

THE IMPACTS OF LAND REFORM ON LIVELIHOODS IN NAMIBIA

Section B

4 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION LOAN SCHEME (AALS)

4.1 Characteristics of beneficiaries

4.1.1 Social categories of beneficiaries

The first AALS farmers in Hardap obtained their land in 1992, and the most recent in 2003. In Omaheke, the first AALS farmer obtained his farm in 1992 and the most recent, a woman, in 2000. Thus in both regions the oldest AALS beneficiaries have been farming as such for 17 years.

All 10 AALS farming households interviewed in Hardap Region were male-headed. Eight of the household heads were married with a civil marriage certificate, one was widowed and one was single. One farm was registered in a wife's name while her husband waited for his AALS loan to be approved. All the others farms were registered in the names of the household heads. The AALS farm sizes ranged from 3 500 ha to 20 000 ha.

In Omaheke, three male and two female household heads made up the AALS interview sample.

The average age of the Hardap household heads was 52 years, with a median of 50. Twenty per cent were over 60 years of age. The average age of the Omaheke household heads was also 52, the youngest being 48 and the oldest 57.

In Hardap, five farmers stated that they had received tertiary education, while the lowest standard of formal education attained was Standard 5 (Grade 7 under the new system). The other four attained standards ranging from Standard 6 to 8 (Grades 8-10). In Omaheke, two interviewees stated that they had completed their tertiary education while the other three had completed Standard 10 (Grade 12).

Compared to group resettlement scheme and FURS farmers in both regions, AALS farmers in both regions are better educated in terms of formal schooling. None of the AALS farmers had obtained specific agricultural training, but one in Hardap had attended a short course of general agricultural training, and one in Omaheke said that the degree in Natural Sciences which she had obtained in the USA helped her to be a better farmer.

All of the AALS farmers are or have been civil servants, and a few indicated that they had acquired business experience in the past.

Table 7: Education levels of AALS farmers

Highest levels of formal education	Full-time farmers		Part-time farmers	
	#	%	#	%
Standard 5 / Grade 7	1	16.7		
Standard 6 / Grade 8	2	33.3		
Standard 8 / Grade 10	1	16.7	1	25
Tertiary education	2	33.3	3	75
Total	6	100	4	100

The majority of AALS farmers (9 in total) stated that they had farmed in communal areas before buying their own farm, while four said that they had commercial farming experience as a result of having rented land in the past. Two farm owners in Hardap were farm workers on commercial agricultural farms before becoming AALS farmers. The oldest AALS farmer, a pensioner aged 69, started farming in the 1960s, while the youngest, aged 38, started in 1994.

Table 8: Main occupation of AALS beneficiaries before farming under the AALS

Occupation	%
Wage employment	20
Farmer	50
Self-employed	20
Pensioner/retired	10
Total	100

Many of the AALS farmers interviewed were born and bred in communal areas. A few of the older farmers had little formal education and became involved in livestock farming at an early age. This type of AALS farmer is typified by **Godfrey**¹⁶ who was born at Pos 3, Epukiro, in 1942. He can read and write in Otjiherero, but never attended school. When his parents wanted to send him to school as a teenager, it was too late for him to catch up. Instead of going to school, he looked after his parents' cattle while they worked elsewhere. When his parents died, he continued to farm on his own in the reserve and even had his own borehole.

Some AALS beneficiaries opted out of a professional career to farm instead, **Tobias** being one of them. He was born and raised in the small village of Aranos. He attended primary school in Mariental and went on to obtain a teaching diploma. He worked in three different towns as a teacher, the last being Aranos. While working there he farmed in the Gibeon communal area. In 1984 he bought his first small livestock with money he had earned from teaching. He took the animals to the Gibeon communal area where his brother-in-law looked after them. He resigned as a teacher in 1999 and bought a farm under the AALS in Hardap where he settled in November 2000.

¹⁶ The respondents' names have been changed to protect their privacy, and this report refers only to first names – Western in origin but nonetheless common first names in indigenous communities in Namibia.

Kristof cut short his schooling on account of political work. He was born in 1955 on a large commercial sheep farm where his parents worked. He attended the farm school until Std 3, whereafter he went to school in Mariental. He did not complete Std 8 due to his involvement in politics. He went on to receive some agricultural training in Windhoek. In 1975, still involved in politics, he took a job as a mine operator in Erongo Region. In 1979 his parents encouraged him to obtain a right to farm in the communal area in the south. He applied to the Witbooi Tribal Authority and was given permission to farm in the Gibeon area. This enabled his parents to transfer small stock to that area from time to time. Initially his mother's sister looked after the animals. In 1981 he left the mine's employ with the intention of leaving the country to join the armed struggle and further his studies, but this plan did not materialise. Instead, he moved to the communal area where he remained permanently until 1992 when he bought his AALS farm. In the late 1990s he was elected to a regional government position which he holds to date.

4.1.2 Motivation for buying a commercial farm

The majority of the AALS farmers in both Hardap and Omaheke stated that they applied for an AALS farm because they wanted to get out of the communal areas. The reason for this was that their livestock herds had become too big, resulting in increased competition with other communal farmers' herds for grazing, and related to this, they were not able to exercise any control over their livestock on communal land. Some interviewees applied for an AALS farm simply because of their passion for farming, and others did so because they wanted to be self-employed.

Godfrey wanted to leave the Epukiro communal area because he felt that he had no control over his livestock. Cattle walked unrestricted all over the communal lands, covering distances of up to 40 km. He decided to buy a farm primarily to ensure that he had more control over his livestock. Also, he was under the impression that any communal farmer with more than 200 head of cattle had to leave the communal area and buy a farm under the AALS. He expected to receive additional subsidies and support from the government to enable him to establish himself as a commercial farmer. This expectation stemmed from his knowledge that before Independence, government supported white landowners until they were able to stand on their own feet. However, after buying the farm, no support was forthcoming even though he asked for it.

Kristof also found farming in the communal area difficult. Due to the absence of fences, livestock owners were not able to control their livestock and stock losses were frequent. In addition, the quality of grazing was poor and most of the communal farmers did not have the financial means to buy supplementary feed. But, having bought his commercial farm, he found that the quality of grazing there is also poor as the farm is "*op die vloere*" (on the plains) with brackish soils. Having discovered this problem, he began to think that farmers in the communal areas were better off than him because they were farming without debt. Like Kristof, many people were very optimistic when they bought an AALS farm, but soon realised that they would have to cover all of the costs of maintenance, which is not the case for communal farmers.

Bernard bought a farm through the AALS in order to get out of the Epukiro communal area where he farmed together with family members. While their social relations were good, they overstocked the area. In addition, the presence of *gifblaar*, a noxious plant, caused big livestock losses, with up to 80 animals dying every year as a result of eating it. In addition, livestock grazed all over the communal area, which led to losses due to stock theft. If 400 calves were born in a year, only 200 were not lost to poisoning or theft. All these factors led Bernard to buy a farm at the age of 50, and his commercial farming experience has not been disappointing: he has been able to control his livestock and hence dramatically reduce the losses. In fact, of 250 calves born, he can sell 250.

For many, the prospect of owning their own piece of land was the driving force behind the decision to buy a farm and take on large debt. This notion has several facets.

In the first place, the AALS farmers hoped to improve their livelihoods through improved agricultural production. They considered the preconditions for this to be much better on commercial farms with their internal camps, boundary fences and the exclusive use rights of the owner.

Tobias, a retired teacher, bought a commercial farm because it had always been his dream to own land and not to have to farm for too long on communal land. He expected to move forward and improve his standard of living beyond that of a teacher. To some extent these expectations were met. He soon experienced an improved standard of living and a feeling of self-satisfaction. The fact that he was working for himself made it all worthwhile.

Apart from the direct economic benefits, owning a farm is seen to provide permanency and security for the owners and their children in a society where little is certain, least of all finding and keeping a job.

Kristof, a high-ranking regional government official, articulated this well in stating that his political work is temporary whereas owning a farm is permanent. For as long as he is able to pay for his land, nobody can take it from him. By acquiring the farm, he had created an employment opportunity for himself and an opportunity for his family to look after themselves. Family members of his generation as well as his children would have a home (*“heenkome”*) which they could fall back on in times of unemployment or when there is no other place to go. He feels that he has to protect his land primarily because it provides security for his family.

Tobias echoed this sentiment in identifying another very important aspect of owning a farm, i.e. being able to leave something to his children which they can always fall back on.

Several AALS farmers bought their farm for the love of farming and a dislike of urban life. For **Kristof**, life in town is very fast and one is not secure in one's own house. While the latter is also true to some extent on a farm, Kristof still finds that life is better on the farm as he loves farming, and his hope of having more time for himself, his family and animals has been fulfilled.

4.1.3 AALS farmers' relationships with pre-settlement homes

Despite all the AALS beneficiaries having farmed in at least one communal area at some stage before buying a farm, none of them kept any livestock on communal land. Some stated that not even during drought years did they take their livestock to communal areas. Instead, they tried to hire land in the commercial sector and bought supplementary feed.

Most AALS farmers maintain social relationships with relatives, friends and acquaintances in communal areas, but only one AALS farm owner allowed a family member, his son, to graze a few cattle on his farm, because the son had helped his aging father on the farm for 15 years. No other family members in the reserve were allowed to keep cattle on his farm.

4.2 Production systems and output types / 'productivity'

The AALS initially provided loans only to full-time farmers, but soon after its inception in 1992, it was decided that the scheme should also serve part-time farmers. This status of AALS beneficiaries impacts on the farming operations of both categories, chiefly because part-time farmers have access to a fixed income stream from formal employment. Their income is not entirely subject to the risks associated with farming and utilising natural resources. Their more secure income enables them to take more risks and gives them easier access to additional loans. They purchase more livestock than full-time farmers but their farming inputs are less. Full-time farmers, conversely, are subject to variable incomes as determined by climatic conditions which in turn determine the farming outputs. On all AALS farms, decisions, rights and responsibility rest squarely on the owner on account of the fact that they obtain freehold rights over their land. Tenure security is therefore not an issue.

The AALS beneficiaries in both regions bought farms ranging in size from 4 000 ha to 11 000 ha. All of these farms had boundary fences and internal camps. **Bernard's** farm in Omaheke, for example, is 5 873 ha in size, with 21 camps, 3 boreholes and 5 water points. **Wilfred's** 11 000 ha farm in Hardap had 22 camps. All of the AALS beneficiaries in the sample obtained the freehold title to which they were entitled after buying their farm. Most of them bought a going concern, the few exceptions being farms which had not been utilised for a number of years. In the mid 1990s in particular, many farms deserted by white farmers during and after the drought in Hardap were bought by AALS beneficiaries.

In Hardap there is a pronounced difference in the average sizes of farms bought by part-time and full-time farmers. For part-time farmers the sizes ranged from 5 000 ha to 20 000 ha, and for full-time farmers from 3 500 ha to 11 000 ha. The main reason for the former having larger farms is that they have access to off-farm incomes and better collateral. However, despite having smaller farms on average, full-time farmers had more livestock – large and small. The impression that full-time farmers farm more intensively than part-time farmers is supported by the finding that the joint livestock sales of part-time farmers were less



Growing Hoodia at Sekretarispan resettlement farm, Hardap.

than 10% of the sales of their full-time counterparts. A possible reason for this is that large farms require more management inputs which were lacking among part-time farmers. Smaller farming units of full-time farmers appear to have been the most productive because the farmers are permanently on the farm.

Answers to the question of whether AALS farmers had enough land for farming depended on whether they farmed full time or part time. In Omaheke, three part-time farmers said that they had enough land and could not make use of more land. The full-time farmers in that region said that they could use more land. Regarding the quality of grazing, part-time farmers said that it ranged from good to extremely good, and for full-time farmers it was not so good to extremely good.

All full-time AALS farmers in Hardap said that they had sufficient land, and 83% said that they did not want to manage more land. Only 50% utilised all of their land, while the other half said that they could increase production if they could further develop their water infrastructure and reduce predators. Half of the full-time farmers perceived overgrazing as a problem, while none of the part-time farmers reported any overgrazing.

4.2.1 Production systems

Production systems and types of output of AALS farmers did not appear to differ markedly from those of the previous white landowners. The main agricultural activity among AALS beneficiaries was the rearing of livestock for commercial purposes, and to a limited extent own consumption. Extensive small-stock farming was the main farming activity in Hardap, while cattle farming predominated in Omaheke.

All of the AALS farmers surveyed in the two regions employed animal husbandry practices as recommended for commercial production: bulls were purchased and used during fixed breeding seasons; a weaning system was used to ensure that females had sufficient time to recuperate for their next offspring; fences were maintained and erected; and rotational grazing was practised. However, the fact that part-time farmers were not permanently on their farm came at the cost of less control over and less-effective management of their farming operations. Full-time farmers' animal husbandry practices were better than those of their part-time counterparts due to their permanent presence.

In Omaheke, cattle herd sizes ranged from 80 to 270 head. The herd of 80 belonged to a full-time farmer who was struggling to enlarge the herd as he had to sell cows (i.e. females, not bulls) regularly to repay his Agribank loan. The other full-time and part-time farmers sampled in both regions had in excess of 200 cows per herd and were increasing their herd sizes continuously. All of them had purchased bulls in the preceding year to introduce new genetic lines.

However, it appears that full-time and part-time farmers' capacities to acquire livestock differ markedly. Due to their off-farm income stream, part-time farmers are able to purchase more livestock and spend more on bulls than full-time farmers. The average initial investment of part-time farmers amounted to N\$375 000 for 12 bulls, 10 heifers, 38 cows and 24 goats. For one bull, part-time farmers paid prices ranging from N\$10 000 to N\$20 000, compared to a range of N\$4 000 to N\$5 000 paid by full-time farmers. The latter, however, did not have sufficient funds to increase their herds with purchases of cows and heifers. Only two new cows in total were purchased by the full-time farmers sampled.

Part-time farmers used their own financial resources and/or borrowed funds from relatives to purchase livestock. They also used income from the sale of their livestock (i.e. small stock). Their approach appears to have differed slightly to that of full-time farmers in that they sold females which did not produce a calf each year, thereby maximising productivity and increasing herd fertility. Full-time farmers gave their unproductive cows a second chance, keeping them longer. Part-time farmers had high turnovers of sales and purchases. These factors enabled part-time farmers to increase their herds at a faster rate than the annual natural growth rate.

A striking feature of livestock production in Omaheke was that all the AALS farmers had a weaner production system, meaning that they sold their weaners and did not keep any for producing slaughter-grade oxen. The main reason for this was cash-flow constraints due to having to pay back a hefty Agribank loan. The weaner production system enables farmers to sell calves as soon as they are weaned rather than only three years later. This system is preferable especially for full-time farmers who do not have access to off-farm income.

As a full-time farmer, being able to increase his cash flow quickly was **Godfrey's** main reason for producing weaners rather than oxen. He could sell weaners faster than oxen which take longer to reach a marketable age and are more expensive to raise. In terms of profitability, it is preferable to produce oxen, but cash-flow needs forced Godfrey to go on with weaners.

Bernard, also a full-time farmer, stopped producing oxen in favour of weaners for the same reason. He needed to sell livestock as soon as possible to obtain enough cash to run his farm. Given his precarious financial situation, producing oxen was too risky. Although his farm is relatively large, the grazing was of poor quality and bush encroachment was an increasing problem. Farmers in Omaheke also face the constant threat of veld fires, and rains are unreliable. These factors increase the risk of producing oxen which take longer to be ready for the market.

All of the AALS farmers consider farming with oxen to be more profitable and hence more desirable than farming with weaners, and this would be their preference, but, like Bernard, several said that they needed better grazing, more rainfall and less annual variation in rainfall to be able to take the risk. Once Bernard's Agribank loan has been repaid, he might start to farm with oxen. Apart from the financial benefits, he pointed out that ox production is also better for the veld, as oxen loosen the soil through trampling.

4.2.2 Marketing

The frequency of AALS farmers' marketing of livestock was determined by auction prices and the condition of the livestock, i.e. they tended to sell when the animals were at or close to maximum weight. In both regions, some AALS farmers tended to limit their marketing to cover just the annual repayment of the Agribank loan and their basic needs.

All the AALS farmers were knowledgeable about the market prices they could expect for their livestock. Because the full-time farmers' were working with more limited resources, their genetic stock was generally of lower quality, with the result that they earned less than part-time farmers earned from their cattle sales. In Omaheke, the prices realised by full-time farmers ranged from N\$2500 to N\$3500 for a heifer and N\$2500 to N\$4000 for a cow, whereas part-time farmers obtained N\$500 to N\$1500 more per heifer and per cow.

The marketing channels of AALS farmers were identical to those of white commercial farmers. **Kristof** in Maltahöhe District sold his livestock either to a private buyer or took the animals to marketing agents in Mariental. There were no longer auctions in Maltahöhe, which Kristof said was due to changes that occurred in the farming sector in the wake of the drought in the 1990s. Because of the drought, many farmers lost and/or sold their livestock and moved to other parts of the country. Others introduced game farming and tourism on their farm. All this meant that there were no longer enough animals to warrant regular auctions in Maltahöhe. However, the growing number of AALS farmers in the district brought in livestock again, which, together with improved rainfall conditions after 1996, increased the livestock numbers to the extent that regular auctions became feasible again in this district.

Tobias also sold livestock regularly, his most important markets being firstly auctions and secondly private buyers. He complained that because buyers 'sat with the money' and paid what they wanted to pay, he as the farmer was a price-taker – a complaint not limited to AALS farmers. His protestations that buyers should pay what he demanded fell on deaf ears. Having to hire someone to transport his livestock to the market further reduced his earnings.

Marketing channels for weaners in Omaheke depended on the number of animals marketed. When farmers marketed on a large scale, they usually sold to established agents such as Agra and Karoo Ochse, or directly to Meatco, the meat processing company. **Godfrey** sold weaners once or twice a year to Agra or Karoo Ochse, while his grown cattle were sold to Meatco only once a year. Although located close to the Epukiro communal area, he did not sell livestock there as the prices were generally lower than in Gobabis. Only in times of emergency did he resort to selling in the communal area.

Transporting livestock to markets was a major problem for many farmers. If they did not own a truck, they had to hire transport. Transport costs impacted negatively on sales, especially if a farmer sold only a few weaners (e.g. 10) at a time. An alternative to hiring transport was to contact marketing agents such as Agra, which would send its own trucks to collect the animals if the number of animals offered by several farmers in an area was high enough. But the farmers still had to cover the transport costs, which were only slightly less than the costs of hiring transport individually.

4.2.3 Diversification

Despite the agro-ecological conditions restricting options for successful diversification in both Omaheke and Hardap, some AALS farmers still attempted to diversify, with varying success. An option available to farmers in Omaheke only is rainfed cultivation of maize and some other crops. Whether to plough or not depends on the rains. **Bernard** and his family, for example, ploughed approximately 7 ha whenever the rainy season looked promising. They planted mainly maize and beans, and had their own mill to produce mealie-meal for their farm workers and own consumption as well as for sale.

Godfrey also ploughed some land and planted maize and beans. Until his tractor broke down, he used it for ploughing, but it was a very costly machine to run, so instead he took to using mules to plough, which is much cheaper. Hiring a tractor from a neighbour costs approximately N\$4 000 for ploughing 1.5 ha.

The most lucrative market for **Bernard's** mealie-meal and beans was the adjacent Epukiro communal area, located only 32 km from his farm, whereas Gobabis is 142 km away. By selling in Epukiro he saved on transport costs and was therefore able to sell his produce at much lower prices than buyers have to pay in Gobabis. There is also much more competition in Gobabis than in the communal area. The situation was very different for cattle, with prices in Gobabis being better than those paid in the region's communal areas. Therefore, **Bernard** and his family sold their livestock through established agents in Gobabis rather than in the communal area.

In Hardap, **Kristof** sought to diversify his farming operations, partly in response to regular drought. In his initial years as an AALS farmer, he had to confine his agricultural production to goat farming only, although he owned sheep and cattle as well. In 1996 he was forced to sell all his cattle due to the drought. When the market for karakul weakened, he started to cross his karakul sheep with dorper sheep to concentrate on mutton production. A

comparison of his livestock numbers in 1992 and 2008 shows that the ratio of goats to sheep had remained more or less the same, but the number of cattle was down virtually to zero. When he moved onto the farm with his family in 1992, he had 570 goats, 320 sheep and 65 head of cattle. At the time of this interview in early 2008, he had 414 goats, 251 mixed sheep and just 4 head of cattle. He was about to purchase a few more head of cattle with the aim of concentrating on cattle and goat farming, rains permitting.

Kristof also explored agricultural production options other than livestock production. He started growing vegetables, but this proved to be an intensive activity which he could not entrust to somebody else. As he could not be on the farm permanently, his crops failed, so he stopped this activity altogether. In view of the regular periods of drought, he had thought that it might be feasible to farm with pigs in combination with growing vegetables, and he purchased some pigs, but when he stopped growing vegetables, he had nothing to feed the pigs, and pig farming was not profitable if their feed had to be purchased, so he stopped farming with pigs.

For **Tobias** in Hardap, goat farming was the most important agricultural activity. He also had some dorper sheep, acquired a few cattle and later cultivated a small vegetable garden for own consumption. He also intended turning one part of his farm into a wildlife area to generate additional income. In his view, the advantage of farming with game was that game survived drought whereas livestock died. He had applied to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to support him in this regard, and was confident that he would be able to generate an income from game, e.g. through commercial hunting.

Despite a general awareness of the advantages of farming with game, no AALS farmer in the sample had ventured into this line of production. The reasons for this may include the fact that farms have to conform to minimum standards for keeping wild animals, and most AALS beneficiaries are unable to incur and sustain the costs of this conformation.

Goat farming in Hardap.



4.2.4 Skills

The change from communal to commercial farming required new skills and adaptations which many AALS farmers did not have or could not make. Some were born in communal areas and had never done anything but farming in those areas. Others were employed in town and their income enabled them to buy livestock. Once bought, they took the livestock to a communal area and placed it in the care of a trusted person, normally a family member. Whatever the case, access to communal land had enabled most of the AALS beneficiaries to accumulate livestock.

The first implication of buying a freehold farm with a commercial loan, albeit at subsidised interest rates, is that livestock production and farm finances have to be managed tightly to ensure sufficient revenues for servicing the loan. Many AALS farmers began to farm commercially with very little support for meeting this requirement of tight management.

Some AALS farmers complained of having had either insufficient or incorrect knowledge of conditions on their farm at the time of buying it. For example, a farmer in Hardap sustained heavy losses by purchasing a somewhat mountainous farm which not well suited for sheep production, and this reduced his herd to a third of what it was when he purchased and settled on the farm. **Kristof** in Hardap stated that many AALS beneficiaries in the region bought farms that were left unutilised after the drought of the mid 1990s. His own farm had belonged to someone who worked at sea at Lüderitz and did not utilise the farm. As a result, when Kristof bought the farm, the grazing looked very good. He only realised later that his initial impression was wrong and its quality was actually poor.

Several AALS beneficiaries felt that they would have benefited had Agribank given better advice about the condition of the farm that they were going to buy. One farmer, whose farm is situated 50 km south of Mariental, only found out after buying the farm that the existing infrastructure needed some serious repairs. By the time he discovered this, he did not have enough money to fix the wind pump and kraal fences. He ascribes this situation to not having enough understanding of what to look out for before buying his farm, and it appears that Agribank was not very helpful in giving him advice at the time of the purchase.

Many AALS farmers lacked management skills to utilise their farm to the optimum. One of them suggested that the AALS should be revised as follows:

“[Provide for] agricultural training and improved administration, including accounting skills because those are very important. The [white] commercial farmers that are still farming today did not become successful overnight ... they were given the chance to learn through trial and error. We must get the same chances and government must help us to become successful.”

All the AALS farmers affirmed that they would be able to increase their overall production with the assistance of knowledgeable extension officers and by acquiring sound financial management skills (i.e. budgeting, setting benchmarks, and general aspects of accounting).

4.2.5 Finances

Many AALS beneficiaries, in particular full-time farmers, indicated that they experienced a constant cash-flow problem. The main reason for this was that they were indebted and had to repay a big Agribank loan. All AALS farmers in the sample had been farming for just over nine years on average, meaning that they were less than one year short of having to pay the full interest rate on the loan. In 2007 this rate was 12.68%. In expressing dissatisfaction with the interest rates charged by Agribank, one interviewee demanded that AALS farmers be entitled to the same conditions that white farmers enjoyed before Independence when they paid interest of only 4%.

A major cost factor for many beneficiaries was the state of infrastructure on their farm. Water infrastructure, in particular, was in need of rehabilitation on many farms, and this was a task that the beneficiaries themselves had to undertake during their first year of occupation when they had little cash. **Tobias** in Hardap discovered only after buying his farm that the water installations were in bad shape. The previous owner allegedly made the pumps look good and perhaps even replaced the first two lengths of piping in the borehole. Reservoirs filled to the brim gave the impression that the water infrastructure was in good working condition. To rehabilitate the infrastructure, Tobias had to use his own money as the Agribank loan did not provide for rehabilitating or repairing infrastructure.

These unanticipated problems aside, **Tobias** did not have problems with repaying his loan, provided that the rains and therefore the condition of his livestock were good. It was only in periods of drought that payment became difficult for him because the livestock did not yield sufficient revenues. His annual repayment amount until 2007 was N\$25 700, and this increased to N\$30 500 for the period 2008-2012. Thereafter the amount will be N\$40 000 per annum. While the prices he could fetch for sheep and cattle were low, goat prices were always good, being around N\$450 per goat. The value of his repayments as from 2008 thus amounts to the price fetched for the sale of about 70 goats per annum. Farming was his only income-generating activity, but his children occasionally supported him and his wife with cash, food and clothing.

Beneficiaries said that once Agribank had granted them a loan to buy a farm, they were not eligible for any other farm-related loan, and many, especially full-time farmers, therefore struggled to maintain their infrastructure. A former AALS farmer who farmed 30 km south-west of Maltahöhe summed up the difficulties he had faced and his views on Agribank. His farm infrastructure had to be repaired at a cost of N\$28 000, which he had to pay from his own funds as he was not eligible for additional assistance from Agribank. He considered himself lucky in that he was still drawing an off-farm income at the time and was able to sell some of the animals already purchased for the farm. But he lost his farm in 2007 after defaulting on his loan. In his opinion, the only thing that interests Agribank is ownership:

[The bank] is not concerned about what you are doing on the farm because they know that you need to start paying your loan from the fourth or fifth year and that is where they are making their money.

The tight financial position of some beneficiaries meant that they could do no more than maintain the infrastructure erected by the previous farm owners. Capital investments were made only if they were inescapable.

Many beneficiaries suggested that AALS farmers should have access to additional loans to help them with infrastructure repairs. Another option proposed was that rather than advance capital for repairs, Agribank could send its field workers to repair infrastructure and simultaneously provide infrastructural inputs, including training on infrastructure repair and maintenance, and then charge the costs of these services to the farmers' loan accounts. According to the farmer who made this proposal, beneficiaries can apply to Agribank for an additional loan, but only after 10 years, and the decision as to whether or not to grant the loan would depend on how the applicant had fared with repaying the initial loan.

Beneficiaries with sufficient collateral had obtained loans from commercial banks to buy vehicles and cover the costs of infrastructure maintenance and/or replacement. Some had used a commercial bank loan also to pay their children's school fees. A few had resorted to informal lending. Several part-time farmers had borrowed amounts as high as N\$260 000 to N\$300 000 from relatives for purchasing livestock. Full-time farmers borrowed much smaller amounts from commercial banks and relatives.

4.2.6 Drought

Regular drought is the single most serious threat to livestock farming in both Hardap and Omaheke. Despite drought being a constant threat in Hardap, less than 10% of the AALS respondents there singled it out as a major problem. A possible reason for this is that the immediate focus of respondents there was on water infrastructure which is easier to manage than drought. However, the qualitative interviews left no doubt that drought was a major issue for all AALS farmers in both regions. Many did state that they had suffered major livestock losses as a result of drought.

In Hardap, a number of farmers said that it was difficult to get into full production as drought reduced their land's carrying capacity. Although drought presents the single biggest shock to livelihoods in Hardap, unseasonal weather conditions cause big losses from time to time. In October 2007, a late frost with accompanying heavy rain occurred in both Hardap and Karas. Some AALS farmers in Mariental District reported heavy losses of small stock, and farmers in the Bethanie area in Karas reportedly lost as many as 2 000 sheep.

To minimise the negative impact of drought on livestock, production systems should be designed to enable farmers to manage drought better. Such systems would include, among other things, systems of flexible and rotational grazing. In theory, large-scale commercial farms with their internal camps facilitate rotational grazing, and evidence suggests that many AALS farmers are practising rotational grazing. Other drought mitigation strategies employed by AALS farmers have been hiring grazing if available and purchasing feed for their livestock.



Water infrastructure problems were severe at Sekretarispan resettlement farm, Hardap.

Selling all their livestock at the onset of a drought does not appear to be a universally accepted strategy among AALS farmers, as **Godfrey**'s testimony suggests. His first response to drought was to look for opportunities to hire grazing in the region. In addition, he bought fodder, lick and grass, financing these purchases by selling those cattle whose condition was still reasonably good. The practice of many established commercial farmers of selling livestock at the onset of drought, banking the money and then purchasing livestock again after the drought was foreign to him. He argued that he kept cattle, not money. The reason for his thinking that selling all livestock due to drought is not a good idea is that a farmer needs cash after the drought. Selling all his livestock and banking the money would mean running the risk of having used half of the money when the time is right for buying new livestock.

Significantly, while Godfrey stated that he does not take his livestock to graze in the adjacent communal area because he cannot control his livestock there, at the same time he said that during a very bad drought it is much easier to farm in a communal area than on a commercial farm, and likewise it would be much easier for him to graze his livestock in the communal area. The reason for this is that even though commercial farms, including his own farm, have several camps which enable the farmers to practise rotational grazing and save some grazing for drought periods, the livestock are limited to grazing within the camp or farm boundaries, whereas communal areas have the advantage that livestock can graze wherever they find something to eat.

4.3 Typology of livelihood strategies in relation to land reform

Most full-time AALS farmers in Hardap and Omaheke appeared to be focusing on land-based livelihood strategies involving livestock production. In the usually arid western parts of Hardap, AALS farmers tend to farm only with small stock, i.e. sheep and/or goats, whereas the pattern of higher rainfall in the eastern parts of the region enable farmers there to farm with both large and small stock, i.e. cattle as well as sheep and/or goats. In Omaheke the full-time farmers focus predominantly on farming with large livestock as a land-based livelihood strategy. Some combine large-stock production with small-stock production.

Livestock production for part-time farmers in both regions is similar to that of full-time farmers. However, part-time farmers seem to have an advantage over full-time farmers in that they are employed elsewhere, e.g. by the government, and therefore earn additional money which they can use to cover operational costs on the farm.

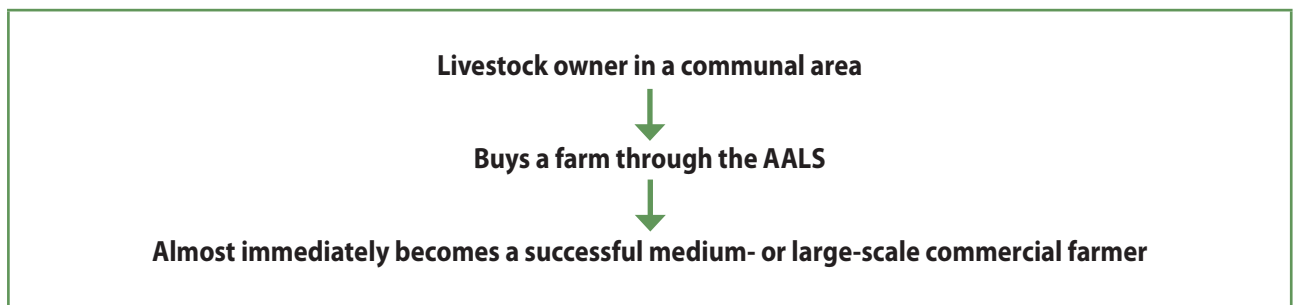
4.4 Livelihood trajectories

The majority of AALS farmers have one thing in common, i.e. they had previously farmed in one or more communal areas. Virtually all of them have experienced communal farming in one way or another before buying their own farm, whether growing up in a communal area and witnessing farming practices there or farming themselves in a communal area. As indicated earlier, 60% of all the AALS farmers interviewed stated that they had applied for an AALS loan because they wanted to get out of the communal areas. The main reasons for this were that their livestock herds had grown too big for communal land, and related to this, they were not able to exercise any control over their own livestock on communal land.

While AALS farmers have much in common in terms of farming origins, their life histories, personal experiences and therefore their development paths as farmers are dissimilar. The livelihood trajectories (or pathways) discussed in this section have been formulated in order to categorise the development paths of AALS farmers in an attempt to understand the different paths better.

Based on its findings and observations on the AALS in Hardap and Omaheke, the research team developed four livelihood trajectories pertaining to AALS farmers. The first is the 'ideal' trajectory, which reflects the ideal development path for a farmer under the AALS. This trajectory corresponds closely to the AALS policy objectives. Because personal and farming experiences hardly ever accord with what is considered ideal, it was necessary to capture deviations from the ideal, hence the 'cyclical', 'part-time' and '*broekskeur en vasbyt*' trajectories. There is also an 'expansionist' trajectory, which represents the aspirations of most AALS farmers, but none of them has achieved it as yet, so it is not discussed in this report.

4.4.1 The ‘ideal’ trajectory



The ‘ideal’ trajectory reflects the model AALS development path as envisioned by AALS policy. In short, this trajectory pertains to a full-time communal farmer or someone who works elsewhere on a full-time basis, who keeps a large herd of livestock on communal land. Farmers in this category purchased commercial farmland with the assistance of the AALS to free up space for smaller, upcoming communal farmers as envisaged by AALS policy, and/or they moved out of the communal area due to ever-increasing competition with other livestock farmers there for grazing. The ‘ideal’ trajectory entails that the new commercial farmer becomes a medium to large commercial farmer, and one who never defaults on loan repayments to Agribank and produces enough to cover costs. In fact, this category of farmer is so successful that he/she is able to repay the entire Agribank loan well within the prescribed 25 years set by AALS policy.

The ideal is not commonly attained in any endeavour or aspect of life, but some of the AALS farmers are close to attaining this ‘ideal’ livelihood trajectory.

Johannes and his wife **Christina** lived alone on a farm of approximately 4100 ha situated 30 km south of Gochas, a town on the Auob River in Hardap. Occasionally their grandchildren stayed with them. Neither of them came from Hardap: Johannes was born and raised in Aries in the Northern Cape in South Africa, and Christina was born in Omaruru and raised at Okombahe, both in today’s Erongo Region, Namibia. Johannes came to Namibia as a young man and settled in Omaruru where he met and married Christina. Both having communal farming experience, Johannes and Christina decided to farm in the Okombahe communal area. Seeking additional income, Johannes found employment at Uis Iscor tin mine in Erongo where he worked for 16 years while Christina continued farming. They farmed mainly with goats and karakul sheep, with some success until karakul pelt prices fell in the 1980s. When the mine closed in 1990, Johannes decided to go on early pension and the mine gave him a retrenchment package. Immediately after receiving the payout, he and Christina decided to become commercial farmers. They wanted to farm with sheep and were looking for a suitable farm. Through an agent they bought the farm in Hardap. Johannes put most of his pension money down as security for an AALS loan. After some delay from Agribank’s side, the loan was granted and the couple started farming in 1992.

Johannes’s livelihood trajectory as a commercial farmer reads like a fairytale. He repaid the bank in full within 13 years of obtaining the loan. He also put all of his children through university in either Namibia or South Africa. He farmed mainly with dorper sheep, of which

he had about 600 in 2008. In addition he had 150 goats and a few cattle which he kept mainly for their milk. He sold livestock at specific times of the year, mostly to the Farmers Meat Market in Mariental.

Johannes ascribed his farming success to four key factors: firstly, his passion to become a commercial farmer and to succeed as such; secondly, the right environmental conditions such as sufficient water and good grazing; thirdly, his tight control over financial matters; and fourthly, his willingness to take advice from his neighbours who had assisted him since the start of his farming venture in Hardap. On the latter factor, he said, “Our neighbours gave us good support especially in the beginning. One can never overemphasise the importance of keeping good neighbourly relations ...”

Although **Tobias** had been farming for only seven years and thus had not yet felt the full impact of Agribank’s interest rate, he can also be regarded as an ‘ideal’ AALS farmer. A teacher by profession, he had used some of his income to gradually build up a livestock herd large enough to stock a commercial farm. He purchased his first small stock in 1984, and took them to the Gibeon communal area where his brother-in-law looked after them. The latter resided on a farm cattle post. Tobias resigned as a teacher in 1999 and bought his farm under the AALS where he settled in November 2000. The farm of 5 439 ha has two fully equipped water points (posts) and is divided into 57 camps.

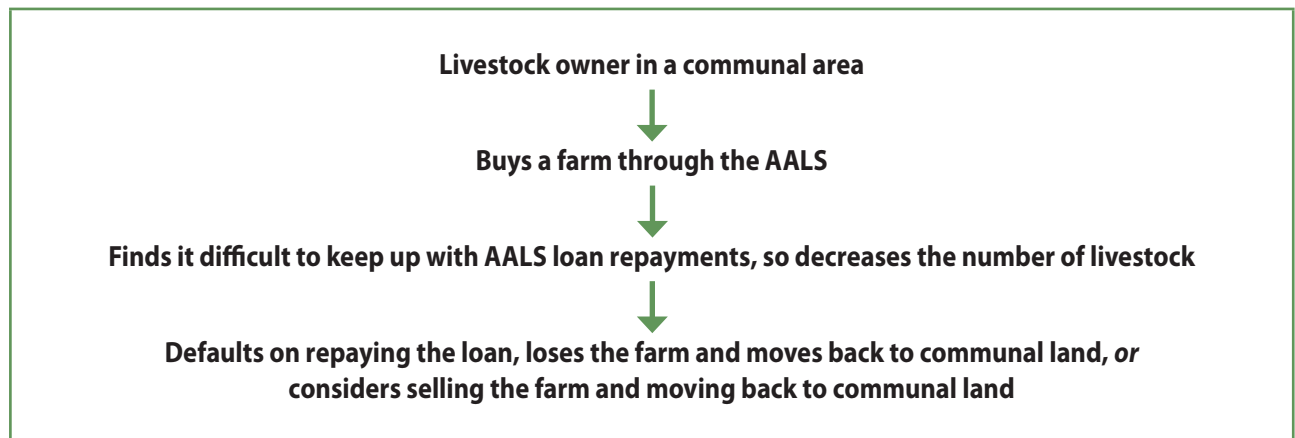
Tobias bought a commercial farm because it had always been his dream to own his own land and not to farm for too long on communal land. His expectations in buying the farm were to move forward and improve his standard of living beyond that of a teacher. Conditions on his farm were much better than those in the communal area. He now had enough grazing, water and camps. In the communal area it was an open-access situation which resulted in, among other things, much more theft of livestock. Having his own camps facilitated better control over and management of his livestock, these being two of his main motivations for buying a farm. He had an approximate total of 1 800 small stock, including lambs, which he regarded as a major achievement considering that he had nothing 23 years ago. This number of livestock meant that his farm was fully stocked.

After seven years on the farm, Tobias had to pay interest on his loan, albeit not yet at the full rate. In seasons of good rains, he had no problem with repayments. Only in times of drought did he experience difficulty as the condition of the livestock was under par and they did not yield sufficient revenues. His annual repayment amount was N\$25 700 until 2007. It increased to N\$30 500 in 2008 and this is what he will pay until 2012. Thereafter he must pay N\$40 000. While the fetching prices for sheep and cattle were low, goat prices were always good at around N\$450 per goat. Farming was his only income, but his children occasionally provided cash, food and clothing to support him and his wife on the farm. Despite a big demand for farmland for rent in the area, Tobias had not rented out any of his land because it was his most important asset and he needed all of it for his own activities.

His vision was to make his farm a *spog plaas* (‘boast farm’). He also envisaged turning the northern part of the farm into a wildlife area to generate additional income. He had applied

to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism for support in this regard, and was confident that he would be able to generate income from game, e.g. through commercial hunting. The advantage of keeping game was that it survived drought whereas other livestock died.

4.4.2 The 'cyclical' trajectory



The 'cyclical' trajectory reflects the history of AALS beneficiaries who started to farm and accumulate livestock in the communal areas, bought a commercial farm under the AALS, found themselves in financial dire straits and thus sold either the whole farm or parts of it to service their debts. Those who sold the whole farm were likely to return to a communal area.

Access to communal land enabled communal farmers to accumulate enough livestock to buy a commercial farm with an AALS loan. Two broad categories of communal livestock accumulators can be identified. The first consists of farmers who were born in communal areas, started looking after livestock at an early age and never engaged in any waged labour or salaried job. Gifts from family members and a gradual acquisition of livestock enabled them to build up a herd of their own. Many of the older AALS farmers in terms of both age and farming period are in this category. The second category consists of people who may or may not have been born in a communal area, but who followed a career and acquired skills which they applied in urban areas. They used part of their income to buy livestock which they took to a communal area to be looked after by a trusted person, usually a family member.

Although a number of factors led AALS beneficiaries in both categories to purchase a farm of their own, two major factors in virtually every case were conflicts with other communal farmers over grazing and natural resources, and a lack of control over their own livestock. The latter not only influenced their ability to apply proper herd management, but also led to high losses due to stock theft. In Omaheke there was a perception among AALS farmers that farmers in communal areas who had more than 200 large-stock units (LSU) had to buy a farm. Although one objective of the AALS is to encourage communal livestock owners with large herds to move out of the communal areas onto a commercial farm, there has never been any formal or informal pressure on them to do so.

The second stage of the 'cyclical' trajectory involves the farmer buying a commercial farm with an AALS loan. The most important requirement is sufficient livestock – at least 150 head of cattle or 800 small stock. The loan repayment period in all cases is 25 years. For full-time farmers, the first three years are free of both capital repayment and interest, and the capital amount is repaid over the remaining 22 years at an escalating rate of interest. Part-time farmers usually start paying interest in the first year.

During the third stage, many farmers, particularly full-time farmers, start to experience financial and cash-flow problems, and find it difficult to keep up with the loan repayment and payments in general. This is related to the gradually increasing rate of interest on the AALS loan. In 2007 the rates were set at 2% in years 4-6, 4% in years 7-8, 8% in year 9, and Agribank's full commercial rate of 12.68% as from year 10.

Apart from gradually increasing financial commitments, the financial difficulties of many AALS beneficiaries are exacerbated by external threats to their farming activities. The most prominent of these is drought, but in Hardap, unseasonal climatic conditions such as frost in November have also caused big losses of livestock.

The 'cyclical' trajectory is completed when the farmer is unable to honour his/her financial commitments and the farm is attached by court order. Having defaulted on repaying the AALS loan, the farmer loses the farm and moves back to communal land.

Abraham, who owned two small businesses in Mariental and a herd of livestock in a Hardap communal area, bought a farm under the AALS in 2000, located in the Swartrand area, 40 km south-east of Maltahöhe. Intending to farm full time, in his first year he farmed part time while continuing to run his businesses. He had no problem with paying the AALS instalment in the first year. In 2001, having attended a funeral in Maltahöhe District, he returned to Mariental to find that the town had been severely flooded and both of his business premises had been damaged. Having no business insurance to cover his losses, he applied to his local commercial bank for a loan of N\$20 000, which was granted.

In the following year he defaulted on the repayment of this latter loan, and hence owed the commercial bank a total of N\$47 000, which he could not pay. In 2007 the bank issued summons, obtained judgement against Abraham, attached his AALS farm and auctioned it in execution for the whole outstanding amount of N\$47 000. After the sale, Abraham was given seven days to vacate the farm with his animals. His only option was to take the animals back to the communal area. During the trek he incurred further losses as some of the animals died. As a temporary measure he applied at the MLR office in Mariental for resettlement. By the time of the survey in early 2008, his application had not been successful, but he had not given up hope. He had closed both of his businesses but had established a new one in Mariental. Determined to buy another commercial farm within five years, Abraham stated that he had learnt his lesson and would not make the same mistakes in the future.

4.4.3 The 'part-time' trajectory



The 'part-time' trajectory is identical to both the 'ideal' and 'cyclical' trajectories in so far as the first two stages involve moving from communal farming to commercial farming under the AALS.

The third stage of the 'part-time' trajectory differs from the previous two in that most of the farmers are in full-time employment (in either the government or the private sector) and use a portion of their income to support their part-time farming activities. A few are full-time farmers who have taken up part-time off-farm employment to supplement their farming income. All of the latter interviewed in the survey stated that they would not have been able to farm on a permanent basis without earning income "outside" their farming activities.

In the fourth and final stage of the 'part-time' trajectory, the farmer has repaid the AALS loan in full, and now intends to farm full time. In some instances the repayment in full coincides with the farmer either having reached the official retirement age of 60 years or having decided to resign or retire from his/her 'city job' or 'city life'.

Born in 1960, **Elizabeth** was raised in Aminuis in Omaheke. She left Namibia at 18 years of age to pursue a B.Sc. in Chemistry in Brooklyn, New York. After spending seven years in the United States, she returned to Namibia to take up employment as a chemist at a mine where she worked for five years. She then moved to Windhoek where she worked as a hydrologist in a government department for six years. Since 1998 she has worked for a parastatal as a senior scientist.

Elizabeth considered herself a "weekend farmer", returning to her farm every two weeks. A widow, she has four children. At the time of the survey the youngest was 19 and the oldest 28 years of age. During her absence from the farm, her brother managed the farm and lived there with his wife and two children.

Elizabeth and her late husband bought some livestock in 1986. From 1992 until 1999 they leased land on a government farm. They were told in 1999 that they were no longer allowed to stay there because the military used the area for training soldiers. The Ministry of Lands

did not offer alternative land, but granted an extension until 2000 to enable them to find alternative land themselves. Her husband's family had a commercial farm in Omaheke and helped to accommodate some of their livestock. Her husband died in early 2000.

Elizabeth applied for an AALS farm in April 2000 and her application was approved in August that year. In order to receive the loan, she had to give Agribank a payslip, a waiver or exemption letter from the Ministry of Lands, and proof of having 150 cattle. She hoped to become a self-sustainable farmer with room to expand her farming operations. After looking at five farms, she purchased one of 5 000 ha which had been well maintained and had good grazing, a good water supply and 27 camps. She estimated that there were 270 cattle on the farm as well as goats and a few sheep. Out of her own pocket she had to cover the difference between the farm's market value and the Agribank evaluation value, which amounted to nearly N\$300 000.

Elizabeth said that she was "definitely happy" with her decision to purchase a farm, despite some difficult times, particularly in the dry years when she coped by selling cattle to buy the required fodder and lick. She had made her loan repayments on time, but to do so she had supplemented the income from the farm with her salary from her full-time employment. She did not know how she would have managed "to keep the farm going" without her off-farm income, and did not believe it would be possible to make the repayments from full-time farming alone, especially with the escalating price of diesel. In addition to the farm running costs, she paid her brother a salary for managing the farm – he was unemployed when she offered him the job – and she also employed four farm workers on a permanent basis.

Regarding support programmes, Elizabeth had attended several conferences and training sessions hosted/run by the NAU and the NNFU, and had found them "very useful". She also said that Agribank had sent extension officers to "our farms" on occasion to examine the animals and provide advice, but this outreach had stopped five years before the interview. She described her relationship with Agribank at the time as one of "come in and pay", and felt that the interest rates are too high.

Some AALS beneficiaries started off as full-time farmers but took on formal employment to support themselves financially. In their assessment, they would not have survived periods of drought without off-farm income streams.

Kristof is one example. He was born in 1955 on a large commercial sheep farm where his parents worked. The farm workers were allowed to keep 25 small-stock units (SSU). After lambing, and when the number reached about 50, they were expected to sell. After a while, Kristof's parents decided not to sell anymore, but rather to use their goats' offspring as a foundation for expanded farming. They encouraged Kristof to obtain a right to farm in the communal area. He applied to the Witbooi Tribal Authority in 1979 and given permission to farm in the Gibeon area. This enabled his parents to transfer small stock to the communal area from time to time. Initially his mother's sister looked after the goats. Kristof established his own kraal in 1981 and stayed permanently in the communal area.



An AALS farm in Hardap.

In 1992 he applied for and was granted a loan under the AALS to buy a farm in Maltahöhe District. His farm of 8 626 ha had a carrying capacity of 1500 SSU. His purchase of the farm coincided with the onset of a drought which lasted until 1995 and resulted in his losing almost all of his livestock. From 1996 to 1998 he was able to hire camps on Maltahöhe town lands to graze his few surviving animals. He returned to the farm only in 1998 after rebuilding his herd.

Rebuilding the herd was possible only because Kristof was able to find employment. From 1996 to 1998 he was employed as managing director of a local business. His employment enabled him to pay his farm workers and the rent for the camps on Maltahöhe town lands as well as the instalments on his Agribank loan. He went back to his farm in 1998 but was approached by the community to make himself available as a candidate in the regional elections, which he did. Since 1998 he has served as a regional official.

Kristof said that without full-time employment since the mid 1990s, he would not have been able to continue farming. Although farming conditions improved with the rains after the drought, he was still using his salary to covering most of his farming expenses, and the revenues from farming covered the rest. His biggest problem as a farmer was the Labour Act, which he said required him to spend more on labour than he earned. What kept him on the farm was his interest in farming and making a success of it.

4.4.4 The '*broekskeur en vasbyt*' trajectory

The '*broekskeur en vasbyt*' or 'neither here nor there' trajectory is probably reflective of the vast majority of especially full-time AALS farmers, not only in Hardap and Omaheke but throughout Namibia. In short, farmers in this category find it difficult to make ends meet, but manage to repay the AALS loan annually, albeit with "the mercy of the heavens above".

Wilfred's story illustrates this situation. He owns a farm of 11 000 ha which he purchased with an AALS loan in 1998, located 60 km south of Mariental off the main road to Keetmanshoop. He grew up with his Bondelswart parents in the Gibeon area where they farmed communally. When he finished school he took a job as a technician in Keetmanshoop. Being interested in farming, he started gathering sheep, goats and cattle which he kept in the Warmbad communal area. There it became difficult to accommodate more than one person on a piece of land. His work as a technician required him to travel often, and he found it increasingly difficult to keep control over his livestock, with the result that he suffered many losses due to theft and disease. He then rented commercial land for two years close to the town of Karasburg, and he duly received a job transfer to be based in that town. When it became too expensive to pay for grazing there, he moved back to the Warmbad communal area where he bought more livestock. At the beginning of 1996 he was transferred from Karasburg to Maltahöhe.

In 1995 he had decided to buy a farm through the AALS. He actively searched for a farm to purchase in Hardap, and started negotiating with the owner of the farm that he favoured. His AALS loan was approved in October 1997, and in February 1998 the farm was transferred into his name. The previous owner set the price for the farm and Wilfred sent the details to Agribank in Mariental. The bank agreed to the price and set the amount to be loaned. Wilfred resigned from his job as a technician on the grounds that farming is a full-time responsibility. He moved onto the farm in May 1998. Agribank did not inspect the farm to ascertain that he had 150 head of cattle or 800 SSU as is required before a loan is granted.

Wilfred could not recall whether the bank inspected the infrastructure on the farm before granting him the loan, but on his own close inspection he found most of the infrastructure to be dilapidated and in need of replacement. The farm had five boreholes, but the water supply had proved problematic in that the supply from the stronger boreholes was salty and not suitable for animal and human consumption. While the other boreholes yielded suitable water for consumption, they were very weak and often dried up during periods of severe drought.

In 2008, Wilfred owned 125 head of cattle, 1100 sheep and 350 goats in 22 camps, but he stated that the land size (11 000 ha) was not sufficing to earn him a living due to the harsh environmental conditions along with the high mortgage to be paid on his loan. He did not feel too upbeat about his farming prospects.

He argued that the condition in which he received the farm did not justify the price he had paid for it. "Nothing worked and nothing was in place when I settled here. I was so eager to

start commercial farming that I did not look at these things beforehand,” he lamented. There also appeared to be a high risk of stock theft in the area. Forty of his cattle were stolen in March 2008, and the police were able to recover only eight. Wilfred ascribes this problem to the farm’s location on the main road between Mariental and Keetmanshoop and in close proximity to Mariental and the communal area, which makes it easily accessible to thieves.

Employing farm workers on a permanent basis was a constant concern for Wilfred. Thus far he had employed mainly Nama-speaking workers, and they “soon get tired of farming and then they leave”. For this reason he had decided to recruit Owambo workers instead:

... they are trustworthy and hardworking. They also save a lot themselves and you can see that they are progressing. If they go on leave for a week after every third month, they come back if you take care of them and this is what the other groups don’t do.

Would he have followed the same trajectory had he known 10 years ago what he knew now?

No. Physically I had to sacrifice and spend too much money, with little to show for it. Yearly I have to pay off my loan with high interest. If things could have stayed the same as those times with the white farmers when it was still 4% annual interest, it would have been better. It is now market related and you really feel it and we as AALS farmers are suffering a lot.

Despite regretting having become an AALS farmer, Wilfred felt that he had no choice but to continue on his farm:

I must just pull through as a farmer because it is the choice that I have made ten years ago. I have my children to look after – my wife passed away a few years ago. If inflation can stay low, I can still make it. Otherwise I will go bankrupt and lose this farm.

The main farmhouse on a resettlement farm in Hardap.



4.5 Evaluating outcomes

Evaluating outcomes and discussing the notion of ‘viability’ of the AALS model is difficult in the absence of hard-and-fast figures. None of the beneficiaries were prepared to divulge personal financial information, and farm data such as budgets were non-existent or not accessible.

This study did not find any ‘standard outcome’ of the AALS, therefore it cannot be said on the basis of this study that the scheme has been an all-out success or an all-out failure. However, the study uncovered a number of issues that pose a challenge to the objectives of the scheme. Evidence suggests that the AALS model for land reform is economically and financially viable only under certain conditions which relate to the asset base of AALS buyers and specifically their access to finance. Beneficiaries with relatively few assets and financial resources find it harder to make ends meet. It appears that full-time beneficiaries with no access to off-farm income streams have found it more difficult than their part-time colleagues to accumulate livestock as they have had to sell offspring to service their Agribank loan. Repayment requirements together with losses due to drought and predators have resulted in some AALS beneficiaries gradually depleting their livestock numbers, or in other words, getting poorer. This in turn has meant that many have not had sufficient livestock to make full use of their farm, with the result that they have not been able to generate enough revenue through livestock sales to make the annual loan repayment and also support a family. Thus, some full-time AALS farmers are forced to engage in off-farm income-generating activities to survive.

A major benefit of owning a commercial farm as opposed to farming in communal areas is that the farmers are able to control their own livestock and farming operations. Most AALS farmers in the sample had hoped that buying a commercial farm with infrastructure such as internal camps and water points would enable them to improve their livestock production and output. Indeed, many have been able to do so. An example is **Tobias** in Hardap who bought his farm specifically for the reasons just outlined. Looking back on his eight years of farming on his own land, he said that conditions on his farm were much better than they had been in the communal area. His small-stock numbers increased much more rapidly on his farm than had been the case in the communal area because he had enough grazing, water and camps, which facilitated better management of his livestock. In the communal area it was an open-access situation which resulted in, among other things, much more theft of livestock.

Apart from the financial considerations, having bought his own farm gave him a sense of satisfaction. He was working for himself rather than for others. Moreover, his farm has given him the opportunity to leave land to his children, which is something of value that they can fall back on if they are ever in need or if they decide to quit urban life.

Acquiring a farm of their own has also enabled AALS beneficiaries to pursue their love of farming and live a rural lifestyle, which many vastly prefer to urban life. Many feel that life

in town is too fast and one is not secure in one's own home. While the latter is also true to some extent on a farm, farm life is still said to be much better.

For **Bernard** and his family who bought their AALS farm in 1992, having their own farm is all-important. They started farming in the communal area but decided to buy their own farm due to the problems associated with communal farming. Stock losses and maintaining communal water points were just two of the many problems which they had continually faced. On their own farm, stock loss was massively reduced, and they had not found it too difficult to repay the Agribank loan, having only five more years to go at the time of the survey. Once their present farm was paid off, they would consider buying another piece of land on which to produce oxen. Their present farm would then serve as collateral, which they would not have had they continued farming in the communal area where they could not own any land.

By no means were all AALS beneficiaries in the sample equally upbeat about commercial farming. For some of the full-time farmers, the farm acquired was a major disappointment. After more than 10 years of commercial farming, some found themselves worse off, not only in comparison to their own situation at the time of buying the farm, but also compared to the situation of their peers in the communal areas. As commercial farmers they have had to service the Agribank loan as well as generate sufficient revenue to cover the farm running costs. These are expenses that their peers in the communal areas do not have. For many, the only way to maintain a positive cash flow was to sell livestock, meaning that many herds have been reduced rather than maintained or built up.

Kristof's livestock numbers had decreased from 1280 SSU in 1992 to 689 SSU in 2008. A major reason for this was that he had to sell 100 to 150 goats annually to make his annual loan repayment of N\$36 000. This became particularly difficult when the full interest rate was applied in year 10. His current livestock numbers did not suffice to generate sufficient revenue to service the loan and cover personal expenses such as schooling for the children. For most of his farming years he had been in full-time employment, without which, he said, he would not have been able to survive as an AALS farmer.

Godfrey regretted having bought his farm. He started to farm in the Epukiro communal area, looking after his parents' livestock. In time their cattle herd grew. He never bought any cattle but exchanged young oxen for heifers. Before deciding to buy a commercial farm, he had his own small camp and borehole in Epukiro. He kept his pregnant heifers in the camp while his other livestock grazed on communal pastures. When he bought his farm of 4 815 ha with 24 camps and 3 boreholes in 1993, he had 300 cattle.

On paying full interest on his AALS loan as from 2003, his financial difficulties worsened. He struggled to keep up with the repayments as he did not produce enough weaners each year to generate sufficient revenue to service the loan as well as cover the farm running costs. He therefore had to sell full-grown cattle as well, with the result that in 2008 he had only 100 head left. In an attempt to cut costs so that he would have enough for the loan repayment, he sold a 1 400 ha portion of his farm in 2005 with permission from Agribank

and the MAWF. He sold the smaller portion and kept the larger one rather than the other way around in the hope that he could still succeed, but said that if his financial struggle continued in the years ahead, he would consider selling the portion he still owned.

He argued that his failure thus far was partly due to there being no additional subsidies and government support for AALS farmers. White farmers received large subsidies and other support and became successful farmers. According to him, the AALS in its current form would not succeed in creating black commercial farmers. As an AALS beneficiary he had to repay a hefty loan for the purchase of a farm, land tax and all the costs of repairs and maintenance. In addition to his farm-related expenses, he had to cover the costs of his children's education at the Polytechnic (N\$20 000 to N\$26 000 per annum). Under such conditions, he argued, it was impossible for a full-time AALS farmers to succeed.

To add insult to injury, it seems that the general public erroneously perceives all AALS farmers to be wealthy, which for Godfrey has meant that, among other things, his children could not benefit from government subsidy programmes for education even though they had good marks. Moreover, if his child owed the Polytechnic, he was not allowed to sit for exams, so Godfrey had to sell a calf or cow to pay the debt. For all these reasons, he would never advise anybody to buy an AALS farm.

Aaron (a farmer not yet mentioned in this report) bought a farm of 5 000 ha in Maltahöhe District in 2002. At the time of the interview with him in 2008, he was about to enter his seventh year of paying off his loan, and the interest rate was about to increase from 2% to 4%. He had experienced all sorts of challenges throughout his years on the farm – periodic drought, livestock disease and so on – which had much reduced his livestock herd, which impacted negatively on his ability to repay the loan. While thus far he had been able to keep up with the repayments, he felt unsure that he could continue keeping up at the new rate of interest, and was considering the option of selling the farm and moving back to the Gibeon communal area.

While **Godfrey** had only sold one small portion of his farm, others had to sell their whole farm due to having defaulted in repaying Agribank. Exact figures are not easy to come by, but based on loan figures captured by Agribank in June 2009 for the total of 604 AALS farms spanning a total area of 3 241 353 ha, the PTT estimated that the total area had decreased by approximately 255 000 ha during the previous five years.

5 FARM UNIT RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (FURS)

5.1 Characteristics of beneficiaries and household composition

5.1.1 Social categories of beneficiaries

As with AALS beneficiaries, attempts were made to include the oldest resettlement farms in the sample of FURS beneficiaries. All FURS beneficiaries interviewed in Hardap were resettled between 1991 and 2004 and in Omaheke between 1992 and 2008.

The average beneficiary household sizes did not correlate closely with the national average size of 5.1 determined in 2001. In Omaheke the average size of the households sampled was 5.6, but most had only 4 members and the largest had 11 members. The 20 respondents in Hardap indicated that a total of 88 persons were residing on the farms, averaging at 4.4 members per household. The largest 5 households in Hardap had 7 members each. The relatively small household sizes in Hardap are due to the fact that a substantial number of FURS beneficiaries there are pensioners. On the farm Mara, for example, one family consisted of two pensioners and occasionally a visiting grown-up child. Their neighbour who had also retired lived on the farm with his wife, and another beneficiary there, though not retired, lived only with his wife and her child. The household of a 74-year-old pensioner on the farm Tulpvlei in Hardap consisted of himself and two of his grandchildren, while three relatives lived close to his house in their own shacks. Common to most beneficiary households was that they grew in size during school holidays when grandchildren visited.

The data suggests that the majority of FURS beneficiaries were middle-aged or reaching retirement. The average age of FURS beneficiaries sampled in Hardap was 49 years, with none being younger than 45, while in Omaheke the average age of those who responded to the semi-structured questionnaire was about 55.¹⁷ This broadly corresponds to the average age of 52 for all FURS beneficiaries in the country as determined in the survey conducted by the Permanent Technical Team on Land Reform in 2003/04 (PTT 2005b: 49).¹⁸ Table 9 on the next page shows the age and gender distributions of FURS household heads.

¹⁷ Being aware that some respondents did not know their age, broad age categories were provided in the Omaheke questionnaire, i.e. 0-5, 6-14, 15-59, 60 and older.

¹⁸ The PTT survey did not distinguish between group and farm unit resettlement.

Table 9: Age and gender distributions of FURS household heads

Age distribution	Omaheke		Hardap	
20-59 years	5	42%	13	65%
60 years and older	7	58%	7	35%
Total	12		20	
Gender distribution	8 males, 4 females		18 males, 2 females	

In Hardap, 35% of the FURS farmers were older than the official retirement age of 60, while in Omaheke more than 50% were older than 60. The 2003/04 PTT survey (ibid.) found 30% of beneficiaries to be older than 60.

These figures, and those produced by the PTT (2005a and 2005b), indicate that younger people are severely underrepresented in land redistribution. The reasons for this are not clear. One explanation may be that younger people are not interested in agricultural production and hence do not bother to apply for resettlement. A less likely alternative explanation could be that younger people have been less successful than older people in applying for resettlement.

A closer look at the age profiles of all members of FURS households in Hardap and Omaheke reveals that people beyond retirement age were more prominently represented on FURS farms than in these regions on the whole. The age profiles are presented in Table 10 below. In Hardap, the number of pre-school children on FURS farms was much lower than in the region as a whole. In both regions the number of people in the economically active age group (15-59 years) was higher than the regional average. One household in Omaheke had no member in the economically active age group but only members under 14 and over 60 years of age.

Table 10: Age distribution of FURS household members by region – Omaheke and Hardap

Age group (years)	Omaheke*	FURS Omaheke (N=68)	Hardap*	FURS Hardap (N=88)
0-5	15%	13%	13%	4%
6-14	26%	16%	23%	14%
15-59	51%	55%	55%	66%
60+	8%	16%	9%	16%

*Source: Omaheke Regional Poverty Profile, 2006; Hardap Regional Poverty Profile, 2006

It is interesting that in the FURS sample in Hardap, the percentage of very young children was comparatively low. As mentioned earlier, it is common for parents in town to send their children to reside on farms with family, but in Hardap, with very long distances between towns and the FURS farms, this phenomenon is possibly less frequent than elsewhere, especially in respect of infants and toddlers.

Most of the household heads interviewed in both regions were male, as Table 11 reflects. The PTT study conducted in 2003/04 found a gender distribution of 72% male and 28% female (ibid.).

Table 11: Gender distribution of FURS household heads

Gender	Hardap	Omaheke	Total
Male	18	8	26 (81%)
Female	2	4	6 (19%)
Total	20	12	32 (100%)

The levels of formal education among FURS farmers was very low. In Omaheke, 8 out of 12 or two thirds of the sampled farmers had no formal education, and only one had completed primary school. The low levels of formal education might have contributed to the poor economic performances of FURS farmers in Omaheke. In Hardap, only one farmer had completed tertiary education. Table 12 summarises the situation in both regions regarding formal education.

Many beneficiaries explained that they were not able to advance their formal education because their parents could not afford to keep them in school. Although this was not stated explicitly, it is reasonable to assume that one factor contributing to this state of affairs was that the parents of most beneficiaries had lived and worked on commercial farms: not only were their wages low, but logistical problems such as a lack of proper schooling facilities and a lack of transport may well have had a significantly negative impact on their children's schooling.

No FURS farmer sampled in either region had received formal agricultural training.

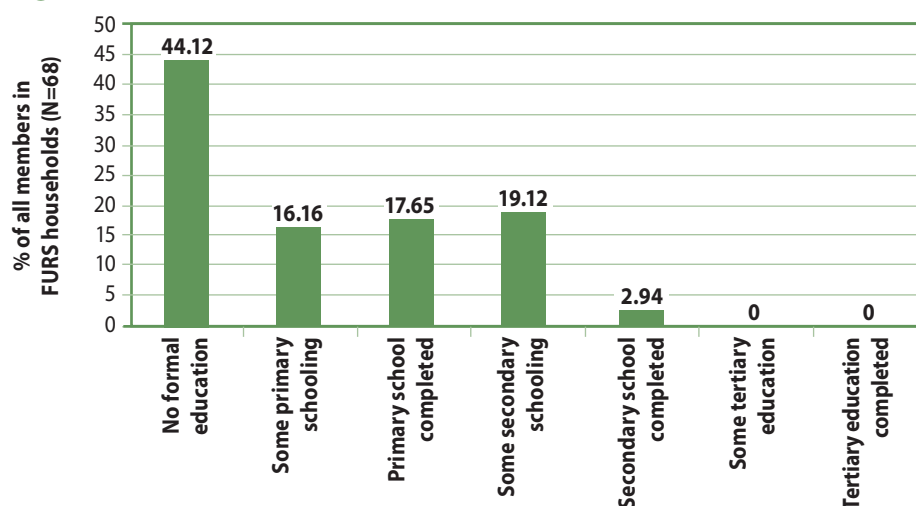
Table 12: Education levels of FURS household heads

	Omaheke	Hardap
No formal education	8	4
Some primary schooling	3	5
Primary school completed	1	5
Some secondary schooling		5
Tertiary education		1
Total	12	20

The education levels of other members of beneficiary households were not much higher. In Omaheke only two households had family members who had completed secondary school, and five had members with some secondary schooling. In three Omaheke households, completion of primary school was the highest level of education attained, and in two households the highest level was some primary schooling.

Looking at the levels of education of all 68 household members in the 12 households in Omaheke, the picture in Figure 1 on the next page emerged. More than 44% of all household members had no formal education, while more than 19% had some secondary schooling and less than 3% had completed secondary school.

Figure 1: Education levels in FURS households in Omaheke



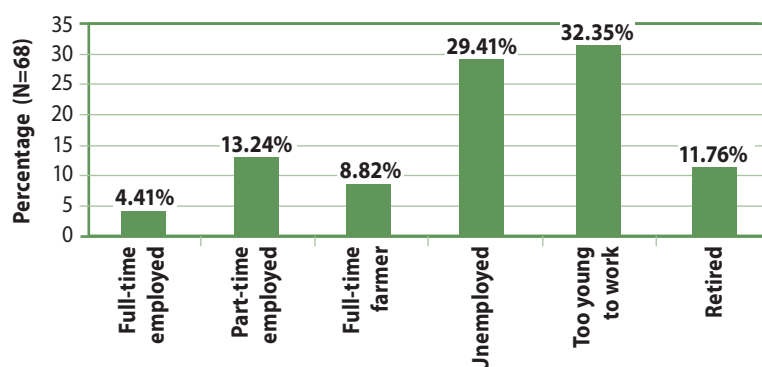
Of the 12 respondents in Omaheke, 5 were retired and receiving a monthly pension, 4 were full-time farmers, 1 was employed on a part-time basis, 1 was employed full time and 1 was unemployed. In Hardap, 5 farmers were in full-time employment, 14 regarded themselves as full-time farmers and 1 was retired. The employment status of the respondents in both regions is shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Employment status of FURS respondents

	Omaheke	Hardap	Total #	Total %
Full-time employed	1	5	6	18.8
Part-time employed	1	0	1	3.1
Full-time farmer	4	14	18	56.3
Unemployed	1	0	1	3.1
Retired	5	1	6	18.8
Total	12	20	32	100

In the Omaheke sample, just over 4% of all household members were employed full time and 13% were employed part time, while close to 12% were retired. This indicates that financial contributions from sources other than farming (either salaries or pensions) were relatively low. Approximately one third (32%) of the people on resettlement farms were too young to work and almost the same number of beneficiaries were unemployed. Figure 2 gives a schematic overview of the employment status of FURS household members in Omaheke.

Figure 2: Employment status of FURS household members in Omaheke





A household on a resettlement farm in Omaheke.

Table 14 shows that 28% of the FURS beneficiaries in Omaheke and Hardap had farmed on communal land before being resettled. A slightly higher percentage had farmed on freehold farms, while 22% were former farm workers. These figures suggests that most beneficiaries had gained experience in livestock husbandry and basic farming skills.

Table 14: Previous work experience of FURS beneficiaries

	Omaheke	Hardap	Total #	Total %
Farmer elsewhere in a communal area	4	5	9	28.1
Farmer elsewhere on a commercial farm	1	9	10	31.3
Farm worker	4	3	7	21.9
Businessman	1		1	3.1
Unemployed	1	3	4	12.5
Employed by a company in the formal economy	1		1	3.1
Total	12	20	32	100

The data presented above suggests that many more respondents in Hardap had farmed on commercial farms before opting for resettlement. Only one in Omaheke was in this category. This must be attributed to the way that the questions in the questionnaire were posed. In Omaheke, one third of the beneficiaries had come from communal areas and another third had been farm workers. Four respondents stated that they had started farming before Independence, five started in the 1990s and two started only after 2007.

Only two beneficiaries in the whole sample were previous fighters in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). **Mathew** was 55 years of age. He was born in Caprivi and is of Subiya decent. In 1975 he went into exile to become a PLAN fighter. After returning to the country in 1989, he spent four years looking for a livelihood. He was not able to find any employment and so joined a group farming project on a government farm with a large dam close to Mariental. The project came to an end as the dam dried up. Eventually, at the age of 41 and having applied for settlement, he secured a place at Mara. He arrived on the farm at the end of May 1993 with nothing. Farming with Mathew on Mara was **Petrus**, born in 1949 in then Owamboland. He had worked for the Department of Water Affairs before going into exile in Angola in 1976. He served as a PLAN fighter in the liberation struggle, and thereafter went to Grootfontein in south-western Namibia, but was involved in a car accident. Due to injuries sustained in the accident, he was unable to find a job. Government then offered him a place at the same government farm project which Mathew had joined near Mariental. After the dam dried up and the project ended, he came to Mara together with Mathew. He received a pension of N\$375 per month.

5.1.2 Motivation for resettlement

The majority of FURS beneficiaries applied to be resettled in order to farm with livestock. Most of them did not want to farm in communal areas as they had previously suffered losses there due to stock theft, this being a consequence of farmers not being able to control their livestock in communal areas. They hoped that by obtaining their own piece of land, they would be able to control their livestock, build up their herds and improve their livelihoods.

Lazarus spent the first part of his childhood in the Epukiro communal area. He left for Windhoek in 1956 to complete Standard 8. Thereafter he was employed, but was fired in 1977 due to his political activities. He went back to his relatives in Epukiro where he stayed until being settled on the farm Skoonheid in Omaheke in 1993. He used part of the money he had earned to buy livestock which he entrusted to his relatives in the communal area. After Independence he decided to leave the communal area simply because he was not able to control his livestock there. His first choice for resettlement was the remote area of Gam, which was also on communal land but not populated at the time. His application to be settled there failed, but he was offered the alternative of Skoonheid. Despite having lived there since 1993, he was conscious of the fact that he was settled there only on a temporary basis because the entire farm of Skoonheid was earmarked for San people. Despite his location being 'temporary', Lazarus expected to become wealthy by farming with cattle on Skoonheid. He had a bull and expected that his cows would be properly serviced and he would be able to build himself up.

Maria had settled in the Otjinene communal area in Omaheke in 1972. After her husband passed away she continued to farm on her own. However, stock theft was rampant in the area, and without her husband she found that she was more vulnerable to theft. She therefore decided to apply for a place on a resettlement farm. She had owned 200 head of cattle and over 300 goats, but stock theft had left her with only 50 and 30 respectively. She suspected that the stolen stock had been sold to a white farmer in the region. She expected to be able

to improve her standard of living by settling on the farm Danel in Omaheke. She believed that she would be able to expand her cattle farming activity to a level that would enable her to sell milk to the neighbouring school as well as start a vegetable garden. But none of her plans materialised. The grazing on the farm was plentiful but of poor quality. Her livestock were dying from unknown causes and the soil for vegetable gardening was poor.

A few beneficiaries applied for resettlement because they were no longer able to keep their livestock on the commercial farm where they worked, but they did not want to farm on communal land. Some commercial farmers allowed their farm workers to keep a limited number of animals on the farm as part of their remuneration. When the number of animals exceeded the maximum allowed, the worker either had to sell or transfer the animals to a communal area. Some commercial farmers charged grazing fees.

For **Herman**, a former farm worker, paying grazing fees was not an option as he still had children in school and could not afford to pay both school and grazing fees. To do so, he would have had to sell his livestock. Although he had been working for the same employer for 12 years, he decided to leave instead of paying grazing fees, and applied for resettlement at Skoonheid.

Like Maria, some other FURS beneficiaries regarded resettlement as a means to build up their livestock farming operations, albeit not necessarily to a large-scale commercial level. **Jakob**, a 32-year-old man who worked as a labourer for a FURS beneficiary indicated that he wanted to apply for resettlement on his own piece of land. He was working on the resettlement farm Rosenhof but had some cattle on a cattle post which his brother in law rented from a beneficiary on the resettlement farm Danel. Jakob wanted his own piece of land because it was impossible to farm in the village from which he hailed in the Epukiro communal area. In the event of being resettled, he would put his livestock and that of other family members on the farm, hire somebody to look after it and continue to earn cash through farm labour. This was necessary to preclude his having to sell his livestock to obtain cash to buy farm inputs such as medicines. His aim was to have around 100 cattle. All he needed to improve his livelihood was his own piece of land, even if it was only one camp. He did not think that he would ever use his cash to buy a car because a donkey-cart sufficed to fulfil his transport needs.

For several beneficiaries, resettlement meant obtaining a piece of land on which to retire. Many former farm workers regarded this as a more attractive option for retirement than a communal area. **Daniel** and his wife **Rosa** were 73 and 70 years old respectively. They did not apply to be resettled at Mara but the Hardap Regional Governor allocated them a place there in 2000. Daniel was born on a commercial farm in the region where he became a farm labourer. He and Rosa married on that farm. He then worked on several other farms in the region. In 1990 they moved to a commercial farm in Rehoboth District. In 2000 the community there were told that they had to move out. The Regional Governor and the Regional Resettlement Committee of the Hardap Regional Council decided in October 2000 that the community would be resettled at Mara. Although Daniel and Rosa had cultivated a small piece of land at Mara, they primarily wanted some land to retire on “in peace”.

5.1.3 Settlers' relationship with pre-settlement homes

Most of the FURS beneficiaries maintained relationships with relatives and acquaintances in communal areas or elsewhere. However, all respondents stated that they no longer had any livestock on communal land because the risks of losing stock on communal land were too high.

Lazarus who farmed at Skoonheid still had close ties with his relatives in the Epukiro communal area from where he had come. One reason for this was that his son, a Windhoek-based lawyer, was keeping a few livestock there. But Lazarus himself did not have any livestock there, and he said that he would not consider taking his livestock there even in a drought. In his view, communal areas were no longer favourable grazing areas, not least due to stock theft which was rife in these areas. He said that “as soon as cattle leave your kraal [in a communal area], they are not your cattle anymore”.

5.1.4 Settlers' social relations and networks

On many resettlement farms, social relations among beneficiaries were problematic. This is partly due to the way that beneficiaries were selected. FURS beneficiaries did not have the benefit of choosing their neighbours. Social issues were not considered in the land allocation process, therefore fate alone determined who settled next to who. Most beneficiaries on a particular farm were not related, but rather were complete strangers at first. In addition, most had opted for resettlement to be able to take management decisions themselves. For them, resettlement represented the only option for leaving communal farming and communal decision-making behind.

The upshot of the above was that there was no real sense of community on most resettlement farms. Ethnic heterogeneity did not help the process either. In and of itself this might not have represented a problem, but it often became a problem when FURS beneficiaries had to co-operate on crucial farming issues by force of circumstance. The most important issue requiring co-operation was water.

As resettlement farms are subdivisions of large-scale commercial farms, not all allocated portions of land had their own borehole. It was therefore very common for beneficiaries to have to share a borehole. In many cases this situation led to disputes. Issues of paying for maintenance, for example, gave rise to disputes because some beneficiaries watered more livestock than others. This was the case on the farm Panorama in Hardap which had only one water point. It was controlled by the labourer of a part-time beneficiary with a large number of livestock. A recurring issue was who was responsible for repairs and maintenance. Because his neighbour had fewer animals, he wanted to pay less.

One way to settle disputes over paying for the pumping of water was to require that each beneficiary provided his/her own diesel. On at least one farm, this solution was a departure from the earlier system of sharing the fuel costs. Farm Uitsicht in Hardap was allocated to three beneficiaries but had only one borehole. Two beneficiaries had to pump water from

this borehole over a distance of 8 km. Until 2005 they managed to buy diesel together, but this system did not prevail as the parties claimed to have no money when the supply ran out. Now each farmer bought his/her own fuel. If any of them did not have diesel, their livestock did not have water. In practice this meant that each farmer filled the tank of the engine with his/her own diesel, pumped enough water for his/her own consumption, and then emptied the tank of any remaining diesel which they took home.

In worst-case scenarios, the pipelines supplying beneficiaries without their own boreholes were cut as a result of disputes. It happened to **Maria**, a widow farming on Danel. She did not have her own borehole, and pipelines linked the water points in her camps to the borehole on her neighbour's farm. The neighbour, who claimed ownership of the pipelines, cut some of her lines on the grounds that he could not get enough water if she also used the supply. She bought her own diesel to pump water, but when the engine broke down, she had no money to repair it, which exacerbated the tensions with the neighbour and the situation became even more difficult. On occasion the engine had been out of order for up to a month, so she had no water and had to take her livestock to the neighbouring resettlement farm. At times she had even transported water by truck from a nearby farm. She compared her situation with that of dogs: dogs normally walked together peacefully until they reached food, whereupon they started to fight, sometimes over nothing more than a bone.

However, sharing of water did not always lead to disputes. In some instances beneficiaries co-operated well in managing water points. On Rosenhof in Omaheke, for example, three beneficiaries shared one water point, and although there were minor tensions from time to time, they worked together to maintain the infrastructure and diesel supply. One of them said that if all their cattle had to drink water from that one water point only, they could not afford to quarrel.

Ethnic differences sometimes impacted negatively on social relations on FURS farms. There was a strong perception among the beneficiaries sampled in both regions that Hardap traditionally 'belongs' to the Nama-speaking communities while Omaheke was associated with Otjiherero-speaking people. In view of this, and for some other political reasons, the MLR strove to implement a regional balance in allocating land. Ideally, a resettlement farm in Omaheke, for example, would be allocated to one Herero person, one Nama person, one person from Kavango and one from a north-central region – if indeed such a mix of people had applied for resettlement in a given area.

This approach did not go down well with all beneficiaries, however. At Mara in Hardap, Petrus, an Oshiwambo-speaking official beneficiary, said that Nama people had moved onto the farm without authorisation, claiming that it was their land and therefore he and his neighbour Mathew should go back to Owamboland and Caprivi respectively.

These ethnic tensions perhaps assumed more importance than was warranted in view of the fact that the Nama speakers on the farm were settled there by the Regional Governor while the non-Nama speakers were settled by the MLR. The official beneficiaries interpreted the Governor's actions as interference with their rights, while the Nama people placed there by the Governor accused the MLR of supporting only the non-Nama beneficiaries.

5.2 Production systems and output types / 'productivity'

The agricultural histories of FURS beneficiaries are similar in many respects to those of AALS farmers. To a large extent, their production systems in Omaheke and Hardap reflect the different agro-ecological conditions of the two regions. Like their AALS counterparts, FURS beneficiaries in Hardap primarily practised extensive small-stock farming, while extensive cattle farming predominated in Omaheke, but all of them kept small or large stock in addition to their primary livestock herds.

The path of FURS farmers in accumulating livestock was similar to that of AALS farmers. Some accumulated small numbers of livestock while working on a commercial farm. They kept as much as the farmer allowed them to keep on the farm and either sold off the excess animals or sent them to communal areas to be looked after by a trusted person. Other beneficiaries were employees in urban areas who used some of their earnings to purchase livestock which they kept in a communal area. It was noted in section 5.1.1 of this report that compared to those in Omaheke, a higher proportion of beneficiaries in Hardap had farmed in one way or another on commercial farms.

5.2.1 Farm sizes and tenure

Many beneficiaries did not know the exact size of the land allocated to them. This was partly due to none of the beneficiaries having any official documents specifying the size of their allocation and their rights regarding that land.

As readers will recall, the Land Reform Advisory Commission (LRAC) recommended that the minimum sizes of land allocations should be 1000 ha in the central, eastern and northern regions, and 3000 ha in the southern half of the country. Regardless of their farm size, most beneficiaries in the sample in both regions had 2 to 6 camps. **Maria** on the farm Danel in Omaheke, for example, received 6 camps which amounted to approximately 800 ha. All of the camps were fenced, but she did not have her own borehole and therefore obtained water for own consumption and for her livestock from a borehole on her neighbour's portion of land. **Lazarus** in Omaheke ended up with 3 camps amounting to approximately 800 ha, on which he grazed 50 cattle and 50-55 goats. In Hardap, 95% of the beneficiaries sampled were allocated more than one camp, but the poor condition of the fences meant that they had little control over grazing. Many FURS farms were thus very similar to communal areas in terms of access to and control over grazing.

Although none of the FURS beneficiaries sampled had any formal lease agreement with the government, tenure insecurity was not a major issue for most and did not appear to impact negatively on production systems and agricultural outputs. Eight respondents (two thirds) in Omaheke stated that they felt secure on their land, while five stated that they had official lease agreements with the government. Only three (25%) stated that they had enough land on which to farm, while the remaining nine said that they did not have enough land. Eight

stated that they would be able to farm more effectively on more land. These findings suggest that many beneficiaries in Omaheke did not regard the allocated land units as big enough.

5.2.2 Livestock farming

FURS beneficiaries commonly owned both cattle and small stock. In Omaheke, most owned cattle and/or goats in varying numbers. In Hardap, 7 of the 20 FURS farmers owned cattle, 10 owned sheep and 13 owned goats. In both regions there were beneficiaries who did not own any livestock, i.e. 25% of the sample in Omaheke, but only one in Hardap. The latter said that all his livestock had been stolen, therefore he was working in town again. As the requirements for resettlement included that beneficiaries had to own some livestock, it can be assumed that all of them did have livestock before settling, but some had lost it due to stock theft or drought, or they had sold it.

Only one livestock owner in Omaheke and one in Hardap did not sell any livestock. Table 15 reflects the livestock ownership situation in both regions. The survey respondents were asked to provide data on their livestock for the 365 days preceding the day of the interview. For Hardap this meant the period March 2007 to February 2008, and for Omaheke it was March 2008 to February 2009.

Table 15: Livestock ownership on FURS farms in Omaheke and Hardap, 2007/08

	Omaheke	Hardap
Number of beneficiaries in the sample	12	20
Owned cattle	7	7
Owned sheep	2	10
Owned goats	9	13
Number of beneficiaries owning no livestock	3	1
Livestock owners who did not sell any livestock by choice	1	1

Beneficiaries with 1000 ha in Omaheke could stock the farm with about 66 LSU or 200 SSU or a combination of large and small stock. Beneficiaries in Hardap could stock a 3000 ha farm with 120 LSU or 600 SSU or a combination. The differing agro-ecological conditions influenced the carrying capacities in each region. Table 16 reflects the types and numbers of livestock owned by the 9 livestock owners in Omaheke. Only 7 owned cattle, of whom 4 had a viable herd (42 to 78 animals), while 3 had fewer than 10 cows and some calves.

Table 16: Livestock ownership on FURS farms in Omaheke, 2008

	Calves	Bulls	Heifers	Cows	Goats	Sheep
Farmer 1	1			4	2	6
Farmer 2	3			6	4	25
Farmer 3	4	1		8	12	
Farmer 4	9	1	2	30	20	
Farmer 5	11	1	3	37	25	
Farmer 6	15	1	6	39	28	
Farmer 7	20	2	9	47	42	
Farmer 8					47	
Farmer 9					68	
Total	63	6	20	171	248	31

The 9 goat owners had herd sizes of 2 to 68 goats. Table 16 suggests that 6 goat owners had sustainable herds, if small ones, of 20 to 68 goats. Only 2 beneficiaries kept sheep, and both herds were small. Sheep were not considered to be suitable for Omaheke.

Table 16 also throws some light on the composition of livestock herds, which in turn gives some indication of future production potential, and also suggests what happened to the offspring of the previous year. Cows are the nucleus of any livestock production system. At least one bull is required for every 40 cows. Without any bull, the production potential is seriously limited. The number of calves reflects the herd productivity in the previous season. If the number of calves is under 60% of the number of cows, it can be assumed that there were problems with fertility or husbandry practices, or otherwise stock was lost or calves were sold once they were weaned. Not all female calves should be sold; some should be kept for future breeding. Heifers are female calves which should start producing calves of their own within the next breeding season. For goats and sheep, only the totals are provided in Table 16, and these clearly show the huge variance in small-stock numbers.

All cattle owners had some cows for breeding. Four owners had herds of 30 cows and more, while 3 owners had fewer than 8 cows. The 7 cow owners jointly owned 171 cows and 63 calves, indicating a calving rate of 37% to 50%. Ideally, 171 cows should have produced 103 or more calves per year according to the national calving rate of 60%. Assuming that half of the 63 calves were female, it would have been possible to introduce 32 heifers into the productive herds each year. In addition to the natural increase in productive capacity, 4 cattle owners brought 20 young heifers into their productive herds to expand production. Two owners purchased 12 new heifers from outside. It was common that young heifers were sold at weaning age to generate income, and this dramatically reduced the prospects of natural heifer production. The three smallest herds had no positive prospects for increased productivity in the near future, and the female herd was not growing.

One farmer had 12 oxen which he was preparing for slaughter at an abattoir.

Seven of the 9 goat owners in Omaheke had 12 to 68 goats, and the other 2 owners had 2 and 4 goats respectively. The total herd number was increased with the purchase of 2 goats and the birth of 12 lambs. This slight increase was offset as 16 lambs, 1 ram and 2 wethers either died or were stolen. Only 2 goats were slaughtered for the 9 owners' own consumption, but this might be an underestimation. Of the total goat population of 248, only 2 had been sold by one owner during the past year. This suggests that goats are not produced primarily for commercial purposes, but rather are kept for own consumption and occasional sale.

Most beneficiaries were aware of the advantages of bringing in new breeding stock (i.e. rams and bulls) in order to increase production and raise overall fertility. However, due to financial constraints this was a rare practice on the farms sampled in both regions. A good ram could cost up to half of the value of the increase in lamb production in the next lambing season, and it had to be paid immediately. In at least one case in Omaheke, three beneficiaries farming on adjacent units managed their cows and calves together. They placed all their cows together in the biggest camp and the calves in a smaller camp. The

cows of all three farmers were serviced by the two bulls belonging to one of them. Only one of the three had a labourer who assisted the other two from time to time.

In Hardap, due to the area's aridity, there were fewer cattle owners who owned fewer cattle than in the Omaheke sample. As in Omaheke, there were herds in Hardap with potential for breeding and regular offtake. The prospects of other herds were limited by their small size. Table 17 suggests that five of the seven cattle owners in Hardap possessed a bull for breeding. The other two either made use of someone else's bull for breeding or did not have access to bulls.

Table 17: Cattle ownership on FURS farms in Hardap, 2008

	Calves	Bulls	Heifers	Cows	Oxen
Farmer 1				3	
Farmer 2				4	
Farmer 3		1		8	
Farmer 4	4	1	3	11	1
Farmer 5	6	1	5	15	
Farmer 6	8	1	8	17	3
Farmer 7	12	2	15	32	4
Total	30	6	31	90	7

In the Hardap sample, 4 beneficiaries owned 10 or more cattle. The largest cattle owner with 32 cows had a good offspring in the previous year. The number of calves in his herd suggested a calving rate of 38%. The calving rate of the other cattle owners varied between 36% and 50%. Two beneficiaries owned 3 and 4 cows respectively with no bulls. There were

A fenced internal camp on a resettlement farm in Omaheke.



no calves at the time of the fieldwork, which could have been due to failure to conceive, current pregnancy, loss or sale. There were also no new productive cows, possibly because they had been sold. In general, fertility and reproduction could be increased but further details are needed to ascertain the cause of the low fertility rates. The year preceding the survey was considered to have been a drought period in which farmers had to reduce their livestock numbers.

Cattle farming on the plains (*“die vloere”*) west of Maltahöhe was not possible as the lack of grazing makes the land unsuitable for large livestock. Cattle ownership was therefore very low. Information provided by some FURS beneficiaries suggests that cattle take a long time to recover from drought to become productive again. In a drought, cows are unlikely to conceive due to weakness. If a drought is followed by seasons of good rain, they might conceive again and nine months later give birth to a calf, but it can take one to two years after the first good rains for a cow to become productive again.

Table 18 reflects the numbers of small stock owned by the beneficiaries in the Hardap sample. The highly unequal distribution of small stock is striking: some farmers owned fairly large herds, while others had very small herds with limited production prospects.

The production of female herds was generally low. An increase in animal husbandry was possible but was challenging and limited during a drought when fertility decreased. Goat nannies/does (i.e. females) and sheep ewes are able to produce three lambs within two years with optimal husbandry. It was difficult to assess the natural reproduction of small-stock herds in the Hardap sample because the owners suffered devastating losses in the year preceding the fieldwork. Lamb deaths in the sheep and goat herds were very frequent due to cold weather. This reduction influenced the small-stock numbers dramatically.

Table 18: Small-stock ownership on FURS farms in Hardap, 2008

	Sheep rams	Sheep heifers	Sheep ewes	Sheep lambs	Sheep wethers	Goat rams	Goat nannies	Goat kids	Goat wethers
Farmer 1	2		11	3		1	2	9	
Farmer 2	2		18			1	6	12	
Farmer 3	3		30	4		1	31	14	
Farmer 4	3		35		5	1	35	15	4
Farmer 5	3		45	10		2	50	17	
Farmer 6	3		87	12	5	2	50	20	
Farmer 7	3		110	18		2	75	21	
Farmer 8	4	46	150	30		2	105	32	20
Farmer 9	5	54	160	31	15	2	118	48	22
Farmer 10	8	60	250	100	38	2	122	50	
Farmer 11	8					3	130	60	28
Farmer 12						4	264	68	31
Farmer 13						5	300	72	40
Total	44	160	896	201	53	28	1 288	438	99

5.2.3 Production costs and gross incomes

Livestock farming costs varied greatly between livestock owners. Indications were that those who owned larger herds purchased inputs and invested in their livestock to increase herd productivity, whereas those with smaller herds minimised their production costs and purchased the minimal amount of inputs.

The seven cattle owners in the Omaheke sample incurred total livestock-related costs ranging from N\$100 to N\$11 500 per annum. Two did not have any livestock-related costs. Four incurred veterinary costs ranging from N\$70 to N\$2 000.

Production costs incurred by goat farmers in the Omaheke sample were much lower, at N\$20 to N\$3 000 per annum. These costs included veterinary, labour, supplementary feed and transport costs. Four of the five goat farmers incurred goat-related costs of under N\$900 per annum. Annual compulsory vaccines were not administered by all of the farmers.

The direct allocable goat-related costs in Hardap totalled N\$23 793 in the year preceding the fieldwork, incurred by 7 of the 13 goat owners. Individual costs ranged from N\$120 to N\$7 500. The 4 who owned the largest numbers of goats incurred 95% of the total.

The same applied to the sheep owners, with the 4 owners of the largest numbers incurring 97% of the total sheep-related costs. Two other sheep owners only purchased dosing medicines and vaccinations at a total cost of N\$200 per owner. The four owners with the smallest numbers of sheep did not incur any costs.

The mandatory annual vaccine for sheep and goats and vaccination against the most prevalent diseases would have cost approximately N\$5 per dose. Vaccination bottles are usually available in doses for 20 animals. Regular vaccination helps to reduce the incidence of disease and death among small stock, particularly where the poor condition of internal fences allows for livestock to roam around freely and therefore to come into contact with the livestock of other beneficiaries. However, veterinary officials stated that while normal vaccinations were being administered, this was often done incorrectly or at lesser doses. It was not uncommon that a beneficiary bought vaccines but administered only half a dose per animal. In some cases, one vaccine bottle was bought and kept at room temperature only to be used when the first clinical signs of disease became rampant.

Production costs might have been higher than usual in Hardap due to the drought that preceded the fieldwork. Farmers in Hardap incurred higher costs than their counterparts in Omaheke for supplementary feeding and fodder for cattle, sheep and goats. During dry periods of the year, many Hardap beneficiaries invested in additional assistance for their livestock.

Table 19 on the next page gives an indication of the gross incomes realised on all of the FURS farms sampled in Omaheke and Hardap.

Table 19: Gross incomes of FURS livestock farmers in Omaheke and Hardap, 2008

	Omaheke	Hardap
Total area covered in sample (ha)	9 718	44 760
Total number of cattle	272	181
Number of cattle sold	39	14
Cattle sales value (N\$)	52 000	38 900
Direct allocable cattle costs (N\$)	31 320	13 837
Gross income (N\$)	20 680	25 063
Total number of goats	248	2 124
Number of goats sold	9	1 124
Goat sales value (N\$)	6 800	108 442
Direct allocable goat costs (N\$)	4 646	23 793
Gross income (N\$)	2 154	84 649
Total number of sheep	31	1 192
Number of sheep sold	5	775
Sheep sales value (N\$)	1 600	78 975
Direct allocable sheep costs (N\$)	3 716	32 472
Gross income (N\$)	-2 116	46 503

These aggregate figures allow for certain deductions to be made regarding stocking rates and intensity of land use. The total land area allocated to farmers in the Omaheke sample was approximately 9 718 ha. With a carrying capacity of 15 ha per LSU and 6 ha per SSU, this area could carry a total of 648 LSU or 1 620 SSU. Given the total combined numbers of livestock in the sample, cattle utilised 4 080 ha, small stock 1 395 ha, and horses and donkeys an additional 1 065 ha. The combined utilisation thus amounts to 6 540 ha which is 67% of the total carrying capacity. Therefore, almost one third of the grazing land was not utilised for livestock production. Livestock lost to and consumed by households during the year preceding the fieldwork accounted for an estimated 235 ha in addition, which brings the total area utilised to 6 775 ha, amounting to almost 70% of the overall carrying capacity of land in the sample.

The total cattle, goat and sheep costs include the direct allocable costs borne directly by the owner for each livestock type. These costs included veterinary, fodder, supplementary feeding, hired labour and transport costs. **Lazarus** at Skoonheid, for example, was buying salt and supplementary feed as well as medicines and vaccines for his cattle. **Matthias**, another cattle farmer in Omaheke, also regularly bought lick for his cattle. He stated that provision of lick is essential in Omaheke: “Without lick, you would be without cattle.”

Administrative costs and costs relating to maintenance of farming infrastructure, vehicles and water supply are not included in direct allocable costs. The questionnaire included the question of whether any animals had been transferred to another place or given away as gifts. One respondent had transferred seven goats to his family as a gift. No respondent had transferred or given away any cattle or sheep.

The combined gross income from cattle and goat farming in Omaheke in the year preceding the fieldwork was N\$22 834 for the 9 718 ha. The gross income of the two sheep farmers was negative (they made a loss) and was not included in the total. This amounts to a gross income of N\$2,35 per hectare. By comparison, commercial large-stock ranching on larger farming

units can have a net farm income of over N\$20 per hectare (personal communication with study group leaders in Omaheke). Net farm income includes costs that are excluded from direct allocable costs, i.e. it includes costs of maintaining farm infrastructure, water supply, vehicles, etc., but excludes the costs of purchasing the farm or renting land.

The FURS respondents in Hardap farmed on an approximate total area of 44 760 ha. The cattle, goats and sheep jointly utilised 21 105 ha, taking into consideration that the carrying capacity was much lower in this arid region; it was thought to be 25 ha per LSU. Horses and donkeys utilised an additional 1 500 ha. The total number of livestock in the Hardap sample thus utilised 22 605 ha or 50% of the total possible carrying capacity. Including livestock lost and livestock slaughtered for own consumption in Hardap brings the total area utilised to 3 510 ha or 58% of the carrying capacity. Gross income on the respondents' farmland was N\$156 215 or N\$3,50 per hectare.

These figures suggest that resettlement land in Hardap was more intensely utilised than the land in Omaheke if measured by income generated per hectare. This is surprising in view of the fact that Hardap poses more challenges due to its aridity and high levels of stock loss.

The data and analysis suggests that there were two broad categories of FURS beneficiaries in both regions. They were distinguished mainly by their asset base and seemingly different production objectives. For beneficiaries with large herds of livestock, agricultural output was important. In both regions this group included part-time farmers who had access to off-farm income streams through employment. For the second group, being those owning only small numbers of livestock, agricultural productivity was not necessarily the main reason for applying for resettlement. This group's investment in infrastructure was kept to a minimum and most income was spent on consumables.

Several households in both regions had access to off-farm income. In Omaheke, apart from 11 households with pensioners, there were 5 households with individuals earning a salary from formal employment. Their incomes were modest, ranging from less than N\$1 000 per month in three cases to N\$2 200 earned by a tailor. Another earned N\$2 000 per month for woodwork. Respondents said that the money earned from off-farm activities was used in their respective orders of priority to pay for food, household goods, travel, fuel, school fees, farming implements, more livestock, medical services, seed, building materials and repairs, and to help relatives and repay loans. A few respondents managed to use some income to boost their savings.

5.2.4 Constraints on productivity

Many beneficiaries identified stock theft and loss to predators as major factors that reduced farm productivity and output. **Matthias** in Omaheke stated that if his herd produced 40 lambs in a year, 15 to 25 would be lost to either thieves or predators (mainly jackals). In Mariental District in Hardap, **Jeremiah** suffered big losses due to stock theft, his camp being situated next to a district road that connects some of the major towns in the region. The beneficiaries in the district did not have much confidence in the police's ability to investigate

stock theft there. The closest police station was at Gibeon, approximately 100 km west of the farm Jakkalsdraai. Often the police did not have staff and/or vehicles to investigate crime in the area, and if they did come out to the crime scene, there was never any follow-up investigation. **Maria** in Omaheke was adamant that most of the stock theft on her farm was committed by people from the neighbouring group resettlement scheme at Skoonheid. In her view, government had not done people in the surrounding areas a favour by settling people at Skoonheid. This view may be imbued with some ethnic bias in that the settlers on Skoonheid are predominantly of San decent.

Livestock diseases were another cause of losses, particularly of goat and sheep lambs which are highly susceptible to diseases and which made up the highest percentage of small-stock losses. In Omaheke, more cattle were lost than small stock. The survey did not classify stock losses in terms of natural death, theft and lost (i.e. wandering away). Table 20 reflects all stock losses as well as the numbers of animals that beneficiaries consumed themselves.

Table 20: Livestock losses and livestock utilised for own consumption on FURS farms, 2008

	Omaheke		Hardap	
	Died, lost, stolen	Own consumption	Died, lost, stolen	Own consumption
Cattle				
Calves	8		1	
Heifers	5		3	
Cows	5		4	
Oxen	3	1		1
Goats				
Lambs	14		138	31
Rams	1			
Nannies			69	10
Wethers	3	16	3	21
Sheep				
Lambs	12		154	37
Ewes		2	151	15
Wethers		1		28

Attaching a market value to the high livestock losses in Hardap would decrease the gross income per hectare by N\$1,50 to give a gross income of only N\$1,50 per hectare.

Respondents in Hardap did not explicitly mention the reasons for their cattle losses. The small stock lost were mainly lambs and ewes/nannies. Lambs are highly susceptible to diseases and require good husbandry practices. The high losses of adult females could be attributed to veterinary causes and poor condition, especially during the early lactation period. A few farmers in Hardap mentioned that in October 2007 (i.e. three months before the applicable interviews), a devastating cold front which lasted for a few days resulted in substantial losses. These losses were included in the data to be analysed. Four beneficiaries mentioned that they had slaughtered some small stock (goats and sheep) on a regular basis for their household's consumption. It was common for farmers to slaughter one or two goats or sheep per month for consumption by themselves and their workers.



Dilapidated water infrastructure at Mara resettlement farm, Hardap.

Dilapidated and/or non-existent farm infrastructure also impacted negatively on agricultural production. Close to half of the respondents in both regions singled out water as their main problem and stated emphatically that every beneficiary should have his/her own water point. None of them considered shared water points with shared costs and responsibility to be a preferred system for water supply. Specific issues raised with regard to water included decrepit infrastructure and a lack of capital to repair or replace it, and not having enough water points. Two respondents expressed their need for support to obtain diesel which they regarded as too expensive.

The general picture on FURS farms was that the majority of beneficiaries lacked financial means to repair water infrastructure. In situations where water sources were shared, this exacerbated conflict, as in the case of **Maria** in Omaheke whose story was related in section 5.1.4 of this report (p. 93).

In some instances, beneficiaries had invested their own money to get basic infrastructure operational again. **Matthias**, for example, not only maintained his camp fences but also demolished the old decrepit kraal and built a new one. In addition he built a permanent house as well as a corrugated-iron house, despite having no documented proof of security and his allocation being too small.

5.2.5 Marketing

Table 21 summarises livestock sales in both regions in the year preceding the fieldwork. Beneficiaries in Hardap recorded higher sales of livestock units than those in Omaheke. This is not significant only in terms of absolute units sold, but also in terms of what this says about livestock production in the two regions. The data suggests that beneficiaries in Hardap did not sell any breeding stock with the exception of two cows. This was in stark contrast to the findings in Omaheke where the sale of cows and heifers appeared to be a very common practice. Selling breeding stock reduces a livestock farmer's breeding nucleus with potentially negative results for the medium term. The sale of 26 cows in Omaheke suggests that the urgency of generating cash income was greater than the need to invest in order to increase cattle production. Old cows have to be sold once their productive years have ended, but they should be replaced with heifers to maintain or expand a herd.

Table 21: FURS livestock sales in Omaheke and Hardap, 2007/08

		Omaheke	Hardap
Cattle	Weaners	2	4
	Heifers	5	0
	Oxen	6	8
	Cows	26	2
Sheep	Lambs/weaners	0	65
	Ewes	2	618
	Young males	2	92
Goats	Kids/weaners	0	105
	Nannies	0	927
	Young males	2	92

Although the survey data does not bear this out, qualitative interviews suggested strongly that many beneficiaries were selling weaners rather than oxen. **Matthias** marketed weaners once a year. One of his reasons for selling weaners was that his two camps were too small. By selling weaners after six months or so, he relieved pressure on grazing to some extent. The other reason was that weaners gave him a more regular revenue stream in the short term. Selling 30 or 40 weaners per annum gave him enough income to live on. He sold small stock only on an ad hoc basis. He said that these animals were basically just running on his land, providing meat for his family and the jackals. He was also milking his cows to make *omaere* (sour milk) for his family's own consumption. He did not sell any milk or *omaere*.

Goat sales in Hardap reflected the skewed distribution of small stock. Four farmers in the sample sold a total of 927 nannies. One farmer sold only 9 nannies, one sold 18, and two sold 150 and 750 respectively. Thus there was a very uneven spread among beneficiaries with regard to small-stock sales, and only the four biggest owners sold stock. The pattern among sheep farmers was similar, with only the biggest owners selling stock.

Livestock were sold to cover a wide spectrum of needs. In Omaheke, calves were sold to help relatives financially, heifers were sold to buy implements and food and to repay loans, cows were sold to buy goods and repay loans and cover travel costs, oxen were sold to buy goods, and goats were sold to cover travel costs. As herds in Omaheke consisted mostly of

female animals, beneficiaries were forced to sell these reproductive assets to improve their cash flow, but selling breeding stock to cover day-to-day expenses has seriously limited their prospects for further expansion and reproduction over the medium term.

Beneficiaries in the Hardap sample stated that they sold calves and cows to buy food for own consumption. This suggests that by selling cows and calves, cattle owners with small herds were decreasing their breeding stock. Goat nannies and sheep ewes were sold to buy food and help relatives. The annual offspring of male lambs and other marketable animals were sold to buy goods, food and more livestock, and pay for repairs, education and medical needs. Indications were that the smaller farmers were gradually decreasing their female herds due to their need for immediate cash to cover urgent needs. Beneficiaries with larger herds were selling primarily for commercial reasons.

Availability of markets for livestock in both regions did not constitute a problem for the beneficiaries. Accessing those markets, however, was difficult for many due to their having no access to transport. Livestock farmers were aware that auctions represented the best marketing prospects. While transport could be hired, this was only economically feasible if farmers combined their livestock into one large consignment that fills the trucks to capacity. Farmers with smaller herds and hence smaller numbers for marketing found it difficult to take their livestock to auctions on their own steam. But sharing consignments also posed challenges as not all beneficiaries necessarily wanted to market at the same time.

Another option available to and often used by beneficiaries was selling directly to individual buyers and neighbouring farmers, who usually came with their own small pick-up trucks which allowed for buying and transporting up to 10 small-stock units. This not only gave beneficiaries the freedom to sell livestock whenever they needed to, but also removed the problem of transport. Those located closer to auction venues tended to take their livestock to auction themselves. It was estimated that if beneficiaries lived more than 40 km away from an auction venue, it became difficult to pay for transport, whereas distances shorter than 40 km were manageable.

The auction facilities most commonly used by beneficiaries in the Omaheke sample were at Plessisplaas. In many cases they had access to information on prices, and accordingly took prior decisions on whether or not to sell. **Matthias**, for example, received price information from a buying agent via his cell phone, but prices were also advertised on shop doors. When the prices were right, he sold quite a few cattle. In July 2008 he sold 30 weaners. He used his own pick-up to transport his livestock to Plessisplaas and was able to transport up to 5 weaners at a time. **Maria** at Danel sold 8 to 10 head of cattle per year, and sometimes 12. She also took her livestock to the neighbouring farm, Plessisplaas, where private and auction sales took place regularly. She used to obtain price information from the Afrikaans radio service as other community radio stations did not broadcast prices. However, in most instances when she sold her stock, price was less important than her need to obtain cash.

There is a tendency to market a lot of livestock around the start of the school year when school fees have to be paid, even though prices may not be at their peak at that time. During

the remainder of the year, goats are sold on an informal basis when money is needed. In Hardap especially, small stock are very lean at the beginning of the year when there is little foliage and hardly any grazing. Prices for small stock are thus generally lower at that time.

Lazarus, a full-time FURS farmer at Skoonheid, started to work in Windhoek after completing Standard 6 (Grade 8) in 1956. While working he bought livestock which he placed in the care of his family in the Epukiro communal area. All the animals he owned he bought himself; his family did not give him any animals. He ended up with 3 camps of about 800 ha in total. He grazed 50 head of cattle and 50 to 55 goats on that land. At one stage these numbers were much higher at 70 cattle and 80 goats, but they declined due to disease, drought, death and sales. When he arrived at Skoonheid in 1993 he had 35 cattle. He did not own chickens as he regarded them as a waste of time: “If you eat white meat, you will still want to have red meat.” He sold his cattle and small stock both at auctions and to private buyers, but the latter were his preference as they paid better prices than buyers at auctions. In both cases, his livestock had to be taken to Plessisplaas. A number of beneficiaries at Skoonheid combined their livestock and hired a truck to take their livestock to Plessisplaas. The costs for this were N\$200 per LSU. Lazarus normally sold cattle every three months or so, sometimes four head at a time or only one head, depending on the circumstances. He never slaughtered cattle for own consumption, but only goats. Cattle were only eaten when they died. At the time of the field visit, he had sold his two bulls as he feared that they might have succumbed to the poor condition of the veld. Once the veld improved, he wanted to raise two more bulls from his own herd. In a drought he usually sold some livestock to buy feed for the remaining animals. In addition he would try to find grazing in the vicinity. Taking his animals to the communal area was not an option.

5.2.6 Diversification

Options for land-based livelihood diversification were limited for beneficiaries in both regions for reasons relating mainly to rainfall. In Omaheke some farmers engaged in small-scale rainfed cultivation, primarily of maize and beans. **Lazarus** is one example. His wife was in charge of planting maize and beans on a piece of land smaller than a football pitch. The whole family provided labour inputs. As they did not have a tractor, they cultivated by hand. The maize was for own consumption and for feeding the goats. Because they did not have a mill for producing maize meal (aka *mielie*-meal), they produced *stampmielies* (samp). If he had more land, they would have enlarged the piece used for cultivation.

Stephanus settled at Grootrooibult in 1997. Although he had a garden in which he grew vegetables, it was only in 2008 that he considered starting to plough. His main reason for not having ploughed earlier was that he lacked appropriate implements to do so. As he and his wife were retired and of advanced age, they were no longer able to plough with donkeys. He approached the Skoonheid project manager with a request to plough his land with the project tractor against payment, but this was not possible. He was hoping to gather three or four beneficiaries interested in ploughing to approach government to provide a tractor and implements for them. In the meantime he had hired beneficiaries from the Skoonheid group resettlement project to clear his field.

Herman who farmed on a portion of Skoonheid also had a small piece of land on which he cultivated maize and beans. Its size was probably smaller than a football pitch. He took his maize to a farmer in the vicinity to be milled into flour. His field did not yield enough for own consumption and feeding his chickens, but it helped. A shortage of labour power prevented him from enlarging the field, but people from the Skoonheid group resettlement project helped him.

In addition to cultivating a small piece of land, **Herman** made tombstones. He referred to this as a hobby that started before he was resettled. After resettlement, the MLR gave him financial support for buying shovels, a wheelbarrow, troughs, cement and steel. There was a good market for his tombstones. When people placed orders, he demanded a deposit before starting the job, and delivered only when the full outstanding amount had been paid.

In Hardap, diversification was limited to very few farms with enough water to irrigate. One such farm was Mara, which was settled on the assumption that beneficiaries would focus on irrigated crop production. This was still happening on a very limited scale, but the main source of income for beneficiaries there was the sale of small stock. The full potential of irrigable land on FURS farms in Hardap has not been exploited in most cases. On Mara, for example, only 2.5 ha are being cultivated by three beneficiaries, and crop production is generally low. A factor that impacted negatively on the marketing of crops was the absence of timely and organised transport arrangements. Quite often when crops were ready for marketing, transport was lacking to get them to the markets.

Crop cultivation at Mara, Hardap.



5.2.7 Skills

Although many FURS beneficiaries were satisfied with their 'fate' on resettlement farms, their agricultural productivity was constrained by several factors. Inadequacy of appropriate skills was a factor mentioned by many beneficiaries. Only a few had basic skills in general farm maintenance, animal husbandry and business management, and many lacked knowledge of appropriate farming practices/methods. **Maria**, a retired widow, was allocated a portion of the farm Danel. She felt that she did not have sufficient skills to farm, and that government should train people like her before settling them. Due to her lack of skills, she was likely to stay where she was rather than develop as a farmer. She arrived with 60 cattle and 14 goats in 2000, and had only a few more at the time of the survey.

Apart from some support provided recently by the Emerging Farmers Support Programme initiated in 2007 to support AALS and FURS beneficiaries, FURS beneficiaries did not receive any post-settlement support from government or any other agency. In Hardap, 75% of the FURS respondents indicated that they had never received any services in support of their agricultural activities. While some knew where to obtain specific agricultural information, many did not. Only three were able to access farming information whenever they needed it. The other eight did not know where to access information. The Ministry of Agriculture and Agra were the most important sources of agricultural information in Omaheke and Hardap.

The issue of post-settlement support will be addressed in the near future in terms of the MLR's *Strategic Plan 2006-2010*, which treats provision of basic infrastructure and empowerment of communities as a separate strategic theme. The plan states that the MLR will provide tailor-made pre- and post-settlement support packages which include technical advice, training and support in appropriate farming methods and agricultural practices (MLR 2007: 11). At the time of writing this report, the MLR was considering proposals to provide infrastructure development grants to FURS beneficiaries.

5.2.8 Finances

Two thirds of the farmers experienced farming-related financial and managerial problems. Most required financial assistance from various quarters (i.e. government and bank loans) to finance their farming activities, but often this assistance was not granted. To **Jeremiah** it seemed impossible to obtain loans to pay for infrastructural improvements. Banks required security such as a house or an investment policy, and since the leasehold agreements with resettlement farmers were not yet in place, they could not use their land as collateral. In fact it appeared that the absence of a leasehold agreement with the MLR was the biggest obstacle facing resettlement beneficiaries. Jeremiah, who did not have a lease, was acutely aware of the importance of a proper lease agreement:

It is only when you have the papers that you have the right to get the other people off the farm. The Ministry only talked about the 99 years agreement, but they have not given me any papers yet. I wanted to keep the place neat and I wanted my children also to farm here one day. We wanted government to give the land to us. If the land was

our own property, we could at least take proper care of it and put in much more. Even if they resettled us correctly, it would have helped a lot. The units must be together in order for us not to move from the one camp across someone else's land to get to your other camp. This is causing conflict and the Ministry knows this, because we have told them so several times in the past.

5.3 Typology of livelihood strategies in relation to land reform

A number of livelihood strategies of FURS beneficiaries are discussed in this section in relation to land reform.

5.3.1 Land-based livelihood strategies

Extensive livestock farming was the single most important land-based livelihood strategy of FURS beneficiaries. Where rainfall permitted, livestock farming was combined with small-scale crop cultivation for own use as well as limited sale.

5.3.1.1 *Accessing land for residence and retirement*

It has been noted in this report that for older beneficiaries in particular, the priority in applying for resettlement was to find a secure home. Pensioners interviewed appreciated the fact that they could live in peace on their plot, receiving a small pension and keeping a few livestock. For **Daniel** and **Rosa**, an elderly couple at Mara in Hardap, the main advantage of being resettled on a government farm was to have a place where they could “*rustig sit*” (sit peacefully). They wanted their own secure place because wherever they had gone before, they had to leave again as it was not their own place. However, they would have liked to be given an official document to secure their rights to the land on which they had now settled.

Stephanus on the farm Grootrooibult in Omaheke did not really want to farm, but his wife persuaded him to apply for land in view of their impending retirement and because she found life in Windhoek too fast. They moved to the farm in 1997 and were very happy there 10 years later. They were still farming, not to ‘get rich’ but only to sustain themselves. Life in town had been too expensive and too noisy, but on their farm it was quiet and peaceful, and they were very grateful for the allocation of this portion of land. Although Stephanus might have qualified for an AALS loan as the owner of the required 150 head of cattle, he preferred to be resettled as he did not have the required deposit for an AALS farm and did not know how he would have serviced the loan as a pensioner.

5.3.1.2 *Small-scale crop cultivation to supplement food supply and income*

Crop cultivation (or ‘cropping’) in both Hardap and Omaheke is very risky due to the high variability in rainfall and low annual rainfall. However, some beneficiaries in Omaheke were ploughing small pieces of land ranging in size from smaller than a soccer pitch to 7 ha.

The most common crops grown were maize and beans. Beneficiaries consumed much of their harvests themselves, and used much of the maize to feed livestock. Depending on the size of land cultivated, surplus was sold at nearby markets, e.g. in the communal areas. A few beneficiaries had gardens in which they grew vegetables such as cabbage, carrots and beans for household use.

5.3.1.3 Crop cultivation to obtain livestock assets

Not a single FURS beneficiary regarded cropping as his/her main livelihood strategy, not even where water was abundant and free of charge as is the case at Mara. The main reason for this is that most resettlement farms did not have enough water to irrigate crops on a large scale. Where there was enough water, the cost of pumping was too high to irrigate.

However, at least two beneficiaries with access to artesian water used cropping to obtain assets including small stock. **Mathew** and **Petrus** arrived at Mara with no livestock. They cultivated small portions of land with artesian water which is cost free. They invested part of the proceeds in small stock. However, intensive gardening was difficult, mainly due to the distance to markets and a lack of appropriate storage facilities. The risk of vegetables rotting was high. In time, small stock became their main agricultural activity. Petrus summed this up succinctly in saying, “*Die tuin het nie geld nie. Goed vrot net.*” (The garden does not have money. The stuff only rots.) Although both Petrus and Mathew continued to cultivate crops, goat farming formed the backbone of their livelihood as it brought in more money than the garden produce.

5.3.1.4 Harvesting of natural resources

With two exceptions, utilisation of natural resources did not play a major role in livelihood strategies. The exceptions were collection of firewood for cooking and droppers for fencing. Firewood appeared to be plentiful on most resettlement farms. In Omaheke, beneficiaries used branches of the yellow wood tree to make fence droppers. This wood is durable and thus an appropriate substitute for the droppers sold commercially. This implied major savings in fence maintenance.

5.3.1.5 Employment of non-beneficiaries

Many FURS beneficiaries employed farm labourers. Part-time beneficiaries who worked in town needed to have someone on the farm to look after livestock while they were away.

The definition of a ‘labourer’ and remuneration for labourers differed from beneficiary to beneficiary. **Lazarus** at Skoonheid, for example, said that he had a San man staying with him. He did not really work for him but only assisted. He did not get a monthly wage as he was part of the family and ate with them. If he needed something, he was given N\$100.

Beneficiaries on the farms around the Skoonheid group resettlement scheme hired piece workers from the scheme when they needed labour, e.g. for fencing jobs. These labourers

were predominantly San people. When the need arose, the beneficiaries would go to the scheme and recruit people at a wage agreed between them. Apart from money, the labourers received basic rations, depending on the duration of the employment. **Maria**, for example, a retired and widowed farmer on a farm adjacent to Skoonheid, had recruited temporary labour there on several occasions, especially for the task of mending the fences of her camps.

Remuneration of farm labourers was generally low. **Matthias** employed one permanent labourer, on a full-time basis, to whom he referred as “my Bushman who I raised”. He was paid N\$300 per month and received rations in addition. He was also allowed to keep his four or five cattle in the camps.

Thirty-two year old **Jakob** was a farm worker on a FURS farm. He had worked on several commercial farms prior to being employed by a beneficiary on the farm Grootrooibult. After four years there he left on the grounds that his remuneration was too low. The beneficiary had paid him N\$200 per month and also gave him mealie-meal, sugar, fat and a little tea, but these did not suffice as rations for a whole month. He stayed there for a long time only because it was difficult to find alternative employment and he had a 10-year-old daughter to look after. Having left Grootrooibult, he went to live with his uncle on the nearby resettlement farm Rosenhof. He helped his uncle because the latter’s eyesight was failing. In return, rather than a monthly wage, he received food and a little money when his uncle sold cattle. Thereafter he worked for a female beneficiary who was a pensioner living in Windhoek. She farmed on a unit next to his uncle’s unit, but could not farm full-time for health reasons. Jakob effectively ran the entire farming operation for her, in return for which he received N\$150 per month and 20 kg of mealie-meal as well as sugar, tea, coffee, rice, macaroni and soup. In addition, as he milked every day, he made sour milk (*omaere*) for his own consumption. He ate meat only when his employer came to the farm from Windhoek. This was enough food for him. Although he worked as a labourer for other beneficiaries, Jakob owned 14 cattle which he kept on a portion of the farm Danel which his brother-in-law and father hired from another beneficiary. The family members (his brother-in-law, his parents and himself) kept a total of 80-90 cattle on that portion. They employed someone else to look after the cattle. Asked why he did not do this, Jakob said that if he looked after them and needed cash, he would sell a calf and hence not make progress. The person looking after the cattle was paid N\$450 per month plus rations. Jakob only sold an animal if he needed money for his child.

5.4 Combinations of land-based and other livelihood strategies

Beneficiaries were combining land-based and other livelihood strategies to survive.

Overall, monthly old-age pensions were the most important source of additional cash for FURS households. These were received on all FURS farms by farmers or their spouses or other family members living in the household (e.g. mother, father or another relative). The pension of N\$370 (2008) assisted in covering the monthly household expenses.



Interview with FURS beneficiaries in Hardap.

Part-time FURS beneficiaries were able to supplement their farming income with income from their off-farm employment, whereas farming was the main source of income for full-time farmers. None of the full-time farmers sampled performed any piece work to generate additional income.

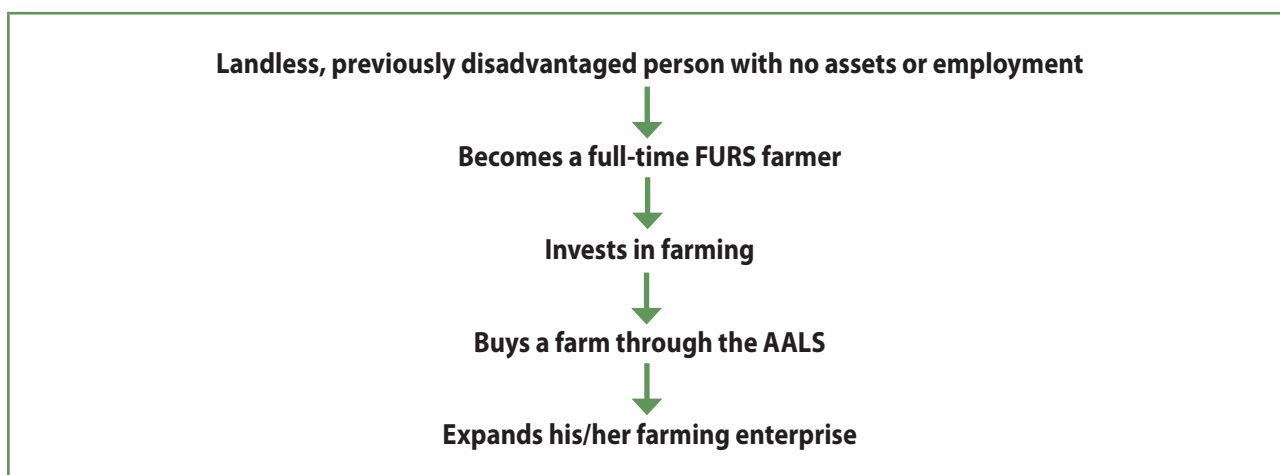
An example of a part-time farmer combining two sources of income was **Matthias** in Omaheke who supplemented his farming income with income from his long-distance taxi business and vice versa. He made money out of farming, but when a mini-bus broke and he had cash from a livestock sale, he would use it to get the mini-bus back on the road. Conversely, if he needed money for his farming operation, during a dry year for example, he made use of income generated by his taxi business. He said that there was no other way to survive. He would not have been able to continue farming cattle without the taxi business and vice versa. His income from farming was simply not enough.

During very dry years, government distributed drought aid to certain target groups. This was also the case in December 2008 when some beneficiaries in Omaheke received drought aid. **Maria** received 25 kg of mielie-meal and two bottles of cooking oil. She never applied for this support. Her understanding was that this aid was for people “*what nie lewe het nie*” (who have no life), i.e. pensioners and people without income.

5.5 Livelihood trajectories

Based on its findings and observations, the research team has formulated a number of livelihood trajectories (pathways) pertaining to FURS farmers. Again, as was stated in the section on AALS trajectories, while the 'ideal' FURS trajectory corresponds closely with policy objectives, it is hardly ever achieved in reality.

5.5.1 The 'ideal' trajectory



The 'ideal' trajectory reflects what amounts to successful poverty alleviation through land reform. It begins with previously disadvantaged Namibians who have no assets, land or employment. They are officially resettled on a group gardening project, which makes it possible for them to cultivate portions of land on their own. With the money earned from cultivation, they are able to purchase livestock and other assets. Those who have followed this trajectory were greatly assisted by their access to artesian water which is abundant and cost free.

This trajectory is best illustrated with reference to 55-year-old **Mathew** who was born in Caprivi and is of Subiya decent. As an ex-combatant, he settled on the farm Mara in Hardap in 1993. In 1975 he went into exile to become a PLAN fighter. After returning to the country in 1989, he spent four years looking for a livelihood. Unable to find any employment, he joined a group farming project on a government farm with a large dam close to Mariental. The project came to an end as the dam dried up. Eventually, at the age of 41 and having applied for settlement, he secured a place at Mara, arriving on the farm at the end of May 1993 with nothing.

Mathew completed Standard 4 (Grade 6) in Katima Mulilo. Apart from military training, he had no further education. Before he was resettled, he attended a few workshops offered by the MLRR on agronomy and livestock farming.

He started gardening on arriving at Mara. He first lived there with a woman who passed away. They were the only two people working in the garden. He grew pumpkins, tomatoes, onions,

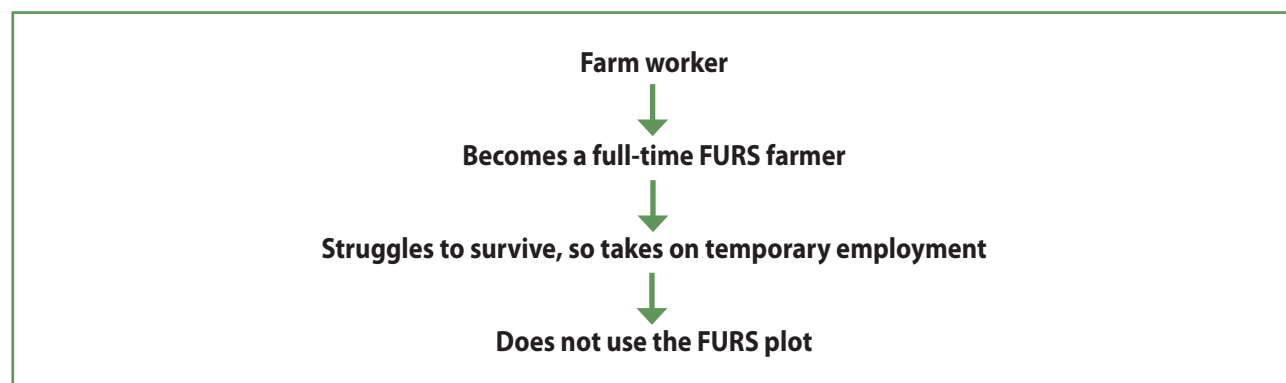
maize and spanspek, and received support from the MLRR in the form of seed and fertiliser. In 1994 the Ministry gave him a Chinese push tractor which he had used ever since. An agronomist hired by the Ministry provided technical advice until the mid 1990s. He had not received any further support from the Ministry. In 1998 he was able to move into the main farmhouse, which was the home of the former owner. In 2004 he remarried, and was living with his wife and her 2-year-old child at the time of the survey.

Until 1997, Mathew received drought food aid. This enabled him to keep all the cash he earned from selling garden produce to buy goats. In 1995/96 he bought 63 goats in one go with the proceeds from the garden. When the drought aid stopped, it became more difficult to cover costs. Despite this, his goat herd grew steadily. In 2007 he had about 400 goats and made most of his money from goat farming. He sold his goats mostly to commercial farmers, who sometimes came to him, or otherwise he went to them. To keep the goats in good condition, he bought supplementary feed such as lucerne and yellow maize in Mariental or Maltahöhe.

Markets for garden produce remained a problem. He sold his produce mainly on the streets of Mariental and in the township there. He mentioned that the competition was tough. In the early years the MLRR provided a lorry to take produce to markets in Windhoek and Mariental. When that service came to an end, he used his bicycle to go to Maltahöhe from time to time. He was able to buy his first used car in 2001, and in 2005 he bought another used car.

The fact that water at Mara was plentiful and cost free undoubtedly helped Mathew to build a successful small-scale farming enterprise. Although the yield of the artesian well varies with rainfall, he experienced water problems only once in 1996/97. No pumps were needed to obtain water from the well which ran for 24 hours a day. The well had sufficient pressure to push the water to other households up to 3 km away.

5.5.2 The 'reversing' trajectory



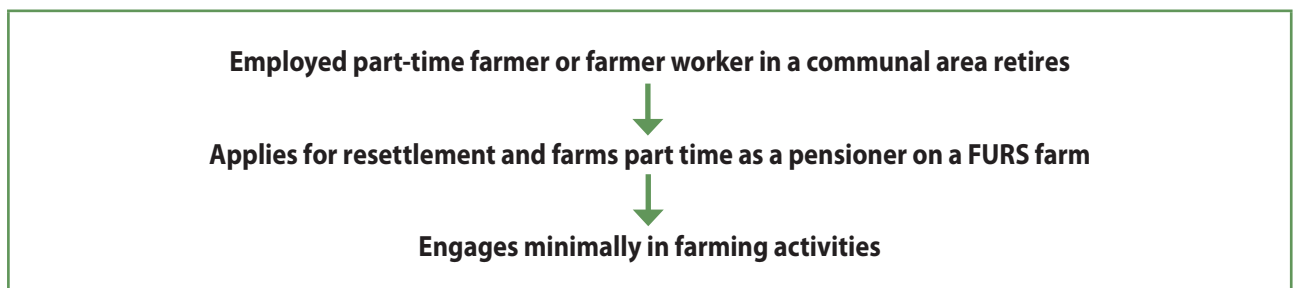
The 'reversing' trajectory starts with a farm worker applying for full-time resettlement. The second stage involves the beneficiary struggling to survive as a resettlement farmer, often because he/she has too few livestock to make a living from, or he/she receives too little technical and financial support. As a result, the beneficiary has to find other means to survive, such as temporary construction work in town, or piece work on a neighbouring

farm. Consequently, the land allocated to the beneficiary is underutilised or lies idle. There is always the wish to return to the land again one day if enough money is generated through temporary employment in order to buy livestock, but this is really a ‘distant dream’ as the beneficiary is unable to generate enough money to return.

The case of **Frederick** exemplifies the ‘reversing’ trajectory. Aged 53 at the time of the survey, Frederick had settled on the farm Jakkalsdraai in Hardap in 1994. Before that he was a farm worker on a commercial farm in the region. The farm owner died and his son took over, but he and Frederick did not get along, so Frederick decided to look for another place. He heard about Jakkalsdraai when he went to the MLR office in Mariental, and was advised to apply for resettlement there as it was the only farm available for resettlement in Hardap at that time. Three to four months later the Ministry informed him that his application for resettlement was successful and he moved to the farm immediately with his 54 goats.

When he arrived at Jakkalsdraai, the Ministry showed him the two camps it had allocated to him, amounting to 445 ha. Thirteen years later, Frederick did not have a single goat left. Many of them died due to drought. In 2002 his wife took ill and he had to look after her in Mariental. On returning to the farm, he found that the rest of his goats had been stolen. Since then he had lived in Mariental where he worked as a casual builder and gardener. On occasion he went back to Jakkalsdraai to see how things were going there. He still wished to return to the farm permanently, but first needed to earn enough money to buy goats. His two camps were unoccupied and no one was using them. He did not tell the Ministry that he was not living on the farm, fearing that the camps would be taken away from him.

5.5.3 The ‘pensioner’ trajectory

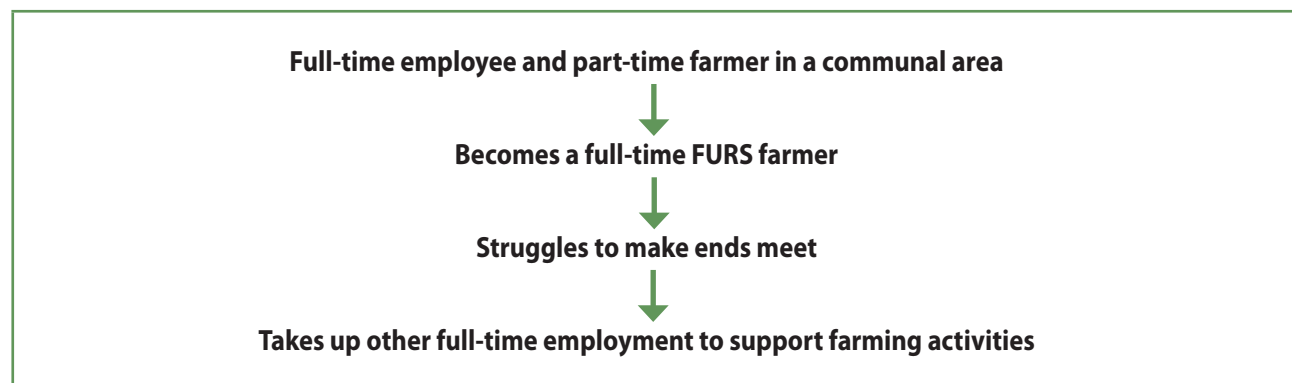


The ‘pensioner’ trajectory starts with an employed part-time farmer or a farm worker on communal land nearing retirement age. The second and third stages involve the person applying to become a resettlement farmer, and then farming part time as a pensioner, but with minimal engagement in farming activities due to not having sufficient capital to expand these activities.

The case of **Jeremiah** exemplifies the ‘pensioner’ trajectory. Aged 64 at the time of the survey, Jeremiah was born in Aroab in today’s Karas Region where he worked for most of his life for the postal service. In 2007 he lived in Mariental as a pensioner, and had been farming at Jakkalsdraai on a part-time basis since 1996. He had waited three months for the MLR in Mariental to approve his application.

Previously a part-time farmer in a communal area 25 km from Jakkalsdraai, Jeremiah felt frustrated with the conditions there: “It is difficult to make progress as a communal farmer where your animals are mixed with others. They get lost or stolen if you don’t keep them fenced in.” He felt positive about resettlement: “I have waited a long time for this to happen. I am an old man now and I am glad to have place for myself.” The Ministry allocated to him a piece of land of 1000 ha where he kept his 145 goats and sheep and 25 cattle. He used part of his monthly pension to support his farming activities. He sold livestock only when the need arose, for example to assist his child who was training to become a builder. While he lived in Mariental, members of his family stayed at Jakkalsdraai to look after his livestock.

5.5.4 The ‘changing pathways’ trajectory



The ‘changing pathways’ trajectory starts with a person in full-time employment who also farms part time in a communal area. The person applies for land on a resettlement farm, is granted land and quits full-time employment to become a full-time resettlement farmer. Due to a lack of farming support and financial security, the person finds it difficult to farm profitably and thus takes up other full-time employment to support the farming activities.

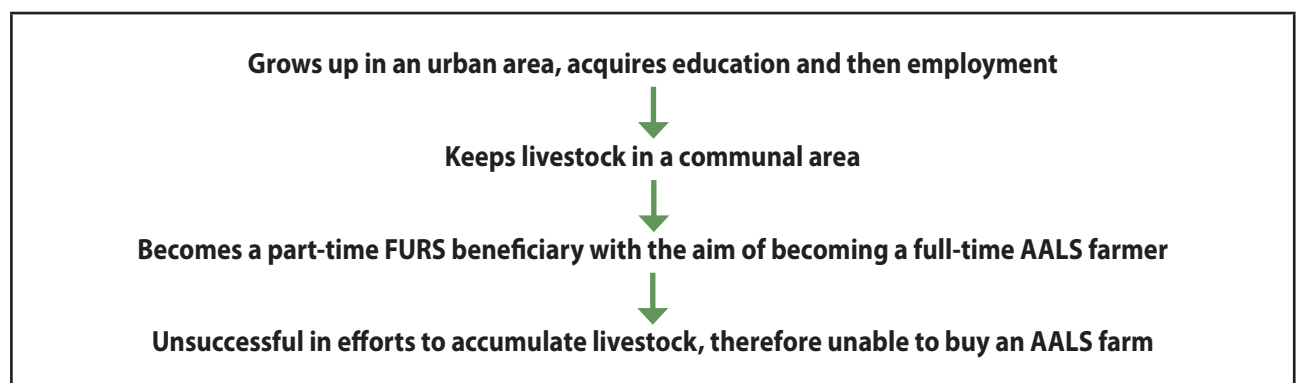
Angelina’s case exemplifies the ‘changing pathways’ trajectory. She was born in Windhoek in 1966. After completing high school in Windhoek in 1986, she worked as a junior teacher in a town in today’s Otjozondjupa Region. She then returned to Windhoek to study nursing and received her diploma in Nursing Science in 1991. For five years thereafter she worked in Windhoek and Okahandja at three hospitals, state and private. She then obtained a degree in Psychology at the University of Namibia. In 1999, working for various public health organisations, she enrolled for part-time study in Industrial Psychology. After graduating in 2005, she worked as a nurse in the UK for several years and then returned to Windhoek.

Angelina grew up with her grandmother’s sister, a family of “Herero farmers who had that dual life of farming and living in town”. While working, she put aside some money to purchase cattle, usually from her own family, which she kept on communal land in the Rietfontein area in Omaheke. She had found it difficult to acquire communal land on which to keep her cattle. In 1999, a few months before her grandmother passed away, Angelina read that the MLRR was granting land to people through the process of resettlement, and this triggered her interest because “you can do nothing without land”. For her, as for virtually every other resettlement beneficiary, land is associated with hope. To apply, she needed

a letter of motivation and a stock book, which she had. She also supplied a letter from her mother's sister's husband stating that the water shortage at Rietfontein rendered the supply insufficient for watering the 85 cattle that Angelina was grazing there at the time. She applied in late 1999 for resettlement at Grootrooibult, and in May 2000 the Ministry phoned to notify her that her application had been approved.

Angelina was allocated a land unit of 1 400 ha, of which 30% was bush-encroached. The infrastructure was in poor condition when she arrived; the borehole and drinking trough were broken and the water tank was leaking. Workers who had worked on her grandmother's farm assisted her with repairs. On her first visits to the farm, Angelina slept in her car as there was no house on her premises. After receiving what she called "a 99-year lease agreement" from the government, she decided to build her own house. Financially, she struggled to make ends meet. The problems started while she was in the UK. Her son, who was asked to look after the farm during her absence, allegedly stole nearly 120 cattle and sold the heifers and young bulls. In addition he spent N\$24 000 on personal items rather than on buying cattle, for which purpose Angelina had sent the money. As if that were not enough, after returning to the farm she injured her hand and was forced her to use most of her savings to cover the medical costs as she did not have insurance. After recovering from this injury, she had to look for a job in town again. Although keen to debush her land to provide more grazing for her cattle, the process was expensive and she feared that the cost may derail her plans to save money for purchasing a bigger farm through the AALS. Her hopes for the future were to farm commercially and perhaps one day to have registered stud animals. She planned to keep working in town for at least another five years until she had enough money to either debush her present farm or purchase a bigger one. Until then, she did not see herself being able to live on farming alone.

5.5.5 The 'blocked accumulation' trajectory



The 'blocked accumulation' trajectory applies to beneficiaries who grew up in urban areas, completed their education at whatever level, and then found employment or established their own business. With their income they bought livestock which relatives in a communal area looked after. Some also hired land for their livestock in a commercial farming area. They then applied for resettlement or were settled on government land bought for drought relief in the early 1990s. Some of them hired people to run their urban business so that they could farm full time. Before long, their livestock numbers exceeded the carrying capacity

of the allocated unit, but the numbers did not suffice for buying a farm under the AALS. At the same time, they did not make enough money from farming and had to supplement their farming income with income from other employment or their business. In effect, therefore, resettlement land posed a barrier to expansion with no viable exit strategy.

The case of **Matthias** exemplifies the ‘blocked accumulation’ trajectory. He was born in Windhoek in 1956 and went to school there. Having completed his schooling, he worked for 10 years for the predecessor of Agra. He then joined another employer, but soon thereafter, in 1985, he decided to invest in a vehicle to work full time as a taxi driver in Windhoek. He expanded his business in 1995 when he bought a mini-bus to travel between Gobabis and Windhoek. Later he bought another mini-bus, and drove both of them himself until retiring from driving in 2003. He still owned the business but had recruited drivers to drive for him.

In 1975, at the age of 19, he started buying cattle, one at a time. He took them to Epukiro where his mother and brother looked after them. In 1989 he had 38 cattle which he transferred from Epukiro to land hired from a white commercial farmer in the Witvlei area. His applications for resettlement in 1990 and 1991 were unsuccessful. Then, this being a time of drought, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development bought some farms in Omaheke for drought relief purposes, Rosenhof being one. Matthias applied for permission to take his cattle to Rosenhof, and was permitted to use two camps there for three years. He went there in 1992 and was still farming in the same camps in 2008. He arrived there with 46 cattle. In 2008, though down to only 6 cattle, he had 90 head of small stock. These numbers exceeded the land’s carrying capacity, with the result that some of the animals were grazing in the road reserve. He had applied at least 10 times for proper resettlement but thus far had not been successful. All this forced him to reduce his livestock numbers.

5.6 Evaluating outcomes

It has been stated in this report that the current model for resettlement is one of small-scale commercial farming. However, the planning criteria for implementation are not entirely clear. One guideline has been the minimum annual income required to remain above the poverty datum line. Allocated units were expected to yield incomes as high as but preferably higher than the poverty datum. As rough gross margin calculations have demonstrated, under optimal conditions, beneficiaries should be able to generate higher revenues than the poverty datum from recommended minimum farm sizes. However, as reliable income data was difficult to obtain in this survey, it was not possible to assess the extent to which beneficiaries in the Hardap and Omaheke samples were able to produce at optimum levels.

The gross margin calculations have also revealed that the recommended minimum farm sizes for northern and southern regions were inherently unequal. Beneficiaries in the south should be able to generate much higher incomes from their 3 000 ha allocations than beneficiaries in the north with 1 000 ha allocations. The findings of this study bear this out: those in Hardap do indeed appear to have generated higher incomes from farming than their counterparts in Omaheke.

It is impossible to provide a simple answer to the question of whether or not the current resettlement model is succeeding in improving livelihoods. Resettlement has impacted in different ways on the material aspects of livelihood, i.e. the economic and social aspects. Beneficiaries were differentiated not only in terms of their assets, but also in terms of their expectations. As discussed above, this survey found several categories of beneficiaries on resettlement land. On the one hand, there were part-time and full-time farmers, who had very different opportunities for financing agricultural production and infrastructure development on their land. On the other hand, there were beneficiaries who had opted for resettlement primarily because they needed a secure place to stay, i.e. a permanent home of their own, and not because they wanted to become successful farmers. Among the latter were retired people and people who were no longer able to work. The beneficiary age profile as presented in this report suggests that most beneficiaries were middle-aged or had reached retirement age. The absence of young beneficiaries raises the question of whether younger generations were actually applying for resettlement or whether their applications were simply unsuccessful.

Their differing motivations for and expectations of resettlement imply that beneficiaries assessed their resettlement experiences on several levels, reflecting the multi-layered nature of livelihoods. This has produced a much more differentiated and nuanced picture of the successes and failures of land redistribution than has public opinion with its focus exclusively on economic considerations. Against this background, it is perfectly understandable that the majority of beneficiaries were generally very happy to have been resettled, notwithstanding the severe problems that many experienced with regard to farming. A more differentiated assessment is more helpful in advancing the objectives of land reform in so far as it enables decision-makers to acquire a better understanding of what is working for beneficiaries and what is not working. It broadens a narrow economic and financial assessment to include non-economic issues that matter to the beneficiaries.

Maria's assessment of her resettlement experience illustrates this point very well. Her expectation of being able to develop her livestock farming operation did not materialise. She had hoped to sell milk to the neighbouring school and to grow vegetables. Contrary to her expectations, the grazing was plentiful but of poor quality, her livestock were dying from unknown causes and the soil for vegetable gardening was poor. In her own words, "We are not living in luxury; we live from hand to mouth." But, despite these disappointments and stock losses, she had never regretted being resettled. In the communal area where she lived before, people stole her livestock as it sometimes wandered up to 10 km away from her home, whereas on her own land she had fenced camps for her livestock.

Close to two thirds or 63% of all respondents in the study expressed satisfaction with having been resettled. This number corresponded to roughly two thirds who said that their standard of living had improved since being resettled. A common explanation for this satisfaction was that they had their own land and could take their own decisions. For many, access to their own piece of land represented empowerment and freedom to do as they pleased, as one beneficiary put it. There was a widespread perception that owning land enabled people to work for themselves instead of making someone else rich.

Their own land enabled some to improve their standard of living by means of accumulating livestock. To some extent this was possible because they were able to reduce stock loss by exercising better control over their livestock, which was not possible on communal land. As one respondent put it, “With the current farm, I know which livestock is mine. Livestock is also better protected against theft than on communal land.”

However, over one third of the respondents were not satisfied with their current situation. This number corresponded to the roughly one third who claimed that their standard of living had not improved at all. The main cause of their dissatisfaction was infrastructural deficiencies which impacted negatively on their farming activities. The sharing of water points and the lack of internal camps were major causes of dissatisfaction. With regard to water, the issue was not so much availability but rather proper management of water points and ways to minimise the costs of supply.

Some respondents also identified a shortage of land as a factor holding them back. This was a major issue for those who had opted for resettlement primarily to get out of the communal areas in order to advance their agricultural productivity. Land size was not an issue for those whose primary motivation was not agricultural production.

Land size is a multifaceted issue, and how best to address it depends on the objectives of land redistribution. In discussing whether the sizes of the allocated units sufficed, the first question arising is whether the recommended minimum farm sizes for the small-scale commercial farming model were *viable*, i.e. whether the allocated land was large enough to enable the farmers to become independent small-scale commercial producers. The answer appears to be that the sizes were *not viable*. The rough gross margin calculations presented in section 2.6 of this report suggest that revenues generated on these farm units under the best possible conditions are not large enough to sustain a family and leave surplus cash for infrastructure maintenance, replacement and investment.

Apart from land size, many respondents stated that the grazing on their land was of poor quality. This problem appears to have been more widespread in Omaheke than in Hardap. An example of a farmer facing this problem was **Lazarus** whose expectations of building himself up at Skoonheid in Omaheke did not materialise. His allocation was too small and the grazing was of poor quality. If he did not provide lick all year round, the condition of his livestock deteriorated. His cows did not produce enough milk to support their calves and also provide milk for the household. While grass was plentiful, its nutritional value was low. Lazarus did not see himself being able to move forward on this piece of land.

The second question that arises with regard to land size and the current resettlement model is whether the sizes allocated allow for the beneficiaries to become full-scale commercial farmers if they so wish. This question is important in that an increasing number of people view the resettlement model as a means to progress from small-scale communal farming through small-scale commercial farming (on a resettlement farm) to large-scale commercial farming. Formally speaking, the threshold between small-scale commercial farming and large-scale commercial farming is 150 LSU: people with more livestock than that cannot

be accommodated by the National Resettlement Programme and rather have to apply for an AALS loan to buy a farm. For the linear progression model to work, resettlement should enable farmers to accumulate livestock to a level exceeding the 150 LSU threshold so that they can qualify for an AALS loan for buying a large commercial farm.

In reality, this cannot happen. In the first place, the recommended minimum farm size in Omaheke, i.e. 1 000 ha, makes it impossible to keep more than 70 LSU given a carrying capacity of 15 ha per LSU. This is less than half of the 150 LSU required for an AALS loan. Livestock owners with herd sizes ranging from 70 to 150 LSU are thus not catered for in the National Resettlement Programme.

Moreover, the model's rigidity holds back resettlement beneficiaries who have succeeded in accumulating livestock. Some resettlement farmers, including some part-time farmers, have managed to gradually but steadily increase their herd sizes due to successful investment in their farming operations, but the relatively small land allocations prevent any further accumulation and thus effectively place a ceiling on their progress as farmers.

An example of a farmer in this position was **Matthias** at Rosenhof in Omaheke, who combined farming with a transport business. His land allocation was too small to accommodate his growing livestock numbers, and in effect, resettlement prevented any further accumulation and even forced him to downsize. Although his livestock numbers far exceeded his camps' carrying capacity, they amounted to only about two thirds of the 150 LSU required for an AALS loan. He thought that a farm of 3 km² would be appropriate for him; it would enable him to keep rather than sell his cattle continuously (*"kort kort"*). His current allocation made further accumulation impossible and thus would keep him at the same level as a farmer.

Regardless of size limitations, **Solomon**, a part-time resettlement farmer in Hardap, viewed his resettlement as his first step towards large-scale commercial farming. Born in 1966, he grew up in a farming environment. He obtained technical diplomas in electrical engineering, and worked for a large mine for several years and since 1995 for the Ministry of Works. His love of farming motivated him to invest a lot of money in his resettlement farm. His ambition was to become the owner of a large-scale commercial farm, and he was confident that by 2011/12 he would be able to buy a large farm. He aimed to have at least 1 000 small stock and 100 large stock by that time. Although this amount was far too high for his allocated portion of 1 200 ha, he intended to negotiate with his neighbour to graze some of his livestock on the latter's portion against a small payment. Solomon was aware that this would be against the law, but he believed it was unjust that he wanted to expand while his neighbour, who was alone on his portion with only 80 goats on 4 camps, had spare grazing capacity.

At the other end of the spectrum were beneficiaries with less livestock than they had when they started farming on resettlement land. Much of the land occupied by this category of beneficiary was underutilised. Apart from drought, cash-flow problems contributed to a situation where they had to sell livestock, and even breeding stock, to generate income. This suggests that they did not have cash reserves to cover day-to-day living expenses and

operational costs on the farm. This implies that any new costs incurred, such as repairs to water installations, were covered by the sale of their only means of production. Unless they receive cash injections in the form of grants or cheap credit, beneficiaries in this category are likely to grow poorer and their farm infrastructure will gradually decay.

Despite the various constraints on the more enterprising beneficiary, productivity on most resettlement farms could be enhanced if beneficiaries are given appropriate support. The almost complete absence of post-settlement support gave rise to dissatisfaction. Most of the respondents said that they needed training in several areas of production, such as financial management, general farm management and herd management. In addition they needed agricultural extension services. No such support measures were in place. While advice could be obtained from agricultural input retailers in urban centres, access to them depended on access to transport. Many beneficiaries who faced continual cash-flow problems expressed the view that if government gave them access to loans and other assistance, they would be better placed to improve their livelihood. In the absence of any meaningful farming and financial support, they found it extremely difficult to farm sustainably.

A number of beneficiaries who were generally satisfied with their situation commented critically on the ongoing absence of proper leasehold agreements. In some cases this had reduced their control over the land on which they farmed, particularly against outsiders and government.

These factors contributed to what this study has found to be a low level of productivity per hectare. From this finding it can be concluded that household incomes on average are far lower than what was possible on the allocated lands. By no means does this imply that most beneficiaries lacked knowledge of livestock farming. This study has confirmed that most had previous farming experience on communal land and/or commercial farms, as farmers or farm workers. However, resettlement farms pose their own challenges, at least in the short term. These being located on freehold land, the expectation is that beneficiaries will farm commercially, but this is not necessarily achievable. Unlike AALS farms which broadly replicate and reproduce existing commercial farming operations and practices, resettlement farms are a 'hybrid' farm model straddling the commercial and communal models. This model has communal features where water points are shared and where communal grazing results from the absence of internal fences separating allocations. Where there are internal fences, resettlement farmers can exercise much better control over their livestock, which increases their chances of breeding livestock for sale and succeeding as commercial farmers.

Against this background, it appears necessary, firstly, to review the minimum sizes of farm units allocated under the National Resettlement Programme, and secondly, to provide post-settlement support urgently to help ensure that beneficiaries utilise their land fully. It appears that cash-flow problems constitute the single biggest constraint on their ability not only to maintain existing infrastructure, but also to invest in the acquisition of productive assets such as livestock. A proper leasehold agreement, registered in the Deeds Office, should be the foundation on which these support measures are implemented.

6 GROUP RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES

Officially, the MLR runs 14 group resettlement schemes across the country. Half of them are located in communal areas and the other half in the commercial or freehold sector. Three, namely Drimiopsis, Skoonheid and Donkerbos/Sonneblom, are in Omaheke Region and two, Westfalen and Bernafey, are in Hardap Region (Meliczek 2008: 11). As opposed to other farms where large groups of people have been settled, group resettlement projects of the MLR are defined in terms of specific official membership and by the fact that some have project co-ordinators appointed by the MLR. At the time of field visit, Drimiopsis and Skoonheid had project co-ordinators while Bernafey and Westfalen did not. (Donkerbos/Sonneblom is outside the study area.) Where co-ordinators have been appointed, their responsibilities are limited to the resettlement projects; they have little knowledge and no mandates with regard to individual beneficiaries who may have been settled in the camps of a farm accommodating an official group resettlement project. An example of such a farm is Skoonheid where nine individual beneficiaries are farming independently of the group resettlement project on land allocated to individuals.

6.1 Characteristics of beneficiaries

6.1.1 Social categories of beneficiaries

A marked difference between the group resettlement schemes in Omaheke and Hardap is their ethnic composition. Beneficiaries on the Drimiopsis and Skoonheid schemes in Omaheke are almost exclusively of San origin, while the ethnic origins of those on Westfalen and Bernafey are diverse, i.e. Nama, Damara, Owambo, Kavango and Caprivian. This is due mainly to the fact that Omaheke has a relatively large San population.

The 1200 ha Westfalen resettlement scheme was started in 1997. Most of its beneficiaries hail from the north-central regions of Namibia. Seven of the official beneficiaries indicated that they were settled there after their applications for resettlement proved successful. One person stated that he lived on the farm without the MLR's permission but then applied to be resettled and was permitted to stay there.

The 3730 ha Bernafey scheme was also started in 1997. When the MLR bought the farm, the farm workers there were allowed to stay and continue cultivating the existing gardens.

In 2002, however, when the Ministry invited applications for resettlement, some of these farm workers were not aware of the advertisements and didn't apply, with the result that they became unofficial or illegal occupants of the farm. By the end of the advertising and selection process, a total of 11 beneficiaries were officially resettled on Bernafey.

For the Drimiopsis and Skoonheid schemes, there was no official selection of settlers. The first beneficiaries ended up on one or the other scheme because they were located closest to the settlers' former places of work and residence. An assessment of group resettlement schemes in 2000 found the following:

[Beneficiaries] simply found themselves in so-called "co-operative" projects, and were instructed by government officials to work collectively on certain activities. Rather than moving towards self-reliance and independence, nearly all beneficiaries exhibit[ed] attitudes of dependency towards the projects (Werner and Vigne 2000: 30).

These schemes were "mainly social welfare projects providing free accommodation, food and other transfers, which show(ed) few signs of being resettlement projects as commonly understood" (Werner and Vigne 2000: 32).

Group resettlement in Omaheke started as a result of an increasing number of farm workers, primarily San, losing their jobs on commercial farms around the time of Independence. Without employment or a home, they squatted in road reserves. **Karolina** described the initial stages of the Drimiopsis scheme. According to her, at Independence there were many San people squatting in the road reserve close to Drimiopsis. It was decided that they could not carry on living like that and the resettlement scheme was established. Government gathered people and gave them food. When the rains came, government provided tents. When the soldiers who were stationed at Drimiopsis left after Independence, the small San community was told to go there and start working in the garden to obtain something to live on.

Ongoing government support to group resettlement schemes, particularly Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, has probably contributed to the fact that none of these schemes has recorded a significant dropout rate. On the contrary, many have attracted outsiders, i.e. illegal settlers, who live in informal settlements on the schemes (Meliczek, 2008: 10).

The number of official beneficiary households at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid in 2008 was 63 and 73 respectively. At Bernafey and Westfalen in Hardap there were 11 and 7 official households. The numbers of male and female household heads were more or less equal in both regions.

The average age of the beneficiaries in Hardap differed markedly to the average in Omaheke. Close to 90% of the beneficiaries at both Bernafey and Westfalen were 20-59 years of age, whereas at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, only 34% and 57% were in this age group. This regional disparity is partially attributable to the fact that the Omaheke schemes offered older and/or retired farm workers the only option for permanent settlement after they

lost their employment. The fact that Drimiopsis was established at Independence may explain why it had the highest number of pensioners: a larger proportion of beneficiaries who settled there in 1990 had reached retirement age by 2008. Table 22 summarises the age situation on the schemes sampled.

Table 22: Age distribution of group resettlement scheme beneficiaries

Age	Drimiopsis	Skoonheid	Hardap
20-59 years	34%	57%	90%
60 years and older	65%	43%	9%

The vast majority of the settlers at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid are the descendants of San generational workers on commercial and communal farms. Many of these settlers either lost or gave up their employment in the early 1990s and had nowhere to go. Being the children of generational farm workers, they had no communal area to return to, but they were fundamentally rural people who wanted to remain so. Others on these two farms decided to retire there. Table 23 shows that only 11% of the beneficiaries at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid were not involved in agricultural work prior to resettlement.

Table 23: Work experience of group scheme beneficiaries prior to resettlement in Omaheke

	Drimiopsis	Skoonheid	Total
Farming or other work related to farming	46%	81%	62%
Work not related to farming	17%	5%	11%
Unemployed or retired	38%	14%	27%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 24 reflects the beneficiaries' employment status prior to resettlement, and shows some significant differences between the schemes. At the time of settling at Drimiopsis in the early 1990s, 69% of the settlers were either unemployed or retired. At the Skoonheid scheme, which was established a little later than Drimiopsis, the corresponding figure was 40%. In Hardap, by contrast, over 90% of those sampled were in full-time or part-time employment at the time of settling. This difference may be ascribed to the fact that most beneficiaries of group resettlement schemes in Hardap had to apply for resettlement.

Table 24: Primary occupation of group scheme beneficiaries at the time of resettlement

	Drimiopsis	Skoonheid	Hardap
Full-time employed	4%	25%	25%
Part-time employed	13%	10%	-
Full-time farmer	13%	25%	67%
Unemployed	39%	30%	8%
Retired	30%	10%	-
Total	99.8%	100%	100%

The high percentage of beneficiaries who were either retired, unemployed or in temporary employment at the time of resettlement suggests that Drimiopsis and Skoonheid provided an opportunity for settlement and sustenance. Indeed, most of them had no other place to settle after leaving their employment on commercial farms in Omaheke.

Low levels of education further limited the options of beneficiaries in Omaheke, who attained markedly lower levels than those in Hardap. As Table 25 indicates, 61% and 71% of the beneficiaries at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid had no formal education, compared to only 14% in Hardap. The numbers of beneficiaries at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid who had completed primary school were more or less the same at 5%, but lower than the 14% in Hardap.

Table 25: Education levels of group resettlement scheme beneficiaries

	Drimiopsis	Skoonheid	Hardap
No formal education	61%	71%	14%
Some primary schooling	26%	19%	36%
Primary school completed	4%	5%	14%
Some secondary schooling	4%	0%	29%
Secondary school completed	4%	0%	7%
Tertiary education completed	0%	5%	-
Total	100 %	100%	100%

Even though one fifth to one quarter of the beneficiaries in Omaheke had acquired some primary education, for many this was too little and too long ago to have retained literacy and numeracy skills. Many respondents were unable to state their age, partly due to an inability to count. An example is **Karolina**, who was born on a farm close to Skoonheid and Drimiopsis, and schooled for only one year. She knew the first two letters of the English alphabet, and was able to count to 30. She could not write anything but her name, and did not know her age.

The low levels of education are undoubtedly connected to the fact that the majority of these beneficiaries were born and bred on commercial farms, which limited their access to schools. Moreover, until the Gquina Primary School was established in Omaheke in the 1990s, mother-tongue education for speakers of San languages was unavailable. Where beneficiaries did have access to schools, their parents were too poor to pay school fees and therefore had to withdraw their children.

The life histories of many beneficiaries illustrate these difficulties, an example being the history of **John**. Born on a commercial farm in 1957, he had never been to school and could not read or write. He started to work on the farm, looking after cattle, at a very young age. He spent his entire working life on the same farm and left with his wife when the owner died in 2004. The latter's son took over, and asked John to stay on, but John wanted to rest for a while as he had worked continuously for many years. After leaving the farm, the couple heard that government was helping people like them. They decided to go to Drimiopsis, where they had stayed on a few occasions in the past, to find out what they could do there, and settled there permanently.

William was born in Kalkfeld in 1930. He started his working life as a worker on a bridge construction site in Omaheke. Thereafter he worked on four different commercial farms and finally on a government research farm in Omaheke. He did general farm work such as repairing fences, making cut lines, tending to livestock and pumping water. Although he did not have a driver's license, his tasks on the research farm included driving workers



Beneficiaries at Bernafey.



A beneficiary household at Bernafey.



Beneficiary at Skoonheid with a valuable asset.

out to their workplaces on the farm and driving to Gobabis. After 21 years of service, he retired. As he was not allowed to continue living on the research farm, he went to look for a place to stay, ended up at Drimiopsis in 1992 and applied to be settled there permanently. The response was that there was no space for him, but he was advised to stay there until he could be accommodated at Skoonheid. Then he was told that Skoonheid was also full, but that the MLR would find a place for him.

He stayed on at Drimiopsis but settled on the eastern side of the main road, away from the group land. He established a small garden to sustain himself and kept livestock. When he needed other food, he used his donkey-cart to buy it at nearby commercial farms. He also used the cart to visit his daughter who worked at a research station in the area. In 2005, the Deputy Director of Resettlement instructed him to move his home and garden to the western side of the project. No reasons were given, and William suspected that a *witvoet*¹⁹ had talked to the Deputy Director about the move. He and 11 other families who were moved with him were not allowed to work in the communal garden as this was only for project members, therefore William established a new small garden near his house.

¹⁹ According to Suzman (1995: 17f), *witvoet* is a common term in farm worker discourse, and it refers to a worker who seeks to win the favour of a farm owner through 'betraying' fellow workers. Winning the *baas's* favour usually had tangible benefits for workers.

William did not really want to farm at Drimiopsis; he just wanted a place to stay and rest. He cultivated his small garden mainly for the purpose of keeping himself busy. All the livestock that he brought to Drimiopsis was stolen. Despite this loss, he hoped for support in the form of 5-10 head of cattle or goats to see where this would take him. He received a combined monthly pension (government and general) of N\$800 which he said was too little.

Alfred was born in 1949 on a commercial farm in Gobabis District where his parents, both of Nama origin, were employed as farm workers. He attended school for about two years in Gobabis, but left because his parents moved to another farm which made going to school impossible. For most of his life he worked in the construction business in and around Gobabis, making bricks. In the 1960s he helped the “Basters” to build Gobabis’ “Coloured” township, Nossobville. But then, work opportunities became scarce and the costs of living too high in the town, so he and his wife decided to offer their services to farmers in the district, whereafter Alfred mainly maintained fences and built kraals.

Alfred quickly learnt from white farmers how to work with livestock. This notwithstanding, permanent farm work was difficult to find, therefore Alfred and his family moved from farm to farm in search of work. He had worked on “too many farms to recall”. He worked on one farm in Gobabis District for about five years until 1991 when he lost his leg in a confrontation with a warthog. This forced him to leave his work and home on the farm. The only place where he could stay free of charge was Drimiopsis. After a short stay there, he was settled at Skoonheid in 1993, more or less the time when the resettlement project there was started. He and has lived there ever since. Alfred recalled that the then Prime Minister of Namibia, Dr Hage Geingob, had visited Drimiopsis to inform the resettlement community that the government had bought a farm at Skoonheid for anyone interested in settling there. Those interested were asked to put their names on a list, and the government would send a truck to move them together with their belongings to their new home. Alfred opted to be resettled at Skoonheid because Drimiopsis was overcrowded and the crime rate was high there.

Kxao, a Ju|’hoansi San man, was born on a commercial farm approximately 20 km west of Skoonheid. He never learnt to read and write. His Namibian identity document states that he was born in 1959, which means that he was not yet eligible for an old-age pension. Unlike many other farm workers in the region, Kxao had never moved around a lot. He had worked for most of his life on a commercial farm approximately 15 km north of Skoonheid. After the owner passed away and his son-in-law inherited the farm, Kxao and his wife left in search of another place to stay.

He heard that government had purchased Skoonheid for the purpose of resettling mainly San. On arriving there, he asked the previous project co-ordinator whether they could stay. The answer was affirmative and they were given a house. Kxao had two sons. One of them lived and worked on the farm where Kxao had worked. He visited Kxao quite regularly at Skoonheid, but Kxao has not seen him for a long time. His other son worked for Herero farmers in the communal area near Otjinene in Omaheke. Kxao’s daughter had passed away several years earlier on another farm in the region after drinking a lethal brew of brandy apparently mixed with poison.

Determining beneficiaries' marital status proved difficult as many of those interviewed defined marriage in a formal way, i.e. as formally sanctioned by a church, but it is very common in the applicable communities for men and women to live and have children together without religious or legal sanction. Also it is fairly common for women to bear children from several fathers and raise them on their own.

6.1.2 Motivation for resettlement

It was noted above that most of the official beneficiaries at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid found themselves on these two schemes because there was no alternative for settlement. They did not apply to be resettled. Many hoped that resettlement would give them a secure place to stay and an opportunity to produce a little food to sustain themselves. As Table 26 shows, only one third of the beneficiaries at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid cited farming as their main motivation for joining these schemes. Most of the others joined because they needed a place to stay after retiring or had nowhere else to go after losing their agricultural job on a commercial or communal farm. The latter category included people who had felt that they were too sick to continue working in the agricultural sector.

Table 26: Group scheme beneficiaries' reasons for resettling

	Drimiopsis	Skoonheid	Hardap
Reasons related to farming	27%	38%	58%
Reasons related to socio-economic hardship	73%	62%	42%
Total	100%	100%	100%

In Omaheke, the majority of the sample stated that they opted for resettlement due to their socio-economic circumstances rather than a desire to farm. These circumstances were primarily related to their vulnerability as farm workers. The right of farm workers to stay on a farm is usually tied to their employment status. Once they lose their employment, they lose not only a source of income but also their residential rights.

In Hardap, several people opted for resettlement due to socio-economic circumstances, including unemployment, the loss of parents, and having been born on the farm that became a group resettlement scheme. However, a much larger percentage of people in the sample opted for resettlement for reasons related to agricultural production and their own place to stay.

It is reasonable to state on the basis of the interviews that for almost all beneficiaries, a secure place to live and work was the primary reason for opting for resettlement. San beneficiaries in particular did not have a communal area that they could call their own, to which they might have retreated after losing their employment. Their homes were the commercial farms. However, residential rights on those farms were conditional on employment. As soon as a worker stopped working on account of ill health or having reached retirement age, for example, he was asked to leave the farm and faced an uncertain future. In some cases, retirement or near-retirement coincided with physical and health problems resulting from farm labour, and in invariably these workers were asked to leave the farm.

Typical of this category of beneficiaries was **Lukas** who settled at Drimiopsis in 1996 when he was 62 years old. He was born in 1934 in Omabalantu in what is now Omusati Region in the north, and never went to school. He said that his parents had not treated their children well. His 'education' was to look after goats and cattle. He was recruited as a contract worker at a young age and spent his entire working life working on commercial farms. His main tasks as a farm worker were looking after livestock, which included fencing and animal health tasks. One of his tasks was to collect cattle in the veld on horseback. After injuring his back, he found it increasingly difficult to perform his duties, and his employer suggested that he should leave the farm if was no longer able to do farm work. He had heard that government was accommodating people at Drimiopsis. He talked to the then headmaster of the school on the farm, Kilus Nguvauva (who later became the Regional Councillor for the constituency in which Drimiopsis falls and thereafter Deputy Minister of Fisheries), about settling there. Mr Nguvauva gave him permission to look for a place for himself on the farm, and Lukas stayed on there, but he settled on the eastern side of the main road, away from the group project, hoping that he would be resettled elsewhere sometime, which he believed would enable him to "go forward".

Benjamin's life journey was very similar to that of Lukas. He was born in 1932, never went to school, and spent his working life moving from one commercial farm to another, the last being in the district of Maltahöhe in the south. The owner first sold his livestock and then the whole farm to move to South Africa, leaving Benjamin without employment. Due to illness, Benjamin was no longer able to do hard physical work. His arms, legs and whole body ached. When he heard that government had obtained Drimiopsis and that people he knew were going to settle there, he decided to do the same. In 1991, at the age of 59, he stopped work and went to Drimiopsis where he stayed for two years and then took up the offer of resettlement at Skoonheid. He anticipated that their lives would improve at Skoonheid, and that government would help them to achieve this improvement so that they wouldn't have to struggle to achieve it. But he was also aware that he would have to do some work and not just rely on government support. All went well initially when he and the other beneficiaries received food from the communal garden as well as government food rations under the Food for Work Programme, but when the latter was terminated in 1998, the struggle to survive began again.

Group resettlement in Omaheke gave some people an opportunity to retire to resettlement farms before reaching official retirement age. Some stated that they opted for resettlement because they had worked long and hard enough for somebody else and needed to slow down. They sought a place on a group resettlement scheme in order to obtain a secure and permanent place of residence. Many expected government to assist them to improve their lives considering that they had worked so hard on commercial farms.

The case of **Karolina** and her family exemplifies this point. She was born on a commercial farm close to Drimiopsis, but does not remember when. On that farm she met her husband who was a farm worker. She accompanied him when he worked on various commercial farms in the area. The last job he had before settling at Drimiopsis was piece work on a farm neighbouring the one where they had met. Although he had not yet reached pensionable

age, they decided that he had worked enough, and moved to Drimiopsis, then still a military camp, where Karolina worked for the farm owner. They settled there permanently because they had stopped working for a wage and saw that government was helping people to stay in one place so that they could start working for themselves. Having worked very hard for other people, she and her husband wanted to settle at Drimiopsis where they could work for themselves instead. Apart from a donkey-cart and two horses, they had nothing when they arrived there. Her husband earned a little money from piece work which helped them to buy food. They expected to progress, but this expectation did not materialise; they still had nothing in 2008.

Philip was born in 1937 on a commercial farm. He had never been to school and could not read or write. He started to work at age 15, and stayed with one employer for 36 years (1952-1989). He did general farm work such as working with livestock, erecting and mending fences, repairing windmills and watering trees in the garden. He left the farm because he was single and wanted to be with his cousins at Drimiopsis, but also because the farm owner's offensive manner made him and the other workers feel vulnerable. He stated that if the workers did not work according to the owner's expectations, he chased them away, frequently without paying them for the work done to date. On hearing that government was taking over Drimiopsis, he decided to leave his job and go there. He said it was a good decision as government provided monthly food rations to the people there and they did not have to struggle at all, at least in the beginning. In 1997 this support stopped and Drimiopsis saw a decline, particularly in the yields of the communal garden.

For the former farm workers who were able to accumulate some livestock while working on commercial farms, losing their employment meant, apart from anything else, having no grazing for their livestock. They needed some land, albeit a very small piece, and the only option was to try to find it on one of the group resettlement schemes.

The group resettlement schemes also assisted a small group of non-San people in similar situations. **Lukas** went from former Owamboland to Omaheke as a contract worker and married a local woman with whom he established a family. Omaheke gradually became his home. He had accumulated livestock while working on farms, which made it difficult to move back to the north. Due to the Veterinary Cordon Fence, he would have had to sell his animals before moving back and he did not want to struggle to acquire livestock again, therefore he settled at Drimiopsis.

6.1.3 Settlers' relationships with pre-settlement homes

Due to the vast majority of the Drimiopsis and Skoonheid beneficiaries being generational workers, they had no ties to communal areas. Their homes had always been the commercial farms where their parents and even grandparents were born and in some cases buried. Many beneficiaries at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid still had relatives working on commercial farms. The older people, some of whom were pensioners, had children working on farms. Many younger people who settled at Drimiopsis or Skoonheid as children no longer had any known relatives on farms.

Albertina settled with her parents at Skoonheid when she was about eight years old. She no longer had any contact with the farm where she was born as she had lived at Skoonheid too long. She did not know whether she still had relatives in the Hochfeld area. She never visited her relatives in other areas because they were too far away, but occasionally they visited her. When they came, they stayed for what she considered a long time – two weeks.

Where they still existed, links between resettlement schemes and commercial farms served as a safety net for farm workers. When they lost their jobs, family or friends at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid gave them a place to stay. The Skoonheid project manager could not control the inflow of settlers as the official settlers would not refuse family members a place to stay.

Likewise, relatives working on commercial and communal farms were a source of support for group resettlement beneficiaries in times of hardship. Working family members provided financial and other support, albeit limited, from time to time, especially when it was needed.

Maintaining relationships with the commercial farms where beneficiaries were born and where they had worked was not always easy, particularly, it seems, where a younger member of the owner's family had inherited the farm. They restricted visits to relatives on the farm out of fear that the visitors would stay. Farmers tended to be even more harsh with visitors whom they knew came from a group resettlement scheme; they often chased them back.

Karolina's experience illustrates this point. Her father and sister were still working on the farm of her birth not far from Drimiopsis, and when she "longed for them", she went there. However, after the owner died and his son took over, visiting became a problem. The son, a part-time farmer living in Gobabis, did not like her to visit her father and sister. Not only was she born on his farm, but her grandfather, mother and cousin were buried there, as he well knew. She had helped to raise him, and he knew her entire background, yet she had to obtain his permission to visit his farm. If he was on the farm, she had to contact him to tell him that she wanted to visit, and only went if allowed. "This is very discouraging," she said. "He knows me and I am a woman. I am not doing anything; I am only visiting my father and he knows it well. I have raised him. Then he asks me what I am looking for when he is there. This is not nice."

Usiel visited family members on commercial farms from time to time, but not for long. He confirmed that farm owners had problems with people visiting their relatives. The owner of the farm where his son worked did not permit him to visit his son, and even prevented his son from visiting him at Drimiopsis. On the few occasions when Usiel had visited the farm, his son had been reprimanded and threatened with dismissal.

Gabriel, a 23-year-old settler at Skoonheid, confirmed that it was not easy to visit relatives on a commercial farm. He said that farmers gave permission to visit for no more than two weeks. If he wanted to stay longer, the farmer required him to work on the farm.

Elfrieda at Skoonheid only visited her daughter on the neighbouring farm. She had lost contact with her sisters, aunts, uncles and grandmother who all lived on another farm in Omaheke,

which was too far away to visit as she did not have transport. She could hitchhike, but feared getting lost as she no longer remembered the farm's exact location. She visited her sister in Gobabis whenever she had money to hitchhike.

Alfons, born in Kavango Region, had been employed as a contract worker on a commercial farm in Omaheke. After being resettled at Skoonheid in 2000, he lost touch with most of his relatives and acquaintances. Only his sister visited him occasionally. His children visited relatives in Kavango, but he and his wife did not have enough money even to hitch a ride to Kavango. Maintaining contact with his relatives was more difficult from Skoonheid than from the farm where he had worked. As a contract worker, he had money as well as regular holidays which made it possible to travel to the north every December.

While some beneficiaries visited their relatives on commercial farms, others preferred their relatives to visit them. **Clemens** felt strongly that his wife's relatives who lived in town had to visit them at Skoonheid so that they could see how they were living there. If they liked Skoonheid, they might decide to stay as they were struggling in town.

6.1.4 Settlers' social relations and networks

The most important social relationships at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid are those between family members. Family ties have played an important role in facilitating access to the group resettlement schemes without formally applying for a place. The project co-ordinator at Skoonheid stated that he could not chase newcomers away as official beneficiaries saw it as their right to accommodate family members. This view was supported by the perception that the entire Skoonheid farm was for San people only. Family members have been an important source of assistance in times of need, such as when there is a shortage of food or of labour for cultivating gardens.

Elfrieda, an unmarried woman with five children, settled at Skoonheid because she lost her employment on a commercial farm. She had two years of schooling, and did not know her age. She had spent her whole life with her father working on commercial farms. Circa 2000, the farm owner wrongly accused her father of stealing small stock, which in fact had been eaten by lynxes, so her father left the farm with her and went to the neighbouring communal area of Epukiro. Having no work in Epukiro, she decided to join her family at Skoonheid. Her sister, grandfather and his daughter and son-in-law were the first members of her family to settle at Skoonheid, soon after the farm was bought for resettlement. Later her father also settled there.

Elfrieda arrived at Skoonheid with two children and bore another three there. Although she and the father of the latter three no longer lived together and he had married another woman at the farm where he was working, he still provided support for the three children. After they separated, Elfrieda moved to her father's house at Skoonheid. Then, when her grandfather fell ill (one month prior to the field visit), she moved to his house to be his caretaker. Believing that he may die, he informed her that he had bequeathed his house to his son who was working in the communal area, and asked her to stay in the house in the

son's absence. She felt certain that she would be able to share the house with the son, should he return, as she did not have a house of her own. Still, her tenure in the house was tenuous. She had never applied officially for resettlement, but her family ties had made it possible for her to stay at Skoonheid. She legitimised her presence there by working in the communal garden.

She stated that after eight years at Skoonheid, she still had no friends but only family, and it was the latter to whom she would turn for help with any major problem or need. If they were unable to help, she would turn to the father of her three youngest children.

Family members helped each other with agricultural activities and provided food for each other if possible. Without access to family labour, cultivation became difficult.

Gabriel at Skoonheid stated that people who are not related do not help each other with their dryland cultivation. His harvest in the 2007/08 season was very low because his father-in-law was away working on a commercial farm and his wife was visiting him there at the time when Gabriel needed their labour in the garden.

6.2 Production systems and output types / 'productivity'

The production systems on group resettlement schemes in Namibia have generally consisted of communal cultivation and limited livestock farming, and in some cases small backyard gardens. However, there was a regional difference in the origins of these systems at the schemes studied: Westfalen and Bernafey in Hardap were established around the existing irrigated cultivation of citrus, maize and vegetables, whereas the communal gardens at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid in Omaheke were established by the MLR after the farms had been purchased for resettlement.

Due to the haste with which group resettlement schemes were established after Independence, little planning went into the process. In terms of policy, the basic concept underlying the group resettlement approach was that beneficiaries would engage in dryland crop farming for own consumption, in combination with other small income-generating activities to "make them self-sufficient in the long term" (MLR 1996: 19). Skoonheid was the only farm with a group resettlement scheme for which a proper in-depth assessment of the "broad agricultural potential" was carried out by the MLRR, in 1994. The two neighbouring farms, Rosenhof and Rusplaas, were included in that assessment (Huesken et al 1994).

The assessment consisted of a soil and vegetation survey, compilation of data on rainfall and evaporation, and an inventory of boreholes and internal and external fences. Water availability was also assessed by measuring the yields of most of the boreholes. On the basis of the information obtained, a land evaluation was carried out, which found that rainfed maize production could not provide a secure basis for a production scheme. The major constraint was rainfall, with crop failures predicted in "at least 2-3 years out of 4"

(ibid.: 11). Pearl millet production (*mahangu*) was considered a better option, but even millet “[could] only perform moderately under the given circumstances ... [providing] the household with grains on a subsistence level” (ibid.). Rainfed crop production was therefore “not recommended as the major land use for the farms” (ibid.).

Limited irrigation was said to be possible under proper management on the loamy soils of the lower-lying areas and in the depressions, provided that the water supply was adequate. Consequently, the assessment recommended that “the resettlement process on the farms will have to be based on extensive grazing with irrigated crop production as an additional land use on subsistence level” (ibid.: 13-14). The economic carrying capacity of the three farms was set at 1 LSU per 10 ha, but the assessment recommended keeping stocking rates to the ecological carrying capacity of 1:15 (ibid.: 10).

The assessment made no recommendations on the use of these resources, nor on how many beneficiaries the farms could sustain. It did not develop detailed enterprise gross margins or farm budgets, nor did it set target incomes for beneficiaries (Werner and Vigne 2000: 36), thus the numbers of settlers on group resettlement schemes have not been determined on the basis of income needs or the income-generating potential of scheme activities (ibid.: 40).

6.2.1 Cultivation

The Skoonheid group resettlement scheme has a 2 ha irrigated communal garden in which beneficiaries are able to produce vegetables throughout the year. At the time of the study, 80% of the garden produce was used for own consumption, and the other 20% was sold, with the proceeds deposited in the scheme’s account. The MLR was responsible for the garden’s operational and maintenance costs, e.g. the costs of fencing, supplying diesel, and repairing machines and boreholes.

Only about 30 beneficiaries were working in the communal garden. It was said that no young people worked in the garden, but only the elderly.

Contrary to the recommendations of the assessment carried out by the MLR in 1994, rainfed cultivation was practised on a small scale. The project had approximately 20 ha for rainfed cultivation, and each official beneficiary household had access to a small portion of this land for producing vegetables for own use. The size of the field allocated to each household was determined by the household’s ability to cultivate it, i.e. by the amount of labour available to the household. The MLR was responsible for providing seed, a tractor to plough the field, and tractor maintenance services. Beneficiaries wanting to make use of the tractor had to pay for the fuel. This was regarded as one way to steer beneficiaries away from dependency on the Ministry for “handouts”.

In Hardap, the Bernafey and Westfalen schemes had established irrigated citrus plantations and infrastructure to produce horticultural products. Water was pumped with electric pumps and the MLR financed the power. Access to artesian water on the Bernafey irrigation scheme made horticulture possible there.

Expenses for the group scheme farmers in Hardap varied significantly. Bernafey's greatest expense was the transportation and marketing of the citrus and other crops. The farmers at Westfalen made use of a government vehicle to transport their produce to Windhoek's informal market. Westfalen received seed, fertiliser and herbicide from government-appointed consultants who visited the project regularly. Bernafey received only some vegetable seed and fewer visits from the government-appointed consultants. The types of seed provided to Bernafey varied with no consideration of planting dates and the needs of the market.

On both schemes in Hardap, labour was the main (perpetual) expense, with family labour used for horticultural production. Additional family labour was used at harvesting times and remunerated in cash or in kind. Wages were paid from the group bank account until the account was exhausted. Monthly wages ranged from N\$300 to N\$500, depending on the beneficiary's labour input. This did not compare favourably with the minimum agricultural wage of N\$429 per month paid to farm workers. Water and electricity were mostly free of charge as electricity was paid by government.

There were no records and thus no data on the amounts of crops sold by the projects as a whole and/or individual families in both Hardap and Omaheke.



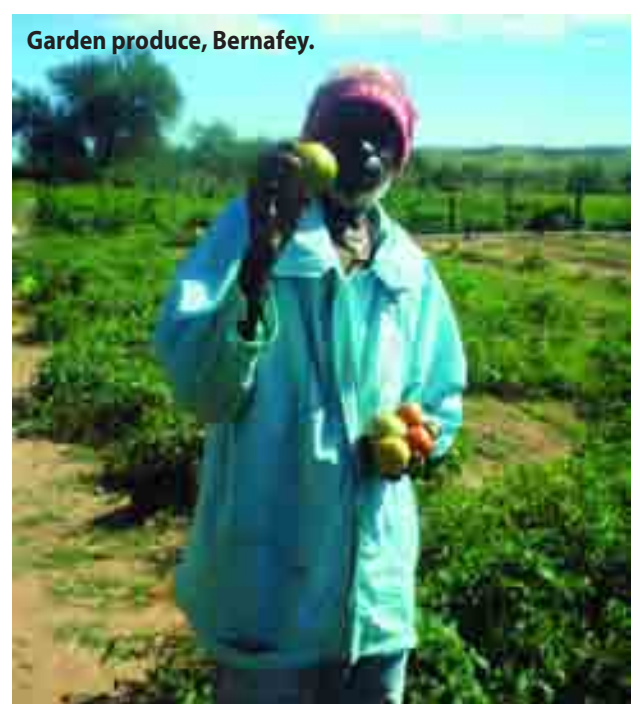
Backyard garden, Drimiopsis.



Individual gardens, Drimiopsis.



Communal gardening, Bernafey.



Garden produce, Bernafey.

At Drimiopsis in Omaheke, two communal gardens of about 3 ha each were irrigated with borehole water. In addition, about 3 km from the centre of the scheme, 55 ha were cleared in 2001 for dryland maize cultivation. However, this land had not been ploughed in recent years. The reason for this was said to be waning interest due to the long distance between the field and the beneficiaries' homes: it was too far a distance to walk every day, and also it facilitated theft from both the field and their homes. Beneficiaries also complained that they did not have any food while out cultivating the field. When they started cultivating it, they were still receiving food under the Food for Work Programme. When the programme ended, they stopped cultivating the field, but continued cultivating the two communal gardens closer to home. Many households also had a small backyard garden at home.

Until 2002, Cuban agricultural advisers supported communal gardening on the group resettlement schemes in Omaheke and Hardap, and elsewhere in Namibia. From 2002 until 2007 when the Livelihoods Support Programme (LISUP) started, group resettlement beneficiaries did not receive any agricultural advice. The MLR provided seed and fertiliser during that period, and made a tractor available, but did not provide diesel or tractor parts such as tyres.

In 2007, the two communal gardens at Drimiopsis were subdivided into individual plots. These were very small, measuring 45 m x 12 m or about 540 m². This initiative originated in the LISUP which was implemented at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid by the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) in association with a Spanish NGO. The LISUP supported beneficiaries with agricultural inputs, technical advice and transport to market produce in Gobabis. The produce was for sale, but what was not sold was consumed.

Beneficiaries were encouraged to produce for the market and not only for own consumption. To facilitate good sales, they were encouraged to be aware of what types of crops were in demand. Certain crops were always in demand, but some, such as potatoes and tomatoes, were costly to produce whereas others, such as onions, carrots and beetroot, were not. Due to their high costs, no fertilisers and insecticides were used, which sometimes resulted in produce of lesser quality. In Omaheke, maize and beans were produced mainly for own consumption.

Occasionally, the Skoonheid project was able to sell some of its produce at a farmers' market in Windhoek. Attempts were made to enter into contracts with shops and vegetable outlets to supply produce on a regular basis, but the beneficiaries found it difficult to deliver. Problems experienced with the irregular water supply, for example, meant that an agreement concluded in 2006 with a catering enterprise in Gobabis to buy fresh produce from the Skoonheid garden came to nothing, and deliveries remained irregular. Sometimes the beneficiaries sold their produce next to the road between Gobabis and Otjinene.

Needless to say, transport was essential to market produce whenever it became available. This was mostly provided by government, and the Spanish Co-operation also assisted. In 2008 a government car shuttled between Gobabis and Skoonheid several times a week. Whenever transport was needed for getting produce to the market, the project co-ordinator

phoned the MLR in Gobabis to send a car. The Ministry also sent someone out to the project every weekend to deal with emergencies, mostly of a medical nature. It was alleged that the driver of the MLR vehicle was transporting shop supplies from Gobabis to Skoonheid for the small *cuca* shop which his girlfriend ran on the project.

In addition to providing Skoonheid and Drimiopsis with seed, the Spanish Co-operation assisted beneficiaries with transporting crops to Windhoek where they could be sold at higher prices. The idea behind this was to concentrate not only on the local market, but also on the Windhoek and other markets as demand and prices might be higher there. Whether this strategy is sustainable in the long run remains to be seen. Unless beneficiaries can utilise the support provided by the Spanish Co-operation to accumulate enough capital to obtain their own transport, they will be not be able to continue supplying distant markets after the Spanish project has come to an end due to a lack of transport opportunities.

The model of communal gardens on group resettlement schemes originated in the MLR. For a few years these communal gardens were referred to as “co-operative farming” in the annual reports and other documents of the MLR, but a review of these co-operative projects in 2000 revealed that they bore no resemblance to co-operatives as defined by the Namibian Co-operatives Act (Werner and Vigne 2000).

In terms of this cultivation model, the entire community was expected to work in the communal garden. For as long as beneficiaries received regular food rations from the Food for Work Programme, most participated in communal gardening. Food rations were introduced at the inception of these gardens to support those involved in developing them. They needed food rations to sustain themselves until the first harvests came in. However, the food aid was stopped in 1998, and interest in communal gardening waned at that point, thus it appears that the waning of interest was a direct result of the food aid stoppage. At the time of the field visit, the Skoonheid project co-ordinator estimated that no more than 30 beneficiaries, mostly elderly people, were working in the garden. The youth were said to be disinterested in the garden as they had no incentive to cultivate.

Communal gardening was controversial in all group resettlement schemes and gave rise to a lot of dissatisfaction among beneficiaries. Disputes over the distribution of proceeds from cultivation were very common. Such disputes arose when people who refused to work in the communal garden claimed a share of the harvest. Many people stopped to work in the communal gardens as a result.

Elfrieda, for example, stopped working in mid 2008 because of the constant quarrels and disputes. This decision meant that she received no more food from the communal garden. She sustained herself and her three children from her own small piece of land where she grew maize, beans and watermelon during the rainy season. If the rains were good, she harvested enough for her family for several months. She was able to conserve her harvest as her children's father was employed and provided food for the family every week. When those provisions were depleted, she turned to her own harvest. This system yielded two meals per day for each child and herself.

Bernadine at Drimiopsis stated that people there did not co-operate in the garden. Some were lazy and did not work. Others went only when they saw that she was going, and stayed home when she did. Yet, everybody received food from the garden, which she did not think was a good thing. General dissatisfaction with communal gardens had given rise to the idea that each beneficiary household should have its own small garden, and Bernadine was confident that this approach would improve the situation.

An issue related to disputes over the distribution of produce from the communal garden was that those who worked in the garden did not know what happened to the money generated from the sale of the produce. All group resettlement schemes were expected to divide their harvests into a portion for own consumption and another for sale. The money generated through the sales would then be deposited in a bank account to be used for the purchase of diesel fuel or other items needed by the scheme.

At Skoonheid the intention was to distribute 40% of the harvest to those who worked in the garden for their own consumption, and to sell the remainder. Part of the revenue received from sales, i.e. 40%, was meant to be used for the maintenance of project infrastructure, and the remaining 60% paid into a bank account held by the community. In reality, however, 80% of the harvest was consumed by the project households. A Resettlement Development Committee sub-committee on health, education, water and agriculture decided how much of the harvest to sell. The MLR provided transport to get produce to the market in Gobabis.

The project bank account was kept in Gobabis and was managed by four project members. At the time of the research, the amount in the account was N\$5 519. The project co-ordinator kept the savings book, but was not authorised to withdraw from the account. The banked money was used to repair garden infrastructure, e.g. engines and pumps, and to buy diesel when government supplies ran out. Individual beneficiaries did not receive any cash payouts, which posed problems. The first was that many people could not understand why they did not receive any payment for their hard work. Secondly, because they received no payment, the beneficiaries were chronically short of money, and were unable to accumulate capital from their gardening work to use for increasing output or investing in livestock. The result was that many beneficiaries stopped working in the communal garden.

Against this background, the option of food for work must be evaluated. The ups and downs of communal gardening in Omaheke were directly linked to the provision of food for work. Initially, the prospect of receiving food rations from government every three months was the major incentive to work in the communal garden, and food rations were conditional on people working in the communal garden. When food rations stopped in 1998, willingness to work in the communal garden dwindled. Many beneficiaries at Drimiopsis were said to have left the project to find work on commercial farms instead.

Alfons, a non-San beneficiary at Skoonheid, put the link between the lack of cash and the necessity of food aid into perspective. He said that food aid is necessary to get people to work well, the reason being that while their crops are growing, they have nothing to eat. Also he said that people at Skoonheid still needed food aid after so many years because

they never learnt to save. They should have saved some of their income right from the start when government still provided food aid. Instead, they had wasted their income. Since his arrival in 2000, the older people who started the project had not had any cash, and he had also not managed to save any. He said that the communal garden was a good idea in the beginning, but now people needed to be trained to save.

The evidence from Skoonheid and Drimiopsis suggests that the communal gardening model does not enable beneficiaries to accumulate sufficient capital to sustain themselves and become independent producers. All the money circulated in these communities came from pension and itinerant work, and this did not suffice to break the dependency on government for basic inputs.

The beneficiaries' troubles with communal gardening coalesced around a desire to have their own plots. For **Alfons**, the way to break dependency on government was to give beneficiaries their own plot. He was convinced that had he been given a plot of his own, he would have been fine. He would have had to buy his own inputs and not wait for government.

As mentioned above, the LISUP took the initiative of giving beneficiaries their own small gardens, thereby clearly addressing a major issue in these projects. The extent of MLR support for this idea is unclear, but there is no doubt that it proved very popular among the beneficiaries. **Karolina** at Drimiopsis said that when people received their own small plot, they started to cultivate again, and this new approach was a good one. She sold beetroot from her garden, and at the time of the field visit was awaiting the cash from her sales. A government car had transported the produce to Gobabis. Apart from beetroot, she grew carrots, pumpkin, watermelon and spanspek.

Rudolf at Drimiopsis also received his own small garden plot in 2008. He considered this a very good solution to the garden-related problems, and observed that many more people cultivated land when they knew that it was their own land. This new approach would also put a stop to complaints about not knowing what happened to the money generated from the communal garden. As the owner of his garden, he would be able to keep all the money that he could earn from cultivation and do with it what he considered necessary, such as buying goats again.

However, a possible downside of the individualisation of garden plots was identified by **Alfons**. Individualisation and the end of the communal garden could impact negatively on the provision of some basic services to the community, such as water. Individuals who did not have cash to contribute to the purchase of diesel would suffer the most. The community garden at least provided some money for purchasing diesel to pump water for the benefit of the entire community.

The individualisation of garden plots (re)introduced co-operation among the beneficiaries at Skoonheid and Drimiopsis. One form of co-operation is mobilisation of family labour to tend the plots. **Karolina** co-operated with five family members, being the daughters of her mother's aunt and her father's uncle's son. Each of these family members had their own

garden and planted for themselves, but they pooled labour to help each other. When the time came for weeding, they weeded all their plots. If one of them was away from the farm at weeding time, the others weeded and watered the absent person's garden. After selling produce, each member of the team gave the other members a small share of the proceeds. Contrary to their experience with the communal garden, there were no quarrels among them.

The same principles were applied for dryland cropping. **Elfrieda** had her own piece of land for cultivation and obtained seed from the government. When short of seed, she obtained some from the father of her children. She was able to carry out all the tasks associated with cultivation by means of pooled family labour, her team consisting of her sister, her grown-up children and the father of her younger children. The team composition was always the same. They used the government tractor to plough their land if they were able to pay for the diesel; the MLR only provided fuel for ploughing the communal garden.

Not all beneficiaries were blessed with enough labour to cultivate their small rain-fed plots, as the story of 23-year-old **Gabriel** illustrates. In 2005 he obtained a small parcel of land of about 0.5 ha for dryland cultivation. It was allocated to him by the Skoonheid Resettlement Development Committee rather than the MLR because he was unemployed. He hoped that this land would improve his livelihood, but instead found himself in a 'poverty trap': he lacked money to buy seed, and the only solution was to do piece work and use his earnings to buy seed, but this meant neglecting his garden which reduced his output.

In 2007/08 he had one of the lowest yields of all the dryland farmers on the project. He harvested only one 50 kg bag of maize and two bags of beans which did not suffice even to feed himself and his child, let alone sell. His explanation for this sorry state of affairs was that he did not have enough seed and his land was too small, but he also faced two other major constraints: a shortage of household and family labour; and the need to go out and work to obtain cash to buy basic foodstuffs and other items while his crops were growing.

During the early part of 2008 when labour was required to weed his maize, Gabriel left Skoonheid to do piece work on a commercial farm. He knew that his absence would impact negatively on his harvest, but he had no choice as there was no food left in his house. He returned to find that most of his maize had been burnt by weeds and his beans had dried up. In addition, goats and cattle had eaten some of his crops. His mother had helped a bit, but could not devote all her time to his land as she also helped his father. His wife had left to visit her father on a commercial farm. The latter fed his wife while she visited him and also gave her some food to take back to Skoonheid. Apart from his close family members, nobody on the project was prepared to help him: "People do not help each other on the farm."

For some beneficiaries, a lack of water limited vegetable production. **John**, for example, had a small garden at a cattle post at Drimiopsis. He planted maize, pumpkin, spanspek and carrots, using borehole water pumped with a diesel engine. But he struggled to contribute cash for buying the diesel. He could water his crops only if the farmers using the borehole had diesel and the reservoir was full. At the time of the field visit, his carrots had dried up and he had to replant. He had to buy all his seed which he considered to be expensive. His

idea was to grow crops and sell them for a living, but was not progressing at all towards that goal due to the water supply problems. In fact, life on a commercial farm was better for him.

Through the MAWF, government provided draught animals and ploughing training for the beneficiaries at Skoonheid. The animals were intended to serve the entire community, but instead were allocated to only some members. This was not because they were any more powerful or well connected than others, but rather, the animals went to those who did not have the cash needed to buy diesel for running the government tractor. LISUP provided seed but no fertiliser.

The MLR continues to provide regular budgetary support to official group resettlement schemes. This is meant to be spent on clearing land, preparing land for crop production, irrigating crops, drilling boreholes, purchasing fencing materials and building houses. The Ministry has not set a cutoff date for providing this support (Meliczek 2008: 11). Individual resettlement beneficiaries and settlers on unofficial group farms do not receive this post-settlement support.

6.2.2 Livestock

Generally, individual ownership of livestock on group resettlement schemes in both regions was low. Normally, beneficiaries accumulated small numbers of livestock while working on commercial farms. Many had to sell these after losing their employment and had no means to sustain themselves. Others were able to build on their accumulated livestock, albeit very modestly.

At Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, 5 of the 24 and 11 of the 21 respondents owned livestock. At Drimiopsis, 2 of the 5 livestock owners owned 90% of all the livestock, and the other 3 each had 10 or fewer head. At Skoonheid, 1 livestock owner owned nearly 60% of all the livestock, and the other 10 had 10 or fewer head of each species, i.e. goats, sheep and cattle. At both schemes, those with the highest numbers of livestock had all three of these types, cattle being the main type. Omaheke is generally not suitable for sheep and goats, whereas cattle fare better and even thrive there.

At Skoonheid, **Benjamin** bought 3 goats with his pension money. These increased to 6 but then decreased to 2 in 2008. One reason for this loss was the presence of a poisonous plant at Skoonheid referred to as *slangkop* (snake head). Benjamin said that most people there had lost their few head of small stock to this plant. Skoonheid was said to be suitable for cattle and sheep, but not for goats.

Alfons had virtually the same experience as Benjamin at Skoonheid. He started to work on a commercial farm in the mid 1980s at the age of 23. When the owner sold the farm to government in December 1998, he gave Alfons 2 goats. In his capacity as government's caretaker of the farm, Alfons worked in the established garden for his own benefit. With the revenues generated from selling his produce, he bought another 8 goats. When he settled at Skoonheid in 2000, he had 36 goats, including a few donated by the MAWF. At the time of

the field visit, he had 28. He ascribed the decrease to Skoonheid not being suitable for goat farming; goats simply died there. In 2007 he sold goats only once, and slaughtered 3 for own consumption. In the following year, he had not sold any goats by September, but had slaughtered 2 for own consumption.

Four livestock owners at Drimiopsis and five at Skoonheid sold livestock, thus 56% of the livestock owners in the sample sold from their herds. They sold most of their livestock (75%) to private buyers, and three made use of auctions as well. Livestock was sold for various reasons, in the following order of priority: to buy food, to help relatives, to cover medical costs, to buy more livestock, to buy household goods, to cover education costs, to make a profit, to buy fuel and farm implements, and to cover travel costs.

As Table 27 shows, on the group schemes in Omaheke in 2008/09, cattle numbers increased whereas goat and sheep numbers decreased.

Table 27: Total livestock numbers at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, 2008/09

	Cattle	Goats	Sheep
February 2008	255	133	71
February 2009	272	117	62

Livestock sales in the same period fetched an approximate total of N\$31 000, and the estimated total value of the livestock slaughtered for own consumption is N\$14 500. Only owners of bigger herds slaughtered for own consumption, i.e. two owners of cattle and sheep, and three goat owners. All livestock owners suffered stock losses, and the effects of these were most severe for those with smaller numbers. Livestock expenses were not covered in the survey of group schemes because the beneficiaries were not able to provide information on direct allocable costs per livestock type.

The purchase of livestock indicates that the beneficiaries had managed to save funds and were keen either to start farming with livestock or to enlarge their existing herd/s. Many found it extremely difficult to save funds, **Alfons** being one. He had managed to save some money in a commercial bank savings account. When he arrived at Skoonheid he had N\$3 400 in the account, earned from his produce sales and waged labour on the farm where he previously lived. At the time of the field visit, though he still had money in the account, the amount was only N\$1 800. He was no longer able to save as he was unemployed, and could generate cash only from the sale of produce from his own plot after a very good rainy season. The communal garden provided no cash; people worked there only to ensure that government continued to supply the diesel needed for pumping water and using the tractor. Should government stop supplying diesel, the beneficiaries would either go without water and a tractor, or pay for diesel themselves.

In Hardap, 20 group scheme beneficiaries were surveyed. The highest number of livestock owned by a single beneficiary was 12 head of cattle. Her previous employer, a farm owner, had given her 13 head, and she had sold 1 male unit at a price of N\$2 000 which covered her personal expenses.

At Bernafey, 7 beneficiaries involved in the group scheme owned goats, as did 1 person who resided at a cattle post on the farm but was not part of the scheme. Only 1 goat nanny was purchased during the preceding year, and the purchase was financed by a loan/gift from relatives. More stock was lost than was utilised for animal production. Own consumption accounted for only a small proportion of the losses.

Two beneficiaries owned sheep. In 2008 they incurred a total cost of N\$820 for the sheep, and fetched a total of N\$640 for the sale of 5 lambs. No sheep were slaughtered for own consumption, but disease killed 11 lambs. Eight beneficiaries owned small herds of goats, i.e. 5-20 per herd. In 2008, 18 goats were sold for a total of N\$5 630, 23 died or were lost, 11 being kids, and 1 nanny and 1 kid were slaughtered for own consumption. The beneficiaries also owned horses and donkeys, and 1 horse was sold.

Livestock sales in 2008 fetched a total of N\$8270, and the costs incurred by the livestock owners totalled N\$3 441. The latter included direct allocable costs, i.e. for vaccination, dosing, veterinary treatment, fodder, supplementary feed, castration, labour and transport. Supplementary feed was purchased on occasion, even though it can be grown and produced on the farm if the water pumps are functioning. It is not clear why it was purchased instead.

Nine of 14 the livestock owners in the Bernafey scheme had access to more than one camp, but none of them practised rotational grazing, nor did they employ a fixed breeding system. Only 22% of them used a weaning system, 50% applied parasite control measures, 71% gave supplementary feed (salt licks) and 50% castrated their livestock. Herd production cannot be improved if young males are not castrated to enhance genetics and promote weight gain. This is particularly important where the goats of multiple farmers graze together. Parasite control is ineffective if some farmers dose their livestock regularly and others do not.

Five Bernafey beneficiaries received daily benefits from their livestock and poultry in the form of eggs and milk in varying quantities. The quantity of milk obtained was 0.5 litres to 2 litres per day, and 1 to 3 eggs were obtained per day.

The stocking rates on the Hardap group schemes can be regarded as low. Localised overgrazing was evident around the households where water points were situated. In the group schemes sampled in both regions, the beneficiaries lived together at or very close to the old farmstead or main dwelling. The outlying areas on these farms had adequate grazing, but the water infrastructure in those areas was often out of order. Beneficiaries wanted to utilise this grazing, but not before the broken fences were repaired because the risk of livestock wandering off and being stolen was too high.

Theft of both crops and livestock on group schemes was a major impediment to sustained accumulation of livestock and other produce and assets. Many beneficiaries had suffered high stock losses due to theft. **William** at Drimiopsis, for example, arrived there with 22 goats in 1992. All of his goats and both of his horses were stolen, leaving him with no livestock, so he no longer engaged in livestock farming. He had also stopped producing crops, allegedly due to too much theft. Respondents said that young people on the scheme, including small

children, stole from the gardens at night. According to William, the old people cultivated their gardens, and as soon as they yielded crops, the young people stole them. “We cannot work for small children; they must work with us,” he said. To prevent theft, the community mobilised some members to undertake regular night patrols in the gardens. Some of the perpetrators were caught and handed over to the police. At the time of the field visit, the community was considering giving the youth gardens of their own as one strategy to reduce theft. Despite having lost all his goats and theft remaining a major problem, William still wanted to be given goats. He said that next time around, he would look after them carefully, whereas in the beginning he was “a bit stupid” because he had “just let them go out”.

The Drimiopsis scheme had struggled with theft from the start. Respondents attributed this to overcrowdedness in the first years. After Skoonheid was established as a group resettlement scheme, many beneficiaries at Drimiopsis opted for resettlement there in the belief that there would be less conflict and violence there because it was not overcrowded. But, according to **Festus** at Skoonheid, “Today things at Skoonheid are the same as they are at Drimiopsis.” People were stealing from each other, especially livestock. Festus said that the perpetrators were not only the youth at Skoonheid, but also the youth on surrounding resettlement farms. He said they stole because they “have no work and nothing to live for”.

Apart from the livestock brought by the few beneficiaries who had accumulated livestock on commercial farms, the Omaheke schemes received donations of livestock.

At Drimiopsis, the Roman Catholic Church initiated a livestock loan scheme in 2001, with 7 households receiving 9 head of cattle each to start livestock production. After the calving stage, the initial beneficiaries were meant to distribute the calves among those who had no cattle. The scheme failed because beneficiaries sold the cattle without permission before every household benefited. According to **Philip**, this closed the doors for many households.

At Skoonheid, 14 households received a total of 20 cattle and 10 donkeys from the MAWF. By the time of the field visit, these numbers had risen to total 60 animals. In 2005, the NGO Komeho gave 12 households 10 goats each and 8 rams to share. This donation was to have operated as a revolving livestock fund, with each recipient expected to give 2 nannies to a household without goats. The outcome of the Komeho project could not be determined by the time of sending this report to print.

Helena and her husband had 10 goats when they settled at Skoonheid in 2000. This number rose to 20, but by the time of the field visit it had dropped to 3. Helena explained that this was because they sold and slaughtered quite a few goats in 2007. They had also received 2 cows through government’s Draught Animal Power Acceleration Programme (DAPAP), which incorporated a loan scheme, in terms of which they had to return the two cows after they had calved. At the time of the field visit, they had 6 cows. They did not know what to do with the loaned cows as nobody had come to claim them back, and they were not allowed to sell or slaughter any of the animals.

All told, it appears that the donations did not have the desired impact of enabling individual households to build up herds, due mainly to a lack of supervision, guidance and support.

6.3 Typology of livelihood strategies

6.3.1 Land-based livelihoods

Limited small-scale crop cultivation and livestock husbandry formed the basis of the livelihood strategies pursued in the four group resettlement schemes sampled, all of which are located in semi-arid agro-ecological regions. Although Bernafey in Hardap had an abundance of water on account of its location in an area with artesian sources, land-based livelihood strategies there were constrained by other environmental factors.

Crop production on group resettlement schemes was further constrained by the particular form of production prescribed by the MLR, being *communal* production. Although initially referred to as “co-operative farming”, none of the group schemes sampled were organised as per the formal definition of a “co-operative” set down in the Namibian Co-operatives Act, and none were registered as a “co-operative”. Rather, “co-operative farming” in the case of these schemes meant nothing more than beneficiaries contributing labour for cultivating a communal garden.

The beneficiaries on group schemes in both regions pursued several land-based livelihood strategies, the most important of which are discussed in this section.

6.3.1.1 Accessing land for residence

Most beneficiaries on these group schemes were formerly farm workers with weak or no ties to communal areas. This was particularly true for beneficiaries on the Drimiopsis and Skoonheid schemes. Some of the Westfalen and Bernafey beneficiaries came from northern communal areas. As farm workers in general do not have a permanent and secure place of residence, access to a piece of land to call their own was of paramount importance for the vast majority of the respondents. The group resettlement schemes provided not only access to land, but also a small brick house and basic services such as water.

Access to land on a group scheme provided a sense of security which replaced the sense of vulnerability that most farm workers experience. In Omaheke particularly, the group schemes have served as secure places from which beneficiaries can go out to look for work and withdraw back to in the event of a dispute with a commercial farmer or unemployment.

Group resettlement schemes have also provided access to residential land for people who are not official beneficiaries. Many people utilised family ties with official beneficiaries to settle permanently or temporarily on a group resettlement scheme. This gave them, among other things, a base from which to go out and look for work, and place to return to if their search was unsuccessful. Due to the ethnic homogeneity of Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, family ties among beneficiaries there were strong, and have played an important role in facilitating access to resettlement without the need to apply formally. The Skoonheid project co-ordinator stated that he could not chase newcomers away as official beneficiaries

saw it as their right to accommodate family members. This belief was supported by the perception that the entire Skoonheid farm was meant for San people only. The testimonies of several respondents confirmed the importance of family ties for accessing land on a group resettlement scheme.

John, born on a commercial farm in 1957, had been a farm worker all his life. Between 2004 and 2007 he worked on a commercial farm in the Khomas Hochland, and thereafter in the Herero communal area of Aminuis. Whenever he lost his employment, he returned to Drimiopsis to stay with his sister until he found new work. In 2007 he decided to stay permanently at Drimiopsis because he was not treated well on the farms where he worked, and also was suffering from rheumatism and struggling to work. He asked to be resettled officially in the belief that government “*sal my optel*” (lift me up). Initially he struggled with accommodation, but then built his own shack next to his sister’s house and was taken up in the register.

Elias, 41 years old, is an example of a person who was able to stay at Drimiopsis after losing his employment due to work-related injuries. He had been there for nearly 10 years. Born in Kavango Region, he went to Omaheke at an early age to search for work on commercial farms. He met his wife on a farm where he worked, and they had three daughters who lived with them at Drimiopsis. A few months before his move to the scheme, Elias injured his back while offloading equipment from a truck and was unable to work. After a few months, his employer retrenched him with no compensation. His only option was to go with his wife to Drimiopsis where her father was an official beneficiary. They built a shack for themselves in the backyard of her father’s house and stayed there permanently.

Although none of the group scheme beneficiaries had received a long-term lease as provided for in the legislation, the majority felt reasonably secure on the schemes. Official beneficiaries at Skoonheid and Drimiopsis felt secure because their names had been entered in the project register. The San beneficiaries’ sense of security was enhanced by the belief that Skoonheid and Drimiopsis were acquired exclusively for them. Still, many beneficiaries including San feared that they might be chased off the schemes one day. The fact that two San families at Drimiopsis had to vacate their houses in favour of two Oshiwambo-speaking families kept those fears alive. The main fear expressed by people in the sample was that they did not know where to go if they were chased off.

6.3.1.2 *Small-scale crop cultivation to supplement food supply and income*

Some people at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid had their own small backyard vegetable garden. The harvests were usually very modest and used mainly for own consumption.

6.3.1.3 *Harvesting of natural resources*

Due to aridity in Omaheke and particularly Hardap, natural resources were harvested only on a very limited scale. At Westfalen and Bernafey, no harvesting of natural resources was taking place, with the exception of firewood collection.



Housing at Bernafey



Housing at Drimiopsis



Water infrastructure in need of repair at Westfalen.



Water provision at Drimiopsis.



Diversification at Skoonheid – leather production.



Firewood – an abundant natural resource at Westfalen.

At Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, harvesting of natural resources complemented agricultural production to a very limited extent. The natural resources were used primarily for own consumption and a very limited amount could be sold locally.

Beneficiaries gathered *veldkos* (field food) seasonally to supplement their diet. However, the resettlement lands were said to be too small to supply adequate amounts of *veldkos* for all community members, so families sometimes had to search for it beyond the borders of the resettlement land. *Veldkos* was most abundant during the rainy season, but was harvested only after the rains, from around July, and it lasted only until August.

The foods gathered included *marimba* nuts, *boesman komkommer* ('bushman cucumber'), wild potatoes and berries. Even if abundant, not all of these natural products could be sold. Traditionally, the sale of wild potatoes and *boesman komkommer* was prohibited, whereas *marimba* nuts and berries could be sold, the main market being at the Roman Catholic Mission at Epukiro.

Karolina explained that *marimba* nuts in particular were very much sought after. The old people would crush the nuts, boil the mulch and scoop off the fat, the taste of which is said to be as good as beef fat. Herero people tend to buy this fat whenever it is available. However, at the time of the field visit, the practice of producing fat from *marimba* nuts had largely stopped in the Drimiopsis area due to declining availability there.

Kamagu or devil's claw was also harvested at Drimiopsis, mostly for own medicinal use. Beneficiaries were promised that somebody would go to the project to providing training on harvesting devil's claw sustainably for commercial purposes. This was already happening in other parts of Omaheke.

In the absence of electricity at both Skoonheid and Drimiopsis, beneficiaries depended on firewood for cooking, lighting and heating purposes. The task of collecting firewood was usually assigned to women. At Drimiopsis it was mentioned that the search for firewood required walking longer distances today than in the early 1990s when the scheme started.

Some beneficiaries at Skoonheid who owned dogs used them to hunt rabbits and small antelope such as steenbok and warthogs, in spite of their fear of being caught by the police. A few beneficiaries hunted snakes or tortoises to eat.

6.3.1.4 *Grazing land for multi-purpose livestock production*

Access to group resettlement land gave beneficiaries grazing for their livestock. However, because few beneficiaries owned livestock, pastures were underutilised at Drimiopsis and Bernafey. At Skoonheid the situation was different because the group resettlement scheme occupies only a portion of the farm. Grazing on the scheme portion was underutilised at the time of the field visit only because the beneficiaries did not own sufficient livestock. The remainder of Skoonheid had been allocated to 11 individual livestock farmers on a temporary basis. They utilised 3-4 camps each for grazing and some rainfed cultivation.

6.3.2 Other livelihood strategies

Beneficiaries were combining land-based livelihood strategies with other strategies to survive. These consisted mostly of off-farm income streams, the most important sources of which were pensions and money earned through piece work on commercial farms.

6.3.2.1 Pensions and remittances

For most households at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, pensions were the only reliable source of cash income. These were being used to pay school fees of children and grandchildren as well as to buy food. Given the strong family ties at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, the benefits of pensions were distributed far beyond individual pensioners and their spouses, as the following testimonials confirm.

Elfrieda was a single mother of five children, two of whom still lived with her. She had access to at least five sources of food, her father's pension probably being the most important. He handed his entire pension to her to buy food which she kept in her house. She prepared meals for the family, including her father, every day. When this food ran out, she made use of the food offered by the father of her three youngest children. This meant taking the children to their father's new wife to eat, but this did not cause any problems. There she received two meals a day for her children, herself and her father. Once this food supply was depleted, she would start to use her own reserves of maize and beans. In 2008 she estimated that her own food reserves would last until the new planting season. In addition, her sister who was employed in Gobabis supported her with a little money from time to time or sent some food. One of her daughters worked in Windhoek, and sent about N\$200 to Elfrieda every month or bought clothes for her younger sisters at Skoonheid.

The limited amounts of cash that flowed into these group resettlement schemes through pensions provided opportunities for some people to earn small amounts of money or food by providing basic services. **Elfrieda's** income included small rewards for itinerant work on the project and remittances from her husband. She earned a little mealie-meal, soap or cash from assisting sick people at Drimiopsis. If they were pensioners, they gave her either mealie-meal or N\$20. Many were unable to give anything. She also earned some cash from selling garden produce. Her husband, who was working on a commercial farm at the time of the field visit, occasionally sent her N\$200 or N\$300, or an average of N\$200 per month. She had a dispute with him over the small amounts he sent. His response was that food at his farm was also expensive and he wanted to save money for Christmas food. When he sent money, she collected it in Gobabis. She had to hitchhike to Gobabis which cost her N\$20 one way. If she had no cash to pay, she had to wait for a free ride.

The community at Skoonheid used to receive food aid from the government until the late 1990s when, according to **Alfred**, it was stopped without any explanation. Approximately every third month, each household had received a food package consisting of mealie-meal, beans, cooking oil and tinned fish. Alfred said that since the stoppage of this food aid, more and more people, especially the youth, loitered around the farm and engaged in criminal

activities. He did not know how he and his wife would have survived without their monthly pensions. For **Usiel**, the years when they received food rations and worked in the garden were the best years at Drimiopsis. When the rations stopped, everything “went backwards”; they struggled even to get the garden going properly.

It was very common for pensioners at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid to look after their grandchildren and pay for their schooling. Some of the fathers employed on commercial farms sent money and/or food to sustain their children and the grandparents. Apart from his wife’s income of N\$300 per month, the only other support that **John** and his wife received was the food or cash sent from time to time by their son who worked on a nearby farm. When they ran out of food, they bought food on credit at a local shop.

William, formerly a government employee, received a government pension as well as the general pension, totalling N\$800 per month. Since arriving at Drimiopsis, the only other cash he had earned was from sales of small amounts of his garden produce. He had used some of this money to buy two bicycles, but had sold one.

Some churches provided support to beneficiaries at Skoonheid from time to time. **Katrina Helena** had received clothing, cooking oil, *stampmielies* (samp), sugar and meat from the Roman Catholic Church once a month. This church provided support only to people who claimed to be Catholic.

6.3.2.2 Crafts and cultural displays

Craft production and needlework provided modest but important complementary income streams for households at Skoonheid and Drimiopsis. However, due to a general lack of cash for buying the necessary inputs, many women were almost entirely dependent on external sources for inputs and marketing. If an outsider provided beads and string for making various items, or cloth for making clothes, women engaged in these activities. As soon as the supply of raw materials stopped, production also stopped. Only occasionally did some women buy beads and other inputs in Gobabis or Windhoek if they had spare cash as well as transport opportunities.

A medical doctor who ran regular clinics at Skoonheid initiated a craft project involving women. She supplied beads and other inputs, and even bought the finished products. **Anna Albertina** was one of the women who benefited from this. She used the time she did not spend in her garden to make beaded items and clothes. The latter she sewed by hand as she did not have a sewing machine. For inputs she depended on outside agencies such as the doctor and the pastor. They supplied inputs and bought the crafts from her. She usually lack cash for buying inputs, but whenever she had spare cash, she bought beads in Gobabis. Making crafts was her only source of cash income, enabling her to earn N\$10 to N\$40 per week. This sufficed to buy mealie-meal and sugar, but was too little to buy soap as well.

Bernadine sewed dresses which she sold for N\$120 each. If she could not sell them at Drimiopsis, she took them to neighbouring farms. When she had material, she made up to



Seamstress at Bernafey



Craftswoman at Drimiopsis.

three dresses per month. She depended on foreign donors to provide material. At the time of the visit she did not have any.

A number of income-generating activities were set up as community-based projects on both schemes in Omaheke. A community-based approach to income generation may have been sensible from a logistical point of view, but, as with communal gardening on these schemes, this approach introduced social problems which led to disputes and some people withdrawing or being excluded. It was stated that jealousy and interpersonal problems are enhanced by this approach.

Karolina, for example, engaged in making crafts from beads and cloth. Although a project had been set up, she did not take part in it because she had observed that the project leader was jealous and did not like her. Jealousy, particularly of community member who did better than others, was common. Many perceived jealousy as a negative characteristic of the community. Karolina likened the community to children who need to be trained. She said that sometimes “*hulle val uit*” (they fall out) and point fingers, but then “*hulle kom by*” (they correct themselves).

Cultural displays or performances were an option for some beneficiaries to earn money. Like San crafts, San dances appeal to many tourists and there is a market for cultural tourism, potentially also at these group schemes, but their success would depend on transport, among other things. At the time of the visit to Skoonheid, **Gabriel**'s wife was away in Windhoek earning money with a San dance troupe.

6.3.2.3 Piece work

Work on other farms remained the most important source of income for beneficiaries at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid. Some beneficiaries or their family members had permanent jobs, and others did piece work. Farmers sometimes recruited people at the projects for short-term labour, but usually the people went out to find work. Disputes between workers and farmers were frequent. Although new labour legislation gives farm workers specific rights, including a minimum monthly wage, the remoteness of many farms makes it easy for farmers to flout the law, leaving the workers vulnerable, and this applies particularly to San workers. It is against this background of vulnerability that being an official beneficiary of a group scheme, or even just a relative of an official beneficiary, provides a sense of security. If workers lost their employment, they returned to Drimiopsis or Skoonheid and waited for the next employment opportunity. These schemes therefore served as labour pools for the commercial farming sector, and in some cases also the FURS and AALS farms. This amounts to reproducing a cheap labour system that ignores basic legislation.

Although in short supply, full-time or piece work on commercial farms was the most accessible option for beneficiaries of these schemes to generate income. However, for San people at Drimiopsis, this was fraught with problems. Although many commercial farmers were said to pay their workers reasonably well, many others did not, which often resulted in a dispute. The Skoonheid resettlement committee started a system of recording the names and details of commercial farmers who came to the project to recruit workers. In this way the committee was able to keep track of which community member had gone to which farm. If the farmer defaulted, the committee knew where to find him.

Karolina explained that farmers went to Drimiopsis looking for piece workers, but the beneficiaries often found it difficult to negotiate a wage that would enable them to sustain themselves on the job and to bring something home. Some farmers treated their workers well by paying well and returning them to the project, but others, including Herero employers, did not want to pay once the work was completed, and certainly did not return the workers to the project. Many people worked for Hereros but found it difficult to make ends meet with the wages they paid. When they got sick on the job, they were dumped at the hospital and relatives had to struggle to get them home and feed them.

Elias was grateful for the opportunity to live at Drimiopsis, but complained about the lack of income-generating opportunities there. He planted his own vegetables, but they did not bring him much income. He often searched for “*stukwerk*” (piece work) on neighbouring farms to get some income. He normally walked from farm to farm asking the farmers for piece work. In recent years it had become more difficult to find regular piece work, and during the rainy season it was very scarce. Piece work usually included clearing fire paths and mending broken fences – tiresome and low-paid jobs. Normally he left his house at the beginning of the week, and walked down the main road visiting each farm to ask if the farmer had any work for him. At times he spent a whole week searching for work, walking up to 60km away from the project. Temporary employment often meant that he was not given proper accommodation and had to stay on his own in a makeshift shelter in the bush.

Having no cash reserves, he often had to ask for an advance on his wage to buy food to eat while living in the bush. He commonly received a net wage of N\$300 to N\$400. With this income he bought food and clothes for his family. His income did not last long; the process of searching for piece work began again within a few days. Elias had a strong desire to break this cycle of poverty to which he had been subject for most of his life. His biggest wish was to have access to credit and land in order to raise cattle and make a living from cattle farming, but none of these things had materialised to date. He felt that government was prioritising the San when it came to providing financial support to buy cattle.

Alfons had gone out to work only once since settling at Skoonheid in 2000. If employers were to go to Skoonheid to look for workers, he would sign up, but he was no longer going out to look for employment, his reason being that was too little to be had. He saw other people at the project go out and return without having found any employment. He considered it a waste of time, and would rather spend his time in his garden.

Apart from the beneficiaries who did not want to go out to look for work due to the high opportunity costs, there were others who could not do so due to illness. **John** at Drimiopsis, for example, was only 51 years old but rheumatism prevented his going out to work. Without a pension and unable to do farm work, he did not have enough money to visit the clinic.

6.3.2.4 Shops

Beneficiaries at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid were dependent on shops for their basic food and other requirements as they did not produce enough food to sustain themselves. There were three shops at Drimiopsis. One, owned by an Oshiwambo-speaking man, was located on the project land, and across the road was another, owned by an official beneficiary of San/Damara descent. The third shop, which was not on the project land, was owned by an official of the Department of Forestry, an Oshiwambo-speaking woman, who was granted permission to establish the shop, on condition that she did not sell alcohol. This permission was reportedly granted by a Development Planner of the MLR in the Gobabis regional office.

A general complaint among beneficiaries was that prices in all three shops were too high. Sometimes they went to commercial farms to obtain basic foodstuffs at lower prices. Due to a general shortage of cash, beneficiaries made use of credit at the shops. For many this implied a neverending cycle of indebtedness and impoverishment: as soon as they obtained their pension or income from employment or craft sales, they had to use it to pay off their debt, which left too little money for buying food until more money came in, which meant asking for credit at the shops again.

Business opportunities for beneficiaries were very limited, mainly because of the low levels of education of most beneficiaries, the lack of surplus capital to invest in even the smallest shop or another activity, and the difficulty of marketing goods due to the long distances to markets and a lack of transport.

Rudolf, an official beneficiary at Drimiopsis, established a small shop when he settled on the scheme in 1991. Since then he had combined livestock farming, crop production and the



A shop at Drimiopsis

shop as a livelihood strategy. He was born in Gobabis in 1962 to parents of San and Damara descent. He completed Standard 2 (today Grade 4) and left school at the age of 10 or 12. For the next five years he stayed at his mother's house, not engaging in any activities. At age 17 he started to think about what he could do for a living without having to engage in waged labour. Avoiding waged labour was a "political decision", he said, as he felt that the wealth of the whites should have been his wealth. He therefore decided to work for himself and saw an opportunity for business. He started his business by selling sweets and bubblegum from his mother's house. A demand for candles and matches arose and he added these to his line of goods. In addition he sold old bottles which children collected for him in return for sweets and bubblegum. The bottles were sold to a white man.

He first went to Drimiopsis not to settle there but to be with the 'woman of his life'. At the time he was informed that government would provide food, a house and a coffin to people who resettled. He decided to resettle because government would do everything for him, and indeed he received a house, food and blankets.

As there was no shop at Drimiopsis at the time, he decided to set up shop there, and started trading from his tent. After initial opposition from the project manager employed by the MLRR, Rudolf formally applied in 1994 for a license to run a shop at the scheme and was granted one, on condition that he would not continue trading from his tent, but rather build

a shop from corrugated iron or bricks. He sold his goats, and with the proceeds of N\$1 000 bought 18 corrugated-iron sheets and built his shop. In 1996 he replaced the corrugated iron with bricks, constructing the brick building himself.

Progress was slow as he had to feed his children from the income generated from the shop. A six-month stint in the police cells awaiting formal charges of alleged rape set him back even further. The charges were never formally laid as it turned out that there was no case against him. When he returned to Drimiopsis he concentrated on his shop again.

On settling at Drimiopsis in 1991, he had no livestock but only his trading business and about N\$2 000 in a savings account. With this he bought some chickens. They bred well, and when they were big enough he sold them. With the proceeds he bought two lambs which he gave to his oldest child's mother's grandfather in Skoonheid to look after.

Apart from the lambs he bought, some people paid him with goats for goods they bought in his shop. At the time there were many more people at Drimiopsis, i.e. 500-600. Most of them had been evicted from commercial farms and were staying temporarily at Drimiopsis. When people ran out of money for buying food, he accepted goats as payment. By 1994 he had accumulated 36-38 goats, which he sold to build his shop. Thereafter he invested in more goats whenever he had money, and accumulated about 15 goats.

In 2004 his wife contracted TB. By this time they had separated but she was still living at Drimiopsis. In the same year she received a few of the cattle donated to the scheme by the Roman Catholic Church, which would earn her a small income. Their daughter was at school and their young son was at home with Rudolf. Looking after his estranged wife in hospital as well as the children and shop became too much of a burden, particularly as he had nobody to look after his goats. He was unwilling to ask community members to look after the goats as he felt that they could not be trusted; they would take the goats out to drink at the water point and forget about them. He therefore decided to sell the goats and buy stock for the shop with the proceeds. Since 2004 he had not bought livestock again. Once his children had completed their schooling he would consider livestock ownership again. Should his son drop out of school, he would be available to look after livestock.

Rudolf's livelihood strategy was to buy and sell assets, e.g. buy goats, let them multiply and then sell them. He ascribed his present "*verwaarloos*" (poor state) to both his own negligence and his former wife's TB. He no longer had any savings. His shop generated a turnover of about N\$1 000 per month, of which he used N\$600 to buy new stock and kept N\$400 to feed himself and the children, leaving nothing for further investment. He was considering cultivating crops in the garden plot given to him in 2008 to generate more cash.

One of his competitors, the Oshiwambo-speaking woman employed by the Department of Forestry who opened a shop at Drimiopsis, focused on selling trees to the community rather than foodstuffs, but she had opened a *cuca* shop in her house where she sold some foodstuffs. His other competitor was the Oshiwambo-speaking official beneficiary who owned the shop across the road from Rudolf's shop and stocked a small range of foodstuffs.

When **Alfons** settled at Skoonheid in 2000, he established a small shop in a corrugated-iron structure which he added onto his house. Selling his goats from time to time provided some cash to buy stock for the shop. He sold up to three goats at a time at auctions, to which he transported the goats in his donkey-cart. In 2007 he closed the shop as it was no longer proving profitable, mainly because he was no longer permitted to make use of government transport free of charge to get goods from Gobabis to the shop. When the cost of transport became unaffordable, he was forced to stop his trading activity. Since 2007 he had also not sold any goats, but there was no reason to do so as his own dryland field and the communal garden gave him enough food.

The MLR prohibits the sale of alcohol on resettlement schemes, and during the field visit there was no evidence of *cuca* shops or people being drunk at Skoonheid and Drimiopsis. However, a few people stated that alcohol was in fact being produced and sold on the premises, i.e. some people brewed and sold “bushman *tombo*” when they needed cash to buy food. The *tombo* was made from sugar, cooked maize meal, crushed beans and a particular root.

6.3.2.5 Investments

Very few people at Skoonheid and Drimiopsis were able to invest in the land, let alone acquire some livestock, mainly because they never had enough cash. Pensions served only to pay school fees and buy necessities, and the income from any employment found was too low to provide even for basic necessities, let alone livestock purchases.

The story of **Bernadine**, one of the first people to settle at Drimiopsis in 1989, illustrates the situation. At an advanced age but still not an official pensioner, her husband was employed for a while on a farm looking after the livestock of a person who worked in Gobabis. For this he earned N\$200 per month and some mealie-meal, but the cash did not suffice to cover basic necessities and life was a constant struggle. Then, a medical condition prevented her husband from working anymore, and Bernadine, also elderly by that time, could no longer work, so all they could do was grow crops in their own garden for their own consumption.

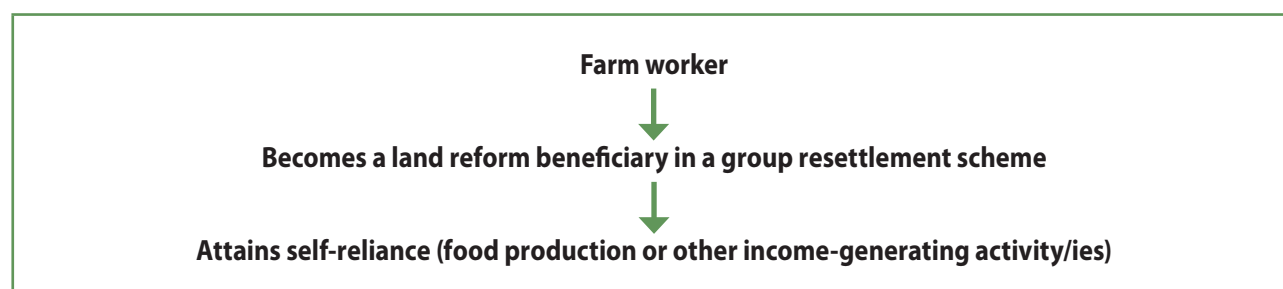
As one of the first settlers at Drimiopsis, Bernadine worked for many years in the communal garden, but did not draw an income from that work: the money generated from the garden was deposited in a bank account and used to buy coffins for beneficiaries who died. On reaching pensionable age, Bernadine and her husband received a total of about N\$900 in pension money every month, but this did not suffice for buying goats. They used a large portion of the pension money to pay off their previous month’s debts for mealie-meal, tea, meat and soap, and the rest went to supporting their children and their schoolgoing grandchildren. It was impossible to save any money for other necessities and emergencies, let alone investments. Only one of their children, a son who worked on a farm, sent money or food from time to time as his children were at Drimiopsis.

The quantitative survey found that most individual households in the group schemes, having extremely limited material resources including cash, were forced to buy basic foodstuffs at local shops on credit, and hence lived in a perpetual cycle of credit and debt.

6.4 Livelihood trajectories

For the group schemes in Omaheke, only one typical trajectory was identified, this being the ‘welfare’ trajectory. The ‘ideal’ trajectory presented below is based on the National Resettlement Policy (MLR 2001) and was formulated for the purpose of illustrating the gap between policy and reality.

6.4.1 The ‘ideal’ trajectory



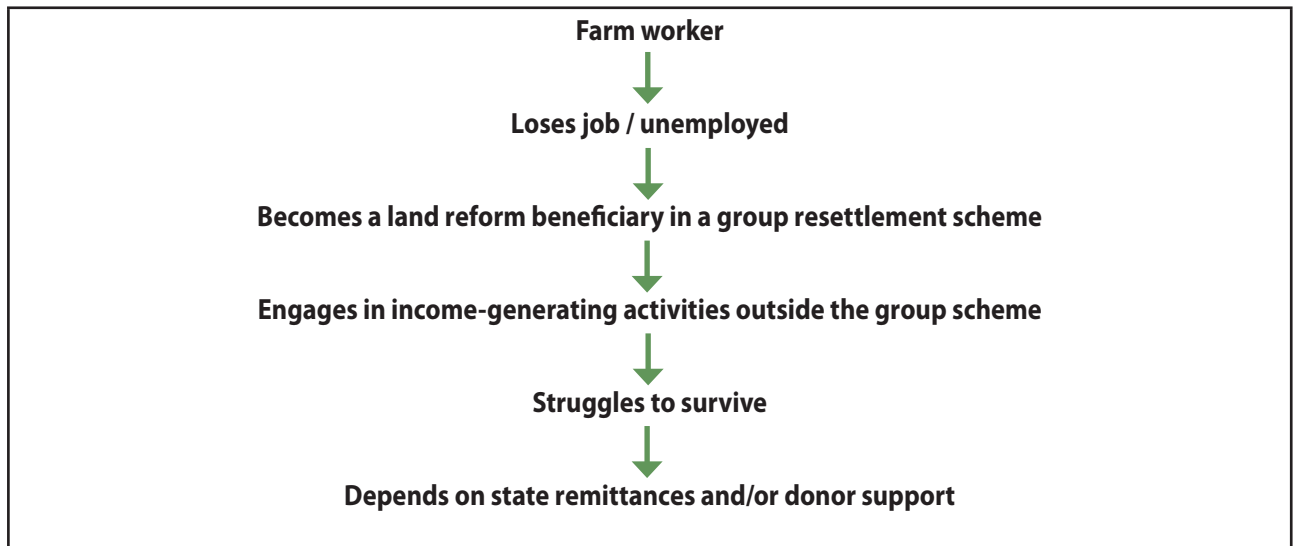
According to the National Resettlement Policy (ibid.: 7), beneficiaries are “expected to be self-reliant and self-sufficient by the fourth year except in the case of existing natural phenomena, e.g. drought or other disasters”. In addition, “... training programmes ... [are] ... to facilitate the resettled to realise their full potential in pursuing a higher level of livelihood”.

The ‘ideal’ trajectory had not been realised on any of the projects visited. Beneficiaries remained dependent on government grants such as pensions or off-project income streams from full-time or part-time employment (piece work), primarily in the commercial farming sector. Also, beneficiaries received little or no training at all to “realise their full potential in pursuing a higher level of livelihood”.

The fact that the ‘ideal’ trajectory had not been attained on the group schemes by the time of the study does not imply that it is unattainable. The ‘ideal’ trajectory has been included in this section merely to set a benchmark from which policy-makers can assess the success of future policy implementation. The ‘ideal’ trajectory could also feature a combination of best practices as described in the trajectories below.

6.4.2 The ‘welfare’ trajectory

The ‘welfare’ trajectory begins with the beneficiary being employed for most of his/her life as a farm worker. Most beneficiaries on the group schemes sampled had worked on one or more farms at some stage, and most conforming to the ‘welfare’ trajectory had worked on several farms. The next stage in the trajectory entails the loss of employment. Reasons for this included being made redundant or being retrenched due to ill health, old age or the sale of the farm or transfer of ownership. Other common reasons for farm workers losing their job are disputes with employers over wages and alleged theft. In some cases, conflict with fellow farm workers led to the decision to leave a farm and face unemployment.



The third stage of the trajectory entails a former farm worker settling on a group resettlement scheme. There are two ways in which this stage comes about. Either, the former far worker formally applies for resettlement and is granted the right to settle on a scheme as an official beneficiary, or a former farm worker settles on a scheme ‘illegally’ or without formally applying because he/she is unemployed and has no other option. Many in the latter situation utilised family ties to stay on a scheme permanently. The MLR has turned a blind eye to such ‘illegal’ or informal settlement in the knowledge that the people concerned had no alternative. An example of the MLR’s leniency is the Kanyemba Street informal settlement at Drimiopsis.

The fourth, fifth and sixth stages of this trajectory see the beneficiary finding it impossible to make a living on the scheme due to limited income-generating opportunities, taking on piece work outside the scheme, but still struggling to survive due to a lack of opportunities for piece work and/or low remuneration and/or ill health or old age, and ultimately becoming dependent on state and/or donor support.

The experiences of beneficiaries conforming to this trajectory have been more or less the same. The majority in both schemes in Omaheke arrived at the scheme with few assets. Some had been able to accumulate small herds of livestock while working on commercial farms. Where farm wages allowed, they bought small stock, one head at a time. Some had received livestock as part of their remuneration, and about three received some livestock from their employer when the farm was sold.

Many beneficiaries who had accumulated livestock while working on a commercial farm arrived at the resettlement scheme without any livestock because they had been forced to sell it to tide themselves over while unemployed. Once settled at Drimiopsis or Skoonheid, they worked in the communal gardens. Until 1998, all beneficiaries on these schemes were supported with government food aid, provided that they worked in the communal gardens. Many people hailed the first few years as the best years on the schemes because of the food aid. When it stopped, they began to struggle, enthusiasm for communal gardening waned and many dropped out of this activity. Income from piece work and itinerant employment,

monthly pensions and limited remittances from employed family members became the main sources of support. Starved of cash, only a few people, predominantly pensioners, were able to acquire small stock.

Benjamin, a 76-year-old beneficiary at Skoonheid since 1991 is a case in point. As a farm worker he accumulated a small herd of goats thanks to farmers giving him a goat from time to time on top of his wages and food rations. He could not remember how many he had, but by the time he settled at the scheme, he did not have any goats. He had sold all of them because livestock proved to be a liability when looking for work: most farm owners did not want to employ people with livestock, or otherwise they limited the number of head that workers could keep. He was not able to save any of the proceeds from the sales as he had to sustain himself during spells of unemployment.

Having neither livestock nor money on settling at Skoonheid, he helped to debush land for the communal garden and then helped to cultivate the garden. In return he received food rations and produce. When the food rations were stopped in 1998, he received only rations from the garden. He stopped working in the garden in 2000 as he wanted to rest, but still he received some rations from the garden thanks to the local Resettlement Committee taking a decision to continue supplying garden produce to old people even though they no longer worked in the garden. In 2008 he received his own small portion in the garden, i.e. a plot of about 0.05 ha. He bought seed with his pension money and grew vegetables there, and stated that one good harvest enabled him to feed himself for a year.

Accumulating livestock on group resettlement schemes was fraught with risks and threats. The most important of these at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid were the presence of poisonous plants and stock theft. Some pensioners were able to buy goats. A few years after setting at Skoonheid, **Benjamin** had used some pension money to buy 3 goats. These increased to 6 but then decreased to 2 in 2008. One reason for this loss was the presence of a poisonous plant at Skoonheid referred to as *slangkop* (snake head). Benjamin said that most people there had lost their few head of small stock to this plant. Skoonheid was said to be suitable for cattle and sheep, but not for goats. In a few cases, stock owners lost their livestock to thieves. **William**, one of the victim's of theft at Drimiopsis, arrived there in 1992 with 22 goats, all of which, along with his 2 horses, were stolen, so he stopped farming livestock.

Compared to the Omaheke group schemes, the Hardap schemes had more beneficiaries who originated in communal areas. Born and raised in communal areas, they left in search of employment, and many ended up as labourers on commercial farms. Thenceforth, their trajectories were very similar to those of the beneficiaries in Omaheke. Another regional difference was the ethnic composition of beneficiaries on the group schemes: in Hardap the composition was more heterogenous than in Omaheke.

Hendrik, of Nama descent, was born in 1952 in the Hoachanas area in today's Hardap Region. He had worked for most of his life on one commercial farm in the region, which was sold to the government in 2000. Though asked to stay on to look after the farm and its infrastructure, which he did for a while, he was never offered permanent resettlement

there. Instead, the MLRR advised him to resettle at Westfalen, and he moved there with his wife in 2002. The Ministry's office in Mariental allocated to Hendrik a single camp of approximately 200 ha where he kept about 43 goats and sheep as well as 2 horses.

Absolom, aged 27, had lived at Westfalen since 2004. He hails from Ohangwena Region in northern Namibia, and was raised in the village of Ongenga located close to the border with Angola. He did not receive any form of schooling. After moving to Hardap, he found temporary work in Mariental as a grocery packer. He applied for resettlement at Westfalen with the expectation of becoming self-employed. At the time of the field visit, he had no livestock and spent most of his time working in the communal garden. He was not married, but lived with his partner and their three children in a house built for them by the Ministry. His partner also worked in the garden. With the help of Ministry officials, the scheme was selling its garden produce in Mariental and Windhoek.

A few individuals, mostly in Hardap, were able to accumulate small numbers of livestock from the proceeds of the communal gardens. **Magdalena**, aged 32, hails from a village in Oshana Region in northern Namibia, and was resettled at Westfalen in 2000. By the time of the field visit she had not received any papers from the Ministry as proof of resettlement. She was single with a 4-year-old daughter who lived with her. Since being resettled, she had accumulated a few goats which she kept in a kraal close to her house. She would sell some of them whenever she needed income, but had not slaughtered any for own consumption.

Crops damaged by water problems at Bernafey.



Water provision at Westfalen.

A good harvest at Bernafey.



A good harvest at Westfalen.



6.5 Evaluating outcomes

Did access to land through group resettlement schemes improve the livelihoods of the scheme beneficiaries? The answer is not straightforward, particularly in view of the fact that for many beneficiaries, access to land meant much more than simple economic factors.

There can be no doubt that for the vast majority of beneficiaries of group schemes, a major benefit of resettlement was that they obtained rights to a piece of land on which they could have a secure home of their own. Resettlement meant not only access to a piece of land, but also the provision of a small brick house with basic amenities and access to potable water. Moreover, as official beneficiaries, they were eligible for state support, in particular food aid.

However, in terms of socio-economic improvements of livelihoods in general, the group resettlement schemes have not proved successful. The vast majority of the beneficiaries were not able to produce surpluses in the communal gardens which might have enabled them to start accumulating productive assets such as livestock. In addition, an incessant lack of cash characterised most households, and this led some beneficiaries to sell their few assets – mostly small numbers of livestock – in order to buy food and other basic necessities. But also, by their own admission, a number of households sold off assets and sank deeper into poverty due to excessive use of alcohol, as the following two life histories reflect. Whatever the contributing factors may be, the vast majority of beneficiaries still regarded themselves as poor; their livelihoods had not improved in any significant way.

Karolina and her husband had not experienced any livelihood improvements since their resettlement. Their only possessions when they settled at Drimiopsis were a donkey-cart and two horses. They expected to move forward, but 18 years later they still had nothing. In 1991 they sold their donkey-cart due to hardship. In the early years they wasted a lot of money on alcohol, but then stopped drinking with the help of a pastor. Karolina speculated that had they stopped drinking sooner, they may have had some livestock at the time of the study. Her husband earned a little money through piece work which helped them to buy food.

John expected his life to take a turn for the better after he settled at Drimiopsis, but this did not happen. There were too many people there and things were “*deurmekaar*” (confused). He had arrived there with 6 goats, 2 dogs and some chickens. He had 8 goats at the time of the field visit, but wanted to be moved to another place because theft was a big problem at Drimiopsis. He was a heavy drinker before resettling, but had stopped since being “*bekeer*” (converted). His employer had advised him to use his money to buy goats, which he did, and his hope was to go on increasing his goat herd. He intended using the money generated from his garden to accumulate goats to a level that would enable him to slaughter a goat once in a while.

The evidence presented throughout this section on group resettlement schemes suggests that much of the failure of these schemes must be ascribed to the communal gardening model. Dissatisfaction with this model was apparent in both Hardap and Omaheke. Among

the major issues identified in section 6.2.1 concerning cultivation were that (a) people who hardly ever worked in the communal garden claimed part of the harvest, and (b) those who worked in the garden never received any cash from the sale of the produce. Disputes that arose in connection with the communal gardens not only posed an economic threat to the schemes, but also impacted negatively on the social fabric of the resettled communities.

With the support of a livelihood support programme in Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, these concerns were addressed by replacing the communal gardens with individual plots for cultivation. Although these plots were very small, many beneficiaries regarded them as a positive step towards improving their living conditions. For the first time since the inception of the two schemes in Omaheke, beneficiaries who engage in gardening will be able to see financial returns for their labours. Whether or not the individualised gardening model will indeed improve living conditions on these schemes remains to be seen.

The permanent shortage of cash on the group resettlement schemes made it impossible for most beneficiaries to improve their livelihoods beyond a basic minimum – in monetary terms probably below the national poverty datum line. The cash shortage placed many beneficiaries in a downward spiral of poverty. Many pensioners, for example, appear to have been continuously indebted to local shops: their pensions did not suffice to buy food for a whole month, so they obtained food on credit, paid off the debt when the next pension came in, spent the rest on other basic necessities, had no money left for more food and so bought on credit again, thereby perpetuating the ceaseless cycle.

In other cases, the need to generate income by going out to work impacted negatively on agricultural output. Some beneficiaries were caught in a situation where, having planted a few crops, they could not look after them as they had to leave the scheme to do piece work to obtain cash for food, so the crops wilted or died.

The absence of cash created a perception among group scheme beneficiaries that life on commercial farms was better than on group resettlement schemes. **John's** wife, for example, stated that people on commercial farms had an income, a constant supply of food, tractors and cars which they could use whenever needed, and no problems with water. She said that they were “fat on the farm”, whereas at Drimiopsis they “suffer and struggle too much”. It was only because her husband got sick that he stopped working. They moved to Drimiopsis to live on their own and make a living for themselves, but life was not good there. It would have been much better if they had their own cattle post, as Drimiopsis was “too urban”. In the evenings young people threw stones at them and their goats were stolen out of their corrals. They felt that if they could live slightly apart from the other settlers, things would change and the future would be bright. Yet, despite these difficulties, they felt at home in the community and saw Drimiopsis to be “our place”.

It would be erroneous to interpret the perceptions of John and his wife as singing the praises of agricultural employment. Their comparison between commercial farms and group resettlement schemes points instead to a serious structural problem in the manner in which group resettlement has been conceptualised and implemented. A minimum level of

asset accumulation has to take place for beneficiaries to become self-sustaining producers who no longer depend on government and other external inputs, and this accumulation has not materialised in close to 20 years since the schemes were established.

Nonetheless, the vast majority of beneficiaries on group schemes, especially in Omaheke, were grateful that government had given them a secure place to stay. The importance of this was well articulated by **Karolina** at Drimiopsis who said that the government “*het ons opgetel*” (picked us up) by providing the land as well as houses which keep them properly sheltered from the rain. If the government had not devised such a plan, she did not know what would have happened to them. They could now go out and look for work if need be. A secure home at Drimiopsis or Skoonheid gives them protection especially where disputes arise with farmers, e.g. over remuneration, since these are homes to which they can return without fear of having to roam around, homeless and desperate, in search of more work.

Does all this imply that the group resettlement model should be discarded altogether? The simple answer is *no*. The primary reason for considering the continued implementation of group resettlement – albeit in a very different form – is social rather than economic. For as long as rural people face losing their place of residence and having no alternative place of residence on account of becoming unemployed, government should offer a land-based welfare model to assist them. Arguably, the group resettlement schemes have performed this function all along. With a different production model, the beneficiaries of a restructured group resettlement approach would stand a better chance of producing food.

What this research has shown is that many poor people opted for resettlement not because they wanted to climb the economic ladder and become successful commercial farmers, but because, primarily, they needed a secure place of residence (see also von Wietersheim 2008). This raises the question of the needs and aspirations of the rural poor, including farm workers. No systematic attempts have been made to determine these. Such an investigation is very likely to establish that many of the applicable people are not interested in obtaining a 1200 ha piece of land on which they are expected to engage in farming as a business. For those who do not aspire to this, group resettlement offers a solution in so far as it provides basic services and access to a small piece of land on which to keep some livestock and grow a few vegetables.

Related to the question of needs and aspirations are the questions of how the failure (or success) of group resettlement is defined and assessed, and whose standards are being applied. It is indisputable that the monetised agricultural outputs of group resettlement schemes in the study regions have been less than when the farms were farmed by a white commercial farmer, even though the state has invested large amounts of money in those schemes, including for proper housing and other infrastructure. But can it justifiably be said that these schemes have failed, considering that close to 150 people in Omaheke alone are officially receiving some basic social services and have the opportunity to raise livestock and/or grow small amounts of food, where previously only a fraction of that number were supported on the same land? The answer depends on the objectives of land reform and resettlement, and ultimately, perhaps, on the perceptions of the beneficiaries themselves.



LaLR study – interview with community at Bernafey.



LaLR fieldwork at Bernafey.



Government visit to Westfalen.

Clearly, converting productive agricultural land into land that accommodates a welfare-type production system carries distinct opportunity costs, but these costs must be determined rather than assumed in evaluating the potential of group resettlement as a welfare measure. Not addressing the needs of the poor also has a cost that has to be established.

The above should not be construed as an uncritical plea for the continuation of group resettlement schemes as we know them. There is considerable room for improvement. This LaLR study has documented some of the problems experienced with group resettlement from the perspective of beneficiaries, and the solutions being implemented to remedy those. It will be very important in this regard to monitor the individualisation of gardening to ascertain whether it has the positive effects expected. Also, support in terms of training, agricultural inputs and marketing should be investigated with a view to furnishing an appropriate post-settlement support package.

The marketing of produce is likely to be the most intractable issue due to long distances to markets. An option that should be investigated is that of establishing group resettlement schemes closer to urban areas both large and small. More specifically, a systematic assessment is required to determine the feasibility of establishing group resettlement schemes close to small rural settlements such as Kalkfeld and Kamanjab, for example.

To pre-empt an immediate and overhasty rejection of this recommendation, it is acknowledged that there is a risk of group resettlement schemes becoming squatter camps. The proposed assessment should therefore include determining whether it is possible to prevent the development of such a situation. One possible way to reduce the risk of such a development is to allocate individual land rights to beneficiaries. In addition, involving the beneficiary communities through community management structures may assist in controlling access to such land. Controversial as it may seem to some, the impact of the Basic Income Grant (BIG) on the sociology of the informal settlement at Omitara may hold valuable lessons for future group resettlement schemes.

7 RETHINKING 'VIABILITY': REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The prevailing model for land reform and resettlement in Namibia consists of small-scale commercial farming units. According to the National Resettlement Policy, the minimum size of a farm should be in line with the minimum size of a viable commercial/subsistence unit in any agro-ecological region, hence the minimum in the higher rainfall areas is 1 000 ha, and in the more arid southern regions it is 3 000 ha. Beneficiaries are expected to become fully self-sufficient on these units.

Viewed in terms of its own objectives and criteria, the current small-scale commercial farming model does not appear to be commercially viable or financially sustainable. This observation is borne out by rough gross margin calculations.

Under optimal climatic conditions and with the best possible farm management skills, a stocking ratio of 1 LSU per 15 ha is not likely to yield a gross margin exceeding N\$37 500 per year on a unit of 1 000 ha and N\$60 480 on a unit of 3 000 ha. Although this net farm income is considerably higher than the poverty datum line of N\$15 747 for a family of 5, it is not clear whether these gross margins leave sufficient capital to maintain and replace farm infrastructure after living expenses are subtracted. To put this concern into perspective: N\$36 000 is just about enough to buy wire and poles for about 3 km of fencing, but it is not enough to replace a windmill, which cost N\$45 000 in January 2009. While these expenses are unlikely to be incurred every year, they do suggest that if FURS beneficiaries are held responsible for the maintenance and development of farm infrastructure, they will not be able to achieve standards of living much above the official poverty datum line.

In addition, this study confirmed that there has been little differentiation in the livelihood paths of most beneficiaries. Options for exploring different livelihoods paths were severely limited in Hardap and Omaheke. The livelihoods of FURS and AALS beneficiaries centred around extensive livestock farming. With few exceptions, having their own piece of land is of great importance to beneficiaries, not only because they love farming and rural life, i.e. a question of lifestyle, but also, very importantly, because their own piece of land enables them to better control and manage their livestock.

Only a few women on the two group resettlement schemes in Omaheke had taken up craft production for marketing as a livelihood strategy, but their success depended on external assistance to acquire the necessary materials and market the finished products. Even where

such external support was available, the incomes derived from crafts sales appear to have been very small.

The benefits derived from utilising natural resources were also very limited. Hardap offers very little *veldkos*, and firewood appeared to be the natural resource most commonly used there. Although Omaheke offers more *veldkos*, beneficiaries of the group schemes gathered only limited amounts just after the rainy season. The significance and success of *veldfood* gathering as a livelihood strategy depend on rainfall and the size of the land area accessible to the gatherers. FURS and AALS beneficiaries derived benefits from utilising a local tree to produce droppers for fencing.

Piece work on commercial farms is another livelihood option available to resettlement beneficiaries, but the findings of this study suggest that it was almost exclusively group scheme beneficiaries who fell back on piece work, and only from time to time rather than continuously. None of the FURS beneficiaries appear to have resorted to piece work.

The dependence of most beneficiaries on extensive livestock farming, and the absence of viable alternatives for full-time farmers, made them vulnerable to external shocks, especially drought. Just about all of the farmers reported big stock losses due to drought. The AALS farmers, by virtue of having full control over their land, should have been able to mitigate the impact of drought, but this point was never explicitly discussed in the interviews. It is reasonable to assume that FURS beneficiaries are more vulnerable to drought than AALS beneficiaries because their small units do not allow for the flexibility in range management required to minimise the impacts of drought.

Group resettlement schemes, and particularly those in Omaheke accommodating mainly San beneficiaries, undoubtedly provide some protection against external shocks. Their own food production may have contributed a measure of protection, but it was primarily government's food aid programmes that prevented them from starving. In a very profound way, Skoonheid and Drimiopsis have been welfare projects more than anything else.

The predominant model for land distribution implies that the basic agrarian structure in Namibia remains intact. It could even be argued that in its current form, land redistribution perpetuates some of the more repugnant features of settler colonialism. Many beneficiaries of the AALS and FURS depend on cheap labour to survive financially. Examples have been cited of farm labourers employed by land reform beneficiaries being paid amounts that are well below the minimum agricultural wage. To the extent that group resettlement schemes such as Drimiopsis and Skoonheid constitute cheap labour pools, they help to reproduce labour relations which are exploitative and not in line with Namibia's labour legislation.

To conclude, it should be pointed out that all of the livelihood improvements attained by land reform beneficiaries have been attained at the expense of hundreds of former farm labourers who lost their employment, their place of residence and their access to land after the state bought the applicable commercial farms. To this day, there still does not appear to be an explicit policy statement on how these workers should be compensated.

8 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on some of the findings of this LaLR study in order to determine ways in which the Namibian land reform programme could be redesigned to facilitate more effective land use and economic growth. It should be stated at the outset that the agro-ecological conditions in different parts of the country, the low densities of settlement that flow from these conditions and the concomitant long distances between resettlement farms and urban service centres pose serious challenges to commercial small-scale farming. More specifically, options for alternative and complimentary livelihoods outside the conventional extensive livestock farming model are limited.

8.1 Models for resettlement

An important point that emerged from this study is that in principle, the FURS and AALS models of extensive livestock farming on individually owned pieces of land have satisfied the interests of a significant proportion of Namibia's previously disadvantaged population. A major advantage of this model is that it enabled livestock owners on communal land to leave the communal production system to farm on their own piece of land instead. This had concrete benefits for these farmers, such as improved control over their livestock, which enabled them to improve breeding methods and reduce stock loss due to theft and uncontrolled roaming.

Although the majority of the interviewees were satisfied with the redistributive land reform process, there is reason to believe that the prevailing land reform models in Namibia are limited and restrictive in terms of the activities that beneficiaries can undertake. With the possible exception of a few group resettlement schemes, the models cater for extensive livestock farming only, on either a small scale (i.e. the FURS route) or a large scale (the AALS route). For resettlement purposes, the MLR assesses land offered to it primarily with regard to its suitability for extensive livestock ranching. AALS farmers select their own land for acquisition.

The findings of this study suggest that the prevailing model for resettlement is too narrow and not well matched with the needs, aspirations and expectations of many beneficiaries, particularly those who have few assets. Current land reform thinking assumes that every potential beneficiary intends to become a small-scale or large-scale farmer, but this study has found that their needs, aspirations and expectations are more differentiated than is commonly acknowledged in the public discourse on land reform and resettlement.

One key finding is that many beneficiaries valued access to resettlement land not primarily because they intended to farm commercially, but rather because resettlement on state land gave them a permanent and secure home, notwithstanding the fact that none of them had a

formal lease agreement. Many people in the sample, and indeed in the wider community of beneficiaries, were pensioners, not all of whom had ties to a communal area. Without resettlement, they would not have had a secure place of residence as well as access to a small parcel of land for their few goats or cattle. Resettlement thus provided residential land and the opportunity to cultivate a small garden and keep some livestock.

Many people who wanted access to a secure piece of land primarily for residential purposes either were not granted any upon applying, or, if their application was successful, obtained access to a farm unit of 1 000 ha or more. Invariably, those applicants who had no intention of becoming farmers also lacked sufficient assets, particularly livestock, to utilise the land optimally. In earlier years especially, little attention was paid to applicants' suitability for resettlement. Did they have enough livestock to farm optimally on the land to be allocated? Did they have the required farming skills and access to agricultural support services to put them on the road to success? Many did not have any of these things and were effectively set up to fail. This failure took several different forms. For example, many who had no regular source of cash income, such as a pension, sold more livestock at cash-strapped times than they could produce, and this practice, particularly where combined with regular periods of drought, made them gradually poorer on resettlement land.

There is a need to revisit the issue of resettlement models for small-scale farmers. Though opportunities may be limited, options other than extensive livestock farming need to be identified and pursued to enable previously disadvantaged Namibians with the requisite skills to produce more food. For example, the potential of small-scale irrigation to increase food production for own consumption and urban markets remains largely unexplored. In recent years, smallholdings with irrigated vegetable gardens close to towns have been waived as unsuitable for resettlement.

If land reform is expected to reduce poverty levels, the needs of people categorised as 'poor' must be identified much more accurately in order to develop models that properly address them. This assumes that a clear definition of poverty exists. Does a person who is resettled with 20 LSU fall into the same category of poverty as a person with no assets at all? What is abundantly clear is that poor people without any farming assets, or with only a few, can be resettled only with generous government support in the form of grants. The financial and economic feasibility of such an approach needs to be assessed.

It has been noted in this report that the group resettlement approach as implemented thus far is fundamentally a welfare intervention to support unemployed farm workers who have no place to go. It may be necessary to develop this approach into a more coherent strategy to support landless rural people who need a place of residence with the option of keeping a few livestock and cultivating a small garden. The feasibility of establishing such group schemes adjacent to small rural centres needs to be assessed.

Any redesigning of resettlement models will have to be accompanied by a review of the beneficiary selection criteria. This review has been going on in the MLR for the better part of two years, and a draft is being discussed at the highest political and government levels.

The current model needs reviewing and redesigning for another reason which pertains to the minimum farm sizes recommended for the southern and northern parts of the country. Gross margin calculations for small-stock farmers in the south (3 000 ha) and predominantly cattle farmers in the central and northern regions (1 000 ha) raise two key issues.

In the first place, the minimum farm sizes recommended for the north and south are inherently unequal in terms of economic potential. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the gross margins potentially attainable by small-stock farmers in the south are approximately 68% higher than those attainable by cattle farmers in the north. This is because beneficiaries settled on 3 000 ha in the south are able to keep 30% more livestock than cattle farmers can keep on 1 000 ha in the north. Cattle farmers in the north can keep a maximum of 67 LSU at a stocking rate of 15 ha per LSU, whereas small-stock farmers in the south can keep 100 LSU (if 600 SSU are converted to LSU). In many cattle farming areas, bush encroachment has contributed to the relatively low carrying capacity (Werner 2009).

Secondly, the recommended farm sizes have placed a ceiling on the numbers of livestock that beneficiaries can own, and the numbers are far too low to enable them to 'graduate' from resettlement farming to large-scale commercial farming under the AALS. Taking the figures above, for example, the maximum of 67 LSU for a cattle farmer is less than half the number required to qualify for an AALS loan. The current situation does not give resettlement farmers the option to accumulate sufficient numbers of livestock for a viable commercial operation.

Finally, the gross margins cited above suggest that the small-scale commercial farming model currently being implemented under the National Resettlement Programme may not be financially sustainable. This becomes clear when provision is made for depreciation and the costs of replacing capital assets. To put this argument bluntly, the replacement of a windmill on a 1 000 ha unit in Omaheke will require more capital than the entire gross margin for one year. At current prices, the materials needed for a 1 km fence would cost about N\$11 000. The entire gross margin would enable a beneficiary to erect a 3.5 km fence at the risk of not eating for a year, let alone paying school fees.

A thorough rethink on resettlement models is required. Not only is the predominant model very narrow and unlikely to match or meet the needs, aspirations, expectations, assets and skills of beneficiaries, but also it is inherently unequal in so far as it gives beneficiaries in the south a much better chance of making money from livestock farming than their counterparts have in the north. The current model also makes it impossible for full-time beneficiaries to accumulate sufficient livestock to become full-fledged large-scale commercial livestock farmers as the land sizes place very low ceilings on the numbers of livestock that they can keep.

A number of options for land reform in the freehold farming areas were developed in 1990 for the National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question. These will not be discussed in detail here, but only mentioned as options for further consideration. One is to purchase freehold farms adjacent to communal areas. This would enlarge the

communal areas at minimal costs for infrastructural development. The main cost would be compensation for the farm owners, much like the FURS entails. This option would assist poorer communal stock owners who feel that their access to grazing is severely constrained (RoN 1991: 344). Two other options were group farming and co-operative ranching. However, it was pointed out that getting the members of group farming projects to make corporate management decisions is problematic, and it was said that very few group ranches survive. Based on the current research, it also appears that the vast majority of FURS beneficiaries are unlikely to buy into any group-based farming approach. Another model, which has been tried in South Africa but not widely discussed, entails joint ventures.

8.2 Joint ventures

Joint venture projects have been a common feature of land and agrarian reform in South Africa for some time. These usually involve, as one party, former farm workers who have land rights or are land reform beneficiaries eligible for a government subsidy, and as the other party, an established commercial farmer or company. The motivation for entering into a joint venture for agricultural production is that land reform beneficiaries have access to capital and land, while established commercial farmers or companies have expertise that empowers the land reform beneficiaries (Mayson 2003: 1).

There are arguments for and against joint ventures which need not be discussed here, but in any case it should be borne in mind that partnerships between resettlement beneficiaries and the private sector (i.e. commercial farmers with donor funding) have been virtually non-existent in the Namibian land reform process. In fact, the involvement of the commercial farming sector in the resettlement programme through joint ventures appears not to have been contemplated at all when the MLR drafted the National Land Reform Policy.

Should joint ventures come to be regarded as a viable option for broadening the range of livelihood options for resettlement beneficiaries, the South African model of equity sharing could be considered.

Equity sharing entails that resettlement beneficiaries on a farm pool their grants and invest in the farm by buying equity or shares in the farm. Typically, the beneficiaries and the commercial farmer form a trust through which they invest funds in their joint venture. The beneficiaries, while continuing to work as resettlement beneficiaries, become entitled to representation on the board and thereby participate in strategic decision-making on management. One of the most important management decisions is approving the budget, which includes setting wages and wage increases.

Joint ventures offer several positive effects which other models do not offer: they enable beneficiaries not only to remain employed but also to share in decision-making and profits, which tends to increase labour productivity, and they retain the commercial farmer's managerial skills to the benefit of all, while simultaneously transferring managerial skills to the beneficiaries through a capacity-building programme.

In South Africa the equity-sharing model has come to predominate in land reform in the high-value agricultural sector. It gives beneficiaries access to and control over the means of production while concurrently providing economies of scale and managerial expertise. Among the preconditions for implementation of an equity-sharing project are (Hamman 2002):

- the inherent viability of the farm;
- very good labour relations;
- a willingness to share in the wealth and in decision-making, and a commitment to doing so; and
- a capacity-building programme to support workers.

The initial ability of beneficiaries to buy equity derives from their access to government subsidies or access to credit facilitated by donor funding. According to Agribank, financing of joint ventures, such as between a commercial farmer and an AALS resettlement farmer, could be arranged.

8.3 Tenure security and access to credit

Issues of tenure security do not affect all land reform beneficiaries equally.

AALS beneficiaries register freehold title over their land and are therefore the undisputed owners of that land. Title enables them to use their land as collateral if they need credit.

For FURS beneficiaries, the absence of secure formal tenure is a major issue. Although the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act of 1995 (ACLRA) provides for 99-year leaseholds, the process of issuing lease agreements to beneficiaries on 190 farm units across the country commenced only in mid 2009 (*Die Republikein*, 18.5.2009). To date, of all the farms sampled in this study, only Grootrooibult and Drimiopsis have been included in this ongoing process.

While the commencement of this process is a most welcome development, a number of questions relating to tenure rights on resettlement farms remain unanswered. Exactly what legal rights are conveyed to beneficiaries through these 99-year leases? Are these leases renewable? Will the families of lessees be able to inherit the properties as a matter of right, or will lease transfers have to be approved by the MLR? Can these leases be sold or traded? If put up as collateral for loans, can banks or financial institutions foreclose on these leases? Can beneficiaries be ejected from their leasehold for bad behaviour? It is also not clear whether restrictions on livelihood options contained in earlier drafts of the lease agreement have been retained. In terms of these restrictions, any deviation from the land use specified in the lease agreement requires the MLR's prior approval, and the same applies for the erection of a permanent structure.

Many FURS beneficiaries interviewed in this study had similar questions regarding their land rights. Most demanded that they be given a formal document setting out their rights. Security of tenure motivates them to develop their land, and it ensures inter-generational

stability, meaning that spouses and children would not be impoverished by the death of a parent or partner.

For FURS beneficiaries to become successful small-scale commercial farmers, it is imperative that the lease agreement provides for maximum flexibility in the management of the land, subject, of course, to the national legislation on natural resources.

Despite the fact that no lease agreements had been registered by the time of writing, FURS beneficiaries have been able to obtain loans from Agribank since 2009. In December 2009 the bank approved 202 loan applications, committing a total of N\$12.9 million. To satisfy the bank's requirements, the applicants had to provide proof of ownership or an allotment letter (*New Era*, 18.12.2009).

8.4 Post-settlement support

Closely related to the issue of tenure security is that of post-settlement support. Economic productivity on farms that changed hands under the country's land reform programme can be considerably increased if beneficiaries are given more support. Many of the AALS farmers interviewed demanded support similar to the support provided to white farmers before Independence.

The story of subsidy support provided to white farmers during the pre-independence era is well known. Not only did they enjoy favourable repayment rates on their bank loans, but also they received additional financial assistance and support services to develop infrastructure for their farming activities. A major criticism of Agribank's AALS is that post-settlement support is virtually non-existent. It is suggested that Agribank review its post-settlement support to AALS farmers.

This study has found that many FURS beneficiaries were allocated land with infrastructure that did not suffice to enable them to farm successfully. In many instances, boundary fences were non-existent or dilapidated, and there were no internal camps. Most pressing of all infrastructure issues was that many beneficiaries did not have their own boreholes and therefore had to share water with neighbours, which gave rise to tensions and disputes in many cases.

The MLR has acknowledged these problems and has started to address them. In late 2008 it commissioned a study on post-settlement support (Werner 2009), and is now considering mechanisms for implementing an infrastructure support grant. This will be a once-off grant to bring all beneficiaries to the same minimum level of farm infrastructure. Any further infrastructure development will have to be financed by the beneficiaries themselves.

To support this process, we recommend subsidising the development of infrastructure on AALS and FURS farms, by way of Agribank providing additional financial assistance to cover the development and maintenance of existing infrastructure. Emerging farmers in the

study sample also complained about the interest rate escalating over the 25-year payback period, the current rates being too high and the grace period being too short. We therefore recommend extending the grace period for full-time AALS farmers to five years, and lowering the escalating rate of interest thereafter.

8.5 Livelihoods for farm workers

The point has been made in this report that all of the livelihood gains resulting from land redistribution have been achieved at the expense of farm workers who lost their employment when the government bought the applicable commercial farms. In a very real sense, this amounts to solving one problem by creating another. The plight of farm workers who lose their employment as a result of land reform needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. In the past it was left to beneficiaries to deal with labourers on their land. This situation is clearly untenable and needs to be properly addressed at policy level. In dealing with this issue, it will be necessary to test the assumption that all farm workers are keen to farm in their own right, and are by definition better qualified than other applicants to do so. If this is not the case, it will be necessary to determine forms of compensation for farm workers that do not involve the allocation of a 1 000 ha unit of land.

8.6 Integrating resettlement planning into agricultural planning

Land reform and resettlement policy should be a component of a broader policy on agricultural and rural redevelopment. This would ensure not only the success of Namibia's land reform programme, but also the continuing prosperity of its commercial agricultural sector. Currently, the resettlement programme planning is characterised by the practice of first allocating land to beneficiaries and then thinking about strategies to assist them. The implementation of policies and strategies is often lacking. Another need is to develop plans for environmental reconstruction of degraded commercial and communal farmland. Therefore, greater emphasis should be placed on environmental and land reform policies in order to provide for the rehabilitation of overgrazed and bush-encroached land that has environmentally degraded the value of land. The groundwork for such reconstruction of suitable agricultural land can provide jobs for labourers as well as equip them with skills which they can use later to increase the agricultural production potential on resettlement farms.

Financial assistance in the form of an Environmental Investment Fund (as provided for in the Environmental Investment Fund Act 13 of 2001) or the Land Reform Acquisition and Development Fund (as provided for in the Agricultural Commercial Land Reform Act 6 of 1995) should be given priority to help with the rehabilitation of degraded land. Obviously, land with a low carrying capacity cannot provide meaningful livelihood options for land reform beneficiaries.

8.7 Building capacity

Developing and strengthening capacity for informed decision-making by all stakeholders should be a priority. Group scheme managers on most of the existing projects do not have technical and managerial skills, the exception being the coordinator of the Skoonheid group resettlement scheme. None of them have a background in agriculture. It is unclear what criteria the MLR applies when appointing project managers to resettlement projects, but there are no apparent educational qualifications. It is recommended that project leaders be educated in the social sciences or agricultural sciences, and that they be trained for the task of managing a resettlement project.

In addition, building the capacity of resettlement scheme beneficiaries by means of suitable skills training courses would greatly enhance efforts to develop the schemes efficiently. In Hardap and Omaheke, resettlement farmers have expressed a need for practical training on technical issues, and some feel that they have inadequate management knowledge and skills. In response, established farmers have offered training in breeding, selection, animal husbandry, infrastructure maintenance, supplementary feeding, rangeland management and overcoming cash-flow problems, as is currently being provided under the Emerging Commercial Farmers Support Programme (ECFSP).

Service providers, together with established farmers, should provide information, advice and guidance to each prospective emerging farmer before he/she buys a farm in the area. In addition, appropriate skills training should be a prerequisite for every prospective AALS, FURS and group scheme beneficiary.

Finally, any land reform planning and post-settlement training should incorporate aspects of water resource management. Namibia's aridity calls for a joint consideration and close adjustment of land and water issues. In line with Namibia's various National Development Plans and the provisions of the new Water Resource Management Act of 2004 and Water and Sanitation Policy (2008), the land reform planning and capacity-building strategies should address the need for integrated land and water management. Since land and water linkages are an important issue in all activities relating to rural development and the management of natural resources, this issue deserves a stronger and more explicit emphasis in future land reform planning and capacity-building strategies.

8.8 Improving co-ordination

Better co-ordination of land reform planning is needed in Namibia. Regional land reform and resettlement planning is still undertaken mostly by central government, which often leads to a breakdown in communication or in the flow of information required for proper planning. Partnerships between government, the private sector and civil society at regional level could effectively ensure their co-responsibility and accountability for their regional resettlement programmes, and directly empower the resettlement beneficiaries to participate in planning and to manage their resources effectively.

The National Resettlement Policy provides that a number of government ministries should carry a responsibility for co-ordinating action plans in a particular area to ensure that sectoral partners in government and NGOs are involved with these plans (MLRR 2001a: 10). For example, the MLR's main responsibility is to finance the resettlement programme, while the MAWF is responsible for, among other things, training resettlement beneficiaries through its Directorate of Extension Services. However, discussions with beneficiaries and ministry officials in Hardap and Omaheke revealed that a lack of co-ordination and communication between these two ministries has often hindered the implementation of agricultural training programmes for resettlement beneficiaries.

Over the years, the MLR has contracted NGOs and donor organisations which offer a wide variety of one-week courses designed to provide knowledge and skills to semi-skilled and unskilled employees and rural communities. For resettlement communities, however, skills training has often entailed just a one-off session on basic skills, and there is no data available for assessing the effectiveness of these. In addition, the MAWF extension services appear to prioritise the training and service needs of communal farmers, and contract out to private contractors the provision of technical services to resettlement projects. This clearly shows that despite the government's pledge to empower beneficiaries to become self-sufficient, the beneficiaries have to rely on external services to resolve what is often a minor problem. Beneficiaries at the group schemes of Bernafey, Westfalen, Skoonheid and Drimiopsis stated that the MLR does not allow them to repair broken equipment themselves, but rather appoints a technical team to undertake repairs, which usually involves hiring private contractors.

Land reform support service systems need to be strengthened, or established where they do not exist. This requires a sound information base and a thorough analysis of agricultural support services, and effective promotion activities for land reform support delivery.

Of particular importance will be the linking of the various information sources and the actual exchange of information within the key government institutions and their regional structures. This applies mainly to the MLR, the MAWF and Ministry of Environment and Tourism, but also to the applicable non-governmental institutions.

8.9 Improving infrastructure

Financial co-operation between the government, donor organisations, the NGO sector and the private sector should be directed to support the development of infrastructure relating to land reform. Of particular importance will be the poverty-reducing effects of the infrastructure investments, and broadening and diversifying the scope for rural production. Through the infrastructure provided as well as the promotion of alternative income-generating options, resettlement communities will be able to take advantage of new opportunities and comparative benefits based on different resource endowments. Land reform beneficiaries need assistance with appropriate infrastructure in their efforts to generate sustainable increases in production in both the crop and livestock farming sub-sectors.

Many resettlement projects are located far from big towns or trade centres. Resettlement beneficiaries complain that they rarely know what goes on in the rest of the country because they do not receive daily newspapers, television or radio reports. This isolation negatively influences the economic activities of most resettlement project communities. For one thing, it makes the marketing of products very difficult, not least due to a general lack of access to transport. This lack also makes it difficult for beneficiaries to get in touch with family and visit other communities. Most beneficiaries also complained about the lack of public transportation to and from the resettlement projects. But again, poor transportation is a problem throughout rural Namibia.

Whatever measures are taken to improve infrastructure on the resettlement projects must include measures to improve communication and transportation infrastructure. In this regard, it is well worth considering the option of locating resettlement projects closer to big towns and trade centres, which would make communications and transportation much easier and cheaper, as well as make the projects more attractive and more efficient on the whole.



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Report produced for the Livelihoods after land reform (LaLR) Programme

