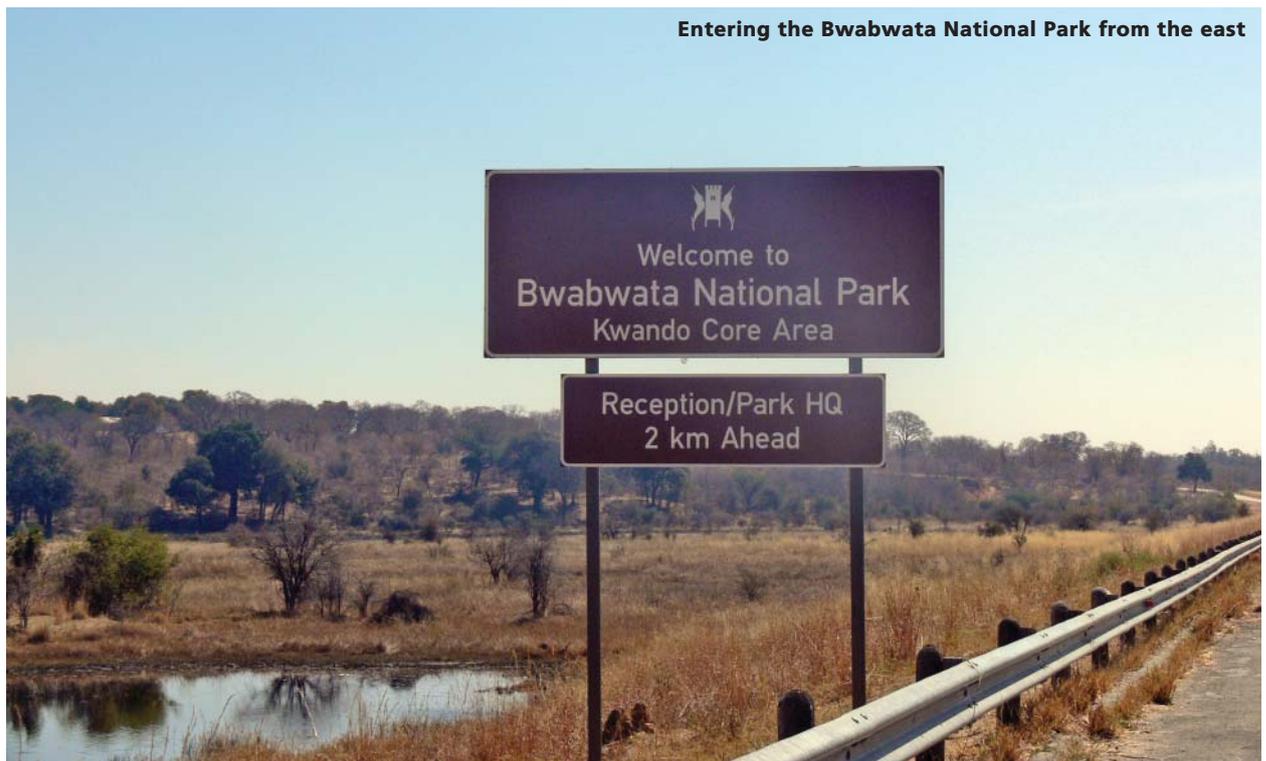


Chapter 10

Bwabwata National Park

By Brian T.B. Jones and Ute Dieckmann



10.1 General background

The Bwabwata National Park (sometimes referred to as West Caprivi or the Caprivi Strip) falls within both Kavango and Caprivi Regions (see map on page 369), and is bounded in the north by the border with Angola, in the south by the border with Botswana, in the east by the Okavango River and in the west by the Kwando River. First proclaimed in 1937 as a “Nature Reserve” (Fisch 2008: 30), in 1963 the park was re-proclaimed as the “West Caprivi Nature Park” (Boden 2009: 44), although there had been plans to declare the area a “Bushman Reserve” in terms of the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission in 1962 (Nuulimba 2012: 3). In 1968 the park was re-proclaimed as the “Caprivi Game Park”, with a higher degree of conservation protection (Brown and Jones 1994: 3). Soon thereafter, however, the South African Defence Force (SADF) declared the park a military zone and established military bases there, e.g. at Alpha (later renamed Omega), Pika Pau (later renamed Buffalo) near the Okavango River and Fort Doppies on the Kwando River (Boden 2009: 57). The SADF withdrew from the area in 1989 – shortly before Namibia’s Independence in March 1990.

After Independence, the then Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism (MWCT) carried out a socio-ecological survey of the Caprivi Game Park to determine the status of its fauna and flora after the military occupation and the circumstances of its human population (Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) 2010: 134). The report recommended that the inhabitants (then mostly Khwe and !Xun San) be allowed to remain there; that any conservation plans for the area involve and benefit residents; and that a joint steering/management committee for the park be established, composed of conservation officials and community representatives (Brown and Jones 1994: 53-54).

In October 2007 the park was re-proclaimed as the “Bwabwata National Park” (BNP), covering 6 100 km² and incorporating the Mahango Game Reserve (see map on page 369) on the west bank of the Okavango River (MET 2010: 134-135). The BNP has been zoned so as to provide for a central multiple-use area where people live, a core conservation area along the Okavango River in the west and a second core conservation area along the Kwando River in the east (see map). Although people are able to reside within the multiple-use area, some livelihood activities are restricted due to the area’s status as a national park. Residents may use the land for cultivation and for harvesting natural resources. Cattle are not allowed in the central part of the multiple-use area beyond the veterinary fence erected east of Mutc’iku, although residents may keep goats in that area.

The BNP is characterised by three distinct physiographic features (Brown and Jones 1994: 1):

- the perennial Okavango and Kwando Rivers, their floodplains and riparian vegetation;
- parallel drainage lines (*omiramba*) which hold seasonal rain-filled pans between the two rivers; and
- deep aeolian Kalahari sands which are low in nutrients and in some places form linear dunes.

Wildlife in the BNP includes large concentrations of elephant, buffalo, roan and sable antelope, red lechwe, hippo, and predators such as wild dog, lion, leopard, hyena and cheetah. The BNP is home to about 5 000 people (MET 2010: 135), most of whom are Khwe San and Mbukushu, and a few of whom are from other ethnic groups. There are also small numbers of !Xun San living in the area – around 150 in total, according to some reports (Chedau, personal communication, 2011).

Major San settlements within the BNP are located at Mushashane and Mutc’iku which are close to the Okavango River in the western part of the multiple-use zone; at Omega I and Chetto in the central part of this zone; and at Omega III and Mashambo in the eastern part of this zone (Suzman 2001a: 54). There are other smaller settlements scattered throughout the central part of the multiple-use zone, mostly along the B8 main road (see map on page 369).

Kavango and Caprivi Regions are two of the poorest regions in Namibia, and economic activity in the BNP is limited due to the area’s status as a national park, so opportunities for people to lift themselves out of poverty are few. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and NGOs are attempting to provide development opportunities based on the sustainable utilisation of natural resources, trophy hunting and tourism. These are described in more detail in this chapter in section 10.4.21 on the impact of external support (page 394).

The residents of the BNP are represented by a community-based organisation (CBO), namely the Kyaramacan Association (KA), which aims to promote community development, particularly through the sustainable use of natural resources. In February 2006, MET officially recognised the KA as the legal body that represents all BNP residents on matters related to tourism development and the management and utilisation of natural resources within the park (Nuulimba 2012: 5). The KA receives support from the MET and the NGO named Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC).



10.2 The San in Bwabwata National Park

10.2.1 The Khwe

Before the onset of colonialism, the settlement area of the Khwe San was bounded by the Kwito, Zambezi, Linyanti and Okavango Rivers – thus an area which today spans parts of Angola, south-western Zambia, Caprivi Region and north-western Botswana. West Caprivi (today's BNP) was in the centre of this area and lay on the periphery of the areas occupied by different Bantu-speaking groups (Brenzinger 1998: 329; Boden 2009: 35). The Mbukushu originally came from south-west Zambia and reached the Okavango River in the late 18th century (Van Tonder 1966: 37). For the whole of the 20th century, especially on the banks of the Okavango, Mbukushu and Khwe lived as close neighbours, though spatially separated from each other to some extent (Boden 2009: 50).

There is little historical evidence of extensive Mbukushu settlement in West Caprivi prior to the 1920s. Expeditions of German troops travelling through West Caprivi from the Kwando River to the Okavango River in 1909 and 1912 encountered scattered groups of Khwe but no resident Mbukushu (Fisch 2008: 25). After this period, some Mbukushu settlements were established in the area now known as the BNP. In 1937, when the South African Administration declared West Caprivi a cattle-free zone and ordered the removal of all cattle and their owners, most Mbukushu left the area (Fisch 2008: 30). According to Fisch (2008: 32), “It is evident from official correspondence that from 1938 onwards the area was recognised as the traditional homeland of the Khwe.” Some Mbukushu remained in the area, and in 1940, eight small settlements of Mbukushu on the west bank of the Kwando River were relocated to the east bank, along with their livestock, as part of a further drive to prevent the spread of cattle disease. Some Khwe voluntarily moved to the east bank of the Kwando at this time as well (Fisch 2008: 31). According to Suzman (2001b: 55), in the 1950s several Mbukushu families settled in West Caprivi with the permission of Khwe chiefs or headmen. Some new Mbukushu villages were built in the late 1960s, but this development was halted in 1968 with the declaration of the area as a Game Reserve, i.e. the “Caprivi Game Park” (Fisch 2008: 38). In 1970 the SADF removed all remaining Mbukushu from the area but again allowed the Khwe to stay.

Oral traditions indicate violent treatment of the Khwe by the Mbukushu in West Caprivi, with memories including slave raids until the 1930s, violations and abductions of women and children, corporal punishment and forced labour (Orth 2003: 124; Boden 2009: 50). Although these oral

traditions might derive from present-day conflicts between Mbukushu and Khwe, it can be concluded that their relationship was often conflictual in the past too.¹ A new influx of Mbukushu has been taking place since the mid-1990s (without permission from the Khwe leadership), which has led to conflicts with the Khwe inhabitants (see section 10.4.15 on relationships with other groups).

The population of Khwe in West Caprivi has fluctuated due to various events. When Angola became independent in 1974, many Khwe living there fled into Namibia and joined the SADF in West Caprivi (Brenzinger 2000). After Namibia's Independence in 1990, around 1 600 Khwe left with the SADF to live in South Africa. In 1998 around 600 Khwe fled to Botswana, alleging intimidation by members of the Namibian Defence Force, and more than 1 000 fled to Botswana when the Angolan civil war spilled into West Caprivi in 2000 (Boden 2003: 170-176; Suzman 2001b: 53-54). Some of those who left at this time returned to Namibia later. In 2005, IRDNC recorded 3 775 Khwe, 830 Mbukushu and 70 !Xun living in the BNP (Taylor 2012: footnote p. 81).

10.2.2 The !Xun

According to the "Investigation into the Bushman Population Group" launched by the South West Africa Administration in 1984, the !Xun did not live in West Caprivi in historical times; they moved there because of the war for Namibia's independence (Marais 1984: 24). Suzman (2001a: 54) also suggests that the !Xun did not view West Caprivi as historically their land. However, !Xun people interviewed during the socio-ecological survey in West Caprivi in 1990 said that !Xun-speaking clans had traditionally utilised the whole area from southern Angola through West Caprivi and into north-western Botswana and the Nyae Nyae area of Namibia (Brown and Jones 1994: 40). Nevertheless, the number of !Xun in West Caprivi increased drastically due to the exodus of !Xun from Angola as from the onset of that country's War for Independence in 1961. The immigrants numbered hundreds in the 1960s, but with the withdrawal of the Portuguese Army from Angola in 1975 following the revolution in Portugal in 1974, many thousands of San (mostly !Xun) fled from Angola to West Caprivi (Brenzinger 2010: 351-352). The ethnic composition of Omega I (one of the research sites for this study) in 1982 was described as follows (Uys 1993, cited in Brenzinger 2010: 353): "99% of the Vasequela (!Xun) came from Angola as refugees, whereas about 40% of the Baraquena (Khwe) do. The rest are local [There are] about 6,000 Bushmen. Less than 800 are soldiers." In 1989 it was reported that 4 800 Khwe and 2 000 !Xun lived in West Caprivi. When Namibia became independent (1990), many Khwe and most of the !Xun left with the SADF for South Africa, and some !Xun went to Tsumkwe District West (Brenzinger 2010: 353). Shortly after Independence it was reported that around 600 !Xun remained in West Caprivi (Suzman 2001b: 63). Subsequently some of them left for Angola or Tsumkwe District or Kavango Region. In 1996, Brenzinger estimated that there were still 300 !Xun in West Caprivi (Brenzinger 1997: 16). As mentioned above, IRDNC recorded 70 !Xun in the BNP in 2005 (Taylor 2012: footnote p. 81). At the time of the research for this study, a KA board member estimated that around 150 !Xun lived in the BNP.

The !Xun essentially form a marginalised minority group in West Caprivi, subordinate to the Khwe (Brown and Jones 1994: 170). Suzman (2001b: 63) reported that one reason for the many !Xun leaving West Caprivi is that they felt marginalised by the Khwe. In our study, Khwe people at both Mushashane and Omega I indicated how they thought of the !Xun by describing them as abusers of alcohol and as "lazy" people because they survive mainly from food aid and piecework, and most of them do not cultivate.

¹ See Taylor 2012 (pp. 59-78) for a detailed outline of ethnic relations between Khwe and Mbukushu and state contributions to the construction of ethnicity in colonial times.

10.3 Research sites in Bwabwata

This section introduces the four research sites in the BNP: Mushashane, Mushangara, Omega I and Mashambo. It provides a summary of the site locations, infrastructures, services, populations, histories and general livelihood strategies. Table 10.1 summarises the main characteristics of the four sites. The sites selected for the BNP range from remote rural to village settlements, and include a settlement of !Xun people who are a minority San group in the BNP.

Bwabwata National Park and the research sites

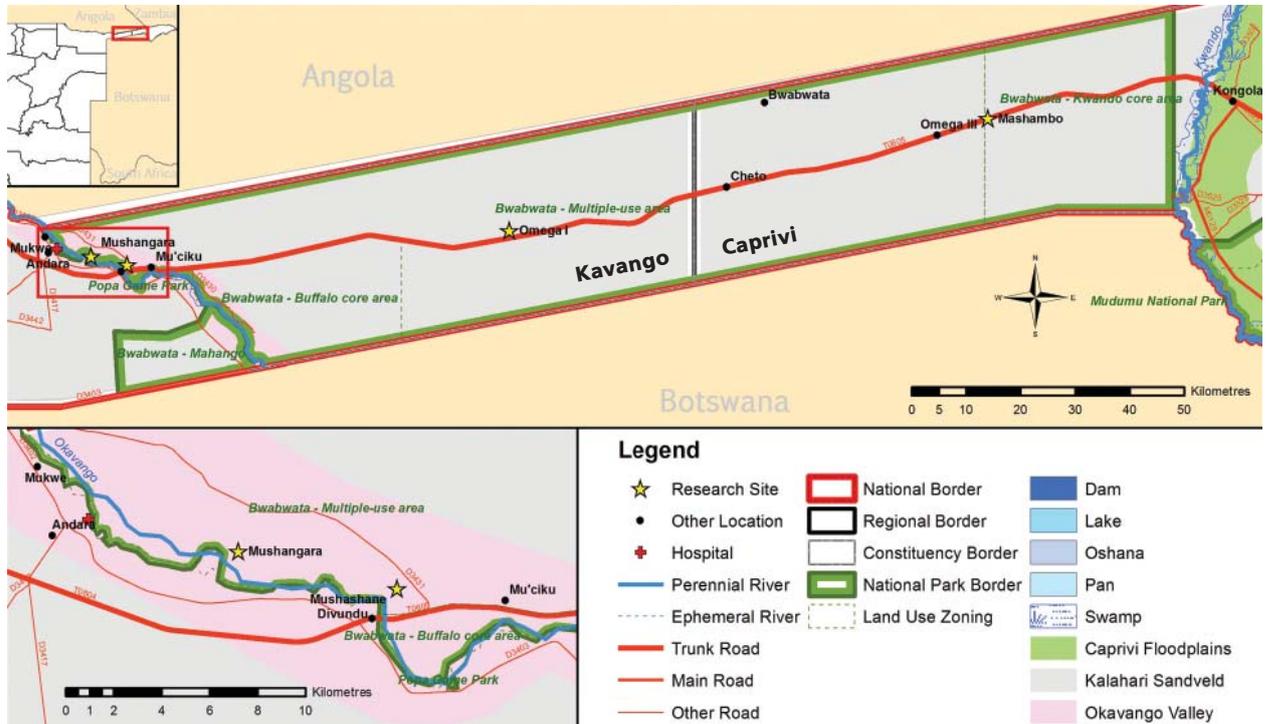


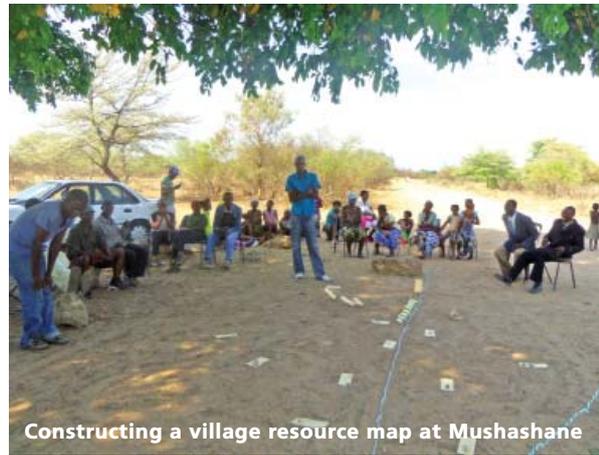
Table 10.1: Main characteristics of the Bwabwata National Park research sites

Research site	Urban/rural status	Land tenure	Language group	Population status (numerical)	Institutional support (GRN)	Institutional support (NGOs)
Mushashane	Rural village	National Park, multiple-use zone	Khwe	Majority	MLR borehole	IRDNC – CBNRM project
Mushangara	Rural village (remote)	National Park, multiple-use zone	!Xun*	Minority	No specific support reported beyond normal GRN rural services	IRDNC – CBNRM project
Omega I	Rural resettlement project	National Park, multiple-use zone	Khwe and !Xun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Khwe majority ● !Xun minority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MLR garden project ● OPM beekeeping project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IRDNC – CBNRM project; ● WIMSA support
Mashambo	Rural village	National Park, multiple-use zone	Khwe	Khwe		IRDNC – CBNRM project

* Although there were also Khwe living at Mushangara (according to Friedrich Alpers, personal communication, 13/6/2013), only !Xun participated in the study discussions there. In the mornings the researchers organised transport for the Khwe participants at Mushangara to join the Khwe group at Mushashane.

10.3.1 Mushashane

Mushashane, a village in Mukwe Constituency, is located along the B8 main road in the western part of the BNP multiple-use zone, a few kilometres north-east of the town of Divundu.² The village has a mixed population composed of Khwe, Mbukushu, Caprivians, Owambo, Kwangali, Gciriku, Nyemba and a few !Xun. According to the Khwe headman of Mushashane, the Khwe there numbered 448 at the time of the research. The Khwe and the Mbukushu are the majority populations in the village. Just across the main



road from the village is the Divundu Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) for prisoners. An agricultural scheme with large cleared fields for the prisoners is attached to the DRC. Also nearby is a Namibian Defence Force (NDF) base. The villagers collect water from the DRC or the NDF base. Water is also available from the Okavango River, but collecting it entails a much longer walk, and the water is unsafe for drinking as it carries bilharzia agents. Electricity was available in parts of Mushashane. The village has a school, i.e. Martin Ndumba Combined School, and there is another school nearby, i.e. Kippie George Primary School at Mutc'iku, a village located a few kilometres along the main road to the east of Mushashane. There is also a clinic at Mutc'iku.

Like other larger villages in the BNP, Mushashane is represented on the management committee of the above-mentioned Kyaramacan Association (KA).

Mushashane was part of the resettlement programme of the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (now named Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR)). In Kavango Region this programme was implemented by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) from 1991 to 1996 (an implementation arrangement similar to the one adopted for the programme in Tsumkwe West – see Chapter 5 on Otjozondjupa Region). The programme targeted the former “Bushmen soldiers” primarily, and aimed to prevent an economic ‘disaster’ among the West Caprivi Khwe and !Xun who had been economically dependent on the SADF before Independence (Boden 2003: 176). Through the programme, Khwe were resettled at Mushashane, Mutc'iku, Omega I, Chetto and Omega III. Each resettled family received a 4-hectare plot for cultivation (Brenzinger 1998: 334). At the time, ELCIN also provided capacity-building training for the settlers.³ Apparently, due to the armed conflict that erupted in the late 1990s between the secessionist Caprivi Liberation Army and the Namibian Special Field Force, the Khwe stopped ploughing their fields for at least two years for fear of striking landmines (Boden 2003: 177).

Mushashane is the Mbukushu name for the village; the Khwe call it *Kx'aica*, meaning ‘vulture water’. According to Khwe respondents, only Khwe lived there in the past; Mbukushu have been moving into the area from across the Okavango River since Independence. The Khwe perceived this as a problem because the incomers did not ask for the Khwe residents’ permission to settle in the area; it was Mbukushu Chief Erwin Mbambo who authorised this. Chief Mbambo had also appointed headmen for Mushashane but there were complaints that these headmen did not consult with the village community as a whole as to who should be allowed to settle there.

² The B8 crosses the Trans-Caprivi Highway (B2).

³ Boden reported that before 2000, Khwe relied economically mainly on agriculture on plots that were part of the resettlement scheme (Boden 2003: 176).

10.3.2 Mushangara

Mushangara, a village in Mukwe Constituency, is in the western part of the BNP multiple-use zone, a few kilometres upriver of the Okavango River bridge located about 7 km from the village of Mushashane. Mushangara's population comprises a mix of !Xun, Khwe and Mbukushu. Including children, there were 33 !Xun and 100 Khwe residents at the time of our fieldwork (late October 2011). The village has little infrastructure. !Xun respondents said that they get their water from the river. There is a small church building at the village. Children go to school at Mushashane or Mutc'iku. In the past, the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) worked with the government to allocate plots to people at Mushangara, and helped them to develop these. Mushangara had no direct representatives in the KA, but the Association did employ a male !Xun of Mushangara as a community game guard, and a female !Xun as a community resource monitor.



!Xun participants at Mushangara

Mushangara is a Mbukushu name. The !Xun participants said that the !Xun had moved to the area after the Khwe had left, and the Mbukushu started moving in gradually after Independence, without asking the !Xun residents' permission to do so. According to one !Xun participant, "We used to have a place of our own, but now we are just living among the Mbukushu."

10.3.3 Omega I

Omega I, a resettlement project in Mukwe Constituency, is located in the central part of the BNP multiple-use zone, just off the B8 main road, around 60 km from the town of Divundu, and east of the veterinary fence that extends from close to the Buffalo camp entrance to the Angolan border. This means that there are veterinary restrictions in the settlement area, and only small stock are allowed there, but some (mostly non-Khwe) residents do keep cattle. Omega I has several 'suburbs' or satellite settlements along the B8 to the west and the east. The main settlement is a former SADF base where many Khwe and !Xun were employed before Independence. The SADF gave the settlement its name. Omega I (i.e. the main settlement *and* the satellite settlements) has a mixed population composed of Khwe, !Xun, Owambo, Angolans, Caprivians, Gciriku, Mbukushu and Kwangali. In 2001, 630 Khwe and 100 !Xun were living at Omega I (Suzman 2001b: 54), and in 2013 the settlement was said to have about 1 000 residents, of whom 700-800 were Khwe (Friedrich Alpers, personal communication, 13/6/2013).

Omega I is the largest and most developed settlement in the BNP. At the time of the research it had a combined school (Grades 1-10), two kindergartens run by churches, a clinic and two boreholes – one powered by solar energy and the other by a diesel generator in the main settlement. Water was available from public taps, but was not supplied directly to homes. Residents of the satellite settlements had to get water from the main settlement. The SADF had installed the diesel generator, and had left it there to continue the electricity supply to the settlement. Today the Ministry of Works and Transport (MWT) provides the diesel. The generator was not in operation during the day, so the residents relied on the solar-powered borehole for accessing water during the day. Participants said that there were often problems with the solar-powered pump, and sometimes there were problems with the diesel generator. It was said that it can take as long as two months for someone to arrive to fix the generator.



The Khwe community office at Omega I

The Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR) has established an office at Omega I to facilitate the implementation of the MLR Western Caprivi Resettlement Project. One activity under this project is the development of a community garden, and this was underway at the time of our fieldwork. The Namibia Development Corporation (NDC) also manages an agricultural project in the settlement area. Omega I has representatives on the KA Management Committee, and the Association also employs some residents. The OPM's San Development Programme (SDP) had promoted beekeeping, and two young men at Omega I were undertaking this activity. WIMSA had a resident employee at Omega I, who was promoting cultural awareness and linking young people to educational opportunities.

In the past, Omega I was not a traditional settlement of either Khwe or !Xun, and there was still no Khwedam or !Xun name for it at the time of our fieldwork. In about 1975, during Namibia's war for independence, the SADF settled the Khwe and !Xun in a tented camp, named Zebra, opposite Omega I (named "Alpha" at the time), i.e. on the other side of the main road. Later they were resettled at Omega I itself. Gradually, more Khwe started coming from Angola and Botswana to settle at Omega I. The SADF also brought !Xun from Angola, and some !Xun moved from Angola into the Omega area on their own, seeking safety during the war for independence. Khwe participants said that before being settled by the SADF, the Khwe had lived in permanent villages such as Bwabwata and Yiceca. Yiceca (meaning 'God's water') is a bit further east of Bwabwata, within the boundaries of the BNP. They cultivated at those settlements, but moved around seasonally to hunt and gather, staying at wells and later at boreholes which the SWA Administration had provided before 1975.

10.3.4 Mashambo

Mashambo is the most isolated village in the BNP, in the sense that it is far away from any services and infrastructure. It is also the village most affected by proximity to wild animals. It is situated very close to the boundary of the Kwando core conservation area of the BNP, alongside the B8, about 40 km west of the Kongola bridge over the Kwando River. In 2001, 119 Khwe were living at Mashambo (Suzman 2001b: 54). At the time of our fieldwork, participants said that there were 273 Khwe living at Mashambo and 64 Khwe living at nearby Poca ('Jackal's water'). Another estimate in 2012 was a total of 380 Khwe living in the two villages (Friedrich Alpers, personal communication, 13/6/2013). Participants said that some Mbukushu tried to settle in the area in 2011, but the MET told them to leave as they had moved into the core conservation area.

At the time of our fieldwork there was a school at Mashambo catering for Grades 1-4 only, but there were plans for it to cater for Grades 5-7 as well. For Grades 8-10 the pupils would have to go to Ndoro School at Omega III. The closest clinics are at Chetto, about 50km to the west but still within the BNP, and at Kongola, a similar distance to the east but outside the BNP. Participants said that Mashambo is also served by a mobile clinic. There is a borehole supplying water to the village.

In the past, some people had lived at the village of Bwabwata, and others lived around the area that is now Mashambo. Most of the residents at the time of our fieldwork had moved to Mashambo from Bwabwata village in 1990 following Independence. That was when they had given it the name *Mashambo*, an Mbukushu word meaning ‘crossing’. Mashambo also has Khwe name, //Xoageri, meaning ‘roan antelope’ – these animals being abundant in the area – but the Khwe name is rarely used nowadays. Brenzinger (1998: 336) documented the name “#Iyo-//ana” (‘waterhole of snake’). Poca came into existence very recently. Most of Poca’s residents had lived in Omega III before fleeing to Botswana in the late 1990s during the secessionist conflict in East Caprivi and the consequent security sweeps in both East and West Caprivi.⁴ When they returned from Botswana, they first resided at Mashambo and then built their own village at Poca.

10.4 Research findings

10.4.1 Livelihoods and poverty

Livelihoods in West Caprivi have undergone considerable change.⁵ Before the arrival of the SADF, Khwe engaged in a variety of livelihood strategies: hunting/trapping, veldfood gathering, cultivation (millet, maize and vegetables) and fishing along both rivers. Many men did contract work on the South African mines and bought cattle with their earnings. In the mid-1960s, for example, most Khwe men were contract workers on South African mines. The migration for mine work in South Africa stopped in 1975 when Botswana closed the border at Mahango, which was on the main route for mine workers. From the 1970s, wage labour, mostly from the SADF, largely replaced the men’s traditional contribution to the subsistence economy, although women and older people continued to grow crops and collect veldfood. At the time of the 1990 socio-ecological survey, it was reported that people at all the settlements visited had some form of livestock, such as donkeys, goats, poultry and also some cattle. Some hunting was taking place and a small number of the elderly received pensions. The Khwe in particular had been involved in the cash economy, and had experience of cultivation and small-scale cattle farming for many years before Namibia’s Independence (Brown and Jones 1994: 40, 45; Brenzinger 1998: 346).

The major change at Independence was the withdrawal of the SADF, which left many men without work. According to Marais (1984: 73), the San of West Caprivi had the highest per capita monthly income of San throughout the country, and this was more than 12 times the income of San on white-owned farms and more than 30 times the income of San living on communal land. The SADF also provided medical services, schools, food, shops and houses. When the South African military pulled out, the economy of West Caprivi collapsed. The MLRR Resettlement Programme, implemented by ELCIN, sought to buffer the disastrous economic impacts of the withdrawal of the SADF, but, according to Suzman (2001b: 56), the success was limited. The expansion of the Angolan conflict into West Caprivi and the secessionist movement in East Caprivi further hampered development efforts in the region. Only recently, with the end of the constant political conflicts that beset the

⁴ For more detail on the events and the impacts on Khwe in West Caprivi, see Boden 2003.

⁵ For an extensive description of Khwe livelihood strategies in the late 1990s, see Boden 2005, pp. 101-118.

region during the last three decades, have development efforts slowly started to impact positively on the livelihoods of the Khwe.

Table 10.2 shows that the Khwe and !Xun at the BNP research sites lived mainly from pensions, government food aid (mostly mealie-meal), income from piecework, employment (permanent and temporary), veldfood gathering and some cultivation. !Xun had proportionally less permanent employment, and were less engaged in cultivation and more dependent on piecework for cash income. The main sources of employment were the Namibian Police (Nampol), the NDF, the KA and schools. Table 10.2 further indicates that keeping livestock is not an important livelihood activity. At the time of the fieldwork, few people had livestock, partly because many people could not afford to buy livestock, and partly because some people with livestock had sold them to raise cash. In addition, veterinary policies have resulted in the removal of cattle held by the Khwe and the provision of goats as compensation (see Box 10.1 for further detail on cattle and veterinary restrictions in the BNP). Begging appeared to be a common strategy for people at Mushashane and Omega I.

Table 10.2: Main livelihood strategies at the Bwabwata National Park research sites*

Livelihood strategies	Mushashane	Mushangara	Omega I	Mashambo
Pensions				
Food aid				
Piecework				
Cultivation				
Veldfood				
Devil's Claw Harvesting				
Employment	Ca. 5%	Ca. 6%	Ca. 2.7%	4.7%
Begging				

* The cell shading indicates that the livelihood strategy is employed at the applicable site.

Pensions

At all sites, pensions for people over 60 years of age were an important means of survival. Pensions provided regular cash income, not just for the pensioner but for the whole family. Mobile teams distributed the pension money each month. However, a number of people said that the elderly have difficulty in registering to receive their pension because they lack the necessary documentation, such as birth certificates and identity documents. Residents said that the elderly cannot afford to go to Rundu or Katima Mulilo for registration. They need money for transport and also to pay for someone to accompany them to assist them with the registration process. A family's dependency on an elderly person's pension for its main cash income is an indication of poverty.

Food Aid

Suzman (2001b: 61) reported that the San in West Caprivi relied exclusively on food aid at certain times of the year. However, our research suggests that this situation has changed, in that more livelihood strategies were being undertaken. Food aid was important as a supplement to food that people were able to purchase or grow, and it helped them if there was little cash to buy mealie-meal. The !Xun were more dependent on food aid than most Khwe. Quantities delivered and frequency of delivery appeared to be inconsistent. At Mushashane and Mushangara, participants said that they received one 12.5 kg bag of mealie-meal per household, which they considered insufficient for a family. At Omega I, participants said that in the past they had received food aid three times per year. At the time of our fieldwork (late October 2011), participants said they were still waiting for

the third delivery for the year. In addition, they claimed that the mealie-meal supplied was often full of worms. Participants at Mashambo reportedly received one bag of mealie-meal three times per year. They mentioned that the government had incorrectly accused them of selling mealie-meal received as food aid.

Piecework

Piecework was an important livelihood strategy for both !Xun and Khwe. For many !Xun, this was the main source of income. Sometimes piecework was carried out for food rather than cash. At Omega I, Mushashane and Mushangara, dependency on piecework was viewed as an indicator of poverty. At Omega I, piecework in the NDC fields was available in the rainy season. Mbukushu or sometimes Khwe people hired Khwe and !Xun to work in these fields from morning to one o'clock for N\$15-25.

"Maybe if you are hungry the whole day, the next day, you will try to do piecework and get e.g. N\$20 and you could buy food."

– !Xun participant at Mushangara

Employment

Suzman (2001b: 60-61) reported that unemployment among Khwe in West Caprivi was high, and that few San had secure jobs. Our research indicates that the situation has not changed much. Few among the total number of Khwe adults living in the BNP had permanent employment. Participants at Mushashane said that 22 Khwe of the village were employed out of an estimated total population of 448 – mostly in the nearby prison, Nampol, the KA and various government ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) and the Ministry of Education (MoE). At Omega I, 19 residents had full-time employment and two had part-time jobs. Most of the full-time work was in the school hostel (eight positions) and the KA (seven). A further 26 people were employed elsewhere, mainly in Nampol and the NDF. Participants said the people working elsewhere did not send money home to support their families. At Mashambo a total of 13 people out of a total population of 273 had full-time jobs: nine were employed by the KA (not all full-time), one by IRDNC and three by the school.

Cultivation

Traditionally, cultivation was one of the important livelihood strategies of the Khwe in the past. After Independence, a resettlement scheme was implemented and a 4-hectare plot was distributed to each family for cultivation (Brenzinger 1998: 350). However, cultivation is not practised on a large scale nowadays due to various problems, the main ones being a lack of equipment and oxen, and the destruction of harvests by elephants. Nowadays it is more common for Khwe to keep small gardens at their homes. At Omega I, for example, only a few Khwe were cultivating plots at the NDC fields because most Khwe could not afford the annual fees for the tractor used for ploughing. Most people had gardens at their homes or in the nearby *omuramba*. Participants at Mushashane said that some people were cultivating in fields around the houses. !Xun participants at Mushangara said that nobody was cultivating there, but subsequently one man there said that once in the past he had once hired equipment to plough his field. The Mashambo community used to farm quite actively, but cultivation had largely come to a halt during the last five years due to elephants and other wild

animals damaging the crops. A new conservation agriculture project will start in Mashambo in 2013. This is a pilot project to test vegetable and crop farming in essential elephant trans-boundary corridor areas, namely the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA).

Veldfood (bushfood)

Veldfood played an important role in the diet of the San in West Caprivi at the time of Suzman's research (2001a and b: 60). Participants in our research indicated that gathering veldfood was an important means of providing food for many people. However, it was also noted that veldfood had become scarce around all the sites. Veldfood was used mostly as relish to eat with maize or millet porridge. Participants at all sites identified a wide range of veldfoods which they ate, including fruits such as monkey orange, seeds from trees, tubers, honey and wild melons.

Hunting

It is always difficult to get reliable data regarding hunting practices because hunting in the BNP is illegal. Some older men in both Khwe and !Xun communities said that they still had hunting skills, and some !Xun still hunted with bows and arrows. Participants said the Khwe elders at Chetto and Omega III still hunt.

Livestock

According to the headman at Omega I, each community in the BNP had relatively large livestock herds before Independence, but, due to the restrictions introduced after Independence (see Box 10.1) and subsequent developments, nowadays only a few Khwe had cattle or goats, and not in large numbers. At Mushashane, residents said that only five Khwe had cattle and seven had goats. The !Xun at Mushangara reported that they had received five head of cattle some years ago from the CCN. According to the participants, these cattle had been taken by one of the Khwe headmen as he said that they were not being looked after properly. At Omega I, very few people had cattle, and not in large numbers, and some Khwe had 2-4 goats. Mashambo residents said that they did not have cattle due to veterinary restrictions, but some people had goats.



Wild animals roam freely in the BNP – often damaging San crops in the process.

Box 10.1: Livestock and veterinary restrictions in the Bwabwata National Park

Veterinary policies that place restrictions on cattle ownership have shaped the history of the BNP and continue to shape development within the park today. In 1937 the SWA Administration declared that West Caprivi should be a cattle-free zone, and this resulted in cattle and their owners being removed from the park (Fisch 2008: 30). The Khwe were allowed to stay because at that time they had no livestock. Over time, however, the Khwe began to accumulate small numbers of livestock, particularly with income earned from working on the mines in South Africa and for the SADF.

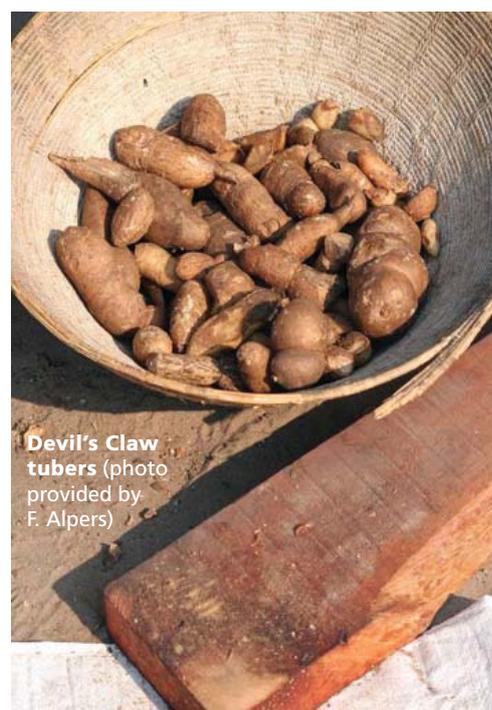
In 1996 there was a renewed effort to remove cattle from the park in response to an outbreak of bovine lung sickness which resulted in the destruction of around 250 000 cattle in Botswana, and the Botswana Government's subsequent erection of a veterinary fence along the southern border of the park to prevent the spread of cattle disease. The Khwe sold or consumed some of their cattle, and a few of the study participants claimed that their cattle were shot by veterinary officials. Some participants said that they were compensated with small stock, and others claimed that they had not received such compensation. Subsequently, however, Mbukushu began settling in the park, bringing relatively large numbers of cattle with them. When the area was proclaimed as the Bwabwata National Park in 2007, the Namibian Cabinet decided that no cattle should be allowed in the park. This decision was taken partly to satisfy the Botswana Government, as it meant that part of the southern-border veterinary fence could be left open for the movement of wildlife without cattle diseases spreading to Botswana. The Namibian Government has also built a veterinary fence extending from close to the entrance to the former Buffalo military base up to the Angolan border. A number of Khwe were not in favour of this fence, saying that it restricted people's movements and their foraging for veldfood. Others welcomed it, as indicated by a Khwe leader at Mut'iku: "The veterinary fence is a right thing; if it wasn't here, the cattle would get into the core area. The fence is only for animals, not for the people."

However, Khwe residents question why they are not allowed to have cattle in the park when other people continue to bring their cattle into the area. The MET Director of Regional Services and Park Management interviewed for this study stated that a BNP Technical Committee, on which the Khwe are represented, had made recommendations to the MET on ways to address this problem.

Devil's Claw harvesting

A large number of people in the BNP were involved in Devil's Claw harvesting, which can provide an important source of income. Table 10.3 on the next page shows that in 2010 there were 424 harvesters, earning a total of N\$278 607 and an average of N\$896 per harvester per year.

The KA supported the harvesters by means of negotiating a central contract with just one buyer, with the aim of securing a fair and consistent price for this product. The KA collected the harvested product from the harvesters and stored it for sale to the buyer. In addition, the KA provided training in sustainable harvesting techniques. This situation was in contrast to areas outside the BNP – or outside conservancies and community forests – where individual buyers exploited harvesters with low prices, and where the harvesting is often unsustainable.



Devil's Claw tubers (photo provided by F. Alpers)

Table 10.3: Devil's Claw harvesting data

Year	Number of registered harvesters	Number of actual harvesters	Amount (N\$) earned per kilogram	Total kilograms harvested	Total amount (N\$) received	Average earning (N\$) per harvester*
2008	No data	388	16	24 896	378 989	976
2009	526	379	8	18 216	145 728	384
2010	424	311	13	21 431	278 607	896

* The average earning masks considerable differences between individual harvesters.

Source: IRDNC (unpublished data, October 2011)

Food security

Table 10.4: Ranking of the most important food items at the Kavango research sites in BNP

Research site	Most frequent (eaten daily)					Least frequent (rarely eaten)
Mushangara/Mushashane*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mealie-meal • Mahango • Groundnuts • Beans • Maize 	Tubers			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat • Sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watermelon • Tsamma melon • Pumpkin • Wild leaves • Seasonal veldfood
Omega I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pumpkin • Tsamma melon** • Mahango • Mealie-meal • Maize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundnuts • Wild leaves • Beans • Meat • <i>Kyaara</i> ** • Sorghum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mangetti nuts • False mopane seeds 	Various types of honey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various types of wild tuber • Sweet potato • Various wild fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar • Rice • Melon • Various tree fruits • Berries
Mashambo ***	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mealie-meal • Various veldfoods (e.g. mangetti and false mopane) 				Meat	

* The participants at Mushangara joined the participants at Mushashane for this discussion.

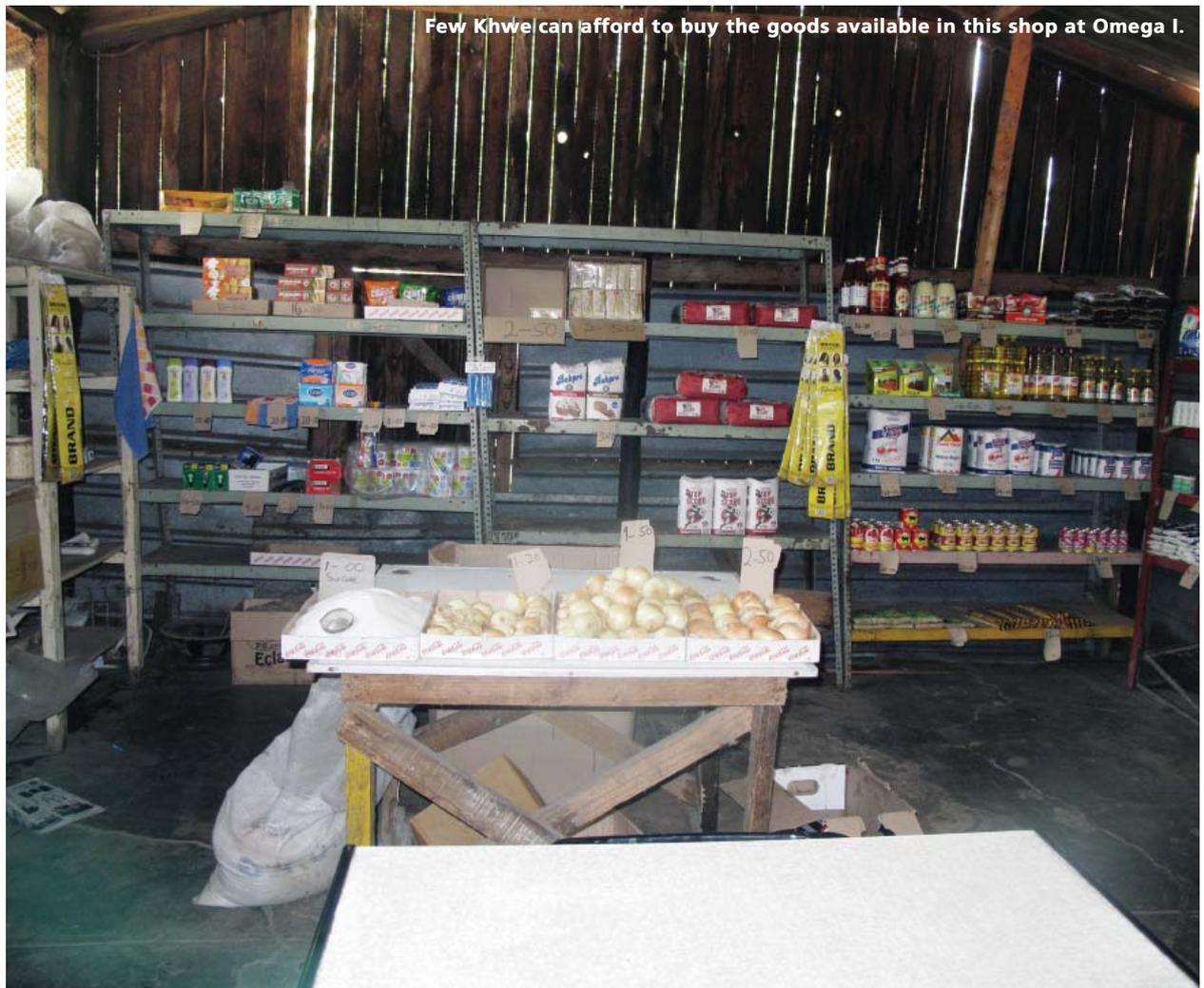
** Tsamma melon is an oilseed melon, related to the watermelon. In Namibia it occurs mostly in the Kalahari.

Kyaara is a cooking oil made from a black fruit (*Ochna pulchra*). A bucket can last a year because it solidifies.

*** The data for Mashambo may be incomplete as it was obtained during a one-day visit, with various topics covered, whereas the data for the other sites was obtained by way of specific questions relating to food security.

Table 10.4 shows that generally, mealie-meal (maize-meal – provided by the government through the San Feeding Programme or obtained from other sources, such as piecework) was the staple food eaten by the Khwe and the !Xun at all of the BNP research sites. At both Mushashane and Omega I, cultivated foods such as maize, *mahango* (pearl millet), groundnuts, beans, watermelon, pumpkin, tsamma melon and *mutete* (a type of spinach) were more common and more important than at Mushangara and Mashambo. Participants at all sites were able to list a wide range of different veldfoods, fruits, tubers, berries and leaves that they ate according to season. These ranged from foods eaten on an almost daily basis to foods eaten rarely – depending on seasonal availability. Some of these veldfoods were more important than others. Berries, for example, were often eaten as a snack while people were travelling in the bush, and tubers could contribute substantially to a meal.⁶

⁶ For a list of gathered plants, see Boden 2005, p. 394.



Few Khwe can afford to buy the goods available in this shop at Omega I.

Most families ate meat only occasionally. At Mushashane people sometimes bought meat from a local butchery or from individuals who occasionally slaughtered an animal when a person was sick and needed good food or income. Game meat was sometimes distributed by the KA from trophy hunting. At Omega I, people appeared to eat meat more often, as meat was ranked in the group of second most important foods that people ate. Residents of Omega I obtained meat from shops, and from the KA distribution of trophy-hunted meat. At Mashambo residents mentioned the KA meat distribution as their only source of meat, and said that they wanted to be able to keep cattle for meat and milk. It is likely that they also obtained some meat from small-scale hunting of animals such as spring hares.

!Xun participants from Mushangara said that, “To have enough food shows that you are a hard-working person instead of someone waiting for others to help you.” For the Khwe of Mushashane, having enough food meant that in your home you already have everything that you would like to eat. They ate 1-2 meals per day. At Omega I, having enough food meant having enough of the following foods in your storeroom to last the whole year: mealie-meal, whole maize, *mahangu*, beans and groundnuts (i.e. virtually everything that people there cultivated), and relish from veldfood such as mangetti nuts, false mopane seeds, tubers and leaves. Discussion participants said that a few Khwe in Omega I were in such a position, but the majority were not (i.e. most residents did not have enough food). However, these differences regarding the perception of what it means to have enough food shows the importance of cultivation at Omega I, compared to Mushashane where apparently more food was bought.

Perceptions of poverty

Table 10.5: Wealth ranking by research participants

(The participants at each site created their own categories, thus the categories varied between sites: Omega 1 did not have the “lower rich” and “medium rich” categories)

Site	Very poor	Poor	Better off	Lower rich	Medium rich	Rich	
Mushashane/ Mushangara*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No work, • No pension • Piecework (e.g. harvesting Devil’s Claw) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivation for subsistence • Few cattle • Pension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time work but not so well paid • Goats • Cattle • Fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time work • Cattle • Goats • Fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shebeen • Cattle • Car • Fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle • Car • Business cash loan • Can hire labour • Fields 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Khwe</i> • <i>Mushangara (!Xun) people without work</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Many Khwe</i> • <i>Mbukushu</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Khwe and !Xun who are e.g. teachers or CGGs/CRMs**</i> • <i>Many Mbukushu in Mushashane</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mbukushu</i> • <i>1/2 Khwe</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mbukushu</i> • <i>1/2 Khwe</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mbukushu</i> 	
Omega 1	<p><i>Example 1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no work • no pension • no field to cultivate • no livestock • no education • begs and does piecework • no home (stays with relatives or “live around everywhere” and has maybe one blanket) • wholly dependent on others <p><i>Example 2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a home • no education • no field • no livestock • no pension • piecework 	<p><i>Example 1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pension • some cultivation • some livestock <p><i>Example 2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • big field • no work • goats <p><i>Example 3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • big field • no work • no livestock <p><i>Example 4:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pension • no field • no livestock • piecework <p><i>Example 5:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a pension • cultivates • no livestock 	<p><i>Example 1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent work • fields to cultivate • no livestock <p><i>Example 2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent work • no field • no livestock <p><i>Example 3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • big fields for cultivation • no work • some cattle 				<p><i>Example 1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has permanent work (cook in MoE hostel), cultivates at home, and has chickens, goats, cattle and donkeys <p><i>Example 2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no work but has a pension, a headman’s salary and fields to cultivate (one at NDC project and one in the bush), and has chickens, cattle and goats <p><i>Example 3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has permanent work, goats, chickens and a big field
	<p><i>Majority of Khwe</i></p>	<p><i>Many Khwe</i></p>	<p><i>45 Khwe with full-time work, including those who have left for work elsewhere plus those with big fields and cattle</i></p>				<p><i>3 Khwe persons</i></p>

* The participants at Mushangara joined the participants at Mushashane for this discussion.

** CGG = community game guard; CRM = community resource manager

Table 10.5 shows that most participants ranked the Khwe and !Xun in the BNP as “poor” or “very poor”. Generally the very poor were people who had no work, no pension and no fields to cultivate, and who depended on piecework and begging for small amounts of cash to sustain themselves. Those described as poor had some income from pensions and piecework, cultivated their own food, and some had a few livestock. Those ranked as better off mostly had full-time work, fields to cultivate and some livestock. There were different categories of rich people, but the richest tended to have a business, fields to cultivate and livestock. They could afford to buy assets such as cars, and could afford to hire people to work for them.

Regarding perceptions of ethnic stratification, the Khwe did not consider the Mbukushu to be better off than them per se – they stressed that some Mbukushu were as poor as the Khwe – but Mbukushu could be found in all of the categories whereas very few Khwe were in the better-off and rich categories. By contrast, Owambo were regarded as rich per se, because they were the ones running businesses in the area. !Xun were generally considered to be at or below the poverty line.

Participants indicated that it was possible to move up or down from one wealth category to another. Moving down was mainly considered to be the fault of individuals, in that they did not have the necessary skills, and/or did not make arrangement for emergencies, and/or spent all their money. Even the death of a family member who ran a business was not perceived as a threat per se, as the other family members could take over the business and make a success of it if they were careful with their income. Moving up depended on how individuals or families controlled their income. If the income was wasted, then it was not possible to move up.

10.4.2 Access to land

The Khwe participants said that the area of the park “between the bridges” is their ancestral land. People at Omega I, for example, said that the land from the bridge over the Okavango River to the bridge at Kongola over the Kwando River is called *Khwe xom* (‘Khwe ground’) or *Khwe nǃú* (‘Khwe land’) – in both cases meaning ‘the area of the Khwe’. They said that *Khwe* means “human being”, but that this was the land of the Khwe alone, not of all human beings. They mentioned that there is also a *Khwe xom* in both Botswana and Angola. Yet, at all of the BNP research sites, the participants felt insecure about living in the BNP because the MET had imposed a number of restrictions on the residents due to the area’s status as a national park. On the other hand, the Khwe acknowledged the benefits accruing to them by way of a share of income with the MET from trophy hunting and through tourism concessions in the park. However, they regarded the lack of *de jure* land rights as a major obstacle to development.

The Khwe and the !Xun felt threatened because of a high influx of Mbukushu people into their area. They perceived the lack of their own recognised Traditional Authority (TA) as a huge problem in the context of land rights. Were the government to recognise an independent Khwe TA, their chief would have the right to allocate land and control the use of land in the same way that the chiefs of other groups do once their TAs are recognised. However, despite serious efforts on the part of the Khwe with NGO support, the government still saw the Khwe (and the small number of !Xun) in the BNP as falling under the Mbukushu TA led by Chief Erwin Mbambo. According to many Khwe, Chief Mbambo had even encouraged Mbukushu people across the Okavango River to settle in the BNP multiple-use areas – land which the Khwe believe to be theirs. The Khwe participants said that the influx of these Mbukushu people and their cattle into their area had led to both competition for and depletion of natural resources which were formerly used by the Khwe predominantly. For instance, at Mushashane the Khwe had observed that Mbukushu people had been cutting down Mangetti trees – an important food resource of the Khwe. It was also claimed that the Mbukushu did not use sustainable burning methods, and were burning the veld at inappropriate times.

“People are pulling from different directions – people from Caprivi say the area is theirs, the Kavangos say it is theirs and MET is fighting for the same land.”

“We want to stay here with the wild animals because this is our ancestral land; it is our own land.”

– Khwe leaders at Mushashane

10.4.3 Identity, culture and heritage

The study participants in the BNP stressed that they preferred to be referred to by the name of their ethnic group, i.e. “Khwe” and “!Xun” rather than “San”. They did not use the term “San” themselves; they always called themselves “!Xun” and “Khwe”, and only “other people” call them “San”. It was also mentioned that “whites” called them “Bushmen” – term which they did not like.

“We don't like the word ‘San’, it makes us confused. We need to be called ‘Khwe’. We do not like the word ‘Bushman’.”

– Khwe participant at Mashambo

The Khwe saw their culture and way of life to be changing rapidly, and in their view this change was imposed mostly by developments outside their own control. According to the participants, the change started with the presence of the SADF in the area, and the concurrent relocation of the Khwe to newly established settlements, and the limitations that both the SADF presence and the relocation placed on their mobility. A male participant at Omega I provided this explanation for the onset of change in the Khwe way of life: “Then the old way of life and the modern life was mixed up; the borders between the countries were also put in at that time – before that we could move freely. And that time as well, schools and churches were introduced to the Khwe culture as well as the modern clothing.”

However, despite such changes – and compared to some other San communities consulted in this study – the Khwe and !Xun communities still exhibited a very deep consciousness of their specific (largely shared) culture. Language was mentioned as one of the most important aspects of cultural identity.⁷ Hunting and the gathering of veldfood were also mentioned in discussing the Khwe and !Xun culture; in other words these are not simply livelihood activities. Participants were concerned about the fact that they could not perform their culture (meaning hunting) anymore. For example, at Omega I, an elderly man said that other people still practised their culture but the Khwe were restricted in doing so because they could no longer hunt. Asked if people still had traditional hunting skills, participants responded that some Khwe and !Xun elders still had some skills, and some still possessed bows and arrows. Reportedly the Khwe elders at Chetto and Omega III still hunted.

Although the participants acknowledged that they received income from trophy hunting, it became evident that they regarded the restrictions on their own hunting activity as a major limitation of living in a national park, not only because hunting was a livelihood strategy in the past, but also because it was an important aspect of their culture, which they feared would be lost. Participants remarked that more consideration should have been given to the cultural and social rights of the people, not only to their economic rights (i.e. securing economic benefits from the trophy hunting). A Khwe headman suggested that the KA and the MET should find a way for individuals to get a permit to enable them to go out and hunt traditionally. Another suggestion was the establishment of a cultural centre, with support from the KA, where old people could record songs and knowledge, and youngsters could learn from them.

At the time of our fieldwork (late October 2011), IRDNC was supporting the KA in the development of a Traditional Environmental Knowledge Outreach Academy (TEKOA) which aimed to establish a community-based “Training Centre and Training Programme in Bwabwata National Park (BNP)”

⁷ For a detailed description of the construction of Khwe identity over time, see Taylor 2012.

which would transfer indigenous knowledge to San youth. It was hoped that this transfer of knowledge would help to renew the youngsters' cultural pride, increase their employability, and ultimately provide the foundation for a culturally appropriate and sustainable approach to education (IRDNC 2012: 3-4).

The collection of veldfood was also seen as an important part of the shared cultural heritage of the Khwe and !Xun. A woman at Omega I, for example, in emphasising the importance of veldfood as part of the tradition, offered this anecdote: A woman had brought a particular wild fruit from Rundu for her children to taste, because in former times this fruit had been one of their traditional foods. The children did not even know the fruit, and in any case they did not like the taste. "We feel that it is bad," said the narrator, "because we grew up with these traditional foods, but nowadays the children don't know them anymore."

Compared to some other San communities (e.g. San in Omusati and Ohangwena Regions, and San commercial farmworkers – see Chapters 7, 8 and 12) who over decades or centuries have become an underclass in their respective socio-political environments and have already lost many cultural characteristics (their language, their knowledge and consciousness of former hunting and gathering practices and so on), the Khwe still exhibit a very strong feeling of ethnic identity, which is not only an identity as a marginalised group, characterised by poverty, discrimination and social exclusion, but also a specific cultural identity. It was feared, however, that recent developments were endangering these cultural elements to such an extent that they would be wholly lost in the near future. As discussed in Part III herein (the national analyses), there is an obvious connection between this strong feeling of ethnic identity and the fact that the Khwe still have access to their ancestral land, albeit limited, and that they still constitute the majority population in their ancestral area.

10.4.4 Relationships with other groups

As described earlier, the Khwe and the !Xun in the BNP were living alongside the Mbukushu, most of whom moved into the park after Independence. The Khwe and the !Xun were unhappy about this situation because they now had to compete with the Mbukushu for land and resources on what they consider to be their own land. The !Xun of Mushangara reported that the Mbukushu arrived gradually after Independence in order to develop fields there, since Mushangara had good soils for cultivation.



A KA community game guard patrol
(Photo provided by F. Alpers)



Khwe participants at Omega I drawing a village resource map in the sand

“When they [the Mbukushu] came, they didn’t ask us, the !Xun, for permission and allocation of land; they just started to clear land. [They] don’t allow us to pass their fields – one person was beaten up by a Mbukushu. They also don’t bother if some of us are living close to a tree, for example; they just start to chop it down.”

“Why doesn’t Chief Mbambo regard us as human beings? God created all of us! Please put this in the book, so that stakeholders can do something about it! I am tired. We are not sleeping during the night; the criminals are busy during the night.”

– !Xun participants at Mushangara

Both historical records and oral tradition indicate that Khwe living close to the Mbukushu were subservient to them – for example, they had to pay tribute to the Mbukushu *fumu* (‘chief’) and provide various services to the Mbukushu such as assisting hunting parties. At times, Mbukushu chiefs kept some Khwe (along with Mbukushu) as slaves (Fisch 2008: 18). Those Khwe living at a distance from the rivers and Mbukushu settlements were more independent. Today, both the Khwe and the !Xun believe that the relationship between themselves and the Mbukushu is very unequal. A Khwe participant at Mushashane stated that, “If they [Mbukushu] come here, they change the life here ... they bring their own rules and names.” The conflicts with Mbukushu have been worsened by the lack of government recognition of the Khwe TA. Our discussions established that the Khwe felt powerless in relation to the Mbukushu, not least because they had no voice in negotiations with the Mbukushu about land and resources.

Contrary to the findings at other research sites in the BNP, residents of Mashambo fell under the Mafwe TA led by Chief Mayuni whose main area was the Mayuni Conservancy east of the Kwando River. Apparently the Khwe residents of Mashambo, like many of the Khwe in Caprivi Region (see Chapter 11), did not face as many problems with the neighbouring TA. In fact, the participants at Mashambo mentioned that Chief Mayuni was willing to help the Khwe – for example, when they had poor rains, or by taking up their concern about lacking a transmitter for cellphone reception. One resident said, “Mayuni is interested in living with us. He says he is not really our chief; he is just helping us while we are waiting for our chief to be recognised.” Thus the residents’ perceptions of Chief Mayuni were very different to their perceptions of Chief Mbambo, mainly because the latter strongly opposed government recognition of a separate Khwe TA.

10.4.5 Education

Education levels among the Khwe and the !Xun in the BNP were very low. Table 10.6 (page 386) summarises the findings of discussions on education. Most elderly people did not go to school, mainly because there were no schools in the area when they grew up, and also because their parents moved often from place to place. In West Caprivi, Namibia’s war for independence had an additional impact on schooling. The level of education among Khwe and !Xun males in their 30s or 40s might have been a bit higher than that of adults in the same age group in some San communities in other regions. At least, many Khwe men had completed a few years of formal education in the military camps (Boden 2008: 116).

As in all other regions, there was a high dropout rate among current learners, and few had reached Grade 12. At Mushashane it was reported that only one Khwe pupil had completed Grade 12. At Omega I it was reported that only nine Khwe had completed Grade 12. Five of them had been able to get permanent jobs outside the region, and two had jobs in Omega I. At Mushangara, only two Khwe children were still at school (at Mushashane) but it was said that they might drop out due to lacking financial resources to pay the hostel fees. All other children had dropped out at an early age,

and it was said that, “Now, we can try to teach our learners in a different way; we can teach them at home, how to plough, how they can help themselves in future”. At Mashambo, three children had completed Grade 12 and all three had employment – one was a nurse at Mutc’iku and two had undertaken further training courses. Mashambo was the only site where participants said that the dropout rate had decreased over the last years, for three reasons: parents there had become more concerned about their children’s education; only Khwe children attended the school at Omega III, so the levels of discrimination and bullying were much lower there; and no fees were charged there.

A lack of financial resources was said to be a major cause of dropout. Participants at Mushangara, Mushashane and Omega I said that they were unable to cover the costs of school fees as well as the clothing and other basic items that schoolgoing children require, given their level of poverty and lack of cash income.

“When children go to school with people from other tribes, they see the other children with cellphones and nice clothes which they don’t have ... this is the main reason for dropping out – the Khwe children are ashamed because they are teased and laughed at.”

– Khwe participant at Omega I

At Omega I, participants suggested that a separate school should be established for Khwe: “Then, we can all be poor together.”

Many girls at all sites had dropped out of school due to getting married and/or becoming pregnant (*The Namibian Sun*, Selma Ikela, 19 November 2012). At Mushashane, early pregnancy was said to be the main reason for girls dropping out of school, but this was also linked to poverty: reportedly, girls would get involved with sugar daddies or truck drivers in the hope of being given money for buying items needed for their schooling. In many cases, pregnancy and dropout were the results of such relationships. Regarding boys, at Mushashane and Omega I it was said that alcohol abuse, smoking and the consequent distraction from school activities were the main reasons for dropout.



Khwe Children at Mushashane

Additionally, the lack of mother-tongue education was mentioned by a KA board member as a reason for the high dropout rate.

Although parents participating in the discussions acknowledged the importance of education, they stressed that they could not force their children to go to school. Parents suggested that programmes could be provided for learners after school (to keep them out of the shebeens), and that the VDCs could be used to force the children to stay in school.

Regarding motivation to complete secondary schooling to qualify for jobs, participants said that Khwe and !Xun applicants for jobs were usually discriminated against; the jobs usually went to applicants from other ethnic groups. The Khwe and !Xun also said that it was easier in former times to find jobs without formal qualifications (e.g. jobs in the SADF, and jobs as cleaners or domestic workers), whereas today, no formal employment is offered without educational qualifications. We also found that there were very few formal employment opportunities in the area itself. Young Khwe generally had to find employment in other areas, which meant working in an unfamiliar environment, usually without a social network. At Mushashane, eight children had completed Grade 10, but were still living unemployed in their parents' homes. Generally it appeared that Khwe and !Xun children in the BNP who had managed to find employment had moved away.

Most of the main villages in the park have a primary or combined school close by. This was not the case only for secondary school learners at Mashambo who had to go to school at Omega III about 13 km away.

Table 10.6: Summary of key education findings

Research site	Distance to school	School fees	Reasons for dropping out of school	Aspirations /importance of education
Mushangara/ Mushashane*	Combined school at Mushashane and primary school at Mutc'iku – for Mushangara around 7 km to primary school	"The principal makes us pay."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beaten by the chief for allegedly stealing ● Bullying ● Never went to school ● Made to work instead ● Made to work in SADF during colonial times ● Children not interested, just want to be free ● Early pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Important for getting jobs ● "Improving your life" ● Starting a business
Omega I	Combined school (up to Grade 10) at Omega I	"We cannot afford the school fees."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Never went to school (9 cases) ● Lacked financial means ● Bullying ● Dismissed for alcohol abuse ● Got married ● Got pregnant ● Had to look after child ● Dismissed for absenteeism ● Ashamed because teased and laughed at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Important for a good life in the future ● To get jobs
Mashambo	Primary school at Mashambo and secondary school at Omega III about 13 km away	"They are requesting school fees from us."	Girls drop out because "boys are troubling them", otherwise no problems with current schoolgoing children	No data

* The participants at Mushangara joined the participants at Mushashane for this discussion.

10.4.6 Health

Major diseases mentioned included HIV and AIDS, TB, diarrhoea and malaria. One participant said that “Malaria is always with us.” Another participant said that HIV/AIDS was “the highest” in the area (i.e. the most common illness), followed by malaria. Apparently, there had been some HIV/AIDS programmes in the past, consisting of the organisation New Start coming to the villages to provide education on HIV prevention and treatment. As in other areas visited for the study, many people were afraid to go for HIV testing.

Young Khwe women from Omega I who were interviewed by journalists prior to the study had informed them that TB was a serious problem in the BNP. They said that some patients would take their medication but did not have enough food to sustain their health, and others would stop taking their medication, which brings about resistant strains of the disease. As women deliver their babies at home, mothers infected with TB would infect their babies as well (*The Namibian Sun*, Selma Ikela, 19 November 2012).

Most main villages in the BNP were close to a clinic. This was not the case only for Mashambo, whose residents had to travel about 50 km to reach the closest clinic at either Chetto or Kongola. Reportedly a mobile clinic was visiting Mashambo, but it served children only, and parents had to pay N\$4 for the treatment. The closest hospital was at Andara. Most women gave birth at home unless there were complications, in which cases a plan was made to find transport to take them to the nearest clinic or the hospital. Traditional medicine was still important at some sites in the BNP.

Alcohol abuse was a problem in the BNP. Residents said that people abused alcohol, became lazy and did not work, and sometimes became violent. Reportedly several pupils had been dismissed from school due to alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse was also mentioned as a reason for becoming poor or staying poor. The Khwe perceived alcohol abuse to be worse among the !Xun in the area.

“Sometimes the drunken men come home and fight with their wives. And even the women, when they get drunk and they come home, then she will also start to provoke the husband and later on they fight. So elder people and young people, violence comes along with alcohol.”

“Every day, every time after drinking they fight ... It is quite common.”

– Residents of Mushashane

It is noteworthy in this context that some forms of piecework were paid for in *tombo* rather than cash. In fact, BNP residents refer to such piecework as *cáca-djàó*, meaning ‘beer work’ (Boden 2005: 112).

Khwe women who were part of the “Speaking for Ourselves” project of the Women’s Leadership Centre (see section 10.4.21 on external support) mentioned to journalists that alcohol abuse in Omega I was common: “There is nothing to do apart from drinking alcohol.” They also mentioned that women would sell their bodies in exchange for alcohol (*The Namibian Sun*, Selma Ikela, 19 November 2012).

10.4.7 Gender

The gender roles among the Khwe and the !Xun in the BNP had changed drastically over the years due to the changing economic opportunities in the park. During the times of contract labour in the mines, men contributed considerably to household income (in particular by buying modern goods with their wages), and women stayed in West Caprivi and managed the household, cultivated

fields and gathered veldfood. During the time of the SADF presence in the area, women were restricted to the role of housewife. Gathering activities in the bush were restricted, and women contributed almost nothing to the family economy and experienced a considerably reduced status (Boden 2008: 116). Men were the sole breadwinners during that period. Boden notes (2008: 116-117): "After Independence, women's productive share increased considerably in absolute and, especially, in relative terms. Since then, women did most of the daily work in the fields and engage in different kinds of craft production, especially basketry. Unlike hunting, the gathering of wild foods is still tolerated by the nature conservation officials." Men, on the other hand – except for the few who had jobs – were generally not able to contribute to the household income until they were over the age of 60 and receiving pension money, and/or, in some cases, taking on bits of piecework. According to Boden, the loss of socio-economic opportunities was especially severe for young men, who, in pre-colonial times, contributed the main share in meat and skins and later could buy sought-after (western) goods for their families, using their contract-labour wages or army pay (Boden 2008: 117). Although difficult to prove, it seems fair to say that these changes in gender roles, and the loss of opportunities for young men especially, have led to some degree of social destruction, including alcohol abuse and violence.

Within San families in the BNP today, we found that women are the main caretakers of children, and women gather and prepare food for the other family members. Gathering, however, was not left to women only: generally, but not always, women gathered tubers, men collected honey, and other gathering activities were undertaken jointly – for example, to get the fruits from large trees, men climbed the trees to shake the branches while women collected the falling fruit. In recent years, employment opportunities for Khwe had improved a bit, due to the KA's activities: men were employed as community game guards (CGGs), and women were employed as community resource monitors (CRMs), i.e. persons responsible for monitoring the use and status of plants and other natural products that people used for producing food and traditional medicine. According to the participants at Mashambo, the CRMs earned N\$900 per month and the CGGs earned N\$1 100 (junior) or N\$1 400 (senior) per month. A few women at Omega I and Mashambo were involved in the production of baskets for sale to tourists. The KA sold the baskets on the producers' behalf, but the producers complained that they had to wait a long time for payment, and that the payment of up to N\$70 for a high-quality basket was not high enough as this amount did not give them a sufficient monthly income. They also said that the demand for baskets was not high enough for more women to be involved.

The Khwe women in the BNP were also involved in Devil's Claw harvesting, but, as illustrated in Table 10.3 (page 378), their average annual income for this work was not very high.

As already noted, young girls did go to school, but many dropped out early due to early marriage and/or pregnancy. Older men who had worked and had money would promise the girls money for sex. Participants at Mushashane said that girls needed money to buy soap and other items needed for going to school, but then, if they fell pregnant, they had to leave school (*The Namibian Sun*, Selma Ikela, 19 November 2012).

Participants discussed the possibility of a woman marrying a richer man in order to lift herself out of poverty. Remarkably, they were of the opinion that if a Khwe woman married a rich man from another ethnic group, this would not make her richer because he would not give her anything, nor would he build a house for her, whereas if a Khwe woman married a rich Khwe man, then she could become rich because he would give her money with which she could start a business. This seems to imply that a woman would not become rich simply because her husband was rich and they pooled their resources, but rather, she would become rich because she could use some of his money to acquire an income independently.

Participants said that a Khwe woman is severely disadvantaged by the death of her husband, as his belongings go to his own family while his wife and children are left with nothing. If the widow had been a “good” wife, however, then the brother of the deceased might marry her.

The Khwe women at Omega I felt that there should be more women representatives in the KA. They had raised this issue in the past but nothing had come of it. There was no women’s group at Omega I, and women said that they would like to start one, not least because this would enable them to send appointed women for skills training, e.g. in sewing, and those trained could impart their skills to other community members. However, they felt that outside support was needed for organising such a group.



10.4.8 Political participation and representation

Traditional authority

Historically the Khwe had no paramount chief (Boden 2009: 52), but well-working institutions of local leadership, best known as *díxa //áé* (‘responsible owners of settlements’ – today referred to as ‘headmen’), granted access to land, water and other resources; settled conflicts within the community; and represented the local community in conflicts with outsiders. Personal qualities and good reputation were as important as a certain genealogical relationship to a predecessor. Some of these local leaders, referred to as *//áxa* (today meaning ‘chiefs’), had a wider reputation because of their conflict-solving abilities, and were consulted by local leaders of the Khwe. The first *//áxa* to be recognised by the SWA Administration, in the 1950s, were Martin Ndumba, residing at Mutc’iku, and his vice, Kadunda Kasetta, living at Bwabwata (Boden 2003: 186). This recognition installed Ndumba as paramount chief, and he was succeeded by his nephew, Kippie George, in 1989. The first application for official recognition of a Khwe TA was made in 1997 by Chief Kippie George, but in October 1998, he and several hundred Khwe left for Botswana after being harassed by the Namibian security forces for their alleged collusion with secessionists in East Caprivi. Chief George was repatriated in September 2000. Just three months later, on 17 December 2000, he died in Mutc’iku. In July 2001, the Khwe were informed that Namibian President Sam Nujoma had accepted the Council of Traditional Leaders’ recommendation that a Khwe TA should not be established, because the land claimed by the Khwe belonged to the Mbukushu TA, thus there was no need for a Khwe TA (Boden 2011: 2). In 2006 the Council of Traditional Leaders rejected a second application, and later that year, a third application was made for official recognition of the newly elected chief, Ben Ngobara (Boden 2011: 3). At the time of writing, the government’s final decision on this third application is still awaited.

During our fieldwork, Khwe participants stressed repeatedly that they needed their own officially recognised TA for their interests to be properly represented. They attributed the increased Mbukushu settlement on “Khwe land” wholly to the fact that they did not have a recognised TA of their own. The community felt powerless because they had no clearly defined land rights in the BNP and no recognised leader who could carry their views to government. As the Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002 requires newcomers to an area to seek permission from the TA to reside there, the Khwe,

having no recognised TA of their own, were unable to stop incomers from settling on what they consider to be their land. At the time of our fieldwork, there were two parallel authority systems:

- The officially recognised TA under Mbukushu Chief Erwin Mbambo, with whom three Khwe headmen were working, one of whom is the official Khwe representative in the Mbukushu TA, who received a government salary.
- The Khwe TA, which, although not officially recognised by the government, appeared generally to have more legitimacy among the Khwe than the Khwe members of the Mbukushu TA.

Khwe community members did not agree on who should be the Khwe chief and who should be part of the Khwe TA. Some Khwe complained that the current Khwe TA did not meet regularly in 2011, partly because of a lack of strong leadership and partly because of the distances between settlements. It was also said that TA members did not communicate regularly with each other due to the lack of cellphone coverage in parts of the park (Boden 2011: 7-8). Despite the internal conflicts about the right candidates for an independent Khwe TA, there was strong agreement that the government should recognise a Khwe TA so that the Khwe voice can be heard and their interests represented. Most participants strongly emphasised this need, although less so at Mashambo, which is in Caprivi Region where the influx of Mbukushu is less of a threat to San people than it is in Kavango Region.

“WE DON’T HAVE A CHIEF! We must get a chief to stand up for our rights and land or we need a representative in government. People in government, they are aware of our difficulties but they don’t assist us.”

– Male participant at Mushashane

The !Xun in West Caprivi also had no recognised TA of their own. At Omega I there had been an attempt to appoint a !Xun headman, but this had not succeeded due to internal divisions. A !Xun man at Omega I said that from there to Rundu in Kavango Region, the !Xun people did not have a headman. The !Xun in Tsumkwe District had a chief, and they were reaping a lot of benefits because they were closer to the chief. The !Xun leader interviewed at Omega I said that one of the Khwe headmen there had tried to appoint him to represent the !Xun, but some !Xun and some Mbukushu had opposed this move. As a result, the !Xun worked through one of the Khwe headmen who tried to solve their problems. An elderly !Xun man said that the Khwe headman was willing to help them, and that the Xun could live with the Khwe; it was not a problem if they did not have their own chief.

Community institutions

Kyaramacan Association (KA)

The most important community organisation in the BNP was the KA, which was established in 2005 because the MET required resident communities to register a legal body if they wanted to benefit from safari/trophy hunting and tourism in the park. In February 2006, the MET officially recognised the KA as the legal body representing all park residents on matters related to tourism development and the management and utilisation of natural resources in the park (Nuulimba 2012: 5). Authorised by the MET, the KA took decisions on land and natural resource management (Boden 2011: 18). The KA had 5 000 members in 2007; the number at the time of the fieldwork in 2011 was not known.



KA community game guards (Photo provided by F. Alpers)

The KA's main objectives, according to its constitution, are as follows (Kyaramacan Association 2012):

“To promote the general welfare, conserve and develop the resources of the residents of the Bwabwata National Park, and to secure for themselves and their descendants security of tenure within or in connection with Bwabwata National Park under the protection of law within the Republic of Namibia. In particular, and without derogating from the generality of the aforesaid:

- To enable the residents of the area to derive benefits from the sustainable management of and the consumptive and non-consumptive use of natural resources in the area;
- To enable its members and their families to assert and gain rights to develop tourism accommodation establishments and conduct and operate guided tours within the boundaries of the area;
- To enable the Association to apply and operate tourism and/or hunting concessions within the area for the benefit of all of its members;
- To undertake programmes and activities which encourage the social and economic upliftment of the residents of the area;
- To generally represent its members and their families in issues regarding the development of the area; and to engage in any other activities as may be necessary to promote the above aims and objectives.”

The KA shared a trophy-hunting concession in the park with the MET, which in 2011 brought the KA N\$1.9 million. The KA used this income to employ staff such as community game guards and female community resource monitors. The KA provided 43 jobs in 2011, increasing to 67 in 2013 (Friedrich Alpers, personal communication, 13/6/2013). In 2011 the KA distributed to residents 32 000 kg of elephant meat from the trophy hunting and 7 000 kg of other game meat (Friedrich Alpers, personal communication, 26/10/2011). In December 2012 the KA distributed a total of N\$425 000 among its community members as a cash benefit (Kyaramacan Trust (KT) 2013). In the past the KA also made cash payments to households from its income. The KA has also budgeted N\$60 000 for support to orphans and vulnerable children (KT 2013).

Further, the KA helps to prevent exploitation of the park's Devil's Claw harvesters by unscrupulous buyers. To this end it negotiated a central buying contract with a reputable buyer, and collected the harvested product from harvesters and stored it for sale to the buyer. The KA was supporting garden activities at some settlements in the park, and was planning to support such activities at all of the park's major settlements. To this end, in 2013 over 20 students were enrolled in various training colleges with support from KA-contracted trophy-hunting operators, and the KA also established a craft market at Mashambo in 2013 (KT 2013). The MET had also awarded the KA a tourism concession at White Sands (at Popa Falls on the east bank of the Okavango River). The KA had awarded the operation of the concession to a tourism company through a tender process, but at the time of the research the contract had not yet been finalised due to the recent recession. The projected additional income from the concession was N\$400 000-500 000 annually. The lodge was expected to employ 15-20 people, most of whom would be Khwe. The lodge would be owned by the KA after 20 years. The KA was also exploring other concession opportunities with the MET.

There were several mechanisms for the KA as a community organisation to be involved in key issues affecting park residents (Friedrich Alpers, personal communication, 26/10/2011):

- The MET is responsible for management of the core areas, but carries out joint monitoring and patrols with KA staff in these areas.
- There is a Joint Management Committee (KA-MET) for overseeing hunting in the park.
- There is an informal joint natural-resource management forum (KA-MET) which addresses outbreaks of fire, livestock issues, village issues, Devil's Claw harvesting and wildlife in the park.
- The park warden attends KA board meetings.
- The KA is represented on a technical committee composed of the MET and a few other stakeholders, which advises the MET on major park management issues and development in the park.

Each of the 10 major villages in the BNP (including an Mbukushu settlement near Omega I) is represented on the KA board. The !Xun at Mushangara were not represented on the board because only the larger villages were, so the board member for Mushashane was responsible for Mushangara as well. Although the KA employed two !Xun from Mushangara, the !Xun were disappointed that they had no representative on the board, and that more !Xun were not being employed. Besides Khwe and !Xun, the KA employed some Mbukushu and Owambo people.

Most participants viewed the KA as an organisation that represented their interests, although some people claimed that only those with employment really benefited from the organisation. Khwe at Omega I said that the KA was the only organisation they had which could speak on their behalf because they did not have their own officially recognised TA. At Mushashane, Khwe felt that the KA would be the right channel to represent their interests to the government, but that the government ministries did not channel enough information through the KA. Some residents thought that the KA should provide more information about its activities, and consult more with the villagers. At Omega I participants said that the KA gave residents information at its annual general meeting, but should also inform them at other times. They suggested that community members should be invited to KA board meetings as observers.

In sum, the KA was an important body for residents of the BNP. It represented them and gave them a voice in interacting with government and outsiders. It provided a platform for community involvement in decision making affecting their development, and helped to drive development activities. Considering the situation prior to its establishment, the KA represented a huge step forward in ensuring that the voices of the Khwe (as the BNP's majority population) are heard. And, the wages from employment and spending on social projects and cash payments to households provided support for the residents' livelihoods. The KA also played a positive role in negotiating a good deal for Devil's Claw harvesters and ensuring sustainable harvesting of this resource.

Other community bodies

Water point committees (WPCs) as well as village development committees (VDCs) have been established at some BNP villages, but only a few were functional at the time of our fieldwork. At Omega I the VDC (with mostly Khwe members) had stopped meeting. Its secretary (a Khwe man) said it had last met in 2008. At Mushashane the VDC (Khwe members only) had also stopped meeting. Participants there said it was important to revive it because VDCs were responsible for development. They would be able to develop their plans in the VDC and then get assistance for implementing them. At Mushashane, four Khwe were on the school board. At Mushangara there were no community bodies apart from the church, of which many or most !Xun were members.

There was no functioning borehole at Mushashane, and thus no WPC there. Boden reported that at one of the Mutc'iku residential areas, namely Block Echo, residents paid a fee for the management of their borehole, and allowed only residents of the block to access the water. At Chetto the WPC had to stop working after its members misused the money for diesel (Boden 2011: 15). There was also a WPC at Mashambo.

Consultation by government

Khwe participants at the research sites did not feel properly consulted by the MET and other ministries (e.g. MLR and MoE) operating in the park. At Omega I, participants said that the MET did not hold meetings with the residents but rather worked with the KA which then informed the community. Omega I residents thought that the MET should hold meetings to tell them directly

about its plans for the park and inform them about development before they take place. However, they did acknowledge that the number of villages and people as well as the lack of a Khwe chief made proper consultation difficult.

“We thought the KA idea with the board members would be the best, but even though we have organised ourselves, the GRN does not even come to us.”

– Male participant at Mushashane

With regard to support from the OPM’s SDP, participants said that there had been some support in the past (e.g. beekeeping project and donations of computers) when Dr Amathila was the Deputy Prime Minister. They did not know the current head of the SDP, and felt that the OPM should provide more support to them.

10.4.9 Visions for the future

Some participants (mainly older people), did not believe that much would change in the future. Others felt that life would improve if their children were educated. Some emphasised that hard work was needed to improve their lives. If people worked hard in the gardens, they could harvest enough to feed their families and also encourage their children to go to school. Several people said that the government should introduce more projects, especially garden projects, but that these should be implemented differently: the people had not been consulted in the planning of the existing garden project, and the beneficiaries had been selected by outsiders. Instead, the government should develop a garden project that is open to all interested individuals, and should consult the community before doing so.



At Omega I, participants hoped that the future would bring an improved supply of electricity and water, as this would make it possible to establish more projects. They also hoped for further developments through the KA. It was noted that the KA planned to give N\$10 000 to the bigger villages to start projects, and if this happened, there could be improvements. According to the KA Benefit Distribution Plan for 2012/13, the villages had already been consulted in 2011/12 to identify projects, and an average of N\$20 000 was to be given to the projects. These were the projects envisaged:

- **Mashambo:** bread baking, clay brickmaking, a tracking and ecology-monitoring training centre, community gardens, a campsite, and a Khwe cultural and craft market.⁸
- **Omega I:** a community garden, expansion of the NDC agricultural project, and a KA-BNP tourism office.
- **Mushashane:** a restaurant and traditional food centre, a community garden and a thatching-grass project.

Some of the projects were successfully implemented up to June 2013. Some had yet to be implemented, and some faced implementation problems (e.g. the water pump at one community garden project was broken). The KA also planned to provide support for school children to complete Grade 10 or Grade 12, and support for children/youth who wanted to undertake tertiary education (Kyaramacan Trust 2013).

⁸ The Gya Xai Khoeji Craft Market was opened at Mashambo in April 2013.

One middle-aged woman stressed that they knew that development was a long-term process, and that the old generation might die during the process, but then at least the young generation would enjoy the improvements.

10.4.10 Impact of external support

Support by government

One of the main government programmes of support is the Western Caprivi Resettlement Project which is implemented by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR) from its regional office in Rundu, Kavango Region. The project aims to provide various support services to settlements in West Caprivi (i.e. the BNP). These services include boreholes, ploughing services, seed distribution, sanitation (pit latrines), garden projects and a sewing project.

According to the MLR Deputy Director for the North East, the garden project at Omega I was not up and running at the time of the research, partly because the fence had been vandalised. The fence had been fixed and three gates had been put in at the request of the community to facilitate access to the garden. However, the site had not been well chosen, and the soil was poor. The garden would need to be irrigated for it to have any impact on people's lives. A borehole had been drilled at Omega I which served the whole village (not just the garden project), and a borehole had been provided at Mushashane, but this provided only a little water.

By the time of our visit in October 2011, no pit latrines had been provided yet, and the funding did not suffice to equip all of the boreholes. No sewing project had been established yet, but the machines were at the MLR offices in Rundu. The problem was that there was no one to provide training. The MLR Deputy Director for the North East said that in any case it was unlikely that local women would be able to compete with cheap imported Chinese clothing.⁹

The settlements supported were supposed to be self-sustaining once the funding stopped, and there was a plan to eventually transfer the projects to the regional council as part of decentralisation. The stakeholder reckoned that the best way to provide support of this nature would be to contract a company or NGO, which had been done at other sites such as the resettlement farm Bravo in the south-western corner of Kavango Region (bordering Oshikoto). Participants at Omega I added that the MLR had no permanent presence at Omega I: “[MLR] people from Rundu only come now and then to visit Omega I; they do not do any work. Sometimes they come for a day or stay overnight, and just say, ‘Start a gardening project!’, without any further instructions.” Participants said that the garden at Omega I operated by the Namibia Development Corporation (NDC) was working well, but few Khwe had plots there due to the annual fees payable for the tractor. There was also a beekeeping project at Omega I, supported by the OPM's SDP. Only two young Khwe men worked on this project, but they said it was going well. Boden (2011: 19) reported that the large community garden started by the SDP at Mutc'iku was not operational because Mbukushu people had allegedly stolen solar panels and fencing material.

Another major area of government support mentioned by participants was the provision of food aid. This support undoubtedly assisted food security and ensured that the most vulnerable did not starve. However, as noted above, the delivery did not appear to be regular, and at Omega I people said that the maize-meal delivered sometimes had worms in it.

⁹ Funding for the project was provided from the MLR budget as follows: 2010/11 – N\$400 000; 2011/12 – N\$400 000; 2012/13 – N\$200 000; and 2013/14 – N\$210 000.

In addition, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) provides different levels of support to the park residents. It had provided tourism concessions to the KA, shared hunting revenue with the KA, and involved the KA in the BNP Technical Committee. MET officials also carried out joint anti-poaching patrols with KA community game guards (CGGs). However, residents told us that they would like to have more direct interaction with MET officials.

In sum, government-supported development projects in the BNP – particularly those promoting the establishment of gardens – had not been very sustainable so far, and the food aid programme appeared to be irregular and inconsistent.

NGO support

Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC)

In terms of its support for the KA, IRDNC was and is essential for many reasons.¹⁰ First, IRDNC has played an essential role in ensuring that the KA is representative of the park residents. It has also provided natural resource management support, including logistical and technical support for joint patrols and game monitoring by CGGs and MET staff, as well as for Devil's Claw harvesting, including support for maintaining the organic status and ensuring sustainable harvesting. It has also assisted with enterprise development, including supporting the KA in its tendering for community hunting and tourism concessions in the BNP (Friedrich Alpers, personal communication, 26/10/2011). IRDNC has also supported the development of a community-run campsite at Popa Falls, and the negotiations for a tourism concession for the development of a lodge near the existing campsite.

IRDNC plans include supporting small-scale intensive gardening close to people's houses; reviving the sustainable harvest and sale of thatching grass; expanding craft sales; and developing the Traditional Environmental Knowledge Outreach Academy (TEKOA) for equipping young BNP individuals with tracking skills with the aims of generating jobs and preserving traditional knowledge. IRDNC will also help the KA and the MET to implement the existing BNP tourism plan which provides for additional tourism concessions for residents, such as campsites in the multiple-use area which could offer tracking and cultural village visits (Friedrich Alpers, personal communication, 26/10/2011).

IRDNC hopes that its role will ultimately diminish and the KA will be able to manage its affairs with minimal external assistance in the form of ongoing extension support for wildlife management.

WIMSA

WIMSA had a field office at Omega I, but the study participants only mentioned this in passing. After our fieldwork in the BNP (i.e. in 2013), WIMSA introduced an HIV/AIDS awareness programme at Omega I, targeting all youth aged 13-24. This programme reaches the youth in general and the San youth in particular, through performing-arts activities developed and undertaken by the settlement's San Youth Cultural Group, and through community outreach activities (i.e. peer education) for youth who dropped out of school. The aim is to effect change in personal behaviours and attitudes to reduce the risk of HIV infection. In addition, this HIV/AIDS programme aims to reduce HIV-related stigma, discrimination and gender stereotyping. The programme will empower girls to make informed decisions about sex to protect themselves from the effects of HIV/AIDS. Since the programme started only in 2013, its impact cannot be assessed yet.

¹⁰ For the role of IRDNC in West Caprivi between 1996 and 2005, see Taylor 2012.

Women's Leadership Centre

In 2012, after our fieldwork in the BNP, the Women's Leadership Centre (a national NGO based in Windhoek) started a project called the Khwe Women's Voices Project: "Speaking for Ourselves", with the aim of strengthening the voice and leadership skills of young Khwe women living in the BNP, through education on their rights as women and as indigenous people. With oral-history activities, creative writing and photography, the young women are encouraged to learn from the past in order to understand the present and envisage a future (Women's Leadership Centre 2012). During several visits to Windhoek in 2012/13, the young women had opportunities to speak to a wider audience about the situation of Khwe women in the BNP, and to share their poems about the past and their current realities. As the project started only recently, its impact has yet to be assessed.

10.4.11 Living in the Bwabwata National Park

We found that the Khwe and the !Xun living in the BNP faced many of the same problems that San face in other parts of Kavango and Caprivi, and a number of additional problems posed by the area's status as a national park. However, this status also provided some opportunities that are not necessarily available to people living in Kavango and Caprivi but outside the park boundaries.

The MET implicitly recognised the land rights of people living in the BNP by recognising the KA as a legal body representing the residents, and by awarding concessions to the KA. However, people's land rights have never been explicitly recognised or spelt out, and this has spawned a sense of uncertainty. People live in the park under restrictions that had not necessarily been negotiated with residents or which residents had not necessarily agreed to. On the other hand, despite the influx of other people into the park (e.g. Mbukushu people), it could be argued that the proclaimed status of the area has helped to secure land for the Khwe and the !Xun (Nuulimba 2012: 8).

The following are some of the main problems identified by participants in our study:

- People suffered losses of livestock to predators and damage to crops (mainly due to elephants), but could not do much about it because MET policy states that there are no problem animals in a protected area. However, the MET allows people to live in this protected area, and to keep small stock and grow crops there. In effect this has meant that residents are not compensated for losses of livestock or, more importantly, losses of harvests.
- Development options for residents were limited:
 - They may live only in those parts of the park designated as multiple-use areas. In addition, people were given plots in the Mushashane/Mutc'iku area, and government told them that they should settle only north of the main road, but now there were many Mbukushu homesteads south of the road, which government did nothing about.
 - The most productive land along the rivers had been denied to them by the designation of this land as core areas where no settlement, livestock, hunting and gathering were allowed.
 - There were supposed to be no cattle in the central part of the park. The MET told the Khwe in 1996 that they could not have cattle in the park, and their cattle were in fact destroyed, but they had observed that Mbukushu people had a lot of cattle in the between Omega I and Chetto, and this was not sanctioned by government.
 - The MET did not encourage the development of new infrastructure in the park..

Participants were aware that it was not a good idea to settle in the core areas due to the presence of too many wild animals (predators, elephants, etc.), but one resident said that moving closer to the core areas might be good for many people: "Sometimes we feel we would like to settle deeper

in the bush”. Mashambo residents thought that there were disadvantages to being near a core area. However, they were aware that the resources in the Kwando core area were abundant because no one was allowed to use them, and they thought that they should have access to these since the area where they lived was depleted of resources. To allow for this, they thought that the boundary of the Kwando core area should be moved 20 km eastwards towards the Kwando River.

There were also restrictions on hunting in the park, even within the multiple-use areas. At first in our discussions, the Khwe at Omega I were unsure as to whether or not they could hunt in the area. It then emerged that the KA and the MET had agreed on some restrictions, but no one was sure of what these actually entailed. It appears that better communication from the KA and the MET is required to inform people about the restrictions and how they were decided. Clearly both the Khwe and the !Xun linked hunting to their culture, and this is an issue that the KA and the MET need to explore further. People recognised that they were getting meat from the safari/trophy hunting, but they wanted to be able to hunt themselves. The headman at Omega I suggested that means should be found to enable individuals to get a permit for going out to hunt traditionally.

As to whether or not it was good to live in a national park, opinions differed: some people saw more advantages (i.e. benefits from hunting concessions) while others saw more negative impacts such as those noted above. At Mushashane some people said that the wild animals and the people must stay apart, thus they welcomed the veterinary fence at Buffalo, whereas other people said, “The wild animals should not go away; they are for us like domestic animals and we own them. Let animals stay and have development the same time.” Another view was that animals should be around so that they could teach their children – the descendants of hunter-gatherers – about the animals and the traditions associated with the animals.

“We elders, we did not know mealie-meal and sugar; we grew up with the animals and we ate the meat of the animals, e.g. springhares. For us, our mealie-meal was a grass [translator does not know the English term], called *bii* in our language. The grass seeds were pounded – that was our mealie-meal. We still want to be with animals.”

– Kyaramacan Association board member

At Mashambo there was strong agreement that the wild animals should be protected. People said that before others came, the Khwe were taking care of the animals. They said that they had a special relationship with the wildlife, and pointed out that most wildlife on the east bank of the Kwando River had disappeared because people had killed them. Some participants viewed the income from hunting and the potential future income from tourism as opportunities that were not available to people outside the park.

That the MET received 50% of the income from hunting concessions was widely regarded as a problem. It was suggested that the KA should receive the full amount to pay for losses due to human-wildlife conflict in the BNP. An IRDNC employee, for one, pointed out that the MET used its 50% share in different regions and other projects rather than in the BNP alone, but he suggested that it *was* being used as compensation for losses due to human-wildlife conflict in the BNP. A KA board member said that they liked the wildlife and should continue living together with the wildlife.

“We want to stay here with the animals because this is our ancestral land; it is our own land.”

– Kyaramacan Association board member

10.5 Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the Khwe and the !Xun in the BNP are politically marginalised. This is due partly to the fact that neither group has an officially recognised TA, and partly to their past association with the former South African regime. In the past the government viewed the Khwe in particular with suspicion, because many Khwe were employed in the SADF when it occupied the BNP before Independence. In addition, some Khwe were allegedly involved in the failed uprising launched by Caprivi secessionists. This historical and political legacy still haunts the attempts of the Khwe to secure a place in Namibian society equal to that of other Namibian citizens. While more research and development attention has focused on the Khwe, the small number of !Xun residents of the BNP constitute the most marginalised group in the park.

Another important point is that the BNP is split between two regions and constituencies, and the Mbukushu TA exerts a strong influence in the Kavango portion. These circumstances make it more difficult to address issues as a group. The existence of the KA is very important as this is the only overarching organisation for the Khwe and other residents in the BNP. The KA has a relatively large source of funding and assists local development. In the absence of a recognised Khwe TA, the KA is the organisation that represents the interests of residents to outsiders.

The MET and IRDNC efforts have improved the situation of San residents of the BNP over the last decade (cf. Suzman 2001b: 53-69). These entities are providing and promoting development options through wildlife use and tourism, which have increased the number of jobs and income-generating activities available to residents. But these activities alone will not lift the majority of residents out of poverty; increased efforts are needed to give more people wildlife- and tourism-based jobs, and to boost household income through sustainable use of other natural resources (e.g. Devil's Claw). Other initiatives are needed to support the livelihoods of the portion of the population who cannot derive a secure livelihood from these activities. There is also a need for a formal agreement between residents and the MET that clearly identifies people's rights, particularly to land.

Practical solutions are required for enabling people to grow their own food. Garden projects are important but not very successful at present. Better prior consultation with beneficiaries must take place, and – as experiences in other regions have also shown – the focus must shift from community projects to individual plots. Much more attention must be paid to reducing and mitigating human-wildlife conflict, and to paying compensation for losses of livestock and harvests. Government's insistence that people may not keep cattle east of the Buffalo veterinary fence means that residents have no draught animals for ploughing, thus government should ensure them alternative means of ploughing, such as access to a tractor or support for the introduction of conservation farming techniques which involve minimal tillage.

Development for BNP residents can also be improved through a closer partnership with the MET, building on the existing joint wildlife management activities and the KA's involvement in the BNP Technical Committee. The MET, other government departments and park residents should jointly formulate a vision for development in the BNP, which clearly sets out the development goal for the park and options for strategies to achieve it. This development vision should take into account the restrictions that living in a national park places on residents. If tourism and wildlife are to provide adequate alternatives to development options enjoyed by Namibians living outside parks, and compensate for restrictions on development, much more needs to be done to develop wildlife and tourism enterprises so that they provide more jobs and income. Otherwise, many park residents will be condemned to a life of ongoing poverty and dependency on government and donor aid.