or places who or which they know will provide a degree of temporary security.

Unpleasant, poorly paid and insecure working conditions mean that San rarely stay in any one place for long. The recent initiatives to grant San land in the Rietfontein Block in the Omaheke Region and in Mpungu in the Kavango Region have significantly reduced levels of mobility among San in these areas, and clearly demonstrate the extent to which their mobility is a function of landlessness and insecurity.²⁸

3.3.4 The breakdown of traditional social organisation

As on the commercial farms, dependency, mobility and patronage have all contributed to breaking down "traditional" San models of social organisation and to weakening community structures (see Chapter 1).

²⁸ It is worth noting that, notwithstanding trips made to commercial farms to seek employment, San usually tend to remain within the areas in which they were born for most of their lives. Felton (1998), for example, noted that despite sharing the same language and history, !Kung speakers living in former Owamboland very rarely travel as far as !Kung-speaking areas in Kavango.

While extended family units have maintained their integrity to a degree, larger units of social organisation such as bands have collapsed, and internal mechanisms for defusing tensions have all but disappeared. In respect of regulating social behaviour, the effects of this breakdown are evinced by the high incidence of alcoholism, disease and violence among San communities in communal areas. A very weak concept of “community” among San in these areas also reflects this breakdown.

3.3.5 Farming

Grazing

Few San in communal areas possess any livestock, and those who do usually acquired them as rewards for long service on commercial farms. For these San access to land is a big problem. Some who have attempted to settle with livestock in communal areas complain of being denied grazing rights as well as of unrelenting predations by stock thieves – to the extent that their herds rarely last long. Consequently most one-time San livestock owners in communal areas end up joining other San in the quest for piece-meal work or formal employment. Since independence access to grazing has become trickier to negotiate due to large-scale illegal fencing in some communal areas.

Cultivation

While not renowned for their “green fingers”, most San are familiar with the rudiments of cultivation. Significant numbers of San have gained extensive experience of agriculture by working on commercial farms or for communal-area cultivators. Thus, particularly in the northern communal areas which are better suited to cultivation, some San have gardens, though rarely on the same scale as their neighbours. Felton (1999) and others (see Bueschel 1998 for example) have noted that among San households with gardens and/or livestock in Kavango, the agricultural outputs of some have been so low that they still depend to a large degree on Kwangali patronage.

Hunting and gathering

Hunting and gathering are no longer important economic activities for most San living in communal areas. Not only are game and veld foods relatively scarce, but the areas in which San congregate tend to lie close to larger settlements where natural resources are most depleted. San in communal areas hunt only opportunistically (and illegally), and gathering tends to be confined to specific resources in specific resource areas (see the following section).

3.4 Area profiles

3.4.1 The “4 ‘O’ Regions” (former Owamboland)²⁹

According to census data, the Owambo communal areas are home to the third-largest population of San living in communal areas outside the Caprivi Region and the Tsumkwe District. San in the 4 ‘O’ Regions (former Owamboland) hail from a number of language groups, though most of them speak !Kung or Hai//om (Nama/Damara). Hai//om populations are concentrated in the south and west of these regions, whereas the !Kung population is concentrated in the east and north – in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto Regions.

²⁹ There has been little academic or practical research conducted among San communities in the Oshiwambo-speaking areas of Namibia, and consequently details are thin on the ground. Much of the information in this report draws heavily on research conducted in the area by Silke Felton of CASS at UNAM, initially on behalf of WIMSA and UNAM, and most recently for this study. Historical data is drawn principally from Gordon (1992).

San constitute a small minority in the 4 'O' Regions: less than 1% of the total population. They are distinguished from other communal-area dwellers by their lack of access to land and resources, and by their relative poverty. In contrast to those in other communal areas with significant San populations, San in these areas often say that despite their conspicuously lower socio-economic status, they "live well" with Oshiwambo speakers.

Historical overview

It is difficult to ascertain when Owambo people and San came into sustained contact with one another. It is clear, however, that towards the end of the 19th century San and Owambo had coexisted relatively peaceably for some time, with extensive contact occurring north of the Kunene River in present-day Angola. During the early years of contact, San living to the south and north of the Owambo kingdoms hunted, gathered and traded relatively autonomously with the neighbouring peoples. At that time, having witnessed the less than amicable relations prevailing between Herero and San, foreign traders travelling in the Owambo regions wrote about what they considered to be surprisingly good relations between San and Owambo. Owambo kings considered San living within their spheres of influence to be their subjects, and expected them to pay tributes in return for royal protection. San thus worked as spies, mercenaries, executioners and messengers for Owambo kings, with some ultimately being granted headman status. In sharp contrast to the state of affairs in Otjiherero-speaking areas, little stigma was attached to marriage between Owambo and (mainly Hai//om) San, and several Owambo royals were the partial progeny of Hai//om (see Gordon 1992: 28, 124-125).³⁰

Despite these comparatively good relations, by independence in 1990 San were conspicuously worse off than other residents of the Owambo communal areas. Particularly in the Ohangwena Region (which has the largest San population of all Owambo regions), their poverty relative to Oshiwambo speakers was marked, with San households sustaining themselves through piecemeal work, charitable donations and farm labour. As in other communal areas, San were disorganised, lacked access to land and were almost entirely dependent on Oshiwambo speakers to secure a livelihood.

Labour in the "4 'O' Regions"

Because San are not regarded as an essential source of labour in the northern communal areas, labour relations in these areas are more ad hoc than elsewhere. Most employment offered to San is in the form of casual work for food, alcohol or small change, and bigger jobs are rarely offered. Some San remain attached to Owambo households for which they work in return for food or small amounts of cash.

Resettlement in the "4 'O' Regions"

Unlike other communal areas in which significant San populations live, the GRN has made some efforts to address the situation of San in the Ohangwena Region, and has established three San resettlement projects there.³¹ Felton (pers. comm.) reports that the living conditions of San in these projects are strikingly better than those of San living on the fringes of larger settlements, partially because resettled San engage in agriculture in addition to receiving food aid.

In contrast to areas like former Hereroland, San living on farms south of former Owamboland complain that they have been denied the right to settle in the southern part of this region and thus have been forced to squat in places like Oshivelo. Similarly, San living in Bravo complain that Owambo farmers are now restricting access to key resource areas on which San depend.

³⁰ Current relations between San and Owambo suggest that "black" Hai//om enjoyed a higher status in the Owambo social hierarchy than the "yellow" !Kung did, and Felton reports that the predominantly Hai//om population living north-west of Etosha around Ongandjera have been thoroughly integrated into Owambo society, with only a few people still able to speak Hai//om in 1999 (Felton pers. comm.).

³¹ These settlements are found in Ekoka, Endobe and Onamtatadiva.

3.4.2 The eastern communal areas: former Hereroland)³²

There are more San living in former Hereroland (now divided between the Otjozondjupa and Omaheke Regions) than in any other communal area in which San are a minority. By 1991 the San population in Hereroland East (Omaheke), West (Otjozondjupa) and Aminuis (Hereroland East Area 2) was in excess of 3 000 – a total comparable to that of former Bushmanland (now the eastern part of the Otjozondjupa Region). Significantly, the Herero communal areas are the only such areas outside former Bushmanland in which San constitute more than 5% of the population. Consequently San are a relatively conspicuous feature of the Herero communal areas.

The bulk of the relatively small Hereroland West San population classify themselves as Omatako !Kung or //’Engakxausi, and articulate links to the West Tsumkwe San Traditional Authority. In Hereroland East and Aminuis the San population is comprised of people from several language groups. The San population in Aminuis and the adjacent Korridor consists mainly of !Xo and Nharo speakers, whereas the San population in Hereroland East consists of Ju/’hoan, Nharon and !Kung speakers.

During the last 10 years the San population in Hereroland East has grown by more than 40% due to the steady numbers of former generational farm workers trekking to communal areas as a result of job losses on commercial farms. The extent of Hereroland’s links with neighbouring commercial farms is illustrated by the fact that almost all adult male San living in Herero communal areas claim to have lived or worked for at least some of their lives on commercial farms.

Most San in the Herero communal areas live in the vicinity of larger towns and villages such as Epukiro, Otjinene, Okakarara and Otjimanangombe. Their living conditions are often squalid, and most sleep in informal housing in “Bushman locations” on the peripheries of major settlements. In the larger settlements alcohol abuse among San is widespread, with many adults (and some children) seeking work only to be able to afford alcohol. The nutritional levels of San in these areas are very poor, and when food aid is unavailable some go without food for sustained periods. The levels of TB and other poverty-related diseases are high among San in these areas, and informal inquiries indicate that a significant proportion of San households in the larger settlements have fallen prey to at least one and sometimes more than one case of such a disease.

Historical relations

Records point to strained historical relations between San and Otjiherero speakers. As the latter migrated through Namibia in the 18th and 19th centuries, they initially clashed with the Hai//om San in the north-west, and thereafter, as they moved southwards and eastwards, they clashed in turn with Mpungu !Kung, Omatako !Kung, Ju/’hoansi, †Au//eisi, Nharon and even !Xo, most of whom managed to retain control over their traditional territories. It was only after 1923, when the SWAA established the Epukiro Native Reserve in what is now Hereroland East, that Otjiherero speakers gained a permanent foothold in these areas.

Relations between San and Herero in the communal areas have been characterised by cycles of conflict and co-operation. Some San attached themselves to Herero households in the newly declared Epukiro Reserve, but others refused and vigorously resisted what they perceived to be Herero expansionism, eventually forcing the Native Commissioner to break with policy in the 1930s and allow Herero to carry arms.

At the time of their creation the Herero reserves were small and catered for small populations. But the populations grew rapidly, and in Hereroland East, for example, the Otjiherero-speaking population grew from a meagre 53 individuals in 1923 to over 3 000 in 1932. Over the next 40 years the borders of the Hereroland East Reserve were substantially expanded, and after Odendaal they were extended further

³² As with other communal areas, information regarding San living in Hereroland is sparse. Consequently this section draws heavily on Suzman (1995a, 1995b and 2000) and to a lesser extent Werner (1998a).

east up to the Botswana border and further north as far as Bushmanland – rendering San increasingly dependent on the Herero economy. By 1990, while Otjiherero speakers emerged as the wealthiest of all Namibian communal-area farmers in terms of livestock capital, San living in the Herero communal areas were possibly the worst off of all San in Namibia (Iken et al. 1994).

Livelihood

Options for hunting and gathering are more limited in the eastern communal areas than elsewhere in Namibia. Most game is shot out and many areas with veld-food resources have been destroyed by long-term overgrazing.

Otjiherero speakers have a long history of labour patronage. Although this practice is in decline in larger villages and settlements, it continues to serve as a model for relations between Herero employers and San workers. In recent years, however, the trend has increasingly been to use non-San for the applicable sort of labour, and many Herero farmers now claim to prefer employing impoverished Himba and Tjimba from Kaokoland because they “know cattle”, speak Otjiherero and yet still fit into the class of *ovatua* (outsiders), from which it is suitable to draw for this sort of labour. Consequently, greater numbers of San are primarily reliant on informal piecemeal work than was previously the case.

The rapid commercialisation of farming operations by some Herero communal-area farmers during the 1980s precipitated a decade-long boom in contract work for impoverished San. During the early 1990s many San erected private fences for wealthier Herero farmers. However, towards the end of the decade former Hereroland was as over-fenced as it was overgrazed and the fencing-contract boom ended. Most contract-based jobs for San in these areas now involve looking after livestock in seasonal grazing areas.

3.4.3 Kavango communal areas³³

Most of the approximately 2 500 to 3 000 San in the Kavango Region live in the south-west of the region around the Mpunguvelde and classify themselves as !Kung.³⁴ Smaller numbers of San reside in all settlements east of Rundu, through Mashare and Geiriku to Andara. In addition to the numerous !Kung, small populations of Hai//om and Kxoe San are scattered through Kavango and a handful of Ju/'hoansi live in the south-west near Kaudum and Samagaigai.

Mpungu !Kung territories once extended from Tsintsabis in a funnel stretching up towards Angola along both sides of the fence which now separates Kavango and former Owamboland. The San population in Kavango was proportionately higher before the SADF removed many to West Bushmanland during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since independence several hundred !Kung whom the SADF had resettled in West Bushmanland and West Caprivi returned to Kavango having grown thoroughly disillusioned with resettlement life (see Chapter 7).

As in other areas where San constitute a minority population, San in Kavango are highly mobile, landless and dependent, with unequal relations pertaining between them and the majority of locals. According to Felton (pers. comm.), Kwangali farmers actively seek out San for labour, whether as temporary helpers or more permanent clients. She also reports long-standing patron-client relations pertaining between San and Kwangali in Mpungu.

History

Historical information on the relationship between San and the various Kavango peoples is sparse. The few records available suggest that sustained contact between San and Kavango peoples was common-

³³ This section draws heavily on a variety of sources including Gordon (1992), Felton (1997), and most recently CRIAA's preparatory investigations into the establishment of a mangetti project in these areas (Cole et al. 1999; Botelle 1999; Bueschel 1998).

³⁴ According to Felton (1998), the numbers of San listed in 1998 as eligible for drought relief exceed the 1991 national census figures. She also notes that figures provided by the MRLGH suggest (contrary to popular perception) that the largest Kavango San communities live in Kaheke and Kapako.

place for much of the 20th century, but it intensified after the 1950s when population growth forced Kavango peoples further from the Kavango River and into the dry Mpunguveld to the south. Kavango peoples only rarely settled south of the river before the 1900s and utilised these areas only seasonally for the next half-century or so. Thus the Mpunguveld remained the “exclusive domain” of the Mpungu San until the 1950s (Cole et al. 1999: 13). Before that time, according to Gordon (1992 :126), !Kung San periodically moved towards the river, and in return for food assisted Kwangali farmers with harvesting and other activities. It was also reported that during times of drought, Kavango peoples relied on !Kung assistance with wild foods. San during times of drought grew increasingly more dependent on Kwangali patronage, and increasing numbers of San trekked to the river year by year.

When Kwangali settled permanently in the Mpunguveld during the 1950s, relations between them and local !Kung were modelled on the seasonal relations which had prevailed along the riverbanks throughout the century. Thus San came to be attached to Kavango households as clients and partial dependants. By independence in 1990 the majority of the San population in Kavango were at least partially if not wholly dependent on Kavango farmers.

Livelihood

As in the other communal areas with relatively large San populations constituting a minority, San in the Kavango Region are highly dependent on others (Felton pers. comm.; Bueschel 1998). The population is mobile (though only within Kavango) and generally unaware of development options outside the region. Although data is sparse, indications are that there is a clear tendency towards patron-client relations and piecemeal work in Kavango, which is poor relative to other communal areas with significant San populations.³⁵ A CRIAA survey (Cole et al. 1999: 14-15) indicated that the majority of San in the Mpungu area were “transitory households” and formed something of an “itinerant” and highly mobile labour force. The remainder of the San population in Kavango is made up of semi-permanent client households or individuals and elderly San living permanently at several settlements, supported by Kwangali. A further study of two settlements in the Mpungu area (Bueschel 1998) found that all San households rely to a greater or lesser extent on working for wealthier Kavango households in return for food and occasionally small cash payments.

The Kavango Traditional Authority in Mpungu has recently shown some commitment to improving the status of San living there, by way of facilitating the establishment of the West Mpungu San Development Project. Part of this process involved allocating farms to 10 San families and providing development assistance. Aside from the Sonneblom/Donkerbos project in the Omaheke Region, this project has been the clearest demonstration of an existing non-San traditional authority seeking to work constructively towards dealing effectively and positively with San-related issues and problems.

Several recent studies indicate that many San in Kavango still depend on the seasonal harvest of some forest products (mangetti in particular), especially when little work is available (Bueschel 1998; Cole et al. 1998; Felton 1999). However, as Felton (ibid.) has pointed out, veld foods are rarely adequate for supporting people for more than “a day or two” (See Chapter 11 herein). Some San in Kavango continue to hunt opportunistically – especially in western Kavango – although game numbers are low. Success is erratic and hunters report that hunts take considerably longer than in the past.

3.5 Conclusions and recommendations

Having gradually lost the means to subsist autonomously, and having been rendered progressively more dependent on others, San today occupy the economic and spatial margins of Namibia’s Herero, Kavango and Owambo communal areas. They are highly mobile, food insecure and dependent on local farmers

³⁵ In terms of various socio-economic indicators, Rukavango speakers are not much better off than San (see Tables 1.1 and 1.3). The fact that San constitute an underclass even in this area indicates the extent to which access to land is a critical factor to consider in assessing the status of San communities.

for survival. Except for the Herero communal areas, San populations constitute very small minorities in these areas and are consequently in a weak position from which to advance their interests or concerns collectively or individually.

The status of San in these communal areas is possibly more precarious than that of all San populations in Namibia. It is in these areas that social problems are most evident, dependency most marked, life expectancy shortest, hunger and malnutrition most conspicuous, school attendance lowest, poverty most pervasive, levels of alcohol consumption most abusive and options for income generation most limited.

3.5.1 Capacity

Because so few developments have directly benefited San in these areas, any efforts aimed at improving their status must necessarily begin with strengthening the capacity of San communities to organise themselves sufficiently to enable them to identify and articulate their own development needs and goals.

It is also clear that due to weak community institutions and structures, San are not well positioned to ensure that their interests will be accommodated in any new dispensation regarding land and land rights in these areas (see Chapter 7). An option that needs to be assessed is the establishment of resettlement schemes in all of these communal areas – based on the Ohangwena model. However, taking into account the high mobility of San in these areas, such schemes need to be well supported and well managed if they are to succeed. Moreover they need to be sufficiently large to allow San to engage in subsistence farming and, importantly, other economic activities after a time. A more desirable option is to ensure that San are adequately represented on land boards in these areas so that their status is taken into account when land is apportioned (see Chapter 7).

3.5.2 Land and relations with traditional authorities

Some traditional authorities have demonstrated willingness and determination to deal with San issues and problems in communal areas in which they live as a minority. The establishment of the Sonneblom/Donkerbos project in the Omaheke Region and the West Mpungu San Development Project demonstrates the potential benefits of good communication between San groups and local authorities, as well as the value of land access to San. There remains great scope in all communal areas in which San live for more fruitful co-operation with local traditional authorities.

CHAPTER 4

“BUSHMANLAND”

4.1 Introduction

San living in former “Bushmanland” (now the Tsumkwe District) are better off than San elsewhere in the country in a number of important ways. What distinguishes San in Tsumkwe from others is firstly the extent to which they retained access to and control over their traditional territories throughout the 20th century, and secondly the manner and period of their integration into the dominant political economy.

The approximately 1 600 San (Ju/'hoansi) in East Bushmanland (Nyae Nyae) have received a disproportionately greater amount of attention relative to their numbers than any other San group in Namibia. Due to their spatial remoteness and “traditional” lifestyle, the Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae are conceivably the most written about, filmed and photographed people in the country. In the last three decades they have been the subject of scores of anthropological and academic theses, reports, nutritional surveys, land-use planning documents and evaluations. This high profile is also reflected in the extent of NGO activity in the area, where the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN) and the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (NNC) in its various guises have played a significant role in shaping people's lives. San in West Tsumkwe have enjoyed considerably less direct NGO assistance than the Ju/'hoansi in Nyae Nyae and are primarily dependent on the MLRR for development.



The Nyae Nyae Conservancy kicks off

4.2 Demography

Outside of West Caprivi, the Tsumkwe District is the only area of Namibia in which San language speakers constitute a local majority population. Census data indicates that in 1991 former Bushmanland was home to a total of 3 851 people, 3 350 or 87% of whom identified themselves as San.

The Tsumkwe District is divided into two sub-districts, namely East and West Tsumkwe, corresponding roughly to socio-linguistic divisions among San living there. East Tsumkwe (excluding Tsumkwe town) is home to around 1 600 people, mostly Ju/'hoan speakers, all of whom participate directly or indirectly in and benefit from ongoing NGO and CBO initiatives. West Tsumkwe is home to a relatively small indigenous !Kung-speaking population, a large population of !Kung-speaking immigrants from Kavango and Angola, and former farm labourers from the Grootfontein farms and elsewhere. Thus, whereas the majority of the Nyae Nyae population were born in the area, only some 4% of people living in the West Tsumkwe area were actually born there (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Place of origin of residents in East and West Tsumkwe

Place of Origin	West Tsumkwe	East Tsumkwe
West Bushmanland	4%	12%
East Bushmanland	4%	76%
Elsewhere in Namibia	54%	12%
Angola	38%	0

Source: Adapted from Botelle & Rohde 1995: 110³⁶

4.3 Historical overview³⁷

San in former Bushmanland have enjoyed a century of greater economic autonomy than many San elsewhere. Until recently few Bantu or whites settled permanently in the area because it was relatively isolated, water was scarce and the land difficult to farm. Such was the isolation of the area that some anthropologists who worked there in the 1950s and 1970s (erroneously) considered San there (as well as those immediately across the border in Botswana) to be largely untouched by the “outside world” and therefore possibly the finest exemplars of hunter-gatherer life still in existence (see e.g. Lee 1984 and Marshall 1976). By the time most San populations elsewhere in the country were fully integrated into the dominant political economy at its lowest level, by retaining almost exclusive control over their lands, San in Nyae Nyae maintained a much more “traditional” lifestyle. During the 1950s it was estimated that about 1 000 Ju/'hoansi lived in Nyae Nyae, scattered through some 37 different communities, each of which was organised around kinship ties and territorial rights. Ju/'hoan groups moved around within their specified *n/oresi* (territories), occasionally joining with other bands at permanent water points during the dry seasons (see Marshall 1976).

Prior to 1953 the Bushmanland area was considered “Crown Land” and consequently “was closed to white settlers and Bantu” (ibid.: 13). In 1953 the Bantu Administration Act was passed and San in this area fell under the administrative responsibility of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development. Efforts to bring the Nyae Nyae population more directly under SWAA control intensified in the following years, and between 1959 and 1961 the SWAA established a settlement scheme in Tsumkwe with the intention of transforming San into subsistence farmers and ultimately wage earners.

³⁶ This table is intended to give a rough idea of the extent of homogeneity in the east and west of the district respectively. Figures provided are based on a limited sample and exclude a third “social domain”, namely central Bushmanland (N/homa, Perspeka, Vikrusus and Aasvoëlnes), which was used in the MLRR study.

³⁷ The history of Ju/'hoansi in Nyae Nyae has been reported in numerous documents. This section draws mainly from Marshall & Ritchie (1984), Marshall (1976) and Hitchcock (1992).

4.3.1 Tsumkwe

Following the establishment of a settlement scheme and the building of a shop, police station and Dutch Reformed Church mission in Tsumkwe in 1961, Ju/'hoansi gradually deserted their *n/oresi* in favour of the conveniences of Tsumkwe life. After one year 125 Ju/'hoansi had moved to Tsumkwe and by 1980 this population had grown to number over 1 000 people (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 44). The settlement scheme at Tsumkwe, however, was a disaster. Unemployment was high, alcohol abuse was widespread and nutritional levels deteriorated rapidly as Ju/'hoansi shifted from their relatively well-balanced diet of bush foods and meat to maize-meal. Conditions in Tsumkwe were so bad, and fighting and disease so rampant that Ju/'hoansi came to refer to it as "the place of death" (ibid).

4.3.2 The Odendaal Commission

The establishment of a "reserve" for "Bushman" had been debated at administrative level for some time before Odendaal penned his recommendations. Initially this debate was framed within a paradigm of nature conservation, as it was still widely thought that San were little more than an interesting addition to local wildlife. Although Odendaal's rationale for establishing Bushmanland had less to do with nature conservation than development, conservationist principles remained central to the SWAA's planning.

In accordance with the Odendaal Commission's recommendations, the territories of the Ju/'hoansi in the area were reduced by 40 000 square kilometres, which in turn were incorporated into Hereroland and Kavango, with the Kaudum area declared a game reserve (Hitchcock 1992: 27).³⁸ Squeezed between the 19° and 20° parallels, the remaining area was officially declared a San "homeland", viz. "Bushmanland", in terms of Proclamation 208 of 1976. Unlike other "native homelands", which were administered through second-tier tribal authorities, Bushmanland was administered through the Department of Nature Conservation with support from a "Bushman Advisory Council" (the "*Rada*"). The SWAA remained fixated on the notion of Bushmanland being a conservation area and in 1976 announced that the Nyae Nyae area would be declared a game reserve in the near future. However, the subsequent increase in military activity in Bushmanland, the return of many Ju/'hoansi to their *n/oresi* and the establishment of the Ju/wa Farmers Union ultimately prevented this from happening.

4.3.3 The SADF and the settlement of West Tsumkwe

Following the successful partial militarisation of !Kung and Kxoe San in the Caprivi (see Chapter 5), the SADF sought to establish a similar presence in Bushmanland. Thus in 1978 the SADF relocated around 1 000 San from Angola, Kavango and the Caprivi to Mangetti Dune in West Bushmanland, where it also established headquarters for the newly formed "36 Bushman Battalion". The military improved local infrastructure and pumped large sums of money into the region, with dramatic effect: over subsequent years an estimated 200-250 Ju/'hoan men – virtually all of whom were physically fit to serve – were tempted by the salaries and other benefits offered by military life, and so joined the SADF in which they served until demobilisation just prior to independence in 1990. During this time the resettled population in West Bushmanland grew to number nearly 3 000 men, women and children.

The presence of the military amplified many of the social problems that had arisen within the Tsumkwe settlement scheme established in the 1960s, and thus (somewhat ironically), according to Marshall and Ritchie (1984), Ju/'hoansi came to be worse off than ever before in spite of the education, health and other services offered by the SADF (see also Hitchcock 1992).

A further problem was that the relocation of San (especially battle-hardened Angolan San) from other areas into Bushmanland created tensions between the Ju/'hoansi, the indigenous !Kung in Omatako and the newcomers. Ju/'hoansi in particular were disturbed by the presence of so many "strangers" in areas

³⁸ The establishment of the game reserve necessitated the removal of several Ju/'hoansi from their *n/oresi* to be resettled in central Bushmanland at N//ohma and Aasvoëlnes.

which hitherto had been largely deserted. In fact different San language groups in the military had to be separated to defuse “ethnic” tensions.

4.3.4 Military withdrawal and the Nyae Nyae Farmers Co-operative

Between 1980 and 1990, discouraged by the evident problems of settled and military life, a number of Ju/'hoansi left Tsumkwe and returned to their *n!oresi*. The benefits of moving out of Tsumkwe were self-evident and those who did so appeared to be healthier and happier, and to experience fewer social problems than those who remained. Over subsequent years many more Ju/'hoansi drifted back to their *n!oresi*, partly encouraged by the activities of the newly formed Ju/wa Foundation³⁹ which had helped to establish the Ju/wa Farmers Union, and which provided funds for decentralised development and the purchase of livestock. By 1986 several Ju/'hoan farming communities were active throughout East Bushmanland and in 1988 the Ju/wa Farmers Union formally adopted a constitution and was up and running.

The Ju/'hoansi had made significant strides by the time of independence and the SADF's withdrawal from Bushmanland. With the help of the Ju/wa Foundation they had established a suitable social infrastructure for development which also served as a vehicle for articulating Ju/'hoan needs and concerns. In 1990 the Ju/wa Farmers Union was transformed into the Nyae Nyae Farmers Co-operative (NNFC) and its support organisation, the Ju/wa Foundation, was renamed the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDNFN). The Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae were thus relatively well placed to cope with the challenges of independence: they were involved in an established grassroots community development initiative, they were well supported and funded by outsiders, and critically, they had staked a living claim for their traditional lands.

San in the west, however, were less well prepared for independence. Many of the now large numbers of Vasekele and Mpungu !Kung settled in West Bushmanland feared retaliation and discrimination from SWAPO after independence, and more than 1 000 accepted the SADF's offer of resettlement at Schmidtsdrift in South Africa.

The Vasekele !Kung, Mpungu !Kung, Hai//om and Omatako !Kung who remained in Bushmanland do not constitute a homogeneous community even though they share a common recent history and (dialectical differences notwithstanding) common languages and cultures. Settlements are divided along socio-linguistic lines and communication between different groups was poor around the time of independence. Those who chose to remain behind were also faced with the daunting task of having to build a life for themselves without the support of the military salaries and structures on which they had depended for over a decade. Moreover they had to do this in a place to which they had weak historical ties and under a government constituted by the very people against whom they had just concluded a war. Many who remained behind did so believing that at some stage they might be able to return to their original homes. Among the San of Angolan descent in particular, it was hoped that a peaceful resolution to the Angolan conflict would pave the way for a return to the country of their birth.

4.4 Development support since independence

San living in East and West Tsumkwe Districts respectively have different experiences of development since independence. San in East Tsumkwe (Nyae Nyae) are represented by a strong CBO, have enjoyed sustained support from NGOs across a wide range of sectors, and have a recognised and functional conservancy. In West Tsumkwe the situation is more complex, and a comparatively heterogeneous San community with weak institutions and limited capacity is supported primarily by the GRN through an MLRR-run resettlement and rehabilitation project.

³⁹ The Ju/wa Foundation was established in 1984 by filmmaker John Marshall and Claire Ritchie.

4.4.1 Development support in East Tsumkwe: the NNC and NNDFN

It is impossible to write about the Ju/'hoansi of East Tsumkwe without mentioning the role played by the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (NNC) and the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN) in their lives. The NNC, which evolved out of the Ju/wa Farmers Union, is a CBO that serves the interests of the Nyae Nyae San community. It is owned and managed by Ju/'hoansi and directly employs 30 local people in various capacities. The NNC is inseparable from the NNDFN, which identifies itself as a support organisation specifically empowered to assist the NNC.

The NNC and NNDFN presently manage several different projects in the Nyae Nyae area. Funding for these is substantial and comes from various sources including USAID, SIDA, the Ford Foundation and Daikonia. The NNC is the most established of all San CBOs in Namibia, and has ensured that the Nyae Nyae population is now the most organised and well supported of all Namibia's San communities.

The NNC and NNDFN have experienced a number of crises since their inception. However, they have managed to bounce back from these setbacks, and through a regular process of monitoring and evaluation they have dealt with problems as they emerged. Target communities are intimately involved in the identification, planning and implementation of all projects, and clearly feel proprietorship over them. The presence of these organisations has also had a marked impact in terms of capacity, and representatives of the NNC are perhaps the most articulate, confident and hence capable San leaders in Namibia.

The Nyae Nyae Conservancy

Following legislative changes that allowed communal-area residents to benefit directly from local wildlife and tourism, the NNC was established in 1997 after a long period of community consultations and with extensive support from USAID and the WWF through the LIFE Programme (see Chapter 11). In line with other conservancies in Namibia, the NNC project aims to manage the natural resources of Nyae Nyae in a sustainable manner while simultaneously attempting to "facilitate the return of economic and societal benefits derived from the sustainable management of natural resources" (NNDFN 1997).

While encouraged by NGOs as well as the GRN, the decision of the people of Nyae Nyae to transform their farmers' co-operative into a conservancy was ultimately a community decision, which was partly motivated by a desire to live with and benefit from local wildlife. Though not all of the (admittedly high) expectations of all community members have been realised, and though the location of campsites within the conservancy has meant that some villages benefit more than others from tourist traffic, the project has been successful on the whole.

Although by no means sufficient to support a significant proportion of the Nyae Nyae population, the NNC's contribution to the local economy will be significant if optimistic Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) predictions of a five-fold increase in tourist traffic prove correct (Ashley & Barnes 1996: 9). The conservancy not only ensures that Ju/'hoansi retain partial control over wildlife in the area – thereby allowing them to continue to hunt (or to benefit from consumptive tourism) within the framework of the conservancy constitution and law – but also it generates income in an area with an under-developed cash economy.

Indeed the greatest failing of and risk to the conservancy is the extent to which – in the absence of other projects – the Nyae Nyae population depends on it for income (see Chapter 10). Within the conservancy framework, cash enters the community through a variety of channels: consumptive tourism,⁴⁰ campsites, direct employment, craft sales and cultural tourism.⁴¹

⁴⁰ An agreement signed with La Rochelle Hunting Lodge has enabled Ju/'hoansi in Nyae Nyae to enjoy the benefits of consumptive tourism too. To date three elephants have been shot in the Nyae Nyae region by trophy hunters who pay a fee (through the MET) to the community. In addition, once the trophies have been removed communities are entitled to the meat of animals shot.

⁴¹ This includes trance dances, gathering walks, musical performances, etc.

The Village Schools Project

Working in co-operation with the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC), the Village Schools Project (VSP) plays an important role in Nyae Nyae (see Chapter 10). Recognised by the MBEC's Basic Education Reform Programme as a minority-language pilot project, the VSP seeks to provide mother-tongue or first-language education for Ju/'hoan learners in the Nyae Nyae area. Currently in its third phase after a disruptive period in the mid 1990s, the VSP operates in five individual schools in different Nyae Nyae villages, which collectively comprise "Baraka School".

The VSP is governed by a committee consisting of NNC members and a project co-ordinator. It services over 100 Ju/'hoan children in Grades 1-3. Due to the lack of trained Ju/'hoan-speaking teachers, the VSP is also engaged in a long-term project aimed at training local Ju/'hoansi to serve as school teachers.

Craft production

Since the inception of the NNDFN, craft production and marketing through this organisation has played a significant role in the procurement of cash income in the Nyae Nyae area. Craft-makers are encouraged to produce high-quality original crafts for sale locally and internationally. Returns to communities have been significant and the NNC reported that in 1998 craft-makers from 30 villages collectively earned over N\$64 000 (Viall pers. comm.).

Workshop and technical training

Situated at Baraka, the NNC workshop plays a dual role in Nyae Nyae: it provides technical services to local communities and tourists, and serves as a training centre and income-generating project for several Ju/'hoansi.

4.4.2 Development support in West Tsumkwe: ELCIN and the MLRR

Following the withdrawal of the SADF from its bases in Bushmanland, the newly formed Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR), in collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), stepped in to provide development support for San in West Tsumkwe. The MLRR co-ordinated the planned four-year programme, ELCIN was the implementing agency and funding was provided by the Lutheran World Federation. ELCIN initiated the programme having been informed by the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) of the problems that San communities in the Caprivi and Bushmanland might face following demobilisation. Based on this information ELCIN proposed a joint initiative with the GRN with a view to resettling and "rehabilitating" San and their dependants in the new Namibia. Registration for the programme began in mid 1990, when it was formally launched (Jansen et al. 1994: 6).

The ELCIN/MLRR intervention in West Tsumkwe was distinctly non-participatory, and suffered as a result. According to a report commissioned by the MLRR, San employed by the programme were only ever given menial and casual jobs, while the entire ELCIN staff of 55 was comprised of people who "lacked the language skills and cultural insight necessary for sensitive and appropriate project management in the region" (Botelle & Rohde 1995: 118). According to the MLRR survey, the limited success of the programme was a direct consequence of its almost complete disregard for existing community institutions, structures and desires (ibid.: 126). Similar views were expressed by the ELCIN evaluation team, which politely noted that "the programme does seem to run in a top-down fashion" (Jansen et al. 1994: 18).

Agricultural extension and services

The MLRR allocated each San household a 7-hectare plot on which to farm. Technical assistance with ploughing and planting was provided through the purchase of 22 draught oxen and the provision of a

tractor, seeds and extension services. The inception of an arable farming programme was considered a “lifeline” for settlers and was the most “comprehensive” aspect of ELCIN’s intervention. A total of 700 plots totalling 4 900ha were allocated, though only 525ha were ever cleared and planted. The small size of the area under cultivation was due to the refusal of many San settlers to participate in the food-for-work bush-clearing scheme aimed at developing usable arable land (ibid.: 10).

Education

ELCIN facilitated the construction, staffing and equipping of two junior schools in West Tsumkwe. It also initiated an adult literacy programme and employed 18 non-formal education facilitators to teach the courses. Furthermore, on behalf of 60 San women it established vocational training projects focusing on skills such as needlework (ibid.: AV1).

Village development committees

Capacity and leadership training were high on the agenda in ELCIN’s initial plans for West Tsumkwe. Village development committees (VDCs) were established and a few individual San were sent on leadership courses. However, as a consequence of various factors – not least the top-down ELCIN/MLRR approach – the VDCs proved to be virtually powerless not long after their inception.

Construction of community facilities

ELCIN and the MLRR arranged for the construction of community facilities and various infrastructural developments. Most notably they facilitated the drilling of several boreholes and the construction of a community hall at M’kata.

Spiritual welfare

ELCIN paid some attention to the spiritual welfare of settlers in the programme and provided a specific budget for the task. Spiritual activities included Bible study, catechism classes, baptisms, confirmations, Sunday services and sacraments. The rationale for this component verged on the absurd, as it sought to re-convert San from the Dutch Reformed Church to the Lutheran Church on the grounds that they had been “misled” by SADF pastors. Despite 600 confirmations, San religious beliefs in Tsumkwe remain very much their own, though they borrow some elements of Lutheran and Dutch Reformed Christianity.

4.4.3 The Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation

Following an evaluation in 1994 (Jansen et al.), the Lutheran World Federation chose not to support the West Tsumkwe programme further, with the result that ELCIN pulled out in the following year. By the time ELCIN pulled out, few of its stated goals had been achieved. Indeed, after five years of MLRR/ELCIN activity, the local population was just as dependent and insecure as before. Moreover, during the ELCIN/MLRR intervention many Vasekele !Kung and Mpungu !Kung chose to up stakes and return to Kavango. Though motivated by various idiosyncratic factors, one of these was general disaffection with the resettlement programme.

Since ELCIN’s withdrawal from West Tsumkwe the MLRR has managed matters there on its own, with considerably fewer resources and a staff contingent down from fifty-five to two. San in Mangetti who complained about the ELCIN programme in 1993 (see Botelle & Rohde 1995) now speak of the time when ELCIN was there in almost romantic terms. As one M’kata resident pointed out:

When ELCIN were here at least they bought cattle, and we had food. With the MLRR we have nothing ... We are tired of these government people. When they come they just bring their things and waste the land.

Notwithstanding the 25 houses it built in Mangetti Dune and M'kata, the MLRR has achieved little in West Tsumkwe since 1995, partially because it has been hampered by a lack of financial and technical support. This is clearly reflected in the declining success of agricultural projects in the area. According to the MLRR's own (optimistic) statistics, household crop production in the district in 1998 yielded only 11kg/person (see Table 7.2) – a quantity barely sufficient to sustain one person for one week (see also Chapter 7 in this regard). Furthermore, MLRR clerks complain that it is difficult to motivate San to participate in activities such as the MLRR sewing project, while other activities have reportedly fallen by the wayside altogether, for example the adult literacy programme.

The MLRR's failure to respond creatively to community needs or to allow San to participate meaningfully in project implementation has certainly prompted San in West Tsumkwe to seek help from sources other than the GRN. (See Chapter 7 for further discussion on MLRR activities in relation to San.)

4.4.4 N̄a Jaqna Conservancy and Omatako Valley Rest Camp

Spurred on by the success of the NNC, community leaders in West Tsumkwe expressed a desire to establish a conservancy of their own, and approached the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) to help with the formal application. Although it was understood that a West Tsumkwe conservancy may well not hold the same appeal for tourists as the NNC, it was still thought to be a viable option with potential to bring some real benefits to the community as a whole.

Despite lacking the extensive financial backing of the LIFE Programme and the strong community institutions found in Nyae Nyae, with assistance from WIMSA the West Tsumkwe Traditional Authority set about establishing its envisaged conservancy, and after a year of groundwork, submitted a formal application to the MET. The MET expressed support for the application in principle, but rejected it initially because of the relative disunity and fragility of the West Tsumkwe "community". Towards the end of 1999, after addressing these outstanding issues in a community meeting, the traditional leadership chose to submit an updated application. Though no response to the application in the near future is anticipated, WIMSA is hopeful of a positive outcome.



A bungalow at the Omatako Valley Rest Camp

In anticipation of the declaration of the conservancy and to take advantage of the increasing volume of tourist traffic en route to Nyae Nyae, five neighbouring communities in West Tsumkwe (with some support from WIMSA and CASS) established the Omatako Valley Rest Camp, situated on the main road between Tsumkwe and Grootfontein. Run by a committee representing each of the five participating communities, the campsite has reported relatively brisk trade, with 178 tourists camping there between April 1998 and March 1999 (Brörmann 1999).

4.5 Livelihood

Despite retaining land rights, and in the case of Nyae Nyae substantial NGO support, San in former Bushmanland remain extremely poor, with the majority of families nutritionally dependent on GRN aid. The economy of the region remains underdeveloped and opportunities for employment are few and far between.

4.5.1 Dependency

Despite their adequate access to land and natural resources, NGOs and others working in the Tsumkwe District have identified dependency as a matter of major concern.

The extent of dependency on central government in the Tsumkwe District is partially the result of the rapid withdrawal of the SADF with its secure salaries. Although the precise number of San once employed by the SADF in former Bushmanland is unclear, the socio-economic and cultural impact of their presence was immense. The Brand Report (Marais et al. 1984: 72-74) indicates that in 1981 San in Bushmanland received an average per capita monthly income of R64, and that around R144 000 found its way into San hands in Bushmanland month in and month out. This meant that within five years of the SADF's arrival, San in Bushmanland were considerably better off in cash terms than many other non-white Namibians, and moreover they were largely reliant on their new-found purchasing power. Its relatively abrupt disappearance after independence meant that those San who opted to remain in Namibia suddenly found themselves left with no cash income at all and few other options to provide for themselves and their dependants.

Throughout the Tsumkwe District, food aid dispatched by the GRN is now the main pillar of nutritional support for people with no buying power, limited agricultural skills and inadequate natural resources to sustain themselves through hunting and gathering.

There is some concern that dependency in former Bushmanland is partially self-imposed, given the resources available for people to engage in agricultural production or other enterprises. The predations of weevils, elephants and hailstorms aside, there is little doubt that San farmers have not performed up to even the worst expectations of others (see below), and have shown some reluctance to engage in the arduous task of growing their own food when the GRN might "provide" (See Chapter 9).

4.5.2 Food security

San in former Bushmanland derive their livelihood from a variety of sources. In contrast to the bulk of the rest of Namibia's San population, gathering remains a highly ranked household food source throughout the year. This is followed closely by food aid, cultivation and purchased food. Hunger is still frequent among populations throughout the district and food security is a pressing issue.

Table 4.2: Seasonal ranking of food sources in former Bushmanland

Food Source	West Tsumkwe	East Tsumkwe	Caloric Importance (Nyae Nyae)
Veld foods	2	1	4
Food aid	1	2	1
Crops	3	3	5
Bought food	4	4	2
Hunting	5	5	3
Milk	6	6	n/a
Other	7	7	n/a

Sources: Botelle & Rohde 1995: 67; Wiessner 1998

*East Tsumkwe*⁴²

The extent to which people in East Tsumkwe (Nyae Nyae) depend on food aid indicates that resources secured through hunting and gathering or agriculture are inadequate to provide for the growing San population there. It also shows the extent to which development projects have done little to alleviate food insecurity. In a recent study of households in Nyae Nyae, Wiessner (1998: 32) shows that despite its high

⁴² Wiessner (1998) has recently provided a very detailed analysis of subsistence and food security issues in Nyae Nyae.

ranking by Ju/'hoansi, veld foods contribute on average only 8-15% of people's total caloric intake, and moreover that Ju/'hoansi in Nyae Nyae live on an average of 700 calories per day – roughly half of what Wiessner recommends is necessary for an adult to “work hard or be able to make rational decisions for their future”.⁴³

West Tsumkwe

No similar data is available for West Tsumkwe, but staff at the hospital at Mangetti Dune (Bosshardt pers. comm.) report that a high proportion of patients are inadequately nourished, and this is reflected in the high incidence of TB. The lack of success in farming, exacerbated by the absence of alternative means of income generation, has made people very self-consciously aware of the extent to which they depend on outside assistance to survive.

4.5.3 Employment

Aside from pensions, cash wages are the main source of income for San in Tsumkwe District, but limited employment opportunities mean that only a proportion of households are directly supported by wage earners. The MLRR survey in 1994 found that 45% of all households had at least one member with a permanent job, while 13% had at least one member working in a seasonal job (Botelle & Rohde 1995: 62-64). The district has an underdeveloped cash economy, with the result that paying jobs are few and far between. There is little opportunity to work in Tsumkwe District itself, the single largest employers being the NNC in Nyae Nyae and the GRN in West Tsumkwe.⁴⁴

As with San communities elsewhere in the country, San in Tsumkwe express concern about the fact that “outsiders” occupy all senior government posts in the district. Although very few San have the minimum formal qualifications necessary to take up these posts, many nevertheless feel uncomfortable with the situation. One man in M'kata voiced a widely held view when he explained:

Those [GRN officials] who come to work with the San are those who want to squeeze them. They [the GRN] won't take Bushmen; they only take blacks.

With employment opportunities so limited, the few individuals who have a cash income or pension are placed under a lot of pressure by kin and others, or as Wiessner (1998: 19) eloquently puts it, they suffer “predations from their relatives”. With such low income levels and the social pressures that arise from being a wage earner, the tendency is often to (very socially) blow cash income on booze before the remainder is dispersed to satisfy the needs of relatives.

4.5.4 Pensions

Pensions are the single most important source of cash for most San households in Tsumkwe District. The MLRR survey (Botelle & Rohde 1995) found that 8% of the population received pensions and 57% of households had at least one pensioner resident. This suggests that pensions provide cash income for more households than the number deriving cash from waged labour. Most pension cash is added to the household pot and rarely lasts longer than a few days. As Wiessner (1998: 18) explains:

Pensioners are highly desired residents because of their income, and those who have no fixed village of residence are wooed by relatives who promise them good care and company ... Not only are pensioners treated well, but they treat their village well, distributing income to their children and other relatives.

⁴³ As with all averages, this does not reflect mean daily intake, but rather it reflects the extreme variation in food available to San over time. As Wiessner notes, Ju/'hoansi frequently go without food for several days at a time, with sweet tea being the main form of caloric intake.

⁴⁴ Other options for employment include the sawmill, the Tsumkwe Lodge, neighbouring farms, shops in Tsumkwe and domestic service.

4.5.5 Farming

Unlike San living in commercial farming areas, the majority of San in former Bushmanland are far better at gathering, hunting and soldiering than at farming, and do not appear to enjoy the rigours of dry-land cropping.⁴⁵ But Tsumkwe is not well suited to dry-land cropping in the first place, and this raises some serious questions about the suitability of dry-land cropping as a strategy for improving food security in the district. In the meantime, however, and in the absence of any better ideas, cultivation does slightly reduce vulnerability, and in good seasons it could dramatically improve the nutritional situation. Nevertheless, in an environment as marginal and variable as that of Tsumkwe District, crop cultivation cannot be considered a sustainable strategy to reduce dependency.

East Tsumkwe

Although livestock ranching was once the principal economic strategy encouraged by the NNFC, less emphasis has been placed on farming activities since the establishment of the NNC. Farming nevertheless remains an important activity and the NNC has facilitated the distribution of drought-resistant seeds to villages in eastern Nyae Nyae, where success in crop cultivation has been mixed. Like elsewhere in Tsumkwe District, outputs have not been adequate to dramatically reduce the extent of people's reliance on other food sources.

The majority of villages do grow or attempt to grow crops from seeds distributed through the NNDFN. Success varies between *n!oresi* and depends on factors like pests and rainfall, among other things.

West Tsumkwe

Farming is hard work in West Tsumkwe. The area's unsuitability for agriculture and livestock farming is the main reason for so few people having lived there before the SADF set up its military bases and sunk boreholes there. Nevertheless, San in West Tsumkwe have been associated with agriculture for a far longer period than San in Nyae Nyae. Moreover, development for those in West Tsumkwe has been driven by the subsistence-agriculture-minded MLRR (see Nujoma 1992; Botelle & Rohde 1995) rather than by the more process-and-capacity-minded NNC and NNDFN. However, as with other MLRR projects, efforts to transform San into good agriculturists have not borne fruit, with the result that crop yields are low and San remain ultimately dependent on GRN food aid. As noted above, only a few San were even prepared to clear fields under the food-for-work scheme during the ELCIN intervention.

The relatively small numbers of livestock in West Tsumkwe are owned by a few farmers, primarily non-San. As such, livestock farming is not an important source of livelihood for San there.⁴⁶ ELCIN provided some communities with oxen for ploughing during the 1990s, but according to Botelle and Rohde (1995: 120), this scheme faltered due to "poor herd management, poisoning and high calf mortality".

4.5.6 Hunting and gathering

Partially as a function of having relatively untroubled access to a large resource base, San in Nyae Nyae remained partially dependent on hunting and gathering well into the 1990s. The symbolic value of these activities is clear, and many Ju/'hoansi rank veld foods as their most important food source, even though from a nutritional point of view it contributes less than food aid, shop-bought foods and hunting (see Table 4.2).

By contrast, San in West Tsumkwe rank gathered foods as less important than food aid, for the following reasons: firstly, the bulk of the area's population originate from elsewhere and hence lack the detailed local knowledge that makes gathering a viable means of subsistence; secondly, they were settled in an

⁴⁵ Botelle & Rohde (1995: 121) suggest that farmers in West Bushmanland were happier to wait until the MLRR tractor arrived well after the prime planting season rather than plough their fields themselves.

⁴⁶ Botelle & Rohde (1995: 120) report that only nine individuals owned the total herd of 450 cattle in the west.

area with sparse veld-food resources; and thirdly, the large size of permanent settlements in the area has meant that local resources are quickly depleted and thus people soon have to travel long distances to get their hands on veld foods.

Hunting is forbidden by law in West Tsumkwe and information regarding its importance is difficult to obtain because people are reluctant to talk openly about illegal activities. In Nyae Nyae on the other hand, hunting has been legal (if “traditional” means are used) since 1987, and even before this time the authorities largely turned a blind eye to San hunters.⁴⁷ With the NNC’s approval, households are now entitled to hunt within the framework determined by law and the NNC Constitution. Gathering remains seasonally important in Nyae Nyae, but the fact that villages located in *n!ores* are always near permanent water points means that nearby resources are quickly denuded.

4.6 Politics and representation

Major political parties have been considerably keener to secure San votes in Nyae Nyae than elsewhere, despite the fact that there are only around 1 500 San living there and they are clearly not representative of the broader Namibian San population. Thus far the few San who have served as MPs, who have been placed on party election lists and who have stood for election to regional councils have all hailed from Nyae Nyae (see also Chapter 8).

In West Tsumkwe political organisation is less developed, and like many other Namibian San, people there consider themselves to be largely excluded from mainstream political process. As a result, greater pressure is placed on their traditional authority to function as a representative body in various contexts.

4.6.1 Traditional authorities

The GRN formally recognised the traditional authorities of both East and West Tsumkwe in 1998. The East Tsumkwe Traditional Authority is in a stronger position than its counterpart in the west. Indeed, despite the fact that Ju/’hoansi were historically opposed to centralised leadership, the role of and need for a formally recognised traditional authority are well understood and supported at grassroots level. The secure role of the East Tsumkwe Traditional Authority is further strengthened by the fact that it represents a relatively homogenous self-identifying social, cultural and economic community with a secure land base and support from a strong CBO.

In West Tsumkwe the situation is more complicated, not least because the “traditional community” represented by the Omatako !Kung Traditional Authority is comprised of people from several different self-identifying socio-linguistic communities, namely the Ju/’hoansi, Omatako !Kung, Mpungu !Kung, Vasekele, Hai//om and Kxoe, the majority of whom were trucked into the district by the SADF. While San in West Tsumkwe are unambiguous regarding the need for a single traditional authority to represent them, diverse group identities provide an idiom for the articulation of discontent with leaders. Thus, despite all groups being represented at various levels in traditional authority structures, there have been complaints that the current Chief, an Omatako !Kung, does not have the interests of his Vasekele !Kung constituents at heart.

4.7 Land and land access

Access to and control over land are issues of lesser immediate concern for the San in Tsumkwe District than for San on farms or in other communal areas. The GRN recognises former Bushmanland as the customary communal land of the San traditional authorities and in all likelihood this status quo will be reinforced once the Communal Land Act is passed (see Chapter 7), but this does not mean that questions pertaining to land are entirely straightforward.

⁴⁷ San hunting was restricted to certain animals, however, with giraffe and a number of other species being protected.

Prior to independence the SADF's presence in former Bushmanland ensured that the area was populated almost exclusively by San, but it has opened up considerably since independence, with Kavango, Herero and other people moving in in large numbers. Unquestionably the most significant recent demographic change was brought about by the resettlement of large numbers of Herero repatriates from Botswana in Gam – just south of Nyae Nyae and right in the heart of pre-Odendaal Ju/'hoan territory (see Botelle & Rohde 1995).

Because the majority of San living in West Tsumkwe were born outside Tsumkwe District, inevitably they do not construct as profound a relationship with place as the Ju/'hoansi in Nyae Nyae. Indeed, except for the small numbers of Omatako !Kung, the majority of the West Tsumkwe San consider their "true homes" to lie outside the district – mainly in Mpungu or Angola. Nevertheless, few living there would not concede that West Tsumkwe is now their "home" by rights of long-term residence, usufruct and occupation. Younger generations in particular do not know of "other places" and consider West Tsumkwe to be their "true home".

Prior to the establishment of the NNC, Herero repatriates to Namibia attempted to settle with their cattle in southern Nyae Nyae, much to the displeasure of the Ju/'hoansi who eventually convinced the GRN to intercede in their favour. The Nyae Nyae community's enthusiasm for the conservancy was motivated in part by the fact that it would provide them with a legal means to prevent the settlement of outsiders in Nyae Nyae.

West Tsumkwe has likewise seen some encroachment by Otjiherero speakers, and San in this area have expressed concern about Herero movement into areas adjacent to the Omatako *omuramba*. It is widely believed among San in West Tsumkwe that the incumbent traditional leader, John Arnold (who has some Herero ancestry), gave permission for the in-migration, though he denies this. As elsewhere in Namibia, San in Tsumkwe District are distrustful of others and wish to maintain control of "their" land. There is in fact a widespread perception that if non-San are granted land in the district, then all San might eventually be squeezed out. In view of what has happened to San throughout Namibia over the past century, it is difficult to fault this reasoning.

4.8 Conclusions and recommendations

Although San in former Bushmanland confront problems similar to those of San elsewhere, their status is different insofar as they retain adequate access to land and hence to natural resources. Consequently priorities are not so much concerned with establishing a foundation suitable for development to take place as they are with the what, when and how of development.

This does not diminish the need for continued support to communities in both East and West Tsumkwe. Although not successful in all its attempted projects and programmes, the existence of the NNC (and its predecessors) provides a paradigm example of the benefits of community empowerment, and moreover of the need to emphasise process as much as outcome in community development. There is certainly little doubt that in terms of capacity and hence medium- and long-term development prospects, the San of Nyae Nyae are better off than many other San communities in Namibia.⁴⁸

The situation in West Tsumkwe is less straightforward and calls for dealing with a number of capacity-related problems which are exacerbated by the relative heterogeneity of the population and its tumultuous recent history. The difficulties that West Tsumkwe communities have experienced in their efforts to establish a conservancy are clear evidence of this. Nevertheless, the fact that these groups retain rights to land and are likely to do so in future provides a platform from which to approach development issues.

⁴⁸ It is beyond the scope of this report to make anything but very general comments and recommendations concerning the activities of the NNC or NNDFN, given the extent of their own evaluations, the level of community involvement and the amount of detailed research conducted and feedback received.

4.8.1 Food security issues

San throughout Tsumkwe District are heavily dependent on GRN aid. To this extent, reducing the degree of San dependency and the vulnerability it creates is a priority. While this should not detract from the long-term goals of capacity-building and empowerment, more attention should be given to the immediate problem of food security. Detailing the mechanics of such a process are well beyond the scope of this report, however it is recommended that San community leaders and other stakeholders examine or assess the precise causes of this dependency and how best to address it (see Chapter 9).

Assuming that the specific conditions underlying this dependency will not alter radically, it is likely that any efforts to render San more self-sufficient will at the very best take time and require the gradual weaning of San off GRN aid (see Chapter 9). This is no easy task, not least because subsistence farming has thus far demonstrated limited potential and viable alternatives have proved elusive. The situation is further complicated by the fact that San in Tsumkwe District lack the marketable skills and formal qualifications necessary to secure employment outside the district.

There is no doubt that the poor harvests of San cultivators in Tsumkwe District are not only the result of environmental problems or a lack of farming skills, but also of other more elusive sociological and political problems. Efforts should be made to ascertain what contribution agriculture in Tsumkwe District as a whole can realistically make to food security, as well as the sociological and political factors preventing these outputs from being realised.

New options for economic development in Tsumkwe District need to be explored, and tied to this, efforts to provide San with formal education must continue to be supported (see Chapter 10).

4.8.2 Capacity issues

As much as Nyae Nyae is characterised by the presence of a relatively empowered, organised and strong CBO, West Tsumkwe is characterised by a lack of cohesiveness between communities, weak institutional arrangements and a lack of capacity. In order for the residents of West Tsumkwe to make use of the advantages they have over other San, capacity issues must be addressed as a matter of urgency by way of utilising their land access to the fullest.

Given their spatial proximity, greater efforts should also be made to ensure that East and West Tsumkwe maintain links at both planning and organisational levels.

CHAPTER 5

THE CAPRIVI⁴⁹

5.1 Introduction

The Caprivi Region is home to approximately 4 000 San, most of whom speak Kxoedam and are known locally as the Kxoe, Barakwena or Barakwengo. At the time of independence West Caprivi was also home to a Vasekele !Kung population reportedly numbering around 600 people (Brenzinger 2001), but around half of them have since moved elsewhere. The Kxoe, most of whom live between the Kavango and Kwando Rivers in West Caprivi, have had possibly the most tumultuous and complex recent history of all Namibian San.

Because of their recent history, West Caprivi Kxoe have had a considerably higher media profile than other San communities in Namibia. The GRN has as yet refused to recognise their traditional authority structures, their tenure status remains insecure and around 600 Kxoe fled to Botswana in late 1998 fearing intimidation and harassment by allegedly ill-disciplined members of the Namibian Defence Force (NDF) and Special Field Force (SFF) (see further on in this chapter). Additionally, the GRN – whose interests in establishing prisons on scenic community-based tourism sites in West Caprivi has brought it into direct conflict with the Kxoe – has been less than accommodating (from the Kxoe perspective at least) in dealing squarely with Kxoe concerns over the past decade.



Deserted housing at Omega III after most of the settlement's residents fled to Botswana in 1999

⁴⁹ Additional research for this chapter was conducted by Matthias Brenzinger and is referred to as Brenzinger 2001.

Problems encountered in seeking to resolve these issues have inevitably impeded the success of development programmes in West Caprivi, including the MLRR's resettlement programme and the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Programme run by Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC). Most recently, the expansion of the Angolan conflict into West Caprivi and the Kavango Region has stalled development efforts in a region (i.e. the Caprivi) marked by extreme poverty, widespread food insecurity, a very high HIV infection rate and economic underdevelopment. Indeed, apart from discouraging international tourists and motivating a possible pullout by donors and NGOs, the war has precipitated another refugee crisis, and in excess of 1 000 Kxoe from the central and western settlements have fled to Botswana. The long-term consequences of this are impossible to predict, but it is clear that the situation will take some time to normalise, even if the Angolan war concludes quickly – a prospect which, given the 25-year pedigree of that conflict, looks highly unlikely.

5.1.1 Demography

Despite the most recent GRN delimitation commission having split West Caprivi down the middle, it is much more practical (from socio-economic, cultural, land-use, linguistic and demographic perspectives) to deal with the Caprivi Region as a whole. At present the Caprivi is home to about half of the total regional Kxoe population of 6 880 (Brenzinger 2001).⁵⁰ Of the 4 000 Kxoe living in the Caprivi, 90% live in settlements that are home to more than 50 people, and half in settlements of over 500 (Table 5.1).

In addition to Kxoe, West Caprivi is home to a fluctuating population of around 300 Vasekele !Kung, most of whom came into the region to form the nucleus of the SADF "36 Bushman Battalion". Their status as an immigrant community has meant that they consider themselves marginal to mainstream Kxoe society. Apart from Kxoe and Vasekele living in West Caprivi, it is estimated that over 1 000 Mbukushu speakers have established plots east of the Kavango Region mainly in and around Mutciku (WWF 1997: 18). In addition, several (primarily Oshiwambo-speaking) farmers have settled with their cattle on Namibia Development Corporation (NDC) farms near Omega. The relatively few San living east of the Kwando River are found in several small settlements between Kongola and Katima Mulilo.

Table 5.1: Major San settlements in West Caprivi

SETTLEMENTS	# KXOE	# VASEKELE !KUNG
Mutciku	1 020	182
Omega	630	100
Chetto	590	
N//am//xom	103	
Omega III	638	
Mashambo	119	
Others	432	
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>3 523</i>	<i>282</i>
East Caprivi (between Kwando River and Katima Mulilo)		
Wayawaya	121	
Others	311	
West of Kavango River		
Mugudi (near Andara)	56	
TOTAL	4 011	282

Source: Brenzinger 2001

5.2 History

Traditionally the Kxoe ranged well beyond the narrow confines of the Caprivi Strip. Typically practising a hunting-and-gathering lifestyle in addition to cultivation, the Kxoe have had sustained contact with

⁵⁰ The majority of other Kxoe live in northern Botswana, although small populations are also found in Zambia, Angola, and since 1990, South Africa.

Bantu groups, especially those who live along the Kavango and Kwando Rivers, such as the Mbukushu and Mafwe. For the Kxoe, West Caprivi constituted their “core migration territory”, their greater territory having been, by quirk of the Berlin Conference, subsumed in five different countries (Brenzinger 1997: 5). Although pressure from neighbouring peoples had significantly reduced the territorial range of the Kxoe by the late 19th century, West Caprivi remained very conspicuously a predominantly Kxoe area.

5.2.1 Kxoe and others

Several generations of Kxoe have lived in close proximity to the Mbukushu, who settled episodically in the Caprivi after first entering the Kxoe’s greater migration territory during the 1800s. According to Brenzinger (1997: 13), the Kxoe did not actively resist Mbukushu in-migrations, but chose instead to move southwards and confine themselves to other parts of this territory. Where they did come into sustained contact with one another, the Kxoe became heavily reliant on the Mbukushu, and according to several sources, were on occasion enslaved by them for personal use or sale to slave-traders in Angola (Brenzinger 2001).

Partially motivated by the proximity of the Mbukushu and others during the 1950s, the Kxoe developed a more centralised model of social and political organisation not dissimilar to that of their neighbours (Orth 1998). Conceptions of land tenure also came to be articulated in terms of dominant regional models that associated territory with identity. Hence the ethnographer Oswin Kohler (1966) reported that by the 1950s it was customary for Mbukushu to ask permission from Kxoe headmen or chiefs if they wished to enter “Kxoe country”. During this time several Mbukushu households settled in West Caprivi, and according to Kxoe oral histories they did so always and only with permission from the Kxoe chief.

Kxoe and Mbukushu relations took a new turn during the 1960s and 1970s, at which time the colonial administration made its presence more strongly felt in the Caprivi. When the Odendaal Commission sat in 1963 to complete the process of apartheid planning for Namibia, it was agreed that West Caprivi, along with what eventually became Bushmanland, should be declared “native reserves” for “Bushmen”. In West Caprivi this did not happen, however, and contrary to Odendaal’s recommendations the area was declared a nature park in 1963 and upgraded to a game park in 1968. Even though West Caprivi was not a San “homeland”, the SWAA (in terms of its well-established “divide and rule” strategy) arranged for the forced removal of nearly all the Mbukushu living there. Those living towards the east near Bwabwata were unceremoniously dumped on the east bank of the Kwando River, and the remainder on the west bank of the Kavango River.

5.2.2 The South African Defence Force

Towards the end of the liberation phase of the Angolan war of independence, the emergence of SWAPO as a significant military organisation precipitated a far larger South African military presence in northern Namibia and in the geographically protruding Caprivi Strip in particular.

Some Kxoe and !Kung of Angolan origin had served with the Portuguese forces, and following the Lisbon coup and Angolan independence they crossed the border into Namibia for fear of reprisals from the MPLA Government. The South African military noted these new arrivals and seized the opportunity of their arrival to form the core of a new SADF “Bushman Battalion”. Popular mythology concerning the tracking and bush skills of San had convinced key figures in the SADF that San might make fine soldiers or reconnaissance commandos. As Colonel Delville Linford, the man most responsible for the formation of the Bushman Battalion, argued:

The Bushman soldier is unique in many respects. Born to use a bow and arrow, he learnt to use modern weapons with surprising efficiency, and his incredibly keen senses and thorough knowledge of the bush made him a soldier feared by all who crossed his path. (Uys 1993: Foreword)

The growing conflict in the north led to the establishment of a large military base at Omega/Mutciku and the initiation of a major recruitment drive to convince the Kxoe to join the armed forces. The SADF campaign was successful, developed a momentum of its own and by the late 1980s close to all healthy adult Kxoe males were wearing the military khakis and leather boots of the SADF.

Oral histories are clear on the fact that Kxoe did not enlist in the SADF for explicitly political or ideological reasons so much as economic ones. During the two decades preceding the large-scale deployment of the SADF in West Caprivi many Kxoe worked periodically in South Africa. Enlisted through the recruitment depot in Shakawe in Botswana, Kxoe came to rely on cash earned through labour on the Witwatersrand reef. In 1975, however, Botswana closed the border at Mahango and in so doing cut the Kxoe off from their principal source of cash income. At the same time the zoning of West Caprivi as a game reserve meant that Kxoe were forbidden to hunt, fish, gather, cultivate crops or harvest reeds for building houses. Thus when the SADF showed up and offered well-paid cash jobs which did not involve being ferried through a thousand kilometres of desert to Johannesburg where they had to dig in a big hole and live in a small one, they jumped at the opportunity.

To the !Kung and Kxoe recruits army life was an attractive proposition because it offered good wages, food, clothing, apparent security and options for development in an area that was conspicuously remote from economic centres. The amount of money poured into West Caprivi and Bushmanland by the SADF meant that in the 1980s San living in these areas had per capita incomes 12 times greater than San living on white farms and 30 times higher than San living in the communal areas (Marais et al. 1984). The SADF propaganda machine also helped to secure Kxoe complicity by playing heavily on their anxieties concerning Bantu overlordship.

The militarisation of the Kxoe was rapid and San soldiers participated in numerous “contacts” in “operational areas”. The SADF ultimately became the centre of the Kxoe socio-economic and political world. Its presence resulted in greater dependency on the cash economy, a commensurate change in livelihood strategies, the sedentarisation of large portions of the Kxoe population, and a radical and traumatic transformation of the Kxoe worldview. By the late 1980s Omega Base was home to around 4 500 San – the largest San settlement in recorded history.

As independence approached, many !Kung and Kxoe in West Caprivi opted to emigrate to South Africa rather than stay in Namibia. Two decades of war had raised fears of possible retaliation by SWAPO and many felt that moving to South Africa was the safest option. Thus despite repeated assurances and guarantees of their safety from SWAPO, some 3 500 San opted to remain with the SADF and they were relocated to Schmidtsdrift in South Africa in March 1990.

5.3 Development since 1990

5.3.1 MLRR/ELCIN intervention

Following the withdrawal of SADF troops the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) drew up a resettlement and rehabilitation plan for the remaining San in West Caprivi, to be run in tandem with the West Bushmanland resettlement scheme (see Chapter 4). As with that scheme, ELCIN was to be the implementing agency, the MLRR the co-ordinating body and the Lutheran World Federation the principal funder.

ECLIN/MLRR efforts in the Caprivi during the first five years mirrored those undertaken in West Tsumkwe. Similarly, success was limited and the Kxoe of West Caprivi did not respond positively to these initiatives. The principal initiative was the establishment of the settlement scheme at Mutciku, where it was reported that around 1 100 Kxoe and several hundred !Kung (Vasekele) (contra Jansen et al. 1994)⁵¹ were resettled in 13 settlement blocks.

⁵¹ Information provided in the ELCIN evaluation (Jansen et al. 1994) suggests that 1 300 Vasekele were settled there. Other sources (e.g. Brenzinger 2001) indicate that this was a miscalculation and the numbers were closer to 600.

As with their joint programmes elsewhere, the MLRR and ELCIN sought a holistic approach which included initiatives ranging from agricultural extension to spiritual welfare.

Agricultural extension and services

For at least two centuries Kxoe have relied on shifting cultivation as well as hunting and gathering. Despite this established tradition, Kxoe arable farmers in West Caprivi resettlement projects have done only “marginally better” than their counterparts in West Tsumkwe (Jansen et al. 1994). As in the latter place, San were allocated plots of 4-7 hectares near existing settlements.⁵² Ploughing and planting were assisted through the purchase of 22 draught oxen and the provision of a tractor, seeds and extension services. More land was cultivated and cleared than in West Tsumkwe and each resettled family ended up with an average of 1.8ha of cultivated land – still well short of what was needed to achieve self-sufficiency. In the final evaluation, difficulties in clearing land, lack of resources (technical and human), pests and poor rains were highlighted as obstacles to success (ibid.: 11).

Education

ELCIN facilitated the construction, staffing and equipping of three schools in West Caprivi teaching learners up to Grade 2. In addition ELCIN employed 12 teachers for these schools and provided each of them with a year of in-service training. ELCIN also supervised the building of teachers’ housing in Chetto and Omega III.

Health and nutrition

Responding to the absence of adequate healthcare facilities after the SADF withdrawal, ELCIN arranged for the construction of clinics in Mutciku, Omega III and Chetto and provided staff training. The planned nutritional health component of this programme never got off the ground.

Village development committees

By the early 1990s San in West Caprivi had relatively established traditional authority structures and ELCIN therefore thought it unnecessary to establish village development committees as it had in West Tsumkwe. Consequently the “traditional structures of local community leaders were supported as a representative body” (ibid.: 19). ELCIN did not give additional training to the local leadership, which according to the final evaluation was largely ignored by both ELCIN and the MLRR anyway. As the evaluation team noted, “genuine consultation and participation” were “not actively pursued” by either ELCIN or the MLRR in West Caprivi (ibid.: 20).

Spiritual Welfare

As in West Tsumkwe, spiritual welfare was considered to be an important part of the programme in West Caprivi. Nevertheless, success was marginal and most Kxoe still subscribe to traditional religious beliefs and/or prophetic churches.

Construction

ELCIN organised the construction of community halls at Mutciku and Omega III as part of the food-for-work scheme. Five boreholes were drilled and another renovated in the region.

⁵² In the Caprivi, as elsewhere, San were not consulted about the layout or positioning of plots, which were arranged on an Owambo/Kavango model. As a result, according to the ELCIN evaluation, “some Bushmen families actually refused to move to the fields and in some cases families decided to live off the plots” (Jansen et al. 1994: 7).

5.3.2 MLRR intervention

Following ELCIN's withdrawal from the programme in 1995, the MLRR took exclusive control over its ongoing projects and this meant a substantial downturn in human and material resources available to settlers. The most significant development initiated since the MLRR took over has been the construction of new housing, though this has only benefited 35 households. Otherwise the MLRR has maintained its support for agricultural projects in addition to co-ordinating the inputs of other ministries in West Caprivi (see Chapter 7).

5.3.3 The IRDNC LIFE Programme⁵³

In anticipation of the possible deproclamation of the West Caprivi Game Reserve and in accordance with conservation policy, the West Caprivi LIFE Programme co-ordinated by IRDNC formally kicked off in 1992 with a view to integrating locals into the conservation process.

IRDNC's activities in West Caprivi form an integral part of a broader programme that seeks to establish seven conservancies throughout the Caprivi Region. Interventions by IRDNC have been motivated by three broad goals: increasing the natural resources base; capacity-building with a view to natural resource management; and income development.

As much as the ability of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and community-based tourism (CBT) programmes to achieve a sustainable improvement in living standards remains to be seen, they are currently of real benefit in West Caprivi where thus far there has been very little development and few income-generation options. According to some studies (e.g. Barnes 1995 and Ashley 1995), the tourism potential of West Caprivi is seriously "under-utilised" and there is real potential for local communities to benefit directly from any further tourism developments that might take place.

With a strong emphasis on capacity-building, IRDNC operates with the long-term aim of changing from being an implementing agency to one providing technical support and assistance to autonomous conservancies. In the years since IRDNC's inception, steady progress has been made and the Kxoe have a high regard for its staff, with whom they enjoy a good working relationship.

The Community Game Guard Programme (CGGP)

Initiated at the inception of the IRDNC-run CBNRM Programme in West Caprivi, the CGGP has been running successfully for several years. Employing 28 community game guards, it is reported to have had a marked impact on poaching levels, helped re-establish a feeling of community ownership of wildlife and provided monthly salaries of N\$800 to N\$1 000 for each guard (Rousset pers. comm.). Game guards involved in the scheme have participated in training exercises with a view to increasing their skills base.

Community Resource Monitoring Programme (CRMP)

The CRMP is dominated by women, who often combine the job with veld-food gathering. Employing 16 women on a part-time basis, the programme aims to monitor changes in natural resources and ensure sustainable harvesting. Participants are paid a salary of N\$300 per month for their trouble and most are the principal wage earners in their households.

Community campsites

IRDNC is working with San in West Caprivi on establishing community campsites to tap into the area's growing tourism industry. The N//goavaca campsite near Popa Falls has been running successfully since 1997 and is widely regarded as one of Namibia's most beautiful camps. There are several other campsites planned for West Caprivi.

⁵³ See also Chapter 11.



The view from Camp No. 1 at the community-run N/!goavaca Camp in West Caprivi

Training

Training comprises an important part of the IRDNC programme and is vital to capacity-building efforts. Participants in this programme have been trained in, among other things, mapping, wildlife monitoring, hospitality and tourism.

Income-generating projects: craft production

Craft production is one of the few means available to Kxoe to earn cash. The IRDNC craft project used to have in excess of 50 participants, but currently provides an income for only 31 women and one man, who each take home in the region of N\$200 to N\$400 per month. Craft-makers tend to be elderly and are generally the only cash earners in their households (Rousset pers. comm.). According to the craft supervisor, there is currently scope for the expansion of the programme in areas like Mutciku.

5.4 Livelihood

During the 1980s a total of around R169 000 found its way into San hands in West Caprivi every month, giving the area a considerably higher average per capita income than the national average for non-whites in Namibia at the time. Although few San spent their money prudently, they came to rely heavily on cash dispensed by the SADF and the products that they could purchase with it.

After the SADF's departure income levels declined radically in West Caprivi and precipitated a corresponding decline in basic household food security. As with San elsewhere, hunger is a real issue for San in the Caprivi, who in addition to receiving food aid pursue mixed subsistence strategies including harvesting, waged labour and gathering.

5.4.1 Agriculture

Despite living in a game reserve, San in West Caprivi depend partially on subsistence farming. With encouragement and technical assistance from the MLRR in particular, the majority of San households in the area plant crops and engage in various other agricultural activities.

Cultivation

With permanent sedentarisation, cultivation has become an important means of subsistence at family level and most families grow some food on their plots. In 1998/99 the MLRR reported that Kxoe farmers harvested 13-20kg per person per year – a quantity inadequate to provide substantially for the settlers' needs.⁵⁴

Livestock

Although primarily dependent on hunting and gathering, Kxoe have owned small numbers of large and small stock for much of their recent history. Many Kxoe purchased cattle during the period of labour migration and during the high-income SADF occupation period. However, almost all Kxoe-owned large stock was either sold or killed during 1996, when an outbreak of contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia ("lung sickness") led to the slaughter of 250 000 cattle in Ngamiland (across the border in Botswana). In response to this threat the GRN passed a series of regulations demanding the immediate slaughter, sale or quarantine of Caprivi cattle. Lacking transport to the quarantine area, Kxoe cattle owners slaughtered their livestock in a panic, or sold them through Meatco at very low prices. In the process the Kxoe lost all their cattle and draught animals, with the result that they were not only poorer, but also had to give up their ploughs and return to hoeing by hand.⁵⁵

5.4.2 Hunting and gathering

West Caprivi still has large numbers of wildlife and abundant flora, sustained by its high (by Namibian standards) albeit erratic rainfall. Various sources attest to the central role of gathering in the Kxoe diet, asserting its importance as second only to cultivation and food aid. As Van Rhyn (1995: 4) points out, "90% of households placed a high value on veld foods as a supplementary food source", and furthermore these formed "part of their daily subsistence". Kxoe, like Ju/'hoansi in Nyae Nyae, retain a formidable knowledge of local flora, with many women in particular able to identify a large number of species and their uses. In excess of 20 veld foods are used regularly, including the all-important staple, mangetti nuts.

Hunting no longer plays the important role that it once did among the Kxoe. Apart from declining game numbers, the fact that West Caprivi is a protected area means that hunting is now "poaching" and hence illegal. Some Kxoe do poach, but not in sufficiently large numbers to have a lasting impact on game numbers, nor on the Kxoe's nutritional status. With the CGGP in operation the risks of being caught are high. In general Kxoe are opportunistic hunters and/or scavengers, often taking animals that have died or been injured at someone else's hand or under someone else's wheels. In addition, small mammals, lizards and birds are killed, cooked and eaten when the opportunity arises.

5.4.3 Employment

The cash economy of the Caprivi as a whole is very underdeveloped, with combined unemployment and underemployment at 80% (CSO 1996: 71). Very few San in the region have secure jobs or can rely

⁵⁴ The MLRR cites figures for Omega which break down to 150kg/person per year – a much higher total than for San elsewhere. Local sources (e.g. the MLRR clerk) suggested that the few San remaining at Omega are no more successful with their crops than others in West Caprivi (Brenzinger pers. comm.).

⁵⁵ According to the Kxoe, the prices they received from Meatco averaged around N\$200/head (15-20% of market value).

on any form of cash income other than pensions. In West Caprivi itself job opportunities are extremely limited and Brenzinger (2001) estimates that at present less than 100 Kxoe, and considerably fewer Vasekele, are formally employed. IRDNC is currently the largest single employer in West Caprivi and several Kxoe work in the service of the GRN (see also Ya Nangoloh 1996). The prison agricultural project is a source of seasonal employment for Kxoe and offers work for 70-100 people for periods of two to three weeks several times a year.

5.4.4 Pensions

Aside from GRN or IRDNC employment, the government pension scheme is the most reliable and far-reaching form of cash income in West Caprivi. Although many San in the Caprivi claim pensions, the indications are that several have been unable to do so due to difficulties involved in acquiring identification documents.

5.4.5 Food aid

In 1998, at more or less the same time that Omega's Kxoe population fled to Botswana, a headline in *The Namibian* (12 November 1998) read "San starving to death". In this article it was reported that four adults and one child had died of starvation due to the poor mangetti harvest and the haphazard distribution of food aid. San in the Caprivi are extremely economically vulnerable and in the absence of other options rely exclusively on food aid at specific times of the year (see Chapter 9).

5.5 Current issues

Compared to other San in Namibia, the West Caprivi Kxoe have had a difficult time since independence, exacerbated by an awkward relationship with their immediate neighbours as well as with the GRN.

The fact that land and traditional authority issues remain unresolved has done little to establish a climate suitable for development in the area. Moreover the recent expansion of the Angolan conflict into West Caprivi has seriously damaged the area's tourism prospects, placed development on hold, caused the violent deaths of several people and possibly destabilised the area for many years to come.

5.5.1 Mbukushu, Mafwe and Kxoe Traditional Authorities

During the initial registration of traditional authorities immediately after independence, Mbukushu *Fumu* (Chief) Mbambo submitted that Kxoe traditional leader Chief Kipi George and his people were Mbukushu subjects, and that by virtue of this the lands they occupied were Mbukushu traditional lands.⁵⁶ In doing so Mbambo laid claim to the entire West Caprivi from the Kavango River to the Kwando River. At the same time Mafwe Chief Boniface Mamili also made claims over the Kxoe and the lands of West Caprivi. He claimed that the Kxoe *tlaxa* (chief) was a Mafwe *induna* (councillor) and that he had already installed a Mafwe *induna* as sub-chief of the "Mafwe Bushmen", as he called the Kxoe (see Brenzinger 1997: 25).

Few Kxoe consider themselves to be subjects of either the Mbukushu or Mafwe Traditional Authority and written historical sources support this notion unequivocally.⁵⁷ Kxoe cite the fact that they speak a different language, practise a different culture, have a different form of social and political organisation, employ different economic strategies, construct a distinct history, have their own traditional authority

⁵⁶ The fact that the Kxoe submitted their own details, thereby indicating that they were exclusively subjects of the reasonably well-established Kxoe Traditional Authority, was ignored at the time.

⁵⁷ Brenzinger (2001) summarises a number of these sources dating back through much of the past century. According to these sources, Kxoe/Mbukushu relations were never good, though they were characterised by a degree of symbiosis from the 1950s onwards. These sources suggest that it was common for Kxoe to be taken as slaves by Mbukushu who were once fond exponents of the trade (Brenzinger 1997 and 2001).

structures and live in a different area as justification for their not falling under Mbukushu or Mafwe rule. Outside of a couple of factions, grassroots opinion among Caprivian Kxoe is vehemently opposed to Mbukushu or Mafwe control.

The manner in which the competing claims to West Caprivi were made by the Mbukushu and Mafwe traditional leaders warrants mention: both claimed that the Kxoe were sub-groups of their respective “tribes” and that West Caprivi between the Kwando and Kavango Rivers was theirs as a function of this relationship. In other words, neither the Mafwe nor the Mbukushu claimed the land by virtue of their historical control over the territory, but rather by virtue of their domination of the people within it.⁵⁸ As such, both claims ultimately depend for their legitimacy on the extent to which Kxoe recognise Mafwe or Mbukushu authority over them.

It is clear though that few Kxoe regard either Mbambo’s or Mamili’s claims as anything more than crass opportunism. The fact that Mbambo stands accused of embezzlement by the majority of his own traditional community reinforces Kxoe convictions in this regard.⁵⁹ However, until confronted in December 1997 with the threat of legal action, the GRN (as represented by the MRLGH and the MLRR) chose to recognise *Fumu* Mbambo as the only legitimate traditional leader in West Caprivi, and up until this time consultations between the GRN and “locals” concerning developments in West Caprivi were conducted exclusively through Mbukushu Traditional Authority structures. As a result the Kxoe were completely unaware of several agreements made between the GRN and the Mbukushu Traditional Authority regarding the future of West Caprivi (see below).

Kxoe Traditional Authority

The Kxoe Traditional Authority is one of the most established San traditional authorities in Namibia. At the same time as San elsewhere were watching their social and political structures collapse, the Kxoe were in the process of establishing a more centralised traditional authority structure. With a recognised chain of succession dating back to the 1950s, a centralised Kxoe Traditional Authority emerged in response to increasing pressure from their neighbours, the Mbukushu in particular. According to oral histories, the current Kxoe *Tlaxa*, Kipi George, was elected in Omega in 1987 to succeed his grandfather, *Tlaxa* Ndumba, who died earlier that year and George was formally installed as the Kxoe *Tlaxa* in 1990.

As was the case for much of the rest of Namibia’s non-white population, the divide and rule period between 1960 and 1990 strengthened Kxoe traditional authority structures and “tribal” identity, as well as their informal claims to land by virtue of customary entitlement. Taking into account the experience of San elsewhere in Namibia and the patterns of relations that emerged between them and others, it is possible that the Kxoe would have lost control of West Caprivi had the SADF not been there. Two decades of SADF presence and its limiting effect on Mbukushu in-migration provided for the strengthening of the Kxoe Traditional Authority, despite the fact that the SWAA had not granted the Kxoe even a partially autonomous “homeland” as it did many other groups.

Following the ratification of the Traditional Authorities Act (TAA) in 1995, the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) at the University of Namibia in collaboration with WIMSA set about facilitating the transformation of Kxoe traditional leadership so that its structures conformed to those stipulated in the TAA (see Chapter 8). In the process, Kipi George’s position as *Tlaxa* was confirmed in another election and a Chief’s Council was formed in compliance with the TAA.

⁵⁸ Mbukushu claims are partially justified by reference to Mbukushu residing in the area near Bwabwata before being moved by the South African authorities.

⁵⁹ After large sums of money went missing from the community trust, and following accusations of graft verging on extortion as well as various other activities, two referendums were held in Andara to assess community support for Mbambo. In both ballots, less than 10% of those who voted did so in Mbambo’s favour. However, the MRLGH disputed the legitimacy of these ballots and Mbambo remains the state-recognised traditional leader of the Mbukushu, despite his own people not caring much for him. It is widely believed that the GRN’s support for Mbambo is the result of his strong links with SWAPO (*The Namibian*, 20 September 1999).

Kxoe and Vasekele

The situation in West Caprivi is further complicated by the uneven relations pertaining between the Kxoe and the !Kung-speaking Vasekele. During the period of SADF's occupation of West Caprivi relations between the Kxoe and the Vasekele were never entirely smooth and the two groups were separated by the military authorities, who reportedly favoured each group at different times.

At the time of the SADF's withdrawal from West Caprivi many Vasekele moved to West Bushmanland and many more to Schmidtsdrift in South Africa. Only about 600 Vasekele remained in West Caprivi, all of whom settled in Mutciku and Omega.

Over the last decade, however, the majority of the Vasekele who remained have left their MLRR-issued plots (which are now occupied by Mbukushu) and headed for Angola, West Bushmanland or Kavango. If the ELCIN evaluation team's statistics (see Jansen et al. 1994) are correct, eight Vasekele have left for every one who has remained (see Table 5.1). Informants in West Caprivi suggested that the Vasekele left for one or more of the following reasons:

- They felt insecure about their future in West Caprivi, which they did not consider to be historically "theirs", and wished to return to places they knew better and with which they had a long historical association
- They did not like the MLRR scheme, which they considered as entirely inappropriate to their needs.
- They felt marginalised by the larger and more dominant Kxoe population.

5.5.2 Land and land use

Questions of land use, land rights and access to land are of foremost concern in the Caprivi. The Kxoe of West Caprivi have been involved in a series of disputes relating to: the status of the Caprivi as a game reserve or national park; their rights to utilise natural resources; the competing claims to West Caprivi made by the Kxoe, Mafwe and Mbukushu respectively; uncontrolled Mbukushu in-migration; the granting of tourism and hunting concessions; the establishment of conservancies; and the controversial construction of and plans to expand the Divindu Rehabilitation Centre for criminal offenders.

Mbukushu in-migration

The socio-linguistic profile of West Caprivi has shifted since independence as a result of in-migration. In the last decade a steady stream of Mbukushu have established new farms west of the Kavango in areas hitherto used only by the Kxoe. The WWF reported that only the first two Mbukushu families to move into the area after independence asked permission from Kxoe Chief Kipi George (WWF 1997: 19).

While providing no statistics on the extent of Mbukushu in-migration, the WWF has argued that it is "considerable" enough to have had a marked impact on the environment in a short period.⁶⁰ The report (ibid.) notes the destruction of both food and non-food resources as a result of the unsustainable and uncontrolled cutting of trees (including mangetti) for building, carving and firewood, as well as the uncontrolled harvesting of thatching grass and riverine reeds. Additionally, Kxoe claim to have lost access to key resource areas that had been earmarked for re-growth.

Among the Kxoe in Mutciku there has been widespread opposition to this in-migration, and a desire to restrict it. Not only do Kxoe not wish to lose resources to Mbukushu, but some claim that they do not wish to live with them because they are "patronising" and "prejudiced", and as one informant put it, they "do not think we [Kxoe] are people".

⁶⁰ The WWF reports that by 1997, blocks Delta and Hippo as well as five of the seven Vasekele blocks had been taken over completely by Mbukushu. Other areas to the north and south-east of these blocks had been settled or cleared for farming as far as the Buffalo fence (WWF 1997: 42-44).

Divundu prison farm

Part and parcel of the land and traditional leadership dispute is the debate over Divundu Rehabilitation Centre, a prison farm bordering the San community-run N//goavaca campsite at Popa Falls. The decision to build the prison on the premises of a defunct agricultural project was taken in 1995 with the consent of the Mbukushu Traditional Authority. The Kxoe were not consulted during the planning phase, and a letter from them requesting the GRN to terminate the project was ignored.

Much to the disbelief of the Kxoe and IRDNC, after the prison was built the GRN announced plans to extend it further into the area currently occupied by the N//goavaca campsite and the White Sands Lodge located on the Kavango River adjacent to Popa Falls. It was intended that Cabinet would deproclaim these portions of the game reserve to allow for this extension, and that the Kxoe living there would be compensated and resettled elsewhere.

The Kxoe formally objected to these plans and questioned Mbambo's jurisdiction over the area. Assisted by WIMSA (whose board of trustees was then chaired by Kipi George), the Kxoe Traditional Authority appealed to the GRN to work constructively towards finding a mutually satisfying resolution to the issue. It was subsequently agreed that the MLRR would arbitrate on the matter, and to this end a meeting was convened between the Kxoe Traditional Authority, *Fumu* Mbambo and the GRN (represented by the Deputy Ministers of the MLRR and MRLGH).

The meeting did not go well for the Kxoe, whose delegates claimed that they received an inadequate and prejudiced hearing – a view corroborated by some observers (Corbett pers. comm.). They complained of being “ridiculed” by the GRN delegates, who Kipi George contends were “demeaning” and “not interested or prepared to afford any proper or meaningful opportunity” for the Kxoe delegates to make their case (George pers. comm.). At the conclusion of this meeting the chairperson (the Deputy Minister of the MLRR) made a number of unilateral resolutions. Key among these were that:

- the N//oavaca community campsite and the White Sands Lodge were illegal and had to be moved;
- an evaluation of compensation for the Kxoe would be conducted;
- the Kxoe would be allocated another place for a campsite;
- the Mbukushu Traditional Authority would henceforth handle land allocation in West Caprivi; and
- the prison farm expansion would go ahead as planned.

In response the Kxoe Traditional Authority sought redress in the High Court in December 1997. Represented by the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), it filed a 15-point motion in which it requested:

- that the Kxoe Traditional Authority be recognised immediately and the contradictory claims of the Mafwe and Mbukushu disregarded;
- a court order declaring the Kxoe the owners of the land situated between the Kavango and Caprivi subject to the limitations of law; and
- that plans to expand the Divundu prison and evict the Kxoe from N//oavaca be frozen immediately.

The GRN initially opposed this motion but later expressed a desire to resolve matters without recourse to the courts. Thus in early 1998 the Office of the Attorney-General notified the Kxoe leadership that the GRN had not only revoked its decision to evict the Kxoe from N//oavaca, but was also willing to reconsider the traditional leadership issue, and moreover to defer the land issue to a judicial commission of inquiry.⁶¹

*Caprivi Game Reserve and Bwabwata National Park*⁶²

The GRN has expressed a desire to find a workable solution to the land issue in West Caprivi without the area losing its status as a conservation area. To this end, in late 1999 Cabinet endorsed plans developed

⁶¹ See *The Namibian*, 6 January, 9 January and 12 January 1998.

⁶² See also Chapter 11.

by the MET to upgrade the area to a national park (and rename it Bwabwata National Park) while rezoning it in such a way that local populations can reap benefits from tourism and other developments.

These plans involve deproclaiming some portions of the intended park, establishing core conservation areas in other portions and creating a large central "multiple-use area". The areas to be deproclaimed (and fenced) are those most densely populated by Kxoe, namely Mutciku and Omega. The remaining land lying between the Buffalo and Kwando core areas (where the remainder of the Kxoe live) is to be rezoned as a multiple-use area where local residents can "benefit directly from [the] sustainable use of wildlife and tourism while carrying on with their normal activities of crop and small-stock⁶³ farming" (MET 1999: 4).

While this plan accommodates and integrates a number of diverse agendas, its success will hinge in part on the successful resolution of the traditional leadership issue, especially as it pertains to Mbukushu immigration. In the meantime discussions are underway concerning the positioning of the eastern fence of the multiple-use area near Mutciku, with Mbukushu farmers pushing for the deproclamation of as large an area as possible in which to graze their livestock and plant fields. IRDNC staff and the Kxoe leadership have expressed concern that this would lead to the destruction of veld-food resource areas currently utilised by the large Mutciku Kxoe population.

5.5.3 Refugees

The situation in West Caprivi has been further complicated by the fact that in 1998 and again in 1999 significant numbers of Kxoe chose to flee to Botswana. The continued presence of over 1 000 Caprivian Kxoe refugees (i.e. 25% of the region's Kxoe population) in Botswana raises some difficult questions concerning the future of West Caprivi.

The Caprivi and secession

In November 1998 Botswana authorities reported at first a trickle and then a stream of Namibian refugees pouring across the Caprivi-Botswana border. By January 1999 it was estimated that in excess of 2 000 Namibians had crossed into Botswana, where they were picked up by the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) and billeted at Dukwe Refugee Camp north of Francistown in Botswana. It later emerged that among the refugees who had crossed into Botswana were Kxoe Chief Kipi George and as many as 650 of his subjects from Omega III and Chetto. Moreover it was clear that those Kxoe who chose to flee did so spontaneously, leaving behind not only their livestock, but also essential items such as blankets, knives, pots and clothes (*The Namibian*, 12 and 17 November 1999; Rousset pers. comm.). That a segment of the Namibian population who were not (as far as has been ascertained) party to nor even aware of any sinister secessionist plots or subversive destabilisation conspiracies⁶⁴ should flee the country believing that they were in mortal danger of assault by their own defence forces does not reflect favourably on their relationship with the GRN.

Although the Kxoe and others working in West Caprivi have reported numerous minor problems with NDF and SFF personnel in recent years, only since 1998 have the alleged problems been serious enough to warrant serious concern.⁶⁵ In the months preceding the exodus, Kxoe in settlements east of Mutciku alleged that the NDF and SFF harassed, intimidated and interrogated them repeatedly concerning the whereabouts of a "secret army camp" established by the now disgraced and exiled Namibian political leader Mishake Muyongo. This intimidation reportedly increased immediately after information emerged that Kipi George had accompanied Muyongo, the former Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) leader,

⁶³ It is intended that no cattle will be allowed in the Bwabwata National Park in order to help control bovine lung sickness.

⁶⁴ The fact that no Kxoe have been reported arrested among the many others for collaborating with the Caprivi Liberation Army corroborates this.

⁶⁵ Numerous Kxoe have reported drunken and undisciplined SFF and NDF personnel causing difficulties, as have IRDNC staff who on one occasion had to officially complain to the Ministry of Defence (see LAC 1998).

along with Mafwe Chief Mamili and former Caprivi Governor John Mabuku when they were arrested by the BDF for illegally entering Botswana carrying “weapons of war” earlier in 1998.

Kxoe informants allege that in mid November 1998 security force personnel severely beat one young Kxoe man in Omega III, unleashed several shots into the air and threatened several individuals with more serious violence should they not provide them with information on the location of “Muyongo’s secret army” by the following morning. The refugees claim that they decided to flee because no one was able to give the security forces the information they requested.⁶⁶

A small proportion of the Kxoe caught up in the crisis were accidental refugees. As already noted, the greater Kxoe migration territory straddles four different countries and Kxoe frequently cross borders (illegally) to meet kin and friends elsewhere. That San do so illegally is firstly a consequence of the fact that it is quicker, cheaper and easier to cross the border in that way, and secondly because very few Kxoe have identification documents appropriate for formal international travel. The most frequently crossed border is that between Botswana and Namibia, with Kxoe from both countries visiting each other quite frequently. Thus after the refugee crisis began, a number of Namibian Kxoe who were (illegally) visiting relatives in Botswana were picked by vigilant BDF soldiers and bundled off to Dukwe.⁶⁷

While the refugee crisis was motivated by a sequence of specific events, the Kxoe’s reaction to these events was determined by their growing collective sense of social and political alienation in the wake of land and traditional authority disputes. San left because they were not convinced that the GRN would either protect or support them under the circumstances.

At the time of independence Kxoe were understandably concerned about their future in Namibia – a fact made abundantly clear by the exodus of so many to South Africa at that time. Although the GRN reassured those who remained that they were welcome partners in the new Namibia, events over the past 10 years convinced many Kxoe that these assurances were empty rhetoric. Indeed the Kxoe speculate that their current difficulties are in part a result of their association with “the Boers” during the colonial era. A senior councillor of the Kxoe Traditional Authority, Thaddeus Cheddau, explained:

When they think of us they take us as if all we have ever done is fight for the SADF and as if we were the only ones who fought with the SADF. But all the nations were in that army including the Owambos; we were not the only ones but this is what they say.

After the Kxoe and other refugees had spent a protracted period in Dukwe Refugee Camp, the GRN agreed to the unconditional return of all those who had not chosen exile. Co-ordinated by the UNHCR, the repatriation process got underway in July 1999, but was stalled temporarily in August by the chaotic skirmishes that broke out between Namibian security forces and secessionists in Katima Mulilo. By October 1999 almost all of the Kxoe refugees (excluding Kipi George) had returned to Namibia, and all reported having been treated well by the Botswana authorities and UNHCR representatives at Dukwe.

The Angolan conflict

Immediately following the presidential and parliamentary elections in Namibia in November 1999 the GRN granted the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) permission to attack UNITA positions in southern and eastern Angola from Namibian soil. To this end Angolan troops were deployed in West Caprivi from December 1999 to August 2000. In response UNITA forces carried out numerous attacks in Namibia, reportedly to secure food and other essential resources after their supply lines were cut off.

⁶⁶ According to Brenzinger (1997), the Kxoe have a history of high mobility. Unlike the *n/ore*-based Ju/’hoansi, the Kxoe have been “moving to survive” for over a century. These movements, Brenzinger has argued, have become something of a standard adaptive strategy for the Kxoe. He postulates that the Kxoe move for a variety of social, political, economic and environmental/ecological reasons.

⁶⁷ As it turns out, some Kxoe were ultimately pleased to be sent to Dukwe Refugee Camp, where they did not have to work, the food was good, and they were kept warm and comfortable.

Following this deployment of FAA troops in West Caprivi, the UNHCR again reported large numbers of mainly Kxoe refugees from West Caprivi arriving in Botswana. Eastern settlements in West Caprivi, including Omega 6 and Chetto, are now close to deserted and significant numbers of San have also left Omega III and Bagani/Mutciku, rendering the second refugee exodus considerably more widespread than the first one. The UNHCR reports that between 31 December 1999 and mid-March 2000 around 1 400 refugees crossed into Botswana, most of them Kxoe (Muftic pers. comm.; *The Namibian*, 27 March 2000).

Kxoe allege that since the resumption of military operations in the area in December 1999:⁶⁸

- they have been too afraid to go into the bush for gathering purposes;
- community projects have been placed on hold;
- schools, clinics and other services no longer operate properly;
- there have been repeated, active and forceful attempts to recruit Kxoe men into the FAA as mercenaries;
- there have been repeated raids by UNITA, especially in and around Mutciku/Bagani;
- the Kxoe have not been adequately protected by Namibian military and paramilitary forces;
- since few Kxoe have identification documents, a number of them have been harassed by members of the SFF and some have been arrested;⁶⁹
- Kxoe refugees in Botswana have been pursued and shot at by Namibia's SFF;
- there have been incidents of harassment by and conflict with the FAA;
- a number of people in the area have "disappeared", men in particular;
- land mines have been laid in Mutciku and blocks Charlie and Delta are now uninhabitable;
- a number of Kxoe men were abducted by Namibian security forces and have since disappeared; and
- there has been repeated harassment and intimidation of Kxoe by Namibian security personnel.

A number of more serious complaints have recently come to light. On 10 December 2000 Kxoe and Vasekele community leaders held an emergency meeting to discuss strategies to highlight what they hold is now an "untenable situation" and to end what they referred to as "persecution and harassment" by Namibia's security forces. This meeting was called in response to the detention of at least 18 local men, the disappearance of several others and the arrest of three prominent community members on charges of high treason.⁷⁰

Prominent among those alleging harassment are IRDNC project participants and San community leaders. According to the IRDNC report on the meeting, "virtually every man who had a salaried job, was [an IRDNC] project committee member, or drove a car had been detained, or was being repeatedly arrested and harassed" (IRDNC 2000). The report states that the co-ordinator of the CGGP, Oena Dihako, was arrested and charged with high treason, and that Ronnie Mahindi, a local project facilitator, recently fled to Botswana after having heard that he would be arrested due to his alleged role in a UNITA ambush. Both men protest their innocence and have requested the opportunity to clear their names.

The report also captures the increasing alienation of West Caprivi San. It notes that they "are living in fear of the Namibian Security Forces, the Angolan FAA and UNITA", and that "people just sit home waiting to die". It further notes that community members feel they are being "persecuted" due to their former association with the SADF and also because they are "Bushmen". The report quotes a meeting participant in this regard:

After independence the new Government came here and told us that now the South Africans had gone back, we who stayed would be treated as Namibians. We believed their words ... Then came these times of killing and they have turned round their words and cut us out of our country.

⁶⁸ These allegations were presented to me in a series of interviews conducted with Kxoe informants in February, March and November 2000.

⁶⁹ Some of the Kxoe who fled claim that SFF members shot to kill while they were trying to cross the electric fence into Botswana as refugees. Others have alleged that men have been separated from their families and "sent to Rundu".

⁷⁰ All details of this meeting are sourced to IRDNC 2000.

Apart from seeking legal assistance, the meeting resolved that IRDNC should meet a high-level GRN delegation to inform the latter of the precise nature of IRDNC activities in West Caprivi, and also to convey that Kxoe and Vasekele leaders will seek an audience with the Namibian President to reassure him of their loyalty to Namibia and to clear their names as UNITA collaborators.

While some steps can be taken to make the best of a bad situation, it is unlikely that the situation in West Caprivi will return to “normal” in the near future. The long-term consequences of recent developments are hard to predict, though it is clear that should matters continue on their current trajectory, the relationship between the San of West Caprivi and the GRN will deteriorate further. Furthermore, Kxoe refugees in Botswana have not expressed a desire to return to Namibia in the immediate future, which means that Botswana and the UNHCR will have to host more than 1 000 Kxoe refugees for some time to come.

5.6 Conclusions and recommendations

To view the recent flight of the Kxoe to Botswana solely as a response to the expansion of the Angolan war into West Caprivi is wrong: others in areas equally affected by the war have not fled. Their recent flight must rather be seen as a response to a wide range of problems and difficulties experienced since independence, of which the recent instability is just one.

There is also little question that the difficulties experienced by San in West Caprivi since independence have hindered the development process in the area. Insecurity over land and leadership issues has been further complicated by political problems that have come to a head over the past two years. Most significantly, the GRN has not yet recognised the Kxoe Traditional Authority (and by extension does not yet recognise the Kxoe as a “traditional community” with customary rights to land – see Chapters 7 and 8) and has referred the land issue to a judicial commission of inquiry which may take years to resolve it.

As in other areas with large, poor San populations, it is likely that life for the Kxoe in West Caprivi will remain difficult for some years to come, no matter what interventions are made on their behalf. Political issues notwithstanding, West Caprivi has an underdeveloped economy, a limited capacity for subsistence agriculture, a growing and largely uneducated population and a terrible HIV/AIDS problem (see Chapter 9).

5.6.1 Land and leadership

Innovative plans tabled in 1999 to rezone the new Bwabwata National Park suggested that matters might well improve for San in the Caprivi. Nevertheless, until such time as the traditional leadership and land issues are resolved and the security situation is stabilised, it is unlikely that development in the Caprivi will progress smoothly, if at all. As a first step for successful development in the region, local institutions must be respected and areas of insecurity removed. The onus is on the GRN to ensure the successful resolution of these issues to secure not only Kxoe support, but also a suitable platform for development in one of Namibia’s premier tourist areas. Failure to do this will further alienate Kxoe, compound development-related problems, and ultimately further destabilise this already unstable region.

5.6.2 The Namibian Defence Force and Special Field Force

At present, NDF and SFF personnel are viewed with suspicion by many Kxoe – a state of affairs not helped by such episodic arrests of Kxoe leaders and IRDNC staff as happened in September and October 2000. Measures are needed to curb undisciplined and drunken behaviour by security force personnel. Given the reluctance of NDF or SFF personnel within the region to respond to complaints laid by San, senior GRN officials should ensure that adequate and effective complaint procedures are established and that military personnel who transgress the rules are disciplined. One possible option is the establishment

of liaison committee in which the SFF and NDF members, San and others working in West Caprivi can meet to discuss problems and plans for co-operation.

With regard to recent developments, notwithstanding the possible guilt of those charged, some damage limitation will be necessary to ensure that the residents of West Caprivi are not further alienated by GRN actions. Additionally, given the response of Kxoe to GRN harassment in the past, the GRN will have to respond quickly to prevent more Kxoe deserting their homes and seeking refugee status in Botswana. As requested by the West Caprivians, a formal meeting with the President or another holder of a high-ranking political office will be an important step in the right direction.

5.6.3 Support for community-based natural resource management

In the absence of other options, support for the existing (IRDNC-run) CBNRM Programme should be continued. The tourism potential of West Caprivi is undisputed and the establishment of a conservancy should allow the Kxoe to reap both direct and indirect benefits from their abundant local flora and fauna. At present CBNRM is one of the few options available for tackling capacity issues and reducing dependency to some extent in West Caprivi. Until such time as other income-generation or subsistence options are available, the CBNRM Programme will remain of critical importance to the Kxoe.

Potential also exists for the possible commercialisation of various non-timber forest products in the biodiversity-rich West Caprivi as part of a CBNRM programme, and these should be researched in greater detail.

5.6.4 Food security and economic diversity

At present, development programmes for Kxoe populations in West Caprivi remain limited to those initiated by the GRN and more recently IRDNC. Most San households in the area depend on GRN aid supplemented by veld foods, and income from pensions and waged labour for their livelihood. At present the MLRR's agricultural programme does not contribute significantly to food security in West Caprivi.

Given that Kxoe are experienced cultivators, it is likely that their poor yields are not related to skill in farming. Taking into account the broader political problems experienced by San in the Caprivi, low yields are more likely a consequence of insecurity of tenure combined with an over-reliance on GRN aid (see Chapter 9). Should land and leadership issues be resolved in the Kxoe's favour, farming outputs are likely to improve.

However, even assuming that outstanding issues are indeed resolved in favour of the Kxoe, West Caprivi will remain an economically marginal area. Unemployment is high and economic opportunities are limited. Moreover it is unlikely that the proposed conservancy will adequately sustain a growing population. It is therefore essential that efforts be undertaken to ensure further economic diversification in the region as a whole, and to investigate other means of income generation.

CHAPTER 6

POLICY AND NGOS

6.1 Introduction

Following the implementation of UN Resolution 435 (as from 1 April 1989), Namibia finally achieved political independence from South Africa on 21 March 1990. This achievement signified much to San in Namibia and many believed that it would bring them tangible benefits, a new sense of empowerment and greater control over their own destinies. This perception was heightened in 1992 when President Sam Nujoma in his opening address to the *Regional Conference on Development Programmes of Africa's San Populations* clarified the GRN's commitment to the San, stating that he recognised their "dire plight", and moreover that his Government had "vowed to help them find their place in the New Namibia" (Saugestad 1998: 249; Appendix A herein). Ten years after independence, however, only a small proportion of Namibian San have seen marked improvements in their quality of life, and moreover the GRN has demonstrated little clear commitment to addressing their "dire plight".

Nevertheless, it must be noted that GRN statements regarding the San and the issues affecting them have been generally positive. Indeed, soon after independence the GRN demonstrated that it had a sophisticated understanding of the problems relating to the social and economic marginalisation of San and the challenges these posed for their development (see GRN 1992). The GRN consequently committed itself to granting San "special attention" and prioritisation in the development and land redistribution processes (see Chapter 7 and Appendices A, B and C). However, apart from receiving food aid, being among the targets of an intersectoral education programme targeting marginalised Namibians, and being the intended beneficiaries of an ad hoc and poorly implemented resettlement programme, the majority of San do not feel that they have benefited from GRN initiatives in any substantial way.

GRN policy regarding San is presently a mixed bag: the MLRR and MBESC have explicitly identified San as a priority target group for development, while other line ministries cater to their needs only under broader programmes. While Namibian law does not discriminate against San (nor anyone else) in word, there are grounds to argue that it does in practice – by not recognising the special needs of San and sufficiently heeding the extent to which they have been and remain collectively disadvantaged. Namibia is not a signatory to any international conventions explicitly concerned with the rights of "indigenous peoples". While San are catered for individually under Namibian law, the law is limited in providing for their collective rights as a minority group (see Chapter 8). Certainly in practical terms there have been no moves to afford San any special status either as an indigenous minority or – far more relevant in the Namibian context – on the basis of their socio-economic status relative to others.

6.2 Government, policy and San

Although the GRN has asserted that it views San as a development priority, Namibia has no integrated programme aimed explicitly at dealing with problems facing San communities, or the worst-off of the country's rural poor in general (Botswana's Remote Area Development Programme being an example of such a programme). The absence of such a programme reflects the extent to which San issues are not perceived as urgent in Namibia, as well as a general reluctance to establish any sort of programme that might prioritise one "ethnic" group's interests over those of another. Nevertheless, the GRN has acknowledged and recognised the "special needs" of the San and has stated that they (along with other marginal groups such as women, the disabled, etc.) should be prioritised in the development process so that they

can attain an “acceptable standard of living”. Furthermore the GRN has expressed its willingness to accommodate and respect San cultural difference in this process.⁷¹

In the absence of a guiding policy, GRN programmes at present are geared loosely towards “the integration of San” into mainstream Namibian society, emphasising the attainment of food security through subsistence agriculture. This strategy is non-participatory insofar as San are required to conform to the GRN’s vision for their development rather than any vision of their own.

6.2.1 Conferences, meetings and GRN commitments

During the period immediately following independence the GRN demonstrated a genuine willingness to work towards a resolution of San-related issues and problems. To this end the NNDFN, in cooperation with the MLRR and with funding from SIDA and NORAD, organised a *Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa’s San Populations*. While delegates from the fairly unrepresentative former Bushmanland dominated this conference, the fact that it was held at all indicated the GRN’s sincerity as regards dealing with “the San question”. Indeed, during the concluding session the GRN undertook to honour a series of commitments relating to land rights, education and culture, social welfare and economic issues (GRN 1992; see also Appendix B herein).

The GRN unambiguously reaffirmed its commitment to San development at the follow-up conference, titled *Common Access to Development: Second Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa’s San Populations*, held in Gaborone in 1993 and attended by a Namibian delegation comprised of 15 GRN and 21 San delegates (see MRLGH 1993). Government involvement in this conference was of key importance, and the Permanent Secretaries of Namibia’s MLRR and Botswana’s Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing jointly chaired the sessions. Conference observers noted the “openness and frankness” that characterised the discussions on topics pertaining to rights, education and culture, economic opportunity and communication (Saugestad 1998: 281). A number of resolutions were passed during the concluding session and the GRN and Government of Botswana (GOB) representatives undertook to follow up on these (GOB 1992; see also Appendix C herein).

While NGOs and several line ministries in Namibia have followed up on some of the resolutions passed at these conferences, the GRN as a whole has paid scant attention to them. Indeed, outside of policy-making on education and to a lesser extent conservation, there is little to indicate that the GRN has paid any attention at all to these resolutions.

6.2.2 Nation-building and policies on minorities

As Africa’s second youngest state, Namibia remains locked in a process of nation-building. A crucial aspect of this process is the subordination of “ethnic”, “tribal” or traditional identities to the dominant national identity (see Du Pisani 1996). However, because the apartheid system reified “ethnic” identities, their subordination has proved difficult to achieve in practice, and the GRN has struggled to balance the desires of traditional leaders and their communities with its primary objective of nation-building.

The GRN is clear, however, that the aspirations of traditional communities rank very much secondary to the perceived interests of the State. On a formal level this stance is clearly conveyed in the Traditional Authorities Amendment Act of 1997, in which the GRN acknowledges the political reality of traditional identities, yet insists on the subordination of traditional or customary law and by implication traditional leaders to the Constitution, statutes and Government of Namibia (see Chapter 8).

From the perspective of international conventions dealing with the rights of “indigenous peoples”, this prioritisation of national identity does not allow for the seemingly arbitrary acquisition of “special privileges” for Namibian indigenes.

⁷¹ This commitment was made in 1993 by the then Namibian Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, who stated that “the Government of Namibia is well aware of the San’s plight and has made their development a priority” (see GOB 1993: 14, and more generally 12-15).

6.2.3 Recognition as “indigenous”

As is the case elsewhere in Africa, the GRN finds the concept of “indigenous” as defined by the ILO and UN a difficult one to uphold, much less to ratify in policy. Namibians popularly define indigenes by reference to European colonialism and ascribe indigenous status to almost anyone of an African bloodline. This is made explicit in the Traditional Authorities Act of 1995, which defines all Namibian traditional communities as “indigenous”. However, in terms of the criteria by which indigenous people are defined in international law, San and Khoe are the only indigenous people of southern Africa and moreover, as Saugestad (1998: 3) makes clear, they are not a borderline case in this regard.⁷²

Like Botswana, Namibia is not a signatory to any international convention or instrument dealing primarily with the “rights of indigenous people”.⁷³ As Saugestad (1998) has noted, the category “indigenous” as defined by the UN and ILO is an “inconvenient” one in southern Africa. Ironically, despite the lack of formal recognition in policy, there is widespread informal acceptance of the fact that San are “indigenous” in a way that others are not. Labels applied to San in almost all Namibian languages constitute San as “first people” with autochthonous relations to the land (see, for example, Wilmsen 1989; Guenther 1986; Suzman 2000).

6.2.4 UN Covenants and Conventions

Although a member of the ILO, Namibia is not a signatory to ILO Convention 169, which is the only legally binding international convention dealing with the rights of indigenous people.⁷⁴ Significantly, it has yet to be ratified by any African country.

However, Namibia is a signatory to several UN covenants and conventions in which the rights of indigenous people are addressed indirectly, and which San could use to lobby for their interests (cf. Saugestad 1998). These include: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights makes provisions for all peoples’ right to self-determination, as well as their rights to “freely determine their political status, freely pursue their economic and social development and to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources” (Roulet 1999: 83). More significant from the San perspective is Article 27 of this Covenant, which guarantees the right of ethnic minorities to enjoy “*in community* ... their own culture, to profess or practise their own religion or to use their own language” (ibid.: 3).

These basic rights are also enshrined in Article 19 of the Namibian Constitution, albeit that they are bestowed on individuals rather than communities:

Every *person* shall be entitled to enjoy, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion subject to the terms of this Constitution and subject to the condition that the rights contained in these articles do not impinge upon the rights of others or the national interest.

Namibian law makes limited provision for “community” rights as detailed in legislation pertaining to traditional leadership, land and education (see Chapters 7, 8 and 10). It is arguable, however, that given their marginal socio-economic and political status, the extent of San community rights granted under Namibian law are insufficient to enable them to enjoy their own culture “in community”. And given the

⁷² These criteria include first arrival, non-dominance, cultural distinctiveness and subjective criteria of self-identification (see Saugestad 1998: 4).

⁷³ See Suzman (in press) for a detailed discussion of this problem.

⁷⁴ Namibia has not ratified this convention despite its ILO membership being written into the Namibian Constitution, Article 95(d) of which states that Namibia shall be a member of the ILO and shall adopt policies that “where possible” adhere to and are in accordance with the recommendations and conventions of the ILO. It nevertheless seems unlikely that the GRN will endorse either Convention 169 or the forthcoming UN Convention on the Rights of Indigenous People if the latter remains broadly consistent with its current draft form.

extent to which they have suffered land dispossession, San could certainly argue a strong case in favour of “collective” rather than individual resettlement in farming areas.

There is real reluctance among Namibians to concede that all people can be deeply prejudiced. Consequently there is some reluctance among the public at large to acknowledge that the marginalised status of the San is even partially a question of prejudice. However, there is very little qualitative distinction between the paternalistic racism of whites towards blacks during the colonial era, or the deeply embedded male chauvinism towards women in many of the world’s societies, and the contemporary attitudes of many Namibians (black and white alike) towards San (see Gordon & Sholto-Douglas 1999: 238-241). The extent of day-to-day discrimination against San in some areas is sufficient to justify recourse to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which demands that states party to the agreement should grant protection to certain groups should they need it. Furthermore, signatories to this Convention are obliged to implement measures in education, culture and information dissemination systems to “encourage a better understanding of and tolerance between racial and ethnic groups” (Roulet 1999: 87).

6.2.5 Human rights

Notwithstanding recent events in Caprivi and the allegations of human rights abuses perpetrated against Kxoe in that region (see Chapter 5), the status of Namibian San is only rarely framed as a human rights issue, and when it has been, this was often done hysterically (see e.g. Ya Nangoloh 1996). There can be little denying, however, that when measured against national means and international standards, the status of Namibia’s San population is problematic. In measuring their status against the benchmark of the draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it is clearly revealed as a rights issue (see Saugestad 1998).

From a legal or constitutional perspective, San are of course entitled to and protected by the same rights as all other Namibians. However, rights under the law do not automatically translate into rights on the ground. Equality before the law is a function of who executes that law, how effectively this is done and an individual’s capacity to mobilise the law in his or her favour. As is made clear in Chapters 1-5 of this report, dependency, mobility, economic insecurity and landlessness mean that few San are in a position to exercise their rights effectively or “freely pursue their economic and social development”. Should, for example, a San generational farm worker wish to lay a complaint about his employer for non-payment of wages or even a more serious matter, that farm worker will have to weigh the small payout likely to materialise from a labour tribunal’s favourable judgement against the loss of a job, a place to live, a regular income or food rations, etc.

6.2.6 Non-ethnic policy

Part of the rationale for rejecting “indigenous” as a valid social category is the policy of “non-tribalism”, by means of which the explicit prioritisation of any ethnic or other socio-cultural group in policy terms is almost automatically vetoed.⁷⁵ Namibia’s Constitution is unequivocal on this matter. Article 10(2) states:

No persons shall be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, creed or social and economic status.

Despite a large Oshiwambo-speaking majority, Namibia like South Africa is home to many different “traditional” communities which articulate distinct socio-linguistic or “ethnic” identities. In rural areas in particular, ethnic consciousness often prevails as a cipher for social action. The policy of separate development pursued by the apartheid regime polarised relations between different ethnic groups in Namibia, such that by the time of independence ethnic consciousness pervaded Namibian political and social discourse. The GRN’s strategy for dealing with this has been to deny “ethnicity” or ethnic consciousness

⁷⁵ This is undeniably also a reaction to and rejection of “apartheid thinking” and the arbitrary measures of social differentiation that constituted it.

any status in politics or policy and to subordinate all matters of customary law to the Constitution and laws of Namibia. While this may be the best strategy for dealing with these problems in the long term, as has reportedly been the case in Tanzania (Ndagala pers. comm.), it does have negative short-term consequences. Most significantly it makes few allowances for the role of ethnic consciousness in maintaining and reproducing uneven structural relations.

6.2.7 Affirmative action

In spite of strong opposition to the singling out of any social category for special treatment, the need for positive discrimination in certain contexts is recognised in the Namibian Constitution, Article 23(2) of which states:

Nothing ... shall prevent Parliament from enacting legislation providing directly or indirectly for the advancement of persons in Namibia who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices, or for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalances in Namibian society arising out of past discriminatory laws or practices.

The GRN reiterates this commitment in Namibia's First National Development Plan or "NDP1" (NPC 1995: 53), which states that "some sections of the community continue to practise discrimination on the grounds of race, sex and disability [and] Government will not tolerate this behaviour ... [and] will therefore support its arguments with a policy of affirmative action". In line with this commitment, the GRN's policies regarding the empowerment of women have been exemplary. It has also endorsed affirmative action for the "previously disadvantaged" in both the private and public sectors. However, despite the fact that San have been collectively disadvantaged by "past discriminatory laws and practices" to a greater degree than most others in Namibia, the GRN has shown a marked reluctance to effectively invoke Article 23(2) of the Constitution in their favour. While San do constitute a development priority at the level of political discourse, this prioritisation does not translate into practice.

It is also good local politics not to endorse or implement a special plan of action for San in Namibia. Although Namibia is one of the few African countries classified by the UN as a "medium human development" country, a large proportion of Namibians are poor and some are very poor.⁷⁶ If the GRN were to devote additional resources to San, this might be perceived as being at the expense of other rural poor. Such a perception could make things awkward for the GRN, since for the most part other rural poor form a statistically more significant political constituency than San, thus their alienation from any major programme would be difficult to justify. Equally, a special policy for San may not be well received by the less poor, some of whom feel that San interests are of secondary importance.

Nevertheless, the gap between San and others in Namibia is so clear-cut that there are strong grounds for arguing that they are entitled to affirmative action, and moreover that affirmative action will be necessary to effect any meaningful change in their status. Taking into account Namibia's nation-building priorities, a non-ethnic policy of affirmative action that is aimed at the extremely poor in general but which still takes cognisance of the "ethnic" dimensions of social poverty could be the most appropriate course of action. Such a policy would enable the GRN to address San needs without antagonising or excluding others in need of similar attention.

6.3 Policy and poverty

Four main objectives concerning poverty are outlined in NDP1 (NPC 1995: 41):

- Reviving and sustaining economic growth
- Creating employment

⁷⁶ The CSO (1996) classifies 22% of the Namibian population as *very poor* and the MAWRD classifies 13% of Namibians as *severely poor*.

- Reducing inequalities in income distribution
- Reducing poverty

Economic policy has thus far achieved little in terms of reducing inequalities in wealth and income distribution or meeting the needs of the very poor in general. High population growth in tandem with a poor natural resource base and a government that has reached the limits of its capacity to mobilise public revenues (World Bank 1999) have meant that despite net economic growth, the numbers of food-insecure people have increased since independence. During 1999, 346 000 people (roughly 20% of Namibia's population) registered for food aid, though the GRN committed itself to purchasing food for only 76 000 applicants and only for a period of four months (*The Namibian*, 27 October 1999).⁷⁷ This indicates that the economy has not grown fast enough to keep up with spiralling population growth, let alone to redress existing inequalities.

The relative lack of success in reducing economic poverty must be considered in the light of the GRN's other achievements and its focus during the last decade on less quantifiable measures aimed at reducing social poverty, such as improving education and healthcare services. As was noted in Chapter 1, the UN has recorded a significant rise in the Namibian HDI and this is a direct consequence of GRN efforts. More people have access to water, telecommunications and electricity than ever before; basic literacy and school attendance levels have improved substantially; the under-five mortality rate has declined, and HIV/AIDS notwithstanding, life expectancy has increased (see Chapters 9 and 10). However, due to the specific conditions of their marginalisation, San have proved less able than others to capitalise on these positive developments.

The GRN's principal strategy for alleviating poverty is employment creation. Although the demand for formal-sphere employment in urban areas is growing faster than the supply at present (UNFPA 1998: 11), employment in the agricultural sector, on which a high proportion of San depend, is declining (see Chapter 2). To this extent GRN policy has done little to alleviate rural poverty.

The GRN's focus on human development may well mean that long-term prospects are brighter and in line with the optimistic "high growth" forecast presented in NDP1 (NPC 1995: 75), but in the meantime poverty and extreme poverty remain serious and urgent problems. Failure to act on poverty as soon and as comprehensively as possible will have long-term repercussions such as placing additional demands on the State to cope with increased urbanisation and crime; increased dependency on food aid; and increased levels of discontent, disillusionment and social polarisation.

6.3.1 Welfare

For San, the two most significant components of Namibia's welfare system are the pension and food-aid programmes. As was made clear in the previous chapters of this report, despite problems in delivery, San throughout Namibia rely heavily on GRN food aid for their survival and often build their economic strategies around its availability (see also Chapter 9). Similarly, many consider pensions indispensable. Unlike food aid, which has been known to go walkabout, the issuing of pensions has been comparatively reliable. In resettlement areas in particular, where there is often a higher proportion of elderly people, the contribution of pensions is essential at a household level.

Despite the value of the state pension having declined in real terms since independence, its value as a regular contributor to household food security has increased, certainly among those San who are spatially stable enough to benefit from the scheme. Moreover, pensions provide a safety net that extends further than the elderly: in low- or no-income households pensioners are often the only source of cash income and are thus highly desirable residents or guests.

⁷⁷ There are at present no up-to-date figures on the numbers of poor in Namibia. Current calculations are based primarily on census and CSO data (CSO 1996). It is thus difficult to accurately assess the success of GRN interventions regarding poverty over the past few years. In the absence of better or more recent data, numbers registered as "vulnerable" people for free food programmes provide the best index of poverty in Namibia.

6.3.2 Aid and the dependency dilemma

Some concern has been expressed that GRN welfare policies might increase public dependency on state aid. Food-aid costs have increased since independence and twice as many people registered for “drought relief” during the adequate 1998/99 rainfall season as during the terrible drought of 1992/93 (National Drought Task Force pers. comm.). This is an unsustainable and undesirable state of affairs and the GRN lacks the resources to serve as a state nursery on this scale (see Chapter 9).

As much as food aid has been irregular, and from the perspective of the seemingly ungrateful recipients, badly organised and inadequate, the fact that it has been an enduring feature of life for the very poor in Namibia since independence has created a widespread perception that the State should be and indeed *is* obliged to provide for its weakest and poorest.

There is little doubt that many of those requiring food aid or drought assistance have factored its availability into their farming and subsistence strategies without taking all possible measures to ensure the unaided continuity of their operations. There are thus some grounds for reducing direct aid to force some of the more borderline vulnerable groups in rural areas into making greater efforts to prepare for drought or food-security problems. Similarly, there are ample reasons to establish better criteria for aid eligibility. The fact that there were no mass starvations following Cabinet’s decision to provide food aid for only a small proportion of those registered during the 1998/99 drought period suggests that a sizeable proportion of those who requested aid had sufficient resources at their disposal to weather the “drought”.

It is also reasonable to assume that if food aid were not distributed at all, more people would be able to find or create work for themselves. Despite its irregularity, receiving food aid in return for a relatively small outlay of labour is often deemed preferable to the major outlay of labour required to earn (in many cases) insubstantial returns on commercial farms or in communal farming areas. In other words, because wages for San employed on commercial farms or in communal areas are so low, even a paltry food-aid package designed to discourage dependency is often better than the rewards of labour.

However, a large proportion of those requesting food aid are not doing so by choice or because this aid offers them “an easy life”: San do not like being dependent on food aid and in most instances where they have had an opportunity to wean themselves off it, they have done so. Most San utilise food aid because they need it to survive and because few other options are available to them.

To reduce the number of people dependent on food aid, the GRN has to create jobs, facilitate better conditions for subsistence agriculture and encourage micro-economic growth in rural areas. Given the current economic climate, this will take a long time, and to discontinue food aid to the most vulnerable now in order to reduce dependency in future would verge on the irresponsible. Since it is very unlikely that rural employment will shoot up in the next decade, or that conditions for subsistence agriculture will improve dramatically, or that massive economic growth occurs, the GRN should factor food aid into its long-term budget plans.

6.4 Policy and San

In the absence of any co-ordinating framework, different policies and programmes that impact on San in Namibia are not always consistent with one another, nor complementary. Whereas some ministries, like the MBESC, prioritise San and have gone some way in seeking imaginative means to address their problems, others have no clear policy on San at all. Still others, such as the MLRR, have identified San as a priority group yet operate under legislation and policy guidelines which effectively nullify their prioritisation by discriminating against San in a variety of ways.

Thus far the GRN has only rarely been able to translate stated policy into effective action for dealing with issues pertaining to San or Namibia’s very poor in general. The reasons for this include:

- the lack of an integrated policy framework for dealing with San issues;
- poorly designed policies that do not go far enough in recognising the nature and extent of the problems faced by most San, or which do not directly address the causes of these problems;
- a lack of material and financial resources;
- human resource problems, exacerbated in some instances by social prejudice against San;
- top-down, non-consultative and non-participatory approaches to San development which actively discourage their participation in decision-making; and
- an implicit refusal to recognise and make allowances for the role of ethnic consciousness in the creation and maintenance of the marginal status of San.

These problems are further compounded by the fact that in some instances policy itself does not focus accurately enough on problems encountered by Namibian San, with the result that the GRN spends much of its time and resources responding to the symptoms of these problems rather than their causes.⁷⁸

6.4.1 Policy design

Even with competent personnel it is not possible to translate a poorly designed policy into an effective practice. Because San have been largely unable to contribute to the process of designing legislation or policy, few policies have been designed with their needs in mind (see Chapters 7, 8 and 9). Even where policies have been designed with San in mind, the GRN has appeared reluctant to consult them directly. Consequently actions taken by the GRN in accordance with these policies are sometimes inappropriate.

6.4.2 Lack of material resources

In several instances the GRN has simply not had the material resources necessary to pursue policies that are appropriate to San needs. According to the World Bank (1999), the GRN has reached the limits of its “ability to mobilise revenues”, which means that without donor assistance, its capacity to deal with San and other poverty-related issues is limited. The squandering of scarce resources on inappropriate projects and unqualified personnel often exacerbates this problem (see Chapter 7).

6.4.3 Human resource problems

The skills shortage in Namibia precipitated by apartheid’s racially biased education policies inevitably affects the implementation of policy. Only a proportion of those charged with the implementation of policy have the qualifications and skills necessary to ensure success. Thus, for example, large numbers of school teachers have not completed school themselves (see Chapter 10), and some resettlement camp clerks charged with managing complex development projects lack a sophisticated understanding of the problems and processes involved in community development. The GRN is aware of this problem and has placed some emphasis on improving capacity through training programmes and courses (see NDP1).

There is another aspect of human resource problems which cannot be ignored: as noted in the previous chapters of this report, San in Namibia remain subject to popular mythologies that construct them as social inferiors, and there is no doubt that such beliefs and attitudes have impacted on the successful implementation of good policy. This has been demonstrated repeatedly in dealings between GRN officials and San in a variety of contexts. It is plausible to argue that low levels of San participation in GRN-led initiatives stem in part from the endurance of such beliefs.

6.4.4 Participatory development

Namibia’s NDP1 (NPC 1995: 51) places some emphasis on promoting “participatory development”. The GRN (*ibid.*) cites three reasons for taking this approach:

⁷⁸ The Emergency Management Unit (EMU), for example, which is ultimately responsible for the distribution of food aid and whose mandate limits it to reactive rather than preventative measures against the ravages of food insecurity on the desperately poor.

- Because it lacks the material and human resources to provide *all* the services people might desire.
- Because resource use will be guided by the beneficiaries' needs and will thus be more effectively utilised.
- To foster an ethic of "social responsibility".

Contrary to the good intentions expressed in NDP1, development projects aimed at San have not been participatory in the manner envisaged. Projects have typically been administered in a top-down fashion with the key decisions being taken in Windhoek and subsequently administered through line ministries or extension officers on the ground.

Intimately tied to the top-down approach adopted in respect of San development is the implicit devaluation of San culture and identity. Apart from alienating the target community, as has happened on some resettlement schemes (see Chapter 7), top-down approaches do not allow for the aspirations and needs of the target community to be addressed, and San are expected to conform to the GRN's vision for their development rather than their own. For many San whose cultural outlook has been shaped by the interplay of tradition, rapid social transition and marginalisation, cultural issues are of paramount importance. Recognition of and respect for cultural differences are critical to the success of any programme that targets San, and this is best achieved by encouraging their full and meaningful participation.

6.5 NGOs and San

Despite the presence of two strong and relatively high-profile San NGOs in Namibia, NGO involvement in San affairs has been limited. However, NGO-led initiatives have been relatively successful because, unlike GRN-led development projects which have been marked by a very low emphasis on community participation, capacity-building and empowerment, NGOs have focused on these issues as prerequisites for community development.

The most prominent NGOs working with San communities are the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDNF) and the more recently established Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA). The former addresses the needs of the 1 600 Ju/'hoansi living in Nyae Nyae (East Tsumkwe) by acting as a service organisation for the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (NNC), whereas the latter is a regional organisation active in capacity-building, networking and advocacy issues. Several other NGOs specialising in areas such as natural resource management, education, health and veld product research work closely with the NNC/NNDNF and WIMSA.

6.5.1 Results and process

The GRN and the relevant NGOs by and large share the same long-term goals with respect to Namibian San. However, whereas GRN interventions on behalf of San have typically been results-driven, NGO programmes for San have placed greater emphasis on process. Thus, whereas the GRN has sought results by way of short-term, measurable indices such as crop production levels, NGOs have tended to define and measure success in terms of less immediately quantifiable qualities such as capacity.

Unlike the GRN, most NGOs and CBOs are directly accountable to the communities in which they work and to the donors funding their initiatives. They are submitted to frequent assessments or evaluations, on which they are obliged to act. This does not mean that relations between San, NGOs and NGO staff are without complications. Like all organisations, NGOs are fallible and have frequently made mistakes. Weighed against their successes, however, their failures have generally not been too damaging. As noted above, because NGO interventions have been more flexible, there has been adequate space for San themselves to express dissatisfaction (or satisfaction) with NGOs and to ensure that necessary changes are made, as was the case in Nyae Nyae in 1994. In the case of WIMSA, for example, a San board of trustees is ultimately empowered to hire or dismiss management staff and to determine the direction that future activities should take.



Participants in the WIMSA General Assembly convened in Katutura, Windhoek, in April 1999

Partly due to poor NGO coverage and the lack of GRN support, San have only recently started to form CBOs, with all apart from the NNC having been established during the last few years. In most cases this has been done without direct assistance from the outside, illustrating the growing desire and capacity of San to take control of their own affairs. With adequate capacity-building and fundraising support, stakeholders anticipate that these San organisations will grow substantially over the next few years and ultimately co-ordinate development at community level.

Table 6.1: San CBOs in Namibia (2000)

CBO	AREA OF OPERATION	PRIMARY FOCUS
Aminuis Korridor Committee	Aminuis Korridor	Promotion of development and capacity
Hai//om Development Trust II	Oshikoto and Outjo	Promotion of development and capacity
Nyae Nyae Conservancy	Eastern Otjozondjupa	Conservancy (see Chapter 4)
Omaheke San Trust	Omaheke	Capacity-building and development support for Omaheke San, including income generation
Omatako Valley Rest Camp Committee	West Tsumkwe	Income-generation initiatives for some West Tsumkwe communities
Sonneblom/Donkerbos Committee	Omaheke East (Rietfontein)	WIMSA-supported land initiative for collective farming and small income-generation projects
Tsintsabis San Committee	Tsintsabis	Newly established to represent San interests
West Caprivi Development Trust	West Caprivi	Representing Kxoe interests (with plans to establish a conservancy)
West Kavango San Project Committee	West Kavango and Mpungu	Newly established to represent San interests

6.5.2 Networking and advocacy

During an extended series of consultations conducted among San groups throughout southern Africa in 1995, San expressed a desire to establish a regional networking organisation whose primary task would be to facilitate linkages between San communities and organisations throughout the region (Thoma & Le Roux 1995). To this end WIMSA was established in 1996 with a mandate to “advocate and lobby for the San’s rights, establish a network for information exchange among San communities and other concerned parties, provide training and deliver advice on tourism, integrated development projects and land tenure.” WIMSA is now directed by an all-San board of trustees comprised of community leaders

from Botswana, South Africa and Namibia. It provides a base from which San community leaders can seek funding for projects, liaise with GRN bodies and other NGOs, and pursue human rights and other issues.⁷⁹ A total of nine San CBOs in Namibia have registered as WIMSA member organisations (i.e. all existing San CBOs in Namibia – as listed in Table 6.1 above).

While primarily a networking and advisory organisation, WIMSA is increasingly taking on an advocacy role and facilitating liaisons between San communities and the GRN on issues relating to traditional leadership, the establishment of conservancies and education. In the absence of support from elsewhere, WIMSA is also frequently called upon to act as an implementing agency, though it does not have the capacity to attend to all the requests it receives from San communities.

Table 6.2: NGOs involved in San affairs

NGO	AREA OF OPERATION	PRIMARY FOCUS
CRIAA SA-DC	Omaheke and Otjozondjupa	Options for commercialisation of natural resources (current focus on Devil's Claw and Mangetti projects – see Chapter 11)
Health Unlimited	Omaheke and Otjozondjupa	Community healthcare (see Chapter 10)
IRDNC	National; San projects in West Caprivi	CBNRM initiative active in several regions in Namibia; involved with San communities in West Caprivi (see Chapters 5 and 11)
LAC	National (Windhoek-based)	Public-interest law centre providing legal access (free advice and litigation services); human rights education; and research, advocacy and lobbying services for law reform purposes
NNDFN	Eastern Otjozondjupa	Support for the NNC and affiliated projects including the Village Schools Programme in Nyae Nyae (see Chapter 4)
Ombili Foundation	Oshikoto	Private development foundation with education, craft-making and other small income-generation activities
WIMSA	Southern Africa (Windhoek-based; Gaborone office for San in Botswana specifically)	San networking and support organisation concerned with planning development initiatives, training and capacity-building, advocacy, and establishing regional bodies for better San representation

WIMSA has been most active in the area of networking among the different San peoples throughout the region. Through board meetings and annual general assemblies, San community leaders have developed far stronger contacts with one another and have also increased their confidence through a realisation of the extent to which their respective situations are similar.

The existence of WIMSA has also provided a forum in which San community leaders can openly and confidently express their views, desires and difficulties. Apart from the conferences that took place in the early 1990s, San have detailed their positions most clearly in forums such as WIMSA annual general assemblies and at gatherings such as the *Indigenous People's Consultation* jointly organised by WIMSA and the Kuru Development Trust and held in Shakawe, Botswana, in 1999 (Brörmann 1999).

6.5.3 NGO coverage and co-operation

Despite the high profile of NGOs like the NNDFN and WIMSA, NGO coverage for San is thin and highly localised.

Given the extent of San poverty and the scale of intervention required to have any real impact, the GRN and NGOs will need to co-operate to a far greater degree than has been the case thus far. In this respect the MBESC has been the leading innovator in that it has actively sought out partnerships with NGOs in an attempt to deal with the enormous educational gap that exists between San and others groups (see Chapter 10). WIMSA staff have noted that over the past two years the GRN has been “more receptive” to the idea of working with NGOs involved with San issues (Thoma pers. comm.).

⁷⁹ See WIMSA 1998 and Brörmann 1999 for a fuller description of WIMSA's activities and its member organisations.

6.6 Conclusions and recommendations

The GRN has demonstrated both a sound understanding of the problems experienced by Namibian San communities and a willingness to amend policy to deal with these problems. However, it has lacked the financial, human and technical resources necessary to implement what is often good policy as effectively as it would like. Thus, while GRN efforts have been praiseworthy in many instances, they have not been uniformly successful.

The fact that San-language speakers are clearly more “socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged” than any other Namibian language group is reason enough to consider the establishment of affirmative action programmes in their favour, and both the MBESC and the MLRR have identified San among other marginalised groups for urgent attention. However, the sheer range of sectors in which San are disadvantaged suggests that development interventions should be expanded, and this will require the support a coherent, integrated and consistent policy framework that spans a broad range of sectors. It is now necessary that other line ministries, in co-operation with NGOs, donors, and most crucially San community organisations and leaders, follow suit. This should be done with a view to establishing an integrated policy framework in the long term that will enable the status of San in Namibia to be brought into parity with that of other language groups.

6.6.1 Action plan for poverty reduction

Should the GRN embark on a more comprehensive initiative to reduce extreme poverty, San would inevitably benefit, and this must be considered as a serious option. In the absence of such a strategy it will be necessary for the GRN, NGOs, donors and the poor themselves to examine ways to address this problem. Taking into account the limited success of poverty alleviation programmes to date, scope exists for donor agencies to prioritise poverty alleviation as a preferential area for their support. Should such a programme not take cultural issues or the politics of ethnic consciousness into account, however, it is unlikely to impact on the situation significantly. Moreover, such a programme would have to deal with the critical issues of access to land and natural resources.

6.6.2 Participatory development

If efforts were to be made to ensure that initiatives aimed at San development are genuinely participatory, many of the local-level problems that have arisen in GRN-led development initiatives for San would solve themselves. If San were to participate at all levels in projects implemented on their behalf, and if they had some proprietorship over them, problems arising from cross-cultural misunderstanding would also be dealt with more easily and effectively. Furthermore, genuine participation would effectively empower individual San and simultaneously reduce the destructive alienation that is central to San understandings of their relationship with formal state apparatuses.

6.6.3 Dependency on GRN resources

In order for the State to cut the umbilical cord between itself and those lacking food security, other economic options have to be made available. Because there is no conceivable way to achieve this overnight, the GRN will have to continue its support in the form of welfare.

6.6.4 Co-operation with NGOs and CBOs

There is some scope for greater harmonisation of GRN and NGO development initiatives. The GRN in particular could benefit greatly from the experience gained by NGOs in dealing with issues relating to capacity-building and participatory development. To better address San issues, a relationship based on co-operation is of paramount importance, and to this end the GRN and NGOs should seek to work through and with San CBOs wherever possible. Likewise, emphasis should be placed on strengthening community structures and capacity so that such structures play a meaningful role in this process.

CHAPTER 7

LAND AND RESETTLEMENT

7.1 Introduction

The land question is perhaps the most difficult issue that the Government of independent Namibia has had to deal with. At the time of independence close to 90% of the country's population derived their means of subsistence in one form or another from the land, thus many have a lot to gain or lose from any new dispensation.

It is difficult to assess the extent of landlessness in Namibia, or to establish who in fact constitute the "landless", since many Namibians are landless to differing degrees. The enduring legacy of colonial land policies, increasing pressure on natural resources and rapid population growth have meant that farmers in communal areas throughout Namibia complain of land shortages (Adams & Werner 1990: 98). Communal areas are certainly limited in their capacity to support resident populations even at a subsistence level – a major reason for Namibia's increasing urbanisation.

Despite the affirmation that San "should receive special protection of their land rights" contained in a resolution passed at the 1992 *Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San Populations* organised by the MLRR, San are arguably worse off today than they were before independence vis-à-vis land, since only a small number of them, specifically those living in the Tsumkwe District, retain *de jure* rights to land.⁸⁰ (see GRN 1992: 15). While the MLRR identifies San as the first on the list of communities targeted for resettlement, other components of land legislation and policy make few specific allowances for the unique problems of the poorest landless communities in Namibia. The current draft of the Communal Lands Bill makes few allowances for the needs of marginalised communities or ethnic minorities such as San.

7.1.1 Landlessness in Namibia

Notwithstanding identification and enumeration problems, one can confidently assert that many Namibians are landless or at least in need of more land for subsistence. Before the resettlement programme was temporary suspended in 1998, the MLRR reported receiving over 10 000 applications for resettlement. It is reasonable to assume that this represents only a portion of the ever-growing number of people seeking land as pressure on natural resources increases in communal areas and jobs remain scarce.

The distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* rights to land is central to appreciating the status of San in Namibia.

De facto rights to land

For most San in Namibia, existing rights to land for residential, farming or other purposes are *de facto* rights, and are not guaranteed by either common or customary law. This is most self-evidently the case on commercial farms, where workers' rights to residence are entirely contingent on their employment on a particular farm or the farmer granting them squatting rights.

⁸⁰ Given favourable changes, such rights might also apply to those living in West Caprivi (see Chapter 5).

As noted in Chapter 3, San living in communal areas are almost universally granted *de facto* rights of residence because there is broad consensus that they are entitled to squat wherever they wish. This is a function not only of the fact that San, who lack livestock, rarely compete with other communal-area residents for resources, but also more generally of their underclass and dependent status. Were San to compete with others for land, it is unlikely that they would be as easily accommodated.

The granting of even *de facto* rights to San in communal areas cannot always be assumed either. San squeezed into the Oshivelo corridor, for example, claiming that they were unable to secure even squatter rights in southern Oshikoto communal areas, and San living at Epukiro Post 3 are expected to live in the “*Boesman Lokasie*” (“Bushman Township”) situated on the outskirts of town. In Kavango and Herero communal areas, residence rights outside of larger settlements are sometimes contingent on clientship agreements with farmers, who grant such rights subject to stipulations regarding the areas which may be occupied and farmed.

De jure rights to land

Outside of former Bushmanland, San land rights are not guaranteed under either common or customary law. Whereas the majority of rural Namibians can claim at least partial tenure rights in terms of common and/or customary law, most San outside of the Tsumkwe District cannot. This is not to say that San are unable to gain *de jure* rights to land in these areas, but just that these rights are in no way guaranteed or automatic. Indeed, in several notable instances where San have requested land for farming through existing customary structures, local traditional authorities have granted it to them without prejudice. The establishment of the Sonneblom/Donkerbos project in the Omaheke Region on land granted by the local Mbanderu Traditional Authority is a good example of this. The critical point here is that San land rights in these areas are contingent on the goodwill of others. The Mbanderu Traditional Authority was under no obligation to assist San by granting them rights to the Sonneblom/Donkerbos land, and it is the only instance to date of a traditional authority in former Hereroland formally ceding land to San.⁸¹

Since commercial farms are freehold lands, generational farm workers cannot under current legislation claim *de jure* or inalienable rights to land in commercial farming areas. Moreover, through long-standing service and residence on commercial farms, most generational workers have lost whatever land rights they might have had elsewhere.

Impacts of landlessness on San

Despite lacking *de jure* rights to land in the areas where they live, most of the numerous San language communities in Namibia have remained within or near to their traditional territories. Because of this, the broader socio-linguistic distribution of San groups in Namibia endured throughout the 20th century. Despite this continuity, the impacts of land dispossession on San are clear and are manifest in their:

- economic dependency and loss of food security;
- social breakdown and alienation;
- gathering in peripheral zones;
- high mobility; and
- inability to accumulate wealth in the form of livestock capital.

An important consequence of not having adequate access to land that is not detailed elsewhere in this text is that many San are in effect prevented from accumulating wealth in the form of livestock capital. Should San wish to acquire and graze a herd of cattle, they are only rarely afforded the land required to

⁸¹ In Kavango there is a similar initiative involving 10 San families which have formed a CBO. They have been allocated land, and through the local Kwangali Traditional Authority have acquired assistance in farming it. WIMSA reports that the project is going well and may provide a suitable model for San land allocations in other communal areas. As was the case in Sonneblom/Donkerbos, the Traditional Authority in Kavango was under no obligation to make the allocation.

do so. Following a century of incorporation into the colonial and “reserve” political economies, many San, like their neighbours, now regard livestock ownership as a potent symbol of wealth and status. Over the past 50 years some San have consequently been acquiring livestock, usually as rewards for long service on farms and through careful breeding (see Suzman 1995a). Due to land-access problems, however, some San have been unable to secure grazing for their herds and have subsequently had to sell them off.

7.1.2 San desires for land reform

In 1997 members of the Hai//om San community blockaded the two main entrances to Etosha National Park. Armed with bows and arrows, they prevented traffic from entering the park in a bid to draw public attention to their landless plight, as well as to their ancestral claims to areas in and adjacent to the park. The demonstration was broken up by the police and protestors were tear-gassed and arrested, though all charges against them were later dropped, apparently under instruction from the Office of the President. That the Hai//om were impelled to launch such a protest is largely a consequence of the dire straits in which they find themselves, with many of them living cheek by jowl in the Oshivelo corridor under conditions that can only breed discontent.

Other San have not been able to organise similar protests as they are generally too dispersed, mobile and segregated. Likewise, few have been able to make their voices heard in other forums. Certainly they have been less able than members of better organised, wealthier, more stable and articulate language groups to make their case heard. As the Hai//om efforts in Etosha make clear, relative silence does not mean that San have no desire for a secure land base. Indeed, former Bushmanland notwithstanding, the issue of land rights and access was foremost among the concerns of San throughout the country. Particularly in commercial farming areas and communal areas where they are minority populations, San claim landlessness to be the major impediment to their development.

7.1.3 Exclusive resettlement

San community leaders in several areas have argued that land given over to them should resort firmly and exclusively under their control. This sentiment was well articulated by a Skoonheid resident:

If we San get some space then it is not long before the blacks come and take it and bring their cattle. When they come they don't see us and we must just live under them ... When we tell them to leave they say you are just Bushmen – you cannot have land.

This desire for exclusive resettlement is motivated in part by their awareness that others often perceive land occupied by San to be “open land” – a fact demonstrated by Herero repatriates at Gam who sought in vain to occupy southern Nyae Nyae following their 1990 repatriation from Botswana. Similarly, at Skoonheid resettlement camp, what the MLRR now refers to as people intent on achieving “their own selfish goals” occupied (and continue to occupy) 80% of the land to the detriment of impoverished San and Damara settlers.⁸² To its credit the MLRR has repeatedly attempted, albeit as yet unsuccessfully, to have these people removed through legal channels, but illegal settlers at Skoonheid do not see why they should move for the sake of San.

7.2 Land reform in Namibia and San

The issue of land reform was a major subtext to the liberation struggle and was widely regarded as one of the first issues any new government would address (cf. Wood 1988). Many in rural areas anticipated the large-scale restitution of “traditional” lands to the exploited masses attempting to subsist in the agro-

⁸² A number of other GRN-owned farms in the Omaheke were also occupied. The extent of this occupation and the difficulties experienced with the removal of these people resulted in a year-long suspension of the resettlement programme in 1998 (MLRR 1999b: 33).

ecologically denuded communal areas, and furthermore a new tenure system within these areas. Like many others in Namibia, most San naively felt that independence and land reform would result in vast tracts of commercial farmland being “returned” to them.

These beliefs were bolstered at the 1991 *National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question* where delegates agreed as follows:

Ever increasing land pressures in the communal areas pose a threat to the subsistence resources of especially disadvantaged communities and groups. Conference resolves that disadvantaged groups, in particular the San and the disabled, should receive special protection of their land rights. (GRN 1991: Consensus No. 14)

7.2.1 Ancestral claims to land

At the 1991 *National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question*, the restitution of “ancestral” land to any group or individual was ruled out.⁸³ Thus the National Land Policy (section 101) states:

Restitution of land rights abrogated by the colonial and South African authorities prior to independence will not form part of Namibia’s land policy. However, *this policy does commit special support to all landless or historically disadvantaged communities ...* [emphasis added].

Notwithstanding the complexity of such claims, if a land restitution programme were run on the basis of aboriginal title, San would be entitled to claim much of Namibia and much of southern Africa to boot. Given present realities, such a course of action is neither desirable nor realistic. It would also verge on the impossible to delineate the boundaries of ancestral claims given the fluid and multiple forms of tenure arrangements negotiated in pre-colonial Namibia.

Ironically the GRN has avoided these problems by using the “Odendaal Plan” (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.3) as a blueprint for identifying customary land rights in independent Namibia. Thus, for example, in terms of the current draft Communal Lands Act (see under 7.2.3 below), Odendaal’s “Hereroland” is now considered the customary land of the Herero, and Odendaal’s “Damaraland” is now the customary land of the Damara. For San this is a problem because the Odendaal Commission made provision for just 2% of the San population, consigning the remainder to labour on white farms or clientship in communal areas. After all, the Odendaal model was instrumental in their collective disenfranchisement and consequently neither protects their interests nor satisfies the needs of the majority of Namibian San.

San requests for land should not be viewed in terms of either restitution of traditional lands or compensation for past injustices, but rather as an attempt to effect a more equitable present, taking cognisance of these matters. San calls for greater access to land are neither unrealistic nor unreasonable since they are bound up in present socio-economic concerns and needs. As Lazarus Hangula (1998) has argued:

The issue here is ... not whether claimants [of land] wish to re-tribalise the country but rather that they see themselves as entitled to have access to land to make a living, that is to lead a decent life, be socially integrated and participate in the development of the common good.

Similarly, as Widlok (1994) has made plain, San attempts to gain land are not motivated by sentimentality but rather by a desire to secure a more certain future for themselves. For San in Namibia, secure land access is both critical to future development and a crucial first step in the process of alleviating the immediate causes of poverty.

If, in accordance with the National Land Policy, San were to receive “special support” as an “historically disadvantaged community”, and if they were treated favourably under the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, the question of ancestral land would not be an issue. However, should San continue

⁸³ See GRN 1991 (p.15) and Hangula 1998.

to be inadequately catered for in land redistribution initiatives, it seems likely that ancestral claims will be mobilised with increasing vigour in the future.

7.2.2 National Land Policy

The National Land Policy (NLP) was presented to Cabinet as a white paper in 1997 and was formally approved in the same year. It attempts to provide a platform for a unitary land system based on a series of fundamental principles, one of which calls for a focus on the needs of the poor. The NLP (section 12) stipulates the following:

Within Namibia's unitary land system, Government Policy will at all times seek to secure and promote the interests of the poor, ensuring that they are in practice able to enjoy the rights which they are assured in principle. A special commitment will be made to ensuring equity in land access and security in land tenure. Special programmes to help the poor to acquire and develop land will be considered.

The NLP also emphasises the need for the "creation of equity in land access" so that people like San will not be excluded from the land reform process. As will become clear, however, despite their having been identified as one of the principal intended beneficiaries of land reform, only a very small number of San have benefited from this reform to date.

7.2.3 Land reform in the communal areas

The GRN has struggled to come up with a land management plan for communal areas that accommodates the interests of both poor and wealthy farmers. The desire to keep communal lands "communal" clashes with the ambitions of many wealthier farmers who regard private tenure as a first step towards greater commercialisation and profit.

Changes in land tenure in Namibia's communal areas

Partial commercialisation is most evident in the former Owambo and Herero communal areas, where the process got under way well before independence (Adams & Werner 1990: 103-113; Werner 1997). The commercialisation of operations in these areas demanded a system of land tenure that granted exclusive rights over land to some individuals. To this end, the SWAA's Proclamation AG8 empowered second-tier authorities to allocate, lease or sell land in communal areas. By the time of independence over 80 farms had been surveyed and fenced in Hereroland and a further 97 in Owamboland.

This set the precedent for the furious land grab that occurred after independence in some communal areas. Wealthier communal-area farmers exploited the absence of a coherent land policy and set about fencing off large plots of land for private use. Because only those who could afford to fence off plots, the process further entrenched existing socio-economic inequalities in communal areas. Poorer farmers found themselves squeezed into smaller areas where they grazed their livestock communally, whereas wealthier farmers "reserved" land for grazing their livestock when communal grazing became scarce. The immediate result of this process in Hereroland East, for example, was the rapid colonisation of most areas suitable for stock farming and the degradation of remaining "communal" grazing areas.

Lacking the resources to erect fences as well as the livestock on the basis of which to claim land for themselves, San were left out of the land grab. Rather ironically, their participation in this process has been restricted to erecting fences on behalf of wealthier farmers who in some cases would later deny San access to these areas for the purposes of gathering.

The fencing off of large chunks of communal land has made things more difficult for San. Firstly it has precipitated a land shortage (evidenced by the large numbers of poorer communal-area farmers seeking grazing elsewhere), and secondly it has made it more difficult for San to acquire land in communal areas

in the future in that San access to land in these areas will now have to be achieved at the expense of others who will be unlikely to move willingly for anyone, let alone for San.

The forthcoming Communal Lands Act includes provisions calling for the removal of fences in communal areas, but it is unlikely that they will have much immediate impact. Since independence the GRN has repeatedly called on farmers to stop fencing in communal areas but has largely been unable to halt the process, much less reverse it.

The Communal Lands Act (CLA)

The CLA has been the slowest of all land-related legislation to emerge. The present draft of the CLA reaffirms Article 100 of the Constitution and vests all communal lands in the State, granting the State ultimate powers of allocation and alienation. The CLA also provides for the establishment of regional land boards (the members of which should be selected by the Minister of Lands in consultation with local traditional authorities) whose duty will be to administer the allocation and registration of communal lands. The envisaged functions of regional land boards will be to:

- control the allocation of “traditional” rights;
- process applications for leasehold rights; and
- establish a land register for communal areas.

As drafted the CLA provides protection for the majority of established communal-area farmers through the recognition of “customary” or “traditional” rights. In effect it also allows for traditional leaders to retain the right to allocate land for residential or economic (specifically farming) purposes, and in so doing the draft Act goes some way towards reinforcing the status quo vis-à-vis land in existing communal areas.⁸⁴ Traditional or customary rights are granted under section 16(3) of the draft CLA, which stipulates the following:

A board shall not grant any right referred to in section one (1) to any person other than a member of a “traditional community” residing in the communal land area in question, except if such a person is specifically exempted by the Minister in writing from the provision of this subsection or belongs to a category of persons in respect of whom the Minister has given general notification granting exemption from these provisions.

The impact of such legislation applies differently to San in different communal areas:

Former Bushmanland

For San in former Bushmanland, as is the case for other majority populations in all of Namibia’s communal areas, the draft CLA provides for the protection of traditional land rights, and goes some way to protecting San socio-cultural and economic structures through granting them partial control over land allocation (see Chapter 4).

The Caprivi

As noted in Chapter 5, since the status of land in West Caprivi remains unresolved, the status of the people living there remains unclear.

Herero, Kavango and Owambo communal areas

As it stands, the notion of “customary rights” is problematic for the 7 000 San residents of the predominantly Oshiwambo-, Otjiherero- and Rukavango-speaking communal areas. Because most San are not

⁸⁴ The accommodation of traditional leaders in the process of land distribution and allocation in communal areas must be understood as a compromise, given that the initial intention was to alienate them from the process.

fully included in dominant “traditional communities”, they are not automatically entitled to “customary” rights as stipulated in the draft CLA (see Chapter 3). It follows that, short of amending the Act to empower San traditional authorities to allocate customary land in tandem with other traditional authorities, for San to secure tenure in communal areas would require them either to seek exemptions from the Minister or to formally apply on an individual basis for a leasehold or a permit known as a “Permission to Occupy (PTO)” through land boards. Thus, while others are guaranteed customary land rights in these areas, the draft law only makes limited provision for the indigenous population and effectively relegates them to immigrant status.

7.2.4 Land reform and the commercial farming areas

Because such large numbers of San live in commercial farming areas, land reform in these areas is of crucial importance. In principle the progressive aims of the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act of 1995 should benefit San very directly, but for a number of reasons this has not yet been the case.

The Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act and San

The first significant piece of land legislation to be ratified by the National Assembly was the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act (ALRA) of 1995. This Act was intended, among other things, to address “long-standing grievances about the injustice of colonial land allocations” (NLP section 3), and to ensure that the equity in land access called for in the (then draft) National Land Policy turned into reality.

The ALRA seeks to balance the aspirations of the landless to acquire and own land with the need to maintain a healthy commercial agricultural sector for economic purposes. Formulated originally in the absence of any guiding policy, the ALRA (sections 14(1), (2) & (3)) grants the GRN the mandate to purchase commercial farms on a “willing seller willing buyer” basis, or in exceptional circumstances to acquire “underutilised” or “excessive” lands with a view to redistributing these to “Namibian citizens who do not own or otherwise have the use of adequate agricultural land and foremost to those Namibian citizens who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices” (section 14(1)).

On the basis of a set of poverty-related criteria,⁸⁵ the GRN (Shanyengana 1998) has published a list of priority target groups for resettlement on land purchased under the ALRA which includes:

- the San;
- former fighting forces;
- Namibians who have returned from exile;
- disabled people;
- people expelled from farm lands; and
- squatters.

The San top this list, the MLRR has argued, because they are distinguished from others by the extent to which they:

⁸⁵ The identification of San as one of the principal groups eligible for resettlement came about through the application of broad criteria in the eligibility assessment. These criteria were established in line with section 14(1) of the ALRA:

1. People who have no land, no income and no livestock.
2. People who have neither land nor income but a few heads of stock.
3. People who have no land but have income and livestock and need land to resettle their families or graze their livestock.

It is difficult to establish the numbers of people in each category of eligibility. San and other generational farm workers clearly qualify primarily in the first and second categories, and to a lesser extent in the third. While there are no statistics available regarding numbers needing resettlement, the largest category is likely to be the third, as it caters for the growing numbers of cattle owners in the communal areas who are competing for scarce grazing.

... have endured exploitation and discrimination at the hands of their fellow men throughout history ... At present they are in the hands of commercial farmers and other big cattle farmers who have reduced them to modern slaves working for food and inadequate shelter. (MLRR n.d.)

Namibia's First National Development Plan (NPC 1995) sets out the GRN's targets for farm acquisitions for resettlement and stipulates that 150 000 hectares should be acquired with a view to resettling 14 000 people by the year 2000. By 1998 the GRN had purchased a total of 51 farms covering an area of 305 556 hectares, at a cost in excess of N\$32 million. Of the 22 farms purchased in regions where large numbers of landless San reside (Omaheke, Otjozondjupa and Outjo), only one, namely Skoonheid, was home to more than 100 San. The MLRR's inability to accommodate the increasing numbers of unemployed generational farm workers with no rights to land outside of their workplaces is evidenced by the rapid growth of settlements like Oshivelo, and the growing numbers of San and other landless people squatting on urban fringes and in communal areas.

It is not only due to a lack of resources that so few San have been resettled on commercial farms, but also this is because the MLRR has not effectively targeted San as a community despite their explicit prioritisation in policy. In areas such as Epako where there are large populations of San and Damara who are obviously eligible for resettlement, few consulted for this study were even aware of the fact that they could apply for resettlement land, much less that they were priority candidates.

The MLRR has stated that it will assess applications for resettlement by reference to its list of priority candidates, but this does not necessarily help San much. Announcements regarding the availability of land are made in newspapers (which are not available to most San). Applications also have to be made in writing, which does not help the predominantly illiterate San either.⁸⁶ In effect, contrary to the affirmative action called for in policy, the application procedure for resettlement implicitly favours applicants who are better educated, better connected and better informed than most San.

Of further concern, in 1999 the MLRR announced that due to budgetary limitations it would expand the list of priority candidates to "include people who can add value to the resettlement process by making a contribution to the maintenance of their allotments and pay a monthly lease amount to Government" (MLRR 1999b: 33). In other words, due to apparent budgetary constraints the MLRR is willing to resettle those who can afford not to be resettled, but cannot afford to resettle those needing resettlement most.

7.3 Resettlement in Namibia

The GRN's resettlement programme was initiated soon after independence with a view to providing land for subsistence purposes to segments of Namibia's impoverished rural proletariat. The process has proved problematic, however, for San in particular. Two independent assessments conducted in 1997/98 (RAEIR 1998; Maclean 1998) found that the existing resettlement programme was largely unsuccessful as a result of:

- inflexible policy;
- unrealistic and inappropriate goals;
- failure to consider the social and political dimensions of poverty and poverty alleviation in respect of San and others;
- mismanagement of resettlement facilities;
- extremely poor communication with settler communities and groups eligible for resettlement;
- inability to translate policy aims and objectives into practice; and
- lack of clarity on key issues precipitating settler insecurity.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ This problem emerges from constraints imposed by the ALRA, section 41 of which stipulates that to be considered, all applicants must follow a formal written application procedure. This section of the ALRA runs contrary to section 12, which stresses the need to focus on the poor. In effect this is discriminating against the illiterate, who are characteristically also poor. It can be argued that this clause of the ALRA is inconsistent with the Constitution in that it arbitrarily discriminates against a certain portion of the population.

⁸⁷ Many of the comments made here regarding the MLRR have much in common with two assessments of resettlement undertaken by University of Cape Town researchers in 1998 (cf. Maclean 1998; RAEIR 1998).

Given the large numbers of people needing or seeking resettlement, redressing existing problems in the resettlement process is an urgent need. Most critically, the establishment of a suitable infrastructure is required to allow for stated policy objectives to be translated into practice.

7.3.1 Resettlement policy

The delays, confusion and debate surrounding the establishment of a National Land Policy meant that it was only in 1996 that a draft National Resettlement Policy was finally approved by Cabinet.

Resettlement aims

According to the MLRR's draft National Resettlement Policy (see MLRR 1996), the principal aims of resettlement are:

- to redress past imbalances in the distribution of economic resources, particularly land;
- to give some sections of the population an opportunity to produce their own food with a view to self-sufficiency;
- to give disadvantaged sections of the population the opportunity to own land which they claim to be their home;
- to bring small-hold farmers into the mainstream of the Namibian economy by enabling them to produce for the market;
- to create employment through full-time farming;
- to alleviate human and livestock pressure in the communal areas;
- to offer citizens the opportunity to reintegrate into society after many years of displacement by the colonisation process, the war of liberation or other circumstances;
- to rehabilitate both the land and the social fabric; and
- to help in the process of poverty alleviation.

In order for this to be achieved, the MLRR envisaged a four-stage process spanning a five-year period, during which settlers would progress towards self-sufficiency and thereafter manage their own affairs:

Stage 1: Planning, land acquisition, infrastructural development and recruitment of settlers

Stage 2: Transition, orientation of settlers and establishment of plots

Stage 3: Social and economic development; encouragement of settlers to expand beyond subsistence-level production

Stage 4: Handing over and incorporation – settlers take control of the project

Planning and research in the resettlement process

In stark contrast to the caution surrounding the preparation and implementation of a Communal Lands Act, the MLRR initiated its resettlement programme very hastily. The speed with which this was done reflected not only the urgency of the problems it was tasked to address, but also the lack of planning, consultation and research undertaken in preparation for the programme. More disturbing has been the fact that in some cases where research appropriate to planning was undertaken, it was ignored by the decision-makers, who sought quick results.⁸⁸ As the RAEIR team (1998: vii) pointed out:

The resettlement process has been implemented on an ad hoc basis ... Certain key steps for the implementation of the policy such as the conversion of strategic policy goals into measurable objectives ... within a realistic framework are, however, lacking.

⁸⁸ At both Tsintsabis and Skoonheid the MLRR undertook environmental studies in 1994 which recommended specific planning and land-use practices that would need to be initiated to make resettlement sustainable. In both cases this advice was ignored (see Huesken 1994; Huesken et al. 1994). The MLRR has not heeded similar advice from a number of sources on the controversial resettling of Otjiherero speakers in Gam. Botelle and Rohde (1995) also made a number of recommendations regarding MLRR projects in West Tsumkwe, which appear to have been entirely ignored. At present the Land-Use Planning Division is tasked to conduct initial feasibility studies on lands identified for possible purchase under the ALRA, to advise on whether environmental impact assessments are needed, and to identify the carrying capacity of farms and the numbers of settlers that can be settled.

Similarly, Maclean (1998: 90) noted:

The planning of the resettlement process is neither inclusive, transparent nor participatory. Policy provisions designate the MLRR as the principle authority ... [but] decision-making by the MLRR is not informed by prior investigations into the context of resettlement projects. The result is a top-down resettlement process undertaken on an ad hoc basis.

Due to ineffective planning, some San have been resettled in areas where there are inadequate natural resources to support them, let alone allow them to progress beyond basic subsistence farming. Tsintsabis, for example, is now home to 169 San households, this being more than double the maximum number of households recommended in an environmental impact assessment conducted on the MLRR's behalf in 1994 (Huesken 1994).

Closely tied to the lack of planning has been the GRN's top-down approach to settlers, particularly San settlers. This approach is implicit in policy and reinforced through administrative structures that devolve all major decision-making power to Windhoek (RAEIR 1998; Maclean 1998: 85-88). Settlers have no officially mandated say in determining the direction of the development of resettlement facilities: their participation in decision-making processes is restricted to the extent that MLRR officials with the power to make decisions choose to consult them or heed their advice, if they ever do. In illustrating how settler interests are abrogated in favour of state interests, Maclean (1998: 86) argues that the "promotion of the interests of the nation rather than that of settlers is clear in [resettlement] policy", and further that "rather than adapting the process to fit settler needs, the onus is placed on settlers to conform to the process."

The failure to allow San on these projects to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes has contributed greatly towards the problems that have collectively resulted in the GRN being unable to achieve the goal of sustainable self-sufficiency in these areas. These problems include:

- alienation of the target community;
- increased dependency;
- mistrust of officials and government bodies in general;
- the absence of any desire to participate in project activities; and
- insecurity on the part of settlers.

7.3.2 San and resettlement

Resettlement aims and San

As noted elsewhere in this text, perhaps the most far-reaching intervention that can be made on behalf of San in Namibia is the protection and expansion of their land rights. In this regard the stated aims of resettlement (see 7.3.1 above) directly address some of the key difficulties that San communities face in Namibia. In terms of these aims resettlement should provide a safety net by enabling impoverished settlers to gain autonomous rights to land and become self-sufficient at a basic subsistence level.

Less realistic, however, are those aims relating to employment and market production. While resettlement can no doubt relieve insecurity to some degree, the resources required to enable settlers to create employment are well beyond the means of the MLRR. Additionally, resettlement areas are typically remote, making access to markets difficult to the point of being impractical. Neither the MLRR nor any other GRN agency has done much to facilitate micro-economic growth in these areas. Projects (e.g. sewing and gardening) initiated by the MLRR to this end have been unimaginative and were planned without consultation and in ignorance of local skills or desires. On occasion individual GRN officials have even been obstructive and stifled community enterprises.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ At Skoonheid, for example, where in 1995 a Peace Corp volunteer and an anthropologist helped a group of women to establish a profitable project making and selling the colourful hats traditionally worn by San farm workers, the project was closed after the GRN took control following the departure of the initiators. According to the hat-makers, as soon as the GRN took over the project, several hundred dollars worth of hats were collected for sale and the GRN official was never seen again. The women are now reluctant to restart the project because "those GRN people will just steal the hats and the money again".

7.3.3 San resettlement areas

Despite being the principal intended beneficiaries of the resettlement programme, only a small proportion of San have been catered for. At present a fluctuating population of around 7 000 San are supported by 11 resettlement projects. Reports of large numbers of San having been resettled by the MLRR are misleading, since around 85% of these people were actually “resettled” by the SADF more than a decade before the MLRR came into existence. Moreover the role played by the MLRR in the day-to-day life of settlers in Mangetti Dune, Bagani, Omega and elsewhere – certainly since the departure of ELCIN as an implementing agency – has been minimal.⁹⁰ Few settlers in these areas expressed any understanding of the MLRR’s role in their lives beyond occasional agricultural extension assistance, the provision of tools and the construction of a few houses.

A trend in the MLRR has been to settle large numbers of San in small areas where natural resource limitations restrict the capacity of settlers to become fully self-sufficient. This problem is most marked at Skoonheid and Drimiopsis, where 500-700 settlers are expected to make a living from a total of 2 762 hectares,⁹¹ in a region where extensive large-stock farming remains the single principal form of land use. Given the low grazing capacity of the Omaheke, this arrangement means that the settlers are expected to become self-sufficient despite having enough land to graze only about one head of livestock for every three people. Under such circumstances it is impossible for settlers to achieve any form of economic self-sufficiency as farmers.

Resettlement in the Caprivi Region and former Bushmanland

In both West Caprivi and former Bushmanland (see Chapters 3 and 4) the MLRR in co-operation with ELCIN took over the administration of the various San settlements established by the SADF. In both of these areas, programmes were initiated to “rehabilitate” San following the departure of the SADF. San involved in the MLRR/ELCIN projects in these areas have not been “resettled” at all in the technical sense, since the SADF had already undertaken that task some years before. Rather, they were allocated agricultural plots with a view to being taught subsistence farming (see Jansen et al. 1994).

Resettlement in other communal areas

To date little has been done for the 7 000 San living in communal areas where they constitute minority populations. The only projects established for San in these areas are the three facilities in the Ohangwena Region which cater for just over 500 people. Despite the opposition of some locals to these projects, they have remained operational, and Felton (1997) reports a “significant [positive] difference” between the living standards of San involved in these projects and those of San living elsewhere.

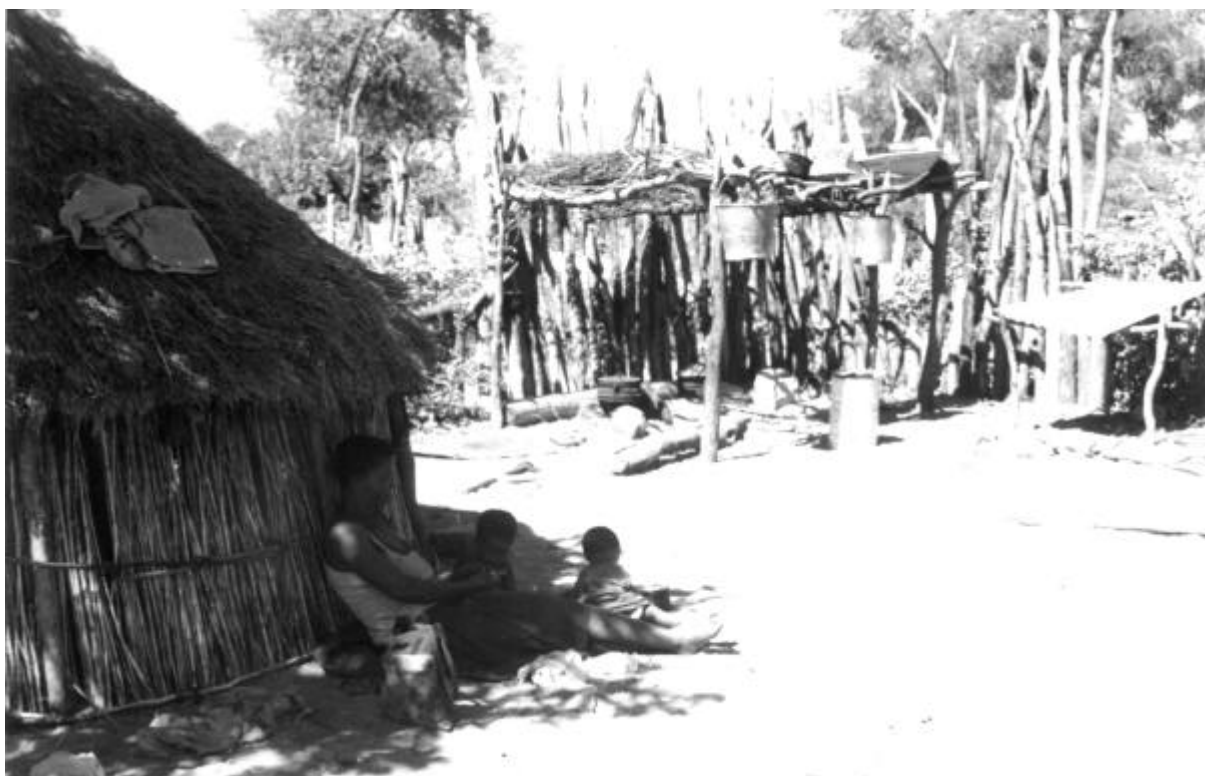
Resettlement in commercial farming areas

At present there are only three facilities (Skoonheid, Drimiopsis and Tsintsabis) catering predominantly for San and other generational farm workers, but these are all far too small to cater for the subsistence needs of settlers. After more than five years these projects have yet to make any real impact beyond the provision of temporary accommodation and food aid to some former farm workers.

Taking into account that about half of Namibia’s total San population are landless generational farm workers dependent on a declining agricultural sector, the resettlement projects in commercial farming areas are wholly inadequate and have as yet made no significant impact on the collective status of San in this country.

⁹⁰ These resettlement areas were neither initiated nor designed by the MLRR. In these areas the MLRR in conjunction with ELCIN stepped in to attempt to fill the developmental vacuum left by the departure of the SADF.

⁹¹ This figure is based on the area available to San settlers at Skoonheid rather than on the hectareage of the entire farm.



A San resettlement scheme in Ekoka in the Ohangwena Region

Table 7.1: Resettlement facilities with predominantly San populations in 1998

REGION	FACILITY	# SETTLERS	TYPE
Ohangwena	Ekoka	281	Individual plots
	Eendobe	76	Individual plots
	Onamatadiva	149	Individual plots
Kavango	Bagani	1 568	Individual plots
Caprivi	Omega	299	Individual plots
	Chetto	595	Individual plots
Oshikoto	Bravo	50	Individual plots
	Tsintsabis	1 055	Individual plots
Otjondjupa	Mangetti Dune (West Tsumkwe) and M'kata	2 923*	Individual plots
Omaheke	Skoonheid (ALRA purchase)	223	Co-operative
	Drimiopsis	458	Co-operative
Total	12	7 677	10 IPs; 2 Co-ops

Source: MLRR 1998

* This figure does not correspond with census data for the Tsumkwe District which indicate that considerably fewer people live in West Tsumkwe. To this extent the number of people catered for under the resettlement programme is possibly between 500 and 1 000 lower than the MLRR statistics indicate. The ELCIN evaluation accounts for the discrepancies in numbers on the basis that people have migrated to the project, whereas informants in West Tsumkwe suggested that there has been considerably more out-migration than in-migration.

7.4 Life after resettlement

Resettlement (where available) represents one of the few residential and economic strategies available to many San. Revealingly though, it is not considered a particularly desirable option except when it offers accessibility to free food. In most cases, if San can find work on a commercial farm they will happily leave resettlement life despite the prospect of working under a white boss. Resettled populations are highly mobile, with numbers of registered settlers fluctuating by as much as 50% at different times of the year on facilities like Skoonheid. Given tenure confusion and the general failure of resettlement projects

to provide avenues for empowerment or income generation, only around half of the San on resettlement facilities consider themselves to be full-time residents. Permanent settlers are usually those with no available alternatives: the aged, the infirm, notorious criminals and “troublemakers”, unemployed women and the young.

7.4.1 Livelihood

Food aid

San in resettlement areas depend heavily on food aid whether by means of the GRN’s Food for Work Programme or the Vulnerable Groups Relief Programme administered through the Emergency Management Unit (see Chapter 9). Access to food aid plays a role in determining numbers of settlers residing on resettlement facilities at any given time. In the Omaheke and Tsintsabis projects, settler numbers decline significantly during periods when little food is available and rise again when food is relatively plentiful.

Small-scale farming activities

Small-scale farming activities have only been initiated in northern resettlement areas where the climate and environment are more suitable for crop production. In these areas most resettled households engage in crop farming, for which they are provided advice, seeds and equipment (Nujoma 1992; Botelle & Rohde 1995). Success in cultivation has varied from household to household, with more successful households having produced enough for partial self-sufficiency in some years. The MLRR provides rough estimates of crop production per facility (MLRR 1999b: 36). Omega (see Chapter 4) and Bravo⁹² aside, these figures reveal that the average annual per capita output on these facilities is 11-27kg. This is inadequate to nourish a rabbit for a year!

Table 7.2: Crop outputs in San resettlement areas in 1997/98

RESETTLEMENT AREA	CROPS GROWN	OUTPUT (tonnes)	PER CAPITA OUTPUT
Skoonheid	Maize	2	27kg
	Carrots	1	
	Beetroot	1	
	Pumpkin	2	
Drimiopsis	Maize	2	24kg
	Carrots	2	
	Beetroot	1	
	Pumpkin	3	
	Watermelons	2	
	Sweetmelons	1	
Mangetti Dune	Mahangu	18	11kg
	Maize	12	
	Watermelon	4	
Bravo	Tobacco	3	360kg
	Maize	10	
	Mahangu	5	
Tsintsabis	Maize	5	15kg
	Mahangu	2	
	Carrots	2	
	Beetroots	2	
	Pumpkins	5	
Bagani	Maize and mahangu	20	13 kg
Omega	Maize and mahangu	45	150 kg
Chetto	Maize and mahangu	12	20 kg

Source: MLRR 1998

⁹² A brief trip to Bravo conducted during the course of this assessment (April 1999) suggests that this figure was sucked out of thin air. At the time of the visit, most of the male population had gone off hunting and the majority of those who remained complained of intense hunger.



The Drimiopsis communal vegetable garden

Communal gardens have also run into problems. At Skoonheid, for instance, only a small number of settlers participate in the garden project despite its being the only means available to participate in the GRN Food for Work Programme. Settlers there are reluctant to work in the garden as they argue that they do not benefit from it. In 1995/96, for example, large quantities of beans and other produce grown by Skoonheid settlers found their way into shops as far away as Gobabis yet brought no direct rewards for the settlers, who claimed that the profits were in fact used to subsidise the now deceased MLRR clerk's private business interests in the vicinity. While this allegation may well be unfounded, the fact that it was made points at least to poor communication between settlers and GRN officials in resettlement areas.

Large- and small-stock farming

Only a small proportion of San on resettlement facilities own livestock. Of those who do, only a handful own cattle and none (to my knowledge) own more than 16 head of cattle in total. Thus livestock ownership plays only a peripheral role in the economic life of most San on resettlement facilities.

Skoonheid is the only facility intended to provide sufficient space for settlers to graze large stock. Even there, however, livestock ownership and stock acquisition are problematic. The few San with livestock complain of a lack of grazing, as almost all grazing and water points available on the farm have been illegally settled, mainly by Otjiherero and Damara speakers with their comparatively large herds. San owning livestock are consequently restricted to the small central areas for grazing, and these are often denuded early in the dry season.

Hunting and gathering

Hunting and gathering are peripheral activities on resettlement facilities accommodating San. Most areas in which these facilities are located have little wildlife and hunting is prohibited by law, thus San settlers hunt only sporadically. Despite the risks involved, San settlers do poach once in a while – usually on neighbouring white farms. For the most part only small animals such as springhares, lizards and squirrels

are caught, though occasionally hunters manage something larger such as a steenbok, kudu or warthog. Despite the social cache acquired through hunting and the pleasure of being able to eat meat, from a subsistence perspective hunting is of little nutritional importance and few households (outside of former Bushmanland) rank it as an important food source.

Gathering, on the other hand, is more important from a subsistence perspective, especially in northern resettlement areas such as Tsintsabis, Bravo, West Caprivi and Mangetti Dune, where settlers regard veld foods as an essential supplement to other unreliable food sources. However, the extent to which veld foods can continue to provide for people in these areas remains to be seen. Residents of Tsintsabis and Bravo complain of having to trek further and further to find veld foods because the now large sedentary communities of these neighbouring settlements very rapidly use up veld foods found within easy walking distance of the settlements. The long-term sustainability of this level of resource use in a confined area is questionable and residents already report “permanent” changes in the resource base.

Mangetti groves do not stretch as far south as the Omaheke resettlement areas. Consequently San settlers in these areas do not consider veld foods to be as important a source of subsistence as they once were, though they are harvested and enjoyed after good rains.

External employment

San at resettlement facilities depend largely on external employment on local farms for additional cash to help them get by. Farmers, for their part, find resettlement facilities to be useful reservoirs of cheap seasonal and casual labour. Most able-bodied men living at resettlement facilities will engage in seasonal or casual work unless their reputation as a criminal, drunkard or troublemaker precedes them. Women engage in cash labour less frequently and are mainly hired for domestic chores. Thus, for example, several San women at Skoonheid have found work doing laundry and other domestic chores for the MLRR clerk or some of the illegal settlers who graze their livestock in the settlement area.

Pensions

Given the numbers of elderly San living on resettlement facilities, pensions have become the single most significant source of cash income at household level. As noted in Chapter 6, pensions are used to provide for entire households and extended families, with many depending on them to supplement income gained elsewhere. As such, pensions usually only last a day or two with pensioners themselves depending on other household members to support them until the pension van shows up again.

7.4.2 San-MLRR relations in resettlement facilities

A characteristic feature of resettlement facilities which are home to large numbers of San is a poor relationship between San settlers and local MLRR officials. San have complained about not being consulted regarding the planning and implementation of projects, and of patronising treatment when consultation has been sought. The problematic nature of San-MLRR relations is most clearly evidenced by a lack of co-operation between settlers and MLRR clerks. On several facilities San have stated that they tolerate the clerks only because if they didn't, they would be denied food or quite possibly chased off the facility.

Decision-making and authority

Settler committees were initially established on all MLRR resettlement facilities to serve as an interface between settlers and the MLRR. However, the effectiveness of these committees varies from facility to facility, and all are ultimately subordinate to MLRR officials. Because of this, even where committees are active, most settlers pay little attention to their activities. The weakness of these committees stems in part from the fact that MLRR officials have been reluctant to work through or with local community institutions and leaders, and instead have imposed their own structures on the settlements. Thus, for example, instead of working together towards a common goal, the Omaheke North San traditional

leadership and the Skoonheid camp management have been almost permanently at loggerheads since 1995.

Human resources

Human resource issues are a real problem within the MLRR and the poor performance of this ministry is no doubt partly attributable to this. Budgetary restrictions have meant that the MLRR is understaffed, with the result that unreasonable strain is placed on often under-qualified and overworked personnel. The MLRR is well aware of its capacity problems, and in response to them initiated a training programme for clerks and other officials which has run since 1996 (RAEIR 1998: 49). Significantly, none of the capacity-building exercises initiated by the MLRR focus on community development, but rather, they focus on “mid-level management” matters such as record-keeping, administrative skills, minute-taking and public sector accounting (MLRR 1998 and 1999b).

At each major resettlement facility the MLRR employs at least one full-time clerk. The specific role of these officials is unclear, though institutional arrangements are such that a fair degree of de facto power over settlers is vested in them. As the frontline link between settlers and the MLRR, clerks effectively have the power to initiate or close small-scale projects, to determine eligibility for food aid and participation in resettlement projects and to decide on the extent to which settlers are allowed to contribute to decision-making processes at grassroots level. Another consequence of clerks being in the frontline is that they are often the locus of tensions between the MLRR and settlers, and are personally blamed by settlers for many problems that arise – a state of affairs which does little to facilitate the smooth running of resettlement life. On several projects visited, San settlers variously complained that the clerks were “patronising”, “obstructive”, “corrupt” and “incapable”. Thus, a survey conducted on the MLRR’s behalf in West Tsumkwe in 1994 (Botelle & Rohde 1995) found that 92% of settlers there complained of disaffection with MLRR project staff.

No MLRR clerk interviewed for this study had more than a rudimentary understanding of participatory community development and related issues which are crucial to the successful management of complex development programmes (see also RAEIR 1998 and Maclean 1998). In addition, MLRR clerks are frequently absent for long periods – a state of affairs which, despite being disruptive, many settlers find desirable (see Maclean 1998: 105). For their part, clerks often feel disillusioned by their own lack of progress, and this is compounded by inadequate support from central government – a lack of transport and telecommunications being a common problem.⁹³

7.4.3 Housing and infrastructure

By 1998 the MLRR had spent in excess of N\$10 million (€1.4 million) on resettlement housing. This amount reportedly covered the construction of 268 brick houses in total (MLRR 1998). MLRR reports on housing construction in resettlement areas are not entirely consistent, and a close examination of annual reports reveals some anomalies requiring clarification.⁹⁴ More recently the MLRR has been involved in adding toilet facilities to some of the houses in some resettlement areas. San settlers greatly appreciate the housing since few have ever enjoyed such a luxury, but they note that it would have been

⁹³ The 1997/98 and 1998/99 MLRR annual reports both mention communication problems and a lack of vehicles. The telephone at Skoonheid was inoperational for over a year because bills were not paid.

⁹⁴ There is a notable discrepancy between the 1998 and 1999 MLRR annual reports regarding housing construction on resettlement schemes. While probably a consequence of editorial oversight, figures provided in the 1999 report do not correspond with those provided in 1998, nor with the actual number of houses that have been built. Indeed the confusingly laid-out 1999 report accounts for many houses that did not exist at the time of conducting the research, but which were reportedly built at a cost of over N\$1 million. For example, where the MLRR reports having built 80 houses in the Caprivi at a cost of N\$720 000, only 35 houses actually exist. There is also a huge discrepancy in costs per housing unit in different areas, which is hard to explain given that all houses are based on the same economical design. According to the 1998/99 annual report (MLRR 1999b: 38), housing in Skoonheid costs N\$32 500 per unit, in Bagani N\$7 500 per unit, in Chetto N\$15 000 per unit, in Mangetti Dune N\$21 000 per unit and in Omega N\$6 000 per unit. In the 1997/98 annual report it is noted that all houses built during that year cost N\$38 240.

better had they been consulted during the planning phase, and considerably better if tenure-security issues had been clarified.

Despite the GRN's substantial investment in housing in resettlement areas, the resettlement programme has not been a huge success and problems have emerged on various levels. That problems have emerged within a scheme that should simply and directly benefit settlers is a consequence of the lack of planning and transparency that has characterised the San resettlement process as a whole.

Layout and planning

In all San resettlement areas houses were erected without consulting the settlers or undertaking any sort of social impact assessment. Consequently settlers have often been displeased with the end results. The central compound of Skoonheid, for example – referred to locally as “Little Katutura” – has some 40 houses located within spitting distance of each other. Despite the fact that the Skoonheid camp is over 7 000 hectares in size, the housing scheme pays scant attention to local understandings of social and spatial organisation.

Housing access

At Skoonheid and Drimiopsis houses were occupied by settlers even before they had been completed. Startlingly though, at some resettlement facilities, for example Bagani and Mangetti Dune, the houses were locked as soon as they were built and the settlers were denied access to them. In Bagani, where 25 houses were constructed in 1996, settlers were not given access to them until late 1999. Fearful of incurring the MLRR's displeasure, the settlers obediently slept outside the houses or in huts adjacent to them. In the meantime insects and several small mammals (which do not require permission from the MLRR to enter the houses) made nice homes for themselves. Settlers living in Tsintsabis, Chetto and Mangetti Dune complained of similar problems.



Resettlement housing at Skoonheid

The MLRR's commitment to providing housing on resettlement facilities does not extend to meeting the housing needs of all settlers. While at Skoonheid and Drimiopsis ample housing has been built to accommodate all who live there, in other larger resettlement areas such as Bagani, M'kata, Mangetti Dune and Tsintsabis, only 10-15% of the residents are catered for. Bagani, for example, is home to over 1 500 people yet has seen the construction of only 25 houses.

7.4.4 Tenure and security

In none of the resettlement facilities visited were San aware of their formal tenure status and few considered their status in these areas to be secure. In terms of stated policy, however, the status of settlers is unambiguous. Writing on behalf of the MLRR (Shanyengana 1998), the Director of Rehabilitation and Resettlement states that in accordance with section 42 of the ALRA, policy is as follows:

Land acquired for resettlement purposes will be provided to settlers or beneficiaries on leasehold for a period of 99 years. The lease tenure system will be arranged so that settlers can use the lease as collateral to get loans from lending institutions.

This suggests that the MLRR has exceeded its mandate by maintaining control over San resettlement areas and not granting leasehold rights to settlers as per policy and the ALRA.

Apart from contravening both the spirit and letter of the ALRA, tenure insecurity in resettlement areas subverts the entire development process by alienating settlers from what should be their homes and their projects, and in so doing reproduces the vulnerable conditions under which they lived on the commercial farms or in communal areas. Settlers are unwilling to invest in a project in which they have no long-term stake, or from which they fear they could be removed at any time. This problem was well illustrated in Tsintsabis where a faction of settlers refused to help with house-building as they believed that they were "building houses for Owambos" who would kick them out once they had been completed. Indeed, the high turnover of San-language speakers on several resettlement facilities is as much a consequence of tenure uncertainty as it is of economic insecurity.

The tenure situation is even more curious in the ELCIN-initiated resettlement project at Mangetti Dune. At one of the agricultural plot handover ceremonies in 1990, the settlers were ceremoniously presented with what were supposed to be certificates of tenure for their plots, but which turned out to be empty envelopes. Thus by the time of the ELCIN final evaluation, the evaluation team concluded that they were unable to establish whether settlers had been given *de jure* rights or simply usufructory rights over their plots (Jansen et al. 1994: 8). Since Mangetti Dune is in the Tsumkwe District, it now seems likely that tenure there will be established by means of the CLA once enacted.

Having overcome problems of illegal squatting on some farms, the MLRR announced in its 1998/99 annual report that it was about to "enter into long-term lease agreements with incumbent beneficiaries under the resettlement programme", and that "this will give a new impetus to the programme and raise much needed revenue to secure the long-term sustainability of the programme" (MLRR 1999b: 38). In the same report the MLRR lists the farms being considered for the issuing of leasehold rights. Significantly, none of the San resettlement projects are listed, despite the fact that they were established several years before any of the other projects.

The fact that land tenure and security remains an issue is curious in view of the fact that the MLRR explicitly states that the process of resettlement is one of *land restitution* (MLRR 1996: 5). At this stage it is only possible to speculate as to why the tenure issue has not been clarified. Should this issue not be resolved, the capacity of resettlement projects to improve the lives of settlers will remain limited.

Co-operative projects

The MLRR resettlement projects at Skoonheid and Drimiopsis are based on a "co-operative" model rather than the individual plots model. The precise status of settlers on these projects is difficult to clarify and there appears to be little understanding at any level within the MLRR regarding the formal status of

these areas. Certainly there is no provision for co-operative projects in the ALRA, which provides only for the allocation of leasehold plots at individual or family level.

Apart from questions regarding their legal status, it is curious that the MLRR embarked on such schemes given the dismal track record of co-operative schemes of this kind elsewhere in the world (RAEIR 1998: 20): these frequently fail because they are built on spurious notions of “community” which are divorced from socio-economic and political realities, and this has proved to be the case in Namibia too. Almost by definition, people requiring resettlement are not a self-identifying community, but rather they are characteristically spatially unstable and economically insecure people, and hence politically (in the local sense) disorganised too. Resettled populations rarely have the local institutions or social capacity necessary to ensure success.

That projects such as these were even initiated by the MLRR reveals a lack of basic planning and even suggests naiveté. It also demonstrates a failure to identify key problems accurately and to consult with target groups on the best manner to address these. Throwing together a diverse group of impoverished people with a background in farm labour and expecting them to participate in a co-operative venture in which they feel they have no long-term stake, and in the design and implementation of which they played no part, is not a recipe for success or sustainability.

7.4.5 Social problems in resettlement facilities

Poverty, insecurity, depression and dependency are daily features of life in San resettlement areas, and alcohol abuse and alcohol-related violence are the norm rather than the exception. At Sphoonheid, for example, where the Omaheke North Traditional Authority has played an important role in reducing disruptive behaviour, there were still numerous violent conflicts and two (drunken) murders committed in the space of one year (in 1998 and 1999).

7.5 Conclusions and recommendations

As the foregoing makes clear, there are strong ethical and practical grounds for motivating the expansion of San land rights. The provision of adequate land access is primarily a development issue, and this is presently the most critical intervention that can be made on behalf of San in Namibia. Failure to accommodate their need to secure greater land access will invariably exacerbate existing problems relating to their high mobility, economic insecurity, dependency on direct aid, access to education, and social and political alienation.

Greater land access and secure ownership for San will serve to:

- reduce their dependency on welfare and GRN aid;
- reduce their mobility and thus impact positively on health and education programmes for them;
- provide them with an asset base;
- strengthen their community institutions and capacity;
- reduce direct aid costs in respect of San in the long term; and
- foster positive relations between the GRN and San.

Suitable land policies will go some way towards enabling San and other rural landless people to achieve greater economic security. These policies will need to ensure *de jure* land rights for San and other minorities in both communal and commercial farming areas. However, taking into account population growth, the weak natural resource base and the extent of rural poverty, it is inconceivable that all Namibians seeking land could be accommodated in any new dispensation. San ambitions for greater land access must consequently be moderated by the quest to achieve greater parity with others. While ancestral claims to land may be mobilised to highlight the extent of San dispossession, these should not be adduced as the basis of San land requests. The current situation alone should be sufficient to bring home the urgency of the situation.

7.5.1 Resettlement

Without massive land purchases which would adversely impact on commercial agriculture and lead to greater job losses, not all people desirous of resettlement can expect to be catered for under the GRN resettlement programme. Nevertheless there is scope for expanding the programme and establishing better targeting procedures so that, in accordance with policy, it is the poorest who benefit.

There is also a strong case for commercial farm resettlement to focus principally on improving the lot of generational farm workers rather than on relieving pressure in communal areas. First and foremost, this would provide basic security for the most insecure and needy, and secondly it would indirectly relieve pressure in communal areas as it would prevent generational farm workers from attempting to seek land and a livelihood there.

If financial constraints have forced the MLRR to seek out settlers who can pay for resettlement, then options should be sought whereby donors could cover shortfalls or NGOs could take over portions of the programme.

7.5.2 The Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act and policy objectives

The purchase of commercial farms for resettlement is intended to provide a platform for reducing risk for San and other impoverished landless people. The resettlement programme has thus far not been implemented in accordance with stated policy, however, and San have not been prioritised in the process, nor have they benefited meaningfully from it. Sections of the ALRA concerning application procedures for resettlement are inconsistent with stated policy objectives favouring the poor. The draft Act needs to be amended so as to enable the MLRR to realise its stated objectives.

Failing this, other special measures should be considered to convert this policy into practice, including:

- an information campaign launched by the MLRR and NGOs, focusing on oral means of communication such as radio programmes, meetings and workshops with the aim of explaining the purpose of resettlement; and
- illiterate-friendly application procedures for San and others who have no formal education.

7.5.3 Adequate landholdings

In several primarily San resettlement facilities there is inadequate space even for subsistence farming. Adequate land must be given to all settlers where they are resettled so that it is feasible for them to make a living from that land. Until this is done, San on these facilities will have to rely on GRN aid.

7.5.4 Communal areas

As much as there is a marked land shortage in communal areas, the fact that San have “customary” ties to these areas must be recognised. There are a number of options to consider that may ensure San access to land in these areas, including:

- meaningful representation of San traditional authorities on land boards to ensure equal access to land;
- the designation of specific zones within communal areas as San traditional lands to be administered as communal lands; and
- the designation of specific zones within communal areas as San resettlement areas in which San are granted secure tenure rights.

7.5.5 Resettlement projects

Given the numerous problems highlighted in this chapter, the existing resettlement programme should be reassessed with a view to a major overhaul to bring it in line with policy. To achieve this without placing

excessive pressure on already overstretched budgets, funding and technical assistance should be sought in the donor and NGO sectors. In-depth consultations should be sought with San settlers and local traditional authorities with a view to establishing new management structures and consensually deciding on the path of development. For this to be achieved, *land rights over resettlement areas need to be devolved to settlers* as per stated policy, while the GRN's role is reduced to that of liaison and support.

Tenure

San on resettlement facilities should be given secure tenure as per the ALRA and stated policy. This will provide a mandate for community management of resettlement facilities and hence establish a platform for genuine participatory development. Where landless settlers are unable to use their own land due to a lack of resources, they should be entitled to sublet that land for a fee to provide scope for income and possible wealth accumulation.

Collective resettlement

There are sound developmental reasons for resettling San collectively (though not necessarily co-operatively) should they desire or request it. At present, however, the ALRA demands that applications for resettlement be made on an individual basis.

Because the draft CLA explicitly entrenches the notion of traditional or customary rights to land, the possibility of setting aside certain blocks of resettlement land as San customary land to be administered under the CLA should be examined. This would go some way to bringing policy into line with the spirit of international conventions concerning the rights of indigenous people. Indeed, should San seek to undertake such a course of action, there are strong grounds to argue in terms of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that they are entitled to exclusive resettlement rights in order to preserve, maintain and profess their own cultural, economic and social identity.

If a collective strategy is pursued as per policy and the ALRA, settlers should be granted exclusive lease of plots, but be entitled to enter common property agreements with neighbours should they so desire. For example, communities should be entitled to establish conservancies on resettlement facilities. If any co-operative projects are to exist, they should only exist on the basis of settler consensus. (However, see the comments regarding co-operative projects below.)

Overcrowding

The resettlement facilities which are now overcrowded should be reappraised with a view to long-term sustainability. Settlers on such overcrowded facilities should be offered the choice of moving to places that are less crowded.

Management

The management of resettlement areas should be vested entirely in settlers by virtue of secure long-term leases.

Co-operative projects

Co-operative projects should be scrapped altogether. They have no basis in law and were an ill-advised option in the first place. Settlers in these projects should be given leasehold allocations as on other projects.

The role of the MLRR

The MLRR should adopt a co-ordinating role and work with a view to capacity-building within settler communities and the formation of community-based management institutions. Given the capacity and

budgetary constraints within the MLRR, greater technical assistance from the NGO and donor sectors should be sought.

Diversification beyond purely agricultural projects

The almost exclusive focus on agriculture in resettlement projects unquestionably hampers their success. Wherever possible, imaginative options should be explored to secure other forms of income generation on resettlement projects. Additionally, efforts should be made to equip settlers with skills that do not restrict them to working in the agricultural sector.

CHAPTER 8

POLITICS, REPRESENTATION AND TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

8.1 Introduction

San remain poorly represented in Namibia's various government structures. At present only one San occupies a seat in the National Assembly; none have as yet sat on regional or local councils and none occupy senior or management positions in the civil service. One reason for the numerous problems in policy identified elsewhere in this report is that San, due to not being well represented in regional and national bodies, have been unable to voice their concerns and interests at various levels or to ensure that they are taken into consideration when policy is formulated.

The lack of San representation in regional and local elected bodies is tied to their political disorganisation at grassroots level and their relative inability to access or exploit mainstream political networks. Consequently, the San voice remains muted if not entirely absent in many important national forums and San typically characterise their political status as one of exclusion from the mainstream.

At present the only forum in which a broad cross-section of San have sought significant representation is the Council of Traditional Leaders established by the Council of Traditional Leaders Act of 1997. To date two San traditional authorities (the Ju/'hoan and !Kung authorities of East and West Tsumkwe respectively) have been granted official recognition of their traditional leadership structures and are thus represented in the Council of Traditional Leaders. This number might increase to six if outstanding disputes are resolved in favour of the other four applicants for recognition (the !Xoo of Omaheke South, the Ju/'hoansi of Omaheke North, the Kxoe of West Caprivi and the Hai//om of Otjozondjupa).

Under-representation of San in government structures is a clear reflection of the extent of their historical marginalisation and must be understood as a continuation of this. The political marginalisation of San by both whites and blacks in Namibia prior to independence meant that by 1990 no San occupied senior or influential positions in any of the major contending political organisations and networks.

8.2 San participation in mainstream politics

Few San fully understand the substance of their rights under a democratic system and how to exercise them. Many San are apathetic in respect of mainstream politics, and generally feel that they have little or no real stake and even less influence in this arena.

Excluding the position of President, the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) is structured at four levels: the National Assembly, the National Council (these two constituting Parliament), regional councils and local authorities. The National Assembly is the principal legislative body and is comprised of 72 members elected on the basis of proportional representation. The National Council is the second-tier legislative body, and is comprised of 26 councillors elected from the regional councils (2 from each of Namibia's 13 regions). The regional councils are comprised of councillors elected on a first-past-the-post constituency basis. Operating closely with the regional councils are the smaller local authorities comprised of representatives of municipal, town and village councils.

Despite plans for decentralisation, regional and local government structures remain largely subordinate to a strong central government. The "most important" tasks of regional councils at present are limited to "socio-economic planning; the upliftment of the people in the region and to encourage (sic) people at the

lowest level of local government to become actively involved in the administration and development of local areas in the region” (Tötemeyer et al. 1994: 13).

8.2.1 National politics

Few San are convinced of the virtues of democracy or its ability to protect their interests. Many complain that it does not matter for whom they vote since no parties which have stood for election to date are concerned with San or San issues. While this is demonstrably not the case, it is understandable that many San perceive it to be so. During the 1995 general elections, for example, very little effort was made by any of the major political parties to secure San votes in areas outside of Nyae Nyae and Tsintsabis.

During the 1999 general elections the San vote was sought more widely and directly than in 1995. The incumbent SWAPO-led Government and official opposition, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), both included one San candidate in the mid ranks of their party lists, though only the SWAPO candidate won a seat in Parliament. Significantly, both candidates hailed from the small, unrepresentative but relatively high-profile Nyae Nyae area of the Tsumkwe District. Kxau Royal /O/oo, the only San elected to Parliament in 1999, is not yet well known among San outside of his own home district, thus he is not yet widely regarded as representing San interests in particular. For the most part, San, like many other Namibians, rarely cast their votes on the basis of issues: most San who voted in 1999 did so on the basis of party allegiances forged somewhat arbitrarily in the run-up to independence in 1990.

While it is important that a San voice is heard in the National Assembly, it is unrealistic to think that San representation in this central body will ever be substantial. San constitute a minority in Namibia and (on the basis of demography) should expect to have no more than one or two representatives in the National Assembly. Far more realistic channels for San to achieve better representation are the regional or local elected bodies in areas where San do constitute more than very small minority groups. More effective San participation in national politics thus depends on the development of strong regional- and local-level representation in the various organs of government.

8.2.2 Regional and local government

No San has as yet held a seat on a regional or local council.⁹⁶ Despite this low level of direct representation, the San vote has been sought more energetically in regional than in general elections. The extra attention granted to San in regional elections is partially a delimitation issue and in 1998 was most marked in marginal constituencies like Steinhausen, where the San vote was large enough to swing the election in one direction or the other.⁹⁷

During the 1998 elections for regional councils, a common strategy pursued by candidates to secure San votes in marginal constituencies was to provide free food at rallies and offer more free food in return for votes, since regional councils are tasked with identifying those eligible for drought-relief food. But, since the promises of regular food handouts made during the 1998 elections were not honoured, it is doubtful that San will continue to buy as wholeheartedly into this election strategy in future.

8.2.3 Political alienation and consciousness

Despite their peripheral participation in mainstream party politics to date, there is little doubt that in the decade since independence San have developed an increasingly sophisticated appreciation of mainstream political processes. The liberation politics that preceded independence, and the freedoms and changes

⁹⁶ As a SWAPO candidate for Tsumkwe constituency, Kxau Royal /O/oo (now a SWAPO MP) stood for election to the Otjozondjupa Regional Council in 1998.

⁹⁷ In Tsintsabis, given their concentration within a small portion of the farming block, the 1 000 San settlers can have a marked impact on the outcome of regional elections. Consequently, electioneering in Tsintsabis prior to the 1998 elections by both SWAPO and DTA regional council candidates ended up dividing the community into two factions, whose respective supporters would subsequently refuse to co-operate with one another on a number of issues.

ushered in since then, have resulted in San throughout Namibia becoming more articulate in detailing their concerns and bolder in asserting what they consider to be their rights, and indeed, what they regard as violations of these rights.

San often characterise their status in Namibia in terms of “exclusion” from the mainstream. Few have embraced the idea of “the new Namibia” wholeheartedly, because as they understand reality, the new Namibia has not embraced them. The GRN’s failure to promote meaningful participation in its projects has convinced a proportion of San that they would be far better off managing things for themselves.

San are often very harsh critics of the GRN, and ironically this criticism is most fierce in areas where the GRN is most active in dealing with San concerns (see Chapter 7). Based on what some San report, it would be possible to argue that from a human rights perspective things are currently worse for San than they were under the apartheid administration. This is clearly *not* the case. The very fact that San are able to articulate their grievances, participate in bodies like WIMSA and legally contest issues such as the West Caprivi dispute over traditional authority indicates the extent to which things have changed. Indeed San complaints – and the vociferousness with which they are expressed – should not be understood relative to their status under the colonial administration, but rather relative to their expectations and aspirations for life 10 years into independence.

8.2.4 Traditional leaders

The Namibian Constitution provides for the devolution of limited powers and a formally recognised “advisory” role to Namibia’s “traditional authorities”, these being comprised of the chiefs, headmen and councillors of Namibia’s various “traditional communities”. These provisions represent, on the one hand, an acknowledgement of the cultural plurality of the Namibian political landscape, and on the other, an attempt to incorporate and ultimately subordinate these entities to civil structures. To this end the Traditional Authorities Act (TAA) was passed in 1995 and amended in 1997.

At present only two of the six established San traditional authorities have been formally recognised by the GRN – the Ju/’hoan and !Kung authorities of East and West Tsumkwe respectively. The TAA (see section 8.4 below) is the only piece of legislation in which the right of Namibian communities to define their own identity is explicitly acknowledged. Given the negligible levels of San representation on other local or national administrative bodies, the role of formally recognised traditional leaders takes on added importance as the Council of Traditional Leaders is currently the most significant forum in which San are anywhere near adequately represented. Most importantly, GRN recognition of the San traditional authorities would give legal status to San “traditional communities” in areas like the Omaheke Region, and would thus constitute an acknowledgement of the San’s right to a separate and nominally independent cultural identity as well as of their entitlement to claim customary title to land.

8.3 Historical overview of San leadership and political organisation

Popular mythologies hold that San societies were historically acephalous and anti-hierarchical. Certainly pre-colonial patterns of social organisation among most San communities were not predisposed to the institutionalisation of leadership positions to the same degree that larger, more stratified food-producing and tribute-paying societies were. Indeed several features of “traditional” life conspired against the formalisation of leadership roles and structures. In particular, primary reliance on hunting and gathering encouraged a system of relatively egalitarian consensus politics that ensured the wide distribution of foods, the greasing and maintenance of social relations, and the endurance of band and kin structures. San cultural discourses and practices reified the notion of “community” at the expense of the individual, so much so that some observers labelled the system “primitive communism” (see Lee & Devore 1976 and Sahlins 1972).



Bobo, traditional leader of the West Tsumkwe community (left) and Kxau Royal /O'oo, the only San representative in Parliament

Frederik Langman being elected as Omaheke North traditional leader at Skoonheid resettlement camp in 1996

Even within the self-consciously egalitarian structures of the band, however, scope existed for both loose institutional leadership and informal charismatic leadership. Among the Ju/'hoansi, for example, each band included a core group known collectively as the *n!orekxausi* or “owners” of the band’s territory, who were ultimately responsible for decision-making on the band’s behalf (Marshall 1976; Lee 1993). Actions or decisions taken by the *n!orekxausi* were based on their capacity to mobilise consensus within the band as a whole, and as will become clear, this formed the foundation for the more formal leadership institutions that some San developed in response to the increasing penetration of the capital economy into their territories.

8.3.1 Pre-1990 San political organisation

Over the last 200 years the social and political dynamics of both black and white in-migration into Namibia encouraged the development of different forms of political organisation among San groups. Over a relatively short period a number of distinct San groups improvised and to some extent formalised leadership structures in response to threats from others: when San communities did not have to deal with outsiders, leadership remained quite self-consciously de-emphasised, but they established ad hoc (but clear) structures of leadership to co-ordinate their resistance in circumstances where communities were pressured by others.⁹⁸ Even in these cases, however, the legitimacy of leaders was a consensus issue, and only in rare instances did they enjoy any special privileges in the form of tributes, taxes or summary powers.

The more sustained presence of both Bantu and whites on traditional San lands meant that around the beginning of the 20th century institutional leadership became deeply entrenched in some San societies.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ In the late 19th century, in reaction to pressure from Herero and Tswana pastoralists, Nharo in Ghanzi developed an ad hoc centralised leadership under a man named Dukiri, who led San efforts to protect San resources from outsiders (Guenther 1993). Similarly, Hai//om in and around Etosha National Park organised themselves under the leadership of several *Kaptein*s (Captains) who were so powerful that the Germans had to sign treaties with them (Gordon 1992). More recently, one of the last significant acts of resistance to white colonialism in the Omaheke Region was orchestrated by a ǀAu//ei leader by the name of Zameko, who co-ordinated and led a collection of Ju/'hoan bands in rebellion against white farmers until they were arrested following their slaying of the Gobabis magistrate in 1923.

⁹⁹ See Gordon 1992; Suzman 2000; Guenther 1993.

8.3.2 The breakdown of traditional authority structures

Namibia's two-tier system of "reserve" governance in tandem with allocations of land to various ethnic groups allowed for the revitalisation (or in some cases reinvention) of "traditional" leadership structures among peoples like the Herero, Mbukushu and Kwangali. Among San, however, the majority of whom were stripped of their territorial base, the nascent and largely vulnerable leadership structures that evolved in reaction to the presence of outsiders were effectively dismantled during the colonial period. This happened for the following reasons:

- The fragmentation of social groups at all levels of organisation resulting from the loss of land and from the need to provide labour in exchange for a livelihood undermined the very integrity of San leadership, since to all intents and purposes there were no coherent, self-conscious communities to lead. The effective loss of freedom of movement and association in these areas exacerbated this tremendously.
- The highly paternalist and authoritarian nature of farm life meant that in these areas all meaningful authority was deferred to the white *baas* (boss) (see Chapter 2). The status of workers in farm-working compounds often depended more on an individual's relationship with the *baas* than on his relationship with fellow workers. Similarly, in the communal areas where San only rarely retained *de facto* or *de jure* corporate rights over land, they were effectively unable to form coherent or viable political communities.
- To minimise risk in the context of the poverty of farm and reserve life, some key pre-colonial institutions relating to reciprocity and sharing were rejuvenated and strengthened. As a consequence of this adaptive strategy, egalitarianism was emphasised at the expense of individual leadership or advancement.

Only in those areas where San retained partial and relatively exclusive control of their traditional lands did leadership structures persevere, though as from the 1970s these were overshadowed by the large South African military presence (see Chapter 5).

8.3.3 Independence

By the time of independence it was clear that San wished to establish better mechanisms to represent their interests at regional, national and local levels. The period 1990-1995 saw the emergence of several San community leaders in various areas, each representing distinct language groups or loosely self-identifying communities (see Thoma & Piek 1997). Lacking financial independence or external support, the new San leaders initially did not have the capacity to effectively represent their communities even at local level, let alone national level. Later on, in anticipation of the passing of the TAA and the establishment of the Council of Traditional Leaders, WIMSA together with CASS at UNAM initiated a training programme (still ongoing) aimed at increasing the capacity of San traditional authorities.

8.4 The Traditional Authorities Act

The eventual ratification of the TAA in 1995 did not please all existing traditional authorities in Namibia because it entailed a decrease in their power as compared to the extent of their mandate in the apartheid era. The TAA explicitly subordinates traditional authorities to central government and politically emasculates their leaders (see Du Pisani 1996 and Hinz & Bruhn 1997)¹⁰⁰ by granting them only a limited "advisory role" in affairs of state and simultaneously denying them the right to engage in "party politics" while in office (section 11(1)(d)).¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ The subordination of customary law to common law in the TAA is also stipulated in Article 66(1) of the Constitution: "Both customary law and the common law of Namibia shall remain valid to the extent to which such customary or common law does not conflict with the Constitution or any other statutory law."

¹⁰¹ The spirit of the TAA is well illustrated by the following sections:

8.4.1 Culture, tradition and the Traditional Authorities Act

The TAA makes limited provision for the maintenance of separate cultures and identities, and in so doing reaffirms Namibia's multicultural and poly-ethnic heritage. In section 10 of the Act, the duties and functions of recognised traditional authorities are identified as follows:

- Identification and codification of traditional law
- Administration and execution of traditional law
- Preservation and protection of culture and tradition
- Promotion of affirmative action within their communities
- Registration of traditional healers
- Provision of assistance to police and other state organs where necessary
- Conservation and sustainable use of natural resources
- Settlement of disputes over customary matters
- Establishment of community trust funds

The TAA also reaffirms the fundamental rights detailed in the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (see Chapter 6). Unlike in Botswana, where the emphasis is on the acculturation and assimilation of minority groups into the Tswana mainstream, the TAA provides in principle for the protection and preservation of distinct minority cultural identities.

8.4.2 Assessment of San claims to constitute "traditional communities"

As stipulated in sections 5 and 6 of the TAA, traditional authorities require recognition from the State in order to assume their legally mandated roles. In March 1998 the GRN announced by way of *Government Gazette* No. 1828 that 31 leaders and hence 31 Namibian "traditional communities" had been formally recognised. Not one of the six San traditional authorities which initially applied for formal recognition was listed. Following a formal complaint, the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing (MRLGH) requested them all to put their cases in writing. Written claims were then submitted to the MRLGH and thereafter forwarded to the Investigating Committee on Tribal Disputes for assessment. On the strength of the committee's recommendation the MRLGH informed the applicants that only the East and West Tsumkwe Traditional Authorities (which retained an autonomous land base) would be recognised, and that the four outstanding applications required further consultation (Brörmann 1999: 14).

The TAA makes specific provision for "traditional communities"¹⁰² which may not have had formal leaders in the past, or for communities whose leadership structures were dismantled under the colonial regime. In section 2(1) of the TAA it is stated that that "every *traditional community* shall be entitled to have a *traditional authority*" (emphasis added). From a legal perspective, therefore, the assessment of San leaders' demands for recognition should be based entirely on whether the different San groups involved constitute bona fide "traditional communities". However, in the terms of reference issued to those traditional leaders charged with the assessment of San claims, no mention was made of the legal

11(1)(b) In the performance of the functions and duties and exercise of the powers referred to in section 10, any customary law which is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution or any other statutory law, shall be invalid to the extent of the inconsistency.

12(1) In the performance of its duties and functions and exercise of its powers under customary law or as specified in this Act, a traditional authority shall give support to the policies of the central government, regional councils and local authority councils and refrain from any act which undermines the authority of those institutions established by law.

12(2) Where the powers of a traditional authority or a traditional leader conflict with the powers of the organs of central government, regional government or local authority councils, the powers of the central government, regional council or local authority council shall prevail.

¹⁰² The TAA defines a "traditional community" as an "indigenous homogenous and endogamous social grouping comprising families deriving from exogamous clans which share a common ancestry, language, cultural heritage, customs and traditions, recognising a common traditional authority and inhabits a common communal area and includes members residing outside the common communal area" (sic). This definition is not without problems, not least of which is that there is not a single "community" in Namibia that conforms to all its somewhat arbitrary requirements.

requirements listed in section 2(1) of the TAA, in terms of which groups may argue for recognition as traditional communities.

Despite occasional positive noises emerging from the investigating committee, the process has dragged on. During 1999 no less than three separate inquiries were conducted into the status of the disputed San traditional authorities. After each inquiry it was hinted that recognition was imminent, only for a final decision to be deferred to the next inquiry. No further progress has been made since July 2000. The body that the GRN has tasked to conduct these inquiries has no legal mandate beyond advising the GRN, and the GRN has shown a marked reluctance to consult with experts or authorities on San histories and identities. The GRN has consequently embarked on a rambling and costly inquiry that has caused the struggling San traditional authorities unnecessary problems.

In November 1999, for example, WIMSA was informed that the Investigating Committee on Tribal Disputes had resolved that the Omaheke North Traditional Authority should be subsumed under the East Tsumkwe Traditional Authority, which would effectively deny the Omaheke North Chief designate a seat in the Council of Traditional Leaders. According to WIMSA, this decision was made because the investigating committee argued that North Omaheke San and Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi are part of the same greater language community and hence should fall under the same traditional authority.¹⁰³ Not only do Omaheke San have only very limited historical ties with Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi (primarily because they fought with one another over corporate access to natural resources), but they also construct separate and distinct histories and identities, are separated by 100km of harsh desert terrain, currently live under very different circumstances (see Chapters 2, 3 and 4) and speak very different !Kung dialects (cf. Marshall 1976; Sylvian 1999; Suzman 2000). The idea that San living in Tsumkwe should make decisions for and on behalf of other San living in a huge area to which Tsumkwe San have no strong historical ties or customary rights is equivalent to insisting that all Oshiwambo speakers should be subsumed under the Kwanyama Traditional Authority (Oshikwanyama being one of several Oshiwambo dialects).

8.4.3 San traditional authorities: problems and challenges

Unlike most of the other traditional authorities (which were relatively well supported and institutionally strengthened by the apartheid regime), most of the San traditional authorities have had to start virtually from scratch since independence with, in the case of the Omaheke and Hai//om San, no land base, few assets, very little administrative support, a scattered and extremely marginalised constituency and very little experience of leadership in a modern democratic state.

Weak communities

Not all San traditional communities are socio-linguistically homogeneous. After a century of sustained dispossession and marginalisation, San leaders now represent communities with few strong central institutions, weak community structures, and in some cases no land base. Apart from the Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae and the Kxoe of West Caprivi, all San traditional communities are constituted by San from a number of distinct socio-linguistic backgrounds. Thus, included within the political community that is now represented by the (GRN-recognised) Omatako !Kung-speaking West Tsumkwe leadership, for example, there are also San of Vasekele !Kung, Mpungu !Kung, Ju/'hoan and even Hai//om origins, though very importantly, they now all consider themselves to be part of the West Tsumkwe traditional community.¹⁰⁴ The diversity of these constituencies is not as serious an issue as it might have been some years ago. As noted in the opening chapter of this report, San social identity is now often expressed and understood in considerably broader terms and with a far stronger geographical focus than it once was.

¹⁰³ Following this reasoning, close to 70% of Namibia's San population should be subsumed under the East Tsumkwe Traditional Authority since they all speak !Kung languages and dialects.

¹⁰⁴ The justification for mixed traditional authorities is in part that some self-identifying San traditional communities, such as the Omatako !Kung or Nharo, are too small to be granted individual recognition under the TAA. It is therefore required that they join with other groups in a similar position to expand the size of their communities.

In this respect the composite nature of San communities and traditional authorities is consistent with notions of “social identity” and “community” based on geography (see Sylvian 1999 and Suzman 2000).

A related problem for these San communities is that failings on the part of leaders or councillors can lead to accusations of favouritism towards the specific communities from which the leaders themselves have come. Thus within the Hai//om Traditional Authority, for example, those currently opposed to incumbent Chief Willem /Aib articulate their opposition by claiming that /Aib only acts for the “Soredana” (western Hai//om groups) at the expense of the !Kung Hai//om based further east around Tsintsabis.¹⁰⁵

An additional problem relating to the diversity of San groups is that in some areas San have received scant direct assistance in their efforts to revive and strengthen local traditional authority structures, hence they remain without representation. This is particularly the case among San groups in the Kavango Region and the “4 ‘O’ Regions” comprising former Owamboland (i.e. Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Oshana and Omusati).

Poverty and capacity

The role of traditional authorities is relatively unimportant when weighed against that of MPs or regional councillors. However, for San, who lack representation in other bodies, it is a role of some significance. Real responsibility is consequently often placed on the shoulders of generally inexperienced leaders who are expected to represent and advocate for their respective groups’ interests effectively in a variety of different forums.

Unlike the majority of state-recognised traditional leaders, San leaders and their communities are characteristically extremely poor. Like their constituency membership, San leaders and councillors have to spend much of their time securing food and income rather than pursuing the community’s well-being. The four San leaders not yet recognised by the GRN are not entitled to the small salary stipulated in the TAA and (for the time being) remain dependent on direct aid and food-for-work schemes to survive.

The GRN salaries received by the two recognised leaders liberate them to the extent that they are able to work full time on community issues. It should be noted, however, that the salaries do also create some awkward problems. The monthly stipend of N\$1 000 for traditional leaders and N\$800 for councillors, though lower than the average Namibian’s monthly income, is substantial from a San perspective and is also considerably higher than salaries that might be earned as an unskilled labourer or farm worker. This sometimes leads to jealousy and conflict, amplifying the process of social differentiation now taking place in San societies as differences in education, circumstances, income and opportunity become more and more apparent.

NGOs like WIMSA and CASS have attempted to address these problems directly by providing administrative assistance to San traditional authorities, in addition to running a number of workshops throughout the country focusing on issues such as “leadership and co-operation”.¹⁰⁶

8.5 Conclusions and recommendations

Outside of the Council of Traditional Leaders and the National Assembly, San are poorly represented in national and regional politics, and many feel alienated from mainstream political processes. Moreover, few San occupy important positions within GRN structures at all levels. Should San remain isolated from GRN structures, it is likely that they will remain alienated from the State as a whole.

¹⁰⁵ The incumbent Chief, with whom a large number of Hai//om are currently dissatisfied, stands accused of having absconded with funds and of illegally occupying the Hai//om Traditional Authority offices, which were purchased with donor funds, as a personal residence. See Brörmann (1999: 22) for a brief discussion of the complicated nature of the Hai//om leadership issue.

¹⁰⁶ A number of workshops have been conducted on these issues among different San communities in Namibia (see Thoma & Piek 1997; WIMSA 1998 and 2000; Brörmann 1999).

8.5.1 Political participation

For a democracy to function it is essential that voters are aware of their rights and the capacity they have to effect changes. San remain on the whole politically naïve and unaware of the extent to which their right to choose can actually impact on their lives. Voter education should thus be a priority.

8.5.2 Political representation

San constitute a small minority in Namibia. Their participation in government will consequently be most effective at regional and local levels in areas where they constitute a higher proportion of the population. Ironically, San have thus far achieved reasonable representation only at national level. Existing political parties should consider making greater efforts to incorporate San into their regional and local structures to facilitate San participation in the mainstream political process.

8.5.3 Traditional authorities

San traditional authorities have a symbolic role that exceeds their legal status. Since they are inadequately represented in other GRN bodies, traditional authorities are expected to represent San interests in a variety of different forums. To ensure that this is effective, the following options should be given serious consideration:

- A GRN assessment of the legitimacy of the four as yet unrecognised San traditional authorities in terms of whether or not they represent bona fide traditional communities as stipulated in the TAA.
- The maintenance and expansion of NGO support for existing San traditional authorities with particular focus on capacity-building.
- San traditional authorities themselves working towards strengthening their respective communities, with donors and NGOs providing material support to this end.

8.5.4 GRN structures

Almost all of the few San in the GRN's employ are menial labourers or at best junior civil servants. The majority of San find dealing with GRN bodies at all levels difficult, discouraging and frequently unrewarding. Efforts should be made particularly at regional and local levels in areas with large San populations to ensure that help is available to San wishing to use GRN services. The most effective way to ensure San access to these structures in the long term will be to ensure that they are well represented in them. In the meantime several options should be considered, including these:

- Affirmative action for San in local GRN structures (where appropriate), encouragement for the promotion and employment of local people in local positions, and the "fast-tracking" of suitably qualified San individuals into meaningful positions.
- The training and employment of San "helpers" in local and regional GRN structures and offices to assist others to access bureaucratic services.

CHAPTER 9

HEALTH

In terms of standard indices, San are the least healthy of all language groups in Namibia, and have an average life expectancy of only 48 years – some 25% lower than the life expectancy of the average Namibian (UNDP 1999). AIDS aside, the diseases to which San are particularly vulnerable are not dissimilar from those that affect the rest of Namibia's people, though the impact of these diseases is often more marked due to the extreme levels of poverty and food insecurity prevalent in San communities.

9.1 Health and tradition

As far as San are concerned, questions pertaining to health and well-being are not always best explained by reference to western science (see Rudert 1995a and 1995b.) As much as San communities do not doubt the efficacy and power of western medicine in a number of contexts, it is not thought to be universally more effective than their own diverse medical practices.¹⁰⁷ Among San, human or spiritual agency is often understood to play a role in making people sick, and where this is the case, western medicine is considered to be ineffective. Among Ju/'hoansi in the Omaheke Region, for example, if an individual is really ill, western medicine is often used as a first step in treatment, and only if it fails are the services of a traditional healer called for. In other areas such as Nyae Nyae, where "traditional" ritual and religious institutions have persevered to a greater degree than elsewhere, communities will often attempt to treat illnesses by traditional methods first, and only if these fail will they seek guidance from experts in the western tradition (see *ibid.*).

However, there has clearly been a decline in the number of skilled traditional healers in San communities throughout the country. Those remaining are conspicuously aged, and because traditions of the past are often devalued by the young, few have transmitted their knowledge in anything but a haphazard and incomplete way to later generations. Nevertheless, at an individual level most San have a number of traditional cures at their disposal, ranging from *grewia* berries to Devil's Claw.

One factor that has helped maintain traditional medicinal knowledge is the well-established mythology of San curative prowess in Namibia. San healers are thought to retain special skills and abilities that other traditional- and western-paradigm medical practitioners lack. Thus, for example, over the past few years elderly San traditional healers from the Omaheke have been secreted to places as far away as Reheboth to deal discretely with the occasional VD problem in exchange for sometimes very generous fees (Sylvian pers. comm.).

9.2 Sickness and disease

The health status of San is intimately linked to their poverty, lack of education and high mobility.

Due to the fairly uniform levels of poverty among San speakers, different San communities tend to suffer from similar health problems. Health Unlimited has identified a number of key health problems common among San communities in Namibia (see Rudert 1995a and 1995b, and Health Unlimited 1999), the most pervasive of which is tuberculosis.

¹⁰⁷ San traditional medical practices are as diverse as their languages.

9.2.1 Tuberculosis

Presently the second most common cause of morbidity in Namibia, tuberculosis (TB) is the most serious health problem among San communities. Its prevalence is related to poverty and also to certain cultural practices that may facilitate its rapid transmission. Health workers and health institutions across Namibia report large numbers of San in need of TB treatment (Rudert 1995a; Health Unlimited 1999), with reported prevalence rates in East Tsumkwe at least three times the national average.

Efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MOHSS) to control TB in rural communities have been hampered by a lack of transport, which in turn prevents the ministry from supporting community-based Directly Observed Treatment Shortcourses (DOTS) – the method recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for effective TB treatment worldwide.

The long treatment period required for TB is often a problem for San, and one that is further complicated by economic insecurity and mobility. Combined with limited MOHSS support, this often results in San not completing the treatment, which renders them susceptible to drug-resistant strains of the disease that require costly and time-consuming treatment and also pose a much greater health risk to the affected community.

9.2.2 Malaria

Malaria is endemic in the north-east of Namibia where the majority of the country's San live. Other areas where San live are subject to occasional epidemics – usually associated with rainfall. San have few means of preventing malaria, especially since most of them sleep outside with no netting. According to MOHSS statistics, malaria annually infects around 400 000 people in Namibia (25% of the population), and for much of the 1990s has been either the second or third most common cause of death in Namibia after TB and, since 1996, AIDS.

9.2.3 AIDS

In 1997 the UNAIDS/WHO programme calculated that nearly 20% of all Namibians were HIV-positive, and moreover that the rate of infection was increasing every year, thus placing Namibia among the most infected countries on earth (UNDP 1998: 18). In the absence of any hard statistical data, it appears that San communities (the Kxoe notwithstanding) are on the whole less affected by HIV than many others in Namibia, though it is doubtful that they will remain so for long.

Vulnerability is contingent on several variables and is most marked among the ever-increasing numbers of San squatting around towns and villages in commercial and communal farming areas where casual sex, rape and prostitution are most common.¹⁰⁸ It is likely that AIDS will have the greatest long-term impact in these areas, where alcohol abuse is rife, economic opportunities are limited and social institutions are weak. Conversely, it is likely that AIDS will have the least impact in the more stable, relatively endogamous San communities living in remoter areas.

Few San consider the risk of AIDS to be a real or immediate threat, and fewer still use condoms or other prophylactics. Health Unlimited reports that in the Omaheke Region, less than 1% of sexually active San report ever using condoms and that only 20-40% are aware of the dangers of AIDS. Taking this into account, and bearing in mind that San, while traditionally monogamous, have fairly weak marriage structures with the result that a high proportion of people will have more than one sexual partner over a period of years, it is inevitable that San will be radically affected by this virus.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ It is rare for San men to have sexual relations with non-San women, though it is not unusual for San women to have sexual relations with non-San men (see Sylvian 1999). Historically San have been largely endogamous at a socio-linguistic level but exogamous with respect to band structures.

¹⁰⁹ It is important to note that for San at the sharp end of missionary colonialism, the colonial encounter had the net effect of strengthening marriage structures. Thus many of the slightly better-off San families in the farming blocks have stable long-term monogamous relationships.

Because of their socio-economic status, mobility and high dependency levels, however, it is unlikely that there will be significant community care for those infected. At present San are not well placed to care for or attend to the needs of those living with or indeed dying of HIV/AIDS.

AIDS is an immediate and visible problem among the Kxoe of West Caprivi, and infection levels in that community are consistent with those of their neighbours. Infection rates in the north-east of Namibia are the highest in the country and sexual relations between Kxoe and others are frequent.¹¹⁰ Moreover, large numbers of the transient population of soldiers, policemen, civil servants, truck drivers, road construction crews and others in West Caprivi have Kxoe girlfriends. Kxoe girls and women for their part often form relationships with non-Kxoe men, who as a rule are wealthier than their Kxoe counterparts. Brenzinger (1996) cites three principal reasons for Kxoe vulnerability to HIV infection, and these hold true for the remainder of the Namibian San population:

- Ethnic bias and low social status
- Poor education and communication barriers
- Disintegration of family structures

9.2.4 Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an important cause of morbidity in Namibia and is responsible for approximately 7% of all recorded deaths nationwide. In the case of San, children are particularly vulnerable because it is difficult for caregivers to identify the main danger signs and symptoms, and then to find or afford transport to the nearest MOHSS clinic if the decision is made to seek conventional (western) treatment.

9.2.5 Gastro-intestinal problems

San have very tough digestive systems. Often, however, poor diets and unhygienic living conditions result in gastro-intestinal problems that are a major cause of infant mortality among San. Dehydration resulting from diarrhoea is common, and when resources are scarce it is often difficult for San to make electrolyte solutions. Salmonella and E-coli infections are also common.

9.2.6 Trauma

Trauma injuries are a common problem in San communities due to the high levels of alcohol abuse and resultant “social” and domestic violence. Knife wounds are particularly common and in some areas, for example Skoonheid, only a small proportion of adult males do not bare scars that testify to a drunken brawl or two.

9.2.7 Teenage pregnancy

There are no recent statistics available regarding teenage pregnancy levels in Namibia. According to MOHSS statistics for 1992, 36% of Namibian women were mothers by the age of 18. Although it is difficult to extrapolate these figures to San, indications are that teenage pregnancy in San communities is common and has not declined in frequency since independence. Schools report a high female school dropout rate after puberty, with no female San in the Tsumkwe District having completed even their junior secondary school studies to date. In respect of the Caprivi, Brenzinger (1996: 55) reports that changes over the last 20 years have meant that children are now sexually active as from puberty, and that school hostels are occasionally “raided” by men seeking youthful female company for the night. According to the principal of Omega Combined School, the increased presence of NDF soldiers at the Omega base in 1999 resulted in over half of the female pupils in Grades 7, 8 and 9 dropping out due to pregnancy.

¹¹⁰ NACP/MOSS report that infection rates among pregnant women at Andara, Rundu and Katima Mulilo in 1997 ranged from 17.3-25.7%.

Historically it has been generally acceptable for San girls to marry or have sexual relations soon after reaching puberty. What has changed is the number of partners that an individual will typically have as well as the virtual disappearance in many areas of traditional marriage formalities. However, both men and women still define women's roles in terms of their reproductive capacity, and pregnancy is thus often seen as a partial fulfilment of womanhood.

In some areas these attitudes are changing: some San, especially those who are keen to see the next generation better educated than themselves, pressure their offspring not to give them grandchildren while still attending school, and some who have taken to the scriptures give religious reasons for disapproving of teenage pregnancy. For the most part, however, parents of young San women do not expect their daughters to complete school and do not discourage them from becoming sexually active at a young age.

9.2.8 Alcohol abuse

Alcohol abuse and its associated problems are a prominent feature of life in most San communities. There is no hard data available regarding the number of San who drink, how much they drink and the consequences of their drinking, but qualitative evidence suggests that it is a problem of considerable magnitude – comparable to that of other marginalised minorities such as the Australian Aboriginals. There is no doubting the fact that a large number of San are alcoholics and a high proportion of them get hideously drunk when the opportunity arises.

There is a tendency to account for many of the problems that San have to contend with by reference to their “abuse” of alcohol. This is a particularly common perception in some communal areas where no settlement is complete without a few drunken San lurking near the shebeens. To be sure, alcohol abuse has impeded their collective and individual capacity to challenge their circumstances, but to view this abuse as anything more than this impediment is a mistake. Although alcohol abuse is now clearly a serious problem in and of itself, the position that San are currently in is not due to excessive drinking. Rather, they drink excessively because of the position they are in.

With alcohol abuse becoming far more obviously a problem, some San have shown that they are capable of leaving the temptations of drink behind.¹¹¹ For many, not being able to be as drunk as they would like is attributable to financial constraints. The appeal of alcohol to San is understandable and San argue that drinking smoothes the edges of what are often rough lives. As a Ju/'hoan man explained:

If you are drunk then you don't feel scared. Listen man, if you are finished drunk, then you wont take shit from anyone, because you can feel strong.

Alcohol abuse is most prevalent among unemployed San living on the peripheries of larger villages, where life is tough and alcohol is easier to find. Many will often work in exchange for alcohol or alternatively exchange donated food for it. In settlements in communal areas some San regularly forgo food in favour of alcohol or tobacco. As one Ju/'hoan resident at Epukiro Post 3 argued:

If you do some work for a Herero and you get maybe one rand [10p] then you can maybe get a little porridge. But for that same work you can get some *tombo* [home brew] and if you are drunk you can sleep and you wont feel hunger until the next day.

Apart from the adverse effects on an individual's health, alcohol abuse has adverse social consequences. Drinking is often associated with domestic violence, brawls and theft, all of which are now common in San communities.¹¹² In resettlement camps, drunken fighting occurs usually every week, as it does in the larger settlements, townships and farm compounds. In families where parents are “big drinkers”, booze

¹¹¹ Some San individuals have recently given up drinking altogether, or at least have learnt to drink less excessively. Though few in number, those who have given up drinking altogether have done comparatively well for themselves. Perhaps the best example of San being aware of the social ills of alcohol and of their capacity to cope with alcohol was the move away from the shebeens (informal bars) of Tsumkwe during the 1980s.

¹¹² On the farms, stock theft is often an alcohol-inspired activity as people rarely crave meat so much as after a few drinks.



Alcohol and violence: children act out a drunken brawl at the Skoonheid resettlement camp

is often procured at the expense of the children. Over the past five years in Epukiro Post 3 it has not been uncommon for some San parents (of both sexes) to sell their (and their children's) entire food ration in return for alcohol. Since San associate their desire to consume alcohol with the evil agency of malevolent spirits, they will often accept no responsibility for their actions when drunk.

Part of the problem is the fact that San have no evolved "culture" of drinking that might regulate the use of alcohol and behaviour under its influence. For many San, being drunk allows for the suspension of normal social rules. Sober San rarely fight or beat their wives, but where alcohol is involved, such behaviour is not uncommon.

9.3 Health services

The extent to which San make use of existing health services depends on the ailment in question and varies from place to place. Nevertheless, in all San communities there is a clear understanding of the value of formal healthcare.

9.3.1 The Ministry of Health and Social Services

The MOHSS has made a number of notable achievements since taking over the health sector following independence. The ravages of AIDS aside, the MOHSS has made considerable progress in terms of key health indicators: infant mortality rates are down, immunisation coverage has increased and new clinics and healthcare facilities have been established.

In respect of "remote" communities, mobile health facilities and rural clinics serve as the main interface between San and the MOHSS. While often overstretched and under-resourced, the MOHSS attempts to provide a relatively holistic healthcare programme for Namibia's rural poor.

9.3.2 Transport

According to the UNDP, San have the worst access to healthcare of all Namibians, with 86% of them living further than one hour away from the nearest healthcare facility. Consequently San are dependent on mobile outreach clinics for routine healthcare matters, while for more serious or urgent matters they usually seek a lift (at some cost) to a hospital or a clinic. Outreach clinics are at hand on a monthly basis, but these are sometimes inadequate to provide for the healthcare needs of all communities living far from healthcare centres. Thus, although it is rare for San not to be able to reach a healthcare facility when absolutely necessary, this does happen occasionally. At Vergenoeg in the Omaheke Region, for example, one penniless San man died during the malaria epidemic of 1997 after waiting two days by the roadside because no one would give him a free lift to hospital.

The transport issue is further complicated in some areas by the lack of functioning ambulance services and the telecommunication systems necessary for summoning an ambulance when required. But perhaps the greatest threat to MOHSS transport support for delivering all rural healthcare services is the anticipated reduction in the ministry's non-salary budget in 2000/01 (Collins pers. comm.).

9.3.3 Communication and co-operation with medical staff

Co-operation and communication with clinic staff often present a problem for San (Rudert 1995a). They dislike visiting clinics and this is not due to a fear or dislike of western medicine so much as a fear and dislike of nurses.

San frequently complain that nurses treat them badly, and while this is partially a consequence of San unfamiliarity with the implicitly paternalist nature of the clinical encounter in western medicine, San complaints are not altogether unfounded. Nurses are often rude and impatient with San, who complain of being intimidated by them. In addition, nurses will rarely if ever even attempt to explain procedures or treatments to San patients even when asked to do so. Furthermore, San women complain that nurses often berate them and blame them for their children's illnesses.

Brenzinger (pers. comm.) states that in the Caprivi Region, San often leave going to hospital till very late as they would rather risk being sick a little longer than face the Mbukushu nurses. Similarly, at Mangetti Dune Health Centre some San patients have claimed that they try to come for treatment only when there is a reasonable chance that they will be treated by the doctor in person rather than by the nurses, whom they claim are patronising and rude.

9.4 NGOs and health

NGOs have also been active in San community healthcare issues at various levels. Although activities such as Raleigh International's cornea operations in Nyae Nyae in 1998 gained a high profile, Health Unlimited, a UK-based NGO, is the most active.

9.4.1 Health Unlimited

Health Unlimited works primarily with San communities in the Omaheke and Otjozondjupa Regions, where it aims to improve the communities' health status through community participation in the identification and prevention of disease. To do this, Health Unlimited has supported the MOHSS by training "community-based resource persons" resident in three of the six target communities. Health Unlimited's community-based strategy also entails addressing some of the social aspects of primary healthcare in San communities, including relations with healthcare providers.

Since 1997/98 Health Unlimited has produced its annual work plans in close collaboration with the MOHSS.

Health Unlimited in Nyae Nyae

Health Unlimited's Bushmanland Project in Nyae Nyae was initiated in 1991. Working in collaboration with the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (NNC) and the MOHSS, the Health Unlimited project has included health education programmes, outreach support activities and the training of community health workers. Health Unlimited was initially involved in the provision of primary healthcare only in the Nyae Nyae area, but the project now operates throughout the Tsumkwe constituency, albeit with a stronger focus on the east. The current project (1998-2003) aims to achieve the following three targets:

- East and West Tsumkwe target population to be screened and treated for TB where required
- East Tsumkwe target population to use treated mosquito nets
- East Tsumkwe target community (including primary school children) to have increased knowledge of how to prevent TB, HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Health Unlimited in the Omaheke

In 1997 Health Unlimited expanded its operations to the Omaheke Region, where it has since worked with mainly San communities in the two MLRR resettlement camps (Skoonheid and Drimiopsis) and also in Korridor Posts 15, 17 and 18.

Currently Health Unlimited is collaborating with the MOHSS to expand the coverage area to include communities at Vergenoeg, Sonneblom/Donkerpos and the Epako squatter area. This is an ambitious move and will effectively expand Health Unlimited coverage in the Omaheke to close to 8 000 people.

Like Health Unlimited's Tsumkwe project, the Omaheke project focuses simultaneously on community participation in health education and expanding the primary healthcare capacity of the MOHSS. The purpose of the Omaheke project is to improve selected San and Nama/Damara-speaking communities' willingness to seek healthcare while raising levels of appropriate knowledge by 2003.

9.5 Food security and food aid

The Emergency Management Unit (EMU) in the Office of the Prime Minister is tasked to co-ordinate food aid. The EMU estimates that around two thirds (17 000-22 000) of all Namibian San are either directly or indirectly reliant on state-sponsored food aid (see Chapter 6). Declining levels of employment on farms, the lack of access to land and natural resources, poor management of resettlement projects, population growth, alcoholism, dependency and the lack of education have placed San in a very weak position with regard to food security. Options for secure and sustainable access to food are few and far between, thus San and others lacking food security pursue mixed opportunistic subsistence strategies.

9.5.1 Hunger

Over a period of eight months San food security issues hit the headlines of national papers on three separate occasions: "San Starving to Death: Villagers say at least five lives lost" (12/11/98), *The Namibian* reported in November; "San Face Starvation" (12/03/99) the same paper reported in March; and in July *New Era* wrote "San Starving" (12-15/07/99). Little detailed information exists outside of Nyae Nyae on the subject (see Chapter 4, section 5), but it is widely recognised that San nutritional levels are generally inadequate and that "hunger" is a common feature of San life. Even though this has always been the case, nutritional levels among foraging and hunting San groups (even during unexceptional seasons) were generally good, only infrequently inadequate, and certainly better than is currently the case (Lee & Devore 1968; Lee 1984). As San came to be further integrated into the capital economy, they suffered a decline in dietary variety: where they once enjoyed a diverse diet of tubers, nuts, vegetables and meats, today maize porridge, beans, sugar, tea and oil account for most of their caloric intake.

As is made clear in preceding chapters, most San rely on several different subsistence strategies over the course of a year. For those without full-time employment, no single strategy is sufficient to support them throughout the year, and they consequently often go hungry. Although it is unusual for anyone to go without food for more than three or four days, it is not rare for people to eat nothing substantial for one or two days and quite common for people to eat very little for periods in excess of a month.

The most reliable means of achieving food security available to San is through gaining employment, which usually involves payment in the form of food rations in addition to cash wages. Most of those employed on farms receive what they perceive to be “good” rations, and although these are based on a maize porridge staple, they are usually diverse and substantial enough to enable a worker and his or her dependants to stave off “hunger” (see Devereaux et al. 1996).

9.5.2 Food aid

Since 1993 San have been receiving food aid from the GRN through three different programmes, all of which operate under the generic label of “emergency drought relief”. San populations have been provided with food aid for much of the time since 1993, and Cabinet has reportedly resolved to continue issuing food aid to San on a more or less permanent basis.

Policy and administration of food aid

For the first six years of its existence the EMU had to provide food aid with no fixed budget and no policy guidelines. The issuing of food aid has consequently been on an unstructured, ad hoc and reactive basis, with inevitably chaotic results (NDTF 1997). In order to co-ordinate matters better, the National Drought Task Force (NDTF) published a “National Drought Policy and Strategy” in 1997 and a “Manual of Procedures” in the following year to create some order in the process through:

- the establishment of better procedures to accurately target the genuinely vulnerable;
- the phasing out of free food distribution in favour of cash or voucher schemes; and
- the establishment of better monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to place greater emphasis on preparedness for drought emergencies.

The number of people supported by food aid from 1993 to 1999 has ranged from 20 000 to 180 000. No exclusive budget is allocated to the EMU for food aid; when requested, funds are allocated from other budget lines. With such high levels of public spending in 1999 the GRN could not afford to provide aid to all who requested it and the EMU was consequently instructed to reduce the number of people registered for food aid in 1999 from 360 000 to 76 000.

The Vulnerable Group Food Distribution and Food for Work Programmes

Since independence the Vulnerable Group Food Distribution Programme (VGFDP) and the Food for Work Programme (FFWP) have been the main programmes by means of which the majority of the San population has been fed. Under these interlinked programmes, food is distributed to vulnerable groups during periods of official drought, but as one EMU official pointed out, “There is always a drought for the San.”

Of those registered under these schemes, “vulnerable” categories (the elderly, the very young, pregnant and lactating women, etc.) are entitled to free food but the “able-bodied” must work to qualify. However, a lack of planning and consultation in the past has meant that in several places San have not been enthusiastic about participating in the FFWP – a situation that has been exacerbated by their mistrust of government officials.

Based on the NDTF's recommendations, the FFWP is to be phased out in favour of a food-vouchers-for-work or cash-for-work scheme. This is likely to be a significant development and will doubtless improve the efficiency of the programme.

Schools Feeding Programme

According to the NDTF (1997), the Schools Feeding Programme (SFP) has been running in more than 600 schools with the aim of providing 33% of children's daily nutritional needs. Considered more successful than other feeding programmes, the SFP is said not only to have helped children nutritionally but also to have encouraged school attendance. Children are not the only ones that benefit from the SFP: instances have been reported in some poorer areas of children being expected to bring their SFP food home with them to share it with their famished family members.

Delivery on food aid

As much as food aid has kept many San alive over the past few years, it has kept few of them happy. It is their most important source of food but it is unreliable, and when it fails to arrive when expected the consequences are serious. Since its inception, the food-aid programme has been riddled with problems including extensive corruption (both large- and small-scale), inefficient and inaccurate targeting of vulnerable communities, weak communication, inefficient and erratic delivery and over-registration (see NDTF 1997: 12). For San and other food-insecure people, communication has been a major problem, and in settlements where San are largely reliant on food aid, people often have no idea when or if food will arrive. In 1999 settlers at Tsintsabis suffered a massive case of collective constipation as a result of having lived almost exclusively on wild raisins for six weeks while waiting for food aid to arrive.

9.6 Conclusions and recommendations

The health status of San is principally an index of their poverty and it is unlikely that it will improve until such time as their socio-economic status improves. The potential success of interventions aimed exclusively at health-related issues is therefore limited. Nevertheless, there is considerable room for improving existing services available to San and other rural poor. Of principal importance is the improvement of communities' capacity to cope with or prevent health problems independently of clinic services, as per the Health Unlimited programme.

Similarly, as far as food security is concerned, there can be no fundamental improvement without profound changes at a broader socio-economic level. In the meantime interventions should focus on empowering communities to handle their own health-related issues.

9.6.1 Community healthcare

Given the limited resources available to the MOHSS and the spatial and social remoteness of many San communities, interventions should aim at improving healthcare at a community level, focusing on capacity. There is scope for the expansion of programmes such as that led by Health Unlimited to San communities throughout the country.

9.6.2 AIDS programmes

As is true for other Namibian communities, San are extremely vulnerable to HIV infection and AIDS. Campaigns to alert San to the dangers of HIV/AIDS should focus on non-written means of information dissemination. San in high-risk areas such as townships and large settlements should be targeted in particular.

9.6.3 Clinics and health services

Clinics should be made more accessible to San. At present San find clinic visits intimidating, unpleasant and often unrewarding. This problem stems in no small part from the prejudiced attitudes of some clinic staff. There are several ways in which to minimise the extent of this problem, including:

- cultural sensitivity training for nurses; and
- training greater numbers of San nurses, or failing this the employment in clinics of San helpers who are familiar with what is going on and can make patients feel more at ease.

9.6.4 Alcohol abuse

As much as San drunkenness is symptomatic of other problems, it has also become a problem in and of itself. It has not only provided a new stereotype to apply to San (“drunkards”), but has also restricted their capacity to manage and deal with their own problems. Efforts should thus be made within communities to discuss alcohol and its attendant problems with a view to establishing a programme that might limit some of its ill effects. Such a programme should also draw on the experiences of other indigenous peoples that have battled with alcohol-related problems, but focus on local solutions to local problems.

CHAPTER 10

EDUCATION

10.1 Introduction

San in Namibia are conspicuous for their lack of formal education and the continuing problems they experience in accessing education services. According to the 1998 UNDP Human Development Report, adult literacy levels among San are around 16%, and although the situation has improved considerably over the last ten years, fewer than one in five San of school-going age currently attend school (see Figure 10.1). In addition, San school dropout rates remain very high and only 1% of San who have enrolled in Grade 1 have proceeded as far as senior secondary education level (MBEC 1999). Due to non-attendance and dropping out, the current generation of San of school-going age look set to be almost as educationally marginalised as preceding generations, despite the fact that they will be in greater need of the skills acquired through formal education. In both the medium and short term this will inevitably have the effect of maintaining and reproducing San socio-economic marginalisation.

Apparently undaunted by the scale of these problems, the MBESC (formerly MBEC)¹¹³ has demonstrated a strong commitment to San education, as well as flexibility and imagination in meeting the needs of San learners. Consequently, despite the fact that results have been slow to emerge, genuine progress has been made over the past 10 years, and significant inroads could be made in future with adequate support. The education sector certainly provides a good model of and for the harmonisation of governmental and non-governmental interventions.



Village school learners in Nyae Nyae

¹¹³ What used to be the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC) is now the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC).

In this chapter I make a cursory assessment of the educational status of San in Namibia. In so doing I place educational issues within a broader socio-economic and political context to complement far more detailed studies and assessments such as those of Biesele (1995), Le Roux (1999)¹¹⁴ and the MBESC (2000), which deal with selected issues raised in this chapter in considerably greater depth and with greater sophistication.

10.1.1 Apartheid education

Colonial administrators argued that a formal education would be wasted on the “primitive Bushmen”, thus very few schools were built in areas where San lived, and moreover San were not encouraged to attend them. Consequently, few San came to appreciate the need for formal education or to develop the social and cultural institutions required to prepare children for the unfamiliar, frightening and challenging world of formal schooling. By 1984 only about one in twenty San had received any formal education whatsoever, and only one San pupil had attended school for longer than seven years (Marais et al. 1984).

The number of San pupils in formal education increased substantially following the deployment of the SADF in West Caprivi and former Bushmanland in the decade immediately preceding independence (see Chapters 4 and 5). Thus by 1991 a total of 1 421 San, or close to 23% of the total San population of school-going age, were enrolled in schools.

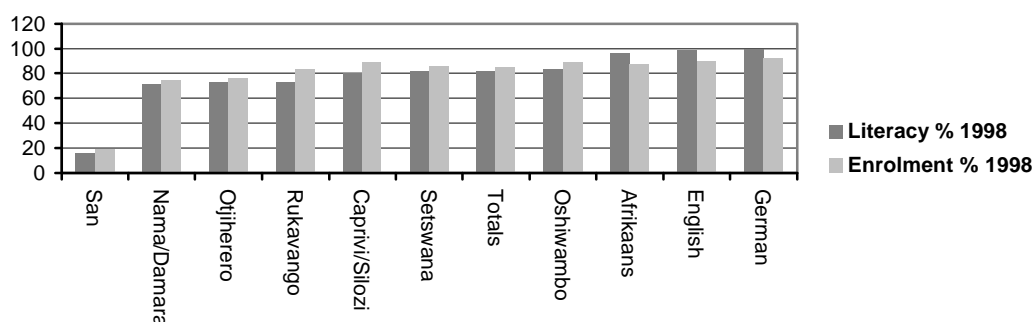


Figure 10.1: Literacy and enrolment of San and other language groups

Source: UNDP 1998

10.2 Impacts of lack of education on San

The long-term consequences of the SWAA’s failure to provide adequate formal education to San communities are immeasurable. At present the low levels of education among San contribute as much to their poverty as their poverty contributes to their poor education. Through remaining un- or under-educated, San remain without the tools required to challenge their marginal status.

10.2.1 Vulnerability

The lack of basic literacy and numeracy means that San are often nervous of paperwork and go to some lengths to avoid having to deal with it. The large numbers of San without identification and other documents is partly a result of this. With the situation exacerbated by frequently condescending and unhelpful bureaucrats, San often leave GRN facilities before they have been able to deal with the matters they went there to deal with in the first place. Consequently many legitimate San labour complaints go unreported, many San fail to register for elections, many do not get a driver’s license and many do not apply for the state benefits to which they are entitled.

¹¹⁴ *Torn Apart* by Willemien le Roux provides a comprehensive assessment of the educational status of San throughout southern Africa. The paper makes detailed recommendations on a wide range of educational issues and clearly demonstrates the extent to which poverty, culture, discrimination and racism are implicated in the education question.

At present only a handful of San households have one or more literate members. San are acutely aware of problems arising from their illiteracy and of the fact that it excludes them in a variety of ways from access to state resources and information. San communities often define themselves in terms of their “ignorance” relative to others, thus reinforcing their own vulnerability. They complain that they often do not understand the contents of documents they are requested to sign or mark, or the legal implications of signing or not signing such documents. They rely entirely on others to ensure that information they have given is correct and that their responses are appropriate – a situation that can and has led to abuse. Indeed San often complain that they have signed documents after having been deceived about their contents.¹¹⁵

10.2.2 Inability to secure non-menial jobs

Perhaps the most self-evident problem arising from their lack of formal education is the inability of San to compete with others in the job market. The overwhelming majority of formally employed San (outside of NGOs and CBOs) have unskilled jobs, and of the few San with educational qualifications appropriate for employment in the civil service, only a handful are, and none at management level. Proportionally San are the most under-represented major Namibian language group in the civil service.

The achievements of a few exceptional individuals notwithstanding, the only thing that gives San a “competitive edge” over others in the job market is their relative poverty and hence the low wages that they command. This is of particular concern given the radical decline in agricultural sector employment over the past 20 years (see Chapter 1). If San cannot gain skills that will enable them to diversify into other sectors of the economy, the only possible outcome will be increased dependency on already over-stretched welfare services.

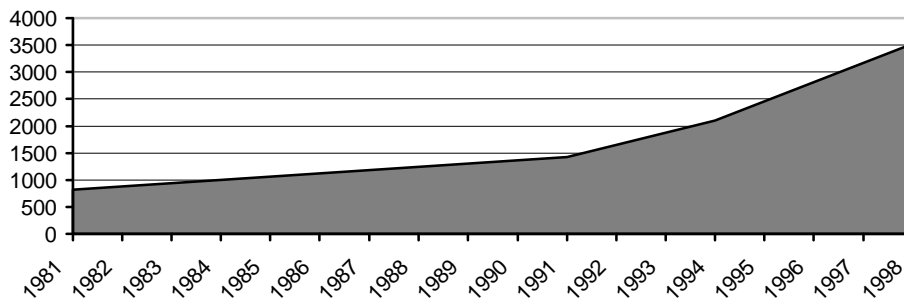


Figure 10.2: San enrolment in schools in 1981-1998

Sources: Marais et al. 1984; EMIS 1999

10.3 San and schooling in Namibia

With support and encouragement from the NGO sector, the MBESC has accomplished a great deal in its first few years and the majority of the ambitious targets outlined in NDP1 for the year 2000 have been met.¹¹⁶ Consequently there has been a marked improvement in the educational status of Namibian San since independence. In just under a decade the number of San enrolled in schools has more than doubled – from 1 409 in 1991 to 3 526 in 1998 (see Figure 10.2). This indicates an enrolment level of 25-30%, this being significantly higher than the level reported by the UNDP (see Figure 10.1). Nevertheless, San school attendance levels remain unacceptably low and their dropout rates excessively high. Were all San of school-going age to actually attend school, an additional 8 000 to 10 000 places would have to be found for them.

¹¹⁵ For example, the Ju/'hoan community at N//homa in central Tsumkwe District alleged that they had inadvertently signed an agreement with the headmaster of Aasvoëlness School allowing his cattle to graze there in the belief that they were signing a registration form for drought relief.

¹¹⁶ In line with targets, close to half a million learners attend 14 897 schools (MBESC 1999: 94).

Formal education for San continues to be a problem area despite the efforts of NGOs and the MBESC, principally because the underlying causes of San marginalisation have not been dealt with and because existing educational facilities are not adequately geared towards the specific needs of San learners or the problems they experience (Le Roux 1999). It is clear that as much as San are aware of the need for formal education, few feel that the long-term benefits of it outweigh the costs and deprivations involved in acquiring it. The MBESC cites poverty and the negative attitudes of others as the two main causes of low school attendance levels among San children (MBESC 2000; Le Roux 1999).

Table 10.1: San in schools in 1994 and 1998

Year	Lower Primary	Upper Primary	Junior Secondary	Senior Secondary	Total
1994	1 707	279	54	10	2 100
1998	2 723	803	193	19	3 526

Sources: EMIS

Considerably more schools now accommodate San learners than was the case in the past (see Table 10.2),¹¹⁷ and support for San education has come from a variety of sources, including anthropologists, church workers, commercial farmers and the GRN.¹¹⁸

10.3.1 Poverty

As Le Roux (1999) has made clear, poverty affects not only the physical and cognitive development of San children, but also their status at school in various ways:

- High mobility means that it is difficult to keep children in school.
- Poverty provokes a lack of interest in schooling because schooling is regarded as circumstantially unnecessary.
- Poverty reduces the level of parental care for children because parents are often too busy struggling to keep their family alive to worry about schooling. Le Roux also notes that it is not unknown for San to “give up” their children to others who are better placed to care for them.
- Poverty-stricken parents cannot afford to cover the costs of uniforms and school fees (see below).

10.3.2 Cultural issues

The ease with which children drop out of school and the negligible resistance of parents to this move are in part culturally motivated. The shift from home life to school life is often highly traumatic for San children, not least because formal age-grade education is an alien concept to them and their parents.

This is further complicated by the fact that the relationship between San parents and their children is generally non-authoritarian. San parents are on the whole reluctant to force their children into anything, so the parents of a child who complains sufficiently about school will often submit to the child’s desire to drop out. That San regard their children’s short-term happiness as being of greater consequence than their schooling suggests firstly that they are not always aware of the extent to which the lack of formal education might disadvantage their children in the future, and secondly that skills learnt in schools are perceived to be of little use in coping with daily struggles.

A further and more complex issue relating to parents’ and children’s attitudes to formal education is the change in cultural outlook that schooling often induces. Some San parents complain that children who go away to school no longer know “how to behave” when they return home. Formal education in these circumstances reverses age roles and hierarchies: where the young were once distinguished by their lack of useful or important knowledge of the world, it is now their elders who bear this dubious distinction.

¹¹⁷ The number of schools with San students has increased from less than 20 before independence to more than 150 in 1999.

¹¹⁸ For example, 1998 saw the establishment of three “community” schools in different parts of Namibia (see Le Roux 1999 and Brörmann 1999: 10). In terms of contribution, farm schools which cater especially for children of generational San farm workers, such as the Gqaina School in Omaheke, are invaluable.

In this way formal education exacerbates a growing generation gap, about which neither old nor young feel entirely comfortable. From this perspective schooling is socially disruptive because it confuses age roles and subverts the subtle power relationships that sustain them. Parents regard their not insisting that children attend school as a means of avoiding these disruptions.

10.3.3 Transport and boarding

Spatial remoteness also poses a problem for many San in respect of formal education: schools are few and far between in the thinly populated commercial farming areas, and as a result many San children are dependent on the goodwill of farmers and others if they wish to attend school. Failing such goodwill they are faced with the option of undertaking a difficult journey on their own steam or staying at home.

Transport problems mean that for many San children boarding school is the only viable option. Apart from the additional costs involved, this is not a satisfactory option as few San parents are happy to “lose” their children to schools and even fewer children are happy to leave their family to live in a hostel. Some San parents are concerned that boarding undermines family structures and alienates their children from them by making them ashamed of their culture. Furthermore, boarding allows greater scope for bullying and sexual liaisons, neither of which fills parents with great confidence.

10.3.4 Punishment

Although technically illegal, beating is still a favoured form of punishment in a number of rural schools in Namibia, and many San have complained of having their backsides “burnt” by teachers, principals and boarding-house matrons. San do not emphasise corporal punishment in their traditional socialisation process and rarely if ever beat their children (Draper 1976; Le Roux 1999).¹¹⁹ Consequently when San children complain to their parents of being beaten in school, the latter often agree that the child should not be forced to return.

10.3.5 Negative attitudes of other students

Bullying, harassment or pressure from other learners adds to the numbers of San who drop out. Schools often reflect and magnify the world around them, and this is also the case in respect of relations between San and other students. In schools where San constitute a minority of the student body, many complain of bullying, teasing and intimidation at the hands of other students – these actions often being based in ethnic characterisations. Some respond by giving up on schooling altogether, while others have tried to conceal, bury or simply discard their identity as San if they are black-skinned enough to get away with it. As noted by the MBEC (1988: 23):

The accounts by many of the marginalised children and their parents of harassment, molesting, teasing [and] degrading by others are plentiful ... It is not only their fellow learners, but also their teachers that behave in a non-professional manner.

Some teachers report that San children do considerably better in school if a reasonable proportion of their schoolmates are San (Maritz pers. comm.).

10.3.6 Problems with teachers

Taking into account the low levels of teacher training in Namibia and the ubiquity of beliefs constructing San as socially inferior, it is inevitable that some teachers in some schools will treat San children and their parents in a way that can only alienate them from the formal education process (Le Roux 1999). While in many cases teachers have proved to be very helpful to San students and their parents alike, in

¹¹⁹ However, as Le Roux (1999) demonstrates, some San have recently changed their attitude towards beating and corporal punishment, and now regard these as means to discipline children.

others San parents have complained of being patronised by staff and treated in an offhand and dismissive manner. Moreover San children have reported that staff do not always assist them when they are being bullied or teased by other children. In schools where San learners constitute small minorities within class structures, some have also complained of being victimised by teachers for poor performance, allegedly often by reference to their ethnic background.

Table 10.2: Number of schools accommodating San learners in 1981, 1994 and 1998

San Learners per School	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS		
	1981	1994	1998
<10	0	87	134
10-49	7	16	18
>49	8	13	29
Total	15	116	181

Sources: Brand et al. 1984: 60; EMIS 1995 and 1999

10.3.7 Payment of fees

Following the *First Secondary School San Learners Conference* in Windhoek in 1997, the MBESC instructed school principals to enrol children regardless of whether or not their parents could afford fees and uniforms. Nevertheless, San have complained that some school principals still insist that fees must be paid before they will admit a child (see WIMSA 1998 and Brörmann 1999). In addition, San parents living in M'kata have complained that teachers still send children home if they do not have a uniform.

10.3.8 Mother-tongue education

The GRN's commitment to providing mother-tongue education for the first three years of schooling is spelt out in the policy document titled *Toward Education for All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training* (MBEC 1993: 65):

All national languages are equal regardless of the numbers of speakers or the level of development of that particular language ... For pedagogical reasons it is ideal for children to study through their own language during the early years of schooling when basic skills of reading, writing and concept formation are developed.

Although no schools offered San mother-tongue instruction at the time of independence, the situation has improved since then, with Baraka School in Nyae Nyae paving the way: here Ju/'hoan learners in Grades 1-3 are now schooled in their mother tongue.

Operating under the Nyae Nyae Village Schools Programme (see Chapter 4), Baraka School caters for 421 San learners and uses Ju/'hoan-language educational materials that were produced through a well-funded long-term collaboration between Ju/'hoan community leaders, educationalists, anthropologists, linguists and the NDNFN. The remainder and overwhelming majority of San learners in Grades 1-3 are taught in other Namibian languages including English, this being a language with which very few San are familiar (EMIS 1999: 43). By contrast, around 60% of learners from other major language groups receive mother-tongue instruction during their first three years of schooling (ibid.). Gqaina School in the Omaheke Region also recently initiated a pilot mother-tongue learning scheme, though at this stage it remains dependent on resources and materials developed in Nyae Nyae by and on behalf of a different dialect community.

Minority status of San in most schools

As noted elsewhere in this report, few San live in areas where they constitute a majority population, and according to the MBESC (EMIS 1999), 74% of all schools with registered San learners have fewer than

10 San in the student body. In schools where San constitute such a small minority, it would be unrealistic and uneconomical in the short term to provide mother-tongue education for them.

Lack of educational materials

Namibian San language groups are characteristically small, and dialect groups are even smaller. Namibia is home to three major San language groups, which in turn comprise over 20 dialect groups with (on average) fewer than 2 000 speakers per dialect (see Guldemann 1998). This makes it difficult to develop appropriate mother-tongue education materials for all San learners. The only such materials available at present are for the Nyae Nyae dialect of !Kung, which is spoken as a first language by only 1 500 to 2 000 people. While such materials are useful to other !Kung speakers, they are colloquial and hence not entirely appropriate to their needs.¹²⁰

Though highly desirable, the development and provision of educational materials for all San language and dialect groups would be prohibitively expensive and logistically impractical. While certainly not an ideal solution from several perspectives, efforts should be focused on developing materials in major languages that accommodate as many dialect groups as possible, such as Kxoe and !Kung.

Lack of teachers proficient in San languages

The lack of qualified teachers proficient in any San language is also a considerable problem. Not only have few San completed their schooling and gone on to tertiary education, but few have spent more than five years at school. The Village Schools Programme, the West Caprivi schools, Gqaina School in the Omaheke and as of recently †Oenie School at Intu Afrika Lodge in the Hardap Region are the only schools in Namibia in which San teachers have taught San students. At Gqaina School, the only teacher fluent in a San language (Omaheke Ju/'hoan dialect) speaks Afrikaans at home.

10.3.9 Teenage pregnancy

Fewer female than male San learners have progressed to secondary education. Similarly, no San women in Namibia have taken up tertiary education as yet. At Tsumkwe Junior Secondary School, for example, it was reported that not a single female San learner had been promoted to Grade 8 in the nine years since independence.

San girls are prone to drop out of school for all the reasons that San boys do in addition to a number of gender-specific ones, particularly teenage pregnancy (see Chapter 9). For many young San women, pregnancy follows soon after sexual maturity is reached, and this is not generally frowned upon or in any way seen as socially unacceptable. The extent to which pregnancy precludes formal educational development on the part of San girls is graphically illustrated by the fact that all San learners studying at the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) in 1998 were male (WIMSA 1999: 8).

10.4 Adult education

Low levels of basic literacy and numeracy not only constrain San participation in the capital economy to the lowest level, but also ensure that San remain vulnerable as a result of their not being able to negotiate the "paper state". To improve this situation several organisations have initiated adult education programmes or helped San to complete their secondary education through institutions such as NAMCOL. Perhaps the most significant intervention in this area has been the funding and assistance provided by the Kalahari Peoples' Fund, an education trust that in 1999 supported 43 San students in Grades 10 and 12 (WIMSA 1999: 8).

¹²⁰ Although there are some clear dialectical differences, Khoekhoegowab (Nama/Damara) resources are available for Hai//om San.

Bearing in mind how difficult it is for adults (especially if they are extremely poor) to learn to read and write, it is unrealistic to expect that adult education programmes will make a significant impact in the short or medium term. Moreover, taking into account current school dropout rates it is inevitable that a large proportion of adult San will still be illiterate a generation into the future.

10.5 Education policy and San

In 1998/99, as in previous years, the MBESC was granted the largest budget allocation of any ministry. The GRN's strong commitment to education is called for in the Constitution: Article 20 states that all persons have the right to education, and moreover that primary education should be provided free of charge. This commitment to education is further spelt out in the 1993 policy document titled *Toward Education for All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training* and in NDP1 (NPC 1995).

In contrast to other ministries that deal extensively with San and San issues, the MBESC has demonstrated a relatively strong commitment to improving the educational status of San and other educationally marginalised groups. This commitment has been made explicit in several forums, the most important of which were the *Workshop on Educationally Marginalised Children* held in 1995 and the *First Secondary School San Learners Conference* held in 1997.

10.5.1 The Intersectoral Task Force on Educationally Marginalised Children

Following the workshop on educationally marginalised children held in 1995, the MBESC resolved to establish an Intersectoral Task Force on Educationally Marginalised Children (ITFEMC) with a view to recommending policy guidelines on educationally marginalised children.

Key stakeholders¹²¹ were invited to participate in the ITFEMC, which has since come up with a number of important recommendations. The ITFEMC identified San children as one of the principal intended beneficiaries of any future special initiatives on behalf of educationally marginalised children.¹²² The ITFEMC's work also resulted in the publication of the document titled *National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children* (see below).

The First Secondary School San Learners Conference

On the ITFEMC's recommendation, the *First Secondary School San Learners Conference* was held in 1997 with a view to identifying and dealing with problems experienced by San learners. Apart from having symbolic significance, the conference was the forum in which the MBEC gave an unconditional guarantee that it would provide financial assistance for any San learner entering into tertiary education (MBEC 1997).

Policy on educationally marginalised children

In 1998 the ITFEMC approved a document detailing policy options that could be followed to improve the lot of educationally marginalised children nationwide, and was subsequently tasked by the GRN to develop an action plan for implementing these. Published by the MBESC in 2000, the document titled *National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children* endorses the need for a "special policy" that is flexible enough to respond imaginatively to the specific needs of different groups of such children. The recommendations contained in this document are based on an accurate identification of problems and their causes, and hence focus as much on changing the negative attitudes of others as on providing a more flexible education infrastructure for the educationally marginalised. Key recommendations relate to:

¹²¹ For example, line ministries concerned with San issues, concerned NGOs, UN agencies, trade unions and UNAM.

¹²² San incidentally fall into a number of the categories identified for priority treatment. Other priority groups include children of farm labourers, the Ovahimba, street children, children in squatter areas or resettlement camps, disabled children and children deemed over-age in terms of existing requirements.

- ➔ ensuring that directives concerning school fees and uniforms in respect of the poor are followed;
- ➔ information campaigns targeted at parents to stress the value of formal education to their children;
- ➔ greater use of informal hostels to cut costs associated with boarding for poor families;
- ➔ the provision of transport facilities for children from remote areas;
- ➔ early childhood development programmes for children in marginalised communities;¹²³
- ➔ the establishment of mobile schools; and
- ➔ the adoption of measures, including gender and cultural sensitivity training for teachers, to change attitudes of others to educationally marginalised children.

10.5.2 Policy implementation

In contrast to many other ministries' dealings with San and other marginalised peoples, the MBESC has sought to respond creatively to problems it has been confronted with. Nevertheless, while its efforts should be commended, there should be absolutely no doubt as to the sheer scale of the problem involved in making education accessible and appealing to San. Despite receiving the lion's share of the national budget, the MBESC has demonstrated that it does not at present have the capacity to implement policy as effectively as it would like.

Human resource problems

An inevitable consequence of the SWAA racially biased education policies is the widespread under-qualification of staff in Namibian schools. According to the MBEC's annual report for 1998, although close to 80% of teachers had some formal teaching qualifications, only 72% of school teachers had themselves completed secondary school, while only 11% had completed more than two years of tertiary education. In these circumstances it is inevitable that some learners perform poorly. It is also inevitable that a high proportion of school teachers are not suitably qualified to deal with the challenges of teaching children from educationally marginalised groups with "special needs".



Children from the Sonneblom/Donkerbos community in the Omaheke Region enjoying a day at their pre-school

¹²³ A study focusing on the early education of San children throughout southern Africa was conducted in 1998/99 with a view to establishing suitable early childhood development programmes.

Lack of material resources

Despite budgetary prioritisation, the MBESC is still insufficiently resourced for the scale of the problem it is tasked to deal with. Certainly as far as the needs of San learners are concerned, there is scope for improvement in teacher training, the provision of educational materials, the development of appropriate curricula, the availability of sufficient school places, and transport to and from school. Because of rapid population growth and the GRN's limited capacity to mobilise revenues, UNFPA (1998) predicts that the GRN will not be able to sustain its current budgetary allocation to the MBESC. This suggests that that there will be considerably greater scope for donor involvement in future.¹²⁴

10.6 Conclusions and recommendations

Given that adult literacy among San is lower than 20% and that their school enrolment rates are almost matched by their dropout rates, it is reasonable to assume that a significant proportion of San currently aged 10-20 will never learn to read or write. This suggests that a declining but still significant proportion of the total San population in Namibia will still be illiterate two or even three decades into the future.

At present the success of educational initiatives geared towards San-language speakers has been limited by their marginal social and economic status. As Le Roux (1999) makes plain, greater land rights would go a considerable way towards creating an environment that facilitates San access to formal education. Efforts that take into account the high mobility of the target population, their inability to pay fees and their lack of a "culture of formal education" are needed. Only once these issues have been more substantially dealt with will formal education be accessible and appealing to San children on the whole.

Because transforming the educational status of the San will be a long-term process, positive results will only emerge after several years. At this stage interventions should focus primarily on enrolling San in school and creating conditions at the applicable schools that encourage learners to stay there. From the perspective of long-term poverty alleviation and dependency reduction, education must be viewed as a priority.

10.6.1 Flexibility in policy

Educating San children has proved to be a highly complex task and the limited extent of success thus far suggests that existing policies and practices do not adequately meet the needs of San learners. To rectify this situation it is essential that recommendations made in specialist studies on San education are put into practice. As Le Roux (1999: 28) notes, of all the countries that are home to San populations, "Namibia is by far the country with the most innovative and progressive programmes for testing alternatives to mainstream education." It is essential that policy remains flexible enough to respond creatively to the challenges of San education. Le Roux (1999: 124) has demonstrated that the majority of San learners do not do well in the current education system and that measures aimed at encouraging San to adapt to it have largely been unsuccessful. Consequently she recommends that policy-makers should think more about adapting the education system to meet San needs than about coercing San to comply with existing educational arrangements. Among other things, this would involve:

- community schooling and the decentralisation of education programmes;
- the linking of education programmes for San with ongoing development initiatives;
- greater emphasis on San cultural matters in early education and the collaborative development of culturally appropriate resources; and
- the development of learning environments appropriate to San methods of acculturative and educational development.

¹²⁴ The budgetary allocation to education decreased from 28.5% of the national budget in 1995 to just over 20% in 1999.

10.6.2 Language development

The development of appropriate mother-tongue education materials for San learners is a priority. In order for children to be educated in their mother tongues, efforts should focus on the development of resource materials and the training of community members who are proficient in the learners' respective mother tongues as educators. The Nyae Nyae Village Schools Programme provides a model that is suitable for emulation elsewhere.

As the Nyae Nyae and Kuru education initiatives have made apparent, the development of mother-tongue education materials for San speakers is an arduous, expensive and time-consuming task. Indeed this kind of work, which entails establishing grammars, orthographies, dictionaries and other materials, consumes vast resources and inevitably requires the assistance of linguists, educators, anthropologists, San language speakers and others who are in a position to dedicate a great deal of time to the project. To this end a workshop or conference should be organised with a view to identifying stakeholders' needs and priorities as well as potential contributors to such a programme, and to securing pledges of financial assistance from donors.

In tandem with the development of mother-tongue materials for San scholars, efforts should be made to minimise the number of schools in which San constitute small minorities. For example, where 50 or 60 San pupils living in one area attend several different schools, arrangements should be made to enable them all – should they so wish – to attend the same school. Speakers of all major languages in the country have access to primary schools attended primarily by other speakers of their languages, and there is no reason why things should be any different for San-language speakers. Indeed it can be argued that should San communities seek to establish primarily San schools, they are entitled to do so in terms of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The establishment of schools that cater for comparatively larger numbers of San should go some way to reducing dropout and non-attendance rates because they will:

- allow for the use of mother-tongue curricula and materials as these are developed;
- reduce the scope for bullying and harassment in an ethnic idiom; and
- facilitate the development of more culturally appropriate curricula for young learners.

Schools with a higher proportion of San students also will appeal considerably more to parents who fear “losing” their children.

10.6.3 Coverage

Although there are more places available for San in schools than there are San who go to school, coverage is also a problem in that many San live far away from even the nearest schools, with the result that their children must board if they are to attend. There is scope for increasing the number of schools catering to San – possibly focusing on mixed- or multi-grade learning to allow for smaller schools in more remote areas. Farm schools in particular should be encouraged and supported, with incentives being offered to farmers to establish them. Another option would be the initiation of a school bus scheme whereby remote learners are picked up and delivered home at the beginning and end of every term.

10.6.4 Status of the uneducated

A significant but declining proportion of San will still be illiterate and innumerate 20 years from now. Although it is likely that by that time almost all San households will include at least one literate member, those who remain illiterate will find themselves increasingly stranded as the information age penetrates deeper into rural Namibia. Steps should be taken to ensure that illiterate adults are not unnecessarily disadvantaged by their handicap. Possible measures include placing more emphasis on oral forms of communication where information must be disseminated, and on the employment of facilitators specifically to help illiterate people to access the GRN and other institutions.

CHAPTER 11

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND TOURISM

11.1 Introduction

Over the past decade community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programmes have sought to reconcile the formerly opposed practices of community development and biodiversity conservation.¹²⁵ Given the former dominance of hunting and gathering as a San economic strategy and the extent to which this strategy is consistent with current notions of environmental sustainability, CBNRM has emerged as an important area of collaboration between the GRN, NGOs and San. A prerequisite of any CBNRM programme, however, is access to land and natural resources, which the majority of Namibia's San population lack. Only among the small proportion of San who retain independent land rights or entertain realistic prospects of acquiring such rights has CBNRM had some appeal. Currently, San in the Tsumkwe District and West Caprivi are beneficiaries of CBNRM programmes, even though the status of the West Caprivi group remains far from straightforward (see Chapter 5).

CBNRM programmes are clearly of real benefit to local populations and have achieved a great deal, particularly in terms of capacity-building and securing land rights. In some instances, however, these programmes have been pursued almost to the exclusion of others, and as will be made clear, this raises some serious questions about their long-term sustainability in terms of both biodiversity conservation and human development.

11.2 Tourism and San in Namibia

Tourism is a growth industry in Namibia, and revenues generated in the tourism sector have increased substantially since 1990 (Ashley 1995: 3).¹²⁶ In 1997 the sector grew by about 9% and a total of 502 012 foreign visitors crossed Namibia's borders (NEPRU, *Viewpoint* No. 18, 1998).¹²⁷

Although the majority of tourists to Namibia come here for the wildlife and scenery, a proportion come with social or cultural interests at heart. As much as wildlife and other natural resources in areas such as former Bushmanland are attractive in and of themselves, most visitors go there to see or meet the famous Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae. San mythology remains a reality for many tourists and they are prepared to part with cash to experience something of San life and "culture" (even if gaudily packaged). To this extent their popular image is an asset capable of generating meaningful returns.

Because few San are well placed to exploit this mythology, however, it is largely non-San who have profited from it: in recent years there has been a proliferation of lodges marketing themselves at least in part as "San attractions" – Intu Afrika being a case in point (see under section 11.2.1).

¹²⁵ There is substantial literature on CBNRM in Namibia over the past 10 years, much of it published by the MET's Directorate of Environmental Affairs (e.g. Ashley & Garland 1994, Ashley 1995 and Jones 1996).

¹²⁶ According to NEPRU (1998: 8), tourism employed around 10 000 people in 1997, contributing 6% to the GDP and 17% to export revenues.

¹²⁷ Of these visitors, 77% were from African countries, suggesting that a good deal less than half of the total number of people crossing the border were holidaymakers.

The commoditisation of culture implicit in ethno-tourism raises difficult ethical issues for San insofar as practices such as medicine dances become commercial activities. San community leaders are aware of these problems and are concerned about their possible ramifications (see Thoma & †Oma 1998). They have realised, however, that where San are desperately poor, tourism represents one potential strategy for generating income and for simultaneously regaining partial control over the production, reproduction and packaging of their own popular image.

11.2.1 Tourism options for San

Community-based tourism

The inadvertent marketing of San by anthropologists and others has made San perhaps the best known of Namibia's peoples. Given their current "attraction" value, community-based tourism has significant appeal for San communities. There are currently three San community-based tourism projects underway: the N//goavaca campsite at Muteiku in West Caprivi, the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (NNC) in Tsumkwe and the Omatako Valley Rest Camp in West Tsumkwe (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Community-based tourism initiatives developed in tandem with CBNRM programmes have been donor-driven, and massively so. Between 1993 and 2000, USAID and the WWF-US funded CBNRM initiatives in Namibia to the tune of US\$25 million, and they have earmarked a further US\$12 million for the next five years (Callihan 1999). The extent of donor support for the establishment of communal-area conservancies has meant that NGOs have played a very significant role in implementing and promoting these initiatives. Most prominent among these is Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) – the driving force behind the major CBNRM efforts in West Caprivi, the Kunene Region and the Tsumkwe District (discussed below).

Joint ventures with commercial outfits

Although options exist for building expensive lodges in communal-area conservancies, no San conservancy has gone this route as yet. Consumptive tourism notwithstanding, the most important collaboration between a San community and a commercial tourism operator was initiated when the management of the Intu Afrika Lodge approached WIMSA in 1995 with a proposal to transform itself into a tourist attraction with a "Bushman" theme. Intu Afrika was concerned that a fair agreement should be made between San and the lodge, and broke new ground by acknowledging that since San are an attraction, they should be entitled to a square cut of the profits.

To this end WIMSA, the Chief Designate of the South Omaheke San Traditional Authority and Intu Afrika entered into an agreement in terms of which members of the extremely poor San community living in the Aminuis Korridor would work on a three-month shift basis at Intu Afrika, serving as guides lodge staff, and as the local "Bushman attraction". For its part Intu Afrika agreed to provide adequate amenities for the San, to build and run a community school, to pay a bed levy in favour of a community trust and to pay the San salaries for the time they spend at the lodge.

While there have been a number of problems at Intu Afrika and a seemingly endless series of disputes between the parties concerned (Thoma pers. comm.), relative to other commercial operators the efforts of Intu Afrika and its willingness to enter into such an agreement must be seen in a positive light.¹²⁸

Farm workers as San attractions

Less formal and more common than the Intu Afrika-type arrangement is one whereby guest farms use San imagery for marketing or "display" San farm workers to the benefit of ethnologically curious guests.

¹²⁸ The disputes between the Intu Afrika management and San at the lodge have been over a variety of matters ranging from drunkenness on the side of the San to management's illegal use of San imagery to promote the lodge. Pay disputes and arguments over a number of other matters have peppered their history together.



A marketable image: Maria Geelbooi on the set of *Running Free*, a recent Columbia Tristar (Hollywood) feature film – partially shot in Namibia – in which she starred

In these instances San are usually employed as farm workers and receive no additional remuneration for their performances. At the Harnas Lion Farm in the Gobabis District, for example, a number of elderly San were kept as a living diorama during 1997 and reportedly received no pay for their labours. Harnas currently advertises semi-naked “Bushmen” in its brochure, although the owners were publicly vilified in 1998 for their poor treatment of San workers.¹²⁹

11.2.2 Policy framework

Communal-area conservancies

In March 1995, following reports on the success of CBNRM initiatives elsewhere in southern Africa (e.g. Zimbabwe’s Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)), Cabinet approved a policy providing for the partial devolution of user rights over wildlife to communal-area residents who form conservancies. Having adopted this policy, the GRN went on to amend the Nature Con-



San performers at Intu Afrika – a safari lodge with a “Bushman” theme

¹²⁹ *Sunday Times* (UK) Magazine, November 1998.

servation Ordinance to provide for the formation of communal-area conservancies and wildlife councils. This provided the necessary legal framework for an alternative – and in some circumstances potentially lucrative – means for some rural people to generate income while ensuring the maintenance of local ecosystems without alienating local populations from the process.

Under the policy in question, communities which successfully navigate the eight-step process as required for establishing a MET-recognised conservancy are granted limited user rights to wildlife within the conservancy area. Rights to wildlife in conservancies are framed in terms of “stewardship” rather than outright ownership, and in this way conservancies represent a partnership between the GRN and local communities in respect of wildlife. Since the adoption of this policy several communities in the Kunene, Otjozondjupa and Caprivi Regions have applied to establish conservancies.

The manner in which CBNRM projects have been pursued in Namibia has generally been sound, with a strong emphasis on community participation at all levels. For San this is of particular importance as it is one of the few initiatives in which power has been meaningfully devolved to community-level organisations.¹³⁰

Application process

The process of setting up a conservancy is by no means straightforward; it requires much effort, substantial financial investment and usually takes some time. The NNC, for instance, which was one of the first conservancies to be formally recognised, was established only after several years of hard work and with substantial donor funding. In 1998 the MET published *A Toolbox for the Establishment of Communal Area Conservancies*, which details the eight-phase strategy for establishing such conservancies and spells out the minimum requirements that communities must meet to establish one. To date only communities which have enjoyed extensive donor and NGO support have been granted GRN recognition of their conservancies.

Foremost among the requirements for a community to form a conservancy are the following:

- The community must establish a representative conservancy committee with the ability to manage funds, and this committee must develop appropriate mechanisms for the distribution of revenues to conservancy members.
- A constitution with explicitly defined goals, objectives and rules regarding wildlife management and utilisation must be in place.
- The community must identify and agree on the geographic boundaries of the conservancy.

11.2.3 CBNRM benefits and constraints

CBNRM initiatives offer tangible benefits to those involved, though it should be recognised that these benefits have come at some cost to donors. The potential benefits of CBNRM have often been cited in the literature,¹³¹ and beyond the obvious value of granting user rights over wildlife, these include:

- Potential direct and indirect financial benefits;
- capacity-building and skills training;
- continued access to natural resources for local consumption;
- greater land rights and security; and
- better conservation practices.

As CBNRM has become more established over the past few years, a number of problems have emerged and criticism of the strategy has become more widespread (see e.g. Madzudzo 1998 and Sullivan 1999).

¹³⁰ The MET policy document titled *Land Use Planning: Towards Sustainable Development* is unequivocal on this issue and states that “re-empowerment ... should be the key principle in planning for community-based rural conservation”, and moreover that this requires “restoring to local communities the power to make decisions about the use of land and associated natural resources”.

¹³¹ See, for example, Ashley 1995 and Barnes 1995.

These problems are not so much to do with the broad concept of local management of wildlife and other natural resources as with the extent to which CBNRM is effective from a development and income-generation perspective. Given the eagerness with which donors and some NGOs have embraced and promoted the concept, one could be forgiven for forgetting that CBNRM is a conservation strategy first and a development strategy second. The primary goal of CBNRM is unambiguous in that it seeks “the protection of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystems and life support processes through sustainable use of natural resources” (Ashley 1995: 5). CBNRM is also largely a donor-driven enterprise that constitutes an attempt to reconcile global agendas with community needs. In this regard, for all the talk of its operating at “grassroots level”, it is not a “grassroots strategy”.

Financial

As matters stand, the financial rewards that might accrue to communities which establish conservancies are in most (but by no means all) instances limited. Indeed conservancies offer communities financial rewards that are appealing only relative to existing conditions of rural poverty. Although in some areas the revenues per hectare generated through tourism ventures exceed the usually marginal returns generated through subsistence agriculture (Ashley 1995; Ashley & Barnes 1996) even under the most favourable conditions, these revenues can only supplement other sources of income.¹³² This is well illustrated in Nyae Nyae, where aside from direct income from craft sales, guided tours and employment in NNC structures, the conservancy members earned only N\$75 (€15) per adult in 1999. Put simply, in these circumstances no one will get rich.¹³³

But CBNRM was never intended to serve as the *only* or even the principal form of income generation for communities which form conservancies. On the contrary, it was always envisaged that CBNRM would provide a living wage for some and indirect benefits for others, thereby expanding the number of options available for rural people to generate additional income. As Ashley and Barnes (1996: 19) have argued, “The question is not whether wildlife can provide enough to become the only option, but [rather, whether it will] become a major addition to livelihoods and hence a viable constituent land use.” Thus even in the most optimistic scenarios, the long-term success of CBNRM programmes is contingent on target communities being able to support themselves partially if not principally through other means. Should this not be the case, then it is likely that CBNRM projects will be unable to fulfil their long-term goal of sustainability. Indeed income generation may well become the Achilles heel of CBNRM in areas where few other economic opportunities are available.

In the absence of other viable alternatives in both Nyae Nyae and West Caprivi, community-based tourism within a CBNRM framework is undoubtedly a desirable option: not only does it build on and strengthen existing structures, but also it capitalises on local knowledge to exploit a growing tourism market. Even ignoring the MET’s somewhat optimistic evaluation of Namibia’s tourism potential,¹³⁴ it is a certainty that tourism will continue to play an important role in the development of regional and local economies in the short and medium terms.

The recent expansion of the Angolan conflict into West Caprivi has raised some awkward problems. Following the murder of three French tourists in the region in January 2000 and the attempted secession debacle in 1999 (see Chapter 5), tourism in the Caprivi as a whole has declined dramatically. Lodges there are virtually empty at present and some foreign governments have issued travel warnings to their citizens. If current rumours of UNITA’s imminent demise turn out to be somewhat exaggerated, then it is likely that the area will remain unstable and hence unsafe for tourists for several years to come.

¹³² As Ashley’s (1995) projections make evident, even in an optimistic scenario only a proportion of a conservancy’s members will be able to make a living directly from the conservancy, with the majority receiving only indirect benefits.

¹³³ Sullivan (1999) calculates that the two highest annual per capita incomes generated through communal-area tourism are N\$85 and N\$254.

¹³⁴ Ashley and Barnes (1996: 9) predict a potential 690% increase in non-consumptive tourism in former Bushmanland as a whole, with revenues per hectare rising from N\$6 to N\$58.

Community and capacity

CBNRM is a social policy conceived of by conservationists, and as such it deals with a number of extremely awkward sociological concepts relatively unproblematically. Key among these is the concept of “community”, which even in economically stable and secure environments is an ephemeral concept. In late 20th- and early 21st-century Namibia, where social identities forged at the interface between modernity and tradition are increasingly fluid and ambiguous, the notion of “community” is often difficult to establish let alone sustain. This has proved to be the case in West Tsumkwe, for instance, where the problems experienced by the traditional authority in gaining recognition for their conservancy have arisen in part because the people of West Tsumkwe are not unified or homogenous. Even in the relatively homogenous Nyae Nyae area, similar problems emerged while the NNC was being established, and Ju/'hoan communities in central Tsumkwe are now excluded from both the conservancy and the East Tsumkwe Traditional Authority.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the communalising discourse that is central to CBNRM, it is clear that some benefit more than others in conservancies. In Nyae Nyae, for example, where most of the local population had unrealistically high expectations of the financial rewards that might accrue to them from a conservancy (NNC 1998: 18), villages with campsites have reaped greater cash rewards than those without.

Having noted this, the emphasis on community has been of some benefit insofar as it has contributed to the creation of new and arguably more appropriate socio-political institutions and structures. For those who have gone through the long and difficult process of establishing GRN-recognised conservancies, the process has partially redefined local concepts of community and has simultaneously provided a set of clearly defined rights and obligations by means of which community membership is defined. In West Tsumkwe, for example, the problems encountered by the San inhabitants in establishing the Nǀa Jaqna Conservancy have ironically provided a paradigm for the establishment of “new” social structures that correspond more directly with contemporary social and political realities. In this context the process of applying for a conservancy has arguably redefined and strengthened traditional authority and community structures, and at the very least has clarified where there are weaknesses in these structures.

11.3 Natural resources and non-timber forest products

The 20th century saw a decline in the quality and extent of San knowledge of their local environments. Although many San retain very detailed and accurate knowledge of key natural resources, this has been declining along with the cross-generational transmission of “traditional” knowledge. In areas like the Omaheke Region where San are third- and fourth-generation farm workers, entire bodies of potentially valuable local knowledge have disappeared. Despite this, for many San – even for those lacking *de jure* land rights – important opportunities exist for the exploitation of certain key natural resources.

In biodiverse areas such as West Caprivi, San still retain a good general knowledge – and in some cases a formidable specialist knowledge – of local flora and fauna. Under favourable conditions they could exploit this knowledge to their own ends. Several successful veld-product programmes have recently been initiated in West Caprivi and there is scope for expansion in this area.

Of the international conventions governing the use of natural resources to which Namibia is party, the most significant as far as San are concerned is the Convention on Biological Diversity ratified in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Any country party to this convention is obliged, subject to its national legislation:

[to] *respect, preserve and maintain knowledges or practices of indigenous and local communities ... relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of benefits arising from utilisation of such knowledge, innovations and practices.*

11.3.1 Policy framework: the Forestry Act

Although a signatory at Rio de Janeiro, Namibia has yet to finalise its policy governing the use of some natural resources. The outdated Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975 is still used to regulate access to and use of certain flora. In terms of this ordinance, harvesting some natural resources on various categories of state land requires a permit that is issued centrally by the MET. Under this system, user rights to certain veld and forest products can be granted to anyone who applies. The upshot of this is that the natural resources of an area can be exploited by people who have no customary or residential rights there. Thus, for example, a large Devil's Claw resource area in the Tsumkwe District was destroyed after the MET granted a permit to a non-resident to harvest in that area during 1999. In the process, local people not only lost access to a potential source of income for themselves, but also permanently lost a renewable resource because of the unsustainable harvesting techniques used. The permit system is also problematic in that it discriminates against the illiterate and the spatially remote, for whom applying for permits is a difficult undertaking.

The current situation is that a new Forestry Act has been approved by Cabinet and is now being fine-tuned by the Office of the Attorney-General. In line with broader policies that grant greater community rights over natural resources with a view to establishing better conditions for sustainability, once passed the new legislation will establish four categories of forest:

- State forest reserves
- Regional forest reserves
- Community forests
- Forest management areas

For each category of forest it is envisaged that different kinds of user rights will be devolved to local communities. It is anticipated that in community forests, user rights to forest products will be on a par with the rights over wildlife granted to communities which form wildlife conservancies.

11.3.2 Devil's Claw

Only a small proportion of non-timber forest products are currently regulated. The most important of these for San is Devil's Claw (*Harpogryphum procumbens*).¹³⁵ Devil's claw is an abundant resource in Namibia and has been harvested, dried and packaged for sale on European markets for some time. Namibia is currently the world's largest producer of Devil's Claw and exported around 600 tonnes in 1998 (Cole 1999). Harvesting is labour-intensive but returns are marginal when measured against labour outlay, with the result that only the very poor harvest on a regular basis.¹³⁶ For many San the harvesting and sale of Devil's Claw offers an opportunity to earn additional cash, even though without regulation it remains a buyers' market and San frequently receive very little cash for their efforts.

The unregulated trade in Devil's Claw is characterised by:

- unsustainable use of the resource due to destructive harvesting techniques;¹³⁷ and
- a lack of pricing and quality control, with middlemen making substantial profits off low-quality products and threatening the resource by encouraging excessive harvesting.

¹³⁵ With the large number of harvesters of Devil's Claw currently operating in Namibia and posing a threat to the long-term sustainability of that resource, the MET has recently undertaken measures to restrict harvesting by means of a permit system which requires written applications to be made on an individual basis.

¹³⁶ During the course of the research for this study, San were found to be involved in the Devil's Claw trade in the Omaheke Region, Tsumkwe District, Caprivi Region and Oshikoto Region.

¹³⁷ Sustainable harvesting of Devil's Claw requires that only the secondary tuber is taken, leaving the root intact and therefore allowing for the same plant to be harvested in the following year. The effort required to do this is substantially greater than that required for non-sustainable harvesting.

Responding to these problems, CRIAA SA-DC set out to encourage a more sustainable trade in Devil's Claw. Working through community institutions this organisation set up a pilot scheme at Vergenoeg (a mixed Damara/San community) in the eastern Omaheke in 1996. Despite some early difficulties (see Cole 1999) the project has been a success: harvesters have not overexploited the resource, yet have earned considerably more than they did in the past. Indeed, since its inception, harvesters engaged in CRIAA SA-DC's Sustainably Harvested Devil's Claw Project have seen their income per kilogram rise by as much as 1 000%.¹³⁸ According to CRIAA SA-DC, 300 harvesters – all of whom earned around N\$300 in 1999 for their efforts – currently participate in the project (Cole pers.comm.).

By San standards this CRIAA SA-DC project provides a significant boost to income – earnings being substantially higher than those typically drawn thus far in wildlife conservancies for example. Moreover, costs incurred by communities involved in projects of this sort are a good deal lower than the costs and risks associated with living with large wildlife. This suggests that the availability of a commercialisable resource constitutes a real opportunity for San and other rural poor to generate additional income.

11.3.3 Other options involving indigenous flora

Various other non-timber forest products hold potential for commercial exploitation. This is especially true in biodiverse areas like the Caprivi Region, where there are numerous natural resources that may have valuable pharmaceutical, cosmetic or nutritional qualities. CRIAA SA-DC has noted that “there is a growing recognition that there are ... a large number of indigenous botanical materials which are not utilised to their full potential”, and furthermore that “many of these ‘wild’ resources are used by populations either for foods, medicines [or] cosmetics” (CRIAA SA-DC 1998). Within the Kavango Region alone, there are at least 336 plants that are edible or may have medicinal or cosmetic properties, and according to CRIAA SA-DC (1999: 8), at least 12 of these warrant immediate attention.

Mangetti

Mangetti (*Schinziophyton rautanenii*) is another potentially commercialisable resource identified by CRIAA SA-DC. Large mangetti groves are found in the northern areas of Namibia, and they are most common in the south-east of the Kavango Region around Mpungu. San in northern Namibia have utilised mangetti as a nutritional staple for many years, although recently the trend has been to sell off the fruit to *kashipembe* (liquor) distillers and discard the nut. CRIAA SA-DC has established that despite the obvious popular appeal of *kashipembe*, the most commercially viable mangetti product is the protein-rich nut that produces a high-quality oil. During the feasibility phase of its mangetti project, CRIAA SA-DC (Du Plessis 1999) ascertained that:

- the mangetti resource base is large;
- there is potential for further commercial exploitation of mangetti, most notably in oil production;
- the commercialisation of mangetti could provide real benefits to San and other rural poor; and
- local communities are keen to participate in the process.

11.4 Conclusions and recommendations

Outside of West Caprivi and the Tsumkwe District, San in Namibia retain only limited access to land and natural resources. Natural resource management is consequently a realistic option for only a small proportion of Namibia's San population.

11.4.1 Conservancies

Conservancies should continue to be supported with a view to long-term self-sufficiency. For this to be achieved, however, far greater emphasis should be placed on the development of alternative strategies

¹³⁸ Prices paid by middlemen ranged from N\$1/kg to N\$4/kg in 1998; harvesters in the pilot project received a flat price of N\$12/kg.

for generating income in conservancy areas. As conservancies become more established and the rural population continues to grow, new problems associated with common property relations are likely to emerge. These must be anticipated and dealt with if “community” is to remain the paradigmatic basis for conservation in rural areas.

11.4.2 Natural resource exploitation

CRIAA SA-DC’s efforts thus far have demonstrated that there is potential for communities to benefit from the sustainable exploitation of some key natural resources. Such activities will most probably be successful in the biologically more diverse areas, although it is clear that there are resources which may benefit a broad cross-section of rural communities. A detailed investigation into the possible uses of selected non-timber veld products and their commercial viability will be of particular benefit to people in areas where opportunities for generating income remain very limited, such as West Caprivi.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Beyond conferring valuable political rights and the chance to participate in a functioning democracy, independence has brought few immediate collective benefits to San, the majority of whom still battle with the continuing legacy of the apartheid system, which denied them even the limited land and cultural rights granted to the majority of other non-white Namibians during the apartheid era. A decade after independence, San stand out due to their dependency, extreme poverty, political alienation and a variety of social, educational and health problems. Of course these problems are not unique to San, and many other Namibians are just as poor and marginalised as they are. However, what makes San conspicuous among Namibia's poor is the fact that while only a proportion of the members of each other language group are extremely poor, San are almost universally extremely poor.

With such a marked gap between San and other Namibians, there are strong practical and ethical grounds for addressing their status as a matter of some urgency. If there is no change in their status, it is certainly likely that the State will have an increasingly agitated, impoverished and largely dependent San population on its hands. Substantial efforts should be made as soon as possible to prevent the situation from deteriorating further and becoming less manageable in the long term.

Given the extent of San marginalisation and all its subtle complexities, it is inevitable that significant change in their status can only occur over a long period. The various attributes of San structural poverty are too deeply entrenched to lend themselves to any quick fixes or easy solutions. Consequently, any interventions should be made with an eye on the long term and be backed up by an appropriate policy framework.

Despite not being enthusiastic about granting "indigenous" rights to San, the GRN has on numerous occasions indicated both an awareness of and a willingness to deal with San issues. In the absence of any overriding policy framework, however, their efforts have been erratic and only a few ministries have made satisfactory progress. As the preceding chapters make clear, GRN initiatives on behalf of San have been characteristically ad hoc, under-resourced and on occasion wholly inappropriate.

It is beyond the scope of this report to motivate for or recommend a detailed plan of action for improving the status of San. The aim in writing this report was to highlight their status, describe the complexity of their situation and suggest possible courses of action that stakeholders could take to improve matters. This report is thus intended to provide a starting point for meaningful dialogue on issues affecting San, as well as a platform from which stakeholders can embark on the complicated process of putting together a workable plan of action.

12.1 Integrated multi-sectoral development

Although poverty is the most conspicuous facet of the "San issue" in Namibia, this issue is clearly also about access to land and natural resources, historical marginalisation, social prejudice, social identity, the trauma of radical cultural change, and more elliptically, political rights. To focus on poverty alleviation without simultaneously addressing these related matters would be of limited long-term benefit.

Given the nature of San social and economic dependency in Namibia, the possibility of establishing a multi-sectoral programme that actively targets them as a development priority should be considered. Affirmative action of this sort is appealing not only because it could fracture the correspondence

between class and ethnic identity in the case of San, but also because this option is most consistent with the benchmark for relations between indigenous minorities and nation states as established in ILO Convention 169 and the draft UN Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Although the MLRR and the MBESC have already identified San as *de facto* targets for affirmative action with few objections from the public, there might well be some opposition to the establishment of a more substantial programme that explicitly favours people from a single “ethnic” community. This problem could perhaps be avoided if an explicitly “non-ethnic” programme aimed broadly at the most marginalised and impoverished of Namibia’s people were to be established. Certainly, any policy or programme that targets those individuals or communities who are cumulatively the worst off across a range of sectors will inevitably focus on San as their principal target group. Moreover, should this be done in a manner that is informed by the need for grassroots empowerment, capacity-building and enabling communities to define their own development objectives, it would altogether do away with the need for an explicitly “San policy”. Botswana’s Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) can serve as a rough blueprint for such a programme in Namibia. Although its problematic status must be born in mind, the RADP should be looked into before the possibility of a San-specific programme is dismissed.¹³⁹

A potential problem with a specifically non-ethnic programme focusing on the needs of the cumulatively worst off is that it might allow for San rights issues to be subsumed in a simplistic economic framework. If such a non-ethnic programme is established, then clearly its success will depend on its being flexible enough to strengthen and work through existing community structures in a meaningful way. It will also need to accommodate target communities’ socio-cultural outlooks through empowering them sufficiently in the development process, and furthermore it will have to be aware of the role of ethnic consciousness in the politics of San dependency. Many of the problems that have plagued Botswana’s RADP are the consequence of a failure to accommodate socio-political and cultural aspects of San marginalisation in that programme (Saugestad 1998).

12.2 Key areas for intervention

As is spelt out in preceding chapters, within the broad gambit of an integrated development programme aimed at San there are a number of areas in the Namibian context that require particular emphasis. Specifically, these are:

- development and empowerment;
- education;
- representation; and
- access to land.

Since these are all dealt with in greater detail elsewhere in this text, I will only highlight some key points here.

12.2.1 Development and empowerment

Given the extent of San historical marginalisation, empowerment is crucial to the development process. Moreover, the process of development as “controlled social change” often valorises existing power relations and steps must be taken to offset this. To this end the following recommendations should be considered:

- Development initiatives for San must work on the principle that empowerment is development. Top-down development initiatives disempower San and ultimately render them more dependent on welfare.
- Programmes and initiatives must be “culturally sensitive” and attempt to work with and through existing social and cultural structures rather than against them.

¹³⁹ Due to inadequate funding, poorly trained staff and an inappropriate policy framework, Botswana’s RADP has not been particularly successful since its inception as the Bushman Development Programme in the 1970s.

- Activities must aim to enable San to determine the direction and pace of their own development within reasonable parameters.

12.2.2 Education

Formal education is one of the more obvious options available to ensure that future generations of San are better equipped to cope with a changing world in the third millennium. The development of mother-tongue learning resources and a school system that makes allowances for and is flexible enough to cope with the economic predicament and socio-cultural standpoint of San is essential.

In addition to this, the ongoing difficulties involved in convincing San children to attend school suggests that 20 years from now a large number of San will still be illiterate. It will be necessary to take steps to ensure that these people are not further marginalised as a result of their illiteracy.

The following key recommendations on education should be considered:

- The development of educational resources for major San language groups.
- The continued co-operation of the MBESC with stakeholders in the ITFEMC.
- The establishment of an education programme that is sufficiently flexible to cope with the socio-cultural and material problems faced by San learners.

12.2.3 Land access

Aside from the moral authority that San can mobilise by reference to their ancestral claims to land, increased secure land access is one of the few development options available for offsetting the immediacy of their current plight. As discussed in Chapter 7 herein, resettlement on land purchased under the mandate of the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act provides the best option for expanding San land rights and stalling their headlong rush to towns and villages. However, if resettlement policy continues to be inappropriately implemented, it is unlikely to have any lasting positive impact.

The following key recommendations should be considered vis-à-vis land access and tenure:

- The de facto prioritisation of San and other landless Namibians under the ALRA in terms of resettlement policy.
- An overhaul of the resettlement application procedure to ensure that San and others are able to apply for resettlement more easily.
- Adequate San representation on land boards in communal areas.
- The implementation of resettlement programmes for San in accordance with the letter of the law and stated policy.
- The abandonment of co-operative resettlement projects.

12.2.4 Leadership and representation

San are poorly represented in Namibia's government structures. As a minority group they require strong local and regional representation to ensure that their concerns are heard. This is particularly important given the historical marginalisation of San communities in Namibia. More effective representation in state structures will not only help to empower San collectively, but will also go some way towards ensuring their greater participation in state processes. To this end the following recommendations should be considered:

- The assessment of outstanding San traditional authority claims in terms of the requirements stipulated in the TAA.
- Continued donor and NGO support for institutional development and capacity-building in San CBOs and traditional authorities.
- Greater encouragement of San participation in local and regional politics.
- Continued donor and NGO support for cultural programmes.

12.3 Stakeholders' roles

The extent of San marginalisation in Namibia points to the need for the formation of stakeholder partnerships by means of which the GRN, NGOs, San organisations and donors can pool their resources and share their experiences. The GRN has shown that it has neither the human nor the material resources necessary to cope adequately with San development. It is thus essential that different stakeholders harmonise their interventions wherever possible. The achievements of the MBESC's ITFEMC clearly demonstrate the potential benefits of co-operation.

12.3.1 The role of the GRN

Inevitably the GRN will be required to play the lead role in any substantial programme aimed at alleviating the status of San in Namibia, and in the short term this might be facilitated by the establishment of a GRN-led intersectoral task force similar to that established by the MBESC for educationally marginalised children. The primary mandate of this body should be to identify and evaluate policy options appropriate to addressing San needs.

As has been reiterated throughout this document, the establishment of an appropriate policy platform for dealing with San needs is essential. In the short term, efforts should focus on assessing where and how existing policy may be inappropriate and examining where and how existing policy that ought to benefit San communities fails to do so. In the longer term, serious consideration should be given to the possible establishment of a broad programme of affirmative action vis-à-vis San and the design of a policy framework that facilitates this.

12.3.2 The role of NGOs

Where San have collaborated with NGOs, their projects have been relatively successful due to the more comprehensive resources available to them, their better-trained staff and their participatory and process-oriented approach to development. Even so, NGO involvement in San communities remains limited.

In view of the GRN's limited resources and the relative success of some NGO initiatives, support for NGOs working with San should be maintained and expanded where possible. NGOs such as Health Unlimited that work within specific sectors should consider expanding their operations to cover all of Namibia, while NGOs the NNDFN with a specific geographical focus should use their experience to assist other communities. Greater NGO and donor involvement is needed particularly in resettlement areas where the MLRR has had to make do with inadequate resources.

12.3.3 The role of San CBOs and traditional authorities

The recent proliferation of San CBOs reflects a growing desire among San to take control of their own development. This is an encouraging development and support for these organisations must be maintained. It is essential that San are fully participant in decision-making processes concerning themselves because top-down interventions have proved unable to accommodate some of the more complex aspects of San marginalisation. San CBOs and traditional authorities provide the best available channel to secure the greater participation of San in decision-making processes.

12.3.4 The role of donors

Given the limited resources available to the GRN, there is considerable scope for greater donor involvement in San development. Indeed the present situation lends itself to the establishment of donor-driven programmes designed in accordance with appropriate international conventions. However, large-scale donor involvement should be contingent on the development of a suitable policy framework, as in its absence external interventions will be of superficial benefit only.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams F & W Werner (1990). *The Land Issue in Namibia: An Inquiry*. Windhoek: Namibian Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Namibia.
- Ashley C (1995). "Tourism Communities and the Potential Impacts on Local Incomes and Conservation". *DEA Research Discussion Paper No. 10*. Windhoek: Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
- Ashley C & J Barnes (1996). "Wildlife Use for Economic Gain: The Potential for Wildlife to Contribute to Development in Namibia". *DEA Research Discussion Paper No. 12*. Windhoek: Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
- Ashley C & E Garland (1994). "Promoting Community Based Tourism Development: Why, What and How". *DEA Research Discussion Paper*. Windhoek: Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
- Barnes J (1995). "The Value of Non-Agricultural Land Use in Some Namibian Communal Areas: A Data Base for Planning". *DEA Research Discussion Paper No. 6*. Windhoek: Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
- Barnes J, C Schrier & G van Rooy (1997). "Tourists' Willingness to Pay for Wildlife Viewing and Wildlife Conservation in Namibia". *DEA Discussion Paper No. 15*. Windhoek: Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
- Biesele M (1993). *Women Like Meat*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand (Wits).
- Biesele M (1995). *Representation and Communication: Social Challenges in Ju'hoan Community Education*. Windhoek: Nyae Nyae Village Schools Programme.
- Biesele M, R Gordon & R Lee (1986). *The Past and Future of !Kung Ethnography: Critical Reflections and Symbolic Perspectives – Essays in Honour of Lorna Marshall*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag.
- Biesele M, P Schweitzer & R Hitchcock (eds) (2000). *Hunters and Gatherers in the Modern World: Conflict, Resistance and Self-Determination*. New York: Bergahn Books.
- Botelle A (1999). "Estimating Manketti Nut Yields in the Forests of Western Kavango Namibia". Windhoek: CRIAA SA-DC.
- Botelle A & R Rohde (1995). *Land Use Planning Series Report No. 1: Those Who Live on the Land: A socio-economic baseline survey for land use planning in the communal areas of Eastern Otjozondjupa*. Windhoek: Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation.
- Brenzinger M (1996). *Report on the Development of HIV/AIDS Educational Material and Prevention Strategies with the Kxoe Community of West Caprivi, Namibia*. Cologne: Eschborn.
- Brenzinger M (1997). "Moving to Survive: Kxoe Communities in Arid Lands". *Khoisan Forum Working Paper No. 2*. Cologne: University of Cologne.
- Brenzinger M (2001). "Report on San in West Caprivi". Unpublished report commissioned for the *Regional Assessment on the Status of San in Southern Africa*.
- Börmann M (1999). *Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa: Report on Activities April 1998 to March 1999*. Windhoek: WIMSA.
- Bruhns P & M Hinz (1997). "The Role of Traditional Authority in a Changing Namibia". *CASS Paper No. 37*, delivered at the *First National Traditional Authority Conference*. Windhoek: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Namibia.

- Bueschel D (1998). "Resource Utilisation Study: Mpungu Constituency, Kavango Region (Namibia Interim Report)". Windhoek: CRIAA SA-DC
- Callihan D (1999). "Using Tourism to Sustain Community Based Conservation: Experience from Namibia" (unpublished report). Windhoek: Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Programme.
- Central Statistics Office (1994). *Provisional Population Projections 1991-2011*. Windhoek: National Planning Commission.
- Central Statistics Office (1996). *1993/94 Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey Main Report: Living Conditions in Namibia – Basic Description with Highlights*. Windhoek: National Planning Commission.
- Cole D (1999). "Community Devil's Claw Workshop Report". Windhoek: CRIAA SA-DC.
- Cole D, N Powell, B !Aice & K †Oma (1998). "San/Vakwangali Natural Resource and Livelihood Study: Mpungu and Kahenge Constituencies, Kavango Region, Namibia". Windhoek: CRIAA SA-DC.
- CRIAA SA-DC (1998). "The Identification and Sustainable Fair Trade Exploitation of Non-Timber Veld Products" (unpublished paper). Windhoek: CRIAA SA-DC.
- CRIAA SA-DC (1999). "Final Report: Non-Timber Forest Products Project Phase 1 – Kavango Region" (unpublished paper). Windhoek: CRIAA SA-DC.
- Department of Environmental and Geographical Science – Masters Students (1998). *A Retrospective Assessment of the Environmental Implications of Resettlement in Namibia (RAEIR)*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Devereaux S, V Katjjuanjo & G Van Rooy (1996). *The Living and Working Conditions of Farm Workers in Namibia*. Windhoek: Farmworkers Project, Legal Assistance Centre, and Social Sciences Division, Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia.
- Draper P (1976). "Social and Economic Constraints on Child Life among the !Kung". In Lee R & I Devore (eds) (1976), *Kalahari Hunter-Gatherers: Studies of the !Kung San and Their Neighbours*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Du Pisani A (1996). "Traditional Authorities and Governance in Namibia". In *The Namibian*, 10 May 1996.
- Du Plessis P (1999). "Report on the Manketti Stakeholder Workshop". Windhoek: CRIAA SA-DC.
- Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) (1999). *Education Statistics*. Windhoek: Ministry of Basic Education and Culture.
- Felton S (1997). "San Community Assessment Visit to Okavango Mpungu Constituency: Interim Report" (unpublished).
- Felton S (1999). "San Community Assessment Visit to Owambo, May 1998: Preliminary Report" (unpublished).
- Felton S (2000). "'We Want Our Own Chief': San communities battle against their image". Paper presented at the *Annual Conference of the Association of Anthropology in Southern Africa*, Windhoek, 8-13 May 2000.
- Gebhardt F (1976). "The Socio-Economic Status of Farm Labourers in Namibia". In *South African Legal Bulletin*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1 & 2.
- Gordon R (1992). *The Bushman Myth: The Making of a Namibian Underclass*. Oxford: Westview Press.
- Gordon R & S Sholto-Douglas (1999). *The Bushman Myth: The Making of a Namibian Underclass (Second Edition)*. Oxford: Westview Press.
- Government of Botswana (1993). *Common Access to Development: Second Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations*. Conference report. Gaborone: GOB.

- Government of the Republic of Namibia – Office of the Prime Minister (1991). *National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question*. Conference report. Windhoek: GRN.
- Government of the Republic of Namibia – Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1992). *Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations*. Conference report. Windhoek: GRN.
- Government of the Republic of Namibia – National Planning Commission (NPC) (1995). *First National Development Plan (NDPI) (Volumes 1 & 2)*. Windhoek: GRN.
- Government of the Republic of Namibia – Office of the President (1997). *Report on the Commission of Inquiry into Labour Related Matters Affecting Agricultural and Domestic Workers*. Windhoek: GRN.
- Guenther M (1986). “‘Bushmen’ or ‘San’?”. In Biesele, Gordon & Lee (1986), op. cit.
- Guenther M (1993). “Independent, Fearless and Rather Bold: A Historical Narrative of the Ghanzi Bushmen of Botswana”. In *Journal of the Namibian Scientific Society*, No. 44.
- Guldemann T (1998). *San Languages for Education: A linguistic short survey on behalf of the Molteno Early Literacy and Language Development (MELLD) Project in Namibia*. Windhoek: National Institute for Educational Development (NIED).
- Hangula L (1998). “Ancestral Land in Namibia”. *SSD Discussion Paper No. 20*. Windhoek: Social Sciences Division, Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia.
- Hansohm D & M Mupotola-Sibongo (1998). *Overview of the Namibian Economy*. Windhoek: Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU).
- Health Unlimited (1999). *Namibia Community Health Programme Annual Report 1998/99*. Gobabis: Health Unlimited.
- Hitchcock R (1978). *Kalahari Cattleposts: A Regional Study of Hunter-Gatherers, Pastoralists and Agriculturists in the Western Sandveld Region, Central District Botswana*. Gaborone: Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing.
- Hitchcock R (1987). “Socio-Economic Change among the Basarwa of Botswana: An Ethnohistorical Analysis”. In *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 34, No. 3.
- Hitchcock R (1991). “Human Rights Local Institutions and Sustainable Development among the Kalahari San”. Paper presented at a meeting of the Association of Anthropology in Southern Africa, Windhoek, November 1991.
- Hitchcock R (1992). *Communities and Consensus: An Evaluation of the Activities of the Nyae Nyae Farmers Co-operative and the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation in North-eastern Namibia*. Windhoek and New York: Ford Foundation.
- Huesken J (1994). “Report on the Broad Agricultural Potential of the Government Farms ‘Oerwoud’, ‘Chuudip’ and ‘Tsintsabis’, Oshikoto Region and Bravo Okavango Region. Windhoek: Directorate of Lands, Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation.
- Huesken J, A Chiza & S Kapiye (1994). “Report on the Broad Agricultural Potential of the Government Farms ‘Skoonheid’, ‘Rosenhof’ and ‘Rusplaas’”. Windhoek: Directorate of Lands, Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation.
- Iken A, D Lebeau, M Mejengua & W Pendleton (1994). *Socio-Economic Survey of Eastern Communal Areas*. Windhoek: UNICEF and Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development.
- Ingold T, D Riches & J Woodburn (eds) (1991). *Hunters and Gatherers (Volume 1): History, Evolution and Social Change*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Ingold T, D Riches & J Woodburn (eds) (1991). *Hunters and Gatherers (Volume 2): Property, Power and Ideology*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (2000). “Report on Emergency Meeting in West Caprivi on 10 December 2000 (unpublished). Windhoek: IRDNC.

- Jansen R, N Pradham & J Spencer (1994). *ELCIN Bushman Rehabilitation and Settlement Programme Evaluation (Final Report)*. Windhoek: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia.
- Jones B (1996). "Institutional Relationships: Capacity and Sustainability – Lessons Learned from the Community Based Conservation Project in Eastern Tsumkwe District, Namibia, 1991-1996". *DEA Research Discussion Paper No. 11*. Windhoek: Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
- Jones B (1997). "Parks and People: Linking Namibian Protected Areas with Local Communities". *DEA Research Discussion Paper No. 24*. Windhoek: Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
- Kakujaha Matunda O & S Tuemumunu Kavazeri (1997). "Overview of the Agricultural Sector in Namibia". *Research Report Series*, No. 4. Windhoek: Farmworkers Project, Legal Assistance Centre.
- Kann U (1997). "The Development of a Policy for Educationally Marginalised Children in Namibia". *Working Paper No. 1*. Windhoek: Ministry of Basic Education and Culture and UNICEF.
- Kohler O (1966). "Tradition und Wandel bei den Kxoe-Bushmannern von Mutsiku". In *Sociologus*, Vol. 16, No. 2.
- Kuru Development Trust & Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (1999). *Report on the Indigenous Peoples' Consultation on Empowerment, Culture and Spirituality in Development*. Ghanzi: KDT and WIMSA.
- Le Roux W (1999). *Torn Apart: San Children as Change Agents in a Process of Acculturation*. Windhoek: KDT and WIMSA.
- Lee R (1984). *The Dobe !Kung*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Lee R (1991). "Reflections on Primitive Communism". In Ingold T, D Riches & J Woodburn (1991), op. cit.
- Lee R (1993). *The Dobe Ju'hoansi: Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology*. Orlando Florida: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Lee R & I Devore (eds) (1968). *Man the Hunter*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.
- Lee R & I Devore (eds) (1976). *Kalahari Hunter-Gatherers: Studies of the !Kung San and Their Neighbours*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Legal Assistance Centre (1998). "Alleged Victimisation and Harassment of Members of the Kxoe Community under Chief Kiepi George by Members of the NDF" (unpublished report). Windhoek: Legal Assistance Centre.
- Leith J (1999). "Devil's Claw: Sustainable Harvesting and Fair Trade of Medicinal Plants". In *Positive Health*, January 1999.
- Maclean B (1998). *Resettlement and Namibian San Communities: Perspectives for Sustainable Community Development Through Empowerment*. M.Phil thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Marais et al. (1984). *Ondersoek na die Boesmanbevolkingsgroepe in SWA (The Brand Report)*. Windhoek: Development Directorate, South West Africa Administration.
- Marshall J & C Ritchie (1984). *Where are the Ju'hoansi of Nyae-Nyae?: Changes in a Bushman Society, 1958-1991*. Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town.
- Marshall L (1976). *The !Kung of Nyae-Nyae*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1993). *Toward Education for All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan Publishers.
- Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1995). "Report on the Workshop on Educationally Marginalised Children". Windhoek: MBEC.

- Ministry of Basic Education and Culture – Intersectoral Task Force on Educationally Marginalised Children (1997). *Report on the First Secondary School San Learners Conference*. Windhoek: MBEC.
- Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1999). *1998 Annual Report*. Windhoek: Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) (renamed).
- Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture – Intersectoral Task Force on Educationally Marginalised Children (2000). *National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children*. Windhoek: MBESC.
- Ministry of Environment and Tourism (1994). *Land Use Planning: Towards Sustainable Development*. Policy document. Windhoek: MET.
- Ministry of Environment and Tourism (1996). *A Toolbox for the Establishment of Communal Area Conservancies*. Windhoek: MET.
- Ministry of Environment and Tourism (1999). “Conservation in Caprivi and the Vision for the Future: Backgrounder” (pamphlet). Windhoek: MET.
- Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1992). *Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa’s San Populations*. Conference report. Windhoek: MLRR.
- Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1996). *National Resettlement Policy*. Policy document. Windhoek: MLRR.
- Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1998a). *Annual Report 1996/97 and 1997/98*. Windhoek: MLRR.
- Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1998b). *National Land Policy*. Windhoek: MLRR.
- Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1999a). *The Land*, Vol. 2, No. 2. Windhoek: MLRR.
- Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1999b). *Annual Report 1998/99*. Windhoek: MLRR.
- National Drought Task Force (1997). *National Drought Policy and Strategy*. Windhoek: Government of the Republic of Namibia.
- Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (1996-1999). *Viewpoint*, Nos. 1-25. Windhoek: NEPRU.
- The Namibian* (daily newspaper). Online archive 1998-2000 (www.namibian.com.na).
- Nujoma J (1992). *The ELCIN Settlement and Rehabilitation of San and their Dependants Project: West Caprivi and West Bushmanland (Progress Report)*. Windhoek: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia.
- Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (1995). *Progress Report*. Windhoek: NNDFN.
- Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (1997). *Annual Report*. Windhoek: NNDFN.
- Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (1998). *Annual Report*. Windhoek: NNDFN.
- †Oma KM & M Brörmann (1998). “Do the San of Southern Africa Have a Say on Education?”. Paper presented at the 16th Session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Geneva, 27-31 July 1998. Windhoek: Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA).
- Pfaffe J (1994). “Learning to Have Sense: An Approach for the Development of a Three-Dimensional School Readiness Programme for Teachers, Communities and Learners of Nyae-Nyae” (unpublished report). Windhoek: Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia.
- Roulet F (1999). “Human Rights and Indigenous People”. *IWGIA Doc. 92*. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.
- Rudert C (1995a). *Report on the Health Needs Assessment at Skoonheid, Drimiopsis and Korridor*. Windhoek: Primary Health Education Programme (Eastern Bushmanland), Health Unlimited.

- Rudert C (1995b). *Ju/'hoan Health Beliefs and Concepts*. Windhoek: Primary Health Education Programme (Eastern Bushmanland), Health Unlimited.
- Sahlins M (1972). *Stone Age Economics*. London: Routledge.
- Saugestad S (1998). *The Inconvenient Indigenous: Remote Area Development in Botswana Donor Assistance and the First People of the Kalahari*. Tromsø: Faculty of Social Science, University of Tromsø.
- Shanyengana M (1998). *An Overview of Resettlement in Namibia*. Windhoek: Directorate of Resettlement and Rehabilitation, Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation.
- Simpson (1997). *Indigenous Heritage and Self-Determination*. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA).
- Solway J & R Lee (1990). "Foragers Genuine or Spurious: Situating the Kalahari San in History". In *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 31.
- South West Africa Administration (1948). *Report of the Long-Term Agricultural Policy Commission*. Windhoek: SWAA.
- Sullivan S (1999). "How sustainable is the communalising discourse of new conservation?: The masking of difference in inequality and aspiration in the fledgling conservancies of Namibia". Paper presented at the *Conference on Displacement, Forced Settlement and Conservation*, St Anne's, Oxford, August 1999.
- Suzman J (1993). *Ideology, Identity and Social Change: Deconstructing the Bushmen*. MA thesis. St Andrews: University of St Andrews.
- Suzman J (1995a). "In the Margins: A Qualitative Assessment of the Status of Farmworkers in the Omaheke Region". *Research Report Series*, No. 1. Windhoek: Farmworkers Project, Legal Assistance Centre.
- Suzman J (1995b). *Poverty, Land and Power in the Omaheke Region*. Windhoek: Oxfam UK & I.
- Suzman J (2000a). *Things from the Bush: A Contemporary History of the Omaheke Bushmen*. Basel: P. Shlettwein Publishing.
- Suzman J (in press). "Human Rights and Indigenous Wrongs: National Policy, International Resolutions and the Status of the San in Southern Africa". In Kenrick J & A Barnard (eds), *Africa's Indigenous Minorities: 'First Peoples' or 'Marginalised Minorities'?*. Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh Press.
- Sylvian R (1998). "Our Hands Made Them Rich: Gender Politics and Labour on Commercial Farms in the Omaheke Region of Namibia". Paper presented at the *Medusa Graduate Seminar*, University of Toronto, 24 February 1998.
- Sylvian R (1999). "*We Work to Have Life*": *Ju/'hoan Women's Work and Survival in the Omaheke Region, Namibia*. PhD thesis. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Thoma A (1997). "Sonneblom/Donkerbos San Community Project Progress Report". Windhoek: WIMSA.
- Thoma A & B le Roux (1995). "Project Proposal for the Establishment of a Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa" (mimeo).
- Thoma A & KM †Oma (1998). "Does Tourism Support or Destroy the Indigenous Cultures of the San?". Paper presented at the *Workshop on Tourism and Indigenous People*, Geneva.
- Thoma A & J Piek (1997). "Traditional Authority and the San". *CASS Paper No. 36*. Windhoek: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Namibia.
- Töttemeyer G, C Tonchi & A du Pisani (1994). *Namibia Regional Resources Manual*. Windhoek: Fredrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

- United Nations Development Programme (1996). *Namibia Human Development Report 1996*. Windhoek: UNDP.
- United Nations Development Programme (1998). *Namibia Human Development Report 1998*. Windhoek: UNDP.
- United Nations Development Programme (1999). *Namibia Human Development Report 1999*. Windhoek: UNDP.
- United Nations Population Fund (1998). *Republic of Namibia: Programme Review and Strategy Development Report*. Windhoek: UNFPA.
- /Useb J (2000). “‘One Chief is Enough!’: Understanding San Traditional Authorities in the Namibian Context”. Paper presented at the *Conference on Africa’s Indigenous Peoples: ‘First Peoples’ or ‘Marginalised Minorities’?*, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, 24-25 May 2000. Windhoek: Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA).
- Uys I (1993). *Bushman Soldiers: Their Alpha and Omega*. Germinston: Fortress.
- Van der Westhuizen P (1972). *Tydsaanduiding in Die Gobabis !Xu*. MA thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Van Rhyn I (1995). “Working Document on Field Observations in West Caprivi”. *SSD Discussion Paper No. 12*. Windhoek: Social Sciences Division, Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia.
- Werner W (1985). “Production and Land Policies in the Herero Reserves”. In *Namibian Review of Publications*, Vol. 2.
- Werner W (1997). *Land Reform in Namibia: The First Seven Years*. Windhoek: Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU).
- Werner W (1997) *Land Reform in Namibia: The First Seven Years*. Windhoek: NEPRU.
- Werner W (1998). “No One Will Become Rich”: *Economy and Society in the Herero Reserves in Namibia, 1915-1946*. *Basel Namibia Studies Series*. Basel: P Schlettwein Publishing.
- Werner W (1998). “Communal Land Bill: The Facts”. In *The Namibian*, 30 July 1999.
- Widlock T (1994). “Problems of Land Rights and Land Use in Namibia: A Case Study from the Mangetti Area”. *SSD Discussion Paper No. 5*. Windhoek: Social Sciences Division, Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia.
- Widlok T (1999). “Names that Escape the State: Hai//om Naming Practices Versus Domination and Isolation”. In Biesele, Schweitzer & Hitchcock (2000), op. cit.
- Wiessner P (1998). *Population Subsistence and Relations in the Nyae-Nyae Area: Three Decades of Change* (unpublished manuscript). Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Wilmsen E (1989). *Land Filled With Flies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (1997). *Report on Activities – April 1996 to March 1997*. Windhoek: WIMSA.
- Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (1998). *Report on Activities – April 1997 to March 1998*. Windhoek: WIMSA.
- Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (2000). *Report on Activities – April 1999 to March 2000*. Windhoek: WIMSA.
- Wood B (ed.) (1988). *Namibia 1884-1984: Readings on Namibia’s History and Society*. London: Namibia Support Committee and United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN).
- World Bank (1999). *Namibia: Recent Economic Developments and Prospects*. Macroeconomics Unit 1 – Africa Region Report No. 19403-NAM. Washington: World Bank.

World Wildlife Fund (1997). *Report on Mbukushu Migration to Kxoe Use Areas to the East of the Okavango River*. Windhoek: WWF.

Ya Nangoloh P (1996). *The Rights of Indigenous People: The Kxoe People of Namibia*. Windhoek: National Society for Human Rights.

Legislation

Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975

Labour Act 6 of 1992

Social Security Act 34 of 1994

Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act 6 of 1995

Traditional Authorities Act 17 of 1995

Traditional Authorities Amendment Act 8 of 1997

Council of Traditional Leaders Act 207 of 1997

International legal instruments

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (approved by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in 1994)

International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 107: Convention concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries (adopted 1957)

International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169: Convention concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries (adopted 1989)

APPENDIX A¹

Speech by Namibian President Sam Nujoma at the *Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations*

Windhoek, 16-18 June 1992

It is a singular honour for me to have been invited to officially open the *Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations*.

From the outset I want to emphasise that the San community is an integral part of the Namibian nation and that the Government regards it as such. Our Constitution guarantees and protects the rights and freedoms of all our citizens irrespective of race, colour, creed, ethnic origin or social standing. This holds true for the San community as well.

However, we agree that there is a peculiar problem confronting the San people today. Their traditional way of nomadic life has been disturbed by the private ownership of land and the demarcation of national game parks for the protection and conservation of our game and vegetation. This prevents them from hunting game for survival as they used to do.

Similarly, the introduction of the money economy has also meant that the San people like every citizen must be gainfully employed in order to receive money wages with which to satisfy their needs. This need for money was exploited by the colonial army during Namibia's national liberation struggle which employed some of the San people as trackers to detect the movements of the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). The withdrawal of the army of occupation and the loss of the subsequent source of wages left the people destitute, unemployed and marginalised.

Master of Ceremonies, Sir

When we delve into our past to gauge where we are at present we are usually accused of blaming everything on colonialism. However, in the case of the San people it is fair to say that these original inhabitants of Namibia were disposed of their former hunting fields by the later wave of communities and settlers who entered our country. Furthermore, their traditional way of life was destroyed by their introduction to the modern economy. Social amenities such as hospitals and schools were organised very late for the San community and are still inadequate.

Therefore, it is little wonder that the San people are appreciative of any move to further encroach on the little land they have left. They cry out for clinics, schools and job opportunities to which they were previously excluded. They need permanent houses and other structures such as community halls where they can discuss and decide on issues which concern them. In short, they need our respect and understanding as fellow human beings.

Master of Ceremonies, Sir

The Namibian Government is aware of the dire plight of the San community and has made their development and social uplifting a priority within its budgetary limitations. The Government is currently

¹ The reader should note that these appendices are verbatim reproductions of the original texts, except that some of the obvious editorial (grammar, spelling, punctuation) errors have been corrected and minimal layout adjustments have been made in some places for stylistic consistency.

involved in four projects in Western Caprivi, Western Bushmanland, Tsintsabis and Drimiopsis. These projects which were launched in 1990 include gardening, brick-making and other agricultural programmes. We have also initiated several discussions with the San representatives and are considering their views. However, the Government would not impose its will on the people but will be guided by their needs and demands.

Thus, the *Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations* has been organised at an opportune time to look at the problems facing the San people and to formulate ways to solve them. It is heartening to note that the conference is also attended by members of the community who reside in Angola, Botswana and elsewhere. I wish you all fruitful deliberations and believe that your conference will formulate directives and resolutions which would go a long way towards solving the San community's problems.

Allow me this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who organised this conference. My particular thanks go to SIDA, NORAD, the CCN, other non-governmental agencies and the San community-based organisations for their efforts to make the conference a success. The Namibian Government, which is also a participant through its line Ministries, is keenly awaiting the outcome of the conference and is prepared to do its part in the provision of social infrastructure and drought relief. However, we realise that the great foresightedness and moral strength lie in the San people who mobilise themselves and who identified their needs and problems.

We salute them for their willingness to work together with the Government and concerned organisations and individuals in their search for solutions and improvement of life, education and health facilities for our San population.

I now have the honour to declare the *Regional Conference on Development for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations* officially open and to urge all the participants success in their endeavours.

I thank you.

APPENDIX B

Resolutions adopted at the *Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations*

Windhoek, 16-18 June 1992

TOPIC NO. 1: EDUCATION AND CULTURE

A) EDUCATION

- 1) The following facilities should be provided:
 - (i) Primary schools in villages and settlements, either within walking distance (or with transport provided) on a daily basis.
 - (ii) Beyond the village school level, schools should be provided with hostels.
 - (iii) Transport for students and teachers should be provided at the beginning and end of every term.
 - (iv) with regards to San people living on commercial farms;
 - a) Schools should be built on communal land set aside or bought by Government.
 - b) Appropriate transport should be provided.
 - c) Trained teachers should be provided.
 - d) Social services should be provided.
- 2) TEACHING IN THE MOTHER TONGUE:
 - (i) Relevant curriculum materials should be developed and provided for each language group.
 - (ii) Members of San communities, selected by the communities, should be trained as teachers.
 - (iii) It is strongly recommended that the first years of schooling be taught in the mother tongue.
- 3) SCHOOL FEES:
 - (i) Governments should provide free education for disadvantaged groups up to secondary level.
- 4) ADULT / NON-FORMAL EDUCATION should be implemented through:
 - (i) Evening courses
 - (ii) Distance learning via radio, etc.
 - (iii) Multi-media approaches
 - (iv) Mobile educational units
- 5) TECHNICAL / VOCATIONAL TRAINING should be provided for:
 - (i) Adults
 - (ii) Within the school curriculum
- 6) EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES should be provided (with transport where necessary).

B) CULTURE:

- 1) Use of the mother tongue is stressed as a means of retaining cultural identity.

TOPIC NO. 2: LAND

- 1) This conference is in agreement with the following consensus drawn by the *National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question* (1991) in Namibia:

“Ever increasing land pressures in the communal areas pose a threat to the subsistence resources of especially disadvantaged communities and groups. Conference resolves that disadvantaged communities and groups, in particular the San and the disabled, should receive special protection of their land rights.” (Consensus No. 14)

- (i) Governments are requested to take action on the above resolution
- (ii) Governments should clarify the rights of specific groups in communal areas
- (iii) Eastern and Western Bushmanland should be seen as one area
- (iv) Hunting and gathering rights should be recognised as a specific land use
- (v) There should be San representatives with translators on each committee concerned with land allocation.

TOPIC NO. 3: HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

A) HEALTH:

- 1) Governments should provide community based primary health care to each community which includes:
 - a) Health education
 - b) Nutrition
 - c) Childcare
- 2) Members of the San community should be trained as community health workers.
- 3) Traditional medicine should be included in the development of the health system.
- 4) The following facilities should be provided by governments:
 - i) Hospitals, clinics, and mobile clinics
 - ii) Overnight facilities at clinics for patients available at all times
 - iii) Adequate transport in the form of ambulances, clinic vehicles, and mobile clinic vehicles
 - iv) Special attention should be given to the transport needs of people in remote areas.
- 5) When patients are unable to pay, government policy on the waiving of health fees should be enforced.

B) SOCIAL WELFARE:

- 1) Old age and disability pension schemes should be established.
- 2) Government should ease the access to identification cards and to the collection of pension by pensioners, by:
 - (i) decentralising the present system, to a complete, mobile home affairs unit
 - (ii) governments should provide easily accessible information on the use of these two systems

TOPIC NO. 4: EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

A) EMPLOYMENT:

- 1) Resources from each area should bring benefits and employment to the local communities, e.g. wildlife utilisation and management, tourism, trophy hunting, community game guard system.
- 2) Wherever possible, affirmative action should be taken to employ the San population in Government posts if posts relate to San development. Contractors and private groups should be similarly obliged to employ San labour.

- 3) Government employers (e.g. safari hunting, tourism and film companies) must ensure that do not exploit the San.
- 4) A labour code should be implemented as soon as possible with special attention to the San workers on farms.
- 5) Minimum wage legislation for all categories, including farm labourers and domestic workers, should be enacted.

B) ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:

- 1) Governments should promote use of all government facilities to support self-employment opportunities e.g.:
 - wildlife utilisation
 - Agriculture
 - Livestock
 - Tourism
- 2) Ministries should share expertise with members of communities.

TOPIC NO. 5: WATER

CONFERENCE RESOLVES THAT:

- 1) Adequate water should be provided for all.
- 2) Water supply for people and livestock/animals should be separated.
- 3) Low maintenance systems should be installed where feasible.
- 4) Training in system maintenance should be provided.
- 5) Water committees of local people should be instituted.
- 6) Governments should monitor water quality.
- 7) Emergency reservoirs and mobile systems should be planned and established.

TOPIC NO 6: COMMUNICATION

CONFERENCE RESOLVES THAT:

- 1) Transport should be provided for communication between San communities to enhance the consultation process.
- 2) Local liaison offices should be set up for two-way communication between San communities and Governments, e.g. in communicating details of local government structures, and in expressing concerns of communities.
- 3) Rules for use of Government vehicles should be revised by the Ministries of Transport in respective countries, especially with regard to medical emergencies.
- 4) More official border posts should be set up.
- 5) Extension work to explain to San communities the legal aspects of border-crossing should be carried out.
- 6) Radio/line telephone networks should be extended to all communities. Preference should be given to the line networks.
- 7) Local language radio broadcasts should be encouraged.
- 8) San peoples should be assisted to form committees to represent themselves at local, regional, national and international levels.
- 9) National media, both private and Government-owned (including community-based media, should be used efficiently to sensitise the people, Governments and relevant institutions to the problems of the San and other marginalised communities.

- 10) Media organisations, using languages of all the people, should be used for discussing problems and their solutions.

TOPIC NO. 7: OTHER ISSUES

- 1) Governments and donor agencies are requested to support conferences such as this: It is proposed that an annual *San Conference for Southern Africa* be held in Botswana next.
- 2) A committee should be set up to identify and assist the smallest communities to approach NGOs, Governments and donor agencies to obtain assistance and participate in dialogue in the interests of their own development.

APPENDIX C

Resolutions adopted at the *Second Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San/Basarwa Populations: Common Access to Development*

Gaborone 1993

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

1. The national Constitutions of Botswana and Namibia call for equality before the law of all citizens including Basarwa/San communities. BUT, not all public servants apply the law equally to all the citizens/people. The conference therefore calls on both respective governments to implement a programme of affirmative action by way of:
 - a) informing San of their legal rights; and
 - b) facilitating awareness-building among and training of civil servants to ensure correct interpretation and application of the law
2. There is a need for effective monitoring of human rights and the establishment of a free legal assistance centre.
3. Current legislation in both Namibia and Botswana does not adequately protect Basarwa/San land-use rights/practices. National governments are thus called upon to recognise hunting and gathering as a legitimate form of land-use.
4. Education is recognised as a very important component of the development process. However, It does not in its current form take into account cultural norms and practices of Basarwa/San communities. It is resolved that mother tongue teaching be encouraged or introduced for the first three primary school grades. Furthermore, the conference calls for '*equal education for all*'. This will call for affirmative action in the following areas:
 - a) Policy recognition of pre-school programmes
 - b) Improved adult non-formal education programmes
 - c) Increased access to vocational training

The conference reiterates the principle that nobody should be excluded from education and training on account of economic inability to pay necessary fees. In such cases, governments are called upon to provide the necessary assistance.

5. Teenage pregnancy in schools is recognised as a serious social problem among Basarwa/San communities. The conference resolves that teenage mothers be accorded the opportunity to continue with their education at any school of their choice (including their original school).

Furthermore, Sesarwa/San culture must be taught and respected. Cultural practices such as puberty rites should be accommodated by the education system by granting students leave of absence to observe such cultural rites.

6. The conference recognises the need for Sesarwa/San language development. Thus there is need for more consultation and research in this area.
7. The conference reiterates the importance of land as a basic resource for people's subsistence and sustenance. All communities (Basarwa/San included) need ownership, control over and access to land to:
 - a) preserve cultural identity and foster survival through agriculture, hunting, and gathering;
 - b) ensure ownership of identifiable areas; and
 - c) secure inheritance for future generations.
8. The conference resolves that appropriate community based land-use patterns should be ensured through consultation, participation, and affirmative action through the following:
 - a) Reserving the remaining land for communal use and giving priority in allocation to dispossessed communities/people.
 - b) Following a) above, giving syndicates and/or group allocation for boreholes priority over individual applications.
 - c) Adequate representation of Basarwa/San people in land allocation bodies (Land Boards).
 - d) Training for Basarwa/San people in resource management.
9. Given the existence of unexplored restrictions placed on some economic opportunities, the conference calls for national governments to establish community-based income-generating activities through:
 - a) provision of financial support packages;
 - b) provision of effective extension services; and
 - c) ensuring access to and rights to use of natural resources.
10. In light of the prevailing misinterpretation and communication gap so prevalent in decision-making structures, the conference calls on national governments to support the formation of Basarwa national fora through which unity needs and problems can be articulated and discussed.
11. In summary, it is recommended that a process be initiated through which country strategies can be developed and crystallised.

APPENDIX D

Field Research Locations

Much of this study is based on interviews and field research conducted between January 1999 and February 2000. Field visits were made to the following locations:

Omaheke:

Epako (Gobabis)
Skoonheid Resettlement Camp
Drimiopsis Resettlement Facility
Epukiro Post 3
Otjinene
Aminuis
Epukiro RK

Oshikoto and Etosha

Tsintsabis Resettlement Area
Bravo Resettlement Area
Namutoni Gate
Okaukuejo
Oshivelo
Outjo

Caprivi and West Kavango

Bagani/Mutciku
Omega
Omega III
Chetto
Bwabwata
Rundu
Andara

Otjozondjupa

Tsumwke
Nyae Nyae
M'kata
Mangetti Dune
Omatako
Grootfontein
Aasvoëlnes
N//homa

Botswana

Mohembo
Kapatula
Maun
Ghanzi

Additional field research was conducted in Namibia by Silke Felton and Matthias Brenzinger in the following areas:

Ohangwena (SF)
Onganjera (SF)
Oshikoto (SF)
East and West Caprivi (MB)
Kavango (MB)
Ohangwena (MB)

At the 22nd Session of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly held in Windhoek, Namibia, in March 1996, a resolution was passed recognising “the special difficulties encountered in integrating hunting and gathering peoples in agricultural industrial states”, and noting “the lack of accurate overall information on the present condition and prospects of San”. The European Commission was consequently requested to undertake “a comprehensive study of the San people ... in the light of international conventions”. To this end a series of studies was conducted among San populations throughout the southern African region over the period 1999-2000 as part of a project titled *Regional Assessment of the Status of the San in Southern Africa*. This publication is one of five reports produced under the project.

Reports on the *Regional Assessment of the Status of the San in Southern Africa*:

- ***An Introduction to the Regional Assessment of the Status of the San in Southern Africa***
– James Suzman (ISBN 99916-765-3-8)
- ***An Assessment of the Status of the San in South Africa, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe***
– Steven Robins, Elias Madzudzo and Matthias Brenzinger (ISBN 99916-765-4-6)
- ***An Assessment of the Status of the San in Botswana***
– Lin Cassidy, Ken Good, Isaac Mazonde and Roberta Rivers (ISBN 99916-765-2-X)
- ***An Assessment of the Status of the San in Namibia***
– James Suzman (ISBN 99916-765-61-1)
- ***A Gender Perspective on the Status of the San in Southern Africa***
– Silke Felton and Heike Becker (ISBN 99916-765-4-6)



Legal Assistance Centre