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Institutional relationships, capacity and sustainability

Lessons learned from a community-based conservation project,  
eastern Tsumkwe District, Namibia, 1991-96

by

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This series of Research Discussion Papers is intended to present preliminary, new, or topical information and ideas for discussion and debate. The contents are not necessarily the final views or firm positions of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Comments and feedback will be welcomed.



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Acknowledgements: This paper was produced as part of the project "Development of Monitoring Procedures and Analysis of Community-based Conservation in Namibia" which was funded by the Biodiversity Support Programme (BSP). Thanks are due to the following: All those who commented on the early drafts of this paper and in particular Barbara Wyckoff-Baird who shared many ideas with me on the long road between Windhoek and Nyae Nyae. Special thanks are due to Kate Newman of BSP for being so patient - she managed to produce a baby much quicker than I could give birth to this paper!



# Institutional relationships, capacity and sustainability

## Lessons learned from a community-based conservation project, eastern Tsumkwe District, Namibia, 1991-1996

Brian T B Jones<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

Over the past two decades conservationists have come to recognise that traditional approaches to conservation have been inadequate because they have ignored the human and social dimensions of natural resource and protected area management. (Western and Wright 1994). This recognition, combined with experiences from rural development and the conceptualisation of 'sustainable development' has spawned a movement in conservation away from reliance on protection and enforcement. New approaches place more emphasis on sustainable utilisation of resources such as wildlife and the involvement of local people and other stakeholders directly in conservation decision-making (Western and Wright 1994).

Following independence from South Africa in 1990, the Namibian conservation authorities began developing a national community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programme aimed at addressing some of the key constraints of past conservation approaches. The programme aimed at providing incentives for rural people to manage natural resources sustainably, thereby maintaining biodiversity outside protected areas.

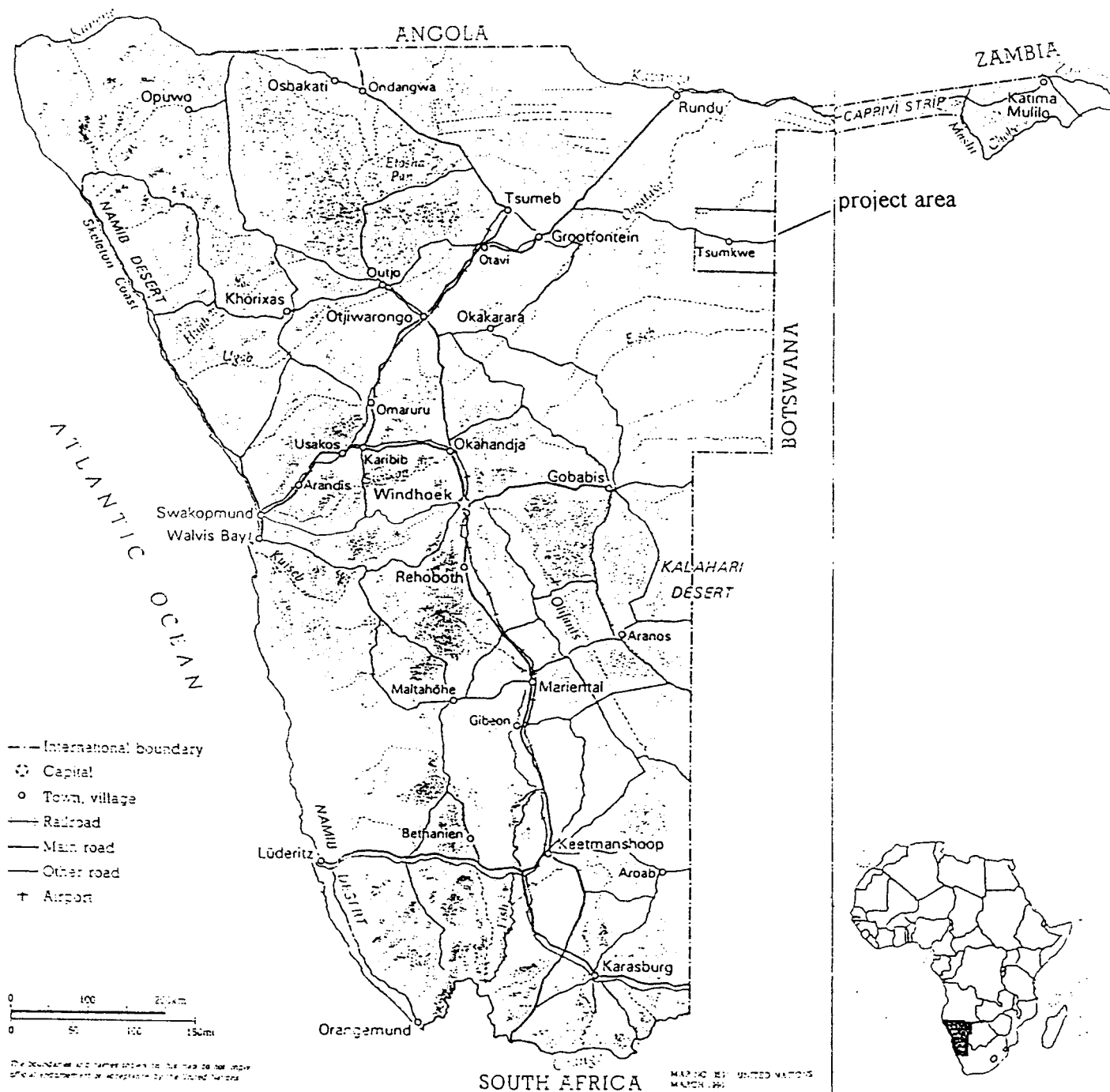
As part of this national programme, a number of local, site-specific projects were developed which aimed to involve rural people directly in conservation and promote the flow of economic and other benefits from sustainable use of wildlife and other resources back to local communities. One of these local projects was developed in 1991 in the eastern Tsumkwe District of north-eastern Namibia. This project was jointly initiated by the then Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism (MWCT), a community-based organisation called the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative (NNFC) and a development NGO called the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDNFN), with support from another Namibian NGO, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC).

Eastern Tsumkwe District was chosen as a project site because of its importance for biodiversity in Namibia and the conflicts which existed between the need for conservation and the need for development for the local inhabitants, the Ju/'hoan San people.

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Map of Namibia showing project area



## 2. Objectives of this paper

The broad aim of this paper is to identify and analyse the lessons which can be learnt for the development of local and national CBNRM programmes from the CBNRM project in eastern Tsumkwe District between January 1991 and March 1996.

The paper will focus particularly on the institutional capacity and relationships necessary for the development of a successful local CBNRM project and the implications for development of a national programme. It will also analyse how the pace of policy and legislative change affected both the project in eastern Tsumkwe District and the national programme.

## 3. The role of institutions in the development of CBNRM programmes - a conceptual framework

### 3.1. Community-based natural resource management

The use of the term 'community-based natural resource management' in this paper rests on the following understanding of the concept:

Community-based natural resource management takes place where a specific group of people have clearly defined rights over a resource and collectively take decisions over the use and management of the resource. By implication this defined group of people are able to retain any financial benefits that might accrue from the use of the resource and are able to decide how they will use those benefits. CBNRM therefore shares essential characteristics of common property resource management, the principles of which provide foundations for developing most CBNRM activities.

CBNRM differs therefore from concepts such as co-management which imply a much greater degree of sharing in decision-making, usually with government. In a CBNRM situation, the community has a large degree of control over the resource or resources with minimum interference or regulation by the State. In an ideal co-management situation the role of the State would be much greater but the relationship more akin to power sharing as equal partners. Murphree (1994) argues however, that most 'co-management' approaches turn out in reality to mean state management.

CBNRM also differs from what might be termed a 'parks and neighbours' situation where a conservation authority decides to share resources and revenue from protected areas with neighbouring communities and tries to develop good neighbour relations in order to legitimise the park in the eyes of the local community. Unless the conservation authority devolves proprietorship (and therefore management responsibility) over the protected area to a local community, CBNRM is not taking place in these circumstances.

Murphree (1994) points out that many of these 'parks and neighbours' approaches have been given the general label of Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs). Whether or not an ICDP can be said to have a CBNRM approach, depends on the extent to which proprietorship over resources or a protected area is devolved to the local community. ICDPs are therefore not

necessarily synonymous with CBNRM, although some commentators (Wells and Brandon 1992, Brown and Wyckoff-Baird 1992) lump the two together.

It should also be noted that CBNRM is usually applied to modern approaches to natural resource management which emphasise devolution of control to communities. Communities have in fact been managing resources themselves for centuries and the idea of communal management of resources is not new.

The new dimension in the modern context is that CBNRM approaches recognise that common property resource management regimes are viable methods of managing renewable natural resources sustainably. They attempt to strengthen existing common property management regimes, and build new ones where rights and tenure over land and resources have been eroded and 'open access' systems have developed.

### 3.2. Partnerships and institutions in CBNRM programmes.

Commentators on the design and implementation of ICDPs and community-based natural resource management projects agree that institutional relationships and institutional capacity are key issues which can govern success or failure and are crucial for project sustainability (Wells and Brandon 1992, Ack 1991, Brown and Wyckoff-Baird 1992, Murphree 1994).

Reference is often made to the establishment of 'partnerships' between different institutions in the development and implementation of CBNRM and similar programmes (Wells and Brandon 1992, Brown and Wyckoff-Baird 1992).

There is clearly an assumption that CBNRM projects cannot be designed and implemented by one institution or organisation acting alone. The range of activities and actions required is too big to be encompassed within one organisation. Partnerships need to be promoted because without a coincidence of interests, and joint action to achieve common goals, institutions will not cooperate, and will undermine each other, whether wittingly or unwittingly. The relationships between institutions will to a very large extent govern the nature of the programme or project and impact heavily on success or failure.

For example, proprietorship and authority over natural resources in many African countries is vested in the State (IFAD 1995, Murphree 1996). Theory and practice of common property resource management regimes indicates that successful and sustainable resource management takes place where the resource users have clearly defined rights and authority over the land and resources (IFAD 1995, Murphree 1996, Bromley and Cernea 1989). CBNRM projects that seek to promote sustainable resource use and the flow of benefits to rural people therefore need to address the issue of land and resource tenure, if tenure does not already rest with local resource users. There needs to be a dialogue and relationship between communities and government over land and resource tenure. Government must be convinced that it is in its own interests to devolve authority to local communities and work in partnership with them.



There is a wide range of potential institutional actors in CBNRM projects. These range from traditional authorities in local communities to international donors. Murphree (1994) lists the following:

Traditional Authority Structures; Local Governance Structures; Local Party Political Structures; Self-interest Organisations (e.g. a water-users' association, local NGO); Service Organisations; Private Entrepreneurs (corporate or individual); Regional or Subregional Administration; Government Line Ministries; National Party Political Organisations; Donor and Aid Agencies/Consultancy Agencies/International NGOs; National NGOs; Universities and Research Organisations; National Interest Associations (e.g. Farmers' Association); National Service Organisations; Private Sector Entrepreneurs (individual and corporate) and Neighbours.

Murphree summarises these under three main groups: community institutional actors, government institutional, and non-government institutional actors. This might be adapted to add a category of donors/consultants. Donors can either be government or non-government and although are usually of foreign origin could conceivably be national rather than international. Either directly or indirectly, donors and their consultants can have significant effects on the implementation of projects, even if they do not have a 'hands on' implementation role.

Clearly not all of these institutional actors are as crucial to successful CBNRM projects as others. It is worth reflecting on the relative importance of these actors in order help develop a conceptual framework for analysing institutional relationships and capacity as factors in successful CBNRM projects.

At the community level, institutions are important as the units of decision-making and active management of resources. Where communities enjoy proprietary or clearly defined use rights over resources, it is through some form of institutional relationships that communities make rules for the use of these resources, decide on sanctions for offenders, exclude outsiders and decide how to use and distribute accrued benefits and income. Murphree (1994, 405-406) emphasises that "proprietaryship provides the necessary tenurial component for an adequate institutional framework."

If CBNRM means the control and management of natural resources by local communities, then by definition, community institutions with proprietary or even de facto use rights over resources, are key actors. I refer to these institutions as community resource management institutions.

Communities are not homogeneous and are made up of many different groups, whether clustered around variables such as age, gender, wealth and status, or around common interests such as livestock farming (IIED 1994).

Murphree (1994) points out the need to recognise the existence of intra-community institutions, and the need to identify their roles and status within the community. Not only do a variety of community interest groups and institutions interact with external actors, but intra-community institutions may have conflicting interests with institutions which exist to govern natural resource management.

Community level institutions are key actors because they represent the resource users, (and if they have proprietorship, the resource owners), the people central to any community-based approach to natural resource management. Community level institutions can also represent other interest groups which might be in conflict with community-based approaches to managing a particular resource and might have the potential to undermine management institutions.

The other key institutional actor is government. Government sets policy, passes legislation, issues edicts, which can help or hinder community-based approaches. National government systems vary and the degree of authority and the capacity to take action of central and regional/local government also varies from country to country. But it is government, whether regional or central, which ultimately decides whether communities will be able to gain legal control over natural resources. No other institutional actor in the list provided by Murphree above, can devolve proprietorship to communities.

Theoretically then, central and/or regional and local government institutions and community institutions are the only actors required to enable local communities to gain control over and manage their resources sustainably. The 'partnership' necessary for successful CBNRM is therefore between government and local communities, and more specifically between government line Ministries (through which legislation is implemented) and community resource management institutions.

Government in this partnership provides the enabling policy and legislative framework for community management to take place, provides extension and support services to the community management institutions, and arbitration for conflict resolution.

The communities in this partnership, develop or adapt appropriate institutions for managing their resources sustainably, becoming increasingly independent of government assistance as their level of expertise and experience improves and their livelihoods become more secure. The communities make rules for the use of resources, decide on sanctions for offenders, exclude outsiders and decide how to use and distribute accrued benefits and income.

In practice, partnerships in CBNRM projects are not usually confined to government and communities. Often neither the government nor communities have the **capacity** to carry out their allotted roles. This is partly why Murphree's list of possible institutional actors is long and broad in scope. It includes a large number of institutions which can potentially provide important services and support to both the central actors, government and community management organisations.

It is also possible, therefore, to break down Murphree's list into categories of institution which carry out certain functions in relation to the community resource management institutions:

a) Community management institutions themselves i.e. those in which proprietary rights and decision-making over resources are vested.

b) Community level institutions which exist separately, but which might influence, undermine or assist community resource management institutions

c)Local and national government institutions which can provide the enabling framework for community-based resource management to take place, or prevent it.

d)Local community-level and national institutions (government and private) which can provide direct support and services to community-management institutions

e)Private sector entrepreneurs which can involve community management institutions in economic development through a range of activities which provide only job opportunities at one end of the scale, but provide opportunities for profit sharing or joint venture partnerships at the other end of the scale. Private entrepreneurs can also provide training opportunities for communities.

f)Donors who can provide funds to initiate projects and consultants who can assist in design and implementation.

The lack of capacity at community level, and even sometimes at government level, means that the theoretical partnership of government and community needs to be expanded to include a range of other partners which provide support either to the communities, or government or both. The partnership should also aim at co-opting other institutions which can potentially threaten or undermine the project or programme. These might include government, NGO, community and private institutions.

The extent to which the institutions involved in the partnership have the capacity to fulfill their roles is crucial for the successful implementation of CBNRM programmes. This might appear obvious, but is not always taken into account in project design and development. CBNRM projects and ICDPs have been developed in the past by NGOs without thought to the roles and responsibilities of government, particularly with regard to the creation of an appropriate enabling environment (IIED 1994). It is also easy to assume that an existing institution has the will and capacity to play its allotted role, but this is not always the case.

It is important to realise that the institutional partners for any given project will vary according to national and local circumstances. However, from the above, we can refer broadly to five types of institutional partners: community resource management institutions, government institutions (including policy/regulatory as well as extension functions); non-government institutions which provide support to communities and government; private sector institutional actors and donors/consultants.

Using the above analysis, we can develop an approach for examining the roles and relationships of institutions within the CBNRM project in eastern Tsumkwe District and the implications for the national programme.

This paper will examine:

a)The role of government and its relationship with community institutions in terms of recognition by government of community institutions and devolution of rights from government to the community.

b)The roles of intra-community institutions and their relationships.

c)The role of support institutions such as government, NGOs and private entrepreneurs and their relationship with community natural resource management institutions.

d)The role of international NGOs/donors and their relationships with community institutions, government and Namibian NGOs.

### 3.3. Partnerships and institutions in Namibia's CBNRM Programme.

#### 3.3.1. The Namibian model

Namibia's CBNRM programme recognised from the beginning that the essential partnership should be between communities and government. It also recognised, however, that both communities and government would need support from other agencies, particularly NGOs and donors.

The original model envisaged the development of the following roles and relationships:

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) would play a coordinating role, creating the enabling policy and legal environment and providing technical support to communities on natural resource management. It would assist in developing local CBNRM projects through carrying out socio-ecological surveys with communities and NGOs. As MET had neither the staff nor the expertise to provide assistance to communities in capacity and institution building, this role would be left to NGOs.

The communities would participate in project design and implementation, receive assistance from MET and NGOs, and as their capacity grew, take on an increasing number of activities themselves. They would receive a variety of benefits through project activities, financial as well as socio-cultural, and would begin to take a more active role in managing their resources sustainably. They would establish or adapt appropriate institutions for natural resource management and the distribution of financial and other benefits within the community.

NGOs would assist the community and MET in a variety of ways. They would provide a range of services to communities, particularly assistance in capacity and institution building. They would liaise between MET staff and the community, initially providing a buffer between MET and sometimes hostile communities, but aiming to assist in bringing the two together. It was assumed that within a particular project, the role of the NGO would diminish as the MET and the community forged a more direct partnership and as the community's confidence and capacity increased. International NGOs were originally included in the partnership in the role of accessing and administering funds from donors.

### 3.3.2. Partnerships in the national programme

The national programme had its origins in the period just before and just after Namibia's independence from South Africa in March 1990.

Prior to this period, CBNRM in Namibia had been pioneered by NGOs working in the former Damaraland and Kaokoland, now Kunene Region. Former agricultural extension officer and game ranger, Garth Owen-Smith, supported by the Namibia Wildlife Trust, had worked with local communities to establish a community game guard system which proved highly successful in restoring to local communities a sense of responsibility over wildlife and in reducing poaching. Owen-Smith later teamed up with social scientist and former journalist Margaret Jacobsohn to form a new NGO, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC). They continued to work with the community game guards and assisted a small community to channel income from photographic safari operators to community members, linking the income to wildlife and wild habitats. The community game guard system was extended to eastern Caprivi in 1989.

Save the Rhino Trust (SRT), also working in Kunene Region, encouraged and supported communities and local entrepreneurs to develop small campsites for tourists and assisted local farmers by alleviating problems caused by elephants.

At this time, the involvement of the conservation authorities with local communities remained limited, and was a result more of the interest and vision of individual conservators rather than an official policy. Nature Conservator Chris Eyre, for example, played a major role with Garth Owen-Smith in the establishment of the community-game guard system in north western Namibia.

The then Directorate of Nature Conservation and Recreational Resorts had enabled local people in Kunene Region to benefit from wildlife conservation through the distribution of meat and skins from game hunted for the community by Directorate officials.

The Directorate also tried to get a share of revenue from two north eastern parks on communal land to be returned to the communities who had given the land for conservation purposes. This attempt foundered on the rock of bureaucracy as the revenue had to be paid to the former ethnic regional government of the area and could not be paid directly to the communities concerned.

An opportunity for the Directorate to explore different approaches to working with local communities came in early 1990 with the withdrawal of the occupying South African Defence Force (SADF) from the Caprivi Game Reserve prior to Independence.

The Caprivi Game Reserve in the Caprivi Strip in north eastern Namibia had been proclaimed in 1968, but occupied by the SADF soon afterwards and run as a military zone for operations into Angola and as a training base for Angolan rebels. The conservation authorities had little access to the reserve, and when the SADF withdrew, it was necessary to investigate the ecological status of the area and its potential. The task of leading this investigation was given to ecologist and Directorate ornithologist, Dr Chris Brown.

Brown realised that the Directorate's investigation had to be expanded beyond the ecological to include socio-economic issues as well. The SADF had left behind about 4 000 people, mostly of

San origin, who had been soldiers, worked for the military or lived in villages attached to the military bases.

If the Caprivi Game Park was to work as a game reserve in future, the Directorate would need to find ways of dealing with the presence of close to 4 000 people living within the reserve. The options were to remove the people from the park, continue to administer the park as a game reserve but without making any special provision for the presence of people, or to find ways of incorporating the people within the park and enabling them to benefit from conservation activities (Brown and Jones 1994).

The first option would have been politically unacceptable and the second would have been a recipe for conflict between residents and park authorities and between residents and wildlife.

Brown put together a multi-disciplinary team to carry out a socio-ecological survey of the Caprivi Game Reserve in April, 1990, one month after Independence. Included in this team was IRDNC, which played a major role in the socio-economic investigation work carried out as part of the survey, and in developing the survey methodology.

The survey was participatory and iterative in approach, having many similarities to Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques. It resulted in a series of recommendations for the Caprivi Game Reserve which included the zoning of the park into core conservation areas and a multiple use area (covering the area inhabited by people), the sustainable consumptive and non consumptive use of wildlife for the benefit of residents, the establishment of a community game guard system and the establishment of a steering committee for the park (Brown and Jones 1994). A project was put together to carry out these recommendations with IRDNC playing a major implementation role, and funds provided by WWF-US.

A similar socio-ecological survey was carried out in eastern Tsumkwe District (formerly eastern Bushmanland)<sup>2</sup> in January 1991, and a project developed to implement the recommendations, this time with the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia as the NGO partner and with funding from the BSP programme.

Socio-ecological surveys were also carried out between 1991 and 1993 in eastern Caprivi, the lower Kuiseb River in the Namib-Naukluft Park, the Huab Catchment and the Sesfontein District, either to develop new projects with the local community or to build on work already begun. In each of these surveys IRDNC was the Ministry's major NGO partner.

July 1993 saw the start of a US \$14 million support programme for CBNRM in Namibia, known as the Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Programme, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), WWF-US and MET. The LIFE Programme is

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<sup>2</sup> The area is known to the local people, the Ju/ 'hoansi, as 'Nyae Nyae'. The Nyae Nyae area used to include parts of Botswana, the Kaudom Game Reserve to the north and parts of former Hereroland to the south. Throughout this paper I use the official administrative designation for the area: eastern Tsumkwe District, as well as the official spelling for Tsumkwe.

administered by WWF-US in partnership with two other US-based organisations, World Learning and Management Systems International, and a Namibian NGO, the Rossing Foundation.

The LIFE programme provides subgrants for the implementation of CBNRM projects by Namibian NGOs and the MET and for support organisations at the national level. It provides technical assistance to the projects and administers the grants. LIFE is coordinated by a Steering Committee, which is dominated by Namibians, and which takes decisions by consensus. The development of the LIFE Programme has brought international NGOs directly into the partnership and brought interaction with a major bilateral donor, USAID.

Since 1993, there has also been the emergence of an informal 'collaborative group' made up of the key implementation partners in the national programme. The aim of this group was to provide overall guidance and direction for the national programme, ensuring that all major implementing partners agreed on key issues and approaches. The members of the group are the MET, IRDNC, the Social Science Division (SSD) of the University of Namibia, Rossing Foundation, and staff of the LIFE Programme. The aim is to include community representatives in this group once there is an organisation representing community natural resource management institutions.

Thus by mid 1995, the national programme included: several locally based projects in three of the country's 14 Regions; two NGOs providing direct support to communities; social science research carried out by SSD in support of the projects, the MET working on policy and legislative change to devolve rights over wildlife to local communities, and considerable support for all of these activities coming from the LIFE Programme.

Also by 1995, community-based tourism had developed as a major component of the national CBNRM programme. The MET had adopted a community-based tourism policy and appointed a community-based tourism officer, a Namibian Community-based Tourism Association had emerged and increased support was being given by CBNRM implementing partners for community-based tourism activities.

### 3.3.3. MET as an institutional partner

As the MET is such a key player in the national programme and has gone through various changes during the period within which the national programme has developed, it is necessary to focus briefly on the MET as an institution.

At the time of the West Caprivi socio-ecological survey, the pre-independence Directorate of Nature Conservation and Recreational Resorts (of the Ministry of Agriculture) was being transformed into the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism as part of the post independence reconstruction of government.

At this stage there was no agency within the Ministry with primary responsibility for community-based conservation activities and no coordinated approach to working with communities. The socio-ecological surveys carried out in 1990 and 1991 (West Caprivi, Bushmanland and eastern Caprivi) began to provide the foundation for such an approach, and a methodology for problem identification, community participation, and project design.

These surveys continued to be led by Dr Brown, assisted by the author (at that time a PRO/extension officer for the ministry). Partly due to their involvement in the surveys and in a number of broader environmental issues, Brown and the author were seconded to form an Environmental Planning Unit (EPU) in the Directorate of Wildlife Conservation and Research within the Ministry.

This unit continued to coordinate CBNRM activities within the Ministry until its transformation in 1993 into a new Directorate of Environmental Affairs (DEA). In April 1994, to reflect its broader environmental mandate, the Ministry became the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The DEA continues to coordinate CBNRM activities within the Ministry, with the Directorate of Resource Management beginning to play a greater role in the implementation of local projects.

#### 4. The Bushmanland CBNRM project

##### 4.1. The project area and its inhabitants

Tsumkwe District (incorporating former Bushmanland and Gam in former Hereroland) is a region of particular significance for biodiversity conservation in Namibia. Generally, the region is part of the Kalahari sandveld system, but the eastern part, which is the focus of the project, is characterised by a series of seasonal pans which serve as a focal point for people and wildlife alike.

When the pans are flooded they attract large numbers of pelicans, flamingoes and a wide variety of small wading birds. They also attract significant numbers of rare or endangered birds such as the wattled crane, Ethiopian snipe and slaty egret. Many Palaearctic migrant birds spend the European winter in eastern Tsumkwe District. The region supports large mammals such as elephant, a small number of buffalo, eland, giraffe, kudu, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest and roan antelope. Predators include wild dog, lion, leopard, cheetah, and both brown and spotted hyena.

The region is inhabited by about 3 000 Ju/'hoan San people who have in recent years tried to diversify their economy by embracing subsistence cattle farming and dryland cultivation. They still derive a large part of their diet from wild plants (veld food) and many of the older men continue to hunt traditionally.

The Ju/'hoansi live in small groups in about 35 settlements scattered around eastern Tsumkwe District, based on the n!ore system. A n!ore in the past was an area of land providing enough game, bushfoods and water to support a band of 30-50 people. Rights of residence in a n!ore were inherited from both parents, and individuals also gained rights in other n!ores through marriage (Biesele and Jones 1991).

The Ju/'hoansi have adapted the n!ore system to modern circumstances and still use it as the basis for land allocation and resource use.



Between 1959 and the early 1970s, many Ju/'hoansi moved from their n!ores to the newly formed administrative centre of Tsumkwe encouraged by the commissioner for the area. He aimed to provide people with wage labour, training in agriculture and animal husbandry and medical care.

About 900 people moved to Tsumkwe and although jobs and infrastructure were provided, the social changes which took place as a result of the move were too great for the people to cope with. Social disintegration was accompanied by dependency on a few wage earners, alcoholism and crime. The Tsumkwe n!ore could not sustain so many people in hunting and gathering, and food resources near the administrative centre were severely depleted (Biesele and Jones 1991).

In 1969, Bushmanland was created as a homeland under the Odendaal Plan, South Africa's scheme for carving up the then South West Africa into apartheid style homelands. This confined the Ju/'hoansi to 30% of their original hunting territory and only one of nine permanent waters.

By 1978, the situation of the people had not improved, and the dependency of many on a few wage earners was increased by the recruitment by the South African Defence Force of young men to form a 'Bushman Battalion'.

About the same time the Directorate of Nature Conservation and Recreational Resorts began developing plans for a national park in the area.

An American film maker, John Marshall, whose family had lived with the Ju/'hoansi during the 1950s, returned to Tsumkwe in 1978 to find the people living in poverty, squalor and social decline. In 1982, he set up an organisation, the Bushman Foundation, to assist the people to move away from Tsumkwe, back to their n!ores and to develop a mixed form of economy including subsistence cattle farming and dryland cultivation to supplement hunting and gathering.

Marshall strongly opposed the government's plans for developing a national park in the area, arguing that it would deprive people of their land rights. Various plans for the park were developed, some of which aimed to remove most of the people from the proclaimed area, and others which were more progressive, allowing people to stay and carry on with their subsistence activities including cattle and crops.

All of these plans, would, however, have meant the Ju/'hoansi losing control over their last remaining land. Proclamation would have given the state absolute control over the area, and the people would have lived there subject to the whim or prevailing conservation approach of officials.

Marshall launched an emotional, controversial, but successful campaign to prevent the park being established. In 1986 the pre-independence government announced that there were no longer any plans to establish a conservation area in eastern Bushmanland.

The campaign left a great deal of bitterness between the Directorate of Nature Conservation and Recreational Resorts and the Bushman Foundation. The Directorate believed that its legitimate attempts to create a national park or game reserve in Bushmanland had been sabotaged. It also objected to some of Marshall's methods of resettling people on their n!ores. In some instances he had encouraged them to occupy boreholes which had been provided by the government for

wildlife. This caused conflict over the use of the water and led to increased antagonism between the Directorate and the Foundation and local people.

Another important development during the 1980s was the emergence of a local community-based organisation, the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative (NNFC). With the assistance of the Bushman Foundation, the Ju/'hoansi formed a body which carried out a variety of functions. Through a management committee supported by the Foundation, it provided some basic services to its members, acted as a voice for the community to government and other outsiders, and allocated land according to the n!ore system to applicants who wanted to move back to the land or Ju/'hoansi who wanted to move in from other areas.

#### 4.2. The Bushmanland project

By 1990, both the author and Chris Brown had developed contacts with the people in the area and members of the Bushman Foundation (by then known as the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia). It was clear that despite the past conflicts there was much common ground over land and resource use in the area. The then chairman of the NNFC, Tsamkxao =Oma, told the author in 1989 that he and his people did not want to see their land overgrazed by cattle as had happened in Hereroland to the south. The Ju/'hoansi wanted to farm with cattle and grow crops, but did not want to lose their wildlife. They wanted to get greater benefits from wildlife, such as a share in the revenue from trophy hunting that was taking place in the area at the time. They wanted to stop lions from killing stock and elephants from damaging water installations and gardens.

Dr Megan Biesele, then the NNDFN's field director, saw the potential for income from wildlife and tourism to contribute considerably to the people's economy, and for wildlife and tourism to be viable additional land-use options in the region. After some exploratory discussions, members of the NNDFN and the NNFC took part in the socio-ecological survey of West Caprivi in April 1990, and observed conservation officials working closely with the local community.

By January 1991, relationships had improved sufficiently for the Ministry (with IRDNC), the NNFC and the NNDFN to jointly carry out a socio-ecological survey of eastern Bushmanland. The survey did much to further the development of mutual trust between the people, the Foundation and the Ministry and to develop consensus on a number of important issues. The survey produced a number of recommendations, the most important of which are summarised below:

i) That the Ministry should draft a national policy allowing people in communal land to own game in the same way as commercial farmers. The Ministry should introduce legislation to give effect to the policy. Urgent attention should be given to establishing ways in which income from trophy hunting and other forms of wildlife utilisation such as tourism, can be channelled back to the community.

ii) A joint committee should be set up between Ministry officials in Bushmanland and local leaders to discuss problems, seek solutions, exchange information and plan joint action. This committee would also act as a forum for joint decision-making.

- iii) That a system of community game guards be introduced, with the guards being appointed by the community.
- iv) That the n!ore system should be recognised as the basis for land tenure in eastern Bushmanland and this should form the foundation for land use planning.
- v) That a practical programme for coping with problem animals be worked out in conjunction with the local people.
- vi) That research be carried out into game numbers, and potential wildlife utilisation projects in eastern Bushmanland.
- vii) That a clear policy be established for Ministry personnel working in eastern Bushmanland, which provides guidelines for communication and cooperation with local people.

Using these recommendations, the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism drafted a proposal for the development of a community-based conservation project in eastern Bushmanland, which would be implemented in partnership with the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative and the NNDFN. The proposal also envisaged support to the then Environmental Planning Unit (EPU) in developing the national CBNRM programme. An important component of the proposal was provision for a community liaison officer, who would primarily be responsible for implementation of field activities in Bushmanland.

Due to areas of remaining suspicion and mistrust on all sides, it was felt at the time that the Liaison Officer should not be attached formally to any one organisation, but should 'float' between them in a neutral position. The CLO would be supervised by a joint committee consisting of the NNFC, the NNDFN and the EPU. Logistic and 'moral' support in the field would be provided by the NNDFN, which had decided to include natural resource management in its integrated rural development programme. It was hoped that the liaison officer would be able to play a major role in helping the three organisations to continue to work together.

The liaison officer's main tasks were to facilitate communication between all parties, assist the NNFC in obtaining the information needed for decision-making on natural resource management, establish, coordinate and give logistical support to a system of community game guards, identify community training needs, and help identify future activities in natural resource-based development.

The proposal was submitted during 1992 to WWF-US for funding which was obtained from the Biodiversity Support Programme (BSP). The grant agreement between WWF/BSP and the Ministry came into effect on March 1, 1993 and ran until March 31, 1995. The project was titled "Development of Monitoring Procedures and Analysis of Community-Based Conservation in Namibia".

The BSP Project activities were aimed at supporting the implementation of the project in eastern Tsumkwe District as well as at providing support to the MET in developing its national CBNRM programme.

The objectives of the BSP-funded project were as follows:

- (1) To develop methods for monitoring the effectiveness of community-based conservation programmes in Namibia as a means to protect biological diversity in arid and semi-arid areas.
- (2.) To support training initiatives for Ministry and NGO staff, as well as community members.
- (3) To provide support for a community liaison officer in eastern Bushmanland to undertake planning activities for a programme in community-based natural resource management.

In order not to lose momentum while waiting for the paperwork with WWF and BSP to be completed, a number of project activities were initiated before the BSP funds had been secured, using other sources of funding.

Holly Stander, an American married to the Ministry biologist for the area, Flip Stander, had been appointed community liaison officer. Holly Stander had previously spent time in Bushmanland visiting her brother, John Payne, who had been working for the Bushman Foundation, so she knew something of the people and the area.

The author also worked with the NNFC and NNDFN to establish an Environmental Planning Committee (EPC) for the area. The objectives of the committee were to provide a platform for the NNFC leadership to meet with government officials and voice their concerns over natural resource management issues, to provide a forum for exchange of information between the community and government, particularly the MET, and to plan and take decisions over natural resource management issues where possible.

As a separate WWF-US funded project, Flip Stander began investigating the status of predators in Bushmanland, the interaction between predators and people, and the level of predation on livestock.

During mid 1992, a major EPC meeting was held involving several government ministries who were asked to give presentations on their work in the region and how they could work with the local people on natural resource management issues.

Consensus was reached at this meeting on a programme of partnership in natural resource management with the MWCT. This programme included the ongoing work of the Ministry in trying to change policy and legislation so that people in communal areas throughout Namibia could gain rights to use and benefit from wildlife. It also included the development of a community game guard system, the establishment of controls over tourism and development of community-run tourism enterprises, a continuation of the newly formed EPC, continued employment of a Community Liaison Officer to assist in implementing the programme and supporting the EPC, action to try to build up the game population in the area and the continuation of Flip Stander's predator research.

The programme also included collaboration with the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR) in a land-use planning project in the region, which resulted from a request by the EPC to make the Tsumkwe District the pilot area for the MLRR's national land-use planning programme.

Unfortunately, before much of this programme could be implemented, Holly Stander left the project for personal reasons in September 1992.

In the absence of a CLO, a greater responsibility fell to the Foundation and local MWCT staff for project implementation, and Flip Stander managed to keep some momentum, for example by taking over the role of assisting the EPC. It took until August 1993 until another CLO could be appointed - Neil Powell, an Australian with experience in community-based natural resource management.

With the appointment of Neil Powell, the programme again had someone in the field responsible for overseeing project implementation and it was hoped that momentum would be regained. Powell's appointment marked the beginning of activities using BSP funding.

Powell developed a rather different role for the CLO, moving away from general liaison and facilitation to working directly with the community to develop a participatory land use planning methodology. He hoped that this would fulfill an essential liaison function through enabling the local people to articulate their views and knowledge about resource management to their own community institutions as well as to outside organisations such as NGOs and government. (Powell 1995).

He established a community ranger system, one of the original project objectives. The rangers are different to community game guards in other areas in that they focus on a broad range of resources including veld foods rather than just game animals. They also play a role in the community governance system, providing information from local settlements to community institutions on issues such as health and education.

The project was at this stage hampered by internal problems within the Nyae Nyae Foundation. Due to personality clashes between staff, key field people, who had been working closely with Neil Powell, left the Foundation's integrated rural development programme.

The remaining Foundation staff were also losing the confidence of the community and this culminated in a request by the community for the resignation of the Director, Axel Thoma, and Field Manager, Marc Spoelstra.

Powell had been close to some of the Foundation staff who had left previously, and had become involved in the internal disputes, particularly over the development approach of the Foundation. He decided to leave the programme in September 1994.

Although the BSP funding for activities in eastern Tsumkwe District effectively ended in September, 1994, community-based natural resource management activities have continued and now receive support from the LIFE Programme.

LIFE assistance initially focused on working with the NNFC to develop project proposals for sustainable natural resource management activities which could be funded by LIFE sub-grants. A LIFE bridging grant enabled certain core activities to continue until April, 1995, when a longer term sub-grant was approved by the LIFE Steering Committee.

This grant has been given directly to the NNFC with financial accounting being carried out on the cooperative's behalf by the NNDFN. This reflects the changed situation following the upheavals of 1994. The NNDFN has stated that it will only carry out activities at the request of the NNFC, where the NNFC believes it does not have the technical capacity. The new Community Liaison Officer, an American, Hugh Hogan, who is funded under this grant, works for the NNFC and reports to them.

The new programme continues to provide support for the EPC, and the community-rangers. It also has a considerable training component, and embraces some basic agricultural activities as these are inextricably linked with management of resources such as wildlife and veld food. The programme also makes provision for activities aimed at building up wildlife as a resource base. The LIFE sub-grants have made provision for the NNFC to hire consultants to help them address issues of representation and decision-making, and LIFE Technical Assistant, Barbara Wyckoff-Baird provides considerable support to the NNFC and MET.

Neil Powell left his raw data from his community resource mapping with the NNFC at their headquarters at Baraka in eastern Tsumkwe District. This material is now being incorporated on to resource maps being developed by the DEA natural resource management specialist in the CBNRM programme, Jo Tagg. These maps are being developed both for MET monitoring of resources in the area as well as for use by the community. A grid system and easily identifiable land marks on the maps will enable community rangers to plot information they gather in the field. This information and the maps will later be linked to a GIS-based environmental monitoring programme within the DEA.

## 5. Institutional issues from the Bushmanland CBNRM Project

### **5.1. The role of government and its relationship with community institutions**

#### 5.1.1. Recognition of community institutions

Government, like communities, is not a homogeneous entity. It is divided sectorally and the sectors are represented by line ministries each with its own mandate and set of interests. Each line ministry is predisposed to build up its own power base at the expense of others and only cooperate with others out of self interest. Even within ministries a number of different interests, and interactions combine to direct the way in which the ministry acts on a particular issue.

This can make government a very unreliable institutional actor from the perspective of communities and NGOs.

In the Bushmanland project, government recognition of community institutions was a key issue in terms of enabling the emergence of a legitimate community natural resource management

institution. Such an institution needs to be legitimised by both the community and government if it is able to manage resources successfully. Hitchcock (1992, 133) points out that "Official legal recognition of local resource management institutions like the NNFC is crucial for establishing institutional legitimacy and sustainability".

In eastern Bushmanland there has been considerable progress towards government recognition of the NNFC as a legitimate resource management and local governance institution. This recognition has not always been translated into action, however, and crucially, the government has not yet given the NNFC or any other local institution clear land and resource rights.

The main area of progress was achieved following presentations given by Ju/'hoansi at the National Conference on Land Reform in 1991. The Namibian President and the Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation recognised the legitimacy of the NNFC as being the equivalent to the traditional authority in eastern Bushmanland (Hitchcock 1992).

This was a major step forward as the Ju/'hoansi previously did not have a system of traditional leadership similar to the systems developed by other Namibian groups. Theirs is a more egalitarian society which frowns on the emergence of elites and hierarchical systems. This made it difficult to interact with government which sought some form of representative or traditional leadership structure through which to work.

The establishment of the NNFC aimed to fill this vacuum by creating a body which would meet the requirements of government and other outsiders, while trying to conform to the people's own traditional social and leadership structures and relationships. (The problems and tensions created within Ju/'hoan society as a result of this process are examined below.)

The 1991 Land Conference also recognised that the 'San' as a group formed a disadvantaged community in Namibia and that they should be afforded special protection within Namibian society.

Further legitimisation of the NNFC has come through its involvement in the Environmental Planning Committee (EPC) which created a forum for it to talk directly to the Ministries of Environment and Tourism, Agriculture, and Regional and Local Government in a formalised way. The EPC has advised the Ministry of Environment and Tourism on a number of issues and made requests and recommendations to it. Important decisions taken at the request of the EPC include the refusal of a licence for a private operator to operate a photographic safari operation (which had no local involvement) and the termination of the trophy hunting concession for the area (because local people did not receive promised benefits.)

The decision by the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation to use eastern Bushmanland as a pilot area for its land use planning programme was made following a request by the NNFC through the EPC.

Although government has given broad institutional recognition to the NNFC, individual officials have expressed concern that the management of the NNFC is not representative of the community and does not enjoy the broad support it claims. These concerns led to some officials involved in the CBNRM programme becoming less willing to cooperate with the NNFC and work through

it as the local representative institution. The concerns appeared to be partly based on applying Western notions of democracy and representation to the Ju/'hoan situation and, among some officials, a desire to find reasons why not to support CBNRM projects. This situation has complicated institutional relationships between the MET and NNFC, but has fortunately not led to a breakdown of relations. It has meant, however, that MET field staff have not developed or maintained the level of involvement with the community necessary for joint natural resource management activities. Opportunities for MET staff to provide technical assistance and extension to the community have been lost with the result that mutual trust and cooperation have been eroded.

The situation was further complicated by officials from other sections of the Ministry continuing to recognise and work through the NNFC.

### 5.1.2. Devolution of rights and tenure

Land and resource rights are the most crucial issues facing the success or failure of the Bushmanland CBNRM project. Without these rights there is little incentive for people to manage land and resources sustainably and invest in future benefits.

It was always recognised that projects such as the Bushmanland CBNRM project were aimed at involving people in natural resource decision-making and in the receipt of benefits within existing legislation until new policies and legislation could be developed. One of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism's explicit roles in the national CBNRM Programme was to change legislation so that people in communal areas could gain greater rights to use and benefit from wildlife. This was one of the recommendations of the Bushmanland socio-ecological survey.

In March 1995, Cabinet approved a policy developed by the MET which provides for people in communal areas to gain rights over wildlife and tourism through forming a geographically based management unit called a conservancy.

Legislation to give effect to the policy was promulgated on June 17, 1996.

By mid 1995, government was circulating for comment a Communal Lands Bill setting out the ways in which land would be allocated and administered in communal areas. It was not known at the time of writing when this would be ready to appear before Parliament. Although early drafts of a national land policy included group tenure, it is still not clear whether government will grant communities secure land tenure on a group basis.

The delay between the survey in eastern Bushmanland, which produced a recommendation for a change in legislation, and the introduction of new legislation to Parliament has had some negative effects on the project.

Since at least January 1991, NGOs and the MET have been explaining to the community in eastern Bushmanland that there are potentially significant opportunities for revenue generation from wildlife and tourism. They have also been explaining that the government is working to



change policy and legislation so that rural communities can realise these benefits and gain greater control over wildlife and tourism on their land.

During the final planning workshop of the socio-ecological survey carried out during January 1991, Ministry Resource Management personnel told the participants that in the future people in Bushmanland should have full ownership and decision-making over natural resources such as wildlife and plants.

Initially in eastern Bushmanland there was some scepticism that this was really the government's intention as there were fears that the MET still wanted to create a game reserve. However, a series of meetings between MET staff and NNFC members and management went some way to reassure people that the MET was serious in its intentions.

The delay in bringing about reform has tended to erode this level of trust and some degree of scepticism began to creep in to community meetings again. People became tired of waiting and started losing patience, as they told a visiting delegation from the LIFE Project during mid 1995. Although the situation did not become critical, it was clear during 1995 that people would not wait forever, and crucial that the new legislation was passed soon (Botelle and Rhode 1995).

The lack of legislation meant the project had to fall back on smaller scale income generating activities to show communities that wildlife and wildlife-based tourism can contribute more significantly to their economies. These activities have been limited to small-scale craft sales facilitated by the NNDFN and NNFC, the establishment of a community-run campsite by one village and the establishment of a leopard-tracking tourism venture on one more, developed by Flip Stander.

Despite much discussion and a consultancy on community-based tourism strategies, little has been achieved in giving local people control over tourism on their land. Although MET refers applications from safari operators to the EPC, some operators ignore the system and 'free ride' on communal land. The options for instituting local control are limited by the lack of land and resource rights vested in the local community.

An example of the unreliability of government as an institutional actor is seen in the attempt by some officials to use problem lions as a means to generate income from wildlife and provide a form of indirect compensation for stock losses. Although it was stated policy of the MET to allow communal farmers to benefit from wildlife, requests to allow problem lions to be sold to commercial game farmers and for the income to go to the local community in eastern Bushmanland were always refused on bureaucratic grounds. Even innovative attempts to get around government regulations and use NGOs as intermediaries for the income to be channelled to communities failed.

The failure by the project to achieve the return of income from problem lions again damaged MET credibility, particularly Flip Stander's work with predators and people. The failure has created confusion about the government's role and its ability to deliver what it promises. (Stander, pers. comm.)

The lion compensation issue discussed above is an example of the mixed messages being sent to the Ju/'hoansi by the Ministry. On the one hand the Ministry was telling people that it was moving towards giving them ownership of wildlife and was trying to establish dialogue and cooperation, while on the other hand it still retained power and control over wildlife and often exercised that power unilaterally and insensitively. Incidents which made a big negative impact on the local people included the arrest of all the males of one village on a giraffe poaching charge and the entering of sleeping quarters without permission while searching for game meat (breaking a very strong social taboo).

## **5.2. The roles of intra-community institutions and their relationships.**

### **5.2.1. Leadership and hierarchy**

The Ju/'hoan people are recognised by anthropologists to be strongly egalitarian and without the leadership hierarchy of headmen and chiefs found in most other African societies (Biesele 1994, Hitchcock 1992). Egalitarianism and a lack of leadership hierarchy, should not however, be confused with a lack of leadership. Clan groups have their own leaders, usually the n!ore owner, but they did not form part of a collective leadership structure beyond the clan level.

This situation has posed problems for the Ju/'hoansi in their relations with government and other outsiders, who look to a leadership hierarchy to represent the community in decision-making, negotiations and lobbying. It has also consistently been used by other groups and the State to take advantage of and exploit the San.

### **5.2.2. Building a community level institution**

Recognising this problem, the Bushman Foundation (predecessor of the NNDFN) encouraged the Ju/'hoansi to form their own organisation, the Ju/Wa Farmers' Union, in 1986.

The objectives of the union were various and not limited to farming matters. Hitchcock (1992) identifies its overall goal as to establish self-sufficient communities that were capable of determining their own political, social and economic future. The union aimed to develop a mixed subsistence economy for its members as well as to have a say in national level forums on issues affecting north eastern Namibia, particularly on land and local government.

Between 1988 and 1989 the organisational structure and leadership system of the Farmers' Union was formalised in a set of statutes. These provided for membership of all persons who speak Ju/'hoan or call themselves Ju/'hoan and are over the age of eighteen. People who had lived in the area for more than ten years could also become members and individuals could apply formally to the union to become a member.

The main body of the union was a Representative Council which consisted of two representatives from every community in eastern Bushmanland including large settlements such as Tsumkwe. The council was expected to meet at least once every six months. The Council

members (known for historical reasons as rada) selected a chairperson and representatives for an Executive Committee which was made up from individuals from each quarter or 'district'.

During 1990, the Farmers' Union renamed itself the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative, taking for itself the name of the geographical area of Nyae Nyae which had formerly encompassed Ju/'hoan territory.

The organisational structure continued to evolve and the positions of Manager, Assistant Manager and President were added to the Executive or Management Committee, while the district representatives were dropped.

During early 1995 it was decided that the system was not working efficiently and a return was made to the presence of District Representatives within the Management Committee in order to strengthen local level participation. There would be weekly meetings of the existing four management committee members and the full committee would meet monthly.

A Management Board emerged with 2 representatives from each district, and this board represented a form of executive arm of the rada. The rada now plan to meet once a year to discuss issues which affect the whole area and which need agreement throughout the four districts.

### 5.2.3. Representation and egalitarianism

Throughout this evolutionary process, the Ju/'hoansi have been struggling with several critical issues.

They have had to reconcile the emergence of regional level leaders who need to be responsive to the demands of outsiders, with their own non-hierarchical approach to decision-making. Increasingly the demands of outsiders for 'leaders' who could speak on behalf of the 'community' have led to the Management Committee being viewed by outsiders as representatives of the Ju/'hoansi. At the same time, however, community members tended to react against the newly emerged elite and criticised them as much to bring them down a peg or two as to expose real failures.

But real failures existed as well and the management committee became less responsive to community needs, travelling less to the settlements, providing less feedback to community members, and losing touch with what community members felt.

Hitchcock (1992) points out that in its early days the Ju/Wa Farmers' Union was concerned to ensure that everyone had an equal say in decision-making. In the cases where government officials or outsiders did not have time to visit every settlement, preliminary meetings were held at local level so that the representatives who would meet the outsiders could present local opinions.

Wyckoff-Baird (1995) traces a shift from this more facilitative approach of the Farmers' Union leadership to the development of the NNFC management committee as a representative

institution. The management and representative roles of the committee became blurred and there did not appear to be a clear understanding among the community of the representative or facilitative roles of the Rada and Representative Council. Rada members also appeared to be providing poor feedback to their villages and were not consulting their villagers before attending Council meetings.

Wyckoff-Baird concluded that despite several years of attempts to institutionalise decision-making, individuals appeared not to recognise the right of anyone else to speak on their behalf. Biesele (1994) argues in retrospect that the approach to community development followed by the NNDFN and the government in eastern Tsumkwe District has led to the application of an imposed international stereotype of leadership and community management.

This had led to confusion between the *n!ore* leaders and their communities, between newly elected leaders and their constituencies and, "perhaps more tellingly, between the struggling new 'Ju/'hoan' polity and the space tenuously saved for it in the Namibian governmental arena." (Biesele 1994, 3). Biesele argues that not enough attention was paid to the people's own processes of consensual decision-making.

She concludes that Western "political correctness", designed to rectify developmental mistakes of the past "can itself be blind to what is really going on in developing societies. It is easy for an ideological perspective to see itself in its own image. In the case of Nyae Nyae, well meaning gender activism and the promotion of individualism, especially since Independence, to name but two examples, created straw men which did not exist, or existed to a lesser extent, in Ju/'hoan society," (Biesele 1994, 16).

During the course of the Bushmanland CBNRM project, since 1991, there has thus been an ongoing process of institutional development within the Ju/'hoan society which has been both difficult and problematic for the people concerned.

They have had to move very quickly from a situation where decision-making was vested at the *n!ore* level to coping with multi-layers of decision-making and representation. At the bottom of these layers, but still perhaps the most important unit of decision-making is the *n!ore*. Biesele (1994) describes this *n!ore*-based system as follows: "Formerly, the Ju/'hoan *n!ore kxaosi*, oldest men or women core-group siblings in whom stewardship of resource and habitation areas were vested, maintained coordinating relationships with other *n!ore kxaosi* which involved balancing giving - and strategically withholding - key environmental accesses."

Overlaid upon this system of interrelationships between *n!ore kxaosi* and their followers is now a layer of radas which may or may not be the *n!ore kxaosi* who come together to discuss certain issues and a layer of district leaders who interact with a Management Committee, which itself is subordinate to the Management Board. The Management Committee interacts on a day to day basis with NGOs, donors, government and other outsiders.

Added to this community organisational structure is the Environmental Planning Committee, to which the NNFC sends 'representatives' who are expected to speak on behalf of the 'community' on environmental issues.

The problems within the system led to a decline in the credibility of the management committee and NNFC as an institution. Some Government officials and other outsiders refuse to or are reluctant to work with the NNFC because they view the management committee as unrepresentative. This view is strengthened by the lack of elections for the Management Committee and by open criticism of the committee members by the community.

#### 5.2.4. Towards a coalescent authority structure

Murphree (1994, 419) states that: "Community-based conservation implies a community with proprietary rights, institutionally structured so that collective interest subsumes and reconciles internal and sectional division. Generally, the institutional instrument for this is the local government authority or the traditional authority structure, or both. They integrate the interests and activities of other institutional actors at the internal or community level."

In eastern Tsumkwe District over the period of the CBNRM project, there has not yet emerged a community institution which has been able to fully integrate the interests and activities of other community institutions, such as the n!ore kxaosi, rada and districts.

On the one hand, local government structures in Namibia do not reach even to District level, never mind sub-district level, and on the other hand, a number of socio-cultural factors have militated against the speedy development of what Murphree calls a 'coalescent authority structure' within the community. The NNFC is still evolving towards this state with the Management Board fulfilling the function of regional decision-making as well as the rada at their annual meeting. The Management Board will need to build up its own credibility as a regional level body that has a mandate to take decisions on behalf of the broader community.

A problem facing the eastern Tsumkwe District project was that while the government and NGOs were legitimising the NNFC by working through it and strengthening it, its legitimation within the community was far less strong than was realised by many outsiders. The complexity of the situation and different perceptions requires that this statement be qualified. Many Ju/'hoansi when asked the question: "What is the NNFC?" will answer: "It is all of us". Whereas most outsiders tend to think of the Management Committee when they refer to the NNFC. Thus in one sense the NNFC is legitimated by the community because individuals believe the NNFC is the sum of its members. But within the institutional framework of the NNFC there is a gap between what members think are acceptable processes of decision-making and accountability and how these are carried out in practice.

### 5.3. The role of support institutions.

#### 5.3.1. MET

The eastern Tsumkwe District Project was established with the MET as the lead agency, but with an understanding that the Nyae Nyae Foundation would continue to play a supportive role in the field, integrating natural resource management with the rest of its development programme.

The Ministry was to channel its support to the project and the NNFC through four main channels: a) Project management and supervision by the Planning Section/DEA; b) The appointment of a Community Liaison Officer; c) A research programme to investigate predators in the region and their interactions with people and their livestock; and d) ongoing support from Ministry management staff in the field.

Project management and supervision was carried out on behalf of the Planning Section/DEA by the author. In the early stages of the project the author was able to devote more time to the project in the field, initiating and attending meetings, being involved in planning and interacting directly with the community.

For most of 1994 when Neil Powell was developing his participatory land-use planning programme and at the height of the conflict within the NNDFN and the NNFC, the author was unable to spend as much time in the field, therefore losing some contact with developments.

The Ministry initially believed that it was necessary to appoint a community liaison officer to act as its main project field operative. Due to the lingering suspicions from the past conflicts between the NNFC and NNDFN and the Ministry, it was felt that a project manager or implementor attached to one of the three institutions would be perceived as acting in the interests of the organisation they were attached to. For this reason it was decided not to formally attach the community liaison officer to any one organisation, although a sound development approach would have suggested that this person work for the NNFC. The aim was that the CLO would be supervised by a joint committee consisting of MET, NNDFN and the NNFC, although as the MET had taken the lead in obtaining funding and establishing a 'project', it was understood that the CLO answered ultimately to MET.

The CLO was to be the MET's main instrument of support to the NNFC, through facilitating contacts with other organisations, providing a secretariat for the Environmental Planning Committee and facilitating access to information on resource management. The main thrust of the CLO's work was therefore liaison and facilitation.

The institutional arrangements for the CLO worked well while Holly Stander was in this post. She was perhaps uniquely positioned as she was married to the Ministry researcher for the area, Flip Stander, but had connections to the Ju/'hoansi through her brother, John Payne, who had been a field worker for the NNDFN during the mid 1980s. While playing the 'neutral' role expected of her, Holly Stander enjoyed considerable logistical support from the Foundation, as well as from the Ministry through its Planning Section (later the DEA).

When Neil Powell replaced Holly Stander as CLO, the role of this position changed considerably. Powell had a strong vision for the development of a participatory land and resource assessment and land-use planning programme, which would assist the Ju/'hoansi in articulating their views on natural resource management within their own community and to government at the regional and national level, and particularly within the Land-use Planning Project of the Ministry of Lands Resettlement and Rehabilitation (Powell 1995). Powell felt strongly that by developing a Participatory Land-use Planning process he would be carrying out the tasks of liaison and facilitation required by the post of CLO.

It was agreed with the author who was supervising the project that Powell would pursue the development of such a programme. This effectively changed the nature of the work of the CLO from a contact person and facilitator between all parties, to a person with his own implementation programme, specific in nature.

As noted earlier, Powell was affected by the conflicts that developed within the NNDFN and between the NNFC and the Foundation. He was also hampered however, by the loose institutional arrangements that had previously worked for Holly Stander. The envisaged supervisory committee consisting of the NNDFN, MET and NNFC was not formally established. Discussions about Powell's work and work plan took place largely through informal meetings between himself and the author and Axel Thoma of the NNDFN.

Due to the conflicts within the NNDFN and Powell's own disagreement with the approach of the Axel Thoma faction within the foundation, he was unable to enjoy the logistical and moral support which Holly Stander had earlier enjoyed.

For a variety of reasons, including increasing involvement in national level coordination and policy development, the author was unable to provide much direct field supervision to Powell, who largely had to find his own way through the increasingly difficult minefield eastern Tsumkwe District was becoming.

Flip Stander's appointment had been a direct result of the January 1991 socio-economic survey of eastern Tsumkwe District, which had recommended that the problems caused by predators be investigated. The information gained from his investigations on predators, and later on ungulate species as well as his experiments with tracking-based tourism is extremely useful for the development of community-based natural resource management in eastern Tsumkwe District.

Stander developed a good working relationship with the NNFC in the early stages of his research, but this deteriorated as he later questioned the representativeness of the NNFC's management committee and their level of grass roots support (Stander Pers. comm.). His involvement in facilitating the development of a tracking and predator-based tourism enterprise on one specific n!ore broadened the gap between himself and the management committee, as the n!ore owner did not want to be involved with the committee, believing it would try to capture the revenue and take over the enterprise. Stander respected this view, and did not formally approach the committee with regard to the tourism venture.

The breakdown in communication between Stander and the NNFC management committee meant that opportunities were lost for training of community rangers and for information to be fed back to the community from his research programme.

Implicit in the requirements for success of the CBNRM project in eastern Tsumkwe District was the support of the local MET management personnel. These are the Ministry staff who have day to day interaction with the community and determine the community's perception of the Ministry. During the project period, management staff did not become fully involved in the project. Possibly because it was being managed by another branch of MET, but also because the staff concerned, through no fault of their own, did not have the skills for working with local communities, and in some cases did not have the support of their immediate supervisors.

The result was that opportunities were lost for positive interactions with the community for provision of information, extension and training. Furthermore, insensitive law enforcement actions also undermined the Ministry's relationship with the local people. The EPC provided a forum for an exchange of information, identification of problems and exploration of solutions, but was under utilised by Ministry field staff in this respect.

### 5.3.2. NGOs

The Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN) provided the main source of NGO support for the project and for the NNFC.

When the project began, the Foundation already had a development programme based on assisting the Ju/'hoansi to make the transition from hunters and gathers to a mixed economy including subsistence cattle farming and cultivation of dryland crops. Their programme included the marketing of crafts, development of decentralised education and a health component.

The Foundation agreed to incorporate a natural resource management component as part of their integrated rural development programme and encouraged the NNFC to do the same. However, after 1992, the effectiveness of the NNDFN became weakened by the internal divisions noted earlier, and more importantly because of losing the confidence of the NNFC.

The problems within the Foundation were not new and some had been identified by Hitchcock (1992) during his 1992 evaluation of the NNFC's and NNDFN's programme.

These included insufficient communication about programme issues within the Foundation and to the NNFC, factionalism within both organisations, the need for greater involvement of the NNFC in programme planning, implementation and evaluation, a need for greater communication and cooperation between staff within different NNDFN programme components, and the need for a project manager based in the field.

The NNDFN failed to address many of these issues adequately and this led to internal staff tensions during 1994 and to the resignation of Axel Thoma and project manager Marc Spoelstra, at the request of the community.

Effectively for most of 1993 and 1994, the Foundation was not in a position to carry forward implementation of key components of the CBNRM project. This contributed to a lack of momentum on issues such as community-based tourism, development of a community ranger programme and strengthening the EPC. It also meant that the Foundation was poorly placed to fully support the work of Neil Powell.

### 5.3.3. Private entrepreneurs

The relationship between private entrepreneurs and the Ju/'hoansi has mostly been one of exploitation.



Within the CBNRM context this is most clearly seen in the activities of private tourism operators, who have consistently used the Nyae Nyae region as a destination or through route for their tours without providing any meaningful recompense to the people whose land and resources they are using.

Due to lack of appropriate legislation tourism has remained largely uncontrolled and there has been little that the community could do to deal with the situation itself. The EPC provided some support by enabling the community to block a formal application by a private operator to occupy a site to develop a safari camp. However, other operators use certain sites as 'fly' camps and do not require government permission.

There has been the potential to try to work with sympathetic safari operators and make informal arrangements for the local community to benefit, but these opportunities were not followed up.

Until 1993, a trophy hunting concessions was awarded by the MET in eastern Tsumkwe District and the relationship between the professional hunter who gained the concession and the Ju/'hoansi was also more negative than positive. This was partly due to the fact that the State had promised the community it would receive part of the revenue raised from the hunting, but this was never implemented. The local people complained of a paternalistic approach by the hunter and that they often did not receive the meat from the kills as stipulated in the concession contract. These issues led to the community successfully requesting through the EPC that the trophy hunting concession be terminated.

The hunting concession represented a lost opportunity for the Ju/'hoansi to obtain some tangible benefits from natural resource use on their land by outsiders, and for positive relationships to be developed with the professional hunter.

#### **5.4. The role of international NGOs/donors.**

For most of the life of the project, the role of international NGOs and donors has been relatively benign and positive.

The project was funded by USAID through BSP with WWF-US ostensibly managing the project. In practice the project was managed and implemented locally within Namibia by Namibian organisations, and WWF, although supposedly responsible for technical supervision, essentially provided a conduit for funds to reach the Namibian project.

In most respects this arrangement suited the project as there was little interference in project management decisions and both from WWF and BSP there was a very flexible approach to the development and implementation of the project. For WWF to have provided meaningful technical supervision this would have had to be provided from within Namibia and by a technically competent person.

BSP personnel made one project visit, during mid 1994, which happened to be at the most difficult period the project has faced.

The situation changed considerably when the LIFE Programme became involved in project funding. During late 1994, LIFE took over funding of most project activities in the field, and also provided technical assistance in the form of Barbara Wyckoff-Baird, formerly of the WWF-US Wildlands and Human Needs Programme.

The technical support provided by Wyckoff-Baird and the general administrative and logistical support provided by LIFE have been very beneficial and have provided an extra dimension to outside support which was not present before.

However, because of its particular institutional structure and relationships, the LIFE Programme has also brought pressures to bear on the project because of the closer proximity of both international NGO and donor. This closer proximity resulted in concerns being raised for the viability of the project, following the troubles and conflicts within the NNDFN and NNFC during 1994. Because WWF-US (the lead partner in the LIFE consortium) had sufficient contact with the project in the field through Wyckoff-Baird, it was able to take a realistic view of events and their implications for the project.

USAID, however, brought considerable direct and indirect pressure for funding to be terminated, believing what it saw as the 'collapse' of the support NGO, the NNDFN, to be critical. An alliance between WWF and MET managed to persuade the LIFE Steering Committee that the project was worth further support and funding.

## 6. Lessons learned and implications for similar projects

The CBNRM project in eastern Tsumkwe District provides several lessons for the development of similar projects as well as for the development of national CBNRM programmes.

### **6.1. Analysis**

Both the Namibian CBNRM national programme and the local project in eastern Tsumkwe District were based on a model of cooperating partner institutions, each fulfilling certain roles and responsibilities.

Success depended upon each partner institution being able to 'deliver the goods'.

The project in eastern Tsumkwe District suffered to some extent because of a lack of institutional capacity and certain institutional weaknesses among the three major partners, the MET, the NNFC and the NNDFN.

#### **6.1.1. MET**

For historical reasons, the project was initiated and managed by a small group within the MET, the Planning Section and later the DEA. This group, with the outside support of IRDNC, were developing a new philosophy and approach to conservation within the Ministry against a background of a political system that had discriminated against black Namibians and repressed

democracy, and a conservation system which emphasised protection, enforcement and exclusion of people. Independence and a new political system provided the opportunity to democratise the control and use of natural resources and develop participatory approaches to conservation, which involved people rather than excluded them.

Although there was support for this approach from the Permanent Secretary and Minister of the new Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism, there was resistance from personnel within the Ministry, either for political reasons or because they did not agree with new approaches. This resistance hindered implementation in the field and slowed down attempts to introduce policy reform. The local level projects which were developed in eastern Tsumkwe District and other parts of the country were used as part of the mechanisms for institutionalising the CBNRM approach within the Ministry, by testing and demonstrating the philosophy, and trying to build up a community level 'constituency'. Although this was a slow process, the local projects were important in eventually getting the National CBNRM Programme accepted within the Ministry and operationalised.

In eastern Tsumkwe District, while the Planning Section/DEA was able to forge good links with the NNFC and NNDFN, other sections of the Ministry did not. To a large extent, Directorate of Resource Management staff on the ground remained outside the project and its philosophy, aims and objectives, apart from attendance at key local meetings. This meant that the Ministry was presenting different images to the local people. On the one hand a willingness to work closely with the Ju/'hoansi to identify and solve natural resource management problems jointly, and a commitment to devolving rights over wildlife and tourism. On the other, a lack of involvement with local people except for at formal meetings or when a problem occurred, insensitive law enforcement and protection of the 'Ministry's' game, little communication and unilateral action on issues concerning the Ju/'hoansi.

This undermined the credibility of the MET as an institutional partner, and made progress slower. Various meetings with the NNFC members and management committee have shown a degree of scepticism on the part of local people about the MET's real intentions and whether legislation and Ministry attitudes really would change.

The standard response to this situation would be to suggest that the national programme or the eastern Tsumkwe District Project should have addressed more carefully the issue of training for local Ministry management personnel so that they could better work within a community-oriented approach. The BSP project in fact had a training component for MET staff built into it.

This ignores, however, the question of the level of commitment to such an approach within the Ministry and the willingness of supervisors to have their staff trained in these approaches and of staff to undergo such training. This commitment was not apparent for most of the project period, and only began to emerge after the end of the BSP support for the project and once the implementation of conservancies became a reality.

A similar situation has existed at a national level, where the LIFE Programme has carried out a training needs assessment for the MET, and offered training opportunities to Ministry staff. Although MET personnel frequently refer to the need for training, the existing opportunities within LIFE have never been fully taken up and the needs assessment is gathering dust.

Many CBNRM and other development projects focus on the need for training and capacity building, often at the insistence of the donor or implementing international NGO. The experience within the Namibian CBNRM programme and from eastern Tsumkwe District points to the fact that capacity building and training are more likely to take place successfully where there is a clearly identified local need for these activities and where there is full commitment to the objectives of the overall programme.

Cabinet approval of the MET's CBNRM 'conservancy' policy and the preparation of legislation to give it effect, were key events leading to key Divisions and Directorates of the MET committing themselves to successful implementation of CBNRM, and to senior personnel publicly committing themselves to the approach. There is now a recognition of the need to train staff to work closely with communities in the formation of conservancies and in CBNRM associated skills.

There were also problems of capacity with the Environmental Planning Unit/DEA. During the early stages of the eastern Tsumkwe District project, the author was able to spend considerably more time in the field, playing a facilitative role in creating consensus and working more directly with the NNFC and the NNDFN. During the course of the project, the national programme grew at a considerable rate, to the extent that the author was responsible at one stage for managing three CBNRM projects, liaising with an NGO and the community in two others, working on policy development and being the Ministry's coordinator for the LIFE Programme. This meant that the author spent a decreasing amount of time in the field with any one particular project and spent an increasing amount of time in planning meetings and coordination activities at the national level.

While the author was becoming more involved in national programme coordination, there was a need to recruit more personnel who could take over some of the field work, keeping track of developments within projects and providing the necessary technical assistance where needed. This need was recognised from the start and the BSP project was specifically designed to address the problem of capacity, making provision for the appointment and training of an assistant to the author.

The main constraint to the appointment of such an assistant was the lack of human resources within Namibia. With its small population ( 1,6 million) there is obviously a limited pool of people to draw from, and competition with the private sector and the broader development sector made it even more difficult to find suitable candidates. At the same time, CBNRM did not have a very high profile in Namibia and was not recognised as a mainstream development activity.

Advertisements for ten positions for posts either at the field or national level to work within the CBNRM programme, between 1991 and 1996 produced only three suitable indigenous Namibian candidates. The assistant who was appointed to work with the author underwent almost a year of in-service training and attendance at various courses and workshops, but was not appropriate for the position, and left the programme.

There had been discussions with WWF-US on the provision of a full-time technical assistant for the EPU/DEA, but it was felt that the situation might be relieved by the establishment of the LIFE Programme. While the personnel provided by LIFE have provided invaluable support to the

overall programme, they did not solve the capacity problem within the EPU/DEA. In retrospect, the EPU/DEA did need a full-time technical assistant who could have helped in implementation and the training of a Namibian for the position of assistant to the author.

#### 6.1.2. The Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia

The role of the NNDFN in the eastern Tsumkwe District CBNRM project was to provide capacity building, facilitation, information and support to the local community. In essence to provide the community development component, which the MET was not equipped to do itself.

The problems which the NNDFN faced both internally and with the community led to its inability to successfully facilitate the development of an integrated rural development programme and provide sustained support for the CBNRM component. The internal divisions diverted the time and energy of the staff for long periods away from project activities, and from developing the institutional capacity of the NNFC.

The LIFE Programme made some attempts to address the institutional problems within the NNDFN, but these were probably too late to make much difference, given the level of conflict that had already developed amongst staff and with the NNFC.

The national programme model assumed that there would be appropriate NGOs with the capacity to work within a partnership with government to provide support to communities. The LIFE Programme was also based on this assumption. It became clear, however, that this assumption was false, and that the national programme and LIFE were relying on two NGOs only. One of these, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) had pioneered CBNRM approaches in Namibia and had specialist expertise in this field. The NNDFN, however, was a development NGO which saw merit in CBNRM approaches, but did not necessarily have the right expertise and experience for developing a CBNRM component. The more interventionist rather than facilitative approach of the NNDFN, was also at odds with the CBNRM philosophy followed within the national programme.

To a considerable extent, the NNDFN took on the role of intermediary for the NNFC and community in eastern Tsumkwe District. The NNDFN served as a conduit for donors, researchers, other NGOs, and government officials to contact the NNFC and this tended to encourage initial contact with the NGO, rather than direct contact with the community. Most outsiders working closely with the Ju/'hoansi fall into the trap of becoming their 'protector' and of interpreting their needs and attitudes to other outsiders. This is a new sort of paternalism seen in development workers who are 'politically correct' in their approach and follow the principles of participatory development approaches. (c.f. Bieseles comment quoted on page 23.)

Within the CBNRM project ideas were often first bounced off the NNDFN and discussed at some length in Windhoek before being taken to the field. The NNDFN was more accessible, the NNFC 700 km away at the end of a frustrating radio telephone system, so it was a common tendency for outsiders to work more easily through the Foundation.

The conflict between the NNDFN and the NNFC and subsequent change in relationship helped to expose the extent to which the NNDFN had become a barrier to direct relationships between institutions and individuals and the NNFC. Instead of the NNDFN developing project proposals to submit to donors following discussion with NNFC members in the field, the NNFC now develops its own project proposals facilitated by LIFE and by consultants hired by themselves. There is a much greater sense of ownership, at least amongst the NNFC management committee, radas and others involved in the discussions, over the existing CBNRM project.

In fact ownership has passed from the MET to the NNDFN and then to the community very rapidly as a result of the decline of influence of the NNDFN. The project was initially managed by MET, which had accessed the funding following the initial socio-ecological survey. Under the LIFE Programme, MET relinquished project management and control of funds to the NNDFN. Once the NNDFN had undergone the staff losses and change in approach, the NNFC became the first community-based organisation to receive a direct subgrant from the LIFE Programme to run its own project activities.

The NNFC management committee worked hard to ensure that a large number of community members were involved in or aware of the discussions leading to the award of the NNFC's latest subgrant from LIFE.

#### 6.1.3. The Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative

The national CBNRM programme has followed the conventional wisdom within similar natural resource management and development projects that it is better to work through existing community institutions rather than try to create new ones.

The project in eastern Tsumkwe District therefore worked through the NNFC, at the time commonly regarded to be representative of a large proportion of the people in the area, although it was recognised that there were key sections of the population which did not fall within the ambit of the NNFC.

The problems which have surfaced within the NNFC regarding issues of representation, decision-making and accountability caused several people associated with activities in the region to question the institutional viability of the NNFC.

The possible responses included looking for other suitable community institutions to work with or to assist the NNFC in addressing the very real issues facing it. The project chose the latter course, believing that the community's investment so far in the NNFC was too great to try to develop a new institution and that community support for the NNFC as an institution was relatively high and would remain so if the key issues were addressed. Through sub-grants for institutional development from the LIFE Programme and technical assistance from LIFE, the NNFC has undergone a reorganisation and has developed a commitment to improving accountability and feedback to its members.

This has to a large extent been made possible by the NNFC's new relationship with the NNDFN, which is now less interventionist and more facilitative in its approach, giving the cooperative time and space to address its internal problems.

#### 6.1.4. Policy development

The delay in establishing an appropriate policy and legal framework for CBNRM in Namibia affected the project in several ways. Most importantly it retarded the development of a community institution with rights over wildlife and tourism which could significantly influence resource use and management in the region. This has contributed to a continued decline in wildlife numbers in eastern Tsumkwe district. While external factors such as poaching by outsiders and erection of fences have played a role, hunting (legal and illegal) by local people and settlement by people at key water points have also led to the decrease in wildlife (Stander pers. comm.).

A community natural resource management institution with the necessary proprietary rights would have been in a position to address these local management issues. The lack of a real partnership between all sections of MET and the community has also contributed to a lack of concerted action to deal with the decline in wildlife.

The passing of legislation providing for conservancies raises the hope that with issues of governance being adequately addressed by the NNFC, a conservancy can be formed relatively soon and the mechanism will be in place for collective decision-making about resource use and management. This could pave the way to the MET agreeing to reintroduce game to the area.

The establishment of a community natural resource management institution with rights over wildlife use will significantly change the relationship between the community and the Ministry. No longer will MET staff be protecting the State's or the Ministry's game against the local people. MET staff will be providing support and extension services to local people who have the right to manage the wildlife sustainably for their own use and benefit. There will be a significant shift in power away from the MET to the community.

#### 6.1.5. International NGOs and donors

The role of international NGOs and donors within the project and national programme has for the most part been supportive and enabling, rather than interfering and destructive, although the pressures from outside increased with the development of the LIFE Programme and the increase in activities which were supported by LIFE.

The institutional arrangements for the BSP support to the project kept the donor at a suitable distance but were to some extent clumsy. BSP had certain objectives in funding the project and WWF-US presumably had certain objectives in administering it, while the MET and others had their own objectives for implementing it. While there was a large degree of overlap in these objectives (biodiversity conservation, testing CBNRM approaches, etc.) there was a tension between the need to get the project carried out in the field and the need to meet the objectives of BSP as set out in the project documents.

The introduction of WWF-US as a sort of cut out between BSP and MET led to an extra layer of bureaucracy and communication, keeping BSP also at a distance from the project. This did not significantly affect the project, but was not ideal. The single visit by BSP staff to the project could only have given them a distorted picture of what was happening as it provided only a small window on a series of activities and events which now span five years.

By contrast, the institutional relationships within the LIFE Programme brought the international donor and NGO closer to the national programme and field projects, enabling better communication and opportunity for a closer understanding of developments in the field.

As noted earlier, however, there have also been greater pressures from the international NGO and more particularly from the donor, which had the potential to significantly influence the course of the project, perhaps even bringing it to a halt. The pressure by USAID for LIFE to withdraw support for the eastern Tsumkwe District project was potentially destructive. The pressure exerted outside of the LIFE Steering Committee also threatened to undermine the working of the Steering Committee, by trying to go against a committee decision without confronting the issue openly.

## 6.2. Conclusions

The following are broad conclusions from the above analysis highlighting the lessons which can be learned for the development of similar programmes and projects:

*1. It is important to follow a two track approach of developing the policy and legislative framework at the same time as establishing field projects, but the policy and legal framework must be established timeously - or opportunities at the field level will be lost.*

Taking the 'two track' approach of working in the field and on the policy and legislative environment simultaneously has had distinct advantages.

The development of field projects such as the one in eastern Tsumkwe District helped to institutionalise CBNRM as an approach within the Ministry. Although resistance and scepticism remained among many personnel, the field projects provided a concrete foundation on which to promote CBNRM, which did not remain just a theory, but could be seen in practice. The involvement and support of outside organisations helped to demonstrate within the Ministry that Namibia's CBNRM activities are part of a broader movement within conservation which enjoys the confidence of international NGOs and donors.

The field projects have also raised the profile of CBNRM within other Ministries. Through involvement in the socio-ecological survey, and various other meetings, other Ministries have been aware of the approach and if not fully coopted as partners, have not directly undermined it. Officials of the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation have attended a number of meetings in eastern Tsumkwe District and taken part in other socio-ecological surveys. Exposure of these officials to community resource management issues, particularly within the Ju/'hoan context, has helped in getting CBNRM and common property resource management issues incorporated into early drafts of the country's new land policy.



The field projects have also provided a testing ground for approaches which have raised important issues *before* the process of conservancy formation has really begun. The issues of representation, decision-making and governance that have emerged within the NNFC have helped to re-emphasise the need to keep the policy and legal framework as flexible as possible to accommodate institutions which are fully legitimated by the community rather than those we might assume to be legitimate and 'representative'. Policy and legislation should not prescribe to which institutions rights and responsibilities will be given, but enable the communities to adapt existing ones or create new ones. Policy and legislation should not prescribe how communities must take decisions, but enable them to use existing decision-making processes or develop new ones according to their own cultural norms. This is particularly important in multi-ethnic societies with a wide variety of different norms.

The existence of two locally-based tourism enterprises has stimulated the community in eastern Tsumkwe District to think through issues of who should benefit when greater sources of income are possible once they have formed a conservancy. Should the whole of eastern Tsumkwe District benefit from a small tourism enterprise on one n!ore, or should the income be retained by the n!ore owner and his clan? The NNFC has started to address issues such as these and has developed a provisional benefits distribution plan based on how they view the 'ownership' of different resources and the extent to which other members of the community are involved in or affected by the use of the resource.

The two track approach also enabled communities within Namibia to prepare themselves for establishing conservancies before the legislation was passed by addressing the requirements for conservancy formation stated in earlier drafts of the legislation. The NNFC have given considerable attention for example, to developing a conservancy constitution and establishing a conservancy committee. There are now six communities countrywide, including the Ju/'hoansi in eastern Tsumkwe District, who have already informed the MET that they want to form conservancies.

*2. There is a need to investigate the existence of suitable partners and assess and address their institutional capacity against identified roles, responsibilities and outputs early on in a project or programme. Once capacity has been assessed there may be a need to adjust roles and expectations.*

This might seem an obvious statement, but in practice seems to get overlooked. This has happened within the Botswana Natural Resource Management Programme (Rihoy 1995) and was repeated at project and programme level within Namibia.

Institutional strengthening and capacity building of the NNDFN and MET early on in the programme would have reinforced the ability of these organisations to contribute appropriate support to the community.

However, two other points are important here:

a) It is not sufficient to address lack of institutional capacity through provision of training and human resource development, where there is a lack of commitment to the programme and its

approach. This raises the issue of institutional reform and whether greater attempts should have been made to institutionalise CBNRM within the MET before developing the programme.

Given Namibia's apartheid history and the pre-independence conservation authority's system of strong centralised control of decision-making and emphasis on law enforcement, institutional change would have been slow and difficult to bring about, without major changes in personnel within the Ministry. The conditions for sustained incremental change, ensuring that key policy and decision-making personnel accepted reform and supported implementation in the field, were not present.

It was assumed that because the CBNRM approach had certain intrinsic advantages as a conservation tool, was being broadly accepted internationally and fitted the political agenda of post independence Namibia, it would eventually succeed in becoming institutionalised within the MET. This began to take place as the promulgation of new legislation became an increasing reality. The Ministry has had to focus attention on how it will implement the conservancy approach and on what its relationship with the emerging community natural resource management institutions will be. The field projects helped bring about the reform and helped familiarise MET personnel and others with the approach.

b)The DEA was able to assess its own institutional requirements and with BSP tried to make provision to meet these within the BSP support. However, this approach did not take into account the lack of suitable human resources within Namibia.

The EPU/DEA was committed to giving preference to indigenous Namibians, but had difficulty finding candidates with the necessary experience and/or potential to carry out the work required.

Experience of hiring outside technical assistants within the DEA shows that a three-year secondment of a technical assistant within the DEA would have enabled the work to be done, while at the same time providing sufficient opportunity for the training of an inexperienced recruit.

*3. The general rule of using existing community institutions is appropriate, but there is a need to understand political dynamics within a community and to track the extent to which such institutions are really legitimated within the community.*

There was an assumption within the project that the NNFC was a relatively stable community organisation with a broad level of support which could speak on behalf of its members.

The introduction of a more formal monitoring and evaluation component to the project, incorporating social science research, closer analysis of project reports, and information from different quarters would have helped to provide a better understanding of community dynamics.

If there are problems, as within the NNFC, the project needs to be in a position to address these through facilitating community identification of the key issues and community solutions to the problems. This is the current approach being taken through LIFE assistance to the NNFC.

The BSP project incorporated a monitoring and evaluation component, which was not sufficiently developed because of the lack of capacity within the DEA.

*4. There is a need to understand community processes of decision-making and representation and to build on these. Outsiders must not impose decision-making processes from outside, such as western democratic elective models or quotas of women or other groups on committees, to suit their own notions of participatory decision-making.*

The issues of representation, decision-making and governance that have emerged within the NNFC have provided salutary lessons for outsiders working with community institutions. The natural tendency among outsiders (including the 'politically correct') is to impose their own cultural values on situations they are not familiar with. Western donors with agendas of promoting western style democracy and western notions of gender equality within developing countries reinforce this approach.

The test should be whether local people, within their own cultural norms, accept the authority and sanction of community institutions. The people affected by the decisions of those institutions should judge whether the institutions are 'representative' and have the authority to speak on behalf of residents. Outsiders need to listen and facilitate, not proselytise.

Wyckoff-Baird concludes in the context of eastern Tsumkwe District, "The only truly democratic model in Nyae Nyae will have to be achieved by the community itself, will have to build on traditional strengths, and will probably not be 'representative' in the western sense of the word." (Wyckoff-Baird 1995, 7).

*5. Institutional relationships must be structured so that outside organisations are cast firmly in the role of supporting agencies to community institutions.*

Wherever possible there should be direct relationships between support organisations and community institutions, and these relationships must clearly spell out the supportive function of the outside organisations.

By slipping into the role of 'protector/mentor' of the NNFC the NNDFN helped define other institutions' relationships with the NNFC and community, promoting the tendency to work with the NNFC through the Foundation. This helped to reinforce the sense of alienation by the NNFC and its members who saw control being held by the Foundation and not by themselves.

As communal area conservancies develop in Namibia, communities are becoming increasingly involved in negotiations with the private sector over joint venture tourism and wildlife enterprises. In many instances these communities are being supported by NGOs or MET personnel. There is a temptation for these support personnel to negotiate on behalf of communities instead of empowering the community to negotiate on its own behalf.

*6. Institutional relationships with international NGOs and donors should be kept simple and roles and responsibilities should be clarified at the outset.*

A major strength of the eastern Tsumkwe District project was that it was initiated and managed by a Namibian institution, the EPU/DEA, which developed relationships with international NGOs and donors in order to support the project. Throughout the project, it has been implemented by Namibian institutions, and this has been clear in the institutional relationships both under the BSP support and under the LIFE Programme.

A simple relationship between donor, implementing agency(ies) and beneficiaries with clearly defined roles provides for easy project management and administration. The more institutions involved, the more complicated the project and the more difficult it is to meet the different expectations and objectives of the various institutions.

Donors and international NGOs need to be very clear themselves to what extent they expect to be involved in implementation and project supervision.

The ideal model for donor/international NGO relationships with local projects is probably the following:

A donor who provides funds and insists on good project reporting based on a sound monitoring and evaluation system, but who is not involved in technical supervision or implementation.

An in-country institution which initiates, supervises and implements the project.

An international NGO which provides technical assistance in planning, monitoring and evaluation, implementation etc, *on request of* the in-country institution.

This is a good model for ensuring that projects are not donor driven and that there is sufficient commitment within the host country institutions, officials etc.

This is the same principle that is applied within development projects. The ideal project is one initiated by the local community, which if necessary seeks outside assistance on its own terms.

In reality, we know that there are very few projects of this nature, and the next best situation is one where outside agencies assist communities to identify needs and problems and find solutions, and build community capacity to implement the solutions.

This is also the approach required in donor/international NGO relationships to CBNRM and other development projects, where local capacity does not exist or is limited.

*6. The most important overall lesson to be learned from the eastern Tsumkwe District project and a common thread through the above five conclusions is that our approach should be one of process not product.*

A product-oriented approach focuses on what is achieved, whereas a process-oriented approach focuses on how something is achieved. The process-oriented development approach acknowledges the centrality of community participation in project design, implementation and monitoring. It casts outsiders in the role of facilitators who assist communities to develop their own process of reflection, discussion and decision-making based on relevant information. It takes a long term view, recognising that mistakes will be made and problems encountered, and therefore incorporating mechanisms for identifying mistakes and problems and dealing with them. It recognises that communities are not static entities, but are dynamic, changing with and adapting to new circumstances. The process-oriented approach recognises that development itself is a process and not a product, and as such often has intangible results such as political, social and cultural empowerment.

In eastern Tsumkwe District, the project began with a process-oriented approach - the socio-ecological survey carried out in 1991. The survey enabled consensus to be reached between the MET and the community on a number of key issues which led to the design of the original project. This laid a solid foundation of community involvement and commitment.

Without a continued process-oriented approach, it is unlikely that the project would have survived either the conflict between the NNFC and NNDFN which led to the departure of Axel Thoma and Marc Spoelstra, or the criticism of the representativeness of the NNFC. DEA and LIFE Programme staff took the long-term view that these events were part of an ongoing process of community empowerment which should continue and not be curtailed because the achievement of concrete outputs and products seemed to be in jeopardy.

Concentrating on process usually means the end result is not in sight at the beginning of a project or activity, and many people are uncomfortable with this apparent lack of a clear goal. Donors in particular like to know what they are actually investing in and government officials like to have clear guidelines within which to work.

But concentrating on process rather than product is the means to ensure that issues of commitment and ownership are addressed, whether at project or programme level.

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